



**DSCC MAYOR  
DEFIES  
DOGGED DOG  
LOVERS**  
SEE PAGE 3

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Your Right to Know

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**"With every day that passes, the chances of a timely agreement do start to fade."**  
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION URSULA VON DER LEYEN ON A POST-BREXIT DEAL WITH BRITAIN



**"Peace, security and stability will not be achieved in the region until the Israeli occupation ends."**  
PALESTINIAN LEADER MAHMOUD ABBAS PAGE 12



**"Some of the BNP Jamaat people are joining journalism ... They write on anything and think it is a report. They don't see the image of the government."**  
STATE MINISTER FOR PRIMARY AND MASS EDUCATION ZAKIR HOSSAIN PAGE 3

STUDENTS AMID CLOSURE

## Walled in by uncertainties

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Shabeeb has been having trouble concentrating on his studies for the last few days.

Stuck at home for six months, the fourth grader of a reputed private school in the capital has become bored and depressed. Ever since his school was closed on March 17 because of the Covid-19 outbreak, he has been missing his playful peers at school and that small playground.

"I don't feel good to be at home all the time. I want to go outside, but my parents don't let me; it's too boring. I feel sad and lonely even though I have support around me," said the 11-year-old boy from Mohammadpur.

Shabeeb attends online classes, but he hardly sits for an hour a day to study at home. He spends most of his time playing with toys and watching YouTube videos, said his father, Mahmud Reza.

"Like many other parents, we are anxious about our son's future if things go on like this," he said.

Parents of tens of thousands of students are concerned about the effects of the unprecedented length of school closures.

On March 17, the government closed the schools to contain the spread of coronavirus. The authorities have yet to decide when to reopen the

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- Schools closed on March 17, reopening still uncertain
- This year's JSC, PECE, equivalent exams cancelled
- HSC exams delayed by four and a half months
- School closure to increase dropout, child marriage
- Sessions jam looms over univs



**A shopkeeper in the capital's Karwanbazar taking an afternoon nap surrounded by piles and sacks of onion yesterday. The race to hoard onions has resulted in runaway prices of the essential spice in recent days. Repeated assurances by the government of having enough in stock have fallen on deaf ears.**

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



## Bangladesh economy relatively in good shape

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh's economy is more or less in a good shape now although the Covid-19 pandemic has dealt a severe blow to it like it has done to other countries in the world.

"We have announced our budget...don't know how long we can do it [for implementing the budget], but we have to make our preparations. If things go well, we will be able to fully achieve it. If it's not, then we will see...we won't

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## Long wait for jobs

Job seekers worried as recruitments stalled amid pandemic

SHARIFUL HASAN

Soon after completing her MBA from Dhaka University last year, Fahmida Khan started looking for jobs. Her first choice was a government job for which the recruitment takes place through BCS exams.

So, when the Public Service Commission published the circular of the 41st Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams in November last year, she applied. She also applied for posts of senior officer and officer at some state-owned banks, and is waiting for the recruitment tests to start.

But the wait has turned out to

be a lengthy one, as the recruitment process has been stalled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"A recruitment exam or a job is not just a matter for one person. It involves an entire family and the dreams of many. No one seems to understand the hardships faced by the youths after finishing their education," a frustrated Fahmida said.

Fahmida is one among thousands of government job seekers whose aspirations have been plunged into uncertainty in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The virus, first detected in the country on March 8, either slowed

down or entirely stopped the recruitment process, forcing the government to freeze its job postings and recruitment exams. This has led to a rise in vacancies in government jobs and jobseekers.

The PSC could not fix the date of the 41st BCS exams while large-scale recruitment for bank jobs have also been put on hold due to the outbreak. As a result, nearly 11 lakh jobseekers are currently enduring hardship, pinning their hopes on the commencement of recruitment tests soon.

PSC officials, however, said even though small recruitment tests have

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## Yoshihide Suga named new Japanese PM

Hasina congratulates

AGENCIES

Japan's Yoshihide

Suga was voted prime minister by parliament yesterday to become the country's first new leader in nearly eight years, appointing a new cabinet that kept about half of the familiar faces from predecessor Shinzo Abe's lineup.

Suga, 71, Abe's longtime right-hand man, has

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SPIRALING ONION PRICES

## Govt insists stock enough, but in vain

STAR REPORT

Repeated assurances of sufficient stock or the promise of importing onions from alternative destinations by top-level government officials could not rein in unbridled onion prices.

Driven by last years' bitter experience when the price per kg of onion shot up to Tk 250 to Tk 300, consumers have begun to stock onions, which creates volatile market conditions.

Yesterday, the local variety of onion was sold at Tk 100 to Tk 110 in the retail market while the imported variety was sold at

about Tk 80 and above.

Within a few hours of the announcement of the ban on onion export by India, the country saw an eccentric rise in onion prices. Many seasonal retailers were seen buying onions in bulk to cash in on the sudden price hike.

For instance, Mohsin Mia used to sell seasonal fruits in the capital's Karwan Bazar. He bought 120 kgs of onion. "It's price is getting high so I bought to make some extra profit," he told The Daily Star.

While buying five kg onions at Tk 500 at Jatrabari kitchen market, Akbar Ali, a

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➤ 11 lakh job seekers in limbo

➤ 5 lakh applied for 2,135 posts in 41st BCS exams

➤ No chance of BCS exams anytime soon

➤ BCS exams hinge on opening of educational institutions

➤ Recruitment exams for state-owned banks to start this month

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

## Collusion still key in winning

Says TIB about 4 major govt institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political influence, collusion between influential people, and syndication still play a key role in winning public procurement contracts from four government institutions despite the introduction of a simplified procurement process, says a report of Transparency International Bangladesh.

The four institutions are Local Government Engineering Department, Roads and Highways Division, Bangladesh Water Development Board, and Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board.

According to the report, the introduction of electronic government procurement (e-GP) system helped shift public procurement system from manual to technical. Besides, incidents like tender box snatching, preventing tender submission,

and blocking office premises also stopped following the launch of e-GP in 2011.

However, unscrupulous stakeholders have found new avenues of corruption, it added.

The graft watchdog launched the report titled "Governance in Public Procurement: Effectiveness of e-GP in Bangladesh" at a virtual press conference yesterday.

The TIB collected data from 52 offices of the four government institutions at different levels -- from upazila level to central level in Dhaka. The data was collected between July 2019 and February 2020.

These four important public offices had received about 20 percent of the country's Annual Development Programme budget in 2019-2020 fiscal.

The overall situation of these offices

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COVID-19 SITUATION

## 21 more die, 1,615 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The total number of Covid-19 deaths yesterday rose to 4,823 as 21 new deceased patients were added to the tally.

The death rate now stands at 1.41 percent, according to a press release by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In the list of country's with the highest Covid related casualties, Bangladesh has jumped up to 25th on Monday surpassing China, according to Johns Hopkins University.

In the past 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, 1,615 new people tested positive for coronavirus.

This was 12.09 percent

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# US wants Bangladesh to be its key Indo-Pacific partner

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US wants Bangladesh to be its key Indo-Pacific partner, considering it a development success story that also serves as a bridge for commerce and an anchor for regional stability, US officials have said.

“The United States and Bangladesh have a long, shared history of cooperation, and we continue to support a tolerant, democratic Bangladesh that serves as a bridge for commerce and an anchor for stability and prosperity in the region,” said Laura Stone, US deputy assistant secretary of state at the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

She said Bangladesh is strategically located at a crossroads between South and Southeast Asia, and plays an important role in the US Indo-Pacific vision. The country also has a good workforce, manufacture base and holds enormous potential for development.

“With a dynamic and, as you know, fast-growing economy in normal times, Bangladesh is a development success story. Future success will be fuelled by deepening its democratic institutions and governing structures,” Stone said at a special virtual press briefing on Tuesday night.

JoAnne Wagner, deputy chief of mission, US Embassy in Dhaka, also spoke at the briefing where they stressed that Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) principles are based on free navigation and trade, good governance, rule of law, transparency, and not to counter the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

They spoke of huge investment opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Bangladesh, in energy, infrastructure, supply chain and digital economy.

Stone said even during the pandemic, the US-Bangladesh relationship is growing, noting that US clothing giant Hanes is buying PPEs manufactured by Bangladeshi company Beximco.

Stating that the coronavirus pandemic has reinforced the common interest in working together with

Bangladesh and other partners for economic recovery, she said this is going to be a big focus as they go forward with Bangladesh.

The US is also ready to support the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and Bangladesh in South Asia’s regional integration and connectivity, she said.

Stone said the Asian Development Bank estimates that the Indo-Pacific region is going to need 26 trillion USD investment by 2030 in order to properly and appropriately develop its infrastructure, but no one country can provide such funding. So, the private sector has to play a very key role in that.

“Through the IPS, we are focused on helping the US private sector do what it does best, and that is sparking innovation, sparking growth, and sparking long-lasting prosperity. And here in Bangladesh we’ve launched a number of initiatives to accelerate private investment to help improve market access and open the investment environment.”

However, JoAnne Wagner said when companies see weak institutions, corruption or poor human rights conditions, they look elsewhere. Therefore, they are working very closely with Bangladesh to promote worker safety, legal aid organisations and vulnerable groups to improve legal services.

Asked how regional development and stability is possible without addressing the Rohingya crisis, Stone said the US is acutely aware of the need for a long-term, durable, sustainable solution to the crisis.

“The current situation is not one that can be allowed to perpetuate indefinitely. And so we are in communication with the governments involved to push forward a long-term, sustainable solution that does maintain the basic principles of the humanitarian relief, but also the need for a voluntary and safe return of the Rohingya to their place of origin.”

## Collusion still key in winning

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was “unsatisfactory” in terms of their institutional capacity, dealing with e-GP process, e-GP Management, and ensuring transparency, accountability and effectiveness, said the report.

Particularly, the situation was “worrisome” with regards to dealing with e-GP management and ensuring transparency, accountability and effectiveness, it said.

The e-GP portal of Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) was launched on June 2, 2011 to ensure transparency and efficiency in public procurement.

As many as 47 ministries, 27 divisions, 1,362 public agencies, and 61,417 tender bidders have got registered under the e-GP system as of April last year, said TIB.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the goal of introducing e-GP could have been achieved effectively if the political leaders stayed away from getting involved in public procurement.

The key challenge to implementing e-GP in the country is use of political influence and the problem needs to be addressed politically, he told the press conference.

Besides, there is collusion between local influential people and also there is a kind of syndicate, added Iftekharuzzaman.

The report said no officials of the procuring entities disclosed information on their assets to their high ups despite a law stipulates that they have to submit statements of assets to their senior officials in every five years.

The TIB study found that works of public procurement of the four government institutions were under control of local political leaders.

In some areas, political leaders, especially local lawmakers, decide who will submit tenders for a particular project, the report said.

It states that officials at some procurement offices take bribes for awarding contracts.

The study found collusion between contractors, political leaders and officials of offices concerned in some areas, selling or subcontracting contracts illegally, and securing contracts by using others’ certificates and licences.

Also, contractors were forced to pay extra money to political leaders in project areas, said the report.

It said there were some limitations in

## 21 more die

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of a total of 13,360 tests in the same 24 hours, while the overall positivity rate stands at 19.36 percent.

With the new cases, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 3,42,671 – the 15th highest number of confirmed cases in the world, according to the reference website worldometers.info.

As 2,375 people were added to the recovery list in those 24 hours, the total number of recoveries rose to 2,47,969.

This is more than 72 percent of all confirmed cases, according to the DGHS.

Five of the dead yesterday were female and 16 were male. One of them died at home while the other died in different hospitals.

The ages of the dead ranged from 21 to over 60, with more than half of them being older end of the scale, according to the DGHS.

Of the dead, 10 were from Dhaka, four from Khulna, five from Chattogram and one each from from Sylhet and Rajshahi divisions.

As of yesterday noon, 3,110 Covid-19 patients were undergoing treatment in general wards and 301 were in ICUs of Covid-19 designated hospitals across the country.

## Bangladesh economy

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step back. We have placed our budget to keep our economy moving,” she said.

The premier was addressing a meeting of the Awami League presidium members at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

Hasina said Bangladeshi expatriates were facing some difficulties due to the Covid-19 and some of them had to return home.

She said many expressed fear that inflow of remittances would experience a setback during the pandemic, but it showed the opposite trend.

“Our remittance inflow has increased. It’s now \$39.4 billion. We are giving two percent special incentive for sending remittance...and our foreign currency reserve is now in a good shape as well.”

In the national budget, Hasina said, the government fixed its deficit at 6 percent. In the last few years, the budget deficit was fixed at five percent. “We would have made it 10 percent had it been needed. But it was not required”

From the very beginning of this crisis, the government wanted to keep the

country’s economy moving facing all the challenges, the PM said, adding that the government also declared stimulus packages for keeping the trade and commerce operative on a limited scale.

Apart from the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has to face some other natural calamities, she said. “We have been able to face these challenges due to some timely and effective measures.”

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said efforts of the government and her party are aimed at serving the people of the country.

She thanked the leaders and activists of the AL, Jubo League, Chhatra League and Krishak League, government officials and members of law enforcement agencies for their all-out efforts for helping people during this crisis period.

About suspending all celebration programmes marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the premier said the safety and lives of people come first and that is why the government is holding events virtually.



Teachers of non-government primary schools demonstrating in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding that every primary school in the country be nationalised.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Walled in by uncertainties

FROM PAGE 1

educational institutions. The long closure has led to the cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray.

Probably most importantly, the closure drastically changed the daily lives of thousands of students. It also put considerable psychological effect on them.

Azizur Rahman, an honorary professor at Dhaka University’s psychology department, said, “Due to the closure, many of the students are feeling suffocated, which is stressing them out.

“These students have become restless, uncontrollable, reactive and cannot concentrate on anything... This will negatively affect their mental and physical development,” he said, adding that many of these children might not be able to forget the miserable memories.

Parents are also faced with the challenge of having to take care of the children at home all the time and manage their work.

### LOSS OF LEARNING

School is not just for learning lessons, it is a source of social activities and human interaction, said educationists.

The learning gap will have long-term effects on children’s future education, they added.

When schools are closed, many children and youth miss out on social contact that is essential to learning and development, according to UNESCO.

Despite the shutdown, schooling hasn’t stopped completely. The school authorities, teachers and parents are working hard to impart lessons online, but the efforts are not likely to provide anything close to the quality of education delivered in classrooms, experts said.

The students in urban areas have access to learning through the internet, but the digital divide has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for the underprivileged learners as they face the prospect of dropping out, they added.

The annual school contact hours

in Bangladesh has mostly been lower than the global average. But the shutdown has brought the contact hours further down.

Primary students lost between 320 and 680 school contact hours in the last six months and learning time at secondary schools also came down as they lost 109 days of class activities.

The international annual average of school contact hours is around 1,000.

“The students are being subjected to a learning gap as the government efforts to cover the loss through TV and internet falls short of meeting the need,” said Prof Siddiqur Rahman, former director of the Institute of Education and Research at DU.

“These interim efforts are not likely to provide the quality of education that’s delivered in classrooms. The students can hardly ask questions or participate in the classes.”

While the precise learning losses are not known yet, existing research findings suggest that the students in grades 1-12 affected by the closures might expect about 3 percent lower income over their entire lifetimes, according to study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

For nations, the lower long-term growth related to such losses might yield an average of 1.5 percent lower annual GDP for the century, said the study.

As of today, students of grade I and II of double-shift primary schools lost around 325 school contact hours due to the shutdown, according to data from the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE).

Students of grade III, IV and V of the same types of schools lost 362 contact hours.

The secondary students are supposed to attend classes on about 228 days a year.

But many secondary institutions are used as centres for public examinations. Students of these institutions lose classroom learning in about 47 days as a result, said Belal Hossain, director of Directorate of

Secondary and Higher Education.

“We cannot exactly say how many contact hours a secondary student lost. But they attend schools for five hours a day,” he said.

Teachers said that on an average, a student attends five to six classes a day. Duration of each class is 50 minutes. So, the students’ learning time at school is just over 4 hours a day.

After the school closure, the government started TV education through Sangsad TV for secondary and primary students.

But according to the government’s Covid-19 Response Plan for the Education Sector, only 44 percent of the children aged between 5 and 11 in rural areas have a TV at home. In urban areas, it is 75 percent.

“This interim arrangement only partially fulfills the objective as many underprivileged and poor people do not have access to a TV and internet,” said Prof Siddiqur Rahman.

Senior Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain of primary and mass education ministry said various steps have been taken to lessen the learning gap.

The ministry will study 20,000 schools to assess how much learning gap was created. “We will have a special plan to cover the gaps,” he added.

DSHE Director General Prof Md Syed Golam Faruk said students who do not have access to digital devices and internet connections will suffer more losses.

The government is uploading all digital content at a platform so that students can take a look whenever they need, he said.

Education of university students across the country has also been affected due to the pandemic.

Many students are fearing session jams if the situation continues for a few more months.

The pandemic also left many teachers with reduced or no income. A number of schools, including the unregistered kindergartens, have faced closure, forcing many teachers to move to other professions.

tests one by one.

“The tests will start on September 18 and will continue one after another. At first, there will be exams with fewer candidates and then tests for more candidates,” he told The Daily Star.

He said they want to take all the recruitment tests for nearly 5,000 posts this year.

“Therefore, the candidates will get jobs and the manpower crisis of the banks will also be resolved,” Arif Hossain noted.

Besides, they have also asked for the number of new vacancies in all state-owned banks in 2019.

“Once we get it, new circulars will be issued.”

### ‘A HUGE TASK’

Jobs recruited through the BCS exams are the first choice of youths. Since various non-cadre posts are also filled up from the waiting list of a BCS exam, interest for the civil service is increasing day by day.

For the 41st BCS examinations, a record number of 4.75 lakh applied after the PSC issued the circular of this BCS on November 26 last year.

PSC Chairman Mohammad Sadiq said hundreds of educational institutions in eight divisions will be required to hold the BCS exams and accommodate this volume of candidates.

“This is a huge task,” he told The Daily Star.

Since educational institutions are closed, it is not possible to take the BCS exams unless those are opened and adequate preparation is taken, he said.

The PSC Chairman also said a few exams for non-cadre posts have been started. Besides, the viva-voce for different exams is also taking place on a small scale.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

## Govt insists stock

FROM PAGE 1

banker, said he usually buys three kgs for his family. “Since the price is shooting up. I’ve bought 5-kg before it rises further,” he added.

About government’s claim of enough stock, he said, “They had said many things last year too but their promises could not stop the market from getting worse.”

### YEARLY ONION PRODUCTION AND DEMAND

Officials said the total yearly demand for onion in Bangladesh is 25 lakh tonnes and the country’s production was 25.57 lakh tonnes last year.

However, since onion is perishable, some 25 percent gets damaged. So, the actual consumable quantity of onion is 19.11 lakh tonnes in the country, they said, adding that the deficit of more than six lakh tonnes is imported to meet the demand. Of the deficit quantity, 90 percent is imported from India, they added.

An official of the Department of Agriculture Extension said last year about 6.45 lakh tonnes of onion were produced in Pabna. “Over 70,000 tonnes are now in stock,” he said, adding that farmers have already started cultivating onion bulbs.

“It will hit market about two months later. I don’t think there will be any shortage,” he said.

In July and August this year, some 1.84 lakh tonnes of onion were imported and there was local stock in major onion growing areas like Faridpur, Pabna, Naogaon and Rajshahi.

Seasonal businessmen are trying to take advantage of the situation, which has created the problem, said Narayan Saha, a wholesaler of Shyambazar. He suggested the authorities monitor the stock at root level.

At a press conference in secretariat yesterday, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi claimed that the current stock of onion in the markets is five lakh tonnes. So, there should not be any crisis now, the minister said.

Saying that his ministry was not aware about the sudden halt of onion import from India, he once again said there is nothing to be panicked about because of an adequate stock and supply of onions in the local markets.

“We will import onions from alternative markets like Turkey and Egypt like last year to reduce the prices,” the minister told the journalists.

“Nevertheless, I talked with Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das about the sudden suspension of onion export by India. The Indian High Commissioner assured me that a good number of onion-laden trucks will enter Bangladesh within a day or two,” Munshi said at a jam-packed room of journalists while facing a barrage of questions from newsmen.

He suggested the consumers be patient for a month so that an adequate quantity of onion is imported to be sold in the domestic markets.

This year too, some domestic business conglomerates like City Group, Meghna Group and S Alam Group might also be engaged in importing onion in a hurried manner to ensure quick supply in the markets.

The Department of National Consumers Right Protection has fined 107 business to the tune of nearly Tk 10 lakh on Tuesday as they were selling onions at higher prices.

“We can punish the traders. But it is also true that if we go tough on them, they will make the onions vanish from the markets,” the commerce minister said.

The state-owned Trading Corporation of Bangladesh has already opened a Letter of Credit to import a few hundred tonnes of onion from alternative countries. Munshi also said the TCB will import one lakh tonnes of onion to address the crisis up to March next year.

The TCB will import the onion through direct purchasing method because the conventional tendering method takes a lot of time. Last year, the TCB imported nearly 12,000 tonnes of onion on its own, he said adding that this year TCB has been empowered to import greater quantities of onion for the local markets. The ministry will also use e-commerce platforms to sell 12,000 tonnes of onion, he said.

Replying to a question, Munshi said Bangladesh asked the Indian government about why onion export to Bangladesh was stopped all of a sudden.

In another development, Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal yesterday said the government was considering a proposal on lowering tax on onion import.

He made the comment while talking to reporters after a meeting of National Purchase Committee.

Recently, the commerce ministry sent a proposal on lifting taxes on onion import to the finance ministry.

### PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS UNDERMINED

India’s sudden ban on onion exports has undermined the earlier discussions regarding such restrictions over essential food items, Dhaka said in a letter to Delhi on Tuesday, as price of the spice skyrocketed immediately after Delhi’s announcement a day before.

“The latest abrupt announcement of the government of India on September 14, 2020 undermines the discussion that took place in 2019 and 2020 between the two friendly countries on the matter and the understanding shared,” said the letter.

The letter issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed deep concern at the sudden announcement of the amendment in India’s export policy of onion that directly impact the supply chain of the essential food items in Bangladesh market.

It referred the India-Bangladesh commerce secretary level meeting in January this year where the Bangladesh side requested the Indian side to consider not imposing export restrictions on essential food items required by Bangladesh.

The letter also said in case of any event that necessitated such restrictions, India was requested to inform the Bangladesh side ahead of time.

The matter was also raised by Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh during the VVIP visit in October 2019, wherein the Bangladesh side requested Indian side to inform in advance about such measures being taken,” said the foreign ministry letter.







## Where to

FROM PAGE 3  
Diane Cook's debut, *New Wilderness*, tells the story of a family in the wake of intense upheaval wrought by climate crisis. Acclaimed Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga's third novel, *This Mournable Body*, is about a young girl's struggle for survival in a nation coming apart at the seams.  
Avni Doshi's debut, *Burnt Sugar*, portrays a tense yet intimate mother-daughter relationship at the onset of mental decline. Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* brings forward an Ethiopian story of the Second World War, which was also recently acquired for a movie adaptation.

Debut author Brandon Taylor's *Real Life* highlights the struggles of race and sexuality in America, among other things, in context of a university-centred life. Douglas Stuart's debut novel, *Shuggie Bain*, is a glimpse into working-class Scotland and the human desires for glamour and luxury during the 1980s.  
Considered the UK's most prestigious literary award for English novels, the 2020 Booker winner will be announced on November 17 with a prize of £50,000. Shortlist nominees will receive £2,500 each.

## Onion price

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“We got 300kg onions from TCB. We can't keep up with the demand, so we've decided to limit each purchase to one kg,” said Md Shohag, manager of a dealer who sells through a mobile truck at Kachukhet.  
“I spent over one hour just to find out the location of the truck (at Kachukhet), but now I'm told I can buy only one kg of onion,” said a frustrated Md Sharok of Boubazar

## Not 500

FROM PAGE 3  
they proposed for sending 500 officials abroad taking one official each from 509 upazilas.  
“But the planning commission after a Project Evaluation Committee meeting proposed for sending two teams abroad,” said Akram, while speaking with reporters at secretariat yesterday.  
He said that each team can be consisted with 10 to 15 officials.  
Akram said his ministry can even drop the idea of sending officials abroad. “We made a draft proposal, and it is yet to be passed by Ecneq, where everything will be scrutinised,” he added.  
He made the comments when the primary and mass education ministry is facing massive criticism on social media over sending officials abroad for the project.

area of Mirpur's Shewrapara.  
Initially, there was an instruction to provide 2kg per person, but the authorities concerned have asked them to limit it to one kg, said Shohag.  
Shohag said customers have almost doubled ever since India's announcement of banning onion export to Bangladesh broke.  
Mohammad Sajal, in-charge of a truck at Abdul Gani Road, said many people had to return empty

handed over the last two days as his truck ran out of stock.

**PRICES STILL HIGH**  
During a visit at four kitchen markets -- Dhupkhola, Kachukhet, Ibrahimpur and Shewrapara -- this newspaper found that local onions were selling at Tk 80 to Tk 100 per kg, while Indian ones went at Tk 65 to Tk 80.

People at markets were still panic-buying the item till yesterday afternoon, fearing further price hike.

Manager of Messers Udayan Banijjalay in Kachukhet wholesale market said they are selling local onion at Tk 82 to Tk 84 while Indian ones went at Tk 66.  
“Many customers are purchasing onions by the sacks, weighing 50 to 67kg. They said they are doing this out of precaution of further price hike,” he said.

These kinds of panicked buying is the main cause of increasing price of onions, he added.

## DSCC mayor

FROM PAGE 3  
people's safety, not dogs'. They [DSCC] cannot bring the dog population down to zero. I don't know what they are trying to do.”  
This correspondent also spoke to several shopkeepers at Dhanmondi Lake area about it, who said the dogs had friendly relations with parkgoers, and were not aggressive or dangerous.

**A STONEWALLING TAPOSH AND A REFUTABLE LEGAL JUSTIFICATION**  
On Tuesday, this correspondent called and texted the mayor, his personal secretary, assistant personal secretary and personal assistant multiple times, requesting a quote from the mayor about it, only to be redirected to DSCC's public relations officer.

Contacted, PRO Abu Nasher first said he is not aware of any official order about this, and that they were at a primary stage of deciding what to do regarding the mayor's “desire” to remove dogs from DSCC, based on complaints from people.

Later in the day, he contacted The Daily Star and said he talked to the mayor about it, but the comment on record would have to be from him as the mayor would not speak about it at the time.

“Yes, we are removing dogs, giving importance to people's appeal. The clause of Animal Welfare Act that prohibits relocation of animals [Clause 7] applies to persons or organisations, but as per the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009, the clauses 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, and 15.10 of the 3rd Tafsil, clause 51 of the 5th Tafsil and clause 18 of the 7th Tafsil, the city corporation can relocate or even cull them.”

Dog culling is prohibited across the country as per a 2013 High Court order.

Asked about the legal provision, noted public interest litigant Advocate Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star, “If the most recent law, in this case the Animal Welfare Act, has an overriding clause above previous laws, then it will have precedence over any prior law. If the clause is there, then the city corporation does not have any separate jurisdiction.”

Clause 3 of the Animal Welfare Act indeed states clauses of the law will have precedence over contradiction in any other law currently in place.

## Cox's Bazar SP, 5 others

FROM PAGE 12  
Later, Sinha's sister Sharmin Shahriar Ferdous, plaintiff of the murder case, appealed to the court to make Masud an accused in the case.  
But Judge Tamanna Farah of Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-4 in Cox's Bazar rejected the appeal.  
On August 31, the home ministry in a circular transferred the Chattogram Range deputy inspector general of police and the Chattogram Metropolitan Police commissioner.  
Besides, a number of officials, who used to work closely with Pradeep, had also been transferred from Teknaf Police Station earlier.  
In the home ministry yesterday's order, Khandaker Lutful Kabir, commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, was transferred to Gazipur Metropolitan Police as commissioner, while Deputy Inspector General of Police Masudur Rahman Bhuiyan of the Special Branch would fill his position in Khulna.  
Meanwhile, Muntasirul Islam, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, was made the SP of Jhenidah police.  
And Md Shahidullah, SP of Rajshahi district police, was transferred to DMP as DC.

## Neo-JMB leader confesses

FROM PAGE 12  
Azampur area of the capital's Uttara. They were, however, arrested for their alleged involvement in the Paltan blast incident on July 24.  
The arrestees were Mamun Al Mujahid alias Mamun alias Sumon alias Abdur Rahman, Al Amin alias Abu Jihad, Mujahidul Islam alias Rokon alias Abu Tarik and Sarowar Hossain Rahat. The fifth murder suspect is still on the run.  
Though Naimuzzaman confessed to the killing and gave a vivid narratives of how Sohail was killed, a CTC official wishing anonymity said since Sohail's body could not be recovered yet, his family was asked to file an abduction case.  
On Tuesday, Sohail's younger brother Saiful Islam Jewel filed the case against unknown persons with Sreepur Police Station in Gazipur.  
The case statement said that around 8:00pm on July 30, Sohail, who was a follower of Maizbhandari Sufi Order, called his father Abul Kashem over phone and said he would visit home on the day of or day after Eid-ul Adha.  
As he did not show up, they tried to contact him and found his phone switched off, he said, adding that they searched for his brother at every possible place but found no trace.  
Jewel said he thinks his brother was abducted sometime after he made the last phone call to his father. Asked, he said the photo uploaded on the SITE Intelligence website was his brother's.  
**HOW SOHAIL WAS MURDERED**  
According to the confessional statement, now arrested Sumon first received a message through an encrypted app with instructions of an “operation”.  
They assigned a local to request Sohail to provide ayurvedic treatment to an ailing person. At 10:00pm, the local took Sohail to a secluded brick field where the trio was waiting, said a CTC official quoting the statement.  
Sumon first gave Sohail a drink mixed with sedatives. When he refused the drink, the three tied his hands and legs and took him to an isolate spot. Sumon hacked Sohail to death with the assistance of Rokon while Al Amin videotaped, the official said.  
Another member Rahat then brought a boat and the killers boarded it with Sohail's body, tied a 30kg stone to the body and dumped it in the Sitalakhya.

## Election

FROM PAGE 12  
colleagues and Awami Ligue leaders, witnessed the speech of the chief election commissioner on television. Soon after the speech comes to an end, Bangabandhu remarks, “My election preparation starts today.”  
**APPEAL TO INDIANS**  
Bangladesh Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed today makes a fervent appeal to the people of India not to be confused by the activities of a handful of criminal elements in Bangladesh, acting as agent provocateurs of some foreign powers. Addressing newsmen at Dum Dum airport before leaving for Delhi on his way to London, the minister says that the vast majority of people in Bangladesh who fondly cherish the friendship of India and have a sense of amity with the Indian people will never allow these elements to drive a wedge between the two countries.  
**SOURCES:** September 18, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

## World's

FROM PAGE 12  
between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres and four hours can be saved,” said KP Purushothaman.  
Fire hydrants have also been installed inside the tunnel in case of any fire incident.  
“The induction and de-induction of resources was a difficult task while it was under construction. We did face a lot of challenges but together we were able to complete its construction. The tunnel's width is 10.5 metres, including footpath of 1 metre on both sides,” said KP Purushothaman.

## UAE

FROM PAGE 12  
the region until the Israeli occupation ends,” he said in a statement after the signing of the deals, condemned by the Palestinians as a “betrayal” of their cause.

## Court sets Sept 30

FROM PAGE 12  
On the other hand, the court kept Rifat's wife Ayesha Siddique Minni in the custody of her nominated lawyer.  
Minni was handed over to lawyer Mahbubul Bari Aslam by the same court after her bail expired yesterday.  
According to the court, after hearing the testimonies of 76 witnesses against 10 adult accused in the case, the court testified on behalf of one of the accused.  
The concerned lawyers then presented arguments in the court for and against all the accused.  
Meanwhile, Ayesha Siddique Minni appeared in the court with her father Mozammel Hossain Kishore around 9:00am due to the due date of the case.  
Eight adult accused in the case were also produced before the court.  
Rifat was killed in front of Barguna Government College on June 26 last year. On September 1 of that year, 24 people were charged of whom 10 were adults and 14 juveniles.  
On January 1, the Barguna District and Sessions Judge's Court framed charges against 10 adult accused in the case.  
The court then started taking testimonies against 10 adult accused from January 8. A total of 76 witnesses have testified in the case.  
The adult accused in the Rifat murder case are Rakibul Hasan Rifat Faraji, Al Qaiyum alias Rabbi Akon, Mohaiminul Islam Sifat, Rezwan Ali Khan Hridoy alias Tiktak Hridoy, Md Hasan, Md Musa, Ayesha Siddique Minni, Rafiul Islam Rabbi, Md Sagar and Kamrul Islam Simon.

## Police hush hush about

FROM PAGE 12  
of the case, recorded the statements.  
Contacted, none of the police officials in the district shared what the witnesses recorded in their testimonies.  
This correspondent also visited the court but Raihan, an assistant to General Registrar Officer (GRO) of Dinaipur court, said he was asked not to give any information of the witnesses.  
The Deputy Commissioner of Dinaipur also remained tight lip over the issue.  
Such secretive attitudes of the authorities have been noticed ever since the arrest of Rabiul Islam, 30, suspended staffer of Ghoraghat Upazila Parishad.  
According to sources, Rabiul was a staff of Nejarat Department of Dinaipur DC office.  
Ashraful Islam, acting Nejarat of Dinaipur DC office, said Rabiul was sacked a long ago. He also denied to give any further detail.  
Rabiul, however, visited the DC office on Wednesday and Thursday, said sources.  
Mahmudul Alam, DC of Dinaipur, could not be reached after repeated attempts over phone.  
The case was handed over to the DB in Dinaipur a day after Rab said Asadul Haq, Nabirul Islam and Santu Biswas were involved in the attack on the UNO.  
After getting the charge, DB police took three persons, including Asadul Haq, a leader of ruling AL, in remand but sent them to jail without recording their statements.  
At 1:10am on Thursday [September 10], police picked up Rabiul from his home at Dhamahar village in Biral Upazila of Dinaipur.  
Rabiul was a suspended gardener of UNO office in Ghoraghat Upazila of Dinaipur. The distance between Rabiul's home and Ghoraghat UNO office is around 110km.  
Rabiul's elder brother Azizar Rahamn claimed police took away Rabiudul Islam, his wife Sabera Aktar and his brother Mohsin Ali.

Taking them somewhere, police forced them to admit that Rabiul attacked the UNO. Police were also looking for a red shirt at the Rabiudul's home.  
Later, the police took away four shirts and four trousers of Rabiudul from home.  
Besides, they took away two hammers from the house of Siddik Ali, father-in-law of Rabiul, who is a shallow machine repairman.  
Rabiudul's mother Rahima Khatun said he was at home on the day of the attack.  
Meanwhile, at a press briefing, Debdas Bhatyachariya, the DIG of Rangpur Range police, also claimed that Rabiul admitted attacking the UNO.  
He, however, did not give enough information at the briefing held at SP office on September 12.  
Rezaur Rahman Rezu cultural activists of Dinaipur said that the investigation of Rab was on the right way.  
“It is clear to everybody that police are making Rabiul as a scapegoat to save the criminal who executed the attack on the UNO.”

On the other hand, Abdul Wahab Bhuiyan the Divisional Commissioner of Rangpur formed a three-member committee to investigate the reason behind the attack on the UNO.  
Zakir Hossain, the additional divisional commissioner, was the head of the body.  
It has been almost 15 days of the incident, the findings of the committee is yet to be disclosed.  
This correspondent could not reach Zakir Hossain over phone after repeated attempts.  
Even the Divisional Commissioner was also not receiving phone calls.

## Fortify Rights wants release

FROM PAGE 12  
transnational criminal syndicates trafficked at least 170,000 people, mostly Rohingya, from Myanmar and Bangladesh to Malaysia, generating an estimated \$50 million to \$100 million annually.  
On February 28 last year, Malaysian authorities announced the creation of the RCI to investigate and ensure accountability for the human trafficking and mass graves discovered in Wang Kelian. The government gave the commission six months to submit its final report and recommendations.  
Former Malaysian chief justice Tun Arifin Zakaria led the seven-member RCI, which included former inspector general of police Tan Sri Norian Mai and other former government and elected officials. The RCI called 48 witnesses, including police members and Rohingya survivors, during 17 days of hearings in Kuala Lumpur.  
In January this year, former Malaysian home minister and current Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced the ministry would present the report to the cabinet in a week and if the cabinet agrees, they will allow the report to be made public.  
There has been no further information about the report following this announcement.  
In March last year, the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) and Fortify Rights published a report following a multi-year investigation, which indicated complicity and direct involvement of state authorities in the transnational trade of Rohingya refugees, including in Malaysia.  
“he RCI was mandated to help bring perpetrators to justice, and that hasn't happened, said Smith. “The government must act. There have been no changes in policy and not even a formal public reckoning of the crimes committed.”

Following a similar discovery of mass graves in Thailand in 2015, Thai courts in 2017 convicted 62 defendants, including nine Thai government officials, for crimes related to the trafficking of Rohingya and Bangladeshis to Malaysia via Thailand.  
Since 2015, Malaysian courts have only convicted four people of trafficking-related offenses in relation to the mass graves discovered at Wang Kelian. None of the convicted traffickers are Malaysian nationals.

The US government currently ranked Malaysia a “Tier-2 Watchlist” country, its second lowest ranking, in the Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report.  
The 2020 TIP report says, “Despite allegations of official complicity in migrant smuggling and trafficking crimes in relation to the 2015 discovery of migrant camps and mass graves in Wang Kelian, containing bodies of suspected Rohingya and Bangladeshi victims of extortion, torture, and other crimes, authorities have not brought charges against any Malaysian official or private citizen.”

## Pandemic at beginning

FROM PAGE 12  
virus, demand for oxygen has more than tripled, doctors and government officials said, prompting urgent calls for help.  
“Desperate patients have been calling me through the night but I don't know when I will get stock,” Rishikhesh Patil, an oxygen supplier in the western city of Nashik, told Reuters.  
The health ministry reported 90,123 new infections yesterday, taking the total caseload to 5.02 million. The death toll from Covid-19 is now at 82,066, the ministry said, with 1,290 fatalities recorded in the previous 24 hours.

<div><div><b>বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক</b> চট্টগ্রাম Website: <a href="http://www.bb.org.bd">www.bb.org.bd</a> <b>Invitation for Tender Through Web</b> <b>Corrigendum</b></div><div></div></div>	
কাজের নামঃ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, চট্টগ্রাম অফিসের ব্যাংক ভবন, আব্বাবাদস্থ কর্মচারী নিবাস এবং নাসিরাবাদস্থ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক হিউম্যান রিসোর্স এন্ড ম্যানেজমেন্ট ডেভেলপমেন্ট ইনস্টিটিউট এর পরিকার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা কাজ।	
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির সূত্রঃ ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২০-২২৩৯, তারিখঃ ০৮/০৯/২০২০	
E-tender Reference: CTG-Admin/Welfare-65/2020-4504, তারিখঃ ০৭/০৯/২০২০	
সূত্রোক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে দরপত্রদাতার ন্যূনতম ব্যোপ্যতা শর্ত নিম্নরূপভাবে সংশোধন করা হলঃ	
<b>০৯/০৯/২০২০ তারিখে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে ব্যোপ্যতা</b>	<b>সংশোধিত ব্যোপ্যতা</b>
বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, চট্টগ্রাম অফিসের নতুন ও পুরাতন অফিস ভবন (সকল এনেঞ্জ ভবন, সংলগ্ন অগ্নিনাসমূহ, লিংক রোড ও বাবতীয় স্থাপনাসহ), চট্টগ্রামের আব্বাবাদস্থ কর্মচারী নিবাসের সকল ভবনের সিঁড়ি, রাস্তা, ড্রেন, ডাস্টবিন, সূর্য্যরেজ লাইন, মসজিদের বাধরুম/অজুখানাসহ বহিরাঙ্গন ও স্কাউট ড্রেনের সম্মুখস্থ অগ্নিনাসমূহ এবং নাসিরাবাদস্থ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক হিউম্যান রিসোর্স এন্ড ম্যানেজমেন্ট ডেভেলপমেন্ট ইনস্টিটিউট (সকল এনেঞ্জ ভবন, সংলগ্ন অগ্নিনাসমূহ, লিংক রোড ও বাবতীয় স্থাপনাসহ) এর পরিকার-পরিচ্ছন্নতার কাজ সম্পাদনের জন্য ০৩ (তিন) বছর মেয়াদে ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে আয়কর ও ভাট নিবন্ধিত লাইসেন্সধারী ও ন্যূনতম ৩০ লক্ষ টাকা তরল সম্পদের অধিকারী দেশীয় ক্রিনিং ঠিকাদার যাদের বিভিন্ন সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়তশাসিত সংস্থা/হাসপাতালের অধীনে ন্যূনতম ৫ (পাঁচ) বছর এবং বিগত ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে কর্মপক্ষে ২ (দুই) বছর অন্তত একটি চুক্তিতে একক কার্যাদেশের আওতায় ন্যূনতম ৩০ (ত্রিশ) জন ক্রিনিং কর্মী নিযুক্ত করে মাসিক মোট ৬৫,০০,০০০/০০ (টাকা পঁচাত্তর লাখ মাত্র) এর ক্রিনিং কাজ সম্ভাষণকভাবে সম্পাদনের অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে তাদের নিকট হতে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইট <a href="http://www.bb.org.bd">www.bb.org.bd</a> এ ই-টেন্ডারিং পদ্ধতিতে অনলাইনে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।	বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, চট্টগ্রাম অফিসের নতুন ও পুরাতন অফিস ভবন (সকল এনেঞ্জ ভবন, সংলগ্ন অগ্নিনাসমূহ, লিংক রোড ও বাবতীয় স্থাপনাসহ), চট্টগ্রামের আব্বাবাদস্থ কর্মচারী নিবাসের সকল ভবনের সিঁড়ি, রাস্তা, ড্রেন, ডাস্টবিন, সূর্য্যরেজ লাইন, মসজিদের বাধরুম/অজুখানাসহ বহিরাঙ্গন ও স্কাউট ড্রেনের সম্মুখস্থ অগ্নিনাসমূহ এবং নাসিরাবাদস্থ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক হিউম্যান রিসোর্স এন্ড ম্যানেজমেন্ট ডেভেলপমেন্ট ইনস্টিটিউট (সকল এনেঞ্জ ভবন, সংলগ্ন অগ্নিনাসমূহ, লিংক রোড ও বাবতীয় স্থাপনাসহ) এর পরিকার-পরিচ্ছন্নতার কাজ সম্পাদনের জন্য ০৩ (তিন) বছর মেয়াদে ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে আয়কর ও ভাট নিবন্ধিত লাইসেন্সধারী ও ন্যূনতম ৩০ লক্ষ টাকা তরল সম্পদের অধিকারী দেশীয় ক্রিনিং ঠিকাদার যাদের বিভিন্ন সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়তশাসিত সংস্থা/হাসপাতালের অধীনে ন্যূনতম ৫ (পাঁচ) বছর এবং বিগত ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে কর্মপক্ষে ২ (দুই) বছর অন্তত একটি চুক্তিতে একক কার্যাদেশের আওতায় ন্যূনতম ৮০ (আশি) জন ক্রিনিং কর্মী নিযুক্ত করে মাসিক মোট ৮০,০০,০০০/০০ (টাকা দশ লক্ষ মাত্র) এর ক্রিনিং কাজ সম্ভাষণকভাবে সম্পাদনের অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে তাদের নিকট হতে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইট <a href="http://www.bb.org.bd">www.bb.org.bd</a> এ ই-টেন্ডারিং পদ্ধতিতে অনলাইনে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।
একইসাথে, ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশিত ই-টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তিতেও প্রয়োজনীয় সংশোধনী আনয়ন করা হল।	
দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।	
তারিখঃ ১৫/০৯/২০২০	
ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২০-২৩৭২	
তাং-১৬/০৯/২০২০	
স্বাক্ষরিত/-	
এ, বি, এম, জহুরুল হুদা মহাব্যবস্থাপক	
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# US wildfires' smoke reaches Europe

UN says world lost 100m hectares of forests in two decades

AFP, Paris

Smoke from the fires devastating swathes of the US West Coast has reached as far as Europe, the European Union's climate monitoring service said yesterday in its assessment of the "unprecedented" blazes.

Satellite data from the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) showed that the wildfires currently raging across California, Oregon and Washington State are "tens to hundreds of times more intense" than the recent average.

Thanks to strong pressure systems, the smoke from the fires was trapped along the western part of North America for days, making for potentially dangerous air quality in major cities such as Portland, Oregon and Vancouver and San Francisco.

But the weather shifted on Monday, carrying the smoke east along the jet stream. CAMS said that it had tracked the long-range transport of smoke particles from the fires as far as 8,000 kilometres to the east -- reaching northern Europe.

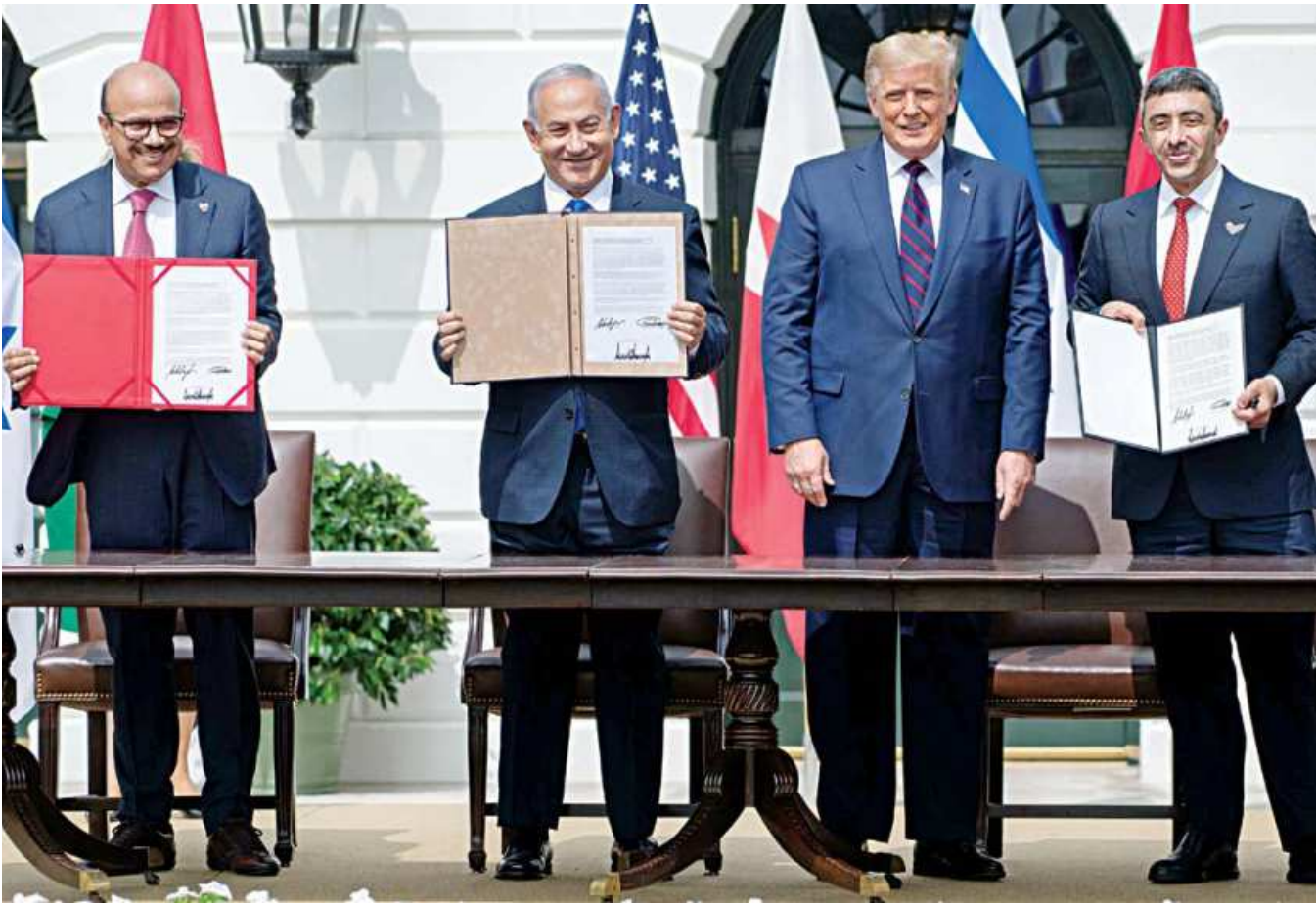
It estimated that the blazes have spewed out more than 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide since mid-August.

The blazes have already burned nearly five million acres across the US West with fears the death toll of 35 may rise.

The disaster has brought the issue of global warming to the forefront of US political discourse a matter of weeks ahead of the presidential election.

Meanwhile, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Tuesday reported that the world had lost nearly 100 million hectares of forests in two decades, marking a steady decline though at a slower pace than before.

The proportion of forest to total land area fell from 31.9 percent in 2000 to 31.2 percent in 2020, now some 4.1 billion hectares, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.



(From left to right) Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump, and UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan hold up documents after participating in the signing of the Abraham Accords where the countries of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates recognize Israel, at the White House in Washington, DC, on Tuesday. The deals, denounced by the Palestinians, make them the third and fourth Arab states to take such steps toward normalizing relations since Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. PHOTO: AFP

# Babri mosque demolition case verdict on Sept 30

Advani among 32 accused asked to be present

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A special Indian court will deliver the judgment on September 30 in the Babri Masjid demolition case, ruling whether Bharatiya Janata Party veterans like L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi were involved in razing the mosque 28 years ago.

Special Judge S K Yadav in Lucknow, the capital city of India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, yesterday directed all 32 accused to remain present in the court on the day of the judgment.

The razing of the mosque on December 6, 1992 had triggered riots across India.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the case, has produced 351 witnesses and about 600 documents as evidence before the court. Charges were framed against 48 people, but 16 died during the course of the trial. The CBI argued that the accused conspired and instigated the "kar sevaks" to demolish the 15th century mosque.

But the accused pleaded that there is no evidence to prove their guilt and claimed they were falsely implicated in the case by the then Congress-led Indian government as political vendetta.

In a landmark judgment last year, the Indian Supreme Court allotted the disputed site in Ayodhya for the construction of a Ram temple, while calling the demolition of the mosque a violation of the rule of law.

An alternative five-acre site has been found in the city for building a mosque.

# 'This is the moment for Europe'

EU chief exec unveils blueprint to get the continent back on its feet

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union's chief executive yesterday laid out ambitious goals to ensure that the bloc is more resilient and united to confront futures crises after the coronavirus pandemic, which has plunged Europe into its deepest recession in history.

In her annual State of the Union address, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen doubled down on the flagship goals she set out on taking office last December: urgent action to combat climate change and a digital revolution.

"This is the moment for Europe," von der Leyen told the European Parliament in a wide-ranging speech that ran for around 80 minutes. "The moment for Europe to lead the way from this fragility to a new vitality."

Von der Leyen, who wants Europe to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by mid-century, unveiled a plan to cut the EU's greenhouse gas



emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels by 2030, up from an existing target of 40%.

The former German cabinet minister also called for greater investment in technology for Europe to compete more keenly with China and the United States, and said the EU would invest 20% of a 750 billion euro economic recovery fund in digital projects.

Turning to the troubled talks with London on the future relationship between the world's fifth-largest economy and biggest trading bloc, von der Leyen said every passing day reduces chances for sealing a new trade deal.

She stressed that the EU and Britain negotiated and ratified their Brexit divorce deal and warned London the agreement "cannot be unilaterally changed, disregarded or dis-applied".

Brexit talks were plunged into a new crisis this month after Prime Minister Boris Johnson put forward a new Internal Market Bill that would undercut Britain's Withdrawal Agreement.

Chiding EU countries for an ineffective foreign policy, she said the bloc must get better at responding to events unfolding around the world.

"When member states say Europe is too slow, I say to them 'be courageous and finally move to qualified majority voting,'" she said. "Be it in Hong Kong, Moscow or Minsk: Europe must take a clear and swift position."



Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga receives a certificate from Emperor Naruhito (L) as outgoing prime minister Shinzo Abe (2nd L) looks on during an attestation ceremony of his premiership at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

# Yoshihide Suga named new Japanese PM

FROM PAGE 1

pledged to pursue many of Abe's programmes, including his "Abenomics" economic strategy, and to forge ahead with structural reforms, including deregulation and shutting down bureaucratic turf battles.

Abe, Japan's longest-serving premier, resigned because of ill health after nearly eight years in office. Suga served under him in the pivotal post of chief cabinet secretary, acting as top government spokesman and coordinating policies.

Suga, who won a ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership race by a landslide on Monday, faces a plethora of challenges, including tackling Covid-19 while reviving a battered economy and dealing with a rapidly aging society.

Speaking in his first news conference as prime minister after being sworn in, Suga said he would implement policies to beef up Tokyo's alliance with the US, while hoping to establish stable relationships with China and Russia.

About half of the new cabinet are carryovers from Abe's administration. Only two are women and the average age, including Suga, is 60.

Among those retaining their jobs are key players such as Finance Minister Taro Aso and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, along with Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto and Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, the youngest at 39.

"It's a 'Continuity with a capital C' cabinet," said Jesper Koll, senior adviser to asset manager WisdomTree Investments.

Abe's younger brother, Nobuo Kishi,

was handed the defence portfolio, while outgoing Defence Minister Taro Kono takes charge of administrative reform, a post he has held before.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, Abe's point man on Covid-19 response, remains economy minister, while Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama, the son of a politician to whom Suga looked up as his mentor, also retains his post.

'CONGRATULATIONS'

US President Donald Trump welcomed Japan's new prime minister, the White House said in a statement, adding that the president looked forward to working with Yoshihide Suga and continuing to pursue "the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific."

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has told Suga that he was willing to sit down anytime in a bid to improve ties strained by historical and economic disputes, Moon's office said yesterday.

British leader Boris Johnson congratulated Suga on his appointment as prime minister. "I hope your appointment and the historic Free Trade Agreement we secured last week take the already rock solid relationship between our countries to new heights," Johnson said on Twitter.

"Heartiest congratulations to Yoshihide Suga on the appointment as prime minister of Japan. I look forward to jointly taking our Special Strategic and Global Partnership to new heights," Indian PM Modi tweeted.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday extended her heartiest congratulations to Suga on his appointment as the prime minister of Japan, saying that she is

looking forward to working in a closer tie with the new Japanese premier, reports BSS.

ROUGH ROAD AHEAD?

Katsunobu Kato, outgoing health minister and a close Suga ally, takes on the challenging post of chief cabinet secretary. He announced the cabinet lineup.

Tomoya Masanao, head of investment firm PIMCO Japan, said Suga's goal of a more digitalised society could widen the gap between rich and poor and would require political capital.

"Abe's administration built political capital for itself with loose monetary and fiscal policies, a balanced and skillful diplomacy with the United States and China, and implementation of flexible domestic politic," he said. "The new administration, on the other hand, faces a rough road ahead."

In a move that resonates with voters, Suga has criticised Japan's top three mobile phone carriers, NTT Docomo Inc, KDDI Corp and SoftBank Corp, saying they should return more money to the public and face more competition.

He has said Japan may eventually need to raise its 10% sales tax to pay for social security, but not for the next decade, reports Reuters.

Clues as to whether and how Suga will push ahead with reforms could come from the lineup of government advisory panels such as the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, Koll said.

"The ambition of Mr. Suga to speed up and reinvigorate the process (of reform) is absolutely clear, but the next layer of personnel will be interesting," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Biden leads Trump by 9 points

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden leads Republican President Donald Trump nationally among likely US voters by 9 percentage points, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that showed Trump's "law and order" message falling short with its target audience of suburban voters. The Sept 11-15 opinion poll, released yesterday, found that 50% of likely voters said they were casting their ballots for Biden while 41% were doing the same for Trump. Another 3% said they would support a third-party candidate and the rest were undecided.

### International travel fell 65pc in first half of 2020: UN

International tourist arrivals plunged 65% in the first half of 2020 compared to last year, data from the World Tourism Organization showed, translating into an estimated \$460 billion loss in export revenues. Just over half of destinations eased travel restrictions by early September but a return to 2019 levels of tourism could take between two to four years, according to the Madrid-based United Nations' tourism body. A total of 440 million international arrivals were lost between January and June this year, with Asia and the Pacific the hardest-hit region at 72% less tourists than last year. Europe saw a 66% drop in arrivals, compared to a 57% decline in Africa and the Middle East and 55% in the Americas.

### US city to pay \$12m settlement over Breonna Taylor's death

The city of Louisville, Kentucky, will pay \$12 million to the family of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman shot dead by police in a botched raid on her apartment in March, to settle a wrongful-death lawsuit, Mayor Greg Fischer said on Tuesday. The settlement appears to be one of the largest of its kind in the United States, where police departments are often shielded from having to pay damages for deaths in their custody. No police officer has been criminally charged over Taylor's death. Taylor's death, alongside that of George Floyd, a Black man killed in May by a white Minneapolis cop who knelt on his neck, gave rise to one of the largest protest movements in US history, with daily demonstrations in cities ever since.

### Barbados to remove Queen Elizabeth as head of state

Barbados wants to remove Britain's Queen Elizabeth as its head of state and become a republic, the Caribbean nation's government has said. A former British colony that gained independence in 1966, Barbados has maintained a formal link with the British monarchy as have some other countries that were once part of the British empire. "The time has come to fully leave our colonial past behind," said Barbados Governor General Sandra Mason, delivering a speech on behalf of the country's PM Mia Mottley. "Barbadians want a Barbadian Head of State. Hence, Barbados will take the next logical step toward full sovereignty and become a Republic by the time we celebrate our 55th Anniversary of Independence." That anniversary will come in November of next year.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



**BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB MEDICAL UNIVERSITY**  
**DHAKA, BANGLADESH.**

### EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FOREIGN EXPERTS

Applications are invited from foreign experts for appointment in the Paediatric Cardiac Surgery Programme in the Department of Cardiac Surgery, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), Shahbag, Dhaka, Bangladesh in the following posts with the mentioned prerequisites.

Sl	Name of the post	Qualifications	Experience	Salary & Allowances
1.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Surgery) - 01(One)	MS/ FRCS/ FCPS/ MCh or equivalent degree in Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery	10 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Surgery.	Consolidated & negotiable.
2.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthesia) - 01(One)	MD/ DM/ FCPS/ FFA/ DNB/ FNB/ Diploma/ Fellowship or equivalent degree in relevant field	5 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthesia.	Consolidated & negotiable.
3.	Consultant (Paediatric Cardiac Surgical ICU) - 01(One)	MD/DM/FCPS/ MRCP/ DNB/ FNB/ Diploma/ Fellowship or equivalent degree in relevant field	5 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac Surgical ICU.	Consolidated & negotiable.
4.	Paediatric Cardiac Perfusionist - 01(One)	BSc or equivalent degree in Cardio Pulmonary and Perfusion Care Technology.	Minimum 2 years of active service in Cardio Pulmonary and Perfusion Care.	Consolidated & negotiable.
5.	Nurse (Paediatric Cardiac Surgery) - 04(Four)	Degree or diploma in relevant field	Minimum 2 years of active service in Paediatric Cardiac surgical ICU.	Consolidated & negotiable.

Interested candidates are requested to apply along with their biodata, scan copy of passport, passport size recent coloured photograph and copy of certificates of all academic qualifications & experiences and certificate of Medical/ Nursing council of the respective country (duly attested by the foreign ministry of respective country and endorsed by Bangladesh embassy / High-commission of that country). In addition to hard copy by guaranteed post / mail, candidates are requested to send the application along with scan copy of necessary documents to the following email address: provc\_rnd@bsmmu.edu.bd or z.hussain71@yahoo.com.

Applications along with pre-requisite documents must reach the office of the undersigned on or before 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 2pm (Bangladesh Standard Time, GMT+6.00 hrs.).

*Zahid Hussain*  
**Prof. Mohd. Zahid Hussain** 16/09/2020  
Chairman  
Department of Paediatric Cardiology  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University  
&  
Director  
Shishu Hridrogider Bina Operatione O Operationer Madyome Binamullay Chikitsa Karjyochrome.  
BSMMU.  
Mobile: +8801819247365, +8801757109551, PABX- 4603: 4979  
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E-mail: provc\_rnd@bsmmu.edu.bd & z.hussain71@yahoo.com



## BOOK REVIEW: NON-FICTION

## Humans are innately evil, and other lies we tell ourselves

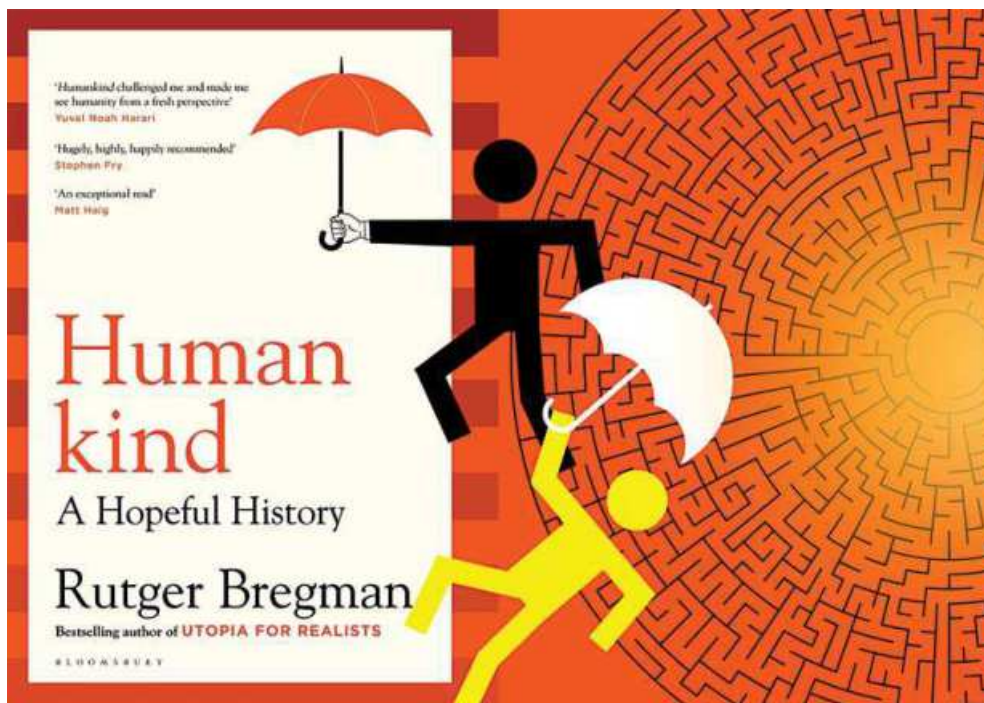
ALIFA MONJUR

At some point in time, we decided cynicism was synonymous with intelligence and wisdom. We praised cynics for their realism and scoffed at those who held onto fairy tales. Taking off the rose-tinted glasses became a coming-of-age milestone. The general consensus says human beings are self-interested by nature, so we embedded this principle everywhere. Too comfortable with it, we refuse to even entertain the radical opposing idea that Dutch historian Rutger Bregman champions in his new book, *Humankind: A Hopeful History* (Bloomsbury UK, 2020).

What is this radical idea, you ask? Well, that deep-down, humans are fairly decent. Anthropology professor Brian Hare tells Bregman that what makes us the kindest species also makes us the cruellest. We are not innately good. After all, we are only human, and history has no doubt proved our capacity for evil—but just as the typical person is no Michelangelo or Shakespeare, they are also no Stalin.

*Humankind* is exquisitely insightful.

Bregman is expansive across history, anthropology, crime, psychology, and politics, arguing that our exaggerated pessimism is not only misleading but damaging. If we continue to treat others as self-interested, untrustworthy, and dangerous then for protection, we will become the same.



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Bregman is at his most riveting when unpacking human weaknesses, like how foolishly we fall for evil disguised as good—the Holocaust was once disguised as a fight for German greatness by Nazi propaganda. In the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment, volunteers posing as prison guards were increasingly cruel to the prisoner test subjects. Why? Because they believed it was for the greater good of science, Bregman says.

This conniving tactic could be what enables extremist rubbish to manifest as

all-consuming, horrific chapters of human history. Bregman convinces readers not with framing tricks and sweeping claims but with pure research. Only after delivering pages upon pages of evidence does he make a claim. His premise is not crazy, so why are we so resistant?

