

IUB holds webinar on Bangabandhu

CITY DESK

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) organised an online seminar titled "Bangabandhu's Vision of a Secular Bangladesh" on Monday, as part of his birth centenary celebration, said a press release.

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni, chief guest of the programme, emphasised on national development based on higher education activities, with the aim of building a new society.

Dr Kamal Chowdhury, chief coordinator of National Implementation Committee for Celebration of "Mujib Centenary"; UGC Prof Fakrul Alam, also member of the celebration committee; A Matin Chowdhury, chairperson of IUB trustee board; and Abdul Hai Sarker, chairperson of ESTCDDT at IUB, also spoke at the programme.

Khandker Md Iftekhar Haider, vice chancellor (acting) and treasurer at IUB, delivered the vote of thanks.

The entire event was moderated by Prof Ahmed Ahsanuzzaman of IUB's English department.

Tk 1,375 cr

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waterlogging. She said when the mega project was initiated, they were exhilarated thinking their crisis was about to end.

"But once again, the monsoon came and inundated the area. Just light to moderate rain was enough to achieve that. Seems like, the thousand crore Taka that was spent went down the drain," she added and urged the authorities to verify whether there was any defect in the planning.

The mega project to mitigate waterlogging in port city included excavating 9.50-lakh cubic meters of mud from 36 canals, building 85km road on canal banks, constructing three flood water retaining areas, replacing 54 RCC culverts and girder bridges, constructing five tidal regulators, building 42 silt traps, expanding 15.5km side drain and building 200 cross drain culverts.

Contacted, Lt Col Md Shah Ali, CDA project director, said the implementation period of the project has been expanded to June 2022.

"We got the project in our hand a year late," he said, explaining the delay. "Also, the pandemic and land acquisition-related issues caused unwanted interruptions," he added.

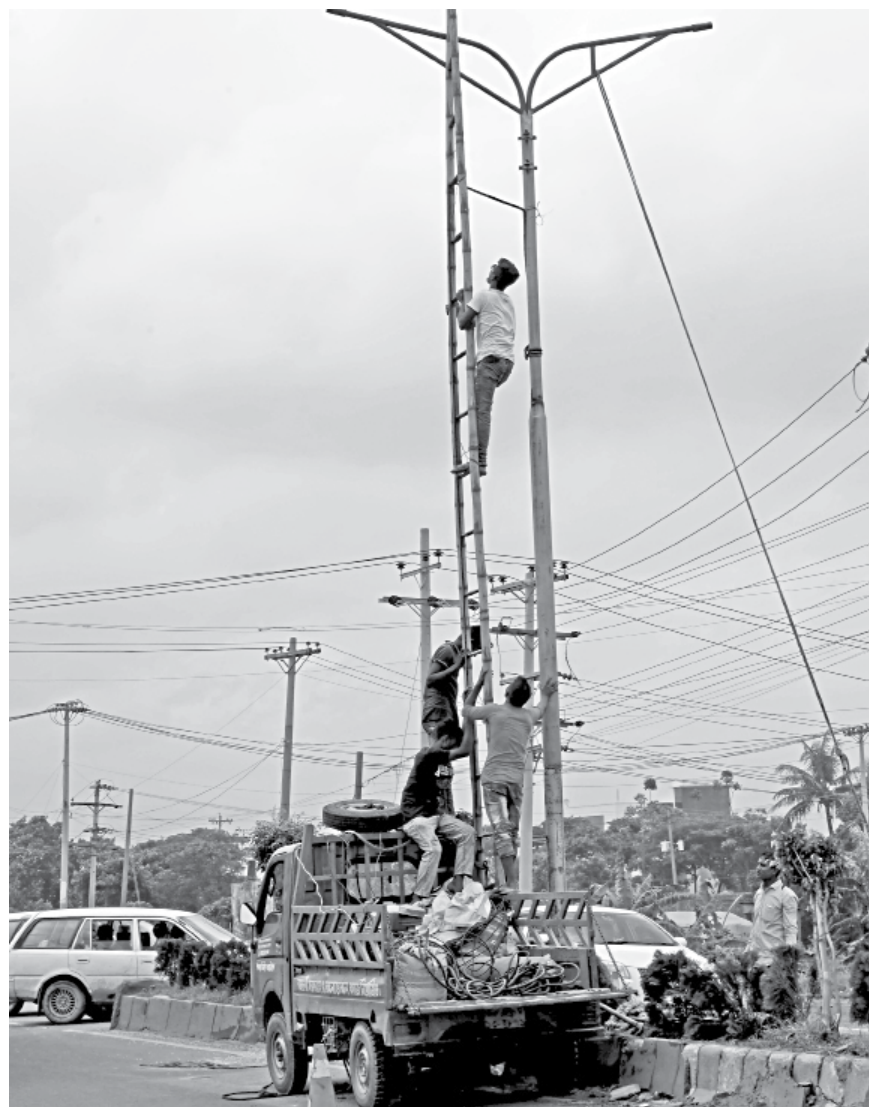
The director said there were structures along the banks of canals, which were about to be excavated. "Without land acquisition, we cannot carry out the expansion of a canal, resulting in the delay of building roads along the banks," he added.

"By the end of this year, we will be able to complete construction of five tidal regulators that will protect Haliashahar, Agrabad and Patenga areas from getting submerged," he assured.

He said the intensity of waterlogging in 22 areas has reduced remarkably as they have nearly completed working on 58.08km of drains there. Apart from this, they have started constructing retaining walls at 28 canals out of 36, he mentioned.

About land acquisition, Md Elias Hossen, deputy commissioner of Chattogram District Administration, said such acquisition goes through various stages. "We have issued notices as per section 3 of the land acquisition act. Then there will be estimation of land, which will have to be approved by the ministry," he added.

"We cannot do anything beyond procedure and there is no laxity on our part," he said.



To fix a streetlight, a man, with no safety gear, climbs up a bamboo ladder held in position only by the his co-workers beneath at Savar's Baliapur area. One small slip could result in a serious injury. This photo was taken earlier this week.

Panic grips

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UAE and resident of Feni, told The Daily Star yesterday in Chattogram that despite trying for the past two weeks, he failed to get any air ticket to reach his workplace.

"We are very worried, as the UAE government announced that it would stop taking back workers. I don't know whether I will be able to return to my workplace," he said.

Abdul Haque of Chattogram's Rangunia said, "I don't know how I will go back to work within the scheduled time. If I can't, I'll have to undergo a lot of complications. My visa could be cancelled," he said.

Abdul said he heard the construction firm he works for might reduce workers due to the pandemic. It might be those who will not join on time, he feared.

"For the last two weeks, I came to Biman Bangladesh office to get a ticket but failed," he told this newspaper.

During a visit to the Biman Bangladesh Airlines office in Chattogram yesterday, hundreds of expatriates were seen coming for tickets to the Middle East, including UAE, but were waiting for a long time without getting tickets.

Javed Tareq Khan, assistant general manager of the Biman office in Chattogram, told The Daily Star, "We couldn't give tickets to everyone because of the sudden increase in air ticket demand."

"We are not selling any more tickets [to Abu Dhabi] until further notice from the country," he added.

Trial of

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Basir was suspended from his post by ACC the following day. But he had denied the allegations, terming the clip fabricated.

ACC later removed Basir from the enquiry, and on June 13 formed a three-member committee to verify Mizan's claim. The committee, led by him, found the allegations to be true and the audio clip genuine, the complainant said.

The commission then gave approval for filing a case against the duo on July 16 last year. The same day, the complainant filed a case with its Integrated District Office-1 of Dhaka for a transaction of Tk 40 lakh as bribe.

On January 15, the ACC submitted a charge sheet against them for their alleged involvement in taking and giving the Tk 40 lakh bribe.

UN Admission

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KEEP FOOD ABOVE POLITICS

Phani Bhushan Majumdar, minister for food and civil supplies, appeals today to all concerned to keep food above politics and lend all support to the government to bring down the food prices. The government has been giving topmost priority on the procurement of food grains from abroad and their quicker movement to the distribution points to meet the requirement of the people, he adds.

CLOTH PRICE FIXED

Commerce Minister MR Siddiqui says that the government has fixed the price of cloth and asks the people not to buy cloths at higher than the price fixed by the government. He also asks people to hand over to police anyone who is found violating the government fixed rate.

SOURCES: August 21, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

Kuwait-based ringleader

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of a foreign intelligence agency and finally caught him in Madhabdi area on Monday night, he added.

Ameer went to Kuwait several years ago and in collusion with two of his cohorts and a Kuwaiti national formed a human trafficking gang there. The gang trafficked nearly 900 Bangladeshis into Kuwait, Jisanul said.

According to CID sources, the gang members used to collect visas from the Kuwait authorities through forgery and sent those to fortune seekers back in Bangladesh. In exchange, they used to take Tk 6 lakh from each person.

Miseries awaited the Bangladeshis who would be tricked into going to that country with fake promises of good jobs. Reaching there, they would stay in streets amid crisis of food and money, said the CID official, who led the drive to arrest Ameer.

The Kuwait authorities started investigation against the gang after some of its victims lodged complaints there. Though the Kuwaiti national, one of the ringleaders, is serving a six-year jail sentence in his country, Ameer and two Bangladeshis somehow fled to Bangladesh before being awarded jail sentences and fine.

CID officials said they were trying to arrest the other members of the gang.

Rayhan not charged

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Malaysian Immigration Director-General Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud already said Rayhan will never step foot in Malaysia again as he will be blacklisted.

On July 3, Al Jazeera published an investigative documentary titled "Locked Up in Malaysia's Lockdown". It raised the issue of the government's repressive treatment of migrant workers in Malaysia during the lockdown. In the documentary, along with the citizens of many other countries, Rayhan also gave an interview, which angered the Malaysian authorities.

An arrest warrant was issued against Rayhan Kabir. He was arrested by Malaysian police on the evening of July 24.

Before arrest, Rayhan Kabir sent a WhatsApp message where he said, "I did not commit any crime. I did not lie. I have only talked about discrimination against the migrants. I want the dignity of migrants and my country ensured. I believe all migrants and Bangladesh will stand with me."

Even during interrogation, Rayhan told the Immigration Police that he spoke about what he had seen and that was his own observation. But he did not want to hurt Malaysians.

Different international and Bangladeshi organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have condemned the arrest and demanded Rayhan's immediate release.

Malaysian rights group Lawyers for Liberty said they had scrutinised the statement made by Rayhan in the documentary and firmly restate that he has not said anything even remotely in breach of the country's laws.

Rayhan Kabir's family of four lives in Bandar upazila of Narayanganj. After getting the news of nor charge against Rayhan Kabir his father Shah Alam said, "I have repeatedly said that my son has protested injustice all his life. But he himself has never done wrong. We are very happy that there is no charge against him. We are waiting for our Raihan to come to us. The day our son comes to us will be our Eid".

The writer is a freelance journalist

Zafrullah

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defamation. But the court accepted the defamation section," Biplab's lawyer Mithun Biswas told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Dr Zafarullah said, "I didn't say anything against any religion. I don't have anything against any religion. I don't know who filed the case. I don't think there is justification in making the complaint. Anyone willing to talk to me [about this] can talk to me."

According to the complaint, Dr Zafrullah's remarks about the Mahabharata and Ramayana at a rally before Jatiya Press Club on August 9 had hurt and defamed the Hindu community.

Water level

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correspondents from different districts reported on flood situation.

In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, the water level was gradually increasing due to rainfall and upstream water from India.

There is a fear among the people of the river bank that water may suddenly rise again causing flood.

Flood victim Nader Ali, 62, of Jorgach area in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, said, "Water level in the Brahmaputra river has been rising since Wednesday morning. We are also preparing to see flood for another phase."

Sheikh Ali, 60, a flood-hit farmer of Char Kodalkati in Rajibpur upazila of Kurigram, said he collected aman seedlings and planted them with great difficulty. If there is a flood again, the aman paddy fields will be severely damaged.

Akkel Ali, 58, a flood affected farmer of Dakkhin Balapara area in Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat, said the roads in the village were still under floodwater. If they fall into the flood again, they will suffer a lot.

Contacted, Ariful Islam, executive engineer of the Kurigram WDB, said there was a risk of recurring flood in this area by the end of this month.

Mizanur Rajman, executive engineer of WDB in Lalmonirhat, said there was possibility of flood again by the end of this month due to heavy rainfall and onrush water from the upstream India.

In Bogura, the water of the Jamuna river has been increasing slowly during this week and crossed the danger level in last two days.

Water of the Jamuna at the Mathurapara point in Bogura's Saniakandi upazila is flowing 5 cm above of the danger level and it will decrease from tomorrow, said Mahbubur Rahman, executive engineer of the WDB.

In Sirajganj, there is no sign of improvement in flood situation as the Jamuna is swelling again and its water level yesterday reached near danger level.

"The water level is increasing slowly. If it continues, the river will flow above danger level within next couple of days," said Milton Hossain, assistant engineer of WDB.

However in Gaibandha, water of the Brahmaputra at the Fulchari point was flowing 33 cm below of the danger level.

Mokhlesur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in Gaibandha, said, "Water will decrease slowly in next three days and the flood situation will improve quickly from next week."

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Pabna, Nilphamari and Manikganj contributed to this report.

99pc to stay back if given better jobs

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and more accessible health services (29 percent).

Almost half the respondents indicated they would not leave if they were supported to further their studies.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents were willing to migrate abroad because of lack of jobs and livelihood opportunities in the country.

The 11,415 potential migrants were categorised as "regular" or "irregular", based on whether they had registered with the government.

The report presented pre-Covid-19 dynamics and suggested that comprehensive analysis of the drivers found in the survey together with profiles of potential migrants can provide a baseline to understand migration in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Most of the respondents were male (89 percent) and their average age was 27, with 64 percent aged in their 20's.

Approximately half the respondents were married. Most respondents were of working age and had attained some level of education.

In terms of the highest education level attained by respondents, 41 percent finished middle school, 27 percent secondary education, 26 percent completed primary education, and 3 percent didn't enroll for any school.

Forty percent of the potential migrants were unemployed before deciding to migrate, and 90 percent reported no personal income or insufficient income.

The survey found that profiles of regular and irregular potential migrants are similar such as "they are of the same age and have

similar levels of education".

It said most Bangladeshi migrants intend to go to the Middle East or elsewhere in Asia, with Saudi Arabia being the most popular destination.

Only 1.4 percent of the respondents expressed interest in migrating to Europe and the Americas.

The report showed 85 percent potential migrants paid migration facilitators, including middlemen to support their migration.

The average amount a regular migrant paid was Tk 243,651 (\$2,871), and irregular migrant Tk 229,488 (\$2,705).

The largest amount paid was Tk 1.6 million (\$18,857).

Launching the report as chief guest, Ahmed Munir Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry, said labour migration is immensely important for the economic and social development of Bangladesh.

He said the new report provides a detailed understanding of the factors that shape international labour migration from Bangladesh and that it will help the government formulate better policies and practices.

This was the first time the IOM has completed a nationwide survey on potential migrants in Bangladesh, said Giorgi Gigauro, chief of the UN agency in the country.

"We anticipate that the findings from the report will initiate discussions on how to address the socioeconomic drivers of migration from Bangladesh and support high-level dialogue on the importance of investing in education and skills," he added.

Changes likely as transport

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two college students were killed by a bus on Airport Road in the capital on July 29 that year.

But the government did not put the law in effect until November last year.

The committee of three ministers was formed on February 17 last year at the 26th meeting of the National Road Safety Council.

Law Minister Anisul Huq is another member of the committee, which was supposed to submit its report in 14 work days. The committee has yet to give its report.

When the government took the initiative to enforce the law in November last year, transport associations called strikes demanding changes to several sections of the law.

The government then decided not to put in effect several sections of the act. For instance, the government decided not to penalise those who drive large vehicles with licences meant for light or medium vehicles until June this year. The deadline was extended for another year.

It also waived until December this year the fines for not renewing the driver's licences and vehicles' fitness documents on time. It also decided not to penalise illegal parking and modified vehicles.

YESTERDAY'S MEETING
Besides the three ministers, Shajahan Khan and Osman Ali, acting president and general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, and Mashur Rahman Ranga and Khondaker Enayet Ullah, president and secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, among others were present at the meeting.

Talking to The Daily Star after the meeting, Osman Ali said they have placed their proposals before the committee.

"The law would not be amended fully. But the amount of fine [mentioned in the act] is likely to be reduced. And some wordings of the act are expected to change," he said. "Actually, a portion of the act may be changed."

Khondaker Enayet Ullah said, "There are some errors in the act. Proposals have been made to amend those errors."

Abdul Malek, an additional secretary of the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, who was present at the meeting, said the committee has reviewed the entire act.

India sees record

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The US pharmaceutical firm will test its drug on 7,000 volunteers in Brazil, authorities said, part of a group of up to 60,000 worldwide.

South Africa, meanwhile, will launch clinical trials of a US-developed vaccine with 2,900 volunteers this week, the second such study in the African country worst hit by the disease.

However, the push for a vaccine has coincided with a rise in anti-vaccine sentiment that could hinder efforts to encourage widespread uptake.

NEW SPIKES

The WHO has said the planet's highest-risk populations must all be inoculated simultaneously or else it will be impossible to rebuild the global economy.

30 new species

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colonies of over one meter in width and, colourful sea fans that host a myriad of associated species," the archipelago's Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) said in a separate statement.

Scientists from the CDF, in collaboration with the National Park Directorate and the Ocean Exploration Trust, probed deep-sea ecosystems at depths of up to 3,400 metres using state-of-the-art Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs).

The two ROVs, Argus and Hercules, were operated from the 64-metre exploration vessel Nautilus, which carried out the deep-sea probe in 2015.

"The deep sea remains as earth's last frontier and this study provides a sneak-peek into the least known communities of the Galapagos Islands," said CDF marine scientist Pelayo Salinas de Leon, who led the study and announced its findings Monday.

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Vacancy Announcement



United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the following posts under Service Contract modality with the Enhancing Adaptive Capacities of Coastal Communities, Especially Women, to Cope with Climate Change Induced Salinity" (GCF) Project.

1. Gender Specialist (Service Contract, SB-4 Level), Re-advertisement
2. Water and Sanitation Expert (Service Contract, SB-4 Level)
3. Operations and Maintenance Officer (Service Contract, SB-3 Level)
4. ICT Officer (Service Contract, SB-3 Level)

The duration of the service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <https://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/jobs.html>. Applications should be received no later than **2 September 2020**.

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