

BLESSING FROM GOD!
Trump says on his Covid infection as he tries to reinvigorate his election campaign
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"By 2030 we really hope to have made huge strides in fixing some of the biggest problems the Earth faces."
BRITAIN'S PRINCE WILLIAM LAUNCHES A GLOBAL PRIZE AIMED AT SOLVING WORLD'S GREATEST ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

"Dialogue is not an excuse for playing for time... On the contrary, it means... getting ready to play hardball whenever necessary."
FRANCE'S FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN ON NAVALNY POISONING AS PARIS, BERLIN PUSH FOR RUSSIA SANCTIONS

"... #Taiwan's Indian friends will have one reply: GET LOST!"
TAIWAN FOREIGN MINISTER JOSEPH WU AFTER CHINA TELLS INDIAN MEDIA NOT TO CALL TAIWAN A COUNTRY

Death sentence awaits rapists

Govt to amend law to ensure tougher punishment for rape; proposal to be placed in next cabinet meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of protests over the growing number of rape incidents, the government is going to amend the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000, to make death sentence the highest punishment for committing rape.

Currently, the highest punishment is life imprisonment.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last night [Wednesday night] instructed me to prepare a draft for amendment to section-9(1) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000, and to place it before the cabinet on Monday for approval.

"Accordingly, we are in the process of preparing a draft for amending section-9(1) and a few other sections of the act for consideration of the cabinet," he said without giving further details.

According to section-9(1), if any male rapes a woman or a child, he could face rigorous life imprisonment and fines.

The government move came at a time when the country is witnessing vigorous protests over the growing number of incidents of sexual harassment and rape.

The gang-rape of a woman in Noakhali and the video of it being released on social media triggered outraged anger as it was already simmering across the country following a string of recent rape incidents.

At least 975 incidents of rapes had happened between January and September 2020, according to Ain O Salish Kendra.

The demand for capital punishment as the highest punishment for rape has been getting louder every day.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



With her injured right arm hung from her neck with a shoulder strap, a protester chants slogans holding a microphone with her left hand at the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding an end to rape incidents across the country. The demonstrator got injured during a scuffle with police in the same area a few days ago.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

5-year-old raped in Noakhali

Teenage girl gang-raped in Gazipur

STAR REPORT

Yet another teenage girl was gang-raped on Wednesday evening in Gazipur while a five-year-old girl was raped in Subarnachar upazila of Noakhali amid ongoing protests against the heinous crime.

The 13-year-old victim used to live with her family members in Tetuibari area under Kashimpur Police Station in Gazipur city. The victim's mother filed a case against two accused yesterday morning.

On Wednesday noon, the victim was staying alone at her residence as her parents went to work. She came out of her residence to find out one of their neighbouring babies.

On her way, Samrat Hossain Shanto, 20, a resident of the same area, called the girl. But she did not respond and started

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Graft obstructs a step forward

Most of 8,500 post offices transformed to provide IT-based services hardly functioning; probe finds irregularities

ASIFUR RAHMAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

"IT-based rural post office" -- that's what is written on the two-room pucca building of Koilain Post Office in Nawabganj, Dhaka.

The post office was transformed into a post e-centre so that people can get various IT-based services.

But during a visit late last month, its collapsible gate was found locked from outside. A local woman was seen collecting dried cow dung on the premises.

The postmaster, Mashiur Kabir, was not there.

He, however, rushed back to his office from his pharmacy in a market nearby, after getting a phone call. But he could not show what services his office provides.

"I don't have the office key to open it," he told The Daily Star. "It is with the runner who went to the nearby village."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

WORLD POST DAY



DIGITAL SECURITY ACT Rise in use of the law alarming

Says Amnesty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two human rights bodies have expressed concern over the escalation in the use of Digital Security Act, 2018 against the media, journalists and rights activists.

Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders issued separate statements yesterday criticising the government for intolerance towards human rights defenders and all those critical of its actions.

The statements were issued marking two years of the draconian law coming into force.

According to 2020 World Press Freedom Index, Bangladesh ranks 151 among 180 countries.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

1 in 10 in Dhaka may have been infected

Says WB report; warns Covid pandemic unlikely to pass anytime soon

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON AND WASIM BIN HABIB

One in every 10 people in the capital may have already been infected with Covid-19, says the World Bank, warning that the coronavirus pandemic is not likely to pass anytime soon.

Even if the actual infections were much higher than the registered cases, it seemed unlikely that Bangladesh and other South Asian countries were already close to the levels that would trigger herd immunity, the global lender said in its latest report on the nations.

"The evidence that those who recover from Covid-19 develop long-term immunity is not very solid. Hence, there is significant uncertainty about the future development of the pandemic in South Asia, and the only relative certainty is that it is unlikely to pass anytime soon," said the report, released yesterday.

The report titled "Beaten or Broken?"

Informality and Covid-19" comes at a time when Bangladesh is fearing a second wave of the coronavirus infection in the upcoming winter amid a steady number of daily infections and deaths.

The total number of confirmed cases in the country stood at 374,592 after the authorities recorded 1,441 new cases in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday against 13,605 tests.

Twenty people died from the virus during the same period, taking the total number of deaths to 5,460.

In another development, Mercy Tembon, World Bank's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, said the lender would allocate resources to support Bangladesh's plan on obtaining potential vaccine for the virus.

"We shall allocate resources to support Bangladesh's plan to obtain vaccines for its population and prepare a strategic plan for vaccination," she told The Daily Star in reply to a written query, at a telephonic

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Dist hospitals to be readied

Says PM about tackling second wave of Covid

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government is getting all the district hospitals ready with ICUs and oxygen supplies to provide healthcare services to the people in case the Covid-19 hits again in the upcoming winter.

"The outbreak of coronavirus had begun last winter. It may resurge in the upcoming winter. Keeping it in mind, we are arranging all sorts of medical services, including setting up ICUs and ensuring oxygen supplies to every district hospital," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme yesterday marking the opening of the Itna-Mithamoin-Austagram all-weather road in Kishoreganj to traffic.

She inaugurated the 29.73-km road

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



American poet Gluck wins Nobel prize in literature

AFP, Stockholm

The Nobel Literature Prize went to American poet Louise Glück, known for themes of childhood and family life that draw inspiration from myths and classical motifs.

Glück, 77, was honoured "for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal," the Academy said yesterday.

Glück has previously won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993 for her collection "The Wild Iris", and the National Book Award for her latest collection, "Faithful and Virtuous Night", in 2014.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



With children at the front, a train passes through a kitchen market, set up illegally on the railway lines in the capital's Jurain area yesterday. The authorities had evicted the vendors around a month ago but they have come back again. Every time a train crosses the place, the vendors have to remove goods and tents from the line. Such disregard for safety sometimes proves to be fatal.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NEW HSC GRADING SYSTEM Those who might have failed lucky

YEAR	TOTAL STUDENT	FAILURE RATE
2019	13,36,629	26.02%
2018	12,88,757	33.36%
2017	11,63,370	31.09%
2016	12,03,640	25.30%
2015	10,61,614	30.40%

SOURCE: EDUCATION BOARDS

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Students who could have failed the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations this year are set to get their certificates as no student will be left behind under the government's new grading system.

Education board officials said over the last five years, 25 to 30 percent examinees sitting for HSC and equivalent exams had failed. But with the government's decision to grade this year's candidates based on their Secondary School Certificate, Junior School Certificate results, 100 percent examinees will pass.

"These 25 to 30 percent students, who could have failed in the exams are getting undue privilege," said Professor Siddiqur Rahman, former Director of the Institute of Education and Research at Dhaka University.

"This is never acceptable. They will get certificates without achieving qualification to pass the level. They will get some privilege even when enrolling for higher education," said Siddiqur, also a member of the National Education Policy 2010 Formulation Committee.

He pointed out that many students who achieved a lower GPA in SSC exams and would have prepared better for the HSC exams will be deprived under new system.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,441
New cases in 24hrs



3,74,592
Total cases



5,460
Deaths



2,88,316
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



1,062,876
Deaths



36,557,054
Total cases

5-year-old raped in Noakhali

FROM PAGE 1
running to return home quickly.

But Samrat and his cohort Shakil Ahmen, who also lives in the same area, caught the girl and took her to a nearby Brac school and gang-raped her.

At one stage, the victim started screaming. Hearing it, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. But the alleged criminals managed to flee the scene.

Later yesterday morning, the victim's mother filed a case accusing the duo, said Rafiqul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Kashimpur Police Station.

The victim was sent to a hospital for treatment and police were continuing drives to arrest the accused, he added.

In Subamachar, a five-year-old-girl was raped by her neighbour, a worker of poultry farm on Wednesday night. The child was admitted to Noakhali General Hospital yesterday.

Police arrested the rapist Helal, 22, yesterday as the victim's father filed a case with Char Jabbarpur Police Station. The court sent the alleged rapist to jail.

After the rape incident at Begumganj, many such incidents like taking nude photos of woman and spreading it on the social media and blackmailing is surfacing.

In Tangail, a woman, wife of an expatriate worker, filed a case against Monjur Rahman, 26, of Haria Village in the upazila, with a Tangail Court on September 21 under Pornography Act, alleging him of spreading nude photo, police said.

The woman, mother of a child, told The Daily Star that as her husband works abroad, Monjur, a local land trader, used to tease her.

At one stage, she was involved in a relationship with the youth about two years ago.

"I do not remember when but Monjur took my nude pictures and videos out of my sense. Later in the next one year, he realised total Tk 5 lakh from me in different times threatening me of spreading the picture and video on Facebook," she said.

She informed the matter to the UP Chairman. But UP chairman wanted to file a case with Mirzapur Police Station

in this regard. The chairman, however, told her not to do so saying that he would sit over the matter.

"As the chairman delayed, I thought he would bar me to file the case with police station. Later, I filed a case with a Tangail court against Monjur in this regard," she added.

The Daily Star, however, could not take version of the UP chairman as he did not pick up phone.

Contacted, Gias Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Mirzapur Police Station, told The Daily Star that the housewife lodged a case against Monjur with Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court under Pornography Act and the court asked police to investigate the case.

In Pabna, a court yesterday sent a local Awami League leader allegedly for raping a housewife at Rampur village in Chatmohar upazila.

The accused Golzar Hossain, 35, of Nazirpur village in Boraigram upazila of Natore, and a joint secretary of Jonail union unit AL in the same upazila. He raped the housewife multiple times, said Aminul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chatmohar Police Station.

In Narayanganj, a police member was arrested yesterday on charge of raping a girl.

The accused is Abdul Kuddus Noyon, 35, a police constable, whose posting was at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

He allegedly raped the girl, who works at a beauty parlour, multiple times promising her to marry, said Kamrul Fakhru, officer-in-charge of Shiddhirganj Police Station.

In Barishal, a court on Wednesday sent four minors, who were accused of gang-raping a five-year-old girl, to Jessore Child Development Center.

The accused, who are aged between nine and 11, gang-raped the girl on Sunday afternoon at Runki village in Bakerganj upazila.

As the accused are juvenile, they were sent to child development centre instead of jail, said Sudipto Sarker, additional superintendent of police in Barishal.

[Our correspondent from Gazipur, Pabna, Faridpur, Narayanganj and Barishal contribute to this report]



The Koilain Post Office in Nawabganj, Dhaka, that had been transformed to a post e-centre remains mostly closed and people are deprived of various IT-based services.

PHOTO: STAR

Graft obstructs a step forward

FROM PAGE 1

This is the picture of one of the 8,500 post e-centres, which went through digital transformation under the project titled "Post e-Centre for Rural Community".

The Tk 541 crore project started in 2012 and was completed on June 30, 2017.

People are supposed to use a post e-centre for getting various IT-based services including computer compose, printing photographs, scanning, emails and online test results, according to the website of the Directorate of Posts.

They are also supposed to draw social safety net allowances or get agent banking service and computer training from these e-centres.

Unfortunately, the transformation of the postal services hardly benefits people as most of the e-centres are not functioning.

One of the reasons -- as the government's probe bodies found -- is widespread corruption and embezzlement of money without fully implementing the project.

According to the directorate's website, 5,506 post offices have been converted into e-centres before state minister Tarana Halim assumed office in 2015 for a three-year term.

Under her leadership, all 8,500 post offices were converted into e-centres before schedule, it claimed.

But a large number of people are still unaware of the services that the e-centres provide. Those who know about it find the centres locked for most of the time like the one in Koilain union of Nawabganj.

A GOOD INITIATIVE TAINTED
As the allegations of graft started surfacing, the Posts and Telecommunications Division formed two separate inquiry committees on October 7 last year and January 26 this year respectively.

Musleh Uddin, joint secretary of the division, was the convener of the first committee while Muhibur Rahman, an additional secretary (telecom), was convener of the second.

Both the committees did not find evidence of use of maximum equipment purchased under the project.

In their reports submitted in November last year and February this year, the committees said the project authorities did not give any instructions on what the devices would be used for.

Although Tk 69 crore was allocated for training, no one was trained.

The actual cost of the project is Tk 380.65 crore, though it was estimated to be Tk 540.94 crore. Nothing was mentioned about the remaining Tk 160.29 crore in the Project Completion

Report. Both the committees held Sudhangshu Shekhar Bhadra, director general of Directorate of Posts, responsible for the financial irregularities and corruption. He was also the project director.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has already started an investigation into the matter and earlier this month, it quizzed the director general.

Md Salahuddin, the investigation officer and a deputy director of the ACC, said they got allegations against Sudhangshu on several occasions.

"He [Sudhangshu] was summoned before the ACC for quizzing. The investigation is going on."

The parliamentary standing committee on the posts, telecommunications and information technology ministry at a recent meeting recommended removal of Sudhangshu for his alleged involvement in widespread corruption and irregularities.

"The parliamentary committee recommended his removal for his alleged corruption. We hope its recommendations will be implemented," Benjir Ahmed, chief of the standing committee, told The Daily Star.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said the allegations of corruption against the DG are symptomatic of the vulnerability of public procurement to illicit collusive practices by a section of government officials with the vendors and contractors of infrastructure projects often with political linkages at various levels.

Allegations in this case transcend the typical abuse of power by the incumbent and his agents, as there is strong basis to suspect widespread fraudulence and profiteering capitalising on funds for lofty postal information centers which were reportedly never built, he said.

"Such institutionalised corruption cannot take place without the participation, collusion and protection of the chief executive," he said.

"And all these seem to have been going on unabashedly at the cost of taxpayers."

Iftekharuzzaman further said it is encouraging and important for the ACC that the parliamentary committee found the allegations credible. The ACC has therefore a challenge to prove that it can genuinely bring to book anyone irrespective of identity or status, he added.

FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEES
The first probe committee in its report said 17,000 Point of Sale (POS)

machines were purchased under the project to serve customers with postal cash cards.

But only 704 of the machines are being used.

The report said although 10,000 finger vein machines were bought, only 643 are being used.

Tk 54.93 crore and Tk 19.62 crore were spent respectively to purchase these two types of machines.

The investigation report further said out of 17,000 POS machines, 14,129 were distributed at the field level and the remaining 2,871 are at the director general's office. The machines sent to the field level are lying unused and undistributed.

During the investigation, 850 POS machines and 600 finger vein machines were found wrapped in packets at the Khulna Divisional Office of the Postal Department, it said.

The second investigation committee in its report submitted in February said although 500 general servers had been procured under the project, three heavy servers included in the DPP had not been procured.

Many of the general servers have also been delivered two years after the project deadline.

An official of the postal department said many servers were bought and sent to the post offices. However, none of them could be used as nobody knew how to use them.

The Daily Star called Sudhangshu's mobile phone several times but it was found switched off. He also did not reply to text messages.

These correspondents went to his office two days but he was not found there as well.

On Sunday, his personal assistant said Sudhangshu was neither coming to office for the last several days nor doing work-from-home.

"Sir is having rest at his home," he said.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar said Sudhangshu is no longer serving in his post now.

However, the website of the directorate still contains his photo as its DG.

"We have sent all the reports of investigations conducted by the ministry and the Anti-Corruption Commission against Sudhangshu Shekhar Bhadra to the public administration ministry. My ministry will take action in line with the decision of the public administration ministry."

The minister said it is the public administration ministry which will take the decision whether Sudhangshu will be sacked or face other actions.

Death sentence

FROM PAGE 1

Even Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury yesterday called for enactment of strict laws and their enforcement to stop incidents of rape.

Prominent rights activist Nur Khan Liton believes enhancement of punishment would not reduce the number of rape incidents, rather proper implementation of the law could bring the numbers down.

He said there were incidents in which suspects were killed in the so-called gunfights but those did not deter the perpetrators and reduce the number of rape incidents.

"I think proper implementation of the existing law can bring down the number of such incidents. Enhancement of punishment without looking into the real issue would not solve the problem," he told The Daily Star last night.

He said with political patronage, the perpetrators turn into monsters and they think that they would not face trial.

"So, what we need to do is quick trials of such cases and give a clear message that no one would be spared after committing such crimes," he added.

Salma Ali, president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, said capital punishment could be incorporated in the question of child rape. However, that should be done after long discussions, she said.

Referring to India, she said the Indian government has incorporated death penalty for rape after the 2012 Delhi gang-rape and murder case but the number of rape incidents there did not decline.

"So, I think enhancement of punishment is not enough to bring down the number of rape incidents," she told The Daily Star last night.

She said victims' access to justice has to be ensured and to do so several steps have to be taken. The steps include amendment of the Evidence Act and Code of Criminal Procedure, enactment of victim and witness protection act, creation of an environment where women feel secure to continue their legal battle, and compensate victims at the preliminary stage of the case.

"Without doing these, enhancement of punishment would not be able to prevent incidents of rape," she added.

