

**SP BALASUBRAHMANYAM PASSES AWAY**  
The legendary singer dies at 74 after coronavirus-related complications  
**SEE PAGE 5**

# The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXX No. 244

ASHWIN 11, 1427 BS

SAFAR 8, 1442 HJRI

12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



**'I fear the worst'**  
UN CHIEF WARNS WORLD IS DOOMED IF KEY ACTORS HANDLE CLIMATE CRISIS LIKE COVID-19 PAGE 5



**"It would save the country a lot of agony and help lower the temperature over fights for the court."**  
CALIFORNIA US REPRESENTATIVE RO KHANNA ON A DEMOCRATIC BILL THAT AIMS TO LIMIT US SUPREME COURT JUSTICE TERMS TO 18 YEARS PAGE 5



**"You did not deserve for them to throw you out like they did... at this stage nothing surprises me anymore."**  
LIONEL MESSI TO LUIS SUÁREZ AFTER THE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FROM BARCELONA PAGE 11



## LIFE GOES ON

ANISUR RAHMAN

Social distancing and Covid-19 transmission are evidently not high on the list of concerns. For these workers, at an iron foundry in Shyampur, the most pressing issue in life is earning the basic living that would allow them to put food on the table back home.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Selim siphoned off Tk 13.28cr to Thailand

He made a fortune out of online gambling, finds CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Online casino kingpin Selim Prodhon raked in crores through online gambling in Bangladesh and amassed business firms and a villa in Thailand.

For his investments in Bangkok and Pattaya he was known among many as Thai Don.

He bought most of the properties through laundering the ill-gotten money out of the country after 2018, investigators have learnt.

After almost a year-long investigation in a case filed under the Money Laundering Act against Selim Prodhon and five others last year, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police has come to know about his wealth and properties abroad.

CID officers found evidence suggesting that Selim Prodhon and the five other accused have laundered Tk 13.28 crore they made from an online casino trade.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Cox's Bazar police go thru' overhaul

About 1,500 cops transferred from the district within a couple of days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an unprecedented move, the police administration has transferred 1,487 of its members -- from constables to inspectors -- from Cox's Bazar.

They have been attached to different police ranges in separate phases in the last couple of days, the relevant wing of the Police Headquarters (PHQ) confirmed the matter to The Daily Star yesterday.

Of the 1,487, 40 are inspectors, 10 traffic inspectors, 179 sub-inspectors (SIs), eight sergeants, five town sub-inspectors (TSIs), 169 assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs), 19 assistant town sub-inspectors (ATISs), 50 nayeks and 1,007 constables, said officials at the wing.

This is the biggest transfer move in any district police in recent history, said PHQ sources.

The sources said the total number of police personnel deployed in the district was around 1,515.

Although police high-ups said the move was a "regular administrative process", the sources said the "wholesale reshuffle" in Cox's Bazar was actually part of a "correction campaign" that followed the killing of retired army major Sinha Md Rashed Khan in the district.

Several police officials are facing trial for their involvement in the killing.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

### BIG SHAKE-UP

430 inspector, SI, ASI level officers, 1,057 nayeks and constables leave Cox's Bazar

## US ELECTION 2020 Race much tighter in key swing states

Survey shows Biden may win popular votes, but Trump may win Electoral College

AGENCIES

The US presidential race is much closer than national surveys suggest, according to Reuters/Ipsos opinion polls in battleground states that show Democrat Joe Biden with only a slim lead over President Donald Trump in three highly competitive states and in a dead heat in three others.

The survey came as US race enters the final stretch with Trump and Biden jostling to lure voters to cast their votes in the Nov. 3 election to decide the future of the country amid fears of foreign meddling and economic meltdown from coronavirus pandemic.

The online state polls, conducted earlier in September and released this week, found Biden and Trump tied

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Protect our planet

PM at UN roundtable presents 5-point proposal to fight climate change; urges robust international collaboration

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for a robust international collaboration as she unveiled a five-point proposal to protect the planet from the adverse impact of climate change.

"To protect the planet and ourselves [from the adverse impact of climate change], I would suggest that political leadership must encourage robust international collaboration," she said in her first proposal.

The premier made the proposal through a video message at a high-level virtual roundtable on climate action on the sidelines of the 75th United Nations General Assembly in New York on Thursday.

In her second proposal, Hasina said the global temperature increase must be limited up to 1.5 degrees Celsius and all Paris provisions must be implemented.

Thirdly, she said, the promised funds have to be made available to the vulnerable countries.

In the fourth proposal, the PM said polluting countries must increase their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) through necessary mitigation measures.

"Recognise that rehabilitation of the climate refugees is a global responsibility," she said in the fifth proposal.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



## None will be left behind

Says Saudia country manager about 50,000 migrant workers waiting to fly to KSA

RASHIDUL HASAN

All the stranded Bangladeshi expatriate workers will be able to return to their workplaces in Saudi Arabia and they need not to be worried about it, said Tarik A Alowaidi, country manager at Saudi Arabian Airlines.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at his office at the city's Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel yesterday, he requested all the 50,000 migrant workers waiting to return to the Gulf country to have patience.

"Of course, all the Bangladeshi workers waiting to return to their workplaces in the Kingdom will be able to reach there," he said, adding that they were trying their best to find a quick solution.

He said Bangladeshi expatriate workers who are holding valid visas, exit and re-entry visas and work visas will be allowed to enter the Kingdom where they will have to undergo a PCR test within 48 hours of their arrival.

"If the requirements are met, there should be no problem and we have already operated a few flights carrying passengers back to the Kingdom and those were successful."

The Saudi embassy has recently announced that they will start the process of extending visas and iqama (work permit) of Bangladeshi expatriate workers from September 27.

"You know the number of expatriate Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Tarik A Alowaidi



**GOLDEN TICKET...** A man proudly displays a plane ticket to Saudi Arabia moments after buying it from a booth at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital yesterday. There has been a scramble for tickets to the Gulf country after it decided to extend its work and resident permits for Bangladeshi expatriates by 24 days. The permits were previously supposed to expire on September 30.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## 21 more die, 1,383 infected in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-one people were reported dead from Covid-19 yesterday, the 201st day since the first cases were reported in the country.

The death toll now stands at 5,093 which is 1.43 percent of all confirmed cases, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

In the 24 hours until 8:30am yesterday, 1,383 people tested positive for the coronavirus.

The positivity rate was 11.09 percent against 12,473 tests in 103 Covid-19 testing laboratories in the 24 hours.

The overall positivity rate stands at 18.90 percent as the total number of confirmed cases is 3,56,767.

During the last three weeks, Bangladesh's position has remained 15th in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of confirmed cases, according to the worldometers.info.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**1,383**  
New cases in 24hrs



**3,56,767**  
Total cases



**5,093**  
Deaths



**2,67,024**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**



**989,055**  
Deaths



**32,498,682**  
Total cases

## Gear up diplomacy to expand trade

PM asks diplomats at virtual discussion commemorating Bangabandhu's historic Bangla speech at UNGA in 1974

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked Bangladesh's diplomats to reinforce economic diplomacy for expanding trade and business to achieve economic self-reliance for the country.

"Diplomacy has transformed into almost economic diplomacy. Now we need to see how we should expand trade and business to achieve economic self-reliance by maintaining good relations with all, to achieve development, and bring peace through collaborating with one another. We will have to carry out diplomacy in such a way," she said.

The PM was addressing a discussion virtually from the Gono Bhavan.

The discussion was arranged by the foreign ministry at the Foreign Service Academy in the city commemorating the historic Bangla speech by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the United Nations General Assembly in 1974.

"In today's world, the responsibility of our diplomatic missions has also changed. Now it is rather economic diplomacy, not only political diplomacy," said the premier.

She said diplomats should join the Bangladeshi missions abroad after having proper training at the Foreign Service Academy.

"I would expect those who are going to join work in our diplomatic missions to receive proper training here," she said, adding that not only diplomats but also all staff of the missions and their spouses should be given training at the academy.

Referring to the contributions of Bangladesh to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, Hasina said Bangladesh is always ready to establish peace.

"Since we are dependent on each other, we expect cooperation from all. We are also ready to cooperate with anyone, if needed. Bangladesh always wants peace to prevail across the world."

She said the Bangladesh forces, including army and police, have been playing a special role in the UN peacekeeping missions to check conflicts in various countries, sacrificing lives in some cases.

Hasina said Bangladesh won the

membership of the United Nations in a short time after its independence, which was a big success in the diplomacy of Bangabandhu. Bangladesh became a member of almost all international organisations, including the UN and the Commonwealth during his tenure.

Mentioning that the maiden speech of Bangabandhu in the UNGA is still relevant, she said, "If we review the speech the Father of the Nation delivered in the UN on September 25, 1974 [also on Friday], we would see we're still dealing with the same issues in the international arena."

In his speech, Bangabandhu had focused on the environment, how to prevent damages caused by natural disasters, changing the fate of the poor, ensuring human rights, justice and socio-economic development, Hasina said, adding that he had called upon the whole world to protect the people from diseases.

Talking about the Covid-19 pandemic, she said her government has placed the highest importance on food production as famine may be seen in the world due to the novel coronavirus.

She said the government had been making efforts to produce food as much as possible and distribute the foods properly, provide food assistance to the poor and overall maintain the food security.

At the function, Hasina also opened the newly constructed Foreign Service Academy Building digitally in Sugandha on Bailey Road in the capital.

The PM unveiled the covers of two books titled "Bangabandhu, Sheikh Hasina and the United Nations: Bangladesh at the World Stage" and "Bangabandhu: The People's Hero" published by the foreign ministry on the occasion of the Mujib Borsho (Mujib Year).

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Mia Seppo spoke at the discussion meeting.

Sugandha was the first Gono Bhavan after the country's independence, from where the Father of the Nation had led his government and used to formulate and conduct foreign policy matters, among other important issues.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opens the newly constructed Foreign Service Academy Building on Bailey Road in the capital yesterday. The premier inaugurated the building virtually from the Gono Bhavan, marking the historic Bangla speech by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the United Nations General Assembly in 1974.

PHOTO: PID

## Protect our planet

FROM PAGE 1

Thanking the UN secretary-general for his concern regarding the impacts of climate change, Hasina pointed out that Bangladesh has some ideas and experiences to share on adaptation and resilience.

"We have prepared Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 to deal with the challenges of climate change and water management."

The PM said the government has built 4,291 cyclone shelters and 523 flood shelters in the country, while 56,000 volunteers are available to facilitate preparation prior to any cyclone.

"That's why we have joined the 'REAP' [Risk-informed Early Action Partnership] initiative which aims to make one billion people around the

world safer from disasters by 2025," she added.

In this context, she mentioned Bangladesh is the current chair of Climate Vulnerable Forum, while Global Centre of Adaptation's regional office was set up in Dhaka recently.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened the event and it was moderated by British journalist Femi Oke. Guterres delivered the introductory remarks at the 90-minute programme.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, Italian PM Giuseppe Conte, President of Chile Sebastian Pineria Echenique, Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou, Fijian PM Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, President of the European Commission Ursula von

## Cox's Bazar police

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Nur Mohammad, former inspector general of police (IGP), told The Daily Star yesterday that such decisions of transferring a huge number of police members are usually made when police personnel of a particular area are either found involved or feared to have been involved in crimes.

"But it is not possible to change [their] character only through transfer orders," he observed.

Their supervisors, including the superintendent of police (SP), the additional SP and the deputy inspector general concerned, must perform their duties with utmost professionalism, he said.

"The supervisors need to be vigilant. They have to oversee and take information round the clock about what is happening. Only then the real change will come," added the former IGP.

In another development, the police administration has already come up with posting orders for 1,507 police members – from the ranks of inspector to constable – against the posts which fell vacant following the transfers.

The police members have started to join work in Cox's Bazar, said PHQ sources.

According to the relevant wing of the PHQ, 43 inspectors, 10 traffic inspectors, 193 SIs, eight sergeants, five TSIs, 183 ASIs, 19 ATIs, 46 nayeaks and 1,000 constables will join police in the district in phases.

Till yesterday, around 1,340 police personnel, including eight officers-in-charge, 29 inspectors and constables have reported to the Chattogram Range Deputy Inspector General's office for joining work in Cox's Bazar.

The police personnel were posted in different districts, including Dhaka. They were sent to Cox's Bazar in 15 police vans, Anwar Hossain, DIG of Chattogram range police, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Among the newly appointed eight OCs of the district, Sheikh Munir-Ul Gias is going from Satkhira, Md Hafizur Rahman from Sirajganj, Ahmed Sanjur Morshed from Sunamganj, Mohammad Abdul Hai from Naogaon, Shaker Mohammad Jobaer from Gopalganj, KM Azmizuzzaman from Nilphamari, Mohammad Saifur Rahman Mazumdar from Dhaka Metropolitan Police and Mohammad Jalal Uddin from Moulvibazar.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday evening, Md Hasanuzzaman, superintendent of police of Cox's Bazar, said they received around 400 police officials till 5:00pm.

"We hope that all the 1,340 police officials will arrive within midnight. They will take charge immediately after reaching here," he added.

Earlier, the home ministry and the PHQ in separate orders had transferred the previous superintendent of police, additional superintendent of police and assistant superintendent of police of the district.

Besides, the Chattogram Range DIG and commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police were also transferred.

All these developments came in the last couple of weeks.

Sources said the authorities would transfer the officials of eight other districts under Chattogram range in phases as a part of the "correction campaign".

## None will be left behind

FROM PAGE 1

workers are very high at this stage and we are working very closely with the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh to start increasing the number of scheduled flights."

The Saudia Airlines boss said they would start operating flights for the returnee migrant workers from October 1.

But they are yet to fix the number of flights, he said, adding that it would be made public when the flight schedules are finalised.

Tariq refuted the allegation circulated in different media outlets that Saudia airlines were selling tickets at high prices and through the black market.

"I would like to emphasise that Saudia is maintaining fares which are reflected in the airlines' reservation system," he said.

He also denied the allegation of charging additional fees for re-issuance

of return tickets to the migrant workers.

Home to more than 22 lakh Bangladeshis, Saudi Arabia is also the prime destination of Bangladeshi migrant workers and the biggest remittance-generating country for Bangladesh.

Many Bangladeshi expatriates came to the country on vacation from Saudi Arabia before the closure of flights amid the pandemic.

They remained stranded as only a few chartered and specially arranged flights were operated between the two countries amid the pandemic.

The Bangladesh government suspended regular flight operations with all countries, except China, from mid-March to contain Covid-19 spread.

At present, 14 airlines, including 12 foreign air carriers, are operating 48 weekly flights in eight countries from Bangladesh, sources at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said.

## Selim siphoned

FROM PAGE 1

"Since it will take longer to find the evidence of Selim's money and properties abroad, we have submitted a charge sheet against Selim and the other accused only for laundering Tk 13.28 crore," Special Superintendent of CID's Financial Crime Unit Mostafa Kamal told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officers also pressed charges against Selim's South Korean associate Youngsik Lee, and Bangladeshi associates Akhteruzzaman, Roman, Arifur Rahman and Chowdhury Golam Molla, said CID officials.

Four of them have been arrested and two are on the run.

The investigator found nine businesses, a villa in Thailand and two bank cheques of Tk 6 crore. Besides, 83 bank accounts of the six accused were frozen.

Mostafa Kamal said the investigation officer of the case CID Inspector Shahidul Islam Khan have the permission to launch an independent inquiry to find evidence of Selim's wealth and properties overseas.

Selim also has bank accounts in the USA and has properties in Bangladesh, Kamal added.

Officers are not sure whether Selim has properties in London and Japan.

While he was remanded by the CID, Selim told investigators that after he went to Japan in 1988, he worked at a hotel.

He also claimed that he started a hotel business there, but could not

show any document to support his claims, CID officials said.

Selim even stopped paying the rent for his office and home and used to scare the landlords, officials added.

On September 28 last year, Rab arrested Salim at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport while he was attempting to flee the country.

Based on information, the Rab conducted a 20-hour raid at his Gulshan office and Banani residence that day.

During the raid, the law enforcers seized around Tk 29 lakh in cash, currencies of 23 countries worth Tk 77.63 lakh, 32 cheque books of three banks, five credit cards, two pieces of spotted deer hide and 48 bottles of foreign liquor.

Rab investigators found that at least Tk 9 crore was deposited in a month to a single payment gateway used for online gambling, with the amount shared equally between Salim and his North Korean partner Doo. The duo had few more online payment gateways.

Born in Dhaka in 1973, Selim went to Japan in 1988 with his brother. He later moved to Thailand where he met Doo.

It was Doo's idea to open an online gambling business in Bangladesh, officers said.

They opened two gaming sites, P24 and T21, in Bangladesh in 2018 and since then Selim had been running them. He was also one of the first providers of B2B live casino solutions in Bangladesh.

## Race much tighter in key swing states

FROM PAGE 1

among likely voters in Florida and North Carolina. Biden led by 1 percentage point in Arizona, 3 points in Pennsylvania and 5 points in Wisconsin and Michigan.

All six are critical to determining who wins the Nov. 3 election, given their population size and potential to swing to either party. In each of the states, the difference between the two candidates was near or within the poll's sampling error, meaning that neither candidate has a clear advantage.

Nationally, the latest Reuters/Ipsos conducted on Monday and Tuesday put Biden's lead over Trump at 8 percentage points among all likely voters.

Taken together, the state and national surveys show the 2020 election may wind up with the same mixed result as 2016, with the Democrats receiving a majority of the votes but the Republicans winning the Electoral College and the White House.

While Biden has an early advantage in winning the national popular vote, Trump has nearly the same chances of winning the battleground states, and with them enough electoral votes for a second term.

The polls also found some important shifts in opinion this year within the US electorate.

Biden, who emerged from a diverse field of Democratic presidential contenders on the promise that he was the most electable candidate, has been chipping away at Trump's dominance over one of the largest voter blocs in America: whites without a college degree.

Trump does not appear to have been penalized by swing-state voters as much as he has been nationally for his response to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Swing-state voters are also more likely to see Trump as better than Biden at managing the US economy.

Support for Biden among non-college whites is up 10 percentage points nationally, when the results of Reuters/Ipsos polling this month are compared with support for Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016 exit polls.

When asked whom they would support for president, 50% of likely non-college white voters said they were supporting Trump, while 41% were backing Biden. Four years ago, 61% of non-college whites voted for Trump and 31% for Clinton.

This shift is happening too among non-college whites in battleground states. In Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, four in 10 non-college likely white voters said they were backing Biden this year, which is up from 2016 when Clinton was supported by about three in 10 non-college whites in those states.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos national poll shows that 56% of the country disapproves of Trump's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, including 43% who "strongly" disapprove of his performance.

But Trump's handling of the coronavirus does not appear to be hurting him that much in a number of swing states, even with new cases on the rise in Arizona, Florida, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Trump is also more likely to be perceived in swing states as superior to Biden on the economy and job creation, a message that Trump has

der Leyen, and Bhutanese PM Lotay Tshering spoke at the high-level event.

HASINA TO ADDRESS UNGA TODAY

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address virtually the 75th UNGA in New York today.

"The prime minister is scheduled to deliver her pre-recorded country statement at the UNGA general debate in the UN Headquarters approximately at 10:00am New York time [Bangladesh time 8:00pm] tomorrow [today]," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told BSS.

Hasina will deliver the speech in Bangla like she did in the past following the footsteps of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he added.

## Turkish FM blasts Pelosi's 'ignorance' about democracy

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey's top diplomat yesterday condemned US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's "blatant ignorance" for suggesting President Donald Trump was trampling on democracy as if he were in Turkey.

Trump sparked outrage in Washington by indicating on Wednesday he might not honour the results of the November 3 US presidential election.

His comments drew harsh criticism from top Republicans and Democrats including Pelosi, who warned the US leader: "You are not in North Korea, you are not in Turkey, you are not in Russia, Mr. President."

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu took aim at Pelosi on Twitter yesterday, firing off messages in both Turkish and in English.

"@SpeakerPelosi's rise to become Speaker of the House is what is truly worrisome for American democracy, given her blatant ignorance," he wrote in English.

"You will learn to respect the Turkish people's will," he said, also tagging Trump's Twitter handle.

## Life goes on

FROM PAGE 1

They had endured untold hardships when this foundry, among around 20 in the area employing more than 5,000 such workers, had been closed during the countrywide shutdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While the wider world battles fears of Covid-19, these workers fear not being able to earn the Tk 10,000-15,000 they get per month working in harsh conditions that would necessitate masks even without Covid-19.

But they are seen without masks or any other protective equipment when working in close proximity with each other. Even when eating, they do so with hands covered in a thick film of metal shavings.

"Allah protects us poor folk from coronavirus," they said when this photographer asked if they were afraid of working without protection.

## 21 more die

FROM PAGE 1

The position is one step ahead of Iraq and one step behind the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, 1,932 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 2,67,024 and the recovery rate at 74.85 percent.

Among those reported dead yesterday 14 were male and seven female. All of them died in hospitals, according to the press release.

Seven of them were aged between 41 and 50 years, four between 51 and 60 and 10 were above 60 years.

So far more than half of the deceased have been over 60.

One each of the deceased yesterday was from Rangpur, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions, two from Chattogram and the rest 16 were from Dhaka.

Dhaka division saw 49.54 percent of the deceased.

As of yesterday noon, a total of 2,762 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds and 260 in ICU beds in Covid-19 dedicated hospitals across the country.

## Over 80pc of Britons not heeding Covid-19 self-isolation rules: study

REUTERS, London

Over 80% of people in Britain are not adhering to self-isolation guidelines when they have Covid-19 symptoms or had contact with someone who has tested positive, a study has found.

A majority were also unable to identify the symptoms of Covid-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

The research raises major questions about the effectiveness of England's Test and Trace programme as Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to keep

a lid on rising infection numbers with new restrictions.

The research, led by King's College London, found that only 18.2% of people who reported having symptoms of Covid-19 in the last seven days had not left home since the symptoms developed, and only 11.9% requested a Covid-19 test.

It also found that only 10.9% of people told by the NHS Test and Trace scheme to self-isolate after close contact with a Covid-19 case had done so for 14 days as required.

The government last week

introduced fines of up to 10,000 pounds (\$12,780.00) for breaking self-isolation rules, and are offering a 500-pound support payment to low-paid workers who lose income from quarantining.

The researchers said that financial support for self-isolating could encourage adherence.

"Our results suggest that financial constraints and caring responsibilities impeded adherence to self-isolation, intending to share details of close contacts, and quarantining of contacts," they wrote.

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

### Purbachol Encore

After three years I have returned to a birding spot in Purbachol that I once frequented. While the rest of this massive urban expansion east of Dhaka has developed fast in the last few years, this small area remains largely unscathed. Years ago I spent hours exploring here and learning much about our birds, observing their behaviour and finding several that were new to me.

I find the plot that was my starting point, the earth raised on one side and its *Bajna*, *Koroi* and *Boroi* trees still intact. On the branches of the *Koroi* I once saw a flock of Bronzed Drongos descend. Uncommon birds, they look like smaller, bluer versions of our common *Fingey*. After settling on the branch, they had sallied forth looking for food – butterflies, dragonflies, bees, moths – before returning to the perch. One had caught a moth – perhaps five inches across. As it was being devoured, the hapless moth's wings fluttered, fast beats that slowed down inexorably.

Across the road, a narrow path ran through a dense grove of wild trees. Today it is overgrown with grass and weeds, but one day five years ago something extraordinary happened as I walked along it. A cat came bounding from nowhere, and immediately something moved behind the leaves of a low branch to my left. A Long-tailed Nightjar, which was sleeping behind the leaves, jumped out to inspect the commotion. The strange-looking bird and I startled each other while I captured it in my camera.

To the south is a squatter homestead with several small cottages. A large Raintree anchors the central yard. Behind the northernmost cottage is a Jackfruit tree. On a crisp winter morning I had found a pair of Streak-throated Woodpeckers on this Jackfruit. That was the first and last time I saw these exquisite birds with streaks of yellow running on the front and a vibrant green back. The male had



Long-tailed Nightjar, Purbachol.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

a red head; the female's was black. They played as they probed the tree trunk with their beak, searching for cavities holding morsels of worms or larvae.

A nearby bamboo grove yielded an elusive Yellow Bittern one monsoon day. Clinging to a bamboo swaying in the breeze, it looked decidedly uncomfortable and finally flew off to another bamboo grove a hundred meters away. Presently it returned. This back and forth continued for over half an hour for reasons I could not fathom.

A couple of *Taal* Palm trees next to the bamboo were home to a group of Baya Weavers busily building their homes dangling from the fronds, frantically flying in and out carrying threads of grass and leaves on their beaks. And *Munias* played on the tall grass, gorging themselves on grass seeds.

One afternoon a large, brown Oriental Honey Buzzard perched high atop the far bamboo grove, scanning the ground. My appearance interrupted its search for a bee or wasp hive to raid where it eats the larvae and honey if available. Winter brings smaller raptors called Shrikes. They perch on branches or fences in vegetable patches. Shrikes are also called Butcher Birds because they hang the carcass of their prey from thorns. Brown Shrikes were common, but I also saw a rare Grey-backed Shrike that refused to pose for me, flying away quickly.

It is good to be back where each footstep recalls my journey of discovering our birds. I hope the wheels of development spare this place a bit longer.

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

## Maktab teacher scorches 7-yr-old with hot water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A seven-year-old child was scorched as a maktab (centre for elementary Arabic learning) teacher allegedly threw hot water from a flask at him.

The incident took place on Tuesday, but the family filed a case about it last night after the child's father came back from his workplace in another district.

The victim is Shahriar Nafis, son of Ekhlash Uddin of Hemu Majhpara village of Jaintiapur upazila in Sylhet and a second-grader of Hemu Government Primary School.

About the incident, the child's father said, "The teacher scorched his skin with hot flask water as punishment for talking with another student of the maktab."

The maktab teacher, Abdul Karim alias Rezaul Karim (27) is also a teacher of nearby Darul Ulum Hemu Madrasha.

After the incident, the child's mother took him to local pharmacy and treated him there, but did not file any complaint. The father came home on Wednesday and met with local Union Parishad member next day, who suggested him to file a case.

The victim's mother Safia Begum filed a case accusing teacher Rezaul Karim alias Abdul Karim, confirmed Jaintiapur Police Station officer-in-charge Mohsin Ali.

"Police in primary investigation is convinced that Karim is the culprit. We have already started looking for him," the OC told this newspaper last night.

## REGISTRAR GIVEN CHARGE OF VC DU teachers slam decision for SAU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association yesterday protested the decision of giving Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University (SAU) registrar the charge of vice-chancellor of the university.

In a statement signed by its acting president Prof Lutfor Rahman and general secretary Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan, it said an administrative officer have never given the charge of VC in independent Bangladesh.

"It is unimaginable that all posts at the top level of a public university will remain vacant for a long time," it added.

The teachers' body termed it an instance of acute negligence of authorities in management of higher studies.

They said they are deeply concerned by such an unrealistic decision, and such a move could lead to chaos in higher education.

The education ministry in a notice on September 20 directed registrar Sheikh Rezaul Karim to carry out routine works of VC, as his tenure expired on August 13.



At a time when towering buildings are squeezing open spaces from all sides, a kite flying in the boundless sky brings peace to the heart. And thankfully, children such as these two are always there to discover some space where bricks and cement have not taken over, and flying their kites towards the clouds. This photo was taken from the capital's Mohammadpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Nazrul Islam new envoy to Ethiopia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed Md Nazrul Islam, currently

serving as the director general of Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the new ambassador to Ethiopia. Ambassador-designate Islam is a career foreign service officer, belonging to the 15th batch of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Foreign Affairs cadre, reports UNB.

In his diplomatic career, he served in different capacities at Bangladesh missions in Rome, Kolkata and Geneva, and had been engaged in many important multilateral negotiations for the government, said a press release from Ministry of Foreign Affairs last night.



ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Although the paper books of sensational August 21 grenade attack, Holey Artisan Bakery attack and Feni madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi murder cases have already been prepared, the High Court is yet to start hearing on their death references and appeals for different reasons, delaying justice.

If a lower court sentences a person to death, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the penalty. The case documents and judgment reach as death references to the HC from the lower court within seven days of the verdict.

Supreme Court Spokesman Md Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star on September 15 that the officials concerned of the HC are now comparing the paper books of the August 21 and Holey Artisan cases with their original documents. They are also examining whether state defence lawyers are needed to

AUG 21, HOLEY ARTISAN, NUSRAT MURDER

## Three sensational cases await HC hearing for disposal

defend the fugitive convicts during the HC hearing, he said.

On completion of the process, relevant files will be placed before Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain for his decision and then the CJ may send the cases to HC benches for hearing, he said.

The SC spokesman could not specifically say how much time will be needed to complete the procedures and when the hearing will begin.

Saifur could not tell the present status of Nusrat murder case.

Contacted, Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told this correspondent that the chief justice in February assigned an HC bench led by Justice Soumendhra Sarker to hold hearing and dispose of the death reference and appeals of the murder case.

But, the bench was later reconstituted, he said, adding that the CJ may now assign another HC bench.

THE 3 CASES

SC sources said the murder case, filed over the grenade attack in 2004, has 585 paper books containing around 10,500 pages in 13 volumes.

Twenty-two appeals were filed by convicts through lawyers while 12 appeals through jail authorities.

The case, filed separately under the Explosives Substances Act, has 495 paper books containing 10,000 pages in 11 volumes. The death references reached the HC on November 27, 2018. On January 13 last year, the HC accepted the appeals filed by the convicts.

A Dhaka court, on October 10, 2018, sentenced 19 people – including former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar – to death, and 19 others – including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman – to life imprisonment in the two cases.

At least 24 people were killed and around 300 injured in the grisly attack on an AL rally on

Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court on November 27 sentenced seven militants to death for involvement in Holey Artisan Bakery attack case.

The July 1, 2016 terror attack left 22 people, including 17 foreigners, dead. Two police officers were also killed during a 12-hour standoff.

The case's paper book was submitted to the HC in August.

In Nusrat murder case, a Feni court on October 24 last year gave death sentence to all 16 accused, including madrasa principal Siraj Ud Doula and two expelled local AL leaders.

Nusrat (19) lost her battle for life on April 10 last year, four days after she was set afire.

The case documents reached the HC on October 29 last year, as a death reference. Later, convicts including Siraj filed appeals with the HC, seeking acquittal of the charges.

## Ensure exemplary punishment for rapists: MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights organisation Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has expressed deep concern over the recent spate of rapes and sexual assaults in different parts of the country.

A Chakma woman was gang-raped in Khagrachhari early Thursday, while two teenage girls were gang-raped on Wednesday night in Jashore.

In a press statement issued yesterday, MJF demanded immediate investigation into the incidents and called for exemplary punishment for the perpetrators through legal process.

In Khagrachhari, criminals broke into the house of the woman and raped her, after tying up her mother and stepfather.

The perpetrators then beat the mother when she tried to save her daughter. They also looted cash and gold ornaments from the house, police said.

In Jashore, criminals were trying to traffic the two girls to India. On the way, they took the girls to a secluded place and raped them, according to police.

In the statement, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "Women and girls are being sexually abused in different parts of the country. Marginalised women, women with disabilities and children are most at risk. Some have been killed after being sexually assaulted."

It is the responsibility of all of us to protect women and children from this peril, she also said.

SYLHET CATHOLIC DIOCESE

## Land grabbers attack again within 72hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three days into an attempt to grab land belonging to Catholic diocese in Sylhet, miscreants attacked again on Thursday.

On Monday morning, they vandalised the property, adjacent to the bishop's residence and office, uprooted 50 newly-planted trees and demanded Tk 25 lakh.

The second attack, carried out at night, was foiled by the guards and staff of the bishop's office. Alauddin, a guard of the land meant for a school, said, "They attacked when power was out. We started shouting and others rushed to help. After they fled, we found sharp weapons there."

Contacted, Sub-inspector Ripton Purkayastha, the case's investigation officer, said, "We went to the spot and recovered the sharp weapons."

Following Monday's attack, Father Saroj Costa, in-charge of the bishop's office, filed a case with Shahporan Police Station, accusing 19 named and several unnamed.

Jyotirmoy Sarkar, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said, "Police already arrested two accused. We are looking into the matter with utmost importance."

Asked about the recent attack, he said he was unaware of it.



Encroachment has been a perennial problem along the banks of river Buriganga, and many a time the culprits returned to the spot a few months after eviction. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) recently evicted encroachers from this spot in South Keraniganj, and are now planting trees there in a bid to turn the riverside into a park, and also ensuring it is not taken over again. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SAVAR SCHOOLGIRL MURDER

## Mizan's parents arrested, placed on 2-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a drive arrested parents of prime accused Mizanur Rahman of the murder case of Savar schoolgirl Nila Roy, on Thursday night.

Jamir Uddin, company commander of Rab-4 (CPC-2), said based on a tip-off, around 8:15pm, a Rab-4 team raided a house at Manikganj's Charigram village and arrested the two.

The arrestees -- Abdur Rahman (60) and Nazmunahar Shadika (50) -- are accused in the murder case filed by the victim's father, and they went into hiding after the murder, he added.

They were handed over to Savar Model Police Station, said Jamir, adding that they are looking for Mizan and others involved with the incident.

Contacted, Saiful Islam, inspector (investigation) of Savar Model Police Station, told The Daily Star that the arrestees were sent to a Dhaka court, and police sought seven-day remand. The court granted two days.

On Wednesday, police arrested Selim Palowan (28), an associate of Mizan, for his alleged involvement.

On Sunday around 7pm, when Nila, a 10th-grader of Aced School, was going to a hospital with her elder brother Alok, they were intercepted by Mizan, who threatened Alok and asked him to leave because he wanted to talk to Nila alone. Mizan then forced Nila into an abandoned house, where he stabbed and left her. Upon hearing her cries, locals rescued and rushed her to Enam Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Speaking to locals, The Daily Star came to know that Mizan was a member of "Shakil and Sakib" gang. Members of the gang are infamous for extorting people and businesses, and are often involved in stalking girls and peddling drugs, alleged locals of Savar's Dakkhin Para.

Savar residents yesterday formed a human chain at Muktirmore area, demanding immediate arrest of Mizan and his associates involved, and capital punishment for the culprits.

**Pabna-4**

FROM PAGE 12  
Commission has already taken necessary steps to hold a free, fair and credible election," he said, adding that the ballot papers would reach the polling centres in the morning.

Nuruzzaman Biswas from the AL, Habibur Rahman Habib from the BNP and Rejaul Karim from the Jatiya Party are participating in the by-polls, according to the district election office.

In the last five national elections, AL candidate Shamsur had secured victory in Pabna-4 constituency.

**Indian farmers**

FROM PAGE 12  
The government insists the new rules give farmers the option to sell their produce to private buyers while it would still purchase staples such as rice and wheat at guaranteed prices.

But such assurances have failed to mollify millions of farmers who make up an influential voting bloc in states such as Punjab and Haryana - India's northern farm belt which borders the capital New Delhi.

Modi, who was re-elected with an overwhelming majority in 2019, now faces the biggest farmers' protest just weeks before an assembly election in Bihar, India's third-most populous state.

As part of a nationwide shutdown called by India's leading farmers' organisations, growers held demonstrations in many parts of the country and blocked highways leading to New Delhi using trucks, tractors and combine harvesters.

Farmer Karam Singh accused the government of trying to make traditional wholesale markets redundant. Farm leaders say India's more than 7,000 regulated wholesale markets have played a crucial role in ensuring timely payments to growers.

Singh said the new law has made nearly 85% of India's poor farmers, who own less than 2 hectares (5 acres) of land, vulnerable to being shortchanged by private buyers.

"The private sector will give us a good price for one or two years, but what about after that?" he asked. "The government should guarantee the private sector will give us more than the government price."

As well as in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, farmers held protests in the eastern states of Odisha and West Bengal.



**Palestinians run away from tear gas fired by Israeli forces during a protest against Jewish settlements, in Asira al-Qibliya in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

**Flood ravages North for 4th time**

FROM PAGE 12  
Many houses have already been inundated, while several hundred houses and many institutions are still facing threats of flooding and erosion.

"Erosion devoured my and some other houses in the last few days," said Yeasin Pramanik, of Pukurtola village in Chowhali.

In Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, around 1,500 families have been waterlogged as some 20 villages are flooded.

Many mud houses also collapsed.

"Floodwater entered my house last night for the fourth time this year," said Adam Ali, of DC Slum area in Thakurgaon town.

A huge area of land in Bogura has been submerged as the Jamuna was flowing 3cm above the danger mark yesterday.

Sultan Ahmed, a farmer of Char Batiya, said, "Flood struck us for four times this year. I have six bighas of paddy that has been flooded in the last two days. If the paddy is damaged, I have to suffer in the winter for the shortage of rice."

Abdul Halim, agricultural officer of Sariakandi upazila, said, "In the last two-three days, water of the Jamuna inundated over 277 hectares of crops, including 250 hectares of Aman paddy, in the upazila."

In Gaibandha, the Teesta was flowing 22cm below the danger level and the Brahmaputra 22cm below the danger level, while the Korotoa and Ghaghot rivers were flowing 23cm and 16cm below the danger mark respectively as of 6.00am yesterday, said Water Development Board (WDB) officials.

Mokhlesur Rahman, executive engineer of Gaibandha WDB, said, "Water will increase the next two days, but there is no possibility of a devastating flood this time."

Fourth spell of flood hit Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas of Nilphamari as the Teesta started swelling again, inundating vast areas of its basin and leaving thousands of people in 20 char areas waterlogged.

Shahidul Islam, a flood victim of Kismoter char, lamented saying that they had just returned to their damaged houses from makeshift shelters at the end of last month.

He said as flood struck them again, they had to leave houses to take shelter elsewhere.

[Our correspondents in Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Thakurgaon, Pabna and Nilphamari contributed to this report]

**Allow Bangalees**

FROM PAGE 12  
objective of their life to perform the Hajj. Every year thousands of our people have gone to your great country for this most sacred pilgrimage. I am very anxious to send them to perform Hajj this year also.

"To enable these people to fulfil their long ambition of performing this sacred pilgrimage I request Your Majesty to allow them to visit your country so that they could go to the holy cities and be in Kaaba, the house of Allah, where all Muslims are equal and universally accepted."

"My foreign minister had already sent a similar request to Your Majesty's foreign minister on the 12th September. If Your Majesty is agreeable to send an official to my country to grant visas to the intending pilgrims prior to their departure he would be received most warmly and all facilities will be extended to him. If Your Majesty has no objection, we would also like to send a small team of officials to your country before the Hajj season commences to look after the welfare of our Hajjis."

**GOVT TAKES OVER TV CORPORATION**

The government has taken over the Pakistan Television Corporation Limited in Bangladesh to ensure better operation of television services. The president has in this connection promulgated the Pakistan Television Corporation (Taking over) Order 1972 which comes into force at once.

SOURCES: September 27, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

**New onion variety ushers**

FROM PAGE 12  
have been brought under experimental cultivation under the supervision of station offices of BARI.

Additionally, test cultivation is taking place in three sugar mills alongside sugarcane cultivation, he said, to test what other vegetables onion can be inter-cropped with.

Besides farmers in the selected districts, many in Pabna, Kushtia and adjoining districts have also started test cultivation of the new variety of onion under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Dr Hamim added.

The BARI-5 seeds were distributed among the selected farmers in early June this year and they produced seed beds for making saplings.

Farmers like Shahinur then planted 40-45-day-old onion saplings in their selected fields in August and early September -- which will be ready to harvest after 60 days.

When this correspondent visited Mohadebpur village, he found several farmers cultivating BARI-5 as a test case, they are now waiting to harvest the crop.

Talking with the Daily Star, Md Azhar Ali, deputy director of Pabna DAE, however, said like Shahinur, many farmers were interested in test cultivation of this variety this year.

It can be cultivated everywhere where the soil is dry and no stagnant water collects, Azhar said, adding that they are expecting production of over 40 mounds of onion from each bigha.

Dr Hamim added if experimental cultivation is successful and all the departments concerned work together, they can proceed with commercial cultivation of BARI-5 -- targeting the crucial gap between the two current seasons of onion production.

**US Covid-19 cases surpass**

FROM PAGE 12  
government announced new restrictions on bars and restaurants in major cities.

Figures from Public Health France showed that 16,096 people had tested positive for Covid-19 over the last 24 hours, a record—even though experts advise that testing during the first coronavirus wave in March-April captured only a fraction of cases.

Hundreds of restaurant and bar owners protested in the southern French city of Marseille yesterday against new shutdown orders.

Madrid's regional government expanded the number of areas under partial lockdown yesterday in a move now affecting a million people, but ignored a central government plea for restrictions across the capital.

The city and the surrounding region is at the epicentre of a second wave of coronavirus that is sweeping Spain, which has claimed more than 31,000 lives and infected over 700,000 in the highest infection rate in the European Union.

From Monday, another 167,000 people will be confined to their neighbourhoods and unable to leave except for work, school or medical reasons although they will be able to move freely within their own areas.

Poland yesterday reported a record spike of 1,587 new cases over a 24-hour period, in line with a rise in other parts of eastern Europe where numbers have been relatively low.

In Asia, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said yesterday the government will ease strict coronavirus border restrictions from October to allow more foreign nationals to enter the country.

The country banned entry for most foreigners this year in the wake of the pandemic, but has been negotiating the gradual resumption of cross-border business travel, reports AFP.

Brazil has postponed Rio de Janeiro's famed carnival for next year, the latest spectacle hit by the pandemic.

Rio's carnival, famous for its gyrating Samba dancers, drummers and dancing crowds, draws millions for all night parties in packed streets, making social distancing all but impossible.

It was the first time the carnival had been postponed since 1912, joining a growing list of major entertainment and sporting events disrupted by the pandemic with the virus showing no signs of slowing its track across the globe.

Australia also postponed plans to host a Test cricket match against Afghanistan and a one-day series against New Zealand yesterday, saying the pandemic had made arranging the matches too difficult.

French Open tennis tournament will now allow only 1,000 spectators each day in line with tougher restrictions introduced this week by the French government.

**EXPERIMENTAL VACCINES**  
China's Covid-19 vaccine development programme is in a "leading position" and Beijing expects annual production capacity to reach over 610 million doses by the end of the year, officials said yesterday.

**brac**  
**Invitation for Tender (IFT) for VTM (Viral Transport Medium)**

Project name	TB Control Programme
Source of Funds	Global Fund
Tender package no.	BPD-TB/03-2020
Reference no. and date	IFT/BRAC/ BPD-TB/20-06 Date: 16 September 2020
Tender name	Procurement of VTM (Viral Transport Medium)
Time of delivery	As per Tender Documents.
Price of the tender documents	BDT 1,500.00 (Non-refundable).
Tender security	As per tender documents.
Availability of Tender documents	Procurement Department (Ground floor), BRAC Center, 75, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212. For study purpose please visit procurement.brac.net.
Date & time of Selling Documents	20 September to 03 October 2020 Between 11.00a.m to 3.00p.m
Tender dropping place, date & time	Tender Box-3, BRAC Procurement Department (Ground floor), BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212. 04 October, 2020 Between 10.00am to 1.30 pm
Tender opening place, date & time	BRAC Staff Canteen (4 <sup>th</sup> Floor), BRAC Center 04 June'2020 at 3.30pm

**BRAC procurement Department, BRAC Centre, 75, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212 Phone: 9881265 Ext 3033**

**Helsinki Airport deploys**

FROM PAGE 12  
during the test. If the test result is positive, the individual will be directed to a health information point inside the airport.

All of the tests are processed anonymously, Helsinki Airport said.

"We are among the pioneers. As far as we know no other airport has attempted to use canine scent detection on such a large scale against Covid-19," airport director Ulla Lettjef said in a statement. "This might be an additional step forward on the way to beating Covid-19."

**19 sued for helping OC**

FROM PAGE 12  
Journalist Faridul Alam was made accused in a false and fabricated case for writing against the spread of yaba pills in Cox's Bazar that destroyed the youth in the district.

"They looted our house, vandalised furniture and physically assaulted us and took our signatures on a blank paper warning us of not to speak out about what happened in last year", the victim's sister said.

Masum Khan, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, told The Daily Star that they received the case and were on hunt to arrest the accused named in the case.

Pradeep filed six cases against Faridul Islam last year for writing about the network of yaba syndicate in Cox's Bazar.

Arrested from Dhaka, Faridul was tortured in police custody for two days and sent to jail for those fabricated cases.

Court granted him bail after Pradeep was arrested in major (ret'd) Sinha murder case in August.

**brac**  
**INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) for Printing BRAC Diary**

Project & Tender Name	BRAC Diary Printing and Supply
Source of fund	Own fund
Tender Items	Lot 01: BRAC Staff Diary-2021 Lot 02: Complimentary Diary-2021
Reference no & date	IFT/BRAC/BPD/FWA/20-05 dated : 16 September, 2020
Time of delivery	All Diary to be delivered within 45 days from the date of signing Contract Agreement
Price of the tender documents	BDT 1,000.00 (Taka one thousand only) non refundable
Tender security	As per tender documents
Tender document available	BRAC Procurement Department 4th Floor, Gulshan Tower, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 (Opposite of BRAC Center). For study purpose please visit procurement.brac.net
Date and time for selling documents	27 September, 2020 to 12 October, 2020 between 10:00am to 4:00pm
Tender dropping place, date and time	Tender box-3, Procurement Department, (G.F.) BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. 13 October, 2020 between 10:00 am to 2:00pm
Tender opening place, date & time	BRAC staff canteen (4th floor), BRAC Center, 13 October, 2020 at 3:00 pm

**BRAC, 75 Mohakhali Dhaka-1212 Ph: 02222281265-72 Ext: 3786**

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Department of Public Health Engineering  
Office of Executive Engineer  
Research and Development Division  
DPHE Bhaban, 14, Shahid Captain  
Monsur Ali Sarani, Kakrail, Dhaka

Memo No. 46.03.2600.083.07.027.20-625 Date: 24/09/2020

**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following package:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description	Online publication date and time	Online closing date and time
448552	VWSP-1767	Construction, installation and supply for piloting of Vessel and Box type AIRP.	24-Sep-2020 22:00	12-Oct-2020 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to date & time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**A.H.M. Khalequr Rahman**  
Executive Engineer (CC)  
GD-1525 Phone: 02-55130711

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Office of the Project Director**  
The Pilot Project in different areas of Bangladesh using Bamboo Bundling Structures to reduce river bank erosion, land reclamation and increase navigation  
River Research Institute, Faridpur  
Phone: +880-631-63465 Fax: 0631-63065 Website: [www.rrri.gov.bd](http://www.rrri.gov.bd)

Ref. No. Ba.Ba.Sa.Ba-1315-RRi-2018-251 Date: 24-09-2020

**e-Tender Notice**

This is to notify all concerned that the following tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Last selling date	Opening date
1	488832	13/09/2020	14/09/2020
2	497320	13/09/2020	14/09/2020
3	497324	13/09/2020	14/09/2020
4	497325	13/09/2020	14/09/2020

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Kazi Rezaul Karim**  
Chief Scientific Officer & Project Director  
Bamboo Bundling Pilot Project  
River Research Institute, Faridpur

GD-1527

**শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশ**  
জনাবায় সহিষ্ণু বাংলাদেশ।

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division, Noakhali  
[cfdnkl@gmail.com](mailto:cfdnkl@gmail.com)

Memo No. 22.01.7500.579.29.20.1372 Date: 24/09/2020

**Invitation for e-Tender**  
Invitation Reference No. CFDN/SUFAL/2020-2021/GD-1

e-Tenders (OTM) is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods:

e-Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of goods	Last date & time for selling/downloading	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
497594	CFDN/SUFAL/2020-2021/GD-1	Supply of Materials for Mangrove Nursery Raising	11/10/2020 16:00	12/10/2020 15:00	12/10/2020 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Bipul Krishna Das**  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Coastal Forest Division, Noakhali  
Email: [cfdnkl@gmail.com](mailto:cfdnkl@gmail.com)  
Phone No. 08-0321-61106

GD-1526

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## India to hold election in Bihar amid coronavirus outbreak

India announced local elections involving millions of voters in a densely packed state even as it reported 86,052 new infections of coronavirus on Friday and remained set to overtake the United States by next month as the world's worst-affected nation. The elections in the state of Bihar, with a population roughly the size of Japan, will kick off at the end of October and will be spread over three days, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) told a news conference. Bihar has reported more than 174,000 Covid-19 cases and 878 deaths.

## Thousands of mosques in Xinjiang demolished: report

Chinese authorities have demolished thousands of mosques in Xinjiang, an Australian think tank said yesterday, in the latest report of widespread human rights abuses in the restive region. Rights groups say more than one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking people have been incarcerated in camps across the northwestern territory, with residents pressured to give up traditional and religious activities. Around 16,000 mosques had been destroyed or damaged, according to an Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) report based on satellite imagery documenting hundreds of sacred sites and statistical modelling. Most of the destruction had taken place in the last three years and an estimated 8,500 mosques had been completely destroyed, the report said.

## SP Balasubrahmanyam passes away at 74



Celebrated singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam died in a Chennai hospital after almost two months of treatment. He was 74. Balasubrahmanyam had been in hospital with Covid-19 complications since August 5. Tributes poured in as the news came out with Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing their grief while remembering his rich contribution to the country. S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, winner of six National Awards, leaves behind a vast body of work that spans 40,000 songs in 16 languages. He was also an actor, producer and voice actor. SPB was a recipient of the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan. His funeral will be held on Saturday morning before which a public homage will be allowed.

## US protesters defy second night of curfew in Louisville

More than 1,000 people defied a second night of curfew in the US city of Louisville to protest over the lack of criminal charges in the police killing of Breonna Taylor, with some seeking refuge in a church. Two officers were shot during clashes in Louisville a day earlier, after authorities announced a grand jury had decided not to charge anyone in connection with the death of Taylor -- a 26-year-old black woman shot dead in her apartment by police earlier this year. Taylor's death has become a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement and the grand jury decision sent fresh demands for racial justice billowing across the country.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Farmers on tractors shout slogans as they arrive to block the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border during a protest against farm bills passed by India's parliament, in Noida, India, yesterday. The legislation means that farmers no longer have to sell to state-controlled markets at fixed prices, freeing them to supply to any buyer they choose and getting rid of middlemen, but also exposing them to corporate exploitations. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Suspected terror attack wounds 2 in Paris

AFP, PARIS

A man wielding a knife seriously wounded two people in Paris yesterday in a suspected terror attack outside the former offices of satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, three weeks into the trial of suspected accomplices in the 2015 massacre of the newspaper's staff.

Charlie Hebdo had angered Muslims around the world by publishing offensive cartoons, and in a defiant gesture ahead of the trial this month, it reprinted the caricatures on its front cover.

12 people, including some of France's most celebrated cartoonists, were killed in the January 7, 2015, attack by Islamist gunmen.

The attack is being investigated by specialist anti-terror prosecutors who have opened a probe into charges of "attempted murder related to terrorism" and "conspiracy with terrorists."

Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz said "the main perpetrator has been arrested". A second person was also detained later in the Bastille area and held for questioning.

## Thai kids revolt against rigid education system

REUTERS, Bangkok

Wearing white ribbons, publicly hacking off their hair and making "Hunger Games" salutes - Thailand's high school students are doing their best to shake up the country's rigid education system.

As university students stage weeks of high-profile campus protests for democracy, their younger brethren are advancing their own rebellion to Thailand's establishment.

"There's a viral saying that 'our first dictatorship is school'," 17-year-old Peka Loetparisanyu told Reuters at her apartment. "They are trying to instill in us that we are only the little people in an authoritarian society," Loetparisanyu said. "This means that a lot of our rights have been violated."

As well as supporting the broader aims of the anti-government protests, the high school movement is targeted at gaining self-expression for students via the abolition of rules they deem as archaic.

Traditionalism runs through Thailand's education system. The royal anthem is played at morning assemblies, uniform and department rules are strict and students are expected to be unquestioning of authority. Critics say the school system is aimed at compliance more than education.

Still, conservatives were furious last month when some students wore white ribbons and raised three-finger "Hunger Games" salutes during the morning anthem recital to support the pro-democracy movement. The salute has been a symbol of calls for democracy since Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha first took power in a 2014 coup. The white ribbons represent the purity of the students.

Fifteen-year-old Benjamaporn Nivas became one of the first faces of the 'Bad Student' movement when she sat in public places with a sign around her neck inviting passersby to cut her hair as symbolic 'punishment' for infringing the haircut rule. She's now set her sights on further reform.

"They should revoke all the outdated rules, not just that one," she told Reuters. "Those rules shouldn't exist in the first place. They violate our human rights."

## 'I fear the worst'

Guterres warns world is doomed if key actors handle climate crisis like Covid-19 as US, China, Russia clash at UN over pandemic

REUTERS, New York

The United States, China and Russia fought on Thursday during a United Nations Security Council meeting on the coronavirus pandemic after UN chief Antonio Guterres had warned the body that if the climate crisis was approached with the "same disunity and disarray" of COVID-19, then: "I fear the worst."

Guterres said the coronavirus was out of control as the global death toll approaches 1 million, while more than 30 million have been infected. He blamed "a lack of global preparedness, cooperation, unity and solidarity."

"The pandemic is a clear test of international cooperation - a test we have essentially failed," he told the 15-member body.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the Chinese government's top diplomat, Wang Yi, both took veiled swipes at the United States during the virtual council meeting on global governance post-Covid-19, to which US Ambassador Kelly Craft responded: "Shame on each of you."

"I am astonished and I am disgusted

by the content of today's discussion ... members of the council who took this opportunity to focus on political grudges rather than the critical issue at hand," she said.

While not naming any countries, Lavrov noted that the pandemic had deepened differences between states.



"We see attempts on the part of individual countries to use the current situation in order to move forward their narrow interests of the moment, in order to settle the score with an undesirable government or geopolitical competitors," he said.

Long-simmering tensions between the United States and China hit the boiling point over the pandemic, spotlighting Beijing's bid for greater

multilateral influence in a challenge to Washington's traditional leadership.

Washington accuses Beijing of a lack of transparency that it says worsened the outbreak. China denies the US assertions. Craft reiterated those accusations on Thursday, echoing a call by Trump for the world body to hold China accountable.

China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun rejected her accusations and said: "Enough is enough. You have created enough troubles for the world already. ... The US should understand that blaming others will not solve its own problems."

The United States has announced plans to leave the Geneva-based World Health Organization after Trump accused it of becoming a puppet for China during the coronavirus pandemic. The WHO has rejected Trump's assertion.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian also appeared to take a stab at the United States when he said the pandemic should not be used to undermine "all the work has been done over recent decades by feminist movements for gender equality."

## 'Very sorry'

Kim issues rare apology for killing of South Korean

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un yesterday apologised for the shooting death of a South Korean man to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, the South's national security adviser said, as public and political outrage over the killing grew.

Apologies from the North -- let alone attributed to Kim personally -- are extremely unusual, and the message comes with inter-Korean ties in deep freeze as well as a stand-



off in nuclear negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington.

The apology came in a letter from the North's United Front Department, which handles cross-border ties, to South Korean President Moon Jae-in a day after South Korean officials said the North's soldiers killed the man, doused his body in fuel and set it on fire.

The shooting of the man, a fisheries official who had gone missing this week, shocked South Koreans and sparked a barrage of criticism from the opposition and the public, prompting an unusually tough response from Moon, who called it "unpardonable".



A woman holds a placard as Fridays for Future activists protest calling for a "Global Day of Climate Action" in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Democrats prepare bill limiting US SC justice terms to 18 years

REUTERS, New York

Democrats in of the House of Representatives will introduce a bill next week to limit the tenure of U.S. Supreme Court justices to 18 years from current lifetime appointments, in a bid to reduce partisan warring over vacancies and preserve the court's legitimacy.

The new bill, seen by Reuters, would allow every president to nominate two justices per four-year term and comes amid heightened political tensions as Republican President Donald Trump prepares to announce his third pick for the Supreme Court after the death on Sept. 18 of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with just 40 days to go until the Nov. 3 election.

"It would save the country a lot of agony and help lower the temperature over fights for the court that go to the fault lines of cultural issues and is one of the primary things tearing at our social fabric," said California U.S. Representative Ro Khanna, who plans

to introduce the legislation on Tuesday, along with Representatives Joe Kennedy III of Massachusetts and Don Beyer of Virginia.

Partly due to rising life expectancies, justices serve increasingly long tenures, on average now more than 25 years.

Term limits for high court justices have for years had support from a number of legal scholars on both the right and the left. Several polls in recent years have also shown large majorities of the American public support term limits.

Some legal observers, including those who favor term limits, say they must be accomplished through an amendment to the US Constitution, which has been interpreted as requiring life tenure for federal judges and justices.

The bill seeks to avoid constitutional concerns by exempting current justices from the 18-year rule. Those appointed under term limits would become "senior" upon retirement and rotate to lower courts.

## Afghanistan: 65 Taliban militants killed in fighting

AFP, Khost

Afghan security forces have killed 65 Taliban militants during an intense battle in eastern Afghanistan, officials said Thursday, as fighting rages between the two sides despite ongoing peace talks.

The latest bloodshed came late Wednesday after the Taliban stormed a military headquarters building in the Wazi Khwa district of Paktika province.

Bakhtiar Gul Zadran, the head of Paktika provincial council, confirmed the information. The Taliban did not immediately comment.

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This is to notify all concern that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl.No.	Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date	Opening Date
1	477079	08/10/2020	11/10/2020
2	477081	08/10/2020	11/10/2020
3	477082	08/10/2020	11/10/2020

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(Dr. Moniruzzaman Khan Eusufzai)  
Senior Scientific Officer & Project Director  
[mkeusufzai@rri.gov.bd](mailto:mkeusufzai@rri.gov.bd)

GD-1524



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## Chanchal Chowdhury opens up about 'Taqdeer', upcoming films

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

National Film Award-winning actor Chanchal Chowdhury started out as a theatre actor, before establishing a rightful place for himself in television and films. He has earned acclaim for his powerful performances on the silver screen throughout the years. The versatile actor will soon be seen in *Taqdeer*, a web series on Hoichoi. He talks about the state of web-based projects in Bangladesh, his upcoming ventures and more in a candid conversation with *The Daily Star*.

**You are leading actor in 'Taqdeer', created by Syed Ahmed Shaawi and Saleh Sobhan Auneem, for Hoichoi. What drew you to this project?** *Taqdeer* has a gripping and powerful story. We shot the series at different locations in Manikganj, Munshiganj and Mawa, among other spots. I play a hearse driver on the show. The creators planned and treated everything like a film. A lot of time and dedication went into the series, and it is very different from anything that I have done so far.

**What was it like to shoot, maintaining all health guidelines?**

We took all possible precautions – all members of the unit wore masks on the sets. But frankly speaking, it was extremely challenging to follow social distancing guidelines while shooting a scene.

**What do you think sets 'Taqdeer' apart from other web shows out there from Bangladesh?**

I think that most of our web shows lag behind in quality. As artistes, we have a responsibility to provide new and interesting stories to the audience. I only work on projects that match my taste and sensibilities. *Taqdeer's* fresh story sets it apart from other shows on the web.

**Where do you think our industry stands, when it comes to web content?** We have yet to make a significant mark on web platforms, but we definitely have a lot of potential. Budget and lack of audience interest are some of our major hurdles. Nonetheless, I hope that *Taqdeer* will bring about positive changes for us.

**You, along with a few Bangladeshi actors, were expected to be a part of Srijit Mukherji's web series for Hoichoi, based on Bangladeshi writer Mohammad Nazim Uddin's acclaimed thriller, 'Rabindranath Ekhan Kohono Khete Ashen Ni'. Unfortunately, the director recently revealed on social media that he will be working on the series with Indian artistes only, due to the pandemic. Would you like to say anything about that?** Srijit Mukherji emailed me about the series. However, we did not finalise anything officially, and we didn't have any talks about it after that. The pandemic has interrupted everyone's plans, and I am sure that there is a valid reason behind his decision.

**What can you tell us about your upcoming films?**

Gias Uddin Selim's *Paap Punno* and Mejbaur Rahman Sumon's *Hawa* are two of my upcoming films. The dubbing for *Paap Punno* is completed, and *Hawa* is also near the end of production. The release dates of these films are yet to be announced.

Translated by Rasheek Tabassum Mondira

# The many inspirations of artist Shahid Kabir

ALI ADIL KHAN

Acclaimed artist Shahid Kabir left for Spain in 1980, after attaining fame in Bangladesh for his series on the mystic Lalon Shah and being deprived of a well-deserved Japanese scholarship for a master's degree in art. I recently found and acquired a set of eight exquisitely embossed aquatint etchings by Kabir made in Spain in the mid 1980's, which intrigued me to research and discuss the inspirations behind them with the artist himself and his long-time art dealer and friend Peter De Munnich from Profile Art Gallery in Canada.

Kabir chose Spain as a fertile ground for further learning and honing his artistic talents. Spain has a long and rich history of producing some of the greatest renaissance, baroque, impressionist, modern and contemporary artists of the world.

Kabir immersed himself fully into the Spanish culture and way of life, observing and experiencing the art world of the 1980s. He received guidance and support from Monirul Islam, a fellow senior artist from Bangladesh who came to Madrid in 1969, and settled down.

Kabir adopted Spain as his new home and initially struggled to find his footing, but never looked back. He integrated at a fast pace with the locals, learned to speak fluent Spanish and cook gourmet Spanish food. Within a short span of time, he established himself as one of the leading printmakers in Madrid. His artistic expressions are ingrained in surrealistic and abstract impressionism.

In 1980, the same year that he arrived in Madrid, Kabir joined the Galleria Estampa as an assistant printmaker. He learned the difficult



Shahid Kabir

process of creating embossed aquatint etchings on paper. Meticulous as he was in his painting, he quickly gained the trust of the director of the print studio, who assigned him to print limited editions of portfolios for well-known Spanish and French artists. He also experimented and produced miniature size prints of his own with varying subjects from still life to self-portraits.

*Wine and I* (1980) and *Still Life* (1980) are great examples of his early etchings, where attention to detail



'Mi Reino 11' (1985)

and treatment of space to create a third dimension are clearly present that speak to the creative genius of Kabir.

Soon after mastering the art of embossing aquatint etchings, Kabir started creating his own works, and by 1985, he was producing large sized multi-colour prints. Humans, friends and neighbours, living spaces, objects and experiences merge and serve as points of reference for the artist. For example, in his *Mi Reino* (My Kingdom, 1985) series, Kabir draws and paints what he sees around him – Senora Maria, his friend and neighbour, a couple kissing in the neighbouring house as seen from the window of his house and his surroundings, his kitchen, dining room and living room.

The same year, Kabir produced a series of etchings, titled *Musica y Vida* (Music & Life, 1985), which was a tribute to life and music. He brilliantly composes the etchings, as if creating a melody, with geometric figures, objects of love, desire and nature. Kabir's deep love for music, be it Bengali Baul music or songs of Lalon Shah, the mystic poet and

philosopher from the 18th century, is evident in his work. In Spain, he was introduced to the traditional Spanish Flamenco music and dance, which has its roots in South Asia. It is believed that the Roma peoples, who migrated from Rajasthan to Spain between the 9th and 14th centuries, brought with them musical instruments, such as tambourines, bells, and wooden castanets, and an extensive repertoire of songs and dances. Kabir is also fond of Reggae music and the Blues, and in particular, loves the sounds of the electric guitar and the saxophone.

His *Circo* (Circus, 1987) series is a vivid depiction of his experience of enjoying a circus by himself, and also later, with his daughter Biba in Madrid. In this etching, Kabir playfully brings out the entertainers and performers, whether they are animals or human beings, showing their mastery in acrobatics, juggling, trapeze, taming or clowning.

Kabir's prints of the 1990s show great finesse and celebrate a bohemian lifestyle. During this period, Kabir was prolific and popular, as he exhibited his works

widely across Europe and North America. Nature played a significant role in his evocative *Feuilles n Fleurs* (Leaves and Flowers, 1997) series.

Peter De Munnich recollected that he had quite a few etchings by Kabir and his fellow printers from Madrid. "The print studio Galleria Estampa in Madrid was fairly unique in producing a large number of etching, aquatint and carborundum editions throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It is through this studio that I first got to meet Kabir and made a trip to Madrid to visit him in the early 1990s," he said. "The prints produced at the studio were all of very fine quality and I really enjoyed working with them. It's sad that the market for hand-printed prints has been diminished over in the last 20 years, as digital printing took over the market to a large degree." I feel lucky to have some of Kabir's best works in my collection. He is an authentic artist, and a compassionate human being.

Ali Adil Khan is the founder and director of SAGA Foundation and South Asian Gallery of Art (SAGA) in Toronto, Canada.

# FROM PAGES TO SCREEN

## Adaptations to enjoy on Netflix

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

As our schedules are getting more and more hectic whilst working from home and attending online classes, a good way to relax is to binge-watch some films and shows on Netflix. Even if you have not picked up any books recently, you will enjoy watching these adaptations on the streaming platform.

**ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES (2020)**

Based on the internationally bestselling novel of the same name by Jennifer Niven, the story revolves around teens Violet Markey (Elle Fanning) and Theodore Finch (Justice Smith), who are facing personal struggles. After being assigned to research the hidden wonders of Indiana, the protagonists unexpectedly form a powerful bond. Featuring a diverse cast of characters, this is a good watch over the weekend.

**ROOM (2015)**

This film adaptation of Irish-Canadian author Emma Donoghue's novel, *Room*, is a brilliant thriller. After being kidnapped by a psychopath, a young woman (Brie Larson) is



All the Bright Places



The Little Prince

held captive in a small shed, along with her son (Jacob Tremblay). This intense story leaves an impact, and rightly addresses the rise in violence and crimes against women.

**THE BABY-SITTERS CLUB (2020)**

This series of novels written by



Room

Ann M. Martin gained immense popularity among young readers between 1986 and 2000. The stories revolve around a group of friends, navigating their everyday problems. Claudia, Kristy, Stacey and Mary decide to start a baby-sitting business to look after the

kids in their neighbourhood. The characters are lively and their storylines incorporate their family dynamics, friendships and relationships. The show perfectly blends nostalgia with modernity.

**THE LITTLE PRINCE (2015)**

3D animated film *The Little Prince* reintroduces audiences to the classic written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The film narrates the story of an aviator who comes across a boy from outer space. As he recalls his explorations with his young neighbour, she starts connecting with the story and is set to find the lost prince, with the help of his fox.

**THE WILLOUGHBYs (2020)**

Based on the book of the same name by Lois Lowry, the animated film portrays the lives of four siblings who are set to unravel new adventures with their nanny. The storyline is humorous and trailed through how the characters solve their own issues, after sending their parents for a dangerous vacation. The light-hearted film beautifully depicts the dynamics of the family.



The Willoughbys



The Baby-Sitters Club



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## 'Arekta' Rock interview

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

We caught up with Arekta Rock Band, one of Dhaka's rising young bands, after the much anticipated release of their latest single, *Arekta Rock Gaan*.

**Congratulations on the new release. How difficult is maintaining a band during a pandemic?**

ARB: The quarantine started off as a much needed break from our hectic routine, and the first month was actually quite relaxing for us. Things eventually got worse, and our productivity hit a slump. The shutdown has put a halt on our momentum that we had been building up for almost a year prior. However, we are glad that we've managed to pull through and finally release *Arekta Rock Gaan*.

**How did you come up with the concept of a video game inspired music video?**

ARB: All of our music videos, including this one, are directed and produced by Shahariar Ahamed (Cybertron Studios). We actually had a completely different idea planned for the video, but the execution wasn't feasible as the lockdown

had restricted our flexibility. The entire credit goes to Shahariar, as came up with the entire theme.

**Do you miss performing in live shows? How are you keeping in touch with your audience?**

ARB: Words cannot describe how much we miss the adrenaline of live gigs. Arekta Rock Band thrives on live shows, because of how well we can connect with our audience through it. Since the 'new normal' does not allow such luxuries anymore, we are keeping in touch with our audience via our social media channels.

**What is the most important quality that a rock band needs to have in this era?**

ARB: You need to be prepared for anything – we learned that the hard way this year. Make the most out of every good moment, and do not give up on your efforts no matter what. They will eventually pay off, when the time is right.

**What's next for Arekta Rock Band?**

ARB: We can promise you one thing – a lot of new music!



## Man with 4 cars, 8 flats worried about overpopulation

NONE-OF-YOUR-BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

"I know the thought on everyone's minds. I am just gonna say it out loud: there are way too many people with way too little to go around. Something needs to be done!" said Zarif Khan, the founder of Kalot Aaka, a boutique art shop in Berrydhara.

The recent pandemic has many questioning how our society is structured and whether the current system is too delicate for humanity's future. Zarif is no different. "I think about this a lot. Every day on my way to work, I see so

many people crammed into buses...50? 100? Who knows? I found it to be an apt metaphor for our country -- too many people crammed into buses.

"It was on your own paper. Bangladesh has the fastest growing rich population in the world! That is an incredible achievement. Wouldn't you say it's amazing how so many people are able to push the ceiling up and fight for their place in today's ever connected world where we are all global citizens?"

"But I am once again asking you, how can a country grow rich with so many poor people? It's basic math. We need to incentivise the rich."

Asked how the rich can get richer, Zarif's solutions hit at a philosophical level.

"We keep saying rich. But what is rich? Rich is everyone. You can be rich, I can be rich, anyone can be rich. The key thing to remember is that being rich requires a growth mindset. You cannot be rich with a victim mindset. I

hate to say it but in our country, certain rich people also have a victim mindset."

When asked about overconsumption as opposed to overpopulation being the problem plaguing the current world, Zarif was quick to laugh it off.

"What overconsumption? Listen, you are putting the cart before the horse. You talk of overconsumption but who is consuming? Did you see me eating four lunches today? I am only consuming as I am able to.

We are overconsuming because we have overpopulating."

Asked what he thinks of his 4 cars and 8 flats, Zarif had his answer ready.

"My four cars help feed 16 people! Where would my chauffeurs and their children be were it not for my cars paying their wages? As for my 8 flats, they provide housing for foreign workers. I am doing the country a favour by putting it out there in positive light to the world through my hospitality."

## Bangladesh Opposition Party to start protesting in places besides their own office

APOLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Opposition Party (BOP), the former official opposition party, has decided to launch yet another month-long movement to remove the current ruling party from office.

The BOP has chalked out one of the most comprehensive action plans by them in years, although it still includes holding numerous press conferences and peacefully protesting outside their office. However, a major change is that one of the protests will actually be held in their party secretary general's residence, in order to uphold the stay-at-home orders applicable only for them.

"We now know. Oh we now know, no jokes. Protesting outside our own office, only bothers us folks. Now we aren't saying we will pick up the glock again. But surely, we will do a Tiktok, my friend," BOP's General Secretary, and also a poet of sorts, Mirza Ghalib said.

Mirza Ghalib made the announcement at the 700th press conference by the party this month alone. The turnout from the press was very little as expected. Having only 10 active members, the BOP is expected to make use of social media to leave a mark in the political scene in which they have been mere bystanders for years.

"They have been talking smack for the past 10 years. BOP right now is like an ex-boyfriend who has actually leveled down but still thinks every 'like' on Facebook



is an invitation to rekindle the romance with democracy," political analyst Shaheed Khan said.

Outlining the party's latest movement, Mirza Ghalib yesterday said they were taking a five-pronged approach. "Congregate. Motivate. Segregate. Elevate. Cross-fire," he said of the plans.

"Congregate involves us hiring people to pretend like we still have party members who aren't in a cell. Motivate is us holding press conferences complaining to the people about this hell. Segregate will be Operation Cleanheart version 2, but more tight. Elevate

will be taking the nation to greatness as dreamt by me last night. And Cross-fire is basically a mantra we repeat. We invented it and will take back what's ours, whether in victory or defeat," Ghalib said.

Pointed out that the party had spent the last decade working just for itself and never for the people, Ghalib chose instead to mention how corrupt the current regime was. "They are a party of businesspersons only," he said. When told that BOP is literally the definition of a pro-business party, Ghalib said that was not true and then he began to cry.

## Aging world leaders still confused about green energy, people's rights and other Gen-Z things

INTERN CORRESPONDENT

Aging world leaders met once again at the Conference of the Wizedened held in one of the oldest country's in the world. Do you see a theme here already?

The world leaders, with their token youngster, and by youngster we mean pushing 50 instead of 100 like the rest, spent five hours discussing the way forward for the world. The way forward, however, was the one they had envisioned and it was anything but forward.

The first hour of the meeting was the leaders bickering over something called the Cold War. The second hour was spent talking about preventing a third world war, even though no one is really interested in that.

The leaders then took to lambasting social media, blaming everything from Facebook to Tiktok for their dwindling popularity. "Leave the brain-washing of the masses to us. We don't need social media to do this for us," one of the leaders said.

The discussion then shifted towards green energy and the world leaders, too rich to be connected with the pulse of the real world, talked about how important green energy was. "Green energy is the way forward. The youth of the world must rise to fulfil the dream of complete green energy by the time we are all dead," one of the leaders said.

Other lesser leaders nodded in acknowledgement and said the youth really need to step up, except Greta, who has proven to be quite a pain in the you-know-what they said.



The meeting then took a turn towards blaming the youth for all the problems in the world and demanding that they step up to fix the problems they haven't caused or are even aware of.

When a youngish leader dared to say that the youth had actually become more socially- and politically- conscious than ever before, he was instantly mocked. "All they talk about is individual rights and freedoms. Blacks, gays, Uighurs and of course dogs. That's all they can talk about," a leader remarked.

The meeting finally ended with a resolution for the leaders to meet again next year if they are all alive and discuss the same old things.

## The dark side of e-commerce

*No law to protect compliance, consumer rights and brand reputation*

A silver lining of Covid-19, which has had a devastating impact on the national and global economy, has been the rapid and unprecedented rise of e-commerce platforms and online transactions in the country. Online grocery stores, in particular, have experienced double-digit growth, while other e-service and e-commerce industries have had to diversify their products in an attempt to stay relevant to their customers during the pandemic. According to news reports, Bangladesh now has 2,500 e-commerce sites selling products worth USD 2.07 billion, and it is the 46th largest in the world in terms of e-commerce revenue.

While all of this is no doubt encouraging, a recent discussion of industry experts highlighted the existing road blocks to the sector's continued growth, in particular the challenges to ensuring consumers' rights and compliance in an unregulated e-commerce market. For one thing, crores of transactions are taking place on a daily basis, circumventing proper legal procedures and in violation of consumer rights. Unauthorised sellers are selling counterfeit products which are hurting the image of reputed brands, but on a broader scale, also shaking people's confidence and trust in the sector in general. Even bigger platforms, such as well-known superstores, are flouting the rules. There's also no proper mechanism through which to resolve consumer dissatisfaction in products or services. With e-commerce platforms mushrooming around the country, it's difficult, if not impossible, to monitor such illegal behaviours and practices and take appropriate action, especially as Bangladesh is yet to formulate an e-commerce act to protect consumer rights and brand reputation.

If the government is to truly implement its "Vision 2021" to build a "Digital Bangladesh," it must pay critical attention to the needs and challenges of the sector and formulate appropriate national policies and ecosystems for e-commerce to develop and flourish. As of now, e-commerce is catering to a predominantly urban populace, and if it is to reach the masses, the government and public sector must work together to develop financial, legal and digital infrastructures and invest accordingly for a future that is truly digital but also accessible. Consumers must be an integral part of the process and their concerns and trust deficits must be addressed accordingly if e-commerce is to be embraced by the public.

## Padma devours Daulatdia ferry terminal

*Immediate embankment essential to prevent further damage*

DAULATDIA ferry terminal, once again, is under threat posed by river erosion, a natural calamity faced by the region year in and year out. The mighty Padma has a ruthless record when it comes to erosion. A recent report reveals that a part of terminal-3 and its adjacent area have already been engulfed by the river over the last few days. Approach roads to pontoon 1, 2 and 3 and over 500 nearby houses were also damaged. Without immediate action, more land remains at risk. Since last year's erosion, terminal 1 and 2 still remain closed.

While it is reassuring that Water Development Board in Rajbari and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) jointly started dumping geo-bags to prevent further erosion, it is at best, a temporary solution. What will happen later?

Disruption of ferry services at Daulatdia as a result of river erosion has been occurring from as early as 2013. Yet, after so many years, why have the authorities failed to reach a sustainable solution? Not only does the severity of the problem impact the locomotion within the region, but it also ruins the lives of countless families living in the area as their homesteads and croplands are swallowed up, stripping them of their shelter and belongings.

Erosion at Daulatdia ferry terminal has been a topic of discussion for quite some time now. The geo-bags are of no match for the strong currents of the river. Thus, the authorities must facilitate the swift implementation of the project taken up to modernise Daulatdia and Paturia ferry terminals, which will include the construction of a 6km dam—4km upstream from the Daulatdia ferry terminal and 2km downstream—to prevent further erosion. And while that is underway, building new embankments will also help ease the woes. Constructing a new approach road and a terminal will also help curb the disruption of ferry services and prevent the never-ending tailbacks, restoring some stability to the area and the people living there. We hope that the project to strengthen the terminals will be done efficiently and without delay.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Pay attention to mental health

Recently, we have seen a steady rise in the number of suicide cases. Due to lockdown, social distancing and social isolation, people are facing some very difficult times which can lead to mental health problems.

This year, the suicide rate among university students has been quite noticeable. Though there are different workshops being held on mental health issues, they do not appear to have helped much.

Family members and friends can play a vital role here by encouraging each other to share their feelings and thereby helping others cope with their troubles. If our actions can help save even one life, we must consider it strongly.

Sweetie Akter, by email

# A game of kabadi against corruption



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

As the old joke has it, there is no lid in the mouth of hell where the Bengalis are kept. After all, we are the proverbial crabs who are quite efficient in dragging each other down and have no intention

of seeing one of our fellow species making it to the top. For the doubters, just ponder over the fact that our national game is kabadi, which is all about either poking others while holding your breath or pulling others back when they are out of breath.

Now wonder how a driver of health ministry can acquire property over 100 crores of taka without being pulled back? Where are the Zafars (add Mir if you want) to become suspicious of the Aladdin like towers he built in the middle of nowhere? Wasn't there anyone to report the growth of this man into a superman? Or did he get caught because he ran out of breath and became a burden for his team?

Engaged in illegal recruitments, manipulation of transfers and promotions, and fake-currency trade, Abdul Malek alias Badal reportedly amassed millions, according to RAB who nabbed him on Monday. Malek joined as a driver of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in 1982. He used his position to get scores of his relatives recruited to the public service, become a union leader, negotiate transfer deals, start his own cattle business using office

proof of his corruption in plain sight. His anomalous growth in wealth probably remained undetected because corruption has now become an integral part of our social fabric; we can no longer distinguish one pattern from the other.

Malek was one of the many employees who were being investigated by the anti-corruption commission. Malek is a mullet compared to the big fish who are having a whale of a time in the health ministry among others. For instance, the rampant

public". He mentioned three stages of corruption: restricted, rampant, and self-destructive.

Although we have managed to keep the Transparency International's champion's wreath of shame for some years now, it does not take a sociologist to understand that the condition of corruption in our country is critical and verging on being self-destructive. According to gainintegrity.com, an investment and risk compliance portal, Bangladesh is red-flagged in the

The bureaucrat can decide to be corrupt or honest. If corrupt, he is detected with probability p, is fired, and receives outside option v. If he is undetected, he receives his wage w plus the bribe b, less a dishonesty cost d. In equilibrium, he will be corrupt if and only if "w-v ((1-p)/p x (b-d))".

This framework suggests several avenues for reducing corruption. One could increase the returns to staying on the job (w), or, equivalently in this



*Unlike the clever ones who can launder their money abroad, Malek was hiding the proof of his corruption in plain sight. His anomalous growth in wealth probably remained undetected because corruption has now become an integral part of our social fabric.*

resources, construct two seven-storied buildings with 24 apartments for his two wives and the list goes on. Malek just had to attend eight-years in school (unless his certificate is fake) to literally ride *gari-ghora* as per one of the maxims that we learned in our nursery primers. However, unlike the clever ones who can launder their money abroad, Malek was hiding the

corruption and graft cases in the DGHS were flagged by an ACC report in January 2019. The report warned the DGHS about the irregularities during the purchase of medicines, surgical equipment and other machines due to the absence of proper monitoring by the government. It added that, "An alleged nexus of contractors and officials from different organisations under the ministry buys many inessential machines and equipment to misappropriate money".

The report was brushed under the carpet and had a dusty return once Covid-19 exposed the sickness of our health sector. The sector is currently undergoing a homeopathic treatment of "like cures like" now that the physical disease has begun to counter its embedded immoral disease. The arrests of a hospital owner Shahed and JKG Healthcare executives Ariful Chowdhury and his wife Dr Sabrina Arif Chowdhury are news that is sweet, albeit mild, like homeopathic pills. Malek is the most recent dose. The cancerous growth of corruption will, however, require much more aggressive and strategic interventions.

In *Sociology of Corruption* (1968), the internationally renowned Malaysian social scientist, late Professor Syed Hussein Alatas defined corruption as, "the subordination of public interests to private aims involving a violation of norms and duty, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and callous disregard for any consequence suffered by the

judicial system, police, public service, land administration, tax and customs administration and public procurement. It adds that the legislature and civil society are not free to address the situation. In other words, all our public officials are susceptible to corruption, and there is a culture of impunity and indifference.

The government has revised the salary and incentives of public officials, strengthened legislative measures, yet the public interest, as Alatas puts it, is constantly being subordinated by the government officials and politicians with complete disregard for the general public. The carrots and sticks have little effect on the bureaucratic beast. The time has come to rethink our attitudes towards those who deviate from norms for personal gains.

While researching for this piece, I came across a very insightful article by two professors from MIT and Harvard. In *Annual Review of Economics*, Benjamin Olken and Rohini Pande (2012) assessed the prevalence, cost and factors of corruption in developing countries. The report does not include Bangladesh, but it offers scenarios involving bribery and thievery of public officials that are common to our country. For instance, it examines the link between wages and corruption among public officials. Let me quote the authors,

"Suppose that the bureaucrat receives a wage w from the government and, if fired, can receive an outside option v.

context, one could decrease the outside option (v) by increasing punishments. One could also increase the probability of detection (p)."

The article also gives examples of the magnitudes of corruption in certain countries. For instance, it reports that in 2005 Pakistan lost 0.3-1.9 percent of its GDP due to politically connected loans. I know a similar analysis of the culture of corruption that is corroding our society will be derring-do in our context. But if we want to become a middle-income country under an inspirational leadership, we need to have the right information to make the necessary informed structural adjustments in the public system. The more transparent the government can become in its dealings, the more aware the citizens will be of their rights. Having an informed public with access to technology will increase the probability of detection of corrupt individuals. People like Malek could have been detected much earlier if we had an informed opinion against corruption in place. Such detection will deter others from becoming another Malek (pun added). Now we need someone who has enough steam inside to foray into the court of corrupts and hit the opponents. We need someone to chant *kabadi kabadi...* and reinvest in our national game. But this time it will be a game against corruption.

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## Are we addicted to prison?

LOUISE ARBOUR, MARIA CATTALU, HELEN CLARK, and RUTH DREIFUSS

WE live in a world of mass incarceration. On this day on the planet, over 11 million people are behind bars. That's about the entire population of Belgium.

A relatively small fraction of these people in prison are women. They are about 700,000 today (or the entire population of Washington DC)—but their numbers are skyrocketing: +834 percent in the United States in the last 40 years, for example, with small drug-related offenses being one of the most significant drivers of global over-incarceration.

Those women involved in the illegal drug trade were, more often than not, coerced into criminal offending—or have few prospects in the legal economy. Their role in drug markets is generally low-level but high-risk, consisting largely of small-scale dealing, transporting drugs, holding drugs for dealers, or buying for someone.

Criminal organisations easily replace these women. When they get caught, their imprisonment does not disrupt trafficking—in other words, it serves no purpose in fighting organised crime.

Even if the imprisonment of women is pointless, it will have heavy consequences. Going to prison destroys lives and families. Over half of all women in prison are mothers—and that number can rise to as many as four out of five in countries such as the USA, Brazil and Thailand. Those incarcerated mothers are often heads of single-parent households, and sole providers for their families.

Incarcerated women also tend to have access to fewer services, including gender-appropriate health facilities. They have less access to vocational training opportunities that are more routinely available in correctional facilities designed for incarcerated males. In other words,

women are more law-abiding, but, ironically, because of their small numbers in prison, they end up being more harshly punished than men! In addition, a high proportion of women in prison have suffered abuse and violence and/or have mental health issues, and a significant number live with HIV and/or hepatitis. Their specific needs are often ignored, revealing that gender inequality does not stop at the prison doors.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of jurisdictions set free nonviolent offenders (but here again, incarcerated women were largely disregarded). This reveals that jails could not guarantee health security for people behind bars. It also suggests they should not have been incarcerated at all.

When released from prison, women rarely receive adequate support. Their housing and employment prospects can be bleak because of their criminal records: in turn, that reinforces a cycle of exposure to violence and poverty, also impacting

their children.

Even the International Narcotics Control Board, the international body in charge of drug treaty compliance, known for its conservative positions, has urged governments to consider alternatives to the punishment of women who have broken the law, including drug laws, but implementation is agonisingly slow.

For almost 60 years now, the international drug control regime has pushed governments into a pattern of punishment and incarceration that is now out of control. Too many people are in jail for non-violent offences in many countries. Increasingly severe penalties, including mandatory minimum sentences, produce grossly unfair results. This is particularly unjust and counterproductive, and has disproportionate adverse impacts on women.

How many decades of failure, marginalisation, and stigmatisation will it take, and how many families will



*Progressive law enforcement alternatives to incarceration should begin with women who have been convicted: their small numbers make it feasible, risks are low, and societal benefits would be readily apparent.*

have to be torn apart for governments to acknowledge that their approach to incarceration is harmful? Societies have a responsibility to treat all people humanely. Incarcerated women should not be an exception to that.

Progressive law enforcement alternatives to incarceration should begin with women who have been convicted: their small numbers make it feasible, risks are low, and societal benefits would be readily apparent.

Governments must now work on overcoming their own addiction to incarceration, and turn to humane and productive alternatives.

Louise Arbour is a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Maria Livanos Cattalu is a former Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce; Helen Clark is a former Prime Minister of New Zealand; Ruth Dreifuss is a former President of Switzerland. All four are members of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.



# How do we go about correcting police deviance?



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

**STRAIGHT LINE**

In the columns of this newspaper, an erudite professor highlighted the need to "at least start a dialogue" on reforming the police. Like many concerned citizens he feels frustrated and distressed at the gross misuse of police powers resulting in grievous physical injuries including death and the uncalled for loss of individual liberty. His plea for reforming the police should strike a sympathetic chord in all sensible quarters for the simple reason that whenever any State violates its citizen's rights, one of the main instrument available for it to do this is its police force. The unpleasant reality, however, is that successive authorities have not dealt with the subject with the desired seriousness.

There is no point in blaming our British colonial masters for our police-related plight although the decay originates from the colonial past. The British had no incentive to reform the system. Now the focus should perhaps be on the continued justification of the retention of the colonial police system.

The modern Bangladeshi State that was the product of a violent freedom struggle, while adopting a written liberal democratic constitution, retained the colonial administrative,

police and judicial structures without recasting them to meet the changed situation. The colonial-repressive character emerged when the governing elite of a decolonised society decided to retain the inherited police organisation, ignoring justified demands for change.

There is a reasonable suspicion that our nationalist leaders who occupied positions of power after the departure of the British and Pakistanis, were enamoured by the administrative and police system left behind by the colonial power and enjoyed exercising power and authority, oblivious of their own demand during the freedom struggle for far-reaching administrative reforms. Is there an apprehension that decolonisation and the resultant professionalisation of police will result in less political control?

The question is, what is a colonial police system? Usually, the colonial police is a para-military force whose first purpose is to support the government, and the government rather than the law is supreme. The major enemy of this police is the political subversive and not the criminal. As in an army, policemen in this force are accountable to their superiors rather than public opinion or the law. Their duties are tabulated for them and there is little or no room for discretion.

To include an external accountability mechanism dealing with serious police delinquency among other provisions for modernising Bangladesh police outfit, a draft police law was submitted during 2007-08 period. No action has been taken to modernise the 1861



PHOTO: AFP

Police Act. So when police officials have proposed a legislation to subject errant elements to external scrutiny, it is not understood what prevents the authority to concur. Any system of police accountability will ultimately require legislative force. Whatever system of external supervision of police complaints is used, all systems need legislation to establish both police and public powers and duties, rights and obligations with regard to complaints investigation.

There is a considered view that substantive reform meaningfully impacting police behaviour and action in our parlance would be difficult to come by in the immediate future. As such it might be pragmatic to concentrate on few segments wherein administrative intervention is likely to

bring salutary result.

The first item requiring attention relates to the sanitisation of the recruitment process in subordinate ranks of police. Impartial and merit-based appointment will hopefully substantially decrease the ranks of bitter and insensitive elements who are allegedly compelled to make hefty investments to gain entry into service. Fair intake should result in lesser malfeasance.

The second item concerns heavy investments on training, particularly on attitudinal changes and brushing-up investigative skills with particular emphasis on scientific enquiry. The strategy should be to move from evidence to accused and not the other way and to gradually move away from the practice of extracting the

less credible judicial confession to collection of material evidence. On a broader canvas, investment for crime prevention and detection should be accorded due priority as compared to expenditures on public order.

The third item relates to rationalisation of promotions and postings. This has to be done by promoting the professionals on merit and discarding the alleged regional or political loyalty bias in matters of posting.

The above measures do not amount to tall orders that are unimplementable but the question is whether in the absence of change of organisational goal, the same can be realistically effected. Such measures in order to be durable must not be regime specific and have to be agreed upon on a bipartisan basis.

A free society needs, ultimately, to have its police acting for the benefit of all its members: the power of the police is too great for control to be entrusted to any single arm of government and likewise too great to allow the police themselves total autonomy. To place police, and the power they wield in the State under the sole direction of the executive government is to give that arm of government power to enforce its will on society and overrule opposition. It is also to give the individual police officer carte blanche to abuse, bully, or act outside the law to a degree acceptable to the government, even if society, or certain sections of it, finds such activities unacceptable.

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Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP.

## Who's afraid of democracy?

### The bitter battle over the US Supreme Court

"This is absolutely the core question: How do you preserve White male rule when it's incompatible with democracy?"

— Heather McGhee, in conversation with political analyst Ronald Brownstein. McGhee, former president of the liberal group Demos, is author of "The Sum of Us."



ASHFAQ SWAPAN

THE sheer brazenness of the Republican *volte face* following the death of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is breathtaking. In 2016, eight months before presidential elections, US Senate Republicans balked when US President Barack Obama wanted to fill a vacancy in the US Supreme Court. They invented a new "principle" that in an election year, this should wait until elections.

Today, less than 50 days away from elections, early voting has started in a few states. Yet pretty much to nobody's surprise, US Senate Republicans are ready to accept whoever US President Donald Trump nominates.

The Supreme Court has the last word on vital issues like abortion and Obamacare, so the battle is not surprising. However, the fight also reflects rear-guard action by an entrenched, recalcitrant white minority that seeks to retain through judicial power what is increasingly elusive through the democratic process.

Yet it can be a dangerous ploy that can backfire, if history is any guide. "In the 1850s...the new Republican Party was emerging as the nation's dominant electoral force as the voice of voters in the industrialising North who opposed slavery's expansion,"

political analyst Ronald Brownstein writes in the CNN Politics website. However, seven of the Supreme Court's nine members were appointed by presidents favouring the south. "That court...sparked outrage among voters in the emerging majority when it repeatedly favoured the interests of Southern slaveholding states," he adds.

The court made a landmark ruling in 1857 in the case of Dred Scott, an enslaved black man who sued for freedom, in which it denied Scott freedom because black people "are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word 'citizens' in the Constitution."

It was an egregious ruling that provoked justified outrage. Four years later, the American Civil War broke out, and this landmark ruling was a contributing factor. Today America is going through profound socio-political readjustment as its demographics change and its population sorts itself geographically into Republican and Democratic constituencies. Race, alas, continues to cast a dark shadow as the Republican Party gravitates towards rural white Americans while the Democratic Party embraces diversity with open arms.

A Supreme Court justice is determined by two institutions with an undemocratic white bias—the presidency and the US Senate. Two quirks—the electoral college of state-by-state election of the president, and the two-senators-per-state rule regardless of size, gives a lopsided advantage to that Republican demographic. Brownstein lays it out: "Republicans have controlled the White House 12 of the past 20 years despite winning the popular vote only once in the five presidential elections since 2000.

In the US Senate, Brownstein notes that "while the (Republican Party) has controlled the Senate for about 22 of



An image of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Ruth Bader Ginsburg is projected onto the New York State Civil Supreme Court building in Manhattan, New York City, US after she passed away.

PHOTO: REUTERS

the past 40 years, Republican senators have represented a majority of the nation's population for only a single session over that period: from 1997 to 1998."

The democratic squeeze will get tighter in the future. According to demographer William Frey, Americans born after 1981—millennials, Generation Z and the younger cohort behind them—are now a majority of the nation's population. In 2020, millennials and Generation Z combined will equal older cohorts as a share of eligible voters, and in 2024 they will exceed them as a proportion of actual voters. People of colour make up 45 percent of millennials, nearly 49 percent of Generation Z and a 51 percent majority of the younger generation behind them.

It seems like a million years ago when the Republican Party had done what it called an autopsy after back-to-back presidential losses. The party recognised that unless it widened its appeal it faced demographic doom.

Then Trump happened, and all good sense went out of the window. Republican white racial polarisation is now on steroids. According to polls and 2018 Congressional races, even college educated white men and suburban white women are deserting the Republican Party.

The party recognises the looming danger, and the result is a remarkable development. Look anywhere in the developed world and you will be hard-pressed to find any party that is so implacably opposed to universal adult franchise. Under the ruse of voter

fraud—a claim debunked by experts—they've tightened voting requirements that, unsurprisingly, makes voting more difficult for minority and poor voters.

The Supreme Court has helped. Two conservative majority-led Supreme Court decisions have given Republicans a substantial edge. In the 2010 case of Citizens United v Federal Election Commission, a conservative majority drove a stake into a bipartisan effort to limit corporate spending to influence elections. Associate Justice John Paul Stevens argued in dissent that the Court's ruling represented "a rejection of the common sense of the American people, who have recognised a need to prevent corporations from undermining self-government." In an even more egregious ruling in the 2013 case Shelby County v Holder, a conservative majority essentially defanged the Voting Rights Act, the landmark law that protects African American voting rights especially in the American South, which has a notorious history of suppression.

However, these could all turn out to be Pyrrhic victories. The egregious 1987 Dred Scott ruling is a dark reminder that if a court goes against the spirit of the times then its ruling can backfire.

If Republicans think packing the US Supreme Court and lower federal courts with their proteges will protect policies no longer shared by a diverse, different demographic cohort they never bothered to court or engage, they are kidding themselves.

African American author James Baldwin had issued a warning in 1963 in a different context that is chillingly relevant for Republicans today. He quoted from a Negro spiritual song: "God gave Noah the rainbow sign/ No more water, the fire next time!"

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

### ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 26, 1960  
First televised US presidential debate

The first in a series of historic televised debates (seen by some 85 to 120 million viewers) between US presidential candidates John F Kennedy and Vice President Richard M Nixon was broadcast this day in 1960.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

<b>ACROSS</b>	34 Buffoon	10 Cunning
1 Jokes	35 Jackson 5 hit	16 Sinking signal
5 Officers above captains	38 La Scala city	18 Pack full
11 Stepped down	41 Notion	19 Swims
12 Like Berg's music	42 Out of bed	20 Land unit
13 Impose, as taxes	43 Kitchen herb	21 Noggin
14 Ant group	44 Overnight flight	22 Piece of data
15 Chopping tool	45 Milky stone	23 Continental coin
16 Pretzel topping		25 Rain heavily
17 Unhappy look	<b>DOWN</b>	29 Bogus
19 Bar bill	1 Fancy party	30 Status -
22 Dreads	2 Baseball's	33 Oxygen form
24 Comet's place	Rodriguez	34 Foundation
26 Mystique	3 Cares	36 Composer
27 Gumbo veggie	4 Pig's place	Bartok
28 Make way	5 Raucous bird	37 Ref's decision
30 Hive head	6 Coral isles	38 Spoil
31 Spinning toy	7 Sudden shock	39 Angry state
32 Day divisions	8 Music's Yoko	40 Jar part
	9 Galloped	41 Altar promise

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinon@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinon@gmail.com).

### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

N	A	G	S	E	D	I	C	T
E	G	R	E	T	D	O	T	E
W	A	I	T	I	N	G	G	A
E	V	E	T	O	E	L	E	A
R	E	V	O	L	T	B	I	N
S	E	V	E	R	E	A	T	S
F	E	L	L	D	I	R	G	E
O	R	E	S	A	B	S	E	N
R	A	N	A	M	I	L	A	W
A	S	S	U	M	E	D	N	A
G	E	E	S	E	O	A	T	E
E	S	S	E	N	Y	O	L	K

### BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

MY BOOTS ARE TOO BIG AND MY HELMET IS TOO SMALL

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO

NOW I CAN'T SEE AND MY FEET HURT!

### BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

THIS IS YOU. GUAH! GUAH!

YEAH? WELL, THIS IS YOU! TATTLE! TATTLE! TATTLE!

GUAH! GUAH! TATTLE! TATTLE! TATTLE!

I SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO ASK WHAT'S GOING ON.



FICTION

# Sand and Water

TANVIR MALIK

Shutters clicked away. Flashes dazzled eyes. News reporters jostled with each other to hold out their mikes as far as their arms allowed. Busy fingers gripped their ballpoints tighter.

A group of borkha-clad women filed out of the baggage reclaim area, hiding their faces.

The reporters ringed in the women. Rokeya dodged the crowd. Followed by Shamsun Nahar, she walked far past the railing and sighed.

"Where will you go now?" Shamsun Nahar asked.

Rokeya didn't reply.

"Come with me. You can stay with us a couple of days. I'm with an NGO. We provide legal aid for women. Here's my card."

Rokeya turned around. "I don't need it." "Keep it, just in case," the woman smiled and left.

Three coffins were brought out on trolleys with people wailing behind. An old woman had passed out. A young boy looked perplexed, clutching the corner of his father's shirt. A little girl cried for her mother.

"Take me away from here," Rokeya whispered.

She looked out the windows of the rental. The flyovers reminded her of the ones between Jeddah and Riyadh; she'd been on them not very long ago. Water was scarce there. Vast deserts dominated the landscape; there was just sand – lots of it.

The run-up to her first plane trip passed in a flurry. Leaving her children behind tore her heart out; her only consolation had been that she was setting foot in a holy land.

The Prophet's country! A Flower bloomed amid its arid, sandy expanses fourteen hundred years back. She had cherished its fragrance in her heart all her life.

"You're lucky; not every Muslim gets a chance to visit the country," the imam of the local mosque beamed.

Jalal was unwilling at first. Nobody from his family had ever worked as a domestic worker. But he came around when Rokeya listed the paybacks; it seemed too good to pass on.

A hairy hand was feeling Rokeya up in the dark. She resisted with all her strength, but the hand possessed superhuman powers. Her mouth was already clamped with his other hand. Pinned to the bed, she writhed in pain. "A-ah!" Rokeya started up. The shaggy darkness bristled against her skin. She squirmed. The nightmare kept coming back to her night after night.

It started on the 31st of March, she clearly remembered. She'd gone to bed, finishing all her chores. The sheikh's wife was out of town. A furry hand gagged her with a ball of cloth in the middle of the night. "I own you, and I can do anything I want," a raspy voice she recognized whispered in her ear.

She woke up in the morning with pain all over her body. She had passed out from the beating and torture. She felt dirty. Even after taking showers, the feeling wouldn't just wash off. She stopped saying her prayers for two days.

Jumping off the high-rise seemed the easiest way out; but once on the balcony, she saw two innocent faces pleading with her. She *couldn't* even die. She cried a full hour.

"Hello, it's me – Rokeya. I'm in Bangladesh now."

"Did you bring any money?" Jalil asked.

"Yes, how's my children?"

"Good."

"Can you come to Dhaka to pick me up?"

"Ok."

Rokeya flopped down on the bed. She could go back home! She could return to her children! Tears of joy filled her eyes.

The bus Rokeya and Jalil got on was parked in the rutted mud. It had "Shatkira Deluxe Express" painted in red cursive letters on the sides. From the driver's rear-view mirror dangled a hanging that had "Allahu" written in Arabic.

The bus started right at 7 am. She could see expanses of green paddy fields passing by through the windows. The occasional villages were concealed in a smoky, deeper green. There was just green—lots of it, so unlike the desert land she had left behind.

The back of the dollar bill she had got from the son was also green. "My father must never know," he said. She flung down the hairy bill straightaway. He gave a fiendish smile, "Oh, the *mishkin* wants more." Tossing another greenback, he left. It was to be her *price*. She cried another full hour.

It was then she set on fleeing. An Egyptian doctor, who lived next door, called the police, who in turn handed her over to the Bangladesh Consulate in Jeddah; then came the safe house, and then...

Jalil was sitting next to her. What was he thinking? Did he have a clue? They were to share their bed tonight. He had hairy hands too. She froze.

Rokeya smothered Shamim and Sumona with kisses upon reaching home. Everything was the same as when she left a year ago. The chicken coop was still missing half of its top. The cement platform at the base of the tube well had been the playground of marauding algae. The rose plant was dead, however.

Rokeya touched her mother-in-law's feet. "You could've brought a lot more money, had you stayed. I was taking good care of your children; you can ask them if you don't believe me."

"What the hell's the meaning of these marks?" Jalil exploded.

Rokeya was weeping. "Believe me, I'm innocent."

"You w\_\_\_\_\_! Now I understand why you wanted to go abroad."

"You don't understand. I saved myself. I ran away, didn't I? I did that for you – for our family."

Jalil was hysterical. He walked up and down, pulling his hair with both hands. "I'm going to go mad if I stay here any longer."

"Can't you forgive me?"

"Forgive! Bitch, I'm going to divorce you!"

"No, no, don't say that. Kill me, but don't say that."

Jalil stormed out, leaving the door open. It was dark outside. Moonlight cast a pale glow over everything, however. The skeleton of the rose plant was clearly visible. The lack of water that had killed it, might as well have been an excess of sand. Sand and water. The sandstorm in the Arabian deserts had rippled out into a cyclone on the Bay of Bengal.

"You're right – a man has every right to punish his wife if she's unfaithful," the imam said, "the newspapers nowadays are filled with scandalous reports and photos of these women. To defame the Prophet's Land like this, for shame, for shame!"

"I warned Jalil before she went abroad. He didn't listen. When a woman sets foot outside her home, she only brings disgrace to the whole family," Jalil's mother curled her lips.

They were seated under the guava tree in the yard. Rokeya was on the porch behind a bamboo chik. She had sent the kids out under some pretext. The tube well platform had been scraped clean. The chicken coop donned a full roof in months. The rose plant was missing.

"My mind's made up, and she has to leave all the money she's brought; it was I who paid for her plane fare and everything else."

Rokeya began to snivel. "Where will I go?" she asked.

"What do I know? Didn't you think of it when you committed *jena*?"

Rokeya wanted to protest. She wanted to point out one last time what Jalil was refusing to see through. Nevertheless, she knew her husband. "I have a request," she said, "I want to take my children with me."

"Never! I'll not let your shadow fall over my children."

The matter was settled. The *imam* gave his blessings. The mother hoped she'd get a better daughter-in-law the next time and a generous dowry. The son felt confident he'd not let his mother down.

Cyclones on the Bay of Bengal were notorious for razing everything to the ground. This one – though born of the desert – flooded everything in its path. Water and sand.

That night Rokeya cried for a long time, again. She had packed her bag and she did not forget to place her copy of the Quran on top of everything else, wrapped in a satin scarf. The children had cried themselves to sleep. She would come back for them, she had assured.

She took the NGO worker's card out and stroked it with her fingers. She repeated the phone number to herself.

Putting it back, she went to bed. Lying in the dark, she saw the light; she dared knit herself an invisible shawl – one neither sand nor water could affect.

Tanvir Malik's first book is a collection of short stories called *Short Takes: Stories from Bangladesh*. A teacher by profession, he enjoys reading, travelling, and painting.



FICTION

# Of Fireflies and Slime

MARJUQUE UL HAQUE

I stood before the door of the house where my grandmother once lived. Age and infirmity had jaded what might have once been a proper door. What had once been a smooth leafy green entrance was now faded and flaking with white speckles and horizontal shafts of indents that the wood lice had eaten into.

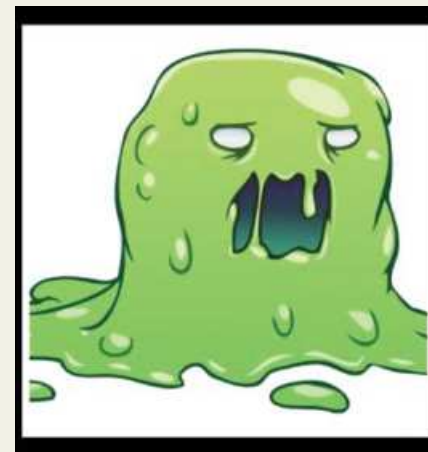
I remember my grandmother while she was alive. At her deathbed, she had apparently told my parents that she wanted all of us siblings at her janaza. I had not been able to attend. I remember that two minibuses were hired to take her dead body to the gravesite. I was supposed to go; only I opted out when my father offered to squeeze me into the microbus, it was overloaded and having me inside would make the ride even more uncomfortable for everyone. I came to know later that in the hubbub of the moment my father had forgotten about her request; otherwise he would have squeezed me inside in spite of everyone's discomfort.

The night was lighted by the moon and noisy with the chirping of crickets and the croaking of frogs at the pond. I took the keys out and opened the door. It was pitch dark and dust laden inside as an abandoned house would be. I shivered a little directing the torch inside and took out candles from the bag, carefully avoiding looking at the dark corners in case I imagined the outline of something ominous hovering by. After a quick look inside the house I unbarred the doors opening into the yard. It was a lovely scene, the weed and tall grass gleamed in the moonlight among the stray

something non-human and the acrid smell that had come to pass. The door was barred and therefore, it was impossible for anyone to enter. The windows, however, were open to let the air in and although no human being could possibly enter through it, a firefly had come in and was present in the room.

Stories as such spread quickly through the village; within a day or two the surrounding villages had learned of the incident. Nobody really understood what was going on; but not long after, another girl was attacked again by the slime. Like the previous case, the girl had been alone in her room and a single firefly was had been present. It did not take long for the villagers to put two plus two together. In desperation they held a council and decided to take measures.

At the imminence of dusk everyone came in and checked to get rid of any fireflies from their homes before shutting down doors and windows and made sure to close the door quickly and watchfully whenever they went out. But these measures were not nearly enough and villagers came up with a plan. From dusk to dawn, a group would be beating pots and pans in places where people lived to disturb the quiet of the night that was taken advantage of by the slime. These were of course joint initiatives, and groups of two and three took turns to continue the noise by inhabited areas. The metallic clang that reverberated through the village from sundown to sunset could be heard from as far away from neighboring villages about a mile away. In the beginning, it was difficult



leaves. A few fireflies twinkled about here and there in the darkness behind the kitchen that stood across the yard. I took the bench to repose by the scene away from the strain of the cloistered indoors. These were the scenery that made the countryside truly beautiful. How long had it been since I had come to my grandmother's village? Absent minded, I watched one the fireflies sauntering in through the door.

I recalled a story my grandmother had told us when she had been alive. In those days, she would sit on the easy chair by the living room door that led to the yard while counting her prayer beads. The electricity at the villages played hide and seek more frequently than you could expect and the whole area would be plunged into darkness. We would often sit quietly by her as she told us stories about Djinns and the like. On such a dark night, we were discussing fireflies as a few of them happened to have entered the living room. The electricity had been gone for a while and it was about time we had dinner before going to bed. Grandma had asked Jahangir to get a broom to get rid of the insects as the doors would be closed soon. We were all fascinated and happy with their presence in the house and had inquired if we may not have them stay. Our grandmother had smiled and asked Jahangir to explain; only he blinked and looked dumbfoundedly at her. It was then that she began the tale of what a firefly in the house meant.

In her younger years, when there had been no electricity in the villages, a particular kind of Djinn which took the form of fireflies had come to haunt the villages. One night when a woman had been sleeping alone in her home she was awakened by a distinct feeling of being touched all over her body by something disgustingly slimy. Initially, she had been so stunned that she couldn't raise her voice for help. At length, she had shouted for help but had not been heard and inquired after only much later. Unsurprisingly, she had been traumatized to near madness as she recounted being molested by

to sleep in the noise, in fact many were unable to sleep, but they soon learned to adapt.

News of such happenings eventually reached the Imam living a few villages away. He was ingenious; in a span of less than two weeks he had imprisoned these supernatural slime beings in jars, filled them in a sack and threw them into the river. For some time, peace returned to the villages. It would have been great if it were to stay as such indefinitely except that the sack full of jars had surfaced again one day and a bunch of children playing by the river had happened upon them. In their curiosity, they unsealed the jars and were delighted to find coloured smoke bursting out each time they opened one. A man who was passing by was shocked to learn about the jars. His explanation of "djinn" frightened everyone by the river. The children stood for a moment before fleeing the spot in fear.

The man himself was terrified but he knew that the djinns would not normally attack humans during daylight. He summoned up courage and collected the empty jars into the sack. He knew that the Imam must be called again for help. A few men were soon dispatched to get the Imam. Thankfully, nobody had been affected by the slimes when the Imam had arrived a few days later. He immediately set about recapturing the wicked slimes. It was lucky that the last slime when he had found him had not gone too far into hiding.

He understood that mere imprisonment would lead to release again one day and hence he gathered them all together by the river and threatened this time to imprison them permanently unless they promised to travel past the distant river that came after this one and never return to this side. The slimes fearful of punishment promised and went past the next river and has not appeared since.

Marjuque Ul Haque is a student of the Department of English & Humanities at ULAB. He loves to explore the intangible and the imaginative.

Valencia v Huesca  
Live from 8:00pm  
Elche v Real Sociedad  
Live from 10:30pm  
Real Betis v Real Madrid  
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE  
Kolkata v Hyderabad  
Live from 8:00pm  
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2  
PREMIER LEAGUE  
Brighton v Man United

Live from 5:30pm  
Crystal Palace v Everton  
Live from 8:00pm  
West Brom v Chelsea  
Live from 10:30pm  
Burnley v Southampton  
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

Torino v Atalanta  
Live from 7:00pm  
Cagliari v Lazio  
Live from 10:00pm  
Inter Milan v Fiorentina  
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

## No movement on SL tour front

SLC yet to provide revised health protocol

SPORTS REPORTER

There have been a lot of confusion over Bangladesh's upcoming tour of Sri Lanka as the Sri Lankan Covid-19 task force are yet to provide the revised health protocol to Sri Lanka Cricket. The cloud over the tour became darker after Sri Lanka Cricket CEO Ashley de Silva stated that if the Bangladesh Cricket Board are not willing to abide by the protocols set by the country's Covid-19 task force, the tour will be called off and rescheduled.

"Whatever the feedback which we would get from the Covid task force, will be shared with the Bangladesh Cricket Board. And once we get the response, if they [BCB] are not prepared to abide by those guidelines given by the task force, then we would be compelled to call off the tour and reschedule the tour during the same cycle maybe for next year or the following year," de Silva said during an interview to ThePapare.com on Thursday.

Earlier, BCB President Nazmul



Hassan said that it would not be possible for Bangladesh to follow the mandatory 14-day strict quarantine and SLC officials have since had a series of meetings with Sri Lankan government officials in an effort to relax the protocol. But it seemed the Sri Lankan government officials and the task force were unwilling to relax the quarantine period.

While nothing definite could be known about whether the tour will go ahead or not, it is by now almost certain that there will be a delay as the



Tigers were scheduled to travel to the island nation on September 27. During the tour Bangladesh were scheduled to play three Tests under the ICC Test championship.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury the board is yet to receive the revised health protocol, adding that the board will assess the protocols before making the final call.

"Look we are still in the same state as before and what the SLC CEO had said is that they are yet to receive the revised health protocol

and after getting that they will send that to us. After receiving that the BCB will assess that and then decide whether we will tour or not. But first, we need to receive the health protocol which we are still expecting from the SLC," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star.

The BCB is expecting to receive the health protocol from the SLC soon but Nizamuddin also added that the main priority for the BCB would be to send a well-prepared team for the tour.

"Our main priority will be to send a well-prepared team as we cannot send a team not fully prepared to play a series and the final call over the tour will be taken by the BCB," he added.

The BCB has already started a residential camp for its 27-member preliminary squad by creating a bio-secure bubble with frequent coronavirus testing. As the uncertainty continues, many cricketers want domestic cricket to resume, with the Dhaka Premier League having been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March.

SPORTS REPORTER



Eager to stage the Premier Division Hockey League after a two-year hiatus, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) received applications from two clubs to lift suspensions on their respective officials so they can participate.

"We have recently received letters from Dhaka Mariner Young's Club and Mohammedan SC, although both of them had previously applied to withdraw suspensions of their officials in 2019. But we could not discuss it at the meeting," said acting BHF general secretary Mohammad Yousuf. "Mariner wanted to know the decision regarding their previous letter while Mohammedan again requested lifting the suspension on their officials. We will discuss the matter in the next executive committee, which may take place in the first week of October."

The BHF imposed a suspension on Mohammedan manager Ariful Haque Prince and assistant manager Asaduzzaman Chandan and banned Mariner Young's general secretary Hasanullah Khan Rana and manager Nazrul Islam for breaching the code of conduct during a decisive league match on June 7, 2018. All four officials

and one judge were handed suspensions between three and five years in November that year, but have not really missed out on much as no league has been held since.

Of the 12 Premier Hockey League sides, seven clubs sent representatives to the league committee meeting. Dilkusha SC, Victoria SC and Ajax SC were yet to send the names of their representatives while Mohammedan and Mariner were waiting for feedback from the executive committee.

Handing and lifting punishments is common practice in the BHF, which has previously lifted punishments on officials "for the greater interest of hockey".

In July, 2013, the BHF suspended five players and officials, including Prince and Chandan, for terms ranging from three years to life in the wake of the assault on Pakistan national team coach Naveed Alam. Four players, including Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, were also handed suspensions for different terms due to deliberately putting up poor performances in the 2014 Asia Cup. All suspensions were later lifted.

"Previous punishment will also come be a factor and we will see how to make it tolerable. We want all clubs to take part in the league as all rules and regulations are formed for the smooth running of the game," said Yousuf, adding that they were ready to start the league.

## Razib, Aminul slip from top

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Enamul Hossain Razib and FM Khandokar Aminul Islam slipped from lead to fourth position in Joytu Sheikh Hasina International Online Chess tournament as Indonesian GM Susantoat Megaranto took solo lead at the close of the sixth round yesterday.

Megaranto secured 5.5 points, 0.5 points more than Vietnamese GM Ngoc Truong Nguyen and Indian GM Diptayan Ghosh.

Seven players shared the third position with 4.5 points each while 11 players including five Bangladeshis -- Aminul, Razib, Abu Sufian Shakil, Taibur Rahman and Azad Al Javed -- were occupying fourth position with four points each.

Seven Bangladeshi players including GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Minhaz Uddin Sagar and IM Fahad Hossain were in fifth position with 3.5 points each.

## Aus cricket mourns Deano

AFP, Sydney

Australian cricket was reeling Friday at the shock death of batting great Dean Jones, with national coach Justin Langer leading tributes to a player he called "the stuff of legend".

Langer revealed he was on the cusp of recruiting Jones into his coaching set-up for next year's World Cup when the 59-year-old died of a heart attack in Mumbai, where he had been commenting on the Indian Premier League.

"I was talking about getting Deano in to help us with World Cup stuff as a mentor and coach, sadly that's not going to happen," Langer told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "(But) the legacy he leaves to Australian cricket and Australian cricketers won't be lost on us."

Jones' dashing strokeplay inspired generations of batsmen, including current power-hitter Glenn Maxwell. "Incredibly shocked by the news that Dean Jones has passed away. Had a poster of the great man in my room as a kid," Maxwell tweeted.

Jones played 52 Tests from 1984-1992, amassing 3,631 runs at an average of 46.55, while his 164 one-day internationals yielded

6,068 runs and an average of 44.61.

Known universally as "Deano", Jones was remembered as a fierce competitor whose knockabout demeanour concealed a keen cricketing mind bursting with innovative ideas.

"The cricket world is shattered today for it has lost one of its greatest characters, a totally original maverick talent whose contribution went far beyond mere statistics -- however excellent they were," the Brisbane Courier-Mail's Robert Craddock wrote.

The ABC's Russell Jackson said Jones' daredevil batting revolutionised one-day cricket and helped Australia win the 1987 World Cup.

"Jones could be subtle and brutal in the space of a minute," Jackson wrote.

"He dictated terms, using the width of his crease and the full 360 degrees to set new standards."

For all his exploits in the limited-overs game, it was Jones' gutsy Test innings against India at Chennai in 1986 that remained etched in the minds of his admirers after 34 years. Jones defied furnace-like conditions to score 210, vomiting and shaking at the crease to save Australia's hopes in cricket's second-ever tied Test, and was then taken to hospital for dehydration after losing eight kilos during the innings.



Javi Martinez came off the bench in extra time and headed home the decisive goal as Bayern Munich laid hands on the UEFA Super Cup for the second time following their 2-1 win over Sevilla in Budapest on Thursday night. The match had rolled into extra time after Leon Goretzka had cancelled out Lucas Ocampos' early strike for Sevilla. The 32-year-old Spaniard re-enacted his heroics from the 2013 Super Cup final when he had scored in the last minute of extra time to take the game into penalties where the Bavarians prevailed over Chelsea. The win added the newest silverware to Bayern's rich cabinet, with four trophies won in 2020.

PHOTO: BAYERN MUNICH



## Messi angry again

REUTERS, Barcelona

Lionel Messi has launched his latest attack on Barcelona's hierarchy by criticising the way the club treated strike partner Luis Suarez, who left for La Liga rivals Atletico Madrid this week.

Captain Messi, who threatened to leave Barca last month and recently hit out at president Josep Maria Bartomeu's leadership of the club, said the Uruguayan, the club's third-highest scorer of all time, was harshly treated by Barca.

New coach Ronald Koeman called Suarez several days after getting the job to inform the striker, who had one year left on his contract, that he was no longer wanted.

Bartomeu had left Suarez off a list of players he considered not for sale in the aftermath of the 8-2 defeat to Bayern Munich in the Champions League in August.

"You deserved a farewell befitting who you are: one of the most important players in the history of the club, achieving great things for the team and on an individual level," Messi wrote on his official Instagram account on Friday.

"You did not deserve for them to throw you out like they did. But the truth is that at this stage nothing surprises me anymore."

Suarez had paid tribute to Messi in his farewell news conference on Thursday, recalling that everyone had told him the Argentinian was difficult to get on with, but declaring they had become best friends as well as prolific strike partners.

"It will be strange to see you in another shirt and even stranger to come up against you on the pitch," Messi added.

"I had already begun to imagine it but today I went into the dressing room and it truly dawned on me. It's going to be so difficult not to continue to share every day with you both on the pitch and away from it."

## Odds heavy against the king

AFP, Paris



The undisputed king of clay, Rafael Nadal is one title away from matching Roger Federer's all-time Grand Slam record, but 15 years on from the Spaniard's first French Open triumph he appears more vulnerable than ever at his beloved Roland Garros.

Nadal owns an astounding 93-2 record in Paris dating back to his debut in 2005, when, still a teenager, he became the first player to win the French Open on his first attempt since Mats Wilander in 1982.

Fast-forward to the present day, and his 19 Grand Slam crowns -- a record 12 of which have come at Roland Garros -- coupled with Federer's absence after knee surgery leave him on the brink of history at a venue where he has won each of the past three years.

Yet a multitude of factors, mostly beyond his control, have conspired against Nadal and offered hope to his chief rivals -- namely Novak Djokovic and recent US Open winner Dominic Thiem.

Boris Becker, a former coach of world number one Djokovic, suggested the rescheduled tournament -- pushed back from its traditional spring billing due to the coronavirus pandemic -- will be tougher than usual for Nadal.

The heavier conditions could suit hardcourt players more and negate some of Nadal's lethal topspin, possibly aiding Thiem who has finished runner-up in Paris twice in succession.

"This year is going to be particularly hard for Rafael Nadal. He's my number one favourite but the difference between him and the other players is less big this year than usual," said Becker, a six-time Grand Slam champion.

often played four big clay tournaments, which he had generally won."

Nadal will head into the French Open without a clay title under his belt for the first time, having lost in straight sets to Diego Schwartzman in the quarterfinals at Rome -- his first tournament in six months.

"It's not a moment for excuses. I've spent a long time without competing, I played two good matches," Nadal, who skipped the US Open citing Covid-19 concerns, said following the defeat.

"It's a completely special and unpredictable year," he added. "I did my job here. I did a couple things well and other things bad. At least I played

showed that Nadal is beatable on clay," added the Serb.

"The conditions that they played on, obviously heavy clay, not much bounce, humid, night sessions, we are going to have that as well in Paris. I'm pretty sure that he does not prefer that to a high bounce. I know he likes the high bounce."

"He likes the hot and warm and fast conditions, where he can use his spin a lot. Even though he's the favourite, I think there are players that can win against him there."

Another championship run for Nadal, not accounting for potential walkovers, would take him to a century



three matches."

Despite the sense this is the most understrength version of Nadal at the French Open in recent times, Djokovic remains adamant the 34-year-old is again the favourite to lift the Coupe des Mousquetaires.

"The record that he has there, the history of his results, you just can't put anybody in front of him," said Djokovic, himself vying to add to his lone 2016 triumph at Roland Garros.

"But, you know, definitely Diego

of wins at the French Open. Only Federer, Serena Williams, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert have hit triple digits in wins at a single major in the Open era.

Schwartzman agreed that Nadal was still the favourite.

"Rafa is the king. It's his house. He went to Roland Garros many years playing good, sometimes not playing his best and he won."

"I think Rafa is always there, the guy who is going to win."

## Jose moves the goalposts

REUTERS

Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho said he had to demand Europa League opponents Shkendija fix the goalposts ahead of their tie on Thursday after his keepers alerted him to the fact they were too small.

Spurs goalkeepers Hugo Lloris and Joe Hart noticed the dimensions were wrong and told Mourinho, who took the matter up with UEFA's delegate.

After the game Mourinho posted a picture of himself on Instagram nearly touching the crossbar.

"Before the game was a funny situation because my goalkeepers told me that the goal was small," said Mourinho after goals from Erik Lamela, Son Heung-min and substitute Harry Kane fired his side to a 3-1 victory.

"I went by myself and of course the goal was small. The goalkeepers, they spend hours and hours and hours in the goal so they know when the goal is not the right dimension."

"I am not a goalkeeper but I know football since I was a kid and I know when I stand there and spread my arms and I know the distance so I felt immediately that something was going wrong. "We got the UEFA delegate to confirm and yes it was 5cm smaller (too low), and of course we demanded for the goals to be replaced with goals of the right dimension."



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

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SHAH CEMENT

# New onion variety ushers in hope

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, *Pabna*

When the country was coping with the soaring price of onion because of Indian export ban earlier this month, vegetables farmer Shahinur Rahman was seeing bumper production of a new variety of local onion he planted two months ago.

Shahinur, from Mohadebpur village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila, thanks the Spices Research Center, Bogura, for giving him the opportunity to participate in test cultivation of BARI-5 variety of onion on his land.

"I used to cultivate vegetables in my field. Recently, I came to know

that this new variety of onion is ready in 90 to 100 days. I was interested and so made seed beds in the middle of June and planted seedlings in the last week of July."

"While the country is worried about the rising price of onion, my fields are full of onions," Shahinur, who is set to harvest next month, said about a week back.

The Spices Research Center, a wing of the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI), is now at the final stage of research on BARI-5 onion cultivation.

BARI-5 is expected to be ready for commercial cultivation next year onwards, which will lead to production of onion in

the months of September and October -- usually around the time of the year when onion import crises and price hikes hit the country.

"Traditionally, farmers in the country cultivate onions in January and February and get the production in by April or May before the floods," Dr Hamim Reza, chief scientific officer of the Spices Research Center, Bogura told the Daily Star.

"After the floodwaters go down, farmers also undertake winter onion cultivation -- popularly named 'mulkata piazi' -- in November and December, harvesting before the start of the main crop season."

The Spices Research Center has already started research on six high-yielding varieties of onion, with BARI-1, 3, 5 for the summer season. Of these, BARI-5 is showing success all year-around in their research, he said.

"After long-term research, we have undertaken experimental cultivation of BARI-5 this year. For test cultivation, we have already selected 10 districts across the country, including the hill districts and districts which are the biggest producers of onion," Dr Hamim said.

Fifty bighas of land in the selected districts

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Fourth grader Mum's elder brother teaches her to swim at Crescent Lake in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. The brother gives his sibling swimming lessons at the weekends. Although there is a lack of facilities for swimming in the city, guardians are becoming more aware of the necessity to train their children.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# US Covid-19 cases surpass 7 million

France sees record cases as India nears 6m mark

AGENCIES

The number of coronavirus cases in the United States topped 7 million - more than 20% of the world's total - as governments across the globe struggle to contain a surge in coronavirus infections.

The virus has killed at least 984,068 people globally since the outbreak emerged in China last December. At least 32,298,410 cases have been registered worldwide. On Thursday, 5,730 new deaths and 312,068 new cases were recorded worldwide.

After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 139,808 deaths from 4,657,702 cases, India with 92,290 deaths from 5,818,570 cases, Mexico with 75,439 deaths from 715,457 cases, and Britain with 41,902 deaths from 416,363 cases.

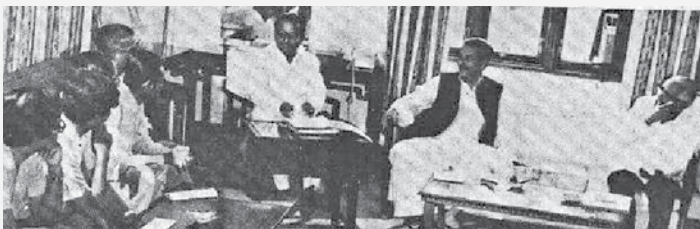
With scientists still racing to develop a vaccine, governments are being forced to reimpose crippling lockdown measures that slowed the virus spread earlier this year but sent much of the world economy into a tailspin.

France reported a new record for daily infections on Thursday after the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

# Allow Bangalees to perform Hajj



The chairman and members of the Service Reorganisation Committee and National Pay Commission are seen with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on September 26, 1972.

September 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S CABLE TO KING FAISAL

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has sent a telegram to His Majesty King Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, sovereign of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, requesting him to allow prospective Hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh to visit Saudi Arabia during the forthcoming Hajj season, says a press release of the government.

The following is an extract of Bangabandhu's telegram to King Faisal: "As Your Majesty is aware most of my countrymen are devout Muslims and strictly adhere to the tenets of Islam. Many of them who are able and resourceful have made it the cherished

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



# Pabna-4 goes to by-election today amid pandemic

Three candidates vying for JS membership

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

By-election to Pabna-4 (Ishwardi-Atghoria) is going to be held today.

Three candidates, including from the Awami League and the BNP, are contesting the by-polls to this parliamentary seat, which fell vacant after the death of AL lawmaker and former minister Shamsur Rahman Sherif Dilu on April 2.

According to the district election office, there are 3,81,112 voters in 12 unions and two municipalities of Ishwardi and Atghoria upazilas.

Voting will be held at 129 polling centres, said Abdul Latif, district election officer and also the returning officer of the polls.

"The Election

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# Helsinki Airport deploys dogs to sniff out Covid



CNN ONLINE

A group of sniffer dogs trained to detect Covid-19 have begun working at Helsinki Airport in Finland in an effort to identify those who have contracted the virus.

Finnish start-up Wise Nose has trained a total of 10 dogs, which will work in shifts of four to sniff out coronavirus.

The process involves those being tested swiping their skin with a test wipe and dropping it into a cup, which is then given to the dog that sniffs it. The dog and its handler are held in a separate booth

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# TORTURE OF JOURNO 19 sued for helping OC Pradeep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Nineteen people were sued yesterday for assisting Pradeep Kumar Das, suspended officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, in filing a fabricated case and torturing journalist Faridul Islam.

The victim's younger sister Fatima Khanam filed the case with Teknaf Police Station. Seven accused were named on the case statement whereas 12 others were unknown.

The named accused are Abul Kalam alias Alam, Mofij Ahmed Iqbal, Jahurul Islam, Dalilur Rahman, Sarwar Kamal, Nurul Absar and Rafiqul Islam.

According to the plaintiff, the named accused designed the plot on how to torture her brother in collusion with Pradeep and picked up the journalist from his hideout in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# CONTROVERSIAL FARM BILL Indian farmers block roads, railways as anger mounts

REUTERS, *Shambhu*

Thousands of farmers in India yesterday blocked roads and railway tracks in a protest against new legislation that they say could pave the way for the government to stop buying grain at guaranteed prices, leaving them at the mercy of private buyers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has defended the bills - recently approved by parliament - as reforms to help rid India's vast agriculture sector of antiquated laws and allow farmers to sell to institutional buyers and big retailers such as Walmart.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



# PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 26

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:15 6:00 7:30  
JAMAT 5:10 1:15 4:30 6:05 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Some locals ride on a raft made of banana trunks to go to a dry place in Chowraha village of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila yesterday. The village went under water a week ago as all five upazilas of the district have been hit by flood due to onrush of water from upstream and heavy rains. About 70,000 people have been affected by the flood in the district so far.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

# Flood ravages North for 4th time this year

STAR REPORT

Many areas in the country's northern region have again been submerged by flash flood due to incessant rain and the onrushing water from the upstream.

The flood victims are suffering immensely as they could yet recover their losses caused by floods in previous phases. With this, flash floods have ravaged the areas four times this year.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, around 3,00,00 families have been waterlogged on the Teesta and Dharla basins. Some families have left their homes and taken shelter on roads and embankments.

Floodwater has also washed away cattle and furniture of some flood-hit families. Aman paddy and vegetable fields on vast areas of land are now under water.

The flood victims in the char areas are in dire need of food and drinking water.

"My crops had been damaged by flood. Then I took loan to grow crops to recover my losses. But my crops have again been flooded," said Mubarak Hossain, a farmer of Shimulbari village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila.

According to officials in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, Dharla has been flowing 39cm above the danger level since Thursday night due to the onrushing water from the upstream.

In Sirajganj, water level of the Jamuna has increased as it has constantly been raining for the last couple of days at Chowhali, Enayetpur and Kazipur upazilas.

River erosion has taken a serious turn in these areas, said locals.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2