



**MESSI'S EXIT IMMINENT?**  
Spanish radio station reports Messi called off contract renewal talks with Barcelona.  
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OXYGEN FOR BREATHING DIFFICULTIES

## Patients handed ghostly bills

*A section of pvt hospitals charging patients higher than usual*

MUNTAKIM SAAD and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Jannatul Ferdous was admitted to Max Hospital in Chattogram with breathing problems early last month.

The 45-year-old woman needed oxygen support for 10 straight days. When it was time to release her, the private hospital handed her family a bill of Tk 3.05 lakh for oxygen alone. The total bill was over Tk 6 lakh.

After haggling for about six hours over the exorbitant fees and asking every ruling party leader he knew, her husband Ishaq was able to get her released by paying about Tk 4.80 lakh on June 14.

Such allegations of private hospitals charging too much for oxygen support are not too uncommon.

Because of the rising cases of Covid-19 in the country, the number of patients needing oxygen has gone up, authorities at five government and private hospitals in the capital have said.

Some private hospitals, however, are viewing the spike in demand as an opportunity to charge unreasonably high amounts for the support, experts said.

This has been happening mostly because there is no government policy dictating what should be charged for the essential service, they added.

"The government should immediately fix the charges for oxygen support," said Prof Dr Muzaherul Huq, former regional adviser of World Health Organization, South East Asia Region.

### THE REASONABLE CHARGE

Jannatul's teenage daughter Aymon said she was traumatised by her experience at Max Hospital.

"We repeatedly asked them why they were charging so high for oxygen

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Workers look at a notice at Platinum Jute Mills in Khulna city's Khalishpur area on Thursday night. It says production at BJMC's 25 jute mills, including Platinum, will remain shut down. *Inset*, workers operating machines at Crescent Jute Mills in the same area on June 28.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

## Curtain falls on 9 Khulna jute mills

*Laid-off workers worried about their future*

DIPANKAR ROY, KHULNA

Platinum Jute Mill's worker Eratun Khatun broke down in tears when she saw the notice declaring the permanent closure of the organisation she had been with for almost three decades.

"The mill is closed. Where will I go now? What will happen to my daughter's education? How will we earn a living, when we go back to the village," wailed the 55-year-old woman, who lives at the mill colony with her son and daughter, a college student.

The sole breadwinner, Eratun joined Platinum as a temporary worker in 1994 and became a permanent worker in 2011, making Tk 11,500 a month. Her husband, who died 11 years ago, was also a permanent worker of the mill.

Like Eratun, thousands of jute workers of the nine mills in Khulna - Jashore

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



3,114

New cases in 24hrs



1,56,391

Total cases



1,968

Deaths



68,048

Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



522,385

Deaths



10,920,457

Total cases

## 'GREAT WALL' for free media falls



SYED ASHEQUL HAQUE

"You know who I am?"

A glare, snarl and an intensely condescending stare typify these characters. It's the tendency of people in general to flaunt authority and pull rank with whatever power we possess or what power we wish to possess.

Humility is the rare quality that is usually sorely missing in people with power. Among hordes of influential people in our society, only a few stand apart as exceptions - bright rays of hope for society against shadowy displays of arrogance. With the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Dental, eye, ENT patients suffer

*Amid Covid pandemic most pvt chambers, dental clinics shut; eye and ENT hospitals now provide only emergency services*

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RASHIDUL HASAN

When Rejaul Karim visited his dentist late February with problems in one of his teeth, the doctor, upon an x-ray, advised him to have the tooth extracted.

Rejaul was preparing for the dental operation when the novel coronavirus hit the country. Subsequently, the government declared a shutdown to contain the spread of the deadly virus. His dentist's chamber at the capital's Dhanmondi too was closed.

"Actually, I didn't dare go to a doctor's chamber out of fear of being infected with the virus," said the 60-year-old resident of Azimpur area.

With no option left, he consulted another dentist over the phone, who recommended an x-ray again.

"I don't know what to do," he said a few days back.

Like Rejaul, many patients are deprived of crucial treatment of diseases related to teeth, eyes and other ENT (ear, nose and throat) as most dental clinics and private chambers

have been closed for more than three months due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many patients prefer not to go to doctor's chambers or hospitals out of fear of getting infected with the virus unless it's an emergency. The same is the case for many doctors who stopped going to their private chambers.

As a result, the number of patients at hospitals and chambers came down sharply although some doctors have resumed their services of late. Even an eye hospital in the capital had to cut the salary of their staffers by 40 to 50 percent.

Dr Md Shafi Khan, director of Lions Eye Institute and Hospital in the capital, said people get infected with Covid-19 through nose, mouth, throat and eye, and so, the doctors who are dealing with these parts are more vulnerable.

Besides, there could be asymptomatic cases too, which intensifies the doctors' exposure, he told The Daily Star on June 28.

Therefore, most eye hospitals are

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Rejoinder, our reply

Apex Holdings Ltd has sent a rejoinder to a report headlined "Is Foul Play The New Normal?" published in The Daily Star on June 26.

Following is the full text of the rejoinder sent by the Board of Directors of Apex Holdings Limited:

We are writing to express our concerns about the article titled, "Is Foul Play The New Normal?" published in The Daily Star on June 26, 2020, (last modified online at 02:31 pm, June 26, 2020).

The article in question wrongly named our company as "Apex Spinning and Textile Mills". We have no such companies under our management. Rather, our sister concern, Apex Spinning and Knitting

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## NEWS ANALYSIS

## They don't deserve it

*Govt to lay-off around 25,000 workers, shut down 25 state-owned jute mills*

AI-AMIN

The government's decision to shut all state-run jute mills could not have come at a more inopportune time for the barely surviving workers in this sector.

With the coronavirus pandemic causing serious damage to life and livelihood in the country, Monday's announcement, of closing down the 25 state-run jute mills and laying off its 24,886 workers, by Textile and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi is also at odds with the government's stated intentions of avoiding job cuts in such desperate times.

It was learnt from top officials of BJMC, the regulating body of the country's jute mills, that the decision would be effective from July 1.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## REMEMBRANCE

We deeply mourn the passing of a legend

### Latifur Rahman

Founder Chairman & CEO of Transcom Group

May his departed soul rest in peace. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.



www.deltalife.org | www.facebook.com/deltalife.org

## Bangladesh still lags behind in virus testing

*Conducts only 4,409 tests per million people; 3,114 infections, 42 death recorded in a day*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though it has been 118 days since the first Covid-19 case was detected on March 8, Bangladesh still lags behind in terms of increasing the testing facilities in comparison with the other South Asian countries.

According to the latest World Health Organization's report on the Covid-19 situation in Bangladesh, the country is carrying out 4,409 tests per million people whereas the rate is 4,727 in Sri Lanka, 6086 in India, 6,707 in Thailand, 17,902 in Nepal, 23,366 in Malaysia and 89,933 in the Maldives.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 14,650 samples were tested in 63 labs across the country in the 24 hours since Thursday and 3,114 were tested positive for the virus, said Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of DGHS yesterday during the regular briefing.

The total number of infected people now stands at 1,56,391.

Nasima said 42 people died from coronavirus infections on a single day in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,968.

Of the deceased, 32 were male and 10 female. Eighteen of them were from Dhaka, 10 from Chattogram, three from Khulna, three from Rajshahi, four from Rangpur, three from Sylhet and one from Barishal division.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## OBITUARY

### Reliance Insurance Limited

*deeply mourns the sad demise of-*



(28.08.1945 - 01.07.2020)

**Latifur Rahman**

Founding Chairman & Director:

**Reliance Insurance Limited**

Chairman: Transcom Group of Companies

Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

National Housing Finance & Investment Ltd.

Mediastar Ltd. (Prothom Alo), Mediaworld Ltd. (The Daily Star)

Your dedication, diligence and contribution will continue to guide us. You were our source of inspiration, strength and nurturer. Your fond memories will always be cherished by us.

In reverence & remembrance

The Management and all Officials of-



**RELIANCE INSURANCE LIMITED**

## WEEKLY INCREASE IN COVID CASES

# Bangladesh now ranks eighth globally: WHO

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh now ranks 8th in terms of global weekly increase in new coronavirus cases, World Health Organization said yesterday.

The country ranked 8th with 26,598 new Covid-19 cases in the last seven days, WHO Dashboard showed in its pandemic situation in countries, territories and areas.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is 9th as per WHO daily Covid-19 new infection reports among the countries.

The USA has come up to the first position again as 304,156 new cases were reported in the country in seven days, while Latin American country

Brazil ranked 2nd with 260,122 new cases in a week.

South Asian country India ranked third with 131,536 new cases, South Africa fourth with 47,537 and Russian Federation ranked fifth with 47,171 new cases in a week.

The WHO website shows Chile in sixth position with 25,477 new cases in one week while Saudi Arabia seventh with 26,958 new cases in seven days.

Bangladesh reported 3,114 new coronavirus cases and 42 deaths in 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The country's health authorities have so far reported 156,391 Covid-19 cases and 1,968 deaths.

## Dental, eye, ENT

FROM PAGE 1

providing only emergency services for the last two to three months and only now they have started to open gradually taking necessary protective measures, he said. But the number of patients is very low, especially those coming from outside Dhaka, he said.

Lions hospital used to give outdoor treatment to more than 250 patients daily before the pandemic, but the number has decreased to around 50.

"We used to carry out 10 to 12 operations daily [six days a week], but now we are doing it once a week," he said.

On the other hand, they would do camp surgeries for 70 to 80 patients a month, which remains suspended now, Shafi Khan said.

As the number of patients came down sharply, the income of the hospital also decreased, he said, adding that they were thus forced to cut the salary of doctors and staffers.

The situation is similar in most of the eye hospitals, he said, adding, "If the pandemic prolongs further, the financial situation of private eye hospitals and chambers of ophthalmologists will face a severe setback."

He said regular patients, especially from outside Dhaka, cannot come to the eye specialists due to the outbreak. And some patients are even avoiding follow-ups, which is harmful for them.

## Bangladesh still

FROM PAGE 1

Of them, one was between 11-20 years old, three between 21-30, one between 31-40, five between 41-50, 11 between 51-60, 11 between 61-70, seven between 71-80 and three between 81-90 years old, she said.

Meanwhile, the DGHS is going to put capital's Wari under lockdown from today while Dhaka South City Corporation will implement it.

According to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), a total of 173 people were infected in this area until June 30.

There are some areas which have higher number of infections but are yet to put under lockdown. For example, Mirpur saw 1,415 cases till June 30 while Uttara and Jatrabari had 716 and 547 cases respectively.

Visiting Wari yesterday morning,

## Curtain falls

FROM PAGE 1

industrial belt -- seven in Khulna and two in Jashore -- were shocked to see the closure notices stapled at their mills' main entrances around 9pm on Thursday night.

Although the government decided to shut down 25 state owned jute mills of the country on June 25 laying off some 25,000 workers, the prime minister approved the closure on Thursday. The notices mentioning that the mills will be closed from July 1 were posted soon afterwards.

Ironically, even on July 2 around 10,326 workers worked in the nine state-owned mills of the Khulna region and the jute product produced on that day was 80 metric tons.

"Thousands of workers were still working in the mills at night [Thursday] when the notice was posted. Most did not think that the government could take such a big decision in such a short time, closing all 25 state-mills at once," said Md Mozammel Haque.

The 65-year-old man, who joined Platinum in 1978 as a temporary worker and became permanent in 1988, doubted that workers will receive the golden handshake.

"We did not even receive our Baishakhi allowance or Eid bonus," he said, adding that some workers are nevertheless happy, expecting a large sum of money.

The nine jute mills of the Khulna region employed around 8,100 permanent and 30,000 temporary workers. Only permanent workers will get the golden handshake when the mills are closed.

Boniz Uddin Miah, liaison officer of BJMC of Khulna, told The Daily Star that the mills will remain closed until further notice from the government. In the meantime, a task-force with law enforcement members and BJMC officials will be created to safeguard the mills' properties and assets.

Workers' compensation Textiles and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi on Friday said the workers of 25 closed state-run jute mills will receive their wages for the month of June through their personal bank accounts by next week.

He gave this assurance at an urgent press briefing arranged from his

residence at the capital's Siddheshwari.

"Workers will also be paid the wages of 60 days -- July and August," he said.

Fifty percent of all arrears under provident fund, gratuity and golden handshake facilities will directly go to workers' bank accounts and the rest will be paid through savings certificates, the minister said.

All the arrears will be paid under the National Wage Structure, 2015, he added, urging the BJMC to provide the bank account numbers of the workers as soon as possible for payment of the dues.

The minister said workers will get priority when the mills resume operation under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

Earlier on Thursday, the prime minister's Principal Secretary Dr Ahmad Kaikaus said Tk 5,000 crore will be required to pay all the arrears.

He also said the 25 mills will be reopened under different types of ventures --PPP, G2G, joint venture or lease model.

**LABOUR LEADERS' RESPONSE**

Although the workers of the state-owned jute mills in Khulna initially threatened protest against the government's decision, they suspended their programmes on June 30. They said they had not yet received any formal notice about the government's decision.

Sahana Sharmin, president of Platinum Jute Mill Workers' Union, alleged that the government has thwarted their movement.

She urged the government to use the money of the golden handshake for the betterment of jute mills, instead of shutting them down.

Khalilur Rahman Sumon, former workers union president of Khulna Platinum Jute Mill, said the workers did not want the jute mill to be closed permanently.

The closure of state-owned jute mills will also hurt jute farmers. The market will be under the exclusive control of jute traders who will pay a relatively low price for raw jute. Thus farmers will suffer losses and gradually lose interest in jute production.

There are around 72 private jute mills in the country, including 16 in the Khulna region.



Signs put up at a refilling station in the capital's Rajarbagh area say expired cylinders will not be filled and no fuel will be supplied to vehicles without valid fitness certificates. However, none was seen enforcing the directives at the station.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 'Great Wall' for free media falls

FROM PAGE 1

passing of Latifur Rahman on Wednesday, a rare light went out for good.

There are over a dozen businesspersons in Bangladesh who are as renowned as Latifur Rahman, yet not as respected as Latifur Rahman. Why? Successes had never gone to his head and made him arrogant.

He was one of the richest and most influential men in Bangladesh. Yet, it never showed in the way he, with a disarming smile, carried himself around in the businesses he owned, the society he lived in and people with whom he mingled. It was as if he learnt to be more honest with every taka he earned, humbler with every authority he gained, firmer with every crisis he came across and calmer with every tragedy he faced.

Every business is designed to make profits. Those who shine with profit are deemed successful businesspersons. Those who do business ethically are considered respected businesspersons. There are a lot of businesses that are making profits and a few enterprises that are notching happy scores in the yardstick of honesty and ethics. But, Latifur Rahman, the chairman of Transcom Group till his death, went much further than all others by driving forward close to half a century ethical business initiatives to perform social as well as national responsibilities.

"Employers have a huge responsibility [towards employees], beyond just being an employer," he told about his vision of entrepreneurship while receiving the prestigious Business for Peace Award, 2012 in Oslo. He was a kind of employer who took extra care of his employees and stood by them in times of crisis. A strong sense of responsibility was in his DNA and that set him apart from others in the league of entrepreneurs.

"Invest, empower and then, don't interfere," was the hallmark of his entrepreneurship development. An entrepreneur, in his eyes, takes the

business initiative but a successful entrepreneurship develops only when decision-makers in the organisation -- CEOs, managers and executives -- are fully empowered. "With authority, not only with designation, every decision-maker acts as an entrepreneur," he told a lecture session, organised in his honour, a couple of years back.

Latifur Rahman and his businesses were just an open book. Unlike most of his pals, his personal integrity and business practices were kept under the constant scanner of the powers that be for decades, ever since he invested in the media -- The Daily Star in 1991 and Prothom Alo in 1998, the two daily newspapers that went on to become the most circulated and respected media outlets within a few years.

Quite ridiculously though, there are about 600-plus national dailies, 32-odd TV stations and over 8,000 news portals in Bangladesh, and almost all are owned by businesspeople. As the practice goes, businesspeople strive to have a media house of their own in order to abuse it in the interest of their other businesses. But the media merchants seldom showed the courage and principle of Latifur Rahman, letting the media be free of influence and interference.

Money has power. And media provides them an extra gear to the power in an autocracy, or democracy under threat. The new power, if used in favour of people in power, is a guarantee for a relationship of convenience. Latifur Rahman could easily have been just another one of them. Having been involved with the two most popular media outlets, he should have been one of the most powerful persons in the country. But, like the rarity he was, he chose to be powerless despite being in possession of media power.

He, along with other co-investors, lived up to his principle of entrepreneurship: invest, empower and then don't interfere. That non-interference was practised to such an

extent that a good number of The Daily Star employees do not know yet how many investors are actually on the board, let alone any instance of influencing a news.

With this freedom, the two newspapers emerged as truly independent media, becoming hugely popular among people and equally unpopular among all governments that ruled Bangladesh. Every bold reporting, critical view or commentary drew praise but wrath as well. As independent media, the two newspapers earned the neglect and fury of influential people.

But this freedom came at a huge cost for Latifur Rahman. Although he neither interfered nor played any role in the journalism of the two newspapers, he was seen responsible for it. His businesses were made to suffer, approvals from authorities were delayed or not given and harassment by tax offices increased despite being among the top tax payers for years.

Tremendous pressure from different quarters tested the character of Latifur Rahman. He neither complained nor interfered in journalism by asking the two newspapers to rein back. With every strike, he remained silent, but got firmer in his resolve. Knowingly or unknowingly, he started to act like the Great Wall of China, taking all the external hits on his body, only to keep the media safe. And that Great Wall for free media fell Wednesday.

That is why losing Latifur Rahman is so very colossal a loss for a nation hungry for freedom of expression. Then, he left at a time when he was needed most -- with the coronavirus pandemic turning every business upside down and pushing millions out of jobs.

Sadly, Latifur Rahmans are rarities. When a rarity departs, it rarely returns. Free media is unlikely to get another Latifur Rahman anytime soon. But he leaves behind a legacy to draw strength from and keep going in the struggle for freedom of expression, till some Great Wall appears from nowhere.

## Patients handed ghostly bills

FROM PAGE 1

and spending on equipment has increased significantly since the outbreak.

"The treatment of Covid-19 patients is not as profitable for private medical hospitals as you think," he said.

A 1,360 litre oxygen cylinder can be refilled for around Tk 100, officials at supplier companies Linde and Spectra said.

Covid-19 patients with severe lung infections suffer very low oxygen levels, a refilled cylinder of this size can provide support for about four hours.

But for most patients whose condition is not severe, such cylinders can last for over 10 hours, providing 2 litres of oxygen per minute, said doctors at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The Daily Star contacted 10 private hospitals in Dhaka and Chattogram and learnt that they have been charging Tk 200 to Tk 400 per hour for oxygen support.

Before the pandemic, the charges ranged between Tk 100 and Tk 200, according to employees of those hospitals.

Contacted, Managing Director of Max Hospital Dr Liakat Ali Khan, who is a member of Chattogram's Covid-19 Surveillance Team, said, "Due to increased demand and expenses, we now charge Tk 300 per hour for oxygen. If we give it through HFNC, the charge would be Tk 400 per hour."

Asked about Jannatul's case, he said, "It might have been an error by the software."

But her husband Ishaq said, "How can they say it was a mistake? My relatives requested the hospital authorities all day long. Even the MD himself was there."

**HOSPITALS BLAME INCREASED COST**

Mubin Khan, president of Bangladesh Private Medical College Association, said oxygen bills at private hospitals does not only cover the expenses for oxygen. The hospitals are paying a lot more to doctors and other employees,

Freedom fighter Mozammel Haque, 67, a Covid-19 patient, who was admitted to the capital's Anwer Khan Modern Hospital for 14 days last month was handed an oxygen bill of Tk 86,400 although he needed the service for less than an hour, according to his son Towhidul Haque Sohel.

The total amount charged was Tk 383,759.

Contacted, its Director Prof Dr Ehteshamul Hoque said the increased spending of the hospital was causing the oxygen charges to rise.

"Still, we will look into the issue if the patient's relatives come to us with a complaint," he said.

**China military exercises will 'further destabilise' S China Sea: Pentagon**

AFP, Washington

The Pentagon said Thursday it was "concerned" about Chinese military exercises around a disputed archipelago in the South China Sea, noting the maneuvers will "further destabilise" the region.

"The Department of Defense is concerned about the People's Republic of China (PRC) decision to conduct military exercises around the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea on July 1-5," the Pentagon said in a statement.

The activities "further destabilize the situation" in the area claimed by China, Vietnam and Taiwan, it said.

Such exercises also violate Beijing's "commitments under the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea to avoid activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability."

The declaration, signed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, said that all parties would "avoid activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability."

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Kuwait House committee lifts immunity of two MPs

They had links with Bangladesh MP Shahid

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Kuwait's Public Prosecution decided to send two Kuwaiti officials to jail, while Parliamentary Legislative Committee has lifted immunity of two MPs for interrogation for their alleged involvement in human trafficking, money laundering and bribery linked to Bangladesh MP Shahid Islam.

Arab Times reported yesterday the Public Prosecution decided to send one official from Kuwait's Manpower Authority and a former candidate of National Assembly for 21 days to the central prison.

Meanwhile, Parliamentary Legislative Committee has decided to lift the immunity of two lawmakers suspected to be involved in the corruption scandal.

The two MPs said they asked the committee to lift their immunity so they could be interrogated by the public prosecution in order to clear their names, denying that they had anything to do with the scandal, reports Kuwait Times.

Last week the Public Prosecutor extended custody of Bangladeshi MP Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul for an additional 21 days by referring him to the central prison to investigate charges against him.

A well-informed source said that more surprises have cropped up with high profile names in this case as marathon investigations continue to take place with the accused and witnesses.

Shahid Islam, lawmaker from Laxmipur-2 constituency, was arrested by Kuwait CID on June 6 on charges of human trafficking, money laundering, bribery and visa trading.

The managing director and CEO of Marafie Kuwaitia Group, during interrogation, admitted he bribed millions of dollars to Kuwaiti officials, but said it was not his fault that he could not get contracts from the government agencies unless he paid the bribes.

Migrants alleged Shahid charged Tk 7 lakh to Tk 9 lakh for recruitment, but many have been paid less than what was spelled out in their contracts charged for renewal of work permits or were even not provided the jobs.

Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission has opened an investigation against him on allegations that he laundered Tk 1,400 crore. Recently, a travel ban was imposed on his family members.

## Doctor held on charge of raping employee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Police arrested a physician in Pirojpur town on Thursday night in connection with a rape case filed by a 17-year-old girl, who worked at the doctor's chamber.

The case was filed at Pirojpur sadar police station against 55-year-old Mohammad Shah Alam, a MBBS doctor, on Thursday night under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, said Md Nurul Islam Badal, officer in charge (OC) of the police station.

The OC said the girl took the job of an office assistant at the private chamber of the doctor on June 17 to support her family. Her office hour was from 9am to 3pm.

According to the case statement, on Wednesday around 2pm, Mohammad Shah Alam raped the girl when there was no one in the chamber. He also broke the girl's cellphone when she tried to capture his photograph following the incident.

On Friday, the girl was sent to Pirojpur civil surgeon's office for her medical test and the accused was sent to jail through the court, said the OC.

## 'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight' with police in Teknaf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a "shootout" with police in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Abul Hashem, 32, said police.

On information that a yaba consignment will be unloaded in the Fishery Ghat area, a police team raided there around 12:30am, said Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

Sensing the presence of police, criminals opened fire. The law enforcers retaliated, triggering the "gunfight", he said.

After the "gun battle", police found the bullet-hit body of Hashem lying on the spot. His cohorts managed to flee, the OC said.

Doctors of Teknaf Upazila Health Complex declared him dead, the police officer added.

Police also claimed to have recovered 10,000 yaba pills, a firearm, and six bullets from the spot.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claim.

His body was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for an autopsy, the OC added.

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



A school in old Dhaka, 1998.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Admission Test

In 1970 my parents had a big problem. That problem was me. We lived in Sylhet and I attended Blue Bird School which went up to Class Five. At the end of 1969 I passed Class Five.

When 1970 came, the main goal in the life of Abbu and Ammu - my parents - was to get me admitted to another school so I could continue with Class Six.

Abbu thought I could attend his old school, Sylhet Government Boys' High School. I needed to pass their admission test. One winter morning in early 1970, on test day, he took me to the school. It was a beautiful setting on the bank of the river Surma. I sat in a large class room with several dozen other boys and took the examination, finishing before noon.

I returned home, had lunch and went about my business. The result arrived early afternoon: I had failed the test.

My parents were stunned and disappointed.

The headmaster of the school, Mr. Syed Amirul Islam, a strict but fair man, was a relative. That very afternoon my parents took me to his house. He and his wife (my Khala) welcomed us.

Abbu debriefed Mr. Islam on the day's events. After showing him my grades from Blue Bird - where I had stood first in class throughout - Abbu asked him if I could possibly take another admission test. Mr. Islam agreed. In the back of their house was a veranda facing a pond. He prepared a fresh test for me. I sat in their veranda and completed the test in the time allotted.

Mr. Islam took away the test to correct it. He returned soon, saying, "He has passed. The school will admit him." But the day's events had jolted

Abbu. While he was grateful to Mr. Islam, my failure that morning had hurt his self-esteem. He decided against sending me to Government School.

This decision had profound repercussions for our family. Abbu and Ammu decided to move to Dhaka to find a better school for me. It took me years to understand the immensity of their sacrifice. The life of my younger brother and sister also changed dramatically.

When we reached Dhaka admission season was almost over; one exception was Dhanmondi Boys High School. I sat for their test. After I had finished, Abbu came to take me home. He scanned the exam and stopped at a Bangla question that was like a riddle. He said, "Oh, this is easy, here is what it means ... I am sure you got that?" Realizing I had completely misinterpreted the question I remained quiet.

I failed the test.

A few days later, Chhoto Fufu, my Aunt living in Dhaka, was able to arrange a one-off admission test for me at St. Joseph's High School. She and I went to the office of Brother Gerald Kraeger, the headmaster. He wasn't there so we sat and waited. When he arrived we stood up and he shook my hand. Then my Aunt and the headmaster sat down. I was bending down to sit when I realized Brother Gerald had not asked me to sit. So I stood up again. He smiled and asked me to sit down. Giving me a test, he pointed me to an empty room to work on it.

To everyone's collective relief I passed the test and started my new life in Class Six at St. Joseph's.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

## Sanitised by water!

Mobile court fines transport workers, passengers in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At a time when Covid-19 cases in the country are rising and health experts insist on strongly maintaining health guidelines, a section of transport workers are using just water to sanitise passengers in Chattogram.

The gross negligence to public health was caught by a mobile court yesterday, that fined 20 persons including drivers, helpers and passengers over different charges.

Executive Magistrate Md Omar Faruk of Chattogram District Administration conducted the mobile court in the port city's GEC and Wasa intersections.

Omar Faruk said during the mobile court, several buses were found with no safety equipment and sanitiser. "Most drivers and their helpers had no mask."

"Most sanitiser bottles in the buses did not have disinfectants; the mobile court also found some transport workers only used water in the name of disinfectants, deceiving public and raising health hazard," added Faruk.

Passengers were found not wearing mask during their ride, or maintaining proper social distancing inside the bus.

The mobile court fined 20 persons including driver helper and passengers with Tk 4,000 for not keeping sanitisers, using water and fake sanitiser and other charges.

## Need diplomacy that ensures health rights, revives economy

International relations experts tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should go for robust diplomacy aimed at ensuring people's health rights and reviving the economy that are now being largely affected by the pandemic, said international relations experts.

The country needs to strengthen relations in all fronts -- bilateral, regional and multilateral -- and find ways how peoples' wellbeing gets the highest priority, they observed.

"The pandemic has demonstrated how health is so important for us. Apart from the economy, the most crucial thing for us is to make sure we can have access to the Covid-19 vaccines or drugs whenever that is developed," said Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, former foreign secretary and ambassador.

Bangladesh's earnings from RMG exports declined by 18.45 percent year-on-year to \$27.83 billion in the outgoing fiscal,

from \$34.13 billion in 2018-19.

Migrant remittance in the outgoing fiscal reached \$18.20 billion, which is 10.87 percent higher than 2018-19, but officials and experts say it could see a downturn, as several lakh Bangladeshis could return home in coming months. Also, there will be fewer new overseas jobs in near future, which means jobs creation at home will be a bigger challenge now, economists say.

Against such backdrop, the foreign ministry held a discussion with the former foreign secretaries and ambassadors -- Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, Shahidul Haque, MR Osmani, Faruque Sobhan, CM Shafi Sami, AKM Atiqur Rahman, Md Abdul Hannan, Humayun Kabir, Ahmad Tariq Karim and Mohsin Ali Khan.

The objective of the virtual discussion on Thursday, chaired by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, was to get their opinions on the course of action by the

ministry against the pandemic.

The former diplomats said Bangladesh should prioritise strengthening relations with India, China, US and European Union for cooperation in health and economic sectors.

Asked, Shamsheer Mobin said he could not disclose the contents of the programme that was held in the format of Chatham House that does not allow disclosures.

Bangladesh gets duty-free access to the European Union, Australia, Japan, India and China. "We need to best utilise these markets," Mobin said, adding, "We need to plan how we can explore sustainable new markets."

Prof Lailafur Yasmin of Dhaka University said in the changed geopolitical situation, many companies will shift from China to Bangladesh, and the government must seize the opportunity by improving conditions of investment.

"This will need strong economic diplomacy," she said.



**BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN...** With a part of Old Dhaka's Wari set to go under lockdown from today, residents of the area yesterday took every last-minute preparation to hunker down for 21 days. Geared in their headcaps, masks, goggles and face shields, they stocked up on groceries, poultry and vegetables, as authorities set up bamboo barriers on entry points to the area.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



## Left ignored for 11 years

No authority willing to take over Khulna's Bastuhara bypass road

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Bastuhara City Bypass Link Road in Khulna has remained uncared for for nearly a dozen of years as no authorities are willing to take its responsibility, resulting in extreme public sufferings.

Khulna Development Authority (KDA) built the 2.37km road stretching from the city's Sheikh Abu Naser Specialised Hospital to Dumuria area.

KDA sources said the Tk 14 crore project started in 2003-2004 fiscal year and completed in 2008-2009 FY. Since then, there has been no maintenance work for the road.

Over the years, bitumen has got off the road, large potholes have developed all the way and finally it has become almost a clay road.

Important establishments like sector office of Border Guard Bangladesh, BNS Titumir, BNS School and College, Anchorage School, Naval Admission Centre, Naval Colony, Police Lines, Mujgunni Children's Park, Rayer Mahol Degree College, Imam Training Centre, and Bastuhara kitchen market are located near the road.

More than 2,000 people -- including students, and government officials and employees -- have to use the road on a daily basis, said residents.

The people living on the city's western part -- including Khalishpur, Daulatpur and Boyra areas -- can enter the central city through the bypass road. Hossain Ali, a resident of Modinabad Residential area, said, "How long will we wait for its repair?"

Hossain runs a poultry farm beside the road. Very often, eggs are damaged amid bumpy ride on rickshaw-van. "The situation gets worse during the monsoon when the road becomes muddy," he said.

The potholes have become so deep that vehicles get stuck in those and crane has to be used to lift those. Ambulance services are severely hampered along the road.

Although 11 years went by, neither Khulna Development Authority nor Khulna City Corporation (KCC)

and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) came forward to repair the road, said Abdur Rob, a resident of Bastuhara area.

Initially, around 400 tank lorries plied the road on a daily basis. Now, the number has come down to 10 to avoid accident, said Sony Hossain, a truck driver from Khalishpur, who suffered multiple accidents there in the last two years.

"For the last three years, I haven't seen any ambulance using the road to go to Abu Naser hospital," he told this newspaper.

Last week, this correspondent



**Bituminous surface has totally disappeared from Bastuhara bypass road in Khulna. The photo was taken recently.**

PHOTO: STAR

found over 250 big potholes on the road of which both ends have become more deplorable. It is difficult for any kind of vehicles to ply on it as a recent rain has made it muddy. Besides, parts of it collapsed into the adjacent canals near the hospital.

**WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY**

Md Mortoza Al Mamun, executive engineer (project) of KDA, told The Daily Star that KDA usually constructs roads but does not look after those.

"One kilometre of the road falls in KCC area and the rest in LGED area. So, we sent letter to them on March 28, 2010 to take its responsibility. We

did the same again on February 6 in 2014, but to no avail."

"Now it is the responsibility of the two authorities to repair the road," said Mortoza Al Mamun.

Md Nuruzzaman Talukder, state officer of KCC, told this newspaper that KDA sent a letter to them to take over 1km from Abu Naser hospital to Rayer Mahol culvert, but no indication of length or width is mentioned in it. Besides, there is no data on illegal structures by the road that has no drain and footpath as well, he said.

Mohammad Hossain, assistant engineer of KCC, said, a private power

company gave them Tk 7.5 crore to repair the road as it recently dug the road to set up gas pipeline. "The company is still examining whether there is any leak in the line," he said, adding, "Once it gives us clearance, road repair work will start."

Bidyut Kumar Das, upazila engineer of LGED in Dumuria upazila, said, "We are yet to decide on taking over their part because it doesn't match with LGED criteria."

Earlier on August 22 in 2019, The Daily Star ran a story on the city's Sonadanga bypass connectivity road, which has remained in similar state.

## Introduce free internet packages for students: UGC

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has urged the government to introduce free internet packages for university students to enable them to attend online education.

In a letter sent to the education ministry on Tuesday, the regulatory body also sought grants or soft loans for students who need to buy smartphones to take part in online classes. UGC Chairperson Prof Kazi Shahidullah said they have sent copies of the letter to the post and telecommunications division; ICT division; and posts, telecommunications and information technology ministry.

"We hope to get a positive nod from the government. It is an important issue if we want online classes at universities to run smoothly," he said, adding "Universities should ensure at least 80 percent attendance of students in online classes."

UGC sought the grants/soft loan after an online survey of students and teachers of public and private universities showed at least 13 percent students do not have smartphones, according to Shahidullah.

All universities in the country were closed down on March 17, are currently scheduled to remain closed till August 6.

On June 25, UGC at a meeting with VCs of public universities urged universities to start offering online classes to avoid possible session jams.

Though most VCs agreed, they cited lack of facilities at institutions and uneven internet access of students as obstructions to implementing it. The VCs also sought internet packages for students so they can join online classes.

On June 22, the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh had also called for affordable internet packages for students.

At an online press conference on Thursday, University Teachers' Network -- an association of public and private university teachers -- demanded a special allowance of Tk 3,000 per month for each student infected with the coronavirus. They demanded 50 percent waiver of all tuition fees at private universities.

The organisation also sought one-time or long-term scholarships, interest-free loan of Tk 20,000 for at least half of the students of public universities.

## Steadfast to his oath

Doctor returns to practice after beating Covid-19, provides free oxygen service

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been countless incidents across the country of medical services becoming scarce, from overwhelmed hospitals to shut-down private practices. And yet, there were hundreds of doctors and staff who remained resolute to their oath of serving patients.

Md Yusuf Faruqi Parvez is one of them, who put himself on the line and had to pay for it, but it did not deter him.

Since the pandemic began, Dr Parvez -- from Chattogram's Hathazari -- continued treating people at his two chambers; one at the upazila's Aman Bazar and the other at the port city's Rahattarpool area.

On May 31, Parvez tested Covid-19 positive. With fever and breathing problems, he was admitted to a private hospital in the city.

It took him nine days at the hospital to recover, after which he went into self-isolation for 21 days.

"When most doctors stopped private practice, patients fell into deep trouble," said Dr Parvez. "Though I knew I could be infected if I continued private practice, I never thought of absconding from my duties. Where would patients go if we all shut our doors?"

"When I tested positive, all I could think of was recovering and getting back to work," Parvez told this newspaper recently.

But this was not a one-off incident. Over the years, the physician has cultivated a reputation as a "doctor of the poor".

After obtaining his MBBS degree in 2004 from Chattogram Medical College, Parvez set up his chamber, but never set a fee for his patients, locals said. He treated insolvent patients for free and sometimes even helped them avail medicine.

From his first-hand experience with Covid-19, Parvez realised oxygen support can be the difference between life and death for patients, which is difficult to avail especially for those in rural areas.

Parvez bought 11 oxygen cylinders to provide emergency support to patients with respiratory distress, free of cost. He circulated his initiative through local public representatives of Hathazari upazila and through social media.

When Omar Faruque (49), a resident of the upazila, was having difficulty breathing, his family was in panic. "A relative gave me the doctor's phone number. I called and informed him of the patient's condition," said Rashed Liton, Omar's brother. "The doctor suggested primary treatment and sent his volunteers with oxygen cylinders on our way."

"They arrived within 15 minutes and we were very relieved," Liton said. Another patient, Md Yunus (70), also received oxygen support from Parvez after he was having trouble breathing last week, said Fazal Ahmed, the patient's cousin.

"I have a plan to set up an isolation centre to treat Covid-19 patients who are suffering from mild to moderate symptoms," the Dr Parvez told this newspaper.



Dr Yusuf Faruqi Parvez



**India's 2nd Covid vaccine cleared for human trials**

The Drug Controller General of India has approved pharmaceutical firm Zydus Cadila to start Phase I and Phase II human clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine. This is the second vaccine after Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech's COVAXIN to get the approval. Drug manufacturers around the world are racing to develop a vaccine against the novel coronavirus; a novel virus is one that has never previously been identified in humans, making the task of creating a vaccine that much harder. India, a leading manufacturer of vaccines and generic medicines, is expected to play a key role in this race, with several institutes working on different drugs. There are at least 17 vaccines being tested on humans across the world currently.

**Europe radioactivity likely linked to nuke reactor: UN**

Slightly higher levels of radioactivity detected in northern Europe last week are likely linked to a nuclear reactor, the UN nuclear watchdog said yesterday. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it could not yet determine where the reactor was located after several northern European countries, including Finland and Sweden, noted elevated levels of radioactivity last week. One Dutch institute said the source was western Russia, while another theory was that it came from wood burned in Latvia that was still contaminated from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Russian nuclear power producer Rosenergoatom has denied any incident at its two plants, while a French NGO dismissed the Latvia theory.



**France gets new PM as Macron charts 'new course'**

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday named a senior bureaucrat to replace Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, whose government resigned after a poor local election showing for the ruling party. The new premier, Jean Castex, officially a member of the right-wing opposition but in charge of overseeing the country's progressive emergence from coronavirus lockdown, is taking over as Philippe leaves the post after three years, the Elysee Palace announced. Macron has said he will set a "new course" for the government as the country grapples with the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. A wider cabinet reshuffle could now come later in the day.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP, NDTV



Supporters raise white paper to avoid slogans banned under the national security law as they support arrested anti-law protester, as a prison van leaves Eastern court in Hong Kong yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

**Age of expansionism over**

*Modi tells troops during China border visit after clash*

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing troops during a surprise visit to a forward post in Ladakh yesterday, said: "The weak can never accomplish peace, the brave do."

Describing the soldiers as "the braves of the soil", the Prime Minister said the "enemy has seen your fire and fury," delivering a strong, direct message to China after the June 15 clash in which 20 soldiers were killed in action.

"The age of expansionism is over, this is the age of development. History is witness that expansionist forces have either lost or were forced to turn back," said the Prime Minister, not mentioning China.

"Every single Indian across the world, especially in India, has the belief that you all can deliver and keep the nation strong and safe. Your courage is higher than the heights where you are stationed. Your arms are as strong as the mountains that surround you. Your confidence, determination and belief are as immovable as the peaks here."

The PM's visit served as a powerful statement against Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual

Control (LAC) since early May, which escalated to a deadly brawl on June 15 in which 20 soldiers were killed and over 70 injured. Army sources said 45 Chinese soldiers were killed or injured.

Chants of "Bharat Mata ki jai" and "Vande Mataram" broke out when he arrived at Nimu earlier yesterday. A video showed soldiers cheering as the Prime Minister walked amidst them, accompanied by Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, and Army Chief General MM Naravane. He was flown by chopper to Nimu, 11,000 feet up in the Himalayas and on the banks of the river Indus.

PM Modi first interacted with soldiers from the Army, Air Force and Indo-Tibetan Border Police, sitting in a camouflage tent. Later, he addressed the troops, reports NDTV.

"Our enemies have seen your Fire and your Fury," he said, addressing the XIV Corps of the Army in Leh. Modi also visited a hospital where several soldiers wounded in the clash are recovering. China and India have long had a prickly relationship.

Both sides have blamed each other for the clash and since sent thousands of extra troops to the region, reports AFP.



**JOURNALIST KHASHOGGI MURDER**

**Turkey opens trial of 20 Saudis in absentia**

AFP, Istanbul

Twenty Saudi suspects including two former aides to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman went on trial in absentia in Turkey yesterday, accused of killing and dismembering journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018.

Khashoggi, 59, was an insider-turned-critic who wrote for The Washington Post before he was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018 where he had gone to obtain documents for his wedding to Turkish fiancée Hatice Cengiz.

Turkish prosecutors claim Saudi deputy intelligence chief Ahmed al-Assiri and the royal court's media czar Saud al-Qahtani led the operation and gave orders to a Saudi hit team.

They were formally charged in March with "instigating the deliberate and monstrous killing, causing torment".

Eighteen others suspects -- including intelligence operative Maher Mutreb who frequently travelled with the crown prince on foreign tours, forensic expert Salah al-Tubaigy and Fahad al-Balawi, a member of the Saudi royal guard -- were charged with "deliberately and monstrously killing, causing torment".

The prosecutor has already issued arrest warrants for the suspects who are not in Turkey. Cengiz, who is a complainant in the case, was attending the trial alongside the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard.

Yasin Aktay, a close friend of Khashoggi and advisor to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party, was also in the courtroom.

Erdogan has said the order to murder Khashoggi came from "the highest levels" of the Saudi government but never blamed Prince Mohammed.



**They don't deserve it**

FROM PAGE 1

On Thursday, UNB reported that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired a meeting that confirmed the decision.

Textile and Jute Minister Gazi on Monday said, during a virtual press briefing, "The step has been taken as Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) continues to incur heavy losses."

He also said the financial benefits of all retired workers, and wages and benefits of all current workers would be paid in due course. A Tk 5,000-crore fund will be allocated for this purpose.

"The mills will be modernised and re-opened under PPP [Public-Private Partnership], joint venture or lease process. And, these laid-off workers will be given priority while manning these modernised mills," said Gazi, who himself is a successful businessman.

That the BJMC has been a losing concern over the years and privatisation is a popular way out for the government is nothing new.

But the pertinent question is whether it was the right time for the government to make such a decision when protecting every job, be it in the formal or informal sector, should have been the utmost priority.

The government had announced a stimulus package of over Tk 1 lakh crore to revive an economy battered by the pandemic. The objective of the package was to keep the factory running and avoiding massive unemployment.

In that context, the decision to lay off jute mill workers was anything but protecting the working class. Rather, it amounts to throwing those workers into the deep end of poverty. Besides, it will also embolden private entities in the country to follow suit.

Reacting to the decision, Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, a professor of Dhaka University's Economics department, told an English language daily on Monday, "If the government shuts down factories and terminates workers, it could encourage other sectors to fire workers."

The government should provide cash grants to people in need to contain the ballooning poverty; it cannot make people jobless, he added.

But the question is why was the government in a mad rush to close them down, going against an otherwise visibly generous approach of providing subsidies in some other sectors?

According to Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), in FY 2019, the government paid Tk 8,992 crore as capacity payments to the power sector -- a 398 percent increase from FY 2010, when the subsidy was Tk 1,790 crore.

And that astronomical figure (Tk 8,992 crore in FY 2019) is higher than the Tk 5,000 crore the government has offered to pay through what it called a "golden handshake".

For the deeply aggrieved jute mill workers, it was the final nail in the coffin. Mizanur Rahman, a worker of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills in Khulna, summed up the grim prospect well.

"The government decided to sack us at a time when we are already in deep trouble due to the pandemic.

"We have been living in quarters for labourers at the jute mills for generations. Where will we go with our family members during this pandemic? Where will we get jobs when all the factories are firing workers?" Mizanur was quoted in a The Daily Star report titled "Workers protest jute mill closure" on June 30.

It means workers will not only lose their jobs, but will also be ejected from their homes and their children deprived of free education.

The coronavirus pandemic is showing no signs of slowing down and the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Monday said, "We all want this to be over. We all want to get on with our lives. But the hard reality is that this is not even close to being over."

And this is more pertinent for Bangladesh where Covid-19 infections and deaths are still rising. Besides, the country's healthcare experts are not sure how long it will take to return to normalcy.

The jute and textile minister said the laid-off workers will get job 'priority' once factories are modernised and relaunched through public-private partnership or by private enterprises. It is not only a distant reality, but proved to be a hollow promise in the past, and has been well-documented.

The two investigative reports in The Daily Star in recent memory -- "JUTE DAY: Reality vs Labour law" and "Jute Workers: No pay scale in 9 years, no pay for months" -- have shed light on how the once topmost foreign exchange earning sector has faced a gradual decline and how the workers were deprived over the years.

However, who is responsible for the fall of the public jute mills is not an issue at the moment.

The issue is whether the jute mill workers deserve such harsh treatment from the government in such a trying situation. Do they deserve to be just thrown away only because they are not profitable? Do family members of workers deserve to be deprived of basic rights like accommodation and education?

We beg to differ.

**US logs record daily cases**

*UK eases quarantine as Beijing lifts virus curbs*

AFP, Miami

The United States posted a record 53,000 new coronavirus cases as the deadly pandemic accelerated across the Americas, but its slowdown in Europe led Britain to announce yesterday its first exemptions to its quarantine rules.

With Europe looking to turn the page on the biggest public health crisis in modern history, travelers arriving into Britain from Germany, France, Spain and Italy will no longer be required to self-isolate starting July 10.

Beijing has contained transmission of a new coronavirus outbreak and will lift travel restrictions on most residents at midnight, city authorities said yesterday, weeks after a new wave of infections broke out in the Chinese capital.

**E-waste levels surge 20pc in 5 yrs: UN**

AFP, Paris

Humans discarded more than 50 million tonnes of electronic waste last year -- an increase of 20 percent in just five years -- making tech refuse the world's fastest growing waste problem, the United Nations said Thursday.

In its annual report on e-waste -- tossed away smartphones, computers, white goods and electronic car parts -- the UN said that materials worth more than \$55 billion (50 billion euros) were being wasted every year.

In 2019 only 17 percent of the year's 53 million tonnes of e-waste was recycled, with the rest ending up in scrapheaps or landfill.

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**Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)**

No. BSMRAAU/Registrar-172/2020/34 Date: 04/07/2020

Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Education (MOE)/Secondary and Higher Education Division.
Agency	: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation & Aerospace University (BSMRAAU)/University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC).
Procuring entity name	: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation & Aerospace University (BSMRAAU), Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Procuring entity code	:
Procuring entity district	: Dhaka.
Expression of Interest for Selection of	: Local Consulting Firm having foreign consultant is preferred.
Title of service	: Feasibility Study for the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation & Aerospace University Development Project.
EOI Ref. No.	: BSMRAAU/Registrar-172/2020/34
Date	: 04/07/2020.
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>	
Procurement sub-method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>	
Budget and source of funds	: GOB (Development Budget).
Development partners	: GOB.
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>	
Project/programme name	: Feasibility Study for the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation & Aerospace University Development Project.
EOI closing date and time	: 25/07/2020, 02:00pm.
<b>INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT</b>	
Brief description of assignment	: a) Different types of survey such as digital, topographical, land use, physical feature, hydrological, archaeological, accommodation, geological, traffic and transportation, drainage, existing flora and fauna and other relevant surveys of 638.5428 (six hundred thirty-eight and point five four two eight) acres land for the preparation of master plan. b) Conducting detailed impact assessment (i.e. need analysis, financial, environmental, social, vehicle movement, implementation plan etc.). c) Preparation of a Master plan including 2-D and 3-D view with animation for at least next fifty years or above of BSMRAAU. Consultant has to submit a preliminary conceptual layout with soft & hard copy including 3D view with animation. d) Guideline of optimum use of land. e) Sub-soil investigation. f) Summarized related infrastructure of BSMRAAU for at least next fifty years. g) Feasibility Study with Conceptual Architectural 3D View (for each building four images) of proposed 116 or more numbers of buildings/structures for preparation of BSMRAAU development project. h) Project cost estimation including construction, land acquisition, resettlement/compensation & other related costs. i) Preparation of DPP for BSMRAAU Development Project by the instruction of BSMRAAU Authority, UGC and MOE. The number of DPP copy should be ensured as needed. j) Preparation of waste management plan for BSMRAAU. k) Discussion about scope of job opportunity for aviation and aerospace graduates, demand of aviation and aerospace graduates, present and future status of research in aviation and aerospace sector, socio-economics condition of Bangladesh and in the project area. l) All reports and document to be supplied in hard & soft form. The number of supplied copies to be defined by the BSMRAAU authority.
Experience, resources and delivery capacity required	: a. Background of the firm with brochure. b. Minimum 10 years' experience of the firm for preparation of digital master plan, different survey and assessment, preparation of DPP, architectural & engineering design, drawings, estimation and supervision of construction works. The firm must have the experience of consultancy service of minimum 03 (three) public university/institute (aviation and aerospace university is highly preferred). c. Particular experience in design & drawings of Academic/Institutional facilities under any public University/institute (aviation and aerospace university is highly preferred) and at least one contract value of Taka 1.00 (one) crore. d. Specific experience in preparation of a complete and full-fledged master plan including rehabilitation plan for a whole complex showing proposed structure under any public University/institute (aviation and aerospace university is highly preferred). e. Availability & summary of qualification of key professional and experience of technical staff. f. Up-to-date trade license, TIN certificate, VAT registration and other necessary relevant documents. g. Minimum 03 (three) years audit report & bank solvency certificate of the firm.
Other details (if applicable)	: Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. Consultant will be selected in accordance with PPA/2006 and PPR/2008 and Public Procurement Procedures issued by GOB with its updated amendment. b) Interested consultant may obtain further information at the address below during office hour. c) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever. d) EOI shall be submitted in sealed envelope, delivered to the address of the undersigned.
Association with foreign firms is	: Encouraged.
<b>EOI DETAIL INFORMATION</b>	
Ref No.	: NA
Phrasing of services	: BSMRAAU Liaison Office, Old Airport, Tejgaon, Dhaka
Location	: BSMRAAU Liaison Office, Old Airport, Tejgaon, Dhaka
Start date	: 04/07/2020
Completion date	: 25/07/2020
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>	
Name of official inviting EOI	: Air Commodore Md. Zahidul Sayeed.
Designation of official inviting EOI	: Registrar, BSMRAAU.
Contact details	: Group Captain Md. Maksudul Alam, Project Director (Acting), Mobile: 01769995054, maksudul815@bsmraau.edu.bd
Address of the office inviting EOI	: BSMRAAU, Liaison Office, Old Airport, Tejgaon, Dhaka.
Email address of office inviting EOI	: E-mail: registrar@bsmraau.edu.bd
<b>Registrar</b> Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation & Aerospace University	
GD-1074	



Pre-rendered model of the universe of 'Omor'.

# Owned, 'Omor' and a dystopian masterpiece

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Writers are usually advised to shy away from words like 'masterpiece', 'classic', 'perfect' – or other bold terms and such, especially in an industry that tries to promote mediocrity as a given. Quite often, the lack of equipment, manpower and investment is cited as a reason. Yet, the music video for Owned's latest release *Omor* was perfect for what it set out to accomplish, even though it was made by just one man.

Before getting ahead of myself, Owned is a rock band from Dhaka that has continuously and diligently delivered nothing but excellence for the better part of a decade now. Consisting of A K Ratul, A K Samee, Fasihuddin Ahmed Itmam and Pritom Arefin, their signature, nuanced grunge sound is



Owned

with the song, I realised that it deals with the theme of immortality. I, myself had been designing what I had planned to be a web-series with similar themes. I thought it would merge pretty well."

The video, powered by live2web, follows the journey of an anthropomorphic pig through multiple dystopian realms. It also includes fully-rendered models of the band members themselves. "I took their photos



An unused shot of the video's protagonist.

from different angles and rendered them together," shrugged the nonchalant animator, "In the end, it was the rendering that took

quite a toll." Even though the scenes were completed in about four months, the making of the video itself took an entire month for Ali's computer. Essentially, just one person accomplished the job of an entire studio full of animators.

"Ali was cordial when it came to our feedbacks," says A K Samee. "We told him to 'go nuts' with the style, but inserted references from our favourite pop-culture phenomenon for ourselves." Samee insisted that even though the easter eggs were put in the video for the band's own amusement, many found them and shared them online. "I am surprised that so many people picked up on those, as it would require multiple re-watches," said the drummer.

Owned shared that the video is the first of a trilogy, that would be made in partnership with Locust Productions. The band is also set to complete their trilogy of albums with *Owned 3*. "The pandemic has definitely hurt our plans, but we will finish the album as soon as we can," said Ratul. In the meantime, I will enjoy multiple re-watches of *Omor*.

## "We create our own limitations as artistes"

- Masud Hasan Ujjal

SHARMIN JOYA

Masud Hasan Ujjal, a graduate of Charukola, is known for his unconventionality. He established himself as a painter before finding his feet as a director. His artistic inspirations are evident in his storytelling. Ujjal presents his works as visual poetry, with thought-provoking social and cultural messages, in the form of surrealist art. Ujjal's first film, *Unoponchash Batash*, was set to release this March, but it was delayed indefinitely due to the ongoing pandemic. In an interview with *The Daily Star*, the director shared his views on contemporary projects and shed light on ways that the industry can get back on track.

According to Ujjal, budget issues are not the definitive reason behind the deterioration of the television industry. "My project, *Rod Mekho Shurjomukhi*, was previewed in Pune as a visual text in classrooms," he shares. "To be frank, it was a low-budget production. I believe that talent and presentation are what matters, and the budget is not always the main obstacle."

For the past decade, Bangladesh's television industry is going through tough times. Tele-fictions lack morals and social messages. At the same time, the industry is struggling to draw audiences that are accepting of diverse stories and patterns. Sadly, many have grown comfortable with these practices. "We are all actually under the custody of capitalists. They have successfully captured everything, including the world of art," asserts Ujjal.

Ujjal also adds that the matter of survival often arises when artistes and creators confront the problems. "We create our own limitations as artistes," he says. "We all have to face the reality of survival, but the parameters have to be within the line. Otherwise, we cannot expect a swift growth in art."

The director believes that the race of having luxuries has blinded the society. In this process, the capitalists are not

only benefitting materialistically, but also technically, as it keeps people away from conspiracies that hinder the power of raising voices against all kinds of domination.

Nowadays, most stories on television lack depth. In line with that thought, Ujjal explains that in literature, films and television, there is no mark or clear vision about the contemporary social and political conditions. "The Renaissance era had an agenda of taking the art and culture from the middle to the modern age. It upheld the unhealthy compromises, for which a revolution took place," he says. "We are going through a 'Renaissance' of sorts, and the time highly demands an insurgence."

Ujjal adds that productions targeting the masses stir excitement, but are forgotten after a while. On the other hand, timeless stories are not widely applauded by audiences, but they are relevant throughout different ages. "Public interest is always harmful for art," he says. "Hyped stories are never responsible for bringing positive changes in taste. They don't make people realise their obligations towards preserving their culture."

According to the director, the patterns of filmmaking in Bangladesh are questionable. "We are either following European formats or Korean and Iranian narratives, to gain international funds and acclaim. Such practices have kept us away from creating our own language of cinema," says Ujjal. "We must be confident in ourselves and create our own path. We should not follow anyone else," he adds.

Ujjal further shares that OTT platforms, controlled by corporates, are not offering proper and fair appraisals to films. They are now trying to take advantage of the crisis the film industry is going through, as currently, cinema theatres are shut. "Our entertainment arena has to change and rethink certain patterns. Otherwise, we will face an irrecoverable lapse in no time," he concludes.



The band members' faces were rendered in 3D.

recognisable in a heartbeat. Yet, their latest music video helps establish new standards for the band.

"From the outset, we did not want to do a live-action music video this time," says frontman A K Ratul, who is also a talented music producer in his own right. "It was quite a hunt, looking for someone who understood our vision and could get the job done." The band came across animator Ali Arman Asgar, and this is where it instantly clicked.

Ali, who is the CEO of Locust Productions, worked a painstaking eight hours a day for four months to turn the concept for *Omor* into reality. "When the band came to me



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



"Dance gives me the wings to fly towards freedom"

-- Rachel Priyanka Perris

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAAR

Gaudiya Nritya exponent Rachel Priyanka Perris has mesmerised audiences with her performances both at home and abroad. The dance scholar, who recently completed her Masters of Philosophy under the Gaudiya maestro Mohua Mukherjee, is currently a lecturer at the Department of Dance, University of Dhaka (DU). She conducted a webinar on *Sculptures of Gaudiya Dancers at Bangladesh National Museum* on the Facebook page of Gaudiya Nritya Bharati on June 24. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the artiste talks about her recent online initiatives, her future plans and more.

**Tell us a little about the webinar you conducted recently.**

There are different ancient sculptures and statues at Bangladesh National Museum. If you look at them closely, you will see that some of them are standing in dance postures. The *Hasta Mudras, Sthanaks, Avinaya* and *Rasa* of these statues are very similar to Bangla classical dance, known as Gaudiya Nritya. The webinar highlighted the contribution of these statues and sculptures on Gaudiya Nritya.

**When did you last perform on stage?**

My last performance was on March 15 for *MujibBorsho* celebrations. Soon after that, the whole country went into isolation.

**Have you been working on any videos or virtual performances lately?**

I started uploading online videos of my performances from home from March 26. The first video I uploaded was a duet, where my friend Ayan Mukherjee played the Rabindra Sangeet *Akash Bhora Shurjo Tara* on sitar from India, and I performed from Bangladesh. I also released my performance *Krishnakali: A tribute to Rabindranath Tagore*, where I collaborated with Joyita. I also participated in the Gaudiya Nritya Festival organised by Mitrayan Institute of Dance and Research and British Council's event Women of the World (WOW), along with many other online performances and fundraising events. I plan to start my online classes at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy soon and I will also be conducting my regular lectures with my DU batches in the upcoming weeks.

**How are you staying fit, keeping up your creative energy and spending time at home nowadays?**

Being a lecturer and a professional performer, I seldom have the time to dance just for my own joy. Dance gives me the wings to fly towards freedom. Fortunately, staying at home has given me the opportunity to dive back into my passion for dancing and also focus on my fitness. I am also spending a lot more time with my family, especially with my parents.

## Prospects of returning to the sets safely

SHABABA IQBAL

Recently, film, TV and web series shoots across the country were permitted to resume, with strict conditions. However, since coronavirus cases are still on the rise, many prolific artistes have not returned to the sets yet, due to safety concerns. As the entertainment arena tries to figure out how to move forward, several professionals from across the film and television fraternities are wondering not just when they might return to work, but also what the post-pandemic sets will even look like. *The Daily Star* spoke to a spectrum of film and television artistes about their thoughts and predictions regarding the future and the prospects of returning to work – safely – in a post-pandemic world, whenever that may be.

**Redoan Rony:** Productions are not going to be as largescale as they could be before. The make-up artistes and costume designers will have to be especially careful, since their jobs involve a lot of human contact. In addition, audiences will be apprehensive of going out to cinema theatres. The future of our film industry lies in digital distribution. Filmmakers will have to pitch their movies to streaming services, as they will be more prevalent than ever.

**Mizanur Rahman Aryan:** Even after the pandemic subsidies, the number of people on the sets will be vastly reduced. I will be shooting with a completely healthy team. In any case, as a director, I will keep pulse oximeters, blood pressure meters, glucose monitors and nebulisers readily available for my cast and crew members, once we begin working again. I have written some scripts that have indoor scenes and require very few actors. However, I have not compromised on the essence of the stories. Other than that, I have worked on some drawing animation short films with a team in Kolkata, through video conferences. I assume that it will take at least six more months for the circumstances to improve.

**Afran Nisho:** Although some shoots have started with social distancing and other such precautionary measures on the sets, I don't think those arrangements will be sustainable after a point. As a solution, I

imagine we will have to work with a team-based system. A small group of people will be shooting and quarantining together in a specific area for ten to fifteen days, and only return home once the entire project wraps up. They will have to stay in isolation in their homes for two weeks afterwards. People have been calling me for my shooting dates, but I have not committed to anything yet. I want to be able to support my family and do what I love, but only when everyone involved feels safe.

**Sabila Nur:** I have been in talks with my colleagues regarding a few Eid-Ul-Azha projects, but I have not made any actual decisions yet. Shooting as we know it will change in the future. We will not be travelling and working with an entourage of thirty to sixty people, like we used to. I hope that rigorous cleaning and disinfecting of the washrooms in the shooting houses become the norm, and actors start using their personal products to do their own make-up. On a positive note, I have been reflecting upon my own

work and the kind of scripts I want to choose, during this hiatus. I will be more energised and motivated once I resume work.

**Bidya Sinha Mim:** Acting is meant to be an interactive profession and we are used to being around large groups. Socially distant films are just not the same. The world of cinema is not doing well at all. It will take at least two years for the industry to recover from the pandemic. I don't think we can fully return to regular life, until a vaccine is available for the virus.

**Arifin Shuvoo:** I worked on *Mission Extreme* for eleven months and it is my most challenging project yet. Sadly, the film's release was pushed back. Needless to say, this pandemic has caused me a lot of psychological distress, and I am not sure where our industry is headed. Frankly, I am not even thinking about work, as I need to stay home now for the well-being of my loved ones and myself. I hope that the virus will become less of a threat and there will be some concrete solutions in the next few months.



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD



Local dog arrested for impersonating a bird on Tweeter and posting anti-government statuses. He was sent on remand for cultural misappropriation by badly singing "Fly like an eagle" by Seal.

## Local dog arrested for defamation

### THE ANIMAL RIGHTS CORRESPONDENT

The government of the Republic of Tango recently made international headlines after arresting a three-year-old labradoodle for what they're claiming as defamation. A video -- all 30 seconds of which has since been censored -- showed Luffy, the canine in question, wearing a costume that seemed to vaguely represent a top member of congress. Within hours of the video airing, the police had shown up at Luffy's home, where she along with her owners were arrested. There was massive outrage all over the internet by citizens of Tango, citing that the video was just cute and funny. However, any and all posts hinting towards public outcry have

since been swiftly deleted, with any individuals involved also being arrested. A representative of the government had this to say about the incident. "Look, if you see the video, it's quite clear the dog and her owner were trying to threaten the power of our state and provoke violence amongst the general public," he said. He continued, "We have to remind people of how great we as a government are, and so we acted swiftly and deftly." The police force of Tango, which has been criticised by many to be just the 'henchmen' of the state, and is also accused of racial profiling and ignoring some of the actual crimes going on in the country, have been under public and international scrutiny since the events

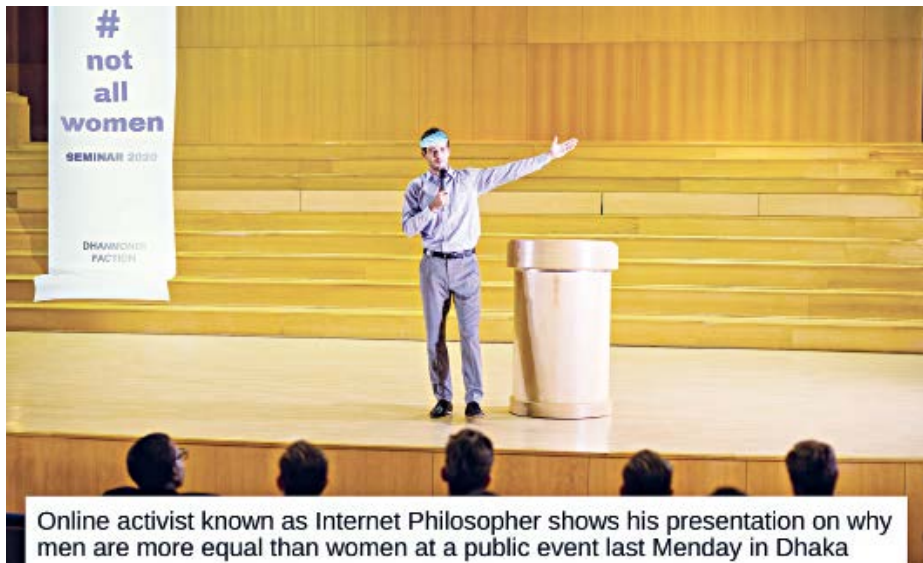
surrounding Luffy began. The police commissioner responded to us via an open letter, the contents of which were as follows: "My men are good men. News media bad men. Period." The Republic of Tango is a very small country, with a small number of inhabitants, most of whom are now behind bars due to a law that many experts are calling an "infringement on people's freedom". The "Internet Act", as it is called, allows the Tango government to arrest any individual on the internet. There are no subclauses and this vague description has allowed public officials to arrest anyone they want. Man, woman, child, and even dogs.

## Drug peddlers offering courses to escape gunfight

### POGO WRIGHTS

The alleged drug peddlers of Cox's Nagar have finally mastered the art of fleeing gunfights with police and are now offering courses for those in need. Yabashbak Sangram Parishad, an association of alleged drug peddlers, claimed to have found the lifesaving techniques of successfully fleeing gunfights. Murgi Shamim, alias Uff Bodi, self-proclaimed president of the association, talked to this newspaper yesterday on the condition of mentioning his interview as exclusive. During the interview, he placed a record of Police Headquarters before this correspondent that showed a majority of alleged drug peddlers managed to flee last month's 100 gunfights. He said, "Earlier, many alleged drug peddlers used to die in each gunfight. With our dedication and hard work, we managed to reduce the number. "Don't you see police accept that they conduct raids on information that a group of us are there. But then they only manage to kill one or at best two of us?" "Rest of us always manage to flee nowadays. Anybody who is interested in learning the advanced

techniques to flee gunfights can contact the association's secret Facebook group," he said. He then bragged about his ability to poison the whole country with his crazy pills. "It is now completely safe for the alleged drug peddlers to join the business as the association now teaches potential alleged drug peddlers to escape gunfights." When this correspondent asked why one alleged drug peddler always died in every gunfight, he responded with a threat. "You just asked an unnecessary and stupid question. You will face dire consequences for this," he said. "All credit goes to the one who does it all," he then whispered. He, however, did not elaborate on the statement. Contacted, Sheikh Wadud, marshal of Cox's Nagar Police, said he was not aware of any such course. He then praised his team saying that he led the best team of law enforcers in the world. "It was not at all surprising that none of our team members ever sustained a bullet injury from the alleged drug peddlers. Our officers are highly skilled," he said. "We are as innocent as Princess Anna. We only retaliate," he added.



Online activist known as Internet Philosopher shows his presentation on why men are more equal than women at a public event last Munday in Dhaka

## Internet man starts #notallwomen movement

### AAQIB HASIB

Quite recently, the internet found itself divided, yet again, after one man from Donmondi started the *notallwomen* (NAW) movement on the social networking site Facebook. The man, known simply by his screen name "Internet Philosopher (IA)" agreed to sit with me for voice call, in order to preserve his anonymity. "Hello Mr IA, how are you doing today?" "Hello, I am constantly struggling against the inequality created by the patriarchy and the overall underlying fallacies of this prerogative narrative that women spew from their heinous visages," replied IA, his voice heavily masked by a Darth Vader voice filter. "Um, what?" "Oh sorry, I usually only use these words when typing out long comments on Facebook. I meant I was doing alright." "O-okay. Well IA, it seems that you have stirred up quite the ruckus when you started the NAW movement. How did it all begin?" I asked. He cleared his throat. "Well, actually, it's pretty simple. We are oppressed. Free speech is a joke. Women don't know how to comprehend my intellect. They feel threatened by it and therefore assume I am a sexist. But the truth is obviously that I am an equalist. I want everyone to be treated equally. All humans are the same. And I should be able to tell a woman that they are just as bad as us." He coughed again, I could only assume the rant would continue. He continued, "But you see, women do not want to understand anything except how to jump to conclusions. I thought free speech meant I could speak my mind. But then why do these women call me out when I openly talk about my opinions? That's not how free speech works. Women are just as bad as men, and that's why I started the NAW movement. It's to remind us to speak out against the oppression that men are under due to the constant scrutiny

woman put us under. Why should I have to think before I start typing up a status on Facebook? Where's the equality in that? Everyone is part of the problem. Not just men. They keep telling each other how great they are, but not all of them!" "So what would you say is the root cause of this 'problem' that you're talking about?" "The problem is society. Men and women, can both do bad things. Look at the wife of Captain Jake Ishparrow, she lied about him assaulting her. But now we know the truth. So, it's definitive, not all women are as great as they say they are. Therefore, the solution is to be willing to learn and reflect on your experiences," he replied calmly. "Oh, okay," I replied, somewhat surprised by this turn of events. "So, you're willing to learn?" "Yes, definitely! I am always looking for ways in which my knowledge matrix can be further updated with all new forms of lexicon and discourse." "Well, I would like to help do that. Anecdotes aside, such as the one you mentioned about Captain Jake, statistically, women are more likely to --" "STOP. You understood nothing I said. There's no way to prove statistics, math is dumb. Give me real-life experience, anecdotes are facts. And facts are the only thing that matter. Stop reading between the lines, there is nothing there. I am a male feminist. An equalist, which is better than a feminist. Don't equate my NAW movement to the not all men tagline. They're very, very different!" he responded. "They're really not. You're just criticizing women, instead of having a proper conversation about the problem. Your social bubble may have good men in it, but that doesn't carry forward to the experiences of everyone in the world --" "Shut up," he said, cutting me off. "My social bubble is the best. I have the best friends. And anyone who doesn't like NAW can unfollow me on Facebook. And as for you, this interview is over, simp"

## First-world travel vlogger discovers Dhaka after barely interacting with locals

### SHOAB AHMED SAYAM

"Hi, everyone! Did you miss me? Of course, you did. It's your favourite wanderlust-stricken traveller, coming to you from Da...Dacca, Bangladesh," Ryan said, lying in his hospital bed, holding up the selfie-stick. After reaching Dhaka during the pandemic, Ryan got stricken with something other than wanderlust: Covid-22. In an interview with The Daily Star at the hospital, Ryan shared Dhaka's characteristics in detail, after roaming specific parts of the city for just five days, while the virus explored his body. When asked why he travelled at a time like this, he replied, "I love challenges. My thirst for exploring this planet far surpasses my fear for a tiny virus. I mean, refugees go through so much to get to my country; I want to embody that energy." "Besides, I almost forgot there was a pandemic going on with all the people surrounding me every time I went out," he said. While Ryan was getting his daily blood plasma treatment, he started talking about the locals. "The spirit Dacca residents possess is beyond amazing. While the whole world is cooped up at home, Dacca is alive and bustling. The energy here is infectious," he remarked. "They're so welcoming, so friendly. Whenever I start vlogging, they all stare at me, giving me all their attention," he continued. "They stand behind me, looking at the camera, and even try to start conversations!" "Could colonialism be a reason you get that kind of attention?" this correspondent asked. "Co-colon what? My colon is just fine, thank you. Just having some bowel trouble." Ryan became embarrassed, not because he was unaware of the selective treatment he was getting from an otherwise bigoted nation, but because along with Covid-22, he had diarrhoea. It started after he went to Old Dhaka to try 100 percent authentic traditional Bengali food. "I've to say, it was worth it. That biryani was to die for; I mean, I don't want to die right now, but you know," he said. "The rustic flavour of the rice and that traditionally spiced chicken reflected the people's souls. That Nanna guy sure knows his stuff." "Nanna died a long time ago." "No." While Ryan was mourning, this correspondent ran a thorough investigation and found that Ryan had actually gone to "New Nanna Biryani House and Chinese Kabab Restaurant", so this was definitely not worth his diarrhoea.



Doctors were able to successfully remove vlogger Ryan's failing colon but were unable to cut away his colonial beliefs.



# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

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## Too many committees spoil the broth

*Why form committees that will never fulfil their mandates?*

FROM the onset of the pandemic, citizens have been confused and frustrated about the government's lack of vision and direction in addressing the health and socio-economic implications of Covid-19 in a holistic manner. From its casual handling of the risk of spread at the initial stages to opening up of garment factories in the middle of the "general holiday" to lifting the lockdown altogether when numbers of the infected and dead were at their highest—the government seems to be making arbitrary policy decisions at every stage, leaving ordinary citizens as well as experts in bewilderment as to what the government is really thinking and what it wants to achieve in the near and far future.

A report published on July 3 highlights that the government formed myriad committees to help it make informed decisions. Unsurprisingly, however, none of these committees have thus far proved to be useful or effective. In some cases, their recommendations were simply ignored. The highest-level national committee with the Health Minister Zahid Maleque, the cabinet secretary, senior secretaries and secretaries to review and implement strategies and issue new directives, have thus far met a total of three times, with the health minister himself admitting that—despite being the chairman of the said committee—he had no idea that the decision to open garment factories had been taken. Yet other committees were not even convened, added the report.

The advisory committees that did meet and put forward policy recommendations did not fare much better, with most of their recommendations on how to contain community transmission or improving the quality of services at hospitals being disregarded by the government, including a warning that the number of Covid-19 cases would rise unless certain conditions were met before easing the 66-day shutdown.

It is apparent that the committees formed have not fulfilled their mandates. Why, then, continue to form more such committees, as the DGHS did on June 27, and then form yet more committees to coordinate and oversee the activities of the previously formed committees? The government's bureaucratic-driven approach has been mired in inefficiencies, mismanagement and lack of coordination from the very start, and it is increasingly becoming evident that the government is not serious at all about developing and implementing a holistic way forward that takes into consideration the interests and well-being of all its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable.

We urge the government and its bureaucrats to take their mandate seriously—the well-being of the nation and its citizens depends upon it.

## Mymensingh's Ali sets a benevolent example

*Poet-turned-philanthropist providing through multiple means*

IT is heartening to learn from a recent report published in this daily that a 49-year-old poet in Mymensingh named Ali Yusuf has been selflessly serving his community for a long time, and even more extensively, after the pandemic struck Bangladesh. Inspired by the altruistic nature of his parents—his father was a truck driver who helped his poor relatives with the full support of his spouse—Ali now continues his philanthropic work with the earnings from his printing press, along with the support from his wife, three children and an orphaned nephew, who is part of their family.

Ali is the perfect example of how a person can be helpful to fellow human beings in one's own way, no matter the magnitude of the work that they do. He serves as the coordinator of one of the three teams of volunteers that bury or cremate deceased Covid-19 patients in Mymensingh city. The humble man is also known to arrange financial aid for the needy through his influential social media handle. When countless people are taking a blow from the economic recession, Ali and his volunteers continue to arrange and distribute relief materials to the underprivileged. A blood donor himself, Ali is also in the advisory body of three blood donation groups and organises blood donation camps on a regular basis.

At a time when many of us are going through our own hardships and can barely make any time to check the state our neighbours are in, a modest Ali continues to do his part relentlessly, inspiring countless people in the process, including the volunteers who have been working with him. Yet, he credits them and his family members for his actions. Ali's extended hands to the needy should serve as an example for the rich and the affluent to follow. We strongly believe that if more people can adopt similar endeavours in their respective communities, it will play a vital role and go a long way to ameliorate the anguish that seems to be ever so prevalent during the pandemic.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### A possible genocide again?

Myanmar's new threat of "clearance operations" is a disturbing echo of atrocities committed against the Rohingya minority and a reminder of the risks of ongoing impunity. Thousands of mostly ethnic Rakhine civilians have fled their homes. Less than three years ago, more than 700,000 ethnic Rohingya fled coordinated attacks that amounted to no less than genocide. The International Court of Justice has since ordered Myanmar to take emergency measures to prevent genocide, but this latest threat shows Myanmar has not changed. The failure of the United States and other countries to recognise previous attacks for what they are and to take further action is putting more lives at risk. We urge Secretary Pompeo to declare the attacks on the Rohingya as genocide and crimes against humanity and to take action to hold Myanmar accountable.

Daniel P Sullivan, by email

# End of state-owned jute mills: why close when you can reform?



OF MAGIC & MADNESS  
BADIUZZAMAN BAY

SO it's official now. The government is going to shut down all 25 state-owned jute mills operated by Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and lay off about 25,000 workers involved with them. The prime minister approved the decision on Thursday, according to UNB, putting an end to speculations following an announcement by the textiles and jute minister to that effect last Sunday. Unless there is a reversal of decisions which is unlikely at this point, we're going to witness a historic moment for Bangladesh's jute industry, although it's not the one we were promised, nor can we let it pass without proper scrutiny of what has led to this moment and what we could have done to avoid it.

Here's what we know so far: the wages and benefits of all current workers (24,886) and the dues of 8,956 already retired workers of those jute mills will be paid within "the quickest possible time", said the principal secretary to the prime minister. A Tk 5,000-crore fund will be allocated for this purpose. On average, each worker will get Tk 13.86 lakh, and the payments will be made directly to their bank accounts. As for the future of the laid-off workers, we are told that they would be trained and "given priority" in recruitment to the mills when they are "modernised" and "reopened" under Public-Private Partnerships, or some other joint ventures, or through leasing out to third parties. Details in that department are still a little sketchy.

The official narrative pins the blame for the present situation on BJMC's lack of profitability, saying it had recorded a cumulative loss of Tk 10,674 crore from 1972 until 2018-19 and cannot be viable in the face of competition from private mills. This is no doubt a huge red flag for any industry, especially in the middle of a pandemic when even profit-making industries are struggling. But what the officials have conveniently glossed over is the reason behind this turn of events. BJMC may have been a rudderless ship but it's not unmanned. It's run by real people, who have let it rot in a bottomless pit of corruption, mismanagement, lack of coordination, inefficiencies, and so on.

So what we are not being told is that loss or lack of profitability, as an excuse for outsourcing production to the private sector, is just a semantic sleight of hand to let these people and their enablers off the hook. We've heard the same excuse peddled in the past, trying to justify occasional closure or privatisation of some mills. We have heard it when the workers went on hunger marches to demand their dues. Lack of profitability is a long-worn-out excuse by now, and it's frightening that

it would be used to pass death sentence to a sector that, if properly run, has so much to offer to this nation.

Jute is called "golden fibre" not just because the fibre is golden. It's called so because it also offers a golden opportunity to turn our economy around. Jute is the second most important natural fibre in terms of global consumption after cotton, and Bangladesh has ample to offer. The country's jute manufacturing sector, one of its oldest traditional manufacturing sectors, emerged in erstwhile East Pakistan in the early 1950s, with the founding of Adamjee Jute Mills. During the 1960s and 1970s, this sector accounted for a major share of the national income. In May 1972, after Bangladesh became independent, the government nationalised the industry to streamline exports. Ironically, the main reason cited for this move was to "check corruption" in

closure of all state-owned jute mills in one fell swoop.

The history of jute in independent Bangladesh is thus one of unutilised potential and unfulfilled promises. From the wholesale nationalisation in 1972 to the wholesale denationalisation in 2020, the trajectory of the industry shows not just its declining appeal or performance through the years. It's also, importantly, an indictment of the stop-start approach of successive governments that either did too much or too little, ignoring the long-term consequences of their action. So it's little wonder that they have chosen an easy exit when push came to shove, instead of taking up the strenuous task of reforming it from the ground up.

The official narrative about closing and "reopening" the mills under private arrangements and reemploying the workers raises some questions: how can

percent in the first 11 months of FY 2019-2020. During the same period, exports of readymade garments declined by about 19 percent and exports of leather goods declined by about 22 percent. In the process, the jute sector surpassed leather to take the second place in Bangladesh's overall export trade. Meanwhile, the RMG bloodbath continues apace as global buyers withdraw orders or refuse to pay the manufacturers. Many migrant workers have already returned to Bangladesh after losing their jobs in the pandemic, making a big dent in its remittance earnings. Experts say in these difficult and changing times, sectors like livestock, jute, and agriculture can play a major role in our economic recovery. Why, then, is this regressive move to close so many jute mills at once which may set us back years, if not decades?

It's worth noting that in recent years



Activists of Left Democratic Alliance, a coalition of left-leaning political parties, protest the closure of state-owned jute mills in a human chain formed in front of Jatiya Press Club on June 28, 2020.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

the sector and ensure fair prices for jute producers. In 1973, its contribution in the overall national export was 89.9 percent. It was a golden time for the golden fibre.

In the 1980s, however, it began to lose its lustre, after synthetic materials like polythene and plastics were introduced. This led to a gradual decline in its share of the national export, overall foreign exchange earnings and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The rise of the RMG sector, regressive policies of successive governments and the push for privatisation were also responsible for the decline. Adamjee Jute Mills was closed down in 2002. Today, as far as public policies go, jute exists as a glorified relic from the past. After a brief period of euphoria over the promulgation of the Mandatory Jute Packaging Act, 2010, which paved the way for compulsory use of jute packaging for 17 products, things have come full circle, culminating with the

workers trust this promise when there is a well-documented history of the authorities failing to give them their rightful dues or break the all-powerful hold of syndicates over this industry? What guarantee do they have that their dues will be paid in full or they will be given proper wages in the privatised mills? Can denationalisation eradicate the culture of corruption and mismanagement so entrenched in the industry? Why were the calls for modernisation to make those mills profitable ignored when it is obvious that it would have cost the government a lot less than its Tk 5,000-crore settlement package? Why did the government take this decision especially when there are signs that jute is making a comeback finally?

The last point is particularly significant. According to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), exports of jute and jute products increased by about 4

there has been a resurgence of interest in jute globally, thanks to the rise in environmental awareness and greening strategies being adopted to combat climate change. In the coming days, there will be a huge demand for jute products and Bangladesh can be a global leader in this sector. The private mills are stepping up to the task as best as they can but we need those 25 public mills to be up and running again. We need them to be refurbished with modern equipment to start making profits. And we need those laid off workers to be back in the game, both for their sake and the sake of the country. Proper strategies, efficient management and diversified jute goods are key to success in this scenario.

The jute industry stands at a crossroads—we need to choose our next path very carefully.

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# Is it really different this time? Maybe.

*The Sisyphean struggle of US Blacks*

*Bicharpoti tomar bichar korbe jara, aaj jegechhe shei janata! (O Judge, those that will judge you, the people, have arisen today!)*

- From a Bangla song written during the anti-colonial movement in British India by leftist writer/composer Saill Chowdhury.



ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

IN the long tortuous history of the battle for the emancipation of Blacks that continues to this day in the US, progress has sometimes been so slow, and recalcitrant racist biases have been so resistant to change, that the tardy progress or lack thereof has been a cause of bitter frustration.

Then in one convulsive, historic jolt—society takes a quantum leap with a dramatic change.

Take two examples from US history: The emancipation proclamation in 1863 during the Civil War by US President Abraham Lincoln, and the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act by Congress in the 1960s, signed into law by US President Lyndon B. Johnson.

With emancipation and the defeat of the Confederacy at the end of the Civil War, Blacks experienced freedom for the first time. For a brief, golden period, they ran and won public office, enjoyed freedoms that the white majority took for granted.

Fast forward to the 1960s, when the nation was convulsed by the Civil Rights movement spearheaded by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. This led to the passage of landmark laws that provided federal protection against racist laws and Black vote suppression.

Yet there is a certain oddness in this progression. If emancipation had been so wonderful, how is it that nearly a century later, Blacks had to fight for civil rights all over again?

The answer lies in the deeply mixed record of the US in race relations. Just like a wave that crashes on the shore, and

then quickly recedes back into the sea, convulsive jolts moving race relations forward have invariably been followed by a strong backlash that has pulled the nation back into its dark racist past. As former US President Barack Obama once drily noted on US progress: "We zig and we zag."

I remember my joy and disbelief at Obama's election. Until then, I had thought that there was no way we would see a Black elected president in our lifetime.

What a president he was! Cerebral, polished, erudite, but also warm and kind—he rightly became a darling of the world, a living, eloquent rebuttal to the vile racist stereotypes that still endure.

Today, upon reflection, I wonder if that vicious, racist US historical penchant is reasserting itself. Obama was followed

Notice a pattern here? Progress, followed by a depressing proclivity towards racist recidivism.

What a breath of fresh air, then, to see a genuine grassroots movement blossom following the horrific racist murder of George Floyd by police. Thousands and thousands of whites joined their Black brothers and sisters to put their foot down: Enough is enough.

It really feels different this time. It's not just the demonstrations, which have been overwhelmingly peaceful and astonishingly diverse. There is a sense that somehow a spark of empathy has shot through the racial divide and caught fire.

Statuses of yesteryear's racist heroes are falling. Editors at *The New York Times* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* have quit for making a racially insensitive faux pas.



Protesters hold placards during a demonstration against the death of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody, in Washington, USA, June 13, 2020.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ERIN SCOTT

by US President Donald Trump, whose record is liberally peppered with racist stances, including promoting a bogus "birther" theory that Obama was born in Kenya, slurs against Mexicans, a US judge of Mexican descent, and most recently against China.

Princeton University has dumped the name of US President Woodrow Wilson for its prestigious centre, acknowledging Wilson's racism.

Taking a knee, the practice of Black players kneeling by one knee to protest oppression of Blacks, used to be

controversial. Now it has gone mainstream as police chiefs in several cities have done so publicly, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi along with her Democratic members took a knee to honour George Floyd.

Corporate America is expressing support. Walmart announced a USD 100 million fund to create a centre for racial equity. Apple has pledged USD 100 million towards a racial justice initiative. Department store chain Target has pledged USD 10 million to support social justice.

What's so heartwarming it that American public opinion has moved.

"A majority of American voters support the demonstrations against police brutality and racial injustice that have roiled the country over the past month, embracing ideas about bias within the criminal justice system and the persistence of systemic racism that are central tenets of the Black Lives Matter movement, according to a new national poll of registered voters by *The New York Times* and Siena College," *The New York Times* reported.

The poll found that 52 percent of white voters believe the death of George Floyd was "part of a broader pattern of excessive police violence toward African Americans."

"The numbers add to the mounting evidence that recent protests have significantly shifted public opinion on race, creating potential political allies for a movement that was, within the past decade, dismissed as fringe and divisive," the newspaper added.

No wonder Trump is flailing so hopelessly. Trump, for all his bluster, is essentially a one-trick pony.

"While (Trump) has shown little sympathy for the protesters and their fight for racial justice, and has continued to use racist language that many have denounced, voters feel favourably toward the protests and their cause," the newspaper added.

To be sure, there is a long, long way to go. Having said that, today's movement could well be remembered as a landmark in Black progress towards equality much like the end of the US Civil War and the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Ashfaque Swapan is a contributing editor for *Silicooner*, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.



# A business leader of incorruptible integrity

MAMUN RASHID

I received a short message on my phone just before noon on July 1 but could not notice it properly due to office work. The message was from Shehzi Huq that read, "My Abbu is with his dotting Shazneen and Chotoo now, Rabbir Hum Huma Kama Rabbayani Sageera." Later, one of my colleagues informed me that Mr Shamim Latifur Rahman passed away in his sleep in the late morning. I was devastated to hear the news about a person who was probably the most respected name in Bangladesh's business community for his high ethical and moral standards.

As I started to write this piece, past memories came rushing back to me. Shamim bhai was not only a good businessman but also a good soul, a well-educated and self-educated person. I had known him for more than three decades, since 1987. Transcom's office was located at 52 Motijheel, almost next to our ANZ Grindlays Bank. I had been closely associated with his businesses in many ways. We were associated in the process of acquisition of Philips, Pepsi, partial stake taking in Nestlé and Holcim, the opening of the LC for the first consignment of machines and papers for *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*. It feels just like the other day. His leadership as president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), the many meetings at my home, at his home, in his car, in hotel lobbies, at the residences of ambassadors, on planes and even outside the country—there are so many memories. We had meetings in Mumbai, Delhi, and in our Hong Kong and London offices.

All my seniors in the corporate sector used

to hold him in high regard. I have personally observed the level of admiration and respect he used to command from global corporate leaders like Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo Global, Sanjeev Mehta, Unilever's South Asia Head, and Ajaypal Banga, Global CEO of MasterCard, who was formerly East India Sales Head of Nestlé and Pepsi and later my reporting senior at Citibank NA. Even PwC global Chairman Bob Moritz in November last year was enquiring about his friend Latifur Rahman from the ICC global committee, where Mr Moritz was the president.

I took him to my classes at North South University, IBA and BRAC Business Schools to deliver lectures on "business ethics". One of his lectures at Standard Chartered Bank was on "What do we expect from a global bank?"

He was shaken by the death of his youngest daughter Shazneen Rahman, and then again by the death of his grandson, the young and brave Faraaz. But he was not broken; he was composed and dignified. He had been suffering from asthma for some time. So, he used to live in his village home surrounded by greenery.

Shamim bhai loved this country very much. Whenever we met somewhere, he used to ask me to send my car back and offered to drop me home so that he could talk on our way back. We used to have discussions on issues such as good business practices and governance in the country. He was genuinely concerned about the high number of non-performing loans and reckless lending by banks. He was a strong critic of repeated rescheduling of non-performing loans. He used to tell us that MCCI should always oppose the opportunity extended for



Latifur Rahman (1945-2020).

PHOTO: STAR

whitening black money. He felt that such a chance is an injustice to honest businessmen who pay taxes regularly.

Just a few days ago, I sent him a short message inquiring about his wellbeing. I was thinking of paying a sudden visit to his home at Chaudhagram to see him. But that was not to happen!

My last travel with him was to Mumbai, where we spent two days together at the Taj Lands End. He was voted the best businessman in the region. Mahbubur Rahman from HSBC, Shams Zaman from Citibank NA and I accompanied him from Bangladesh. We saw how much respect he

commanded from the renowned businessmen of India. Our good friend Sanjeev Mehta of Unilever almost touched his feet to pay his respect to him. Shamim bhai delivered an excellent speech on his vision and ethics in business. After returning to Bangladesh, we arranged a reception to honour and celebrate his achievement. In 2012, he became the first Bangladeshi businessperson to receive the prestigious Oslo Business for Peace Award.

I met him for the last time at his home during the farewell dinner of the US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat. He was coughing a lot and taking deep breath while talking. His European friends advised him to

buy a country house somewhere in France or England and live in a pollution-free environment. I told him, "What's the harm? It will be good for your health." He was unhappy to hear that and said, "I will stay at my village home, that is no less."

Shamim bhai used to say that businessmen should not get involved in politics. If they put sincere efforts into business, more people will get jobs and the country will move forward. Those who have worked with him would know that he trusted each of them a lot and allowed them to work independently and gave them the opportunity to lead. By virtue of his work, dedication and faithfulness, he became an iconic businessman who was well known in the international arena. He kept close contact with each and every good employee of the different companies of his group. He used to motivate and encourage them regularly.

I have never seen him compromise on the question of ethics and morality. He was also a person who implanted family values within his family. He loved his wife, children and grandchildren very dearly. He used to tell his grandchildren, "Wherever you go for higher studies, you have to come back to the country and work here. Bangladesh is your final address." My respect is also for his children and grandchildren as they are also among the finest people I have met.

The departure of such a good soul is painful. But the Almighty has a better plan for each one of us, especially a person like him. May Shamim bhai rest in peace.

Mamun Rashid is former CEO of Citibank NA, Corporate and Institutional Banking Head at Standard Chartered Bank and Commercial Banking Head at ANZ Grindlays Bank Bangladesh, and currently Country Managing Partner at PwC Bangladesh.

# A hitchhiker's guide to our educational galaxy



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

LET'S admit it: our education today is in crisis. And it was in crisis even before the pandemic was here. The pandemic has exposed the skeletons we have been hiding in the open for a long time. As we begin the centenary celebration of the oldest university

in the country, Dhaka University, we need to reflect on the "splendid imperial concession" that had made the establishment of the university possible. The birth of Dhaka University is tinged with a colonial legacy. And the university came of age when students voiced a resounding "no" to the introduction of Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. That collective "no" became the voice of the nation and eventually paved the way for the country's political freedom. The middle-class students managed to excite the imagination of the masses to pursue their freedom; it is no coincidence that the centennial celebration coincides with that of the Father of the Nation who came to political prominence during his days in Dhaka University. It is the shining star of our educational galaxy.

Then again, Dhaka University epitomises the paradoxes of our education system: it airs the fresh breath of freedom, yet it has not been able to break away from the shackles of colonial pedagogy.

The university has failed to take leadership in the academic field, update its curricula keeping pace with the best practices of the world, and form a national consciousness on knowledge development highlighting the needs for indigenisation and decolonisation. The university has simply managed to promote a fallacy that you learn more simply by loitering in the corridors of the university and pursue success by queuing up for a seat in the library at the break of dawn to sit with your BCS guidebooks. The university results have become secondary to those in competitive exams. This is symptomatic of a weak system that has stopped instilling hope in its students. Students are left to their own devices where they learn (read, memorise) on their own to become civil servants. Then there are the other groups who try to expose them to the corporate culture and eventually become grasshoppers in the service sector. These business-minded students try to blend in a corporate ecology only for a while and

sail away whenever the wind is right. We have two kinds of outputs: one group simply adds to the ring of a deeply rooted, ageing tree of bureaucracy, and the other drifts away like a dandelion with no roots of its own. If ends justify the means, surely there is something wrong with the means.

You must be thinking that with 150-plus universities in the block, why flog the old horse which is one hundred years old? It is because Dhaka University is the corpse of the century that contains "the ancient pulse of germ and breath... shrunken hard and dry" (*The Darkling Thrush* by Thomas Hardy), and we must resuscitate it not only to revive one institution but also our entire education system. Dhaka University must set the standard for others. In the absence of a local heritage, we are becoming mimic

indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts" (Antoine et al. *Curriculum Developers*). This process demands a blend of indigenous approaches and Western ones. Decolonisation, on the other hand, challenges and defies the privileged positioning of colonial ideologies and Western thoughts and approaches.

The supremacy of the west is best detected in Rudyard Kipling's "*The Ballad of East and West*". The opening line of the poem claims, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." Tagore in his essay "Creative Unity" responded to such a proposition by saying that West views the East as nothing more than a machine to run its empire. It misses to identify the human elements in us. Hence Tagore rephrased



Dhaka University is the corpse of the century that contains "the ancient pulse of germ and breath... shrunken hard and dry."

STAR FILE PHOTO

men, constantly looking for overseas benchmarks and success stories. More and more, institutions are pursuing the golden deer of world rankings and international markers. Unless our students are made proud of their heritage, they will be deceived by the corporate instruments of rankings that privilege cash investment above everything else.

I am not asking for any largescale rejection of western parameters. Any two of the terms I broached earlier would help you understand my position. Indigenisation, for instance, "is a process of naturalising

the line, saying, "Man is man, machine is machine, and never the twain shall wed."

Similarly, our educators too must remind ourselves of the human elements that form the basis of our indigenous pedagogy. Historically, we had a rich tradition of imparting knowledge that involved the *gurukul* (a mentor-mentee system). Then of course, from the 5th to the 12th centuries, the Buddhist monasteries had a serious impact on our education. Nalanda (in present-day Bihar) is a UNESCO heritage site that is dubbed the oldest university-system of education in the world. The architectural

remains of Paharpur resembling Nalanda suggest that we too have the shared legacy of education. It was a time when education was considered to be a higher virtue practiced by the monks and the novices on the order of teaching. With the advent of Islam, *madrasas* and *maktabs* were established to teach grammar, philosophy, mathematics, and law influenced by the Greek traditions inherited by Persia and the Middle East. This traditional Islamic education emphasised the importance of a connection between science and humanities. When the British came in, they deemed new applications of local education. The East India Company wanted some educated Indians to assist them in the administration of the land. They needed some local educated agents who would help them understand the local customs and laws. The establishments of the Calcutta Madrasa by Warren Hastings in 1781 for the teaching of Muslim law and a Sanskrit College in Varanasi by Jonathan Duncan in 1791 for the study of Hindu philosophy and laws are cases in point.

Conversely, the missionaries facilitated the spread of Western education in India primarily for Christianising (which they deemed equivalent to "civilising") the natives. The British government was thus divided in their views on what kind of education was to be offered to the Indians. While the orientalist preferred Indians to be given traditional Indian education, the other groups wanted a western style of education with western subjects being taught to the locals. (Our three-track education system today continues to ring the same division bells).

In 1835, Lord William Bentinck's government decided that western sciences and literature would be imparted to Indians through the medium of English. Bentinck appointed Thomas Babington Macaulay, an ardent anglicist who had absolute contempt for Indian learning, as the Chairman of the General Committee of Public Instruction. Macaulay Minutes on Education 1835 became definitive for the education that we have inherited. In his proposal of education for the Indians, Macaulay considered the oriental culture to be "defective" and "unholy". He proposed English education in place of traditional Indian learning and offering of education to a few upper and middle-class students. His infiltration theory involved the idea that in the course of time, education would trickle down to the masses. He wanted to create "brown coconut" like *sahibs* who would be brown outside, but

"white" inside. In short, Macaulayism is the policy of eliminating indigenous culture through a planned substitution with the alien culture of a colonising power via the education system.

In 1854, this changed slightly when there was an attempt to spread education by Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the company. Wood sent a dispatch to the then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie. This "Wood's Dispatch" is often called the "Magna Carta of English education in India" as it recommended, among others, the reformation of education system from the primary to the university levels, education in both English and native languages, creation of educational institutes in all provinces, establishment of at least one government school in every district, aids for affiliated private schools, and offering education to women. The inception of Universities of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay were done by 1857. This dispatch asked the government to take up the responsibility of education of the people.

Dhaka University was established in 1921 as an imperial concession for the annulment of Partition of Bengal in 1911. Soon after the annulment, Bengali Muslim elites approached the Viceroy and explained how the partition of Bengal would affect the educational progress of the Muslim community. Viceroy Lord Hardinge was instrumental in the formation of the Nathan Commission which eventually recommended the establishment of a university in Dhaka. In its first convocation, Lord Lytton said, "this University is Dhaka's greatest possession, and will do more than anything else to increase and spread the fame of Dhaka beyond the limits of Bengal or even of India itself."

Lord Lytton is partly right. Indeed, the university is famed for its involvement in various national and cultural events related to our national consciousness. But somehow, if I may surmise, the university has failed to lead from the front, especially in recent years. My position in the totem pole does not allow me to point out the evil spirits that plague the system, but as a member of this institution I look forward to the day when this university is famed for its visionary leadership that engages with its colonial past, negotiates with the machine-making pedagogy of the present, and aims for a future that frees the mind from any forms of rigidity.

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## QUOTABLE Quote



VIVEKANANDA (1863-1902)

Hindu spiritual leader and reformer.

*The whole secret of existence is to have no fear. Never fear what will become of you, depend on no one. Only the moment you reject all help are you freed.*

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- 1 Between-meals nosh
- 6 Almanac info
- 11 Hawkeye
- 12 "Carmen," for one
- 13 Pancake's kin
- 14 Car type
- 15 Pekoe and oolong
- 17 Retina setting
- 18 Creative
- 22 Notorious emperor
- 23 On cloud nine
- 27 Pollute
- 29 Shoe material
- 30 Rice and Bernstein
- 32 Ky. neighbor
- 33 Parental

### DOWN

- 1 Attack command
- 2 Neither follower
- 3 Stunned wonder
- 4 Like some photos
- 5 Leg joints
- 6 Paleontology finds
- 7 King Kong, for one
- 8 Hand over

- 9 Serving aid
- 10 Rational
- 16 Had lunch
- 18 Poker payment
- 19 Authentic
- 20 Quick cut
- 21 Warned
- 24 Golf pegs
- 25 Writer Ferber
- 26 Turn down
- 28 Highway cop
- 31 - Francisco
- 34 Purloined
- 35 Told tales
- 36 Land measure
- 37 Trounce
- 40 Try out
- 42 Droop
- 43 December 31, for one
- 44 Sluggish Williams



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

LANCE GAMES  
UNION APORIT  
REMIT GENRE  
EMBLEM RAW  
OIL REASONS  
NAY TAPPED  
RASPY  
AWHILE CAL  
CROONER CORE  
RAM STANDS  
ABBOT ANGEL  
PIANO INANE  
SATAN NASTY

## BEETLE BAILEY



## BY MORT WALKER



## BABY BLUES



## BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

# Dystopian Literature: In Conversation with Critical Discourse and Contemporary World

KAZI ASHRAF UDDIN

The twentieth century's interactions with the popular revolutions, capitalist advent, authoritarianism, World Wars, repressive state-system paves the way for a frowning skepticism about the Enlightenment metanarrative and nuances the global literary firmament with dystopian motif. And, we got classic dystopian authors like Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, William Gibson to name a few. Political sensitivity and literary imagination are the two pivotal components of their oeuvres. Dystopia, popularly conceived as an imagined state or society where suffering, injustice, repression and control mechanisms are the essentialist features, accounts for the post-apocalyptic human condition. Hence, appears the dystopian fiction showcasing such human (or posthuman)

tion, and the arts. People in general and the party members are forced to believe that black is white if the state of the party demands it which they call *doubtthinking*. In this state, people have no privacy as their apartments are equipped with telescreens so that they may be under surveillance. The so-called Thought Police or "The Private Eye" employs undercover agents so check any so-called subversive tendencies against the Big Brother. Everyone of the country is forced to love their Big Brother, an attitude they call "positive nationalism."

Yes, we are talking about Orwellian prophetic dystopian novel. Published in 1949 and set in 1984 in the fictional superstate of Oceania, Orwell's *Nineteen eighty-four: A Novel* visualizes a world-order when the world falls victim to endless

presented as false dogma which the individuals are meant to believe even if they do not have any scientific or empirical proof. We find such Orwellian resonance later in the economic concept of "propaganda model" (Chomsky and Herman) or Chomsky's "manufacturing consent." We can trace literary sampling of Foucauldian "panopticon" or Bentham's architectural surveillance in Orwell's *telescreen*, a device that is equipped with television, secret camera and microphone to bug and control any non-conformist discourse, an accusation which nowadays is unsettling big tech giants like Google, Apple and Facebook. The uncanny pop-up of Amazon or Daraz ad of my favorite ear-pods on my Facebook home page is perhaps what Orwellian telescreen or modern Alexa can perform by invading our privacy and tracking our preferences. To establish the affective control of emotion, Ministry of Love regulates, converts, and punishes any unorthodox emotional behavior and if the cases are serious, they are sent to the torture cell Room 101, a nightmarish reminder of Abu Ghraib, Alcatraz Prison or Guantanamo Bay for the contemporary readers. Even, memory hole, a device to delete unwanted and unorthodox (to the state, or course) memories is present in the novel as a hegemonic tool. Perhaps, we can relate it to the electrocution or lobotomy used in the treatment of trauma and other pneumatic discrepancies.

Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, once Bolshevik and Communist party member also disengaged himself from Stalinist ideological and literary essentialism. His discomfort with the regulatory aesthetic norm namely "socialist realism" is present in his literature. Set in a futuristic and totalitarian One State run by the dictator Benefactor (literacy predecessor of Orwellian 'Big Brother'), Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1921 novel *We*, embodies a geopolitical reorganization and hints at the occupational nature of the imperial states. The all-pervasive glass structures in order to ensure mass surveillance help us again to read what Jeremy Bentham prison-design meant. Visibility as a instrument for overpowering endorses Foucauldian Knowledge/Power nexus. The specter of Cartesian Machine-Animal (*machina animata*) returns in the form of the nameless and codified characters of the novel who are watched by secret police, psychologically castrated by Great

Operation in order to avoid mutiny, cannot have dreams and sometimes function as "tractor in human form." Zamyatin's prophecy of a late-capitalist dehumanization and post-humanist mind-body re-embodiment has a tacit resonance of Frederic Jameson's famous pronouncement, "Postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism." When someone dreams big in *We*, they are detected as having mental illness, a discursive violence that Michel Foucault has repeatedly mentioned in *The Birth of a Clinic* and *Madness and Civilization*. The use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the prolonged war causing human loss just aptly reflects the contemporary imperial attitude of the G8 nations.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931/1932), apart from its common literary chronotope of a totalitarian state in the future "World State," heavily and almost accurately anticipates the genetic, biotechnological, scientific and environmental futurism such as Psycho-Phone (machine for sleep-learning), cloning, test-tube baby, mood enhancement, classical conditioning, simulation technology and the like. The citizens of the World State with a predetermined class/caste based on their intelligence detected through "childhood indoctrination programme" resonates the race and caste politics across the world, or the contemporary polemics about eugenics.

Oftentimes called an oppressive and depressive speculative dystopian fiction, Canadian writer Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale* underscores the telling feminist question of women's position in a patriarchal matrix. The handmaid Offred is just another victim of a phallogocentric nexus who lends her womb to other elite infertile couples. Living in a repressive male-dominated state called Republic of Gilead where women have only three confined status- wives, Marthas (domestic servants) or handmaids (a form of fertility slave), Offred the handmaid, has lost all human agency. Atwood's novel is rich in its gynocritical preoccupation and can serve as a seminal text in understanding the capitalization of women's bio/body-capital and the devastating psychological aftermath of it. Mahasweta Devi's *Breast Stories* (trans. Gayatri Spivak) also delineates what Spivak calls "the harsh indictment of an exploitative social system." Narrated from an intimate gendered perspective,

such dystopian can also complement Hélène Cixous' famous gendered writing discourse called "écriture féminine."

Within South Asian context, Prayaag Akbar's *Leila* (2017) envisages the extreme margin of caste/social segregation where people are resettled and separated by building dividing and confining walls. Akbar delineates an ecological apocalypse with sheer scarcity of drinking water and fresh air where big corporation like Skydome produces fresh air. Spatial demarcation of rich and poor neighborhood is strictly maintained. Heavily guarded walls, brutish army of "repeaters" (some readers are reminded of the RSS cadets), communal and classicist hatred, ecocide, massive urban restructuring, child labor, brainwashing mechanism – all lead Shailini, Leila's mother, to the verge of an unbearably surreal future. Echoing the social and political fabric of India, Akbar's portrayal is thus a reflection of the unbearable present and projection of the fearful future.

Be it futuristic or science-fictional, or set in the contemporary world, dystopian fictions serve as a powerful critic of society and its different repressive mechanism. Among other thematic components like mind-body duality, anthropomorphism, geo-spatial re-mapping, posthuman condition, perhaps the most pervasive aspects that almost all dystopian fictions deal with is the issue of the control over human life and death, critical concerns popularly known as biopolitics and necropolitics. Critics like Giorgio Agamben, Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, Jasbir Puar et al. have extensively contributed in this field accommodating different intersectional concerns such as race, ethnicity, religion, xenophobia, and coloniality. Dystopian fiction has a generalized thematic umbrella which updates itself according to the cultural and geographical specifications, yet this genre remains intimate to our own narrative, true to our own time and place. Every individual, every period, every place has its own anecdote of dystopian narrative. Sometimes as social commentary while sometimes as political forebodings, dystopian fiction has always drawn attention of theorists, sociologists, cyber-critics to name a few schools of thought.

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condition. The bracketed "posthuman" entails a confusion that our academia is dealing with vis-à-vis the generic blur of dystopian fiction attempting to negotiate between modern fiction, postmodern fiction, sci-fi novel, cyberpunk novel and the like. Perhaps such obscurity is what gives and will give the dystopian fiction available popular and discursive currency across the decades and perhaps centuries.

Let's start with a storyline. There is a state ruled by the "Party" led by a powerful "Big Brother." In this state of the Big Brother, the Ministry of Truth controls information: news, entertainment, educa-

war, mass state surveillance, authoritarianism and thought control. Humans cease to apply logic and reason and conform to the imposed and propagated ideals of the state. None can go beyond what the state makes them believe; any breach of this situation is considered to be a *thoughtcrime* and hence punishable. Even the linguistic ability is curtailed and controlled by imposing *Newspeak* as the official language with simplified grammar, and limited vocabulary restrain freedom of thought. Orwell envisioned an advent of post-truth era in his 1949 book. Slogan like 2+2=5 is what Orwell

## The Bat, the Pigeon and the Doctor

SANJEEDA HUSAIN

"Mama, mama re! Would you like to munch on my toast and have a sip from my sugary milk tea?"

My five-month old son carefully listens to Nipa as she speaks. Nipa is a part-time maid servant at my mom's place. And she always has stories to tell.

"Don't you go again to your father's house my dear mama. When you are not here, we look for you everywhere. Where has the mama gone? Are you not my *lokkhi* mama, hmm?"

*Lokkhi* means nice and well-behaved, and my son nods his head affirmatively and replies, "Hu!"

Then he looks at her inquisitively and frowns.

"We haven't heard anything about Arup Roton today," I pause and ask Nipa, "How is he?"

"Unwell and troubled. His left hand is burnt. His mom and dad went to office, and he was kept under the surveillance of his *pishi*. That careless aunt made tea and kept it beside the feet of the *thakur*. The hot tea fell on his hand."

My son looks hurt. He leans his head on my shoulder and puts his arm around my neck.

I turn on the TV to divert his attention. A highly contagious virus in China is killing a lot of people. The virus transmits through respiratory droplets of infects people. The disease has originated from a wet market, they claim. Perhaps, it has been carried by the bats they eat.

"Tell me, tell me O Lord, who in the world can really eat those vicious bats?" Nipa whispers as she stands up to get ready for her work. April, 2020

I hear a siren and walk to the balcony. I see an ambulance in front of the opposite building. Ammu suddenly arrives and shouts, "The virus is everywhere and you have opened that door to the balcony! There's a baby in the house!"

She immediately orders me to have a bath before touching the baby.

I feel sad and hopeless as I go to my bed-

room. My son is fast asleep. He looks content and happy.

But I hear another distressed child crying somewhere. Is that Arup Roton? Both his parents have been working during this entire period of lockdown. His father is a policeman and his mother, a banker.

Apart from Nipa, who else can inform us about Arup? Nipa is not allowed inside the building because part-time helping hands, drivers, and even newspapers are banned in the area. If we need medicine or food, we call up the security guards. They ask the community police and request them to buy the essentials. And when things are brought, they are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before they reach us.

With Nipa not being allowed, Ammu now has to do all the household chores alone. She is, consequently, always angry.

I turn on the TV to divert his attention. A highly contagious virus in China is killing a lot of people. The virus transmits through respiratory droplets of infects people. The disease has originated from a wet market, they claim. Perhaps, it has been carried by the bats they eat.

"Didn't I tell you to get a bath before your son wakes up?" I look at ammu as she glares and spits the words out.

I feel like bursting out, "What do you mean by 'your son'? Isn't he your grandson as well?" But no, I gulp down my rage.

It's really not a time to be impatient and agitated. We are all struggling to survive this containment.

May, 2020  
During the afternoon, my son and I sit beside the window in my brother's room. My brother

does his office work online, typing on his laptop. My son stares at him amazed.

My son also stares out the window and gazes at the sky. The Dhaka sky hasn't been so serene and clear in years. We watch birds of various kinds. They chirp, and they sing; they dance and they tweet.

We also watch kites being flown on the roof tops by little children and their fathers. The children cry out, "Abbu here, here goes our kite. Abbu, abbbuuu!"

Apart from abbu, other words are mostly indistinct. The afternoon sky resonates with their calling out to their fathers. My son listens to them carefully and tries to imitate them. Finally, after a whole week's effort, he calls out, "Abbu" loud and clear.

He also shouts abbu, abbu when he hears those children. Their fathers are at home. Where's his father? Does he know?

"Always calling abbu, abbu. His abbu is everything. He has his bath, splashes water and calls out, 'abbu.' He eats and he says, 'abbu.' Even after he sneezes, he utters 'abbu.'" My brother gets up from his chair and lifts my boy up from my lap as he speaks to him. He leaves with his nephew on his shoulder to see what Ammu has cooked for today's iftar.

I sit back and lean towards the window. Will there be a storm? A gust of hot wind surrounds me and the sky turns peach black. I see flocks of bats flying and covering the entire sky. Next, they try to enter through the window. I close it as fast as I can, but not before one rushes in.

It hangs from the curtain stand and starts swinging by covering its head with its pair of wings. Then it starts flapping them and makes a flight around the room. It approaches me and stares directly into my eyes.

I am about to faint when my brother turns on the light and cries out, "Apa, we are all waiting for you at the dining table."

\*\*\*

Apart from me, everyone else in the house has gone to sleep after iftar. It's drizzling, and the breeze seems perfect for a nap after a long



day of fasting. I sit with my hot mug of coffee and turn on the news channel. The highest number of new corona patients have been detected across the country today: almost nine hundred.

Ammu's phone rings. It's Nipa. She enquires after her mama, and pleads to be allowed in.

"No one is allowed inside, Nipa. This disease is very dangerous," I try to explain.

"How long will this continue? All our money is spent. I cannot pay the slumlord. He will now kick us out. Neither I, nor my husband has any work. My little girl is having sugar dissolved in water. We can't afford milk," she starts crying.

"Will you come tomorrow? We will send you some money," I try to console her.

"Yes, sure, thank you, but how long will people help us like this? We are ready to work. I have heard markets will open next week. So, my husband will be able to open his fruit-and-vegetable shop again. No matter what you say, people will need help before

Eid. I'll work for them."

"You don't need to come to our house," I feel petrified. A large number of corona patients are detected in her area.

"Are you throwing me off?" I hear the shudder in her tone.

"No, Nipa, you will again start working once this virus is gone. Don't worry," I try to pacify her.

After speaking with her I turn the TV off. People are already out in the streets in large numbers. Surely, they will flood the markets for Eid shopping. I wonder what will happen if all these people leave the city to head for their villages.

I come out from the living room and stand alone in the balcony. A pair of pigeons have built a nest on the sun shade right above where I am standing now. Perhaps they have laid eggs. The male pigeon grooms the female one with his beak, cleaning the fleas from her feathers. He shares his food with her. I hear the pigeons cooing too.

I look down and see a man walking alone on the empty road. I recognize his strides, his gestures and movements. He stands a little away from my building and removes his mask from his face. We smile at each other.

I rush inside to get my phone. I need to talk to him, not having spoken with him properly for so long. I find a text message from him instead.

"A patient arrived at the hospital this evening. His relatives reported of his kidneys being damaged. Only when he started having severe chest pain and breathing problem, and finally embraced death within an hour, his relatives confessed that he's actually a covid-19 patient. They hid the truth, otherwise, no hospital would admit him."

I along with my team of doctors and nurses treating that patient will be going into quarantine. I will come to visit if I am tested negative.

Give my love to our son."

Sanjeeda Husain is a Lecturer in the Department of English, University of Dhaka.

# SPORT

## City honour Liverpool and hammer them 4-0

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester City generously applauded new champions Liverpool onto the field before their Premier League match on Thursday -- and promptly showed no mercy by thrashing them 4-0 at the Etihad stadium.

With the title secured a week ago, there was little at stake for Juergen Klopp's Liverpool side who showed far from their usual levels of intensity but the loss, just their second of the league campaign, was an emphatic reminder that City will be desperate to regain their crown next season.

Klopp was quick to defend his team's attitude, rejecting any suggestion they had taken the game lightly.

"I saw a brilliant attitude. I saw fight. We didn't behave like somebody who became champions a week ago. We lacked fluidity. And in some 50-50 situations they were quicker than us," he said.

"Man City are incredible. I saw their season, they didn't play a bad game even when they lost," he said.

After the guard of honour, which included City manager Pep Guardiola, the visitors started brightly and Ederson had to be alert to keep out a fourth-minute effort from Mohamed Salah.

Salah then struck the post after a clever pass from Roberto Firmino, whose hair was coloured red, but if Liverpool thought they were in for another night of festivities, they were in for a rude awakening.

Joe Gomez could not cope with Raheem Sterling's twisting and turning in the box, pulling him to the ground before Kevin De Bruyne converted the penalty in the 25th



Manchester City forward Raheem Sterling celebrates his goal against former club Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium on Thursday. The Citizens comfortably won the match 4-0 and put a damper on the Reds' title celebrations.

PHOTO: MANCHESTER CITY FC

minutes. Sterling doubled the lead 10 minutes later when after a swift break, Phil Foden found him inside the box and the ex-Liverpool forward cut inside Gomez and slid the ball home.

The 20-year-old Foden made it 3-0, firing past Alisson after a swift exchange with Kevin De Bruyne.

City were showing an unusual willingness to play long balls

and after Rodri launched a pass deep to De Bruyne, the Belgian found Sterling inside the box and he slipped the ball goalwards, with substitute Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's outstretched touch only turning it into his own net.

It could have been even worse for Liverpool with Riyad Mahrez's fine solo effort in the final moments but VAR spotted a handball by Foden in the build-up.

"We beat the champions, an extraordinary team," Guardiola said.

"We tried to play football, take risks against the best team I have ever faced in my life at high pressing," he added.

"They drank a lot of beers this week but they arrived here with no beers in their blood which is why I give us a lot of credit."

## ZIDANE WANTS MESSI TO STAY IN SPAIN

Lionel Messi was reported on Thursday to be planning to leave Barcelona in 2021, but Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane was hoping the Argentine maestro will stay in Spain. Messi's current contract expires next year and he has halted negotiations due to frustrations with the direction of the club, said Spanish radio station Cadena Ser. Barca sit second in La Liga with five games left, four points behind Real Madrid, who edged past Getafe 1-0 on Thursday to put the title within their grasp. "I don't know what will happen but we hope not because he is in this league and we want the best in this league," said Real coach Zidane afterwards, when asked about the possibility of Messi leaving.



REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said his side used their team spirit to finally break down and beat a resolute Getafe side 1-0 at home on Thursday to inch ever closer to winning their first La Liga title for three years.

The league leaders created scant chances but finally got the goal when captain Sergio Ramos converted a late penalty, sending Real four points clear of title rivals Barcelona with five games left.

"We can be very happy today because we did an incredible job today against a side who caused us loads of problems, but we got the victory because of our team spirit," Zidane told a virtual news conference after

his side won their sixth game in a row.

"Me and the players have been suffering a lot because we have had to work so hard in all of these matches. It's not easy to do what we are doing. You can't achieve anything without suffering."

"The coach's message after the break was that we had 11 finals left and we had to try and pick up all 33 points. We're on the way to doing that," Carvajal said.

"It was clear that this was not like any other game and we had the most of Barca's slip-up. Today was like a final for us and we treated it like one."

"Getafe put us under a lot of pressure but we produced a serious performance and proved we are a real team."

## Messi's exit imminent?

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona captain Lionel Messi has called off negotiations over renewing his contract with the club and is ready to leave the Catalans when his current deal expires in 2021, according to a report by Spanish radio station Cadena Ser on Friday.

The report said Messi and his father had begun discussing renewing his last deal with the club but that he no longer wishes to stay at the Camp Nou. The report added that Messi is angry about leaked reports that appeared to make him responsible for events at the club, such as the sacking of coach Ernesto Valverde, and that he is frustrated about the squad's lack of quality.

Messi, who turned 33 last month, scored his 700th career goal on Tuesday against Atletico Madrid, but the strike ended in disappointment as Barca drew 2-2 in the latest blow to their bid to retain the Spanish title. Barca trail Real Madrid by four points in the title race with five games remaining after Real beat Getafe 1-0 on Thursday.

Previously known for his shy personality off the pitch, Messi has become more vocal in his criticism of the club in the last year.

In January he hit out at sporting director Eric Abidal, who he said had implied players had led to Valverde being sacked.

In a February interview with newspaper Mundo Deportivo, he declared the team were not good enough to win this season's Champions League. Then in April he criticised the board for implying players were not willing to accept a pay-cut to help the team's financial difficulties during the coronavirus pandemic.



BABY WILLIAMS IS READY FOR THE GAME: 23-time Grand Slam winner Serena Williams yesterday posted pictures on her Instagram account of herself with her two-year-old daughter Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr. taking the court, kitted out in matching outfits.

PHOTO: SERENA WILLIAMS' INSTAGRAM

## 'Legislation needed to fight racism'

REUTERS

Taking a knee is not enough and legislative change is required to battle racism in society, according to West Indies all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite.

The gesture, first popularised among athletes by American football quarterback Colin Kaepernick, has become widely adopted by many people to protest racial injustice following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died in police custody in Minneapolis on May 25.

"Taking a knee in isolation or wearing a badge in isolation is not enough," Brathwaite told BBC's 'Stumped' programme. "For me it's just cosmetic - that may ruffle a few feathers."

England will join West Indies in wearing a "Black Lives Matter" logo on their shirts during the three-match test series beginning in Southampton on Wednesday.

"The biggest change needs to be legislative and needs to be the reprogramming of the wider society," he said.

West Indies captain Jason Holder has demanded racism be treated as seriously as doping and match-fixing in cricket.

Former captains Darren Sammy and Chris Gayle said last month they have experienced racist abuse and threw their weight behind the Black Lives Matters campaign.

### WHAT TO WATCH

- FACEBOOK LA LIGA**  
Celta Vigo v Real Betis  
Live from 9:00pm  
Real Valladolid v Alaves  
Live from 11:30pm  
Granada v Valencia  
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)
- ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
Norwich City v Brighton  
Live from 5:30pm  
Man United v Bournemouth  
Live from 8:00pm  
Wolves v Arsenal  
Live from 10:30pm  
Chelsea v Watford  
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)
- STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
Leicester City v Crystal Palace  
Live from 8:00pm
- TEN 2**  
**SERIE A**  
Juventus v Torino  
Live from 9:00pm  
Sassuolo v Lecce  
Live from 11:30pm  
Lazio v AC Milan  
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

## SL drops WC fixing probe

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan police on Friday dropped a match-fixing investigation into the 2011 World Cup final, saying they found no evidence of Sri Lankan players letting India win.

Former chief selector Aravinda de Silva, ex-skipper Kumar Sangakkara and opening batsman Upul Tharanga were questioned this week over suspicions that have dogged the match for years.

"We are satisfied with their explanation," a top police official told AFP. "The inquiry is now closed."

"They had reasonable explanations about the changes that were made to the final squad," the officer added. "We found no evidence of any wrongdoing."

Sri Lanka made four changes to the team for the final that lost to India at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium.

The sudden decision to end the investigation came after the 2011 team's vice captain Mahela Jayawardena arrived at the office of the Special Investigation Unit to give a statement.

"We will give our maximum cooperation," Jayawardena told reporters before leaving the SIU when officers refused to accept his testimony. Jayawardena was called in after Sangakkara was grilled for nearly 10

hours by detectives on Thursday.

The investigation was triggered after Mahindananda Aluthgamage, who was sports minister in 2011, alleged that the finals was thrown by Sri Lanka to ensure an Indian victory.



Former Sri Lanka batsman Mahela Jayawardena arrives at the Special Investigation Unit of police in Colombo on Friday to testify on allegations of match-fixing in the 2011 World Cup final. Later in the day, police said the investigation had been dropped due to a lack of evidence.

PHOTO: AFP

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার				
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ				
আ্যাতিশনাল ইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেলের কার্যালয়				
সিআইডি, ঢাকা				
www.cid.gov.bd				
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (ন্যাশনাল)				
১	প্যাকেজের নাম	৪	আপার্নী (২০২০-২০২১) অর্থ বছরে ক্রেমাওয়ার্ক টেন্ডারের আওতাধীন অফিস সামগ্রী, প্রশিক্ষণ উপকরণ, মুল্লুপ ও বিধাই, বেলাখুলা সামগ্রী, আসবাবপত্র এবং অনুষ্ঠান/উৎসবাবাদি (জিআর-৪) সরবরাহ প্রসঙ্গে।	
২	অর্থের উৎস	৪	রাজস্ব বাজেট (পতনঃ)।	
৩	ক্রম পদ্ধতি	৪	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র; ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক।	
৪	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	৪	প্রশাসন/জিআ/প্রকিউরমেন্ট/৪৮-২০২০/৩৩৪(৫); তাঃ ০২/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ।	
৫	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	৪	দরদাতার (ক) হালনাগাদ ক্রেড লাইসেন্স ও ভ্যাট সনদপত্র (খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদপত্র (গ) বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের তফসিলভুক্ত যে কোন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক হতে ইস্যুকৃত আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতার সনদপত্র (ঘ) সার্ভিস বিধানে কমপক্ষে পাঁচ (০৫) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র ইত্যাদি থাকতে হবে। বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টে উল্লেখ থাকবে।	
৬	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান ও ঠিকানা	৪	২০৬নং কক্ষ (নতুন বিডিং), লজিস্টিকস শাখা (২য় তলা), সিআইডি সদর দপ্তর, মালিবাগ, ঢাকা।	
৭	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	৪	বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (প্রশাসন), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, সিআইডি, ঢাকার অফিস কক্ষ (২য় তলা) সংলগ্ন করিডোরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাগ।	
৮	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	৪	০৫/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ এর পূর্বে।	
৯	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৪	২১/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ অফিস সন্ধ্যাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।	
১০	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়	৪	২২/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।	
১১	দরপত্র খোলার সময় ও তারিখ	৪	২২/০৭/২০২০খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।	
১২	প্যাকেজের সর্বোচ্চ বিবরণ	৪	বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সিডিউলে উল্লেখ আছে।	
ক্রমিক নং	প্যাকেজের নাম	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	টেন্ডার জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)	ক্রেমাওয়ার্ক টেন্ডার মেয়াদকাল
১।	অফিস সামগ্রী	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছর পর্যন্ত
২।	প্রশিক্ষণ উপকরণ	৫০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	ঐ
৩।	মুল্লুপ ও বিধাই	৩০০/-	২০,০০০/-	ঐ
৪।	বেলাখুলা সামগ্রী	৩০০/-	২০,০০০/-	ঐ
৫।	আসবাবপত্র	১,০০০/-	৩,০০,০০০/-	ঐ
৬।	অনুষ্ঠান/উৎসবাবাদি	২০০/-	১০,০০০/-	ঐ
১৩. শিরোনামঃ				
(ক) টেন্ডার জামানত বাবদ ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (প্রশাসন), সিআইডি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকার অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে।				
(খ) উক্ত টেন্ডারটি আইটেম-বাই-আইটেম অনুসারে মূল্যায়ন করা হবে।				
(ঘ) একক মূল্যের ভিত্তিতে চুক্তি সম্পাদন করা হবে; ত্রুটিসহকারী চাহিদা মোতাবেক যে কোন সংখ্যক মালামাল সরবরাহ করতে হবে।				
(গ) কোন কারণে দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময় বা খোলার সময় সরকারি ছুটি থাকলে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবসে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে এবং ঐ দিনই পূর্ব নির্ধারিত সময়ে খোলা হবে।				
(ঘ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।				
জেনারেল বেগম				
বিপি-৭০০১০৮১৮৮৫				
বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (লজিস্টিকস)				
পক্ষে/- আ্যাতিশনাল ইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল				
সিআইডি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা				
ফোনঃ ৯৩৪৫৫৫০				
জিডি-১০৭৫				



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## Their days pass without work

Daily wage earners in the capital hit hard in pandemic

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

The continuous spread of Covid-19 and the consequent shutdown have made jobs rare and life harder for many daily wage earners of the capital.

Day labourers usually gather at certain spots of the city and wait to be hired mostly for contractual jobs. Since the pandemic began, their waiting time has become excruciatingly long.

Visiting one of these spots in Mirpur-11 near Purobi cinema hall one recent morning, some 300 men and women were seen waiting for work. Most had a shovel and a basket with them.

Before the pandemic, most labourers would get hired by noon. Now, days pass by without any work, they said.

"During the first two months of the shutdown, I did not get a single contract. Since last month, I started to get work once or twice a week. But, that too is uncertain," said Shariul Islam, a 35-year-old mason.

"For a day's work, I used to earn Tk 700 to Tk 800. But, nowadays, I never bargain. I agree to whatever wage is offered," he said.

Shariful, who lives in Mirpur in a rented quarter with his wife and 18-month-old child, said he spends the whole day at the gathering spot.

"What is the use of returning home when you cannot feed your family and pay the landlord? All of us have unpaid house rent for more than two months," he added.

Jahanara Begum, 55, sometimes works as a maid and sometimes as a construction worker on a contractual basis.

She said work at households has almost disappeared as

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Ansar members swoop on Shaon Hossain, middle, at the entrance to Mugda General Hospital around 9:00am yesterday for protesting "anomalies" in token distribution for Covid-19 testing. A resident of Dakshin Mugda, Shaon took his cancer patient mother to the city hospital to give samples. He was 36th in a long queue, but he could not collect a token despite waiting for hours. He said Ansars were supposed to give 40 tokens for the day, but they handed out only about 15.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DIGITAL SECURITY ACT Cases filed for 'merely expressing opinion'

Says Article 19; 208 sued in 113 cases in last 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 113 cases have been filed under the Digital Security Act in the first six months of this year in Bangladesh, UK-based rights group Article 19 said yesterday.

A total of 208 people of different classes and professions have been accused in these cases due to "mere expression of opinion". Of them, 53 are journalists, the rights group said in a press statement.

Of the accused, 114 were arrested immediately, most of whom were still awaiting bail, after the cases were lodged, it said.

On the other hand, Article 19 recorded 71 cases in 2018 filed against practitioners of freedom of expression, including journalists,

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## HONG KONG SANCTIONS BILL China warns US of counteraction

Appoints hardliner as head of city's security agency

AGENCIES

China has promised to take "all necessary countermeasures" if the United States pressed ahead with legislation penalising banks doing business with Chinese officials who implement Beijing's draconian new national security law on Hong Kong.

The warning came yesterday after the US Senate unanimously approved the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, sending it to the White House for President Donald Trump's signature.

"This US move has grossly interfered in China's internal affairs and seriously violated international law, as well as the basic norms governing international relations," the Foreign Affairs Committee of China's National People's Congress said.

"If the US side is bent on going down the wrong path, China will resolutely respond with all necessary countermeasures."

Beijing has faced a groundswell of criticism over its decision to impose a law outlawing "acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and colluding with foreign forces" in Hong Kong.

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Foundation for freedom fighters maimed in Liberation War



Bangabandhu shaking hands with people who came to greet the prime minister when he arrived in Cumilla on July 4, 1972.

July 4, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU VISITS CUMILLA

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today stresses the need to build good character with a view to establishing a new society in the free and sovereign land of Bangladesh. He urges the people to ensure that future generations are capable of providing an honest leadership and prepare themselves as ideal citizens of Bangladesh.

Addressing the biggest ever public meeting in Cumilla, the prime minister laments that while the bloodstains of the martyrs are still there, a section of people has gotten busy with fortune hunting. He lists among others the black marketers, hoarders and smugglers in

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## 6 more die with virus symptoms in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

At least six people died with Covid-19 symptoms in Cumilla in the last 24 hours until yesterday.

All of them died at Cumilla Medical College Hospital with symptoms like cold, fever, chest pain and breathing difficulties, CuMCH officials said.

Mukta Rani, assistant surgeon at the hospital, said, three died at the hospital's ICU while the rest died at the isolation unit.

Three of the deceased were women, she said, adding that their samples were collected for Covid-19 tests.

At least 115 patients -- 39 were Covid-19 positive and 76 were suspected -- were admitted to the Corona Unit yesterday.

## Vietnam opens world's 'first' gold-plated hotel



AFP, Hanoi

For guests at the "Dolce Hanoi Golden Lake" coffee comes in a gold cup and bath time is taken in gilded splendour.

The world's first self-proclaimed gold-plated hotel is open for business -- and the Vietnamese owners insist they have the Midas touch despite the cramping of global travel during the coronavirus pandemic.

The hotel cost \$200 million to construct with a 24-carat plating across lobbies, an infinity pool and rooms with even cutlery, cups, shower heads and toilet seats receiving the golden treatment.

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## Bangladeshi man 'shot dead by BSF'

STAR REPORT

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead allegedly by the members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in Jashore's Benapole early yesterday.

Some farmers of Dhannokhola village in Benapole noticed a body near the border and informed local BGB office. Later, members of Benapole Port Police Station recovered the body on information from BGB.

The dead is Reajul Islam 30, son of Katu Morol of

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#### PRAYER TIMING JULY 4

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17  
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



## Wahidul Huq passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former finance minister Wahidul Huq passed away in Toronto, Canada, on Thursday. He was 87.

His family sources confirmed it to The Daily Star yesterday.

The noted economist was the minister during the regime of HM Ershad.

Wahidul completed his masters from Dhaka University in 1955 and did his PhD from Stanford University in California, US.

He taught for some time at the University of California, Berkeley, and later joined the University of Toronto and settled there.

The economist served as the country's finance minister from September 1988 to May 1990.

A highly respected and

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Gabsara area in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila is under water as six of the district's 12 upazilas are hit by flood due to rise in water level of several rivers. The local administration says the flood has affected 1.24 lakh people.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## FLOOD-HIT AREAS

# Thousands at risk of virus transmission

STAR REPORT

Exposed to highly contagious coronavirus, some people of the flood-hit areas in Bangladesh are now living in congested shelters and some on dykes.

They have very limited scope to maintain social distance as large numbers of people have to stay in small places.

Furthermore, it is very difficult for them to follow health guidelines like washing hands with soaps, wearing masks and others. In fact, they are struggling for food as well.

Government officials in the regions said they were trying to make the people aware about maintaining social distance and following health guidelines.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on the issue.

In Gaibandha, around 5,256 flood-hit people have taken shelter in 88 flood centres.

Mohtab Uddin, chairman of Uria Union Parishad in Fulchari upazila of the district, said around 700 people took shelter in one small flood centre in Kabilpur area.

"How can they maintain social distancing?" he asked.

Contacted, the district's civil surgeon ABM Abu Hanif said, "We send health workers in flood centres on a regular basis to make them [those in shelter] aware of social distance."

In Bogura, around 1,200 people have taken shelters in three flood centres of two upazilas.

Our correspondent visited those shelters and found the

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