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Dist hospitals to be readied

FROM PAGE 1

through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban in the capital.

Hasina said the government recruited some 2,000 doctors, 3,000 nurses and a good number of health technicians following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

She said the government has been making all kinds of efforts to check the spread of the virus in the country.

The premier said the government was setting up special economic zones in different regions so that the local people could attain financial solvency by processing their produced goods there.

"While setting up special economic zones in a region, we are paying attention to goods hugely produced there," she added.

Hasina said the government has a plan to develop food and other agriculture goods processing industries so that agriculture-dependent regions do not remain dependent on only farming.

"Rather their produced goods will be processed, marketed and exported from there ensuring financial gains for the local people."

The premier said the government is setting up a university in Netrakona-Kishoreganj region.

"We want a university to be set up in every big district across the country so that students can pursue their higher education staying in their localities."

The PM stressed the need for running educational activities through the digital platform as the Covid-19 has badly affected the academic life of the country's students.

Hasina said Sangsad TV having been dedicated to the education of the students in absence of the Jatiya

Sangsad session.

About the connectivity, Hasina said the government has been strengthening the communication systems by developing the road network throughout the country, expanding the railway networks and making the waterways more operational. "So, the connectivity with different regions will be developed."

She extended her sincere thanks to President Abdul Hamid for taking the initiative for the construction of the road.

The PM said she would like to visit the road once the Covid-19 situation improved.

With the construction of the road, the protracted sufferings of the local people will end as they now can easily travel to and from Dhaka via Nasiragar or Bhairab.

The road, constructed at a cost of Tk 874.08 crore, connects three upazilas of Kishoreganj -- Itna, Mithamoin and Austagram.

The Itna-Mithamoin-Austagram road goes straight through the vast haor area in parallel with the Dhanu and Baulai rivers. In 2016, President Hamid had inaugurated the construction work of the road in his ancestral district.

Later, the PM exchanged views with some local people who were connected from Mithamoin upazila. Local lawmakers and dignitaries of Kishoreganj district were present at the Mithamoin end.

While exchanging views with local people, Hasina said the road is a gift on behalf of the president in the "Mujib Borsho".

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader delivered the welcome speech at the event, conducted by PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikas.

American poet Gluck wins

FROM PAGE 1

The Academy's permanent secretary Mats Malm said he had spoken to Gluck just before making the public announcement.

"The message came as a surprise, but a welcome one as far as I could tell," Malm told reporters.

She is the fourth woman to win the Nobel Literature Prize in the past decade, and only the 16th since the Nobel prizes were first awarded in 1901.

A professor of English at Yale University, Gluck "seeks the universal, and in this she takes inspiration from myths and classical motifs, present in most of her works," the Academy said in its prize citation.

"The voices of Dido, Persephone, and Eurydice -- the abandoned, the punished, the betrayed -- are masks for a self in transformation, as personal as it is universally valid."

Her collections "The Triumph of Achilles" (1985) and "Ararat" (1990) address "almost brutally straightforward images of painful family relations", the jury said, noting that her use of a "deceptively natural tone is striking, with 'no trace of poetic ornament'."

Gluck is also a poet of radical change and rebirth, describing in her poem "Snowdrops" the miraculous return of life after winter, her work often marked by "humour and biting wit."

'MASTERLY'
The jury said her 2006 collection

"Averno" was a "masterly collection, a visionary interpretation of the myth of Persephone's descent into Hell in the captivity of Hades, the god of death."

"She writes oneiric, narrative poetry recalling memories and travels, only to hesitate and pause for new insights. The world is disenthralled, only to become magically present once again," the Academy concluded.

Last year, the Swedish Academy gave the nod to Austrian novelist Peter Handke which unleashed a flood of criticism, as many wondered how it could award a writer known for supporting Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic in the Balkan wars and playing down his army's atrocities.

The Academy defended that choice as being made solely on literary merit without political considerations.

The Nobel Prize comes with a medal and a prize sum of 10 million Swedish kronor (about \$1.1 million).

Gluck would normally receive the Nobel from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his last will and testament.

But the in-person ceremony has been cancelled this year due to the coronavirus pandemic and replaced with a televised ceremony showing the laureates receiving their awards in their home countries.

1 in 10 in Dhaka may have been infected

FROM PAGE 1

press conference on Wednesday night before the launch of the report.

The country director said the global lender was committed to providing additional financing so that low- and middle-income countries could have access to the vaccines necessary to alter the course of the pandemic and to rebuild livelihoods and economies.

Consequently, the World Bank management has asked the executive board to approve additional financing of \$12 billion to help low-income and middle-income countries purchase and distribute vaccines, Mercy Tembon added.

'BANGLADESH TESTS FAR BELOW'
The WB report, which mainly focuses on the coronavirus' devastating impacts on the economies of the region, briefly sheds light on the present state of Covid-19 and the pandemic's impact on the education system in seven South Asian countries.

It said the testing was low and the actual extent of Covid-19 infections in these countries was highly uncertain because of supply constraints, social stigma, and a young population.

Due to the social stigma associated with an infection, many prefer not to get tested in the first place and only seek medical attention when the symptoms are severe, it said.

Besides, as the South Asia's population is on average very young, infections are more likely to cause no or only mild symptoms, the report said, adding that testing fees and distrust in the testing facilities result in subdued demand in some places.

"Most South Asian countries fare

poorly on testing for Covid-19. The benchmark range for adequate testing set by the World Health Organization is between 10 and 30 per cent confirmed case," the report said.

But Bangladesh is testing far below the range, which makes its recorded numbers particularly uncertain, it said, adding, "Low testing is both a result of supply constraints and subdued demand for testing."

Only Bhutan and Sri Lanka, which have a very few cases per capita, have tested far above that range since March, it added.

The report said while the number of infections per million people varies strongly at the national level, nearly all countries have districts with less than 50 cases per 100,000 people and districts with more than 250 cases per 100,000.

In Bangladesh, less than 10 percent of the districts have less than 50 cases per 100,000 people, the report added.

Apart from advocating for economic relief for the poor and vulnerable, the WB suggested that the government's Covid-19 response should remain a paramount priority, including testing, quarantining and treating patients.

'DROPOUTS, SUBSTANTIAL LEARNING LOSSES'
Temporary school closures in all South Asian countries have had major implications for students as the authorities kept 391 million students out of school in primary and secondary education, further complicating efforts to resolve the learning crisis.

Man held on charge of sexually abusing 4 children in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man allegedly sexually abused four children over the course of a week, luring them with candy, in the capital's Khilgaon area.

The victims, aged between six and nine, were sent to one-stop crisis centre at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Wednesday night for medical tests.

Police arrested the accused, Sazal Mollah (55) after victims' families filed a case last evening in this regard, said Faruqul Alam, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station.

The OC said the children live near Sazal's home in Goran area, and that Sazal is a rickshaw puller.

Quoting victims' families, police said Sazal used to lure the children with candy to his home and sexually abused them.

He had been doing this for several days, Faruqul added.

The families came to know about it and filed a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Sazal will be sent to court with a remand prayer today, said the Khilgaon Police Station OC.



Workers of readymade garment factories leave their workplaces for lunch in the capital's Agargaon yesterday, with not a mask in sight. The World Bank in a report yesterday said one in 10 people of the capital may have already been infected with the novel coronavirus.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Another month-old rape surfaces only after video release

Two teens confess to crime

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Two accused among 15 in a case for gang-raping a girl and assaulting another in Savar confessed to court of the crime yesterday.

Earlier on Wednesday night, the rape victim's elder sister filed the case against 10 named and five unnamed members of a gang, Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The accused are: gang leader Sharuf (18), "Shadhu market" Al-Amin (19), "Diamond" Al-Amin (18), Zakir (18), Redoan (19), Badsha (18), Jihad (20), "Goru" Al-Amin (19), "Bata" Al-amin (19), and Shakil (19).

All are members of a gang known as "Prince gang" lead by Sharuf, police said. Sharuf, Diamond Al-Amin, Jakir and Rakib were detained in separate drives on Wednesday, said OC Kamruzzaman.

Among the detainees, three were shown arrested in the case and sent to court with seven-day remand prayers, while Rakib was released as police did not find his involvement in the incident, the OC added.

Dhaka's senior judicial magistrates Md Rajib Hassan and Md Moniruzzaman recorded the confessional statements of Sharuf and Zakir respectively under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) after investigation officer AKM Fazlul Haque, an inspector of Ashulia Police Station, produced the duo at their chambers.

Diamond Al-Amin was also produced before the court with a seven-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ATTACK ON HASINA'S MOTORCADE HC clears way to resume trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for the lower court concerned to resume the trial proceedings of a case filed over the attack on motorcade of the then opposition leader and now Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Satkhira in 2002.

The court lifted its stay order and also discharged the rule issued more than three years back, questioning the proceedings. It also directed the trial court to finish the trial proceedings in three months.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain delivered the verdict after virtually holding hearing on the rule.

AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, the lawyer for Rakib alias Rakibur Rahman, an accused of the case, told The Daily Star that the HC has discharged the rule as the trial court has recorded the statements from the witnesses.

Mahbub Uddin, however, said his client will move an appeal before the Appellate Division, challenging the HC order as he was 10 years old during the incident.

The case is now pending with the chief judicial magistrate court in Satkhira, he informed.

Following a petition filed by Rakib, another HC bench on August 23, 2017 stayed the trial proceedings.

During hearing on the rule recently, Mahbub Uddin

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Tk 2,000CR SCAM Freeze 88 accounts of 5 including ex-AL leader: court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday

ordered the authorities

concerned to freeze 88

bank accounts of five

accused, including a

former Awami League

leader of Faridpur in a

Tk 2,000-crore money

laundering case.

The accused are: Sajjad

Hossain alias Barkat,

former general secretary

of Faridpur unit Awami

League, and his brother

Imtiaz Hasan alias

Rubel, former president

of Faridpur Press Club,

Rubel's wife Soheli Imroz

Punam, Barkat's wife

Afroza Akhter and their

accomplice Abdus Sadek

Mukul.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Enact, enforce strict laws for rape: Speaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury yesterday said strict laws have to be enacted and enforced as well as exemplary punishment for rapists must be ensured as soon as possible.

"Repression and rape against women is not acceptable in any way. Rape is the worst form of crime," she said while addressing a virtual dialogue.

UNFPA and parliament secretariat organised the programme, "Concerted Response to Stop Child Marriage, Prevent Gender Based Violence and Improve Maternal Health During Natural Disaster and Covid-19 Pandemic".

The Speaker joined the programme virtually as the chief guest from the Jatiya Sangsad.

"As part of the national response plan, the upazila women's affairs officers can play the role of first responders and assist them in getting all the legal help if any woman is being abused in remote areas," she said, adding that awareness is needed to prevent violence against women.

The event was chaired by Awami League MP Meher Afroze, convener of the sub-committee on prevention of child marriage and gender based violence and also chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on women and children affairs.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira, UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo and UNFPA Representative Asa Britta Torkelsson, among others, joined the programme. Aroma Dutta, a member of the sub-committee, presented the keynote paper.

Road crashes kill four

STAR REPORT

Two persons died in separate accidents in Dhaka early yesterday, while two more lives were lost on the road in Khulna.

The deceased were identified as Jahidul Islam (30) and Md Ripon (18).

An unidentified vehicle hit Ripon while he was crossing a road near Jamuna Future Park around 2am. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said Bachchu Mia, in-charge of police outpost at the hospital.

In Tikatuli, another unidentified vehicle hit Ripon, leaving him dead, he added.

Jahid's nephew Md Ali said Jahid was on a truck last night to carry bricks from Manikganj to Tikatuli. "We came to know that he died in a road accident around 4am," he added.

Our Khulna correspondent adds, two people were killed and another was injured as a bus and a human hauler collided in front of Muktiyoddha Mahila College in Dumuria upazila yesterday.

The deceased are human hauler driver Aminul Islam (55) from Sajiara village in Dumuria; and Mizanur Rahman Sheikh (60) from Sahas village in the area, said Dumuria Police Station OC Aminul Islam.

50pc irregularities will come down if cases filed centrally

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 50 percent of irregularities at the Supreme Court will be reduced if cases are filed centrally, said Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain on Wednesday.

"If we don't find out the root of the problems, irregularities will not be dispelled..." he said without elaborating the irregularities.

He made the comment while speaking as chief guest at a meeting organised in memory of late Attorney General Mahbubey Alam who passed away on September 27.

Law Reporters Forum (LRF) organised the event at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium.

Mahmud Hossain said, "Mahbubey Alam had told me that all the irregularities at the court must be stopped and he also said if a central system (of filing cases) is introduced, the irregularities will be prevented."

"I want his wish to be implemented. No case will be heard and disposed of from now on breaking the serial," the chief justice said.

He also asked journalists to publish reports on SC verdicts regarding confirmation of death sentences of convicts along with verdicts of the acquittals of accused.

He said the government is embarrassed at the incidents of rape as a minister reportedly said the government cannot avoid the responsibility of the incidents. "We, who are in the judiciary, also want proper trial of the

incidents," he said.

Reminiscing works and life of Mahbubey Alam, the chief justice prayed for eternal peace and salvation of his departed soul.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, who spoke as special guest, told the meeting that the late attorney general never compromised with his non-communal belief and spirit of the Liberation War.

He never backtracked from protecting the independence and dignity of the judiciary. "If the rare qualities of Mahbubey Alam are followed, he will be honoured properly," the minister said.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim said giving false enrolment certificates by the Bangladesh Bar Council has been stopped through the sole attempts of Mahbubey Alam as its chairman.

The judiciary has accepted and recorded many of his (Mahbubey Alam) arguments, he said, adding that research on Mahbubey Alam needs to take place.

Justice Obaidul Hassan, a judge of the SC's Appellate Division; State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahbub Ali; High Court judges Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Jahangir Hossain Selim; former Appellate Division judge Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik; SCBA President AM Amin Uddin, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza, SCBA Secretary Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, SC lawyer KM Saifuddin and LRF President Mashudul Hoque also spoke.

SC modifies Muhuri murder verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday modified its verdict in the sensational Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case of Chattogram.

In the modified verdict, the SC fined Tk 50,000 to each three convicts whose death sentences were commuted to imprisonment till their natural death.

In the default to pay the fine, the convicts will have to serve imprisonment for more one year, the SC said in the modified judgement. Deputy Attorney General Amit Das Gupta told The Daily Star.

He said a three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Muhammad Imman Ali modified its verdict on suomoto (voluntary) move as there is a provision for fining along with the life imprisonment until death under Section 302 of the Penal Code.

On October 6, the SC, inadvertently, did not mention the punishment of fining in its verdict, said the DAG.

Meanwhile, Khandker Mahbub Hossain, a lawyer for convict Alamgir Kabir alias Baita Alamgir, said his client will move a review petition.

He said the fine is a must along with the imprisonment as per Section 302. But how will the convicts serve imprisonment for one more year after they die if they don't pay fine? he said.

The ground on which the apex court delivered the verdict could not be known as its full text is yet to be released.

On October 6, the Appellate Division bench had delivered the verdict in Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case after hearing the appeals of three convicts against the High Court judgement.

In the verdict, the apex court commuted the death sentence of three convicts -- Azam, Alamgir Kabir alias Baita Alamgir and Taslim Uddin Montu to imprisonment till their natural death.

Where good deeds is the currency

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

It's not a regular restaurant. You won't see the usual imagery of a shabby hotel here. No waiters running around like shuttle trains, no customers hagglng with cash counter supervisors over a bill. It's so different in fact, that it doesn't even run on monetary exchange!

At Bhalo Kajer Hotel, the accepted currency is "good deeds". It's a restaurant where you can eat to stomach's peace day and night, all for free, as long as you have done a good deed on that day.

The "restaurant" is located beside a footpath near the Kamalapur Railway Station. At the spot, a white wall bears the name of the eatery, written in deep red for your eye's convenience.

If one crosses the area between 1:30pm and 3pm from Sunday to



Samaritans enjoy a filling meal at Bhalo Kajer Hotel in Kamalapur.

Thursday, a battery-powered van can be seen parked there. This is the Bhalo Kajer Hotel.

A couple of youths can be seen picking up food packs from the van and distributing them to a waiting crowd gathered on the footpath.

When this correspondent went

to visit the place, he saw a young volunteer in the role of a surveyor. With a clipboard in hand, he took turns asking the crowd two questions: "What's your name?" and "Did you do any good deed today?" That's all you need to eat at the mobile restaurant.

It's only been a few months since the initiative was launched -- it started in August this year.

The eatery opens its door between 1:30pm and 3pm from Sunday to Thursday and between 7pm and 9:30pm on Saturday. Along with the spot at Kamalapur, they also distribute food to almost 300 people at various mosques and orphanages across Dhaka around Jumah time every Friday.

On weekends, the food packs come with chicken, beef, mutton khichuri and tehari. Khichuri and eggs go for the rest of the week.

The initiative was started on August 29 by Youth for Bangladesh (YFB), a Facebook-based volunteering organisation, said its founder Ariful Rahman. The endeavour goes further back

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MINI BYTES



3 personal safety apps for travelling

EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

A woman can't really walk through the city streets alone without feeling that uneasy need to look over the shoulder. Bangladesh saw an increase in rape by 19 percent from 2018 to 2019. This year seems to be competing with incidents of sexual assault, kidnapping and violence against women and children. Following are a list of personal safety apps that are a no-brainer for women that need to increase their chances of safety while travelling.

LIFE360 FAMILY LOCATOR APP

You sync family members and friends in one place for a single texting thread. The app notifies family when you reach a particular destination while providing real-time info of your whereabouts. You can also limit the number of people who can track your whereabouts. This is great if you need to travel for work.

MY SAFETIPIN

This app shows up on a regular basis as one of the top safety apps. I tried it and it is quite simple to use with an easy interface. It has GPS location tracking and auto calling of preset emergency contact numbers.

It also suggests areas safe nearby while allowing you to give ratings according to how safe or unsafe you consider a particular location. The data is collected based on number of women and children around, the population density and availability of public transport.

WOMEN SAFETY

While the other apps send messages to emergency numbers, this one also sends emails containing your location and a Google Maps link to preselected people. The app also takes and sends two pictures from your phone's camera along with a video/audio clip.

It has quick react buttons of three colours for three categories. Obviously red will directly inform someone of a dangerous situation that you are in. Basically, if you think you are in a difficult situation, you would have to get hold of your smartphone and press



the button from the app. The one major flaw is it has ads that pop up.

KEEP IN MIND:

These apps won't prevent trouble. And taking out a phone may not always be possible. But having technology to assist means you have that one extra factor aiding your safety. We have had a few local apps come up tackling this issue. Apps like Joy 109 was launched couple years back but now it is nowhere to be found. BD 999 is a promising app but it wouldn't let me register. It alerts Bangladesh Police by sending emergency messages along with your location and a quick video with subsequent updates. Also, all these apps require GPS which will drain the battery faster so keep your smartphone charged and preferably carry a powerbank to top up.

For further queries, contact ronnyraza@gmail.com

BCL LEADER SUDIPTO MURDER

No charge sheet in three years

ARUN BIKASH DEV, CTC

Three years have passed since BCL leader of Chattogram city unit Sudipto Biswas was brutally killed, his family still awaits justice.

Sudipto, a master's student of Government City College and an assistant general secretary of the city unit of BCL, was beaten to death in front of his house in port city's Sadarghat area on October 6, 2017.

According to police and family, a group of people arrived in the area by eight to nine auto-rickshaws and motorbikes and murdered Sudipto.

Sudipto's father Meghnath Biswas filed a case with Sadarghat Police Station accusing seven to eight unknown persons that day. Later, the case was transferred to Police Bureau of Investigation, who are yet to submit a charge sheet.

PBI sources said police arrested 18

people, mostly BCL activists, in the case. Of them, 16 are now on bail.

Sudipto's peers and followers alleged that Didarul Alam Masum, a former BCL leader of the college and general secretary of Lalkhan Bazar ward unit of Awami League, plotted the killing.

Masum, however, denied the allegation, claiming that it's a "conspiracy" against him by his rivals.

Sudipto's father, who retired from a primary school as a headteacher seven years ago, recently told The Daily Star that all he wants is justice. "PBI has been assuring us of submitting a charge sheet for a long time, but to no avail," he added. According to a number of BCL leaders and investigators, Sudipto was vocal against "misconducts" in student organisations and wanted an end to it.

On Facebook, he often criticised senior leaders known as "big brothers"

and such outspokenness may have led to his murder, they said. Two days before his murder, he wrote that a leader is nothing without his/her activists and activists should revolt to achieve something.

Nurul Azim Roni, former general secretary of Chattogram city unit of BCL, alleged that law enforcers are "wasting time". They have enough evidence -- including CCTV footage -- to submit the charge sheet, he claimed.

Asked, PBI Inspector Santosh Kumar Chakma, the case's investigation officer, said they got all the relevant CCTV, audio and video footage, and seized seven auto-rickshaws and a motorbike.

"The investigation is at final stage. I'm waiting for a court order to verify Facebook profile of an accused. The court fixed October 12 for the hearing. I think, I would be able to file the charge sheet this month," said Santosh.

HC clears

FROM PAGE 3

told the HC that the proceedings against his client could take place under the Child Act, 2013 as he was a minor at the time.

Meanwhile, Additional Attorney General SM Munir told the HC that Rakib was 32 years old during the incident as per the FIR.

He did not inform the court that he was 10 during the time and therefore there is no legal bar to run the trial against him, the additional attorney general argued.

Police earlier submitted charge sheet against 50 accused including Rakib to the trial court.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Workers of Dhaka South City Corporation remove a heap of entangled wires attached to a pillar at Hatirpul area. Earlier, DSCC started a drive to remove all cables of government and private organisations, and internet service providers.

INVITATION FOR TENDER

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(Dilip Kumar Paul)
General Manager



ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION
Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

Freeze 88

FROM PAGE 3

of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Investigation Officer Uttam Kumar Biswas, assistant superintendent of police of Criminal Investigation Department, submitted an application to the court.

Earlier, nine people were arrested from different parts of Faridpur and Dhaka. Of them, Rubel, Barkat and six others gave confessional statements before the magistrates, narrating their involvement with the money laundering.

CID Inspector SM Miraj Al Mahmud lodged the case against the two brothers under the money laundering act with Kafrul Police Station on June 26.

Where good

FROM PAGE 3

though. The team first undertook a similar initiative under a project titled "Bhalo Kajer Binimoya Ahar" in December last year.

The planning started even before that. Ariful, who is an agro entrepreneur by profession, said he came up with the idea in 2009, when he was still a student of Southeast University.

Md Mizanur Rahman Babu, executive member of YFB's central committee, said they run the hotel by a Tk 10 contribution from each of their 265 members everyday. The food distribution programme is run by this Tk 80,000-ish they raise every month, said Babu, a lecturer at University of Information Technology and Sciences.

The organisation could've just made the food free, but Ariful said they want to inspire people into action. "When we first opened shop, a 10-year-old boy named Jahid used to come and eat for free, without performing any good deeds. However, after a few days, we came to know that he started watering a roadside flower tree. These kind of stories inspire us a lot."

In addition to this project, YFB has been running various other programmes to support people in need since 2012, Arif said.

He said he is hopeful that this experimental method of inspiring action will work, and if it does, they will look to expand it to a greater extent.

Another month-old

FROM PAGE 3

day remand prayer, but the court decided his hearing will be held at the juvenile court on Sunday, after a defence lawyer claimed that his client's age is below 18.

THE CASE STATEMENT

According to the case statement, on August 30 around 3pm, the victim, a factory worker, along with a female friend, and a distant uncle of her and her uncle's neighbour, went for a visit in North Pabnartek area. There, around 15 gang members including named accused cornered them.

They beat up the four and forcibly took the two girls to two separate remote places nearby, and gang-raped one. They also recorded the incident on video. They freed the two around 5:30pm, after giving them death threats.

The incident came to light four days back, after the video spread among locals, said police.

Primarily, police suspected that both girls were raped, but one of the

girls, aged around 18, claimed that she was assaulted not raped, according to police.

Police were also interrogating the two young men who were with the victims at the time.

'NOT REPORTED EARLIER OUT OF FEAR'

On Wednesday, talking to reporters in presence of police, the uncle of the victim (20), also a worker of a local cap factory, said after the incident, the girls said they were assaulted and not raped.

"We did not report it because of the threats issued by the gang members," he said.

"As a video of the incident was leaked somehow three days ago, we came to know that my niece was gang-raped," he said, adding that his niece left her job and went back to her village.

According to police and locals, after the video came to light, Akram, a local businessman and father of Sharuf, tried to mitigate the issue by providing

money to the victim's family.

Akram admitted to a journalist over phone that he collected money from parents of the other gang members to pay the victim family and settle the matter outside court.

The Daily Star has a copy of the conversation.

Earlier during a visit to Akram's house in Vadhail area on Wednesday, all members of the house were found to be in hiding.

A NOTORIOUS GANG

Visiting the area, this correspondent spoke to at least 10 locals and came to know that a group of 20 to 25 teenagers were involved in criminal activities there, including taking drugs. The gang members also sometime engaged in altercation with another group.

"The teenagers used to gather in the area and committed crimes but we could not protest in fear as they were rowdy," said Montaz Uddin, who farms vegetables next to the crime spot.

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Contact E-mail: KOICA-CHW@gnbangla.org

Memo No: GNB/20/003 Date: 08th October 2020

Hereby invite tenders from the Supplier Vendors of Good Neighbors Bangladesh for 2020 FY for the Procurement of the COVID-19 WASH materials for the project area as per terms and conditions stated in below:

Package No	Name of Works	Tender security (BDT)
GNB/2020/05	COVID-19 WASH Materials	3,00,000/=
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2. Funder	Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)	
3. Implementer	KOICA-GNB CHW Project office, T&T Road/Melagachi, P.O: Setabganj, P.S: Bochaganj, Dinajpur.	
4. Date, time and place of the bid conference	No Bid Conference for COVID-19 Situation But on-call bidding will be held for primary selected Vendors	
5. Last date, time and place of receiving tender	Date: 08th October 2020 to 17th October 2020/unitl BD-05:00 PM For Tender Details visit: http://bit.do/fj424	
6. Tender Duration and Tender details	Date: 17th October 2020, Time: 5:00 PM Place: KOICA-GNB CHW Project office, T&T Road/Melagachi, P.O: Setabganj, P.S: Bochaganj, Dinajpur.	
7. Date, and time for opening tender	Date: 18th October 2020, Time: 10:00 am	
8.	The tender shall be valid for a period of 15 days after the tender opening and must be accompanied by the tender security specified above. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever. Interested tenderers may obtain further information from the undersigned in favour of the Project Director of KOICA-GNB CHW Project of GNB from the places mentioned above. The tenderer or their authorized representatives are allowed to visit our link to collect details of tender and tender documents- http://bit.do/fj424 Terms & Conditions: • Vendor must submit tender budget only for the listed materials with its mentioned brands • Vendor must guarantee & give Expired duration of the materials • Vendors must have capacity for procurement, delivery, Supply & Packaging in Due Time & Place • Reputed Vendors having experience in similar supply works for five (05) year's minimum • Liquid asset by tender publish date to submission date duration (8) Eight lac at any Government approval bank • Up to date bank statement document • Up to date Trade license • Up to date TIN & BIN and other valid verification documents	

Project Director, Good Neighbors Bangladesh, KOICA-GNB CHW Project

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Senior Programme Manager, Programme Development, Implementation & Reporting

Educational Requirement : Masters in Social Science/ Environmental and Climate Science/ Engineering/ Disaster Management/ Agriculture/ Development Studies or any relevant discipline from any recognised university/ institution with minimum 2nd division/ class or equivalent GPA/ CGPA in all academic examinations

Experience Requirement : Minimum 08 years of experience in diverse project management including 4 years experience in CCA and DRR field

Job Location : BRAC Head Office
Application Deadline : 16 October 2020

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BRAC believes every one of its employees, suppliers, downstream partners, visitors, clients and community including children, youth and vulnerable adults that come into contact regardless of age, race, religion, gender, disability or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, harassment, and exploitation. We guarantee assessment of candidates with disabilities who meet the essential requirements. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer and will do everything possible to ensure that those who are suitable to work within our values and beliefs are recruited to work for us. Any personal persuasion will result in disqualification of candidature.



Water level of the Jamuna river has increased, flooding most of the low lying areas of Tangail's Basail upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Never-ending flood woes of Basail

Nearly 30,000 people in the low lying upazila of Tangail have been marooned

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The low lying areas in Basail upazila still remain under water while floodwater receded in other 11 upazilas of the district. The situation has made life of thousands of people miserable in the low-lying upazila for the last few months.

Several rivers including Jhenai, a branch of Jamuna, and Banshi, a branch of Brahmaputra, pass through Basail. Moreover, there are numerous water bodies in the upazila.

Water level of the rivers has increased for the last few days. Waters then entered through different points overflowing the beels and canals in Basail. As a result, more than 30,000 people of different villages in six unions of the upazila have been marooned again.

The worst affected villages are Kanchanpur, Adajan, Purbo Poulee, Singardak and Saidampur under Kanchanpur union and Moytha, Karatiapara, Aishora, Akdhala, Balia and Tironcha under Fulki union, and Majdhara, Borni Kishori, Basail Dakkhinpara under Basail municipality, and Badajan, Gumbari, Bartha, Kolyanpur, Kawaljami and Sehrail under Kawaljami union and Bathuli Sadi and Baghil-Fulbari under Kashil union, and Rashora, Mirikpur, Naikanbari and Habla under Basail Sadar union.



The flood affected people were facing acute crisis of safe drinking water and fodder for their cattle, locals said.

Mamunur Rashid Khan, chairman of Kanchanpur union parishad (UP), said the road communication between the upazila headquarters and the union has remained disrupted due to the floodwater, causing immense sufferings to people of 22 villages.

Rozdid Ahmed, upazila engineer of Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) in Basail, said two important bridges in the area have been damaged by floods in July.

Around 70 kilometers of earthen roads and 20 kilometers of concrete roads were damaged by the two phases of floods, said the LGED engineer.

Md Shakhawat Hossain, project implementation officer (PIO) in Basail, said water level of the rivers has recently increased, flooding several areas in the upazila. Several union parishad chairmen have been asked to prepare lists of the damages.

Necessary steps will be taken after visiting the affected areas, said the PIO.

Kazi Alid Islam, upazila parishad chairman in Basail, said Basail is the low lying area. This year, the upazila has been badly affected due to the prolonged floods.

Moreover, increasing water level of the rivers for the last few days entered through different points, flooding fresh areas in the upazila including Fulki, Kashil, Kawaljami, Kanchanpur, Basail Sadar, Habla and Basail municipality, he said.

Contacted, Md Sirajul Islam, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Tangail, said some low lying areas were inundated after water level of the rivers, including Jamuna, has increased for the last few days.

Two transport leaders sued for embezzling Tk 1.86 crore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Two transports leaders in the district have been sued for embezzling Tk 1.86 crore.

The accused are Pabel Mia, president of Moulvibazar District Auto Tempo, Auto-rickshaw, Mishuk and CNG Transport Workers' Union, and its general secretary Azizul Haque Selim.

Nahidul Islam, deputy director of labour department in Sreemangal, on September 21 filed a case with Sylhet Labour Court in this regard.

According to the case statement, after verifying the annual income and expenditure of the union submitted in 2018, assistant directors -- Sohel Azim and Yusuf Ahmad Chowdhury - of the labour department on January 12 this year conducted a field investigation in presence of the union president Pabel and general secretary Selim. On January 14, they submitted the investigation report to the deputy director of the labour department.

The union showed that its income was Tk 51.32 lakh and expenditure Tk 51.20 lakh in 2016. But the investigation found that Tk 20 is collected from 17,000 members of the union in seven upazilas of the district. Receipt books were used to

collect the money. The district committee of the union gets Tk 3 from the money they collected.

According to the data, the income of the district committee is about Tk 51,000 per day which is 1 crore 86 lakh 15 thousand taka per year. The union did not show the income in the tax return submitted in 2018.

Besides, in the return submitted by the union, it was shown that Tk 51.32 lakh was earned annually from subscription fees, but no record was kept in favour of the expenditure. Although there is 17-member committee in the union, the return was signed only by union president Pabel and general secretary Selim.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach president Pabel for his comment on the issue as he did not receive the phone call.

On the other hand, General Secretary Selim said that "The plaintiff of the case has no jurisdiction to file the case. He has personally informed me that he has filed this case under the pressure of influential people." Deputy Director of the labour department in Sreemangal Nahidul Islam said they filed the case after the investigation committee found the transport leaders' involvement in the money embezzlement.



Pabel Mia



Azizul Haque Selim

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari
Telephone No. 0551-61403
E-mail: eenil@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.7364.456.07.012.20-1545(24) Date: 08-10-2020

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by The Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Nilphamari for the procurement of:

Tender ID & Tender No.	Name of works	Tender document price (in BDT)	Tender security (in BDT)	Last selling & opening (date and time)
e-TID No. 502921, Tender No. e-GP-05/EE/RHD/Nil/2020-2021	Emergency pavement repair by base type-II & DBS-Wearing Course at 6th(P), 7th(P) 18th(P) and 19th(P) km of Jharbari (Birgonj)-Joygonj-Bhabaniganj-Nilphamari (Police Line)-Pachmalha-Panchapukur-Kishorgonj (Sadurapool) Road (Z-5027) under Road Division Nilphamari during the year 2020-2021.	2,000	2,00,000	Date: 22-10-2020. Time: Up to 17:00 & Date: 25-10-2020. Time: After 11:00.

Md. Monzurul Karim
ID No. 602000
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari

GD-1603

3 siblings to die for double murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Gaibandha court yesterday sentenced three siblings to death in connection with a case for killing a woman and her son in Sundarganj upazila of the district in 2016.

The convicts are Hazrat Ali, 35, Hafizar Raham, 32, and Azizar Rahman, 27, sons of Abul Hossain of Purba Jhuniya village.

Gaibandha District and Sessions Judge Dilip Kumar Bhowmik also acquitted three other accused of the case as charges brought against them could not be proved. On November 12 in 2016, Morzina Begum, 42, wife of Mofizul Haque, and their son Taslim Hossain, 26, died from electrocution after the convicts set up a live electric wire intentionally on a disputed land, Public Prosecutor Shafiqul Islam said.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two minor boys drowned in a waterbody in Subalpar village under Kachakata Police Station in Kurigram yesterday.

The victims are Nakul Bishwas, 6, son of Narayan Bishwas, and Sumon Bishwas, 6, son of Pacharu Bishwas. Victims' relatives said the duo went to take bath in Subalpar Beel near their houses around 1:30pm and drowned.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal.
Tel: 0431-64185, Fax: 0431-61844
e-mail: eebar@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 2036 Dated: - 07/10/2020

Invitation for e-Tender

Invitation Reference No.	22/e-GP/BRD/2020-2021
Tender ID	500889
Name of Works	Maintenance of existing pavement with seal coat including necessary repair works at Ch.17+000 to18+000 km, Ch.19+000 to 20+000 and Ch. 24+000 to 25+000 of Barisal (Dinarerpool)-Laxmipasha-Dumki Road (Z-8044) under Barishal Road Division during the year 2020-2021.
Qualification Criteria	As Stated in Tender Notice & Tender Data Sheet (TDS) of the Tender Document.
Tender Document Price	Tk. 1,000.00 (one thousand) only.
Tender security Amount	Tk. 1,20,000.00 (one lakh twenty thousand) only.
Tender Document last selling	Date: 21 October 2020, Time: 17:00
Last Date and Time for Tender Security Submission	Date: 22 October 2020, Time: 11:15
Tender Closing Date and Time	Date: 22 October 2020, Time: 12:15
Tender Opening Date and Time	Date: 22 October 2020, Time: 12:15

01. These are online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted.

02. To submit e-Tender, visit to the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

(Md. Masud Khan)
ID No. 601926
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Barishal.

GD-1605

জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশন
(একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় জীবন বীমা প্রতিষ্ঠান)
কর্মচারী প্রশাসন বিভাগ
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা

তারিখঃ ০৭-১০-২০২০খ্রিঃ

আরকঃ ৫৩.১৯.৯০০১.০০২.১১.০০০.১৯-

জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশনের সহকারী ম্যানেজার ও জুনিয়র অফিসার (প্রকৌশলী) পদে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রার্থীদের MCQ Test এবং লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড প্রসঙ্গে।

জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশনের সহকারী ম্যানেজার ও জুনিয়র অফিসার (প্রকৌশলী) পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রার্থীদের MCQ Test এবং লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশপত্র <http://bc.teletalk.com> -এ ওয়েবসাইটে আপলোড করা হয়েছে এবং ইতোমধ্যে প্রার্থীদেরকে SMS এর মাধ্যমে জানানো হয়েছে। পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের নিমিত্ত শুধুমাত্র উক্ত ওয়েবসাইটে হতে প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহের জন্য প্রার্থীদেরকে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে। পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় এবং পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রের নাম প্রবেশপত্রে উল্লেখ থাকবে। পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রের তালিকা নিম্নরূপঃ

Sl	Name of the College/Institute	Address	Post	Roll No.		Total
				From	To	
1	Mirpur Girls Ideal College	Mirpur-10	Assistant Manager	110000001	110003000	3000
2	Mirpur Girls Ideal Laboratory Institute	Mirpur-10	Assistant Manager	110003001	110006010	3010
3	Shaik Borhanuddin Post Graduate College	Nazimuddin Road, Dhaka	Assistant Manager	110006011	110008010	2000
4	Siddheswari College	Mogbazar, Dhaka	Assistant Manager	110008011	110010930	2920
			Junior Officer (Engineer)	120000001	120000100	100
Grand Total						11030

মোহাম্মদ মাহবুবুল আলম
সহকারী জেনারেল ম্যানেজার
প্রশাসন
ও সদস্য সচিব বাছাই কমিটি,
জীবীক

জিডি-১৬০৭

Prize launched to solve planet's biggest problems

AFP, London

Britain's Prince William yesterday launched a "prestigious" environmental prize aimed at turning "pessimism into optimism" by rewarding innovative solutions to the planet's biggest problems.

The Earthshot Prize will present five £1 million (\$1.3-million, 1.1-million-euro) awards each year for the next 10 years, to "incentivise change and help to repair our planet," said his office in London.

The jury will include a host of high-profile global figures, including Queen Rania of Jordan, Australian actress Cate Blanchett, British naturalist David Attenborough and the Colombian singer Shakira.

Kensington Palace described it as the "most prestigious global environment prize in history" and said it was inspired by US president John F. Kennedy's "Moonshot" project in the 1960s to put a man on the moon.

"We need to find solutions to be able to live our lives and enjoy our lives and not feel guilty and bad about some of the things we do," the prince, who is second in line to the throne, told BBC Radio 4 in an interview aired Thursday.

"That ultimately has to change, because I also worry from a mental health point of view, the anxiety and the worry that many of these younger generations are going to have."

He said he hopes the prize will "galvanise and bring together the best minds, the best possible solutions, to fixing and tackling some of the world's greatest environmental challenges".

"The next 10 years are a critical decade for change. Time is of the essence, which is why we believe that this very ambitious global prize is the only way forward."

The project is centred around five "simple but ambitious" aims to be met by 2030: "protect and restore nature", "clean our air", "revive our oceans", "build a waste-free world", and "fix our climate".

The prize is supported by a coalition of individuals, organisations and businesses with the winners to be announced each year at a ceremony in a different city around the globe, starting with London in 2021.

Prizes can be awarded to individuals or teams, whether they be scientists, activists, economists, governments, business leaders or even countries.

"The Earthshot Prize aims to turn the current pessimism surrounding environmental issues into optimism that we can rise to the biggest challenges of our time," said the palace.

"But the Prize is about much more than awarding achievement -- it is a decade of action to... inspire people all over the world to work together to repair the planet."



Protesters throw rocks towards security personnel on the last day of a three-day nationwide strike against a new law which critics fear favours investors at the expense of labour right and the environment, in Tangerang, Indonesia, yesterday. Hundreds of people were arrested in Jakarta yesterday as tens of thousands protested across Indonesia against the controversial law.

PHOTO: AFP

US ELECTION 2020 24 DAYS TO GO

'Blessing from God'

Trump says on his Covid infection as he readies for campaign

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump has declared his Covid-19 illness a "blessing from God," as he got back to work in the Oval Office despite warnings that his return could put others at risk.

Trump has worked hard since he checked out of the hospital on Monday -- including a made-for-television return to the White House -- to cast his illness as a personal triumph.

"I think this is a blessing from God that I caught it," Trump said in a video, referring to the virus which has killed over 210,000 people in the United States.

But Democrat Joe Biden, who leads Trump in the latest polls ahead of the November 3 vote, attacked the president's downplaying of the risk.

"I think it's a tragedy that the president deals with Covid like it is



something not to worry about when over 210,000 people (in the US) have died," Biden told reporters.

Trump, confined to the White House where he is being treated, yesterday said he does not believe he is contagious and is feeling good enough to resume campaign rallies as he tries to boost his flagging reelection bid.

"I'm back because I'm a perfect physical specimen," Trump told Fox Business Network's Maria Bartiromo

in his first interview since it was revealed nearly a week ago that he had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Trump's contention he was no longer contagious was not yet backed up by solid evidence from his doctors. The White House has refused to say when his last negative test for the virus was and, as a result, it is unclear how long he has been positive.

The Republican president is under pressure to actively campaign again to try to inject new energy into his reelection bid as he faces a deficit in opinion polls in battleground states with Election Day now less than four weeks away.

"I'm feeling good, really good," said Trump, who spent three nights being treated at a military hospital outside Washington until his discharge on Monday. Trump said he had stopped taking "most therapeutics" for the virus but was still on steroids.

Trump calls Kamala Harris a 'monster'

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday called Kamala Harris, who is making US history as the first Black woman vice presidential candidate, a "monster."

Trump, far behind in the contest for the White House on November 3 and doing especially badly in polling of women voters, used the word twice, calling the Democrat "this monster."

Speaking to Fox Business News for almost an hour in his first interview since falling sick with the coronavirus, Trump said Vice President Mike Pence "destroyed" Harris in their debate Wednesday in Utah.

"Everything she says is a lie," Trump said. Harris, who is also the first person of Indian descent to be on a White House ticket, spent most of her debate attacking Trump for presiding over what she said was "the greatest failure of any presidential administration in the history of our country" over Covid-19.

In the Fox interview, Trump once more branded Biden, who is leading handily in almost every significant opinion poll around the country, "not mentally capable." "Everybody knows that," Trump claimed, predicting "Biden won't be president for two months."

Trump, who for months has slurred Biden as senile and previously called Harris "nasty," also revived one of his darkest claims as a politician -- that illegal Latin American immigrants equate to serious criminals. Democrats "want to have thousands of people that are murderers, rapists, just pour into our country. They could be very sick people," he said.



NEWS IN BRIEF

EU parliament demands tougher climate targets

The European Parliament has called for the EU to step up its targets for cutting greenhouse emissions in response to climate change. Lawmakers voted late Wednesday to press the bloc to slash emissions by at least 60 percent by 2030 -- a bigger cut than currently proposed by the European Commission, the EU executive. MEPs also demanded an interim target be set for 2040 to ensure the bloc meets its plan to be climate neutral by 2050. The calls form part of parliament's negotiating platform for talks with member states to agree the final form of the EU climate law, which will be binding. Ambitious climate goals are backed by big EU powers including France and Germany, as well as many major businesses, but face resistance from eastern member states still dependent on coal for energy. EU leaders will try to agree on a common position at a summit in Brussels next week.

NZ PM Ardern poised for big win in election: poll

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's party is projected to be one seat short of a being able to govern alone, and has a double-digit lead over its rival, with just over a week to the general election, an opinion poll showed yesterday. The closely watched 1News-Colmar Brunton poll showed support for Ardern's Labour party, which is seeking a second term in office, at 47%, unchanged from the last poll on Sept. 28. This means Labour, which is campaigning on its record of bringing the coronavirus pandemic under control within New Zealand's borders, would have 60 seats in parliament, one short of the 61 seats needed to form a government. Support for its coalition partner the Green Party was at 6%, which would give it eight seats. New Zealand heads to the polls on Oct 17 and advance voting began on Saturday.

Kuwait's crown prince pledges commitment to democracy

Kuwait's new Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah took the oath of office in parliament yesterday, pledging the Gulf Arab state's commitment to democracy and peace and calling on Kuwaitis to shun divisions. The assembly unanimously endorsed the octogenarian Sheikh Meshal for the role in what has been a smooth succession that retained power firmly within the ruling family's oldest ranks following last week's death of Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad. New ruler Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad, 83, assumed power last Wednesday in the US-allied OPEC member state as it faces a liquidity crunch caused by low oil prices and the Covid-19 pandemic against the backdrop of continued tensions between larger neighbours Saudi Arabia and Iran.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Protesters raise their fists during a demonstration after the release on bail of former police officer, Derek Chauvin, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Wednesday. The police officer charged with killing George Floyd, the African American whose death sparked a mass protest movement, was released from a Minnesota jail on October 7 on \$1 million bail.

PHOTO: AFP

Ready to 'play hardball'

Say France, Germany as they push sanctions against Russia

REUTERS, Paris

The EU must stand up to Russia when it violates international norms, France and Germany's foreign ministers said on Thursday, adding that a decision to push sanctions over the poisoning of a Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny did not end dialogue.

France and Germany said on Wednesday they would propose European Union sanctions against Russian individuals after receiving no credible answers from Moscow over the use of a nerve agent on Navalny.

Several Western governments have said Russia, which has denied accusations by Navalny that it was involved in poisoning him in August, must help in investigations or face consequences.

"Dialogue is not an excuse for playing for time. We must be very clear: dialogue with Russia does not mean doing it a favour," France's Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told a security conference in Bratislava.

"It does not mean abandoning our ambition to build a peaceful continent. On the contrary, it means defending this ambition by asserting

firmness ... and getting ready to play hardball whenever necessary."

Speaking at the same conference, Le Drian's German counterpart Heiko Maas echoed those comments. We need to be able to play hardball but at the same time we must never let dialogue be stopped, Maas said, according to a translation into English. "We need Russia to solve the conflicts in Syria, in Libya, in Ukraine."

EU foreign ministers are expected to give their political support for sanctions on Monday, but they are not expected to be approved immediately as legal texts must be prepared and cleared by experts from the 27 EU states.

The decision and speed with which Europe's two main powers agreed to push ahead with sanctions suggested a hardening of the bloc's diplomacy towards Moscow, which said on Wednesday that it no longer considered "business as usual" to be possible with Berlin and Paris.

French President Emmanuel Macron has tried to reduce distrust between Russia and the West since coming to power in 2017, hoping to enlist Russian help in solving the world's most intractable crises.

NAVALNY POISONING

'GET LOST'

Taiwan reacts as China tells Indian media not to call it a country

REUTERS, New Delhi

China was accused by Taiwan of trying to impose censorship in India after its embassy in New Delhi advised journalists to observe the "one-China" principle after newspapers carried advertisements for Taiwan's national day.

China's hackles were raised on Wednesday by advertisements placed in leading Indian newspapers by Taiwan's government to mark the democratic, Chinese-claimed island's national day tomorrow.

The advertisement carried a photograph of President Tsai Ing-wen and hailed India, a fellow democracy, as a natural partner of Taiwan.

China, which claims Taiwan and regards it as a wayward province, made its displeasure evident in an e-mail sent by its embassy on Wednesday night to journalists in India, including Reuters.

"Regarding the so-called forthcoming 'National Day of Taiwan', the Chinese Embassy in India would like to remind our media friends that there is only one China in the world. ... We hope Indian media can stick to Indian government's position on Taiwan question and do not violate the 'One China' principle," the embassy said.

"In particular, Taiwan shall not be referred to as a 'country (nation)' or 'Republic of China' or the leader of China's Taiwan region as 'President', so as not to send the wrong signals to the general public."

Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu scoffed at Beijing's advice to Indian media. "India is the largest democracy on Earth with a vibrant press & freedom-loving people. But it looks like communist #China is hoping to march into the subcontinent by imposing censorship. #Taiwan's Indian friends will have one reply: GET LOST!" he said in a tweet.

New Delhi has no formal diplomatic relations with Taipei, but both sides have close business and cultural ties.

AFGHAN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL

Trump announces 'Christmas' plan

REUTERS, Washington

All US troops in Afghanistan should be "home by Christmas," President Donald Trump said on Wednesday, just hours after his national security adviser said Washington would reduce its forces in Afghanistan to 2,500 by early next year.

Trump and other officials have said the United States will go down to between 4,000 and 5,000 troops in Afghanistan around November. Beyond that, officials have said that a reduction will depend on conditions in Afghanistan.

On Twitter, Trump said: "We should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas!"

It was unclear whether Trump was giving an order or verbalizing a long-held aspiration.

Trump has made walking away from "ridiculous endless wars" the cornerstone of his foreign policy, even though thousands of troops remain in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

The Taliban welcomed Trump's comments saying it will help peace talks being held in Doha, Qatar.



A woman stands in front of a destroyed house after a late Wednesday shelling in the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region's main city of Stepanakert yesterday, during the ongoing fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed region.

PHOTO: AFP



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NANDITA SURAKSHA

(L) Volunteers of Nandita Suraksha hand out relief packages to flood victims. (R) Nandita Suraksha's team teaches children about good touch and bad touch.



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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Gates Cambridge Scholarship Program 2021 in University of Cambridge

The Gates Cambridge Scholarship programme was established in October 2000 by a donation of US\$210m from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the University of Cambridge; this is the largest ever single donation to a UK university. Scholarships are awarded to outstanding applicants from countries outside the UK to pursue a full-time postgraduate degree in any subject available at the University of Cambridge.

DEADLINE: October 14, 2020 | Scholarships



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD SPECIAL
Nandita Suraksha: Enabling women and children across the country

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA & MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Nandita Suraksha started their journey in April 2019 as a non-profit voluntary organisation, with an aim to support underprivileged women and children across the country. The organisation intends to ensure gender equality through social and economic empowerment of women and girls, as well as the creation of safe spaces for them. Ahead of International Day of the Girl Child (October 11), we caught up with the team to find out more about their projects.

"Women in our country face threatening situations on a daily basis. We aim to protect them and build secure futures for them," shares Tahiyatul Jannat Remi, Founder and President, Nandita Suraksha. "We work as fearless soldiers to ensure and protect the safety rights of women and children." In 2018, Remi, a student of Govt Sarda Sundari Mahila College, established a free school, Hashimukh Pathshala, which is now run by Nandita Suraksha's team. 35 young children are currently enrolled in the free school.

The organisation has reached out to 9,000 children and 3,000 parents in several primary schools across the country, encouraging open discussions on the differences between good touch and bad touch, among other subjects. Along with discussions and

awareness campaigns, Nandita Suraksha's team provided emergency menstruation kits to primary and secondary schools, reaching out to 30 educational institutes. "Nearly 86 percent of women and girls in our country still use cloths instead of sanitary napkins, and are unaware of the diseases a lack of proper menstrual hygiene can cause," adds Remi.

Nandita Suraksha's team also organises medical camps and conducts tree plantation drives with rural women and children. Their project, 'Pashe Ache Nanditara', extends support to women, children, elderly, disabled and transgender people in times of need.

"While studying child development, I had to visit different places for surveys. I've grown up listening to people's plights through Nandita Suraksha," says Nafisa Mim, a volunteer of the organisation. "We aim to connect with people and initiate impactful conversations."

In 2019, the organisation launched a self-defence course to equip women from all walks of life with basic self-defence skills at an affordable cost. At present, 50 women are enrolled in this course.

Nandita Suraksha's team started their COVID-19 initiatives in March by providing necessary hygiene products to 500 people. They also provided menstrual kits to 500 women from underprivileged communities in Faridpur. During Ramadan, they provided



Girls demonstrate self-defence techniques during a session.

ed iftar packets to 650 people in Faridpur, Jhalkathi and Barishal.

Recently in Faridpur, 30 unions were flooded. With the collapse of the dam in Sadipur, hundreds of villages were waterlogged. Nandita Suraksha's team, in collaboration with the district administration of Faridpur, recently provided menstrual kits and other necessary items to the flood affected families.

Though other relief programmes provide people in these areas with food and other items, sanitary napkins and other menstrual necessities are largely ignored. Under their initiative, 500 women in these waterlogged

areas were provided with menstrual kits, including sanitary napkins, underpants and soaps, among other things. Recently, Amal Foundation partnered up with Nandita Suraksha to distribute sanitary napkins and other hygiene products in Faridpur.

Their team also conducts discussions on sexual harassment, menstrual hygiene, child marriage, online harassment and mental health issues, among other things, under their project, 'Aparajita Suraksha', with an aim to provide necessary information to women living in the most remote areas of every upazila. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation launched an emergency helpline to provide assistance against sexual assault, child marriages and online harassment for women. The virtual platform will also provide necessary support with the help of the administrations in nine upazilas of the country.

With 40 active members across the country, Nandita Suraksha's team reached out to 18,000 women and children so far through their different projects. To support underprivileged communities, the organisation works mostly in remote villages, densely populated areas and slums. They recently expanded their initiatives in Dhaka as well, and are working to launch their projects in Ranganamati and Rajbari. "We dream to provide a platform to young individuals, who dare to stand beside people in the face of adversities," concludes Remi.

"World Tales" Short Story Competition by UNESCO and Idries Shah Foundation

With the aim to foster imagination, resourcefulness and ingenuity, UNESCO and the Idries Shah Foundation (ISF) launch the World Tales Short Story Competition in close collaboration with the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities of UNESCO (ICCAR). Young teenagers from all over the globe are invited to write about the challenges of today and tomorrow in the format of a short story and share their perspectives.

DEADLINE: October 15, 2020 | Competitions

IBRAF Fellowship Program 2020

The IBRAF FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ON SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION (IFP) aims to overcome the gap between studying and engaging in international cooperation, taking scholars and professionals to hands-on experiences in Brazil in order to explore, understand and disclose good practices and projects in socioeconomic development.

DEADLINE: October 12, 2020 | Fellowships



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY SPECIAL

'Bolte Pari Na Bolte Chai', a supportive space for a heart-to-heart

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

To this day, mental health remains one of the most neglected subjects in developing countries like Bangladesh. Despite the sheer number of people living with traumatic experiences and mental health issues, it is not uncommon for many of us to feel isolated and alone. Ahead of World Mental Health Day tomorrow (October 10), we had a conversation with Sumaiya Kabir, also known as RJ Arunima, about her newly launched podcast, Shadhin Music App's *Bolte Pari Na Bolte Chai*, where people open up about their most guarded secrets and their hardest life experiences.

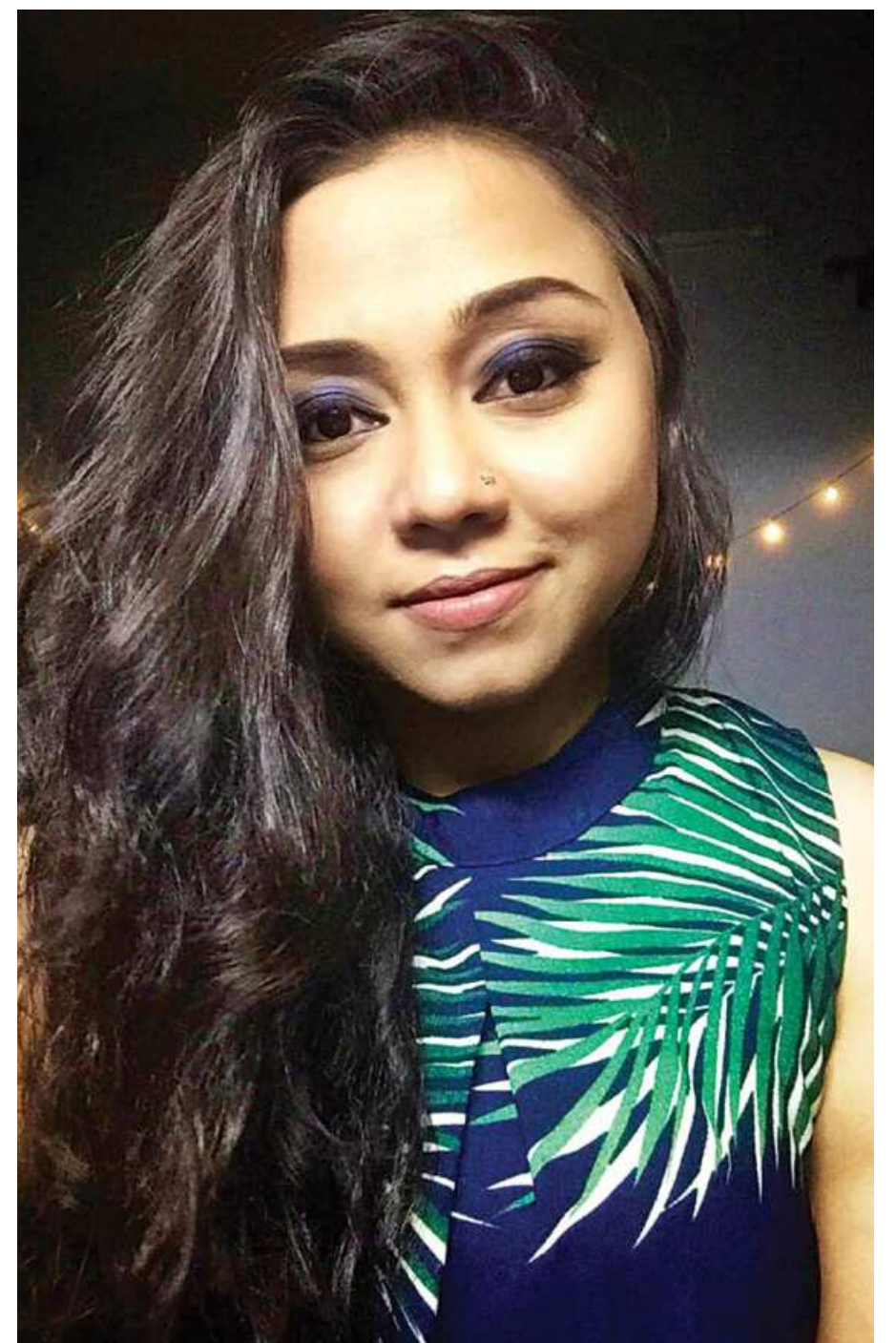
RJ Arunima has been associated with radio since 2013. With her signature show, *Ek Cup Bikel* on Radio Foorti, she became a household voice. She recently made her comeback with *Bolte Pari Na Bolte Chai*, a show designed with true stories from callers who struggle to talk about their upsetting life experiences, even with their close ones. Guests on the show can remain anonymous.

"I am not a psychologist or a psychiatrist, but I think at times, we just need to lend an ear to others. I hope to be that listener and that friend to our guests. The show offers a non-judgmental space for them," says the host.

With the coronavirus crisis taking a toll on people's mental health, this year felt like the right time to start the show. "Shadhin Music App came to me with the concept when we saw a rise in cases of depression, with people staying indoors during the pandemic. We planned the show in just two months," RJ Arunima shares. The weekly podcast kicked off on September 19.

Returning to her favourite medium was a huge relief for the RJ. "I've always enjoyed connecting with people through my voice. I really like how different people respond differently to me," she says.

So far, only female guests have participated in the podcast. However, it will feature a male participant soon. "Men are reluctant to open up about their feelings and embrace vulnerability, mainly because of social stigmas," says RJ Arunima. With her show, she hopes to have heartfelt talks with the guests and encourage others to open up about their struggles as well. "Our traumas and suppressed emotions often lead to mental health issues. The more we talk about our issues, the more aware people will be," she concludes.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF RJ ARUNIMA

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 9, 2020, ASHWIN 24, 1427 BS

Political patronage of rapists, criminals must stop

Why was Delwar not arrested for his previous crimes?

AS is the case with most rapists and criminals in the country, Delwar Hossain, the prime accused in the recent gang-rape case in Noakhali, was also engaged in various crimes under the patronage of local politicians from both the ruling Awami League and the BNP. Reportedly, after the 2014 elections, Delwar joined Jubo League's politics and formed "Delwar Bahini" which has 40-50 members. Before joining the AL youth wing's politics, Delwar used to be a follower of a BNP-leaning criminal and was engaged in different criminal activities in his area. Although "Delwar Bahini" committed crimes like rape, extortion, land grabbing and robbery, and used drugs to recruit youths of the village to the "Bahini", unfortunately, people of his village and of the entire upazila were so afraid of him that they never dared to speak up against any of his crimes.

According to the Begumganj circle's Additional Superintendent of Police, Delwar is a wanted criminal in three cases—two for murder and one for possessing illegal arms. However, he was never arrested and used to move around freely in the village. The impunity enjoyed by Delwar and his gang only emboldened them to commit more crimes and become more ferocious. The recent gang-rape and torture of a woman in Noakhali is a horrifying example of what happens when identified criminals go unpunished. According to the National Human Rights Commission, Delwar previously raped the survivor of the gang-rape in Noakhali multiple times at gunpoint. Needless to say, he has always gone scot free with impunity because of his affiliation with local ruling party leaders.

There is a dangerous similarity in most of the rape incidents that have taken place recently across the country—most of the rapists were somehow affiliated with the ruling party's student or youth wings. We have seen it in the case of the recent gang rape of Sylhet's MC college where all the rapists were involved with Bangladesh Chhatra League. Evidently, such horrible, inhuman crimes cannot take place without any political patronage.

Therefore, first and foremost, the ruling party leaders must stop patronising these identified criminals in the party in order to stop crimes like rape and break the existing culture of impunity. At the same time, the law enforcement agencies should be given the freedom to do their duty without any political influence. If Delwar was arrested for his previous crimes, the woman in Noakhali could have been saved from being gang-raped and tortured by him and his gang members.

Stranded, despite nod from government

Apprehend syndicates that are exploiting helpless migrant workers

FOLLOWING the suspension of international flights, the government recently permitted their resumption, but due to the soaring demand for tickets and the limited frequency of flights, many expatriate workers, especially those based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are in danger of losing their jobs if they cannot travel on time. We are dismayed to learn from a recent report in this daily that a syndicate of travel agents and a section of officials of Biman Bangladesh Airlines are cashing in on this crisis and taking money from the workers in return for confirming their tickets. Some agencies are working on social media as well to avoid detection.

Despite Biman's claim—that tickets are only reissued to those who have return tickets for flights to KSA, and the service can be availed free of cost from Biman's sales centres as no other agency was given permission to reissue Biman tickets—the migrants who fell victim to this trap claimed they had to pay somewhere from Tk 25,000 to Tk 40,000 to officials of respective airlines to have their return tickets reissued. If our national carrier is confident about its own claim, then who are these middlemen meddling to make a quick buck?

Though it is reassuring to know that the Saudi government has extended the validity of visas till October 30, given the fact that around 55,000 Bangladeshi expatriates returned from KSA amidst the pandemic, if we are to send our migrant workers back by the revised deadline, we must realise that time is of the essence. And if they have to fall victim to such corruption where they need to pay "additional" amounts despite the tightening noose on their income, it will further delay their return. The sooner they go back, the sooner they can send back remittance that has proven all the more crucial for our economy, both pre- and post-Covid. The authorities must immediately investigate the matter and bring these syndicates to book. At the same time, they must ensure the timely return of the stranded migrant workers so they can resume their work.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Govt must address the rape endemic

The recent series of rapes should really jolt us. How did we get to this point? Why is it that the most basic human rights of so many women are being violated this disdainfully?

Although the recent cases are especially horrific, rape has been happening at an alarming rate in the country for some time now—so much so that special steps to address the problem should have been taken. We are yet to see the government even talk about it—let alone act.

Politicians and public officials often come out and condemn this or that when it is in their interest. Why is it that no high official is condemning this in the strongest possible way and then taking stern action? This is just unacceptable.

Rezwan Kabir, Dhaka



KAJALJE SHEHREEN ISLAM

last week, 975 women have been raped in Bangladesh between January and September of this year. Of them, 43 women were killed following rape, while 12 women committed suicide. That was before the news of rape in Sylhet, Rajshahi, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Gopalganj; the rape of the madrasa student; the teenage girl raped by her father-turned-"saint"; the 13-year-old pregnant as a result of rape and now being threatened to withdraw the case; the 12-year-old with special needs allegedly raped by an 85-year-old man; and the pages of news on rape reported in the last week. There is a flurry of media reports following every sensational case, but the heinous crime of rape is committed every single day. While the numbers are slightly less than during the same time period last year when 1,115 women were raped and 57 women were killed afterwards, the brutality of such crimes has increased, according to the ASK report.

The video gone viral last week depicting the gang-rape of the woman in Noakhali is just the tip of the iceberg, but which raises several questions. What kind of families, society and legal system do we have, where a woman can be raped for multiple days at gunpoint and does not feel she can report it? When the same woman is recorded being stripped and raped by multiple men with sticks while begging for mercy? When, for over a month, she still does not dare to report the crime, and it is actually the perpetrators themselves who release the video to shame her, the victim. When, after everything, and feeling like her own life has been "ruined", the woman worries about her daughter's in-laws seeing the video and taking it out on her daughter by throwing her out. Because that is the kind of society we have made for ourselves, where women's bodies are not only sites of hatred, violence, venting of frustrations and abuse of power, but where women themselves are often held responsible for the crimes committed against them.

If rape was not "okay", then victims of rape would not be questioned about when and where they were and why, what they were wearing, what relationship they had with the rapist, or whether they were sexually active. Every woman, no

When rape is okay

matter who they were or what they said or did, would not be threatened with rape on social media, the comments section of online mainstream media, and even in person, with the most violent and violating language. Perpetrators would be immediately arrested, tried and convicted, regardless of whether or not the crimes went viral in the media. Justice would be done, whether the crime occurred in a madrasa, in the hill

husbands. It would not just seem "not okay" for those with the same beliefs and ideologies. It would not just seem "not okay" only in the cases where we speak, write, and take to the streets in angry protest and not the countless others.

If rape is not okay, it is not okay for anyone, no matter who they are, where they were, when and with whom, what they were wearing, what they said or did, or what their "character" is like. We

their sexuality, and men implicitly learn about the worst weapon to use to destroy women. If rape is not okay, each and every legal, political and social institution must be sensitised to deal with victims/survivors as being just that. If rape is not okay, it is the rapist whose life should be "ruined", and who should live in fear and shame forevermore. If rape is not okay, it is the survivor who should be free to live in society with their honour



If rape is not okay, it is not okay for anyone, no matter who they are, where they were, when and with whom, what they were wearing, what they said or did, or what their "character" is like.

PHOTO: MUNTAKIM SAAD

tracts, or at a late-night party. Rapists would not dare to keep raping repeatedly, assaulting the victims and their families, and threatening them with worse if they dared to report it to the authorities. There would not be debates over what does and does not classify as rape based on archaic laws. There would be more and harsher punishment of rapists. Court judgments that would "deter other men from going down the same wrong path" would be highlighted in the media, as it was in the recent case of a woman convicted of murder. If rape was not "okay", rape jokes and metaphors would not be normalised in sports or under any circumstances, and rape would not have become an acceptable weapon for terrorising (mostly) women, with threats, the actual act, threats of consequences after the act, and the shame of it forever.

Rape would not just seem "not okay" if the victims were children, or covered in a burqa, or accompanied by their

cannot pick and choose the victims we think did not "deserve" it and show them our support, while others are raped over and over again—by the rapists, at the police station, the hospital, in court, in the media, and with our own judgment. Neither can we choose to punish some perpetrators and not others based on their money, political influence, official positions, or simply whether or not they fit our "image" of a rapist. If rape is not okay, every incident needs to be reported, every case filed, taken to court and issued a prompt and fair judgment, with severe punishment for the perpetrator which will serve to deter every other potential rapist.

If rape is not okay, change must come at every level, from changes in the law in order to make it more relevant to crimes committed today, to changes in our culture, society and family, where women are explicitly taught that their lives and reputations begin and end with

intact, because their honour does not lie in their chastity and their shame is not in its violation. If rape is not okay, women need to be seen not only as sacred mothers and sisters and daughters and friends who need protection from being violated and ensured justice if they are, but as human beings with basic human rights to safety and well-being.

While we express outrage at the most gruesome crimes committed because we cannot turn away from what is literally staring us in the face, let us not neglect to demand justice for those who suffer in fearful silence every day. And while we protest the rape and other atrocious war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in our history, demanding that harsh justice be done, let us not forget the crimes that are going down in our history today.

Kajalje Shehreen Islam is Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka.

From lockdown towards opening up the economy

How to achieve our GDP growth target?



NAWSHAD AHMED

ALL indications in the past few weeks give an impression that the country is turning around. Economic activities have been picking up fast after a prolonged lockdown of about four months. Couple of

quantifiable progress indicators in this respect are: higher export of ready-made garments and increased flow of foreign remittances, in the last three months. We can also observe a sizeable movement of people back to the cities and increased traffic on the roads. Government offices, banks and private offices are almost functioning normally now. In residential neighbourhoods, more and more "To-Lets" are being removed from buildings as owners are finding people to rent out their houses again.

In the midst of a global slowdown, one vital question is, can Bangladesh stand out and ride on a positive growth path over the next nine months? The question is pertinent because South Asia's economy as a whole is predicted to contract by 2.7 percent. It is however promising to note that whereas the government expects GDP growth to be in the vicinity of 5 percent in the current financial year, the Asian Development Bank forecasts a GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent.

What are the economy's drivers at the moment? In the first three months of this financial year, the signs in case of the main growth drivers which are agriculture, RMG exports and remittances are encouraging. But it is still difficult to predict if the same momentum will continue over the next nine months. If it does, that is well and good. The two major export destinations of our garments which are Europe and North America, are set to grow at minus 4.7 percent and minus 3.5 percent, respectively. So there is a big risk there.

The BGMEA claims that garment factories are almost back to operating normally and according to its own survey,

at the end of August, only 113 factories laid off 51,500 workers. It is difficult to say due to data constraints how many workers were laid off at the peak of Covid-19 induced shutdowns in March-June period. The figure that was quoted was one million workers lost their jobs but this number was contested by the BGMEA—which thought it was much lower than this number.

In case of foreign remittances which picked up in the month of June, 2020,

mostly engaged in low-paid jobs. After paying for food and house rent, many workers are left with little to remit back to the country. Historically speaking, there has been a positive correlation between oil prices and per capita remittance flow to Bangladesh.

The health of our local economy, in a big way, is dependent on the three major economic drivers mentioned above. If agricultural production falls, garment workers are laid off due to weak

It was generally perceived to be a good decision to lockdown the country from end March to June, 2020. Also, it makes sense now to open up the economy, as has been observed since July that the pandemic has not caused any significant havoc despite widespread economic activities being pursued. For the government, there was no option other than cautious and gradual opening up on all fronts, except in the education sector as yet, to resume the cycle of growth. There is no doubt, however, that there is a cost to bear due to the opening up of the economy.

The total number of confirmed official Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh till September 28 was about 362,000. This translates roughly to one affected person per 460 population. No doubt, the number of affected persons increases every day. The work-days lost by 362,000 persons so far, with an average medically required minimum quarantine period of two weeks, comes to 5.07 million man-days. Although it is difficult to put a monetary value to the lost work-days, taking the average USD 2,064 annual per capita income as a measure of convenience, the total loss of income incurred by these people comes down to USD 29 million. This amount, if a rule of thumb calculation applied, as a percentage of total annual exports in 2019-20, comes to 0.86 percent which is less than one percent. If we do this calculation for the total GDP of the country, the total loss of income will be about 0.08 percent only.

From the above calculation, we can make a strong justification in favour of opening up of the economy in full, which would save us from the scourge of unemployment and poverty, which Bangladesh as a developing country cannot bear for an extended period of time. It is hoped that with more and more sectors fully opening up, the possibility of the economy reaching its full potentials will be achieved in the remaining nine months of the current fiscal year.

Dr Nawshad Ahmed is an economist and urban planner.



A jam-packed New Market in July.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

its sustainability is again to be cautiously observed in the coming months. While remittances rose to USD 1.83 billion in June, USD 2.6 billion in July, it went down to USD 1.96 billion in August. Remittance contributes to 6 percent of Bangladesh's GDP. The crude oil market is down. As of September 28, the global crude oil price was USD 41 per barrel. This has an obvious link with the regularity of salary payment of workers in the oil producing middle-eastern countries where 80 percent of Bangladeshis are working—and are

international demand, and remittance flow comes down due to low oil prices, the likely effect is low overall consumer demand, higher poverty level and a cyclical impact on other sectors. As we have seen, the three major growth drivers are showing early signs of recovery, another important sector for the country which is the service sector, is still to show promise of a turnaround. Private sector housing, tourism and hospitality, public construction and maintenance of roads and buildings, are yet to recover from the shocks of the pandemic.

Covid-19 pandemic and the economics of higher education



MONEY can't buy knowledge, but the knowledge industry of the modern world, centred in our universities, runs on money. Universities worldwide are money-strapped now. The pandemic has done them in. I used to believe that economics leans more toward ethics than money, so the connection between education and money is marginal. I was coaxed into such an assumption having read the lecture delivered by professor Amartya Sen at the University of British Columbia, Canada, when the university celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Interdisciplinary Graduate Programmes in 2011. Professor Sen claims that one of the founders of modern economics, Adam Smith, was a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. Professor Smith ventured into economics with his profound philosophical knowledge to establish the connection between economics and ethics. Professor Sen seems deeply influenced by the work of Adam Smith, and I'm somewhat influenced by professor Sen. As the pandemic hit education hard, ironically, I found Anthon Chekhov more influential than professor Sen when he wrote, "Money, like vodka, does strange things to a man."

Money does strange things to a woman, too! The president of Brown University, USA, professor Christina Paxton, wrote an essay, "College Campuses Must Reopen in the Fall. Here's How We Do It," in the *New York Times* in April 2020, in which she claims, "The reopening of college and university campuses in the fall should be a national priority." While professor Paxton sounded like a philistine to public health officials, faculty, staff, and students, who cared about health and safety, she had her followers. Some universities in the US before and after professor Paxton's article have flip-flopped between opening-again and closing-again as the cases of the coronavirus spiked in the campuses. But the tenor of her argument in the essay prioritised money, for she repeatedly reminded her readers of the importance of universities in the US economy, revenue generation, and employment. She was brazenly honest about the basic business model for most universities, which depend on tuition due twice a year at the beginning of

each semester. Remaining closed for a semester means losing as much as half of the revenue. So, she wanted universities re-opened and revenue regained immediately.

Fortunately for Bangladesh, the economics of higher education seems determined by leaders, who are compassionate. For example, *The Daily Star*, the premier English newspaper in Bangladesh, organised a webinar on July 11, 2020, to discuss the barriers to transition from classroom to online teaching because of the pandemic. Two students and six academic leaders participated in that webinar. They identified some of the pitfalls to online education such as inadequate physical and intellectual infrastructures, students' inability to afford devices for online classes, poor technology proficiency and Internet connectivity, students' anxieties, the digital divide between well-off and not-so-well-off students, and the absence of hands-on training. Surprisingly, none of the academic leaders seemed concerned about the economic costs of not opening the universities. Public and private universities are based on different economic models in Bangladesh, as elsewhere perhaps. Private universities are self-sponsored, while the public universities are sponsored mostly by the government. Public university professionals are hardly affected by the economics of higher education in Bangladesh as such.

While private universities are accused of commodifying education in Bangladesh—and they stand guilty to some extent on that front—professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice-Chancellor of North South University, the premier private university in Bangladesh, averred in the webinar that no one's education should be stopped because of the pandemic and that private universities shouldn't pressurise students over tuition fees and enrolment. His suggestions for remedial measures (tuition reduction, fee waiver, and scholarships offering) didn't smack of money. He proposed that small private universities that might not survive without enrolling students during the upcoming semester should consider mergers to help students pursue their studies smoothly. These recommendations have ethics and empathy embedded. The economics of higher education speaks a different language here thanks to the pandemic. Saving students' lives first to educate them later in-person is the new business model for higher education.

Paul Krugman, a Nobel Laureate in Economics, calls professor Islam's stance, and the stances of that are similar to his, the

"economics of not dying" in his essay "On the Economics of Not Dying" in the *New York Times* in May 2020. Professor Krugman argues that generating incomes for improving the quality of life is not the economy's ultimate purpose. What makes the major contribution to the quality of life is not dying, he contends. Until the pandemic, people hardly realised that universities are more vulnerable to death than humans. Fee revenues have fallen sharply; endowments and donations have shrunk; research funding has close to disappeared

are lower priorities these days, for universities are investing in deluxe dormitory rooms, elaborate student centres, and expensive gyms. In order for that to happen, universities have taken on staggering amounts of debt to expand their physical plant. The economic viability of so many universities is determined by what happens out of the classroom. Now that the universities are physically closed and the social side of the universities is altogether missing, spiralling tuition and other fees that far outpaced the rate of inflation have stopped

seem to have evolved further along that line by adding more bullshit jobs. Why do universities need coaches, local and global advisors, brand ambassadors, ranking consultants, legal advisors, public relations bureaucrats, and equity fund managers? These sharks gut the coffers of universities built by faculty. Where are they now, when the universities they've leached face an existential threat? The pandemic exposes that universities serve people who can't serve universities, because they're nimrods. They've skewed the economics of universities to mire them in what Graeber calls "managerial feudalism."

So, faculty governance in universities erodes and administrative bloat increases. Universities gradually shift away from teaching, research, and community service into extraction and embezzlement. Greed, insensitivity, and cruelty underpin the economics of universities. In Bangladesh—as elsewhere, private universities are more vulnerable to these vagaries than the public ones. Besides a handful of faculty (fortunately I fall in that bracket!), most private universities in Bangladesh have laid off and furloughed faculty and staff along with reducing salary and withholding benefits to weather the pandemic. Because the pandemic has upended the economics of the universities, where would the money come from to sustain the faculty and staff at full throttle? Some universities ask this wrong question to justify their economic mismanagement. The right question is: Where did the money go?

I would like to conclude with a personal note. I enrolled at a public university in Bangladesh in the mid-90s to pursue a Bachelor's and a Master's in English literature. I paid Tk 120 (USD 1.42) as tuition for a year. At the end of the year, I was informed that I was awarded a merit scholarship for three years from the board I was affiliated with. The university refunded my tuition along with a stipend every year. When I recall these days, an infinite sense of gratitude overcomes me. I feel indebted and patriotic. I wonder what my feeling would be like if I had to pay Tk 10,00,000 (USD 11,795) for my Bachelor's and the same amount for my Master's.

Economics critically determines ethics, emotion, and civic engagement of the students universities serve. The pandemic urges us to revamp all three.

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(with some exceptions in biological sciences); and room and board income for residential universities have all diminished. Almost all universities around the globe are in a financial fiasco. And because most courses last 4 years, a fall-off in applications during one year has lasting effects on income for the years ahead. Some universities that were already in a chronic economic crisis will not survive the slump caused by the pandemic. Before they perish, though, they will expose the "foundation of wilful ignorance" about the economics of higher education, as professor Krugman implies.

Professors Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa added further arguments to the economics of higher education in their essay "Your So-Called Education" in 2011 in the *New York Times*. They claim that academic investments

rolling in. Universities are in a disarray. If the pandemic lingers, the crisis will exacerbate. As a consequence, some universities will crumble, not because they've exhausted their utilities, but because they were built on a flawed economic model.

Fixing such a flawed model of economics in modern universities warrants considering the complex ecosystems that besiege universities these days. Anthropologist David Graeber deplores the "bullshitisation of real jobs" in universities in *Bullshit Jobs*. From 1985 to 2005, Graeber notes—from Benjamin Ginsberg's *The Fall of the Faculty*—students and faculty populations at American universities increased by 50 percent, while administration increased by 85 percent, and the number of administrative staff increased by 240 percent. Since 2005, universities around the globe

No place for an ordinary man!



THE photo of Md Fazlur Rahman has been making rounds across social media. At first glance, it may appear that he is a mentally challenged person, but a close inspection will prove otherwise. His heart-wrenching words echo his miseries.

"They took away my rickshaw! How on earth will I now pay the instalment of Tk 80,000? How will I survive?"

"What do you intend to do?"

"What can I do? Hang myself, I guess."

The coronavirus pandemic has left thousands without any means to earn a living and Fazlur is one of them. Perhaps Fazlur has a family—a father, a mother, a wife and a child. Now that he has no work, no earning, where will they stay, what will they eat? How will he sustain himself and his family?

Fazlur had borrowed Tk 80,000 to purchase a battery-operated rickshaw, to toil under the scorching heat in order to make some money to feed his family. Maybe that day they were waiting expectantly for him to return with some food to quell the pangs of hunger. Fazlur could not relieve them of that painful wait. Officials from the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) snatched his rickshaw away from him near Jigatala as such rickshaws have been banned in the capital. Earlier, the city corporations had warned of such crackdowns on battery-operated rickshaws. Unfortunately, Fazlur was either not aware of the ban or too desperate to take heed.

A lowly rickshaw puller defying the order of the city corporation! How dare he?

So they had to forcefully confiscate his rickshaw. Perhaps it had been smashed to pieces. Who cares about a few miserable folks—a hungry child, mother... Who has the time for such things when you have to clean up the city, make it modern? The law must be enforced, and for that, they have to start somewhere. Otherwise how will they show that they are doing their job?

So men like Fazlur Rahman invariably make it to the list of "things that must be done". His

instalment is worth a measly Tk 80,000. In terms of per capital income, Fazlur Rahman's income would be Tk 180,000. If his instalment was worth Tk 80 lakh, or Tk 80 crore, or Tk 800 crore, then perhaps it would have been worthy of consideration.

There is no accurate data regarding the number of rickshaws, including the battery-operated ones, in the capital. Not even the officials who impounded Fazlur's rickshaw know the number. Instead, what they have are connections with those who make and sell the rickshaws.

Meanwhile "human haulers" drive freely around Dhaka, but unlike rickshaws, no one keeps account of the number of such vehicles plying the streets. They are driven by underage drivers who possess no licences, neither do they have the road permits to operate on the routes they use. Simply put, human haulers are illegal. They stay on the streets by paying bribes of at least Tk 700 on a daily basis. The question inevitably arises: If the authorities can ban and confiscate rickshaws, then why not human haulers? The city corporation officials may say that human haulers are not under their control, but that is not the actual case.

The reality is that owners of human haulers are not like the helpless indebted Fazlur. They are in fact political leaders and law enforcement officials. As a result, they try to justify their operations saying, "How else will people commute?" Moreover, people like Fazlur cannot afford to pay bribes worth Tk 700 every day.

Most of the public buses on our roads which are in a dilapidated state lack fitness certificates, road permits and licenses. On the other hand, many such buses and trucks do have the documents—their owners are worth Tk 80 crore or Tk 800 crore. When people like Fazlur are there to suffer, why would bus owners face any hardships? Bus owners have borrowed crores from the banks, and if their transport is confiscated, then the banks will go bankrupt!

Buses occupy large portions of the roads, turning them into "terminals". And they justify this by saying that the vehicles need to be parked at some place and that the transport is for the public's benefit. Thus, legality does not seem to matter here. The problem only lies

with Fazlur's illegal rickshaw.

It's not hard to spot what is legal and what is illegal. By acquiring trade licenses from city corporations, hundreds of commercial schools, colleges and universities have been set up in residential areas. Such an act is not legal under our law, yet the city corporations have granted them the licenses. Will these institutions now be demolished? Most likely not, because it involves the future of education and the economy of the country.

At one time there used to be nearly 56 canals in Dhaka; now there are 26. The remaining canals were filled and used to construct multi-storied buildings. And those influential quarters worth Tk 80 crore or Tk 800 crore are the ones responsible for eating up these canals. None of these wrongdoings are unknown to the city corporations. Will we ever get back those canals? Will the illegal structures ever be demolished? Of course not! Because millions will be lost. As long as we pay no heed to the likes of Fazlur, it will be business as usual for all.

The day Fazlur lost his rickshaw, perhaps a hundred more were launched in the capital, even though launching new rickshaws is not allowed, it is happening daily. Someone has assured that Fazlur would get a new rickshaw. Fazlur got his smile back. But how long will he be able to operate that rickshaw on these streets? Without connections with the right parties or people or the syndicate that dictates which rickshaws must be taken off the streets, it is hard to keep a rickshaw's ownership.

Golam Mortoza is a journalist at *The Daily Star*. This article has been translated from Bangla by Minam Haq.



A distraught Fazlur Rahman after his rickshaw got confiscated. It was his only source of income.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



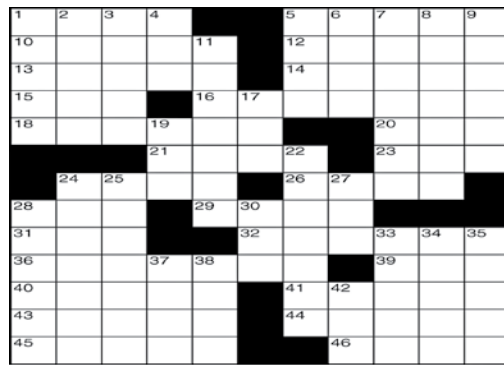
OCTOBER 9, 2004
First Afghan presidential elections

On this day in 2004, for the first time in Afghanistan's history, voters went to the polls to choose a president, selecting Hamid Karzai, who had served as the interim president after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 32 Toy-filled target | 9 Trick-taking game |
| 1 Large truck | 36 Tom Hanks movie | 11 Hopes |
| 5 Huge hit | 40 Macaroni shape | 17 Clay, later |
| 10 Nurse Barton | 41 Wear away | 19 Animation frame |
| 12 Therefore | 43 Gladden | 22 Like Prometheus |
| 13 Tricks | 44 Sofa's kin | 24 Flower part |
| 14 Extreme | 45 Does kitchen work | 25 Reception feature |
| 15 Major fuss | 46 Stiff drink | 27 Road-house |
| 16 Black leopard | | 28 Tender of nursery rhyme sheep |
| 18 Schoolbag item | | 30 USN rank |
| 20 Put away | | 33 Higher than |
| 21 Burden of The Animals | | 34 Kind of pool |
| 23 Apt. ad abbr. | | 35 Deal maker |
| 24 Porter of song | | 37 Carry |
| 26 Sound from an angry cat | | 38 Has debts |
| 28 Jazz style | | 42 Vault part |
| 29 Checkout act | | |
| 31 Smelter supply | | |

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

CAMP ER
APOLLO RENO
REPA ST EDAM
RARE NASSAU
AGE SHUTTLE
DID PEN IDA
ALABAMA OIL
RECUR ONES
SWIG CACTUS
POOL TRAUMA
ANNE STREAM

BETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Trump rejects virtual debate

FROM PAGE 12
as a safety precaution 25 days before the election.

"The American people have witnessed what is the greatest failure of any presidential administration in the history of our country," said Harris, a US senator from California and former prosecutor.

"And frankly, this administration has forfeited their right to reelection based on this," Harris said before a masked and limited audience at the University of Utah.

Saying Trump treated front-line health personnel as "sacrificial workers," Harris -- pointing to Trump's own statements to journalist Bob Woodward -- accused the White House of not moving quickly despite knowing the risks of Covid-19.

"The president said it was a hoax. They minimized the seriousness of it," Harris said.

After a raucous debate eight days ago between Trump and Biden, Pence and Harris took a more civil tone with no name-calling, but sharply disagreed on the reaction to the pandemic.

"I want the American people to know, from the very first day, President Donald Trump has put the health of America first," Pence said, pointing to his ban on travel from China on January 31, a month after cases first emerged in Wuhan.

In contrast to Trump's firehose-like blasts on Biden and his family, Pence demonstrated calm and stability and congratulated Harris on the historic nature of her candidacy.

Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, would also be both the first African-American and Asian-American vice president.

But Pence tried to portray her as a radical, saying that Harris -- generally considered close to the Democratic

establishment -- was further to the left than socialist Bernie Sanders.

"More taxes, more regulation, banning fracking, abolishing fossil fuel, crushing American energy, economic surrender to China is a prescription for American decline," Pence said, reciting a list Biden would be unlikely to describe as his platform.

Pence, questioned by moderator Susan Page of USA Today, acknowledged that "the climate is changing" but insisted that market solutions were the best way to reduce carbon emissions.

Even if they delved more into substance, the two candidates revealed little new about their policies and were notably evasive on hot-button issues such as abortion and the Supreme Court.

In one moment that went without commentary on stage but triggered an avalanche of social media commentary, a fly found its way onto Pence, spending a visibly long time on his white hair.

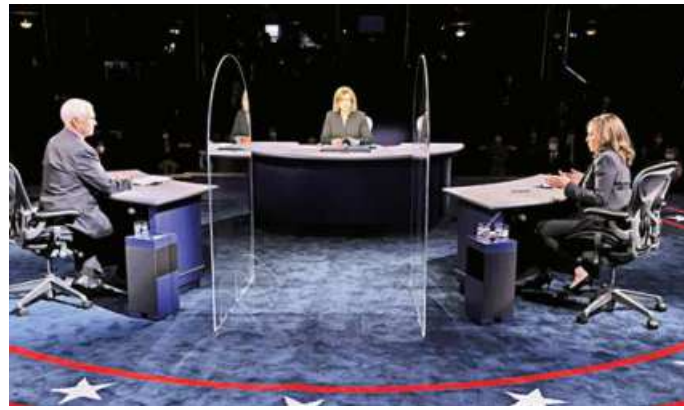
The Biden campaign quickly started selling fly-swatters online with the inscription, "Truth over flies."

The two candidates still scoffed at each other's remarks. At one point Harris, firmly but with a smile, reproached Pence, telling him: "Mr vice president, I'm speaking."

They had one of their most intense clashes about racial justice after nationwide protests over police treatment of African-Americans.

Biden "believes that law enforcement has an implicit bias against minorities," Pence said.

"It's a great insult to the men and women who serve in law enforcement. And I want everyone to know who puts on the uniform of law enforcement every day, President Trump and I stand with you," he said.



US Vice President Mike Pence and Democratic vice presidential nominee and US Senator Kamala Harris take part in the 2020 vice presidential debate moderated by Susan Page of USA Today, on the campus of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah, US, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Rise in use of the law

FROM PAGE 1
Quoting data of Cyber Crime Tribunal, Amnesty said nearly 2,000 cases have been filed under the DSA since its enactment on October 8, 2018.

More than 800 cases were filed in the first nine months of this year alone, with many of the country's most prominent editors and senior journalists being increasingly targeted, the rights watchdog said.

"Since its inception, the Digital Security Act has been wielded as a weapon to silence critics and suppress dissent. The Bangladesh authorities have exploited the law's vague and broad provisions to escalate attacks on independent journalism and media freedom," said Sultan Mohammed Zakaria, South Asia researcher at Amnesty International.

"The recent crackdown and increased targeting of prominent journalists is clearly a cynical effort by the authorities to use the Covid-19 crisis as a cover to ramp up these efforts. Bangladesh must substantially reform the DSA and bring it into line with the country's constitution and its human rights obligations," he added.

The Amnesty statement said the DSA imposes multiple undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, including up to 10 years' imprisonment for "spreading propaganda" against Bangladesh's Liberation War, the national anthem and national flag using digital devices. Repeated offences carry the maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The statement listed incidents of arrests and filing of cases under the DSA. Zakaria said journalists were being targeted simply for reporting on stories critical of the authorities and holding the powerful to account. "The charges against them must be dropped and those detained must be released immediately and

unconditionally." In its statement, Front Line Defenders said the government passed the DSA despite intense criticism and condemnation from human rights defenders, students, civil society organisations and the international community for its overly broad and vague provisions, which lack legal certainty and precision.

The DSA gives the government absolute power to initiate investigations into anyone whose activities are considered a "threat" by giving law enforcement agencies power to arrest without warrant, simply on suspicion that a crime has been committed through the use of social media, said the rights body.

The law also allows the government to order the removal and blocking of any information or data on the internet it deems necessary, thereby providing broad scope to silence those critical of its policies or who share information on human rights violations in the country, the statement said.

The Act allows for invasive forms of surveillance by permitting authorities to ask service providers and other intermediaries for data without requiring a court-obtained warrant, it added.

Front Line Defenders said at a time when governments should be reducing the prison population to protect against the spread of Covid-19, the authorities in Bangladesh have been arresting people for their legitimate defence and exercise of human rights.

Didar Bhuiyan, a human rights defender, was arrested on May 5 after he shared a report on social media criticising the government's response to the pandemic.

The rights watchdog urged the government to ensure that its laws are sufficiently precise so as not to arbitrarily target human rights defenders or their work.

1.3 lakh of them living

FROM PAGE 12
Of the more than 250,000 Rohingyas left in Myanmar, around 100,000 have been living in refugee camps having been displaced during an earlier wave of violence in 2012.

Thousands of other Rohingyas live in villages spread across Rakhine, but are fearful of the military, which keeps a constant watch on their communities. Conflict between the military and the Arakan Army, an ethnic Rakhine armed group, has complicated their problems.

The 169-page HRW report, based on interviews of more than 60 interviews with Rohingyas as well as Kaman Muslims and humanitarian workers, said the Rohingyas have been living in the camps and camp-like communities and experiencing "severe limitations" on their livelihoods and their movement.

Rakhine State is subject to an internet blackout and remains off-limits to foreign journalists unless they travel in a prearranged trip with government minders. The report said the living conditions in the camps had increasingly threatened Rohingyas' right to life and other basic rights, resulting in higher rates of malnutrition and other health problems.

The HRW called on the international community to exert more pressure on the government of Myanmar and hold officials accountable for the alleged abuses.

The abuses documented included denial of freedom of movement as well as widespread extortion. Those found outside the camp were also reportedly subjected to torture and other abuses by security forces, the report said.

"Life in the camp is so painful," a Rohingya man told the HRW. "There is no chance to move freely.... We have nothing called freedom."

The HRW accused the Myanmar government of using the earlier 2012 violence against Rohingya communities as a "pretext" to segregate and confine the population from the rest of the population.

In April 2017, the government announced that it would begin closing the camps, but actions later taken by the authorities only perpetuated the segregation of the Rohingya, denying them the right to return to their land, rebuild their homes, find work, and take their place back in Myanmar society.

The report said that the "sense of hopelessness in the camps" became pervasive, with not one Rohingya interviewed expressing the belief that their indefinite detention would end.

"I think the system is permanent," a Rohingya woman said. "Nothing will change. It is only words."

Further complicating the situation for Rohingyas is the Covid-19 pandemic, which has prompted the government to impose more restrictions on movement as part of an effort to contain the spread of the disease.

The HRW called on Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the military to take necessary steps to grant more freedom to Rohingyas who remain in the country.

"The government's claims that it's not committing the gravest international crimes will ring hollow until it cuts the barbed wire and allows Rohingyas to return to their homes with full legal protection," it said.

Scientists develop robot

FROM PAGE 12
The "ribs" of the squid are connected to two circular plates, with one attached to a nozzle for shooting water and the other carrying a waterproof camera or other sensor.

The researchers decided that a cephalopod -- the group of marine animals that includes squid, octopus, cuttlefish, or nautilus -- was the best

choice of design because of their speed.

Squid can reach the fastest speed of any aquatic invertebrates, through a similar natural jet propulsion system.

The robot can reach a speed of approximately 18 to 32 centimetres per second, which equates to roughly half a mile per hour - faster than most other soft robots, they claim.

2 accused placed

FROM PAGE 12
charge of Begumganj Model Police Station, said police arrested Kalam from Cumilla's Daudkandi and Shahed from Begumganj's Eklashpur on Wednesday night.

After preliminary investigation, the two were produced before the court with remand prayers, the IO said. The court placed Kalam on six days' remand in two cases and Shahed on two days' remand in a case, he added.

Ten people have so far been arrested in connection with the rape incident.

Alamgir Hossain, superintendent of Noakhali police, said the victim

filed three cases against nine named people and seven to eight unknown others over the incident.

Drives are on to arrest the other accused, he added.

There was widespread outrage on social media after the graphic video of a woman in Noakhali being gang-raped was uploaded and shared on Sunday.

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.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Panchagarh District, Panchagarh
Phone: 0568-61261

Memo No. 46.03.7700.061.14.005.19-903/20
Date: 08/10/2020

Invitation for e-Tender Notice
Tender No. 03/2020-2021

01	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division.
02	Implementing agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
03	Project/program name	Village Water Supply Project (VWSP).
04	e-Tender IDs	Tender ID 501692 & 501694.
05	1. Installation of # 6 Shallow Tubewell Under Village Water Supply Project of Department of Public Health Engineering, Panchagarh District, Panchagarh. 2. Installation of Shallow Submersible Tubewell with 1.5 HP Submersible Pump Under Village Water Supply Project of Department of Public Health Engineering, Panchagarh District, Panchagarh.	
06	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	A. N. Md. Nimul Eashan, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Panchagarh. Tel. No. 0568-61261.
07	This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal & no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	

A. N. Md. Nimul Eashan
Executive Engineer
DPHE, Panchagarh

GD-1606

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Roads & Highways Department
Office of the Superintending Engineer
Road Circle, Moulvibazar
Phone+Fax: 02-41110074, 0861-62821
e-mail: serhdmoulvibazar@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.5874.187.07.7-82.20-1545
Date: 08/10/2020

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concerned that the following tender have published through e-GP Portal.

Tender ID, Package No. & date of publishing	Name of work	Last selling date	Closing and opening date & time
Tender ID No. 502889 Tender Package No. 03/ e-GP/PMP/BrIDGE/ Culvert/SE/RHD/MRC/ 2020-21	Construction of 1 x 2.00 meter Clear Length 3.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 800m (Tabujure) 1 x 3.00 meter Clear Length 2.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 1800m (Chatarikhai) of Shahbazpur-Daulatpur Road (Z-2816) 2 Nos. 1 x 4.00 meter Clear Length 2.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 4100m (Golsha) & 4700m (Taradharan) of Bariekha-Shahbazpur-Latu Road (Z-2815) 3 x 5.00 meter Clear Length 4.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 10200m (Jora) of Moulvibazar Rajnagar-Sylhet Balaganj Road (Z-2017) 1 x 2.00 meter Clear Length 3.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 2612m (Ranimura) 2 x 6.00 meter Clear Length 5.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 10232m (Boradahar) of Juri - Fultola - Batuli Road (Z-2823) & 3 x 6.00 meter Clear Length 4.00 meter Clear Height RCC Box Culvert with U Type wing wall at Ch. 4526m (Noyabazar) of Juri - Lathilla Road (R-282) under Road Division Moulvibazar during the year 2020-2021.	08.11.2020, up to 15:00	09.11.2020, at 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Moulvibazar.

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

A. K. Shamsuddin Ahmed
ID No. 000379
Superintending Engineer, RHD
Road Circle, Moulvibazar

GD-1609

Constitution in shortest

FROM PAGE 12
(ALPP) at the Engineering Institution, the prime minister who is also leader of the House, says that the people are eagerly awaiting a constitution and the Awami League government is pledge-bound to give the country a constitution.

"We shall fulfil our pledge by framing the constitution," he adds. Bangabandhu observes that his party can legitimately feel proud for being able to give the country a constitution in such a short time. Considering the circumstances under which Bangladesh was born one could say that the country is getting a constitution much quicker, he adds. He points out that no country, born in a revolution, could frame a constitution in such a short time.

The prime minister renews his call to the MCAs to help maintain law and order in their respective areas. He reiterates that general elections would be held earlier than expected.

On the question of the dissolution of the Gono Parishad immediately after the framing of the constitution he says that the suggestion of the organising committee of the Awami League in this respect would be honoured. **BORDER TRADE SUSPENDED**
The mid-term review of Indo-Bangladesh Trade Agreement by the officials of both governments ends in Dhaka today with a decision to suspend the border trade between the two countries. A credible source says the Bangladesh delegation wanted the border trade suspended as they felt that meaningful implementation of the provisions of border trade was not possible unless adequate checks and control could be established along the entire border between the two countries.

SOURCES: October 10, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Amin Uddin new

FROM PAGE 12
attorney general Mahbubey Alam to continue establishing the rule of law and justice in the country, as well as the independence of the judiciary.

"I will work to ensure justice for people of the country," he said.

AM Amin Uddin was born at Kulaura in Moulavibazar in October 1963. The eminent lawyer has completed his masters and law degrees from Dhaka University.

He was enrolled as a lawyer for the lower court in 1987, as a High Court lawyer in 1989 and as a lawyer for the Supreme Court's Appellate Division

in 2003. He was appointed assistant attorney general from 1996 to 2000 and as deputy attorney general in 2000. He served in that post until the then Awami League government was in office till October 2001. Amin Uddin was elected president of the Supreme Court Bar Association last year and re-elected this year.

Amin Uddin, who was elected as secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association in 2006, told this correspondent that there is no legal bar for serving as the president of the SCBA while holding the office of attorney general.

Court frames charges

FROM PAGE 12
Both the accused were in the courtroom when the charges were framed on Wednesday said lawyer Abdul Hai, counselor for the lawmaker.

"It is a baseless case. It will be reflected in the verdict," said Hasibur Rahman Swapon.

"This case is based on conspiracy and instigation ...," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Nilphamari
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7300.000.14.003.20.1903;
Date: 07-10-2020

e-Tender Notice: 10/2020-21 (OTM)

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

Sl. No.	Tender proposal ID	Name of the scheme with package No.	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Opening date and time
01	495476	Improvement of Dokhin Sonakhuli-Vajonchur via Khamalpara Road. Ch. 1000.00m-3040.00m under Upazila Dimla District Nilphamari. Road ID 173124082 [Package No. PRONIL/DIMV/20-21W-140]	08-Nov-2020 up to 17.00 hrs.	09-Nov-2020 Time: 12.30 hrs.	09-Nov-2020 Time: 12.30 hrs.
02	495477	Improvement of Kakina Chapani Madrasa-Tista Main Canal Road. Ch. 0.00m-1783.00m under Upazila Dimla District Nilphamari. Road ID 173125089 [Package No. PRONIL/DIMV/20-21W-141]	08-Nov-2020 up to 17.00 hrs.	09-Nov-2020 Time: 12.30 hrs.	09-Nov-2020 Time: 12.30 hrs.

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 (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 17.00 hrs. on 08-Nov-2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also for e-mail: zen.nilphamari@lged.gov.bd or call to: 0551-61485. Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Sujan Kumar Kar
Executive Engineer
LGED, Nilphamari
Phone: 0551-61485
zen.nilphamari@lged.gov.bd

GD-1602

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 8181658-61, 8181169, 8181664-69; Website: <http://www.pksf-bd.org>

Vacancy Announcement

PKSF has been implementing "The World Bank" funded project titled "Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP)" since August 2018. The objective of this project is to increase adoption of the environmentally sustainable practices by targeting microenterprises following business cluster development approach. PKSF hereby invites applications from the suitable candidates for the recruitment of the following position under SEP:

S.N	Name of the Post	Consolidated Monthly Salary
1	Senior Program Officer (Branding, E-commerce and Innovation Specialist); No. of Post: 01 (one)	BDT 1,65,000/-

The employee will be recruited initially for one year with an opportunity for performance-based annual renewal during the project period. Interested candidates who fulfill the requirements should apply online by **24 October 2020**. For detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and instructions to apply, please visit PKSF website: www.pksf-bd.org.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. PKSF is an equal opportunity employer. Any kind of persuasion will be treated as disqualification of the candidate. PKSF reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Golam Touhid
Deputy Managing Director



PHOTO: FEROZ AHMED

A once-rich well now drying up

ANISUR RAHMAN

A group of brilliant young footballers put Bangladesh prominently on the map of age-level women's football, especially in South Asia, by clinching the first-ever AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship in December 2015. Eighth months later they once again made the whole of Asia sit up and notice by emerging the unbeaten champions in the six-team qualifying round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship and advancing into the eight-team final round in Thailand.

The girls made history in the country's football by advance to the final round leaving strong teams such as Iran and Chinese Taipei in their wake. They carried their form and success through to the next year to emerge champions in the SAFF U-15 Championships (a few members of the original squad were left out of due to age limitations and were replaced by upcoming talented players) on home soil in December 2017.

The players from Kalsindur Primary School and Kalsindur High School under Mymensingh's Dhobaura upazila were key behind

those successes. The likes of Maria Manda, Marzia, Sanjida Akther, Shamsunnar Sr, Shamsunnar Jr, Saraban Tahura, Mahmuda Akter, Sajeda Khatun, Nazma and many others dominated in the age-group squads, which also contained a few booters from Tangail, Sirajganj, Kushtia and Satkhira.

Unfortunately, there are now no players from Dhobaura or Kalsindur in the 15-member squad that the Bangladesh Football Federation announced on Wednesday for the upcoming AFC U-17 Women's Championship Qualifiers to be held in April next year.

There are no players from Dhobaura even in the additional list of entry squads feeding into the national team, although a couple of players have come from of Mymensingh's Nandail upazila. Kalsindur Primary School had once been a role model for other primary schools across the country ever since their eye-catching successes in the Bangamata Primary School Gold Cup.

But the supply line from Dhobaura has dried up and other parts of the country are now producing players, with the current U-17 women's national squad featuring players from 11 districts -- Tangail, Thakurgaon,

Mymensingh, Cox's Bazar, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Magura, Jhenaidah, Satkhira and Bagerhat.

"The girls from Kalsindur village have been dominating the national teams since 2014. Now they are even dominating U-19, U-20 and the national women's team but unfortunately, there are no Kalsindur representatives at the early age levels at present," national women's team head coach Golam Rabbani Choton told The Daily Star.

"It is a bit frustrating that we can't get players from that productive region, which was supposed to produce more quality players. There may be internal problems, although I actually don't know the exact reasons," said Choton, who basically fine-tunes the skills of players who enter at the age levels.

"But it's a relief that players are coming through different districts, although the supply line of Kalsindur is currently closed. We hope they will provide more players like Maria, Sanjida, Shamsunnahar and Marzia in future."

Mofiz Uddin, a Kalsindur Primary School teacher is the one who nurtured some quality players and led them to two successive Bangamata Gold Cup

triumphs in 2013 and 2014. But he is now a teacher at Ronosingha Govt Primary School, some six kilometres away from Kalsindur Primary School.

"As far as I know, girls of Kalsindur are taking part in training regularly but the players are not coming out to the national level. I don't know whether the training is going in the right direction because I have not been with them for nearly three-and-a-half years," said Mofiz. "Maybe the girls are not getting the attention they were getting before. There may be a lack of sincerity from authorities after Kalsindur High School turned into a government school."

Kalsindur may not be consistent in producing quality players lately, but coach Golam Rabbani is hopeful of continuing the consistent performances in the AFC U-17 Women's Championship Qualifiers (which was the AFC U-16 Championship last year) by qualifying for the final round for the third successive time as he has some 10 players out of 15, who have experience of playing international matches.

Meanwhile, some 33 players from the U-17 and U-20 squads reported to Choton yesterday and training will start at the BFF artificial turf from today.

Tsitsipas's overdose of information

REUTERS, PARIS



Stefanos Tsitsipas is coached by his father Apostolos but also his mother, who is also knowledgeable about tennis, around at the French Open has sometimes proved to be an overdose of information for the fifth-seeded Greek.

Tsitsipas's father has been a regular at Roland Garros, wearing a mask bearing an image of his son, but the 22-year-old also has his mother Julia in Paris for this year's claycourt Grand Slam.

"My mom, she knows a lot about tennis," Greece's Tsitsipas, who is also guided by Serena Williams' coach Patrick Mouratoglou, told reporters with a smile. "Sometimes it can be a bit complicated when she wants to give her own opinion or advice direct to me, then have my dad tell me something else."

"We've sat down and we said, 'Guys, that's my coach. Whatever opinions or whatever thoughts you have, has to be filtered through Apostolos, my father'. It can get quite hectic. "Obviously the presence of Patrick, we are a strong, united team. My mom is also a small part of it. She brings a lot to the team, a lot of energy, a lot of good vibes. She is lovely."

Austrian Dominic Thiem, with whom Tsitsipas is good friends, became the first player outside of tennis's 'Big Three' of Novak Djokovic, Rafa Nadal and Roger Federer to win a Grand Slam since 2016 when he claimed the U.S. Open last month.

Tsitsipas, who used to skip school to watch the French Open on TV, has also long

been marked out as a future prospect and made his second Grand Slam semi-final on Wednesday, after reaching the same stage at last year's Australian Open.

"Dominic inspires me a lot. What Dominic has achieved is amazing," Tsitsipas said after defeating Russian Andrey Rublev 7-5 6-2 6-3 in the quarter-finals.

"Being able to have back-to-back finals here at the French is truly inspiring. Dominic is someone that makes me understand the game and makes me want to push even further to reach what he has



reached.

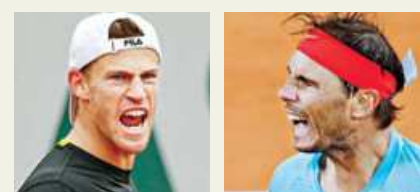
"He's a nice guy off the court. Big workaholic on the court. He's very balanced and a very passionate person in every aspect. I think I can learn a lot from him and add it to my game. From the young guys, he's someone that I really look up to."

Tsitsipas feels he is on the right track to achieve his dream of Grand Slam success.

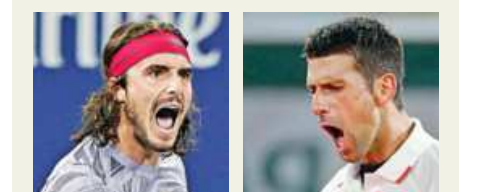
"I'm expecting since a young age to potentially triumph at these Grand Slams. I'm happy that I'm able to be in a position where I am today. Yeah, it's very, very satisfying," he said.

"I think I can learn from the previous one. I'm chasing something spectacular."

MEN'S SEMIFINALS TONIGHT



Schwartzman V Nadal



Tsitsipas V Djokovic

AGENCIES

World number one Novak Djokovic will face fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the Roland Garros semifinals tonight, while Rafael Nadal, the defending champion in men's singles, will take on 12th seed Diego Schwartzman in the other match on Philippe Chatrier Court.

Seeking an unfathomable thirteenth French Open title, Nadal has won all the 15 sets he has played so far. But his Argentine opponent Schwartzman previously proved that he could be a huge threat as he defeated the Spaniard

in Rome last month.

With an impressive win-loss record of 36-1 in 2020, Serbian Djokovic has dropped just one set in five matches in the tournament but suffered an injury scare in the last eight. However, Tsitsipas, in his first career semifinal at Roland Garros, looks fully fit and has also had an excellent tournament so far.

Nadal and Schwartzman have faced each other ten times before, with the 34-year-old leading by a massive margin of 9-1. Meanwhile, Djokovic leads the head-to-head 3-2 against Tsitsipas in their five previous meetings.



No arms, no problem

AFP, SAMUNDRI

Muhammad Ikram, who was born without arms, steps up to a snooker table, sizes up his options and with a firm flick of his chin strikes the cue ball and slots a red into a corner pocket.

The sport was perhaps an unlikely passion for Ikram, 32, to pursue, but the Pakistani player has spent years honing his skills and can now give anyone at his local snooker hall a run for their money.

"It is a tough job that requires hard work. If there is a player like me, I am ready to face him", Ikram told AFP during a recent visit to the snooker hall in the small town of Samundri in Pakistan's eastern province of Punjab.

Born into a poor home, he and his eight siblings did not go to school and he spent much of his childhood feeling isolated. As a teenager, he started to watch players in the local snooker hall and was inspired to start practising "in secret".

"In the beginning, I used to push the balls by myself on an empty pool table," Ikram said. "Gradually, I improved my game and started playing with others."

Ikram can now challenge the best players in town. He demonstrated a range of shots, giving a solid and assured flick of his head to sink reds

and then colours into pockets, drawing applause from other players.

"Chalk your chin," one of them quipped after Ikram eventually missed a shot. Worried he might injure himself, Ikram's parents initially barred him from snooker for several years, but last year they allowed him to return to the sport.

His skills quickly turned him into something of an internet celebrity among Pakistan's snooker-playing fraternity. "I become famous," Ikram said, though he confessed to having no idea what social media is. Cricket is by far Pakistan's most popular game, but snooker holds an important place in the country's sporting scene. British officers introduced the game during the colonisation of the Indian subcontinent and Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was a keen player.

Muhammad Nadeem, who owns the Samundri snooker hall, described Ikram as a "true sportsman".

"We don't charge him for a game. Instead people pay him to play with them," Nadeem said.

"He has no competition, in cricket and football there are disabled players but when it comes to snooker he is a one-of-a-kind player."

Int'l football returns with Lisbon stalemate

AGENCIES



National teams with national anthems, flags and small number of fans returned to the field across the globe as International Friendlies made its return on Wednesday night in multiple continents. As some of these matches were decorated with plenty of goals, others were agonizingly breathtaking.

Portugal had to settle for a 0-0 draw at home to Spain in a heavyweight friendly encounter as they hammered the crossbar twice and missed a last-gasp open goal. Cristiano Ronaldo, who hit a hat-trick when the two sides met in a thrilling 2018 World Cup group stage game, almost gave the European champions the lead when he sent a shot crashing against the underside of the bar early in the second half.

Germany midfielder Florian Neuhaus scored on his national team debut but Turkey came back three times to earn a 3-3 draw in their friendly. The Germans, playing without Bayern Munich and RB Leipzig players who were rested and missed several due to illness and injury.

Having become France's second highest all-



time top scorer on Wednesday by leapfrogging Michel Platini with 42 goals, Olivier Giroud is now gunning for Thierry Henry's all-time record of 51. Giroud netted twice in a 7-1 demolition of Ukraine in a friendly, celebrating his 100th cap in style in front of visitors' coach Andriy Shevchenko, one of his idols.

Forward Francesco Caputo scored on his Italy debut at the age of 33 as they routed Moldova 6-0 in a one-sided friendly.

Mexico handed new Netherlands coach Frank de Boer a defeat in his first game in charge as they enjoyed a deserved 1-0 win over their hosts in a friendly. Goals from midfielders Josip Brekalo and Mario Pasalic gave Croatia a 2-1 win at Switzerland.

Zambia secured a narrow 1-0 win over neighbours Malawi in Lusaka in the first international involving African countries since the Covid-19 pandemic shut down world sport in March.



(Anticlockwise from bottom L) Some 2,500 fans spectated the game from inside stadium as Portugal allowed spectators back in for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak. Croatia's Ivan Perisic throws his shirt to the fans after the match against Switzerland and the home crowd and a noisy visiting contingent created a cracking atmosphere as they filled 30 percent of the St. Gallen stadium, in line with UEFA's coronavirus regulations. Turkey's Kenan Karaman celebrates scoring their third goal with teammates while Germany's Emre Can looks dejected and Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo consoles Joao Felix, who missed the target with the goal gaping in front of him.

PHOTO: REUTERS/TWITTER



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US ELECTION 2020

Trump rejects virtual debate

His pandemic record in spotlight as Harris, Pence trade blows at vice presidential debate

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday said he would not participate in a virtual debate, throwing into doubt the second presidential debate between Trump and his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, scheduled for Oct 15.

His words came moments after the commission that oversees the debates said the event would be conducted from remote locations in the wake of his Covid-19 diagnosis. The Biden campaign welcomed the move.

"That's not acceptable to us," Trump said on a phone call with Fox Business, adding he thought the virtual format would allow the moderator to cut him off.

The news came a day after the sole vice presidential debate between Vice President Mike Pence and Biden's running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, who clashed repeatedly over the Trump administration's response to the pandemic, which has killed more than 210,000 Americans.

Harris has called Donald Trump's Covid-19 response a historic failure that disqualified him from a second term, in a pointed but mostly civil debate with Mike Pence who sought to portray her as extreme.

With Trump's weekend hospitalisation for Covid-19 throwing a new importance on the role of the vice president, Pence and Harris spoke separated by plexiglass

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Criminals demolished a monument built in memory of slain Buet student Abrar Fahad hours after it was built. Inset, Buet students constructing the monument at the capital's Palashi intersection on Wednesday to mark his first death anniversary.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN/PRABIR DAS

Amin Uddin new attorney general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AM Amin Uddin, a senior lawyer at the Supreme Court and president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, has been appointed the new attorney general of Bangladesh.

"President Md Abdul Hamid has appointed Advocate AM Amin Uddin as the new attorney general of Bangladesh. He will fill up the vacancy created after the death of longest-serving attorney general Mahbubey Alam," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

The post of attorney general fell vacant after Attorney General Mahbubey Alam passed away on September 27.

AM Amin Uddin, who has been appointed as the 14th top law officer of the state, told The Daily Star yesterday that he will carry forward the work of the government and late

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Anti-rape protests roll on for 4 days

BCL men attack demos in Ctg, Moulvibazar

STAR REPORT

As anti-rape protests raged across the country for the fourth consecutive day yesterday, BCL men have attacked demonstrators in Moulvibazar and Chattogram.

Spurred on by the recent gang rape in Noakhali, students, their guardians and teachers of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College yesterday took position in front of its campus on Baily Road around 12:00pm and staged demonstrations demanding the toughest of punishments to the rapists. They also expressed discontent regarding the government's failure to protect women.

"The guilt is only yours... the rapist is you," the protesters chanted.

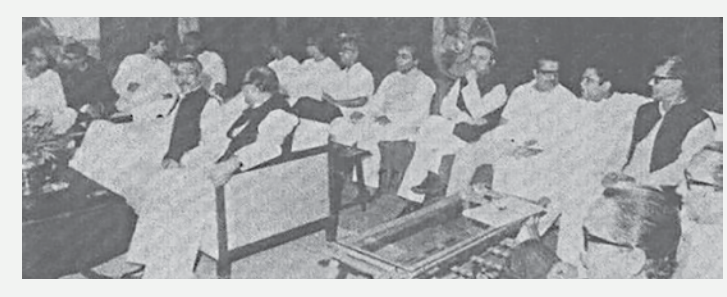
They said nobody should be a victim of rape. Even boys in madrasas go through this. No children should face rape and sexual assault, the protesters demanded.

In front of Bashundhara Residential Area gate, protestors held a rally around 11:30am, wearing black t-shirts, holding placards demanding justice for rape

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Constitution in shortest possible time



Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presiding over the opening session of the Awami League Parliamentary Party at the auditorium of the Engineers' Institute on October 9, 1972.

October 9, 1972
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU ADDRESSES AWAMI LEAGUE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY CONFERENCE

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman maintains today that the Gono Parishad (Constituent Assembly) in its forthcoming session would enact a constitution which would meet the expectations of the people and reflect their hopes and aspirations. Addressing the opening session of the two-day meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

VESTED PROPERTY Court frames charges against MP over bid to plunder it

OUR CORRESPONDENT, PARNA

A court framed charges against Sirajganj-6 lawmaker Hasibur Rahman Swapon and a title deed writer in connection with an attempt to take over vested property by falsifying documents.

Senior judicial magistrate Abu Shahin Khan Konok of Shahzadpur framed the charges Wednesday afternoon.

Senior sub judge Tofazzal Hossain filed the case against the lawmaker and deed writer Abdur Rashid for attempting to turn a piece of vested property into the lawmaker's private property using false documents and forging signatures on July, 25, 2018.

The lawmaker got bail in the case and the deed writer was initially sent to jail but later received bail.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Scientists develop robot squid for deep sea exploration



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A new squid-like robot can swim on its own and take pictures.

The machine was built to explore the sea by researchers at the University of California San Diego.

The robot propels itself by shooting jets of water behind it; it takes in a large amount of water into its body, and then compresses itself to blast it out behind it.

The machine's body is made of acrylic polymer, supported by 3D-printed and laser-cut parts; its soft body means that it will not injure fish or coral, and can also maneuver more easily than larger, more rigid robots.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROHINGYAS IN RAKHINE 1.3 lakh of them living in inhuman conditions

SAYS HRW

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

About 130,000 Rohingyas in the camps of Myanmar's Rakhine state are living under squalid and abusive conditions, which are like "open prisons", said Human Rights Watch (HRW) yesterday.

"The Myanmar government has interned 130,000 Rohingyas in inhuman conditions for eight years, cut off from their homes, land, and livelihoods, with little hope that things will improve," said Shayna Bauchner in a new HRW report published yesterday.

An estimated one million Rohingyas lived in Myanmar, but a brutal military crackdown in 2017 forced some 750,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

NOAKHALI GANG RAPE 2 accused placed on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Noakhali court yesterday placed two accused on remand in cases filed over the torture and gang rape of a woman.

Judge of Noakhali Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court Mashfiqul Haque passed the order, said Begumganj Police Station Inspector Mostak Ahmed, also the investigation officer of the case.

Abul Kalam, 22, was placed on a six-day remand and another accused Main Uddin Shahed, 51, on a two-day remand, he said.

Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, officer-in-

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



A scaly-breasted munia sitting on a bamboo branch in Gandagram village of Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila. The bird, which is common all over the country, eats grass seeds and small insects. Its name is based on the distinct scale-like feather markings on the breast and belly.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

COVID PANDEMIC IN EUROPE Surging cases force lockdowns

AGENCIES

New cases have been spiralling across Europe and the governments are preparing to renew some lockdown measures as German health experts warned yesterday that the coronavirus could "spread uncontrollably" in the country.

Across the world, 36.2 million cases of the coronavirus have been officially diagnosed since it first emerged in China late last year, according to an AFP tally based on official sources yesterday.

Of those 1,057,084 have died.

The United States has the highest death toll, with 211,844, followed by Brazil with 148,228, India 105,526, Mexico 82,726 and Britain 42,515.

In Belgium, Brussels' crowded bars and cafes were shut for a month, a return to the stricter protocols imposed at the height of the epidemic in March and April.

And in France, officials were to apply tighter restrictions in several major cities, two days after a maximum alert protocol went into force in Paris.

Austria yesterday recorded its highest ever one-day total of infections despite measures taken in recent weeks to try to bring the pandemic under control.

Countries including Germany have warned against travel to parts of Austria, putting the tourism industry under pressure as the ski season approaches.

Poles will have to wear face masks in all public spaces from Saturday, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said yesterday, after cases hit a new record daily high of 4,280.

"The second wave has reached us and we have to face it in a decisive way," Morawiecki told reporters, explaining that the entire EU country of 38 million would now be considered a "yellow zone".

PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 9

Fajr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:45	12:30	4:15	5:53	7:30
JAMAAT 5:20	1:15	4:30	5:56	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION