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FIRST INDIAN TRAIN CARRYING CONTAINERS ARRIVE AT BENAPOLE
SEE PAGE 12



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INTEL ON POSSIBLE 'MILITANT ATTACK' New security alert before Eid

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The police have received intelligence that militant outfit "Neo JMB" could try to carry out attacks centring the Eid-ul-Azha.

The Police Headquarters has already instructed its various units to remain cautious about the Islamic State-inspired outfit and take necessary measures to prevent subversive acts.

The so-called IS has decided to announce formation of a new wing -- "Bengal Ulayat" -- ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha. Analysing data on militant activities at home and abroad, it was found that such a declaration is made through a subversive act, the PHQ said in its instructions.

"Neo JMB" could try to carry out subversive acts. All police units need to be on alert and take necessary measures, it noted.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Haider Ali Khan, additional deputy inspector general (intelligence and special affairs) at the PHQ, said, "We always take some preventive measures whenever there is any global development."

"The next month is August. In the past, militant outfits were found active in August. So we have stepped up security measures," he said.

The special units, including the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) and Rab have been asked to be on alert, he said.

"We have adopted a policy of zero tolerance against militancy as per the prime minister's directives..."

According to intelligence, "Neo JMB" may choose embassies, religious institutions or police establishments as their targets.

Police officials have been instructed to beef up security, collect information on new tenants in cities, properly check identity of visitors to police installations, increase security in DMP's Diplomatic Division and religious establishments, and not to leave any police vehicles unattended, according to sources.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Pedestrians on the footbridge near the capital's New Market jostle for space with shoppers, which makes social distancing measures to curb the spread of coronavirus near impossible. With Eid-ul-Azha approaching, hawkers have taken up space on the bridge to sell their wares. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Give drainage to Dhaka city corporations

TIB asks gov't; blames poor coordination, culture of blame for waterlogging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Waterlogging in Dhaka is turning into a severe problem due to the lack of coordination among the responsible government organisations, their unhealthy competitions and culture of blame, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Last week, much of the capital was submerged following incessant rainfall. In many places, people were found walking in waist-deep water.

According to the anti-graft watchdog, there was a lack of coordination among the three organisations responsible, including the two city corporations and Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in drain and waste management.

TIB asked the government to hand over the drainage

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BANGLADESH UPDATE

2,275 New cases in 24hrs

2,23,453 Total cases

2,928 Deaths

1,23,882 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

649,902 Deaths

16,291,257 Total cases

US AG reopens Bangabandhu killer Rashed's asylum case

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has reopened a decades-old asylum case against Rashed Chowdhury, a convicted killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, keeping alive the prospect that he could be deported to Bangladesh where he has been sentenced in absentia to death.

The Politico, an American political magazine, on Friday reported that US Attorney General William Barr "quietly reopened" the case as he directed the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) on June 15 to send Rashed's case to him for review.

The document doesn't include Rashed's name, but refers to "the matter of A-M-R-C," using his full initials. A lawyer for Rashed shared the Department of Justice (DOJ) communications with Politico.

"Barr's move is the first step in a process that could result in Rashed losing asylum after more than a decade and potentially facing deportation," it says.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



No visible plan 4 months into outbreak

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Four months into the Covid-19 outbreak in the country, the government still appears to have no noticeable plan to contain the spread of the virus.

Since the first three cases were reported in the country early March, the government departments supposed to deal with the crisis have been displaying inefficiencies and lack of coordination by making the wrong decisions, often ignoring the recommendations from expert committees.

While the country is witnessing a gradual rise in the numbers of death and infection, the need to control the raging coronavirus apparently became a secondary concern for the government centring most of its activities around restructuring the health services following a series of coronavirus testing scandals.

At least 2,23,453 people in the country have tested positive for the virus, and 2,928 of them died, and the fatality rate is on rise for the last couple of days.

Against this backdrop, public health experts cautioned that the number of new cases will rise by a lot if strict and effective containment measures are not taken during the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

The country cannot afford to repeat the mistakes made before the Eid-ul-Fitr when thousands of people left the cities for their hometowns in crammed vehicles, ignoring social distancing rules. The daily new cases spiked soon afterwards.

But things are not likely to change this time. The national technical advisory committee on Covid-19 had suggested not to let people leave Dhaka and three other major cities ahead of the three-day holiday from July 31-August 2.

But the government decided to let public transport operate, "maintaining" the health safety guidelines. In a circular issued on June 30, the cabinet division announced extending the duration of controlled movement and other restrictions until August 3.

Holidaymakers have already started leaving for their villages to celebrate the Eid with their loved ones and a massive rush is expected during the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Another 54 die from Covid-19

Positivity rate still over 20pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death toll from novel coronavirus infections continued to rise in the country as the health directorate reported 54 deaths yesterday.

This is the third highest single-day death toll so far.

On June 30, highest 64 Covid-19 patients died while the second highest figures were 55 on July 5 and 7.

With yesterday's figure, the death toll rose to 2,928, which is about 1.31 percent of all confirmed cases.

Like any other day, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services, talked about the latest Covid-19 situation at a virtual briefing yesterday afternoon.

In the past 24 hours till

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

He used power of media to build his empire

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Regent Group Chairman Md Shahed alias Shahed Karim had used the "power of media" to be on good terms with politicians, bureaucrats and law enforcers to build his criminal network, detectives said.

Shahed attended numerous talk shows on various television channels and also brought out a newspaper called "Dainik Natun Kagoj" from March 11, 2015. He needed this identity of a media person to cover up his criminal offences, they added.

Badruzaman Zillu, additional deputy commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of police, told The Daily Star on July 21, "We did not find any godfather or political leader behind Shahed yet."

"Shahed has used his newspaper and the fame he earned by attending different talk shows to solve whatever crisis he faced."

Shahed used to visit the Secretariat regularly, and collected a press accreditation card showing his newspaper. He also managed access to various government programmes after arranging special security passes, investigators said.

Shahed established good relations with listed criminals

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Govt fixes lower rawhide prices this Eid

The government yesterday fixed the price of cattle rawhide treated with salt within Dhaka at Tk 35 to Tk 40 per square feet, down 29 per cent from last year. Outside of Dhaka, the price range is Tk 28 and Tk 32, which is 20 per cent less year-on-year. For processed skins of male goats, the price would be Tk 13 to Tk 15 (down 27 per cent), and for female goat's skins, the price would be Tk 10 to Tk 12 (down 23 per cent). The current international prices of leather and leather goods, the pandemic and the quality of rawhides were taken into consideration while fixing the prices, said Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi.

STORY ON B1



An elderly woman and her grandson navigate the flooded land on a raft fashioned out of banana trees after receiving government relief materials in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila yesterday. The recent floods that have beset many regions of the country also hit Tangail hard, with crops of over 11,000 hectares being inundated in the district.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Thousands of hectares of farmland damaged

STAR REPORT

The dreams of thousands of farmers in the flood-hit areas of northern Bangladesh have been shattered as their crops and seedbeds washed away by floodwater.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts, around 40,000 farmers have been affected by the flood. Around 2,500 hectares of land have been damaged and about 20,000 hectares of arable land are still under floodwaters.

In Tangail, crops of over 11,000 hectares of land have been inundated by the flood. As a result, around 27,000 farmers will have to incur loss, agriculture department officials said.

Nurul Haque, a farmer of Salangka village in the district's Kalihati upazila, said he cultivated Aush paddy in around 22 bighas of land but all have been inundated.

Besides, seedbed of one mound of transplanted

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

WALTON Smart Fridge

WORLD'S MOST SMART FEATURED REFRIGERATOR

Buying Fridge From Walton Plaza Laksm, Cumilla

NOW I AM MILLIONAIRE

Mr. Md. Yasir Miah, Father: Ali Azam, Son: Md. Arifur Rahman, South Khatun, Gata Road, Dhaka Cantonment

Buying Walton Fridge From Asa Electronics, Keranbat Salkania, Chattogram

NOW I AM MILLIONAIRE

Mr. Nigam Uddin, Father: Nur Ahmad, Son: Md. Arifur Rahman, South Khatun, Gata Road, Dhaka Cantonment

Buying Fridge From Walton Plaza Mirpur-10, Dhaka

NOW I AM MILLIONAIRE

Mr. Sachara Rahman, Father: Md. Arifur Rahman, South Khatun, Gata Road, Dhaka Cantonment

Buying Walton Fridge From Sonyton Electronics, Khansama, Dinajpur

NOW I AM MILLIONAIRE

Mr. Saigh Chandis Roy, Father: Haiman Roy, Kama, Malpura Piganj, Thakurgaon

Who is Next?

This Eid, buy Walton Fridge, Washing Machine & Microwave Oven. You may be the **Millionaire** or get **Taka One Lac**, Crores of Taka Cash Voucher also.

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- This campaign is conducted by fully computerized system basis
- Digital campaign facilities will be used in case of more than 1 registration of fridge from the same mobile number in a year
- In case of cash payment, customer will be paid through check after deduction of 10% tax at the rate determined by National Board of Revenue (NBR)
- The authority reserves the right to change the campaign anytime

This initiative is taken to ensure maximum customer facilities through research & development of products and digitalization.

WALTON GROUP OF COMPANIES

He used power of media

FROM PAGE 1
in Uttara and Gulshan areas and gave jobs to criminals in his newspaper. His future plan was to appoint noted journalists to create a positive image of the daily.

Shahed, who disclosed all this during interrogation in DB custody, was on a 10-day remand beginning on July 16 in the case filed for Covid-19 test report forgery and charging patients for testing and treatment, violating an agreement with the government, they added.

After five days of the remand, he was shifted to Rab custody.

In a development yesterday, Shahed was placed on a 28-day remand in four fraudulence cases -- seven days for each case -- filed against him with Uttara Paschim and Uttara Purba police stations.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the orders after four separate investigation officers produced him before the court with a 40-day remand prayer.

Besides, Regent Group's Managing Director Masud Parvez was placed on a 21-day remand in three cases filed with Uttara Paschim Police Station.

Contacted on July 23, Kuddus Afrad, president of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), said he does not think Shahed used the media to cover up his crime.

"Rather, he used popular and influential figures in the society, people working in the administration. There were cases and warrants against him but law enforcers failed to act and take action."

He further said intelligence clearance is required to get declaration for a newspaper. "When there were cases against him, how was it possible to get the clearance?" he questioned.

COMPLAINTS PILE UP

Since Shahed's arrest in Satkhira on July 15, many including businessmen, rickshaw pullers, job seekers, doctors and lawyers are communicating with law enforcers and filing complaints.

Talking to The Daily Star, a person from the capital's Khilgaon area claimed that he had to pay around Tk 2.5 lakh for his mother's stay in the Uttara branch of Regent Hospital for only seven days.

"My mother was admitted to the hospital with Covid-19 symptoms around 4:00am on June 2. She started to recover just a day after the admission. But the hospital authorities said they needed to keep her in the intensive care unit."

Requesting anonymity, he further said two days later, the hospital authorities shifted his mother to the general ward. On June 8, when they wanted to leave, the authorities handed them a bill of Tk 2.5 lakh.

Another victim said he stayed just

one day in the hospital with a leg injury but the bill came to Tk 50,000.

"I did not stay for a single hour in the intensive care unit but the authorities claimed that they kept me in the ICU," the man from Sylhet told this newspaper recently.

Investigators said they found complaints from a number of victims that they had to pay for an ICU bed despite staying in general beds.

If anyone refused to pay the bills, hospital staffers and in some cases Shahed himself would threaten to take his or her life, said a high official of DB.

"We have found a firearm from Shahed's personal vehicle. In primary interrogation, he told us that though he had bodyguards around him but he used to keep a gun to scare people," the DB official said on July 20.

During a drive on the night of July 18, DB police also recovered five bottles of foreign liquor and 10 bottles of Phensedyl.

Kazi Shafiqul Alam, deputy commissioner of DB Uttara division, last week said two separate cases were filed regarding the arms and liquor recoveries.

Every day, he added, they were receiving various complaints against Shahed and getting information on his fraudulent activities.

On July 7, Rab filed a case against Shahed and 16 other staff of Regent Group and Regent Hospital after a mobile court found proof that the hospital authorities issued fake Covid-19 certificates and charged patients for tests and treatment.

Lt Col Ashique Billah, director of Rab's legal and media wing, said on Thursday that they managed to arrest around 11 out of 17 accused so far in the forgery case.

"We have already got investigation charge of two cases filed against Shahed, including the forgery and arrest with arms in Satkhira. Shahed is now in our custody. Rab has so far identified 48 cases against him," he said.

Earlier, on July 17, Rab formed an investigation cell to provide support to the people who were allegedly conned by Shahed.

"We have closed the phone number of the cell yesterday [July 22]. So far, we received calls from 139 people who claimed to have been conned by Shahed," said Ashique Billah.

He, however, said people will still be able to submit complaints to them through email. Rab received complaints from 21 people through email, as of July 23.

"We have even got complaints that he takes money from different inmates in prison saying he would help them get released," added the official.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A child runs excitedly towards the whistle of the soon-to-depart train at the Kamalapur Rail Station yesterday afternoon. With Eid-ul-Azha fast approaching, families are leaving Dhaka for their ancestral homes to observe the festive occasion, with the masks they wear a reminder of the growing coronavirus pandemic.

US AG reopens Bangabandhu killer

FROM PAGE 1
Contacted, Bangladesh Law Minister Anisul Huq preferred not to comment on it.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen could not be reached for comments.

The Father of the Nation and most of his family members were killed in a coup d'état on August 15, 1975. His daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana survived as they were abroad at the time, but the investigation into it stopped through an Indemnity Ordinance, which had protected the self-proclaimed killers. The ordinance was abrogated in November 1996 when the Awami League returned to power.

After a lengthy trial, the Supreme Court on November 19, 2009 upheld a High Court verdict, confirming capital punishment of 12 people. Five of the convicts -- Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed on January 27, 2010. Another killer, Aziz Pasha, died in Zimbabwe in 2001.

Those who remain fugitives include Maj (ret) Rashed Chowdhury, Col (dismissed) Khandaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haque Dalim, Maj (ret) Noor Chowdhury, Capt Abdul Majed and Risaldar Moslehuddin Khan.

Bangladesh has been making legal and diplomatic efforts to bring back the fugitive killers. A taskforce was formed in 2010 to locate and bring back the six. However, only two of the six could be traced -- Rashed Chowdhury in the US and Noor Chowdhury in Canada. Two law firms -- in the US and Canada -- were also appointed for lobbying to bring the killers back to the country.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wrote to US President Donald Trump in 2018 for the extradition of Rashed. Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, on different occasions, requested the high US officials for Rashed's repatriation.

After the killing of Bangabandhu, he was deputed to the ministry of foreign and then posted in different missions. He was terminated from jobs in 1996 when he was posted at the Bangladesh mission in Brazil.

Instead of coming back to Dhaka, he fled to San Francisco, USA, with his family with visit visas. Within two months, they'd applied for asylum.

The Politico says, "That's where the Justice Department comes in. America's immigration courts aren't part of the judicial branch. Instead, the system that determines who gets to stay here is part of the DOJ, with the attorney general as the ultimate authority. The immigration courts

are massively backlogged, and adjudicating asylum claims can take years."

That's how it went for Rashed. Nearly 10 years after he arrived in the US, an immigration judge granted him asylum. But the Homeland Security (DHS), which handles US government arguments against immigrants' efforts to stay in the US, appealed the judge's ruling. DHS lawyers argued his participation in the coup should disqualify him from receiving asylum.

Then, the BIA took up the case and in 2006 concluded Rashed deserved asylum. But there was still one open question: if he had violated the US anti-terrorism laws.

"So BIA sent the case back to the immigration judge to reexamine that issue. The immigration judge found no issue with granting him asylum, and Rashed's lawyers assumed the matter was resolved," says the Politico report.

"For almost 15 years, the case was closed. But now, thanks to Barr, it's back. And immigration lawyers say the move sends a chilling message to people who have received asylum in the US. It signals, they argue, that even after years of successful legal battles, any protection could still be revoked out of the blue," it added.

No visible plan 4 months into outbreak

FROM PAGE 1
next few days.

The committee's recommendation of not having cattle markets in Dhaka, Chattogram, Narayanganj and Gazipur cities have already been ignored.

The government asked all concerned to follow the health guidelines at the markets.

Seventeen cattle markets have already been set up in the capital with permission from the city corporations.

In the absence of proper monitoring, those guidelines are hardly maintained as cattle markets in and around the capital are drawing large crowds.

Many of the people in the markets are flouting the government order to use face masks.

The cabinet division on June 30 also said neighbourhoods would be marked red, yellow or green, based on the number of cases in the area.

But that decision has not been detailed yet.

The authorities experimented with marking zones and locking them down in two areas in the capital and several other ones in different districts.

The government imposed a lockdown on the capital's East Rajabazar last month as an experiment. After that experience, it locked down Wari. The restrictions were lifted on Saturday.

But there is no visible plan to lock down larger areas, as suggested by the national technical advisory committee.

Noted virologist Prof Nazrul Islam, who is a member of the committee, said, "Our focus has changed from Covid-19 control to other issues like corruption [in health sector] and arrest [in forgery cases]."

"We have done some work on treating the Covid-19 patients at hospitals, but we couldn't do anything significant to control coronavirus... We didn't lay emphasis on controlling it in the beginning and we still are not..."

Prof Nazrul, also a former vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said the committee had not put forth a specific plan for Bangladesh.

As the committee found a conventional lockdown is not applicable in Bangladesh, it earlier

suggested implementing a zoning system.

"But that is also not being followed.... I can't comment on the whole country. Local authorities may have taken some initiatives, but I don't see one in Dhaka city to control coronavirus now."

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former Southeast Asia regional director of World Health Organisation, said there should not be any gatherings, especially at cattle markets, inside red zones, or wherever the transmission is high.

"Cattle markets will obviously increase the risks of more transmissions and thus, there should not be any cattle market inside Covid-19 hotspots," he told this newspaper recently.

Prof Shah Monir Hossain, one of the eight members of Public Health Expert Divisional Advisors' Group, said nobody is acting as they should.

"The measures that should have been taken to control it have not been taken. So, the outbreak could not be brought under control," he said on Saturday.

New security alert before Eid

FROM PAGE 1
Seeking anonymity, a police high-up, told this correspondent that they have already strengthened security measures in and around embassies and different areas of the capital. Checkposts have already been set up at different points in the city.

Contacted, Additional Inspector General of Police Md Kamrul Ahsan, the chief of the ATU, categorically said they always remain alert, and there is no scope for an agency like the ATU to let their guard down at any point of time.

Earlier on Friday, there was a bomb explosion in the capital's Purana Paltan area around 8:45pm. There was no casualty. Later, a bomb disposal team of the CTC unit collected evidence from the spot.

Rahmatullah Chowdhury, in-charge of the bomb disposal team, told The Daily Star that the elements of the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) were different from the ones they had recovered from different militant hideouts in the past.

The IED was designed to cause massive destruction but it didn't contain powerful explosives, he said.

The following day, a bag was left unattended on a motorbike in the capital's Gulistan area. Police found a bomb-like object inside it around

9:30pm and the bomb disposal unit was called in. It turned out to be a bomb hoax.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, CTC unit Chief Monirul Islam said no one was hurt in the first blast and the second was a hoax. Inside the bag, there was a sand-filled plastic bottle wrapped in tape.

"We are investigating both the incidents."

Asked about the latest alert, Monirul said that at the end of last month, the IS in Iraq and Syria urged their followers all over the world to gather ahead of the Eid-ul Azha. The UN also warned that militancy could be on the rise during the Covid-19 pandemic.

All these are global developments and there is "no specific threat" to Bangladesh, he pointed out.

"But still we have taken some measures and remain alert which we always do ahead of Eid to avoid any untoward incident."

Earlier on February 28 this year, an IED went off at a traffic police box in Chattogram's Sholoshahar, injuring four people, including a child.

A bomb exploded at an Awami League office in Khulna city in September last year. Before that, two persons, including a female police

officer, were injured after a bomb went off near a police pickup in the capital's Malibagh intersection on May 26. Police claimed that all these attacks were carried out by "Neo JMB".

Bomb kills eight in Turkish-held Syria town

AFP, Beirut

A bomb in a Syria border town controlled by Turkey and its Syrian proxies killed at least eight people, including six civilians, yesterday, a Britain-based war monitor said.

The blast from an explosive-rigged motorbike ripped through a vegetable market in the volatile town of Ras al-Ain, wounding at least 19 people, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Such bombings are common in the town, which was held by Kurdish forces before Turkish troops and their Syria proxies seized it last October.

The Turkish defence ministry blamed yesterday's attack on the US-backed Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which still controls much of northeastern Syria.

PM to open Dhaka-OIC Youth Capital 2020 today

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will today inaugurate the "Dhaka-OIC Youth Capital 2020" virtually, connecting youths from OIC countries and beyond.

The programme will be opened at 4:00pm with an aim to bring the youth and their spirit together from every corner of the world.

The theme of the mega event is "Parity and Prosperity: For a Resilient Future."

Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Yousef Al-Othaimeen, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel, Youth & Sports Minister of Qatar, Youth and Sports Minister of Azerbaijan, and President of Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum Taha Ayhan are expected to join.

Another 54 die

FROM PAGE 1
8:30am yesterday, 2,275 people out of 10,078 tested were confirmed positive for the virus.

Yesterday's positivity rate was 22.57 percent.

With this, the number of confirmed cases reached 2,23,453, which is around 20.01 percent of all samples tested.

So far, a total of 11,11,558 samples have been tested at 81 labs across the country starting on January 21.

Yesterday, the 81st Covid-19 testing lab in the island district of Bhola started testing samples, Prof Nasima mentioned.

The total positivity rate stands at 20.01 percent, according to DGHS.

Despite the decreasing of daily tests, the positivity rate continues going up throughout this month.

On July 5, the positivity rate was 19.57 percent.

Meanwhile, 1,792 Covid-19 patients recovered in 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday.

The number of recoveries is now 1,23,882, which is 54.44 percent of all confirmed cases.

As of yesterday, 4,226 patients were undergoing treatment at different Covid-19 facilities across the country, while 285 were in ICUs.

There are 15,182 general beds and 533 ICUs for Covid-19 patients countrywide.

Besides, 668 people were put under isolation in the 24 hours.

Among the yesterday's deceased, 40 were male and 14 female. Forty-eight of them breathed their last at hospitals and six at homes. The victims were aged between 21 and 90.

Division-wise: 19 of them were from Dhaka, 10 from Chattogram, eight from Khulna, seven from Rajshahi, six from Sylhet, three from Rangpur, and one from Barishal.

Give drainage

FROM PAGE 1
management system to the two city corporations -- Dhaka South City Corporation and Dhaka North City Corporation.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said according to the corresponding laws, Wasa is responsible for the construction and maintenance of major drainage systems while the city corporations look after connecting lines.

Of the entire drainage system of Dhaka, Wasa looks after 385 kilometres of drainage system whereas the city corporations are responsible for 2,500 kilometres.

Besides, there are 26 canals, a total of 74 kilometres in length, and 10 kilometres of box culverts maintained by Wasa.

"Due to the legal complexities, the organisations blame each other to avert their responsibilities whenever the city suffers from waterlogging during the monsoon," said the TIB executive director.

"That's why it is necessary to amend the Acts and hand over the drainage management responsibility to a single organisation. In this case, the responsibility should be handed over to the city corporations as they represent the public. They need to be given the power to evaluate Wasa's activities," he said.

Saying that Wasa has failed to solve waterlogging problems in previous years too, Iftekharuzzaman added that Wasa in one its reports claimed they have become able to clean 20 out of 26 canals.

However, TIB in its research found that these canals are not cleared; instead, heavy solid waste has clogged the entry points of the canals.

Iftekharuzzaman said Wasa does not regularly monitor maintenance of its canals and drainage. Although responsible officers of Wasa are supposed to inspect drains and canals at least twice a month, they do not do and that creates scope for grabbing.

"Therefore, Wasa has no scope to deny its failure. On the other hand, city corporations could not avert their failures in maintaining drains and waste management," he added.

TIB in its research also found that in many cases, the city corporations do not dispose of the waste of canals and drains after cleaning by Wasa.

The TIB executive director said there remains a question over whether the city corporations are able to properly clean the 2,500 kilometres of drains under their purview.

Thousands of hectares

FROM PAGE 1
Aman paddies washed away by the floodwater, he added.

Contacted, Ahsanul Bashar, deputy director (DD) of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Tangail, said they would cover up the losses.

"We will provide seeds to the farmers who lost vegetables. Those who lost seedbeds of transplanted Aman would also get assistance from our management."

In Thakurgoan, a large amount of maize, green chillies and vegetables have been damaged due to the flood.

"I cultivated maize which were just around two weeks ahead of harvesting. But this floodwater damaged my maize. I have to incur a loss of around Tk 2 lakh," said Babu, of Yakubpur village in Sadar upazila.

In Sirajganj, crops of around 28,300 hectares of land have been submerged causing huge sufferings to farmers.

"I was taking preparation to harvesting jute. But jute on two bighas of lands went under water early this month," said Abdul Hai, a farmer of Betilchar village.

Normally, farmers prepare seedbed for Aman paddy cultivation during monsoon. But prolonged flood has destroyed 265 hectares of seedbeds this year, said Habibul Haque, DD of DAE in the district.

In Bogura, crops worth Tk 72.34 crores, cultivated by some 44,095 farmers, have been damaged by the flood in the first spell, according to DAE.

Rafiqul Islam, a farmer of the Auchar Char in Sariakandi upazila, said he lost 16 bighas of jute due to the floodwater.

"Because of coronavirus, I centred to work in remote Shaol

Libya govt disavows visit by French uprising champion

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's UN-recognised government has disavowed a visit by French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, a champion of the 2011 ouster of longtime dictator Moamer Gaddafi whose standing has plummeted since the uprising.

Across Libya, the euphoria of the Nato-backed rebellion has long since faded as fighting has raged on between rival governments and feuding militias.

In the government-held west of the country, France is widely resented for the political support it has given military strongman Khalifa Haftar whose forces dominate a rival administration in the east.

Levy flew into Libya's government-held third city Misrata in a private jet on Saturday, airport sources said.

He told pro-government television channel Libya Al-Ahrar that he had travelled to the country as a journalist to write a piece for the Wall Street Journal.

DUBIOUS COVID-19 CERTIFICATE Shajahan Khan's daughter barred from boarding London flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Oaish Khan, daughter of former shipping minister and Awami League presidium member Shajahan Khan, was barred from going to London at Dhaka airport yesterday, after she was found Covid-19 positive upon cross-checking her certificate.

Since July 23, international passengers are required to submit a Covid-19 negative certificate at the airport to be cleared for travelling.

The health desk at the airport came to know that she was Covid-19 positive through online cross-checking of a certificate she provided at the immigration, saying she was Covid-19 negative, officials at the airport said.

Generally, passengers submit their Covid-19 certificate at the airport health desk. Upon checking it, doctors at the desk issue a token certifying the passenger is fit to fly. The passengers then submit the token to the immigration police for clearance.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



This family of three lives under an abandoned truck at Chattogram city's old rail station area, and make a living by selling scrap metals, paper, and bottles from the streets. The youngest of the family, inset, was seen engaged in make-believe reading by flipping through pages of a university admission guidebook, an opportunity she may never be afforded in life.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Asymptomatic carriers can wreak havoc at garment factories

Speakers tell SNV-The Daily Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Interviewing 237 ready-made garments workers from 22 factories, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation found that four percent reported having been infected with Covid-19.

This was revealed in a virtual roundtable titled "Access to general and reproductive health services for RMG workers during new normal: challenges and opportunities" jointly organised by the development organisation and The Daily Star yesterday.

Hanifur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association Standing Committee on Health Centres added the association's own finding, "We have found 492 Covid-19 positive patients so far, of whom, most were male. Of them, 415 recovered and returned to work."

Speakers iterated the need for community-based surveillance among RMG workers to understand the actual impact of Covid-19 on the community.

"We do not have any information on the percentage of Covid-19 patients in this community. What we do know is that 12 lakh people have been tested and 2 lakh tested positive. I do not know how representative [of the real picture] small sample sizes can be," said Ubaidur Rob, country director at Population Council Bangladesh.

Dr Dabir Uddin Ahmed, chief executive officer of Centre for Woman and Child Health said, "The RMG workers are not being tested. The government is saying that they are providing testing facilities but the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Digital Security Act 'to silence people'

University teachers tell webinar for journo Kajol

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of university teachers at a webinar alleged that the government wants to silence people using the Digital Security Act, and that is why many people, including photojournalist Kajol, were arrested under this law.

They made the remarks at a webinar titled "Kajol-er Mukti Ebong Mukto Chinta" (Kajol's release and free-thinking) on Saturday night.

"Where is Kajol?" a social media campaign led by Kajol's son Monomom Polok, organised the programme.

Speaking there, Jahangirnagar University's economics teacher Anu Muhammad said the main purpose of this law is to scare people by using the legal system.

Dhaka University's (DU) international relations teacher Md Tanzimuddin Khan said those who are trying to talk to protect people's rights, are being arrested under this law.

"This is a very dangerous time for

free thinkers... We can only praise the government, not criticise it" he added.

DU sociology teacher Samina Luthfa said a journalist carries out his professional duty for his livelihood, but now that is also under threat. "A journalist is being arrested whenever he talks about government's corruption, violation of rule of law."

She said the government has arrested some culprits including Regent Hospital owner Shahed, but masterminds behind the corruption are yet to be arrested.

JU anthropology teacher Sayeed Ferdous said the foundations of the state are being destroyed through this act.

"There is no effective opposition in the country and that is why mass people, artists, journalists, teachers are protesting against injustice, but that too cannot be done due to such an act," he claimed.

Ferdous said that many teachers are afraid to take online classes freely because they have to teach socio-politics and democracy and bring contemporary examples. "But the act does not allow this."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Petition filed to show Kajol arrested in yet another DSA case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have submitted a petition before a Dhaka court to show photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol arrested in another case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Rassel Mollah, a sub-inspector of Detective Branch of police and also the case's investigation officer, submitted it on July 22 to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah will hear the petition through videoconferencing today. A web link has been sent to authorities of Dhaka Central Jail, where he is.

On March 11, Sumaiya Chowdhury Banna, member of Bangladesh Jubo Mahila League's Central Committee, filed the case against Kajol with Kamrangirchar Police Station.

On June 23, Kajol was shown arrested in a case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, by ruling party lawmaker from Magura-1 Saifuzzaman Shikhor.

On June 28, Kajol was placed on a two-day remand in another case filed on March 10 with Hazaribagh Police Station by Usmin Ara Beli, a member of Bangladesh Jubo Mahila League's Central Committee.

Fifty-three days into his disappearance, Kajol was found by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on May 3. He was then arrested on charges of trespassing, but was granted bail by a Jashore court. However, that same evening he was shown held under Section 54 of the CrPC after police told the court three more cases against Kajol were now pending with different police stations in Dhaka.

EID-UL AZHA IN SYLHET

Cattle market on school ground sparks protests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Despite protests against it, local administration in Sylhet has permitted a temporary cattle market on the ground of an educational institute for Eid-ul-Azha, and the lessee has already started setting the haat.

The school is located in Lakkatora area of Sylhet Sadar upazila, right at the edge of Sylhet city. It was established in 2013 under a project to establish seven secondary schools in metropolitan city.

"As per the recommendation of the upazila council, we asked the district administration and they permission for the school ground," said Kazi Mahua Mamtaz, upazila nirbahi officer of Sylhet Sadar.

School headteacher Md Zahur Ahmed claimed that neither the council nor the administration asked them.

"The cattle haat will destroy the school compound. I have already contacted higher authorities and urged the upazila chairman to reconsider the decision," he added.

Moreover, hundreds of trees were planted on the school ground on July 18, marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which may get damaged, he said.

The headteacher also submitted a

letter to the district administration in this regard.

But it is not only a matter of taking consent, but also a serious violation of the act that protects playgrounds, open space, gardens and natural water reservoirs of the country.

As per the section 5 of the act 36 (2000), leasing, renting or using such spaces for any other purpose is completely prohibited and a person may face up to five years in jail or Tk 50,000 fine or both for breaking the law.

Citing the act, advocate Emad Ullah Shahidul Islam Sahin, former president of Sylhet District Bar Association, said, "Most educational institutes don't have playgrounds... protecting each and every should be of highest concern. Once they set haat, they will definitely try to make it a tradition."

Jahangir Kabir Ahmed, deputy director of Divisional Secondary Education Office, said, "This is not a good practice to lease out school grounds for commercial purposes. We are also sending a letter to our higher authorities to take necessary steps."

About the decision of permitting the haat, the UNO said, "We have no other option where we could maintain health

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

CATTLE MARKETS IN DHAKA 8 teams to monitor veterinary service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock yesterday formed eight monitoring teams to observe the activities of veterinary medical teams and other health related issues at all the cattle markets of two Dhaka city corporations ahead of Eid.

Each of the monitoring teams comprises a deputy secretary, says a ministry press release.

The ministry also formed 18 veterinary medical teams and one specialised veterinary medical team to provide services at the 17 cattle markets in Dhaka.

This year, Dhaka South City Corporation has approved 11 cattle markets while Dhaka North City Corporation approved six.

The ministry also formed four cattle market management monitoring teams and one control room management team to look into other issues at the markets.

The Department of Livestock constituted 1,213 veterinary medical teams for cattle markets across the country and other teams to monitor their activities.

Don't allow hawkers at cattle markets: DMP

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam yesterday asked the leaseholders not to allow hawkers or makeshift shops inside the cattle markets.

Sometimes criminals snatch money from traders and buyers after doping them, and so makeshift shops and hawkers should not be allowed on the market premises, he said.

He asked cattle haat lessees to set up permanent food shops and tea stalls inside the market, and submit identities of shop owners to police stations.

Shafiqul gave the directives at a meeting on maintaining law and order and traffic arrangements at the DMP headquarters recently, ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, said DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media) Walid Hossain.

The DMP chief said it will be better if facilities of selling sacrificial animals are available online in the name of each cattle haat.

"This system will be safe for buying animals. The haat authorities can avoid the possibility of financial losses by selling online too. If someone buys a cow online from outside instead of a cattle haat, no hashil [service tax paid by buyers] can be taken from them," he added.

The commissioner has also asked the deputy commissioners of DMP crime divisions to ensure discipline in the movement of the cattle-laden vehicles.

Vehicle number and driver's name, identity and photograph should be taken and kept with the local police station so that the driver can be identified quickly, he added.

The commissioner said the buyers and the sellers in the markets must abide by the hygiene rules. "We hope that everyone will follow health guidelines at the haats," he added.

67,229 get bail in 50 working days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 67,229 persons accused in criminal cases, including 755 children, have secured bail in 50 working days between May 12 and July 23.

A total of 870 children, who were detained on criminal charges, were kept in three juvenile development centres till July 23 as 508 accused children were sent to the centres between May 12 and July 23, Supreme Court Spokesman Md Saifur Rahman said in a statement.

According to the statement, the lower courts across the country have heard and disposed of total 1,36,399 bail petitions in the 50 working days till July 23.

New Navy chief adorned with rank badge

UNB, Dhaka

The new Chief of Naval Staff Mohammad Shaheen Iqbal was adorned with rank badge of vice-admiral in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday.

"Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat adorned the new naval chief with the rank badge," said PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim.

After the ceremony, the prime minister wished the new naval chief's success in discharging duties and assured of extending all cooperation to this end.

Principal Staff Officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Md Mahfuzur Rahman and Prime Minister's Office Secretary Md Tafazzel Hossain Mian were present on the occasion.



Newly-appointed Chief of Naval Staff Mohammad Shaheen Iqbal was adorned with the rank badge of vice-admiral by Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat, at a programme in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday morning. The government appointed Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) Shaheen Iqbal as the new navy chief through a gazette notification by Ministry of Defence on July 18.

PHOTO: PID

Conning people with false promise of VIP SIM cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taking advantage of online social networks, fraudsters have been conning people into buying "VIP SIM cards". They use unverified online pages and e-commerce sites for this purpose.

VIP SIM cards are meant to be phone numbers with digit repetitions and patterns that are easy to remember.

They promise to sell these VIP numbers to people after they pay the full amount through cashless transaction methods. After that, they tell the buyers to visit the nearest customer care centre of their chosen operator to collect the VIP SIM.

However, the sellers block their customers' numbers after they receive money. If the customers try from different numbers, they are verbally harassed and then blocked.

Criminal Investigation Department's Cyber Police Monitoring team arrested one conman -- Mithun Sarkar (29) from Madhukhali area in Faridpur on July 25.

The CID recovered Tk 10 lakh from Mithun and also seized his three mobile phones.

"We found ten Facebook pages that

Mithun was using to con people," CID's Cyber Police Special Superintendent Rezaul Masud said at a press briefing at its headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The VIP numbers with the same last eight digits of 017 series was selling at Tk 20,000; 019 series for Tk 17,000 while 018, 016 and 015 series were selling at Tk 15,000 on Mithun's Facebook page, the CID said.

"He didn't have any VIP SIM cards on him and the Facebook pages were just for conning people," Mohammad Mahmudul Islam Talukder, additional superintendent of CID's Cyber Police Centre, told The Daily Star.

The CID official said the "upper-middle class and high-profile people" contact them for VIP numbers. Many of them get cheated.

He said that some mobile operators earlier used to sell VIP numbers, but after BTRC's instruction, they don't sell it anymore.

CID filed a case against Mithun under the Digital Security Act with Paltan Police Station. He was placed on a two-day remand.



Even though people are protesting the move to set up a cattle market on the school ground in Lakkatora area on the outskirts of the city, work continues in full swing. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

14th death anniversary of Novera Deepita

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 14th death anniversary of Novera Deepita, a journalist of The Daily Star and



a gold medalist student of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism of the University of Dhaka.

Novera passed away on July 27, 2006. She is survived by her mother, two brothers, one sister, and a host of friends and well-wishers.

To mark the day, Novera Deepita Memorial Trust has arranged elaborate programmes.

The Trust will award "Novera Deepita Memorial Scholarship" to the student achieving the highest marks in BA (hons) examinations under DU's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism next month.

The awardee will receive Tk 25,000.

Road accidents take seven lives

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and five persons injured in road accidents in three districts during the last two days, according to reports from our local correspondents.

In Cumilla, four people were killed and five injured as a truck collided head-on with a human hauler on Cumilla-Sylhet highway in Horindhora of Mainamati under Burichang upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Billal Hossain Bhuiyan (35), his sister Ripa Akhter (40), Sadhon Chandra Saha and Sazid, said Safayet Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mainamati Crossing Highway Police Station.

The OC said three of the victims -- who were the human hauler passengers -- died on the spot and the woman was declared dead at a local hospital.

The injured others were taken to Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

In Rangpur, a girl and her uncle were killed as an oncoming truck hit a motorbike they were riding at Shathibari in Mithapukur upazila yesterday.

Jui Akter (10) from Hajarapur-Dublachari village in Mithapukur died on the spot and her uncle Lablu Mia (35) succumbed to his injuries on way to a hospital, said police.

Jui was a third-grader while Lablu a deed writer.

The truck driver fled the spot with the vehicle.

In Panchagarh, a farm labourer was killed after a truck hit a bicycle he was riding on Panchagarh-Tunirhat road at Fulbarpara village in Sadar upazila on Saturday night.

The victim -- Lulu Mia (40) from the village -- died instantly, said police. After the accident, police seized the truck and detained the driver's helper Yasin Ali after locals handed him over to them.



Conservancy workers burn items such as pillow covers, bed sheets, mosquito nets used by the Covid-19 positive patients at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. They said they do this every five to seven days as a precaution measure. This photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Virtual discussion held at UAP on education opportunities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University of Asia Pacific (UAP) yesterday organised a virtual discussion on the impact of Covid-19 on opportunities of higher education and studying abroad.

The Office of International Affairs of UAP organised the event, said a statement of the university.

Eminent academicians from abroad and educational consultants from Bangladesh joined the discussion and responded to student ambassadors' queries.

Among others, University of California, USA Professor Sayeef Salahuddin; University of Leeds, UK Associate Prof Zia Wadud; PFEC Global Country Director Fareha Begum; Country Director, Education USA Adviser, EMK Center, Bangladesh Razoun Siddiky Tohin; took part in the discussion.

Digital Security

FROM PAGE 3

He urged the government to accept constructive criticism, saying "otherwise democracy will not exist."

The platform "Where is Kajol?" is running a weeklong programme on its Facebook page since July 21. A number of teachers, journalists, rights and cultural activists have expressed solidarity with it.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, Kajol's son Polok alleged that the Digital Security Act completely undermines the government's claim of not intending to restrict the right to freedom of speech.

Polok said that his father was shown arrested in one of the three cases filed against him under the law.

"Among 32 accused in the case, only my father was in jail for 52 days in Jashore, and later he was shown arrested after 105 days since the case was filed. Even the case's prime accused, the Manabzamin editor, got bail," he said.

Kajol, the editor of the Daily Pokhokhal, was shown arrested under Digital Security Act in Jashore on May 3, after he was found at Benapole that day following his disappearance on March 10.

Asymptomatic

FROM PAGE 3

workers are not getting tested -- this needs to change. Asymptomatic carriers can wreak havoc in a factory."

Maheen Sultan, lead researcher at Centre for Gender and Social Transformation, Brac Institute of Governance and Development said under-reporting could be an issue because workers could be scared that complaining about symptoms could lead to decrease in wages or loss of job.

Md Kawsar Ali, chief operating officer, Comfit Composite Knit Ltd, said, "After Eid we noticed a significant number of workers with flu-like symptoms. We are fearing that there will be movement during Eid, and there might be a health concern in August." He added that in his factory, pregnant women were asked to stay at home with full salary.

They also spoke about how access to health services for RMG workers have been affected during the pandemic.

"We have about 2,000 workers. There are no proper healthcare

services in our area. We had 22-23 deliveries during the pandemic and most of them went well. But there were certain cases where the mothers did not find healthcare, they did not find vaccination services for the newborns, and there was a child who had pneumonia after birth and passed away. We need affordable healthcare in the area," said Geetha Powani, CSR-Support at Alpha Clothing Ltd.

"Overall, unintended pregnancies and domestic violence have increased, but we need to do disease surveillance to see what effect this has had on the productive labour force," said Professor Dr Mohammad Mainul Islam, chairman of Department of Population Sciences at Dhaka University.

Dr Md Sarwar Bari, director (finance) and line director, Directorate General of Family Planning said, "They are at huge risk of unsafe abortions and we need to figure out how we can ensure the services they need."

Over 82 percent of the workers seek healthcare from their factories, instead

of other establishments, said Prof Syed Abdul Hamid of Dhaka University's Institute of Health Economics while presenting the survey results.

"But most of the factories have unqualified nurses," said Dr Md Mostafizur Rahman Mian, director of PMK Hospital & Diagnostic Centre.

Several speakers said the workers' dependence on factory nurses may be a result of them being unable to access external healthcare because they have to be at work. This is especially true for those who work overtime.

"We could accumulate the corporate social responsibility fund of buyers, and use that to give health coverage to all factories," suggested Syful Alam Mallick, compliance manager, South Asia at Auchan International.

Dr Md Mostafizur Rahman, joint inspector general at the Department of Inspection For Factories and Establishments' health section also spoke at the event, and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star inaugurated the session.

Cattle market

FROM PAGE 3

safety and set up a temporary haat. We understand the market might damage the compound, but the lessee is bound to repair it to its original state."

"If it was not a pandemic situation, we wouldn't have permitted it," he further added.

It may be worth mentioning that the district administration had permitted two more grounds of educational complexes -- Murari Chand College field and Alia Madrasa field -- to Sylhet City Corporation for setting up cattle markets for Eid.

Amid protests, the city corporation authorities later decided not to set up haat there.

Meanwhile protesting the decision, a human chain was formed on the school ground yesterday, organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Sylhet chapter).

This correspondent could not get in touch with the deputy commissioner of Sylhet for comments, despite repeated attempts.

Mahfuzul Haq no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahmed Mahfuzul Haq, a writer and publisher, breathed his last at Ali Asgar Hospital in the capital on Thursday. He was 72.

He was suffering from Covid-19 and pneumonia.

Haq, founder director of the Creative Publishers Guild in Bangladesh and former publications director of National University, was buried at Banani Graveyard on Friday, family sources said.

He played a significant role in their family business, Mawla Brothers, a leading printing and publishing company.



With the temperature rising across the capital after a few days of rain, ice-cream carts are out and about to provide working-class people respite from the heat. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Kamalapur area.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shajahan Khan's

FROM PAGE 3

Dr Jahirul Islam, a physician at the health desk at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said an official of VIP immigration came to their desk with the passport of Oaishe Khan and her token which had a doctor's signature that did not match with anyone at the airport health desk.

He said they then cross-checked the token online and found she is Covid-19 positive. Following the development, immigration police barred her from leaving the country by the Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight at 11am for London.

A police official at the airport confirmed the incident. He however said officially the cause is mentioned that Oaishe Khan failed to show Covid-19 negative certificate.

Contacted about it last night, Shajahan Khan told this newspaper that his daughter gave samples for testing at the government testing centre in Mohakhali's DNCC isolation centre on July 24. They received a message the next day saying Oaishe was Covid-19 negative, he said.

When the family contacted the certificate-issuing authority -- National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Reference Centre -- yesterday after returning from the airport, they were given another certificate which says she is Covid-19 positive, he added.

DUPED BY REGENT HOSPITAL

Writ petition seeks refund for patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rights organisation yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directives on the authorities concerned to refund the money and fees received from the patients who were cheated by Regent Hospital in the name of Covid-19 test and treatment.

Children Charity Bangladesh Foundation (CCBF), represented by its director Advocate Ishrat Hasan, lodged the petition as a public interest litigation through email.

The petitioner also requesting the court to order the authorities to give Tk 25,000 as an interim relief to each of the patients victimised by the hospital.

In the petition, the rights body prayed to the HC to ask the health and home secretaries, director general of Directorate General of Health Services and managing director of Regent Hospital to make a list of the persons, who got fake certificates from the hospital and to publish a list of the names of the hospitals and diagnostic centres that have legal licence to conduct Covid-19 tests.

Barrister Md Abdul Halim, submitted the petition to the HC as the lawyer of the rights organisation, also requested the court to direct the authorities to take necessary measures to monitor the activities of the hospitals and diagnostic centres at the upazila level, regarding the test and treatment for patients.

Advocate Ishrat Hasan told The Daily Star that the HC may virtually hold hearing on the writ petition any day this week.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Lalmoinirhat

Invitation for e-GP Tender

Tender Notice No. e-GP-02/6821/Fur/Lal/2020-21

Memo No. EED/XEN/Lal/66 Date: 23.07.2020

e-Tender is hereby invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works/goods mentioned below.

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Online tender publishing date (on/after)	Online tender opening & closing date & time
1.	480188	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Nowdabash High School.	27.07.2020	Please visit Tender Notice in e-GP website
2.	480189	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Jaorani High School.		
3.	480190	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Shah Gorbullah Secondary Girls School.		
4.	480191	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Patgram Pouro Girls High School.		
5.	480192	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Collectorate Collegiate School.		
6.	480193	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Borokhata Girls High School.		
7.	480194	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Moshor Doljor High School.		
8.	480196	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Borokhata High School.		
9.	480197	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Uttaron College.		
10.	480198	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Phakol Police Line High School.		
11.	480199	Manufacturing and Supplying of Furniture at Burmani Hashor Uddin High School.		

i) This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal according to the above tender ID and no offline hard copies will be accepted.

ii) To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

v) The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following package from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

vi) Further information and guidelines are available in the procuring entity office, National e-GP System Portal in accordance with tender ID and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
Md. Shahjahan Ali
Executive Engineer (Add. Char.)

GD-1194



A few days of heavy rainfall have left a mark on some of the busiest streets of the capital, just as vehicles have started plying the roads in numbers. This photo was taken recently from in front of Kamalapur Rail Station.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CORONAVIRUS

Crowded cattle markets pose risk as health rules grossly ignored

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Cattle markets in Patuakhali are now buzzing with buyers and sellers of sacrificial animals ahead of Muslim religious festival Eid-ul-Azha to be celebrated in the country on August 1.

But the government-stipulated health rules, aimed at checking the spread of Covid-19, are hardly followed in these markets, locally called haats.

Visiting several cattle markets in the district on Thursday and Friday, it was seen that most of the people do not wear mask while maintenance of safe distance remains elusive. Arrangement of washing hands is mostly absent.

Bridge Hat adjacent at Patuakhali town, Sehakathi Hat, Hajir Hat, Botalbunia Hat, Moukaran Hat under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, Badura Hat, Galachipa Hat under of Galachipa upazila, Kalaiya Hat, Baga Hat under Baufal upazila, Deuli-Subidkhali of Mirzaganj upazila are some of the notable haats.

Traders said there is not yet much sale of cattle although the prices are low.

Badura Haat, the largest cattle market in Galachipa upazila, saw thronging of thousands of sellers and buyers who seem to bother least about maintenance of safe distance and wearing mask properly.

There is no arrangement for hand washing or using sanitiser. No awareness campaign was seen on behalf of the market committee.

Abu Hanif of Amkhola village, came to buy cow at Badura Haat.

When asked why he was not wearing mask, he quickly took one from his pocket and put it on the face.

Ismail Hossain from Auliapur village of



PICTURE TELLS THE TALE: Badura Haat, a makeshift cattle market in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila, is hardly distinguishable from other years although the ongoing Covid-19 situation demands strict maintenance of health rules including safe distance among people and wearing masks. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: STAR

Sadar upazila came to the market for selling a few cows.

Asked why he did not have a mask, he said, "By the grace of Allah, nothing will happen to us." Afterwards he took a mask out of his pocket and wore it.

Abdul Motaleb Sikder, a lessee of Deuli Subidkhali Haat, said, "Everyone is talking about health rules. But it is not properly maintained as most of the rural people are not aware."

Mirzaganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sarwar

Hossain said a meeting has been held with the cattle market lessees of the upazila and all concerned have been instructed to comply with the health rules while selling the sacrificial animals.

Contacted, Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner Md Matul Islam Chowdhury said, "The organizers have been instructed to follow the health rules in the haats. If the instructions are ignored, disciplinary action will be taken through mobile court."

KALMAKANDA UPAZILA

Three back-to-back flash floods devastate fish farmers

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

When losses incurred by fish farmers in the entire district of Netrakona totals to Tk 10 crore, the ones in Kalmakanda upazila alone suffered around Tk 7 crore in losses due to three flash floods in one month.

The losses have been severe as nearly 2,500 fish ponds out of around 3,600 in the upazila have been washed away in the flash floods, said Anik Rahman, fisheries officer in Kalmakanda upazila.

While speaking with this correspondent, Netrakona Fisheries Officer Fazlul Kabir said among 38,500 fish farmers in the district, around 3,600 -- mostly in Kalmakanda -- have been affected by the floods.

Other upazilas also affected by the floods are Sadar, Madan, Khaliajuri and Barhatta, he added.

Wabidul Haque, chairman of Kharnoi Union Parishad under Kalmakanda upazila, said 38 villages of the union experienced three back-to-back floods within a span of one month, thanks to floodwaters rushing down from hills up north through the Boithakhal and Ganeshwari rivers.

The floods in his union have washed away around 700 fish ponds, causing a damage of over Tk 1 crore, he added.

Fish farmer Nizam Uddin, from Bausam village in the same union, said fish from six out of his eight ponds were washed away, resulting in a loss of around Tk 4



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Attempt to contain fish in the pond with nets went in vein after flash floods overflow all obstacles in Chinahala village of Sadar union in Kalmakanda upazila.

lakh. "I run my family with income from fish cultivation. But now I'm stuck in a dire situation amid the ongoing crisis [of floods and Covid-19 pandemic]."

Nurul Islam Mondol, from Sundarighat village, said he took a bank loan of Tk 10 lakh for fish cultivation in 10 ponds. But after fish from five of the ponds were washed away by floodwaters, he incurred a loss of over Tk 5 lakh.

"Now I'm in a deep crisis as I don't how I would repay the loan," lamented the farmer.

Upazila Agriculture Officer Faruk Ahmmid said aside from fish farms, floods also damaged seed beds for Aman paddy on around 49 acres of land in Kalmakanda upazila.



People wade through knee-deep water at Purbo Dashara in Manikganj on Friday as most of the roads in the town went under water amid massive flooding in the district, triggered by the rise of water level in Jamuna, Padma, Kaliganga and Dhaleswari rivers.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

Alarming rise of cattle theft ahead of Eid

About 400 cows stolen in Moulvibazar in a month

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Sharif Mia has been rearing his three cows worth Tk 1.50 lakh for the last two years to sell at the haat ahead of this Eid-ul-Azha, a festival marked by sacrifice of animals. He wanted to celebrate this Eid and pay back some loans by selling the cattle. But the cows were stolen in Rampasha village of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar last week.

"I am now in utter despair for my future after losing the cattle. How will I pay off the debts now and how will I buy new clothes for my children in the Eid?" said Sharif.

Dilip Roy, a tea worker at Champarai tea garden in Kamalganj upazila of the district, said he has been rearing two cows for long.

"The cattle were our only assets. I had a plan to spend my children's education cost and repay some loans by selling a cow before Eid. But a few days ago, the cows were stolen. And all my dreams have been shattered," he said.

Cattle lifting has increased in different upazilas of the district ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, forcing farmers to guard their cows during the night. Two weeks ago, alarming rise of cow theft in Kulaura and Kamalganj upazilas caused a stir across the country.

Farmers said around 400 cows have been stolen in different upazilas of the district in the last one month. The upazilas are Kulaura, Kamalganj and Sreemangal.

After the incident, farmers are worried about the rise of cattle lifting. The cattle farmers are now guarding their cows in many areas at night to prevent theft.

Abdul Ahad, a resident of Dildarpur area, said 70 cattle out of 114 have been stolen in Joychondi union of Kulaura



Kamalganj police in Moulvibazar have recently arrested four people with two stolen cows.

PHOTO: STAR

upazila. Police are reluctant to lodge a complaint in cattle lifting when the victims visit the police station.

Solaiman Ahmed, former chairman of Islampur Union Parishad in Kamalganj upazila, said a total of 196 cattle have been stolen in the border areas including Champarai and Kurma tea gardens of the upazila in the last three months. After being stolen, the cows were sometimes sold out and slaughtered.

He further said that it is too tough for the tea workers to run the family with their minimum daily wage of Tk 102. Due to this, they rear the cattle to survive.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities concerned are yet to take any steps to prevent cow theft, said

Solaiman.

Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kamalganj Police Station, said they have arrested four people with two stolen cows from the border area a few days ago.

The law enforcers also seized a pick-up van used for stealing cows from their possession, said the OC.

They have increased their patrols in different areas of the upazila to prevent the cattle theft, said the police official.

Moulvibazar Superintendent of Police (SP) Faruq Ahmed said the cattle theft incident has occurred at different places in the district ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

They are raiding different areas to arrest the cattle lifters, said the SP.

Missing boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The body of a minor boy, who was missing since Thursday, was found dead in Birganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Sohag Islam, 7, was son of Pagar Islam of Gopalpur village.

Quoting the deceased's family members, Bhognagar Union Parishad Chairman Badiuzzaman Panna said Sohag went out of his house on Thursday and remained missing since then.

Villagers spotted his body in a ditch yesterday and informed police.



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Office of the Project Director (ACE), RHD
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Improvement of Elenga-Hatikamrul-Rangpur Road to a 4-Lane Highway
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh
pd.sasec.rhd@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.0000.069.17.001.2017-665 Date: 23 July 2020

Invitation for Bids (IFB) No.: WP05/2020, ICB No. and Title: SASEC-2/ICB/WP05; SASEC Road Connectivity Project-2, Improvement of Elenga-Hatikamrul-Rangpur Road to a 4-Lane Highway, (SASEC Dhaka-Northwest Corridor Road Project, Phase-2).

Addendum/Corrigendum No. 1

The following modifications have been made in the Bid Documents, all other terms and conditions of the Bid Documents shall remain valid and unchanged.

Sl. No.	Applicability	Bid document	Reference clause	Page reference	Amendment
1	WP 05	Volume 1 of 5	Invitation for Bid (IFB), Memo No. 35.01.0000.069.17.001.2017-476, 10 June 2020, Serial No. 9, Section 2, ITB22.1 & ITB25.1	2-5	The deadline for bid submission is: Date: 27 August 2020 Time: 12:00pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) The opening of the Technical Bid shall take place on: Date: 27 August 2020 Time: 12:00pm (Bangladesh Standard Time)
2	WP 05	Volume 1 of 5	Section 6: Employer's Requirements. Personnel Requirements Part 1: Construction Phase Works	6-5	Educational Qualification of the personnel will be as the following: Sl No. 6. QA/QC Engineer [B.Sc. Eng. in Civil] Sl No. 7. Plant/Equipment Engineer [B.Sc. Eng. in Mechanical] Sl No. 8. Quantity Surveyor [B.Sc. Eng. in Civil] Sl No. 9. Environmental/Safety Engineer [B.Sc. in Environmental Science/B.Sc. Eng. in Civil]
3	WP 05	Volume 1 of 5	Section 3: Evaluation and Qualification Criteria, 2.4.2 Construction Experience in Key Activities (Criteria Requirement)	3-8	Criteria Requirement No. 5 to be replaced as following: Reinforced Concrete (Bridge/Flyover) work in One Year: 3,000 m ³
4	WP 05	Drawing Volume 3 of 5 Structures	Pedestrian Overpass: Drawing No. 5060090-02-130-0001	-	Pedestrian Overpass: Location: Chails Bazar, CH 77+500
5	WP 05	Drawing Volume 3 of 5 Plan & Profile	Drawing No. 5060090-02-003-0022 (Issue C) (Underpass Ch 82+000) Sheet 20 of 49	Sheet 20 of 49 (Plan & Profile)	"Type 04" will be replaced with "Type 01" in Plan & Profile.
6	WP 05	Volume 2 of 5 (Section 6: Particular Specification)	Clause 3.4.2.1 Bitumen	6-75	Replace the first paragraph with: "Bitumen for both Dense Bituminous Base Course and DBS Wearing Course will be 60/70 Penetration grade conforming to the requirements given in Table 3.4-1."
7	WP 05	Volume 5 of 5 (Section 8: Particular Conditions of Contract) Part-B	Table of Contents	88-1 88-2	Delete 1.14: Joint and Several Liability 13.7: Adjustments for Changes in Legislation 14.2: Advance Payment 21- Particular Conditions of Contract, Part-B- Additional Clauses 21.1: Foreign Taxation 21.2: Local Taxation 21.3: Customs Clearance

Md. Waliur Rahman
ID No. 005083
Project Director (ACE, CC), RHD
SASEC Road Connectivity Project-2
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka

GD-1193

Hundreds of firefighters battle wildfire in Portugal

REUTERS, Lisbon

More than 700 firefighters yesterday battled a wildfire sweeping across a part of central Portugal, with strong winds complicating efforts to tackle the blaze.

The wildfire has been raging in the municipality of Oleiros since Saturday afternoon but it has now spread to two neighbouring municipalities and has already forced the precautionary evacuation of several people.

A 21-year-old firefighter died in a road accident on Saturday evening while fighting the fire and six others were injured.

"I would like to send a word of solidarity, encouragement and thanks to the firefighters ... for the work they do for Portugal and for all of us," Prime Minister Antonio Costa said in a statement.

The fires are small compared with a massive fire that hit the region in June 2017, killing 66 people and injuring more than 250.



Russian warships sail during the Navy Day parade in Kronstadt near Saint Petersburg, Russia, yesterday. Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday said the Russian Navy would be armed with hypersonic nuclear strike weapons and underwater nuclear drones, which the defence ministry said were in their final phase of testing. Putin, who says he does not want an arms race, has often spoken of a new generation of Russian nuclear weapons that he says are unequalled and can hit almost anywhere in the world. Some Western experts have questioned how advanced they are.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US RACE PROTESTS

Protesters clash with cops

Dozens arrested, 21 police hurt in Seattle; one shot dead in Texas

AGENCIES

US police used flashbang grenades, pepper spray and tear gas as protestors marched in cities across the country on Saturday amid a wave of public anger over Donald Trump's planned "surge" of federal agents into major metropolises.

The demonstrations against racism and police brutality -- sparked by the death in Minneapolis of unarmed African-American George Floyd -- come as the US president faces an increasingly tough battle for re-election, and is campaigning heavily on a platform of "law and order".

Protestors marched in Austin, Texas, as well as Louisville in Kentucky, New York, Omaha, California's Oakland and Los Angeles, and Richmond in Virginia -- where riot police fired chemical agents at a Black Lives Matter march, according to US media.

In Seattle, the sounds of repeated

small detonations rang out in some streets, and smoke rose from an area where demonstrators had set fire to trailers by a construction site for a youth detention facility, an AFP reporter observed.

Protestors slashed car tires and smashed trailer windows. Police in riot gear faced off against the protestors, some holding umbrellas against falling pellets of pepper spray.

Late Saturday, Seattle police said 45 people were arrested in connection with the demonstrations, which they designated a riot, according to the force's official Twitter account. The post also said "21 officers sustained injuries after being struck by bricks, rocks mortars or other explosives. Most officers were able to return to duty. One was treated at a hospital for a knee injury."

Police Chief Carmen Best implored people to "come in peace to the city," and castigated the demonstrations.

"The rioters had no regard for the

community's safety, for officers' safety or for the businesses and property that they destroyed," local media reported her as saying.

In Texas, one person was killed when several shots were fired amid the Black Lives Matter protest in downtown Austin on Saturday, authorities said.

Footage posted during a Facebook Live showed the moment when several shots rang out in the Texas capital as about 100 people marched and chanted, "Fists up! Fight back!"

The latest violence came after police and federal agents fired tear gas and forcefully dispersed protestors further south in Portland early Saturday, also in anger over Trump's heavily-criticised surge of security forces.

The city, the biggest in the state of Oregon, has seen nightly protests against racism and police brutality for nearly two months, initially sparked by Floyd's death.



Police officers stand guard as a bus, which was loaded up with items by US Consulate staff, leaves the US Consulate General in Chengdu, Sichuan province, China, yesterday, after China ordered its closure in response to US order for China to shut its consulate in Houston.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Vietnam bus crash kills 13 on school reunion trip

AFP, Hanoi

A high school reunion trip in Vietnam took a fatal turn yesterday when a bus carrying the alumni crashed at a bend on the highway, killing more than a dozen passengers.

The nearly 40 passengers on the bus were classmates from Dong Hoi High School who were travelling to visit an area in central Quang Binh province for the 30th anniversary of their graduation. But the driver lost control on a sharp turn on the highway, said state media.

UK to unveil anti-obesity plan

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to roll out a £10 million anti-obesity campaign, including junk food advert bans, following his own brush with death that he partly blamed on his weight.

Johnson will announce his "Better Health" campaign on Monday, which is expected to include encouraging doctors to issue "cycling prescriptions" for overweight patients, more segregated cycling lanes and a ban on junk food television ads before 9.00pm, according to British media reports.

"COVID-19 has given us all a wake-up call of the immediate and long-term risks of being overweight, and the Prime Minister is clear we must use this moment to get healthier, more active and eat better," said a government spokesman on Sunday.

"We will be urging the public to use this moment to take stock of how they live their lives, and to take simple steps to lose weight, live healthier lives, and reduce pressure on the NHS."

Restaurants will also have to publish the number of calories in the meals they serve, according to a report in the Daily Mail.

Johnson, who has fought his own battles to control his weight, required intensive care treatment in April after catching the virus.

The plan, which the Guardian estimated would cost £10 million (\$12.8 million,

11 million euros), marks a U-turn by the prime minister, who has long railed against the interventionist "nanny state".

A Public Health England (PHE) study published on Saturday found that obesity increased the risk of death from coronavirus by 40 percent.



HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Calls grow in Israel for Netanyahu to go

AFP, Jerusalem

"We won't leave until Bibi leaves." Israel's struggle to contain the coronavirus has stirred deep-seated resentment towards Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and protests demanding his resignation are growing by the week.

Some demonstrators branded Netanyahu -- who has been indicted with bribery, fraud and breach of trust -- as corrupt, while others condemned a lack of coherence in the government's response to the pandemic.

For Tamir Gay-Tsabary, who travels each day to the Jerusalem protests with his wife Tami from southern Israel, coronavirus was "a trigger" that brought renewed focus to Netanyahu's leadership faults.

The pandemic made people "understand that he doesn't care (about) Israel, he just cares for himself," the 56-year-old sales manager told AFP. Netanyahu won praise for his initial response to the virus.

His government's quick decisions in March to curb travel and impose a lockdown brought the daily case-count to a trickle by early May.

But an economic re-opening that began in late April has led to an explosion in transmission in the country of about 9 million people, with daily COVID-19 tallies ranging between 1,000 and 2,000 cases in recent weeks.

Anti-government protests that initially included a few hundred people in Tel Aviv, now regularly count several thousand there and in Jerusalem.

Reflecting on the movement, Einaf Schiff of the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper said it began in response to "a premature victory celebration for having defeated the coronavirus".

That false victory "morphed into a healthcare and economic failure, which has left a severe crisis of confidence between the public and the government in its wake," he said.

In response to rising cases, Netanyahu's centre-right coalition has re-imposed economically painful restrictions, including targeting shops and markets. It has also approved additional relief measures, notably cash deposits to all citizens.

Protester Amit Finkler said accused the government of giving everyone cash "just to shut our mouth up."

Netanyahu has taken responsibility for re-opening the economy too soon, but said he was seeking a tricky balance between protecting livelihoods and limiting viral transmission, a challenge faced by many leaders. But he has also sought to undermine the protests as a product of the "anarchist left" and accused the media of exaggerating their size.

US sends envoy to press for peace talks in Afghanistan

Washington has dispatched a special envoy for Afghanistan to press for peace talks between the government and Taliban fighters, with the diplomat scheduled to visit Kabul on a trip with stops in five nations, the US State Department said on Saturday. US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad departed on Friday to travel to Doha, Kabul, Islamabad, Oslo and Sofia, the department said in a statement. The United States is drawing down its troops in Afghanistan under an agreement struck in February with the Taliban. The agreement aimed to pave the way for formal peace talks between the insurgents and the Afghan government, and Khalilzad's task is to try and bring both sides to the table.

Hurricane Hanna lashes south Texas coast amid pandemic

Hurricane Hanna pummeled the south Texas coast on Saturday night with howling winds and a surging sea that threatened a broad area already contending with an intense spike in coronavirus deaths. Hanna is the first hurricane for the 2020 Atlantic storm season, which is expected to be unlike any other in recent memory. Authorities will have to contend with sheltering and evacuating people while also maintaining social distancing protocols and other pandemic restrictions. The NHC forecast that Hanna would lose steam as it moved inland across Texas and northeastern Mexico overnight into Sunday. But the storm could dump upward of 18 inches of rain in the area through Monday.

Temperatures at Norway's Arctic archipelago hit record high

Temperatures at Norway's Svalbard archipelago, about midway between the mainland and the North Pole, hit a record high of 21.7 degrees Celsius on Friday, Norway's Meteorological Institute said. Home to more than 2,000 people, Longyearbyen, the main settlement in Svalbard, is about 1,300 kilometres (800 miles) from the North Pole. The Norwegian Centre for Climate Studies said last February average temperatures in Svalbard had leapt between three and five degrees Celsius (5.4-9.0 Fahrenheit) since the early 1970s and could rise by a total of 10C (18F) by 2100, if world greenhouse gas emissions keep climbing. The Arctic region is warming faster than the rest of the world, putting the entire ecosystem in danger.

Prince Harry took offence at brother's advice, says book



Britain's Prince Harry took offence at what he thought was Prince William's "snobbishness" when he advised his brother to "take as much time as you need to get to know this girl" when he was dating Meghan, Markle, a new book says. Harry and his wife, Meghan, have distanced themselves from the book called "Finding Freedom", saying they were not interviewed for the biography being serialised by The Times and The Sunday Times newspapers and made no contributions to it.

The Sunday Times said Harry heard a tone of snobbishness in the last two words, "this girl", and that Harry no longer felt he needed looking after. The couple and their son, Archie, now live in Los Angeles after they stepped down from their royal roles in March to forge new careers. In January they announced plans to lead a more independent life and to finance it themselves.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



বাংলাদেশ সড়ক পরিবহন কর্পোরেশন

অপারেশন বিভাগ

বিআরটিসি বাসের 'ঈদ স্পেশাল সার্ভিস' সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আসন্ন পবিত্র ঈদুল আযহা/২০২০ উপলক্ষে বিসাত বৎসরের নয়ায় বিআরটিসি ঘরমুখে মানুষের সহজ ও আরামদায়ক যাত্রা নিশ্চিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে অন্য ২৭/০৭/২০২০ তারিখ হতে 'ঈদ স্পেশাল সার্ভিস' এর আয়োজন করেছে।

০২। এ উপলক্ষে আগামী ২৭/০৭/২০২০ তারিখ হতে বিআরটিসি'র সবশ্রেণি ডিপো হতে অগ্রিম টিকেট বিক্রয় শুরু হবে এবং আগামী ০৪/০৮/২০২০ তারিখ পর্যন্ত ঈদ সার্ভিসের বাস চলাচল করবে। ঢাকাস্থ মতিঝিল, জোয়ারসাহারা, কল্যাণপুর, গাবতলী, মোহাম্মদপুর, মিরপুর, যাত্রাবাড়ি, গাজীপুর ও নারায়ণগঞ্জ বাস ডিপো (ফুলবাড়িয়াস্থ সিবিএস-২) হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত রুটসমূহের (ঢাকা হতে) অগ্রিম টিকেট বিক্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে।

০৩। মতিঝিল বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ দাঁড়কান্দি, খুলনা, দিনাজপুর, নেত্রকোনা রুট। কল্যাণপুর বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ রংপুর, পঞ্চগড়, কুষ্টিয়া, গাইবান্ধা, কুষ্টিয়া, রাজশাহী, শেরপুর, জামালপুর, নেত্রকোনা, নাগরপুর, গোবিন্দপুর, রানিশংকল, ঠাকুরগাঁও, দিনাজপুর রুট। গাবতলী ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ ঢাকা-নাগরপুর, রংপুর, দিনাজপুর, ঠাকুরগাঁও রুট। জোয়ারসাহারা বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ বিশ্বরোড-পাঁচদোনা, রংপুর, নওগাঁ, জয়পুরহাট, টাঙ্গাইল, ময়মনসিংহ ও বগুড়া রুট। মিরপুর বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ রংপুর, কুষ্টিয়া, কুষ্টিয়া, দিনাজপুর ও নওগাঁ রুট। মোহাম্মদপুর বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ রংপুর রুট। গাজীপুর বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ বিশ্বরোড-পাঁচদোনা, কিশোরগঞ্জ, টাঙ্গাইল, জামালপুর, নেত্রকোনা, ময়মনসিংহ, রংপুর, দিনাজপুর, ঠাকুরগাঁও রুট। যাত্রাবাড়ি বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ ঢাকা-পৌরপুর, টঙ্গী-মাওয়া রুট। নারায়ণগঞ্জ বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ ঢাকা-নারায়ণগঞ্জ, ঢাকা-মেঘনা উপজেলা, বিশ্বরোড-পাঁচদোনা রুট। কুমিল্লা বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ ঢাকা-কুমিল্লা, ঢাকা-বগুড়া রুট। নরসিংদী বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ ঢাকা-নরসিংদী ও ঢাকা-ভৈরব রুট। সিলেট বাস ডিপোর নিয়ন্ত্রণেঃ সিলেট-তারাকান্দা রুট। সম্মানিত যাত্রীসাধারণকে বিআরটিসি'র 'ঈদ স্পেশাল সার্ভিস' এর সেবা গ্রহণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হ'ল।

০৪। এতদ্বারা যাত্রীসাধারণের চলাচলের সুবিধার্থে অন্য ২৭/০৭/২০২০ তারিখ হতে ঢাকার বিভিন্ন ডিপো/টার্মিনালে জরুরি সার্ভিস প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে ৫০টি বাস নিম্নলিখিত ডিপোতে/স্থানে স্ট্যান্ডবাই থাকবে- সায়েরাবাদ বাস টার্মিনাল, মিরপুর ১২ নম্বরস্থ মিরপুর বাস ডিপো, কল্যাণপুর বাস ডিপোর সামনে, নবীনগর, মতিঝিল বাস ডিপোর সামনে, মহাখালী বাস টার্মিনাল, জোয়ারসাহারা বাস ডিপো, মোহাম্মদপুর বাস ডিপো, গাজীপুর চৌরাস্তা, হোমোয়েটপুর বাসস্ট্যান্ড এবং চন্দ্রা বাসস্ট্যান্ড। এ সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য বিআরটিসি'র ওয়েবসাইট www.brtc.gov.bd এ পাওয়া যাবে।

০৫। যোগাযোগঃ ম্যানেজার (অপাঃ) যথাক্রমে মতিঝিল বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৯৯৯৬৬৮৮৮৮, কল্যাণপুর বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭১১৫৭৮৭৪৪, গাবতলী বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭১২২২৪০৩৬, জোয়ারসাহারা বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৬১৯৪৫৭২৪৫ মিরপুর বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৫৫২৪৪২৫৬৬, মোহাম্মদপুর বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭১১৪৩৫২১৩, গাজীপুর বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭১২৪২০৬৫৩, যাত্রাবাড়ি বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭১৫১০৩৪২৪, নারায়ণগঞ্জ বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭৩৬৮৮৪৩৩৫, কুমিল্লা বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৭৫৮৮৮০০১১, নরসিংদী বাস ডিপো-মোবাঃ ০১৫৫৩৪৪৬৬৭।

ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (অপাঃ)
বিআরটিসি

তারিখঃ-১১৯২



(L) An explosion followed by a huge fire rages in the south-west part of Pristina (Kosovo) in the early hours of March 25, 1999 after NATO launched a missile attack against Yugoslavia.



(R) People carry a coffin during a mass funeral in the village of Hambarine, near Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 20, 2019.

PHOTO: REUTERS

The different intrigues and agendas tied to the Srebrenica Massacre

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

This year marked a quarter of a century since the Srebrenica Massacre of July 11, 1995, when around 8,000 Muslim men and boys were allegedly massacred by Bosnian Serbs—during the Bosnian War—in what has been described by some as the “worst war crime” to have taken place on European soil “since World War II”. The killings were suspected to have been perpetrated by units of the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) under the command of Ratko Mladic with the involvement of a paramilitary group from Serbia known as the Scorpions.

Of course, we here in Bangladesh are no strangers to genocide, having witnessed our share of it during the Liberation War of 1971. According to Bangladeshi authorities, as many as three million people were killed by the Pakistani Army. Unfortunately, as the country was busy rebuilding itself from the devastation left behind by the Pak Army in the immediate aftermath of the war, Bangladesh was unable to pursue the genocide case in the UN with much effort and hence, the genocide in Bangladesh, which was much worse than the one that was perpetrated in Srebrenica, never got the kind of attention at the UN that it deserved.

Nevertheless, the Bosnian War lasted for a much longer time—raging on from 1992 to 1995—and saw

Catholic Croats (17 percent)—passed a referendum for independence on February 29, 1992. Following the declaration of independence, Bosnian Serbs, led by Radovan Karadzic and supported by the Serbian government of Slobodan Milosevic and the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), mobilised their forces inside Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to secure ethnic Serb territory. It was after this that the war started.

Throughout the first year of hostility, Srebrenica saw heavy fighting and the town at the centre of the municipality had to endure Serb military and artillery assaults. From late 1992 to January 1993, Bosniak forces under the command of Naser Oric launched military incursions into Serb villages around Srebrenica, resulting in the murder of Serb civilians and soldiers. Although the number of casualties have been subjects of controversy, these raids, according to some, is what motivated the massacre of Srebrenica.

In April 1993 the United Nations had declared the enclave of Srebrenica which was under siege by the Serbs, a safe area under UN protection. However, the UN failed to both demilitarise the army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina within Srebrenica and force the withdrawal of the VRS surrounding Srebrenica.

When Serbian attackers overran



Bosnian Serb wartime general Ratko Mladic appears in court at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague, Netherlands, November 22, 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Sadly, to this day, neither the ad-hoc court established by the UN to prosecute war crimes in the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), nor anyone else, have been able to determine conclusively just how many people were actually killed in and around Srebrenica in July 1995—or even under what circumstances. However, many questions have been raised in recent years in regards to the alleged massacre, the role of different parties, as well as the agendas that drove and motivated their actions.

The number 8,000 originated from the International Committee of the Red Cross’s (ICRC) estimate of 3,000 people being allegedly detained by Bosnian Serbs, along with another 5,000 it believed had attempted to “flee Srebrenica”. Initially the ICRC said it was unable to verify what had happened to them. But in a later statement that is rarely mentioned, the Red Cross said that “some [of the 5,000] had already reached central Bosnia”.

On the other hand, the ICRC’s estimate that Bosnian Serbs had detained 3,000 people from Srebrenica was based on Angelo Gnaedinger’s—the ICRC’s head of operations for Western Europe—visit to Pale and Belgrade in early September of 1995 and the gathering of information from witnesses. These witnesses were the United Nations Dutch Blue Helmet Protection Force stationed in Srebrenica, who earlier had told journalists a completely different figure after being evacuated from the area.

The *New York Times* for example reported: “Dutch peacekeeping troops evacuated from Srebrenica... say that Bosnian Serbian invaders... abducted between 150-300 men aged 16-60” (July 24, 1995). After the Red Cross’s statement on 3,000 people being detained, the *New York Times* contradictorily stated: “About 8,000 Muslims are missing from Srebrenica... Among the missing were 3,000, mostly men, who were seen being arrested by Serbs... In addition to those arrested, about 5,000 ‘have simply disappeared’.”

The report never mentioned the Red Cross’s statement that “some” of the 5,000 had already “reached central Bosnia”. Nor that journalist Chris Hedges (who later won the Pulitzer Prize) had previously reported that: “Some 3,000 to 4,000 Bosnian Muslims who were considered by UN officials to be missing after the fall of Srebrenica have

made their way through enemy lines to Bosnian government territory” (*New York Times*, July 18, 1995).

Similar to Hedges, the *Times of London* also reported that: “Thousands of the ‘missing’ Bosnian Muslim soldiers from Srebrenica who have been at the centre of reports of possible mass executions by the Serbs, are believed to be safe to the northeast of Tuzla” (August 2, 1995). And professor Milivoje Ivanisevic at the University of Belgrade, having compared the Red Cross’ list with the Bosnian electoral lists for the 1996 fall elections, claims to have found 3,016 people named as “missing” by the Red Cross on the electoral lists (“Faux electeurs...ou faux cadavres”, October 1996).

However, as far as summary executions were concerned, people like Lieutenant General Hans Couzy, the commander-in chief of Dutch ground forces, have documented how Bosnian Serbs had executed unarmed Muslim men by shooting them in the back of the head. And there is no doubt that many other war crimes were committed during the Bosnian War. But it is important to ask how many died during the evacuation of Srebrenica, how many managed to safely reach Bosnian Muslim territory, and when, according to former UN Military Observer Carlos Martino Branco—who was on the ground in Bosnia during the war and, in particular, during the fall of Srebrenica.

In his detailed account published in 1998, Major Branco wrote: “In mid 1995, the prolongation of the war had dampened public interest [in the west]...An incident of this importance would nonetheless provide hot news material...and incite new passions.” The “western media exacerbated” the situation, which Bosnian politician Alija Izetbegovic “was quick to explore”. Years later, French politician and Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Kosovo (1999-2001), Bernard Kouchner, asked a dying Izetbegovic about the Bosnian Serb concentration camps, whereupon Izetbegovic answered that the claims had been inflated with the aim of getting NATO to bomb the Serbs (*Les Guerriers de la Paix*, 2004).

Former president of the (Muslim) Social Democratic Party in Srebrenica, Hakija Meholic, during an interview with a Muslim journal, made another shocking revelation when he said that in

September 1993, while he was a member of Srebrenica’s delegation to his party’s congress in Sarajevo, Izetbegovic had taken the delegation aside in confidence and said: “You know, I was offered by [US President Bill] Clinton in April 1993...that [if] the Chetnik forces enter Srebrenica, carry out a slaughter of 5,000 Muslims...there will be a [NATO-US] military intervention” (“5,000 Muslim Lives for Military Intervention”, *Dani*, June 22, 1998). According to Meholic, the Srebrenica delegates had turned down the offer. But in the grand scheme of things, the Srebrenica massacre played a significant role in letting NATO break out of its post-war “collective defence” area of operations (limited to the defence of the territories of its member nations) to become a globally



Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic in the Hague.

PHOTO: AFP

operating alliance—through NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 during the Kosovo War based on “humanitarian reasons” (which was a precursor to the humanitarian wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, etc).

In September 1996, former UN official Cedric Thornberry wrote that he was warned at the UN headquarters back in the spring of 1993 to “take cover” because “the fix is on” (“Saving the War Crimes Tribunal, Bosnia Herzegovina,” *Foreign Policy*). And also that, “prominently in parts of the international liberal media” the position is “that the Serbs were the only villains”. As a result, Serb misbehaviour was routinely presented by the western media, who omitted similar atrocities when they were committed by other parties to the conflict—an example being the attention given to Bosnian Serb prison camps like Omarska, which the media focused on with indignation, even though the Muslims and Croats had very similar prison camps at Celebici, Tarcin, Livno, Bradina, Odzak, etc. (*Fool’s Crusade*, Diana Johnstone).

Though this record of systematic omission does not disprove the truth of the standard narrative on the Srebrenica massacre, it does suggest the need for a closer look which the mainstream in the west has generally refused to provide. As well as remind us to be aware of the fact that even massacres are often tried to be spun by different factions to serve their own (geo)political agendas, and be suspicious of anyone willing to drop bombs for peace and start wars for humanitarianism.

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The Srebrenica Potocari Memorial.

PHOTO: AFP

many terrible atrocities which is the hallmark of nearly all wars. By 2008, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) had convicted 45 Serbs, 12 Croats and 4 Bosniaks of committing war crimes in connection with the war which resulted in the displacement of an estimated 2.2 million people and 100,000-200,000 deaths.

After Slovenia and Croatia seceded from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, the multi-ethnic Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina—which was populated by mainly Muslim Bosniaks (44 percent), Orthodox Serbs (32.5 percent) and

Srebrenica on July 11 and took peacekeepers hostage, about 25,000 Bosniaks fled to the UN base at Potocari on the city’s outskirts. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), represented on the ground by a 400-strong contingent of Dutch peacekeepers, could not prevent the town’s capture by the VRS. And it was in its aftermath that the massacre is said to have taken place.

The ICTY spent years investigating the killings. And later declared that the Bosnian Serb forces had begun planning the genocide during the final stage of the three-year Bosnian War, in March 1995.

Crossfire killings go on unabated

Belittles the rule of law and maligns the justice system

INCIDENTS of crossfire, regrettably, seems to be going on continually. So far this month, 35 people have been killed in so called-called crossfires. The accounts of the incidents have become rather predictable and hackneyed, and they hardly fit the definition of crossfire. Instead, it makes the law enforcers and the police appear to be the judge, jury and executioner, all in one, by taking, what a lawmaker termed, "instant action." It is surprising to hear the police briefings after the so-called crossfires, describing the antecedents of those killed, as if to justify the killings. Either they are drug dealers or persons with several criminal cases against him, or a suspected killer. As if an accused drug dealer automatically forfeits the right to his life.

There is no doubt that these operations are a continuation of the government's anti-drug drive to rid the country of drugs? In fact, a police super's comment that the anti-drug operations would continue in the border areas of his district where drug smuggling is going on, confirms that. We would want the country to be free of drugs. But his statement to the effect that no drug dealer would be spared, betrays the ominous intention. We support the government's zero-tolerance against drugs, but take issue with the modus of ridding the country of drugs employed by the government. In fact, as per records 466 people were killed in 2018 after the government launched an anti-narcotics drive on May 4 that year. Last year, the figure was 391. In January of this year seven people—alleged drug dealers—were killed in one incident alone in Cox's Bazaar. This particular aspect of the current anti-drug strategy, we believe, is flawed. And it may be counterproductive in the long run.

No society that values justice and rule of law can condone extrajudicial killings, which the so called crossfire deaths are. It is also a gross violation of, and disregard for, the legal system. A suspect or an accused must be allowed to have his day in the court of law, and not the court of man through "instant action."

Children drowning and falling ill in flood-affected areas

Ensure shelter, pure drinking water and food supplies for children, families

THE increasing incidents of children drowning in the floodwaters and getting infected with waterborne diseases across the country is extremely worrying. Recently, a woman lost her three-year-old son in the Teesta as he slipped out of her lap and fell into the river while she was on a boat trying to go to a flood shelter, and a seven-year-old girl in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila drowned in a deep hole in which stagnant floodwater had collected due to illegal lifting of stones. The girl drowned there when she was crossing knee-deep water to get to a road. Such incidents have become common in the flood-hit areas as families have been forced to take shelter on streets and embankments under the open sky, losing their homesteads and belongings to the flood.

According to local health authorities, at least 24 children have drowned in floodwater in Jamalpur this month, while in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, the number of children drowned in the last two months is 26. Although we do not have sufficient data on children drowning, it can be guessed that the situation could be the same in other flood-affected districts.

Besides drowning, children are also vulnerable to various waterborne diseases. Reportedly, the number of child patients is rapidly increasing in the flood-hit areas as diarrhoea, skin disease and other waterborne diseases are spreading among them. Malnutrition, too, has become a major issue as children in the shelters do not have access to nutritious food and pure drinking water. The halted immunisation programmes in the affected areas is another reason for the high rate of illness among children.

The Unicef has recently estimated that around 1.3 million children in Bangladesh would be affected by flooding this year. Under the circumstances, the government needs to scale up its flood response efforts and take particular measures to save our children from drowning and diseases. Families need to be evacuated to the flood shelters well ahead of time and those shelters need to be made safe for children. Children also need to have safe places in the shelters where they can play without facing any risk of drowning.

The absence of shelters in the remote flood-affected areas has increased the vulnerability of children. So, the government needs to build flood shelters in the areas where it is needed the most. At the same time, awareness needs to be raised among parents about the risk of children drowning. Moreover, flood-affected families need to be provided with pure drinking water and food supplies. The government alone cannot ensure all this; non-government organisations and well-off people of society should also come forward to meet the immediate needs of affected children and their families.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Stand beside the flood victims

The recent floods have left thousands of people hungry and vulnerable to diseases like diarrhoea in the absence of adequate relief supplies. Many of the flood-hit people are unable to return home from temporary shelters as their houses were badly damaged. And they are also facing a shortage of drinking water as most of the tube-wells in the area have gone under water.

Inadequate government relief has worsened their crises and compounded their woes. Apart from the government's aid, other affluent individuals and organisations must step forward immediately to stand beside the victims of flood.

Md Zillur Rahaman, Dhaka

Making online education effective



MACRO MIRROR

FAHMIDA KHATUN

DURING the ongoing coronavirus pandemic educational institutions all over the world have introduced online medium for imparting lessons to students. Indeed, classroom lessons in many advanced countries had become technology dependent even before the pandemic. Now it is no longer a choice but a necessity if students are to be taught.

Several schools, colleges and universities in Bangladesh have also adopted this method so that students do not miss out on learning during the current situation. Various virtual platforms are being used for lessons and exams. Both private and public institutions have introduced this mechanism of teaching. Indeed, since the middle of March this year, the government has initiated distance learning through television. Various government ministries and departments such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, the Ministry of Information Technology and access to information of the ICT division of the government, have taken active measures to provide education to students during the corona crisis.

The importance of keeping students engaged in education throughout this period is a laudable task. However, how this system is functioning, who can access this facility, what quality of education are being provided and how this can be improved are issues that need to be looked at carefully.

The issue of infrastructure comes first. Online education is not accessible to all. Majority of the schools and colleges in the rural areas do not have facilities for technology-based education. Many students do not have laptops. Besides, internet connections and speed in rural areas are poor and slow. Even in the urban areas the quality of internet connection is not good.

Unfortunately, imposition of additional Value Added Tax (VAT) on internet use in the budget for fiscal year (FY) 2021 has been a contradictory measure taken by the government. Such VAT has been imposed on the bandwidth price both at the wholesale and retail levels. As a result, monthly internet payment for students will increase from Tk 1,000 to about Tk 1,400. This is a big jump for students from

poor and low-income families during the coronavirus crisis. Parents will feel this is a burden and may think of withdrawing their children from education. As it is, economic hardship during this crisis will force poor families to send their children for income earning activities. One does not know whether and when they will be able to return to classrooms. Thus, the risk of child labour may increase. For girl children, the situation is even worse. Parents are marrying off their daughters who are below the age of marriage as they cannot bear daily expenses and feel girls are additional burden. This is also going to have impact on the health of these girls since they will now be having children at a very young age.

reduced to a large extent. However, to fulfil the national development vision and to become a developed country by 2041, the current level of achievement is not enough. Shortcomings in several areas have to be removed. Higher resource availability and its use, quality education for all and improved governance in the education system are still unfinished agendas which may reverse the achievements made so far. Therefore, consolidation of the current initiatives, and ensuring consistency and alignment of education-related commitments with national priorities are essential to achieve the aspiration of building capable human resources for the future.

In the medium-term, the allocation for

increasing as the size of the budget is also increasing, the share of education expenditure compared to the total budget expenditure has not increased much over time. In the budget for FY2021, education budget as a share of total budget has decreased to 11.7 percent from 14 percent in FY2010. As a share of GDP, education budget has decreased to 2.09 percent in FY2021 compared 2.12 percent in the revised budget of FY2020. Even with such low allocation, the utilisation rate of the education budget, especially development expenditure, is low and has been decreasing over the years, except for certain years, such as FY2019.

Education objectives have to be aligned with national plans. There is no specific universalisation plan for education beyond grade five in Bangladesh. Measures are needed to reconcile global target of universal full secondary education by 2030, with national targets for grades eight, ten and twelve. The need for improved education governance has always been felt by education experts. A permanent statutory National Education Commission can be a mechanism for guiding the sector, exercising oversight, monitoring progress and assessing the impact of reforms in education governance and management.

The quality of teachers is another critical area for achieving the education objectives. The profession is yet to be looked at as a respected one. An overall transformation is needed for the teaching profession to make it prestigious and effective. A separate National Teaching Service Corps can be created with better remuneration package which will attract qualified and young graduates. The online lessons provided through digital platforms during the corona pandemic have also shown the ill-preparedness of teachers. Many are averse to technology and many have no experience.

The ongoing corona crisis underscores the need for change in the method of teaching at educational institutions. In order to adapt the new normal, the education sector has to be redesigned. Instead of following the path of providing certificates through traditional education system, the new realities have to be taken into consideration and contextualised within the plans and strategies of the education sector. This is essential for making quality education inclusive and equitable, particularly when it is becoming more technology dependent.

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Like many other sectors the achievement of the education sector made over the past decades is at risk of being reversed.

Indeed, like many other sectors the achievement of the education sector made over the past decades is at risk of being reversed. During the past decades, Bangladesh has achieved near-universal access to primary education. Gender gap in access to primary and secondary education has been reduced. About 14 percent of secondary level students is in the vocational track. Students' participation in education is being supported by expanding stipend scheme and free textbooks. Student-teacher ratio has improved, teachers' salaries have increased, student assessment reforms have been undertaken and school facilities have improved.

Thus, many deficiencies that characterised the education system of Bangladesh in the past decades have been

public education budget should be raised to at least 4 percent, and eventually to 6 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), and at least to 20 percent of the national budget. Stagnation in public fund allocation for education in recent years is a worry. Actual expenditure on education as a share of GDP remained somewhat stagnant, hovering around the 2 percent mark. This is lower than what is targeted in the national Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP), and also below the standards set for Education 2030 Framework for Action of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Education 2030 Framework for Action advises to allocate 4-6 percent of GDP and 15-20 percent of total public expenditure for the education sector. Though total allocation has been

Apparel industry needs to recognise its truth worth



RMG NOTES

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

"If you don't know your own value, somebody will tell you your value, and it'll be less than you're worth," stated Bernard Hopkins Jr, one of the most successful boxers of the past three decades. As the world slowly comes to terms with the new norms following the global Covid-19 pandemic, is it time for the ready-made garment (RMG) industry of Bangladesh and the wider global apparel supply chain to reassess the value of the product that it produces and increase end-consumer awareness of the true costs of the fashion purchases that they make.

The RMG sector of Bangladesh has enjoyed rapid growth since its inception in the late 1970s and, until the devastating effects of the coronavirus hit home, had established the country as the second largest global supplier of apparel, with a 6.4 percent market share in clothing and with the RMG sector accounting for 83 percent of Bangladesh's exports, employing some 4.4 million people and contributing over USD 36 billion to the economy.

A few short months later and the entire fashion industry landscape has changed. Retailers and brands around the world have seen demand for their products shrink dramatically as their customers have been restricted by lockdown measures and, even as these measures are being relaxed, are reluctant to resume the purchasing habits they followed prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. The RMG industry has felt the consequences of this contraction in the fashion industry, with orders from customers being cancelled, delayed or, worse still, payments being withheld, leaving many companies in the industry facing a bleak future.

How could it have come to this in such a short space of time? An industry that was the pride of the nation has been brought to its knees in a matter of weeks and this has raised some serious questions about how we recover and shape the sector for the future.

Let us forget, the rapid rise in the fortunes of the Bangladesh RMG industry were largely based upon the supply of "value" product, with the industry able to rely on a ready workforce whose salary expectations were, until recently, very low. The current apparel industry in Bangladesh is heavily reliant on "basic" low ticket price production, although some 40 percent of exports in 2018 were

on higher ticket price fashion items. Due to this, the sector runs on extremely low profit margins, often eroded through increasing taxes, rising charges for fuel and power and greater expenditure on transportation and wages.

Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of this reliance upon lower ticket price items manufactured by workers who depend on their salaries to support themselves and their dependents. For too long a culture of price pressure from our customers has

social and environmental standards and, at all costs, we must not turn our back on what has been achieved. Now is the time to engage with our customers and ensure that they understand our needs and the true value of the product we produce rather than continually chase orders for the lowest purchase price.

I appreciate that this approach will be alien to many involved in the Bangladesh RMG sector, but recent events have proven that we cannot let things carry on as

within the global apparel supply chain. There is a common misconception that when asked to describe the process of natural selection, as defined by Charles Darwin in his work *On the Origin of Species* and the term survival of the fittest, many assume "fittest" to mean the best physical specimen of the species and that only those in the best shape and best health will survive in nature.

However, this is not always the case. Individuals that survive are not always



Now is the time, through engagement with our customers, to ensure that the true costs of any apparel item, whether produced in Bangladesh or in other sourcing hubs, are clearly communicated to the end consumer.

instilled a situation whereby, in general, the lower the cost paid for any apparel item, the lower the salary of the workforce that produce it.

But have we been missing a trick here? Has the RMG industry, over the years, lost sight of the true value of the product that it produces? I am not for a moment suggesting a wholesale increase in the purchase price of apparel products produced in Bangladesh but what I think needs to be realised is that the prices being paid for the product we produce are being kept artificially and, as has been proven, unsustainably low. In a post-Covid world we need to readdress this imbalance and, together with our business partners establish a fair pricing system for apparel produced in the country.

We should not forget the advances and investments that have been made in the RMG industry in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013. We have been rightly proud of improvements in ethical,

normal. In fact it would be foolhardy to assume that things will return to normal once the ravages of the pandemic subside.

Now is the time, through engagement with our customers, to ensure that the true costs of any apparel item, whether produced in Bangladesh or in other sourcing hubs, are clearly communicated to the end consumer. There is an emerging groundswell of consumers in our key markets of the UK, Europe and the USA that want to be assured that the product that they purchase is produced in the most ethical, environmentally sound manner possible. The Covid-19 pandemic offers the opportunity to inform those consumers and, together with our business partners, we can champion the virtues of the apparel product that we produce as a nation.

The Bangladesh RMG industry can no longer rely on the level of business that we enjoyed before the pandemic broke and we will need to adapt. There is much talk about the "survival of the fittest"

the strongest, fastest, or smartest. By that definition, then, survival of the fittest might not be the best way to describe natural selection as it applies to evolution. Darwin did not mean it in those terms when he used it in his republished book. He intended "fittest" to mean the members of the species best suited, or able to adapt to the immediate environment, and it is this process of adaptation that will ensure that the Bangladesh apparel industry can survive going forward.

Through engagement with our business partners, the championing of the advances the RMG sector has made and the establishment of meaningful partnerships based on a fair pricing strategy, the industry will continue, albeit in a different format to what we all knew before the Covid-19 crisis took hold.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE). Email: mostafiz@denimexpert.com

Some questions on DU's research budget



SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

A local newspaper published a report recently on University of Dhaka's (DU) Tk 869.56 crore budget for the current fiscal year, the

largest ever, to support the work of the iconic institution poised to celebrate its 100th year since its establishment in 1921. Recognised in the past as "The Oxford of the East", people ask, what happened to that illustrious veneer?

A prime reason the lustre has vanished, among several others, is the quality and quantity of research originating from its hallowed halls. In fact, the budget allocated to research is shown as merely 1.09 percent or roughly Tk 9.5 crores for the entire university. The rest is allocated as follows: 30.71 percent for salary, 24.81 percent for allowances, 22.74 percent for supply and services, 14.38 percent for pensions, and a tiny amount for grants and capital grants. One might look at the minuscule allocation for research and ask: how or why would faculty pursue research?

Teachers are actually compensated for three major activities: teaching, research, and service. They are aided by an administration whose budget is covered as institutional support. The entire budget is, therefore, for "faculty activities" and "administrative support." The "faculty activity" budget is largely for teaching and research, which is why faculty are compensated.

If we look at MIT's (USA) operating expenditure budget (2019), it is shown under three major heads: sponsored

research 47 percent; instruction and unsponsored research 32 percent, and general and administrative 21 percent. How then are salaries, allowances, and supply/services accounted for? Are the faculty not paid? The fact is that faculty compensation (salaries, etc.) is included in the operating expenditure as instruction and research (mainly) which accounts for 79 percent of the budget. Similarly, the University of Hong Kong's 2019 expenditures are listed under "two" heads: i) Teaching, Learning, and Research and ii) Institutional Support. The first head accounts for roughly 70 percent of the expenditures that covers faculty compensation and benefits.

For the DU budget, the faculty portion of compensation/allowances/supply/services is surely for research and teaching. Then why is there a separate category of 1.09 percent for research? Say (as an example only) that faculty are expected to allocate 50 percent of their time for research: shouldn't the research allocation be shown not as Tk 9 crores but actually 50 percent of the budget or roughly Tk 434 crores (minus administrative costs)? The rest is for teaching (and services).

The amount "actually" allocated for research at DU, therefore, is substantially higher than claimed. The 1.09 percent for research is a misrepresentation which would allow faculty to complain and give them an excuse not to produce good research—or any research at all. With the more realistic view of the research budget that I present, the question would then arise: "For last year's budget expenditures of Tk 810 crores, what proportion of compensation was for research? And what outcome was thus generated? What record or evidence

would the university administration show?"

Another key point: If one takes a look at the revenue side of MIT's budget, tuition accounts for only 10 percent of the revenue stream. The lion's share of revenue comes from the Lincoln Lab (27 percent), research revenues (19 percent) and investment returns (likely from surplus money that research generates, 22 percent). MIT

"UCLA has averaged USD 1 billion in research funding with over 350 research labs, centres, and institutes...and over 1,800 inventions have come from this research powerhouse." If good research can be done by the DU faculty, under visionary leadership, that garners the confidence of the government, industry and international bodies, there should be no dearth of research funds!

DU's situation is context-bound

budget guide the expected activities. Absence of a vision and a lack of desire to give prominence to research already shows dismal results (especially our rankings) that are not surprising.

I will concede that "if" research is not a priority, then DU (and other universities) ought to state clearly its priority and the activities for which the expenditure of Tk 869 crores is budgeted. This would establish accountability. Also, if teaching is the institution's priority, one might ask, why are so many DU graduates unemployed?

Universities build their reputations on research. When it makes impact and garners attention, not only do universities rise in stature, even the nation attains a stellar reputation. This is perhaps why many Asian universities have begun to focus on establishing a research pedigree. China, Japan, S Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia have already surged ahead. To build such a vibrant research culture, will Bangladesh follow?

With 38 public and 105 private universities in the higher education system, the question that must be posed is: What is the broad vision and expectation from these universities. To be in the ranks of the globally recognised universities, at least some of Bangladesh's universities must assume the role of flagship universities with a clear research agenda that drives their activities and outputs. Otherwise, they'll continue to churn out certificates for aspiring students who, at the end of their academic journey, will be destined, unfortunately, to join the ranks of the despondent and the unemployed.

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The Curzon Hall building in Dhaka University.

faculty members thus bring in, from research, roughly 68 percent of its total revenue of 3.932 billion dollars! Then there are endowments, grants, gifts, bequests, etc. In other words, faculty members bring in a good part of their own compensation through research grants and the like. Is this a model we can emulate?

I have also written elsewhere that

and should not be equated with that of MIT and other vaunted universities. The compensation that faculty earn also require serious discussion. I bring the matter of research budgets to the forefront to generate a conversation on what is the purpose of our universities, what outcomes should be expected from our faculty members, especially in terms of research, and how can the

Covid-19: Social stigma, discrimination and deprivation

MD ABDUL KARIM

MORE than half of the world's population lived in Covid-19 induced lockdown until recently, which highly disrupted lives and livelihoods throughout societies. In particular women, people with disabilities, the poor, ethnic minorities and the disadvantaged section of the society, mostly in the developing world, have been adversely affected. Income inequality, deprivation, discrimination on the basis of colour, creed, ethnicity, social status, etc. have worsened the situation. The pandemic outbreak has provoked social stigma and discriminatory behaviour against people of certain ethnic or also social backgrounds. Anyone perceived to have been in contact with people affected by the virus has been discriminated against in certain cases.

Covid-19 patients in many cases have been neglected by caregivers, family, friends and the community. Stigma has undermined social cohesion and prompted social isolation of patients. Bodies of people who died from Covid-19 were found to have been abandoned in forests or on the streets in certain places of Bangladesh. Communities in a few areas even refused burial of such bodies. After being identified as a corona patient, a number of aged men/women could not even enter their own houses or get any treatment anywhere. And Covid-19 patients, their family members and frontline workers like medical professionals and law enforcers have been harassed in many places.

Economic disparity has led to deprivation, discriminatory behaviour and denial of proper treatment of economically poor corona patients in Bangladesh and elsewhere. The rich-poor gap has increased significantly in Bangladesh in recent years. The massive GDP growth has not been accompanied

with increased equality. The Gini coefficient has increased from 0.388 in 1992 to 0.482 in 2016, meaning that inequality has increased. GDP growth without proper job creation has resulted in slow progress in poverty reduction. Existing inequality of access to healthcare for the poor has aggravated during the pandemic. Economic recovery packages like bailouts, incentives, loan rescheduling, subsidies, etc. are benefitting mainly the rich businesses. Our average household consumption fell from 1.8 percent



PHOTO: GIORGOS MOUTAFIS/REUTERS

in 2010 to 1.4 percent in 2016. Low-income communities are more likely to be exposed to the coronavirus and will be more affected due to long-standing segregation, high-cost of medicine, etc. Higher mortality rate has been observed among marginal groups in the US—21 percent of black Americans and 18 percent of Hispanic people live below the poverty line, compared to 8 percent of white Americans. Low income is associated with diabetes, heart-disease,

etc. which makes on more vulnerable to Covid-19. The US Gini coefficient was 0.59 in 2016 which represents high inequality. Implicit racism and discrimination through attitudes, process, behaviour, prejudice, ignorance and thoughtlessness have been reported in the UK also, 8.5 million non-whites in Britain face disparity in education, employment, medical treatment, etc. Proportion of coronavirus infection is disproportionately higher (34 percent) among the UK's ethnic minority population (14 percent).



In the absence of effective testing and contact tracing system, the pandemic now confronts the world with unsolved and urgent challenges. Lockdown, business closure, job cuts, etc. have resulted in huge disruptive impacts on individuals and society. Even countries that have suppressed the pandemic are experiencing adverse economic spill-over effects from the rest of the world. The IMF has downgraded the decline in global

GDP from (-) 3 percent in April to (-) 4.9 percent in June 2020. Effective Covid-19 treatments and vaccines are still far off. Equitable and lasting solutions to the pandemic are urgently required on the basis of social justice, global cooperation, good governance and sustainable development. The core challenges to be addressed by the global community include suppressing the pandemic rapidly; meet the pressing needs of vulnerable groups (poor, elderly, minorities); prevent public health emergencies from turning into fulminant financial crises and improve healthcare systems.

Multilateral institutions like IMF, WHO, FAO, WFP, etc. which are coordinating global responses to Covid-19 seem to be caught up in the middle of big-power geopolitics. Strengthening the efficacy of these critical institutions is essential for sustainable economic recovery. Specific dimensions of the pandemic that need to be urgently addressed include: i) strengthened public health systems for surveillance, testing, tracing and isolating Covid-19 cases; ii) prevention of zoonotic diseases; iii) development and distribution of medicines and vaccines; iv) protection of vulnerable groups; and v) efficient and equitable financing of pandemic control. The global Lancet Covid-19 Commission headed by Jeffrey D Sachs aims to control the pandemic decisively through equitable, innovative and globally cooperative strategies with firm commitment to leaving no one behind.

Discriminating against Covid-19 patients violates their fundamental human rights. The poor and vulnerable patients must be given access to proper medical treatment and care. Accurate information about the pandemic should be shared, fear and rumours must not be spread. Infected persons must not be referred to as the "victims" of coronavirus. Social media may be

used to express solidarity with Covid-19 patients. Spread of social stigma can be stopped by calling out hateful online rhetoric which may be reported to the hosting platforms. Youths as active agents of change can use the digital platforms to create awareness about the pandemic and reduce social stigma against patients and front-line workers. The root causes of poverty and inequality should be addressed to encourage economic growth with equality.

Human Rights Watch recommends that 8 million unauthorised workers who will not receive governments' "direct cheques" should be financially supported by the US government. Direct payments should also include child benefits, disability benefits, social security and sickness benefits, etc. The use of enhanced budgetary allocations to the health sector in our budget this year, along with the special financial packages declared by the prime minister for the poor and jobless people, should be used transparently and with accountability. Social safety net should be widened.

Cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh should be offered adequate financing through banks and MFIs to get the rural economy moving. Structural changes must be undertaken to ensure sustainable and equitable economic growth and reduce deprivation and exclusion. Universal non-contributory pension may be introduced for Bangladeshis above 70-years-old on a pilot basis. Covid-19 treatment facilities should be enhanced and some facilities should be kept reserved for the elderly and disadvantaged patients. Above all, patients of the disease must be treated with dignity and must not be stigmatised.

MD ABDUL KARIM is a former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. Email: akarim521@gmail.com

QUOTABLE Quote

ELIE WIESEL
(1928-2016)
American author.

The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Ready to pick
- 5 Javelins
- 11 Diva's piece
- 12 Finish
- 13 Music's Waller
- 14 Cleopatra's love
- 15 Forebear
- 17 Crude abode
- 18 Like some athletes' wrists
- 22 Energetic
- 24 Church topper
- 25 "Exodus" hero
- 26 Make a knot in
- 27 "Jurassic Park" critters
- 30 Indiana player
- 32 Fragrance
- 33 Tough wood
- 34 Lickable sweet

DOWN

- 1 Tennis star Nadal, to fans
- 2 Turkey neighbor
- 3 Turpentine source
- 4 Slacken
- 5 Try for a fly
- 6 Some wines
- 7 Snare
- 8 Bustle
- 9 Enter the race
- 10 Mole, e.g.
- 16 Pig's digs
- 19 Choirmaster's aid
- 20 Lake near Buffalo
- 21 Woodland grazer
- 22 Knee protectors
- 23 Rocker Clapton
- 28 One way to shop
- 29 Hot
- 30 Buddy
- 31 "Foundation" author
- 35 For fear that
- 36 Some bills
- 37 Cream buy
- 38 Distant
- 39 Had dinner
- 40 Beat walker

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

B	E	S	T	E	Q	U	A	T	E
O	T	T	O	T	U	R	N	I	N
A	C	R	E	H	O	S	T	E	D
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Help Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12
proposal to remove import duty on goods to be imported from one country to the other under the limited payment arrangement of the Indo-Bangla trade agreement. The limited payment arrangement allows for payment of specific imports in rupees instead of foreign exchange.

SIRAJGANJ TOWN AT RISK
The erosion of the river bank in Sirajganj has taken a serious turn and the Sirajganj town is under serious threat of extinction as River Jamuna has already washed away half of the town's protective embankment. People are leaving the town in search of safe spaces as the constantly swelling river has been eroding homesteads and properties for the last couple of days.

SOURCES: July 28, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

DU suspends

FROM PAGE 12
isolation unit, the release reads.
Against this backdrop, she has been suspended from her post, while a show-cause notice was also served asking her to give an explanation within seven working days for her actions.

Hope

FROM PAGE 12
Even though passenger and goods trains have been running between the two countries for long, businessmen of both countries had been demanding for container train services to make their trade faster, safer, hassle-free and more organised, BR officials said.

The two countries carried out the test run of the first containerised freight train in April 2018.
Earlier in April 2017, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian CONCOR and Container Company of Bangladesh Limited (CCBL) to operate container services between the two countries.
A BR official said the container trains will run up to Benapole station until some infrastructures are developed.
Once the infrastructures are ready, trains would go as far as to Bangabandhu Bridge West Station.
There will be a small ICD terminal near the Bangabandhu Bridge station, which will facilitate the service, he said, wishing not to be named.
"But the container trains would not go to Dhaka or Chattogram for now as there is a weight restriction on Bangabandhu bridge," he said.
Asked how they would charge from the container trains, the official said it would be same as the charge imposed on other freight trains operate between the two countries.
Mofizur Rahman, president of Clearing and Forwarding Agents Association, said the new service would bring momentum in trade.
"If a container terminal is established at Benapole port, the export and import through the port would be doubled and revenue income of the government will also increase," he told our Benapole correspondent.
Benapole Custom Commissioner Azizur Rahman also expressed similar remarks.

Meanwhile, India has said the newly introduced container train service has opened up a huge opportunity for bilateral trade via rail.
"It's expected that this initiative will substantially boost business and trade between the two countries," Indian High Commission in Dhaka said in a press release yesterday.
The container train service will be a permanent service connecting the nominated inland container depots and terminals of CONCOR in India and various stations under Bangladesh Railway.

France opens probe into Rwandan genocide suspect

AFP, Paris
France has opened a probe into alleged crimes against humanity by a top former Rwandan military official, Aloys Ntuiragabo, during the country's 1994 genocide which claimed 800,000 lives.
Anti-terrorism prosecutors told AFP Saturday that a preliminary investigation was opened after Ntuiragabo was found hiding in the suburbs of the city of Orleans, about 100 kilometres south-west of Paris.
French investigative news site Mediapart tracked down the former Rwandan spy chief, who was identified by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) as one of the architects of the genocide.
Neither the ICTR, Interpol, France nor Rwanda were actively seeking him now and had dropped arrest warrants years ago.
The revelation of his whereabouts comes barely two months after another suspected genocide architect, Felicien Kabuga, was arrested on the fringes of Paris.
Kabuga, who evaded police in several countries for 25 years, is accused of financing the genocide.



A blast ball detonates as police clash with protesters following the "Youth Day of Action and Solidarity with Portland" demonstration in Seattle, Washington on Saturday. Police in Seattle used flashbang grenades and pepper spray against protesters who set fire to construction trailers outside a youth jail, amid a wave of public anger over President Donald Trump's planned "surge" of federal agents into major cities. Story on page 6. PHOTO: AFP

NHRC asks foreign ministry to help Rayhan

FROM PAGE 12
an interview he gave to Al Jazeera news channel on Malaysia's treatment to migrant workers during the movement control order enforced to contain the coronavirus outbreak.
In a tweet, Al Jazeera yesterday termed the arrest "disturbing."
"Al Jazeera finds it disturbing that Bangladeshi migrant worker Mohammad Rayhan Kabir has been arrested for choosing to speak up about some of the experiences of the voiceless and the vulnerable," reads the tweet, posted by Al Jazeera public relations.
The Qatar-based global news outlet said Rayhan, who featured in its 101 East programme "Locked Up in

Malaysia's Lockdown", was subjected to abusive online harassment, hate speech, and became the target of a manhunt in Malaysia.
"Al Jazeera reaffirms its support to freedom of expression as a fundamental human right -- without fear of being criminalised."
Local and international rights groups condemned the Malaysian authorities' steps against the Bangladeshi national and called for his protection.
On Saturday, 21 civil society organisations working on migration and development in Bangladesh demanded his immediate release.
Rayhan, who went to Malaysia in 2014 and had been working after

completing his bachelor's degree, was the target of Malaysia's manhunt after his criticism against Malaysia's detention of undocumented migrant workers in the Al Jazeera's documentary aired on July 3.
In the 26-minute video, he accused the authorities of "racism" against the undocumented migrants in Malaysia.
The documentary said the undocumented migrants were at risk during the coronavirus pandemic when over 2,000 migrant workers were arrested during raids in areas of Kuala Lumpur that were placed under tight virus lockdowns.
Following the coronavirus outbreak, Malaysia enforced

movement control order to curb the virus infections.
After the documentary broadcast, the Malaysian immigration department issued a public announcement with Rayhan's photo and address asking people to help arrest him.
He had to hide himself in fear of arrest while his work permit was also revoked.
Following the arrest, Rayhan was placed on 14-day remand, according to media report.
On Saturday, two Malaysian lawyers were appointed for him.
Malaysia said it would deport Rayhan and blacklist him from entering the country forever.

Australia suffers deadliest day

FROM PAGE 12
Meanwhile, Europe has reported around three million infections -- despite being largely open for summer holidays within the continent.
However in a snap decision, Britain's government said passengers arriving from Spain will have to self-isolate for two weeks, after a surge in cases in the Mediterranean country, with health officials pointing to nightlife as a possible culprit.
The move, effective from yesterday, has reportedly caught out its Transport Minister Grant Shapps who is holidaying there.
It marked another hit to Spain's tourism industry, which is desperately seeking a rebound after lockdowns and border closures pushed around 13 percent of bars, hotels and restaurants to permanently close.
It mirrors the fiscal pain wrought around the world by the pandemic, particularly in precarious economies where livelihoods are fast crumbling.

COVID-19 HEALTH INSURANCE
In India, for instance, millions of migrant workers who fled cities when

Covid-19 hit say they are too scared to return.
Asia's third largest economy has reported more than 1.3 million virus cases and is the third worst hit country behind the US and Brazil.
"We are trying our best to bring back migrant workers, even going to the extent of giving them air tickets, Covid-19 health insurance ... (and) weekly checkups by doctors," real estate developer Rajesh Prajapati said.
"But it has not reaped any positive signs yet."
Pakistan has seen an 80-percent drop in coronavirus deaths but risks a spike in new cases after the upcoming Eid festival, a government health official said yesterday.
According to government data, Pakistan saw daily virus deaths peak at about 150 in June. On Saturday, only 24 new fatalities were reported over the previous day.
North Korea declared its first suspected coronavirus case yesterday, becoming one of the last countries to do so as the number of people

infected worldwide passed 16 million.
The isolated, impoverished state had until now insisted it had not detected a single Covid-19 case -- even as the pandemic swept the planet, overwhelming health systems and trashing the global economy.
At least 645,000 people around the world have succumbed to the respiratory disease, with North Korean arch-rival the United States the worst-hit country by far.
"The vicious virus could be said to have entered the country," leader Kim Jong Un said, according to the official KCNA news agency.
Authorities locked down the city of Kaesong, near the frontier with South Korea, as state media said a defector who left for the South three years ago had returned and was suspected to be infected with the coronavirus.
Vietnam suspended its domestic football leagues yesterday until further notice following news of the first locally transmitted case of coronavirus in nearly 100 days.
After more than three months with no local cases, a 57-year-old retired

Vietnamese man in the central city of Danang tested positive for the virus.
NO FIREWORKS
Around a quarter of the world's 16 million confirmed cases are in the United States, which recorded more than 68,000 new infections in the past 24 hours.
After a drop in transmission rates in late spring, the country has seen a virus surge -- particularly in California, Florida and Texas, which is also bracing for the first Atlantic hurricane of the year.
Daily US fatalities have exceeded 1,000 for the past four days, rapidly increasing the country's death toll to more than 146,000.
"I'm still concerned that America doesn't take it as seriously as the rest of the world," said British golf star Lee Westwood, voicing his hesitation to travel there despite a new quarantine exemption for professional golfers.
In Latin America and the Caribbean, which also count for a quarter of total cases, governments are not planning a return to normality any time soon.

JP replaces secy general Ranga with Bablu

FROM PAGE 12
"I was elected secretary general by the councillor. If the party had asked me to resign, I could have tendered my resignation," he said.
'RANGA REMOVED TO APPEASE GOVT'
More than three presidium members of the JP said that their party chief had removed Ranga on the direction of government.
"He [Ranga] created a controversy by terming Shaheed Noor Hossain as an addict in November last year," said a JP presidium member.
"He [Ranga] reportedly made comments about Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at that time," the JP leader added.
Opposition Chief Whip Ranga,

in November, sought unconditional apology for making derogatory remarks over Noor Hossain at the parliament following heavy criticism in and outside the parliament.
Regarding his remark about Bangabandhu, Ranga said if he had said anything wrong about Bangabandhu then he seeks "unconditional apology" for it as well.
Ranga claimed that he did not call Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina "corrupt and terrorist".
"Beside this, Ranga was vocal against government activities in and outside the parliament that made government dissatisfied," said another presidium member.
Ranga yesterday said that it was normal for them to have constructive criticism of government activities.

"I do not see any reason for anyone becoming dissatisfied regarding the criticism of government," he added.
The senior leaders of the party also said that the party presidium member Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu was in good book of the Awami League leaders.
He was appointed the PM's adviser with a minister's status in the poll time interim government formed ahead of January 5, 2014 national elections, they added.
Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not contact Quader for his comments.
PAST RECORDS
In December 2018, less than four weeks before the December 30 election, JP removed Ruhul Amin Hawlader from the secretary general's post and replaced him with Moshuiur

Rahman Ranga.
The JP chairman HM Ershad was unhappy with Hawlader due to allegation of "nomination business" against him.
Another reason for the change was that Hawlader failed to manage the ruling Awami League to ensure the nomination of two JP heavyweights -- lawmakers Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu and Salma Islam -- from the two constituencies, party insiders said.
In April 10, 2014, Ershad ousted Hawlader from the post, which he had been holding since 2002, and appointed Bablu to it in recognition of his "significant role" in the party.
In January 2016 Ershad removed Bablu from the post on charge of negligence in discharging duties, and reinstated Hawlader.

Pakistan tried to 'backstab' India

FROM PAGE 12
the heights...the high morale and all for no reason comes naturally. People with such a disposition keep thinking of harming even their well-wishers... that is why when India extended a hand of friendship, Pakistan tried to respond, stabbing in the back," the Indian PM said.
However, he said the "gallant Indian army displayed deeds of valour when India demonstrated her might the whole world watched it. You can imagine...the enemy lodged in soaring mountainous heights and our armed forces, our brave soldiers fighting from down below! But it was not about victoriously conquering

the heights...the high morale and true of our forces won against mountains."
"Thanks to the courage of our armed forces, India showed great strength in Kargil," Modi said, recalling his own visit to the area.
Kargil Diwas commemorates the day the Indian army recaptured all the Indian posts in Ladakh's Kargil area that had been occupied by Pakistan's army 21 years ago.
It was on July 26, 1999, that the Indian army had announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay" declaring victory after the nearly three-month battles in the icy

heights of the Himalayas. More than 500 Indian soldiers died in that war.
"It was the victory of high morale and bravery of our armed forces in the truest sense of the term," Modi said.
In an apparent response to the opposition Congress Party's criticism of his government's handling of the recent border standoff with China in Ladakh, Modi said that "in times of war, whatever we say or do has immense bearing on the morale of the soldier, ever vigilant at the border, as well as the morale of his family."
"We should never forget this... and that is why our conduct,

our demeanour, our speech, our statements, our limits, our aims... whatever we do and say, must distinctly be conducive to enhancing the morale & honour of our soldiers," he said.
The PM cautioned that the dangers of coronavirus are far from over and said the contagion is spreading at many places.
"...the hazards of Corona are far from being over. At many places, it is spreading fast. We need to be extra vigilant. We have to bear in mind that Corona is as fatal today as it was in the beginning -- that's why we have to be fully cautious," he said.

Norwegian Elvis

FROM PAGE 12
an Elvis costume, told Norwegian television after completing his performance early Saturday in an Oslo bar.
His manager said Kjell Elvis, who sang through two days and two nights, had been told to go easy on the coffee, and to rely instead on smoothies, fruit and energy snacks to keep his voice in shape while staying the course.
He did, however, sound increasingly hoarse during the final hours.
Bjornestad, who is 52, had set two Elvis singing records before. The last time, in 2003, it took 26 hours of nonstop performing to come out on top.
This time, he called on fans to make donations during the event which are to be used in part to finance a hospital in Myanmar.
Elvis Presley, who died in 1977 and was known as "The King", was among the 20th century's cultural icons.
He had dozens of number one hits and sold more than 146 million albums, according to the Recording Industry Association of America, and won more gold albums than anybody else.

24 feared

FROM PAGE 12
police, the illegal Rohingya migrant had jumped off the boat that had 24 other people and that he was the only one who managed to swim to the shore safely," Zawawi said.
A search and rescue operation had been launched, but another official told AFP that no bodies or survivors have been found.
It is not clear what happened to the boat.
Muslim-majority Malaysia is a favoured destination for Rohingya, who face persecution in their mostly Buddhist homeland of Myanmar, but authorities have in recent months been trying to stop them entering over coronavirus fears.
Many of the 700,000-plus Rohingya Muslims who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar three years ago have attempted to leave overcrowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar on boats headed for Malaysia and neighbouring Indonesia.
Zawawi said two coastguard aircraft and two boats have been deployed to search the suspected area.
Malaysia has stepped up maritime patrols since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic in a bid to stop Rohingya boats from landing.
Although some have made it ashore many boats have been turned back, sparking anger from rights groups.

Iran says medics exhausted in battle against coronavirus

AFP, Tehran
Iran reported 216 new deaths from the novel coronavirus yesterday, calling on its citizens to observe health protocols more closely to ease the burden on exhausted medical staff.
The Islamic republic announced its first Covid-19 cases on February 19, and the outbreak quickly became the Middle East's deadliest.
Declared coronavirus deaths have surged since the end of June and claimed more than 200 lives nearly every day in the past week, including a record 229 on Tuesday.
"Our biggest concerns are the infection and fatigue of medical staff," health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said in a televised briefing yesterday.
"We can help them and prevent the spread of the disease" by observing basic guidelines such as hand-washing, mask-wearing and social distancing, she added.
Iran said earlier this month that 5,000 health workers had been infected with the novel coronavirus and 140 had lost their lives.
According to Lari, the 216 fatalities recorded in the past 24 hours brought to 15,700 the overall death toll in the country's outbreak.
A further 2,333 new cases of infection were confirmed over the same period, she added, taking the total to 291,172.
The official said that 12 of Iran's 31 provinces were classified as "red" and 13 were on "alert" or close to red.
Red is the highest category on the country's coronavirus risk scale.
Authorities have made masks mandatory in enclosed public spaces and allowed the hardest-hit provinces, including Tehran, to re-impose restrictions that had been progressively lifted since April to reopen Iran's sanctions-hit economy.

Thai protesters use Japanese cartoon hamster to mock govt

REUTERS, Bangkok
Hundreds of Thai protesters sang a Japanese cartoon jingle yesterday with lyrics mocking the government as hungry hamsters feasting on taxpayer cash, part of a new protest movement by youth who say they are using whimsical tactics for serious ends.

Training week ends with players wanting more

MAZHAR UDDIN

Although yesterday was supposed to be the last day of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's individual training schedule as part of their attempt to resume cricket, Mushfiqur Rahim characteristically expressed his wish to practise for two more days at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The BCB had allowed players to use their facilities and grounds across the country and also prepared a roster through which each cricketer trained individually under the safety measure provided by the board from July 19 to 26.

It was a major step for the BCB towards resumption of cricket amid discussion about the logistics of resumption after all sport came to a halt in mid-March in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. However, the coronavirus situation in Bangladesh is still alarming and



Young spinner Nayeem Hasan, who is the only cricketer from Chattogram using the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) facilities after the board allowed individual training, bowls at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

the board is in a dilemma over resuming full-fledged activities or even starting a tournament. Organising individual training sessions was easier than arranging matches or even group practice.

"Mushfiqur will practise for two more days. So far, we have not faced any trouble arranging practice sessions as far as health measures are concerned. We dealt with a small number of players, so the job was pretty easy. But the challenge will be [greater] when we will have a larger number of people. Training and tournaments are two different things to manage," said BCB's chief physician Debashish Chowdhury.

"In training we are having one-on-one sessions, which is the easiest way. But when we involve teams, the scenario will be totally different. It will involve lodging, food, transport and other logistics. The exposure increases as the number of people involved increases and it becomes difficult to ensure the measurements."

Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who was among the few cricketers who had resumed training at Mirpur, is looking forward to continuing training if the BCB allows the use

of facilities after Eid.

"I had my last practice session before Eid today [Sunday] at the BCB facilities. If the arrangement is in place, I would like to attend sessions after Eid too. It was a totally different experience and you are not as enthusiastic as when you do it with the team. I was having my own sessions at home and when BCB arranged this, I thought to avail it. We are still dealing with the pandemic. I hope we recover from this soon and get back to the ground playing cricket," said Taskin.

Like Taskin, there are domestic cricketers who are also eager to resume training after Eid and have expressed their desire to the BCB. The board is still waiting for government's guidelines about the next step towards resumption as a lot will depend on the improvement of the coronavirus situation.

"The work is still in progress when it comes to our plans after Eid and obviously, we have our plans. The game development committee had already chalked out plans with the High-Performance team. As far as the national team is concerned, much will depend on

the confirmation of the upcoming Sri Lanka series," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said.

"There are domestic cricketers who expressed their desire to avail the training facilities after Eid. The board is willing to provide facilities to as many cricketers as possible, but we also have to follow safety measures and maximise the venues so that safety and social distancing can be followed accordingly."

Meanwhile, the long gap of over three months away has taken a toll on the fitness of cricketers and BCB's trainer Ifikharul Islam urged those cricketers who are still at home to focus more on fitness work on the ground.

"Look, you need to have the touch and feel of the ground no matter how much you work on fitness at home. Those who have undergone the training lacks the game fitness, which is obvious as they were out of touch for over three months. It will take some time but there is nothing to worry about. But it won't be easy for those who are still at home and those who started early will surely be ahead of others in terms of fitness," said Ifikharul.

Tariq in alongside three new faces

Preliminary squad for WC qualifiers named

SPORTS REPORTER

Finland-born Bangladesh defender Tariq Raihan Kazi has been drafted into Bangladesh's 36-member preliminary squad for four matches of the Joint Qualifiers for the World Cup and Asian Cup in October and November.

Tariq is one of few expatriate footballers in the preliminary squad. The 20-year-old, like Jamal Bhuiyan, enrolled in Bangladesh's domestic league. Denmark-based Jamal made his way into the national team in 2012 and is now captain of the national side.

Tariq represented Finland's age-group teams in the U-17 and U-19 levels and last played for Bashundhara Kings in the 2019-20 season. He was selected in the starting eleven twice as a centre-back and came off the bench four times. However, Tariq's preferred position is at right-back.

Apart from Tariq, there were three more new faces in the squad with holding midfielder Nazmul Islam Rasel and winger SM Bablu of Bangladesh Police and Sumon Reza of Uttar Baridhara Club also named in the squad, which will start a conditioning camp from August 5 at Sarah Resorts in Gazipur.

Midfielders Mastuk Mia Jonny, Mohammad Abdullah and Atiqur Rahman Fahad, alongside striker Nabib Newaj Jibon, also returned to the squad after recovering from injuries.

Sushanta Tripura, Tutul Hossain Badsha, Pappu Hossain, Yeasin Arafat and Manjurur Rahman Manik also returned

after being excluded for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

"We are really pleased to add some new players to the squad and are so excited by them. We have a good mixture of experience and youth. So we are looking forward to working with them and hopefully it will be a good camp ahead of the games in October and November," head coach Jamie Day said in a video message released by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

Bangladesh will host Afghanistan on October 7 in Sylhet before travelling to Qatar to play against the Asian champions on October 13. The men in red and green will host India and Oman in November and complete the qualifiers.

Jamie informed that players will initially start training under local coach Masud Parvez Kaiser before foreign staff join in mid-August.

About the picking up 36 players, BFF vice president and National Teams Committee deputy chairman Tabith M Awal said: "Bangladesh will play four official matches and have the possibility to play two practice matches. So keeping in mind injury problems and illness due to the coronavirus pandemic, we have selected more players to keep as backups."

Awal informed that they would start the camp from August 5 and that head coach Jamie would trim the squad to 25 within a month and announce a final 23-member squad before the match against Afghanistan.



Look, it's the call of the individual and if you ask me, honestly I was a bit confused and worried initially while resuming training. As you know, most of Mirpur is under the red zone. But once I started training, gradually I gained the confidence after witnessing such a neat, clean and organised environment. The others who have also done individual training will agree. Hopefully, if not the whole team, at least four-five of us can practise together in the near future.

MUSHFIQUR RAHIM

'No doubt that Messi will stay'

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu repeated on Sunday that he had "no doubt" that Lionel Messi would sign a new contract adding that he can only see Neymar returning in a player exchange due to the club's financial constraints.

"Messi has said many times that he will re-sign," Bartomeu said in an interview with Mundo Deportivo. Messi's contract expires in June 2021 and local radio station Cadena Ser reported that the Argentine had broken off talks.

Messi has had regular disagreements with the club's board. He reacted publicly when sporting director Eric Abidal appeared to blame the players for the sacking of coach Ernesto Valverde in January. He also led the fightback from the Barcelona players over a dispute with the board in March regarding pay cuts during the coronavirus pandemic.

In discussing plans for next season and financial constraints on the club, Bartomeu addressed another long-running issue: the possibility that Neymar would return.

"Now we are making decisions and the players, if they do not come as part of a player exchange players, it is very difficult for them to come," Bartomeu said.

Bartomeu said another priority was persuading German goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, whose contract expires in 2022, to sign a new deal "not only for his quality as a goalkeeper but for his personality" and added that talks with Inter Milan over Argentinian striker Lautaro Martinez were "at a standstill".



'WE'RE TALKING FANTASY FOOTBALL'

Inter Milan coach Antonio Conte on Saturday dismissed talk of a reported move by the Chinese-owned Italian club for Barcelona star Lionel Messi. "We're talking fantasy football, a situation that cannot be approached at Inter for many reasons," Conte said. "I don't think there is a madman in the world who does not want Messi, but he is really far from us and what we want to build," added the former Juventus and Chelsea coach. Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta also brushed aside talk that the northern side wanted Messi to rival Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo. "Leo is not our goal and I don't think he wants to leave Barcelona," said Marotta.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hazard sunk due to expectations, says Capello

REUTERS, Madrid

Eden Hazard has struggled to deal with the weight of the Real Madrid shirt following his high-profile move from Chelsea, former Real manager Fabio Capello has said.

Hazard joined the Spanish club from Chelsea on a five-year contract for a reported 100 million euros ahead of the 2019-20 season. The Belgium international inspired Chelsea to two Premier League trophies but has failed to hit similar heights in Spain, with injuries limiting him to 21 appearances in all competitions this season.

"He hasn't been the player he was at Chelsea and he was injured for a long time, he hasn't adapted," Capello told Marca. "I've always thought of him as a great player but the Real shirt weighs heavily and Hazard has sunk this year. It's clear that he'll be better next season," added the Italian, who led Real to two La Liga titles.

With Hazard struggling for form, the onus was on Karim Benzema to shoulder the goal-scoring and the French striker enjoyed one of the best seasons of his career, netting 21 league goals and firing Real to a 34th La Liga crown.

"He's become a benchmark for Real. He has taken on responsibility that he didn't have when he played with Cristiano Ronaldo, he has a nose for goal and he's shown it," added former England coach Capello.

J. League game cancelled as players test positive

AGENCIES

Japan's J.League said on Sunday it was cancelling a match between Nagoya Grampus and Sanfrecce Hiroshima scheduled later in the day after players tested positive for the coronavirus.

Two players and a staff member on the Nagoya team tested positive for the virus, media reports said.

Football's top division restarted its season in early July after four months of delays due to the pandemic.

Nagoya defender Kazuya Miyahara developed a fever and headache on Friday and tested positive for the virus. The team tested 60 players and officials, with another player and a staff member testing positive.

"We had a meeting in the morning and decided to cancel this game," J-League chairman Mitsuru Murai told local media. "I think the way the team conducted itself was appropriate. But the fact that positive cases have been detected tells us that we need to continue to work on our infection prevention measures."

Major sports resumed competitions in front of a limited number of fans over the past few weeks under strict infection-prevention protocols.

Eight other first-division games on Sunday were expected to go ahead as scheduled. The J-League returned to action behind closed doors in June and began allowing fans into stadiums earlier this month.

Japan reported 809 new cases on Saturday, compared with 99 cases a month ago and 27 cases on May 26.

Abuse from spectators is a massive problem: Dier

REUTERS

Tottenham Hotspur's Eric Dier says the culture of abuse from spectators in football is a massive problem and authorities need to take stricter action against offenders.

Dier was banned for four games and fined over a confrontation with a fan after Spurs' defeat by Norwich City in the FA Cup fifth round in March. Following a penalty shootout, video showed Dier climbing over seats and confronting a supporter before being restrained by security guards and fans.

"It's a massive problem," the England international said. "It's a massive problem

in society in general because of social media, football stadiums, sports stadiums in general. It needs to be looked at much more seriously and there needs to be much more repercussions. It is being addressed, but it needs to be addressed even more.

"I have no problem with anyone criticising my footballing ability at any time, but when it's anything more than that then there is a big problem."

Crystal Palace's Wilfried Zaha has called on social media platforms to identify users who use racist abuse after he was targeted this month while Borussia Dortmund's new signing Jude Bellingham was also subjected to racist abuse in recent weeks.

After his heroics with the bat the day prior, Stuart Broad came out with a vengeance with the cherry in hand, scalping six wickets and sending the West Indies packing for 197 on the third day of the third and final Test at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. The pacer is now just three away from 500 Test wickets. England, who scored 369 in their first innings, went to lunch at 10 for no loss with a 182-run lead.

PHOTO: ECB





4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BSRM XTREME

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT BSRM



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM

SHAH CEMENT

Hope for faster trade arrives

First container carrying train from India reaches Benapole

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh and India formally started operating commercial container trains yesterday more than two years after the trial run of the service, aiming to boost cross-border trade and business.

The first train, which started from Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR) terminal in Kolkata's Majerhat, carrying 50 containers, reached Benapole Railway Station at 12:25pm, Bangladesh Railway (BR) officials said.

The goods, which include garment fabrics and toiletries, were unloaded at Benapole land port, they said, adding that necessary custom procedures would be followed before transporting them inside the country.

Three railway officials, including the divisional railway manager (Pakshy), were present when the train arrived at Benapole Railway Station, they added.

"We are hopeful that the service will continue," Shafiqur Rahman, director (traffic) of BR, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The development came days after the first parcel train came to Bangladesh carrying 384 tonnes of dry chillies from Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh in the second week of this month.

Besides, the first ship under the trial run of transshipment of Indian goods to its north-eastern states through Bangladesh reached Tripura last week.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



A part of a hill is being cut in Bandarban's Lama for constructing a road despite a government ban on cutting hills. Inset, the signboard of Homeland Planters which is constructing the road. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

LOCKED UP IN KL NHRC asks foreign ministry to help Rayhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Human Rights Commission yesterday wrote to the foreign ministry over Rayhan Kabir's arrest in Malaysia, urging the ministry to provide the Bangladesh necessary legal support in the Southeast Asian country.

In the letter, the commission also expressed deep concern over a series of steps taken against Rayhan by the Malaysian authorities in the last couple of weeks.

Kazi Arfan Ashik, director (admin and finance) of NHRC, said the commission urged the ministry to provide necessary legal support to Rayhan after "properly scrutinising" the arrest incident through Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

On Friday, the Malaysian immigration department arrested Rayhan, 25, in Kuala Lumpur following

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

JP replaces secy general Ranga with Bablu

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Jatiya Party yesterday removed Moshir Rahman Ranga from the post of the party's secretary general and replaced him with Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu.

The JP made the change in a sudden move "to appease the government" as Ranga was vocal against their activities, said party insiders.

The decision came following government "pressure" to remove Ranga from the position, they added.

Such a sudden change in the party's top posts is not new. The JP has a past record of removing its secretary general abruptly even few weeks before a national election.

A JP statement yesterday said that party chairman GM Quader, appointed JP Co-chairman Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu as secretary general replacing Ranga.

Party took the decision as per Article 20/1 (1) of the party's charter, where it said that party chairman would be able to take any decision including expelling or incorporating someone in the party on his own decision.

"I am not dissatisfied with the decision. Party charter gave chairman the power to take such a decision," Moshir Rahman Ranga told The Daily Star regarding his removal.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Help Bangladesh enter UN

July 27, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S APPEAL TO SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

In an appeal to the heads of the governments of USSR, USA, UK, France, Yugoslavia, Japan and India, Bangladesh Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman sought their active support for Bangladesh's membership in the UN. All these countries, which are members of the UN Security Council, have missions in Bangladesh. The Security Council in its meeting next month will in all likelihood take up the issue of Bangladesh's entry to the UN. Bangabandhu had signed this appeal before leaving for London yesterday. Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad invited diplomatic representatives of these countries and handed them the letter from the Bangladesh prime minister.

BANGABANDHU ADMITTED TO CLINIC

Bangabandhu has been admitted to the famous London Clinic for treatment this morning. Immediately after arriving at Heathrow Airport, the prime minister was taken to the clinic in a special ambulance. Sir Edward Muir, Queen's Surgeon, examined Bangabandhu and put him under observation. A three-member medical board has been constituted today to examine the Bangladesh prime minister who is suffering from a stone in the gallbladder. The board will recommend the course of treatment.

REMOVAL OF DUTY ON SOME IMPORTS BEING CONSIDERED

The government of India and Bangladesh are considering a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Pakistan tried to 'backstab' India

Says Modi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said Pakistan tried to "backstab" India despite New Delhi's efforts to keep friendly ties as he paid tribute to the Indian armed forces on the 21st anniversary of Kargil war in 1999.

"India can never forget the circumstances under which the battle of Kargil took place. Pakistan had embarked upon this misadventure, nursing delusions of encroaching upon Indian soil, to distract attention from the internal strife prevailing there.

"India was at that time making efforts to foster good relations with Pakistan," Modi said in his monthly radio address to the nation "Mann Ki Baat" aired yesterday.

"But as it is said, to the wicked, enmity with one

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Norwegian Elvis impersonator sets world record



AFP, Oslo

A Norwegian Elvis Presley impersonator set a world record on Saturday by singing the legendary entertainer's songs for more than 50 hours straight in an online competition.

Kjell Henning Bjornestad, whose stage name is Kjell Elvis, sang non-stop for 50 hours, 50 minutes and 50 seconds, smashing the previous record, recognised by the Guinness Book of Records, by more than seven hours.

The title of the previous Elvis champion, a German by the name of Thomas "Curtis" Gaethje, had remained intact for more than 16 years.

"I'll never do this again", Bjornestad, dressed in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

FAKE MASK SCAM DU suspends Sharmin

STAR REPORT

The authorities of Dhaka University have suspended its assistant registrar Sharmin Jahan, the owner of Aparajita International, for tarnishing the image of the university by supplying fake N95 masks to BSMMU's Covid-19 isolation unit.

The suspension order was issued today, reports our Dhaka University correspondent citing a DU press release.

The release said launching and running a business organisation without taking prior permission from the university authority after being an employee of the educational institution, is not only against the rules and regulations of the university but also against job discipline.

On top of that, she also tarnished the image of the university as she was sued and placed on remand for supplying fake N95 masks to BSMMU's Covid-19

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROHINGYA MIGRANTS 24 feared drowned off Malaysia

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

A Rohingya migrant is feared to be the only survivor from a boat carrying at least two dozen asylum seekers that is believed to have run into difficulty off the Malaysian coast near Thailand, a coastguard official said yesterday.

Mohamad Zawawi Abdullah, coastguard chief for the northern states of Kedah and Perlis, said the 27-year-old named Nor Hossain was detained by police after he swam to shore on the resort island of Langkawi.

"Based on the information from the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING JULY 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:50 8:15
JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 6:55 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Hilsa is being taken to the Fishery Ghat wholesale market in Chattogram for sale yesterday. Fishermen have started getting good catches of the popular fish after a 65-day ban on netting fishes in the Bay of Bengal to ensure smooth breeding of sea fishes.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Australia suffers deadliest day

UK quarantines travellers from Spain after surge in infections; N Korea reports first suspected case

AGENCIES

Australia has suffered its deadliest day from the coronavirus since the pandemic began, with authorities reporting ten fatalities yesterday and a rise in new infections despite an intensive lockdown effort.

The country's Covid-19 death toll rose to 155 and the southeastern state of Victoria reported more than 450 new infections in the last 24 hours.

A clearly concerned Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said ten people aged between their 40s and 80s had died, of which seven deaths were linked to outbreaks in aged care facilities.

It is the worst loss of life from the virus in Australia since the disease first emerged, according to a tally compiled by AFP.

Australia has dodged the worst ravages of the pandemic so far, logging just 14,000 cases in total -- fewer than many harder-hit countries see in one day.

But a second wave of infections is testing the nation's much-lauded response to the contagion.

The number of new cases has remained stubbornly high in recent days despite five million people in greater Melbourne spending the last two weeks in lockdown.

Still, 459 fresh cases were reported in Victoria yesterday -- up from 357 on Saturday. Around a dozen more were recorded in other parts of Australia.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2