Is it our obsession with horror and spectacle? Bregman explains: shock value generates the most clicks and so, by simple supply-and-demand, our world is saturated with cynicism. In William Golding's 1954

book, *Lord of the Flies*, civilised British boys turn savage while stranded on an island. Golding's book is a powerful reminder of how fragile civility seemingly is when law and social judgment are out of the picture. Dutch biologist Frans de Waal called it veneer theory, the idea that civility is a thin shell breakable by poor circumstances. As Bregman puts it, "a tweak in our situation" and "out comes the Nazi in each of us". Golding's cautionary tale became a pillar in our view of humankind, despite one tiny detail—*Lord of the Flies* is fiction.

Bregman uncovered the real story: in 1966, twelve years after Golding's book, an Australian captain incidentally found six Tongan schoolboys on the island of 'Ata. They were stranded for 15 months on an island uninhabited since 1863, when its natives were forced into the Pacific slave trade. So, did Golding's prediction play out? Not at all. No one formed rival gangs. No one was murdered. When one boy fell off a cliff and broke his leg, his fellow castaways set his leg with sticks and leaves. They told him to rest while they did his work for him. *Lord of the Flies* would have left him for dead.

Bregman argues that our exaggerated pessimism is not only misleading but damaging. He explains that if we continue to treat others as self-interested, untrustworthy, and dangerous then for protection, we will become the same. What we think of others determines our own conduct. After all, friendly Easter Island natives were killed by Dutchmen who thought they would be attacked.

That is what economics professor Robert

Frank found in the 1990s, when he tested how treating human nature as egotistical might affect his students. Frank's students became what they were taught: the longer they studied economics, the more selfish they became.

Bregman puts some blame on falsified journalism—twisted information that pushes a shock-value narrative. When Kitty Genovese was dying in front of her apartment, the friend who immediately ran out, without questioning if Kitty's murderer remained, was reported as someone who did not want to get involved. They buried the fact that most of Kitty's neighbours thought she was just drunk. A *New York Times* journalist said, "It would have ruined the story". They buried the fact that police were called multiple times but did not come. Instead, the story became: 38 witnesses sat idle as their neighbour was murdered.

Yet Bregman is not tunnel-visioned, he is expansive across history, anthropology, crime, psychology, and politics. Above all, he makes *Humankind* a kaleidoscope of stories. Stories of soldiers repeatedly emptying and refilling rifles to avoid shooting. Stories of German and British soldiers shaking hands during Christmas ceasefires, and Londoners sipping tea as their windows rattled from bombs. Perhaps, it is time we observed human nature with valid evaluation rather than blind cynicism.

Perhaps, as *Humankind* uncovers, the cynics are the ones out of touch.

Alifa Monjur is studying commerce and law in Sydney.

## BOOK REVIEW: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

## 'Ajob Deshe Alice': Alice's adventures now in Bangla

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

*Alice's Adventures in the Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) by Lewis Carroll may be two of the finest pieces of juvenile literature to be published in the last 150 years, but it contains deeper waters than that. Carroll's beautiful storytelling allows one to ponder over broader philosophical questions through a 10-year-old child's lens, and this is what has captivated readers of all ages globally. The two novels were adapted into drama by playwright Jason Pizzarello. In February 2020, Professor Abdus Selim translated it into Bangla with illustrations by Sabyasachi Hazra, which was published by the University Press Limited.

Written as a play, *Ajob Deshe Alice* launches straight into action from the first line. It starts with Alice tumbling down a mysterious—now infamous—rabbit hole to enter a strange land where every individual is raving mad. With the help of a Cheshire Cat, an astute Caterpillar, and a righteous Humpty Dumpty, a confused Alice sets on the conquest of finding her way home.

We are given no context for Alice's background, or who Alice even is. This might confuse a young reader unfamiliar with Carroll's original works, but more notably it also creates a sense of delightful suspense to keep the reader going. The mystery unfolds itself gradually throughout the book, putting Alice in bizarre situations involving strange characters. One after another, these weird episodes help Alice connect the dots on a journey of self-discovery.

The intricacy of Carroll's work lies in how beautifully he crafts conversations—they are comic and philosophic; and they play with one's sense of logic as well as the unbounded imagination of a child. Alice's conversations with the Mad Hatter and Tweedledum and Tweedledee would be the finest examples.

Tweedledum and Tweedledee have a philosophy all their own—they oversimplify matters the way they want to, simultaneously confusing Alice and the reader. "There's no possibility of raining under this umbrella," they tell Alice, consistently reminding one of the diversity of thought among individuals. In front of the Duchess' house, Alice is told by the butler, "Knocking would make sense if there was any door between us. If you knocked the door from the inside, I could easily get you out." Such dialogues scattered across the text raise piercing questions about one's perception of reality, while the

undercurrents of colonial sentiments are hard not to miss. Does one ponder over these sayings, or focus on why there are suddenly two Alices in this Wonderland?

Translating all this could be tricky. It involves initiating a new locality of readers into the world of the translated text, and in turn embellishing the text with the accents and quirks of their language (Bangla in this case). Professor Selim does a brilliant job in this regard. The dialogues he writes are simple and easy-to-comprehend for a young audience, and contain the subtleties of Bangla language and culture. Alice addresses certain characters just how a young Bengali would address their elders. And the language incorporates Bangla proverbs to localise the humour in Alice's encounters.

Sabyasachi Hazra's black and white illustrations certainly add to the aesthetics of this story. They are minimalistic yet intricately detailed. What stood out to me is how each characters' emotions are reflected vividly in the sketches, including Alice's wonder and her confusion, the comic elements of the plot, and the whimsy



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

of wonderland. They set just the right atmosphere for storytelling for both a child and an adult reading.

Jason Pizzarello's adaptation reimagines Alice's wonderland experience by ending it with an unexpected twist. Translator Abdus Selim certainly keeps that twist alive in Bangla, making the reading experience smooth and enjoyable for all readers.

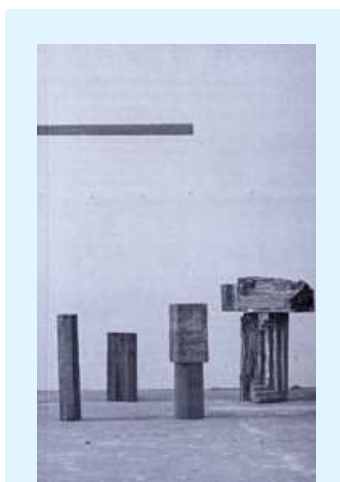
Nahaly Nafisa Khan is a contributor to *Daily Star Books*.

## THE SHELF

## Must reads out from Bangladesh in 2020

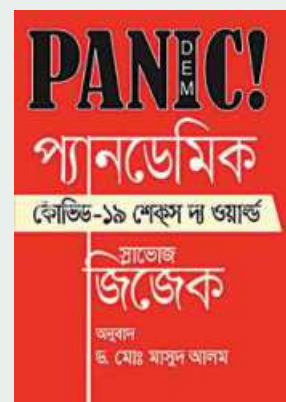
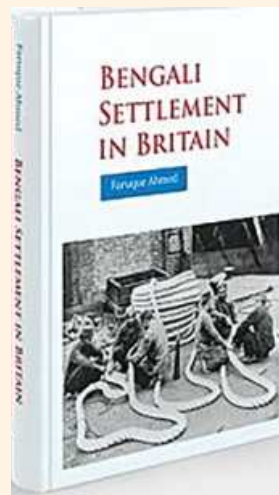
STAR BOOKS DESK

Our shelf today features books from Bangladesh--books that have either been translated into Bangla, books that explore Bengali civilisation over the ages, and books that explore their authors' spiritual journeys through art and poetry, all published in this country in the year 2020.



**BENGALI SETTLEMENT IN BRITAIN**  
(University Press Limited)  
Faruque Ahmed  
*History*

Over 100 years before the granting of Bengal's Dewani to the British, Bengalis began taking up jobs as sailors in the British East India Company's ships. The second half of the 19th century saw educated Bengalis travelling to Britain for higher studies. Today, their descendants—British-Bengalis—hold esteemed positions in British business and politics. Ahmed's research traces 400 years of Bengali migration to Britain, and their forgotten stories of triumph and despair.

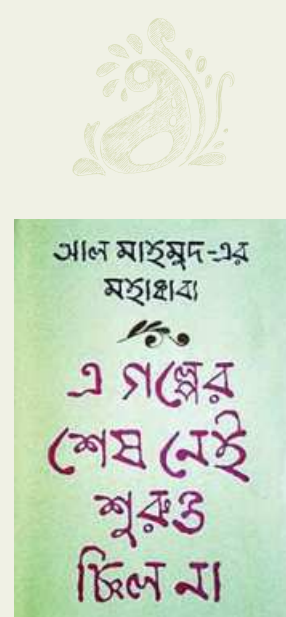


**PANDEMIC! COVID-19 SHAKES THE WORLD**  
(Oitijjo)  
Slavoj Zizek, translated into the Bangla by Dr Muhammad Masud Alam  
*Non-Fiction*

The coronavirus will overturn the foundations of our lives; not only will it bring unbounded misery, but it will also bring about the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression. There is no way back—we have to pave a new way forward and make adjustments in our healthcare system. Simply writing it off as a tragedy in our quest to return to normalcy will not do. We must ask: Where were the flaws in our system that we fell into this disaster despite repeated warnings from scientists? More on this in Zizek's book, now available in Bangla.

**AL MAHMUD-ER MOHAKABBO: E GOLPER SHESH NEI SHURU O CHILO NAH**  
(Shorolrekha Prokashon)  
Al Mahmud  
*Poetry*

Poet Al Mahmud's epic poem *E Golper Shesh Nei Shuru O Chilo Nah* fills up a large modern-day vacuum in the genre of Bengali epic poetry. With pre-historic stories as his subject, Mahmud explores the creation of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, their ascent, and Iblis' plot to have them banished from heaven. The book is edited by poet Abid Azam.





The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2020, ASHWIN 2, 1427 BS

# Indian onion export ban already making prices skyrocket

*The authorities must monitor markets and create consumer confidence*

INDIA'S decision to suspend the export of onions, which was announced on Monday evening, has triggered a steep rise in onion prices in Bangladesh, with prices rising nearly twofold in kitchen markets across the country. According to a report published in this daily on Wednesday, this is largely due to panic buying by consumers and price gouging by wholesalers, which occurred despite Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) officials saying that the country still has a surplus of onions in stock to meet local demand.

This is not the first time this has happened—we found ourselves in a similar situation earlier this year due to a similar ban on India's end, which lasted for five months and was eventually lifted on March 15. Bangladesh has requested the Indian government to withdraw the suspension of onion exports as soon as possible, and as of yesterday, farmers within the Indian state of Maharashtra were also creating unrest to protest this decision, since trucks carrying an estimated 25,000 tonnes of onion were stranded on the Bangladesh border with West Bengal, leading to a sharp decline in wholesale prices within India.

Despite the negative impacts on Bangladeshi markets and certain Indian states, it is difficult to speculate on whether there will be a change in Indian policy regarding this export ban. In the meantime, there are certain steps that we can take in the domestic arena, the first of which is to create consumer confidence so as to put a stop to panic buying. According to BTTC officials, a bumper crop in domestic onion production, a surplus stock of already imported onions and the decision to immediately import another one lakh tonne of onions from other countries will ensure affordable prices for consumers. In order to deal with the rising price of commodities, the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh has also started selling onions, lentil, sugar and soybean oil from 275 trucks at reasonable prices, which will continue until October 1. These are commendable steps and we urge the authorities to ensure that inefficiency and mismanagement do not hamper the process.

However, these steps will only work if the wholesalers are also held accountable. During the spike in onion prices in late 2019 and early 2020, several warehouses were fined by mobile courts for selling onions at exorbitant prices. This time around, the authorities must be even more vigilant in monitoring markets and ensuring such unethical practices are quickly nipped in the bud. The pandemic and seasonal floods have already had an impact on the prices of daily essentials. We must ensure that the rising prices of onions do not become one more burden on the lower-income groups who are struggling to cope during these difficult times.

# Pay jute mill workers their dues and other benefits

*Harassment of workers and delay in processing payments unacceptable*

WE welcome the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) for starting the disbursement of due wages and other benefits of the laid-off and retired workers of 25 shuttered state-run jute mills. The government closed down the mills operating under the BJMC on July 1. The prime minister at that time directed the officials concerned to prepare a list of workers of the state-run jute mills and send their dues directly to their bank accounts. More than two months after the shutdown of the mills, the BJMC has finally started paying the workers. However, according to our report, the authorities handed over cheques to only 30 laid-off workers during the cheque disbursement ceremony on September 15, while around a hundred workers with their family members were not allowed inside the Karim Jute Mills Corporation where the ceremony took place.

Around 25,000 permanent workers lost their jobs as the government closed down these jute mills. Although they were supposed to get their dues and other financial benefits as soon as possible, many of them are now being harassed by the BJMC in the name of processing their payments. They are now worried whether they would ever get their dues and benefits. The workers have also complained that the entire process of payment has been carried out in an uncoordinated manner from the very beginning, which has exacerbated their sufferings. Many of them have been forced to leave their residences in Dhaka and return to their villages as they are now jobless.


According to the jute ministry's decision announced on June 28, the laid off permanent workers and retired workers should receive their dues directly in their bank accounts. While 50 percent of their dues will be paid through bank cheques, the other 50 percent will be paid through savings instruments. Many of the workers, however, have no idea about savings instruments and are finding it hard to submit various types of papers required by the mill authorities.

The BJMC and mill authorities should give clear guidelines to the workers on how to submit the required documents for the savings certificates instead of harassing them for those. The pace of the payment process is also not satisfactory. The BJMC should work efficiently and pay the workers as quickly as possible. They should not also forget about the temporary and substitute workers and allocate funds to compensate them.

# The exodus of the helpless

*Can this challenge be turned into an opportunity?*

A CLOSER LOOK



TASNEEM TAYEB

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh, the country's flourishing economy had taken a hit. With the government-announced general holidays leading to closures of businesses, offices, educational institutions, shops, eateries, factories and other livelihood-generating opportunities—both formal and informal—life came to a halt in the nation. And so did the livelihood for many. As a result, many who had once come to Dhaka—the bustling hub of the country—with neon dreams of a better life, had no choice but to go back to their roots, unable to make ends meet.

According to a survey conducted by Brac, the general holiday imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19 has left 51 percent of households with no income. A report published by a local daily suggests that around 50,000 people belonging to low-income groups had to leave Dhaka having no other option. Overcome by poverty, dejection and desperation, people from the lower to the middle strata of society had to make the return journey home.

Many news outlets, including this newspaper, published photos of families making desperate journeys—often literally—the young and the old huddled together on the backs of trucks, at the top of trains and busses, on the edges of steamers and overcrowded dingy boats, going back to their villages in search of sustenance. In other cases, the main earning members of a family—often the

*While this forced migration from the city is causing a significant challenge, it can also be turned into an opportunity to develop living and livelihood conditions outside Dhaka.*

sole one—had to send their dependents back to the villages since daily essentials there would be more affordable. At least back home, they will have something to eat, something to live on.

What happens now to those who have gone back to their ancestral homes? What can we do to make their lives easy in their native places? And can the government transform this tragedy into an opportunity by driving the decentralisation agenda?

"Decentralisation is about power. If local governments are not empowered, then actually what will happen is, people like us who will be left behind in Dhaka will have a bit more comfortable life. But the goal of decentralisation will not be

decentralise means to give appropriate powers and responsibilities to local governments. If we take a look at the budgets, including this year's budget, we don't see much. The people leaving Dhaka by itself is not an opportunity. If a strong local government reform agenda can be driven in the context of the relocation of population, including financial empowerment of these bodies, only then can this be transformed into an opportunity."

However, while sharing his concern regarding this, Dr Rahman feared that the government neither has the track record nor the political orientation to undertake a massive rehabilitation of the people who have relocated outside Dhaka.



File photo of passengers waiting on the platform of Kamalapur Railway Station to leave Dhaka, amid the coronavirus crisis.

PHOTO: THE DAILY STAR


achieved," said prominent economist and chairperson of Brac, Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, while discussing this issue with this writer.

He further added: "I think the government can capitalise on this opportunity if they simultaneously revisit the whole issue of stronger local governments, although the trend is rather towards the opposite. We can now see that the power of local governments is very limited. Party-based local elections that are now taking place have further marginalised this system. Before, there used to be a sort of local democracy within the party. Now due to party symbol, whoever is nominated from the top, that person is elected. So it has in fact further reduced the political competition even among the same party base. So, conducting local election under party symbol has also been a strong barrier to more meaningful decentralisation. To

He, therefore, suggested that "what they can do is create a more supportive environment, because the people in our country are working to change their lot on their own. All they are looking for is a more supportive environment. And this is within the capacity of the government. If the government can create a supportive environment, people will find their own solutions."

And indeed the government can, and need to, support these people. According to architect and urban planner Salma A Shafi, who is also the general secretary of the Centre for Urban Studies, Dhaka, incentives can be provided to encourage establishment of new industries outside Dhaka to provide employment opportunities to the people who are having to move out of Dhaka.

"Jobs need to be made available for the people who are leaving Dhaka. Some industries can be established outside



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

The more things change in India's main opposition party Congress, the more they seem to remain the same. This was the most important takeaway from the party's interim President Sonia

Gandhi when she carried out a major organisational reshuffle on September 11. If there is one man who grabbed the unanimous highlight of the changes, it was Ghulam Nabi Azad whose is undoubtedly the biggest name among the 23 party leaders who questioned the leadership of the Gandhi clan in a letter to Sonia in August. Azad has been removed as General Secretary although he was retained as a member of the party's highest decision-making forum, the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

Not just Azad—his senior party colleagues Motilal Vora, Ambika Soni and Mallikarjun Kharge too have been removed as general secretaries. Some commentators have tended to see this as the start of the phase-out of the party's old guard. The CWC has been reconstituted and P Chidambaram, Tariq Anwar, Randeep Surjewala, and Jitendra Singh have been named as its regular members. Sonia also set up a committee of leaders to help her in steering the party towards a session of the All India Congress Committee where a full-fledged president of the party is expected to be elected. The committee also has in it Gandhi family loyalists like Ahmed Patel, AK Antony, Randeep Singh Surjewala, Ambika Soni and KC Venugopal.

But a much more important message of Sonia's organisational rejig is the importance given to an array of leaders who are considered close to her son Rahul Gandhi, who resigned as Congress President soon after the party's dismal performance in the general elections last year. Just look at the names of at least Rahul-loyalist leaders: Venugopal, Surjewala, Jitendra Singh, Shaktisinh Gohil, Ajay Maken, Manickam Tagore,

Rajeev Satav and RPN Singh. Surjewala is the biggest winner of the reshuffle as he has been named as General Secretary in charge of the party's affairs in the southern state of Karnataka, inducted as a member of the special committee to oversee organisational changes, besides retaining his responsibilities as the party's chief spokesperson.

Venugopal too is a member of most of the committees. Jitendra Singh has been made in-charge of Congress affairs

where the party lost power some months ago. Wasnik has also been included in the committee formed by Sonia to oversee the party's organisational elections. But Wasnik's presence in the committee does not go beyond tokenism as it has been made abundantly clear that the committee is a temporary mechanism for ensuring the logistics of organisational poll.

It must also be pointed out that another man who continues as General



Will Rahul Gandhi be back at the helm of Congress once again?

PHOTO: REUTERS

in the north-eastern state of Assam, which is about to witness fresh assembly polls next year when the battle will be between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress. The reshuffle has seen either entry or elevation of some Rahul supporters in the party's secretariat. The party's Central Election Authority reconstituted by Sonia is headed by Madhusudan Mistry, who is known to be close to Rahul, and has two other members who are acolytes of the Gandhi family scion.

In all fairness, it must be noted that Sonia also brought in Mukul Wasnik, who was among the signatories to the letter that called for leadership change, as a General Secretary and given him the charge of party affairs in Madhya Pradesh

Secretary is Jitin Prasada, who too was among the 23 leaders who shot off the letter in what was seen as a banner of revolt against the Gandhi family and demanded an overhaul of the party, internal elections in the organisational hierarchy from the grassroots to the top, and a "full-time, visible leadership". But Prasada was shifted as General Secretary in charge of India's politically most crucial state, Uttar Pradesh, to West Bengal where fresh assembly elections are due next year. While the Congress has a big stake in Madhya Pradesh politics because it is the only principal challenger to the BJP in the Hindi heartland state, the 135-year-old party has over the decades been reduced to a marginal player in West Bengal.

Dhaka to create job opportunities for those who are moving out. The industries should also provide housing provision for the people they are going to employ. To this end, incentives can also be provided. Why can we not have vegetable canning, food canning, fish canning plants in the rural areas? If each of these plants can employ 50 to 100 people and provide them with housing facilities, then we will be able to find solution to the current problems." Salma Shafi added.

Along with these, the government also needs to develop the healthcare, educational, and recreational infrastructures outside Dhaka so that those who have been forced to migrate to their ancestral land can live a decent life there.

Good schools, colleges, and universities, modern hospitals, AC shopping malls, fancy restaurants, good movie theatres, clean amusement parks and zoo, along with improved physical and digital connectivity, well-paid jobs, decent housing, and of course an empowered local government, will not only provide people with healthy and satisfying living conditions outside of Dhaka, but also will organically push forward decentralisation. People now are having to relocate from Dhaka because of lack of livelihood opportunities. But once these metrics are improved and required measures implemented, people will voluntarily want to spread out of Dhaka.

While this forced migration from the city is causing a significant challenge, it can also be turned into an opportunity to develop living and livelihood conditions outside Dhaka. This will automatically drive the capital's much-needed decentralisation agenda. Also the government needs to look at the issue of planned allocation of jobs and housing in the rural and urban townships to ensure equitable access to decent living and jobs for everyone.

However, to do this, strong political will would be required. The government would need to make sure that the district administration and local governments rise above their power struggles and work in tandem to create congenial and liveable environment at the local levels. The government would be required to empower the local administration both in terms of decision-making abilities and financial authorities so that they can take appropriate measures that are suitable for their local contexts to create sustainable livelihood generation opportunities for the local inhabitants.

The question remains: does the government have the appetite to drive such an overarching change?

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Though the letter by the 23 leaders had also suggested that the Gandhi family would always be a part of collective decision making, there was little doubt that its thrust was a critique of the Gandhis, especially Rahul Gandhi, who quit as President last year over the Congress's election defeat. Over the past few months, the Congress has been sharply divided between the old guard and the new generation of leaders, many of whom would like to see him back to the top job.

Sonia's September 11 organisational reshuffle, which has once again showed the culture of selection as opposed to election in the running of the Congress, has sparked speculations in political circles if she has begun the spadework for bringing Rahul back in the saddle as party president by building a Team Rahul. Is the script being readied for Rahul's second appointment as the party head? Sonia quit as the party chief in 2017 after being in the post for 19 years at a stretch, and then Rahul took over the mantle from her in December 2017 in what represented a generational shift. And when Rahul stepped down and refused to withdraw his resignation in the wake of the party's electoral debacle, the baton once again passed to his mother, albeit in an interim capacity. And if Rahul gets back the party presidency in the All India Congress Committee session, possibly sometime early next year, it will once again drive home the message of indispensability of a Gandhi family member to lead the party.

Murmurs of discontent are already in public domain about Sonia's organisational changes. Kapil Sibal, a legal luminary and one of the party's senior-most leaders, in an interview to *The Indian Express* has said that Article 14 of the party's Constitution provides for All India Congress Committee's (AICC) election of 12 of the 23 members of the Congress Working Committee. But that has not happened, Sibal said, and made it a point to be caustic: "if nominations are the norm and elections are anathema, then we might as well change the Constitution of the Congress party."

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NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

‘Commercialisation of education will only increase inequality in society’

Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), talks to Naznin Tithi of The Daily Star about the spirit of the 1962 education movement, the current state of our education system, and how commercialising it helps create further inequality in society.

How would you evaluate the 1962 movement that the Education Day commemorates? The education movement of 1962 was an unprecedented event in the political history of this nation. The movement had been waged by the students of then East Pakistan for a pro-people education policy and to establish ordinary people’s right to education. At the same time, it was our first attempt to revolt against the then Pakistani military ruler Ayub Khan. Inequality in education has always been an issue in our society. While the British imperialists followed a colonial policy to educate our people, in the Pakistan period, the Pakistani rulers continued to follow those policies and made new repressive policies to dominate and oppress the people of East Pakistan.

The British Indian policymakers planned to educate the Indians in a way that they would remain Indians physically but ideologically they would be like the British. To that end, they formulated a policy to educate only a section of the people to perpetuate their colonial rule in India. Pakistani rulers followed that same policy.

In 1962, the Ayub government published the Sharif Commission’s report in which instead of ensuring education for all as a basic right, there was a clear attempt to commercialise education and make it accessible only to a section of people. It was specifically mentioned in the report that education should be considered a commercial activity, meaning that only those with money would have access to education while the door would be closed to the poor and low-income people. This also meant that the state would not take any responsibility for educating the common people.

In the Sharif Commission’s report, it had been mentioned that “Urdu should be made the language of the people of Pakistan”, “English should be made compulsory from class VI”, “Education should not be available

at a cheaper rate”, “there is reason to see investment in industry and education at par”, etc. The commission’s recommendation that the two years’ degree course should be upgraded to three years was also against the interest of the students and they took to the street to protest this move. For the poor farmers’ children, it was difficult to study even a two-year course, and lingering the course length by one year meant that many would have to quit education. Thus, students from all levels joined the movement to press home their demands.

During that time, another movement was building up in favour of democracy. After martial law was promulgated in 1958 and Ayub became the self-appointed president of Pakistan and chief martial law administrator, he came up with his own constitution. A document named “basic principles” was publicised by the government in which the democratic rights of the people of East Pakistan were trampled upon.

During that time, the leaders of Awami League and the Communist Party (then operating in hiding) secretly held a number of meetings to end the suffocating environment prevailing in East Pakistan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Comrade Moni Singh, Khoka Roy were present there. Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia, the editor of *Ittefaq*, helped arrange these meetings. The topics of discussion included demand for democracy, release of political prisoners, independence of the judiciary, etc. A decision was taken from these meetings that the national leaders would call upon the Chhatra League and Chhatra Union to wage a movement together to push these demands. In one of the meetings, Bangabandhu told other leaders to take note of the demand for the independence of East Pakistan.

The 1962 education movement was simultaneously a movement for ending discrimination in education as well as for



Mujahidul Islam Selim. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

establishing people’s democratic rights, as both issues came to the forefront when students protested the education report of the Sharif Commission.

Three students—Mostafa, Babul and Wajullah—were killed when police opened fire at the students’ demonstrations.

How would you compare the education system of the pre-Liberation period with the system that we have now? How far have we progressed in ensuring quality education for all?

Although the movement for a pro-people education policy started in 1962, it continued throughout the years till our independence in 1971. Around 1964, there was another round of student movement to reform the education policy. And after the mass uprising of 1969, the Nur Khan Education Commission was formed and it presented another education report. However, it was just a new version of the last two education commissions’ reports during Ayub Khan’s regime and was outright rejected by the students.

I was a freedom fighter and participated in

the battle to liberate Dhaka. On December 17, I along with my whole battalion entered Dhaka and within 20 days Bangladesh Chhatra Union held a meeting. I was then the general secretary of Chhatra Union’s central committee. In that meeting, we decided that we would make a draft education policy for the newly independent country. Accordingly, we formed our own education commission which published its report within two months. We distributed the report among the public.

When the Qudrat-i-Khuda Education Commission was formed, we from Bangladesh Chhatra Union presented our recommendations to the commission. Many of our recommendations were reflected in the commission’s report.

To get back to your question, let me say that during Ayub Khan’s rule, we used to say that free thinking and equal education for all were not possible in a subjugated country, and that democracy and independence are needed for making education accessible to all. Sadly, after almost 50 years of our independence, we could not yet ensure equality and equal access to education for all.

One of the key features of the Sharif Commission’s report was that it considered education as a commercial product that could be accessed only by those with money. How would you assess the current situation?

Seventy percent of the tax that we give to the government is indirect tax. People irrespective of their income have to give this indirect tax at the same rate. Why do we give this money to the state? We give that because in exchange for that tax, we are entitled to certain services to be provided by the state. It is written in our constitution that it is the responsibility of the state to provide all citizens with food, shelter, treatment and education. We were making some progress in education after independence but now everything has changed.

Now it is being said that a university should generate its own income. The question is, how

will the universities do that? By increasing tuition fees? If a university has to generate its income through increasing the tuition fees, the direct effect of this would be that only the affluent section of society will get the scope for education while those with limited means will be left behind. The economic inequality in society will then directly affect the opportunities to get education.

The direct result of commercialisation of education has been manifested in many of the events of recent times. We have seen how university teachers have resorted to plagiarism in writing their doctoral thesis, or how educational certificates can be bought now with money.

How do you suggest our public universities should be run if they do not generate their own income?

We have always been saying that one-third of our national budget must be allocated for health, education and social welfare. There is no alternative to increasing the budgetary allocation if we want to ensure equality in education. While research should be one of the most important things our universities should be doing, research is almost non-existent in these institutions. The public universities’ budget for research is negligible, and whatever the budget may be, that also mostly remains unutilised. How will our universities generate new knowledge if there is no scope for research?

What should be done to remove inequality in education?

Our vision should be to reestablish the principles of 1971 through a social revolution. There is no shortcut. The Pakistani army and their local collaborators killed our intellectuals prior to our victory to cripple the nation. While a nation can be crippled through killing its greatest souls, it is also possible to cripple it through making its education system distorted, corrupt, communal and commercial.

Beyond the question of choice, motherhood, and burqa

NAFISA TANJEEM

JHARNA Akter overheard journalists talking about how the photo of a burqa-clad mother playing cricket with her son will shake the world. It did indeed. We see hundreds of news reports and op-eds, thousands of social media posts, and perhaps millions of comments on these posts. What seems interesting in the whole discourse is our conservative, secular-liberal, as well as progressive fascination about a piece of cloth and our tendency to focus overwhelmingly on the question of choice and motherhood. Some of the secular-liberal-nationalist critiques we are noticing argue that the photo misrepresents the “true” Bangladeshi/Bengali cultural and nationalist values, mimics religious fundamentalist trends in Afghanistan or Pakistan, and signifies Muslim women’s loss of voice to patriarchal conservative practices. Some are emphasising that participation in sports does not necessarily mean that Muslim women have to give up purdah, and some are seeing this photo as a disrespectful gesture towards the institution of purdah. Some are highlighting the value of motherly love and the importance of women’s choice to wear or not to wear burqa. Feminist scholars have explained how this photo challenges our perceived construction of gendered performances of Bangladeshi Muslim women, how burqa became (or did not become) a part of the Bengali culture, and how religion alone cannot explain this historical transformation (BBC Bangla, September 13, 2020).

I think what the whole discussion would benefit from is to move away from the tendency to singularly focus on the question of women’s choice or motherhood or a piece of cloth, to think holistically, and to examine this photo’s concurrent relationship with various intersecting systems and institutions such as patriarchy, capitalism, religion, media, and so on. The photo is an embodiment of contradictions that do not conform to our commonsensical expectations from Bangladeshi Muslim women. Therefore, we



Eleven-year-old Yamin Ahmed Sinan plays cricket with his mother, Jharna Akter, in the practice nets at Paltan Maidan on September 11, 2020. The photo went on to attract a lot of attention and debate after it was published.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/THE DAILY STAR

need to go beyond a singular analytical focus on “choice” or “motherhood” or a binary “oppression vs. empowerment” framing, and examine the complex and contradicting roles of Muslim women in our society as symbolised by this photo.

One of the things this photo brings forward is the gendered politics of space—how space shapes gendered performances—and the response of a sexist society towards these performances. In an interview, Jharna Akter mentioned that she often plays cricket and other games with her son, nephews, and nieces in front of her Shewrapara home. The very act she performs on a day-to-day basis in a private/semi-private sphere was read as a spectacular performance when she decided to repeat it in the public space of Paltan Maidan. Even her fourth-grade student son knew

that repeating these day-to-day interactions in a public space would mean something different in a society shaped by sexist norms and practices. Yamin Ahmed Sinan asked his mother to play with him because no one was around in the field at that time. He asked, “You play so nicely with me in our courtyard, but why are you saying you won’t bat now?” Why and how does our society teach a male child that his mother can play with him only when no one is around? What does it mean when a madrasa student questions the spatial divide and gendered norms?

Also, what does it mean when Akter and Sinan started playing with the assumption that no one was watching them only to realise that they got surrounded by a crowd and that journalists were capturing their photos without asking for their consent (BD Syl TV, September

12, 2020)? Akter first requested them not to take pictures, but then she rethought her stance and gave permission because she was wearing a burqa and following the purdah norms (GangChil, September 13, 2020). Wearing a burqa made her comfortable enough to consent to be photographed and to give interviews to journalists from print and electronic media, thereby offering a tremendous amount of exposure and circulation of her story. This complicates the secular-liberal assumption that burqa’s sole role is hiding women and obstructing their mobility.

We noticed a strong call to move away from the burqa debate and focus on the innocence and purity of the mother-son relationship in both liberal and progressive circles, which—I would argue—risks depoliticising the representation of motherhood in this photo. Akter got married after finishing HSC and gave up her dream of being a recognised athlete. Still, she chose to send her elder daughter to an engineering school, thereby challenging conventional norms and career paths for women. She sends her son to a madrasa, which shouldn’t make us automatically presume her complicity to conservative values as we don’t precisely know the historical-political-cultural context of this decision. She dreams of sending her son to BKSP and training him as a cricketer so he can come out of the madrasa life (GangChil, September 13, 2020). She lives in Shewrapara and her son goes to a madrasa in Arambagh in the morning. Then she takes her son to the Kobi Nazrul Cricket Academy for practicing cricket in the afternoon (Bangla Tribune, September 12, 2020). An interpretation of the photo as a pure, innocent depiction of a depoliticised “motherly love” subsumes the way this photo also depicts Akter’s disproportionate amount of unpaid care work for her son and perhaps for other family members. The image is an emblem of Bengali Muslim women’s compliance with as well as subversion of gendered, classed, and religious expectations in creative and complicated ways.

Also, let’s not ignore that it’s the participation of a mother-son duo in the multibillion-dollar masculinist-capitalist-corporatised industry of cricket that makes the photo even more palatable to our nationalist liberal self. The aspiration of a mother and her son to climb up the social ladder by playing cricket and becoming a superstar like Shakib Al Hasan makes us “forgive” her presumed submissiveness to conservative values and celebrate her image as a hallmark of pure motherly love. Akter herself was an athlete in the 1980s and 1990s; she used to compete in shot put, long jump, javelin throw, 200- and 400-meter races, and other track and field events. Her aspiration shifted from being a national-level athlete to be the mother of an internationally recognised cricketer, signifying how the neoliberal globalisation has created a powerful cricket-industrial complex, taking attention, aspirations and resources away from traditional sports that do not generate financial capital. Our geographical and cultural proximity to India—a global cricket superpower which constitutes 90 percent of the one billion cricket fans around the world (*The Economic Times*, June 27, 2018), where the Indian Premier League is a USD 5.3 billion industry (CNBC, August 1, 2018), and where cricket accounts for almost 85 percent of the Indian sports economy (exchange4media.com, May 21, 2020)—along with our historical cricketing connections with other South Asian countries, add a twisted flavour in the photo. Would this photo have gained the same level of attention if Akter was playing badminton or *kanamachhi* with her son?

It’s the dissident feminist act of a conservative-looking mother who defies gendered norms and claims her authority over a public space through her participation in a capitalist dream, which makes this photo unique and subject to incredible public scrutiny.

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ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



SEPTEMBER 17, 1978  
Camp David Accords concluded

The Camp David Accords, negotiated by US President Jimmy Carter, were completed this day in 1978, leading to a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and a broader framework for pursuing peace in the Middle East.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Ignored the limit

5 Copied

9 Long look

10 Passover feast

12 Hatch on the Hill

13 Binding need

14 Scanner target

16 Even score

17 Summer on the Seine

18 North Carolina native

20 “Alien” director Scott

22 Throws in

23 Famed fur tycoon

25 Prayer ender

28 Stand against

32 Almost kaput

34 Teachers’ org.

35 Border

36 Toddler’s safety item

38 Keats, for one

40 Ouzo flavor

41 Reason

42 Henry VIII’s house

43 Small amphibian

44 Actor Richard

DOWN

1 Flat gray clouds

2 Just missed a birdie

3 Rocker Clapton

4 Signifies

5 Fall flower

6 Chapel seat

7 Fixed copy

8 Said no to

9 Very serious

11 Staggers

15 Florida race site

19 Plucked instrument

21 Singer k.d.

24 Run

25 Big ‘dos

26 Horse with no wins

27 Royal fur

29 New York tribe

30 Fall, for one

31 Diner patron

33 Duo quadrupled

37 Tight-fitting


39 Compass dir.

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


YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

T	A	G	S	C	R	E	E
A	C	R	I	D	H	E	L
S	C	E	N	E	A	N	V
K	E	G	C	A	S	T	I
S	P	O	K	A	N	E	S
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT





COVER STORY

# BEGUILING TIME OF BANGLA THUMRI

The quintessential Classical and Nazrul Sangeet artist Nirupoma Rahman expresses devotion and love of music through her melodious voice. She is a Bangladesh-Australia based singer who recently sat down with Rafi Hossain for an exclusive interview. During the interview, the artist performed an enthralling blend of songs and talked about the beautiful influence of Indian classical music in Bangla Songs.



PHOTO COURTESY: NIRUPOMA RAHMAN

**Rafi Hossain:** Thank you for giving us your time, Nirupoma. I am truly delighted to be here with you today. **Nirupoma Rahman:** I want to thank you and The Daily Star. I am looking forward to our lively discussion alongside singing.

**Rafi Hossain:** Generally, audiences sometimes avoid the classical genre of music. Can you tell us why that is? **Nirupoma Rahman:** I think it's important to expose the audience to all kinds of music. The general audience often assumes classical music to be difficult, when in reality, all music is universal, and there is nothing complicated about it at all. One may not understand the composition or language, but the melody can be enjoyed by all. Even a popular song can be based on a pure raga. I believe it is also the responsibility of us artists to explain this to the audience clearly. Let me give you an example. If we were are both given same shades of three different colours to paint with, we would both draw entirely different paintings which reflect our personality, thoughts and insights. Just as playing with colours is called painting, playing around with specific melodic notes is known as *raag*. There are also different variations and history of Indian classical music.

**Rafi Hossain:** Could you tell us about Nazrul's contributions? **Nirupoma Rahman:** Nazrul has brought a lot of aspects of Indian classical music, as well as other genres, into Bangla music. His not only composed so many songs which are based on different *ragas*, he also made his own *ragas* given the needs of his beautiful lyrics. In Hindustani classical music, melodic structure is vital compared to the words. Bangla songs, on the contrary, call for special attention to the words. To interweave the lyrical and melodic aspects, Nazrul even mixed different ragas in one composition very beautifully and with ease. Not only that, he also brought different genres of Indian classical music like *Kheyaa*, *Thumri*, *Kajri*, *Dadra*, and so on into Bangla songs keeping all the essence

and purity of Bangla music and 'Bangaliyana'. And that was only possible because of his immense depth of knowledge in music and sheer talent in language. Each of his compositions are like a treasure with hidden beauties for the singer to discover and highlight in their own ways. And that element of exploration is something I really love and enjoy. His tutelage under Ustad Zamiruddin Khan, who is considered to be a maestro of *Thumri*, had made an enormous impact on his love and knowledge in Indian Classical music. There are many aspects of Indian classical music, which Nazrul pioneered in incorporating very uniquely in Bangla music. Later many musicians followed his footsteps. In relation to this, with great admiration, I will make a mention here about an esteemed and widely respected Azad Rahman, who has recently passed away. He has worked tirelessly and with great passion to compose



and popularise Bangla Kheyaa.

**Rafi Hossain:** Tell us more about Thumri. **Nirupoma Rahman:** The word *Thumri* has been derived from 'thumakna', which implies a sort of sensual and romantic nature. Usually when we hear the word *Thumri*, we assume it would be in Hindi or Urdu. However, Nazrul has introduced us to *Thumri* in Bangla music, keeping the melodic and rhythmic beauty of the genre, yet maintaining the essence of romantic and passionate imagery of Bangla literature. Nazrul created many *Thumri* compositions and experimented with different forms of their melodies in a really beautiful manner.

**Rafi Hossain:** You mentioned the word 'Kajri', what is it? **Nirupoma Rahman:** *Kajri* can fall under the *Thumri* category. The word *Kajri* means black thick rainy clouds. *Kajri* is usually sung to either express the feeling of separation, especially when it is raining and you don't have your loved one around, or to describe the rain itself. This musical genre related and relevant to the rainy season according to North Indian classical music. Bengalis have a very special and romantic connection to rain and

*In Hindustani classical music, melodic structure is vital compared to the words. Bangla songs, on the contrary, call for special attention to the words. To interweave the lyrical and melodic aspects, Nazrul even mixed different ragas in one composition very beautifully and with ease.*

monsoon, and Nazrul was the first to bring *Kajri* in Bangla music. Nazrul explored and studied these things thoroughly and added words and phrases from other languages that fit in perfectly with the Bangla songs. And that proves his immense literary talent.

**Rafi Hossain:** Do you think it's important to practice and become skilled at classical music before stepping into the genre of Nazrul's songs? **Nirupoma Rahman:** I think learning classical music is an important step before pursuing any specific field of music. Understanding the form and structure of melodies is an important skill to acquire, whether you choose to pursue Nazrul sangeet, *Rabindra sangeet*, modern pop music or even band music. But for Bangla music not only the melodic part but also the understanding the lyrical part of it also crucial. It is very important to understand the connection between the words and melody of a song to perfectly express it. I believe that just like chefs keep tasting their food as they cook, as a musician it's important to understand and connect with the feeling behind the songs as you sing and practise. Otherwise, how can we expect to deliver the song meaningfully and connect to our audience?

**Rafi Hossain:** Will you be singing any of Sabina Yeasmin's songs for her birthday as it's her birthday today? **Nirupoma Rahman:** I don't think I can properly honour any of her songs as she is such a legendary artist with exceptional music. However, I will express my love and respect for her through a Nazrul song, the lyrics of which portray my feelings exactly. **Rafi Hossain:** Is there anything else you would like to add? **Nirupoma Rahman:** I would say it's important to expose the younger generation to our classical forms of music in a more engaging and stimulating way, rather than blaming them for being unaware. It is our duty and the duty of those in the media to promote such music. Lastly, I want to thank you and the audience for listening to me and being with me today. It is truly a joyful experience to sing like this.

Shreya Shomoyeeta

GRAPE VINE



## Shakib Khan shooting after 226 days

After being stuck home for almost six months, Shakib Khan is back to shooting the Anonno Mamun directed movie *Nabab LLB*. Alongside Shakib Khan, the movie also features Mahiya Mahi, Orchita Sporshia and Shahiduzzaman Selim, among others. The film is being produced under the banner of *Celebrity Production*. Regarding the movie, Shakib Khan said, "I was told that a lot of people had their eyes on me, and that if I began shooting, it would give a lot of people courage to start. With a lot of things in mind, I decided that starting shooting is the best course of action for me. I always try to present Bangladeshi films to the world, and even after a lot of adversities, it still hasn't stopped. Due to the pandemic, our industry and the people of our country have suffered, but we will continue our work."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



## ROSHAN'S New Mask

Popular actor Roshan recently signed for a new film, *Mukhosh Porimoni* will be seen sharing the screen with him again. The film, directed by Iftekhar Shuvo, begins shooting within a few days. Roshan said, "I really liked the story of the film as it is based on current times. I have previously worked with Porimoni in *Rokto*. Overall, I feel that my audience will appreciate this project." Aside from this, Roshan is still awaiting four releases: *Makeup*, *Ostad*, *Jinn* and *Operation Sundarban*.



## Oyshee singing in noakhali dialect

After staying home for a long time, singer Oyshee has finally been able to work on her music. Aside from appearing on a live television programme, she has also recorded new songs. Some of her songs are set to appear on films. She has given her voice to the title track of the Iftekhar Chowdhury film, *Mukti*. The song was given tune by Shahriar Rafat, and Oyshee had to do the song in the Noakhali dialect. Regarding it, she said, "I was still very involved in music even though I was stuck home, but now, I am going to the studio to work on songs. So far, I have been able to work on some songs made for movies, and I really enjoyed singing the song in the Noakhali dialect."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

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



## Bandish Bandits

*Bandish Bandits* is a Hindi TV show on Amazon Prime Video, aired on August 4, 2020. It was created by Amritpal Singh Bindra and Anand Tiwari, directed by Tiwari himself, produced under the banner of *Still and Still Moving Pictures*, and stars Ritwik Bhowmik, Shreya Chaudhry and Naseeruddin Shah, among others. The show follows the lives of a popstar and a classical singer who are on a quest of self-discovery and overcoming their differences.

## Raised by Wolves

*Raised by Wolves* is a sci-fi TV series, set in a strange planet where two androids are given the task of raising human children. It was created by Aaron Guzikowski, produced by Jon Kuyper, distributed by WarnerMedia Direct, and stars Amanda Collin, Abubakar Salim and Winta McGrath, among others. It was first released on September 3, 2020 on HBO Max.



## PERRY MASON

*Perry Mason* is a period-drama series, originally released on June 21, 2020 on HBO. It was created by Rolin Jones and Ron Fitzgerald, directed by Tim Van Patten and Deniz Gamze Ergüven, produced by Matthew Rhys, and stars Matthew Rhys, Juliet Rylance and Chris Chalk, among others. The plot follows the life of a defense lawyer, Perry Mason (based on the eponymous character by Erle Stanley Gardner), as he takes on an intense case.

## I May Destroy You

*I May Destroy You* is a comedy-drama series, written and created by Michaela Coel, directed by Coel herself, along with Sam Miller, produced by Simon Meyers and Simon Maloney, and stars Michaela Coel, Weruche Opia and Paapa Essiedu, among others. The plot deals with the concept of consent in the modern day through the eyes of a millennial icon. It was first released on June 7, 2020 on HBO and BBC One.

Amina Hossain





## Concerted effort to contest posts other than president's

SPORTS REPORTER

After the sudden departure of aspiring presidential candidate Tarafder Mohammad Ruhul Amin from the election scene and Badal Roy's attempt to withdraw from the election, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) polls appeared to be shaping up to be a one-sided affair like in 2012, but it now seems there will be two-way traffic after all.

Organisers from district football associations and some Dhaka clubs have reorganised under the banner of Integrated Panel on Tuesday to bring some excitement to the BFF elections, but they decided not to contest against incumbent president Kazi Salahuddin, who is leading another group named Combined Panel. They will instead contest the 20 other posts.

The Integrated Panel did not explain why they were not contesting the president's post, which has three candidates -- Salahuddin, Shafiqul Islam Manik and Badal, who attempted to pull out due to pressure from "some quarters".

Sheikh Mohammad Aslam, a candidate for senior vice president from the Integrated Panel, is disheartened by what he called external pressures.

"I'm really ashamed that country's influential persons threatened candidates like Badal Roy and others. If pressure comes through such important places centring just a small election, then where do we go? Those influential persons should focus on their own work



which is more important than the BFF polls. FIFA also does not permit such interference and can also ban us, so we are really worried," said former national striker Aslam.

The Integrated Panel officially started their campaign yesterday from Sylhet where they will meet the leaders of four district football associations and the divisional football association before heading to Chattogram for another meeting with four districts, university and educational board. They will also meet the leaders of some districts and educational board in Noakhali. The Integrated panel also plans to meet with leaders of Rajshahi and Rangpur division on September 21 and 22 before having another meeting with district leaders from Khulna, Barishal, Mymensingh and Dhaka divisions on September 20.

"Following the sudden departure of the secretary general of Bangladesh District and Divisional Football Association (BDDFA), Tarafder Ruhul Amin, many of us were broken down mentally. They [district leaders] were also

disappointed and discouraged. That's why we needed some time to make the district leaders understand and bring them back into the elections," said BDDFA deputy secretary general Shahinul Islam Bhuiyan on way to Sylhet yesterday.

"The organisers at the grassroots were never given the opportunity to serve football but they are the main cogs in the wheel. So, we are not weaker than anyone. We have chosen qualified organisers to compete in the BFF elections in a bid to change the leadership in football. We believe we can win a majority of the posts," said Bhuiyan.

There were also strong whispers that both Tarafder and Roy left the scene following "pressure from some quarters" and many also believe the Integrated Panel may face the same fate in the October 3 polls.

"We are hoping that we won't face any pressure because we are not competing for the presidential post. Besides, those who are going to compete in the elections are

qualified in their respective fields and they will be able to change the fate of the country's football if they get a chance to serve," said Bhuiyan.

Another BDDFA leader, who preferred not to be named, said they are ready to face the challenge as they have experience of such situations.

"After the disclosure of the final candidature of the BFF elections, general people from all over the country have already voiced their opinion against the existing committee on Facebook and we certainly did not tell them to do so. So, we believe we are ready to face any challenges in any circumstance," said the organiser.

"We know pressure may come from different quarters and our well-wishers have advised us to be careful. In the last elections, I was asked to avail all facilities from the hotel after allotting me a room two days before the elections and advised to stay inside the room. If this type of situation returns in upcoming polls, then we won't have nothing to do and it is reality."



## Salahuddin brushes off 'professional' Facebook campaign

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin said that his popularity prompted others to criticise him, while maintaining that social media campaigns were being conducted 'professionally'.

"It means I am popular when I am the subject of discussion. I don't use Facebook, so I don't know about it but my office informs me. One interesting thing I have seen is that there were one thousand dislikes under a post about 'Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed'. But you know my name is Kazi Salahuddin. When I saw it, I thought one thousand people couldn't make a mistake. So, I can understand that a platform has been made for this publicity. It is not a big deal to make a platform through Facebook, so I can't give importance to it because it has been done professionally," Salahuddin replied when asked about the criticism on Facebook.

The BFF primo has been subject to the wrath of the country's football fans after deciding to run for president of the BFF four a fourth consecutive term.

A post made by the BFF on Facebook about the polls, slated for October 3, drew 26 thousand comments, most against Kazi Salahuddin. Facebook campaigners also flocked in front of the National Press Club a few days ago to demand Salahuddin and his committee's resignation.

Salahuddin said he had no intent to take any action despite the negative publicity and that he would not resign.

"I have come here to serve football. They and [SA] Sultan [former BFF president] are asking me to resign but there is no scope to do it because the elections are 15 days later. You come here by winning the elections. If you ask the president of a country to resign, there is no logic. Yes, you will ask me to resign, when I am not holding the elections," said the three-time BFF president, who also heavily criticised former footballers.

"I watched some news on TV about people talking about my fourth-term. They, who did not watch football in the past 10 years and some four to five people from the street, are raising questions. You show me whether those who watched football in the past 10 years are saying this? One thing is very clear: five to six footballers, who retired from football for 20 to 25 years, are saying the same things time and again on different channels. But, you never take any interviews of current players. Those five players always contest in the BFF elections and get 12, 10 and 20 votes," said Salahuddin.

## 'Barca' can't afford Depay

AFP, The Hague

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas said on Tuesday that his Barcelona counterpart Josep Maria Bartomeu told him the Catalan giants could not afford Memphis Depay after reports in Dutch media a deal was almost complete.

De Telegraaf reported earlier on Tuesday that Netherlands forward Depay was set to join compatriots Frenkie de Jong and Ronald Koeman at Barca this week in a transfer worth 25 million euros.

Responding on Twitter, Aulas said: "The president of Barcelona told me on Sunday that Barca are really suffering from the Covid crisis and were not able to make an offer."

Koeman has been on the hunt for a striker after telling Uruguayan Luis Suarez he wasn't in his plans for the coming season.

Depay played an important role in Lyon's progress to the Champions League semi-final and scored a hat-trick in their opening Ligue 1 win of the season over Dijon.

However, he had announced that he did not wish to extend his Lyon contract, which expires next summer, and has never hidden his desire to play "for a bigger club".

The 26-year-old started on the bench for Lyon's Ligue 1 match against Montpellier on Tuesday night.



## YAAMIN'S DREAM COMES TRUE

Sheikh Yaamin Sinan had made the news after photographers captured beautiful images of him playing cricket with his mother at Paltan Maidan last Friday. Yaamin's energy drew the attention of his hero Mushfiqur Rahim and the child got to meet his childhood hero. Mushfiqur himself went to the Banani field yesterday to meet up with the youngster and presented him with his No. 15 shirt along with an autographed memorabilia bat and gloves.

PHOTO: MAASRANGA TV

## SLC 'easing up' on BCB's terms

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka Cricket [SLC] is going through a busy time to set a revised tour plan to host Bangladesh for the three-Test series under the ICC Test Championship.

After Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan called the SLC's health protocols 'historically unique', SLC got involved in a series of meetings with concerned authorities in the government.

An SLC team led by president Shammil Silva met with the country's head of national operation centre for prevention of Covid-19 outbreak (NOCPCO) Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, chief of defence staff and commander of the army at the army HQ on Tuesday.

One of the SLC members, during the meeting, listed a copy of the blueprint protocol that has now been laid in connection with the Bangladesh tour beginning on September 27.

Even though SLC is expected to



Head coach Russell Domingo was apparently making some serious points to explosive batsman Liton Das during a nets session in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROOZ AHMED

go through further discussions with health authorities, it has already laid plans that would meet most of BCB's terms. According to sources, SLC is considering to move away

from their stance of mandatory 14-day quarantine period towards a week-long isolation period for Bangladesh.

According to the new plan, the

visitors are expected to have a new bio-secure bubble that would allow Bangladeshi cricketers to practise within the first week of their arrival, but confirming isolation. After the first week, the visitors would be allowed to get into full-fledged training which includes a two-day warm-up game against Sri Lanka A. Meanwhile, SLC is also considering a request to add more members to the contingent travelling to the island. The Tigers are likely to be allowed to have between 35 and 41 members even though SLC had initially instructed to keep the number within thirty including support staff.

The hosts are planning to arrange the camp for Bangladesh in Hambantota, but the BCB, according to sources, is willing to have the conditioning camp in Galle or Dambula as the distance from hotel to the field in Hambantota is almost 45 kilometres.

Kandy is expected to host the first two Tests while the third Test is likely to be played in Colombo.

## All quiet in Dortmund, Leipzig as Bayern aim for ninth straight

AFP, Berlin

European champions Bayern Munich begin the hunt for a ninth-straight Bundesliga title on Friday, but while their rivals ponder how to break their iron grip on the German league, the Bavarian giants have pressing issues to resolve on the eve of the new season.

Bayern host Schalke at the Allianz Arena to kick-off the Bundesliga season just 26 days after lifting the Champions League trophy in Lisbon to complete the treble.

They stand to play 57 games in a condensed 2020/21 fixture list, but on Friday, Bayern will be able to play in front of a small number of fans for the first time since March.

However, they have already lost three of the Champions League-winning squad's loans for Ivan Perisic, Philippe Coutinho and Alvaro Odriozola expired.

"We have to make up for it," head coach Hansi Flick admitted with Bayern facing Sevilla in the UEFA Super Cup and Borussia Dortmund for the German Super Cup in the coming fortnight.

Flick's star-studded squad finished last season on an all-conquering 21-game winning run,



After an all-conquering season, Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich still look the team to beat in Germany as they start their campaign for a ninth straight title against Schalke on Friday.

PHOTO: BAYERN MUNICH

including the 8-2 thrashing of Spanish giants Barcelona in the Champions League's semifinals.

"The current team of Hansi Flick is perhaps the best Bayern team ever," Hans-Joachim Watzke, chief executive of arch rivals Borussia Dortmund, declared last month.

"They no longer beat their

opponents -- they destroy them."

Bayern's last loss was at the hands of Moenchengladbach in December.

Watzke refuses to make any statements about Dortmund denying the Bavarians a ninth-straight Bundesliga title in 2020/21.

The messages are similar from the camp of Champions League

semifinalists RB Leipzig, who finished third in the Bundesliga behind Bayern and runners-up Dortmund.

"What Bayern did in Lisbon was impressive," admitted Leipzig's German defender Marcel Halstenberg. "We are working to become even better and to reach their level."

Bayern's impressive run is down to the irresistible form of stars like Thomas Mueller and Robert Lewandowski.

Mueller managed a league-record 21 assists, making a mockery of Joachim Loew's decision to end his Germany career in March 2019. Lewandowski netted 55 goals in 47 games last season, leaving him as the top-scorer in both the Bundesliga, where he hit 34 goals, and the Champions League, where he scored 15 times in 10 games.

However, to preserve the harmony in the dressing room, Flick and the club's bosses must quickly resolve the future of defender David Alaba and midfielder Thiago Alcantara. Both are stalling over signing contract extensions.

"I don't know who is going to leave us and who is going to arrive again. It's not the best way to prepare," Flick has admitted.

### SHORT CORNER

#### PAOK dump Benfica out of Champions League race

Two-time European champions Benfica were dumped out of the Champions League in the qualifiers on Tuesday following a 2-1 defeat at PAOK Thessaloniki.

The Portuguese giants, who won the old European Cup twice in the 1960s, were knocked out by goals from Dimitrios Giannoulis and Andrija Zivkovic.

Benfica finished second in the Portuguese top division but had a tough draw at PAOK, who finished second in the Greek Super League.

They will not have a chance to overcome the defeat because the third qualifying round is being contested with single-leg ties.

-- AFP



and complained of back trouble.

The Colombian, 23, saw his title defence effectively extinguished on Sunday, the first major mountain stage, when he slipped to more than eight minutes off the pace.

"This is obviously not how I wanted my Tour de France to end, but I agree that it is the right decision for me in the circumstances," Bernal said in a team statement.

"We have taken this decision with Egan's best interests at heart," said Ineos team principal Dave Brailsford.

"Egan is a true champion who loves to race, but he is also a young rider, with many Tours ahead of him and at this point, on balance, we feel it is wiser for him to stop racing." -- AFP



#### Defending champion withdraws from Tour de France

Last year's winner Egan Bernal has withdrawn from the Tour de France, his Ineos team said on Wednesday, after the young Colombian fell out of contention





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## US-BROKERED HISTORIC DEALS

# UAE, Bahrain forge ties with Israel

*Palestinians protest; Israeli jets bomb Gaza after rocket fire*

AGENCIES

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed agreements on Tuesday to establish formal ties with Israel, becoming the first Arab states in a quarter century to break a longstanding taboo, in a strategic realignment of Middle East countries against Iran.

US President Donald Trump hosted the White House ceremony, capping a dramatic month when first the UAE and then Bahrain agreed to reverse decades of ill will without a resolution of Israel's dispute with the Palestinians.

In front of a crowd of several hundred people on the White House lawn, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed accords with Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdulatif Al Zayani.

The deals, denounced by the Palestinians, make them the third and fourth Arab states to take such steps toward normalizing relations since Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas said only an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories can bring peace to the Middle East.

"Peace, security and stability will not be achieved in

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People standing on a fragile strip of land, which has been shrinking fast due to river erosion, to see the Padma bridge in the distance, ignoring the risks. A construction shed of Chinese employees working for the bridge is just a 100 yards away and also at risk of being devoured by the river. The photo was taken recently in Munshiganj.

PHOTO:  
ANISUR RAHMAN

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## Neo-JMB leader confesses to killing missing man

*Body not found; SITE uploads victim's photo; CTTC arrests 4*

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A Neo-JMB leader has confessed to a court that a sleeper cell of the militant group killed a man whose photograph is uploaded on the website of SITE Intelligence Group.

The picture, captioned "IS Documents Execution of Practitioner of Witchcraft in North of Bangladeshi Capital", is of Sohail Rana, 39, from Shilasi village in Mymensingh's Gafargao.

SITE Intelligence, which monitors the online activities militant group ISIS, released the picture on August 16. In it, Sohail is seen bald, wearing a purple vest, two large beaded necklaces and an identity card around his neck.

Sheikh Sultan Mohammad Naimuzzaman, leader of a Neo-JMB cell, who was arrested with four others on August 11 in Sylhet, confessed to a magistrate on August 24 that a Gazipur-based Neo-JMB sleeper cell of five killed Sohail, who they called "shadhubaba", said an official from The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Unit (CTTC).

It claimed to have arrested four of the murder suspects on September 10 from Azampur area of the capital's Uttara. They

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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

### Election preparation starts

September 17, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### VOTERS' LIST FROM OCT 1

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Idrees announces in Dhaka today that enumeration of the voters and the preparation of voters' lists would begin on October 1 this year and the final voters' list would be published on January 30 next year. Addressing the nation over radio and television, the chief election commissioner says that the election authorities are determined to hold the general election in smooth and disciplined manner which, he adds, is imperative for holding impartial election in the country.

#### 'MY ELECTION PREPARATION STARTS TODAY'

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spends his third consecutive busy day today after his return to the country. Bangabandhu reaches the Gono Bhaban at 10:00am and stays until 8:30pm. Bangabandhu confers with the Information Minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Revenue Minister Abdur Rahb Serniabat in the morning.

In the evening, Commerce Minister MR Siddique, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and Minister for Power, Natural Resources and Scientific Research Dr Mafiz Chowdhury call on Bangabandhu and apprise him of different problems faced by their respective ministries.

At 8:05pm Bangabandhu, along with some of his cabinet

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## MASS GRAVES IN MALAYSIA

### Fortify Rights wants release of probe report

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Regional rights organisation Fortify Rights has called upon Malaysia to immediately release the final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into the human trafficking and mass graves of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis discovered in Wang Kelian, Perlis in 2015.

The RCI submitted to the King of Malaysia one year ago its report on the mass graves in Wang Kelian, where Malaysian authorities discovered 139 graves and 28 suspected human trafficking camps.

"Malaysian citizens and survivors of trafficking deserve access to the final report," said Matthew Smith, chief executive officer at Fortify Rights in a statement yesterday. "This is a matter of truth, justice, and accountability."

Between 2012 and 2015,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## World's longest tunnel above 10,000ft ready



NDTV ONLINE

The construction of the Atal Tunnel connecting Manali with Leh, which is the world's longest highway tunnel above 10,000 feet, has been completed in a span of 10 years whereas the original estimated time was less than six years.

"Atal Tunnel, connecting Manali to Leh, is the world's longest highway tunnel above 10,000 feet. The estimated period for completion of this tunnel was less than 6 years but it was completed in 10 years," said KP Purushothaman, Chief Engineer.

"There are CCTV cameras at every 60 metres and emergency exit tunnels at every 500 metres inside the tunnel. The tunnel will reduce the distance

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## RIFAT MURDER CASE

### Court sets Sept 30 for verdict delivery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The verdict of much talked about Rifat Sharif murder case would be delivered on September 30.

Barguna District and Sessions Judge Asaduzzaman declared the date yesterday noon after closing arguments for both plaintiff and prosecution of the case.

On the day, the verdict will be delivered for 10 adult accused of the case.

Fourteen more juvenile accused of case were undergoing trial at the children's court in the district.

Prosecutor Bhuvan Chandra Halder said, "As per the pre-arranged date, the rest of the arguments in the case were presented today [Wednesday]. The court set September 30 as the date of verdict after the argument finished."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## ATTACK ON UNO

### Police hush about witnesses' statements

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Detective Branch of police has recorded testimonies of three witnesses under Section-164 in connection with a case filed over the attack on Ghoraghat Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

The authorities, however, expressed their inability to share any further details of the testimonies with journalists.

The first testimony was recorded on Saturday while two more were recorded on Tuesday afternoon. Imam Zafar, investigation officer

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Cars seized for various reasons are left to wear away on the footpath in front of Uttara South Police Station. While obstructing sidewalks is illegal, and the DNCC mayor has begun a drive against such practices, the officials of the police station seem to be least bothered about the problems the pedestrians face.

PHOTO:  
AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Pandemic at beginning stage

*Warns WHO; Indian hospitals scramble for oxygen; Russia to sell 100m doses of vaccine to India*

AGENCIES

The world is still at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, a World Health Organization special envoy on Covid-19 said as infections in India soared past five million yesterday.

Global cases are rapidly approaching 30 million, with more than 936,000 known Covid-19 deaths, the global economy devastated and nations struggling to contain outbreaks.

In the frantic global race to battle the disease, the EU's chief warned against "vaccine nationalism". "None of us will be safe until all of us are safe -- wherever we live, whatever we have," Ursula von der Leyen said.

The spread of the virus has accelerated in some of the most populous parts of the world such as India, where the latest million infections were detected over just 11 days.

And some experts have warned that the total number of cases could be far higher in the vast nation, which has been easing one of the world's strictest lockdowns recently despite the surge to help its reeling economy.

"People have lost their fear or are too tired (of) being cautious. They want to be out and earn a living right now," Jayant Surana, a New Delhi-based entrepreneur, told AFP.

"Everything has now been left to god's will." The surge in infections is piling pressure on hospitals grappling with unreliable supplies of oxygen that they need to treat tens of thousands of critical patients.

In the big states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, that are also some of the worst-affected by the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



**PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 17**

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:35	12:45	4:30	6:14	7:45

JAMAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION