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What happens if a candidate exits the race?
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“The government does not want exam-centric education rather it wants education through which a student will get knowledge, acquire skills”
EDUCATION MINISTER DIPU MONI



“District Football Associations are responsible for holding district leagues but you blame us... It is not my responsibility”
KAZI SALAHUDDIN AFTER WINNING HIS FOURTH TERM AS BFF PRESIDENT **PAGE 11**



“I think that we can prosper mightily under those circumstances.”
UK PM BORIS JOHNSON ON NO-DEAL BREXIT **PAGE 6**



A DISASTER called Titas

Graft, mismanagement have turned it into cause of public sufferings, accidents

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Sirajul Haque Khan cannot recall the last time someone came to check the gas connection to his building.

In fact, the 73-year-old businessman in Pargandaria of Jatrabari never saw any official to inspect the gas lines in his neighbourhood in the last 39 years since he started living there.

“All these years, people from the city corporation worked several times to upgrade the sewage line but we did not see anyone coming from Titas gas for checking or upgrading the gas connections,” said Sirajul.

“We only see their movements after a tragic incident caused by gas leaks.”

Despite being the country's biggest gas transmission and distribution company with 60 percent share of gas connections, Titas does not have any mechanism to



identify any leakage from its vast network of underground gas pipelines.

This government-owned company acts only after getting complaints from customers about leaks in service lines or in household connections.

And the actions the Titas officials take after such events are not prompt enough, forcing customers to turn to local plumbers to fix the problems, allege a number of customers.

Energy experts said such complaints have been a common phenomenon over the years and it only speaks how badly Titas maintains its transmission and distribution lines.

They think the frequent fire incidents and the last month's blast in a Narayanganj mosque were the outcome of negligence and mismanagement over the years from the country's biggest natural gas distributor and its supervising authorities.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



TITAS SUPPLY NETWORK

- » 13,138 km underground pipeline
- » 624 km transmission line
- » 12,514 km distribution, service lines

Titas network covers Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur

The longest service line (6,000 km) covers Dhaka

COVERAGE

It has around 28.66 lakh domestic and industrial consumers

RISKY, RUSTY PIPELINE

- » More than 700 km line installed before 2001
- » One third of the pipeline installed about 25-40 years ago
- » Major part of distribution line has become rusty and risky



“People are suffering just due to the greed of those corrupt officials. Titas has turned into an enemy of the masses for this.”

PROF M SHAMSUL ALAM
ENERGY ADVISER TO
CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
OF BANGLADESH (CAB)



“We only see their movements after a tragic incident caused by gas leaks.”

SIRAJUL HAQUE KHAN
A CONSUMER FROM
JATRABARI, TALKING ABOUT
TITAS SERVICE

China ready to improve strategic relations

Xi Jinping tells President Hamid

STAR REPORT

Chinese President Xi Jinping has said he stands ready to work with Bangladesh to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of the Belt and Road to take the China-Bangladesh strategic partnership of cooperation to new heights, reports Xinhua.

He made the remarks in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart Mohammad Abdul Hamid as the two countries celebrated the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties yesterday.

Xi said the China-Bangladesh friendship has a long history and remains ever new over time.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 45 years ago, the two countries have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Outrage as woman gang-raped, filmed

Graphic video making rounds in social media; 1 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Late last night, there was widespread outrage on social media came as the graphic video of a woman in Noakhali being gang-raped was uploaded and shared yesterday.

Police in the evening arrested Abdur Rahim, 22, who during primary interrogation confessed to his involvement in the crime, said Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Police Station.

While it is unclear who uploaded the video, or initiated the sharing of it, it is evident that the rapists had filmed the rape, with the intent of spreading it on Facebook. As the woman was, one man yelled, “This will go on Facebook,” while another was heard saying, “No, let's go live”.

While the torturous actions seen in the video

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Plumbing depths of pandemic pain

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Golam Kibria used to teach at a private school in Parbatipur town in Dinajpur before the pandemic hit the country.

But the 25-year-old man lost his earnings as the schools closed, and in just a few months, he found himself carrying sacks of cement, sand, and bricks at construction sites.

“I can't find words to express how difficult it is for someone who used to teach in classrooms to work as a mason's helper,” Kibria told this correspondent last week.

The National University graduate of sociology joined Brighten Residential Model School at Parbatipur last year at a monthly salary of Tk 3,000. He supplemented that income by giving private tuitions to support his family of six.

But everything came to a grinding halt during the pandemic. The school stopped paying salaries in April. Left with no other source of income, he eventually started working as a mason's helper.

Kibria's situation mirrors those of many. Meherul Islam was a teacher of Roujatul Adab Kindergarten School in Sundarganj of Gaibnadhra for four years. He now ekes out a living by operating a boat on the Teesta river.

“As a sole breadwinner, I have to make the decision for the sake of my life. I have to feed my wife and elderly parents,” he said.

Meherul used to earn Tk 5,500 as monthly salary and around Tk 5,000 from private tuitions. He now earns about Tk 6,000 by operating the boat.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

**WORLD
TEACHER'S
DAY**

Corrupt judges have to be discharged immediately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that corrupt judges should be discharged from their duties immediately in order to keep the judiciary free from graft.

In a verdict, the HC said, “[If they are not removed,] the corrupt judges will gradually influence others onto their paths.”

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaul Kamal and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil made the observations in the full 144-page text of the verdict released on Thursday.

“A judiciary without any graft is one of the original pre-conditions of the rule of law, which cannot be imagined without corruption-free judiciary,” the HC said.

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SURVEY ON RMG WORKERS DURING PANDEMIC

99.8pc say they're not Covid-infected

430 workers from 21 factories took part in limited-scale study by MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A staggering 99.8 percent of the 430 garment workers, covered by a survey, claimed that they were not infected with Covid-19, according to a study by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Of the workers, 95.8 percent said they didn't have information whether their co-workers were infected or not. Only 1.8 percent of them mentioned that their family members were infected with the virus, says the study titled “Covid-19 Impact on Selected RMG factories and Way Forward”.

None of the respondents visited doctors or got tested for Covid-19 while 85.7 percent of them suffered from fever and cold during the period. They doubted whether the symptoms were related to the novel coronavirus, it said.

The study is based on telephone interviews of 330 female and 100 male workers in 21 garment factories in Dhaka and Chattogram.

On wages and benefits, the study said 99.8 percent of the respondents received wages for March and April this year.

However, none of the respondents got full wage. And 91.48 percent of them said they did not get wages and allowances as per the labour law.

Besides, 80.4 percent workers said they received masks from the factories, and 95.3 percent said they were satisfied with the hand-washing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



This photo taken recently at Paglir Beel in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, shows what appears to be a lake where four years ago there used to be a dense forest. Rampant sand-lifting in the area has put animal habitats in danger as well.

PHOTO:
MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Encroachers dig a lake out of forest

Illegal sand-lifting, tree-felling go on unabated at Dulhazra

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Four years of illegal sand lifting and forest razing have turned what was once a dense forest in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, into what now appears to be a lake.

The rampant tree felling takes place on both sides of the Hargoja canal in Paglir Beel area.

The canal through Dulhazra Safari Park of Cox's Bazar forest division (north) is leased out to the upazila chairman of Chakaria.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Syed Shamsul Tabriz told The Daily Star that there is a legal quarry in Hargoja canal in the Paglir Beel area, but men working for the lessee -- the upazila chairman -- are encroaching into the forest.

“We discussed the issue in our monthly meeting and decided to get the area surveyed to assess how far they have encroached,” he said. “It is getting rampant. We are doing our best to stop it.”

The continuous sand lifting is threatening to eat into the Biodiversity Conservation Zone under the Chattogram wildlife division, threatening animal habitats in greater Chattogram that are already in jeopardy.

Mohammad Moazzom Hossain, director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Chattogram region, said a team from his office visited the spot and found a grim scenario there.

“We will issue a notice to the perpetrators soon and take action as per law,” he added.

After talking to locals the team found that at least 11 locals engaged 24 large machines to dig out sand in the forest area. The razing and digging has inched perilously close to the Biodiversity Conservation Zone.

On September 15, this correspondent found no trace of forest when visiting the spot that was lush with greenery just a few years ago. Around 50 acres of the forest land was dug 10 to 15 feet deep to lift the sand,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,125
New cases in 24hrs



3,68,690
Total cases



5,348
Deaths



2,81,656
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,039,349
Deaths



35,232,157
Total cases

A disaster called Titas

FROM PAGE 1
A SAGA OF NEGLIGENCE
Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited has 13,138km underground pipeline, 624km transmission and 12,514km distribution or service lines, in its network that covers Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Gazipur.

It has around 28.66 lakh domestic and industrial consumers.

Of the total service line, 7,001.40km was constructed by the end of the year 2000, according to official documents of Titas. Its longest service line is around 6,000km, which is in Dhaka.

Titas officials said around one third of the total gas pipeline, installed 25-40 years ago, has become rusty and risky. The problem is mostly with the distribution line.

The company has a dedicated section called System Operation Department for maintenance. But it mainly depends on consumer's complaint in the absence of a mechanism or device to identify the leaks without seeing it physically.

For lodging complaints, it has a call centre which receives on an average 375 emergency and 50 normal calls a month, according to an official.

Surprisingly, Titas does not have the detailed service line map and central database for replaced pipelines.

"We don't have the exact data on leaks in gas distribution lines right now," Titas Managing Director Ali Md Al-Mamun told The Daily Star.

However, a survey conducted by Titas three years ago found 35,000 out of its 5.65 lakh gas risers leaky.

Risers are used to bring buried natural gas piping above the ground to allow access to the gas flowing through the pipes.

A Titas official concerned said there was no data on risers being fixed so far.

The poor condition of the gas transmission and distribution infrastructure was highlighted in the Power Sector Masterplan (PSMP)-2016, prepared by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

As a short-term goal, the PSMP-2016 recommended that transmission and distribution should be electronically mapped to introduce advanced monitoring and control systems to support efficient use of gas by 2019.

On the gas leak incidents, it said most of the incidents presumably are caused by poor maintenance, use of low-grade materials, and/or poor construction practice.

"More attention should be given to gas leaks and system loss from gas transmission and distribution infrastructure to prevent economic loss, i.e. the lost opportunity cost," it added.

Four years have gone by since the PSMP-2016 came up with the recommendations but nothing has changed in the field of operations and maintenance, said energy experts.

The government mainly focused on power generation using expensive fossil fuel, they said, adding that due to poor maintenance and operation, gas-related fire incidents are taking place frequently, leading to casualties.

According to the Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate, there were 24,074 fires last year.

"We found 19 percent accidents were gas-related, gas leakages to be precise," said Brigadier General Md Sazzad Hussain, director general of the directorate.

Titas claimed 208 fires in 2018-2019 in its distribution areas gas-related.

'AN ENEMY OF THE MASSES'
Prof Badrul Imam of Dhaka University pointed to two factors: use of poor-quality raw materials in illegal connections and no effort to replace the old pipelines.

Terming the network of illegal gas lines nothing but a time bomb, he said it is the creation of Titas officials who are "more interested in corruption than providing service".

"They are not accountable. The illegal network of gas pipelines is their creation. Unless Titas stops their illegal activities, accidents will continue to happen."

Prof Badrul suggested that the government makes alternative fuels like LPG cheaper, even if it requires subsidy, to shed the burden on pipeline gas.

On the graft among Titas officials, Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), said, "People are suffering just due to the greed of those corrupt officials. Titas has turned into an enemy of the masses."

"We have to bribe them to fix the leakages and pay extra charge due to the rise in gas price. They are providing poor quality gas but feasting on illegal networks."

He claimed there are 70,000 points in Dhaka city where gas leaks due to poor maintenance and illegal connections.

M Tamim, a teacher of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, thinks the main problem of Titas is in its management.

"Illegal gas connections, gas line leakage, corruption -- all are interrelated. If there is corruption, there will be illegal connections," said Tamim, also a former adviser to a caretaker government.

SHIFTING BLAME

Titas Managing Director Ali Md Al-Mamun blamed other service providers, including city corporations and Wasa, for damaging and cracking its pipes during their development activities.

"In most cases, when other service providers work, they unintentionally make some leaks," he said.

"I have already issued instruction to identify all the gas-leaking points and repair those within a month."

Rana Akbar Haidary, director operation of Titas, said, "A number of development work like metro rail is going on in the Titas gas transmission area, causing a good number of leaks. But some leaks happened automatically."

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said most of the Dhaka city lines are old and need to be replaced.

There are around 700km of illegal gas pipelines across the country, he said without elaborating further.

"Of course, Titas has responsibility and they will be punished for any negligence on their part. But Titas also cannot do everything. What about the other service providers? We all have to work together," he said.

The minister said the government has taken up a Tk 1,200 crore project for replacing the old pipelines to streamline the gas distribution system.

Under the project, the gas transmission and distribution system will come under Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system.

Once the SACDA system is introduced, information of a leak in a gas line or an illegal connection at any place will immediately go to the central control room, said Nasrul.

China ready to improve

FROM PAGE 1
always respected each other and treated each other as equals, enhanced political mutual trust and deepened mutually beneficial cooperation that brings tangible benefits to the two peoples, he noted.

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, China and Bangladesh have stuck together through thick and thin, helped each other and fought against the pandemic side by side, writing a new chapter of bilateral friendship, the Chinese president added.

This year, China has also offered zero-tariff treatment to 97 percent of Bangladesh's exports by adding 5,161 more items to the existing list of 3,095 duty-free products.

With some \$26 billion Chinese investments and \$38 billion funding commitments, Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of China's massive infrastructure project.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), President Xi's top priority initiative, aims firm up China's global influence through rail, maritime and road links from Asia to Europe and Africa in a revival of ancient Silk Road trading routes.

Bangladesh has joined BRI, saying it is ready to be part of any initiative that is aimed at promoting economy, connectivity, peace and sustainability.

India, which has yet to join it, and its ally US, however, are critical of the initiative. They said Chinese financing of projects lead to debt-trap of the

recipients. Dhaka maintains that it is careful and makes sure that the country does not fall into debt trap.

For his part, President Hamid in the message said the Bangladesh-China relationship is developing rapidly and has covered cooperation in key areas, to which Bangladesh attaches great importance.

He expressed his deep appreciation for China's continuous support for Bangladesh in its socio-economic development progress, adding that he believes the close and friendly relationship between the two countries will continue to deepen in the future.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also exchanged congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

In his message, Li said China is willing to deepen practical cooperation with Bangladesh in various fields and promote the steady and sustainable development of the China-Bangladesh strategic partnership of cooperation to better benefit the two countries and their people.

For her part, Hasina said the strategic partnership of cooperation between Bangladesh and China has been developed from the two countries' time-tested friendship and cooperation.

The strengthened Bangladesh-China cooperation has unleashed enormous potential in maintaining peace, security and stability in the region and even around the world, she said.



Motorists driving in the dark on Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover. The streetlights of the flyover have not been lit for a long time, despite the surrounding buildings appearing to have electricity. This photo was taken on Friday.

PM expresses sympathy over Trumps diagnosis

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday wrote to US President Donald Trump sending a message of sympathy after he and First Lady Melania Trump were diagnosed with Covid-19.

"I'm saddened to have learnt that you have, unfortunately, contracted the novel coronavirus and began your treatment at a hospital," Hasina wrote. The PM wished full recovery of the US president and the first lady at the soonest.

"Hope to see you back in your office with a robust and vibrant disposition in the coming days so that you can continue to lead your country in its fight against coronavirus and related challenges," she wrote in her letter.

2 Rohingyas killed in gunfight in Kutupalong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingyas were killed in a reported gunfight between two rival groups in a camps in Ukhia of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The gunfight erupted between two groups of Rohingya "criminals" over "establishing supremacy in the area", said Samsuddoza Nayan, additional repatriation, rehabilitation, and relief officer of the government.

The deceased were identified as Imam Sharif, 32, and Shamsul Alam, 40, residents of Kutupalong refugee camp in the upazila, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports. They had bullet wounds in their bodies.

The violence began at the Refugee Camp-2 West around 1:00am and continued until 5:00am.

Law enforcers did not reveal the identity of those involved in gunfight.

The bodies were recovered and sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, said Ahmad Sanjur Morshed, officer-in-charge of Ukhia Police Station.

No case was filed in this connection.

Meanwhile, there was another "gunfight" around 8:30am in Refugee Camp-3 of Kutupalong between alleged Rohingya criminals, said Hafez Jalal Ahmed, chairman of Kutupalong Rohingya Registrar camp. At least 15 Rohingyas were injured and seven houses were burned during the incident, sources at the camp said.

The injured were taken to different hospitals including Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, they said. None of them had bullet injuries.

99.8pc say they're not Covid-infected

FROM PAGE 1

facilities at workplaces.

MJF Programme Manager Shoma Datta shared the findings of the study, conducted between March and June this year, at a virtual meeting jointly organised by the MJF and The Daily Star.

Tanjim Ferdous, a national consultant of the United Nations in Bangladesh, moderated the meeting.

While presenting the findings, Shoma said 85.5 percent of the respondents said their factories resumed operation and 67.44 percent said they feel the threat of job loss.

About sexual harassment amid the pandemic, 31.8 percent of the female workers said they were subjected to sexual harassment at workplaces, while 47.6 percent said the supervisors used abusive language if they failed to meet the target. Of the victims, 32.9 percent lodged complaints and only 7.4 percent got remedy.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of the MJF, said the study does not give a complete picture of the entire garment sector, rather it gives a partial picture. The study was conducted on a limited scale.

"We want the sector to thrive, and at the same time we want improvement in the living standards of the workers," she noted.

Addressing the meeting, Planning Minister MA Mannan said the government has rolled out stimulus

packages so that the garment sector remains unaffected by the pandemic.

"We want to work together with all the stakeholders..."

The minister also mentioned that Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is conducting a study to know the socio-economic status of people, including the garment workers, amid the pandemic.

At the virtual meeting, Jasmin Shila, former operator at a garment factory, said she and her family have been going through a tough time since she and her husband lost their jobs.

She contacted some factories for a job but couldn't find one as all of those had sufficient manpower.

Nazma Akter, executive director of Awaj Foundation, said that when the owners started shutting factories in big numbers in late March, many workers lost jobs.

Later, many of those who still had jobs didn't return to their workplaces though international retailers and brands reinstated a significant number of work orders for local apparel manufacturers, she noted.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the importance of the garment sector is immense as more than four crore people are directly or indirectly involved in the sector which accounts for 84 percent of the country's annual exports.

Nazneen Ahmed, senior research

fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, suggested creating a database of retrenched workers so that they can be given jobs in factories when normalcy returns in business activities.

Referring to the measures to protect workers from Covid-19, Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said those were not adequate to keep the workers safe from virus infections.

George Fallor, chief technical adviser of the ILO's RMG Programme, said "Throughout, the ILO has been working with the government of Bangladesh in preparing several Covid-19 guidelines and training on workplace safety and health and labour relations."

Banasree Mitra Neogi, gender adviser to the MJF, said female workers must be protected through enforcement of legal measures at workplaces.

The survey found that the majority of the respondents reduced food intake, started depending on loans and felt job insecurity and mental pressure, added Banasree.

SM Shahed Hossain, human resources manager at the Chattogram-based Clifton Textiles, said his factory was shut for one month between March and April this year because of the pandemic. But none of the workers was terminated.

Encroachers dig

FROM PAGE 1

causing it to resemble a water body.

Around 30 trucks lumbered in empty and chugged back sand-laden over the course of the day. One of the truck drivers, pulling the vehicle over at Shah Suja road, said each truckload of sand would be sold for Tk 10,000.

The sand is used at various construction sites, he said, requesting that his name not be used.

Another truck driver told The Daily Star the vehicle's owner pays Tk 500 for each trip to influential locals including Dulhazra Union Parishad Chairman Nurul Amin, his brother Md Monsur and one Bipen Dutta.

They have the backing of Chakaria upazila Chairman Fajlul Karim Saydee.

Nurul Amin told The Daily Star that Paglir Beel was leased out to the upazila chairman and that he had nothing to do with the sand lifting.

Saydee said most quarries in Chakaria were leased out to him as party men make a living by lifting sand.

"I don't know actually what the scenario is on the ground. If there is any damage, I will certainly abide by the action the authorities concerned will take," he said.

Thouhidul Islam, divisional forest

officer (north) of Cox's Bazar under Chattogram Forest Circle, told this correspondent that they had seized and burnt down sand lifting machines last year in the area.

"As I came to know it from you, I am going to take action soon," he said, adding that there is political backing behind the rampant sand lifting.

Abu Naser Md Yeasin Neyaz, divisional forest officer (wildlife and nature conservation), said due to the sand lifting which has caused a large crater in the area, a biodiversity conservation zone for animals is in jeopardy.

Outrage as woman gang-raped, filmed

FROM PAGE 1

was probably no different from any of the 889 rapes that happened between January and August 2020, the video forced netizens to face just what rape entails, and the horror of having one's rights violated.

The incident happened in Noahkhali's Begumganj upazila at Joykrishnapur village of Eklashpur union on September 2.

The brutality of the torture lay not only in how much physical pain it inflicted on the woman, but also in their lack of mercy.

"I am calling you my father, my brother, please let me go! For the sake of Allah let me go!" the woman implored her rapists, but mercy was not on their agenda.

The video also documents that sticks were used as instruments of torture when executing the action of rape and the whole gang of men aided and abetted each other in raping the woman.

Confirming the incident, Moazzem Hossain Sohag, a ward member of Eklashpur union, said the woman came to him after the incident, but

did not name anyone.

The woman and her family members left the village soon afterwards, locals said. The survivor could not be contacted by The Daily Star, and more details about the circumstances surrounding this incident could not be found.

Police said they started looking for the culprits after seeing the video on social media.

Locals say alleged notorious drug trader Delwar, the chief of Delwar Bahini, and six of his followers were involved in the crime.

Truckers to go on 48hr strike on Oct 12

UNB, Ctg

Bangladesh Truck-Covered Van Owners-Workers Coordination Council yesterday called a 48-hour strike across the country from October 12 to press home their nine-point demand, including amendment to the Road Transport Act.

The transport organisation announced the programme through a press release yesterday.

Earlier, Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, called the strike at a meeting at Rajbari Community Centre near Karnafuli Shah Amanat bridge in the city on Saturday.

DEATHS OF 26 IN LIBYA

CID to seek

Interpol's help in capturing suspects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department will issue a Red Notice through Interpol by this week for Bangladeshi human traffickers thought to be responsible for the killing of 26 people of the country in Libya earlier this year.

"We will issue the notice for 10-20 people," Syeda Zannat Ara, special superintendent of police (Serious Crimes and Homicide), told a press conference at the capital's CID headquarters yesterday.

Also present at the event were nine survivors of the massacre that happened at a warehouse in Mezda in southwest of Tripoli in May.

A Red Notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

The survivors came back to the country on a special flight on September 30. Three other survivors have yet to reach Bangladesh, Zannat said.

"We will talk to the survivors and identify the foreign agents involved in the trafficking chain," she said.

Law enforcers arrested 44 people in 26 cases filed in this regard.

"We have spoken to the families of the 26 who died. The families filed the cases, and they gave us the identities of the local traffickers. Most of them have been arrested."

The nine survivors present there bore the marks of torture and many had freshly healed bullet wounds, and one of them had been permanently disabled.

Janu Miah said, "The incident happened on May 27 around 11:00am. The mafia used to come to our camp and beat us up; this was a daily routine, but that day they tortured us indiscriminately."

"There were around 100 to 150 people from Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan. Around 30-35 of them were women. The Libyan mafia started beating them up, but they retaliated that day and killed a member of the mafia."

The other members of the mafia called for reinforcements, who came and started a shooting at the migrants, he described, "That is how 26 of us died, and 12 of us got injured."

The CID shared with journalists a video footage of the incident obtained from the survivors. The video begins with the image of a body being dragged on a mosaic floor with floral motifs. Men carrying weapons that looked like semi-automatic rifles walked about. The smoke and dust made it difficult to see what was going on. Most of the video was shot in the dark with the only light coming from a parked car.

The person filming walked up to a body possibly of a dark-skinned individual lying in a pool of blood. He then walked up to another body of a lighter-skinned man with close-shorn hair wearing a black and red polo shirt. More bodies come into view, blurry in the smoke.

Throughout the video, people shouted in Arabic. "Stop recording," and "Where is my pistol?" were two of the things said.

Janu Miah said, "One person from the mafia took us to a hospital, but the doctor refused to treat us, saying that there is no chance of survival. The hospital provided an ambulance for another hospital, and they too refused to treat us."

He himself survived two bullet wounds in the stomach.

"Around dawn, they left us on a garbage heap in the desert. We walked around two to three kilometres in that state and found a house of a Sudanese camel-herder. He gave us shelter, and got the locals to call the militia. The militia came, took us away in their vehicles, and got us admitted to Tripoli University Medical College Hospital."

"They didn't treat us until the Bangladeshi embassy officials came. My surgery was done at 1:00am."

The survivors were taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka to give their statements.

Online classes for grade XI begin at colleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Colleges across the country have started online classes for the newly-admitted grade XI students from yesterday.

Usually a new academic year for HSC and equivalent courses begins on July 1. But this year online classes started after three months due to the coronavirus situation.

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday inaugurated the online classes from a virtual programme organised by Dhaka College.

The minister congratulated all students and said Covid-19 has created an opportunity for them to have multimodal education system including online classes.

"We are now trying to improve the quality of education," she said. The government does not want an exam centric education rather it wants education through which a student will acquire knowledge and skills as well as improve their mental health, she added.

"We need to overhaul the education system and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Saudi expatriate workers, anxious to fly back to join their workplace before their visas and work permits expire, blockaded the busy Sonargaon intersection in the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Many of them have been coming here for days on end to confirm a ticket from the airlines' offices, but in vain.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Bus Route Rationalisation First meeting in six months to focus on Basila-N'ganj route

HELEMUL ALAM

After months of stalling, the Bus Route Rationalisation (BRR) committee -- formed to bring discipline to Dhaka's chaotic bus operations -- is set to sit next week, to set up the first of the six proposed routes stretching from Ghatar Char in Basila to Narayanganj.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) will present a proposal at a meeting of the 10-member committee on October 6, according to sources. DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh will preside over the meeting, scheduled to be held at Nagar Bhaban.

The move will be taken on a pilot basis. The government eventually plans to bring the entire public bus system of Dhaka city and surrounding areas under six companies, according to the plan.

"We have already completed most of the work regarding the route," said public transport expert Dr SM Saleh Uddin.

Currently, there are 15 routes on which buses ply from Ghatar Char to Narayanganj. The proposal aims to bring these 15 routes under three cluster routes. Three sub-companies will be put in charge of these clusters. They will all be under one company, said Saleh Uddin, a member of the committee.

"The route will be discussed in the meeting and a decision may be reached," he said.

The "Bus Route Rationalisation and Operation of Bus Services on Company Basis in Dhaka" initiative was first taken by late mayor Annisul Huq.

The plan looked to bring all buses in the capital under a few companies, each to be provided with permits for their respective routes and made responsible for proper public transport management and minimising congestion.

However, after his death in late 2017, the project lost momentum.

The issue came back to the fore after the 2018 road

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Time to take rape justice seriously

LAW DESK

Incidents of rape have been making headlines on a daily basis for quite a long time now. An alarming increase in the number of this gruesome sexual violence, now requires us to revisit the rape laws in play in Bangladesh and review the entire criminal justice system in this regard as well.

The special law that deals with rape is the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000 (as amended in 2003). For a woman aged above 14, rape happens, according to Section 9(1) of the Ain, when sexual intercourse takes place without lawful marriage, against the woman's will or by obtaining her consent fraudulently or by putting her in fear. For a woman aged under 14, sexual intercourse itself amounts to rape, and here, consent is immaterial.

Under section 9(2) of the Ain, if in consequence of rape or of any act committed after rape, the woman or the child dies, the man shall be punished with death or with life imprisonment and with fine not exceeding Tk one lakh. If more than one man rape a woman or a child and that woman or child dies or is injured in consequences of that rape, according to section 9(3), each member of the gang/group shall be punished with death or rigorous imprisonment for life and also with fine not exceeding Tk one lakh.

Attempt to rape a woman or child is punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 10 years, but which shall not be less than five years, and fine. Attempt to cause death or hurt after rape, on the other hand, is punishable with imprisonment for life and fine.

The law also provides that if a woman is raped in police custody, each and every person under whose custody the rape was committed, shall be punished for failure to provide safety to the woman in question. The imprisonment may extend to 10 years but not less than five years of rigorous imprisonment, coupled with fine.

The laws seem stringent in terms of providing punishments. However, the stringent laws do not seem to play an effective role in tackling rape as an offence committed on regular basis against women in Bangladesh.

Taslima Yasmin, assistant professor of law at Dhaka University, spoke to The Daily Star on the current situation as well as the legal framework.

She observed that it is high time the policy makers in our country took rape justice seriously. It is essential, according to her, that sexual offences, including rape, are prioritised as an issue, and addressed with utmost care.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

CSO/NGO SECTOR Virtual confce starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BD CSO Process, a forum of around 700 civil society organisations and local NGOs, will hold a virtual conference from Tuesday, with 15 international speakers.

The forum discussed the conference, titled "Towards self-esteemed independent CSO/NGO sector", during an online press conference yesterday, according to a press release.

After Tuesday, the event will be held on Thursday and Saturday. Each day's programme will run from 11:30am to 1:30pm, said the release.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief moderator of the forum, said the conference's aim is to re-energise local NGOs and CSOs considering different UN-led summits and agreements.

The 15 prominent CSO/NGO leaders include Roberto Bissio, secretariat of Social Watch, Uruguay; Ignacio Packer, executive director of International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Switzerland; and Dr Hany El-Banna, president of Humanitarian Forum, UK.

Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairperson of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, will inaugurate the conference.

Leaders of the country's leading networks --

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

New Indian envoy arriving in Dhaka today thru' Tripura

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh, Vikram Doraiswami, has visited Tripura and a number of connectivity projects between India and Bangladesh before his scheduled arrival to Dhaka today.

The Northeast is "central" to PM Narendra Modi's vision of "stronger, resilient and modern" India, and "Tripura is the gateway of the Northeast", he told reporters after meeting Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Saturday.

That's why he decided to meet Deb, known for being close to the Bangladesh premier and having good ties with Bangladesh, reported Indo-Asian News Service of India.

"As we develop our relationship with Bangladesh, our most important neighbouring country, it is going to be of great value to both the countries if our connectivity, travel, trade and people to people ties grow. To achieve this, Tripura is critical, that's why I am here," Doraiswami said.

Vikram Doraiswami, who succeeds Riva Ganguly Das as the Indian envoy in Bangladesh, on Saturday met Tripura Governor and Chief Minister and discussed various issues involving Bangladesh.

He also visited the under-construction new India-Bangladesh 12.23km railway project along Agartala, and was scheduled to visit several upcoming and under-construction border projects --- Special Economic Zone, Integrated Check Posts, and big bridge over river Feni in southern Tripura's Sabroom, border trade facilities in Belonia and India-Bangladesh Waterway Project in Western Tripura's Sonamura yesterday.

After the meeting, Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb tweeted: "Held a fruitful meeting with India's High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh, Shri @VDoraiswami."

He also said he "extensively discussed various contours of India-Bangladesh relations and how Tripura can contribute towards strengthening the bond between the two nations."

Subsequently, Doraiswami tweeted: "An honour and a privilege to meet Hon CM Biplab Kumar Deb and get his specific and clear guidance for the Mission ahead. Inspired by his strong advocacy of the closest India-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Crumbling before its inauguration

Cultural activists demand immediate handover of Barishal's Shilpakala Academy

SUSHANTA GHOSH

Cultural activists of Barishal yesterday organised a human chain and rally to protest irregularities in construction of the divisional Shilpakala Academy. They demanded immediate handover of the building.

They gathered in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall, speaking out against delays in construction. Barishal Sangskritik Sangathan Samonoy Parishad organised the programme, and Kajal Ghosh, the organisation's president, presided over the protest.

The speakers said that although foundation stone of the building was laid in 2015, its construction work has not been completed in five years. Besides, the

auditorium's ceiling is currently crumbling. Speakers called for formation of an inquiry committee to inspect all irregularities.

According to Shilpakala Academy sources, in 2015, then cultural minister Asaduzzaman Noor laid foundation for the academy. Construction was supposed to be done within two years. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the academy building on February 8, 2018. But even after these years, construction has not been completed.

The construction company has also stopped related work. Meanwhile, parts of the auditorium's ceiling collapsed several times in the last week of September, claimed District Cultural Officer Hasan Maksud.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Newly-installed ceiling panels were seen falling apart onto the floor.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SYLHET-LONDON Biman resumes flight after 9yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumed direct flights to London from Sylhet yesterday after nine years.

A flight of Biman's Boeing 787 Dreamliner (BG-001) carrying 238 passengers took off from Sylhet Osmani International Airport around 11:15am yesterday.

Earlier a programme was held on the occasion where Md Mahbub Ali, state minister of civil aviation and tourism, was present as chief guest. Biman chairman Sazzadul Hasan and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh chairman Air Vice Marshall Mafidur Rahman were present as special guests.

Due to the pandemic, there is only one flight a week between Dhaka and London at the moment. From October 25, there will be two -- one from Dhaka every Sunday, and another from Sylhet every Wednesday, officials said.

In 2011, direct flight to London from Sylhet was suspended due to lack of facilities at Sylhet airport.

RAPE OF 12-YR-OLD IN SYLHET 2 held after a month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday arrested two accused in a case filed for raping a 12-year-old girl of Sardarergaon village of Sylhet Sadar upazila.

The accused are -- Jashim (22) and Ekhlash (20). They were arrested from Sunamganj and Sylhet, said Md Shah Alam, inspector (investigation) of Jalalabad Police Station.

As per the case statement, on September 6, the fifth grader went out of the house to use the restroom. She was kidnapped and raped by one accused with help of another.

Influential locals told the victim's family not to lodge any case, and assured of arranging a village arbitration to settle the matter, alleged the girl's father. He filed a case with Jalalabad Police Station on September 14, accusing the duo.

But since the case was filed, influential locals started

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

REOPENING OF JUTE MILLS Cops foil workers' procession, detain 3

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police foiled a coffin procession, organised by workers demanding reopening of closed state-run jute mills, in Khulna city's Khalishpur area yesterday.

The law enforcers stopped the programme before it started by detaining three of the main organisers -- Ruhul Amin, Sujoy Shuvo and Atif Anik -- in front of Crescent Jute Mill, said the workers.

Of them, Ruhul Amin is coordinator of Jute Mill Protection Workers-Farmers-Students-Janata Oikya Parishad, Atif Anik central president of Biplobi Chhatra

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Cartoonist Kishore wins int'l award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI) has presented its annual "Robert Russell Courage in Cartooning Award" to Ahmed Kabir Kishore, who was arrested under the Digital Security Act in Bangladesh over five months ago.

In an article, the cartoonists' organisation called for his immediate release, total exoneration of all criminal charges against him, and an independent investigation into his treatment as a detainee.

On May 5, a team of Rapid Action Battalion arrested cartoonist Kishore, allegedly for making anti-government posts on Facebook, from the capital Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

IN THE PATH OF DARK SHADOW YOU REMAIN THE LIGHTHOUSE FOREVER.



FEROZ ALAM

(Born: April 30, 1956 – Died: October 5, 2019)

On the occasion of **1st Death Anniversary** of Veteran Industrialist, Social Worker and Founding Managing Director of Youth Group **Mr. Feroz Alam**, we seek prayers for his departed soul.

- Chairman, Directors and All Employees of Youth Group and the bereaved family members.

10,000 earthen nests for birds

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

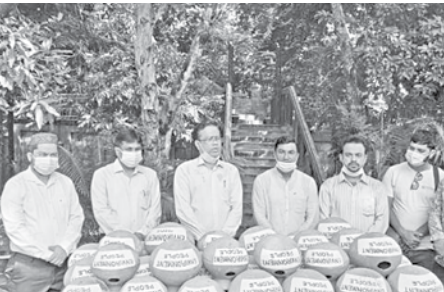
To resist gradual habitat loss of avian species, Cox's Bazar district administration along with an environmental organisation is working to set up 10,000 earthen nests for birds across Cox's Bazar district.

Md Kamal Hossen, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, inaugurated the initiative by setting up 50 of these nests at his bungalow yesterday morning. "We have started with 50 earthen nests today. We will gradually expand to other areas," the DC said.

He told The Daily Star that they they planned to set up the nests primarily at government offices and government officials' residences across the district.

Citing a six month's plan, Kamal said the district administration sourced primary expenditure from its own funds, while the rest will be provided by conservation organisation "Environment People", which also help in setting up the nests.

Rashedul Majid, chief executive of Environment People, told The Daily Star, "Hills, forests, rivers, sea all combined to make Cox's Bazar a unique natural hub once



To bring back our avian friends, Cox's Bazar District Administration and "Environment People" have planned to set up 10,000 earthen nests across the district.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

upon a time. Unfortunately, those days are gone."

"These days, birds are rarely seen as their habitats got shrunk. This is why we have come up with this initiative", he added.

Observance and maintenance will be the key focus of the programme, Majid added.

Moulvibazar road crash kills two

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Two people were killed and at least five injured yesterday after a car and bus collided head-on in Habiganj's Bahubal upazila.

The deceased were identified as car driver Sanjeet Karmakar (36) from Sreemangal upazila, and Anjali (60), a tea worker from Bahubal.

According to locals, a passenger bus of Habiganj Express collided while overtaking the car, killing the car driver on the spot.

After taking the injured to Sreemangal health complex and Habiganj Sadar Hospital, doctors declared Anjali dead.

Sreemangal Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Sajjad Hossain Chowdhury said conditions of the injured, including a two-year-old child, were critical.

Upon receiving news, Shayestaganj Fire Service and police recovered the body, said Sub-inspector Selim Mia, in-charge of Kamaichhara police outpost.

The bus driver fled the scene after the incident, he said.

Traffic on Dhaka-Sylhet old highway remained halted for half an hour after the accident.

BLOGGER OYASIQUR MURDER CASE Verdict on Oct 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set October 27 for delivering judgment in a case filed against five members of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) over the murder of blogger Oyasiquur Rahman Babu murder in 2015.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka set the date after defence lawyers completed arguments, assistant public prosecutor Md Salahuddin Howlader confirmed to The Daily Star.

Defence told the court the prosecution has failed to prove charges brought against their clients and sought acquittal.

The prosecution on September 21 completed arguments and sought capital punishment for all accused. Twenty-four prosecution witnesses out of 40 gave their depositions before the court so far in the case.

Oyasiquur (27) was attacked by three cleaver-wielding youths in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area on March 30, 2015. Monir Hossain, brother-in-law of the victim, filed a murder case with Tejgaon Industrial Police Station.

On September 1, 2015, Mashir Rahman, an inspector of Detective Branch of police, submitted charge sheet against five people to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, showing 40 people as prosecution witnesses.

The Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka framed charges against five ABT members on July 20, 2016. Of the accused, Zikrullah alias Hasan, Ariful Islam alias Mushfiq and Md Saiful Islam are now behind bars, while two others -- Akram Hossain Hasib alias Abdullah and Junayed alias Taher -- are on the run.

Cops foil

FROM PAGE 3

Jubo Andolan and Sujoy Biswas, convener of Socialist Student Front (Marxist) of Barisal University.

They were involving workers at Crescent Jute Mill to bring out a coffin procession.

Confirming the detention, police said they did not have permission from Khulna Metropolitan Police to hold the event.

The procession -- organised by Jute Mill Protection Workers-Farmers-Students-Janata Oikya Parishad -- was supposed to be brought out at 4pm yesterday.

Visiting the area around 4pm, a large number of police personnel were seen in Khalishpur industrial area. Police closed the entrance to BIDC Road in Notunrasta area after 12:30pm. Industrial police were deployed at each mill gate.

Niaz Murshid, an activist of the movement, told The Daily Star that a workers' rally was held on October 2 in Crescent Jute Mill area. Yesterday's coffin procession was announced from that rally. On October 3, a letter was given to the KMP headquarters seeking permission for the procession.

Mollah Jahangir Hossain, deputy commissioner of KMP, said none was allowed to hold the procession.

The activist said they attempted to did so as police did not prohibit as well.

Online classes

FROM PAGE 3

we are doing that," Dipu Moni said.

Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, Secondary and Higher Education Division Secretary Mahbub Hossain, Technical and Madrasa Education Division Secretary Aminul Islam Khan, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, and Dhaka Education Board Chairman Ziaul Haque among others spoke at the programme.

Officials of the Dhaka board said around 12.50 lakh students have enrolled at colleges across the country and many of them started online classes.

It is not possible to take classes in physical classrooms due to the coronavirus pandemic, and therefore it was decided to conduct classes online for students admitted to Class XI in this academic year, so that their studies are not disrupted, they said.

2 held

FROM PAGE 3

putting more pressure on the victim's father -- a fisherman and a low caste Hindu -- the complainant alleged.

Meanwhile, protesting the rape, Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad and Bangladesh Puja Uddjapan Parishad formed a human chain in front of Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, demanding justice.

City Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury, former AL organising secretary Misbah Uddin Siraj, and former president of Sylhet District Bar Association EU Shahidul Islam were present at the human chain, among others.

Cartoonist

FROM PAGE 3

"Ahmed is a cartoonist and activist known to CRNI for over a decade. He campaigned bravely on behalf of the disappeared Sri Lankan cartoonist Prageeth Eknaligoda (2010) and jailed Bangladeshi cartoonist Arifur Rahman (2007) and identified as a CRNI "affiliate leader" in the country," the article said.

"Doing so inevitably made him a target for accusations of aligning with foreign interests. This speaks to his courage, as do his public demonstrations for the human rights not only of cartoonists but also hijra people and in defense of health and consumer rights and the Bengali language," it added.

The Robert Russell Courage in Cartooning Award aims to recognise the plight of a cartoonist experiencing violations of human rights -- and in the organisation's view, that is what has happened to Ahmed.

"2020 has been an extraordinarily,

exceptionally bad year. We could have presented the "Robert Russell" (award) to European cartoonists whose censure was requested by Chinese diplomats, to a Jordanian cartoonist arrested for caricaturing the crown prince of the UAE, Brazilian cartoonists harassed by law enforcement, an Algerian cartoonist detained for "disrespecting" the military or a Palestinian cartoonist subjected to mass internet trolling and death threats over a cartoon to which Saudi Arabians took offense," the organisation stated.

"Ahmed Kabir Kishore's case is emblematic of the times in which we live; his freedom to express skepticism and dissent has been violated and that in itself would be sufficient to attract our attention, but for the last six months his life has been needlessly put at risk by detention in jail -- universally recognised as an environment where corona virus is a higher risk," the article said.

New Indian

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh ties!"

After meeting with the Tripura Governor Ramesh Bais, he tweeted that the governor's guidance was most welcome.

"Sustained interest in Tripura in the best possible ties with Bangladesh," the tweet also said.

Meanwhile, outgoing Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das left Dhaka for Delhi on Friday after serving one-and-a-half years in Dhaka.

She will join as Secretary (East) at the Ministry of External Affairs.

Before leaving Bangladesh, she tweeted, "Good bye Bangladesh. Wish to thank everyone for their cooperation in making it an extremely productive tenure. Taking back many fond memories of the warmth and hospitality."

MA Rashid's death anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 32nd death anniversary of MA Rashid, a former secretary, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his second son's residence in Satarkul in the capital after the Maghrib prayers.

Rashid's family members have requested all relatives, friends and well-wishers to attend the programme to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Guests at the ceremony.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Duke of Edinburgh Award ceremony held at Pink City

CITY DESK

The launching ceremony of the first community based award programme under The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award was held on Saturday at the Pink City Model Town in the capital, said a press release.

With this, Pink City Home Owner Co-Operative Society Limited became the first residential community partner of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Bangladesh.

In the chief guest's speech, Robert Chatterton Dickson, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said "As the proud parent of a Gold Award winner I know that The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award does a lot to help young people develop as active leaders and citizens. This will be even more important as young people face new opportunities and challenges in a world

recovering from COVID-19 pandemic."

Special guest The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said, "You all should have a dream, the dream to make the world greener and more liveable. I hope this award will help you nurture and shape that dream."

The ceremony was also attended by Rizwan Bin Farouq, Member, Board of Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh; Shaheen Anam, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; TIM Nurul Kabir, Executive Director of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Dr Shaikh Faridul Islam and Abdur Rahman, former and current president of Pink City Home Owner Co-Operative Society Limited respectively; executive committee members and other residents of the co-operative society, and 16 award participants.

Time to

FROM PAGE 3

Regarding laws, she commented, "We do have stringent laws in place that provide for harsh punishments for rape. However, it is now clear that the existing laws have failed to work as deterrent factors for the perpetrators. The deep-seated culture of impunity has almost become a norm and the potential perpetrators are not fearful of the laws or the punishments that such laws provide for, anymore."

"Now it is time to rethink the legal framework; we need to emphasise more on the effective implementation of the existing laws. The Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain of 2000 has introduced stringent punishment for rape; however, the substantive definition of rape is drawn from the Penal Code, 1860, which is a colonial holdover. Lessons need to be learned from different countries in reforming the rape laws and making those suitable for the present times," she said

"The procedural laws also need to be revisited and reformed (for example, it is high time we reformed the provision of Evidence Act, 1872 that makes room for character assassination of a rape victim during trials," she added.

Additionally, she observed, "Gender-sensitivity in dealing with rape cases needs to be ensured at all levels for individuals who are engaged in investigation and justice dispensation. We need to ensure competence, transparency, and sincerity from all criminal justice actors in this regard."

When asked if reforming laws alone will be enough, she opined, "Beyond laws, we also need to think about the societal issues that contribute to the increase in sexual crimes like rape. Gender inequality and misogyny permeating different spheres of the society now need to be addressed with comprehensive plans as well as policy initiatives."

Crumbling before

FROM PAGE 3

He said the academy building was to be handed over in June, 2017. According to the project, an open stage, art gallery and a 500-seat auditorium would be constructed. But the work period was extended repeatedly.

On December 26, 2019, State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid visited the under-construction building and asked the project officer and contractor to complete work within February 28, 2020.

"Those instructions were ignored by the contractor; the building is now abandoned as work is halted," he added.

Many components -- fans and air-conditioners, toilets, furniture and elevators -- have not been installed yet.

Khorsheed Alam, managing director of project contractor Infinity Engineering Ltd, said due to the pandemic, construction work was disrupted. There were also delays for extra work outside the original project plan. They are quickly repairing the ceiling, he added.

The original cost of the project was Tk 19.86 crore, later increased to Tk 23 crore. Authorities are trying to hand it over as soon as possible, said project director Mainur Rahim.

Kajal Ghosh said Shilpakala Academy is the lifeblood of cultural activities, but construction work was not completed in five years due to negligence. Cultural activities are being disrupted and activists are being deprived, he said.

"The ceiling had collapsed due to poor quality work. We demand an inquiry into this," he added.

SM Ajiar Rahman, deputy commissioner of Barishal, urged authorities to hand over the building immediately.

Virtual

FROM PAGE 3

including Rokeya Kabir, Joyanta Adhikari, Shireen Haque, Shaheen Anam, Morshed Sarker, Rafiqul Islam, and Abdul Awal -- will take part in different sessions.

Around 500 local NGOs and CSOs will participate in the virtual sessions.

Mostafa Kamal Akanda of COAST, a local NGO, said since 2014, Bangladesh local NGOs had participated in UN-led process for World Humanitarian Summit, which ended with Grand Bargain (2016) agreement, envisaging localisation, aid transparency, and participation revolution.

First meeting

FROM PAGE 3

safety movement, where students demonstrated for safe roads following the death of two college students in a road accident in Dhaka on July 29.

On September 9 of that year, a 10-member committee -- comprising of representatives from government bodies, police, transport owners, workers and transportation experts -- was formed, with then DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon as convener.

However, the project faltered again since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, as the committee failed to hold any meetings in the last six months.

Tuesday's meeting will be the first since Taposh took charge as Dhaka South City Corporation mayor in May.

"We have primarily selected 22 routes in Dhaka and its periphery for the plan," Saleh Uddin told this correspondent.

After observing outcomes of the pilot plan, the project will be subjected to some modification after considering demands of other projects like metro rail, he said.

Till July 1, 2019, as per BRTA Route Permit Data, there are 291 active routes with 9,027 buses and minibuses permitted to operate in Dhaka, said a DTCA official.

The study identified 520 locations of existing bus stops, along the 291 existing routes, Saleh said.

According to him, the committee has already prepared proposals for bus bays, bus stoppages, ticket counters for the pilot route, which will be presented at the

meeting.

While the number of major bus companies will be six, some subordinate companies may also come under the six mother companies based on necessity, he added.

Kazi Md Shifun Newaz, assistant professor of Accident Research Institute of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology said the ongoing delay to adopt the system is not acceptable.

He said this system is already being applied in different countries and Bangladesh can also adopt it quickly. What is needed is political decision for its implementation, but six years have already passed.

"I think it is not possible to implement within six months, but it is also not work of six years," he said.

"To implement the bus route rationalisation system, some important things will have to be followed, and I hope they are doing it," Newaz added.

These include making all buses same coloured, giving drivers uniforms, stopping only at designated stops, drivers appointed based on salary and not trip based, drivers trained on road safety, buses brought under a digital system so that a passenger can easily know about its position and can know when they can get the next bus.

All these ingredients will have to be included in the pilot route, so that they can implement the system properly, he suggested.

সুলাভে গুনগত মানের rt-PCR for Covid-19 পরীক্ষা

□ অত্যাধুনিক মেশিনে, অভিজ্ঞ বিশেষজ্ঞের তত্ত্বাবধানে বিশ্বস্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার নীতিমালা অনুসরণে BSL2 ল্যাবরেটরিতে rt-PCR for Covid-19 পরীক্ষা।

□ দুপুর ২ টার মধ্যে নমুনা দিলে রাত ৯ টার মধ্যে ফলাফল।

□ এপয়েন্টমেন্ট* নিয়ে বাসা থেকে সংগ্রহ করা হয়, তবে চার্জ এক হাজার টাকা।

□ পরীক্ষা বাবদ চার্জ হবে ৩০০০.০০ (তিন হাজার) টাকা।

□ উদ্বোধন উপলক্ষ্যে প্রথম সপ্তাহে প্রতিদিন প্রথম ৫০টি নমুনা পরীক্ষার চার্জ হবে মাত্র ২৫০০.০০ টাকায়।

* শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

গণস্বাস্থ্য আরএনএ মলিকিউলার ডায়াগনস্টিক এন্ড রিসার্চ সেন্টার এর সহযোগিতায়

গণস্বাস্থ্য প্যাথলজী এন্ড ডায়াগনস্টিক সেন্টার

বাড়ী-১৪/ই, রোড-৬, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৫।

ফোনঃ ০২-৯৬৭০০৭১-৫, ০১৭০৯৬৬৩৯৯৪, ০৯৬০২১১৯৪০, ০৯৬০২১১৯৪১

Rajshahi City Corporation

Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi

মেমো নং. ৪৬.১২.০০০০.০০৬.১৪.২৭৩.২০.১৩৪৬

e-Tender Notice

(IFT 04/2020-21)

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

Sl No.	ID	Reference No.	Name of works	Tender document last selling time and date
1.	500644	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1367	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 01, 02 & 03 (Salvage Tk 340,856.33).	12.30pm on 04-Nov-2020
2.	500732	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1368	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 04, 05, 06 & 08 (Salvage Tk 3,927,434.42).	
3.	501114	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1369	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 07, 09, 11, 12 & 13 (Salvage Tk 4,753,770.31).	
4.	501155	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1390	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 10, 14, 15 & 16 (Salvage Tk 43,48,003.77).	
5.	501209	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1391	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 17, 18 & 19 (Salvage Tk 19,73,144.88).	
6.	501482	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1392	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road, Footpath and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 20, 21, 22, 23 & 24 (Salvage Tk 50,81,870.93).	
7.	501484	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1393	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road, Footpath and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 26, 27 & 28 (Salvage Tk 26,33,853.63).	
8.	501556	46.12.0000.006.14.273.20.1394	Construction of Carpeting Road, CC Road and RCC Drain under the project of "Integrated Infrastructure Development of Rajshahi City" in Ward No. 25, 29 & 30 (Salvage Tk 30,08,308.98).	

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 banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

সদ-
Kh. Khairul Bashar
Superintendent Engineer
Rajshahi City Corporation
Tel. 0721-772119
E-mail: serccrbd@gmail.com

UK ‘can prosper mightily’ under no-deal Brexit

Says Johnson a day after extending talks with EU

AFP, London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday said that Britain “can prosper mightily” without a post-Brexit trade deal with the European Union, the day after agreeing to extend stalled talks with Brussels.

Johnson, who accepted prolonging negotiations in a video-call Saturday with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, told the BBC he believed a deal is “there to be done” before Britain leaves the bloc’s regulatory regime in 2021.

But he cautioned the EU needed to understand that his government is “utterly serious about needing to control our own laws and our own regulations”, including its fisheries policy.

Britain formally left the bloc in January but remains bound by most of its rules until the end of the year under the terms of its Brexit divorce.

The current 11-month transition phase was intended to allow the two sides to agree their future trading relationship after nearly five decades of economic and political integration.

However, nine scheduled rounds of negotiations ended Friday with both parties saying significant obstacles to an agreement remain, prompting Johnson and von der Leyen’s intervention.

The two leaders, who last held Brexit

talks in June, asked their negotiators to “work intensively in order to try to bridge those gaps”.

But fears are growing of travel and trade chaos if progress is not made and a so-called no-deal Brexit ensues.

“I don’t want the Australian, WTO (World Trade Organisation)-type outcome particularly, but we can more than live with it,” Johnson said of the scenario.

“I think that we can prosper mightily under those circumstances,” he said.

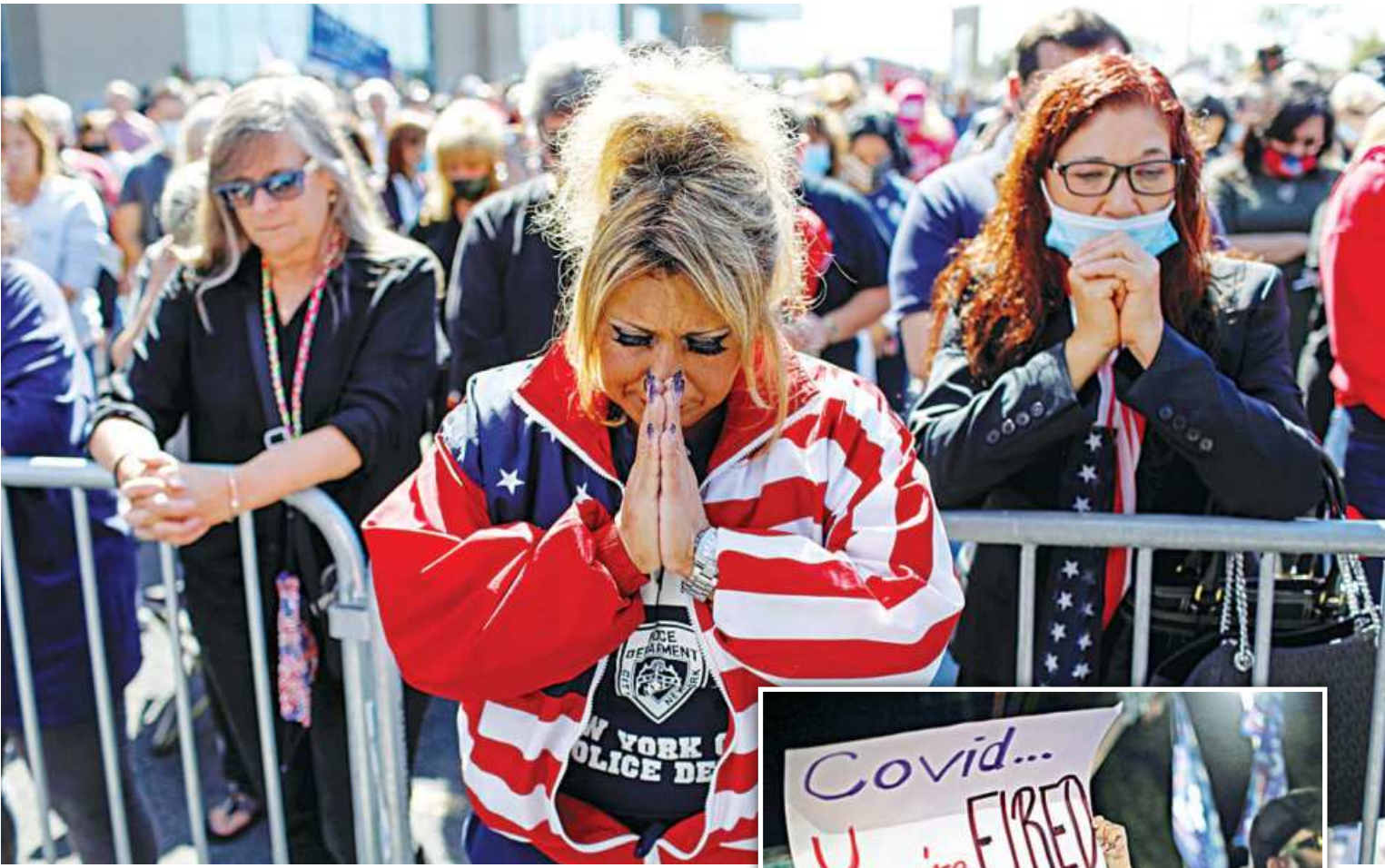
London and Brussels had pinpointed a European summit on October 15 as the latest an agreement could be reached for it to be ratified in time to take effect

by 2021. Reports suggest the talks could now continue for the rest of October, but British officials are stressing the need for clarity on whether a deal is feasible by the summit.

Neither side appears ready to make a big shift in their entrenched positions.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who meets the bloc’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier today, said Friday she believed a deal was still possible, though warned the coming days were crucial.

Meanwhile the atmosphere has been soured by London taking steps to overturn parts of the divorce agreement struck last year, prompting Brussels to launched legal action this week.



A woman cries while participating in a prayer with fellow supporters of US President Donald Trump, who was diagnosed with the coronavirus disease, at the commencement of the New York Triumph Rally on Staten Island in New York City, US, on Saturday. Inset, Supporters rally at a vigil for Trump outside of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where he is being treated for COVID-19 in Bethesda, Maryland.

PHOTO: REUTERS



WHAT HAPPENS IF A CANDIDATE EXITS THE RACE?

A US presidential nominee has never died or had to withdraw from a White House race this close to an election. But President Donald Trump’s hospitalization for coronavirus just a month from the November 3 vote has raised the question of what happens if such an event should occur. Here is a look at some of the potential scenarios in the event a nominee exits the race:

Delay the presidential election?

Unlikely. Congress set the date for the election and this one has already been scheduled, as per US law for the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Both the Republican-controlled Senate and the Democratic-majority House of Representatives would have to agree on a postponement, which is unlikely. Even during the Civil War between the North and South, the 1864 election was held as scheduled with Abraham Lincoln winning another term.

Can a candidate be replaced?

Trump’s Republican Party and Biden’s Democratic Party both have rules outlining how to fill a vacancy on the presidential ticket should one occur. In the case of Trump’s GOP, the 168 members of the Republican National Committee could vote to select the replacement. The RNC could also reconvene its national convention of more than 2,500 delegates to select a new candidate but time pressure probably makes this unworkable. A simple majority would be all that is needed to choose a new candidate in either scenario. In the case of the Democrats, a new presidential nominee would be selected by the nearly 450 members of the Democratic National Committee.

US ELECTION 2020



Can a replacement candidate be on the ballot?

Probably not. “The problem at this point is that we are so far along in this 2020 election that not only have people cast ballots, ballots have already been printed,” Cafaro said. “You really don’t have enough time to reprint ballots which say Mike Pence or Kamala Harris,” she said, referring to the Republican and Democratic vice presidential nominees respectively. More than 3.1 million Americans have already cast their ballots, according to a tally kept by the US

Elections Project at the University of Florida. In addition, deadlines for ballot access vary from state to state and they have already passed in most cases.

What about the Electoral College?

While the United States holds a popular vote, the president is elected by an absolute majority of the 538 members of the Electoral College. In every state but two (Nebraska and Maine), the candidate winning the majority of the popular vote in that state wins all that state’s electors. Nothing in the Constitution obliges electors to vote in one way or another but the Supreme Court ruled in July that states could fine so-called “faithless electors” who do not respect the popular vote. The members of the Electoral College will gather in their respective states on December 14 and vote for president and vice president. In the event a candidate dies or withdraws before the Electoral College casts its votes, things could get messy. Individual state laws come into play but each party could theoretically direct its electors to vote for a replacement candidate. On January 6, 2021, Congress will certify the results, with the winner being sworn in as president on January 20.

SOURCE: AFP

Biden leads by 10 points

Says survey as majority of Americans say Trump could have avoided Covid if he took it seriously

REUTERS, New York

Democrat Joe Biden opened his widest lead in a month in the US presidential race after President Donald Trump tested positive for the coronavirus, and a majority of Americans think Trump could have avoided infection if he had taken the virus more seriously, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released yesterday.

The Oct 2-3 national opinion poll gave little indication of an outpouring of support for the president beyond Trump’s core group of followers, some of whom have gathered outside Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where the president has been hospitalized.

Trump has repeatedly dismissed the severity of the pandemic as something that would disappear on its own, chiding Biden as recently as last week for wearing a protective mask, even as the coronavirus infected millions of people and forced businesses and schools to close.

Among those adults who are expected to cast ballots in the Nov. 3 election, the

poll found that 51% were backing Biden, while 41% said they were voting for Trump. Another 4% were choosing a third-party candidate and another 4% said they were undecided.

Biden’s 10-point edge over Trump is 1 to 2 points higher than leads Biden posted over the past several weeks, though the increase is still within the poll’s precision limits of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

With about a month to go before the election, Biden has maintained an early advantage in securing the national popular vote. But to win the presidency, a candidate must prevail in enough states to win the Electoral College, and state polls show that Trump is nearly as popular as Biden in battleground states.

Most Americans continue to be deeply worried about the virus, and the poll found that 65%, including 9 in 10 registered Democrats and 5 in 10 registered Republicans, agreed that “if President Trump had taken coronavirus more seriously, he probably would not have been infected.”



An opposition supporter argues with a police officer during an opposition rally to reject the presidential election results in Minsk, Belarus, yesterday. Tens of thousands of people marched through the centre of the Belarusian capital Minsk yesterday to demand that authorities free political prisoners, prompting police to turn water cannon on them.

PHOTO: REUTERS

We won’t let them destroy farmers

Says Rahul as he launches rally in Punjab; CBI to probe UP gangrape case

AGENCIES

Congress’s Rahul Gandhi yesterday promised Punjab farmers that the party will remove the contentious farm sector laws once it comes to power in the Centre. Calling Minimum Support Price, food procurement and wholesale markers the “three pillars” of the country, Gandhi said “Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to destroy this system”.

“Their (the BJP’s) only aim is to destroy MSP and food procurement... The Congress is never going to let this government to do it,” he added, flagging off the three-day tractor rally by farmers in Punjab.

Farmers and the opposition claim the new laws -- which enable them to sell produce to corporates anywhere in the country -- lays them open to exploitation by big companies. The protests against the two laws are the loudest in the northern states of Punjab and Haryana, the grain bowl of the country.

CBI TO PROBE GANGRAPE IN UTTAR PRADESH

India’s federal investigators will take over the probe into the alleged gang-rape and murder of a low-caste teenage woman that has sparked nationwide outrage and days of protests.

The 19-year-old woman from the marginalised Dalit community was attacked in mid-September in northern Uttar Pradesh state and died on Tuesday, in the latest case highlighting India’s epidemic of sexual violence. Five senior police officers have already been suspended over the investigation amid criticism of law enforcement’s actions -- including the cremation of the woman’s body in the middle of the night against the wishes of her family.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Geneva adopts world’s highest minimum wage

Voters in Geneva, Switzerland, have agreed to introduce a minimum wage in the canton that is the equivalent of \$25 an hour -- believed to be the highest in the world. According to government data, 58% of voters in the canton were in favor of the initiative set the minimum wage at 23 Swiss francs an hour. While Switzerland has no national minimum wage law, Geneva is the fourth of 26 cantons to vote on the matter in recent years after Neuchâtel, Jura and Ticino. The Swiss system of direct democracy calls voters to exercise their right four times a year, and allows citizens to collect signatures to introduce “popular initiatives” to be enacted.

Solomon Islands record first coronavirus case

The Solomon Islands announced they have lost the battle to stay free of the coronavirus, leaving just nine small, remote territories that have not reported a single case. Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare told the Pacific island nation in a televised address that a student who recently arrived from the Philippines on a repatriation flight carrying 96 passengers had returned a positive test. He urged the population of 600,000 in the archipelago to remain calm and said contact tracing and other measures to prevent the spread of the virus had been activated and there was no need for a lockdown. Only the small and remote island nations and territories of Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are believed to be still free of the virus.

New Caledonia rejects independence from France

The French South Pacific territory of New Caledonia narrowly rejected independence in a referendum yesterday, the archipelago’s high commission said after a partial count of the votes. The vote rejecting a breakaway from France after almost 170 years fell to 53.3 percent, according to 70 percent of ballots counted, down from 56.7 percent in a previous referendum two years ago, it said. Turnout was much higher than last time, reflecting enthusiasm of voters who had formed long queues to cast their ballots. Yesterday’s referendum was part of a carefully negotiated decolonisation plan agreed in 1998 which ended a deadly conflict between the mostly pro-independence indigenous Kanak population and the descendants of European settlers. Another referendum can be held by 2022 so long as the poll is requested by at least a third of the local legislature.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

India seeks up to 500m doses by July

REUTERS, New Delhi

India hopes to receive up to 500 million doses of coronavirus vaccine by July to inoculate about 250 million people, health minister Harsh Vardhan said yesterday, as infections in the world’s second-worst affected country continue to surge.

India’s has recorded some 6.55 million infections, with 75,829 in the past 24 hours, while Covid-19-related deaths have totalled 101,782, health ministry data showed.

“There is a high-level expert body going into all aspects of vaccines,” Vardhan wrote on Twitter. “Our rough estimate and the target would be to receive and utilise 400 to 500 million doses covering (200 million-250 million) people by July 2021.”

India has set up committees to look into various aspects of the vaccine supply chain, including availability timelines for various vaccines, while obtaining commitments from manufacturers to ensure the maximum doses are available, Vardhan said.

To prioritise the distribution of coronavirus vaccines, the health ministry aims to prepare a list of key personnel, such as frontline health workers, by the end of the month.

ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN DISPUTE OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Cities hit as fighting intensifies

AFP, Stepanakert

Armenian and Azerbaijani forces exchanged rocket fire as fighting intensified over Nagorno-Karabakh yesterday, with the breakaway region’s capital and Azerbaijan’s second-largest city bombarded.

Yerevan said Nagorno-Karabakh’s main city Stepanakert, which has been under artillery fire since Friday, was hit again yesterday and AFP journalists said there were regular explosions and smoke rising in parts of the city.

Azerbaijan’s defence ministry said Ganja, a city of more than 330,000 in western Azerbaijan, was also “under fire” while separatist forces claimed to have destroyed an airbase there.

The two sides accused each other of targeting civilian areas, as the conflict appeared to be widening a week after heavy fighting broke out in the decades-old dispute over Karabakh. The clashes has killed more than 350 people on both sides.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have resisted



international calls for a ceasefire and clashes have intensified in recent days, with both sides claiming victories on the front and saying they are inflicting heavy losses. Sirens were sounding and explosions were heard at regular intervals in Stepanakert, where residents were taking shelter in basements. Armenia’s foreign ministry said Stepanakert and the town of Martakert were under rocket attack.

Azerbaijan said Ganja was under fire, including from areas outside of Karabakh.

It said Armenian forces had also used heavy artillery and rockets against the towns of Terter and Goradiz in Azerbaijan.

Karabakh’s separatist forces said they had targeted and destroyed an airbase in Ganja, while the region’s leader, Arayik Harutyunyan, warned that it would now consider “military facilities in Azerbaijan’s big cities” as legitimate targets.

Karabakh’s declaration of independence from Azerbaijan during the collapse of the Soviet Union sparked a war in the early 1990s that claimed 30,000 lives.

Talks to resolve the conflict have made little progress since a 1994 ceasefire agreement.

The breakaway province is not acknowledged as independent by any country, including Armenia.

Yerevan has accused Turkey of dispatching mercenaries from Syria and Libya to the fighting -- an allegation confirmed and denounced by Russia and France.

Environmental history of Dhaka: An outline

IFTEKHAR IQBAL

Environment has been key to Dhaka’s birth and rebirth, growth and development as well as its urban predicaments. Recently, Dhaka’s environmental issues have led to public debates drawing a lot of interest. However, there has been no long-term historical trajectory in such debates, despite the fact that many of the contemporary environmental issues could be appreciated from a historical perspective.

Environmental changes in Dhaka

It has been suggested that in the Mughal period, especially during Shaista Khan’s time (1663-79), Dhaka was one of the largest cities in the world. Although it is usually believed that Dhaka thrived only along the banks of river Buriganga until 1905, there are reasons to believe that during the Mughal period, it extended up to rivers Tongi, or Turag. We have no clear idea about the internal environmental dynamics of those times, but it seems that not only river Buriganga, but other surrounding rivers and internal canals were maintained and kept well as these worked as both commercial and commuting arteries.

Thomas Bowrey’s narratives of Dhaka’s environment from the late seventeenth century offer some observations which would sound quite interesting today. The book pointed to the fact that the sea was closer to the city and had brackish water, which was the “only inconvenience”. On the authority of French

Despite the fact that Dhaka lost its status as capital in the late Mughal period and was devastated by famine and flood in the late eighteenth century, the British seemed to have appreciated the importance of the river Buriganga for a considerable part of their rule. The East India officials moved into the Lalbagh Fort and built a residence nearby. An overall appreciation of the commercial need of the river contributed to the proper upkeep of the same. This added aesthetic value to the city itself. As Taylor describes: “The city stands upon the northern bank of the Boorigonga about eight miles above its confluence with the Dullaserry. The river, which is here deep and navigable, by large boats, expands in the season of inundation to a considerable breadth, and gives to Dacca with its minarates and spacious buildings, the appearance, like that of Venice in the west, of a city rising from the surface of the water.”

However, as the railway began to expand, the water system fast declined as a commercial nerve line. With the focus away from river Buriganga the internal smaller streams and canals that worked as tributaries of the river Buriganga and other surrounding rivers also fell victim to the expansion northward. “The great change came in the 1880s with the railway which was drawn along what at that time were the outskirts of the city. In this way



Mosque in the suburbs of Dacca. Oil on canvas, 60 x 89 cm, circa 1812. Artist: Charles D'Oyly. Provenance: Eyre & Greig, 1988. Private collection.

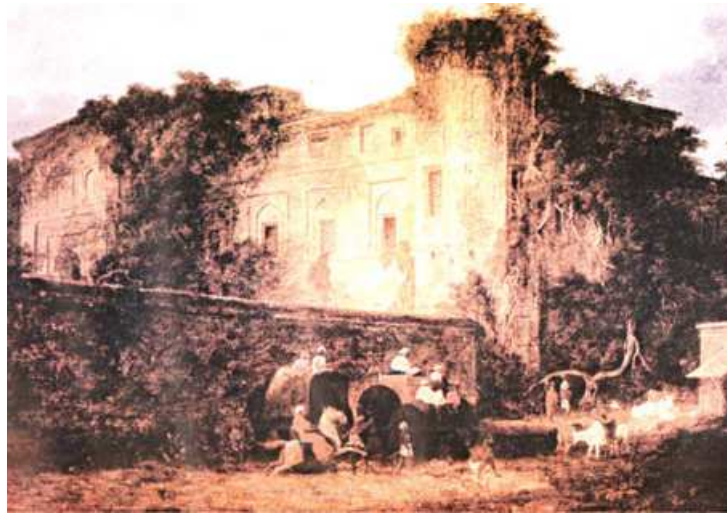
COURTESY: CHARLES GREIG.

tion of several houses and public buildings in the city and the then outskirts of Teigaon. A severe tornado in 1888 destroyed parts of the Nawab family’s palace including members of the stall who were with the Nawab family in the evening of the storm. More than 100 bodies were found in the city, but many more feared dead. More than 1,200 were wounded. Nine large mansions were completely demolished and about 150 were severely damaged. More than 3,500 kuchta houses were uprooted, 120 large boats and many smaller ones including a steamer of the Nawabs were sunk and destroyed. The damage done to property inside the city was estimated at about 70,000 pound sterling. These are some examples in the course of the nineteenth century that show that Dhaka city was not immune from natural disasters. If we take 1840 as a starting point, Dhaka has grown enormously in population since then, when its population was about 70,000. If any powerful natural disaster like earthquake and tornado takes place in our time, the damage would be colossal.

Environmental perceptions and consciousness

In an article published in the journal *All the Year Round*, edited by Charles Dickens, the author describes the Ganges in the following words:

“FROM the mountains covered with eternal snow to the ocean basking in the rays of the tropical sun flows Gunga, the river. By Mahomedan mosque and palace; by Hindoo temple and serai: by European factory and English guardhouse; while all around is ever shifting; while men and manners come and go; while those that today cool their parched throats, or leave their weary limbs, or sport in idleness in its cool and limpid stream, tomorrow float helpless on its bosom, hewn down by the sword of the invading warrior, or victims of a cruel superstition; unchanged since history



The Great Kuttra, Dacca. Oil on canvas, 60 x 89 cm, circa 1811. Artist: Charles D'Oyly. Provenance: Eyre & Greig, 1988. Private collection.

COURTESY: CHARLES GREIG.

glaringly speaks of a general fault-line in our environmental consciousness. Dhaka’s history is so much the history of a city in tryst with its environment, especially water. Yet, neither romanticism nor pragmatism places Dhaka’s environment securely in our consciousness. How do we explain this?

In the colonial times, the changing environmental relations were informed by new security concerns, new technology and new pace of international trade. It meant that the ecological setting of the Bengal delta was no longer informing the spatial growth, emergence or shifting of the city of Dhaka. Rather it would be the official perception of the ecology of the region that would influence the environmental conditions of Dhaka.

The colonial government wanted to keep the peasant resistance under control and it was increasingly becoming clear that river police were not adequate to stem influence and mobility of the resisting peasants like the Faraizis and the so-called dacoits who had established a very efficient river network of transport and communication. Secondly, given the pace at which jute was being produced and carving a niche in the world market, the commercial elite and the government were looking for swifter transport to the ports. While in 1828 the export value of Bengal jute was just about 70 pounds, by 1873, it was worth 4 million pounds. The opening of the Suez canals reduced the distance between London and the Bay of Bengal by about 4,000 miles and this reduction of distance in the global marketplaces meant that the internal transport system had to keep pace with this. It was therefore no wonder that the intricate river and water system would be made the scapegoat for a more “speedy” surface transport network. And it was about this time the railways were making their way in Bengal which was not going to exist in harmony with the water regime.



Buriganga River (1880).

PHOTO: COLLECTED

began, the river flows on unchanging still.”

The author has proved wrong. The Ganges, so as other rivers, have changed. Rivers do indeed change. But what is surprising is that the consciousness about rivers and riverine landscape has changed too. Bangladesh’s environment in general and Dhaka’s waterscape in particular have become clear victims of our unconsciousness. For example, on 7th February 2010, the much-awaited dredging programme began in the grossly polluted river Buriganga. This spell of cleaning campaign, which came into being as a result of civil society pressure, aimed to extract over 3,000 tonnes of waste in three months. But news articles reported in the following days that while dredging was taking place at one point of the river, tonnes of garbage were being dumped on many other points. This certainly reflects the problem of environmental management in a populous country like Bangladesh, but it also

The combination of these broad factors led to the fashioning of a certain consciousness that was hostile to the fluid riverine ecology of the region. This anti-deltaic consciousness can be summarised by a colonial official’s remarks in the late nineteenth century. After criticising the disadvantages of boat travels which depended on the tides, the author writes:

“The crew insisted on stopping for their midday meal in a muddy stream between high banks, where the vertical sun of May or June warmed the boat like an oven, and not a breeze tempered the heat. Violent showers of rain compelled the closing of all the windows and occasionally threatened to swamp the pinnacle. From the attacks of river Dacoits or pirates, the Englishman, of course, enjoyed immunity, and native merchants were often glad to avail themselves of his safe convoy... in hot weather or rains it was simply a penace. The traveller has to put up with heat confine-

ment, slow progress, and the chance of being drowned, or at least of losing all his goods and chattels on a sandback in a “north-wester.” The boatman would sleep when the passenger wanted to get on and when he wanted to sleep they would jabber about their domestic affairs, and sing in monotonous and exasperating tones some fearful vernacular ditty about a Sahib’s boat with oars painted red, a boatman who chewed betel, and a Brahman’s daughter who had come down to the riverside. It was but small comfort under such circumstances to recollect that the plague mosquitoes, and the croaking frogs, and the song of boatmen, and the unpardonable delay, had all been endured and immortalized on a not so dissimilar journey undertaken by a Roman poet just eighteen hundred years before.”

If a Roman poet was settling in the consciousness of a colonial official in the late nineteenth century Bengal, this official’s consciousness in turn has perhaps travelled forward to many who have been governing the environment in the postcolonial times.

In the Pakistan period, an appalling ecological unconsciousness surpassed even that of the British. The first master plan for Dhaka, drafted in 1958 by Minoprio & Spencely and P.W., included a provision for “green belts”. However, as it was being revised by 1967 the then D.I.T’s Chairman Abul Khair suggested “cutting out a great deal of area originally designated as green belt and making development recommendations instead.” This is a deviation from even the least environmental consciousness that the British administration showed about Dhaka.

Referring back to our starting point of the massive cleaning project of the river Buriganga and simultaneous process of pollution, we would suggest that given the flawed nature of our environmental consciousness, any such efforts may not be fully successful. In our own time, there are two specific aspects of this false consciousness.

Firstly, such efforts are often taken place in piecemeal, rather than being informed by the broader environmental problems across the Delta that have trans-regional and trans-national dimensions. The fate of Dhaka’s rivers is integrally bound with that of the major trans-boundary rivers. So the problems of Dhaka rivers and those of the entire country, have to be taken up holistically.

Secondly, we need to appreciate the ecological commons and to ensure the public sense of belonging to such commons. If the ecosystem services like clean water for everyday use, fish or water transportation routes are encroached upon for private gains, ordinary people will only find it a great pleasure to dump their waste as well as anger on such ecological resources.

Thirdly, another way of restoring ecological stability of Dhaka, particularly its water regime, is to make the surrounding rivers of Dhaka its high street. The cleaning and the upkeep of Dhaka river are not a favour or kindness to the rivers, but rivers are automatically kept well if their commercial and trade value is restored as has been the case for centuries.

Fourthly, a section of the civil society is taking it to satisfy the aesthetics of a river view. This is an important ingredient to environmental consciousness, but these ecological aesthetics have to be linked with more material base of the water system.

Fifthly, the river Buriganga and other surrounding rivers in Dhaka have to be the central nerve system rather than the peripheral boundary. It has to live not only in our consciousness, but in our everyday life. The absence of such process gives us clues to the question of why Dhaka thrived while its waterscapes were left to decline.

Iftekhhar Iqbal is a faculty member, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Brunei Darussalam.

This is an excerpt of the article titled ‘Environmental History of Dhaka: An Outline’ which was originally published in *400 years of Capital Dhaka and Beyond: Vol III, Urbanization and Urban Development (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2011)*.



“Carannignons” (Keraniganj) and “Damerah” (Demra), c. 18th century (National Archives, The Hague: Vosmaer family map collection (access code 4.VMF, inv. no. 848, plate 36, f. 46).

COURTESY: BENGAL INSTITUTE

scholar and traveller Thevenat, Bowrey noted that “the tide comes up as far as Dacca, so that the Galleys which are built there may easily trade in gulf of Bengala, the Dutch makes most use of it for their commerce...” The second significant point that Bowrey made was the proximity of the river, perhaps the Buriganga, that ran “close by the wall thereof” and which, to his word, was a “fine convenience” – its water being “extraordinary good” that relieved the brackishness of the city water table. Another more significant function of the river, which was 40 miles in length, was that it was remarkably navigable, being able to sustain ships weighing 500-600 tonnes.

If the proximity of rivers and the sea made Dhaka a suitable candidate for an emporium and urban settlement in colonial times, it was not until the 1850s, as mentioned earlier, when Dhaka’s fortunes were revived. The question, however, remains to what extent the revival of Dhaka contributed to the environmental changes of the city. At least we can trace some data with which we can compare the changes that took place subsequently. For instance, according to Taylor’s account, Dhaka’s underground water level varied in the range of 18-22 feet in the 1830s, “according to the depth of the super-stratum of alluvial soil and to the height of the rivers.” In the year 1836, noon time temperature in Dhaka was 78.6 (25.75 Celsius). As Taylor observed, the abundant wind with moisture, sweeping over the surface of the large rivers and the swamps, mitigated the heat, “rendering the climate cool and pleasant during April to July.” Or the fact that the Dholai Khal connected as late as the mid-nineteenth century the River Baloo with the river Buriganga, rendering drainage possible for the city. Or the fact that river Buriganga was about half a mile in breadth as late as the 1880s.

If compared to the present time, there are clear indications that water level has gone down and mean temperature has risen significantly. At present the water level has gone down to 140-160 feet, while the current mean temperature appears to be at 89 (31.7 Celsius). There clearly is a strong relationship between the decline or loss of rivers and wetlands in and around Dhaka and the city’s rising temperature.

the city turned its face towards land, and the banks of the river began to lose their economic importance and social status.” By the turn of the century, the British apparently had environmental settings around its buildings. The first houses in Ramna were set in “real wilderness”. The race course was built. The government buildings were placed south of it and a “very spacious” garden suburb with white bungalows for civil servants was laid out north of it. In fact, the Dhaka of the early 20th century preceded Delhi.

As Nilsson puts it: “The new Dacca was a general rehearsal for the expansion of Delhi that was undertaken a few years later.” Yet it might well be assumed that much of the wetlands disappeared during the construction of the “British Dhaka”. The expansion of Dhaka away from the river Buriganga in the early 20th century began the first process of environmentally insensitive developments of Dhaka. The trend continued in the Pakistan period. In the post-1947 era, when Dhaka saw the growth of a series of industrial suburbs, especially at Teigaon, the city core by the river was “allowed to fall into a state of decay”. The project of Ayub Nagar or the second capital (Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, which now forms an administrative nerve-line of the city), which included the construction of Louis Kahn’s famous parliament building, came at a considerable cost of the loss of wetland. So if the British recreated some of the forest landscape, in the Pakistan period, some water flow was recreated around ‘Avub Nagar’. These truly represented Eastern Bengal’s picturesque forested and watery landscape, but these modernist physical developments did not reflect the basic principles of built environment. These were examples of artistic modernity of representation of nature rather than integration with it. After independence, Dhaka’s environmental situation was left to deteriorate along with many other urban facilities.

While environmental changes in Dhaka have taken place for the worse, particularly so at the beginning in the early nineteenth century due to man-made reasons, one needs to be alert to the reality of natural disasters as well. In 1775 and 1812, there were severe earthquakes. The 1872 earthquakes, which occurred on 10th April and 11 May, caused the destruc-

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA MONDAY OCTOBER 5, 2020, ASHWIN 20, 1427 BS

Independent institution to conduct dope tests

Will the government provide counselling to those who test positive?

WE have learned that the government has taken steps to form an independent institution to carry out dope tests in a systematic manner to intensify and strengthen narcotics control across the country. The tests will be conducted mainly for higher education admissions, before entrance in jobs and for the transport sector to identify drug addicts. According to the home ministry sources, any authority or private organisation would be able to conduct dope tests through the institution.

The transport sector is a major stakeholder for the government's dope test operation since drivers of public transport are often found to be driving under the influence of drugs, which is believed to be one of the causes of road accidents. So, the government has a plan to check public transport drivers before, during and at the end of a journey to stop them from taking any drugs while on duty. For higher educational institutions, these "special health examinations" will be conducted before admission and before the final examinations of the degree.

While we understand the government's good intentions in forming the institution to stop drug abuse, we would also like to draw its attention to some other issues that should also be addressed simultaneously. Given the existing unemployment problem in the country, frustration among the young people is more prevalent than ever before, which in many cases may force them to turn to drugs. If these people are identified as "drug abusers" during a job entrance exam, how does the government plan to deal with them? Will there be any counselling facilities available for them to deal with their issues? If they are outright rejected from entering a job without getting any scope to deal with their psychological issues, will that not lead them to further frustration and subsequent drug abuse? Also, if a student cannot sit for their final exams due to a positive dope test result, will they not become more vulnerable to further drugs and unsocial activities?

Will the government consider having counselling facilities in all educational institutions, transport and job sectors with professional psychologists and therapists to help those in need? These are some of the issues we hope the government will also consider while moving forward with forming the institution to stop drug abuse.

Scant regard for workers' safety

Whatever happened to worker's safety laws and regulations?

A picture published in yesterday's paper—which shows a group of workers employed in the demolition work of the BGMEA building—speaks a thousand words. They have no personal safety gear whatsoever, nor are there any visible signs of safety measures for the workplace. This picture is not unique—similar scenes can be seen in any number of construction sites, with very few exceptions, all over the country.

The picture narrates most vividly how cheap the life of a daily labourer is, and how dispensable they are, because they would do anything hazardous just so that they can put some food in the mouth of their family members who eagerly await their return. Some unlucky ones do not return, given the conditions they are compelled to work in.

The picture also speaks volumes about the utter disregard for the laws, rules and regulations related to labour which, among other things, obligate the employer to provide a safe and secure environment for the workers. It also speaks of the absence of oversight by the relevant government agencies that have the authority to penalise the errant employers, contractors and building owners.

Workplace safety has been a great concern for us. With rapid growth in our economy, more and more workers are joining the workforce, particularly in the infrastructure sector. There are labour laws and ILP conventions that regulate their work and employment. The building code also specifies the safety measures that the construction companies must provide, both personal and otherwise. But as with so many laws and regulations, our labour laws are observed in their violations only. The construction sector is the worst off in this case.

According to the Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health, and Environment Foundation, in 2019, 945 workers lost their lives and 266 sustained injuries at their workplaces in various sectors in the country. Of those killed, 156 were construction workers. The number of deaths is nearly a hundred more in 2018. The labour ministry and other relevant agencies and authorities and the labour organisations must address this hazard with due diligence to save more lives being lost in workplaces.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Mission

It is a matter of great pride for us that Bangladesh has secured the top rank in sending troops to the United Nations peacekeeping missions amongst 118 countries, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate. It regained the position after sending a 160-member Quick Reaction Force in Central African Republic on July 17.

Currently, a total of 6,731 Bangladeshis are employed in different peacekeeping missions. While we know how dangerous the global situation has been since the year began, it surely is reassuring to know our soldiers are doing whatever necessary to fulfil their peacekeeping objectives. I wish them luck in their missions.

Jubayer Ibrahim, Dhaka



to comprise 40 million students, over 200,000 institutions, and over a million teachers. Girls and boys are equally enrolled in schools, a feat not achieved by many developing countries. We do need to work more on improving quality. So why is the despair?

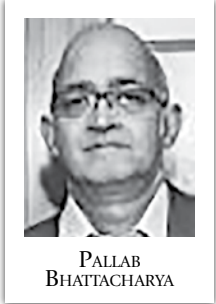
Is it a matter of describing the glass as half full or half empty? This rhetorical question does not capture reality. Is it acceptable that more than three quarters of the children—after five years of primary schooling—cannot read, write or use rules of counting at a basic level (according to the National Student Assessment survey)? But 97 percent of the students pass the primary education completion public examination, which raises questions about what is taught in school and what is measured by the examination.

Is it acceptable that graduates of tertiary education have to wait up to three years to land a job? Close to thirty percent of young people of age 15 to 24 years are not in employment, education or training—a tell-tale category called NEET.

On September 24, 1972, inaugurating the Education Commission headed by Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda at Ganabhaban, Bangabandhu had asked the Commission to expedite its work keeping in mind the requirements of the present as well as the future generations, and to cater to the vocational and agricultural needs of the country and eradicate illiteracy. Forty-eight years later, the same challenges are being discussed.

Most people, besides the quarter of the total population who are students, have views about education as parents, guardians, teachers, academics, and as concerned citizens, most having gone through a school experience themselves. There is no dearth of advice about what may be done. In the complex, large and many-faceted phenomenon called the education system, it is difficult to see the large picture and tempting to either point at diverse partial solutions or come up with a long laundry list of activities.

A favourite solution is curriculum reform—contradictorily proposing addition of new content about various social problems, or reduction of burden and simplifying it, and so on. Student assessment and examinations are another hot topic. Physical facilities—safe building, classrooms, toilet for girls—are a common concern. Decentralisation of education management is recommended to change the present highly top-down structure. IT-based learning and online



his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit the streets on October 2, to protest against the brutal assault and alleged rape of a Dalit teenager by upper-caste men in Uttar Pradesh and her cremation in the dead of night. From October 3, Rahul was also set to travel to Punjab and adjacent Haryana states, considered granaries of India, to join the farmers' agitation against the farm laws of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

It was not the first time Rahul hit the streets since the Covid-19 lockdown was imposed in March. He had done so when he met distraught migrant labourers on the streets of Delhi on their way back home after being rendered jobless in different states in the wake of the lockdown. But that was a cameo appearance. The one on October 2 was a full-fledged political drama as Rahul scuffled with policemen and tumbled on the ground in sweltering heat in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on his way to meet the family of the Dalit woman, whose cremation in the dead of night without her family's presence has triggered a nationwide outcry.

Rahul and Priyanka were prevented from going to the village of the Dalit woman in Hathras when their cavalcade

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Time to rethink teaching to salvage our education

instruction as a silver bullet has come to the fore lately.

All of these are important and must play their role. But, each by itself cannot make enough difference in students' learning outcome. How they come together, what is the gel that binds them and makes an impact on measurable change in children's learning, the ultimate criterion, remain the problem.

No education system can be better than its teachers. This is a truism that happens to be true despite all that is said and done about technology-based learning. Are teachers the thread that ties various reform and change initiatives to bring about the transformation in education?

To draw attention to the teacher's paramount role in education, Unesco observes October 5 as the World Teachers' Day each year. The theme of the celebration this year is "Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future"—an opportune theme as the coronavirus

The small changes that Karmali urged teachers to begin making were to invite students to join in discussion in class, not just listen; give students the chance to take part in teaching their peers; start a social service project in which the whole class can join; find a talent in students who lack confidence; and offer help to fellow teachers who are experiencing difficulties.

In his first few months, Karmali announced the abolition of the old textbook-based public examinations for grades 4, 8 and 11 and introduction of assessment of minimum competency in language and math and moral development, with more emphasis on school-based evaluation. Karmali believes that the biggest risk is staying in place, sticking to the status quo, when the system is not working for many.

Karmali enjoys an advantage over his Bangladesh counterpart because Indonesia has been spending on education 20 percent of its national budget (of USD 193



STAR FILE PHOTO

pandemic upends all education activities and plans.

Nadiem Anwar Karmali was appointed the Minister of Education and Culture last October when Joko Widodo won a second term as President of Indonesia. Karmali, a graduate of Brown and Harvard Universities, at age 35 was a super-successful entrepreneur who had launched in 2010 the app-based transportation, delivery and payment service Gojek and built it up into a USD 10 billion business. The new minister faces the most formidable entrepreneurial challenge of transforming Indonesia's education. It has the fourth largest population in the world (compared to Bangladesh's 8th largest), 60 million students and 3 million teachers.

In his first Indonesian Teachers' Day message last year, Karmali gave a short speech, "speaking from heart," which went viral. He said, "Changes cannot be started from above. Everything starts and ends with the teacher." He pleaded, "Don't wait for cue, don't wait for orders. Take the first step. Tomorrow, wherever you are, make small changes in your class."

billion in 2020), compared to under 12 percent in Bangladesh (out of a national budget of USD 67 billion in 2020). Indonesia also took steps to decentralise education management involving local government and communities. Taking individual schools as the unit of change, Karmali aims to transform 10,000 schools in the remaining four years of his tenure, so that these become the model and catalyst for change in the whole system. He admits that the results will be truly visible in ten years, but nothing will happen unless a beginning is made.

A comparative disadvantage of Bangladesh along with countries in South Asia—unlike other regions of the world—is that it does not have a well-established, pre-service teacher education programme. Yet school teaching is the single largest field of employment for college graduates. The common practice is to first recruit college graduates as primary or secondary teachers and then let them go for one-year to 18-month pedagogy training. Bangladesh also needs to double its teaching force to reach Indonesia's

VIEWS FROM INDIA

Rahul as street fighter, chance to silence 'Pappu' jibe?

was stopped *en route* after which the siblings had begun to walk. There was no illusion that they would not be allowed to reach the village not only because the village was still 142 km from the place where they had to get off their vehicles, but also because Uttar Pradesh authorities had clamped prohibitory orders there.

Video footages of Rahul walking with party workers, falling during a skirmish with the police personnel, and he and Priyanka being taken away in a police vehicle conjured up the image of agitation-savvy opposition leaders who are no longer willing to be held back by Covid-19 and content with issuing statements, online interaction and tweets. Nothing could possibly be a more reassuring signal for the Congress party and other opposition parties that wanted Rahul to take the lead in the fight against the organisational might of the Bharatiya Janata Party. It has been a matter of unstated unhappiness in the opposition camp that ever since the Lok Sabha poll defeat, the Congress, particularly Rahul and Priyanka, have not been visible much on the ground.

There appears to be three main objectives of Rahul's role as a street fighter. In the short term, the Congress sources hope, it would dent the prospects of the BJP and its allies in assembly elections in Bihar in October-November. In the longer run, it prepares the groundwork for the Congress for the fresh assembly polls in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh due in 2022, seeking to recover the lost ground in India's electorally most crucial state. The Congress has over the years been marginalised not only by the BJP but also by caste-based regional parties like Bahujan Samaj Party and Samajwadi Party in UP.

The Congress is hoping that the UP government's handling of the Hathras woman's death would resonate among Dalits in the state as Dalits are a key component of the electorate in the state. There is already anxiety in the BJP, particularly its backward caste and Dalit lawmakers in the state, over the fallout of the Hathras incident which is one more occasion when the BJP government in UP has come under fire over the law and order situation. Most importantly, Rahul in street combat mode could signal the start of a build-up towards his taking over as Congress President possibly early next year.

It is too early to say if the Congress has found its political groove in Rahul taking to street agitations. In the past, he had been accused by critics of not being consistent in this form of politics, by going into fairly long hibernation at times during the most crucial phases in and outside parliament. This time around, Rahul was apparently under pressure following his skipping the entire Covid-19-curtailed monsoon session of parliament recently for a different reason altogether: he had to accompany his mother and the Congress' interim President Sonia Gandhi to the United States for her medical check-up.

The Dalit woman's assault and the unrest among farmers over the farm law reform have come to Rahul on a platter when he returned to India. They provide him with a chance to silence the "Pappu" (a novice) jibe against him. Will he be able to seize it?

Rahul's street politics in Uttar Pradesh or in Punjab and Haryana cannot be just one- or two-off events. They need to be sustained over a long period to enable the party to mount a meaningful challenge to

student-teacher ratio.

School teaching is not the first choice as a career for higher education graduates, especially the talented ones. It, therefore, ends up attracting the "bottom of the barrel" of the graduates. The basic talent gap cannot be remedied by in-service teacher training. The need to think afresh about attracting and keeping talented people in the teaching profession is a major challenge for improving education system performance.

A teacher's professional preparation model following what is known as the "concurrent" approach of combining subject content and pedagogy in the four-year degree programme, followed in most better performing education systems, is likely to be a way out of the problem. This approach would replace the present sequential model. Along with measures to improve career path, incentives and social status of teachers, the approach is likely to break the vicious cycle of poor teacher quality and poor student learning.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke about turning each secondary school in the country into a "digital academy" as a step towards preparing the youth with skills and knowledge for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Speech at High-level event "Digital Cooperation: Action Today for Future Generations," United Nations Headquarters, on the sidelines of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, September 22, 2020). Teachers have to be prepared to become the mediators to help students navigate the new learning pathways.

New thinking about the education workforce can be implemented only by adopting a longer term approach and preparing the ground, rolling out the plan gradually, taking into confidence the education stakeholders, including teachers and parents, and applying a transition arrangement so that there is no disruption in the on-going school system. As the new graduates emerge from the programme, they would be integrated into the system. Over a period of 10 to 15 years, a change in the system will become evident.

The present arrangement and current lateral entry into teaching will continue simultaneously during the transition, perhaps inspiring the current teachers to aspire higher and perform better.

The new approach to the school education workforce is proposed in the Education Sector Plan for 2021-25 that the government is in the process of submitting to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Preparation of the Education Sector Plan is a requirement for seeking international financial support from GPE. The 8th Five Year Plan for Bangladesh coinciding with this time period is also under preparation. The Education Sector Plan and the 8th Plan are an opportunity to reimagine teachers and teaching to make a beginning towards transformative change in the educations system.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed is professor emeritus at Brac University. The views expressed here are his own.

the BJP. There lies the real challenge for the Congress: to pick up the issues that have a direct connection with key segments of the electorate and keep up the momentum.

The ongoing farmers' agitation and the groundswell of protests against the Hathras incident relate to very important components of the society—farmers and women. A farmer-friendly image was one of the main reasons for the Congress' success in successive general elections in 2004 and 2009. The agrarian crisis and the attack on the BJP on this issue was a key reason for the Congress' victory in three heartland states Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in November 2018, and saw the party putting up an impressive show in the assembly polls in Gujarat where the BJP's supremacy continues for the last two decades. Rahul is trying to tap into the discontent and misgiving among the farmers over the farm sector reform laws, passed recently by parliament.

Another party to take up the Hathras incident in right earnest, besides the Congress, is the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress. A day after Rahul and Priyanka made an attempt to march to Hathras, a delegation of Trinamool Congress leaders tried an encore and similar scuffles between the party's leaders and the police were on display. As part of the same strategy, Mamata has been stepping up her attacks on the BJP over the Hathras incident as well as the farmers' protest with the objective of pinning down the saffron party in the run-up to the assembly elections in West Bengal due early next year. When it comes to street politics, very few can beat Mamata, pandemic or no pandemic.

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent of The Daily Star. He writes from New Delhi, India.

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 12
also discuss exports and imports on both sides, balance of trade between the two countries and measures to remove bottlenecks in the way of smooth flow of trade.
FISH EXPORT TO INDIA
The first consignment of fish from Bangladesh, 4,294 kg of hilsa and 875 kg of carp, reaches India today. It may be mentioned that about five tonnes of fish will be exported to India daily under the trade agreement between the two countries signed in March, 1972.
DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH THAILAND SET UP
Bangladesh and Thailand decide to establish normal diplomatic relations between the two countries from today. A note constituting the diplomatic relations between the two countries is exchanged between the Bangladesh High Commissioner and the Thai Ambassador in New Delhi.
SOURCES: October 6, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Condemned

FROM PAGE 12
lawyer ZI Khan Panna at his chamber in the capital for filing an appeal against the verdict.
“I got all the documents today. We will file a petition soon,” said Panna on Facebook live in the afternoon.
“Please pray for us so that we get justice,” he added.
The families of the other five convicts are also preparing to file appeals with the HC, reports our Pataukhali correspondent.
As per rules, the HC officials will scrutinise the documents and then prepare paper books for hearing on the death reference.
If a lower court sentences any person to death in a case, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The lower court has to send the case documents as death reference to the HC within seven days after delivering the verdict.
Apart from Minni, 19, the five other convicts are: Rakibul Hasan Rifat, 23, Al Kaiyum, 21, Mohaiminul Islam Sifat, 19, Rezwan Ali Khan Hridoy, 22, and Md Hasan, 22.

On June 26 last year, Rifat, 25, an internet service provider, was hacked by some youths in front of Barguna Government College in broad daylight. He died at Barishal Medical College Hospital later that day.
A video clip of the attack, believed to be captured on a mobile phone, went viral on social media, triggering public outrage.
The following day, the victim’s father filed the murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station, naming 12 as accused.
Minni, who was seen in the video clip screaming while desperately trying to prevent two men from attacking her husband with sharp weapons, was made the first witness in the case.
But after some days, her father-in-law demanded her arrest claiming that she herself was involved in the murder.
Following investigation, she was named as the seventh accused in the charge sheet.

House helps

FROM PAGE 12
deserve any mercy from the tribunal, he said.
Saniat Ismat Amit, the victim’s son, who was present at the tribunal, expressed satisfaction over the verdict.
Matiur Rahman, a defence lawyer, said they did not get justice. They would appeal to the higher court, he added.
On February 10 last year, police recovered the body of Mahfuza from her flat at Sukanya Tower on the capital’s Elephant Road.
After the murder, the victim’s family reported that their two housemaids went missing along with 20 tolas of gold, valuables, and Tk 50,000 in cash.
The following day, Mahfuza’s husband Ismat Kader Gama filed a murder case with New Market Police Station against Ruma and Rita and one Runu Begum in this connection.
During the investigation, the two housemaids made confessional statements to magistrates.
On July 21 that year, Alamgir Hossain Mazumder, sub-inspector of New Market Police Station, submitted the charge sheet against the two before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court of Dhaka.

The investigation officer dropped the name of Runu from the charge sheet as her involvement in the killing was not found.
In the charge sheet, the IO said the accused planned and carried out the killing of the former principal with an intent to loot gold ornaments and money.
On February 9 this year, the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka framed charges against the two accused.
Twenty-seven prosecution witnesses out of 34 gave their depositions before the tribunal in the case.



Saudis and foreign residents circumambulate (Tawaf) the Kaaba at the Grand Mosque complex in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia yesterday, as authorities partially resume the year-round Umrah for a limited number of pilgrims amid extensive health precautions after a seven-month coronavirus hiatus.

PHOTO: AFP

Migrants want labour issues

FROM PAGE 12
on December 4 last year and was scheduled to return in the middle of March this year, got stranded as international flights were suspended since March 8 due to the coronavirus pandemic.
He said he has an electronics shop in Kuwait, but cannot return as Kuwait has yet to allow Bangladeshis to return. Bangladesh is one of the many countries from where travel to Kuwait remains suspended.
“We are facing huge losses,” Sabur told this correspondent. He added that there are some 15,000 Bangladeshis who were stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many of their work permits have expired and they are frustrated.
Meanwhile, the Kuwait authorities have cancelled visas of several thousand Bangladeshi workers who were recruited by Kuwaitia Marafie Group, whose CEO Shahid Islam Papul from Bangladesh and about a dozen others -- both Kuwaiti and

Bangladeshi -- are facing charges of human trafficking, money laundering and cheating.
Kuwait’s CID arrested Shahid, an independent lawmaker from Laxmipur-2. He was accused of charging each foreign worker, mostly from Bangladesh, up to 3,000 dinars to be taken Kuwait.
Many, however, alleged that they were not provided with the jobs and wages as promised.
The Kuwait authorities are cancelling job contracts of Kuwaitia Marafie Group, which will mean job losses of several thousand Bangladeshis in Kuwait, home to over 300,000 expatriate Bangladeshis.
Jalal Uddin, a Bangladeshi working for a hospital in Kuwait, yesterday said he wanted Foreign Minister Momen to request the Kuwaiti authorities not to cancel visas of Bangladeshis.
“Workers are not responsible for the irregularities, so they should not be victimised,” he told this correspondent.

Plumbing depths of pandemic pain

FROM PAGE 1
“But the water level in the river will start to fall in the dry season. There will be no earning from the boat then. I don’t know what I will do then,” he said.
The coronavirus outbreak and resulting shutdown of the economy have thrown the lives of many teachers like Kibria and Meherun into disarray. As the country celebrates World Teachers Day today, many teachers of private schools, especially the ones outside Dhaka, are struggling with no financial assistance from the government.
The theme of this year’s day is: “Teachers: Leading in crisis, reimagining the future”.
In Bangladesh, the teachers of many kindergarten and other primary-level schools and non-MPO (Monthly Pay Order) secondary schools are ill-paid.

They provide private tuitions to make ends meet.
The pandemic forced many of the teachers to change their profession and caused some schools to shut. The specific data on it is hard to come by.
Many private schools, mostly kindergartens, are also undergoing monetary crunch while their teachers are not getting their full salaries.
Mizanur Rahman, secretary general of Bangladesh Kindergarten Association, said an estimated 20 percent of kindergarten teachers have switched to other professions.
There are about 40,000 kindergarten schools in the country with around six lakh teachers, he said.
“Hundreds of teachers are working as labourers at shops, selling seasonal fruits, vegetables, or driving auto-rickshaws and there-wheelers.”

France steps up search efforts after floods

AFP, Breil-Sur-Roya

Rescue services stepped up their search efforts in southwestern France yesterday after floods cut off several villages and killed two people in Italy, with eight still missing in France.
Breil-sur-Roya, a French village close to the Italian border, was a scene of devastation with houses buried in

mud and turned-over cars stuck in the riverbed, an AFP journalist said.
Eight people were still missing on the French side of the border after storms, torrential rain and flash floods battered the area, washing away roads and houses, cutting off entire villages and triggering landslips.
Rescue efforts were concentrated on the Roya valley where around 1,000 firefighters backed up by helicopters

and army units resumed their search hoping to find survivors, and giving assistance to people whose homes were destroyed or inaccessible.
Storm Alex barrelled into France’s west coast on Thursday bringing powerful winds and rain across the country before moving into Italy, where regions across the north suffered an onslaught on Saturday.

Corrupt judges

FROM PAGE 1
The bench had delivered the judgement on December 11 last year, following two separate writ petitions filed by the ministry of housing and public works last year, challenging a verdict given by the First Court of Settlement of Dhaka on November 27, 1995.
In the judgement, Khandker Musa Khaled, Md Taha Mollah and Farid Uddin Aktar, the then judges of First Court of Settlement of Dhaka, had removed 16 kathas of the land at Kakrail area in Dhaka from the list of abandoned property and given its ownership to four claimants -- KAM Ashraf Uddin (six katha), Lutfunnissa Rahman (four katha), AKM Idris Hossain and his wife Jamila Khatun (six katha) in different plots.
The HC further observed that the then First Court of Settlement of Dhaka, led by Musa Khaled, had created unprecedented history and handed over the property of the state and people worth thousands of crores of taka to a gang of frauds without any documents or evidence (of claim) and, by doing so, had damaged the dignity of the judiciary.
“When the gang of frauds witness that property of Tk thousands of crores can be claimed without any

documents and evidence, it sends a message to them and to the general public that the judiciary is for frauds and the affluent, not for the general public,” the verdict said.
It further observed, “The judiciary is the people’s last resort of hope and expectations. When the judges do their work through corruption, the general people have no place to go. They get disappointed and angry, and try to find the alternatives. Then they take shelter from unlawful people.
“The rule of law and judicial corruption cannot go hand in hand. If the judicial officers and staffers are corrupt, the rule of law will remain confined only to books...” the HC judges said in the full text of verdict.
They added, “Numerous reports and articles have been published on the independence of the judiciary in our society in many intellectual forums, newspapers and electronic media. But, there is no specific and clear article, on corrupt members of the judiciary.”
The HC directed the authorities concerned to send a copy of this verdict to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in order for her to be informed of the matter so that she can take initiatives on a personal level to protect the rule of law and take actions in this regard.

Testing dropped

FROM PAGE 12
This is around 11.41 percent of the 9,859 tests carried out in the 109 Covid-19 testing labs across the country.
With this, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 3,68,690 since the DGHS reported the first three cases on March 8.
In the same 24 hours yesterday, a total of 1,587 Covid-19 patients were added to the total recoveries, taking the total to 2,81,656.
This is more than 76 percent of all cases detected, according to the press release.
The DGHS also reported 23 deaths due to Covid-19 in those 24 hours, raising the total number of deaths to 5,348.
This is around 1.45 percent of all cases detected.
Six of the deceased were females, the press release said.
One of the deceased yesterday died at home while rest 22 died in hospitals.
One each deceased was from Sylhet, Khulna, Chattogram and Rajshahi divisions while two were from Rangpur, and the rest 17 were from Dhaka division.
One each was aged between 11 and 20, 21 and 30, and 31 and 40 years while three were aged between 41 and 50 years, five between 51 and 60 years and the rest 12 were over 60.
So far, more than half (51.16 percent) of the deceased were aged over 60 years old.
As of noon yesterday, a total of 2,610 people were undergoing treatment in general beds and 291 were in Covid-19 dedicated hospitals across the country, said the press release.

Late-night

FROM PAGE 12
They had been living in the ancestral four-storey building of KS Nabi in Dhanmondi area with their father until his death on August 10, after which they went to live with their mother, who was separated from Siratun.
The two recently went back to their ancestral home with their aunt Meherin Ahmed. But their father’s elder brother Kazi Rehan Nabi refused to allow them into the house.
After Adian and Nahian were denied entrance into the residence as Rehan did not even open the door despite their requests, Dhanmondi Police Station was informed about the matter, Manzill said, adding that police did not take cognisance of the allegations but have, however, taken necessary steps to ensure that Adian and Nahian can live in their ancestral home in line with the HC order.
Police have also submitted a compliance report to the HC yesterday, he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Manikganj Road Division, Manikganj

Phone & Fax: +880-02-7710377

E-mail: eeman@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 2752

Dated: 04/10/2020

e-Tender Notice

This is online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer RHD, Road Division, Manikganj for the procurement of:

Tender Description

Tender Reference No.	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Submission/opening dt.
05/e-GP/EE/Mkg.Rd/2020-2021	501457	Repair and Beautification work in front of Nabinagar National Mausoleum on the occasion of "Great Victory Day" on 16th December at 1st Km (P) of Nabinagar-EPZ-Kaliakoir (Chandra) Road (N-540).	19-Oct-2020 16:00	20-Oct-2020 12:00

Md. Gaus-UI-Hassan Maruf

ID No. 602215

Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD

Road Division, Manikganj

GD-1583

Trump can be discharged from hospital today

FROM PAGE 12
campaign schedule this week, as would Trump’s three oldest children.
“We can’t stay in our basement or shut down the economy indefinitely. We have to take it head-on,” Trump campaign senior adviser Jason Miller said on ABC’s “This Week” yesterday.
Trump has repeatedly played down the threat of the pandemic, even as it has killed more than 208,000 Americans and hammered the US economy.
CONDITION UNCLEAR
Differing assessments of Trump’s health from administration officials on Saturday left it unclear how ill the president had become since he tested positive for the coronavirus on Thursday night.
A White House team of doctors said on Saturday morning Trump’s condition was improving and that he was already talking about returning to the White House.
Within minutes, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows gave reporters a less rosy assessment, saying, “The president’s vitals over the last 24 hours were very concerning and the next 48 hours will be critical in terms of his care. We’re still not on a clear path to a full recovery.”
Meadows, whose initial comments were delivered on condition that he not be identified, altered his tone hours later, telling Reuters that Trump was doing “very well” and that “doctors are very pleased with his vital signs.”
Meadows did not clarify the discrepancy in his comments. A Trump adviser who spoke on condition of anonymity said the president was not happy to learn of Meadows’ initial remarks.

Plumber finds skeleton in wall

FROM PAGE 12
flat were terrified of the recovery. Of them, a school-going girl and women were the most affected from the incident.
Shyamol Khan, the person whose family now stays at the flat, yesterday said they rented the house in November last year. They were not allowed to leave the flat as police were still investigating the case.
The building owner said he started construction the establishment in 1990 and the work ended in 1993.
The building, holding No 389, was abandon for several months after the construction.
Prof. Selim Reza, head of forensic medicine at Shahheed Suhrawardi Medical College, said Mirpur police sent 156 pieces of bones for forensic test recently.
They have sent the samples -- teeth, bone and hair for DNA test. “It will take one to three months to get the result,” he told The Daily Star.
Muntazirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Model Police Station, said they were yet to get a breakthrough.
“From the building owner to tenants, everyone is a suspect to us in this case,” he added.



A large crowd had gathered at a local hotel on Saturday and given the BFF elections a festive mood, which was a stark contrast to the game's decline on the field. The festive mood was palpable among the huge crowd but the question remains whether the game's governing body will be able to create same kind of euphoria when it comes to matches.

PHOTO: STAR

I'm not responsible for district leagues, says Salahuddin



KAZI SALAHUDDIN

SPORTS REPORTER



After being elected Bangladesh Football Federation president for a fourth successive term, Kazi Salahuddin promised to hold three national championships with the participation of all 64 districts but refused to take responsibility for holding district leagues.

"First, we want to start all the leagues on time and do not want to hear anything from any party. If we want to reach the next level, both the clubs and federation must have discipline in this regard," Salahuddin said at his office yesterday.

"The second thing is that the delegates spoke time and again about youth development and we will do it. We also want to hold three tournaments -- Bangabandhu senior home-and-away, Sheikh Kamal U-18 Championship and Sheikh Russel U-12 tournament -- with the participation of all districts. If we can hold these three tournaments at the district level, it will cover everything," said the 66-year-old, adding that he was not responsible for district football.

"District Football Associations (DFAs) are responsible for holding district leagues but you blame us. It is not my responsibility to hold district leagues. Why don't you ask the president of DFA about the district league? Holding the professional football league is a duty of the BFF, not FIFA. If the DFA can't hold their respective league, then I think three national championships at the district level will cover everything," said Salahuddin.

He added that he wanted to take measures to ensure DFAs would hold district league. "We want to make a formula similar to FIFA and AFC's. If a DFA can't hold two successive leagues, they will not be BFF delegates.

Salahuddin also said: "I have kept football rolling for the past 12 years when the play stopped. I am repeating it time and again because the teams will come if football is on the ground. Football will still remain on the ground with high spirit and more energy because it has turned into a habit."

A fourth false dawn?

ATIQUE ANAM



In the late hours of Saturday, following an exhausting-yet-satisfying BFF Elective Congress when Kazi Salahuddin, surrounded by his jubilant panel members, announced to media that he "would work together with those from the opposition panel for the love and betterment of football", one could not help wonder whether he was speaking from a script from 12 years ago or, for that matter, eight or even four years ago.

Salahuddin usually is a very good speaker, not that he speaks too much in front of media but when he does, he makes his point eloquently and precisely. Unfortunately, his actions often fall way short of his words, for we have seen, time and again, his committees not working together, at least not in harmony and with consensus.

Over the last 12 years that the iconic footballer has been leading Bangladesh football, we have seen a number of seasoned organisers either leave his side or being disposed of over difference of opinion. There is a long list of powerful names in the unwanted list, the last of which is Badal Roy.

Saturday night saw Salahuddin winning the election for the hot seat for an unprecedented fourth time, each victory more convincing than the preceding one,

As arguably the greatest ever Bangladeshi footballer takes charge for a fourth term with greater power bestowed in the form of a sweeping victory, it would be worth observing whether the greater power leads to greater responsibility or more false promises.

yet there is little conviction among the masses and even less so among the football fraternity that there will be any paradigm shift in the ways the game is run in the country.

This latest victory is perhaps one of the easiest ones that the 66-year-old organiser had to navigate. There never was any competition there since Tarafder Ruhul Amin, an industrialist-turned-organiser and one-time ally of Salahuddin, left the scene at the latter stage of his campaign following four years of investment and politicking. What prompted the shrewd businessman to make an abrupt exit following years of investment? It is anybody's guess.

And Tarafder's was not the first late exit from the election scene.

Coming back to Badal Roy, the iconic midfielder of a great Mohammedan side is still a very popular figure in footballing circles, and he could still make a great candidate for the president's post, except that he was never meant to be a candidate. It was out of sheer frustration at the powers that be and the absence of a willing candidate that the long-time ally of Salahuddin chose to be his rival. His constant change of stance due to "pressure from some quarters" compromised his chances to a great extent.

The third candidate, Shafiqul Islam Manik, the coach who wished to be the president, did not have any organisational credentials to begin with. He was just a "dummy candidate" as one would expect to see in any election so highly politicised and influenced by financial muscle.

What is gone is gone, though, and what happens next is of greater importance to those who care about the game and are frustrated at the state of affairs. It was not supposed to be like this.

When Salahuddin came to power at the BFF, winning a popular mandate in 2008, it was a transitional point in time, not just for football but for the nation as a whole. Football was at one of its lowest points due to years of poor governance and lack of vision; hence there were obviously lots of expectations surrounding Salahuddin. His

iconic image and promises of a new dawn had the corporates running to the corridors of the once-shabby Motijheel building with bags of money. But that dawn never came, thanks to the lack of a proper plan and cohesiveness within the team. Salahuddin's personal charm was working no more, fading to a degree that the corporates dared not even think of football anymore.

Thanks to the fund provided by the world bodies of football, the game at the national and club level is still functional, but the dream of revival of its popularity still remains distant.

The beautiful game as we call it, after all, is a team game, both on and off the field. One may win an odd game due to individual brilliance, but to make winning a habit a team needs to have a well-drilled squad, marshalled by an astute manager. Great tacticians often fail in their pursuits if they cannot ensure a cohesive work environment.

And that is probably one oft-overlooked aspect which Salahuddin, a great player in his day and a decent manager too, has failed to ensure, leading to false dawns over the last three terms.

As arguably the greatest ever Bangladeshi footballer takes charge for a fourth term with greater power bestowed in the form of a sweeping victory, it would be worth observing whether the greater power leads to greater responsibility or more false promises.

Sinner downs Zverev to set Nadal clash

REUTERS, Paris

Italian teenager Jannik Sinner became the first debutant to reach the French Open quarter-finals since Rafael Nadal in 2005 when he downed German sixth seed Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 on Sunday.

The 19-year-old, who will also be the youngest male player since Novak Djokovic in 2006 to feature in the last eight at Roland Garros, will face 12-times champion Nadal for a place in the semifinals.

The South Tyrolian, winner of last year's NextGen ATP Finals, dropped a set for the first



time in the tournament but he never lost his composure. Sinner ended it on a windswept Court Suzanne Lenglen with a booming forehand that Zverev could only return into the net.

Frenchman Hugo Gaston, who plays later on Sunday, and German Daniel Altmaier, on court on Monday, are other debutants looking to reach the last eight in Paris.

Earlier in the day, Nadal blew away American qualifier Sebastian Korda 6-1, 6-1, 6-2 and close in on a record-extending 13th title. It always looked like mission impossible for the 213th-ranked Korda and so it proved in a one-sided fourth round match.



Polish teenager Iga Swiatek booted top seed Simona Halep out of the French Open on Sunday with a crushing 6-1, 6-2 victory to make her maiden Grand Slam quarterfinal. Halep came into the game on a 17-match unbeaten streak, having defeated 19-year-old Swiatek, ranked 54th in the world, 6-1, 6-0 in 45 minutes at the same stage last year at Roland Garros. "All the credit to her, she played unbelievable today and she was everywhere and she hit all the balls in very strong, very powerful," said Halep.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pacers hit the ground running

SPORTS REPORTER



Even during short breaks, it is a big challenge for fast bowlers to maintain their fitness levels, so when the Bangladesh national players played a two-day practice game among themselves after seven months away from the game, the challenge was a big one for the fast men.

And happily for the Tigers, while the game between Ottis Gibson XI and Ryan Cook XI ended in a draw at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, it was a win of sorts for the fast bowlers.

Initially seamers like Mustafizur Rahman, Al Amin Hossain and Khaled Ahmed got off to a rusty start but the likes of Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain and Hasan Mahmud provided head coach Russell Domingo much to be positive about after such a long break.

Taskin was the brightest of the lot, picking up three wickets for Ryan Cook XI and more importantly, the tall pacer looked in a fine shape throughout the practice match.

"It was indeed a great feeling to be able to play a game after a long gap. Obviously, we have been working on our fitness for quite some time now but it is always a different challenge when you play a game. I felt in good rhythm with the ball and tried to utilise the opportunity," said Taskin.

It is also important to prepare pitches at home that suit pacers and that was seen during the practice game as the Mirpur deck offered both bounce and carry.

Young seamer Mahmud was also impressive. He had only one wicket to show for his efforts, but that one wicket was precious for the gem of a delivery that produced it and the batsman it sent back – the solid and experienced Mushfiqur Rahim, who had his stumps uprooted with a length ball.

Domingo said during the virtual press conference on Friday that the team management is focused on developing a group of six to seven good fast bowlers who could play across all formats and, more importantly, perform abroad.

"If we can have fast bowlers who put pressure on opposition batsmen away from home, that's going to help us become a lot more competitive. At the moment, I think we are on the right track with that group of bowlers," said Domingo on Saturday.

It is also important to prepare pitches at home that suit pacers and that was seen during the practice game as the Mirpur deck offered both bounce and carry.

With no international matches in the near future, Domingo will surely keep a close eye on the seamers in the upcoming practice games, as well as the domestic circuit in the coming days.



Players are 'terrified' of new handball rule, Dier says

REUTERS



Tottenham Hotspur's Eric Dier has said the new handball law has made things more difficult for defenders who now second guess themselves before going in for a challenge in the box.

Dier's handball last weekend - when he rose to challenge in the air with Newcastle's Andy Carroll who headed the ball, at close range, against the raised arm of the Spurs player - has raised questions about what constitutes a handball offence.

The Premier League wants to change the handball law and is in talks with rule-making body IFAB after players and managers across teams stood united in their scathing criticism of how referees interpreted the new rule.

"You're terrified in and around the box with the new rule," Dier said. "You don't feel free to act, to try to play in a normal way. Sometimes it's difficult because it's something that can come back to bite you and is still an opinion."

"The fact that everyone seems to be of the same opinion, which is a rarity in football, makes it clear that things aren't right. If the opposition manager



is saying ... that he doesn't think it's a penalty, which is also a rarity, it's very clear."

Dier said that there were also conflicting rules that "make no sense" with respect to how referees view handball offences.

The 26-year-old added that referees should award a penalty only if the offence was intentional or if the arm was in an unnatural position.

"If you're too close, if you're in close proximity and the ball hits your arm, it's not a handball. If it hits a certain part of your arm, it's not a handball. And if your arm is in a certain position, it is a handball," Dier added.

"For me, it's very clear. Is it intentional? Is an arm in a position it shouldn't be? Those are the two questions you need to ask."



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

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT BSRM building a safer nation



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM

SHAH CEMENT

FOREIGN MINISTER'S KUWAIT VISIT Migrants want labour issues sorted

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladeshi migrants working in Kuwait want the foreign minister and foreign secretary, who are visiting the Gulf country, to talk to the new emir about their challenges amid the coronavirus pandemic and the issue of workers' visa cancellations in connection to the irregularities of MP Shahid Islam Papul.

"They [minister and secretary] are going to Kuwait with a special message from the prime minister to the new Emir of Kuwait," a foreign ministry official said yesterday.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen flew to Kuwait in a Qatar Airways flight about 11:00am yesterday and are scheduled to return on Tuesday.

They will convey messages of condolence for Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who died aged 91 last Tuesday, and of greetings to new Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

Asked if Momen would hold any bilateral meetings with Kuwait's new emir, especially on labour welfare, the foreign ministry official said there is nothing of that sort planned. However, the issue may be raised if they find it convenient.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi migrants now in Kuwait and those stranded in Bangladesh say they expect the Bangladesh foreign minister to discuss labour welfare with the Kuwaiti authorities.

Sabur Khan, a Bangladeshi who returned from Kuwait

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Locals dumping sandbags to protect a dam in Gobordhan area of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila. The flood control dam along the Teesta is collapsing due to river erosion. Around 5,000 families in several villages will be affected if the dam collapses. This photo was taken on Saturday afternoon.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

RIFAT MURDER

Condemned preparing to appeal

STAR REPORT

The families of all six convicts, including Ayesha Siddika Minni, in the Rifat murder case are preparing to file appeals with the High Court against their death sentence, as a copy of the verdict and other documents reached the HC from a Barguna court yesterday.

Officials of the Barguna court brought the documents to the HC, Md Saifur Rahman, special officer at the HC, told The Daily Star.

Earlier on September 30, Barguna District and Sessions Judge's Court sentenced Minni, the widow of slain Rifat Sharif, and five others to death for killing the youth in broad daylight in Barguna in June last year. It acquitted four other accused.

Yesterday, Minni's father Mozammel Hossain Kishore, who also received a copy of the 429-page verdict, met Supreme Court

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Late-night HC order ensures 2 children's access to their home

Talk-show prompted the action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two High Court judges have operated a bench on Saturday night and directed Dhanmondi police to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that two minor grandchildren of former attorney general KS Nabi can enter and live in his Dhanmondi residence in the capital.

The virtual HC bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice Md Zakir Hossain also directed officer-in-charge of the concerned police station to ensure the security of the two boys -- Kazi Adian Nabi and Kazi Nahian Nabi -- at the residence.

The bench came up with the directives suo moto (without a formal complaint from any party) following a live discussion on the issue on a private television channel that night.

Supreme Court lawyer Manzill Murshid, who participated in the live programme, told The Daily Star yesterday that the HC judges have issued the order suo moto to establish the human and fundamental rights of the two minor boys.

He said Adian and Nahian are the children of KS Nabi's son Kazi Siratun Nabi.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangabandhu orders drastic action against smugglers

October 5, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

ARMY, NAVY DEPLOYED

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman orders the army and the navy to rush to border areas to help the civil administration prevent smuggling. The prime minister also orders that drastic action should be taken against smugglers engaged in nefarious anti-social activities calculated to ruin the economy of the country. He asks the home minister to call a conference of the agencies concerned -- namely army, navy, customs, police and Bangladesh Rifles to chalk out a comprehensive plan for the anti-smuggling drive.

The local administration will be fully involved in the drive. Bangabandhu expresses the hope that the people would fully cooperate with the administration in the operation against smugglers who, by their activities, are causing hardship and miseries to the people of the new-born state.

INDO-BANGLADESH TRADE TALK BEGINS
The first round of talks to review the Indo-Bangladesh trade agreement between visiting a Indian official trade delegation and the Bangladesh officials is held at Dhaka today. The meeting described as an inaugural meeting session, discusses the 'general problems' regarding trade between India and Bangladesh. They

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Plumber finds skeleton in wall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human skeleton has been recovered from a makeshift wall at a six-storey building in the capital's Shewrapara area.

Primarily it was suspected that the bones were of a woman's body as a long hair was recovered with it.

A local plumber discovered the bones while repairing water supply lines at the flat, said police.

Some 150 bones, both whole and broken, were recovered one after another from the wall. Those were packed inside a polythene bag mixed with tea leaves.

Police have started investigating the incident since the horrific recovery was made on September 17.

Hanif Sarkar, the owner of the house who also has a furniture business, informed Mirpur police about the recovery. He was questioned by police.

The residents of the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Egypt unveils coffins buried 2,500 yrs ago



AFP, Saqqara

Archaeologists in Egypt said Saturday they had found 59 well-preserved and sealed wooden coffins over recent weeks that were buried more than 2,500 years ago.

Opening one of the ornately decorated sarcophagi before assembled media, the team revealed mummified remains wrapped in burial cloth that bore hieroglyphic inscriptions in bright colours.

The dramatic find was unearthed south of Cairo in the sprawling burial ground of Saqqara.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

EDEN PRINCIPAL MURDER

House helps sentenced to death

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced two house helps to death in a case filed over the killing of former principal of Eden Mohila College Mahfuza Chowdhury Parvin in February last year.

Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of the two accused in the courtroom.

The convicts are: Rita Akhtar alias Swapna, 35, and Ruma alias Reshma, 30, both of them were housemaids of the former principal.

In his observation, the judge said it is a sensational case and the accused had committed a heinous offence by killing the victim and looting the valuables from her house.

So, the accused did not

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Testing dropped over 9pc last week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 tests has decreased by 9.05 percent last week compared to the previous [38th] epidemiological week, said a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The numbers of detections, recoveries, and deaths have also decreased by 7.7 percent, 21.53 percent and 9.26 percent during the same period.

In the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, the number of cases that came out to be positive was 1,125.

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PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 5

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-53 7-30
JAMAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-56 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man welding an additional bumper to a car lying on Darussalam Road in the capital's Mirpur around Saturday noon. He seems nonchalant about his own safety as other vehicles that are rolling by may not notice him and an accident could happen.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Trump can be discharged from hospital today

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump's condition is improving as he is being treated for Covid-19 at a military hospital, and he could return to the White House as early as today, the doctors leading his treatment said yesterday.

That word came the day after a series of contradictory messages from the White House about Trump's conditions caused widespread confusion about his health.

"The patient continues to improve. He has remained without fever since Friday morning, his vital signs are stable," Dr. Sean Dooley told reporters at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where Trump has been receiving treatment since Friday.

Trump released a four-minute video on Saturday in which he said the "real test" of his condition will come over the next few days.

"Over the next period of a few days, I guess that's the real test, so we'll be seeing what happens over those next couple of days," Trump said into the camera, looking tired and wearing a jacket and open-necked shirt.

Trump's illness has upended the campaign ahead of the November presidential election and cast a spotlight on the president's handling of the pandemic. The Republican president is trailing Democratic rival Joe Biden in opinion polls.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll published yesterday found that Biden had opened a 10 point lead over Trump nationally, slightly wider than it has been for the past two months.

Trump's campaign vowed that Vice President Mike Pence, who would assume the presidency if Trump were unable to carry out his duties, would have an "aggressive"

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2