

# **Double blow** to education

Pandemic, flood take toll on lakhs of primary, secondary students; remote learning severely disrupted

### MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Flood is hampering over 8 lakh students' access to remote learning, introduced to minimise disruptions to their education during the pandemic.

These students are not able to take part in lessons online and on TV, which they had been relaying on the most since the coronavirus outbreak and the closure of schools on March 17. From late March and early

April, the state-run Sangsad TV has been broadcasting classes

for all students of primary and secondary levels and on several subjects for madrassa and technical students. It is broadcasting 10 classes a day for the secondary level students.

into rivers

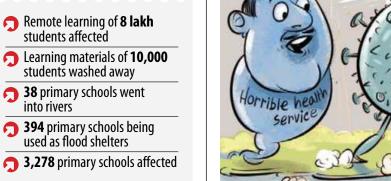
Apart from this, classes are also being held on Facebook and YouTube for primary- and secondary-level students in many areas.

But at least 10,000 of the flood-affected students have lost their books and other learning materials to the flood. Many were relocated to flood shelters, where there is no power or the supply is disrupted or they have taken shelter at places with no access to internet or TV.

before the incident.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

'Suspects' held 2





### MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday formed a three-member committee to investigate the explosion incident inside the capital's Pallabi Police Station on

early Wednesday. The committee would try Shahidul Islam, 23, and Rafigul Islam, 40, yesterday told The to figure out the nature of

the explosive and whether it

was handled properly inside

the police station, according

The committee, led by

DMP Joint Commissioner

(operations) Md Monir

Hossain, has been asked

three working days.

early to comment.

of the committee are

to submit its report within

Monir told The Daily

investigation but it was too

Rahmatullah Chowdhury,

The two other members

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Star that they started an

to an order signed by DMP

commissioner Shafiqul

Islam.

# TRIAL OF CHINESE VACCINE **Govt indecision** puzzles experts

PORIMOL PALMA and MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

It remains a mystery why Bangladesh government is still in a fix about allowing a clinical trial of the Chinese Covid-19 vaccine here when health experts are saying the trial can help the country access the life-saving vaccine quickly and build national capacity for advanced research.

Globally, more than 100 organisations are working on Covid-19 vaccine development and governments are investing billions of dollars to get the vaccine at the soonest. The UK and US have also signed contracts with

# The Baily Star wishes its valued readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a very happy Eid

### **HOLIDAY NOTICE**

The Baily Star offices will remain closed for 4 days from today on account of Eid-ul-Azha. There will be no issue of the newspaper from August 1-4. However, our digital version will serve the readers 24/7 during the holiday.

### Going Home for Eid Not in droves this time

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Daily Star

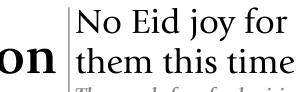
Uhr

Long tailbacks on highways, crammed buses, launches and trains, and anxious faces of holidaymakers -- the usual missing this time.

days before blast Claim families of two detainees, calling into question police account SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD Contradicting the police account, family members of two

scenes before every Eid are The number of people leaving the capital for the

festival is relatively low this year.



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8

Thousands face food crisis in flood-hit areas

### STAR REPORT

Sixty-year-old Hormuj Ali of Char Kharibari Shoal village in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila, along with his six family members, returned home from local flood shelter but almost nothing of his home was left.

The devastation of the mighty Teesta devoured his homestead. Sitting on a piece of wood in his ruined vard, the elderly was worried about upcoming Eid-ul-Azha as he was completely empty handed.

Fears of contracting the deadly virus, economic hardship and floods in several parts of the country have forced thousands of holidaymakers to cancel their trips home to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow with their loved ones.

Besides, the government has asked public servants to remain at workstations during Eid vacation.

According to estimates by transport operators, around 80 lakh to 1.15 crore people leave the capital to celebrate Eid every year. But their SEE PAGE 2 COL 6 Daily Star that they were picked up by armed men in a black microbus on Monday from near their homes in Mirpur.

of the suspects arrested in connection with the explosion

at Pallabi Police Station said they were detained two days

Family members and neighbours of two of the accused

But officers said that Pallabi police raided Kalshi area around 2:00am on Wednesday and arrested three men, including the two, with two pistols, four bullets and a weighing machine fitted with bombs that exploded at the police station hours later.

Bus driver Shahidul was detained by several armed men while he was at a tea stall near his home in Bauniabadh area around 3:45pm, said Shamim, the stall owner.

Shahidul's mother Peyari Begum filed a general diary with Pallabi Police Station a few hours later. The family also filed a complaint with Rab-4 in this connection the next day.

Describing the incident, shopkeeper Shamim said Shahidul and his cousin Selim were having snacks and hanging out at his stall when "two or three men in plainclothes carrying firearms got off a black microbus. One of them left his DB [detective branch] vest inside the vehicle. Then they asked, 'Are you Shahidul?' The moment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

vaccine producers to this end.

Against this backdrop, it is an opportunity for Bangladesh to conduct a clinical trial of the vaccine here. The country should invite not only China, but also other countries for vaccine research so it can be part of the global initiatives to fight the pandemic, say medical researchers.

Recently, Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC), the regulator for medical research, has approved the trial of a vaccine developed by Chinese company -- Sinovac Research and Development Co Ltd -- for coronavirus treatment, after more than a month of review.

The company selected icddr,b, a globally reputed medical research organisation, as its local partner in Bangladesh.

Making the decision public on July 19, BMRC Director Mahmood-uz-Jahan said icddr,b would now have to follow some procedures and get permissions from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) for conducting the trial.

He also said the trial would be conducted on around 4,200 healthcare staffers

But two days later, a private TV channel, quoting Health Secretary Abdul Mannan, reported that the approval for the trial was overturned. SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Although the man received 10 kg rice from the government ahead of Eid but the amount was so insufficient that it would be finished a day before the festival arrives.

Talking to The Daily Star on Wednesday, he said, "I don't know how I could manage some money to bring some special food for my family members on the special day."

Like Hormuj, millions of flood victims are in the same condition. Eid-ul-Azha would bring no joy to those struggling with sufficient supply of food and drinking water.

In the flood-hit regions, many people have left their houses and taken shelter on flood centres, roads, embankments, rail lines and other safe places.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

### Daily Covid death toll rises again

48 deaths, 2,695 cases in a day

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The daily death toll from coronavirus infections spiked again as authorities reported 48 deaths yesterday, up from 36 on Wednesday.

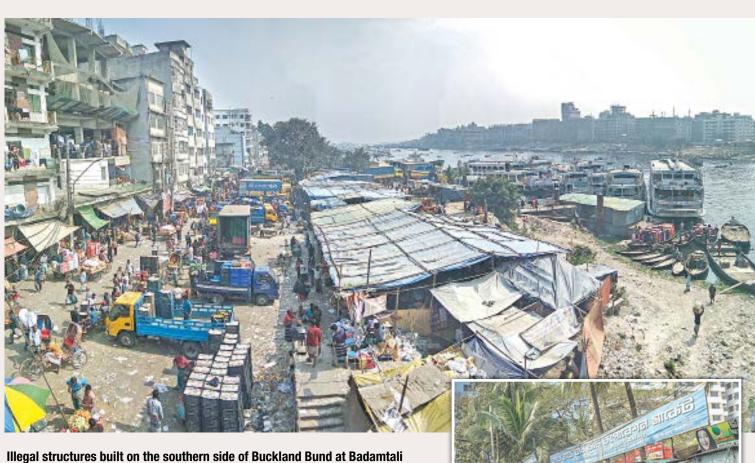
In 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, 2,695 people tested positive for the virus.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, however, said the infection rate of novel coronavirus was decreasing slowly.

Yesterday's figures took the death toll to 3,083 -around 1.31 percent of all confirmed cases. The total number of cases in the country stood at 2,34,889 as of yesterday.

In the 24-hour period, 12,937 samples were tested at 82 labs across the country.

The positivity rate was 20.83 percent yesterday, Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of



Ghat near Sadarghat terminal in the capital. This part of the dam is under the supervision of the BIWTA. Inset, a city corporation market set up illegally on the northern side of the dam near the terminal. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Misfortune of a MAJESTIC LANDMARK

### Historic Buckland Bund stands years of abuse

TARUN SARKAR writes for The Daily Star

Instead of protecting the Buckland Bund of Old Dhaka, its custodians have been busy erecting illegal structures on the historic dam and its periphery since 1984. The 1.6-kilometre Bund and its northern side

is currently the responsibility of the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), while the southern side, including a portion of the Buriganga river's foreshore, is a responsibility of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

When the dam was handed over to the then Dhaka City Corporation in the 1980s, it almost immediately started building a number of one-storey markets on the northern portion of the dam near Sadarghat and Waizghat.

Though at one point the corporation stopped construction on the dam facing opposition from locals, private businesses continued to commit the misdeed right under the custodian's nose.

Today, the entire northern side of the Bund, except for the area of the Ahsan Manzil, is occupied by encroachers.

The corporation's construction frenzy and inaction against land grabbers also erased the existence of two British-era parks near the dam.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Daily Covid death

#### FROM PAGE 1

Health Services, said during yesterday's briefing.

testing having begun on With January 21, a total of 11,64,195 samples were tested as of yesterday. The overall death rate now stands at

1.31 percent, and the overall positivity rate at 20.17 percent. Bangladesh is currently the 16th

worst affected country in the world in terms of confirmed cases -- one place above Turkey and one place below Italy, according to worldometers.info. Meanwhile, 2,668 Covid-19

patients have recovered in the 24-hour period.

The total number of recoveries stands at 1,32,960 and the recovery rate at 56.61 percent.

Six hundred and thirty-five people were put under isolation in the 24 hours, Dr Nasima added during the briefing.

Among the deceased, 36 were males and 12 females.

One was aged between 31 and 40 years, four between 41 and 50, 14 between 51 and 60, 12 between 61 and 70, 11 between 71 and 80, five

between 81 and 90 and another was above 90 years old, Dr Nasima also said.

### 'TRANSMISSION DECREASING'

Health Minister Zahid Maleque vesterday said the transmission rate was decreasing slowly, thanks to different measures taken by the government.

"Due to those initiatives, 60 percent beds in Covid-19 hospitals are now vacant," the minister said while addressing the Annual Contract Signing ceremony among different organisations under the ministry at the secretariat in Dhaka.

He also said the number of tests has decreased a bit due to the unwillingness of the people to be tested and the flood situation, among other reasons.

"The medical sector is now in the right position. It took some time at the beginning to understand the situation," the minister said.

There is no patient in half of the Covid-19 dedicated ICUs as the proper steps were taken, the minister added.

### Govt indecision

### FROM PAGE 1

Mannan did not clarify anything but said it was a matter of two states and the government would make a decision.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, however, on July 22 said the government would decide on the trial of the Chinese vaccine upon consultation with the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19.

Chair Prof Contacted, NTAC Mohammad Shahidullah on July 28 told The Daily Star that the government had not yet sought any advice from the committee. "You please let us know if there is any decision," he said.

The Daily Star talked to four medical scientists having knowledge of vaccine development, but none of them wanted to speak on the record, saying that it has become a "geopolitical issue", which, they said, should not determine anything about the life-saving vaccine. **BÉNEFITS OF TRIAL** 

### IN BANGLADESH

According to epidemiologists and virologists, three countries - the UK, US and China -- are now at the advanced stage of vaccine trials. Oxford University of the UK and American biotechnology company Moderna have already begun their third phase trials in Brazil.

AstraZeneca, a partner of Oxford, also partnered with Indian private vaccine maker Serum Institute of India to produce doses.

Of two Chinese companies, stateowned Sinopharma began stage-three trials in the UAE on 15,000 people, while Chinese private company Sinovac Research and Development Co Ltd signed a deal with a Brazilian organisation for the phase-three trial. The BMRC of Bangladesh also approved the third phase trial of Sinovac vaccine in Bangladesh.

Medical scientists say a global race

a huge opportunity for us," said Prof Nazrul Islam, a member of the NTAC on Covid-19.

"Also, trial on the Bangladeshi population means the vaccine's effectiveness will be proved on our population. Thus, the vaccine can be further improved for higher level of effectiveness for the population of this country," the virologist said.

He also said the World Health Organisation has taken global initiatives to distribute coronavirus vaccine through Vaccine Alliance GAVI, once it will be produced. Bangladesh is one of the countries that will get free vaccines, but GAVI also prioritises countries based on their epidemiological situation.

"That means, we have to totally depend on charity for the vaccine," Prof Nazrul said, expressing frustration over the government's indecision over Sinovac's vaccine trial in Bangladesh.

The medical scientists who spoke to this newspaper off the record said only a few countries have the capacity for phase three trials that require standard equipment, human resources as well as the conditions where Covid-19 infection is active. International medical research organisation icddr,b, in that case, is a blessing for Bangladesh. Also, infection is still happening in Bangladesh, they said.

But now, geopolitics seems to have come into the play. Some are saying that Bangladeshi population will be used as guinea pigs for the trial, which is not true at all, said a former scientist at the icddr.b.

China has already conducted trial of Sinovac's vaccine on animals as well as on its army. It is also set to begin the phase three trial in Brazil.

"How can that be possible without rigorous safety measures in place," the scientist said

Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Pharmacological Society, in a recent TV talk-show said there were globally-recognised ways of minimising risks in such trials. The BMRC has approved the trial considering all these aspects.

Traders bringing cattle to the capital in a boat on the Buriganga to sell the sacrificial animals ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, which will be celebrated tomorrow. The photo was taken from Postogola Shoshan Ghat yesterday.

### 'Suspects' held 2 days before blast The grieving woman said her husband was a brick and sand trader.

FROM PAGE 1 Shahidul said yes, they took him to the

microbus at gunpoint and sped away."

The whole thing happened in seconds and Shahidul didn't even have time to pay for the snacks. Shamim and several others said the

men didn't look for anything else or seize anything. Shahidul's elder brother Rafiqul said

the family members went to Pallabi Police Station where officers told them that they did not detain Shahidul and asked them to contact the Detective Branch office.

At the DB office, the family was told that even if the detectives caught Shahidul, the family would not get any information before three days.

Rafigul and his mother Peyari then went back to Pallabi Police Station to lodge a general diary.

Peyari said her son Shahidul was a bus helper for a long time and then he applied for a driver's licence in 2016. After he got it, he used to drive buses for several transport companies. Now he is a driver of a Mohammadpur-Abdullahpur bus of Tetulia Paribahan.

She added that Shahidul had never been accused in a case.

several neighbours who also said that they knew Shahidul only as a bus driver.

Asked about the police claim that he was the member of a gang named Shahadat Bahini, they said that they had no knowledge of it.

The family members said they were shocked to see on TV Wednesday afternoon that Shahidul and two others had been arrested.

"How can a man, who has been in custody for two days, be involved with a bomb blast at a police station?" This was the question everyone in the family and the witnesses asked.

Not far from this neighbourhood, Shilpi Akhter, wife of another arrestee Rafiqul Islam, told The Daily Star that five or six men identifying themselves as law enforcers picked up her husband around 8:00pm on Monday from their home in Pallabi.

They also took him in a black microbus.

"I went to Pallabi Police Station soon afterwards and I was told that he was

not there," she said. She added that she wanted to file a general diary but the officers told her that it would be unnecessary.

Double blow to education

FROM PAGE 1 These students could fall behind as

normal educational activities will not resume before August 31 at least.

"They have taken shelter at flood centres and on roads ... they are struggling to survive ... how they will be able to follow lessons on TV?" asked Shariatpur Primary Education Officer Abul Kalam Azad.

Ninth-grader Shahin Islam took shelter on the railway line in Kustari area of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila. He said he continued his studies at home after school was closed in March.

"My books are inside a suitcase. There is no opportunity or environment to study at a temporary shelter," he said, adding that he was lagging behind in his studies.

upazilas in 31 districts have been affected by the flood, said the latest report of National Disaster Response

According to a study of The Needs Assessment Working Group, a platform of government and non-government humanitarian agencies, 10,000 students lost their textbooks and other learning materials.

The report, titled "Monsoon Floods 2020 Coordinated Preliminary Impact and Needs Assessment", said 807,467 children were facing learning losses.

Academic performance of these children is severely impacted due to double sufferings (pandemic and flood), said the report based on 21 flood-affected districts.

Needs Assessment Working Group National Coordinator Jafar Iqbal said these children were students of primary and secondary levels. Things may not change that much if the schools reopen after August 31. Students of at least 38 schools will not have their schools to return to as those have gone into rivers and have been destroyed, according to the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) officials.

with no guarantee when those will be

She also added that the men who took

him didn't ask for anything else or seize

Meanwhile, Abdul Baten, additional

commissioner of DB, at a press briefing

at the DMP Media Centre yesterday

said, "We will investigate the family's

statement. We have not received any

such information. We arrested them.

You have seen the object [the weighing

machine] that we have recovered . We

will investigate if there is any issue

Mosharraf Hossain, 26, is from Tongi.

The three were put on a 14-day remand

Of the three, the other arrestee,

Police said they were suspected of

On Wednesday morning, a bomb

fitted inside a <sup>"</sup>weighing machine"

exploded inside Pallabi Police Station,

injuring four policemen and a support

of any militant outfit, but US-based

terrorism analyst SITE Intelligence

Group in a tweet on the same night said

IS claimed credit for the blast.

Police ruled out the involvement

any object.

besides this.

vesterday.

staff

being hitmen.

usable for teaching. According to DPE Deputy Director Delwar Hossain, the flood affected 741 primary schools of Mymensingh, 730 in Rajshahi, 673 in Dhaka, 580 in Sylhet, 506 in Rangpur, 44 in Chattogram and two in Barishal division as of yesterday. He said 19 primary schools in Rangpur, 11 in Rajshahi, five in Dhaka and three in Mymensingh division went into river.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) is yet to ascertain how many of its schools and madrassas were affected, but one of its top officials said at least several hundred schools.

DPE Director General Md Fashiullah and DSHE Director General Prof Sved Md Golam Faruk said they were taking immediate measures to repair the flood affected schools. "We will also provide students with textbooks and learning materials if those have been washed away by the flood," Fashiullah said. Fashiullah and Golam Faruk said once the water starts to recede, they through their field-level officials would take necessary step to repair the schools.

### FROM PAGE 1 journey often turns bitter largely due to traffic jams, overpriced tickets and

Not in droves

delays in public transport schedules. But things were different this year.

There was no pressure of home-bound people at the bus terminals over the last few days. However, the bus stations and Sadarghat launch terminal started seeing crowds of people since yesterday afternoon, operators said.

The passengers did not have to endure tailbacks either at the exit points of the capital or on highways, nor did they face any traffic congestion on the way.

Major bus operators claimed to have maintained health safety guidelines as much as possible and took a number of passengers that cover only 50 percent of the vehicles' capacities. Many small bus operators, however, violated health directives.

Even though buses were less crowded, home-goers heading for south western districts faced severe hurdles at both the ferry terminals, as floods and strong currents in the Padma continued to disrupt ferry services.

The rush of holidaymakers is likely to increase today as the three-day holiday for Eid begins, operators said.

Crowds were scarce at train stations; only 17 intercity trains are operating with 50 percent of the capacity. There was also no major disruption in train services.

Health experts, however, stressed he need for maintaining health safety guidelines during the journey, or else Covid-19 infection rate could go up sharply.

Mosharref Hossain, general manager of Hanif Paribahan, said the number of passengers has increased yesterday but it was still unlike other years.

He said they were operating only 30 percent of their total number of buses. We are incurring huge losses due to the low number of passengers on the way back to Dhaka," he said.

People heading to the south western region are facing hassles, as authorities are operating 10 out of the 16 ferries on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route due to strong currents in the Padma, which washed away a pontoon of the Shimulia ferry terminal on Tuesday.

As a result, many are taking the alternative Paturia-Daulatdia route, resulting in huge pressure on the vehicles there and causing tailbacks on the way there.

A Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) staffer at Shimulia said the number of passengers, especially on motorcycles and other light vehicles, has increased yesterday. "The numbers of passengers and

vehicles were high in the morning as the ferries remained suspended the night before due to strong currents," he said, preferring anonymity.

Meanwhile, around 250 private cars and microbuses were seen waiting at the Paturia end of the Paturia-Daulatdia terminal around 1:00pm. Some 300 trucks were seen waiting at truck terminals at that time as well, reported our Manikganj correspondent.

Zillur Rahman, BIWTC deputy general manager at the terminal, said they were facing a pressure of vehicles since yesterday morning as many people started leaving Dhaka. "However, our ferry services remain normal," he claimed, adding that they were operating 15 ferries.

Coordination Centre.

is underway to develop an effective vaccine and ensure national demand before supplying doses to other nations. Any country participating in the trial will obviously get quick access to the vaccine, they said.

They also said the countries participating in the research would also get technological support. Besides, local pharmaceutical companies would be able to go for production.

China also said Bangladesh would get priority in getting its vaccine, claimed a source in the vaccine research community, adding that though icddr,b was yet to sign any deal with Sinovac, it was negotiating in this regard.

"If Sinovac's vaccine is found effective through trial in Bangladesh, our companies having expertise can go for manufacturing it locally. We can get access to vaccine at the earliest. This is

"Also, the volunteers for the trial will be selected from health workers because they can give instant feedbacks. This is meant to minimise risks, if any," he said.

"The research experience, if done, will be an asset for us. The government should take quick decision on this," he said.

Prof Savedur Rahman also said Bangladesh should not always remain at the "receiving end". With its robust growth of pharmaceutical industry, human and laboratory facilities, the country now needs to participate in global research and help the countrymen and the humanity, he added

us," said Morzina Begum, 35, of Aglar

Kawyabata Char in the same upazila,

said there remained waterlogged for the

us relief. So, we can't think of any

In Sirajganj, flood-hit people are

"We are struggling to get food for

struggling to survive. They too will have

survival every day. We have no joy

for the Eid," said Jamiran Begum, of

About 3.38 lakh people have been

"We have already started distributing

Betilchar village in Chowhali upazila.

marooned in floodwater in the district.

special relief among the victims ahead

of Eid," said Abdur Rahim, district relief

In Munshiganj, around 40,000

said Rahmam Hossain, a resident of

Medenimandal village in Louhajang

In Manikganj, although floodwater

has started receding slowly, flood

situation remains unchanged as all the

Our correspondents from Nilphamari,

and

rivers were flowing above danger level.

Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Pabna

Manikganj contributed to this report.

and rehabilitation officer.

no festivity of Eid-ul-Azha this year.

Another victim Ali Akbar, 50, of the

"We can't move and none gave

### Shahin is lucky. He still has the books.

About 100 families took shelter on the Mahila Bandh at Bagura's Sarikandi upazila. They do not have any TV and internet connection is far cry as mobile network is spotty at best.

"My nephew lost his books in the flood. How will he continue his education amid this situation?" asked flood victim Najirul Islam.

Around 37 percent of the country has been flooded. Several million people of 150

Besides, the flood damaged 3,278 government primary schools and 394 others were being used as flood shelters,

However, how the government is going to make up the loss of months of academic activities is yet to be seen.

### LAUNCHES AND TRAINS Meanwhile, Sadarghat launch terminal

witnessed a relatively higher number of people yesterday as many of them, especially garment workers, rushed here after their offices or factories were declared closed.

"There is a crowd of passengers at the terminal today [Thursday]. But the crowd is not as intense as previous Eid holidays," ne told The Daily Star yesterday.

Even Kamalapur railway station did not see its usual Eid crowd.

Bangladesh Railway is operating only 17 intercity trains with 50 percent of the passenger capacity. As all tickets were sold out online and people without tickets were not allowed to travel, there was no pressure of passengers at the stations, officials said.

### DMP to probe

### FROM PAGE 1

in-charge of the bomb disposal unit (BDU) at CITC and Mahmuda Afroz ucky, additional deputy commissioner Darussalam zone) of Mirpur Division Police.

Meanwhile, two cases were filed against the three arrestees -- Shahidul Islam, Mosharraf Hossain and Rafiqul Islam -- with Pallabi Police Station on Wednesday night, said Walid Hossain, deputy commissioner of DMP.

According to the FIR, police arrested the three from Pallabi area around 1:55am on Wednesday, based on information that a group of criminals had gathered there.

Police also recovered two pistols, our bullets and a weighing machine from their possession.

During interrogation, the arrestees informed that there were explosives fitted inside the machine.

The arrestees also disclose names of their two associates Md Jony, 32, and Md Alamgir alias Nata Alamgir, 32, reads the FIR.

Police produced the three before a Dhaka court yesterday seeking a ten-day emand in each case.

In response, Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam approved a total of 14-day remand -- seven days in each case -- for the accused said DC Walid.

Abdul Baten, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP, yesterday once again claimed that there was no militant link behind the blast.

On Wednesday, around 15 hours after the blast, SITE Intelligence Group which tracks the online activity of jihadist organisations and white supremacists said the Islamic State had claimed credit for the blast.

### Misfortune of a majestic landmark FROM PAGE 1

According to historian Muntassir Mamoon's book titled "Dhaka Smriti Bissmritir Nogori", Coronation Park, built to mark King George V's accession to the throne, stretched from Sadarghat to Lalkuthi. A smaller Ladies' Park was also situated near the dam.

Hashem Sufi, a researcher and a local of Old Dhaka, told The Daily Star that significant rallies were held at the Coronation Park during the British period.

named Nobojoog Sharircharcha Kendra in the park. The Ladies' Park was on the western side of the Coronation Park. The latter existed even after the Liberation War.'

City undivided Dhaka The Corporation constructed a market on the Ladies' Park while individual businesses grabbed the land of the Coronation Park, said Hashem.

mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka

land grabbers, who set up shops and

The filled-up portion of the river from

Government Engineering Department (LGED), said a BIWTA official. The source also informed that the

LGED is now handing over the south western section of the dam -- from Waizghat to Badamtoli -- to BIWTA, which is planning to build more structures including a recreational park and a car-parking lot there.

BIWTA's Executive Contacted, Engineer Motiul Islam said existing laws stipulate that permission must be taken from the BIWTA to construct any structure on the land within 150 feet from the riverbank and no such permission was given to anyone by the

When asked about their plan to build more structures on filled-up riverland, Motiul, also deputy chief director of Dhaka's circular waterway project, said, "We evict illegal occupiers and they occupy land again. It is a waste of resources. If a permanent structure is built by the government, then land grabbers won't be able to occupy [the area].'

He did not answer why they are not removing earth from the filled-up portion of the river and its foreshore, instead of building permanent structures. NO PLACE FOR STROLLS

The historical Buckland Bund was constructed on the bank of the Buriganga river in 1866 by Charles Thomas Buckland, the then commissioner of Dhaka, and was later expanded by elites and merchants including Khwaja Abdul Gani, Ruplal Das and Raghunath Das.

Stretching from Badamtoli to Farasganj, the dam was a place of recreation and entertainment for the city dwellers, who would take afternoon strolls there enjoying the breeze coming across the river.

Several magnificent mansions of the city including Ahsan Manzil, Ruplal House and Lalkuthi were situated along

the dam overlooking the river. Except for Ahsan Manzil, none of the other mansions are visible from the river or the dam anymore.

The dam is now one of the most congested and dirty roads in the capital. Endless streams of rickshaws and goodscarrying vans create traffic gridlocks all day long.

Several researchers, historians and environmentalists demanded removal of all illegal structures and recovering the land of the historical Buckland Bund.

Prof Muntassir said the Buckland Bund must be protected for the sake of the Buriganga.

"Saving the Buriganga does not just mean ensuring navigability and cleaning the water. The river's foreshore must be protected. The dam on the riverbank must be saved," he said.

Water resource and climate change specialist Prof Ainun Nishat said governments in developed countries construct walkways along riversides, where people take afternoon strolls.

"The Buckland Bund was also constructed for that purpose, not for

erecting buildings on it," he noted. Researcher Hashem urged the government to restore the dam to its original state and set up benches there for people to spend their leisure along the riverbank.

Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, president of Arcasia, said the removal of illegal structures on the premises of Buckland Bund could offer the city dwellers a place to roam around freely in a clean environment.

"Establishment of government buildings on illegally captured lands do not justify the occupation," he said.

The government agencies need to set up an example by removing the illegal structures on both sides of the Buckland Bund, he added.

The writer is a freelance reporter and researcher.

eastern side of the dam was handed over to the BIWTA in 2016 by the Local

"There was also a fitness centre

demolished the fitness centre and built a multi-storey building in its place.

The current DSCC mayor, Fazle Noor Taposh, could not be reached on his mobile phone after several attempts for comments about the Corporation's plan on protecting the dam from illegal occupiers and restoring its beauty.

Meanwhile, the south side of the dam, including a portion of the

temporary market on the illegally filledup riverbank and allocated shops to local businesses.

demolished, but in 2017, the BIWTA again constructed a number of structures including a four-storey building on the illegally filled river-land.

Sadarghat to Shyambazar on the south

BIWTA.

At the turn of the century, Dhaka's

Buriganga's foreshore, were filled-up by businesses.

Rather the river custodian had built a

The temporary market was later

No Eid joy for them this time live. So, this year Eid means nothing to

Char in Fulchari upazila.

last 35 davs.

celebration like Eid.'

While visiting Char Sonaigazi-Char Jatindranarayan embankment at Shimulbari union in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, our correspondent found a large number of polythene wrapped huts.

FROM PAGE 1

Villagers in the area took shelter and kept their belongings inside the huts. Some of them were planning to cook using firewood stove while some collecting water and firewood.

The same picture was seen by the two sides of Kurigram-Ramna rail line at Thanahat union in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila.

Begum, 55, of Char Banesa Sonaigazi, said, "I along with my family took shelter on the embankment about four weeks ago as the sudden flood destroyed my homestead.

Asked about their Eid, she said, "All our Eid preparation, including our children's dresses, were washed away in the recent flood. Eid is meaningless to us as we do not have the ability to celebrate the festival.

Another flood Rahman, 65, of Char Gobordhan in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, said, "Our crops, fishes and everything else have been washed away. How can we celebrate Eid?"

In Gaibandha, around 2.50 lakh people have been affected by flood. Almost all of them are at a miserable state. So, celebrating Eid appears to be a luxury to them.

"We have become homeless. Our houses were eroded by the Brahmaputra around a month ago. Now, we are desperately searching for a new place to

people have been affected by flood. Many of them cannot trade cattle for the Éid. They have got no dry land left victim Safiar to sacrifice animals. "This year, it's quite impossible for us to sacrifice an animal because our houses have been submerged. Eid will pass like any other ordinary days,"

upazila.

# SALE OF SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS Traders fear loss, buyers complain of high prices

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With only a day remaining before Eid-ul-Azha, selling of sacrificial animals is yet to gain momentum at the markets in the capital

However as of yesterday afternoon, prices of cattle were still high compared to that of last year, said buyers.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the number of buyers and sellers is also low at the markets. Traders fear loss as the pandemic has wreaked havoc on the economy, reducing people's capacity to purchase. Visiting Dhupkhola, Sadeque Hossain Khoka playground, Kachukhet and Gabtoli cattle markets, these correspondents saw that the haats, which usually remained abuzz with sellers, buyers and visitors around this time, looked rather desolate.

A mid-size bull was being sold at Tk 10,000 to 15,000 higher than last year's price while big-size ones were Tk 20,000-Tk 25,000 higher.

"I managed to sell three bulls so far... I am happy about it. At first I feared I won't be able to sell any due to lack of customers," said Jamal Bepari, who brought five bulls from Faridpur three days back to Sadeque Hossain Khoka cattle market.

He said he sold a bull for Tk 1.30 lakh yesterday.

Rafiqul Islam, a trader from Jhenidah who brought four mid-size bulls to Dhupkhola cattle market, said he was able to sell all the bulls.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



It's an Eid-ul-Azha like never before, but despite the adversities, people in the capital are trying their best to prepare for the joyful day. At various kitchen markets, customers are busy inspecting spices and bargaining for a deal, while sellers are determined to take home a well-earned profit. Cutlers are busy roaming through the alleys and calling customers to sharpen their blades before the big day. And of course, the occasion calls for wooden blocks to dice meat, and piles of them are displayed for customers to take home at many areas of the city. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, FIROZ AHMED

# DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION Saving waterbodies, mosquito control among top priorities

Mayor Taposh announces Tk 6,119.59cr annual budget

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday announced a Tk 6,119.59 crore budget, with a major focus on recovering waterbodies, mosquito control activities and ensuring recreation facilities for city dwellers.

This is the first budget of Mayor Taposh after taking office. He announced it at Nagar Bhaban.

The budget is Tk 2,488.19 crore higher than that of the last fiscal. In the budget, DSCC kept Tk 150

"The government organisations responsible for *maintaining canals* and waterbodies are not doing their job properly. The city corporation will not take the liability

### **DSCC BUDGET IN NUMBERS**

SECTOR	FY 2020-2021	FY 2019-2020
Development expenditure	Tk <b>5,505.84</b> cr	Tk <b>2,693.93</b> cr
Revenue income target	Tk <b>1,009.02</b> cr	Tk <b>972.80</b> cr
Road, traffic infrastructure dev	Tk <b>1,741.75</b> cr	Tk <b>896.74</b> cr
Recreation	Tk <b>847</b> cr	Tk <b>271.30</b> cr
Mosquito control activities	Tk <b>335</b> cr	Tk <b>43.34</b> cr
Waste management	Tk <b>8</b> cr	Tk <b>12.50</b> cr
Environmental dev	Tk <b>183.30</b> cr	Tk <b>151.99</b> cr

the city corporation as among the organisations only mayors are elected by them, he added.

"The government organisations responsible to maintain canals and waterbodies are not doing their duties properly. The city corporation will not take the liability of their negligence anymore," said Taposh.

He also said, "Following the will of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we want to make the old town free from encroachment and pollution, for which we want to activities. make the old channel of Buriganga

activities which was Tk 43.30 crore in the last fiscal. In addition, it kept Tk 300 crore for comprehensive mosquito control activities for the first time.

"There is a huge number of waterbodies in the city which turned into breeding grounds for mosquitoes. These have become stagnant due to encroachment and pollution," the mayor said.

He said they have cleaned many of those and released fish and ducks as a part of their mosquito control

About garbage management, the

## Overhead cables on Gulshan Ave to go underground: Atiq UNB, Dhaka

All overhead cables on Gulshan Avenue (from Pakistan Embassy to Gulshan Shooting Club) will be put underground by October 1, Dhaka North City Corporation(DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam said yesterday.

No price will be increased at the consumer level for these, he said. The decision was taken at a meeting of DNCC at Nagar Bhaban in the capital's Gulshan.

The project will be implemented by Summit Communications Ltd, Fiber at Home, Bahan Ltd, Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB), and Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB).

At the meeting, the mayor said the existing overhead cables in all areas of DNCC need to be moved underground for planned urbanisation.

In order to enhance the beauty of the area, electric cables, internet cables and dish line cables will be shifted underground on various roads in phases, said Atiqul.

Utility ducts will also be constructed in 17 new wards under the newlyapproved Ecnec project for development of the extended area of DNCC, said the mayor.

### Six Eid jamaats at National Mosque UNB, Dhaka

Six Eid-ul-Azha jamaats (congregations) will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque from 7am on the Eid day tomorrow, said a press release of Islamic Foundation.

### 59 'members of dope gangs' arrested in capital Unв, Dhaka

Detectives in separate drives arrested 59 members of "dope gangs" from different parts of the capital yesterday.

Police recovered food mixed with sedatives and knives from them, said DMP Deputy Commissioner Md Walid Hossain.

Among the arrestees, 16 were arrested by DB Wari zone, 10 by Cyber and Special Crime Investigation Department, nine by Mothijheel zone, and eight each by Ramna, Lalbagh and Tejgaon zones of DB police.

Upon interrogation, police learned that the criminals quickly built up rapport through conversation with "targets" at shopping malls, cattle markets, bus terminals and rail stations ahead of Eid, and offered them food laced with sedatives.

Later, when the victim fell unconscious, they looted the belongings and fled, said law enforcers.

GRAFT IN MEDICAL EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT ACC asks BB to freeze Munsi Sazzad's accounts STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has requested Bangladesh Financial

of their negligence anymore."

crore for the renovation of the old channel of the Buriganga, and Tk 250 crore to recover land along the river and construct roads and parks there.

The mayor said they want to bring the canals and waterbodies under the city corporation's jurisdiction and if necessary, they want to build walkways and parks along the banks.

DSCC is not the only organisation responsible for solving the city's waterlogging problem, but people

that flows between Old Dhaka and Kamrangirchar -- more aesthetic after recovering it from encroachers."

He said they have already started the work and the Military Institute of Science and Technology is consulting on the project.

"We will also recover all the canals in Dhaka and we will do the necessary maintenance work," he said.

Taposh said they will also take initiatives to extend the banks of the Buriganga and Shitalakkhya rivers, along with making the road communication system more dynamic.

DSCC in the current fiscal kept Tk expect more from the mayor and 35 crore for regular mosquito control

mayor said they have a plan to set up Secondary Transfer Stations (STS) at all of its 75 wards."We hope we will be able to set up the STS in 31 wards by December 31," he said.

On road digging by different utility service providing organisations, which leads to public sufferings, the mayor said they will not allow any organisation to dig city roads within three years of its construction or repairing works.

Responding to a question on overhead cable lines, the mayor said they will conduct a drive from next week in this regard as well as initiate a project for stray dogs from next month.

The first Eid jamaat will be administered by Mufti Mizanur Rahman, senior Pesh Imam of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, it said.

Eid jamaats will be held maintaining social distance and health guidelines.

After the first jamaat, the second one will be held at 7:50am while the next four jamaats will be held at 8:45am, 9:35am, 10:30am, and 11:10am.

On Monday, the government issued some directives asking people to offer Eid prayers at their nearest mosques instead of Eidgah and open spaces maintaining recommended health guidelines amid the coronavirus pandemic.

It also suggested disinfecting mosques SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Intelligence Unit (BFIU) of Bangladesh Bank to freeze all bank accounts National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital (NIDCH)'s Administrative Officer Munsi Sazzad Hossain and his two brothers.

In a letter, ACC's deputy assistant director Mohammad Shahjahan Meraz yesterday also asked BFIU to prevent the trio from liquidating FDRs and saving certificates.

Sazzad and his brothers - Munsi Faruk Hossain, proprietor of Ahmed Enterprise and Abdulla Al Mamun, proprietor of Anik Traders - are already accused in a graft case filed in 2019.

On June 21, the High Court (HC) granted bail to Sazzad and Mamun in the case.

There are allegations against the brothers of amassing wealth beyond the known source of income through supplying sub-standard equipment and machines to hospitals.

The Commission is now enquiring into their illegal wealth and came to know that the brothers are trying to transfer their money to obliterate the trace of the illegal funds.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

### US committed to combating human trafficking: envoy STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller yesterday reassured country's commitment his to work with Bangladesh in combating human trafficking.

"The United States reconfirms our commitment to partnering with all of you to fight human trafficking," he told a webinar, marking the World Day against Trafficking in Persons.



Bangladesh United Nations Network on Migration (BDUNNM) organised the webinar which was also addressed by government officials, members of civil society organisations working on migration, and officials and representatives of UN agencies.

"Human trafficking [or] modern slavery has no place in our world anywhere, anymore," added the US ambassador.

Addressing as the key guest speaker, the US envoy said human trafficking is a "difficult and complex" issue and that trafficking networks are "sophisticated, far-reaching and dangerous.

He stressed the need for keeping up the good fight against traffickers, saying fighting human trafficking remains one of the US embassy's top priorities.

He said human traffickers prey upon the most vulnerable and look for opportunities to exploit them.

Instability and lack of access to critical services caused by the Covid-19 pandemic mean the number of people vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers is rapidly growing, he added.

"My sense of urgency is magnified by the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic," he said, adding human SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



While a vegetable market is set up throughout the year on this field adjacent to Mahasthan Mahiswar Degree College in Bogura, the compound turns into a sprawling cattle market once a year, ahead of Eidul-Azha. The threat of coronavirus transmission was largely ignored, as several thousand people throng the market to bargain and buy sacrificial animals. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### No export of Hilsa this year

Fisheries minister says in Barishal

### **OUR CORRESPONDENT**, Barishal

The government will not export hilsa abroad during this season, saidFisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim yesterday.

The national fish is now being sold at Chadpur, Bhola and Barishal to some extent, said the minister. During the peak time, its price would come down, he added.

"We have decided on principle not to export hilsa fish from Bangladesh this year," he said. This delicious fish meets the needs of nutrition of the country's people, said Minister Rezaul.

He was speaking at a programme in Barishal city's Circuit House to hand over cheques to journalists who have been victimised in various ways during the

coronavirus pandemic. "Sangbadik Kalayan Trust" organised the event supported by Barishal Sangabadik Union. The minister said

the government would undertake all necessary measures including SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# Road crashes kill nine

### STAR REPORT

At least nine people were killed and around 12 injured in road accidents in four districts during the last two days, report our correspondents.

Three people, including a police officer, were killed in separate accidents in Chattogram yesterday.

In the port city, Ehsanul Haque (27), a probationary sub-inspector hailing from Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila, was killed after a bus rammed into his motorbike at Mariners' Road around 11:15am, said Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station.

In Lohagara, two bus passengers were killed and 10 injured, as the bus collided with a truck in front of Bara Awliya Degree College around 7:30am, said OC Yasir Arafat of Dohazari Highway Police Station.

The deceased are Md Shawkat (27) and Mostafizur Rahman (27), he said.

The injured were treated at the upazila health complex, he added.

In Gaibandha, madrasa teacher Md Achir Uddin (55) and his son Zobayer (14) died after their motorbike crashed into a microbus at Tarof Kamal Shiyalgara area in Gobindaganj upazila around 10am.

Quoting witnesses, Md Afzal Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Gobindaganj Police Station, said Achir was taking his son home from a madrasa when the accident occurred.

Locals rescued them immediately and took them to the upazila health complex,

where the doctor pronounced them dead, he said.

Police seized the microbus but its driver managed to flee, he added.

In Gopalganj, three family members were killed and two injured, after their rented car hit a roadside railing on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Kashiani upazila around 4am yesterday.

The deceased are Ziaur Mollah (55), Emdadul Haque (25) and Sajjad Mollah (35)

Quoting locals, OC Ataur Rahman of Bhanga Highway Police Station said Emdadul, a Singapore returnee, his father Ziaur, brother-in-law Sajjad and a friend, had rented a car from Dhaka airport to go to their home village.

The injured, including the driver, were admitted to Gopalganj General Hospital.

In Kurigram, Limon Islam (6), a child with speech impairment, was killed after a battery-run auto-rickshaw hit him at Phulbari upazila on Wednesday.

Son of Abdur Rahman of the upazila, Limon succumbed to his injuries at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital around 10pm while undergoing treatment, said officerin-charge Rajib Kumar Roy of Phulbari Police Station.

Police said the boy was seriously injured after being hit. Locals rescued and took him to the upazila health complex.

When his condition deteriorated, he was rushed to the Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

A lighter vessel carrying

1,500 tonnes of cement

another vessel yesterday.

All 13 crew of the

cement clinkers from a

anchorage of Chattogram

port, Tanesha was heading

for Narayanganj, said Md

(DD) of Bangladesh Inland

Water Transport Authority.

The accident occurred

when it collided with MV

Nilgiri, heading from the

same direction, and crack

developed at the bottom of

Tasneha-5. iIts master and

managed to take it around

half a kilometre away from

the channel when it sank.

mother vessel at outer

Salim, deputy director

rescued by a trawler.

clinker capsized near Hatiya

channel after colliding with

vessel, MV Tasneha-5, were

After loading imported

A woman quite literally creates her own path while walking through Chattogram's Naya Bazar, as she places a brick piece to step on, in order to avoid muddy water accumulated on the road. Waterlogging has been a long-standing problem in the port city, and road development work going on in the area has only added to commuters' woes. The photo was taken on Wednesday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

### Dealer arrested for hoarding TCB goods

**OUR CORRESPONDENT**, M'singh

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday (Rab-14) arrested a dealer of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) for illegally hoarding its goods.

The arrestee is Md Saidul Islam (50) from Phulbaria.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab-14 team raided Phulbaria's Aziz Oil Mills, arrested Saidul from the spot and recovered the goods.

goods included The 96 sacks of sugar (50kg per sack), 42 sacks of dal (50kg per sack) and 21,162 litres of soybean oil, said Md Tafiqul Alam, senior assistant superintendent of police and Rab-14 media officer.

During primary interrogation, Saidul said he had been storing the goods illegally for a long time to sell them in the black market, said the Rab official.

He was later handed over to Phulbaria Police Station. A case was lodged.

#### Healthcare sector has Clinker-laden lighter vessel collapsed: Fakhrul capsizes STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has alleged that people do not have confidence in the country's health system anymore, as it has completely collapsed.

"Babu's [Shafiul Bari Babu's] death in such a way has exposed that Bangladesh's health system has completely collapsed. His illness and death have also proved that people can't be confident about the system," he said.

The BNP leader made the comment while talking to reporters after visiting the house of Swechchasebak Dal President Shafiul Bari Babu, who died on Tuesday.

Fakhrul said the country's health system itself has become a problem for patients, as people do not get proper treatment and authentic diagnosis reports.

"Many asked why the country's people go abroad for treatment. People are forced to, as they can't undergo even proper diagnosis here," he observed.

Terming Babu a talented leader, Fakhrul said, "We can't imagine a popular and conscious leader like Babu leave us in such a way. He had all the qualities to be a big leader."

Fakhrul said Babu left his wife and two children in such a condition that they have no place to take shelter.

"I urge all of our party leaders and activists to extend their helping hand to Babu's family."

The BNP leader came to Babu's rented house in the capital's Eskaton and talked to Babu's wife and children.

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

### **US** committed FROM PAGE 3

trafficking is a global threat necessitating global response. Earl R Miller said fight against the crime requires joint collaboration from government, civil society activists and international organisations.

The fight must involve training law enforcement officials, bringing trafficking in persons (TIP) cases to court, building strong community networks, protecting survivors, and enhancing cooperation between countries to investigate trafficking networks, he added.

The US envoy said Bangladesh's establishing of seven anti-human trafficking tribunals is a "huge step forward" to fight the crime.

On Bangladesh's upgrade from "Tier 2 Watch List" to "Tier 2" in the US State Department's TIP Report 2020, he congratulated all those who fought tirelessly to pursue accountability for traffickers and freedom for the victims.

However, he said the struggle continues, calling upon Bangladesh government to fulfill recommendations made in the TIP report.

ambassador mentioned four specific The recommendations for immediate government actions.

To this end, he mentioned that he and his colleague Ambassador-at-Large John Richmond wrote an op-ed published in The Daily Star on June 26, emphasising the four recommendations.

The US envoy also lauded Bangladesh's effort to fulfill the objectives of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, known as the "Palermo Protocol."

before the Eid prayers and not rolling out carpets on the floors.

The devotees have been asked to bring prayer mats from home. They must wear masks inside mosques and avoid using prayer mats and caps

stored there. Children, elderly people, people with physical ailment, and those involved in taking care of the sick will not be allowed to attend the Eid prayers.

Besides, the devotees were requested to shun handshaking and hugging after the prayers which has been a common practice during Eid throughout the

world. The Ministry of Religious Affairs urged imams and managing committees of mosques to ensure proper implementation of the directives.

"While enquiring, we noticed that they [Faruk and his brothers] are trying to transfer their money. That's why we've asked Bangladesh Bank to freeze all of their

accounts," said Meraz to the correspondent. Specifying an FDR worth Tk 9 crore belonging to Faruk with Prime Bank's Ibrahimpur Branch, ACC asked BFIU to freeze it.

Earlier this month, Director General of Health Services black listed 14 medical equipment supplying farms. Ahmed Enterprise and Anik Traders are among the 14 black listed suppliers.

In 2019, the High Court (HC) ordered ACC to enquire into gross anomalies in the procurement of medical equipment for Faridpur Medical College Hospital (FMCH).

Record shows, in September 2014, M/S Anik Traders, owned by Sazzad and Mamun, was awarded a tender for the procurement of medical equipment for ICU of FMCH.

Anik Traders supplied FMCH the required machines and equipment on December 9 and December 20 of the same year, according to the FIR.

The trader then submitted a bill of Tk 10 crore. This was, however, rejected by the DGHS at the last minute for being "inflated"

MS Anik Traders in June 2017 moved a petition with the High Court against the DGHS for withholding the pavment.

After scrutinising the documents submitted by DGHS and Anik Traders, the HC bench found gross anomalies and directed the ACC to launch an investigation.

# Traders

FROM PAGE 3 He said he made Tk 40,000 profit after selling the bulls. ন্যাশনাল ন্যাংক লিমিটেড এর চেয়ারম্যান ও বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা জনাব

which is 10 less than last year.

Eid, but apparently changed his Nagar cattle market, said, "I have Md Azmal, a trader from mind afterwards -- at the cattle a loan of Tk 5 lakh, which I'll have Jhenidah who brought 10 cattle market in Kachukhet yesterday to pay by selling the bulls. If I don't CORRESPONDENT

Charges pressed against Shahed

Arms Case

ACC asks BB Six Eid FROM PAGE 3 FROM PAGE 3

জয়নুল হক সিকদার ২০১৫ সালে তার অপ্লের 'দারিন্ন মুস্তি' খন প্রবন্ধ ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংকে চালু করেন। এর আগুতায় রাজশাহী ও ময়মনসিংহ সহ দেশের কয়েকটি জেলায় দরিদ্র মানুযের সাবলম্বী হবার লক্ষ্যে বিনা জামানতে ৫% সৱল সদে ঋণ প্ৰদান কৰা হয়। সে সময় ৰাজ্যসমূহে সাধাৰণ ঋণ সুদের হার ছিল ১৪ থেকে ১৫%। মাননীয় প্রথানমন্ত্রী শেথ হাসিনার নির্দেশে ৰাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক বৰ্তমানে ব্যাংকসমূহকে সৰ্বোচ্চ ৯% হাবে সুদ প্ৰহণের সীমা নির্ধারণ করে সেয়।

ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর ৪৩৯তম বোর্ড সভায় ব্যাংকের পরিচালক রিক হক সিকদার জানান যে, "দারিদ্র যুক্তি প্রকল্পের আওতায় যে সকল মান্যকে ক্ষা প্রদান করা হয়েছে তাদের ক্ষা ফেরতের হার ৯৮% বাংলাদেশে বেসরকারি ব্যাংকসমূহের মধ্যে ইসলামী ব্যাংকের পর ন্যাশনাল বাংকে করাল ব্যাংকিং শাখা সর্বোদ্ধ ফলে আমাদের জন্য এই জাতীয় প্রকল্প অন্তান্ত তালো এবং লেশের মানুযের জন্য কল্যাণকর, বিশেষ করে এই করোনা মহামারীতে যখন দরিদ্র মানুষ সবচেয়ে কষ্টে আছে।"

এর প্রেক্ষিকে ব্যাংকের চেয়ারম্যান ও বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা জনাব জয়নুল হক সিকদার এই প্রকল্পের আগ্রতা বাড়িয়ে সারাদেশে চালু করার নির্দেশনা প্রদান করেন এবং এই গ্রকন্তে সুদের হার কমিয়ে ৩.৫% নির্ধারণ করে দেন। এই সিদ্ধান্দ্রের ফলে এই করোনা মহামারীকালে ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংকের এমন মানবিক প্রকল্প অনন্য উদাহরণ হয়ে থাকবে।

National Bank Limited

profit and I had to work hard to rear them. But given the situation, I am not complaining. Hopefully, I will make more profit next year."

However, not all traders were as optimistic as Rafigul. Mohammad Shanto, who reared three bulls for around seven months targeting Eid, said he could sell only one as of yesterday. "I sold the bull for Tk 51,500, that too at minimal profit.' Shanto arrived at Kachukhet

cattle market three days back. "The first two days were very

frustrating for me as I kept on waiting for buyers to show up. Hopefully, tomorrow [today] being the last day before Eid, more people will come and purchase animals.

A total of 18 cattle markets have been set up in the capital this year,

"I was hoping to make more to Dhupkhola cattle market, said, "Eighty percent traders in our area did not bring their bulls to the market fearing loss as they heard most people will not sacrifice animals due to financial crisis or coronavirus."

### PRICES STILL HIGH

Even though the number of buyers and cattle are both significantly lower this year, prices of animals seem to have gone up, complained city dwellers.

They said the capacity of TRADERS WORRIED purchasing sacrificial animals is less this year as many have lost their jobs or faced huge losses in their businesses due to the pandemic.

up with Shamshul Islam Khan -who had initially decided not to said Mohammad Jony Sheikh. sacrifice any animal this year for

morning.

He bought a bull for Tk 60,000, which he thought was at least Tk 10,000 more compared to the one he bought last year.

Md Ridoy, who purchased a bull for Tk 70,000, echoed him.

Many also said they are sacrificing animals by splitting the cost. "I did not get bonus this year... I am sacrificing a bull along with my neighbours this year," said Md Shajahan, a private job holder.

With Eid just a day away, many traders are beginning to worry as they were yet to sell their livestock. "I brought 25 bulls from lakh. Faridpur two days back at Sadeque This newspaper also caught Hossain Khoka cattle market but could not sell any of them yet,"

Monsur Ali, a trader at Aftab said.

get a good price from the market, I will have to sell those to meat Within nine

traders after Eid." Though production of cattle in the country this year is satisfactory,

it's reflection was not seen in the markets. Traders now fear if the situation persists, they may have to drop prices drastically so that they could at least sell their cattle and make some money.

Dr Abdul Zabbar Shikdar, director general of the Department of Livestock, told The Daily Star that this year, 1.19 crore cattle have been reared targeting Eid, exceeding last year's demand by 10

But the challenge was selling cattle at different markets while maintaining physical distance and following health guidelines, he a petition.

days, detectives yesterday pressed charges against Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed in an arms case. Md Sairul Islam, of Detective inspector Branch (DB) of police and

working

also the case's investigation officer(IO), submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 13 people as prosecution witnesses. This was first time DB pressed charges against Shahed since his arrest on July 15. On July 26, Shahed was shown arrested in the case after the IO submitted



# PUBALI BANK LIMITED REGISTERED OFFICE

26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

### Disclosure relating to un-audited Half-Yearly (Q2) Financial information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank Limited in its 1246th Meeting held on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 4:00 PM in the Board Room of the Bank's Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka has approved the un-audited Half-Yearly (Q2) Financial Statements of the Bank period ended on June 30, 2020 and disclosed the following key financial indicators of the Bank:

	As on 30 J	une 2020	As on 30 June 2019			
Particulars	Taka	Taka	Taka	Taka		
	(Solo)	(Consolidated)	(Solo)	(Consolidated)		
Operating Profit	3,956,500,939	3,992,523,528	5,184,550,145	5,400,834,855		
Net Profit after Tax	1,463,060,502	1,475,623,520	2,034,206,045	2,222,769,373		
Net Asset Value (NAV)	30,370,192,934	30,232,149,749	28,412,090,627	28,430,419,484		
NAV Per Share	29.53	29.40	27.63	27.65		
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	1.42	1.44	1.98	2.16		
Net Operating Cash						
Flows Per Share (NOCFPS)	(1.88)	(2.37)	3.38	3.53		

The details of the published un-audited Half-Yearly (Q2) Financial Statements period ended on June 30, 2020 are also available in the website of the Bank at www.pubalibangla.com.

By order of the Board

Dated: Dhaka July 28, 2020

sd/-

Zahid Ahsan General Manager & Company Secretary

# No export

FROM PAGE 3

providing financial aid, to compensate for losses caused by coronavirus in the fisheries and livestock sector.

"Our government will stand beside all small farmers and commercial entrepreneurs by providing them financial incentives, during this pandemic," he said.

When he was asked about repealing of the Digital Security Act, Minister Rezaul Karim said, "It is uncomfortable

Fire breaks out

at CNG station

**OUR CORRESPONDENT,** Cumilla

Fire gutted a CNG filling

station at Burichang on Dhaka-Chattogram

highway yesterday, injuring

Due to the explosion and subsequent fire, movement

restricted for an hour. Four

units of fire brigade brought

the blaze under control in

director of Cumilla Fire

Brigade said 12 fire service

vehicles were deployed to

one-and-a-half hours. Jashim Uddin, assistant

douse the blaze.

the highway was

two workers of the station.

on

for me if the mainstream journalists are harmed by this law."

"We want people to exercise free, fair and constructive criticism without harassing anybody illogically," he said.

Criticism must be constructive for development of the country, the minister further said. He, however, did not say about cancellation of the controversial law.

prime minister's financial assistance, the minister handed over a cheque for Tk 10,000 to 200 journalists each from four districts of Barishal division

Journalist leaders from Barishal, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur and Barguna were present on the occasion. Sheikh Mamunur Rashid, member of the executive committee of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, among

At the programme, as part of the others, addressed.



World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under Special Service Agreement:

### Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Consultant, NO-B

For further details on the terms of reference and deadline for applications, please visit our website:

https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment

Qualified female candidates are highly encouraged to apply



### COUNTRY

# Indian cattle smuggling on before Eid-ul-Azha

Local cattle farmers worried as smuggled animals, mostly old and ailing, are sold for cheaper prices

### EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Smuggled Indian cattle are being taken to local markets in large numbers in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila and adjacent areas for sale as sacrificial animals before Eid-ul-Azha.

The smugglers bring cattle at night through the bordering river Teesta where patrol by law enforcers of the two countries is slack due to odd geographical conditions.

A few days ago, Dimla police detained nine smuggled cattle and arrested seven smugglers from Dangarhat area.

Border Guard Bangladesh often launches drive against the smugglers and detain Indian cattle but the smugglers become active again, taking the advantage of loopholes.

An investigation by this correspondent found that Bangladeshi cattle smugglers in collaboration with their Indian associates bring the animals from the other side of the border to Teesta shoal Jhar Singheswar of Purbo Satnai union in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari

At night they push the cattle into the Teesta and engage some poor villagers for good amounts to steer the herds of cattle to the Bangladesh territory through the waterway.

On an average, 200 to 300 cattle are smuggled in this way, locals said, adding that

after arrival of the animals at Jhar Singheswar, those are counted in presence of a section of local influential people, ruling party leaders and dishonest members of law enforcement agencies.

Smugglers pay Tk 20 thousand for each

pair to manage various quarters for safe passage of the cattle to different areas.

A veteran BNP leader of Purbo Satnai union, who recently joined the ruling Awami League (AL), acts as mediator for distribution of the money while a close relative of an influential AL leader controls the entire process, said locals on condition of anonymity.

A section of dishonest lessees of adjacent cattle markets provide the smugglers 'purchase receipt' to brand the animals as Bangladeshi ones.

People who protest the illegal act are harassed in different ways as smugglers enjoy the blessings of influential quarters, said Jahanara Begum, a social activist of Balapara village.

'Old Indian cattle are sold in markets at lower prices, which leads to price fall of the healthy animals reared in our farms. It is a threat to the development of local livestock," said Sumon Islam of Dakkhin Titpara village, who rears around 100 cattle in his farm.

Ramjan Ali, a small cattle farmer of Gayabari village, said many people like him might leave commercial cattle rearing if Indian animals occupy local markets. District Livestock Officer Monakka Ali said there are more than enough cattle in the district and so, there is no need to bring Indian cattle, which are sometimes found to be affected with severe infectious diseases

Contacted, Mofizuddin Sheikh, officer in charge of Dimla Police Station, said, "Cattle smuggling has dropped noticeably as we have intensified 24-hour patrolling in the smuggling routes.

Indian cattle recently seized by Border Guard Bangladesh are kept FILE PHOTO: at a place of Purbo Satnai village in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari, STAR prior to auction through legal procedures.

Woman



Workers lay bricks along the Akhaura-Chandura road in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila recently. Inset, a mixture of earth, sand and brick chips of exceedingly low grade is piled up on a side, apparently for using as bitumen macadam surface on the road. PHOTO STAP

# ROAD REPAIR IN BIJOYNAGAR UPAZILA

# Dirt now LGED contractors' component of choice!

### MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

Civil engineering contractors in Bijoynagar upazila have been using earth and substandard bricks to repair a vital road that connects Akhaura land port with at least three nearby upazilas.

But the contractors are having a field day with the Tk 20.92-crore project as officials of the supervising authority, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), have been deviously distancing themselves from the work site, alleged locals.

The 17.5-kilometre-long stretch of the road being repaired lies between Chandura bus stand and Singarbeel Bazar on Akhaura-Chandura road -- the only means of communications for residents of 10 unions in Bijoynagar upazila.

It is also used by residents of Bijoynagar and Akhaura upazilas of Brahmanbaria and Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj to communicate with the Akhaura land port. A large number of trucks carrying stones from Sylhet division use this road to reach the land port.

Moreover, communications between the headquarters of Bijoynagar upazila and Brahmanbaria district are conducted via this road. Despite its significance in the region, the

contractors have been using a mixture of exceedingly low-grade brick chips, earth and a negligible amount of sand to lay bitumen macadam surface on the road, the locals said.

This correspondent during a recent visit to the area found truth in the allegation made by the locals. When the issue of substandard materials being used in the work was pointed out to a supervisor of Moitri Builders, one of the contractor firms, he neither denied nor agreed to the allegation. "What's being used is what you see," he said callously.

Babul Aktar, a former vice-chairman of Bijoynagar Upazila Parishad, said he even made a written complaint about the quality of work to the then upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Meher Nigar.

Despite using this road every day to and from Brahmanbaria district headquarters, the chairman of Bijoynagar Upazila Parishad never raised objection to the shoddy work. As such, there is still no one to supervise the work and the contractors are still using the worst quality of bricks in the repair work, he said frustratingly.

Satgaon village resident Amrit Lal Saha said, "Nobody ever noticed any LGED official supervising the repair work of the road. Evidently, the contractors are working in any

way to obtain their heart's desire."

They are also not complying with the 70:30 brick chips and sand ratio, set for construction of roads with bitumen macadam surfaces, he added.

Asked what steps were taken after she received the written complaint about the substandard repair work of the road, Meher Nigar, the former UNO who is currently working as secretary to Brahmanbaria Zila Parishad, said upon receipt of the complaint, she had paid a visit to the site and warned the contractors of stern action if they use substandard material in the repair work.

Contacted, the serving Bijoynagar UNO, KM Yasir Arafat, said in the few weeks since he joined the new workplace, he did not receive any formal complaint regarding the use of lowgrade material in the repair work of the road.

However, after finding out that slow pace of the work has been causing great inconvenience to locals, he has asked the contractors to expedite the work, he also said.

Jamal Uddin, engineer of LGED in Bijoynagar, did not answer his cell phone this Wednesday when this correspondent made several attempts to reach him for his comment over the accusations. A text message sent to the same number also remained unanswered.



ইস্টার্ণ রিফাইনারী লিমিটেড Eastern Refinery Limited (A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, North Patenga, Chattogram-4000)

killed over family feud



Erosion by the Jamuna has taken a serious

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2 3 4	Ministry/Division Agency Procuring entity name Procuring entity district Invitation for & Invitation Ref. No.	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Division. Bangladesh Petroleum Corporati Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL). Chattogram. Extension of fire garage at the e renovation of existing fire station	Mineral Resources/Energy and ion.	A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband over family feud at Purbo Bolipara in Khagrachhari's Ramgarh upazila on Tuesday. The deceased, Rasheda Aktar, was wife of Omar Faruq.		· · · ·	1			a N ir	Paishka Maijh Irea in Tangai Iagarpur upaz In the last few Iays.
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### INTERNATIONAL

### Priyanka Gandhi moves out of govt bungalow before deadline

Senior Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra yesterday vacated her official bungalow at Delhi's posh Lodhi Estate area before the deadline specified in a July 1 eviction order. The central government, in the notice, had asked her to vacate the sprawling premises by August 1 or face monetary penalty. Priyanka, the daughter of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and a general secretary in the party, will stay in a Gurgaon penthouse for a few days before moving into her new house in central Delhi, news agency PTI quoted sources as saying. Earlier this month, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs had asked her to move out of the bungalow allotted to her in 1997 as she no longer had Special Protection Group security.

### UMNO quits as Malaysia's ruling coalition stumbles

The biggest party in Malaysia's ruling coalition yesterday said it will withdraw from a political alliance with the prime minister but will continue to support the government, potentially undermining the stability of his administration. The move by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) party comes two days after former premier Najib Razak, a party leader, was sentenced to 12 years in jail for corruption in a case linked to the multibillion dollar scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). UMNO makes up the largest bloc of lawmakers in Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's coalition and its support is crucial for the survival of the government, which has a two-seat majority in parliament.

### Ashley Judd wins appeal in Weinstein harassment case



A US court of appeals on Wednesday ruled that actress Ashley Judd has the right to pursue her sexual harassment lawsuit against disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, overturning a lower court's decision. The three-judge panel on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found that Weinstein, who is in prison, held power over the actress and her career when he invited her to his room in a luxury Los Angeles hotel in the mid-1990s. Judd was one of the first women to come forward with sexual harassment claims against Weinstein, and sued him in April 2018 over the incident at his Beverly Hills hotel where she met with him to discuss potential film roles. She alleges that after she rebuffed his advances, Weinstein defamed her and damaged her career by discouraging "Lord of the Rings" director Peter Jackson from giving her a role, claiming she was a "nightmare" to work with.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Federal law enforcement officers fire tear gas at demonstrators during a night of protest against racial injustice, police brutality and the deployment of federal troops to US cities in Portland, Oregon, on Wednesday. President Donald Trump's administration, without specifying time-frame, on Wednesday agreed to a deal to defuse weeks of clashes in Portland with the withdrawal of federal forces whose presence enraged protesters. PHOTO: AFP

# Pandemic-hit hajj 'safest ever'

This year's downsized hajj may prove to be the safest ever despite the ever-present threat posed by the novel coronavirus.

In past years pilgrims have faced a host of viral illnesses, with some falling sick, but a raft of measures are in place for the relatively modest number allowed to attend this year.

The hajj is usually attended by upwards of two million Muslims, who converge on the Saudi city Makkah for one of the world's biggest annual gatherings.

That poses enormous health and logistical challenges. In the past, pilgrims returning home have developed respiratory diseases after mingling with large crowds and staying in cramped pilgrim camps where social distancing was unheard of.

Just 10,000 Muslims, all resident in the kingdom, are being allowed to perform the hajj -- 0.4 percent of last year's 2.5 million attendees from across the globe.

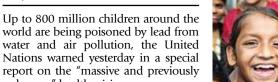
But despite the pandemic, many pilgrims said they felt safer joining a limited number of fellow faithful for the hajj as the risk of both infection and logistical upsets was limited.

A stampede in 2015 that killed up to 2,300 worshippers was one of a series of deadly incidents that had sparked criticism of how the pilgrimage was managed.

But the scene on Wednesday was a vast contrast to that: mask-clad pilgrims performed the "tawaf", a ritual walk around the Kaaba, in small groups, following carefully spaced routes marked on the white marble floor.

Attendees were given elaborate amenity kits that included sterilised pebbles for the ritual Stoning of the Devil, disinfectant, masks and a prayer rug, according to the hajj ministry.

# 80m kids poisoned by lead Arrests, disqualifications UN says 'previously unknown' health crisis more acute in South Asia



unknown" health crisis. One out of every three children is estimated to have levels of lead -- a potent neurotoxin -- in their blood that require immediate action to prevent long-lasting damage, the UN's children's fund said.

AFP, Paris

"With few early symptoms, lead silently wreaks havoc on children's health and development, with possibly fatal consequences," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF executive director.

"Knowing how widespread lead pollution is -- and understanding the destruction it causes to individual lives and communities -- must inspire urgent action to protect children once and for all.

Childhood lead exposure has been linked to a range of behavioural



problems, as well as kidney damage and cardiovascular conditions later in life.

The problem, which occurs overwhelmingly in South Asia, is estimated to cost low- and middleincome countries almost \$1 trillion over the children's lifetimes.

Lead pollution comes from a variety of sources, including open-air furnaces, paint and petrol. Lead piping in many countries also produces dangerous levels of the chemical in drinking water supplies.

The UN report said a leading source of the toxin was un-recycled or poorly disposed-of car batteries. In countries where child lead poisoning is most prevalent, the number of vehicles on the road has doubled since 2000

The analysis of childhood lead exposure was complied by the Institute of Health Metrics Evaluation and was partly funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

It found that while blood lead levels among children in richer countries had declined over the years, in poorer nations the problem had increased drastically.

"The good news is that lead can be recycled safely without exposing workers, their children, and surrounding neighbourhoods," said Richard Fuller, president of Pure Earth, a charity that co-lead the study.

"People can be educated about the dangers of lead and empowered to protect themselves and their children.

He said the economic and social returns on investing in reducing lead pollution could be "enormous".

"Improved health, increased productivity, higher IQs, less violence, and brighter futures for millions of children across the planet," said Fuller.

### AFP, Hong Kong

Leading Hong Kong democracy campaigners were disqualified yesterday from upcoming elections after four student activists were arrested for social media posts, sparking warnings of a new "terror" under authoritarian China.

The moves were the latest blows against the semi-autonomous city's democracy movement, which has been under sustained attack from China's Communist Party rulers.

China imposed a national security law last month on Hong Kong outlawing subversion, which it warned was a "sword" hanging over the head of democracy protesters.

In some of the most significant developments since the law was imposed, 12 democracy activists were disqualified yesterday from legislative elections due to be held in September.

"Beijing shows a total disregard for the will of the Hongkongers, tramples upon the city's... autonomy," Joshua Wong, one of Hong Kong's highest-profile activists who was among those disqualified, wrote in a tweet. Wong described the move as "the biggest-ever crackdown" on the city's pro-democracy movement.

In a statement Hong Kong's government listed political views that required disqualification -- including criticising Beijing's new security law, campaigning to win a legislation-blocking majority and refusing to recognise China's sovereignty.

Chris Patten, Britain's last colonial governor in Hong Kong, accused Beijing of carrying out "an outrageous political purge". "It is obviously now illegal to believe in democracy... This is the sort of behaviour that you would expect in a police state," he added.

Tech giants 'too powerful' Says US antitrust panel chair as lawmakers accuse Facebook,

Google, Amazon, Apple CEOs of crushing rivals to boost profits Agencies smaller rivals in their quest for market



Amazon, Apple, Google and Facebook are too powerful and will likely emerge from the coronavirus pandemic even stronger, the head of a US congressional antitrust committee said Wednesday.

"Simply put, they have too much power," House Judiciary Antitrust subcommittee chair David Cicilline said while opening an unprecedented hearing featuring the CEOs of the four giants.

"Whether it's through selfpreferencing, predatory pricing, or requiring users to buy additional products, the dominant platforms have wielded their power in destructive, harmful ways in order to expand," the Democrat from Rhode Island said.

Google and Facebook took particularly sharp jabs for alleged abuse of their market power from Democrats and Republicans on Wednesday in a much-anticipated



in the hot seat.

The chairman of the US House of Representatives antitrust panel holding the hearing said afterwards that the four CEOs had acknowledged concerning behavior.

"What we heard from witnesses at the hearing confirmed the evidence that we have collected over the last year," Cicilline, a Democrat, told Reuters

Facebook Inc's Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon.com Inc's Jeff Bezos, Google owner Alphabet Inc's Sundar Pichai and Apple Inc's Tim Cook - whose companies have a combined market congressional hearing that put four of value of about \$5 trillion - parried a early fall by the committee, senior America's most prominent tech CEOs range of accusations that they crippled committee aides said.

share.

The videoconference hearing was the first time the four CEOs have appeared together before lawmakers. Though it was Bezos' first

congressional testimony, he appeared the least fazed. Cook drew fewer barbed questions than Bezos and handled them efficiently. Zuckerberg suffered the most damage, stumbling at times when confronted with internal emails.

Pichai, CEO of both Alphabet and Google, took the most heat from conservatives on the panel and looked the worse for it, as he repeatedly told lawmakers he would be happy to look into various situations and get back to them.

A detailed report with antitrust allegations against the four tech platforms and recommendations on how to tame their market power could be released by late summer or



Rescue workers search near vehicles in a parking lot and lower sections of apartment buildings flooded due to heavy rain in Daejeon, South Korea yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

### Nasa's life-seeking rover launches for Mars US fuelling new Cold War

AFP, Cape Canaveral

Nasa's latest Mars rover Perseverance launched vesterday on an astrobiology mission to look for signs of ancient microbial life -- and to fly a helicopter-drone on another world for the first time.

A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket took off on schedule at 7:50 am (1150 GMT) from Cape Canaveral, Florida, despite a 4.2-magnitude earthquake that rattled Nasa's Jet Propulsion laboratory in California that manages the mission minutes earlier.

The first stage separation took place a few minutes later and Perserverance prepared for a second burn to put it on a trajectory toward Mars.

If all goes to plan, Perseverance will reach the Red Planet on February 18, 2021, becoming the fifth rover to complete the voyage since 1997

All so far have been American. China launched its first Mars rover last week, which should arrive by May 2021.

By next year, Mars could therefore have three active rovers, including Nasa's Curiosity, which has traversed 23 kilometers (14 miles) of the Red Planet since it landed in 2012.

Perseverance is an improved version of Curiosity.

It is faster, with a tougher set of six wheels, has more computing power, and can



autonomously navigate 200 meters per day.

About the size of a small SUV, it weighs a metric ton, has 19 cameras, and two microphones -- which scientists hope will be the first to record sound on Mars.

It has a two-meter-long robotic arm, and is powered by a small nuclear battery.

Once on the surface, Nasa will deploy the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter -- a 1.8 kilogram (four pound) aircraft that will attempt to fly in an atmosphere that is only one percent the density of Earth's

The idea is to lay down a proof of concept that could one day revolutionize planetary exploration, since rovers can only cover a few dozen kilometers in their whole lifespans



and are vulnerable to sand dunes and other obstacles higher than 40 centimeters (15 inches)

Perseverance's primary mission is to scour the planet for evidence of ancient life forms.

Scientists believe that more than three billion years ago the planet was much warmer than today and was covered in rivers and lakes, conditions which could have led to simple microbial life.

The reasons for it becoming the cold, barren world we know today aren't fully known.

Another first: Perseverance's drill will collect around 30 intact rock cores and place them in test tubes, to be collected by a future joint US-European mission.

# as election nears: China

REUTERS, London

China yesterday accused the United States of stoking a new Cold War because certain politicians were searching for a scapegoat to bolster support ahead of the US presidential election in November.

US President Donald Trump identifies China as the West's main rival, and has accused President Xi Jinping of taking advantage over trade and not telling the truth over the novel coronavirus outbreak, which Trump calls the "China plague"

Asked if he saw a new Cold War, China's ambassador to London, Liu Xiaoming, said the United States had started a trade war with China and that there would be no winner from such an approach.

"It is not China that has become assertive. It's the other side of the Pacific Ocean who want to start new Cold War on China, so we have to make response to that," Liu told reporters. "We have no interest in any Cold War, we have no interest in any war.

"We have all seen what is happening in the United States, they tried to scapegoat China, they want to blame China for their problems," he said. "We all know this is an

election year."

The envoy did not mention Trump or Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden by name, but he said some US politicians were doing and saying anything to get elected.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said earlier this month that the United States wanted to build a global coalition to counter China as he accused Beijing of exploiting the coronavirus pandemic to further its own interests.

After British Prime Minister Boris Johnson slapped a ban on Huawei's participation in 5G networks, Liu bluntly warned that the United Kingdom it had no future if it tried to decouple from the Communist state

"It is hard to image a 'Global Britain' that bypasses or excludes China, decoupling from China means decoupling from opportunities, decoupling from growth and decoupling from the future," Liu said.

He said London had poisoned relations by meddling in its former colony of Hong Kong and cautioned that the United Kingdom would "pay the price" if it wanted to treat China as a hostile state.







# **Transitioning from campus** to corporate life

The Daily Star, in association with SBK Tech Ventures, Shah Cement and Mountain Dew, recently hosted the Youth Skills Summit 2020 on World Youth Skills Day, with Star Youth, 10 Minute School, Preneur Lab and Youth Opportunities as the youth engagement partners. During the daylong discussion series, over 60 speakers from different walks of life presented their views on the existing challenges and requirements faced by the vouthin the corporate, academic and social sectors.

### ASHLEY SHOPTORSHISAMADDAR

The session, Transitioning from Academics to Corporate: The Post-COVID-19 Scenario, moderated by Galib Bin Mohammad, Head of Marketing, Arla Foods Ltd, discussed how the pandemic has affected students and graduates.

Educationalists Mohammad Baktiar Rana, Associate Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Jahangirnagar University, Md Saimum Hossain, Assistant Professor, Department of Finance, University of Dhaka and Mahboob Rahman, Vice President, Administration, BRAC University were present in the panel discussion, which revealed that there is a mismatched demand and supply demography, in terms of the number of graduates available in the job market, and an absence of skills demanded by employers. In order to bridge this gap, affiliations and collaborations between educationalists and employers are important. Md Saimum Hossain said that critical thinking, communication skills and team-building capacity are three essential skills for any professional employee.

that there is a gap between the knowledge offered by job seekers and the soft skills required and expected by employers, in order to balance out their needs without wasting resources like time and energy. While people question the competency of educational institutions in this regard, there are two sides of this coin. "We tend to blame universities for being incompetent in producing creative and skilled professionals. However, we often forget about the bureaucratic system each university must deal with to update their curriculums," shares Rashed Mujib Noman, Country Director of Augmedix (Bangladesh) Acquiring soft skills is also tough.

"Theoretic framework is already facilitated by our educational institutions, but students need to analyse the market needs, especially the latest technologies and applicationw associated with the area of specialisation. This can be done by simply utilising resources that are available online, even for free sometimes," adds Rashed Mujib Noman. "In the fast- changing 21st century, the role of institutes is to educate students on how to learn from available resources. Graduates need to identify their strengths and self-train themselves

Mahboob Rahman emphasised on the importance of technical skills, especially during the pandemic, as both students and professionals are studying and working from home, respectively. Other such soft skills are also important for recent graduates in order to pursue good jobs or run successful entrepreneurial ventures. "When I was a student, I felt that our curriculum did not put enough focus on technical skills such as the proper use of software like STATA, SPSS, and Excel," mentions Farhana Shahnaz, an Economics graduate from North South University who currently works as a Communications Officer at UNDP. "While my one-dimensional curriculum focused a lot on theoretical knowledge, it failed to address the necessity of practical proficiencies. I adapted to the changes, and I was also keen on upgrading my practical knowledge. As a result, Iwas able to cope up with the job market. However, many of my peers who didn't, are still struggling to find jobs."

Making the transition from the campus to the corporate life might be challenging initially, but if students focus on delving into the real world approaches, they can easily adjust to the

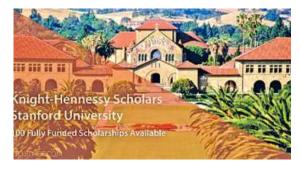
www.youthop.com **YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES** Knight-Hennessy Scholars Program

2021 at Stanford University (100 **Fully Funded Scholarships)** 

Applications are now open for Knight-Hennessy Scholars Program Autumn 2021 session at Stanford University! Knight-Hennessy Scholars develops a community of future global leaders to address complex challenges through collaboration and innovation. Every year, up to 100 high-achieving students from around the world will receive full funding to pursue any graduate degree at Stanford.

DEADLINE: Oct 14, 2020 | Scholarships

ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD



### National Geographic Call for Proposals for Big Cats Conservation (Prize Money \$100,000)

The National Geographic Big Cats Initiative (BCI) seeks to advance conservation efforts benefitting big cat populations, protecting and restoring them, and their habitats via field-based, action-oriented, direct, and quantifiable strategic programs. The goal of this fund is to identify projects that will help reduce the decline of African big cats in the wild.

DEADLINE: Oct 21, 2020 | Grants

### 2020 Money Trail Grants for African, Asian and European Journalists

In Money Trail, Journalismfund.eu offers working grants for mixed teams of African, Asian and European journalists to investigate cross-border illicit financial flows, tax abuse and corruption in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Mohammad Baktiar Rana mentioned



# Redefining perceptions about less fortunate communities

### **RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA**

Perception Foundation started out in 2014, when some school students identified various societal problems and the differences between communities with regards to access to basic necessities. Since then, they have been working to improve the lives of the underprivileged populace in Bangladesh.

"We observed the gap between people from different socioeconomic classes residing in the same area and the struggles that the underserved communitieshave to go through," shares Sajid Mahmud, one of the founding members and an advisor to the organisation. "We wanted to address this gap between people, with reliable approaches."

The organisation runs Project Pot Belly during Ramadan, Sweater Weather in winter and 'HaatheHena' during Eid, among other programmes.

For Project Pot Belly, their volunteers are divided into different teams, who are



A volunteer from Perception Foundation hands out food packets to day labourers during Project Pot Belly. PHOTOS: COURTESY

responsible for bringing, sorting out and handing out food packets to underprivileged groups, including day labourers in their localities, for iftar. Around 300 people benefitted from this project in Uttara, this year.During winter, their volunteers collect donations and winter clothes from people in the city. They use the monetary donations to buy winter clothes for those in need. Last



### Perception Foundation's members and volunteers with the school kids from Project Dream.

year, the clothes were distributed to 400 people in Rangpur. At their annual charity programme, 'HaatheHenna', volunteersapply henna on people's hands for a certain amount, during multiple live performances.A percentage of the earnings from the event is utilised in other initiatives of the organisation.

Perception Foundation teamed up with FootstepsBangladesh for Project WeCan, where waste collected from different schools was recycled with the help of Garbageman, another organisation working to protect the environment. The profitswere used to develop school resources and provide access to safe drinking water and sanitation systems. Perception Foundation was the pilot funding partner in the project.

Change the Lives School is an organisation that strives to provide a better future through education for the disadvantaged children residing in slums. For their initiative, Project Dream, Perception Foundation's volunteers spent a week with these children by interacting with them through sports, art competitions and many other activities.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the foundation has been working in different areas to help struggling communities. Their COVID-19 response began with the collection of donations and the distribution of care packages in eleven areas across the country, including Khulna.

Their volunteers maintain proper social distancing protocols while working, and raise awareness about proper hygiene and cleanliness practices. As the number of COVID-19 cases are on the rise, Perception Foundation plans to continue their initiatives to help people in need.

"We aim to step up for those in need, while involving the youth. We want to empower young people and teach them how they can use their privilege to make the lives of the less fortunate a little easier," says Nazeef Khan, CEO of Perception Foundation and a recent graduate from International School Dhaka.

Determined to bridge the economic gap in our society, members of Perception Foundation are working tirelessly to change the views we haveabout the underserved communities.

EDITORIA



LATE S. M. ALI DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 31, 2020, SRABAN 16, 1427 BS

# An Eid to remind us of our responsibility

We must stand beside each other now more than ever

S we celebrate Eid-ul-Azha during these trying times, it is more important than ever to remember its true spiritual message of sacrifice. This Eid-ul-Azha might not be like the ones we've had before, when we could freely go to the haat with others and gather with family and friends on the Eid day-as it is still necessary for us to maintain social distancing in order to defeat the ongoing pandemic. But it's important to keep in mind that the Covid-19 outbreak has put a major dent in the lives of thousands of people and economically destroyed the financial stability of many families, pushing many into destitution. Thus it is incumbent upon those fortunate and better off among us to stand beside those whose lives have been wreaked by the pandemic.

Besides the economic damage it has caused, it has also led many to perish. And many will be observing this Eid without the presence of their near and dear ones on this Earth. As a society, we must show empathy to them as they try to cope with their terrible loss. We must all be ready to be more understanding and tolerant of each other, as all of us will be going through some form of difficulty or the other during this time which, under normal circumstances, would have been a time of celebration.

We appreciate the government's initiative to distribute free rice to the extreme poor ahead of Eidul-Azha. The food aid is being given to one crore VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) cardholders across the country to ease their sufferings due to the recent floods and the coronavirus outbreak. We hope the government will carry out this duty making sure that there are no irregularities or inefficiencies in the distribution process this time. And we encourage non-government and private organisations to also chip in as there is a great need for much more relief initiatives than what is present.

We would also like to remind everyone how important it is to maintain proper hygiene during Eidrelated ceremonies and distributions. The government must ensure that the city corporations and other local administrations diligently carry out their duties so that garbage and other waste material do not pile up on our roads and such public places. And lastly, we hope that Eid travellers will have a safe journey home and back following all the health guidelines, despite the struggles that arise with trying to overcome an ongoing pandemic. We wish our readers and patrons Eid Mubarak!

# Higher conviction rate in human trafficking cases can make a difference

**BLOWIN' IN** THE WIND

on July 27, Prof Sved Saad Andaleeb reviewed the DU annual budget and argued that the dearth of funding should not be blamed for the lack of

responsibilities of a faculty member include both teaching and research, Prof Andaleeb suggested that the salary amount shown in the budget (30.71 percent of the total Tk 869.56 crore) should also be considered under research head. He cited examples from MIT and UCLA to point out how faculty members compensate for their own research by bringing in grants. The paltry payment of our public university teachers exposes the chink in the armour of such an argument.

However, Prof Andaleeb raised two very pertinent issues: What is the broad vision or expectation from our universities? Do we want our universities to remain certificate-churning, degree-giving academic institutions, or do we patronise some of our institutions to become flagship research centres?

As the oldest university of the country, we expect Dhaka University to take up the role. However, sitting on the century's threshold, Dhaka University is gradually falling in research as is evident from its budgetary allocation. This year, it allocated Tk 40.91 crore for research, which is only 4.07 percent of the total budget. In the last academic session, the figure was 5.04 percent, and the year before, it was 6.66 percent. While funding is an issue, the negligence towards—or the absence of—a research culture in our academia is even more worrying.

By research culture, I mean the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of an academic community. In the academia, research is related to the career paths of the faculty. In universities in Bangladesh, research is mainly conducted and communicated keeping the objective of promotion in mind. In most cases, the outputs of research take the shape of a publication in a peer-reviewed journal, which is treated as a criterion for promotion. For each rung of the professional ladder, a faculty member is supposed to publish a certain number of publications. For instance, with a total of 15 publications and a higher degree, a faculty member can become a professor in 10 to 12 years if the wind is in her or his favour. Beyond that, any research or publication is voluntary, and there is hardly any incentive or reward. There is no evaluation for teaching, no annual performance appraisal either.

### The promotion of a faculty member largely depends on spending the required number of years in a position and getting

# Fostering a research culture in higher education

in a web of science journal, she or he earns the same points as someone publishing locally. Even a shortage in the required number of publications or service length can easily be overlooked if the candidate carries the right party card. In other words, the reward system for research is far from fair. Research centres are also created either to promote certain individualistic or institutional agendas or to rope in a particular grant in which a select few will be benefitted. Within the same

institution, there are overlapping units vying for the same target groups. For instance, at DU there is an Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies as well as the Department of Disaster Science and Management. The Institute of Business Administration and the Faculty of Commerce are offering similar degree programmes. The Institute during their stints. The system values quantity above quality.

There is hardly any accountability. Even though most of the bursary comes from the taxpayers, the public universities have failed to create a research culture where they link up with the government agencies and the industry. Because of the absence of this tripartite linkage, avoided in the name of institutional autonomy, we have failed to recognise the stakeholders of our public system. Only a national conversation can help us understand our research landscape.

As long as members of a university think that politics generates higher returns, we are not going to have researchers. Faculty members will simply invest in politics to hold on to offices in place of building their research resumes. Time has come to incentivise research, however. This should be done at the point of entry. Public universities still maintain the

themselves lured by the research culture or academic ambience in developed countries. Imagine how many times we have heard the success stories of Bangladeshi researchers doing marvels in overseas universities! But somehow we do not have the system in place and the research culture in practice to accommodate these brains who had been drained. Even more sadly, there is no initiatives to connect with our brains abroad and create a brain circulation.

On top of that, the quest for research ranking is encouraging an unhealthy practice where our research objectives are being convoluted and dictated by the ranking agencies. Today, each local university must have a global strategy, and align itself with the sustainable development goals to tackle complex humanitarian issues in the areas of health, human rights, economy and the



### In our universities, the reward system for research is far from fair.

of Modern Languages has started giving degrees in English as a Foreign Language, notwithstanding the fact there is a wellestablished English Department doing the same. These overlapping programmes suggest primarily a wastage of resources, and secondarily a shortage of collegial culture. The university has failed to create a support structure that promotes interdisciplinary research. Every faculty member lives in a silo, and is afraid that in a collaborative project her or his contribution will not be credited. In other words, we lack good practice in our academic institutions.

Often an influential faculty member breaks away from her or his host department, and starts a centre to insulate their research. These "selfish" ventures find administrative support because the administrative heads find it rewarding to

primitive hiring process where a faculty member is recruited based on her or his academic performance. In a system that lacks best practices, best candidates are often not chosen. Then again, not all good academics are programmed to be good researchers. Recruiting someone with a Master's degree with no teaching or research experience is one of the primal flaws of our system. Even in our neighbouring countries, degree-level college teachers (let alone those at universities) must have higher research degrees such as MPhil or PhD as their initial recruitment criteria.

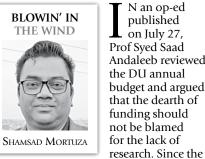
Many of our colleagues struggle to write a research paper because they were never taught to do so in their academic years. They had traditional summative assessments in which they could get away with memorising answers right before

### PHOTO: COLLECTED

environment. If a university teacher thinks that her or his duty rests in giving lectures in a large classroom and checking bundles of scripts, then she or he will miss the big picture.

Research communities thrive through promoting a culture of public and societal engagement, through working with communities, educators, and policymakers both at home and abroad. Dhaka University can lead the way by boosting knowledge exchange through innovations and industry collaboration. To do that, there has to be a national level policy which can be adopted through a dialogue on research culture-otherwise, we will simply keep on barking up the wrong tree and wait for fruitful research by locating our mouth where the money is.

Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at the



### Govt needs to ensure quick disposal of cases

N two recently organised webinars—one by Star Forum of *The Daily Star* and the other by Brac and Winrock International—experts working on safe migration and protecting trafficking survivors came up with some important suggestions that could help reduce the extent of human trafficking occurring in the country. According to them, a higher rate of conviction in human trafficking cases could be an effective way to curb the crime in the country. The slow pace of prosecution has been one of the factors that embolden the traffickers to continue with the crime. They said the seven tribunals, set up to dispose of human trafficking cases, should be made "properly functional" to reduce the number of pending cases. Ensuring protection of the victims and witnesses is another area that needs to be given importance.

In recent years, the incidents of human trafficking have increased alarmingly in the country. Sexual exploitation of women who fell victim to trafficking have also increased. Bangladesh also has been in the international news for some recent human trafficking cases. The question is, despite all these facts, why do people look for ways to go to a foreign land at any cost? The answer is very simple. It is poverty and unemployment that force most people to try to migrate to the middle eastern or European countries.

According to Rohingya lawyer Razia Sultana, Rohingya men and women living in the camps are increasingly falling victim to trafficking gangs. Being deprived of any employment opportunities here, they take on uncertain, perilous journeys through the sea to migrate to other countries for a better future for their families and themselves.

To combat human trafficking effectively and ensure safe migration of our workers, the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 must be enforced efficiently. According to the law, recruitment agencies must ensure the basic rights of our workers in the destination countries-they must make sure the workers get the job they were offered, the salaries as promised, have proper accommodation facilities, etc. The law also says that these agencies must have a local office through which they would recruit people. But in reality, most of these agencies do not have any local office and they recruit people through dalals (middlemen) who are often involved with various national and transnational trafficking gangs. So, bringing these middlemen under the purview of law and making them accountable is crucial.

In addition, creating employment opportunities for our workers inside the country can significantly reduce the crime since unemployment is one reason for unsafe migration. But the most important task is to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice. For that, all the seven tribunals dealing with trafficking cases should be made functional. And effective coordination between the special tribunal public prosecutors and the investigation officers is essential to ensure punishment of perpetrators through convictions in human trafficking cases.

the right amount of publications. If someone gets a high-impact publication count the number of centres, departments and institutes that have been created

the exams. The better ones soon become discouraged by the system, and find

Pro-Vice-Chancellor of ULAB Email: shamsad71@hotmail.com

# Amazon Kindle, here we come!

Pioneering programme launches Bangla e-books



overwhelming in the US and substantial

Thirty books are part of this growing

programme has just launched Bangla

Kindle. These books are also available

leading names as Bangladesh's Anisul

Hoque and West Bengal's Akademi

Award-winning author Amar Mitra.

Bangla intersect.

on Google Books. Authors include such

This is a complex story where digital

We Bangla aficionados are rather a

quaint, old-school lot. The thought of

into a nostalgic reverie, basking in fond

memories of the annual book fairs at

the Bangla Academy (or its gargantuan

cousin in Kolkata). Where's the fun of a

digital book where the physical joy of a

ephemeral bits and bytes?

book nestling in our hands is replaced by

The fact of the matter is it's crucially

important to bring Bangla publishing

up to speed in the digital age. This is

bibliophile Facebook group Boier Hut

comes in. Started in 2012 by passionate

book-lover Riton Khan, a 40-something

Atlanta-based Bangladeshi expat, the

Facebook group is hard to pin down

geographically. Its members run across

the length and breadth of the world, and

its administrators are in Dhaka, Kolkata

and Mumbai, and it boasts of-I kid you

These books are available freely, but

not-over 40,000 online Bangla books.

where the 150,000-member Bangla

Bangla literature invariably sends us

e-publishing landmark for Bangla.

space. Its global presence is also formidable. Its dominance in online book

readership is

Amazon Kindle e-book ecosystem is so big, it just bothers me that Bangla does not have a footprint here," he told me. Two years ago, he discovered that

Amazon Kindle did not even support Bangla. In India, Amazon Kindle supports Hindi, Gujarati, Malayalam but not Bangla. He harangued the folks at Amazon Kindle support. The response was coldly businesslike-it is not clear

Riton is keen to take it a step further. "The Bangladesh and West Bengal.

The whole point, Riton said, was to make publishing economically more viable for Bangla writers. Riton offers authors a straight 30 percent royalty from books sold on Kindle. This is generosity bordering on madness, because to promote its fledgling Bangla e-book sales, book prices are kept as low as USD 2. At that price, Amazon itself often keeps 70 percent of proceeds.



An online advertisement for Bangla e-books on Amazon Kindle. COURTESY: AUTHOR

there is significant interest in Bangla books to merit support, the Amazon folks said.

In a word, the futile circular logic of a classic Catch-22 situation. Bangla books are not available, so there's no demand. There's no demand, so Bangla books are not available.

Riton, though, wasn't about to take no for an answer. An IT healthcare solutions expert, he worked out the technological kinks. A few months back, he launched a few Bangla books using Unicode Bangla fonts on Amazon Kindle to test the waters.

After that seemed to work fine, he registered a company in Georgia, Boier Hut Publications, and officially joined as a publishing associate at Amazon. Then he began negotiating with authors in

That's okay, says Riton, who is not in it for the money anyway. For somebody whose passion for Bangla books borders on obsession, Riton's goal is more lofty: to help digital publishing turn the tide of what he sees as impending doom for Bangla books. His group Boier Hut says in its mission statement:

"Boier Hut began with a simple premise. The digital age has ushered a new age in the dissemination of books. Many advanced countries have jumped on the digital bandwagon, and e-books have resulted in an exponential increase in the dissemination of books. Bangla books have failed woefully to take advantage of this opportunity. This is where Boier Hut decided to step in. Our goal is to use digital tools to make Bangla books easily available everywhere in the world.'

The Facebook page of Boier Hut is a wondrous salon for vibrant discussions of books. Boier Hut multimedia has video chats with authors, podcasts.

The bottom line is that Bangla publishing is struggling to make the transition into financially remunerative digital publishing. This is happening at a time when Bangla publishing, in Bangladesh at any rate, is in deep crisis.

Riton says writers need to be financially compensated, otherwise literature will die. The response from writers in Bangladesh and West Bengal has been overwhelmingly supportive. Talks are ongoing to publish Hasan Azizul Huq and Tanvir Mokammel in Bangladesh and Bani Basu and Mihir Sengupta in West Bengal.

Now with Kindle, there's a big catch. While Amazon Kindle books can be downloaded and read nearly everywhere in the world, it's not available in Bangladesh. The workaround for that is to get it from Google Books, where the same titles are also available for download.

Riton is tight-lipped about initial sales figures. All he will say is that currently sales are in the low three digits. But here's the interesting thing: Just being on the Amazon Kindle space gives Bangla books huge exposure. Amazon has a monthly subscription plan, Kindle Unlimited, where book reading figures are calculated in number of pages read. The plan is available in the US as well as in India. Boier Hut e-books have a cumulative 150,000 pages read to date—no mean achievement.

Riton's goal is to get digital Bangla book publishing going. "Ultimately, if it really takes off, I'm looking forward to the day when heavyweights like Ananda Publishers and Prothoma will start their own programmes on Kindle. Only then will this whole thing work.

(For more information about Boier Hut e-books, visit: eboi.in/kindle or eboi. in/google.) 

Ashfague Swapan is a contributing editor for Siliconeer, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, a leading public intellectual and academic of the country, talks to Emran Mahfuz of The Daily Star about the government's handling of the impacts of Covid-19, inequalities and injustices in society, future threats and the need for reforms. The following is a translated excerpt.

### Covid-19 has changed our lives and lifestyles in a manner never seen before. There is no certainty about when we will be free from its shackles. How did we come to this point?

This pandemic is unprecedented indeed, but its consequences are partly the result of our ignorance. We have taken nature for granted, and are consequently suffering from climate change, cyclones, rising tides, floods, droughts, etc. The coronavirus is one such outcome. In the last hundred years, humanity has witnessed tremendous progress in terms of science and technology, yet it could not prevent a disaster like Covid-19. We have invested in manufacturing weapons of mass destruction and indulged in material progress. If we had spent even a portion of our energy to the prevention of diseases and treatment, then perhaps this pandemic could have been avoided, or it couldn't have hurt us the way it did

### Many countries have dealt with Covid-19 quite efficiently. Unfortunately, Bangladesh fares poorly in this regard. Many say it's due to the lack of proper coordination and prevention measures. How do you see it?

Certainly, there has been a lack of coordination as well as a lack of sense of responsibility. The state is duty-bound to look after the citizens and ensure their safety. The most basic needs for their survival are food and shelter. Since the authorities are least concerned about our health, treatment has now become more of a commodity available only for those who can afford it. Our healthcare system is in tatters. Such a development was made possible by the state's lack of accountability since no one can dare question those in power. The National Assembly is not effective, there is no functional opposition party, and there is no freedom of the press. In addition, there

2020, Human

**L** Rights Watch

warned that migrants

and stateless people

are more at risk of

virus transmission

that Malaysia needs

care for all without

in Malaysia, and

to ensure health

is the Digital Security Act which is further choking the voice of the public. If those in power could have been held accountable for their action or lack thereof, then there would be proper coordination in our response and the situation could be turned in favour of the general public.

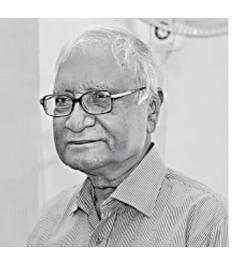
### Healthcare is a basic right but the pandemic has revealed the sorry state of our healthcare system as inequality runs rampant here. How can one align this with the lofty socialist ideals that led to our liberation?

Yes, the Liberation War was fought to establish equal rights and opportunities for all people. Even before the war, there had been certain improvements but those were selective and marred with prejudicethere was vast regional disparity and class inequality. We fought the war not just for the sake of sovereignty, but also to eliminate these inequalities. Unfortunately, discrimination remains firmly in place even today and the pandemic has only exacerbated the situation. The poor seem to be getting poorer as the rich continue to deprive them.

The way forward is to break the system of individual ownership and establish social ownership. This calls for a social revolution as token reforms will no longer work. We need a fundamental change in social relations. It is the people who are deprived that can revolutionise the system along with the support from conscious individuals of the society.

Who should be held accountable for the scandalous developments with regard to issuing of fake Covid-19 certificates in Bangladesh, which suffered an image crisis as a result? Whose responsibility is it to mend the image of our nation now?

The damage done was severe and extensive. It has been proven, once again, that fraudulence



### **Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury**

is widespread across our country even when the question is of life and death. Such fake certificates could be a fatal blow to the general public. What's dreadful is that it happened not just with the knowledge of an influential section at the Directorate General of Health Services, but with their active support.

In order to restore our image and reputation, we have to continue with our "Liberation War" in order to establish a fully democratic state and society. Another name for this democracy is socialism, which we have failed to achieve. The further we drift away from it, the more hardship and miseries we are to suffer. It is our responsibility to march forward with dignity, and that requires a political movement through an organisational approach. We need to clearly set our goals and the leadership will emerge from within the movement.

Many people and families have left the cities, jobless and without aid, in the

wake of the outbreak. Isn't it the state's responsibility to ensure they are taken care of? The intellectuals of our society remain silent while the Fourth Industrial Revolution is almost here. What should be done under such circumstances?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution does not worry me; I'm more concerned about the effects of capitalism. The coronavirus will definitely come under control one day, vaccines will be made available, and the treatment situation will improve as well. But is there any guarantee that a greater threat will not come in the future? It is our responsibility to make sure that a well-organised revolutionary change in existing systems and structures takes place to avoid the looming disorder, and this applies to every nation. Only then can a sense of internationalism be created based on cooperation and sympathy. It will be a world free from war and sustained through social production and distribution and this will restore happiness and comfort in the lives of human beings.

### There have a number of high-profile crimes and corruption cases even in the midst of the pandemic, but the authorities remain nonchalant about them. What seems to be the reason behind that?

The reason behind it is that the authorities are least concerned about the interest of the general public as well as public opinion. The injustices that are happening are a matter of grave concern for the people, but not for the state. Many criminals go unpunished, and as a result, the crime rate goes up. Proper investigation will perhaps reveal that government officials and powerful people are often involved with many of the offences being committed. The ruling class does not take the consent of the masses into consideration and often takes power by force. When it comes to voting, deserving

candidates often remain unelected, as those with the most amount of money win the votes

When the intellectuals in our society speak, it is seen that one group among them supports the government—either because they have already benefitted from government action or will soon-while another criticises it. The latter also remains optimistic that there is a chance to receive benefits in the future. However, their arguments are not strong. Even most of the media do not give them coverage in order to avoid any altercation with the authorities. Also, the government does not encourage dissent, and is therefore happy to silence the voice of the opposition. Unfortunately, neither the government nor the opposition want to explore the deeper issues of public life which are intimately linked with the state and the social system. They refuse to accept that the persisting problems are the manifestation of the existing capitalist economy and ideology, and they do so for their own benefits.

### From the social perspective, how would you describe the overall state of our society?

The present condition does not seem favourable at all. Whatever improvement we see is the external view. Inside there is a whole different picture—one of increasing inequalities and injustices. It has somewhat become a norm that with progress, inequality tends to rise. Such wide-ranging inequality had never been there in our society before. This is worsening the state of poverty and making people deeply frustrated. The rich have set examples with their lack of patriotism and consumerism, which is worryingly spreading among the deprived people too.

The interview has been translated from Bangla by Minam Haq of The Daily Star.

# Rayhan Kabir's arrest and the systemic exploitation of migrant workers in Malaysia



Shuprova Tasneem

discrimination. In the eastern state of Sabah-home to a large population of irregular migrants, stateless people, and holders of various refugee passes who tend to live in small, crowded houses with inadequate sanitation and serious barriers to access to healthcare—the police commissioner asked all foreigners to come forward for coronavirus testing, saying, "Don't be afraid because the police will not arrest them... the most important thing is the health screening and if they are found to be healthy, then they will be allowed to go home." This same assurance was also repeated by the Malaysian national authorities. The arrest and imminent deportation of Bangladeshi student-turned-migrant worker Mohamed Rayhan Kabir-because he dared to criticise the Malaysian government's policies towards migrant workers in a documentary by Al Jazeera-expose just how hollow those words were. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, undocumented migrant workers and refugees have been rounded up in a military-style crackdown and detained in camps under the pretext of safety measures and quarantine. Rights groups have criticised Malaysia's indiscriminate and heavy-handed approach that has ignored the rights of workers, put migrant workers at greater risk of infection in crowded detention facilities, and deterred others from seeking testing and treatment out of fear of deportation. In the Al Jazeera documentary, a Pakistani man described how, despite being a documented worker, his family (including his children) were handcuffed and chained together under the hot sun for hours, and were only released after their documents were

S early as March verified. In his interview, Rayhan also referred to the same atmosphere of fear, saying the illegal detentions were "a clear act of racism and clear act of humiliating people. I feel scared of the future of migrants.

Rayhan's words clearly hit a little too close to home-Malaysia's track record with migrant workers is hardly one to be proud of. As early as 1998, links between state officials and the "immigration industry" had been found, where syndicates were supplying false

collusion between law enforcement agencies and companies hiring undocumented migrant workers who are at the mercy of human traffickers and loan sharks, and how the pandemic-induced economic downturn has influenced the Malaysian authorities to take a more populist, anti-immigration stance. The general feeling of ill-will towards

migrant workers is also reflected in the Al Jazeera documentary, where an employer in



journalist recently spoke to The Wire about the down upon them too, calling them 'dirty' or 'smelly', whether it's because of their darker skin or the perceived 'lowly' jobs that they do.'

> This racial discrimination is an add-on to the existing poverty and exploitation faced by migrant workers. A 2015 World Bank study showed that while Bangladeshi migrants pay the largest sum of money for recruitment, they receive the lowest wages and are most likely to be struggling with debt. In September 2019, the Malaysiakini reported how Bangladeshi migrant workers were allegedly being traded between firms in slave-like conditions that violated Malaysian labour laws; another report found that 96 Bangladeshis had died in Malaysia in January 2019 alone, with the Migrant Workers Right to Redress Coalition

are a welcome prospect for Bangladesh, and our authorities are in no rush to jeopardise these discussions. However, the heavy-handed approach that Malaysia has taken to Rayhan's 'dissent"—arresting him and planning his deportation, revoking his perfectly valid work permit, and putting him at risk in an environment that is already hostile to immigrants-can hardly be ignored either. We must also remember that a majority of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia are in lowwage, precarious employment that cannot be considered to be "decent work" according to ILO standards, and given the desperate conditions they are being faced with during the pandemic (this daily reported in April how a huge number of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia were facing acute food shortages), they are likely to become even more vulnerable to exploitation. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the exploitation of migrant workers across the world has received renewed attention, and it has become clear that Bangladeshi migrant workers specifically are at a great disadvantage in their host countries. We must work with other countries and regional bodies, and fight for our workers on international platforms to ensure that their rights are not routinely ignored. Additionally, the governments of both Bangladesh and Malaysia must take steps to dismantle the lucrative industry that has mushroomed around the recruitment and management of migrant labour, creating a network of syndicates who prey on vulnerable workers, and deal with the rampant corruption that is so often linked to labour migration in both countries. Given that Malaysia relies heavily on migrant labour for low-skilled jobs-according to the ILO, around 20 percent of the country's labour force is made up of documented migrantsand that the Malaysian economy is expected to still require this labour force in the postpandemic era, now is the time for us to raise our voices and stand by Bangladeshi migrant workers when they need us the most.

Malaysian police arrested Mohammad Rayhan Kabir, a Bangladeshi student-turned-migrant worker who spoke in a documentary aired by Al Jazeera, on July 24, 2020. PHOTO: COLLECTED

documents to illegal migrants, according to a paper by the Yusof Ishak Institute. The report also detailed how the 1997-1998 Malaysian economic crisis led to the festering of antiimmigration sentiments and nation-wide crackdowns on undocumented migrants, culminating in clashes that left eight migrants and one policeman dead in a detention camp in Kuala Lumpur on April 26, 1998. More than two decades later, the situation seems to have hardly changed. A senior Malay

a marketplace speaks of how South Asian migrants are "culturally" different and do not follow the same standards of cleanliness as Malaysians, even while admitting that these low-skilled workers are recruited because they are most likely to do labour-intensive work for long hours. However, the country's race issues are nothing new. Malaysian columnist Sade Dayangku echoed Rayhan's words on racism, writing "Not only are they treated like lesser humans by employers, but our society looks

(MWR2R) raising questions about poor living conditions and barriers to seeking healthcare.

In this scenario, how do we provide adequate protection to our migrant workers? The Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed's recent comments to BBC Bangla-"We have a responsibility towards Rayhan but also towards the country; we have to think of the thousands of other Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia"-demonstrates the precarious situation our workers are in. There are some eight lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, of whom an estimated two lakh are undocumented. In September 2018, Malaysia stopped recruiting workers from Bangladesh following allegations of malpractices in the recruitment process and high recruitment costs. While the two countries were engaged in talks to resume the hiring of Bangladeshi workers, the resignation of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad led to the cancellation of the fourth joint working group meeting due in February this year. After the onset of the pandemic, Malaysia then announced that no foreign workers would be recruited for at least the remainder of this year.

As a result, the talks being held last month between Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur on regularising the huge number of undocumented Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia (thus saving them from deportation)

Shuprova Tasneem is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is @ShuprovaTasneem.

Quotable Quote

**JOHN F KENNEDY** (1917-1963) 35th president of the United States.

Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

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### 'S ANSWERS

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FROM PAGE 12

safer places.

firmly committed.

Dainik Ittefaq.

FROM PAGE 12

50,000-mark.

150,000.

Bangabandhu

rise sharply and flow above the danger

level at many points. The government

has airdropped relief goods in the

flood-affected areas. People living

near the Sirajganj town protection

embankment are being evacuated to

3 LAKH TONNES OF FOOD

Bangladesh will get 3 lakh tonnes of

**GRAINS FROM FRIENDLY NATIONS** 

food grains from the USA, Canada and

India, according to latest information

available at the Ministry of Food and

Civil Supplies. Another report from

the UNROD discloses that over 50

percent of the one million tonne

additional food grains requested by

the UN secretary general in his May

31 appeal for Bangladesh have been

SOURCES: August 1, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and

caseload to 15,83,792 while death

toll rose by 775 to 34,968, according

to the Health Ministry data. This was

for the first time that the tally of cases

in the 24-hour span breached the

In the United States, southern

and western regions were grappling

yesterday with a renewed surge of

infections as the death toll in the

world's worst-affected nation passed

Brazil is second to the US in

Exactly six months after the World

Health Organization declared an

international emergency over the

deadly pathogen, countries around the

globe are seeing rises in infections that

are damaging economies and forcing

Despite efforts in place to contain

the virus, Covid-19 has killed more

than 667,000 people around the

world and total infections have passed

17 million, according to an AFP tally.

approaching the 300,000 mark,

with the curve showing no sign of

Global daily cases are now

The United States, however, is

still battling its first wave, having

never taken control of the virus, and

on Wednesday alone the country

recorded 1,267 new deaths in the

past 24 hours and notched more than

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson,

fresh from announcing quarantine

for travelers returning from Spain,

suggested the rest of Europe could

be facing a second wave -- despite his

disruptive protection measures.

terms of cases and fatalities, and

also reported a sobering figure as it

surpassed 90,000 deaths.

Australia marks

### Palliative Care in a pickle were reluctant to allow medical

### FROM PAGE 12

palliative patients to cabins, to limit professionals in their houses, said Dr interaction with others," he said. Marufa. "Even though it has been restarted However, even the new arrangement

couldn't reduce the contagion risk, as two more patients tested positive in the unit since then. One of them, a six-year-old kidnev

and cancer patient, Shamim, later succumbed to the disease. FEWER VISITS

Inpatients and outpatients visits at palliative care units of hospitals and private clinics have also seen a sharp decline

Many have been skipping necessary appointments and treatment including morphine and painkiller administration and palliative chemotherapies fearing the risk of potential infection.

Salma Chowdhury, founder of Ashic Palliative Care Unit, said earlier 20-25 children with terminal diseases would come to her organisation for treatment every month.

In April, the number of visits by child patients was zero, six in May and nine in June, she said.

According to Salma, most patients, coming in now, are from Dhaka; those living outside are reluctant to come due to the fear of infection and increased transport cost.

"Earlier, one needed to spend around Tk 500 for transport, which has become around Tk 1,500 in recent times," she said.

picture is similar at The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibor Rahman Medical (BSMMU).

Currently, BSMMU's 21-bed palliative care unit has three patients while its three-bed paediatric palliative care is now empty.

Dr Marufa Khanam, medical officer of BSMMU's palliative care unit, said when patients with terminal illness come in a critical condition, doctors cannot wait for their Covid-19 test result to start the treatment.

"However, when they are tested positive later, it creates a lot of fear among other patients of the wards and their family members," she said.

The BSMMÚ also had to stop its home palliative care services in April, as family members of the patients

units have been deployed to provide emergency care to Covid-19 patients in many hospitals. University In DMCH, only three out of six

consultants are working at the 29-bed paediatric oncology and haematology department and eight-bed paediatric palliative care unit.

from May, the number of patients

seeking this service is less compared

cancer patient from Gazipur said

although her husband's condition has

deteriorated, the family is afraid to

take him to a hospital in Dhaka for a

are being infected, my sons don't dare

to take him to any hospital. Rather,

we are contacting his doctor over the

Besides, the patient too is reluctant

Meanwhile, the number of patients

in DMCH's eight-bed paediatric

palliative care unit, which otherwise

remains very busy, also saw a decline in

However, from this month, patients

According to the Quality of

Death index 2015 by the Economist

Intelligence Unit, Bangladesh stands

79th in a list of 80 countries in terms

of quality of life during terminal days.

FEWÉR MEDICAL CAREGIVERS

Since the coronavirus outbreak a

significant number of doctors, nurses

and other medical staff from palliative

the first few months of the pandemic.

have started to come in to palliate

their pains, said Dr Amirul.

phone for consultation," she said.

"The way the doctors and nurses

follow-up, fearing infection.

to travel, she added.

The wife of a 60-year-old stomach

to before," she added.

Two of the consultants are working at the DMCH's children's Covid-19 unit and one is currently in quarantine. However, three junior doctors,

not yet palliative care specialists, are working alongside the three consultants of the paediatric oncology and haematology department.

When a doctor goes for Covid-19 duty for a week, he is technically unavailable for a month, as s/he needs to be quarantined for 14 days and later, isolated for the next seven days at home, said Dr Amirul.

Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson tries out a North Yorkshire Police Rural Taskforce electric bike during a visit to North Yorkshire Police headquarters in Northallerton, northeast England yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

# 26 charged with murder of 2 students

hacked to death on the roof of a dormitory of the university on the night of April 16 in 2015 during a clash between two Chhatra League factions over establishing supremacy on the campus.

The charge-sheeted accused are Abu Ibne Rajab, relieved president of Dinajpur Sweschhasebak League, Bishwajit Ghosh Kanchan, relieved general secretary of Dinajpur Sadar upazila AL, Zakaria Zakir, general secretary of Dinajpur district Sweschhasebak League, AL leader Sirajul Salekin Rana, Jubo League leader Mahmudur Rahman Masum, BCL leaders Sabbir Ahmed Sujan, Mahmudul Hasan, Harun Ur Rashid, Ruhul Kuddus Joha and Nahid Ahmed Mithun, Mominul Islam, Aminul Islam, Nazmul Ahsan, Kamruzzaman, Jewel Islam, Nahid Ali, Tayef Bin Sharif, Abu Hares, Azizar Rahman, Arman Biswas, Arafat Hossain, Shahidul Islam, Abu Sayeed Seru and Ashraful Alam.

Among the 26, Rajab and Sabbir are now behind bars. Rajab was relieved of his post as president of Dinajpur Sweschhasebak League after he was picked up by law enforcers last month. Sabbir was also arrested on the same day.

Sources in the AL said the party has recommended Rajab's expulsion from Sweschhasebak League. Kamrul Huda Helal, office secretary

of Dinajpur district AL, said party

Nayon, Rashidul Islam, Rakibul Islam leaders accused of the double murder have been relieved of their posts. A letter was sent to central AL leaders urging them to expel the accused from the party, he added.

The probe in the case hardly saw any progress for several years due to various reasons.

The investigation gained some momentum early this year after the victims' parents had met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the AL president, and sought her intervention to ensure justice for their sons.

Following the double murder in 2015, the victims' relatives had filed the case with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station. The case was transferred to Dinajpur CID late last year.

# 3 killed in gunfights

FROM PAGE 12

criminals opened fire. Rab members retaliated, triggering the "gun battle", he said, adding that at one stage, Mostafa was caught in the line of fire, while others fled.

The injured was taken to Jhanjhania Hospital in Rampal where doctors declared him dead.

Rab claimed to have recovered a foreign pistol, 500 yaba pills, a knife, and Tk 67,000 from the spot.

In Bandarban's Naikhyangchhari upazila, an alleged Rohingya drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with police.

Shah Alam, 45, was a resident of Ukiya Rohingya camp, said police.

"We arrested Shah Alam on Wednesday night and took him to Ghumdhum area, near Myanmar border, around 3:00am to recover

The OC said sensing their presence, his cohorts opened fire. Police returned fire, triggering the "gun battle". Shah Alam was hit by bullets when he tried to flee from the police custody. He died on the spot, the OC added.

Police claimed to have recovered 40,000 yaba pills, a firearm, and three bullets from the spot.

In Satkhira, a drug peddler was killed when two groups of drug dealers were exchanging bullets in Bashdaha Koiarbeel area of Sadar upazila, claimed police.

The dead is Liakat Ali Sardar, 45, of North Taluigacha village of the upazila, said Asaduzzaman, officer-incharge of Sadar Police Station.

In another incident, a suspected bidi smuggler was killed as BGB

"Knowing how widespread lead

pollution is -- and understanding the

destruction it causes to individual

lives and communities -- must inspire

urgent action to protect children once

The report notes that lead is a

It is particularly destructive to

potent neurotoxin which causes

irreparable harm to children's brains.

babies and children under the age of

five as it damages their brains before

they have had the opportunity to

fully develop, causing them lifelong

neurological, cognitive and physical

been linked to mental health and

behavioural problems, and to an

consequences including increased risk

of kidney damage and cardiovascular

Childhood lead exposure

estimated to cost lower- and middle-

income countries almost USD \$1

trillion due to lost economic potential

SOURCES OF LEAD POSITIONING

The report notes that informal and

substandard recycling of lead-acid

batteries is a leading contributor to

lead poisoning in children living in

low and middle-income countries,

which have experienced a three-fold

increase in the number of vehicles

The increase in vehicle ownership,

combined with the lack of vehicle

battery recycling regulation and

infrastructure, has resulted in up to 50

per cent of lead-acid batteries being

unsafely recycled in the informal

of these children over their lifetime.

is

diseases in later life, the report says.

Older children suffer severe

increase of crime and violence.

Childhood lead exposure has also

Kulaura upazila.

The dead is Badrul Islam, 22, of Daudpur village in the upazila.

Alinagor camp commander of BGB-46 Battalion, said a BGB patrol team took position in Shuvonavi Char area near Razapur bridge on information that a big consignment of Indian Nasir Bidi would be smuggled in from India.

Sensing the presence of BGB team, the criminals attacked them with sharp weapons, the BGB official said. The patrol team opened fire in "self-defence" and to disperse the

The BGB official said after they returned from the spot, locals informed them that a bullet-hit body was found on the spot.

68,000 new daily cases.

flattening -- it took just 100 hours for one million new cases to be recorded. In Hong Kong, where authorities fear a worrying third-wave of infections

could cripple the healthcare system, Mohammad Abdul Kader, the government reversed a day-old ban on restaurants serving dine-in customers following widespread

smugglers, he added.

[Our correspondents from Bagerhat.

own country's dismal figures. Holocaust survivors

# Mystery of mighty stones

### FROM PAGE 12

same time: around 2,500 BCE, the monument's second phase of construction, which in turn could be a sign its builders were from a highly organised society.

It also contradicts a previous suggestion that one large sarsen, the Heel Stone, came from the immediate vicinity of the site and was erected before the others.

The new paper appeared in the journal Science Advances.

Lead author David Nash, a professor of physical geography at the University of Brighton, told AFP he and his team had to devise a novel technique to analyse the sarsens, that

were obtained during restoration work in 1958 but which then went missing until resurfacing in 2018 and

2019, respectively. performed more They а

sophisticated analysis on these samples using a mass spectrometry device, which detects a bigger range of

elements at a higher precision. The resulting signature was then compared to 20 possible source sites for these sedimentary rocks, with West Woods, Wiltshire found to be the closest match.

Only the 17th century English natural philosopher John Aubrey had previously postulated a link between "Overton Wood," probably

Station.

stand up to nine metres tall (30 feet) and weigh as much as 30 tonnes.

They first used portable x-rays to analyse the chemical composition of the rocks, which are 99 percent silica but contain traces of several other elements

"That showed us that most of the stones have a common chemistry, which led us to identify that we're looking for one main source here," said Nash.

Next, they examined two core samples from one of the stones that

a former name for West Woods, and Stonehenge.

Previous work has found that Stonehenge's smaller "bluestones" came from Wales, about 200 kilometers (160 miles) to the west, and the new study says that they and the sarsens were placed at the same time.

"So it must have been an enormous endeavor going on at that time," said Nash. "Stonehenge is like a convergence of materials being brought in from different places."

## Trump suggests delaying

### FROM PAGE 12

going into the runup to the 2016 election - but had not so directly suggested changing the Nov 3 date.

Representatives for the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump has cast doubt on the legitimacy of mail-in ballots, which have been used in far greater numbers in primary elections amid the pandemic. He has also made unsubstantiated allegations that voting will be rigged and has refused to say he would accept official election results if he lost.

Democrats, including Biden, have already begun preparations to protect voters and the election amid fears that Trump will try to interfere with the November election.

"A sitting president is peddling lies and suggesting delaying the election to keep himself in power," Democratic Representative Dan Kildee wrote on Twitter. "Don't let it happen. Every American — Republican, Independent and Democrat — should be speaking out against this President's lawlessness

and complete disregard of the Constitution."

US Senator Tom Udall, also a Democrat, said, "There is no way @ POTUS can delay the election. We shouldn't let him distract us from his #COVID19 incompetence.

Nonpartisan US election analyst Kvle Kondik of the University of Virginia said the tweet seemed to follow Trump's typical approach of trying to distract voters from bad news.

"Trump suggesting delaying the election (he can't do this w/o congressional approval) seems to be one of his more obvious attempts to change the subject given this morning's wretched GDP numbers," Kondik wrote on Twitter.

Attorney General William Barr was asked in congressional testimony earlier this week whether Trump could change the election date: "I've never been asked the question before. I've never looked into it."

Barr also testified that to his knowledge, a sitting president cannot contest the results of an election if the vote tallies are clear.

# Girl gang- raped FROM PAGE 12 Khol

she went to Galachipa ferry ghat to go to her sister's house in Sonakhali village which is on the opposite side of the river.

There, she met a man named Shahidul who told her not to go to her sister's house at night and asked her to stay at a hotel. They then went to a hotel. Shahidul left the hotel, keeping the girl there, the OC said.

with four associates Swapan, Jiten, OC said.

Khokon, and Rashid Gazi, returned to the hotel. Then hotel manager Faruq asked the girl to open the door of her room. When she opened the door, the six entered the room and raped her, the police officer added.

On information, police rescued the girl around 3:30am and held the five. But hotel manager Faruq managed to flee

Legal action will be taken against But around 8:30pm, Shahidul, along the accused after investigation, the

drugs," said Alamgir Hossain, officer-

members opened fire on his gang Bandarban, Moulvibazar, and Satkhira

### urge Facebook to remove genocide denial posts

### AFP, New York

public anger.

Holocaust survivors launched a campaign Wednesday in which they plan to upload daily videos to Facebook urging CEO Mark Zuckerberg to remove posts from the site that deny the Nazi genocide of Jews

Survivors from around the globe, including Anne Frank's stepsister, have recorded 30-second messages that are then posted on social media, including Instagram and Twitter, with the hashtag #NoDenyingIt.

The online campaign comes as hundreds of advertisers boycott Facebook as part of a call for them to take more aggressive action against toxic and inflammatory content that promotes violence and hate.

"I lost all my family. Many, many family members. There is no denying it! Remove Holocaust denial from Facebook," Eva Schloss, Frank's stepsister, says in her video.

Other survivors who have contributed to the project include 84-year-old Serge Klarsfeld, a prominent so-called Nazi hunter who has helped track down and expose Nazi war criminals.

The campaign has been organized by the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

The non-profit works to seek compensation from the German government and the return of Jewish property stolen by the Nazis.

Zuckerberg, who is Jewish, sparked controversy in 2018 when he argued that Facebook should not filter out posts denying that the Nazis killed six million Jews.

In an interview with tech website Recode he said that while Facebook was dedicated to stopping the spread of fake news, it would not filter out posts just on the basis of being factually wrong.

He said that while he found Holocaust denial "deeply offensive," he said he didn't think deniers were 'intentionally getting it wrong.'

Critics lashed out at Zuckerberg, saying these types of comments can incite hatred and violence and pointing out that Holocaust denial was "quintessential fake news."

# Bangladesh 4th worst- hit in world

Unicef.

and for all."

impairment.

since 2000.

economy

Asia. In Bangladesh, it is estimated that 35.5 million children are affected with blood lead levels above 5  $\mu$ g/dL, making the country the fourth mostseriously hit in the world, according to the report launched by Unicef and Pure Earth.

"Lead exposure has severe and long-lasting health and development impacts on children, including lifelong learning disabilities and their capacity to earn income when they grow up. Unicef will be working with the concerned actors to help address dangerous metal waste and lead pollution and the toll it takes on children," said Tomoo Hozumi, Unicef Representative in Bangladesh.

The report -- The Toxic Truth: Children's exposure to lead pollution undermines a generation of potential -- is an analysis of childhood lead exposure undertaken by the Institute of Health Metrics Evaluation and verified with a study approved for publication in Environmental Health Perspectives.

In Bangladesh, illegal recycling of used lead-acid batteries in the openair and close to homestead areas is considered to be a major source of lead exposure.

This poses a significant health risk for both children and adults.

According to the Institute of Health Metrics Evaluation, Bangladesh has the world's fourth-highest rate of death due to lead exposure with an average population of blood lead levels at 6.83 µg/dL, which is the eleventh highest in the world.

The research also found that high concentrations of lead were found in spices in Bangladesh.

Lead chromate, which is used to enhance colour and weight of turmeric as a sign of quality, contributes to the elevated lead blood levels in children and adults alike.

According to one study, some concentrations exceeded the national limit by up to 500 times.

The report estimates that the economic loss due to lead-attributable IQ reduction in Bangladesh is equivalent to 5.9 per cent of the country's GDP.

in-charge of Naikhyangchhari Police in "self-defence" in Moulvibazar's contributed to this report]

battery cases, spill acid and lead dust lead in crude, open-air furnaces that emit toxic fumes poisoning the

Other sources of childhood lead exposure include lead in water from the use of leaded pipes; lead from active industry, such as mining and battery recycling; lead-based paint and pigments; leaded gasoline, which has declined considerably in recent decades, but was a major historical source; lead solder in food cans; and lead in spices, cosmetics, ayurvedic medicines, toys

can be recycled safely without exposing workers, their children, and surrounding neighborhoods. Leadcontaminated sites can be remediated and restored," said Richard Fuller,

"People can be educated about the protect themselves and their children. and brighter futures for millions of children across the planet.'

declined dramatically in most highincome countries since the phase-out of leaded gasoline and most leadbased paints, blood lead levels for children in low- and middle-income countries have remained elevated and, in many cases, dangerously high even a decade after the global phase-out of

case studies where lead pollution and Bangladesh; Tbilisi, Georgia; Ghana; Agbogbloshie, Workers in dangerous and often

EFFECTS OF LEAD POISONING illegal recycling operations break open ON CHILDREN

Lead poisoning hampers children's in the soil, and smelt the recovered ability to fully develop and prevents them from taking the maximum advantage of the opportunities in life. surrounding community. Often, the workers and the exposed community neurotoxin.

and other consumer products.

Parents whose occupations involve contaminated dust home on their clothes, hair, hands and shoes, thus

"The good news is that lead President of Pure Earth.

dangers of lead and empowered to The return on the investment is enormous: improved health, increased productivity, higher IQs, less violence,

While blood lead levels have leaded gasolines.

"With few early symptoms, lead silently wreaks havoc on children's are not aware that lead is potent health and development, with possibly fatal consequences," said Henrietta Fore, executive director of

> working with lead often bring inadvertently exposing their children to the toxic element.

The report features five country other toxic heavy metal waste have affected children. These are Kathgora, Pesarean, Indonesia; and Morelos State, Mexico.

e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 31, 2020, SRABAN 16, 1427 BS

HAT TO WATCH

**SONY SIX** England v Ireland Second ODI (D/N) Live from 7:00pm **TEN 2 FA CUP FINAL** 

SATURDAY

Arsenal v Chelsea Live from 10:30pm **TEN 2 SERIE A** Juventus v AS Roma Live from 12:45am (Sunday) **SUNDAY** 

**TEN 2 SERIE A** Spal v Fiorentina Live from 10:00pm Bologna v Torino Live from 12:45am (Monday)



The former assistant teacher of a nondescript primary school in remote Kalsindur village at the foot of the Garo hills, Mofiz Uddin, who coached the institution to a hattrick of titles in the Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup from 2013 to 2015, poses with the students (L) while budding footballers of the famed village of Dhobaura upazila in Mymensingh have been confined to practising in their courtyards amid the pandemic. PHOTO: COLLECTED

# **Double whammy for Kalsindur girls**

#### AMINUL ISLAM from Mymensingh



famed Kalsindur village of the Dhobaura upazila in have Mymensingh been confined to practising in their courtyards after a double whammy; the coronavirus pandemic paired with flash floods.

Budding footballers of the

The young girls, some of whom have represented the national team at age level and others hoping to emulate that feat, have been left with little to survive with, let alone play football.

According to Kalsindur Govt School and College principal Mala Rani Sarker, the village currently boasts around 50 active female footballers. 14 play for age-level national teams or the women's national team. The rest ply their trade in local and district competitions.

"As Kalsindur has earned name and fame from football throughout the country and abroad, we are trying to produce more football talents through our limited efforts", Mala told this correspondent.

But the past four months have been

very difficult. Mala claimed that these girls did not get any support from official quarters, adding that she and her peers, with assistance from some affluent people, arranged relief materials for 40 girls before Eid-ul-Fitr.

But with another Eid knocking on the door and floods exacerbating the situation, financial assistance is paramount for the girls and their families.

Mohammad Juel Rana, coach of the Kalsindur girls' football team, said it was becoming increasingly difficult to continue coaching. The young man gets only Tk 5000 as a monthly honorarium from the school and it is only due to his devotion to the game that he is continuing, he claimed.

Unfortunately, the current crisis is not the first setback to the fertile breeding ground for footballers. The village's primary school, which produced famed players such as Sanjida Akter, Tahura Khatun, Maria Manda, Sajeda Akter, Shamsunnahar Sr and Shamsunnahar Jr, saw football activities cease completely in 2018 due to a row over the credit for these players' success.

According to local sources said, the row

started in 2016 between Kalsindur Govt Primary School and Kalsindur Govt School and College over credit for the success.

Mofiz Uddin -- a former assistant teacher of the primary school who had coached the institution to a hattrick of titles in the Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup from 2013 to 2015 -- was eventually transferred to another school and football activities at the primary school were stopped. The consequence for the schools from the famed football village was failure at the national level.

Despite all that, there are several players from that successful period who are very much part of the national team set up.

Sanjida is such an example, having graduated from the primary school well before the infamous row and claiming a regular place in the national team. She is nurtured and trained by the BFF along with 40-plus others round-the-year.

"I want to improve my performance and I dream of playing in the Club World Cup one day", the 19-year-old midfielder said.

But her plans have been upended and she is now training at home. Sanjida was playing for Bashundhara Kings in the long-awaited women's football league in mid-March when the pandemic broke out, forcing the BFF to halt the league.

Having been away from the game for four months, Sanjida is trying her best to maintain fitness by following BFF coach Golam Rabbani Choton's instructions, which she receives online.

Like Sanjida, Shamsunnahar Jr, captain of the under-15 national women's team, is training at home and sends footage to the BFF every week for further instructions.

"I suffered huge mental pressure when I lost my mother when I was a fifth-grader. But I want to do well in football and lead a decent life with my siblings and ailing father," Shamsunnahar said.

Both Sanjida and Shamsunnahar know online instructions and individual drills are a far cry from the experience they garner from BFF camps or competitive matches, domestic or international.

They know their current test is navigating through this situation, but once the twin crises are over, their skills and fitness will face a much sterner test.

# 'India can't match bumpermachine Wagner'

#### CRICKET.COM.AU

Matthew Wade expects more sustained shortpitched onslaughts this summer but warned that not even India's world-class pace attack will be able to match New Zealand's bouncerbowling extraordinaire, Neil Wagner.

Wade's showdown with Wagner in Perth was the most enthralling contest of a one-sided Test summer, with the Tasmanian taking a series of blows to his body as he refused to fall into the leg-side trap that would ensnare the previously infallible Steve Smith several times in the series.

As Australia's top-order piled on runs, Wagner's unusual tactics proved the only effective bowling strategy the Kiwis had up their sleeve. The fact Wagner dismissed Australia's three leading batsmen -- Smith, David Warner and Marnus Labuschagne -- a combined 10 times will not have gone unnoticed by India, who are set for a four-Test tour of Australia this summer.

Virat Kohli's men defeated the Aussies 2-1 in 2018-19 but Smith and Warner were banned for that series, while Labuschagne played just one Test. Wade says replicating



Wagner's method will be harder than it looks.

Teams may try it but I don't think it will be as successful," Wade said. "I don't think anyone has bowled bouncers the way he bowled and been so consistent, and not gotten scored off while also picking up wickets.

think we'll see it a bit (from India) but I don't think it will be as effective as Wagner. He's done it for a long time now ... to be honest I've never faced a bowler who is so accurate at bowling bouncers."

Australia coach Justin Langer likened Wade and Wagner to "street fighters" but Wade stressed his approach was not



Irrepressible AC Milan





forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic likened himself to film character Benjamin Button after scoring twice in a 4-1 Serie A win at Sampdoria.

"People tell me I'm old and tired but I'm just getting warmed up," the 38-year-old said after his ninth league goal. "I'm like Benjamin Button, except I've always been young, never old," he added, referring to the main character in a 2008 movie about a man who ages in reverse.

Ibrahimovic left LA Galaxy and joined Milan in January this year, making 17 appearances so far.

Ciro Immobile and Zlatan Ibrahimovic were ecstatic in celebrations during their respective Serie A games on Wednesday. Immobile boosted his chances of clinching the top scorer award as he netted his 35th goal of the season, moving four clear of Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo during Lazio's 2-0 win against already-relegated Brescia and he now has a shot to go ahead of Robert Lewandowski, who had 34 goals. Meanwhile, Ibrahimovic scored twice to help AC Milan win 4-1 at Sampdoria. It was the second time in three matches that the 38-year-old has got a brace. On the other hand, Juventus, who won a record-extending ninth straight Serie A title on Sunday, fielded a much-changed team and lost 2-0 at Cagliari. PHOTO: TWITTER

as primitive as it might have appeared

"If you looked at all the bouncers (Wagner) bowled .... he's always between your shoulder and the top of your (helmet) peak, or in your armpits," said Wade. "It's very easy to say, 'We're going to do this' and set the field like they set They barely had anyone in front of the wicket. They had really cagey fields, catchers in good places, they were trying to take wickets all the time, it wasn't negative bowling.

"That's why I didn't play the shot all that much because I felt like they could get me out that way. It was a good contest. Hats off to him, he bowled unbelievably well."

While Australia's top-order is now far more settled, Wade expects Kohli's side to be the toughest challenge.

"Everyone, although they might not admit it, is looking towards that Indian series," said Wade. "It's going to be hard work. They are a fierce team. They're as hard a team as I've ever played in terms of the way they compete.

"Led by Virat, you can see the way he goes about it on the field, you can see what it means to him and he drives all those guys, they jump on the back of him. It's going to be as big a challenge as this team has faced for the 12 months we've been together."

# 'Must continue Vardy's story an inspiration in trying times this in the CL'

### Boateng urges players to continue showing support for BLM

### REUTERS



Bayern Munich defender Jerome Boateng says players must use the platform provided by the Champions League to continue sending messages about racial equality by taking a knee.

Athletes from around the world have taken a knee in a show of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter campaign, which gained momentum after George Floyd's death in police custody in May

Europe's Champions League, which has been suspended since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will resume next month

"It's very powerful and very important that we continue this in the Champions League, especially in the final, because the whole world will look," said Boateng, whose side hold a 3-0 lead over Chelsea heading into the second leg of their last-16 tie on Aug. 8.

Hopefully in some sports that are not back yet, they will join us. I think it's very important."

The German defender, who has been the victim of racial abuse in the past, said he had spoken to his Bayern team mates about the issues raised by the BLM movement.

"We talked about it before our break, I talked actually to Joshua Kimmich and Leon Goretzka about it," the 31-yearold said

"They asked me how to support, how does it feel, what happened to you when you were younger, so I could tell them my story, what were my experiences, and why is it so painful and hard to hear those things.

### SABBIR HOSSAIN

"Even now there Premier are moments when League I shake my head at the madness of it all

-- going from the factory floor and playing Sunday morning pub football with my mates, to scoring for my country against the World Cup winners in Berlin. It's the stuff of dreams. It hasn't always been an easy journey, some doubted that I was capable, and at times I was probably guilty of not helping myself, but nobody can question my passion for football or my commitment once I set foot on the pitch.

Leicester City's prolific English striker lamie Vardy uttered these words four years ago when he launched his autobiography, Jamie Vardy: From Nowhere, My Story'.

There have been a lot of stories regarding team and individual achievements in England's Premier League but Vardy's is a one about how a person can overcome all barriers and achieve something special. Particularly during a pandemic, when everyone is seeking inspiration, Vardy's story could be a good read.

He proved age is not a barrier to achievement. Last Sunday, aged 33, Vardy became the oldest player to bag the Premier League Golden Boot, overtaking former Ivory Coast superstar Didier Drogba, after finishing top of the scoring chart of the 2019-20 season with 23 goals.

Vardy's story is not short of a fairy tale.

Eight years ago, he was playing noneague football with Fleetwood Town in

of 2016 -- from a footballer playing in the fifth-tier of the English football league system, he became a Premier League champion with Leicester.

Born in Sheffield on 11 January 1987, Vardy started playing football at local team Sheffield Wednesday but was released as a teenager. He was told that he was too small to make it in football, and for some time, he thought his chance had gone.

But Vardy was far from giving up his dream and joined Stocksbridge Park Steels youth system at the age of 16. He made his

front of a handful of people. And by May first-team debut in 2007, earning 30 pounds a week at the club while working in a factory as a technician making medical splints.

Stocksbridge tagged Vardy as a 'special' talent, but he was convicted for assault following an altercation outside a pub the same year, and for six months, he had to play wearing an electronic tag.

Vardy then moved to Halifax Town, and after a successful stint, joined Fleetwood Town in 2011. In his only season there, he scored 31 league goals and drew the attention of Championship side Leicester City.

the Foxes signed Vardy for a reported fee of one million pounds, a non-league record, and the next year he helped the club to earn back a spot in the Premier League, scoring 16 times in the process.

Vardy made his debut on the English top-flight at the age of 27 in the 2015-16 season. And defying all expectations, he helped Leicester, who were on the brink of relegation on their return, to win the coveted Premier League title for the first time in the club's history in their next campaign.

Before the start of the 2012-13 season,

The 5-feet-10-inch tall forward scored 24 goals in that extraordinary season, setting a Premier League record by scoring in 11 consecutive games -- a record previously held by former Manchester United forward Ruud van Nistelrooy. He was later voted the Premier League Player of the Season and FWA Footballer of the Year.

Vardy made his international debut on 7 June 2015, and has so far played 26 games for England with seven goals to his name.

At the beginning of this year, former South Africa batsman Hashim Amla told The Daily Star that although he started his ODI career at the age of 25, there was no race against time. Before retiring, he became the fastest batsman to score 2,000 (40 innings), 3,000 (57 innings), 4,000 (81 innings), and 5,000 (101 innings) runs in 50-over cricket.

Vardy, the creator of one of the greatest sporting stories of all time, might have shared and nurtured the same belief.



# DHAKA FRIDAY JULY 31, 2020, SRABAN 16, 1427 BS

The Daily Star

SHAH

HAJEE DANESH UNIV

with murder

of 2 students

after 5 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Criminal Investigation

pressed charges against 26

people, including several

local Awami League, Jubo

League and Chhatra League

leaders, in a case filed over

the murder of two students

of Hajee Mohammad

Danesh Science and

(HSTU) in Dinajpur five years ago. OC Ramzan Ali of CID

in the district, also the

investigation officer of the

case, filed the charge sheet

with the Chief Judicial

Magistrate's court in the

However, the court is yet to accept the charge sheet.

Md<sup>2</sup>Zakaria 22, a BBA

student, and Mahmudul

Hasan Milton, 25, a

student of the agriculture

department of HSTU, were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

vesterday

University

Several AL, BCL leaders among them

Department

Technology

afternoon.

26 charged



# COVID-19 PANDEMIC **Palliative Care** in a pickle

Fewer terminally ill patients seek treatment at hospitals

### Nilima Jahan

The ongoing Covid-19 outbreak has made palliative care services relatively inaccessible for patients with terminal illnesses, said doctors.

Since these patients usually have low immunity, they are more prone to viral or bacterial diseases than a normal person, noted Dr Amirul Morshed Khasru.

The doctor heads the Paediatric Oncology and Haematology Department and Paediatric Palliative Care Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

He said if patients with serious illnesses such as cancer, kidney disease and Alzheimer's contract coronavirus, they suffer more, and often require more time, about 28 to 30 days, to recover.

Thus, it has become difficult to provide palliative care to these patients in hospital wards amid the coronavirus contagion, the physician said.

In fact, DMCH's paediatric palliative unit had to be kept closed for most of April, after a leukemia patient undergoing treatment there was tested Covid-19 positive. While the infected child was shifted to Kurmitola

hospital for coronavirus treatment, other patients in the unit had to be sent to their homes, private clinics and other hospitals, said Dr Amirul.

Around 13 nurses, who came in contact with the child, tested positive, he added.

"When we reopened the unit, we decided to send the SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



It's hard to believe that this man is actually walking on a road pulling a cupboard-laden boat. He is trying to save the furniture as his home has been inundated with floodwater at Khashimpur of Gazipur yesterday. The water level is very close to the roofs of shops as seen on the left of the photo.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Five people were arrested vesterday on charge of raping a girl in Galachipa upazila town of Patuakhali.

The arrestees were then produced before the Galachipa Upazila Judicial Magistrate's Court that sent them to jail.

The 19-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped in the upazila town on Wednesday night.

She

## Trump suggests delaying US polls

**REUTERS**, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday raised the possibility of delaying the nation's Nov 3 presidential election, though the Constitution bestows that power on Congress, not the president.

The move drew immediate objections from Democrats and it was not clear whether Trump was serious. Trump also said he would not trust the results of an election that included widespread mail voting - a measure that many election observers see as critical given the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump, without evidence, repeated his claims of mail-in voter fraud and raised the question of a delay, tweeting: "delay the election until people can properly,

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

July 31, 1972 Shamsuddoza Sajen

back to sleep.

NO CAUSE FOR ANXIETY Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was operated upon yesterday at the London Clinic to remove a gallbladder stone, is showing gradual improvement since last night. This morning, the prime minister talked to Begum Mujib and his personal physician Dr Nurul Islam and after some time went



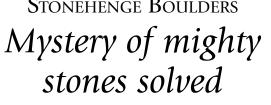
# 3 killed in 'gunfights'

They include ex-UP chairman, Rohingya 'drug peddler' STAR REPORT

Two people, including a former union parishad chairman, were killed in "gunfights" with law

enforcers in Bagerhat and Bandarban early yesterday. In another incident, an alleged drug paddler was killed in "infighting" in Satkhira.

In Bagerhat, Mostafa Kamal alias Mina Kamal, 58, a former chairman of **S**TONEHENGE BOULDERS





AFP. Washington

Girl gangraped in 5 arrested

securely and safely vote???"

Trump's tweet came shortly after the United States reported its worst economic downturn since the Great Depression: a second-quarter crash in gross domestic product due to widespread shutdowns prompted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump, who is trailing challenger and former Vice President Joe Biden in opinion polls, had previously intended to focus his re-election bid on the nation's economic performance.

Trump had previously suggested he would not trust election results complaints similar to those he raised SEE PAGE 10 COL 1 is improving and also to tell his other relatives that there is no cause for anxiety.

#### YEMEN ACCORDS RECOGNITION

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen has accorded recognition to Bangladesh. This is communicated by the Yemen government in Aden to the foreign ministry in Dhaka today. Yemen becomes the second Arab country to recognise Bangladesh, the first being Iraq.

Begum Mujib has requested the Bangladesh foreign minister to

inform the parents of Bangabandhu at Tungipara that his condition

#### FLOOD SITUATION ALARMING

The directorate of flood forecasting and warning today terms the flood situation in the Brahmaputra Basin as alarming. The districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Bogra are already in the grips of flood. The water level of Brahmaputra at Chilmari and Bahadurabad, Jamuna at Sirajganj and the Ganges at Goalondo continue to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Naihati Union Parishad in Khulna's Rupsha, was killed in a "shootout" with Rab members in Rampal upazila.

Lt Col Raushanul Firoz, commander of Rab-6 in Khulna, said they went to Babu Bari area near Rampal Thermal Power Plant on information that a secret meeting of drug dealers was going on there. Sensing the presence

of Rab members, the SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Stonehenge, a Neolithic wonder in southern England, has vexed historians and archaeologists for centuries with its many mysteries: How was it built? What purpose did it serve? Where did its towering sandstone boulders come from?

That last question may finally have an answer after a study published Wednesday found that most of the giant stones -- known as sarsens -seem to share a common origin 25 kilometers (16 miles) away in West Woods, an area that teemed with prehistoric activity.

The finding boosts the theory that the megaliths were brought to Stonehenge about the SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

was Patuakhali General Hospital for medical tests, said Monirul Islam, officerin-charge of Galachipa Police Station, adding that a case was also filed with the station.

sent

to

Quoting the case statement, Humayun Kabir, OC (investigation) of the police station, said the girl went to a doctor in the upazila town on Wednesday afternoon. In the evening, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC Australia marks deadliest day

India sees highest cases in 24 hrs; US deaths surpass 150,000

#### AGENCIES

Australia yesterday reported a record number of new coronavirus infections and its deadliest day of the epidemic so far following a spike in cases at elderly-care homes.

Days after authorities expressed hope that a Melbourne lockdown now in its third week was bringing persistent outbreaks under control, the surge is a potent warning that initial success in managing coronavirus can quickly unravel.

Fourteen deaths and 723 positive test results were recorded in Victoria State alone, well beyond the previous nationwide high of 549 infections set on Monday.

State Premier Daniel Andrews indicated the leap was, in part, linked to a surge in cases at aged-care homes. Most of those who died were aged in their 70s-90s.

Spikes in infections in Asia have dispelled any notion the region may be over the worst, with Australia, India and Hong Kong reporting record daily cases, Vietnam testing thousands and North Korea urging vigilance.

Asian governments had largely prided themselves on rapidly containing initial outbreaks after the virus emerged in central China late last year, but flare-ups this month have shown the danger of complacency.

India yesterday saw its biggest jump in daily cases as the total tally of infections reached near the 11.6 million mark yesterday.

A total of 52,123 infections were reported from across the country in the last 24 hours , taking India's total SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

### KIDS EXPOSED TO LEAD Bangladesh 4th worsthit in world

Says global report

### UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh is the fourth most-seriously hit country in terms of the number of children affected by lead poisoning on a massive and previously unknown scale in the world, according to a new global report.

The report says that around one in three children -- up to 800 million globally -- have blood lead levels at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu g/dL$ ), a level which requires action. Nearly half of these children live in South SEE PAGE 10 COL 3





A pair of cotton pygmy geese, popularly known as Balihash, flying over Jhajhor Beel in Bogura's Sherpur upazila. These birds were spotted in almost every wetland 15-20 years ago but they are hardly seen now due to poaching and loss of habitat.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

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