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ICU IN SYLHET DIVISION
32 out of 46 dedicated beds are at private hospitals
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BANGLADESH UPDATE

3,462
New cases in 24hrs

1,22,660
Total cases

1,582
Deaths

49,666
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

481,442
Deaths

9,422,847
Total cases

CONTAINING COVID-19

Testing kit crunch frustrates efforts

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

With the country witnessing a continuous surge in Covid-19 infections and deaths, a shortage of testing kits appears to be a major setback for efforts to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

In terms of the number of tests, Bangladesh remains at the bottom among the South Asian countries, and the crisis of kits has already led to suspension of testing in some laboratories.

Shortage of kits at such a crucial time raises serious concern as it is not only causing delays in identifying infected people and tracing their contacts, but also in deciding whether a patient has recovered, said experts.

They said the authorities were not testing enough people taking the country's high population density into consideration. The number of daily tests still hovers around 17,000, although it should be at least 20,000.

As of yesterday, the country tested 660,444 samples, shows data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

According to www.worldometers.info, 4,029 out of every one million people in the country have so far been tested, whereas the number is 89,351 in the United States, 83,585 in Italy and 5,329 in India.

The government has managed to test only about one out of every 250 people, which is direly inadequate to get any conclusive picture of the real Covid-19 situation on the ground, said experts.

KIT CRUNCH

The 300-bed government hospital in Narayanganj is one of the places where testing remained suspended for five days from Thursday amid kit shortage.

"We have the capacity to test 280 samples per day. The demand is huge, but we cannot meet it because of the crisis of kits," Goutam Roy, superintendent of the hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The facility received 1,920 kits on Tuesday, which would last for a week and officials have already asked for more, he added.

In Gazipur, Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmad Medical College wrote to the

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Dinghies crammed with mostly garment workers arriving in Nishat Nagar area of Tongi, crossing the Turag river, yesterday morning. Everyone, except a few, is wearing masks. The boat could have carried fewer people to ensure physical distancing.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Five lakh customers got inflated power bills

State minister says distributors working to correct 'errors'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The distribution companies have mistakenly inflated bills for about 5 lakh customers while preparing an average monthly charge as officials could not go from door to door amid the coronavirus pandemic, said state minister for power Nasrul Hamid yesterday.

"The current problem is down to the mistake of the distribution companies. While preparing the average bill, they inflated bills in some cases," said the state minister.

He made the comments during a virtual discussion organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue on the power sector.

Many customers have complained that they received monthly electricity bills that are much higher than in the previous months.

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3,000-plus daily cases the new normal

3,462 more reported infected; 37 die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In all but one of the last 16 days, the daily new Covid-19 cases has not dipped below 3,000 and another 3,462 tested positive in the 24 hours preceding 2:30pm yesterday.

Over the same duration, 37 people -- 28 male and nine female -- have died of the highly contagious virus. The death toll now stands at 1,582 and the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases at 1,22,660.

June 9 saw the highest number of new cases until then -- 3,271, also the first time the number crossed the 3,000 mark. On June 16, authorities reported 53 deaths -- the highest single-day fatalities in the country. The very next day, the highest number of new cases till date, 4,008, were recorded.

June 13 was the only exception, when the total number of new cases dipped below the 3,000 mark as 2,856 new cases were reported.

Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general of the Directorate General

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Lockdown helped in East Rajabazar

Officials say infection rate fell; people of low income group suffering inside red zone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-week lockdown of East Rajabazar has resulted in reduced number of cases of Covid-19 transmission.

Ayesha Akhter, an assistant director of the Directorate General of Health Service, said infections among people in East Rajabazar have reduced after enforcement of lockdown there.

She urged all to follow the guidelines for preventing coronavirus infections.

Faridur Rahman Khan Iran, councillor of ward-27 of Dhaka North City Corporation, told The Daily Star yesterday, "There were 31 infected people when the area was locked down on June 10 ... Hundreds of people might have been infected by them but that did not happen."

"Only 19 people were reported infected a couple of days after the lockdown was enforced. They were actually infected before the lockdown and detected later. Nobody got infected since then, as far as we know," he said.

At least 35 of the total 50 recovered and the rest were doing fine, he said. Faridur said samples of nearly 230 people had been collected for Covid-19 tests and that some results were yet to be delivered.

This correspondent spoke to nearly a dozen people who live inside the locked down area.

Rakibul Hasan, a resident of East Rajabazar, said, "People did not care much [about social distancing] during the countrywide shutdown and moved freely on the streets. But after the lockdown, people stopped going out and maintained social and physical distancing."

"I hardly see anyone on the streets without a mask now. That can be a reason for fewer infections," he said.

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FAST-TRACK PROJECTS Govt moves to speed up work amid pandemic

Monitoring Task Force to sit with implementing agencies today

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and REJARUL KARIM BYRON

Amid growing concern over the slow pace of work of almost all fast track projects due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the government is working to find ways to speed up the schemes.

As part of its efforts, the Fast Track Project Monitoring Taskforce is going to meet today with the officials of the project implementation agencies, officials said.

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus, also the head of the taskforce, will preside over the virtual meeting from Prime Minister's Office. Secretaries of different ministries and project directors concerned will join the meeting through videoconferencing, they said.

Abul Mansur Md Faizullah, secretary of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, said as many first track projects were running behind

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Primary healthcare made hassle-free

Daktarkhana, country's first general physician centres, ensuring treatment at low cost

NILIMA JAHAN

When 50-year-old Md Shahjahan Khandaker was having an asthma attack last month, he was too afraid to go to hospital.

A businessman from Rangpur's Taantipara area, Shahjahan has been an asthma patient for the past few years. Even though he had no other symptoms of Covid-19 apart from shortness of breath, he was reluctant to go to a doctor, afraid of being a Covid-19 suspect and then being denied treatment.

However, when his condition deteriorated, his son Md Monsur Ali, took him to Daktarkhana -- the first general physician (GP) model in Bangladesh -- right next to their home. "The doctor there examined him and assured us that it was nothing related to Covid-19 and said that with the prescribed medicine, he would be fine."

A week after the first Daktarkhana visit, Shahjahan was all better without having to see a specialist or go to a hospital.

"The whole process cost me only Tk 200. If I took my father to a specialist or a hospital, it might have cost me thousands," said Monsur, adding, "I was amazed that the doctor gave us enough time in exchange for such a low cost."

"Without hesitation, I took my four-year-old daughter to the Daktarkhana as she was suffering from fever. With the prescribed medicine, she too was cured," Monsur said.

According to Dr Ratindra Nath Mondal, a medicine specialist and founder of Daktarkhana, in developed countries, each area has a GP centre, where people of that particular area can go and get primary medical consultation and treatment.

"In order to see a specialist, one needs to get reference from the GP

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FAKE COVID REPORTS Cops track down dozen syndicates

Some hospital staffers involved in it; each report sold for Tk 5,000-9,000

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

While the coronavirus itself is a cause for grave concern in the country, some people are out there making business by putting others at further risk of infection by selling fake Covid-19 certificates.

Law enforcers claimed to have detected around a dozen syndicates, who are selling fake certificates during the pandemic. They provide a printed "Covid-19 negative/positive" certificate or an E-mail as per desire, for Tk 5,000 to Tk 9,000.

In cooperation with some hospital staffers, these syndicates mainly target those in need of a Covid-19 negative certificate to go abroad, said officials of police and Rab.

They have medical staffers, graphic designers and IT experts involved in their gangs. For the certificates, they mainly use DGHS or IEDCR pads.

Police and Rab claimed to have learned about the syndicates after arresting around a dozen people who were selling fake certificates.

"We have come to know that several

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Saiful Islam is all smiles holding a report that says his grandchild tested negative for coronavirus at the National Institute of Neuro-Sciences & Hospital in the capital. He came from Jashore with the child for a surgery.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

64 Bangladeshis found in a truck in Macedonia

Detained, taken to a site close to border with Greece

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in North Macedonia said 64 Bangladeshi migrants were found in a truck on a highway near the country's border with Greece, reports AP.

The driver evaded arrest during an inspection late Monday near Strumica in the country's southeast. In a statement Tuesday, police gave no other details about the migrants, the AP report said.

Contacted, Mutasimul Islam, first secretary at the labour welfare wing of the Bangladesh embassy in Spain, which is responsible to look after diplomatic issues in North Macedonia too, said they communicated with the North Macedonian government for details about the incident, but did not get any response till yesterday evening.

"We have sent an email to know about the incident. We will be able to tell about it once we get the reply," Mutasimul told The Daily Star via WhatsApp.

The migrants were detained and transferred to a holding site in the border town of Gevgelija, pending deportation to Greece, said the news agency on Tuesday.

Syeda Farhana Noor Chowdhury, labour welfare counsellor at the Bangladesh embassy in Athens, said they were

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Road accidents claim eight lives

Four of them killed in Thakurgaon as truck collides with three-wheeler

STAR REPORT

Eight people were killed and six others injured in road accidents in three districts on Tuesday.

In Thakurgaon, four people were killed when a truck collided head-on with a diesel-run three-wheeler around 8:00pm on Tuesday in Kadeshuka area on Thakurgaon-Baliadangi road.

The victims are Sadequl Islam, 30, Banu Begum, 45, Shahidul Islam, 45, and Yakub Ali, 55.

Sadequl, Banu, and Shahidul were residents of Baliadangi upazila, while Yakub hailed from Naogaon's Dhamoirhat.

Banu and Yakub died on the spot. The two others were taken to Baliadangi Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition where doctors declared Sadequl dead, said Hasibul Haque Prodhan, officer-in-charge of Baliadangi Police Station.

All three were the three-wheeler passengers. Meanwhile, Shahidul, who was the three-wheeler driver, was moved to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. He died there later.

Banu's six-year-old son Rahimullah, who was also injured in the accident, was now undergoing treatment at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

A case was filed with Baliadangi Police Station in this connection, the OC said.

Two people were killed and two others wounded when two trucks collided with each other in Sirajganj's

Pachalia area on the Sirajganj-Dhaka highway on Tuesday morning.

The dead are Kawsar Ali, 28, and Sanwar Hossain, 20.

The accident took place around 9:30am when a Sirajganj-bound brick-laden truck hit a stone-laden truck from the rear. Kawsar and Sanwar died on the spot.

Law enforcers and fire fighters rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies, said Abdur Rashid, sub-inspector of Hatikumrul Highway Police Station.

In Tangail, a newlywed woman and her grandmother were killed in a road accident in Kalihati upazila on Tuesday. The victim are Moriom Akter Munni, 18, and her grandmother Omichha Begum, 80, of Nonla Bagbari village in Tangail's Dhanbari. Moriam's husband Tofayel Ahmed Anik and two others were also injured in the accident.

Tofayel and Munni were married in the first week of June, and he along with his wife and her grandmother were going to his brother's house in Tangail town on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

The auto-rickshaw collided head-on with a Dhanbari-bound bus from Dhaka on Bangabandhu bridge at Elenga in the morning.

Kamal Hossain, in-charge of Elenga highway police outpost, said the injured, including the CNG driver, were admitted to Tangail General Hospital.

Police seized the bus, but its driver and helpers managed to flee.

Our correspondents from Thakurgaon, Pabna, and Tangail contributed to this report.



A motorcyclist weaving through traffic at speed in Aminbazar area on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday morning. Such unnecessary risk-taking is all too common on the roads.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Testing kit crunch frustrates efforts

FROM PAGE 1

Prime Minister's Office, drawing its attention to a severe crisis of test kits.

"We had informed the matter to the Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday. We then got some kits. The problem is solved for now," said Principal Prof Asad Hussain.

SK Saiful Alam, assistant professor and head of the department of microbiology there, said they were supposed to test 188 samples a day, but the number came down to 70 to 80 due to the shortage.

The microbiologist also said his team got some new European kits, but the team needs training to learn using them. He said he hoped that they would begin using them from Friday.

Even a ruling party lawmaker has recently vented anger over the shortage of kits that led to suspension of Covid-19 tests in three districts.

Coming live on Facebook on Monday, Ekramul Karim Chowdhury, lawmaker from Noakhali-4, alleged that the testing had stopped in Noakhali, Feni, and Laxmipur.

Ekramul, also a member of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said, "I have come to know that three or four business companies have already brought around 10 lakh testing kits, but they have not been able to supply them to the health ministry due to the 'Mithu Syndicate'."

Our health sector will never be normal until it gets rid of the Mithu Syndicate."

IEDCR data indicates that the testing also got halted in Jamalpur

and at some private hospitals in Dhaka, apparently due to a shortage of kits.

Experts said the country's testing capacity was still drastically insufficient against its huge population, amid a pandemic when testing facilities should have been expanded every day.

"The current number of daily tests is poor. We have to take the number to 50,000," said IEDCR consultant and epidemiologist Mushtaq Husain, but pointed out that that might not be possible with PCR machines.

RT-PCR, in which samples from nose and throat are swabbed, is considered gold standard for Covid-19 tests.

Since the testing machines have to be imported, there are chances of a disruption in the supply chain. "So, we have to go for local production or other means of testing."

Replying to a query, Prof Shahid Ullah, chief of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, said it was tough to determine the target of daily tests as the "trend of infection will determine the number."

"We have been saying there should be at least 20,000 tests per day now," he said.

The DGHS yesterday said 17,245 samples were collected and 16,430 tested in 66 labs across the country.

Regarding the kit crisis, he said the government must keep at least two lakh kits in reserve as the supply chain could be disrupted any time. Besides, it should look for other

markets also.

Health officials said one of the major challenges is PCR machines cannot conduct a huge number of tests in a single day.

Take the capacity of DNA Lab limited, a testing facility in Dhaka, for an example.

It has around 500 kits in stock and those could last about three days. After that they will have to collect more kits.

"Kit crisis is worsening every day," said Gobindha Chandra Ghosh, a top official of the facility.

Officials, however, said there was no crisis of kits and that the testing did not stop at any place.

"Right now, we have one lakh and two thousand kits. More kits will come. So there is no kit crisis in the country," said Abul Kalam Azad, director general of DGHS.

He said they were gradually increasing the test numbers and more districts were coming under the testing facilities.

64 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 1

contacting Bangladesh officials in Madrid regarding the incident in North Macedonia.

The so-called Balkan migration route, mostly running through former Yugoslav republics, has been closed since 2015 and Greek border with North Macedonia was closed earlier this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the AP report.

But police said trafficking networks remain active in the border area, it added.

Five lakh customers

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"I have said a number of times a mistake is taking place. There is nothing wrong in admitting the mistake. Our distributors are working to correct the mistakes. So, we are acting on it," Nasrul said.

There are 3.68 crore electricity consumers in Bangladesh. Of them, 30 lakh customers use smart meters. The rest use manual, Nasrul said.

"Meter readers have to read those manually. It would take 20 lakh people to read the meters at 4 crore households. If these people were sent to every household, at least 5 lakh people would have contacted the coronavirus," he said.

So, they were told to find a solution so that nobody faced any trouble, he said.

3,000-plus daily cases

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of Health Services (DGHS), yesterday said, "We urge people to maintain hygiene and social distancing to stay safe."

A total of 16,433 samples were tested in 65 labs across the country before yesterday's daily briefing, she said.

The percentage of tests that returned positive was 21.07, marginally higher than the 20.94 percent the day before.

In terms of the total confirmed cases, the death rate was 1.30 percent, showing almost no change for the two months, according to DGHS data.

Bangladesh also continued to be the 17th worst affected country in terms of the number of cases. It remains one step ahead of South Africa and just below France, according to worldometer.info.

Meanwhile, 2,031 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries has reached 49,666. The recovery rate was 40.49 percent, the DGHS official added.

In total, 749 people were put under

isolation in 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday.

Among those who died in that duration, 10 were from Dhaka, nine from Chattogram, six from Rajshahi, seven from Khulna, three from Mymensingh, one from Barishal and another was from Rangpur Division.

One of them was aged between 11 and 20 years old, two between 21 and 30, two between 31 and 40, three between 41 and 50, 12 between 51 and 60, nine between 61 and 70 and the rest were 71 and 80 years old, Dr Nasima also said.

According to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) website, males constituted 77 percent of the deaths and 71 percent of infections in the country.

More than half of the total infected were aged between 21 to 40 years, reported IECCCR, adding that the death rate was 65 percent higher among patients older than 50 years of age.

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Cops track down

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syndicates are involved in selling fake Covid-19 certificates. We have already increased vigilance and are conducting drives to arrest them," Lt Col Sarwar-Bin-Quasem, director of Rab's legal and media wing, told The Daily Star yesterday.

In the latest drive on Wednesday, a team from Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Tejaon Division arrested a couple from Airport area, who were selling fake Covid-19 certificates. The arrestees are Humayun Kabir and his wife Tanzina Patowari.

Harun-Ur-Rashid, deputy commissioner of Tejaon Division Police, told this newspaper that they used to collect samples by visiting people's houses, even though they have no laboratory.

After collecting samples, they would go home and prepare fake certificates on their laptops. They would write "negative" or "positive" on the certificates depending on the patient's symptoms, he said.

If the patient had any Covid-19 symptoms, they would write positive and if not, they would write negative, added the DC.

Interrogating the couple, police later conducted a drive in the capital's Badda area and arrested three others, including JKG Healthcare CEO Ariful Chowdhury.

The two others are Sayed Chowdhury and Al Mamun, an IT expert, said police. Md Mahmud Khan, assistant commissioner of DMP Tejaon Zone, said that Humayun Kabir is a graphic designer and used to give patient reports on the official pads of the health directorate and the IEDCR.

"Tanzina, a nurse, worked for JKG Healthcare but the CEO Ariful said she was sacked her in April. But, we have

found IEDCR pads on the laptops of JKG Healthcare," he said.

"We would be able to say more about the syndicates' activities and involvement of any other gang after interrogating them [the arrestees] after taking them into remand," said Mahmud.

He added that in primary interrogation, they have come to know that these syndicates so far sold around 40 certificates to different people.

If the patient was a local resident, they charged Tk 5,000 but if the patient was a foreigner, they charged \$100, Mahmud said.

Meanwhile on June 15, a Rab-3 team raided a photocopy shop in the capital's Mugda area and arrested four for selling fake Covid-19 certificates. The arrestees were Fajal, Sharif, Jamshed, and Liakat.

According to the law enforcers, they have sold around 150 to 200 certificates to different people and charged Tk 5,000-7,000 per certificate.

During interrogation, the arrestees said that mainly the garment workers would take negative certificates from them to join their work. But some people take positive certificates to submit those in office so that they could take leave.

ABM Faijul Islam, senior assistant director of Rab-3, told The Daily Star yesterday that the arrestees worked in photocopy shop and they used to scan and preserve certificates of Covid-19 patients. Some brokers in the hospital used to help them for the job, he said.

"We are investigating the incident to trace these brokers and such syndicates involved in selling fake Covid-19 certificates," he added.

Earlier on June 5, police arrested two people from the Savar upazila health and family planning office for selling fake Covid-19 certificates.

take part in a four-day training called GPOC (general practice orientation course) by the General Physicians' Society. After training successfully, one can open a Dakarkhana branch with due permission.

"The training covers all areas so that they can treat all types of general diseases and give treatments to newborns and adults alike. They are also taught to counsel the patients about the possible side effects of the medicine they will prescribe and much more," he said.

"And most importantly, we advise them [the GPs] to give at least 15 minutes to hear the case history of every patient," the doctor said.

In metropolitan areas, one needs to pay Tk 200 for treatment, while in district and upazila level branches, they charge Tk 100 from the patients.

To open up a medical history record book, one needs to pay Tk 30, while the patients of district and upazila level need to pay Tk 20.

However, if someone is unable to bear the fee, Dakarkhana doctors provide with free treatment and

Primary healthcare made hassle-free

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centres. When and if the GPs fail to diagnose a disease or if a patient needs to see a specialist for the severity of the disease, the GPs can refer them to a specialist," he said.

"I have tried to replicate the model here in Bangladesh so that an overwhelming majority of our patients, who crowd specialist chambers or hospitals for a general diseases, can take treatment from our general physicians. This way, they can save both their time and money."

"At the same time, our specialists, who are overburdened with duties, can give proper time to critical patients at the hospitals and focus on emergency situations," said Ratindra Nath.

Besides, since Bangladesh has no specialist field for general physicians, and every year, a large number of new graduate doctors fight for employment, Dakarkhana has been helping the new doctors with employment.

Newly graduated students, who have an MBBS degree and are registered as a doctor under Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BM&DC), can

Lockdown helped in East Rajabazar

FROM PAGE 1

East Rajabazar, with about 50,000 residents, was categorised as "red zone" and put under experimental lockdown on June 10. All shops inside the area were closed. A day after the lockdown began, a man of East Rajabazar died from Covid-19 at a city hospital.

After two weeks, the authorities on Tuesday extended the lockdown for another week. Some inhabitants staged demonstrations protesting the extension.

Many residents said people from poor families and those working in informal sectors were bearing the brunt of the lockdown despite the help from police and volunteers.

Many lost sources of their incomes and were facing acute financial problems.

Some alleged that the designated

sellers of groceries were allowed inside the area were charged exuberantly, worsening the situation.

A 50-year-old woman said, "I went to buy some shrimps. A fishmonger wanted Tk 850 a kg for something that is worth Tk 600 at best." She returned without the shrimps.

The woman used to run a tailoring shop at her house and her husband and elder son were professional drivers before the pandemic.

"We are now jobless. My husband and son cannot go out to drive as the area is locked down... We are in acute financial problems," she said, preferring anonymity.

"Our house rent is Tk 18,000. We are now thinking about moving to a cheaper house. But we cannot move because of the lockdown," she said. She said she received five kg of rice,

medicine.

Since its inception on February 14 last year, it has established 70 branches around the country, while a total of 95 doctors have been offering treatment at Dakarkhana.

A total of 15 GPOC have been carried out countrywide, where a total of 3,250 doctors were trained.

Another positive aspect of Dakarkhana is that during the Covid-19 crisis, all their branches have been providing free telemedicine.

Laiju, a pregnant woman living in Mirpur-1 area, who had been doing her prenatal visits at the local Dakarkhana, continued her check-ups over phone with her doctor.

"I even called the doctor at 2:00am and he prescribed medicines and gave advice. I'm very grateful to him," she said.

Currently, Ratindra Nath is aiming to set up a branch for every 20,000 people and in every one kilometre area. "If there is one such branch in every area, only 15-20 percent of patients will need to go to specialists," he said.

Masud Hossain, zonal executive officer of zone-5 of DNCC, claimed that they had received some reports of issues relating to high prices of essentials inside the locked down area, but the sellers were now selling products at market price.

He said people were tired of the lockdown.

"We are getting calls urging the end of the lockdown."

Govt moves to

FROM PAGE 1

schedule due to the virus outbreak, they sent letters to project directors to come up with recovery plans.

"Tomorrow's [Thursday] meeting will discuss the problems faced by the projects and how to overcome those. Some specific directives are likely to be given [to the project implementing agencies] from the meeting in this regard," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

With most of the first-track projects already running behind schedule mainly due to uncertainty over funding, complexity over designs, planning and land acquisition, their progress was hit hard by the Covid-19 outbreak.

The number of first-track projects rose to 12 after three new projects were included and one was excluded from the list in the last meeting of Fast Track Project Monitoring Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in January.

The projects are Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Metro Rail (MRT-6), Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Padma Rail Link, Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail Line, Rampal Thermal Power Plant, Payra Port First Terminal, Payra port infrastructure development, Maheshkhali Matarbari integrated infrastructure development activities, MRT-1, MRT-5, and Matarbari Port Development Project.

The last three was included in the list of the first-track project. The Sonadia Deep Sea Project has been dropped from the list.

Once the projects are completed, the country's communication and power sectors will get a huge boost, traffic congestion in Dhaka city will ease, and trade and tourism will be benefited immensely, say experts.

Studies show that the country's GDP will increase by 3 to 4 percent after the completion of the projects.

DELAY IN PROJECTS

The long-cherished Padma Multipurpose Bridge project suffered shortages of workers, both Chinese and local, and construction materials since January after the virus broke out in China, officials said.

A project official said the project authorities are now working on a pace of 70 percent of normal. It received an allocation of Tk 5,370 crore from the outgoing Annual Development Programme (ADP), but officials could spend Tk 2,140 crore as of February.

Bridges Division Secretary Belayet Hossain yesterday said, "We have returned Tk 1,700 crore from the ADP allocation. The current deadline of the project is going to be deferred by six months as the work has been disrupted by Covid-19."

After several deferrals, the current deadline of the project is June 2021. The overall progress of the project was 79.50 percent as of May this year, according to project documents.

Another important first track project is the construction of a single-line dual-gauge railway track from Dohazari to Cox's Bazar via Ramu. It will bring the country's popular tourist destination under railway network. The long-drawn project has also been facing obstacles since the Covid-19 pandemic began due to a lack of workers, officials said.

Project Director Mofizur Rahman said they had a plan to complete 50 percent physical work of the project within the current fiscal year, but the progress reached 40 percent as of now.

The physical work of the project came to a near-halt after March, he said, adding that although most of the workers have returned to the project site, rain was creating obstacles.

"We are hopeful about recovering the delay if the virus situation returns to normal. But if the situation prolongs, it may not be possible for us to recover the delay within the deadline," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the MRT-6 project has witnessed 44.67 percent physical progress till last month, Padma Rail Link 24.43 percent, Rampal Thermal Power Plant 48.93 percent, Payra Port First Terminal 0.82 percent, and the Payra port infrastructure development has seen 66.25 percent physical progress.

The 2,400 MW Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the largest single project worth Tk 113,092 crore, saw 25.04 percent financial progress till last month. The deadline of the project is December 2025.

CMCH doctor dies

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Dr Aniruddha Ghosh, associate professor of medicine at CMCH.

Samirul's family shifted him to a private hospital in the port city on Monday, said Brig Gen SM Humayun Kabir, director of CMCH, adding that his health condition suddenly deteriorated yesterday and he was put under a ventilator at Metropolitan Hospital where he died around 2:25pm.

His death was mourned by many on social media as Samirul was known as a humanitarian doctor.

Journalist and poet Bishwajit Chowdhury wrote, "How an unknown person can become so dear after the very first meeting. I understood when I met Dr Samirul...Patients praised his amicable behaviour and professional attitude. I can't believe he is no more... I can't hold my tears."

Abdur Rob, a senior consultant of Medicine at Chattogram General Hospital, said Samirul was a very good person. "All the good are dying young. Such a loss is irreplaceable," he said.

Reaz Hyder Chowdhury, general secretary of Peshajibi Samannoy Parishad in Chattogram, said the death of a good doctor like Samirul is a great loss for society.

More than 4,000 healthcare staffers, including 1,268 doctors and 1,199 nurses, have so far been infected with Covid-19. At least 45 doctors and nurses and eight other healthcare staffers died of the virus so far, according to the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

The BMA has accused the health ministry of reluctance to ensuring safety and security of doctors at workplace during coronavirus pandemic.

Man involved in ATM fraud in 3 cities held

He stole from Pubali Bank's ATM booths in Ctg, Cumilla and N'ganj in 2019

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Police claimed to have arrested two ATM fraudsters from port city's Agrabad commercial area on Tuesday night.

According to law enforcers, they stole Tk 9.60 lakh from two ATM booths of Pubali Bank in Chattogram around eight months ago.

Besides, they also withdrew Tk 3.30 lakh from a Pubali Bank booth in Cumilla and Tk 10,000 from a booth of the same bank in Narayanganj in November last year, said police.

On June 22, they again tried to take money from ATM booths in Chattogram but failed. From CCTV camera footage, police confirmed it and gathered information, which eventually led to his arrest. The arrestees are Md Shariful Islam (34) and his associate Md Mohiuddin Monir (30).

Law enforcers of Double Mooring Police Station made the arrest, said Deputy Commissioner (west) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police Faruk Ul Haque while address a press briefing at the station.

Shariful, the mastermind, completed his higher studies abroad and got involved with crime after coming back to the country in 2010, said police. He apparently learned how to skim cards from a UK national while there.

The police official said later the UK national came to Bangladesh, and the two started skimming cards together in port city. They were arrested by Panchlaish Police Station in 2013. The official, however, could not confirm the whereabouts of the foreign national.

Shariful has also been arrested several times on charges of embezzling money, cloning credit and debit card, said police. "He then adopted a new technique and hacked into the bank's server and took away TK 9.60 lakh from two ATM booths," said the police official.

SEE PAGE 4COL 1



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Just one slip of a toe, and a cup of tea might end up costing a broken limb or two. The city corporation is carrying out development work at Mirpur's Mazar Road, so small tea stalls are having to improvise with wooden planks as bridges to keep their business running despite the gaping hole on the side of the road.

UN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Cabinet resolution congratulates PM

Bss, Dhaka

The cabinet has adopted a resolution congratulating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as Bangladesh won the prestigious (UNSPA) 2020 in "Developing Transparent and Accountable Public Institutions".

The felicitation resolution was adopted at a cabinet meeting on June 8, while the Cabinet Division issued a gazette notification to this end on June 15, a handout said yesterday.

Bangladesh won the award for successfully implementing the land ministry's e-mutation programme.

On June 1, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin informed Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima about winning the award.

Zenmin said implementation of the e-mutation programme is a remarkable achievement for Bangladesh, and it will play a significant role in development of the country's public administration.

Bangladesh, for the first time, received the prestigious UN award.

According to the resolution, the cabinet believes that the dynamic leadership, wisdom, foresight and effective decisions

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

No more waste on roads, open spaces

Says DSCC mayor Taposh

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said no more garbage and waste would be allowed on roads and open spaces.

Garbage collectors will collect waste from house to house from six o'clock in the evening in every ward. All waste will be transferred to an Intermediate Waste Transfer Center (STS) by 10 pm. From there, the waste will be taken to Matuail waste disposal site, said Taposh, while laying foundation stone of Islamabad STS under ward-29.

Taposh said, "We have already rearranged our waste management activities. From now on, we will build waste transfer centres in the wards which do not have one."

Meanwhile, Mayor Taposh said that cleaners will sweep the streets from 9pm and Dhaka city will be clean and tidy within 6am the next day.

Later, Taposh inspected the STS to be constructed at Malibagh (ward-12) and inspected the road adjacent to Nagar Bhaban, Bangabazar, Anandabazar and Fulbaria bus stopover and identified some existing problems.

Ride bikes for a better Dhaka

DNCC mayor Atiq urges

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday called upon everyone to use bicycles to present a beautiful Dhaka city to the future generation.

He made the call while inaugurating the bicycle service Jobike at Gulshan in the capital.

The mayor said, "All over the world, rich and poor, men and women use bicycles. It has been launched experimentally here. Then, there is a plan to expand it to Uttara and the entire DNCC in phases."

"We are working to ensure space for passers-by and bicycle lanes," he said, urging city dwellers to use bicycles to maintain social distance.

Atiqul Islam said, "Let's use bicycles to save the environment and reduce carbon emissions. We should use bicycles to present a beautiful city to future generations. It will even save money. If we want to save Dhaka city, we have to increase the use of environment-friendly modes of transportation. Cycling will also save time."

Jobike will be available in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Niketan. Hundreds of bicycles have already been parked at 22 points in these areas.

MIGRANT WORKERS' CRISES DURING PANDEMIC

Experts stress regional cooperation, govt action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Migration experts from across South Asian countries yesterday stressed for regional cooperation and action from governments to address problems of migrant workers in distress during the coronavirus pandemic.

Workers of South Asian countries were losing wages and jobs, they said during an e-symposium, organised by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) on "Migrant Workers of South Asia: Experiences of Return, Repatriation and Deportation".

Prof CR Abrar, executive director of RMMRU, referred to Bangladesh foreign minister's remarks, and said following the coronavirus outbreak, some labour-receiving countries have asked Bangladesh to take back its migrant workers.

The countries have threatened to not hire workers from Bangladesh in future if it

were to refuse to take back migrant workers, he said. "It's unfortunate and a breach of diplomatic protocols."

Jagannath Adhikari, senior visiting fellow at Australian National University, Canberra, said whenever any crisis emerges -- whether it is related to economic or health, migrant workers have to suffer most.

This has been evident during the coronavirus pandemic, he said.

Prof S Irudaya Rajan, chair of Centre for Development Studies in Kerala, India said at least 15 lakh migrant workers of Indian nationality are estimated to return home due to the pandemic.

Ganesh Gurung, chair of Nepal Institute of Development Studies in Kathmandu, said some 17,792 Nepalese migrant workers were infected with coronavirus in 35 countries, of whom 127 have died.

SEE PAGE 4COL 4

BIP demands workplace security for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) yesterday demanded workplace security for all professionals.

It also sought exemplary punishment for killers of Dr Abdur Rakib Khan in Khulna and Gazipur City Corporation's executive engineer Delwar Hossain. BIP issued a statement to press home their demands.

They said the killing of an on-duty engineer and a doctor has highlighted how professionals are working without security. "If professionals do not feel safe at workplace, the overall development of the country will be hampered," the statement said.



This illegal structure built at port city's Baizid area was demolished during a drive yesterday. Many such structures were constructed amid the pandemic after a group razed the hills, prompting the authorities to take action.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

350 structures torn down from Ctg hills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A joint drive conducted by seven authority bodies yesterday knocked down 350 illegal structures in Chattogram.

The drive, led by Chattogram district administration, was launched amid increasing number of illegal occupants along the link road connecting port city's Baizid area to Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Department of Environment (DoE), police, fire service, Chattogram Wasa, Power Development Board and Chattogram City Corporation took part in the drive, that began at three spots simultaneously: Asian Women University's proposed campus, Sitakunda upazila and Link Road.

DoE Director (Chattogram) Moazzom Hossain told The Daily Star that they had noticed increasing number of illegal occupants along the road.

Taking advantage of the pandemic, a group razed many hills at Arefin Nagar, Jangol Salimpur and Jangal Latifpur areas recently, prompting joint action to free the hills from encroachments, he said.

DoE Deputy Director (Metro) Mia Mahmudul Haque told this newspaper that the drive began at 10am, and several hundred labourers demolished the structures, which were built after razing hills.

Online classes in focus as UGC sits with univs today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The University Grants Commission is likely to urge public universities to ensure online education to minimise possible session jams, despite students' and teachers' consensus shifting momentum against it.

The regulatory body of higher education is set to sit in a virtual meeting with vice chancellors of all public universities today.

"We'll request them to start online education. We are trying to take steps so students do not incur major academic losses due to the Covid-19 situation," UGC member Prof Dil Afroza Begum said.

"We will hear from them about their problems. Public universities should be worried about session jams," she added.

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, universities were closed down in March 17, that has since been extended till August 6.

Most public universities are yet to offer students online education, said a UGC member. Officials gave reasons including lack of facilities at institutions and uneven internet access for all students as reasons.

A majority of 19,000 students and 7,000 teachers of public and private universities in an online survey in May said they do not support online education methods.

A UGC member said during the survey,

they found that over 71 percent students are against online education, while 63 percent teachers have similar attitude, he said.

Asked about it, Dil Afroza Begum said, "Can we snatch one year of time from students' academic lives? Is it moral? In this competitive time, students of private universities will go ahead, as they have online education".

Regarding many students not having access to internet and devices, Dil Afroza said, "Teachers can have their lecture at university website, so students can access those later in cases of load shedding or connectivity issues".

UGC member Prof Muhammed Alamgir said session jam is an inevitable problem. Regarding students' and teachers' disinterest towards online classes, he said steps should be taken so they feel their problems and concerns will be addressed.

"It is reality that our universities are not ready to introduce online classes fully," he said.

Many universities started online education but students and teachers lost interest within a week or two. Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology started online classes on June 6, but attendance reduced significantly within a week, said Alamgir.

Barishal kitchen markets abuzz, defying order

Traders shift back to crammed bazars; cite monsoon, waterlogging as reasons

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Defying official order, all kitchen markets in Barishal city are bustling with people as vendors have opened shop again, a month after they were shifted to open spaces due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to April 21 circular, issued by the district administration, 11 major kitchen markets, out of total 13, have to sit on certain playgrounds of the educational institutions from 9am to 2pm so that physical distance can be maintained.

The coronavirus prevention committee of the administration took the decision in consultation with Barishal City Corporation officials, ward councillors and different kitchen market committee leaders.

However, the directives, which were followed initially, have been ignored for the last one month, said residents.

While visiting, Chowmatha Bazar was found on its previous spot instead of the designated Government Hatem Ali College premises. Not only that, area of the kitchen market was extended up to the nearby four-lane regional highway, disrupting traffic.

Anwar Mridha, a grocer at the bazar, said the administration only issued the order. "We need necessary infrastructure -- such as sheds -- for our shops," he said.

Besides, the college playground gets waterlogged after a brief rain, said Selim Mondol, another trader.

Similarly, Mubarak Sheikh, a vegetable seller at Kawnia Bazar, said it is risky to run business under open sky during monsoon.

The city's Pura Bazar shops were relocated to Khaja Moinuddin Madrassa playground, Port Road Bazar to A Karim College and Kawnia

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

CANCELLATION OF HAJJ TRAVELS

Registration to be valid for next year

Says religious affairs ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On Tuesday, Saudi Hajj Minister Mohammad Benteen said the Kingdom will only allow around 1,000 pilgrims residing inside the Kingdom to perform hajj this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, reported the country's media outlets.

Following the announcement, the religious affairs ministry has decided on a guideline for Bangladeshis who registered or pre-registered to perform Hajj under government or private Hajj management this year.

The decision was taken at an emergency virtual meeting yesterday, with religious affairs ministry secretary Nurul Islam in the chair. Following a unanimous decision, the ministry has announced that pre-registrations and registrations for Hajj made this year, will be effective as pre-registration and registration of 2021 as well.

"If the cost of the Hajj package increases or decreases in 2021, it will be adjusted," Nurul Islam said.

Those who want to withdraw their registration money must apply to the ministry online from July 13. The money will be refunded without deducting any service charge, the announcement states.



Journalist Sajida Islam Parul -- who was allegedly tortured for dowry by her husband, also a journalist -- stood in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday with a placard, seeking the PM's intervention in giving her justice.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Sylhet residents seek premier's attention to battle Covid-19

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet residents have sought attention of prime minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday for necessary steps to combat the pandemic in the district, as the situation is worsening.

A memorandum addressing the PM was submitted to Sylhet's deputy commissioner yesterday.

Signed by 28 persons on behalf of various organisation, it said most parts of the city and many parts of the district are considered "red zones", but the administration has not taken adequate steps.

They also said swab testing at MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital takes too much time, and health facilities at hospitals are inadequate.

As of yesterday, 1,944 people in Sylhet district have tested Covid-19 positive.

Mustafa Kamal no more

CITY DESK

Mustafa Kamal, chairman of Dhaka Sangbadpatra Hawkers Union Limited, passed away at a city hospital in Dhaka, yesterday. He was 70, says a press release.



Kamal, a freedom fighter, was laid to rest at Shaheed Buddhijibi Graveyard at Mirpur. He left behind his wife, a son and five daughters. Sangbadpatra Hawkers Kalyan Union Limited, Sangbadpatra Agent Association, and Sangbadpatra Circulation Managers Association expressed their condolences to the bereaved family.

Premier Cement hands over seven ventilators to hospital in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Amid severe crisis of ICU beds equipped with lifesaving ventilators at most of the hospitals in Chattogram, a group of individuals and business groups have come forward to support coronavirus patients.

Premier Cement, as part of its ongoing corporate social responsibility, provided seven ventilators to the recently-introduced Covid-19 unit at Chattogram Maa o Shishu Hospital yesterday.

The equipment was handed over to Divisional Commissioner ABM Azad at Chattogram Circuit House. Managing Director of the company Md Amirul Haque told The Daily Star, "Although the number of Covid-19 patients is increasing every day in Chattogram, they are not getting proper treatment due to a lack of facilities."

Rezaul Karim Azad, treasurer of Maa o Shishu Hospital, said they had started the coronavirus unit with limited equipment at the beginning of June. Some capable persons already came up with supports and so far donated a total of 20 ventilators to the hospital, he said.

Earlier, Chattogram-based S Alam Group, TK Group and several individuals took such initiatives.

Sheikh Abdul Quaiyum passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighter Sheikh Abdul Quaiyum died from Covid-19 at Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka on Tuesday afternoon. He was 66.

Quaiyum was admitted to CMH on May 31 after being tested positive for the disease on May 29. He had multiple other underlying health conditions.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and a son. He was laid to rest at Rarikhal mosque premises in Munshiganj with state honours.

Quaiyum served as the principal of Dharmakoat Ideal High School and College during his career.

Covid crisis sinks global

FROM PAGE 12

would particularly affect low-income countries and households, as well as threatening progress made on reducing extreme poverty.

The number of COVID-19 deaths surged past 477,000 yesterday after doubling in less than two months, according to an AFP tally.

China said a new outbreak that has infected 256 people in Beijing since early June is "under control", but fears remain over the risk of community transmission.

Experts warned that small, recurrent outbreaks of the virus were likely in future.

"There may be an increase in cases in the winter or next spring, but I don't think the outbreak will be as big as the first wave of the pandemic," leading Chinese respiratory expert Zhong Nanshan said.

While Europe has recorded the most deaths of any continent, it is reopening from lockdown after seeing the numbers of new cases and fatalities fall.

Experts stress

FROM PAGE 3

He also said the Nepal Supreme Court recently gave a verdict to use money from migrant workers' welfare fund for their wellbeing during the pandemic.

Prof Nasra M Shah of Lahore School of Economics in Pakistan and L. Kumara Ruhunage, former additional general manager of Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, among others, address the virtual conference.

Cabinet

FROM PAGE 3

of the PM helped achieve unprecedented successes.

The e-mutation programme aims to streamline management of land records with the help of technology. It will play an important role in building a digital Bangladesh by ensuring transparency and accountability in land services, according to authorities.

E-mutation is being implemented all over the country except three hill districts. The a2i project of the ICT Division is providing technical support to this end.

It is being implemented through the assistant commissioner (land) under management of Land Reform Board.

Man involved

FROM PAGE 3

Officer-in-Charge Sadip Kumar Das said on November 17, 2019, the money was withdrawn from ATM booths of the bank's Chowmuhoni and College Road branches.

Due to the unnatural transaction, bank authorities filed two GDs with Double Mooring and Chawkbazar police stations.

"During investigation, police came to know that, Tk 3.30 lakh

were withdrawn from Cumilla's Kandipar Pubali Bank branch booth on November 16, 2019 and Tk 10,000 from Narayanjanj Bangabandhu Road branch booth on November 15 and 21 in a similar way," he said.

OC Sadip said Shariful and his associate tried to take money from ATM booths on June 22 in Chattogram but failed, which led to his arrest.

Inspector Jahir Hossain (investigation) of Double Mooring

Police Station said, "Earlier, Shariful used to clone debit and credit cards but after his arrest in Dhaka's Banani by Criminal Investigation Department in 2018, he started hacking bank server."

He is accused in seven cases filed in Dhaka, Chattogram and Cumilla. Several banks' debit and credit cards, card readers, keyboards, drives, and a locally-made pistol were recovered from his possession, said police.

Unaffordable, inaccessible

FROM PAGE 12

All of its 14 ICU beds have been dedicated for Covid-19 treatment.

INACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

For patients with illnesses other than coronavirus, SOMCH has 15 and private hospitals have about 40 ICU beds in Sylhet division, consisting of four districts.

Since all of these facilities are located in Sylhet city, it is difficult for people from other districts of the division to quickly access ICU support.

A 70-year-old heart and kidney disease patient from Moulvibazar's Sreemangal lost her life on May 31, while her family searched for ICU facilities.

"As she developed stroke-like symptoms and severe breathing difficulties, we took her to Sreemangal Health Complex, then to Moulvibazar District Hospital, where doctors recommended ICU support and told us to rush to Sylhet," said her relative Mazharul Islam.

Reaching the city, they first went to several private hospitals, some of which did not have empty ICU beds, while others denied admittance without a coronavirus negative certificate.

By the time they reached SOMCH, doctors declared her dead.

Noting that Sreemangal to Sylhet

is about 2.5 hours by road, Mazharul said an ICU facility at Moulvibazar would have saved the woman's life.

Dr Anisur Rahman, assistant director of Sylhet Divisional Health Office, said, "Due to the crisis of anesthesiologists and other trained medical staff for ICU, there is no scope to increase the number of ICU beds for Covid-19 patients in the division."

He added, "Two new government isolation facilities -- Shahporan Health Complex and Dakshin Surma Health Complex -- with 31 beds each will be dedicated for Covid-19 patients. But these two facilities have no ICU beds."

ICU BEDS FILLING UP FAST
Prof AFM Nazmul Islam, former head of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College's medicine department, said, "Around five percent of all Covid-19 positive cases turn critical and at least two percent of positive cases may require ICU support."

As of yesterday, 3,631 people in the division tested coronavirus positive in Sylhet division. Of them, 814 already recovered, 60 patients died and 2,757 are still recovering.

Based on these numbers, at least 55 Covid-19 patients may require ICU support in the division any time.

Furthermore, as of yesterday, 118 doctors, 79 nurses and 161 other health staff were infected with

Covid-19 while two doctors and a nurse died, according to Sylhet Divisional Health Office.

Authorities of different hospitals yesterday said 32 out of the 46 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients are currently occupied -- seven at Mount Adora and 13 at NEMCH and 12 at Shamsuddin.

Besides, said Dr Anisur, not all the ICU beds in private hospitals have ventilators.

Only six out of the 12 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients in Mount Adora have ventilators, according to hospital authorities.

Moreover, the ICU at Sylhet Saheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital is running on oxygen cylinders in the absence of a central oxygen supply system. Even the stock of oxygen cylinders is low compared to the daily demand, as reported earlier this month.

Abdul Karim Kim, coordinator of civil society body Sangkhudha Nagorik Andolon in Sylhet, said the government should have increased the number of health professionals for ICU and facilities months ago considering the infection rate.

"There are some facilities in private hospitals, but where will the general patients go? ICU beds at government hospitals must be increased as soon as possible," he demanded.

2 killed

FROM PAGE 12

on the ground while rest of the gang members managed to flee.

The body was sent to Joypurhat Modern Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Two members of Rab were also injured during the "gunfight", Rab claimed.

Rab also claimed to have recovered two pistols, a one-shooter gun, eight bullets, two magazines, 200 pieces of yaba pills and 502 bottles of Phensidyle from the spot.

Meanwhile, in Cox's Bazar, another suspected drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with police on Teknaf-Cox's Bazar Highway around 4:00 am yesterday.

The dead is Imam Hossen, 30, of Hnila union of the district.

While describing the "gunfight" incident, Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, echoed the statement of CO Rashid in Joypurhat.

Three policemen were injured during the "gunfight", he said.

He also claimed to have recovered one locally made gun, three bullets and 20,000 yaba pills.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify any of the law enforcers' claims.

Our Dinajpur and Cox's Bazar correspondents contributed to this report.

Dozens died

FROM PAGE 12

MMEA Director General Mohd Zubil Bin Mat Som told a news conference yesterday.

"But some died at sea. They were thrown overboard," he said, later telling Reuters that those that perished had fallen sick, without elaborating further.

Journo Kajol denied bail

FROM PAGE 12

arrested in the case filed over the Facebook post.

Ruling party lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shikhor from Magura-1 filed the case against Kajol with Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Police Station in the capital on March 9.

Two other cases were also filed against Kajol under the Digital Security Act with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations on March 10 and 11.

Fifty-three days into his disappearance, Kajol was said to be found on May 3 by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole.

He was then arrested on charges of trespassing, but was granted bail after being produced before a Jashore court.

Later in the evening, he was shown in documents as detained under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc). Police informed the court that three more cases against Kajol were pending with different police stations in the capital.

The court then sent him to Jashore jail. RIGHTS ACTIVISTS DEMAND WITHDRAWAL CASES

Various civil and human rights organisations yesterday demanded his release and withdrawal of the cases against him.

They submitted memorandums to Law Minister Anisul Haque and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

Barishal kitchen

FROM PAGE 3

Bazar to A Kader Chowdhury Primary School. During a recent visit, this correspondent found those at their previous places where social distancing remains a far cry.

The situation at other kitchen markets are similar, according to city dwellers.

All the kitchen markets have their individual management committees. Their leaders said traders are reluctant to go back to the designated places to save themselves from incurring loss.

"Customers were unwilling to gather at those spots when they got muddy or submerged," said Shib Sankar Das, president of Natun Bazar Market committee.

Mizanur Rahman, a member of Port Road Bazar committee, echoed him.

Asked, Gazi Naimul Islam, councillor of ward-19, said, "What can we do if the traders do not shift their shops on their own? We cannot force them to do so."

The authorities imposed the order to save people's lives urging all to come forward during this pandemic, said SM Ajar Rahman, deputy commissioner of Barishal. "We are already aware of the present situation," he said.

"On one hand, the traders are running their business at congested places. On the other, they are not maintaining timetable," he said.

"We will conduct mobile courts, if necessary, after holding a meeting with the traders soon. We will discuss about their issues and try to come up with a solution," said the DC.

Kabir Hossain, market inspector of BCC, said they will help the district administration so that no one violates the order.

Birdem doctors outraged over salary cuts

FROM PAGE 12

income fell drastically due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RMOs are junior medical officers. They are temporarily enrolled in Birdem, one of the five listed hospitals where medical professionals seeking the FCPS degree undergo a three-year mandatory residency training.

In the letter, a copy of which The Daily Star has obtained, the RMOs said some doctors have been infected with coronavirus while treating patients, but the Birdem authorities did not take any initiative to treat them.

The RMOs declined to say anything on record, fearing a backlash from authorities. But most of them said they were working extra hours to make up for the senior consultants' absence.

"Earlier, we used to work eight hours a day, but now we are working on average 12 hours a day and five days a week," said an RMO.

He also alleged after the coronavirus

outbreak in the country, most of the senior doctors remained absent in the hospital.

"There are 179 medical officers in the hospital, and 107 of them are RMOs and the rest are senior medical officers," he said.

Another RMO said 36 of the admitted patients tested Covid-19 positive in a day.

The aggrieved RMOs have also placed a five-point demand in the letter.

These are: regularising the RMOs, treating Covid-19 infected physicians and their family members, giving Tk 10 lakh to their family members as compensation in case of death, providing necessary safety equipment to the working doctors, and formulating a written policy for Covid-19 positive and non-Covid-19 patients.

Contacted, Prof Dr AK Azad Khan, president of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh that runs the Birdem General Hospital, told this

correspondent that some of their demands were illogical.

"As far as I know, RMOs have been enrolled here as part of their training and education. We give them training allowances, not salaries. Information of salary cut is not true. Currently, there is a fund crisis and that's why payment of their remaining allowance is being delayed," said Prof Azad.

Nazmul Islam, joint director of Birdem General Hospital, also echoed the view.

"We give each of them Tk 30,000 as monthly allowance. Our incomes have drastically dropped. We used to earn Tk 16-18 crore a month, but that has now come down to Tk 2 crore. We will urge the RMOs to have patience," he said.

"We realise their pain and will pay their dues soon as they earn very little, but we have nothing to do with their job regularisation," said Nazmul, adding that salaries of both RMOs and senior physicians had been cut.

GOOD NEIGHBORS BANGLADESH KOICA
KOICA-GNB CHW Project in Bochaganj Invitation for Tender
Tender Notice Number- GNB/20/001
Contact E-mail: KOICA-CHW@gnbangla.org

Memo No: GNB/20/001
Sealed tenders hereby invite from the Contractors of Good Neighbors Bangladesh under Open Tendering Method (OTM) for 2020 FY for Procurement of the works mentioned works below as per terms and conditions stated:

Package No	Name of Works	Tender security (BDT)
GNB/2020/01 W-1	Construction work of Nafanagar SDC, Bochaganj, Dinajpur: A) Boundary Wall B) Security Guard Room with toilet, C) Generator Room, D) Main Gate, E) Placenta pit, F) Concrete Road.	1,53,808.00
GNB/2020/01 W-2	Construction work of Ishania SDC, Bochaganj, Dinajpur: A) Boundary Wall, B) Security Guard Room with toilet, C) Generator Room, D) Main Gate, E) Placenta pit.	1,43,721.00

1. Client: Good Neighbors Bangladesh (GNB)
2. Funder: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)
3. Partner: Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP)
4. Tender documents collection address: Google drive link : <http://bit.do/F9QK>
5. Last date, time and place of receiving tender: Date: 14th July 2020, Time: 5:00 PM
Places: KOICA-GNB CHW Project office, T&T Road/Melagachi, P.O: Setabganj, P.S: Bochaganj, Dinajpur.
6. Date, time and place of opening of tender: Date: 15th July 2020, Time: 10:00 AM
Place: KOICA-GNB CHW Project office, T&T Road/Melagachi, P.O: Setabganj, P.S: Bochaganj, Dinajpur.
7. The tender shall be valid for a period of 120 days after the tender opening and must be accompanied by the tender security specified above. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever. Interested tenderers may obtain further information from the undersigned in favour of the Project Director of KOICA-GNB CHW Project from the places mentioned above. The tenderer or their authorized representatives are allowed to visit our providing link to collect documents. Link : <http://bit.do/F9QK>
* Eligibility of Tenderer For Each package: * Reputed Contractors/Construction Firms having general experience in similar nature of construction works for minimum five (05) years * Must have successful completion of at least one (01) number similar nature of work under any government/semi-Government/autonomous organization in Bangladesh * During last five (05) years amounting minimum for (30) thirty Lac in a single contract * Last five (05) years will be counted backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper * Liquid asset tender publish date to submission date duration 24 hours (10) ten lac at any Government approval bank * The tenderer must have valid A/B/C category license from Government up to date * Other required eligibilities and conditions of the tenderer are given in Tender Documents * Up to date Trade License, Vat, TIN and other documents that client required
8. If the quoted amount of the tender is 10% less or above of the official estimated cost, his tender shall be summarily rejected.

Project Director KOICA-GNB CHW Project Good Neighbors Bangladesh

Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU)
Planning, Development & Works Office
Santosh, Tangail-1902

Memo No. PDW/e-GP/Rev/Printed Paper/2019-2020/01R/71(07) Date: 23/06/2020

e-Tender Notice (OTM) No. 09/2019-2020

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Printed Paper under the Revenue Budget of MBSTU this tender is as follows:

Sl No.	Invitation Ref	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Tender security (Tk)	e-Tender document price (Tk)	Tender last selling date & time	Closing date & time and opening date & time
01	PDW/e-GP/Rev/Printed Paper/2019-2020/01R	473184	Procurement of Printed Paper under the Revenue Budget of MBSTU.	65,000.00	2,000.00	06-07-2020 at 17.00	07-07-2020 at 11.30

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 bank's branches date on 06-07-2020 at 17:00 of receiving tender. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

[Signature]
Md. Bulbul Hossain
Assistant Registrar
Planning, Development and Works Office
MBSTU, Santosh, Tangail-1902
Phone: 0921-51328
e-mail: pdwmbstu@gmail.com

GD-1039

'Lal Bahadur' tomato: a new summer breed with hope

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Amid gloomy atmosphere all around, caused by novel coronavirus, a red fruit is putting smiles on farmers' faces in Srimangal and Kamalganj upazilas of Moulvibazar.

'Lal Bahadur (the spunky red)' is the name of the red delight -- a new variety of high breed tomato suitable for growing in summer months -- is currently being cultivated at five trial sites, 10 acres each, at the two upazilas.

Lal Teer, a private seed development and production firm, through their experiments of grafting tomato plants with wild eggplants, developed the seeds and seedlings for the new breed.

After one year of successful trial production of the new summertime tomato, they came up with the name Lal Bahadur.

Farmer Kader Mia, from Jaimarakona village in Kamalganj, who is taking part in the trial production of the variety, said, "As the name implies, it's really not just bright red, it's spunky in the field too with a high yield."

To back up his claim, he said each Lal Bahadur tomato plant he grew in his field produced up to eight kilograms of fruit throughout four straight months and each fruit, quite large in size, weighs up to 180 grams.

Before sowing the seeds, the land has to be prepared between May and July. The trees bear fruits in 60 to 75 days and the fruits are ready to be plucked in 15 to 20 days.

So far he has sold each kg for as high as Tk 90 -- thanks to its attractive looks and size. The oblong and round shaped tomato has a yield of 18 to 22 tonnes per acre, with about Tk 15 thousand cost of cultivation for the same area, added Kader Mia.

Another tomato grower, Muslim Mia, from Tilakpur village in the same upazila, said Lal Bahadur is much better than other summer tomato varieties such as Bari-4 and Bari-6.

Its thicker and tougher skin makes Lal Bahadur tomato less prone to damage during transport and extends its shelf time. One of its best features is that it turns red naturally, he added.

The high-yielding fruit has turned

out to be a stable source of income for Monowara Begum of the same village. She said after keeping necessary stock for her family's consumption, she sold the excess fruit and the earning from it was enough for her children's educational expenses.

Tapash Chakraborty, divisional manager of Lal Teer Seed Ltd, said they formally unveiled Lal Bahadur at a press conference in Srimangal recently.

Although they developed the summer hybrid variety tomato with the farmers of Kamalganj area in mind, it can be cultivated in any fertile ground.

After deducting the cost of land preparations, Tk 50 thousand can be made from its harvest on each acre, he added.

Contacted, Srimangal Upazila Agriculture Officer Nilufar Yasmin Monalisa Sweety said the new summer variety, which yielded very large and beautiful tomatoes in trial production, might be beneficial for marginal farmers.



A Lal Bahadur tomato plant in Tilakpur village of Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Awful drainage brings woe for Kuakata municipality

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Kuakata municipality in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali suffers severe waterlogging during the rains every year, thanks to the abysmal drainage system in the famous tourist centre.

Heavy rains in the last few days flooded most of the areas of the municipality including its temporary offices, internal roads, hotels and dwelling houses.

The stagnant water mixed with dirty garbage poses the risk of an outbreak of waterborne diseases and mosquito menace, said locals.

Seedbeds, vegetable fields and the fish enclosures are being affected too.

Kuakata municipality was formed in 2010 to enhance the quality of life of locals and ensure quality service for tourists from home and abroad.

In the last 10 years, only 4 km of paved drainage, out of a total 14 km, has been constructed in the municipal area while the work in Ward No 3 area got suspended at the initial stage in last March allegedly due to lack of coordination between the municipal mayor and councillor.

Municipal officials said unplanned construction of multi-storied buildings and



concrete set-ups without leaving drainage system is responsible for the waterlogging problem.

The canals and reservoirs disappeared with the increase of the municipality area, said Wahid Ibrahim, a resident of Ward 3.

Development according to a master plan is required to save the people of Kuakata from permanent waterlogging, said Hossain Amir, another local resident.

Ruman Imtiaz Tushar, managing director

of Hilsa Park Eco Resort, said the park and its surrounding area remained under two-foot water for the past week and it has caused extensive damage to the plants and fish there.

"Due to the lack of coordination of the municipal mayors and councillors, the citizens are not getting the expected civic amenities including a functional drainage system even ten years after the formation of the municipality," he said.

Shah Alam, councillor of Ward 3, said, "Kuakata municipality office, several multi-storied houses and hotels are located in this ward. When the mayor decided to do the drain construction work with soil cutting machine, I requested him to do it with workers as use of machines would cause damage to several buildings."

"But the municipal mayor decline and stopped the work. As a result, waterlogging occurs even with a moderate rain," he added.

Asked about these issues, Mayor Abdul Berek Mollah said, "The work for a planned 14-km drainage system is suspended for the time being due to rains. When the Tk 44-crore project work is completed, the waterlogging problem will be solved."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
 Police Headquarters
 6, Phoenix Road, Dhaka

Invitation for Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the medicine manufacturer companies in their official pad for the purchase of the following items for AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka for the year 2020-2021.

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs/Public Security Division.
2	Agency	AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
3	Procuring entity name	Inspector General, Bangladesh Police.
4	Invitation for	Purchase of Medicines.
5	Invitation Ref. No.	AIG (Health Services)/Tender-01/2020-2021
6	Date	23/06/2020

KEY INFORMATION

7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB).
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9	Tender publication date	24/06/2020
10	Last date of selling tender schedule	20/07/2020
11	Closing date and time of tender submission	At 12.00 Noon on 21/07/2020
12	Opening date and time of tender	12.30pm on 21/07/2020

Name & address of the office(s)

13	Place of selling tender documents	Office of the AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
	Place of receiving tender documents	Office of the AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
	Opening tender document	Office of the AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

14	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting. Bidder must remain present in the meeting to avoid any future ambiguity.	Office of the AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.	Date	13/07/2020	Time	11.00
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INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15	Eligibility of tenderer	(1) Up-to-date trade licence (2) Up-to-date income tax certificate (3) VAT registration certificate and (4) Other documents described in tender document.
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16	Brief description of goods				
	Sl. No.	Name	Price of tender document	Tender security in Taka	Completion time in days
	1.	Medicine	Tk 1000.00	Tk 15,00,000	Medicines will have to be delivered as per work order in four instalments: August/20, November/20, January/21 & May/21.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17	Name of official inviting tender	Shorif Mostafizur Rahman.
18	Designation of official inviting tender	AIG (Health Services).
19	Address of official inviting tender	Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
20	Contact detail of official inviting the tender	Tel & Fax: 88-02-55101621

Special instructions:

- No tender will be received after the deadline for submission.
- The procuring entity reserves the right to reject the tender or annul the tender proceeding.
- Bangladesh Police will establish framework agreement with the successful tenderer for supply of goods.

Shorif Mostafizur Rahman
 AIG (Health Services), Bangladesh Police
 Police Headquarters, Dhaka
 Tel & Fax: 88-02-55101621

GD-1035

CASH AID TO POOR 80 percent families yet to get assistance

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

The government announced that 50 lakh poor families hit by the coronavirus pandemic would get Tk 2,500 cash assistance each through four major mobile financial service (MFS) providers from May 14 to 18 to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, but 80 percent of listed low-income families in the district are yet to get the cash aid.

The MFS operators are bKash, Nagad, Rocket and SureCash.

The prime minister on May 14 launched the disbursement of over Tk 1,200 crore cash aid for 50 lakh poor families hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in the country. Under the cash assistance programme, each family will get Tk 2,500 cash aid through MFS providers so that they get the money directly.

There are 55,000 listed low-income families in seven upazilas of the district, said Md Mozaharul Haque, Pirojpur district relief and rehabilitation officer.

But only 20 percent of the listed families in the district have received the cash assistance using their cellphone numbers till now, said local public representatives.

Shahidul Islam, one of the listed beneficiaries of Togra village in Indurkani upazila, said "The government declared to disburse the money before Eid-ul-Fitr, but I'm yet to receive any cash aid. However, I provided my cellphone number and photocopy of national identity (NID) card to the authorities concerned."

Like Shahidul, thousands of listed beneficiaries are facing the similar problem, said local union parishad members.

Another listed beneficiary Rezaul Karim from the same village said local union parishad (UP) member took his cellphone number and photocopy of national identity (NID) card, but he is yet to receive the money.

"I am now jobless due to coronavirus outbreak. I'm now running my family by taking loan from relatives. If I get the cash aid, it will be very helpful for me in the crisis time," he said.

Saadullah Liton, councillor of Ward no 7 of Pirojpur municipality, said there was a mistake in providing information during preparation of lists of poor families.

"As the information of NID and registration of SIM cards of mostly beneficiaries does not match, it is being delayed to get the money," he said.

Liton further said he has already informed the authorities concerned about the matter and they have assured him that all the listed beneficiaries will get the money.

"Because of delaying the cash disbursement, every day the listed beneficiaries contact with me in person or through cellphone to know when they will get the money," said Mohsin Hawladar, another member of Ward no 5 of Parerhat union parishad in Indurkani upazila of the district.

Contacted, Abu Ali M Sazzad Hossain, deputy commissioner in Pirojpur, said rest of the listed beneficiaries will get the money using their provided cellphone numbers from 27 June.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
 বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
 পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
 রূপিত এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৬
 লবণচরা, খুলনা

তারিখ: ০৯ আষাঢ় ১৪২৭ বঙ্গাব্দ
 ২৩ জুন ২০২০ খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

"The Public Procurement Act-2006, "The Public Procurement Regulation-2008" ও তদীয় সংশোধনী মোতাবেক চলতি ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরে রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনার নিম্নলিখিত কাজ বাস্তবায়নের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি ঠিকাদারের নিকট হতে নিম্নোক্তকৃত খসে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	খরট্টা মন্ত্রণালয়।
২।	সহায়	রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পরিচালক, রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
৪।	সম্মেলনকারী সংস্থার জেলা	খুলনা।
৫।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর	রূপ-৬, খুলনা, স্মারক নং-৩০০০/২১/প্রকিউরমেন্ট/১৪২০
৬।	তারিখ	২৩ জুন ২০২০ইং।
৭।	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৮।	বাজেট এক সোর্স অফ ফান্ড	রূপ সদর দপ্তর, টাকা হতে আর ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরে বরাদ্দকৃত বাজেট প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।
৯।	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	২৫ জুন ২০২০ইং।
১০।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২১ জুলাই ২০২০ইং অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১১।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২২ জুলাই ২০২০ইং তারিখ ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২২ জুলাই ২০২০ইং তারিখ ১২:০০ ঘটিকা।
১৩।	দরপত্র মাঝি/বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের ঠিকানা	পরিচালক, রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
১৪।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
১৬।	দরপত্রগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	The Public Procurement Act-2006, The Public Procurement Regulation-2008 ও তদীয় সংশোধনী মোতাবেক দরপত্র সিভিলিট মাফিসের সমস্ত টেন্ডারের মাফিসিক লিপিবদ্ধকৃত ঠিকানা দিতে হবে: ক। মাগরিবকৃত সন্ম, হাদনাগান ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিআইএনসহ হাদনাগান পরিবেশিত আয়কর সন্ম, বৃসক (ভ্যাট) রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট এর সত্যায়িত কপি। খ। স্বয়ংপ্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকানা সম্পর্কিত প্রকিউরমেন্ট এর মালিক অথবা প্রতিষ্ঠানের চেয়ারম্যান/ম্যানেজিং/নেটওয়ার্কিং পার্সনাল এর স্বাক্ষরিত সত্যায়িত কপি। গ। দরপত্রের আবেদনকারী মালিক এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের সদস্যদের ০২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, ঠিকাদারের সার্ভিস কার্ডের প্রতিলিপি অফিসিকাল সত্যায়িত প্রমাণের মাধ্যমে ব্যাংক সোনচেনের সত্যায়িত বিবরণী (হাদনাগান) দাখিল করতে হবে। ঘ। রূপ অথবা অনুরূপ কোন সরকারি সংস্থায় বর্ণিত/অনুরূপ মাসালার সর্বসময়ের কমপক্ষে ০২ (দুই) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা ও কার্যসম্পন্ন সন্ম (সংক্রান্ত সংস্থার উপস্থিত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত)। ঙ। দরপত্র সিভিলিট করে ইলেক্ট্রনিক মাধ্যমে কাসো তালিকাভুক্ত নয় মর্মে নিজ প্রতিষ্ঠানিক প্যাকে প্রতিক্রিয়াসহ যুক্তসঙ্গে দিতে হবে। চ। এছাড়াও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী সিভিলিট উল্লেখ আছে। ছ। দরপত্রের সকল কার্যক্রম Public Procurement Act-2006, Public Procurement Regulation-2008 ও তদীয় সংশোধনী মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে।

১৭।	মাসালার সমগ্র অথবা কাজের বিস্তারিত বর্ণনা	সিভিলিট মোতাবেক।				
১৮।	ক্রমিক	মাসালার বিবরণ	অর্থসংক্রান্ত কোড	জামানতের পরিমাণ	সিভিলিটের মূল্য	অর্থবছর
	(ক)	পেশাক	৩২৫১০৬	১৮০০০/-	৫০০/-	২০২০-২১ অর্থবছর
	(খ)	কাঁচামাল ও সুচার যন্ত্রাংশ	৩২৫১০৬	৩২৫০০০/-	২০০০/-	
	(গ)	মেট্রিকান মোরামত	৩২৫১০৬	৩০০০০/-	৭৫০/-	
	(ঘ)	জলদান মোরামত	৩২৫১০৬	২৭০০০/-	৫০০/-	
	(ঙ)	ট্রিক্সা ও টৈপা ডিক্টিং	৩২৫১০৬	৩৫০০০/-	৭৫০/-	
	(চ)	কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী	৩২৫১০৬	৩০০০/-	৪০০/-	
	(ছ)	কম্পিউটার ও অনুসঙ্গিক	৪১২২০২	৩১৯৫০/-	৭৫০/-	
	(জ)	কম্পিউটার মোরামত	৩২৫১০৬	২৫০০০/-	৫০০/-	
	(ঝ)	আসবাপার মোরামত	৩২৫১০৬	৩০০০/-	৪০০/-	
	(ঞ)	আসবাপার ক্রয়	৪১২২০২	২৫০০০/-	৫০০/-	
	(ট)	অন্যান্য যন্ত্রাংশ ও সরঞ্জামাদি	৪১২২০২	৩৫০০০/-	৫০০/-	
	(ঠ)	অন্যান্য যন্ত্রাংশ ও সরঞ্জামাদি মোরামত	৩২৫১০৬	১৫০০০/-	৫০০/-	
	(ড)	স্বাস্থ্য বিদ্যান সামগ্রী	৩২৫১০৬	৮০৪ ৭৫/-	১০০০/-	
	(ঢ)	অন্যান্য মনিহারী	৩২৫১০৬	১৭৬৬৭৫/-	১৫০০/-	
	(ণ)	বাহ্যিক মন্বাদি	৩২৫১০৬	২৪৫২৫০/-	১৫০০/-	
	(ত)	বুকস/সুপার/খাবার সরবরাহ	৩২১১০৬	১৫০০০/-	৫০০/-	

দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণ

১৯.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	রওশনুল ক্বিরোম, পাসক্রিক।
২০.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	সেং কর্ণেল।
২১.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	অধিনায়ক, রূপিত এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা।
২২.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	০৪১-৭২৯৩১০।

বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্য

- বাচি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারী স্বাক্ষরিত প্যাকে আবেদনকারী রূপ-৬, লবণচরা, খুলনা হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময় দরপত্র সমগ্র করা হবে।
- দরপত্র সমগ্রের অন্যান্য তথ্যাদি দরপত্র সমগ্রকালে নিম্নোক্তকৃত কার্যালয়ে হতে জানা যাবে।
- দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হইতে ২১ দিন পর্যন্ত মূল্যায়নের সময়কাল বলধ্ব থাকবে।
- অন্যোদিত ব্যক্তির আবেদনকারীকে প্রবেশ করা হবে।
- দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করার সময় মনো কার্য সম্পাদন করতে হবে।
- দরপত্রের জামানতের টাকা ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারসহ দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণ করে নিম্নোক্তকর্তার অনুমতি লাভ করতে হবে।
- দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন সিভিলিট বিক্রয় করা হবে না।
- কাসো তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে সিভিলিট প্রদান করা হবে না।
- দরপত্র ক্যাট-হেড/ফো-আর্ডার হবে না।
- দরপত্রের উন্মুক্ত মূল্য অঙ্কে ও কলার সিদ্ধান্ত হবে।
- দরপত্র গ্রহণ/খোলার দিন অনিবার্য কারণবশত অফিস বন্ধ থাকলে পরবর্তী কার্যক্রম দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলার হবে।
- আইটিএমের পর বাস্তব হিসাবের সাথে সম্মতপূর্ণ হতে হবে।
- দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন সময় কোন কারণে মর্ননো বা বাতীত দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা রাখে।

রওশনুল ক্বিরোম
 সেং কর্ণেল
 অধিনায়ক
 রূপ-৬, খুলনা
 টেলিফোন: ০৪১-৭২৯৩১০

তারিখ: ১০/৬

Kim suspends military plans against S Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has suspended plans for military action against the South, state media reported yesterday, in an apparent sudden dialling down of tensions after Pyongyang blew up a liaison office. In recent weeks, Pyongyang has issued a series of vitriolic condemnations of Seoul over anti-North leaflets, which defectors based in South Korea send across the border -- usually attached to balloons or floated in bottles. Last week, North Korea military said it would take multiple measures against the South including re-entering areas of the North that it had withdrawn from as part of inter-Korean projects, restoring guard posts in the Demilitarized Zone that forms the border, and stepping up exercises. The North also began removing loudspeakers yesterday from border areas, which they had started setting up just two days ago to broadcast anti-South propaganda.

Human error blamed for Pakistan plane crash

A plane crash which killed 97 people in Pakistan last month was because of human error by the pilots, who were discussing the coronavirus crisis during the landing, according to an initial report released yesterday. The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane crashed into a crowded residential area on May 22 after both engines failed as it approached Karachi airport, killing all but two people on board. The report found the plane was flying at more than twice the altitude it should have been when it approached the runway without the landing gear down. Standard flight operating procedures were then ignored by the pilots and the air traffic controller, resulting in an aborted landing that heavily damaged the plane's engines. The aircraft went down as it attempted a second landing.

7.4 quake in Mexico kills six



A 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck southern Mexico on Tuesday, killing six people, sending hundreds fleeing from their homes and forcing the closure of a major state-owned oil refinery. Hundreds of aftershocks were reported in the hours following the initial tremor, which was felt in Mexico City, some 700 kilometers distant from the epicenter in Cuicatlan, in Oaxaca state. The 7.4 quake struck at a depth of 23 kilometers, the US Geological Survey reported. An initial tsunami warning was later reversed. There was no damage reported to "strategic infrastructure" including ports, airports, refineries and hydroelectric plants, said President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The quake has hit at a time when Mexico is already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic. It has suffered more than 23,000 COVID-19 death and 191,410 cases.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP

J&J told to pay \$2.1b over cancer-causing talc powder

AFP, Washington

A US court has upheld a verdict that talcum powder sold by Johnson & Johnson caused ovarian cancer and ordered the pharmaceutical giant to pay \$2.1 billion in damages.

The decision by the Missouri Court of Appeals cut by more than half the \$4.4 billion a jury had awarded 22 people in 2018. The court agreed that some of the plaintiffs should not have been included in the case as they were from outside the state.

But the Tuesday decision upheld the awarding of damages for the company "knowingly selling products that contained asbestos to consumers."

"Because defendants are large, multi-billion-dollar corporations, we believe a large amount of punitive damages is necessary to have an effect in this case," the judgement said.

"It is impossible to place monetary value



on the physical, mental and emotional anguish plaintiffs suffered because of their injury caused by defendants."

A spokeswoman for Johnson & Johnson said the company would appeal the decision in the Supreme Court of Missouri, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Johnson & Johnson has faced thousands of lawsuits across the United States alleging it failed to warn consumers of the risk of cancer from asbestos in its talc-based products.

In 2019 a California jury became the latest to award millions in damages to a plaintiff who said the company's baby powder had given her terminal cancer.

Last month the firm announced it was discontinuing production of its talc-based baby powder in the US and Canada, in part due to the "constant barrage of litigation advertising" over the product.

It will continue to sell the product in the rest of the world, it added.

Twitter hides 'abusive' Trump tweet

AFP, Washington

Twitter on Tuesday hid a tweet from President Donald Trump in which he threatened to use "serious force" against protesters in the US capital, saying it broke rules over abusive content.

In a growing dispute, the platform has recently labeled other Trump tweets as misleading and violating its standards on promoting violence.

"There will never be an 'Autonomous Zone' in Washington, DC, as long as I'm your President. If they try they will be met with serious force!" Trump tweeted.

The action by Twitter requires users to click through to read the Trump tweet, with a tag on the message that it "violated the Twitter rules about abusive behavior."



Soviet WWII-era T-34 tanks move through Red Square during a military parade, which marks the 75th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, in Moscow, yesterday. President Vladimir Putin reviewed the spectacular Red Square military parade, a patriotic display critics said was designed to lift his lower-than-usual ratings on the eve of a nationwide vote that could extend his rule until 2036. Putin watched as intercontinental ballistic missile launchers trundled past, nuclear-capable bombers flew overhead, and columns of tanks and over 14,000 troops, including some from allies like China, India marched past under hot sunshine.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India funding militants

Accuses Pakistan as analysts say latest row may end in closure of each other's embassies

REUTERS, New Delhi

Pakistan yesterday accused old foe India of funding militant groups, a day after the nuclear-armed neighbours said they would expel half the other's embassy staff for the first time in nearly two decades.

Tuesday's announcement of planned expulsions followed weeks of accusations and counter-accusations including espionage and the harassment of rival diplomats as relations plummet.

"India has fomented terrorism inside Pakistan by providing training financial and material support to terrorist groups," Aisha Farooqi spokeswoman for Pakistan's foreign ministry, said in a statement, following a failed attempt to blacklist an Indian citizen at the United Nations for allegedly providing funding to banned militant groups.

India has frequently levelled identical accusations at Pakistan. Former officials in both countries said the move could eventually lead to the closure of the embassies altogether.

"I see a further downsizing embassy strengths of the two countries in the coming months," said Brahma Chellaney, a political analyst at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and a former Indian national security adviser. "India is even ready to cut diplomatic ties if things continue the way they are."

In August 2019, Pakistan suspended almost all trade and transport ties with India after New Delhi revoked autonomy and statehood of Kashmir.

With the latest expulsions, relations are now at an all-time low, said Asif Yasin Malik, a retired Pakistani general and former defence secretary. "They are as bad as they can be," he said. "It is possible we will break diplomatic relations altogether."

Tensions high in Ladakh

India reinforces flashpoint area; China holds ground in Galwan valley

AFP, Leh

Indian fighter jets roared over a flashpoint Himalayan region yesterday as part of a show of strength following what military sources say has been a Chinese takeover of contested territory.

Chinese forces have held onto a chunk of land covering several square kilometres (miles) at the mouth of the Galwan valley following a deadly brawl there on June 15, the Indian military sources told AFP.

The two sides publicly declared they would pull back following the clash, which saw 20 Indian soldiers killed in a battle involving rocks and nail-studded batons.

But both have maintained troops around the valley, with India deploying more forces and trying to project military might.

Indian jets regularly took off yesterday from a military base in Leh, the main Indian town in the contested region, and headed towards the mountainous border 240 kilometres (150 miles) away.

There were also checkpoints on main roads out Leh and a frenzy of military activity around the main town, which lies at 3,500 metres (11,500 feet).

Residents reported long lines of military trucks and artillery on roads near Leh. "We now have a good strength present in the area," an official of the Indian army's Northern Command told AFP on condition of anonymity, referring to the reinforcements.

Tashi Chhepal, a retired Indian army captain who has served in the area and



An Indian helicopter is seen flying near Leh, Ladakh, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

is based in Leh, said the mobilisation was unprecedented in a sensitive region touching Pakistan as well as China.

After the latest round of talks between military commanders on Monday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the two sides had "agreed to take necessary measures to promote a cooling of the situation". But they made similar comments after a first fight in May that proved to be a warmup for the medieval-style battle at Galwan.

Images taken on Sunday by the US satellite firm Maxar showed trucks and huts at camps on the river at 4,500 metres near the scene of the fighting. It was not clear whose army they were.


The two countries fought a border war in 1962 but this month's fighting was their deadliest encounter in 53 years. According to Indian military sources, Chinese troops ambushed Indian soldiers and forced them down a ridge where they had gone to remove

a Chinese "encroachment". A bilateral accord prevents the use of guns, but the fighting was still fierce, reportedly with rocks and batons wrapped with barbed wire.

China has in turn accused Indian soldiers of twice crossing the Line of Actual Control, the unofficial boundary, provoking its troops.

But the Chinese appear to be sticking to their gains at Galwan and the nearby Pangong Tso lake, police intelligence as well as military sources told AFP. China is now claiming the valley as its own, in statements that India has rejected.

Indian analysts are dubious of the chances of a major easing of the tensions or that India will reclaim the territory. Harsh Pant from the Observer Research Foundation think-tank in New Delhi said: "Anything that the Chinese now say can't be taken on face value. India, hopefully, has learnt its lessons now."



Eastern Refinery Limited


(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chattogram-4204

Invitation for National Tender

Partial Replacement/Reconstruction of Product Storage Tank No. T-6128

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources/Energy and Mineral Resources Division.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.
3	Procuring entity name	Eastern Refinery Limited.
4	Procuring entity district	Chattogram.
5	Invitation for	Partial Replacement/Reconstruction of Product Storage Tank No. T-6128
6	Invitation Ref. No.	ER/DEV (M)-39(1)/2020
7	Date	23 June 2020.
KEY INFORMATION		
8	Procurement method	National One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method.
FUNDING INFORMATION		
9	Budget and source of funds	Eastern Refinery Limited.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
10	Tender Package No.	ER/DEV (M)-39(1)/2020
11	Tender package name	Partial Replacement/Reconstruction of Product Storage Tank No. T-6128
12	Tender publication date	23 June 2020.
13	Tender last selling date	07 July 2020.
14	Tender closing date and time	08 July 2020, 14:15 Hrs.
15	Tender opening date and time	Technical: 08 July 2020, 14:30 Hrs. Financial: Will be informed to the successful bidders.
16	Name & address of the office(s):	
	Selling tender document (principal)	Manager (Accounts), Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh.
	Selling tender document (others)	AGM (DLO), ERL Liaison Office, YMCA Bhaban (2nd Floor), 1/1, Pioneer Road, Kakrai, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
	Receiving tender document	Development Department, Training Complex (2nd Floor), Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh.
	Opening tender document	General Manager (D & C)/DGM (Development) Office Room, Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
17	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	As per Tender Data Sheet (Section-2).
18	Brief description of works	Partial Replacement/Reconstruction of Product Storage Tank No. T-6128.
19	Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk 1,000.00 (Taka one thousand) (each).
20	Lot No.	Identification of lot
	1	ER/DEV (M)-39(1)/2020
		Location
		Tank Farm Area of Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram
		Tender security amount (Tk)
		Tk 40,000.00 (Taka forty thousand)
		Completion time in days/weeks/months
		180 (one hundred eighty) days from the date of getting hot work permit & electrical connection
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
21	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Amir Masud.
22	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager (Development).
23	Address of official inviting tender	Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh.
24	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tele No.: 88-031-2501261-67, Ext-430 Fax: 88-031-2501269 E-mail: ameer_masud@erl.com.bd, md-office@erl.com.bd Website: www.erl.gov.bd, www.erl.com.bd
25	a) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	
	b) If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.	

GD-1033



Narayanganj City Corporation

Nagar Bhaban
10, Bangabandhu Road, Narayanganj.
www.ncc.gov.bd

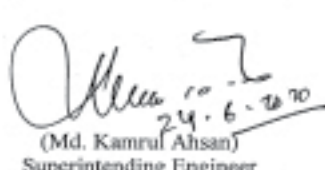
Memo No. 46.16.6700.015.09.059.18.1036 Date:24-06-2020

e-Tender Notice No.-21/2019-20

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works under the Project "Construction of Scavenger's Colony in Narayanganj City Corporation."

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Description of work & Package No.	Tender Last Selling Date & Time	Last Date & Time for Tender/ Proposal Security Submission	Last Date & Time for Tender Submission
01	471297	NCC-CC-1-2-A Construction of Scavenger's Colony (Part-A) at Tanbazar under Narayanganj City Corporation.	26-July-2020 Up to 5.00 pm	27-July-2020 Up to 12.00 noon	27-July-2020 Up to 2.00 pm
02	471299	NCC-CC-1-2-B Construction of Scavenger's Colony (Part-B) at Tanbazar under Narayanganj City Corporation	do	do	do

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. Further information and guide lines are available in the National e-GP portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). This notice is also available in Narayanganj City Corporation website (www.ncc.gov.bd). The bill will be paid under availability of the Project Fund.



(Md. Kamrul Ahsan)
Superintending Engineer
Narayanganj City Corporation, Narayanganj.
Ph. 02-7645032
e-mail: se@ncc.gov.bd

GD-1032

INTERVIEW

Into the nuances of history: The Battle of Plassey

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

Sudeep Chakravarti is an eminent commentator and author whose narrative non-fiction and fiction have been translated into Bangla, Hindi, Spanish, Portuguese, German and more. In January 2020, his book—*Plassey: The Battle That Changed the Course of Indian History* (Aleph Book Company, India)—sought to parse through the history and the myths surrounding the topic. This week we brought together the author and our Commercial Supplements Editor Shamsuddoza Sajen to discuss the book and the battle, fought 263 years ago on June 23.

Why did the British want to capture the throne of Bengal? Was the Battle of Plassey inevitable? Bengal was a major Asian trade hub. Here cottons and silks were legendary, there was jute, lac, saltpetre for making gunpowder and preserving foods. Finance was relatively easy. The rivers and waterways ensured excellent transportation and communication networks. And Bengal was rich: its revenues helped to sustain Mughal coffers and armies, and later, European trade in India. Siraj and the French were both perceived as great political and commercial threats by the British. They wanted both removed from the chessboard.

A make-or-break conflict with Siraj-ud-daulah became a priority for John Company in early 1757. The Seven Years' War had broken out in Europe. That hostility between Britain and France carried over to Bengal, and weakened the so-called 'Neutrality of the Ganges', a tenuous understanding by which Europeans attempted to insulate the Bengal trade. When Siraj's outreach to the French began to increase from February, the die was cast. First the French settlement of Chandannagar north of Calcutta was destroyed by the British, in March. The elites of Murshidabad now formally conspired with John Company against the nawab and the stage was set for what came to be called the Battle of Plassey, fought on June 23, 1757. But the outcomes were far from certain. It's all in my book.

How did the battle change the course of Indian and global history?

As an outcome of the battle the British put their imprimatur on the court of Bengal alongside defeating the French. And Plassey set off another chain of events: the granting of *diwani* rights of Bengal and Bihar to the Company in 1765. The Company's move west to Awadh, and then, in a few short decades, to Delhi. The Mutiny in 1857. The formal replacing of Company with Crown. Bengal—and India—becoming the hub and glory of the British Empire, underwriting its local and global growth. It all began with the Company's victory—British victory—at Plassey.

What sources did you tap into for your research? What does your book add to the existing literature around the Battle of Plassey? Plassey, like all my books, required intensive and extensive research—and also much travel. This required a mix of library research, books,



COURTESY: ALEPH BOOK COMPANY, INDIA

monographs, articles and reportage—flavours gathered while visiting Kolkata, Murshidabad, towns and villages up and down the Hugli-Bhagirathi river, places in Bangladesh and Jharkhand. And, of course, Plassey.

Equally, it was for me important to go beyond English and Persian to include sources from France, the Netherlands, and Bangladesh—once part of greater Bengal—and even look at cultural sources like poetry, folk theatre and movies to see how Plassey is portrayed, and why. I also realised that several Company and British sources, even Persian sources, had only been partially plumbed. This offered an opportunity to extract crucial information that has largely been overlooked.

My book seeks to offer a balanced view. This approach is, to my mind, the appropriate way of treating an event so pivotal to India, Bangladesh and the subcontinent. There is a crucial need to peel away layers to expose the truths, the lies, and the nuances. The descriptions of Hapless Siraj, Crafty Clive and Treacherous Mir Jafar cannot be the only absolutes, because they are not.

Nawab Siraj-ud-daula as a historical character is fraught with nationalist, imperialist and communal prejudices. How does your book engage with this idea?

Siraj-ud-daula is neither absolute villain nor tragic hero—and this opinion is gleaned from my research, not my emotion. He was a victim of circumstances of his own making as well as some beyond his control. Siraj was callow, somewhat impulsive, certainly spoilt, naturally nervous and tense, but hardly the martyred nawab or the

illiterate and complete Caligula he is made out to be.

Why should we discuss the events of Plassey now, when the erstwhile Subah of Bengal is fractured into two separate entities?

To know our past for what it really was is as crucial as understanding our present for what it really is. Those who see history as a fantasy-factory, and the fundamentalists and ultra-right politicians who see history as an opportunity for pamphleteering, evoking hatred and seeking genocidal revenge, are the truest enemies of history. Certainly, the events of Plassey are rooted in schism. But they cannot continue to be a reason for schism.

An extended version of this article is available online.

Watch a lively and more in-depth version of this conversation, conducted over Facebook Live, on *The Daily Star* and Daily Star Books Facebook pages, and the latter's Instagram page @thedailystarbooks.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

BOOK REVIEW

An intellectual at his finest

MOHAMMAD SHAFIQU L ISLAM

Aaj O Agamikaal: Nirbachito Shakkhatkar (Daily Star Books, 2020) by Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury and edited by Emran Mahfuz, a young poet and writer, comprises a selection of interviews given by Professor Chowdhury in his long career as an academic, writer and a strong voice of social justice and democracy. With 21 interviews, *Aaj O Agamikaal* is rich with insight on democracy, education, freedom of speech, the Liberation War, and literature and culture. The book starts with an interview with Keshab Mukhopadhyay and ends with reflections on the quota movement.

Since the merciless killing of Bangabandhu, different governments have ripped off the constitution, subsequently letting opportunism and bigotry seep into politics and people's mindsets. Since then disparities have grown in society, in the education system, and hostile relationships exist among political parties; as a result, discrimination abounds in every sector. Choudhury believes that Bengalis have a long legacy of living together peacefully, but the issue of religious and communal conflicts—the latter of which spawned upon the arrival of the British—has gone

Choudhury points out, "Everyone has to leave this world, but creative people never die. To keep the dead alive, the living should live on" (translation mine). There is deep philosophy in this remark. He further articulates, "Humans are called the best creation, but actually they are selfish beings." For even an insignificant gain, a person does not refrain from killing another, and in a capitalist society, the number of the selfish only multiplies. There is no denying our two opposite virtues: animalism and empathy.

What Choudhury predominantly stands against are capitalism, fundamentalism, social injustice and violation of human rights. Over and over, he emphasises that only socialism can ensure emancipation of human beings from subjugation and inequality. He stresses on the separation of religion from politics and the state. In this respect, writers, poets and artists can play a vital role to inspire people to think outside the box. Great writers pose a challenge to the existing state apparatuses, whereas minuscule ones lick statesmen's boots, hoping to earn favour. Following the flow of the current, no one can create great literature. And yet, intellectuals have started becoming mouthpieces for political parties.

The meaning of life, to Professor Chowdhury, is to live well and such a life has three elements: creativity, a sense of right and wrong, and self-respect. He places conscience above courage. At this stage of life, he is happy, but not content, because many of the dreams that the people saw during the Liberation War are yet to materialise.

The book *Aaj O Agamikaal*: certainly inspires a reader to look back and forward, as the writer covers almost everything that a conscious person may need to build his country anew. Among manifold issues, he reflects on educational institutions, Shakespeare, Bacon, Tagore, Nazrul, Jibanananda Das, European revolutions, the two world wars, gender discrimination and more. There is weight and insight in his words. Except for some typos, the book is well presented, and lucidity of prose sets the seal on a smooth read. It is no doubt a valuable document for Bengali readers.



COVER ART: MANAN MORSHED

unaddressed on an institutional level. Consequently, the country has seen a rise in fanaticism and hooliganism. If the three main sectors—executive, legislative, and judiciary—do not work properly, if people do not see hope in economic development and equal distribution of wealth, the disadvantaged will take recourse to criminal activities. The country will be doomed to turmoil. Asked about his thoughts on death,

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The book is available on Rokomari and at Bookworm Bangladesh, Friends Book Corner, New Market and Bookends, Unimart.

#DADMAN LIFE HACKS

E. RAZA RONNY



CARTOON: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

THE SHELF

GREAT DADS IN LITERATURE

DS BOOKS DESK

Social media brimmed with photos and stories of dads for Father's Day this past Sunday, June 21. But who were some of the fathers we have loved reading in books? The *DS Books* team chimed in with their favourites.

KABULIWALA (1892)

Rabindranath Tagore
Tagore's short story portrays a father who is far away from his home. He misses his daughter and his fatherly affection sparks up after encountering a young girl who resembles his child. The story portrays not only the tenderness a father feels towards his daughter, but also how that love can shape the dynamics between two fathers, each from different circumstances in life.

THE LOWLAND (2013)

Jhumpa Lahiri
Subhash in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel—the brother who leaves to study in Rhode Island—goes on to become an especially tender father to his daughter. The generational struggle between them is beautifully portrayed; their inability to

communicate their shared trauma feels painfully real.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA (1950-1956)

C S Lewis
Lewis' fantasy series has always had religious underpinnings, with critics theorizing that Aslan the lion could be a metaphor for Jesus Christ. But he is also a father figure of sorts, not just for the Pevensie children whom he guides through life, but also for the creatures of Narnia, all of whom he breathed life into. They look up to Aslan more as a paternal figure than a king, as is illustrated by Lewis through the Pevensies' coronation ceremony hosted by Aslan himself.

THE BOAT PEOPLE (2018)

Sharon Bala
The protagonist in Bala's novel sacrifices blood, sweat and tears to protect his son from the perils of a civil war in Sri Lanka. Even after they land in Canada after a long journey by

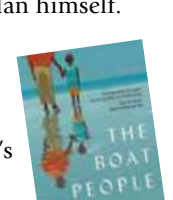
boat, he suffers fresh trials to protect his son from imprisonment and deportation as they seek asylum.

MY STRUGGLE BOOK 2: MAN IN LOVE (2009)

Karl Ove Knausgaard
Knausgaard's book is about him reconciling his roles as a father and as a writer. He feels strongly responsible for his daughter and her well-being but at the same time, he has a duty towards literature. He writes about his place in all this with almost brutal honesty, sparing no embarrassing detail.

DRAGONFLY SEA (2019)

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor
On the island of Pate in coastal Kenya, sailor Muhidin arrives first as a friend for Ayaana. As the plot progresses he becomes her mother's love interest and, therefore, a father to her. Muhidin is a rigid figure, but he shields Ayaana from radicalisation and the social stigma that is rife in a Kenyan island for a single mother and her child.



Frightening Unicef predictions of possible child deaths

Govt needs to strengthen its immunisation and nutrition programmes to save their lives

WE are alarmed to learn from a Unicef report that Bangladesh could see additional deaths of 28,000 children in the next six months in a worst-case scenario due to the disruption in immunisation, nutrition and other vital health services. The Unicef report revealed the figure quoting a recent study of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. According to the report, the transport crisis during the closure and fear of Covid-19 transmission at health centres are major reasons behind the falling immunisation coverage in Bangladesh. The report also mentioned that being deprived of vital health services due to the Covid-19 pandemic, lives of about 4.59 lakh children and mothers of South Asian countries are in danger while 600 million children in these countries will face the immediate and longer-term consequences of the pandemic.

Bangladesh had an outstanding achievement in conducting regular vaccination programmes and increasing its coverage over the years, which was globally acknowledged. Just last September, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received the prestigious Vaccine Hero award in recognition of Bangladesh's success in immunising children. The prime minister at that time expressed hope that the target of "vaccines for all" in the country would be reached well ahead of 2030.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on our public health services as the government struggles to provide basic and essential maternal, new-born, and child health services. The government's immunisation and nutrition programmes have been interrupted due to a serious lack of preparation by the agencies and the healthcare providers concerned. In April, the number of children receiving routine vaccinations dropped by about 49 percent compared to the previous month. While Bangladesh has been grappling with the pandemic, a measles outbreak in Rangamati killed at least 10 children and infected 300 others last April.

Similarly, the nutrition programmes of the government and non-government organisations have also been interrupted during this crisis. It is said that if a child remains malnourished for the first 1,000 days of their lives, from pregnancy to age two, they can suffer from irreversible damage such as stunting and other conditions. Thus, the long-term consequences of the lack of proper maternal care and nutrition programmes on our children will also be huge.

We call upon the government to take urgent action to continue the immunisation and nutrition programmes in full swing while ensuring health safety of the service providers. Additionally, the government should direct more resources towards social protection schemes, including emergency universal child benefits and school feeding programmes, as suggested by Unicef. Only the government's prompt action in this regard can save the lives of thousands of children across the country.

Malaysia to no longer recruit migrant workers

Govt must protect the Bangladeshi workers still in Malaysia

ON June 22, Malaysian authorities announced that they will no longer recruit foreign workers until at least the end of the year, as they have decided to prioritise jobs for locals amid the economic slowdown caused by the global pandemic.

Although Malaysia is home to some eight lakh Bangladeshi migrants, the country stopped recruiting workers from Bangladesh in September 2018 following allegations of a syndicate that used to charge up to Tk 400,000 each for jobs. Since then, the two governments have been working on measures to make the recruitment system less corrupt and exploitative, and there were hopes that official recruitment would begin again this year. As such, Malaysia's announcement comes as a blow to Bangladesh and its aspirations for future migrant workers.

There has already been an exodus of migrant workers returning to Bangladesh after losing their jobs, especially from the Gulf countries. The Bangladesh government recently announced their plans for supporting these now-unemployed workers, although the plan to re-skill returning workers and help them find overseas employment again requires reconsideration given Malaysia's latest decision. However, while we must ensure that our returning workers do not fall into poverty once they return home, we also urge the government to place equal importance on protecting our workers who are still abroad.

According to the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), a global campaign against "wage theft" of migrant workers is underway to stop countries from deporting migrant workers without giving them their dues, and Bangladeshi workers are increasingly vulnerable to this. Rights groups have also criticised Malaysia's heavy-handed approach to migrants and refugees during the pandemic, where the authorities rounded up and detained thousands in a series of immigration raids despite the heightened risk of Covid-19 transmission in detention facilities. According to a joint statement by Fortify Rights and the Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN), Malaysia is continuing these arbitrary arrests and detentions with little concern for the rights of these migrants.

During this period of recovery, the Malaysian government must ensure that migrant workers within their borders are protected, with access to food, accommodation, healthcare and their due wages. We urge the Bangladesh government to immediately take up the cause of our migrant workers, in Malaysia and other countries, and engage in all levels of diplomacy with the host countries to ensure Bangladeshi workers are not being deprived of their rights.

How about leaving some space for ordinary patients?

Preferential treatment for professional bodies at private hospitals is the tip of an iceberg of healthcare disparities in Bangladesh.



BADRUZZAMAN BAY

IN 1883, the American poet Emma Lazarus wrote a sonnet about the virtues of diversity and inclusion. The poem, written to raise money for the construction of a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, ends with a powerful message: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore... I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" Fast forward to 2020, and in the middle of a pandemic in Bangladesh, a revision of these iconic lines in line with the present reality is in order. Seeing how some hospitals are profiting off people's misery and providing "special" treatment to the rich and powerful, their motto can be summarised in the following: "Give me your affluent, your noble-born, your finest and strongest... I welcome them with open arms."

At least, this is the message we get from a tell-all report by *The Daily Star* about the exclusionary policy being adopted by some private hospitals that gives preferential treatment to powerful individuals and professional bodies while discriminating against other patients—ordinary folks who are suffering as much but have neither the political clout nor the backing of a professional body to get them the care they deserve.

According to the report, a number of professional bodies have secured beds for their members and families at several private hospitals in Dhaka. On June 11, Bangladesh Judicial Service Association signed a deal with the Universal Medical College Hospital Ltd to provide treatment to lower court judges suffering from Covid-19 and other diseases. The deal was signed at the law ministry. Not to be outdone, Bangladesh Police on May 5 "hired" an entire hospital (Impulse Hospital) for two and a half months for treating its members. Besides, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), in a letter signed by the DGHS director (hospital) and sent out on June 18, asked three private hospitals—Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital, Anwar Khan Modern Medical College Hospital and Japan East West Hospital—to provide treatment to the members of the Supreme Court Bar Association who are infected with the coronavirus.

Most recently, on June 20, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) sought similar services from the health ministry. In a strongly-worded letter, the association

urged the health minister to dedicate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) or any other hospital for treating doctors infected with the virus. It gave the ministry three days to do so, or else the latter would be responsible for "any situation that may arise". Among other instances is a government move to improve healthcare facilities at Sarkari Karmachari Hospital for the treatment of public officials. Every ministry has by now formed a quick response team to provide assistance to their infected staffers. General public hospitals are also not immune to such attempts by powerful, well-connected individuals.

These initiatives and decisions have sparked some unsettling questions. Since when is it okay to "book" entire hospitals

The question, therefore, is not if they deserve treatment—they most certainly do—the question is if they deserve more, and in a manner consistent with institutional discrimination. And the fact that such behaviour has been condoned, even promoted, by the highest echelons of power in Bangladesh lays bare not just vulnerabilities in its hospital system, but also gaping healthcare disparities facing ordinary people.

These disparities, confounded by Covid-19, have been well-documented. Since March 8, when the country confirmed its first coronavirus case, there have been multiple reports of ordinary people desperately moving from one hospital to another without getting treatment. They are more likely to be turned away. They are more likely to

But to be fair to those now seeking preferential treatment, their intervention is not the only reason shrinking the space for ordinary patients. The crisis is also reducible to a number of pre-existing factors including the for-profit mentality of private hospitals, expensive treatment, corruption and mismanagement in public hospitals, spheres of influence within hospitals affecting admission decisions, a general lack of ICU beds and other facilities, lack of timely and adequate interventions from the health authorities, etc.

As a result, ordinary Covid-19 patients are not the only ones being elbowed out of crucial hospital services. Think of patients needing routine treatment. This constitutes what I call Bangladesh's second public health emergency: the crisis that is quietly threatening lives alongside the coronavirus. Many hospitals, overwhelmed by Covid-19 patients or simply fearing infections, are refusing to provide treatment for other diseases and life-threatening conditions. The situation has reached a point where people are simply afraid to have anything to do with sickness lest they needed to confront the challenges of hospitalisation.

The practice of denying treatment by hospitals, both private and public, has continued despite repeated instructions and warnings from the government. Some hospitals demand Covid-19 clearance certificates before hospitalisation, ignoring the fact that it takes days, even weeks sometimes, to get test results. Is there a disconnect between the messages given by the authorities and that received by the hospitals? What emboldens the latter to rubbish official instructions like they are garbage? Who is in control of our health sector, really? The long-term consequences of the chaos caused by the unequal access to healthcare are symptomatic of an unexploded bomb, slowly waiting to go off.

It is time the top brass of the DGHS and health ministry were brought to account for their continued failure in providing direction, reigning in the disruptive influences in hospital management, and establishing an equitable system in healthcare. And the hospitals—all hospitals—must stop granting preferential treatment to a fortunate few, leaving out the vast majority of the people. This is not just unethical; it sets a dangerous precedent for the future also. We are already saddled with too many problems and loopholes in our response to the pandemic. We don't need another to add to our misery.

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Elbowed out of the healthcare system?

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

or hospital beds for certain people? Since when is healthcare the privilege of a few and not a basic right for all? Are we to witness more of such colonisation efforts in the health sector in the coming days? Should we accept this as the new normal where access to treatment for the common people will be contingent on availability of beds left by the influential?

There is no disputing the truth that members of these associations and institutions have as much right to healthcare as any member of the public. Some of these groups, particularly doctors and police officers, have been at the forefront of our fight against Covid-19 and continue to provide crucial services. Until June 20, 30 members of the police reportedly died from the virus and at least 8,544 others got infected. According to an estimate by the BMA, around 3,500 health workers including over 1,100 doctors have been infected with the virus, while 44 doctors died from infections.

be disproportionately affected in terms of access to testing facilities. They are more likely to die or suffer from hunger, impoverishment and other associated risks. One recent incident saw the nurse of a private hospital in Dhaka dying after being denied treatment by the very hospital she worked at. Another saw a five-year-old boy from Chattogram, who was hit by a three-wheeler, travelling a distance of around 24 kilometres in the hopes of getting treatment. His family tried, unsuccessfully, to get him admitted in four hospitals before he was pronounced dead. As Shuprova Tasneem of *The Daily Star* rightly asked: "Was it the accident that killed him, or that desperate 24 kilometres his family travelled in the hopes of keeping Shaon alive?"

A common thread running through these heartbreaking episodes is the victims' "ordinariness", their having no power or connections that could qualify them for treatment.

From Bolshevik Revolution to Cold War: Partition in a different light

ALI AHMED ZIAUDDIN

JUST as the French Revolution had sent shivers across all the monarchies of Europe, a century and a quarter later the Bolshevik Revolution too rattled all the colonial powers to their core. And they didn't wait to respond. Even before the First World War formally ended, Anglo-French, American and Japanese forces were dispatched to nip the revolution in its bud. But this typically arrogant imperial intervention failed as the Bolsheviks remained steadfast. However, the colonial powers didn't give up; they bided their time and adopted a policy of slander, squeezing and, when possible, confronting the Soviet Union. And the rise of Stalin provided them with ample ammunition to actively pursue this policy. So, contrary to popular belief, the Cold War didn't start in the aftermath of the Second World War—but much earlier—it remained a key policy of the imperial camp till the war's outbreak.

Fast forward to the early thirties, Hitler emerged as a key figure and made clear his intense hatred for the Bolsheviks as much as the Jews. And instantly, the Anglo-French ruling elites, with very few exceptions, cheered him as the right answer to Stalinism. They were least bothered about his Jewish persecution because they had pursued a similar policy for nearly two millennia. Between the years of his rise to power and invasion of Poland in September 1939, Britain and France were actively cheering him and assisting his crushing of the German communists while ignoring the plight of the Jews, or his alarming rearmament drive. This obviously got Stalin worried and he hastily made a peace deal with Hitler. Of course, it didn't work out but that's a different story. What is important here is that the Anglo-French hatred of the Bolsheviks and their active support for Hitler were no less responsible for the eventual outbreak of the war. Neither of the two can wash their hands of their

Between the years of his rise to power and invasion of Poland in September 1939, Britain and France were actively cheering him and assisting his crushing of the German communists while ignoring the plight of the Jews, or his alarming rearmament drive. This obviously got Stalin worried and he hastily made a peace deal with Hitler. Of course, it didn't work out but that's a different story.

diabolical role in helping to create a crazy monster. No western mainstream history book would care to mention this, however.

Although the Soviet Union was an allied power in the war, it was never trusted either by the Anglo-French or the Americans. Of course, the feeling was mutual. In the pre-war years, the three had waged first a "hot" and then a Cold War against Russia while it encouraged "red" revolutions in their countries. The war had ravaged the entire European continent. Part of Russia was also

destroyed, but it managed to not only survive but also to repulse the German onslaught that turned the tide of the war. By the end of the war, Russia emerged as the most powerful state in all of Europe. This got all three other powers very worried that Russian influence might help the communists/socialists come to power in all other countries of Europe. America, the emerging superpower, was unwilling to accept such an eventuality because it hated the communists as much as the European colonialists. Moreover, it was nurturing its own imperial ambition. But Russia was still technically an ally and, having far more military strength than the Anglo-Americans in Europe, couldn't be forced to withdraw while the Americans remained. A diabolical plan was devised and executed, which still haunts the world and remains a matter of intense debate.

By July 1945, the Manhattan Project successfully detonated the atom bomb. Even after most of the scientists involved in the project warned of its devastating impact, the US leadership had other considerations. It would demonstrate the power of the bomb, bring the Japanese to their knees, while simultaneously making Russia aware that the US imperial ambition was global and was here to stay. Russia was expected to acknowledge that and refrain from challenging it. Thus, the Cold War that was put in the freezer during the war was re-launched. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were its first victims even if many were of the opinion that there was no compelling military necessity. The US leadership, however, couldn't care less if a hundred thousand Japanese civilians were vaporised so as to view the impact of the bomb and establish its hegemony. Yet, this was just the beginning. More would follow.

Now let's shift our attention to the Indian subcontinent. By the end of the war, India was boiling with rage. On the one hand, the chasm between the

two large communities had become deeper, and on the other, Britain could no longer afford to hold on to India indefinitely. It was immersed in huge problems of its own. First, its economy was in a shambles; second, its control over the Indian army—its prime asset—was no longer guaranteed. And third, the huge military presence of Soviet Union in the heart of Europe and just across India's northwest border was enough to scare the British to rush into things and obviously make rash decisions. Their hatred was so intense that Churchill even wanted to nuke Russia. They were also worried that if it got time, it would influence both European and Indian politics and throw the Brits out unceremoniously.

Moreover, American pressure to decolonise was also active. All these concerns combined made them scuttle and run. What would happen to India was no longer their concern. Their view was, if the Indians couldn't settle their differences quickly and peacefully—which were in fact actively encouraged by the Brits—let them go to hell. Such callous indifference was at the heart of the colonial project. It left India drenched in blood, with a partition that could have been avoided.

It may sound odd now but if there were a satellite view of history, it would show one single incident that played the most crucial role in shaping the 20th century: the Bolshevik revolution. It made friends and foes alike, changed global power alignment, and influenced politics, culture and technology. So it may not be an exaggeration to say that India's partition was an unwitting second victim of a protracted Cold War. Yes, there were multiple compelling internal causes but the Cold War dynamics was no less responsible for the vivification in India and the bloodbath that followed.

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Automation is not hurting RMG employment... yet

JOBAIDA BEHTARIN, SALIM RASHID and SYED BASHAR

THE readymade garments (RMG) industry is vital to Bangladesh economy. It contributes 84 percent of the total exports—nearly 13 percent of the GDP—and employs some four million workers. The direct and indirect impacts of the RMG sector in the country are profound. Because it employs so much of unskilled labour, the sector looks particularly vulnerable to automation: will machines replace the workers and unleash mass unemployment? The fear is not totally unfounded since robots are already common in manufacturing. In textiles, smart sewing machines, jacquard machines, smart sensors, big data, 3D printing, etc. are already in place. The automation of cutting, drawing patterns, spreading, and relaxation of fabrics has quietly begun, while some administrative tasks like maintaining attendance or working hours, which were previously carried out manually, have now become digitised.

However, the widespread perception that industrial robots will take over and automate everything is questionable. Globally, the share of industrial robots used in textile and apparel is minuscule at best. For example, of the 1.63m industrial robots used in 2015, only 1,580 were in textiles and apparel. The hype generated by the prospect of sewbot as a potential disruption in the apparel industry is unwarranted. Much textile automation is about smoothing supply chains and reducing environmental strains rather than about replacing abundant cheap labour. As pointed out by *The Economist* in 2017, the unpredictable formations of fabric make it very difficult for a robot to keep track of what it is handling and where to apply itself. What is remarkable is that despite spinning being the first process to succumb to industrialisation in the early 19th century, textile and apparel activities still have to be guided by hand. The actual impact of automation is an empirical question.

In new research, we carried out a field survey to understand unemployment in the RMG sector by interviewing garment workers who have recently become jobless. The survey approached nearly 200 respondents

(including garment officials) across ten areas in Dhaka. Regrettably, the last portion of the survey overlapped with the Covid-19 outbreak, and prematurely ended our survey.

To date, the early adopters of automation were the large apparel factories. Typically, these factories employ a large number of workers, operate from their own premises, and receive steady export orders from the buyers. By boosting efficiency, new

of other garment exporting countries in Asia, international buyers now enjoy multiple sourcing options. Some predict that with the passage of time many small factories will be forced to close down or consolidate, while some medium factories will continue to operate manually.

To get an idea of how automation impacts garments manufacturing, consider the initial stage—“pattern design”. Before automation,



The widespread perception that robots will automate everything in the RMG industry and take over jobs is questionable.

SOURCE: STAR FILE PHOTO

technologies are permitting big factories to focus on greater product diversification. Despite automation, large factories have often kept displaced workers as more labourers are still needed to produce a much higher volume of output.

By comparison, medium and small units could not afford expensive automation. Today, they mostly survive on subcontracting and, with limited bargaining power over western retailers, they often take orders at depressed prices. With the improved productivity and product diversity

pattern design needed 10-12 workers to complete a task; but after automation, with computers and 3D printers, the same task now requires only 1-2 workers. Similarly, the “spreading” section formerly needed 10-12 workers, but after the automation it requires only 2-3 workers. The “cutting” section has been partly automated. Previously, cutting required 100-120 workers, but now 60-70 workers suffice. In making sweaters, an operator can supervise six jacquard machines at a time, greatly reducing the need for workers to perform repetitive manual

tasks. Hence, a good number of sweater factories were forced to terminate workers, whose jobs are being replaced by jacquard machines. Our analysis shows that it is certainly possible for automation to cause much unemployment, but has it actually done so?

Interestingly, garment workers displaced by automation were often not laid off but reallocated to other sections to boost production. Some factories are also providing on-the-job training so that employees become familiar with technology, yet others hoard labour with the expectation that they can be used on a just-in-time basis. The picture that emerges from our survey is that, if before the automation 50 workers were needed to produce 5,000 pieces a day, after automation a factory requires 30 workers to produce the same output while the remaining workers continue to work with the factory in a new line. As a consequence, with automated processes, 50 workers can now produce an estimated 8,000 pieces a day.

While automating an apparel factory can undeniably be expensive, several owners argued that it takes only 1-2 years to recover the purchase cost. In fact, factories that invested in high-tech manufacturing were able to secure new orders to fill up the extra capacity. Sadly, the small and medium factories could not exploit the scope of automation like their large counterparts. Automation is disrupting the entire sector on an ongoing basis. The small and medium factories are struggling to operate at break-even point by any means; the ghosts of Rana Plaza and the wave of automation weigh them down. Many have already shed redundant workers and kept only the skilled, multitasking, and experienced workers. Quite a lot of factories were closed down after encountering huge losses.

Another finding that came out of the survey was that the increase in the minimum wage has increased the unemployment of RMG workers. Factories that embraced automation and did not face difficulty in getting steady orders still laid off unskilled workers in the wake of a higher minimum wage. The combination of falling prices

and higher minimum wage led to worker layoffs in some factories as they restructured to meet intensified global competition. Factories that were unable to compete or adapt to new technology laid off unskilled workers foreseeing a decline in economic activity.

In Bangladesh's RMG industry, automation has hitherto been a secondary reason for job loss. Unemployment rose more due to factors such as squeezed profit margins, higher minimum wages, and a slowdown in export orders. Automation has affected both skilled and unskilled workers and both high- and low-paying occupations. However, low-paid workers disproportionately bear the brunt of automation's impact as they lack the basic knowledge to operate advanced machinery and also are not often chosen for training to operate such machines.

The most worrying development is the prejudice that female workers are either physically or mentally incapable of handling machines and equipment. This prevents top management from encouraging female workers to receive the necessary training to upgrade their current skills. When the shortage of skilled workers is holding back RMG potential, the tendency to deprive female workers of upper-end work is short-sighted and wrong. While new technologies are creating new job opportunities, they should be geared towards females, since a plethora of research show that compared to men, women workers are less mobile and therefore less likely to switch jobs. Prejudice may be depriving Bangladesh of the profit-maximising option.

The clear conclusion that emerged from our survey is that it is not automation but rather falling export orders, rising wages and decreasing global prices that are behind the rising unemployment in the RMG sector. If these trends continue, textile manufacturers will have no option but to embrace automation and cut jobs in order to revive the business.

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Telecom—the next golden goose?



SABBIR AHMAD

ON a sunny November afternoon in 1997, a ringtone buzzed while I was riding a rickshaw together with a friend. I watched him in awe as he received the call from his handset. It was the first time I got so close to a mobile phone; once my friend ended the call, I asked him if I could have a look at it. Mobile phone was still a rarity those days. Fast forward to 2020, the scenario has completely changed. As you walk down the streets today, you often notice even young children armed with a phone in their hands.

In Bangladesh, telecom was out of reach for the common people until the early last decade. The state-owned BITB had a complete monopoly over mobile phone services. Besides the mismanagement by the operator, the high cost of wired infrastructure, coupled with the lower purchasing power of consumers, caused the masses to remain grossly underserved. But as GSM operators debuted in the mid 90's and competition emerged, the scenario changed in the next decade, leading to the vast majority of citizens having a mobile phone of their own.

Although mobile tariff dropped from CDMA operator to GSM, the technology remained beyond the reach of common people until 2005. Over time, price affordability came through, attaining an equilibrium between the demand and supply sides. Mobile penetration then began to eclipse that of the landline. Nowadays, people refer to the mobile telecom industry as the telecom, almost ignoring the existence of landlines.

Experts suggest that there is a causal connection between the continuous development of telecom and economic growth. In modern days, telecom not only has a significant impact over an economy in terms of GDP but also serves the people by creating employments, empowering women and the underprivileged groups. In Bangladesh, the story is no different. Mobile communication has a significant economic impact considering the aggregation of the supply side, demand side and intangible benefits. The direct GDP contribution from this industry was USD 3.8 billion at the end of 2019 which was expected to grow to USD 5.08 billion within the next five years, according to a USAID study. Besides, it employs over 760,000 people today with job growth estimated at a rate of 9 percent during 2016-2020.

However, the recent proposed budget of the country called for hiking supplementary duty on mobile services by another 5 percent, followed by last year's 5 percent jump. This

In a country of over 160 million people with continued GDP growth, the number of taxpayers is extremely low. This demands an urgent attention to growing the tax base instead of milking the telecom sector repeatedly.

duty was 3 percent when introduced in FY 2015-16 and increased to 5 percent in FY 2016-17. The users also have to pay 15 percent VAT, 1.0 percent surcharge on voice and messaging, and 5 percent VAT on internet services.

It is not surprising that the government



would find sources for additional revenue to realise its lofty goal of 8.2 percent GDP growth in the next fiscal year. The telecom and tobacco industries seemingly became the easy targets to meet the shortfalls. It is understandable that smokers would be a prime target but why target mobile phone users? It is a dilemma for a sector offering a lifeline to the homebound people during the pandemic, besides serving as a backbone of the country's digitalisation and progress. Telecom is already being forced to pay corporate taxes as high as that of the “health hazardous” tobacco industry. As of now, the government claws back Tk 51-56 from each Tk 100 revenue generated from this sector. Beside the extremely high taxes, the average

revenue per user for a mobile operator is only about Tk 140, which is the lowest among our neighbouring countries, with a year-on-year decline of 6.9 percent.

According to a local newspaper, the chairman of the nation's revenue authority suggested that the additional rate wouldn't impact the users as the call tariffs are very low. The fact is, affordability is still a barrier afflicting mobile services in Bangladesh as correctly identified by GSMA, an organisation representing the interests of the mobile network operators (MNOs) worldwide. At a time when the nation is rapidly moving to become a data-driven economy, a medium consumption basket (1GB of data) costs an individual in the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution around 11.4 percent of their monthly income, which is significantly above the long-term affordability target set by the UN. This somewhat explains the relatively slow adoption of 3G or 4G technology in Bangladesh.

According to the nation's regulatory body, BTRC, Bangladesh at present has over 165 million mobile subscribers, of whom 93.5 million are mobile internet users. The questions that come to mind are if the volumes of data and calls are enough for the MNOs to meet their revenue targets, and whether the mass population can afford the mobile services to perform their social and business activities without significantly burdening their cost of living.

Also, the basis of taxation is found in the reciprocal duties of protection and support between the state and its citizens. In exchange for their contribution, the taxpayers receive general advantages and protection from the government. This implies that the government should collect taxes from those who are supposed to pay, while all citizens enjoy the privileges and protection

irrespective of their ability to pay taxes. The never-ending hike in taxes and duties on telecom is not only challenging these fundamental tenets but also acting against public interests. In a country of over 160 million people with continued GDP growth, the number of taxpayers (around 2.2 million) is extremely low. This demands an urgent attention to growing the tax base instead of milking the telecom sector repeatedly.

So far, the quality of services of the telecom industry is not up to international standards. The sector's combined investment fell 19 percent year-on-year in 2019. The projected surge in demand and a reluctance to invest are contributing to consumers becoming the victims of substandard services. Given the situation, it is imperative that public policies should be focused on driving investments to improve telecom infrastructure in terms of quality of services and network coverage. We cannot expect the MNOs to continue investing when their return on investment is significantly low, mostly due to the overall market condition, unfavourable taxation or regulatory policies. High taxation or spectrum pricing may continue to be impediments against the dream of establishing a Digital Bangladesh, including the rolling out of 5G services as per the vision of our government.

Instead of hiking taxes and duties on telecom should be rather lowered to boost mobile connectivity to lead higher productivity across the economy, and consequently higher GDP growth. This would help in meeting the nation's growth forecast, not the other way around. A sector contributing to the betterment of people's lives must be supported to sustain and thrive. It shouldn't be the next golden goose in the making.

Dr Sabbir Ahmad is a director (engineering) at edotco Group. The views expressed in this article are his own. Email: sabbir@ieee.org

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



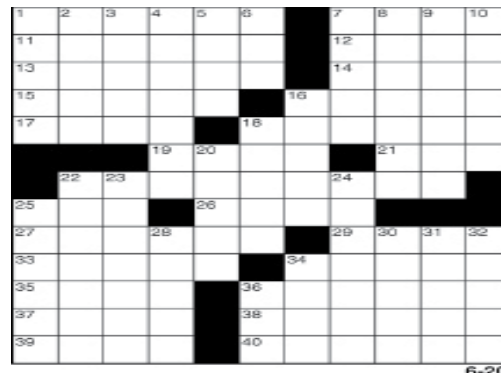
KOREAN WAR BEGINS

June 25, 1950

On this day in 1950, North Korea unleashed an attack southward across the 38th parallel, after which the UN Security Council (minus the Soviet delegate) passed a resolution calling on UN members to assist South Korea.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ACROSS | 27 In agreement | 6 Primary color |
| 1 Winery worker | 29 Sweeping | 7 Espresso order |
| 7 Deficiency | 33 Indy entrant | 8 Corroded |
| 11 Musical range | 34 Choir member | 9 Pipe material |
| 12 Heaps | 35 School near | 10 Dragon fighter |
| 13 Put on, as a play | Windsor | 16 Squall |
| 14 Garr of "Tootsie" | 36 In abundance | 18 Place |
| 15 Baseball's | 37 Blunders | 20 Brown shade |
| Schilling and Flood | 38 Rust and the like | 22 "My Way" singer |
| 16 Police trap | 39 Copenhagen | 23 Mythical creature |
| 17 Vaulted area | native | 24 Sporting spear |
| 18 Awful smell | 40 Casual eateries | 25 Made into mush |
| 19 Lot buy | DOWN | 28 Keyed up |
| 21 Young one | 1 Puccini opera | 30 Battery end |
| 22 Student's income source | 2 Carry on | 31 More tender |
| 25 Sewing aid | 3 Night lights | 32 Lock of hair |
| 26 Crimson Tide, for short | 4 Ring pair | 34 Fare carrier |
| | 5 Preceding times | 36 Zeus or Apollo |

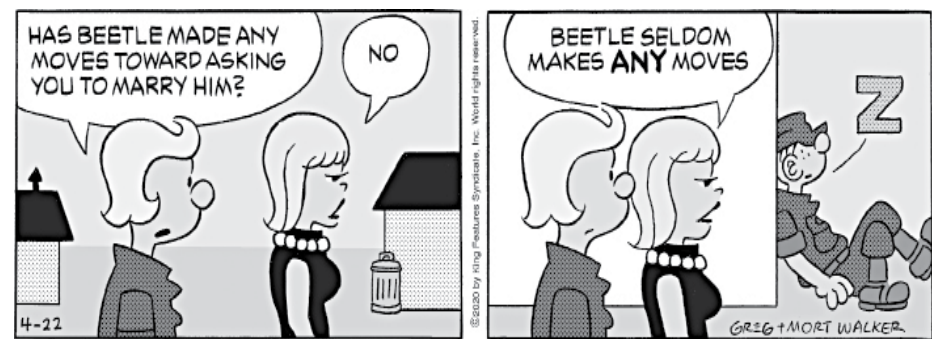


YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

COVER STORY FOOD for thought

NUSRAAT FARIA



During this unprecedented crisis, everyone from the entertainment industry is trying to keep themselves safe and also others safe by staying indoors. With so much time in hand, many celebrities have taken this wonderful opportunity to cook delicious food for their family and loved ones. In this interview with Star Showbiz, the talented actors shared their personal food choices and what they like cooking.

What's your favourite cuisine?
I love Japanese food the most.

What's your favourite food?
I absolutely love having any sort of maki rolls.

What do you prefer, sweet or savoury?
I prefer savoury food because I eat a lot of spices.

Which dish do you cook the most?
I bake a lot and cook the everyday Bangladeshi food at home.

Can you share your favourite easy recipe?
I recently discovered a very quick and easy brownie recipe which you can make in a mug. You can also make a full size. You can make it in an oven or in a stove. First, you have to mix two bars of any type of chocolate, butter, sugar, salt, cocoa powder, vanilla extract and a very small amount of regular flour or oat flour for a healthier version. For the mug version, microwave it for three minutes. For a larger version, you can cook it on the stove in a pan with a lid on medium low heat for one hour.

Why do you like to cook?
Cooking helps me get relief from stress as it is a creative process. It removes all negativity from my mind. Also, it's like a physical exercise because it involves movement. Finally, I love to feed people.

Do you prefer eating out or do you prefer cooking?
I mostly eat at home. I love making my own food and experimenting with different ingredients. I watch a lot of cooking and food videos on YouTube. Cooking at home and having it with my family is a special experience.



Kala Bhuna Lasanga PHOTO: RAF

What's your favourite spice?
When I'm cooking Bangladeshi food, I love to use garam masala. When I'm cooking Asian cuisine, my favourite is chilli flakes. I also love a Korean spice.

What's the secret to creating an amazing dish?
The secret is patience. Cooking isn't everyone's cup of tea. You also have to pay attention to the smallest things.

Amina Hossain

Irfan Sajjad

What's your favourite cuisine?
I love eating all sorts of food, so I can't really choose a specific cuisine.

What's your favourite food?
I love pudding, custard and kunafa.

What do you prefer, sweet or savoury?
Sweet all the way because sugar gives you energy. My favourite foods are all desserts.

Which dish do you cook the most?
I love cooking pan fried chicken steak with vegetables.

Can you share your favourite easy recipe?
The pan fried chicken steak is super easy. First, I marinate breast pieces of chicken with spices of my choice, like



Kunafa PHOTO: IRFAN'S FACEBOOK PAGE

oregano, parsley and rosemary and mustard oil for forty-five minutes to an hour. The marinade can be adjusted to taste. Then I fry it in a pan along with some vegetables. This recipe is easy and healthy at the same time.

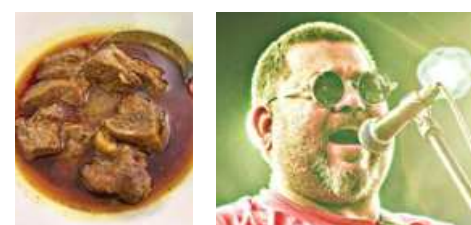
Why do you like to cook?
I find cooking quite difficult which is why I like doing it. It's like an adventure to me. Different people have different ways of cooking. They know what to put where to make a dish taste good. With YouTube now, we can create so many dishes and have a good time.

Do you prefer eating out or do you prefer cooking?
Definitely cooking at home. I don't eat out too often. Home cooking is the best.

What's your favourite spice?
I think that Mejbani beef spice mix is the best spice out there. Nothing can top it in my opinion.

What's the secret to creating an amazing dish?
I don't think there is a secret to that. I think interest, concentration and dedication are the most important things needed to make a good dish.

Amina Hossain



What is your favourite cuisine?
Bangladeshi food without a doubt.

What is your favourite food?
It has to be rice with beef and Shutki Bhorta.

What do you prefer, sweet or savoury?
I have always preferred savoury over sweet. I think the reason I always lean towards savoury food might be genetic. Another reason I prefer savoury is because I'm not really a big fan of the taste of sugar.

What do you cook the most?
I mainly cook beef and chicken.

Can you give us an easy recipe that you make?
I don't exactly have any specific recipes. I just use Radhuni's ready mix and add the amount of onions and other spices to it and cook beef or chicken in it. I love to cook like that.

What makes you interested in cooking?
Before the pandemic, I had never cooked in my life. But due to the pandemic I had to start cooking myself. When I started, I realized that the process of cooking is also a very creative

Shakib Chowdhury

process. I love working hard to create something and that's what I loved about cooking.

Do you prefer eating out or do you prefer cooking?
You can't compare the two. It's like if you try to compare listening to music with creating music. Eating out is a social experience for me because I can spend time with my friends and family. However, cooking is a much more intimate experience for you and your family. Cooking also gives you the joy of creation. Both of these give two very different thrills, so you can't compare the two.

What spice do you like to use the most?
I love to use cumin a lot.

What is your secret to creating an amazing dish?
I'm not very experienced in cooking so I don't have any secret to creating an amazing dish. All I can say is that you should try until you can make something good.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



BIDYA SINHA MIM

What's your favourite cuisine?
I like the typical Bangladeshi cuisine.

What's your favourite food?
I have a lot of favourite foods. I love chocolates and ice cream. I also like sushi.

What do you prefer, sweet or savoury?
I like both. I don't like anything too sweet or too savory.

Which dish do you cook the most?
I don't cook many dishes. I cook pasta dishes among other things.

Why do you like to cook?
I haven't really cooked too much to answer

that. However, the little cooking I do, I like it.

Do you prefer eating out or do you prefer cooking?
I mainly eat at home, but eating out once a week is nice.

What's your favourite spice?
I don't know yet since I haven't been used to cooking it's many different spices.

What's the secret to creating an amazing dish?
Since I don't cook too often, I don't know any secret to make a delicious dish.

Amina Hossain

GRAPE VINE

Emon Chowdhury's new chapter

We have seen many popular musicians around the globe performing as one-man band, now our Bangladeshi band Chirkutt's guitarists Emon Chowdhury has recently taken on the role of a one-man band. He recently released a music video under the banner of M Records. The one-man band is a term used to describe a musician who plays multiple musical instruments simultaneously using their hands, feet, limbs, and various mechanical or electronic contraptions. Emon said, "I am thrilled about this project. I have experimented and worked hard on this for about two years now. I am happy that it finally came to life. I am grateful to all the people who have supported me throughout this project. I have previously played various musical instruments, but I had to extra work hard this time. I successfully took on the role of a one-man band after continuously practising and training for a long time." The music video is made by Khair Khandakar.



Airin's poem on youtube

Actor and model Airin Sultana will be releasing a poem on her official YouTube channel. She will be reciting the poem, *Bhul Preme Kete Geche Trish Bosonto* by Taslima Nasrin. The video for the poem is being directed by Evan Monowar. The shooting for the video has been completed by maintaining all safety protocols. Airin said, "I did not want to use any video content using a mobile phone, which is why I preferred doing the project professionally. I planned this project out of my passion for poems. I hope to release the video before Eid-ul-Adha."



Muhin and Abanti's new duet

After a long break, rising singers Muhin and Abanti Sithi have recorded a song together. The duo worked for the first time together. The song titled *Tumi Kache Esho* is composed by Anurup Aich, written by Rajub Bhowmik and the musical arrangements are done by Mushfiq Liu. Muhin said, "It felt good to sing after a long time. I have tried to sing the song wholeheartedly and I hope everyone will appreciate it." The song will be released by the end of July under the banner of Aich Song.



POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



Love 101

Love 101 is a Turkish teen drama on Netflix. It has been directed by Ahmet Katkısiz, produced by Kerem Çatay, and stars Mert Yazıcıoğlu, Kubilay Aka, and Alina Boz, among others. The story focuses on a group of teenagers who are determined to find a romantic interest for their teacher, in order to stop her from leaving their town. The series was released on Netflix in April 24, 2020.



Designated Survivor: 60 Days

Designated Survivor: 60 Days is a South Korean political drama, based on its American counterpart. It was written by Kim Tae-hee, directed by Yoo Jong-sun, developed by Studio Dragon, produced under the banner of DK E&M, and stars Ji Jin-hee, Heo Joon-ho and Kang Han-na, among others. The plot follows the life of a Minister of Environment, as he becomes the acting president for sixty days when an explosion takes place at the National Assembly building. It was first released on July 1, 2019 on tvN and Netflix.

LENOX HILL

Lenox Hill is a documentary TV series, initially released on June 10, 2020 on Netflix. It was written and directed by Adi Barash and Ruthie Shatz, produced under the banners of Netflix Studios and Yulari Films, and stars John Boockvar, David Langer and Mirtha Macri, among others. It follows the lives of doctors, surgeons and physicians as they tackle their jobs at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Shreya Shomoyeeta & Amina Hossain





Resumption scenarios different for Bangladesh

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Novak Djokovic on Tuesday said he was "deeply sorry". After all, he had set in motion the chaos during an ill-fated Adria Tour -- a tournament he himself organised through his foundation -- which acquainted tennis with the realities of the current pandemic.

Djokovic, along with stars Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki had all tested positive for Covid-19 during the Zadar leg of the event where people were seen flouting social distancing rules. The Zadar event dealt a severe blow to tennis's planned official return.

Usually, each and every sport exists in its own vacuum, but in a pandemic, the series of events in Croatia showed how difficult it will be to safely resume sports activities all over the world, but more so in the context of Bangladesh. Cricket, the premium sport in the country, took a hit when the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) was postponed three months ago during the second round. The infection rate in the country has since been increasing steadily and alarmingly.

The positive tests of former ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam severely dented the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) plans to even ponder cricket's return.

While sporting activities have commenced in many countries, Bangladesh cannot yet think about resumption and although BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury had previously told The Daily Star that 'they need to look forward and find a way to resume things at some point', that reality is a distant one at the moment.

Bundesliga, the Spanish La Liga, Italian Serie A and English Premier League have begun once more in an effort to complete the season while the French Ligue 1 was declared over with PSG awarded the title.

Following government directives, the leagues had started their plans for resumption. Protocols were put in place as the players geared up for the restart following a break and despite the huge toll that coronavirus inflicted on countries such as Italy and Spain, football started again.



However, the plans and the eventual restart of these leagues depended ultimately on what stage of the pandemic they were in. Germany were the first to start, allowing the players to start training because they had curbed the virus considerably by then. France, whose Covid-19 fatalities is the fifth highest in the world at the moment, have not restarted the football league.

Spain and Italy employed tough measures to curb the virus and managed to flatten the curve. Spain ended its state of emergency on Sunday and also reopened borders, and while the risk is still there, the facilities provided to footballers will ensure that they can react faster to any outbreak. The financial aspect led to the urgency in restarting the leagues and Spain, Italy and England conduct regular coronavirus tests on footballers to detect cases.

The Premier League has had 18 positive cases since restart but are carrying on with protocols in place. The Vietnamese V.League 1 had begun last month with packed crowds and the country has won praise for its aggressive coronavirus testing and a mass, centralised

quarantine programme. Meanwhile Brazil, where infections have only been escalating, saw the Rio de Janeiro state football championship postponed only a week after restart following a ruling from the country's sporting court.

Cricket on the other hand has been less aggressive with restart plans. Financial pressure as always could see the way for international cricket's return too. Australia, which has had no new deaths since May 23, are still pondering if they can host the T20 World Cup in October this year. Cricketers in Australia however have been able to start their training programmes. Cricket Australia, which has had significant job cuts, could reportedly lose 300 million Australian dollars if they are unable to host India for the Test series in November. West Indies meanwhile would be banking on their tour of England -- the first international series set to take place amidst the pandemic -- to generate revenue.

The English and Wales Cricket Board are under financial strain and the latest seven positive tests of Pakistan players does put a dent on plans for the upcoming series.

BCB, on the other hand, has

said they are financially stable even without any cricket going on. However, the main headache remains the restart of cricketing activities. The scenario in Bangladesh is similar to that of Brazil in terms of sports returning. While other countries knew about their virus peak, it is as yet uncertain for Bangladesh. The facilities the BCB can provide is not similar to ECB and more importantly, the situation in the country is different to other countries, like Sri Lanka for instance, where players have begun training as well.

"If we make any mistakes, we could infect the whole team," a BCB official told The Daily Star. "We tried to understand the Djokovic situation. It's not easy to maintain [protocols] here so we are yet to identify what we can plan. If our country was doing well on the virus front, we could get in on such plans regarding rules. We cannot just isolate cricket and think differently," he said regarding resumption of training for cricketers.

The local climate matters and, in this regard, conditions are not yet conducive for players to return to training. Cricket here will have to wait.

Pedro takes Sk Russel to FIFA

SPORTS REPORTER



Although all 13 Bangladesh Premier League clubs have negotiated contracts and payments with foreign players following the cancellation of the league in May, Sheikh Russel have been taken to FIFA by their Brazilian forward Pedro Henrique.

Officials of different clubs have informed that they have solved payment issues with foreign players in line with the FIFA-prescribed process of reaching a mutual understanding, ending their contracts through amicable solution.

Four of Sheikh Jamal's other foreign players -- Udoka Alison, Raphael Odwin, Chris Herd and Alisher Azizov -- accepted the club's offer in line with their original agreement.

"Only one foreign player, Simon Obioma of Uttar Baridhara Club, complained to us. But he later withdrew his complaint as he reached an amicable solution with the club," Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) competition manager Zaber Bin Taher Ansari told The Daily Star.

Ansari added that they had received an e-mail from FIFA asking if Sheikh Russel had anything to say in response to the complaint.

"Pedro filed a complaint demanding approximately one lakh US dollars, alleging that Sheikh Russel did not pay him wages and did not bear expenditures for his treatment from injury. We have informed the club."

Pedro sustained an injury during the team's third league match against Mohammedan and could not play the next three matches before the league's suspension in mid-March.

"As per the contract, we can extend with Pedro for two more months or deduct two months before the contract expires. We offered him to accept wages till May 15 but he demanded wages till July 15. We did everything according to the contract. Even Alisher tried to convince him, but he filed a complaint to FIFA," Sheikh Russel sports director Saleh Jaman Selim said, adding that they had borne the cost of his treatment.

"He lodged a false complaint against us. We have already sent all documents to FIFA. We sought justice because he has damaged our country's image," Selim said, adding that they would clear two months' wages worth 28,000 dollars as soon as FIFA clears the matter.

Tigers' tour of Sri Lanka postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket Board (BCB) and Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have mutually agreed to postpone the Tigers' upcoming tour of the island country, the host board announced yesterday.

There was a lot of buzz about the July tour, deferred now to a 'mutually planned later date', which would feature a three-match Test series that would be a part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC).

"SLC wishes to announce that the BCB has informed SLC that a conducive environment has still not arrived for their players to take part in an international cricket series, purely due to the lack of preparation for its players, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," a media release said yesterday.

On Tuesday, Bangladesh's home series against New Zealand, also part of the WTC and due to start in August, was postponed. The Tigers have faced a total of five series postponements while cricketing activities in the country have been on hold since mid-March.

The second Test against Pakistan, scheduled to be held in Karachi in April, the Ireland and UK tour in May and a home series against Australia scheduled for June were previously postponed.

WHAT TO WATCH

LA LIGA

Facebook

Eibar v Valencia

Live from 11:30pm

Real Betis v Espanyol

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

PREMIER LEAGUE

Star Sports Select 1

Southampton v Arsenal

Live from 11:00pm

Chelsea v Man City

Live from 1:15am (Friday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Burnley v Watford

Live from 11:00pm



Manchester City and Argentina striker Sergio Aguero posted this picture from a Barcelona hospital after undergoing surgery on a lateral meniscus injury in his left knee yesterday. He will be out of action for up to seven weeks. PHOTO: TWITTER

Novak apologises amid growing criticism

We're lacking spark, Setien says after win

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona coach Quique Setien admitted his side have struggled to get going since the season returned following the three-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, after a scrappy 1-0 win at home against Athletic Bilbao on Tuesday.

Barca needed a late goal from substitute Ivan Rakitic to see off a determined Athletic side and although they picked up a third win in four matches since the season re-started, they again failed to sparkle.

"When teams offer you little space you have to be very precise and agile and we have been lacking that since we returned," Setien told a virtual news conference. "It's not been easy and we are missing something overall, a bit of spark. Our opponents have a lot to do with this because they are sticking together and leaving hardly any space and we're finding it hard to open them up. But I think we'll start to find it easier the more the season goes on."

Barca thrashed Real Mallorca 4-0 on their return but looked rusty in last week's 2-0 victory over struggling Leganes and on Friday were held 0-0 at Sevilla, allowing Real Madrid to go top of the league on Sunday.

The win over Athletic took Barca three points ahead of Madrid provisionally.



From chest-bumping at the tennis court during matches, playing full throttle games of basketball and courting controversy by partying at a nightclub, Novak Djokovic showed blatant disregard for the norms of social distancing during his Adria Tour recently. PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS/COLLECTED

AFP, Paris

World number one Novak Djokovic was widely condemned on Wednesday for hosting a tennis exhibition where he was one of four players to test positive for the coronavirus, a lapse that sent shudders through a sport struggling to get back on its feet.

The Serbian star said he was "deeply sorry" in an unstinting apology for the now-cancelled Adria Tour, where social distancing was minimal and matches were played in front of thousands of fans.

However, criticism was swift and heavy, with many voicing concerns over attempts to restart professional tournaments in August, including the US Open Grand Slam which is scheduled to begin on August 31.

Djokovic, Grigor Dimitrov, Borna Coric and Viktor Troicki all tested positive after taking part in the Adria Tour, where players embraced across the net, played basketball and even danced in a nightclub.

"I am so deeply sorry our tournament has caused harm,"

Djokovic, 33, said in a statement. His wife Jelena also tested positive after attending the "philanthropic" tour in the once war-torn Balkans.

As the mocking hashtag #Djokovid circulated online, Australia's Nick Kyrgios, so often in the crosshairs for his own on-court indiscretions, said the incident was pure "stupidity".

"Don't @ me for anything I've done that has been 'irresponsible' or classified as 'stupidity' -- this takes the cake," tweeted the world number 40.

Britain's Andy Murray, a three-time Grand Slam winner who has known Djokovic since their junior days, told reporters: "I don't think it has been a great look for tennis. In hindsight, it's not something that should have gone ahead. It's not surprising how many people have tested positive after seeing some of the images of the players' party and the kids' day. There was no social distancing in place."

"Some people have said maybe this has put the US Open in doubt -- which it may well do. But the measures and the protocols they have in place at the USTA are different to Serbia and Croatia. No fans for a start."

Djokovic is unbeaten this year, a

run that includes winning his 17th Grand Slam at the Australian Open, but the pandemic has been a public relations disaster for the eccentric Serb. Even before the Adria Tour, he was criticised for breaking lockdown rules to train in Spain, and he then raised eyebrows by insisting he wouldn't be prepared to vaccinate against the coronavirus.

Djokovic also described limits on players' entourages at the US Open as "extreme" and "impossible", again putting him at odds with public opinion.

"I think there's a lot of his peer group who are scratching their heads," celebrated coach Paul Annacone told Tennis.com. "I was anxiety-ridden and very disappointed because the restart, or the reimagining of how we can start is about eight weeks away. And with all these opportunities to try to start in a progression, to me, it felt like they skipped about 15 steps."

Martina Navratilova, who won 18 Grand Slam singles titles, tweeted: "Yikes... this is not good and it's a pattern... What now, US Open? Roland Garros? We have a lot of work to do."

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Website: www.spcbl.org.bd

Ref: 53.18.3300.019.07.02.20-64-65 Dated: 23/06/2020

Name of work:

- Construction of 5-storied E-Type Building at The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd., Gazipur (e-Tender No. 65)
- Construction of 5-storied F-Type Building at The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd., Gazipur (e-Tender No. 64)

Electronic tenders (e-Tender) are hereby invited from the contractor having experience of construction work in the departments of PWD/MES/other government, semi-government/autonomous organizations/bank/insurance organizations for the construction of abovementioned structures for this Corporation as per undernoted schedule. Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specification will be available at the website e-tender.spcbl.org.bd/114.130.43.56. It is to mention here that this is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted and no hard copy will be accepted except price of tender schedule and earnest money. To submit e-Tender the bidders need to register on e-Tender.spcbl.org.bd. For more details please contact cell: 88-01534002183 & 88-01534002184. Necessary information is given below:

- Price per e-Tender schedule : (1) 5000.00 (five thousand) Taka only.
(2) 2000.00 (two thousand) Taka only (not refundable).
- Date of publish of e-Tender : 25/06/2020.
- Last date & time for submission of e-Tender : 22/07/2020 up to 11.00am.
- Date & time for opening of e-Tender : 22/07/2020 at 11.15am.

Bidders may collect the e-Tender schedule from the abovementioned website. Bidders need to submit earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee in favour of the "Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd." along with the price of e-Tender schedule in the form of an account payee Cheque/Pay-Order/DD in the tender box kept at Corporation's office in Gazipur on or before the scheduled deadline for submission of e-Tender. e-Tender(s) without earnest money and price for procurement of e-Tender schedule shall not be acceptable. The e-Tender shall have to submit as per e-Tender guidelines mentioned at above website. Offer(s) shall be opened as per schedule mentioned above in presence of the tenderer(s) if any. 01 (one) e-Tender schedule is applicable only for one Construction firm submitting one offer along with earnest money and price of e-Tender schedule. The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any e-Tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of e-Tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

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Executive Engineer (Civil)
GD-1037 Phone: 88-02-9205110-15, Ext. 266