

Your Right to Know

Safar 23, 1442 Hijri

"We'd be wrong if we think that rape is a matter of law and justice. It'd be a mistake to assume that a law passed in parliament will reduce the number of rape incidents." SHIREEN HUQ OF NARIPOKKHO AT A PROTEST RALLY



I think we could lose the White House and both houses of Congress, that it could be a bloodbath of Watergate proportions." US REPUBLICAN SENATOR TED CRUZ



"I wish good health to all the people around the world who are fighting the ills of the evil virus." NORTH KOREA LEADER KIM JONG UN



Washing hands of workers' plight While trafficked workers thrown into jail,

recruiting agents remain untouched with no authentic paperwork to prove links

ZYMA ISLAM

While 81 migrant workers returning from Vietnam were incarcerated for more than a month, before finally being released from prison over this past week, the recruiting agents who sent them to the Southeast Asian country in the first place are going scot-free and denying all claims of trafficking.

They are emboldened by the fact that such workers' recruitment, employment, and paper processing are dealt with by up to three layers of recruiting agents.

Often the agency who represents a worker on his/her emigration clearance -that means the agency officially sending the worker abroad -- has never even met the worker or seen the worker's paperwork.

So, in the case of the migrant workers returning from Vietnam, all paper trails point back to the agency listed on the emigration clearance -- the agency the worker had never met and has little evidence against.

These agencies are now denying trafficking charges, saying they had not even met the workers and their licences were misused by others.

Meanwhile, the intermediary agencies too are flat-out denying sending the workers to Vietnam, confident that the only thread linking them to this trafficking are the workers' verbal testimonies.

Over the last few months, Brac's Migration Programme unit interviewed 120 migrant workers in Vietnam to map out the actors involved.

By collecting the Bureau of Manpower, Employer and Training (BMET) smart cards from the workers, they found that 11 recruiting agencies were involved in getting these workers' emigration clearances.

Through worker testimonials, Brac identified a further 11 agencies involved in passport and visa processing, as well as 52 local recruiting agents.

BMET clearance records collected by Brac link M/S A Jharna Trade International with sending at least 28 workers, who did not get their promised jobs, to Vietnam.

The clearances stated the workers were employed for 13 Vietnamese companies; apart from one company -- Nam Phuong Xanh Company Ltd based in the city of Vung Tau -- none of the other companies have a digital presence.

However, the proprietor of M/S A Jharna Trade International, Shanto Das, claimed SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Demo in front of JS calls

for drastic reform of laws

to end rape culture

Anti-rape protests continued across the country for the

and rights organisations took to the streets to condemn the

growing incidents of rape, sexual harassment and violence

Avenue and National Press Club areas.

women's rights, staged demonstrations.

In Dhaka, protests were held in Shahbagh, Manik Mia

In front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, activists from

The protesters were chanting slogans condemning the

They were holding placards inscribed with slogans such

Before the programme started, police obstructed the

as: "Stop protecting rapists", "Mukti chai, Rokkha Noi", "If you justify rape, you are a rapist too."

protesters saying they would not allow demonstrations

there, after which more protesters joined and began

impunity of rapists and demanding prompt action to bring

different organisations, including those working for

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

against women.

the rapists to book.

chanting slogans.



People from all walks of life, including activists of different rights organisations, protest in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, demanding reforms in the country's rape law.

SK ENAMUL HAQ

HSC: TECHNICAL EDU BOARD

Uncertainty over grading of 2.8 lakh

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Around 2.8 lakh Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) students, under Bangladesh Technical Education Board, are uncertain as to how they would be graded in the newly adapted HSC grading system.

The students take courses like HSC Vocational, HSC Business Management, and Diploma in Commerce that require them to sit for the final exams after finishing grade XI.

The scores of their final exams get added to their HSC results, said at least two officials of the technical education

"We are facing some difficulties. It is still uncertain how we will evaluate these candidates without their final exams' scores," said a top official of the board.

It is decided that their results would be announced based on their JSC and SSC results. However, we are yet to know about what to do with the final exam scores of these students, the official added.

The government on Wednesday decided to cancel this year's HSC and its equivalent exams due to health-safety concerns amid the coronavirus crisis.

Instead, candidates would be evaluated based on their SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Covid-19 death toll now 5.5k

23 die, 1,203 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid-19 death toll reached 5,500 as the health directorate reported 23 deaths in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The daily death toll was at its peak between June and August, shows DGHS data, with June 30 seeing the highest, 64, number of

deaths. This daily figure has largely been below 30 from the beginning of September till date.

A health expert said the transmission of coronavirus continues with no intervention and may accelerate as the cold season approaches.

The total number of confirmed cases rose to 3,77,073 as the DGHS SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Man arrested 'Death penalty over gangnot a solution' rape of teen

Indigenous community protest student's murder after rape in Dinajpur

STAR REPORT

Against a backdrop of ongoing countrywide outrage and protests against rape, the prime accused of a gang-rape of a teenage girl from Lalmonirhat was arrested on Friday night, and a demonstration was held yesterday demanding justice for the murder of a woman in Dinajpur, killed allegedly after rape.

From Patgram, Lalmonirhat, the 15-yearold orphan was travelling from her aunt's house to an uncle's house at Kaunia upazila in Rangpur by train on the evening of October 6.

When the train arrived at Kakina Railway Station in Kaliganj upazila, the girl SEE PAGE 10 COL 1 Marital Rape, Child Marriage

Issues that are now even more pressing

NILIMA JAHAN and ZYMA ISLAM

No conversation about rape is complete without recognising this: marital rape, and underage marriage "under special circumstances" are both legal in this country.

As it currently stands, girl children can be forced into sexual relationships without their consent as long as the perpetrator is legally married to them, even though it amounts to marital rape.

Underage marriage allowed under Section 19 of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, which states, "... if a marriage is solemnised in such a manner and under such special circumstances as may



be prescribed by rules in the best interests of the minor, at the directions of the court and with consent of the parents or the guardian of the minor, as the case may be, it shall not be deemed to be an offence under this act.

Critics of the law have pointed out time and again that "special circumstances" are not defined. The law also does not mention when and how a court can make such

And as per Section 375 of the Penal Code, "Sexual







Beyond public knowledge, Panchakhanda Basudeva Angan, a 1,000-year-old temple in Supatala village of Sylhet's Beanibazar, houses two more statues -- one of a Dhyani (meditating left bottom) Buddha and another of a Garudashin Vishnu (Lord Vishnu sitting or riding on Garuda, a mythical bird-like creature) -- alongside one Basudeva statue.

PHOTO: TARUN SARKER, SAGAR DAS CHOWDHURY

On the road to **ANCIENT SRIHATTA**

Two ages-old statues found in Sylhet temple open new avenue of study

TARUN SARKAR

As per the record, Panchakhanda Basudeva Angan, a millennium-old temple in Supatala village of Sylhet's Beanibazar, housed only a Basudeva statue.

Beyond public knowledge, however, two more unrecorded ancient statues are kept in the historic temple. During a visit to the temple in late June, the statues of a Dhyani (meditating) Buddha and a Garudashin Vishnu (Lord Vishnu sitting or riding on Garuda, a mythical bird-

like creature) were found. The Basudeva statue, depicting Lord Vishnu in Samapadasthanak posture in which the feet are firmly arid squarely planted, was mentioned in various journals while the two other statues remained unheard of.

In Achyut Charan Choudhury's book "Srihatter Itibritta", some publications of Bangladesh Asiatic Society, and a memorandum published by the temple in 2006 state

that there is only the Basudeva statue in the temple. But the expedition found all three statues are kept in the Sri-Mandir of the Panchakhanda Basudeva Angan and

being worshiped. Finding of the Dhyani Buddha proves the existence of Mahayana Buddhist while the Garudashin Vishnu is the only statue of its type to be found in the region.

Two neighbourng villages, Supatala and Nidhanpur, under Panchakhanda Pargana of ancient Srihatta, are very much known to historians and archaeologists. These places are crucial for understanding the ancient time of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Death penalty

At least 500 people had joined the rally in front of the parliament building, where Feminists Across Generations an inter-generational feminist alliance -- declared a national emergency, demanding an end to all gender-based

They said the death penalty is not a solution; they want an end to rape

Rights activists further demanded the urgent and immediate adoption of a 10-point demand issued by the Rape Law Reform Coalition, including redefining rape to ensure that it covers all forms of non-consensual penetration, whether penile or not, and irrespective of gender, reviewing the Evidence Act 1872 to remove all scope for institutional victim blaming, ensuring protection and access to justice without discrimination for all rape victims, and conducting sensitisation trainings for police, lawyers, Judges and social workers so rape survivors are treated with respect and due responsiveness during reporting, investigation and prosecution.

Shireen Huq, founder member of Naripokkho, said that women of different generations have come together to fight this long battle.

"Our mothers have struggled before us and we are standing here so that the younger ones gain strength from this... If we think that rape incidents will come down by passing a law in parliament, then it is wrong. We look forward to a day when there will be no more such incidents, no more sexual violence...," she said.

Shireen believes that death penalty is not the answer to stop rape.

"How many people will we deal with through the death penalty? The problem is all around us, the rapists did not come from an alien planet -- they are our brothers, our relatives. Children need to be taught to respect women from an early age, only then this problem can be solved," she said, adding, "We'd be wrong if we think that rape is a matter of law and justice. It'd be a mistake to assume that a law passed in parliament will reduce the number of rape incidents.

Protesters demanded women's right to occupy all public spaces without the fear of violence, at any time and for any purpose. They wanted families to hold their boys and men accountable for such violence, which they perpetrate. Rapists will no longer be sheltered in homes, schools and workplaces, they

Protests against the growing incidents of rape, sexual harassment and other kinds of violence against women have been rampant across the

Some protesters also called for the resignation of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal over the government's "failure" to stop the alarming rise in sexual violence against women and children.

'NONE OF US ARE SAFE' At a rally in front of National Press Club around 11:00am, Gonoshasthaya

Zafrullah iounaei has been in a fury, protesting against the recent spate of rape incidents, violence killings. Now, none of us are safe. The court," the press release added.

people's rights have been taken away. Just as sexual abuse is a crime, so is

people have woken up and history will not forgive those who have deprived the people of their rights.

sentence for rapists.

prevalent in the country.

"These heinous incidents were taking place under political patronage. These crimes were never tried. There was power on one hand and lack of justice on the other.'

rise, Śaki said.

Dhaka University Professor Asif Nazrul said this government is patronising casino traders, murderers and looters.

Various organisations human chains, protest rallies and demonstrations in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The streets resounded with fiery speeches and slogans, demanding speedy trials of rapists and also free and fair elections to establish a democratic government.

Speaking at a human chain held in front of the National Museum, Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of SUJON (Citizens for Good Governance), said perpetrators of violence against women remain active under political

He added the coronavirus pandemic has been joined in the pandemic of iolence against women. Women are being abused everywhere, from their homes to their workplaces.

SUJON has declared nationwide human chain programmes, demanding justice for violence against women and the punishment of perpetrators.

A press release of the Police Headquarters (PHQ) yesterday said there is a lot of reaction among the youth and on social media against heinous crimes like rape and violence against women and it has finally

Police are working with utmost professionalism, dedication and sincerity in every case of violence against women and children, including rape, to ensure social discipline and

submitted before a court for trial after completing the investigation of all Chowdhury said, "The entire nation cases as soon as possible. We firmly believe that proper punishment for these criminals will be ensured in the against women and extrajudicial shortest possible time through the

Issues that are now even more

intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under 13 years of age, is not rape."

Individuals under the age of 16 are defined as children according to Bangladeshi law (although United Nations recommends the age be 18 years), but forced sex within the confines of marriage is legally acceptable as long as the girl is 13 years and over.

"The law is saying, if a girl of 13 vears old is forced into having sex by her husband, she cannot file a rape case. And by this, we are legally endorsing the rape of a 13-year-old girl. And we are legally endorsing the rape of child bride, which is absurd and archaic," said Taslima Yasmin, assistant professor at Dhaka University's law

Bangladesh is one of the 36 countries in the world where a 13-yearold girl can be forced into submitting to a sexual relationship -- which is equivalent to marital rape -- because she can be "married" under special circumstances and as such it is still

A February 2019 study conducted by Brac's Advocacy for Social Change department found that almost nobody considers marital rape as violence against women. The survey chose 4,800 respondents -- 600 from each division -- and found that only four percent of the people considered spousal rape to be a form of violence. That marital rape is neither recognised nor criminalised is a reflection of what society thinks of men's entitlement over women's

Seventy-year-old Dola Akter Reba, general secretary of the National Child Forum of World Vision Bangladesh, spoke about how difficult it is to educate people about marital rape.

"Most of the time, in rural areas, when we campaign among communities and try to educate parents about how marital rape can harm the body and mind, they don't want to hear this from us. According to them, after marriage, everything is legal between husband and wife. Those who

follow the religions blindly don't pay heed to us, and we face more challenges," said Dola.

The forum works on 88,000 children in 54 upazilas.

A new report published jointly last month by Girls Not Brides Bangladesh and Plan International explored the legal loopholes making it difficult to protect child brides from rape.

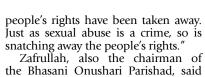
"This is contradictory to Bangladesh's international commitment to protect the girl child from sexual exploitation, particularly its obligations to ensure the best interest of the child under the UN Child Rights Convention. Such a provision also encourages the culture of forced marriage of a child rape victim with her perpetrator in order that the perpetrator can get away with the crime easily," said the report.

allow for underage marriage, there is no special provision that allows for the

in Humanitarian Settings in South Asia: Study Results from Bangladesh and Nepal", where child marriage was termed "a fundamental violation of human rights."

"About 59 percent of women aged 20-24 in Bangladesh were married under the age of 18," said Jean Gough, regional director, Unief South Asia, and Björn Andersson, regional director, UNFPA Asia-Pacific, in their jointly

51 percent.



The rally demanded a 50-year prison

Addressing the rally, which demanded a 50-year prison sentence for rapists, Ganasamhati Andolon Coordinator Zonayed Saki said that political power has been involved in rape incidents becoming increasingly

The government talks big but takes no initiative to implement laws in favour of women. There had been no justice in cases such as those of Tonu's murder, Taqi's murder, the killing of Sagar and Runi, or Abrar's murder. That was why today, incidents like rape and extrajudicial killings have been on the

of justice, they "Speaking occasionally catch a couple of small fish but do not take any initiative to eradicate their root," he said.

WHAT POLICE SAY caught the attention of law enforcers.

peace in the country, the PHQ added.

"The investigation report will be

are educated sometimes get convinced, but those who are not educated or

The report points out that the law does not require obtaining the consent of a minor in an application for child

marriage under the "special provision". It also mentions that although there are special provisions in the act that dissolution of underage marriage.

Last Wednesday, the United Nations released a report, titled "Child Marriage

written foreword.

According to Unicef data from 2017, 22 percent were married before the age

Bangladesh's own statistics also paint a similar picture. A multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) done in 2019 shows the child marriage rate stood at



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A woman sitting on the street in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh area, wearing a saree printed with anti-rape slogans. A group of students yesterday demonstrated there yesterday.

Washing hands of workers' plight

that he had allowed another agency to use his licence by "mistake".
"I am a new business owner; I had

just gotten the licence. A partner wanted to use my licence and I had allowed him. I had nothing to do with this," he

While he refused to name his partners", stating that he is in the middle of financial negotiations with them, worker testimonials taken by Brac identified Al Noman Human Resource, M/S Satkhira International, M/S Advent Overseas Ltd, and Star Line Associate as the intermediary agents.

Pranesh Kumar Mahot, a workshop welder, told The Daily Star that he was sent to Vietnam by an Al Noman Human Resource agent named Saiful "I was recruited by a Bogura-based

dalal called Asgor Ali who introduced me to Al Noman Human Resource," he When asked about his clearing agency, M/S A Jharna Trade International, Pranesh replied, "What is

Pranesh said he was given an ad by Noman Human Resource stating "Urgent recruitment at Vietnamese

Shipyard". A copy of the ad received by this correspondent states that the agency sought 250 men for the shipyard, and promised a monthly salary of \$510-650

"I spent Tk 3.5 lakh to go there after

being promised a monthly salary of \$650 to work in a place called Keppel Shipyard. I didn't even earn \$100," There was no Keppel Shipyard job waiting for him -- in fact, the BMET

clearances obtained by Jharna Trade show no Keppel shipyard, as per Brac's After landing on January 28, Pranesh was made to sit around for more than a week. On February 7, he and 11 others

he flew to Vietnam with were taken to

a dry dock. "We all gave interviews and only four of us got jobs, while the rest didn't. worked there for a month before being fired. After that, I just sat around unemployed for five months," said

The Daily Star contacted two of the intermediary agents sending workers through Jharna Trade.

Both Star Line Associate's proprietor Firoz Md Mansurul Hoque and M/S Satkhira International's proprietor Sk Nazrul Islam told this correspondent that they never sent any workers to Vietnam.

However, as part of an ongoing investigation into these recruiting agencies, Rab-3 identified Firoz as the brother of a Vietnam-based Bangladeshi labour handler named Mostafa.

Eighty-one Bangladeshi workers from Vietnam, and two workers from Qatar, returned on August 18, following their imprisonment in these countries for involvement in criminal activities, according to local police.

A Dhaka court had sent them to jail on these charges on September 1.

On September 21, the High Court issued a rule asking the government to explain why directives should not be given to the authorities concerned to free the 83 Bangladeshi migrant workers.

NOT WHAT THEY SIGNED UP FOR Jharna Trade's Shanto Das claimed, "I have spoken to the agents in Vietnam. They [the workers] were given jobs, but they refused to work."

To prove his statement, he gave

this correspondent copies of four

resignation letters in English, signed by

The workers' families, however, said they were duped into signing the letters. The letters, addressed to the management board of Nam Phuong Xanh, stated, "I would like you to give me permission to not continue working at the Company because I plan to return to Bangladesh. This is my personal desire. I also confirm that when I go to work, the Company pays me full. I also confirm that Company has arranged the work for me, but I don't like this job, so

I do not work.' This correspondent called the family of one of the signees -- a worker named Md Milon Miah -- to ask why Milon resigned from his job.

"My brother never held a permanent

position in Vietnam. He went there on January 4 or 5, and got 10 days of work. After that, he was sitting around unemployed for a month. Then he got seven more days of work, before that job too vanished," said Shilon Miah, speaking on behalf of his brother who was until recently in jail.

That was the last job he had -- he was unemployed up until he came back to Bangladesh. He did not get a single coin in wages for the jobs he did," he said. "Milon only studied up till class

five and cannot understand or write in Milon's signature on the letter was his name written in English in disjointed,

spaced-out block letters. "In June, after six months of unemployment, we told the recruiting agent to bring Milon back if he cannot give him a job. The agent agreed and said Milon needs to sign a letter saying he is leaving Vietnam willingly," Shilon

That was the "resignation letter", he

As agents at all levels deny charges of trafficking, evidence states otherwise. Mizanur Rahman was sent to Vietnam by M/S Mam and Mam Overseas, according to his BMET card.

His family spent Tk 3.5 lakh to send him to work at a furniture factory, stated his brother-in-law Kamrul. But the visa application letter submitted on his behalf to the Vietnam Embassy in Dhaka on January 10 this

year, only sought a visa for four months. At that rate, the eighth-grade graduate would have needed to earn close to a lakh each month just to get back the money he spent to go there.

construction company based in a Vietnamese city of Thu Dau Mot and his family had no idea about any of this. His family had no idea about any of

"He has never physically gone to the embassy in Dhaka as far as we know," said Kamrul, "nor did he get any job in Vietnam. That is why he went to seek help at the Bangladesh Embassy in

Hanoi and ended up in jail." Similarly, another worker Kashem Miah was sent on a DN "entrepreneur" visa by Mam and Mam Overseas that was only valid for a month -- January 3

to February 2, 2020. When M/S Mam and Mam Overseas was called to ask why they applied for such a short "entrepreneur" visa for the worker, the agency's manager Habibur

Rahman denied being involved. "We were fooled by a business partner. Our business partner is Noorjahan Akhter, who was arrested by the police. She owns 25 percent of the

Akhter, a Wage Earners' Welfare Board accounts section official and a former data entry operator at BMET, and her husband Md Abdus Satter were arrested in July for trafficking and are

currently out on bail Anamul Huq and Shariful Islam too were sent as "entrepreneurs" for one month each, by Jharna Trade and M/S Estema International Recruiting Agency respectively.

FAKE PAPERS While fake documents reigned supreme

when sending such workers to Vietnam, none of the government agencies concerned caught it. For example, before Shital Chandra Sarker was sent to Vietnam by M/S Shandhani Overseas, the recruiting

agents got certificates from Nadia

Furniture and Medallion Furniture,

stating that he worked there between September 2014 and September 2015. One letter stated that "he was instructed in professional business skills, such as: introducing products in a scientific way, finding, caring, maintaining relations with customers, solving problems at the request of

However, Shital's brother Sanjay claimed that Shital never worked in any furniture store in Dhaka.

"We lived in Dhaka a few years back, but he was not working anywhere. He had just got back from Dubai and was living off his savings. Then, we shifted to our village and he got involved in farming," said Sanjay.

Shital's certificates were attested by a High Court lawyer and an assistant director of BMET, and the attestors were verified. The papers were then

again attested by an assistant secretary of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and an assistant secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At least 14 other workers had

similar certificates from all major furniture stores in Dhaka, and attested by the above-mentioned government officials -- but as The Daily Star could not independently verify these, hence it is refraining from naming them. Shandhani's MD Mosleh Uddin,

asked about Shital's case, denied sending any workers to Vietnam. "My licence was used by someone

else and I was billed to bring back 21

workers at Tk 34,000 each," he alleged.

BMET clearance records link
Shandhani with sending 20 migrant workers to Vietnam. The clearances stated the workers were being sent to work in four companies, of which only

one had a Yellow Pages listing. Worker testimonials collected by Brac found two other intermediary agencies, Mash Career Services and Kazi Enterprises.

Mash Career's agent Shohag is already in jail, having been arrested by Rab in July.

Kazi Enterprise' Moshiur Rahman denied being involved. "I just run a photocopy business in Paltan and my customers are agents. I never sent anyone to Vietnam," he said.

Only two local recruiting agents drew up notarised contracts with the workers they sent, rendering them culpable for trafficking.

As per copies of these contracts

received by this newspaper: Anowar Hossain of Five Star Aviation signed a contract with Nur Hossain and sent The invitation letter was sent by him via Jharna Trade; and Mojammel Hague from Cumilla signed a contract with Polash Ahmed, Rayhan, Masum Miah, Rubel and Masud, promising them salaries of \$400-600 and sent them using Shandhani Overseas.

Other agents who denied sending workers abroad, when contacted, include M/S Afeef International.

Jashim Uddin, the proprietor of the recruiting agency, alleged that his licence was misused by a "syndicate". "Ask the migrant workers if they

have ever met me. They will not be able to claim that I ever took a single Taka from them, or met them even once," he said. To clear his name, Jashim also submitted letters directed towards the director general of BMET and the

secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, claiming that he is not at fault and is a victim of forgery. BMET DG Md Shamsul Alam said the agencies in whose name

the clearances have been taken are responsible for the situation. Their names and licences were used to send these workers abroad. It does not matter if the violations were caused by other agents using their licences -- it was in their name, and

they are being held responsible," he CR Abrar, executive director of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, however, said local and intermediary recruiting agents too have

to be held responsible. "Right now, the law does not recognise their role but they are the main nexus between recruiting agencies, the government, and the workers. The licensed recruiting agencies never have local branch offices and are always reliant on local agents to recruit, and most of the workers get their clearances through the local agents. This needs to be brought under

the purview of law. Either way, the BMET DG's words bear hope for Raju Ahammad, despite not knowing who he was actually defrauded by.

The worker from Sharsha in Jashore only knows that he was recruited by Port City International -- and has no idea that his only contracts are with M/S Rezwan Overseas, an agency he does not even recognise.

In the absence of documents, Port City's proprietor Md Badiul Alam denied all allegations when contacted by this correspondent.

'I spent Tk 4 lakh to go to Vietnam. only got VND 5.5 million, which is equivalent to Tk 20,000. Please help me get my money back," Raju

EU commissioner tests positive for Covid-19

AFP, Brussels

EU commissioner Mariya Gabriel has tested positive for Covid-19, she said vesterday, the first top Brussels official known to have caught the coronavirus.

Gabriel, the EU commissioner for research and innovation, had already announced on Monday that she would self-isolate after a member of her team tested positive for the virus. "After a first negative #COVID19

test on Monday, my second one is positive," said Gabriel, who is Bulgaria's representative to the 27-member EU executive. "I have been in self-isolation

since Monday and continue staying at home, following the established regulations. Keep yourself healthy and stay safe!" she said. The EU commission is headquartered in the Belgian capital

of Brussels, which is currently one of the worst hit cities in Europe by the virus, along with Madrid and Paris. The commission's president Ursula von der Leyen on Monday briefly went

into self-isolation after a close contact with a positive case, but her two tests came back negative. Last month the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, was forced to postpone a European leaders' summit for a week after a

security guard in his team tested

positive. Uncertainty

FROM PAGE 1 results of Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and their equivalent tests.

The evaluation of the candidates would be published by December this Candidates of technical courses said whatever the government decision is

should be announced soon to reduce their concerns. Contacted Bangladesh Technical Education Board Chairman Morad Hossain Mollah said that they were

well aware of the issue. "We are working on the alternatives of giving grades of these students. We will take decisions keeping the students' benefits in mind", he told The Daily Star.

He also said that around 2.8 lakh students were expected to take part in the exams under the technical education board. With Wednesday's decision

more than 13.65 lakh students,

who were expected to sit for the

HSC or equivalent exams, will pass automatically. An advisory committee was also formed to chalk out how students who had changed education groups

The committee would also decide how JSC and SSC grades would be used for evaluating the candidates. This is the first time the HSC

after SSC would be evaluated.

exams have been cancelled since the introduction in 1964. The closure of schools for over six months has led to the cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in

Educational activities of about four rore students are being hampered due to the pandemic. This year's Primary Education Completion and its equivalent exams

and Junior School Certificate and its

equivalent exams were also cancelled

due to the pandemic. Covid-19 death

same 24 hours yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1 reported 1,203 new infections in the

Against 10,859 tests in 109

Covid-19 laboratories across the country yesterday, the positivity rate was 11.08 percent. "The daily positivity rate has come down to 12 percent naturally. So, the transmission may or may not

increase in the coming days as there

is no intervention," Prof Nazrul Islam,

member of the National Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19, told The Daily Star yesterday. Coming down heavily on the health authorities, the former vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), said, "Now, there are no programmes to ensure people are wearing masks,

washing hands frequently. "On the contrary, we are not getting he right information in this regard." Among yesterday's 23 deceased, who all died in hospitals, 15 were

males and eight females.

maintaining physical distance, and

Of the deceased, two were aged between 41-50 years, five aged between 51-60 years, and the rest 16 were above 60 years of age. Four of the deceased were from

the Chattogram division, while the

remaining 19 were from Dhaka, added the press release. In 24 hours till yesterday morning,

1,453 Covid-19 patients have recovered; this raised the total number of recoveries to 2,91,365, and the recovery rate to 77.27 percent.



This fallen tree branch covered with clothes of all kinds is located at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan, which has remained closed due to the pandemic. However, just because the gates are locked doesn't mean there is no one there, as floating people are taking advantage of the situation by occupying the park with their belongings. This photo was taken on Friday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Look beyond the perps

Political patronage of ruling groups allowed rape incidents to happen, say delegation of activists after visiting Noakhali victim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rape incidents like the one in Noakhali's Begumganj could take place due to political patronage of ruling groups and it is important to look at the source of power of these perpetrators, said a delegation of six women who visited the rape victim in Noakhali on October 9.

Led by Rahmuna Ahmed, a writer, researcher and anthropologist, the delegation issued the statement yesterday.

Other members of the delegation were Bithi Ghosh, a teacher and cultural activist; Jannatul Mawa, political activist and photographer; Mahfuza Haq, cultural and human rights activist; Shipra Bosh, development activist; and Taslima Akhter, organiser of workers and women's movement.

They visited Noakhali's Begumganj from Dhaka and exchanged views with a crosssection of society, including the Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent

They also spoke to the rape victim. The statement said the victim will not get

justice if the ongoing movement is limited only to demanding arrest and punishment of the perpetrators. Questions must be raised and movement waged against the source of power of the perpetrators, who are patronised by the ruling force.

"It was not possible to ensure a safe life and safe movement for women keeping the source of power of Delwar gang hidden," the delegation said in the statement.

During their meeting with the Deputy Commissioner and SP of Noakhali and officer-in-charge of Begumganj Police Station, they called upon the authority figures to play the highest role in ensuring safety of the rape victim.

They also called upon all to wage a strong social movement against all incidents of rape and repression against women including the one in Noakhali.

While talking with the rape victim, they assured that she is not alone in the movement against rape. They also said her courage will strengthen the movement against rape and rape culture.

According to the case statement filed by the victim on October 4, the perpetrators including the main accused Badal, "Delwar Bahini" chief Delwar, Rahmat Ullah and Abdur Rahim, among others entered the house of the victim and beat up her husband on the night of the incident.

They took him to the adjacent room and

Later, they tortured the victim and assaulted her while filming the incident on

At one point, locals gathered around the house hearing the victim's cry for help. The accused then threatened to kill her if she spoke about the incident, and left.

The victim, fearing for her life, fled her house and has been living elsewhere since

The perpetrators, however, contacted her

Children speak their minds

Taking part in online dialogue, they seek justice for rape, killings STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children from different districts in the country demanded justice for the recent killings and rapes in an online dialogue yesterday.

They also highlighted the issues of physical abuse and mental health of children, early marriage, drugs, cyber bullying and safety measures taken against those, said a

They placed those topics before the officials of the ministries of social welfare and women and children affairs, who were present at the event. As a part of World Children's Day and Child Rights

Week-2020, Save the Children, Bangladesh in association with six other organisations arranged the programme. The week is being observed from October 5 to 11.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Social Welfare Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru said his ministry will stand beside the children to fulfil their logical demands.

If any non-government organisaiton is interested in working for the underprivileged children, the ministry will extend their helping hand, he added.

Onno Van Manen, country director of Save the Children in Bangladesh, stressed the importance of a state and its responsibilities towards children in their overall development.

He pointed out that child labour, violence, early marriage are the drawbacks in establishing the rights of

Reassuring the attendees, Rafiqul Islam, director general of the Social Welfare Department, said the department is committed in ensuring child rights.

He also reminded the children to use the online platform with caution.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry Joint Secretary Md Mohibuzzaman and Director of Child Rights Governance and Child Protection, Save the Children in Bangladesh Abdullah Al Mamun were also present at the programme, among others.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 5 inaugurated the World Children's Day and Child Rights

95 waterways accidents killed 149 in 3 months

Says report by 2 orgs Unb, Dhaka

Although launch capsizes have decreased, accidents involving different types of vessels take place on inland waterways round the year, and deaths continue, said a report of two nongovernment organisations yesterday.

At least 149 people, including 22 women and 44 children, were killed, while 26 were injured and 58 remained missing in a total of 95 waterway accidents in the last three months.

The 58 missing victims vere considered deceased, as they were not found, later raising the death toll to 207, revealed a survey of Green Club of Bangladesh (GCB) and National Committee to Protect Shipping, Roads and Railways

The fatal accidents took place in different inland waterways and coastal areas between July 1 and September 30 across the country.

The survey was conducted by taking information from 24 national and 10 regional dailies, and nine news portals and agencies, says a press release.

The report said 86 people, including 10 women and 31 children,

Law, enforcement of HC guidelines urgent

Speakers tell webinar on emergency medical services for road accident victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Formulation of law and enforcement of High Court guidelines are needed to ensure emergency medical services for road accident victims, speakers have said at

While sharing statistics, Taqbir Huda, research specialist at Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), presented a comparative analysis between the HC guidelines on such emergency medical services and provisions endorsed by the Road Transport Act, 2018.

"Provision no-13 of the guideline ensures protection of people who volunteer to help the road accident victims from police harassment and from obligation to give testimony before the court. Again, provision 14 states that it is the duty of police officers to ensure treatment for road accident victims. If ambulance is not available, police will use their own vehicles to take the victims to the nearest hospital. However, these provisions are not covered by the Road Transport Act, 2018," said Taqbir.

The Daily Star, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and ALAP jointly organised the webinar titled "Emergency Medical Services for Road Accident Victims" on October

Barrister Sara Hossain, a Supreme Court lawyer; Dr Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, resident physician and assistant professor, in charge of medical emergency, BIRDEM; and Ilias Kanchan, Nirapad Sarak Chai chairman, spoke at the

It was moderated by Advocate Rashna Imam, founder, Academy of Law and Policy.

At the beginning of the session, the speakers presented

statistics of road accidents. According to Nirapad Sarak Chai, in 2019, 4,356 people were killed and 6,953 injured by road accidents. That means, on an average 11 were killed and 19 injured every day in the country last year.

Dr Ashraf Uddin Ahmed said, "All the doctors must have life support and basic trauma management training so that they can provide emergency care to any road SEE PAGE 4

1.37cr primary students to get stipends thru' digital service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is going to distribute stipend to over 1.37 crore primary students through digital financial service Nagad.

Yusuf Ali, project director of Primary Education Stipend Project (third phase), said they have received a ministry order and are now working on the

Nagad is a venture of Bangladesh Post Office.

The government sends the money directly to a student's mother through mobile banking services four times a year -- in April, July, October and January.

To qualify for the stipend, selected students must have 85 percent monthly attendance. They also need to take all school examinations and attain a minimum of 33 percent marks in each subject.

Each student fulfilling these criteria gets Tk 150 per month, as a single beneficiary of a family. Similarly, two children from the same family receive Tk 300 per month, whereas in case of three and four children, the stipend is Tk 400 and Tk 500 per month, respectively.

Yousuf said Nagad will receive 0.70 percent money as service charge.

My City, My Home

Writing contest seeks entries from women

LABIBA KABIR, Star Books Desk

"Where do I belong? What is the character of my city? Who decides where is the power? Who do we celebrate and forget?" The identity and role of a woman as part of a city is fraught with expectations, restrictions, trials, and in some These are the questions and issues a writing competition

of UK-based organisation Sampad South Asian Arts and Heritage hopes to address, said eminent dancer and art director Lubna Marium, while moderating a virtual press meet held last week.

The competition is seeking submissions from women: short fiction, poetry, non-fiction, diary entries, and just about any written format that explore women's relationship

Submissions need to be within 1,000 words and sent in by December 30, 2020. Women aged 16 and above from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the UK are eligible to participate.

All interpretations of "city and home" are encouraged. Write-ups in English, Bangla, and Urdu are welcome; the

judges will be bilingual and fluent in all three languages. In the third week of October, writing workshops with Selina Hossain and other eminent writers will be introduced, along with informal meet-ups, which will continue to serve as safe spaces for women even after the

competition ends. The winning entries will be published in a book to be launched in Bangladesh in June, 2021, and top three writers will receive £200 pounds.

The initiative is unique because it offers a platform for artistic and emotional engagement between women from all backgrounds, free of cost.

One of the biggest British Asian art-based organisations in the UK, Sampad has teamed up with dancer and choreographer Sharmila Banerjee, writer and yoga professional Shazia Omar, Lubna Marium, theatre actor

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Sunnydale School, Brac, IUB, Naripokkho and other institutions are expected to participate.

Jyoti Sinha and many others to host the event.

Submissions and queries can be sent to sampad.org.uk/ project/mycitymyhome2020/.

Follow Daily Star Books on Facebook and @thedailystarbooks on Instagram for more book-related news.

Eight accused remanded over Ctg gang rape

Two confess, three remanded in another similar case in Savar STAR REPORT

A Chattogram court yesterday placed eight accused including a woman on remand in connection with a case filed for gang-raping a housewife in the port city's Chandgaon area early Friday, reports our staff correspondent from Chattogram.

Inspector (Investigation) Rajesh Barua of Chandgaon Police Station said the court placed Jagangir, a CNG-run autorickshaw driver, also a key accused of the gang rape case, on a five-day remand while the rest seven on a three-day each.

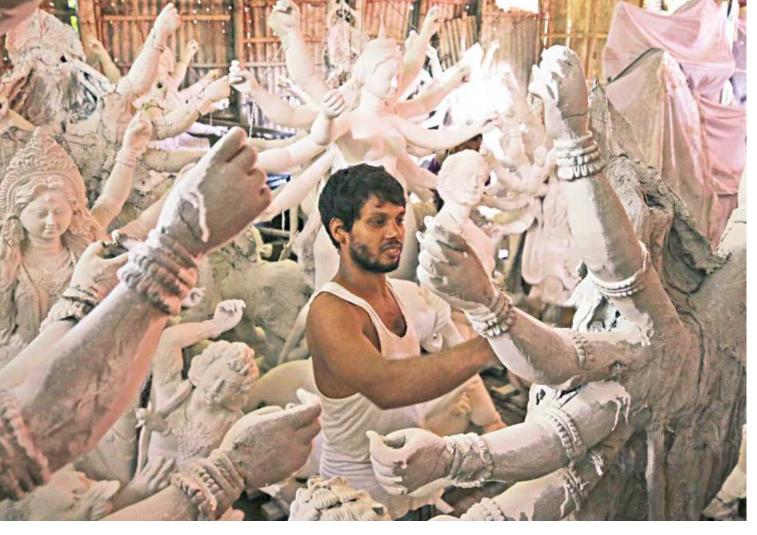
The other accused are Md Yousuf (32), Md Ripon (27), Md Sujan (24), Debu Barua alias Jobayer Hossain (31), Md Shahed (24), Rintu Datta (30), and Monowara Begum alias Lebur Ma (55). The court of the metropolitan

magistrate, Khairul Amin, passed the remand order after police produced the accused before it with a seven-day remand prayer, said court sources. Jahangir is known as an informant of

Chandgaon Police Station, said locals. However, the law enforcers are yet to

confirm it. incident The took place around 1:30am on Friday and was led by Jahangir while the victim was returning home from Chattogram's Rangunia upazila.

The victim is now undergoing



Durga Puja, the biggest religious celebration of the country's Hindu community, will not be the same this year, with Covid-19 playing spoilsport in the festivities. The home minister also said last week that no procession will be held for the ceremonial immersion of the idol. However, artisans across the country are still putting in the hours at their workshops, like this young man in Chattogram city's CRB area. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

PROTEST AGAINST RAPE

DU student falls sick on third day of hunger strike

UNB, Dhaka

The Dhaka University student who started fast-unto-death on Thursday demanding arrest of former Ducsu vice-president Nurul Haque Nur and five others in a rape case fell sick yesterday.

She refused to get admitted to a hospital, and vowed to continue the strike until Nur and Hasan Al Mamun, suspended convener of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, are arrested. On September 20, she filed a case

against Nur, Hasan, Nazmul Hasan Sohag and Saiful Islam, joint conveners of the platform; Nazmul Huda, vice-president of the platform and DU student Abdullah Hil Baki with Lalbagh Police Station. Another case was filed with Kotwali Police Station against the six on September

21 under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act by the same She started the hunger strike at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture accompanied

Chhatra League. DU Proctor AKM Golam Rabbani said they are looking into the issue.

by some classmates and activists of

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League and Bangladesh Students Union expressed solidarity with the student.

Leaders and activists of the two organisations brought out separate protest rallies on Friday.



A large part of Kachari Ferry Ghat-Joybangla Bazar Road lies broken at Char Gobindapur in Mymensingh. The photo was taken recently.

Mymensingh City Corporation

Wards new, problems old

Dilapidated roads, waterlogging make residents' lives miserable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Among the 12 new wards under Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC), people of three wards (Ward-31, 32, 33), which are on the other side of Brahmaputra river, regularly have to deal with dilapidated roads amid serious waterlogging.

Development work has not started in these wards, said residents.

On April 2, 2018, the municipality was upgraded to the 12th city corporation in the country. The gazette for MCC, which covers around 91 square kilometres, was published on October 14 that very year.

During monsoon, conditions got way worse in many areas of the wards, due to dilapidated roads.

The road leading to Kachari Ferry Ghat from Joybangla Bazar in Ward-31 is in critical state, as roads have not been repaired for years. Hundreds, including many students, use the road regularly. But only battery-run easy-bikes and motorbikes ply it.

"It's very difficult to travel from Joybangla Bazar to Kachari Ferry Ghat due to innumerable potholes," said Enamul Haque from Char Gobindapur

The situation is even more dreadful when a critical patient needs to be carried through the road, said Moazzem Ali, a resident of Char Ishwardia village.

Md Asaduzzaman Jamal, councillor of the ward, said a project of Tk 7 crore has been approved to repair all broken roads. The tender is under process and priority, he assured.

work will start within a month.

Shambuganj Bazar, a large market in Ward-33, is an important business centre, but there is no sign of development, although Tk 2 crore has been realised as taxes from there per year.

The ward includes Raghurampur, Shambhuganj Bazar and Char Jhaogara. Even the garbage discarded at the

bazaar is not cleaned up regularly, and the place is one of the dirtiest among the city corporation markets, said Alhaj Abdul Haque, a rawhide trader at the

Some 150 families have been facing waterlogging at the cattle and rawhide market areas for six months, as there is no sewerage system to drain rainwater, said the trader.

trade licence, which was Tk 300 earlier, but civic amenities have not improved at the bazaar, said traders. Shahjahan Munir, councillor of the

Now a trader must pay Tk 800 for

ward, said they are working with utmost sincerity to resolve the issues.

Due to waterlogging, many residents in the ward are living a miserable life, and unplanned construction of buildings and fish cultivation made waterlogging significantly worse this year, claimed the councillor.

Contacted, MCC Mayor Ekramul Haque Titu said several development projects for the new wards are pending with the ministry concerned for approval. After everything gets sorted, necessary development work would start with high

IUB holds online academic award ceremony

CITY DESK

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) awarded its most talented students through a virtual ceremony on October 8.

Deputy Minister of Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury was chief guest of the programme, says a press release.

The welcome speech was given by IUB Registrar Md Anwarul Islam, while IUB Treasurer Khandker Md Iftekhar Haider delivered the vote of thanks.

Along with Mohibul, Chowdhury, IUB trustee board chairperson; Prof Milan Pagon, vice chancellor (acting) of the university; and deans of five different schools at IUB, spoke on the occasion.

In his speech, the deputy minister said there are lots of limitations and challenges in online education system, but Covid-19 has provided the opportunity to maximise usage of existing infrastructure and

This year, 470 students from Spring 2019, 485 from Summer 2019, and 571 from Autumn 2019 semesters were recognised. Certificates and award vouchers were also distributed among 190 students for being on Dean's Honor List and Vice Chancellor's

JP picks Nasir Uddin for Dhaka-18 by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition party in parliament, Jatiya Party, has picked Mohammad Nasir Uddin Sarkar to contest the Dhaka-18 by-polls.

JP Chairman GM Quader yesterday interviewed the party's prospective candidates and made the announcement, said a press release issued by the party.

secretary Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu,

co-chairs Mujibul Haque Chunnu and Salma Islam and presidium member Rezaul Islam Bhuiyan were present at the meeting of the selection board, chaired by GM Quader. The meeting was held at the JP chairman's Banani office,

added the release. Awami League has already selected Habib Hasan while

BNP has picked SM Jahangir for contesting the by-polls in The by-elections will be held on November 12. As

per schedule, the deadline for nomination submission s October 13. They will be scrutinised on October 15. October 22 has been set as the last date for candidacy

Dhaka-18 seat fell vacant after the demise of former minister and Awami League presidium member Sahara Khatun on July 9 this year.

Book on Pranab Mukherjee published

A tribute book written on former Indian president and a true friend of Bangladesh Pranab Mukherjee, highlighting his life and contribution, was published through a webinar in Dhaka yesterday.

Writer Salam Azad edited the book titled "Bharat Ratna Shri Pranab Mukherjee Smarak Grantha". Publishing Department of Soheli Mirza Cancer Foundation, which published the book, organised the webinar.

"This is my tribute to Pranab Mukherjee. This volume is not for sale. But a person and organisation can collect it," said Azad. Pranab served as the 13th president of

India from 2012 to 2017. He was the first Bangalee president of the India. In a political career spanning five

decades, Pranab Mukherjee was a senior leader in the Indian National Congress and occupied several ministerial portfolios in Indian government. He was awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, in 2019. Pranab Kumar Mukherjee died on August 31, 2020.

The book of over 200 pages contains condolences of different politically and socially important persons across the globe issued after the death of Pranab.

It also contains a good number of articles and photo albums highlighting his life and contributions.

Stay alert of conspiracies

Obaidul Quader

Obaidul Quader tells party leaders, activists; alleges BNP of diverting anti-rape movement

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday called upon party leaders and activists to remain alert against conspiracies, saying that a vested quarter is out to capitalise on the

anti-rape movement. He was addressing an extended meeting of Gazipur district unit of AL through videoconferencing from his official residence on parliament premises.

Quader, also road bridges transport and minister, said government of Minister Sheikh Hasina has tougher stance not only against rape or violence on women, but also against any sort of criminal activities, irregularities hand.

and corruption. Accused in every incident have been

arrested and brought to justice, he said, adding that the government -- in a self- be evaluated while forming committees motivated way -- carried out drives against as there is no room for wrongdoers and illegal casinoes and irregularities and opportunists in the party.

corruption in different sectors, including

The AL general secretary said BNP is making "evil attempts" to divert the antirape movement to a different direction to oust the government.

"BNP is carrying out their conspiracies to give a violent shape to a peaceful movement. The government remains alert about their plots and efforts are underway to identify those who are spreading rumours," he said.

He sounded a note of warning that if anybody out ill-efforts to create an unstable

situation, the government will handle it with an iron About the formation of committees of different organisational units of the party, he said tested and devoted workers must

Look beyond

over phone and threatened to release the recorded video of the incident on social media if she did not go back to her house and agree to their demands. As the victim did not agree to their immoral proposals, they released the video on social media on October 4.

As the video circulated widely, police located her and questioned her about the incident, following which she

iled the case against her perpetrators, the statement reads. The whole country was sparked with outrage after the recorded video of the incident was released on social media.

Eight accused

treatment at a One-Stop Crisis Centre of Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, two arrestees among five confessed to raping the 23-year-old woman in Savar, at a court in Dhaka yesterday, reports our Savar correspondent.

The court also placed three arrestees -- Antar (19), Jotirmoy Saha (20), and Milon (21) -- on a three-day remand each after Ashulia Police Station Inspector (Operation) Abdur Rashid, the investigation officer, produced them before it, court sources said.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Moniruzzaman recorded the confessional statements of Saiful Islam (18), and Pappu Saha (19), under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), said the IO.

According to the case statement, Saiful and Antar were earlier introduced with the woman, a resident of Mirpur in Dhaka. On September 23, they took the woman to an abandoned place in Ashulia where the two along with seven others raped her.

Law, enforcement | 95 waterways

accident victim. BRTA while issuing driving licence can also ensure that all the drivers have first aid training | and 23 remained missing in defore having a driving licence. Besides, trauma centres should be established all along the highways."

"Our ambulance services should also be improved significantly. Ambulances should be equipped with life support equipment and manned by at least one paramedic," he said. Focusing on the legal aspects, Barrister Sara Hossain said,

"Lawyers mobilise more to get a full-fledged law ensuring medical services for road accident victims. Meanwhile, we should circulate the High Court guidelines that guarantee emergency medical treatment for them." "We are also legally bound to abide by the guidelines.

These guidelines should be translated into Bengali and circulated widely through mainstream and social media," she added. Ilias Kanchan, who has been protesting for safer road

for more than 27 years, emphasised investment, political will and coordination between ministries. He said, "Road transport sector should not be operated only under the communication ministry. This sector has a

lot to do with public health." There should be a coordinating body between health and communication ministries to monitor medical services

for accident victims. "We also need a lot of investment to build safer roads, to provide medical care and to improve public transport condition. For such a large scale investment, motivation to

reform the sector from the political leadership is essential," said Ilias Kanchan.



women and 31 children, lost lives, while six were injured 48 accidents in August

At least 18 people were killed in a trawler capsize in Uchitpur haor on August 5. As per the report, 41

people, including six women and five children, were killed, while 10 were injured and 17 remained missing in 37 accidents in July.

Ten accidents took place in September, where 22 people lost lives, 10 received njuries and 18 were missing. Ashis Kumar Dey, general

secretary of GCB, said deaths continue due to accidents of trawlers and other small vessels. He blamed lack of proper

monitoring, a huge number of illegal vessels, unskilled operators and drivers for the accidents.

however said Ashis, accidents waterway decreasing, and identified some major reasons for publishing reports in different mass media shipping regarding sector's irregularities, and strengthening coast guard and river police petrol, among other factors.



Bangabandhu Avenue, one of the major thoroughfares of the capital, is in a miserable state, as the road is filled with potholes with asphalt slowly chipping away. This is bad enough during any regular day, but it gets significantly worse after it rains, as puddles of water fill the cracked spaces. This photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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ADMISSION IN MASTERS, MBA, EMBA & BBA PROGRAMS Spring- 2020 Semester

Program	Minimum Qualification/Requirement
M.Sc. in EEE M.Sc. in Civil Engg. Master in Arch.	Minimum CGPA of 2.50 out of 4.0 in B.Sc. Engineering/B.Arch. and must have a minimum GPA of 3.50 out of 5.0 in either S.S.C or H.S.C and must not have a GPA less than 2.00 in other examination
M.S. in Mathematics	Bachelor Degree in Math/ Statistics/Physics/Engineering or equivalent degree.
MBA & EMBA	Minimum CGPA of 2.25 on 5.0 /minimum GPA of 2.0 on 4.0 /No third division/Class in more than one Public Examination.3 or 4-Year Bachelor Degree. Minimum 2 Year Job Experience [for EMBA]
BBA Link (https:/iums. aust.edu/admission)	Total GPA 6.00 in SSC+ HSC (with additional subject). Sum of equivalent GPA for GCE O & A-Level: Minimum 7.00 with at Least 3.00 at any Level [Grade Equivalence: A=5, B=4, C=3 D=2 & E=1]
Candidates can apply through online from 12/10/2020 using "https://jums.aust. edu/pg-admission". Application forms	

(hardcopy) are also available at the respective Department Office. For detail information, contact respective Department or

Registrar's Office. Application fee is Tk. 500/-. Last date of submission of all applications is 12/11/2020

Children

needs of the children.

FROM PAGE 3 Week, aimed at raising awareness of the rights and

divisions, city corporations, Unicef, Save the Children, Plan International, Aparajeyo Bangla and Shishu Odhikar Forum, as well as other national and international organisations

have chalked out elaborate

programmes marking the

Different ministries,

World Children's Day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day and is celebrated on November 20 each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare, according to the United Nations.

World Health Organization

Bangladesh **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

The World Health Organization Emergency Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar Bangladesh invites proposals/bids using "Two-envelope system" from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. CXB RFP/2020/020: Renovation works at 5 Locations in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh

Deadline for the submission of RFP: 17:00hrs, 25 October 2020.

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Emergency Sub-Office, Hotel Sea Place Ltd (western wing-1st floor). Kolatali Road, Cox's Bazar-4700, Bangladesh.

A village that thrives on eco-friendly product

Over time, Bhalain village in Naogaon's Mahadevpur upazila has adopted the name of 'pakha graam', where eco-friendly handheld fans are made from leaves of palmyra palm trees.

Out of the two hundred families that live in the village, 35 kilometres away from Naogaon town, most are now involved in making the handheld fans, also known as 'taal pakha'.

Almost everyone in Bhalain -- young and old, schoolchildren and housewives -- use their spare time in the making of the fans, contributing to attaining economic stability of their households and ultimately that of their rural economy.

While speaking with the villagers recently, many said it is possible for one person to make about Tk 70 from making 100 hand fans every day.

'Taal pakha' maker Anwar Hossain has been in the trade for 20 years. He and his wife with three female workers can make around six to seven thousand fans in one month, he said.

After finishing household chores at their own houses, the workers come to his house in the morning and start making fans.

A palmyra leaf is first cut to give it a rounded shape with its main stem sticking out, so it can be used as the handle of the fan. Fine stalks, carved out of bamboo strips and dipped in paint, are then sewn on both sides of the leaf's outer edge. Finally, colourful motifs are hand-painted on the fan.



Anwar's wife Shiuli Begum said she helps out her husband every day while she also takes care of their two children and everyday household work.

Saidul Islam, a 'taal pakha' trader, said about 25 years ago, when his family did not own any land, he started to help his father in his hand fan trading business. They used to buy hand fans from Bhalain village and sell those at different markets in Naogaon.

The family turned the corner after they started to make the fans themselves. Now Saidul employs five female workers to make hand fans at a small factory set up in

He now makes a decent living from the factory that produces over eight thousand pieces of hand fans per month. With the income, he made an earthen two-storey house on six decimals of land and bought a motorbike too, said Saidul, whose father still makes hand fans at 65 years of age.

Each piece of palmyra leaf, the main component, is bought for Tk 5 from different parts of Naogaon. After spending about Tk 3 more on bamboo stalks, paint, threads and labour, each fan usually sells for Tk 10 to 12, he said.

Cutting and preparation of the components are usually done by male workers, while the sewing, painting and finishing touches are done by female workers. Sometimes students in their free time also take part in the work alongside

Although 'taal pakha', made in Bhalain village, is now available in all major cities including Dhaka, Chattogram Sylhet and Rajshahi for their high demands, its makers are sometimes incurring losses due to fund shortage, Saidul said.

In order to recover the money invested throughout the year, they are often compelled to sell the excess production at low prices during cooler months, when demand for hand fans diminishes.

Bhalain village fan makers would find it greatly beneficial if commercial banks would come forward to offer them small loans at affordable interest rates, Saidul



A worker makes a handheld fan, top left, from leaf of palmyra palm trees in Bhalain village of Naogaon's Mahadevpur upazila.



A farmer works at his vegetable garden in Kagoil union of Bogura's Gabtoli upazila.

PHOTO

HOMESTEAD GARDENING

An endeavour to help Bogura farmers

The Covid-19 crisis has made lives of many people, especially marginal farmers, miserable. To overcome this situation, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Bogura has recently taken an initiative to distribute free vegetable seeds and money among the marginal farmers under the gardening project.

As many as 3488 farmers in the district have got the benefit from the project till now, said Md Shahaduzzaman, additional deputy director of DAE in Bogura.

He added that they have lunched a year-round gardening project around homesteads in the district in June this

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that a number of farmers in Kagoil union of Gabtoli upazila were enjoying the benefit from the project.

Palash Candra, a farmer of Daskandi village in the upazila, said he has been harvesting organic vegetables from the garden for the last two months.

Earlier, he got 12 types of vegetable seeds and a cheque of Tk 1935 to make garden from the DAE authority, said the 60-year-old grower.

Mahbubur Rahman of Hizli village said "Our income has decreased amid the pandemic. The price of every vegetable item has increased significantly due to the prolonged flood but we are enjoying

benefit from the gardening project." Monwara Begum of Koichar village

said the greater benefit is that they are getting chemical-free vegetables from this

Tabibur Rahman, another grower of Kagil village, said "We are getting sufficient vegetables from this onedecimal garden in the crisis time. After seeing my garden, many villagers started homestead gardening.'

Farmer Shahidul Islam of Koichor village said "Before starting this homestead gardening, I spent Tk 400 to Tk 600 for buying vegetables for my extended family every week, but now I can save this money."

However, every farmer of the union is not getting the opportunity. Only selected farmers are getting this benefit.

Upazila sub-assistant agriculture officer Zannatul Mohol said a farmer, who has one decimal of land at their home yard to make garden, is getting the benefit.

Only 32 farmers in a union have got this benefit from the gardening project, said the officer.

Bogura DAE Deputy Director Md Dulal Hossain said they started the year-round project to support the farmers amid the pandemic.

He further added that in the first phase, 32 farmers in a union parishad got the opportunity to make the garden.

Criminals stab driver, loot auto-rickshaw

Criminals stabbed a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver and snatched his vehicle in Sarail upazila on Friday.

Critically injured Abdul Hai, 13, son of Helal Mia of Swalpo-Noagaon village under Sadar union, was first taken to Sarail Upazila Health Complex, from where he was shifted to a hospital in the capital for better treatment.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said two unidentified men boarded on Hai's auto-rickshaw in guise of passengers on Friday night.

When they reached near Islamabad area the duo stabbed Hai on his throat from the back and took away his vehicle. Later, another auto-rickshaw driver Milon, who was crossing the area, found Hai lying in a pool blood, rescued the boy and took him to the upazila health complex.

Bakki Mia, general secretary of Sarail upazila Auto-Rickshaw Workers and Owners' Association, said another such incident occurred at the same place about one and a

OC of Sarail Police Station Nazmul Ahmed said they were investigating the matter.



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তারিখঃ ২২/০৯/২০২০খ্রিঃ

One killed, 10 injured in villagers

clash Our Correspondent, Kushtia

A man was killed in a clash between two rival groups of villagers over establishing supremacy in their locality in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Farid Hossain, 45, was son of late Moin Farazi of Bhabanipur village.

Meanwhile, at least 10 people from both sides were injured during the clash that took place around 10:00am.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Model Police Station Kamruzzaman Talukder said there had been a feud between two rival groups, one led by local Awami League (AL) leaders Liaquat Ali, Badshah Mia and Reza Mandol and the other by Rashidul and Labu for long.

As a sequel to the conflict, both the groups locked in a fierce clash that left Farid killed and 10 others injured, police said.

^{বাটাজোর-সরিকল ভায়া আগরপুর ও শিলন্দীয়া রাস্তা}

দ্রুত মেরামত এবং সংস্কারের দাবীতে

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ

নং-যবিপ্রবি/রেজিঃ(একাঃ)/১৪২৩/এম.ফিল ও পিএইচ.ডি ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি/২০১৯-১৮৭৬ (একই স্মারক ও তারিখ স্থলাভিষিক্ত)

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(পূৰ্ণকালীন এম.ফিল ও পিএইচ.ডি প্ৰোগ্ৰাম)

অত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পূর্ণকালীন এম.ফিল ও পিএইচ.ডি প্রোগ্রামে ২০২০-২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষের জুলাই-২০২০খ্রিঃ সেমিস্টারে পরিবেশ বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি, জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড টেকনোলজি, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল এন্ড প্রডাকশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ফার্মেসী, রসায়ন, ইংরেজি এবং মার্কেটিং বিভাগে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তির জন্য নিমুবর্ণিত শর্তে নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচেছ।

১. এম.ফিল প্রোগ্রামে আবেদন করার সাধারণ যোগ্যতা ও শর্তাবলীঃ

- a) Candidates must have Master's Degree/an equivalent Degree obtained from this University/a recognized University in the relevant/related subjects.
- Candidates having at least second class Honours Degree with 50% marks in total or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) and second class Masters Degree with 50% marks or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) shall be eligible for admission. In case of Degree pass Examination, candidates must have one first class or CGPA 3.5 (out of 4) either at Degree Pass Course or Master's level.
- Candidates having M.B.B.S degrees with 50% marks in total or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) shall be eligible for admission to the M. Phil Program.
- ২. পিএইচ.ডি প্রোগ্রামে আবেদন করার সাধারণ যোগ্যতা ও শর্তাবলীঃ
- a) Candidates must have Master's Degree/an equivalent Degree obtained from this University/a recognized University in the relevant/related subjects. Candidates should have a strong academic record with not less than 55% marks or CGPA 3.25 (out of 4) both in Honours and Master's degree and have minimum 2 (two) years teaching/research experience in any recognized institution.
- Candidates, who have four years Honours with MS/M.Sc degree can be enrolled directly to the PhD Program.
- Candidates having M. Phil Degree obtained from any recognized University shall be eligible for admission to the PhD program.
- Candidates having 3rd division at any level shall not be eligible for admission to the PhD program, except in cases of candidates having first class both in Honours and Master's level or CGPA 3.50 with an outstanding contribution in the field of their research interest and have minimum 2 (two) years teaching/research experience in any recognized institution and have minimum 2 (two) research publications in recognized journals. This clause may be relaxed for candidates having outstanding research carrier with the approval of the Academic council.
- The teachers of this University or of any other University who do not satisfy the condition given in clause 2 (a) of the ordinance shall be eligible to apply for admission to the PhD program. It is noted that they have minimum 2 (two) years teaching experience in any recognized university and have minimum 2 (two) research publications in the field of their research interest in standard academic journals.

৩. আবেদন ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা দেওয়ার নিয়মাবলীঃ

১ ও ২ এ বর্ণিত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীগণকে স্ব-স্থ বিভাগ থেকে এম.ফিল আবেদন ফরম বাবদ ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা এবং পিএইচ.ডি আবেদন ফরম বাবদ ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা রশিদের মাধ্যমে জমা দিয়ে ফরম সংগ্রহ করতে হবে। প্রাথমিক আবেদন ফরম সঠিকভাবে পূরণ করে আগামী ১৯/১০/২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে (ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) স্ব-স্ব বিভাগে জমা দিতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের সঙ্গে অবশ্যই সকল পর্যায়ের পরীক্ষার সত্যায়িত মার্কশীট, সনদপত্রের অনুলিপি, তিন কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সদ্য তোলা রঙিন ছবি ও ১ সেট গবেষণা প্রস্তাব/সিনপসিস জমা দিতে হবে। চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীগণকে নিজ নিজ নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে লিখিত অনুমতিপত্র আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। গবেষণা প্রস্তাব ব্যতীত/ক্রটিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ বা বিলম্বে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র (নির্ধারিত সময়ের পর) গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

8. ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত যে কোন তথ্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট (https://just.edu.bd) অথবা স্ব-স্ব বিভাগ হতে জানা যাবে।

/স্বাক্ষরিত প্রকৌশলী মোঃ আহসান হাবীব

GD-1613

People of Batajore and Sharikal union, under the banner of 'Bhuktabhugi Purbanchalio Janagan', form a human chain in Barishal's Babuganj upazila, demanding immediate steps to repair the 20 kilometre-long Batajore-Sharikal road that connects Birshrestho Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Library.

রেজিস্ট্রার যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়



Republicans risk election 'bloodbath'

Warns Senator Cruz

AFP, Washington

US Republican Senator Ted Cruz warned Friday that his party could face a "bloodbath of Watergate proportions" in next month's election if voters are pessimistic about President Donald Trump's handling of the economy and the pandemic.

"I am worried.... It's highly volatile," Cruz, a staunch Trump ally, told CNBC television, although he noted that Trump could win re-election if voters feel the country is recovering from the pandemic-driven economic crisis.

"If people are going back to work, if they're optimistic, if they're positive about the future, we could see a fantastic election," Cruz said.

But he also spoke of the possibility of landslide losses similar to those in 1974, when Democrats expanded their majorities in the House and Senate in the first election following the Watergate scandal. Jimmy Carter won the White House in 1976 in the first post-Watergate presidential election.

"If on election day people are angry and they've given up hope and they're depressed... I think it could be a terrible election," Cruz added.

"I think we could lose the White House and both houses of Congress, that it could be a bloodbath of Watergate proportions."

Democrats are widely expected to keep the House in the November 3

Republicans hold a 53-47 advantage in the Senate, but that majority is under threat with Republican senators in several battleground states trailing in polls behind Democratic challengers



White House hosted Covid 'superspreader event'

Says Fauci, warns Trump's talk of 'cure' misleading

Top US virus expert Dr Anthony Fauci has criticised the White House for hosting a gathering last month that has been linked to an outbreak of Covid-19.

The event at the White House on Saturday 26 September, for the president's nomination of Amy Coney Barrett as a Supreme Court justice, is thought to be the root of the localised outbreak.

Dr Fauci, a member of the White House coronavirus task force, said the gathering was a "superspreader event".

More than 30 people are thought to have been infected at the White House ceremony including the president himself.

Trump has been talking up an experimental Covid-19 treatment he received as "a cure," but Fauci, who gave an interview to CBS News on Friday, said referring to it as such may cause "confusion."

Asked about Trump's effusive praise for Regeneron's antibody treatment, Fauci said that talking about a "cure" could be misleading because it hasn't yet been proven, and the drugs that are currently available have only been shown to have modest to moderate results.

"We don't have any indication -- I think you really have to depend on what you mean by a cure, because that's the word that leads to a lot of confusion," he said.

He warned everyone against coming to a conclusion without scientific evidence.

Fauci was also asked about the low level of mask use at the White House until recently, and what lessons could be learned.

"I think the - the data speaks for themselves," the scientist said of maskwearing. "We had a super-spreader event in the White House and it was in a situation where people were crowded together and were not wearing masks. So the data speak for themselves.

Fauci said he had faith that the president's medical team wouldn't allow him to o out campaigning while he is still contagious.

"I can tell you, they are going to be testing him to determine the trajectory and whether he gets to the point where he's not infected," he said. "I can guarantee you that they will be testing him before they let him go out."



A ballerina wearing a gas mask performs as demonstrators take part in a protest against Chile's government, in Santiago, on Friday. Analysts fear that the anniversary of the 2019 protests, triggered last October by a rise in the price of transport, will unleash a new wave of unrest that came to a halt in March due to the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

FIGHTING OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION

Rivals trade accusations of breaching ceasefire deal

Armenia and Azerbaijan traded accusations of new attacks yesterday in breach of a ceasefire deal to end nearly two weeks of heavy fighting over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The two sides agreed to implement the ceasefire from noon (0800 GMT) yesterday, after 11 hours

of talks in Moscow, but it took only minutes after the deadline for their forces to claim new attacks.

An ethnic Armenian enclave of Azerbaijan, Karabakh broke from the country's control in a war in the 1990s that killed some 30,000 people. Its separatist government is

strongly backed by Armenia, which like Azerbaijan gained independence with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, and Baku accuses Yerevan of occupying the region.

Karabakh's declaration of independence has not been recognised by any country -- even Armenia -and the international community regards it as part

of Azerbaijan. The heaviest clashes since the war erupted on

September 27, with more than 450 people reported dead, thousands forced to flee their homes and fears the fighting could escalate into a devastating all-out

Armenian defence ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan said that "in disregard of the previously declared humanitarian ceasefire Azerbaijani forces had launched

> Azerbaijan's defence ministry said Armenian forces had also carried out attacks on the

an attack on the frontline at

frontline and were shelling two populated areas. An AFP journalist in Stepanakert reported hearing blasts in the city before the

ceasefire took effect, but it was calmer after noon, with isolated explosions in the

The ceasefire deal had been announced after talks between the two countries' top diplomats mediated by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. He said the truce had been agreed "on humanitarian grounds" and would allow for exchanges of prisoners

N Korea displays huge new ICBM

North Korea showed off a gigantic new intercontinental ballistic missile yesterday that analysts described as the largest of its kind in the world, as the nuclear-armed country defied the coronavirus threat with thousands of maskless troops taking part in a military parade.

The ICBM, carried on a transporter-erector-launcher with no fewer than 11 axles, rolled through Kim Il Sung square as leader Kim Jong Un watched from a rostrum, footage from state broadcaster KCTV showed.

It was the "largest road-mobile liquid-fueled missile anywhere" tweeted Ankit Panda of the Federation of American Scientists.

Nuclear negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington have been deadlocked since the collapse of the Hanoi summit early last year and the North is widely believed to have continued to develop its arsenal throughout the diplomatic process.

The missile could see its first test around the time of the inauguration of the next US presidential term, as a signal to either Donald Trump or Joe Biden.

Kim -- wearing a grey suit -- told the crowd Pyongyang will continue to strengthen our military for self-defence and deterrence".

"If you don't have the strength, you'll have to wipe away the tears and blood that flow with your two clenched fists," he added.

Kim said the North had not seen a single infection, and he repeatedly thanked his citizens for their efforts. He also wished all the coronavirus infected people a sound recovery.

India needs US as ally

to counter China threat

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday urged closer ties with India

as he warned of China's growing might on its doorstep, amid a flurry of

in this fight," Pompeo said of his four-way meetings earlier this week in

They absolutely need the United States to be their ally and partner

"The Chinese have now begun to amass huge forces against India in the

"The world has awakened. The tide's begun to turn. And the United

Following the Tokyo meeting, Pompeo will travel shortly to New Delhi

Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun will also travel to India next

Tensions have soared between India and China since violent hand-

China has acknowledged suffering casualties but has not revealed any

Citing national security grounds, New Delhi has since banned dozens

Despite wide concerns about China, India has historically shied away

from formal alliances with outside powers under its doctrine of "strategic

of Chinese apps including TikTok, the blockbuster video-sharing platform

to-hand fighting in the Himalayan region of Ladakh in June that left 20

with Defense Secretary Mark Esper for annual talks with their Indian

States under President Trump's leadership has now built out a coalition

diplomacy between the world's two largest democracies.

week to prepare the meeting, the State Department said.

which had counted on India as its largest overseas market.

north," Pompeo told radio host Larry O'Connor.

that will push back against the threat," he said.

Indian troops dead.

Tokyo with his counterparts from India, Japan and Australia.

Says Pompeo ahead of US-India talks

GREEN FUTURE

The car that emits water

India unveils hydrogen fuel cell vehicle

India has conducted the first successful car run trial using hydrogen fuel cell with indigenous technology that is expected to cut down emission of harmful greenhouse gas from fossil fuel.

The trial was done by the stateowned Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and global technology company KPIT headquartered in Pune city using first Hydrogen Fuel Cell (HFC) prototype car, a sedan, running on an indigenously developed fuel cell stack in Pune, said the Science and



Technology today in a statement. The FC vehicle should run for approximately 250km under typical Indian road conditions at moderate speed of 60-65km per hour. The entire fuel cell stack and its associated components with power train were retro-fitted in a standard 5-seater sedan car.

The fuel cell is a low temperature PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) type fuel cell that operates at 65-75 degree centigrade, which is suitable for vehicular applications.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell technology uses chemical reactions between hydrogen and oxygen (from air) to generate electrical energy.

The fuel cell technology emits only water, thus cutting down the emission of harmful greenhouse gases along with other air pollutants. The technology, with further adoption and use, is poised to make the world a cleaner place with reduced air pollution levels, said the statement.

The trials were run on a batteryelectric passenger car platform retrofitted with the fuel cell stack.

HFC technology requires a much smaller battery, compared to large battery used in buses and trucks, for a very large operating range. Hence, HFC technology offers more promise for the Commercial Vehicle segment.

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern takes pictures with supporters during a campaign outing at Mangere town centre and market in Auckland, New Zealand, yesterday. New Zealanders head to the polls on Oct. 17 with popular 40-year-old Ardern seen as a frontrunner to secure a second term in office.

Germany says Thai king cannot rule from there

REUTERS, Berlin

Germany's foreign minister has said that Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn should not be conducting politics from the European country, where he spends much

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas responded to a question by a Greens member of parliament in the Bundestag on Wednesday at a time that King Vajiralongkorn's monarchy faces unprecedented calls for reform from protesters in Thailand.

"We have made it clear that politics concerning Thailand not be conducted from German soil," Maas told parliament. "If there are guests

in our country that conduct their state business from our soil we would always want to act to counteract that." Thousands of protesters have been

holding demonstrations in Bangkok over

recent months calling for reform of the

monarchy to curb the king's powers and for the removal of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, and a new constitution and elections.

King Vajiralongkorn, 68, has been on Thailand's throne since 2016, but spends much of his time in Bavaria, where his 15-year-old son is at school.

> Thai protesters have complained about the cost of the king's stays in Europe as well as his absence from the kingdom. The protesters seek to reduce the king's powers under the constitution, which specifically allows him to exercise powers when he is outside Thailand without appointing a regent.

Protesters also want to remove his direct control of a royal fortune valued in tens of billions of dollars and some units of the army. Protesters in Thailand on Thursday said they would rally again next Wednesday and expected a big turnout to pressure the government to meet their demands.

Thunberg urges US voters to pick Biden

AFP, Stockholm

Swedish environmental campaigner Greta Thunberg vesterday asked US voters to choose Joe Biden, saying the outcome of the US presidential election was crucial for fighting climate change. The 17-year-old founder of the "Fridays for Future" climate

protests said on Twitter: "I never engage in party politics. But the upcoming US elections is above and beyond all that. "From a climate perspective it's very far from enough

and many of you of course supported other candidates, Thunberg acknowledged. "But, I mean...you know...damn! Just get organized and get everyone to vote #Biden," she added.

Biden is challenging US President Donald Trump, who dismisses climate change warnings and who has been dismissive of Thunberg.

Biden has reached out to Thunberg and hailed her commitment to the fight against climate change.

Last month, the respected magazine Scientific American also urged readers to vote for Biden on November 3, the first time in almost 200 years that it has taken a political stance."Think about voting to protect science instead of destroying it," editors said in comments relayed by Thunberg along with her endorsement.

Teen one step from becoming world's first millennial saint

AFP, Vatican City

A British-born Italian teenager who dedicated his short life to spreading the faith online and helping the poor was scheduled to be beatified by the Catholic Church yesterday.

That leaves him just one miracle away from becoming the world's first millennial

Internet and computer-mad youngster Carlo Acutis, who died of leukaemia in 2006 aged 15, was placed on the path to sainthood after the Vatican ruled he had miraculously saved another boy's

The Vatican claims he interceded from heaven in 2013 to cure a Brazilian boy suffering from a rare pancreatic disease.

He will be beatified in Assisi, the home of his idol Saint Francis, who dedicated his life to the poor. Some 3,000 people are expected to follow the ceremony on giant screens set up in five squares in the central Italian city.

Eucharist", was born in London to Italian parents, and moved to Milan with them as a young boy. "He was considered a computer genius...

Acutis, dubbed "the cyberapostle of the

But what did he do? He didn't use these media to chat, have fun," his mother Antonia Salzano said in an interview with Vatican News. Instead, "his zeal for the

Lord" drove him to make a website on miracles, she said.

The millennial, whose body lies in state in Assisi, dressed in a tracksuit and trainers, also warned his contemporaries that the internet could be a curse as well as a blessing.

Acutis was religious from a young age, despite his mother saying his family had rarely attended church.

When he wasn't writing computer programmes or playing football, Acutis was known in his neighbourhood for his kindness to those living on society's margins.

Scope for massive scale-up of investment in mental health

STAR HEALTH DESK

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilising efforts in support of mental health.

Mental health is one of the most neglected areas of public health. Close to 1 billion people are living with a mental disorder, 3 million people die every year from the harmful use of alcohol and one person dies every 40 seconds by suicide. And now, billions of people around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a further impact on people's mental health.

Yet, relatively few people around the world have access to quality mental health services. In low- and middle-income countries, more than 75% of people with mental, neurological and substance use disorders receive no treatment for their condition at all. Furthermore, stigma, discrimination, punitive legislation and human rights abuses are still widespread.

The limited access to quality, affordable mental health care in the world before the pandemic, and particularly in humanitarian emergencies and conflict settings, has been further diminished due to COVID-19 as the pandemic has disrupted health services around the world

Primary causes have been infection and the risk of infection in long-stay facilities such as care homes and psychiatric



institutions; barriers to meeting people face-to-face; mental health staff being infected with the virus; and the closing of mental health facilities to convert them into care facilities for people with

Move for mental health: let's invest On this year's World Mental Health Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO), together with partner organisations, United for Global Mental Health and the World Federation for Mental Health, is calling for a massive scale-up in investment in mental health.

During the past few months, WHO has issued guidance and advice on mental health for health workers and other frontline workers, managers of health facilities, and people of all ages whose lives have changed considerably as a result of the pandemic. With the disruption in health services, countries are finding innovative ways to provide mental health care, and initiatives to strengthen psychosocial support have sprung up. Yet, because of the scale of the problem, the vast majority of mental health needs

remain unaddressed. The response is hampered by chronic under-investment in mental health promotion, prevention and care for many years before the pandemic.

Countries spend just 2% of their health budgets on mental health

Countries spend on average only 2% of their health budgets on mental health. Despite some increases in recent years, international development assistance for mental health has never exceeded 1% of all development assistance for health. This is despite the fact that for every US\$ 1 invested in scaled-up treatment for common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, there is a return of US\$ 5 in improved health and productivity.

World Mental Health Day: an

opportunity to commit The World Mental Health Day campaign offers opportunities, primarily online given the continuing pandemic, for all of us to do something life-affirming: as individuals, to take concrete actions in support of our own mental health, and to support friends and family who are struggling; as employers, to take steps towards putting in place employee wellness programmes; as governments, to commit to establishing or scaling-up mental health services; and as journalists, to explain what more can and must be done to make mental health care a reality for everyone.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)

DID YOU KNOW?



Heat has a stronger effect on health in less developed cities

Compared to high income cities, less developed cities in Brazil have a higher hospitalisation rate associated with increased heat exposure, according to a new study published recently in PLOS Medicine by Yuming Guo of the Monash University, Australia, and colleagues.

Heat exposure, which will increase with global warming, is associated with increases in mortality and morbidity but little is known about the socioeconomic disparities in vulnerability to heat. In the new study, researchers collected daily hospitalisation and climate data in the hot season during 2000 through 2015 from 1,814 Brazilian cities covering 78.4% of the Brazilian population. 49 million hospitalisations were studied.

For cities of lower middle income, as classified by the World Bank, every 5°C increase in daily mean temperature during the hot season was associated with 5.1% increase in all-cause hospitalisation; and for cities of middle income, every 5°C temperature increase was associated with a 3.7% increase in hospitalisation. While for cities of high income, the temperature increase was only associated with a 2.6% increase in hospitalisation.

"Increasing heat exposure along with global warming could be a potential driver for exacerbating inter-city health inequalities," the authors say.



HEALT H bulletin



Early physical therapy for acute back pain and sciatica improves disability

Patients with acute low back pain and sciatica who are referred early to physical therapy see improved outcomes at 6 months, according to a randomised trial in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Some 200 adults who presented to primary care with low back pain and sciatica that had lasted no more than 90 days received education about low back pain either alone (usual care) or with a referral to start physical therapy within 3 days. Physical therapy included six to eight sessions over 4 weeks, plus home exercises.

The primary outcome — the change in patient-reported disability at 6 months — significantly favored physical therapy over usual care (mean reduction: 22.4 points vs. 17.0 points on a 100-point scale). The difference between groups persisted at 1 year. Several secondary outcomes, including self-rated back pain, also favoured physical therapy

Editorialists call the observed effects of physical therapy "average, modest, but nevertheless, beneficial."

The adverse effect of overuse of hand sanitizer

Prof M Karim Khan

We all know that the COVID-19 pandemic situation is the new normal that is going to be here for quite some time. To keep the disease away, we are asked to wear a mask, wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a sanitiser and maintain social distance. We all are trying to keep ourselves safe by following the mentioned health rules and are being benefited as well.

The use of hand sanitisers has increased a lot after the COVID-19 outbreak and to some extent, we are using it too much. Some of us have become obsessed with it. There are various types of hand sanitisers available in Bangladesh. Some are in gel, some as liquid and some of them are in spray form. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has prescribed the ingredients of hand sanitisers. It should be Ethyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol based but it should never contain methyl alcohol, or commonly known as methanol.

There are many side effects of using the hand sanitizer, such as ocular irritation, vomiting, conjunctivitis, oral irritation, cough, metabolic acidosis, respiratory depression and rarely hypoglycaemia. Excessive use of hand sanitisers may weaken our immunity by reducing our exposure to the commensal organism. Sanitisers cannot be used for disinfecting vegetables and fruits. Sanitisers should not be put inside

vehicles as they are flammable products, they can explode due to the hot temperature inside the vehicle cabin. Hand sanitisers also increase the risk of eczema and various skin infections.

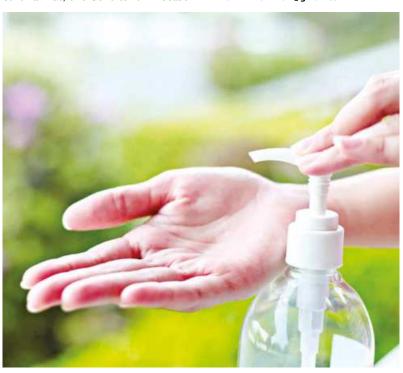
Children after using hand sanitisers can eat with their hands, even if they lick their hands it will not cause any notable harm. Using methanol in disinfectant and hand sanitisers is not acceptable and it is very injurious to health, it can even be fatal.

To prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the Centres for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and if soap and water are not available, alcoholbased sanitisers may be used as an alternative.

So it is important for everyone to be rational in using hand sanitisers. Use them only when necessary and sparingly to avoid the risks.

The author is a Professor of Paediatrics at Community Based Medical College, Mymensingh. E-mail: mmukkhan@gmail.com



Evercare Hospital Dhaka started post COVID-19 recovery clinic

Evercare Hospital Dhaka has recently started a post COVID-19 respiratory recovery clinic to help post COVID-19 patients continue their journey to recovery, says a press release.

Evercare Hospital Dhaka's post COVID-19 recovery clinic services include pulmonary care and rehabilitation, pulmonary physiologic testing, pulmonary imaging, rehabilitation, psychiatric and social services as well as research studies related to COVID-19

The clinic also supports home recovery including multi-disciplinary involvement for medical complications for heart issues such as arrhythmia and myocardial dysfunction, as well as support for issues related to prolonged ICU stay such as loss of muscle, myopathy, neuropathy, anxiety and depression.



COVID-19

Rumors and Misconceptions Unveiled

Can COVID – 19 be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates?

 The COVID- 19 virus can be transmitted in any climate, including areas with hot and humid weather.

Can cold weather kill the new corona virus?

• There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new corona virus or other diseases.

The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5 to 37 °C, regardless of the external temperature or weather.

The best and most effective way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by maintaining physical distance of at least 1 metre from others and frequently cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water.

By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

Public awareness by:



8 | The Pailty Star EDITORIAL



FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 11, 2020, *ASHWIN 26, 1427 BS*

Definition of rape must be changed

The narrow definition of rape and archaic provisions lead to low conviction rate

HILE rape in reality constitutes many forms of violent actions, the definition of rape in our laws, unfortunately, is limited to only a certain form. As unbelievable as it might seem in this time and age, rape is still defined only as penile-vaginal penetration in our laws. Section 375 of the Penal Code 1860 defines rape as sexual intercourse with a woman against her will, without her consent, and adds that penetration is sufficient to constitute the sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape. And that's all. While the punishment of rape was modified in the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act in 2000, it did not touch upon the substantive definition of rape.

The archaic definition we presently have prevents many of the rape survivors from seeking justice for the crimes committed against them. Not only the definition but other archaic provisions in laws relating to rape also result in a low conviction rate—a 2019 study found that only three percent of the rape cases end in conviction. Procedures such as medical tests to find semen, character evidence against rape complainants in court, etc. further add to the trauma and scrutiny of the survivors. The narrow definition of "sexual intercourse with a woman" also makes it difficult to prosecute child rape, male rape or the rape of transgender individuals. Furthermore, the law also fails to criminalise marital rape.

Therefore, reforming the rape laws by providing death sentence to the rapists—as announced by the law minister in the wake of nationwide protests against rape—would hardly help in increasing the conviction rate, if other far more crucial changes are not made to the law. In modern rape laws around the world, penetration with objects or other body parts and penile penetration are equally punishable offences and deserve an equal degree of punishment. We also need to ensure that our rape laws are compatible with global standards. The brutality of being raped with a stick, or hands, or the violence exhibited in the video of the gang-rape of a woman in Noakhali, is in no way less in proportion than a penile-vaginal rape.

It is time we rethought and reformed the definition of rape in our laws to ensure justice for the rape survivors.

Mental healthcare is grossly neglected

More investment in increasing capacity of hospitals is needed

recent report in this daily reveals the activities of a nexus of brokers harassing families of patients with mental illness seeking treatment at Pabna Mental Hospital. Getting an appointment with a doctor has become a difficult task with the already understaffed hospital operating with fewer resources due to the Covid-19 outbreak. This has given a field day for brokers to demand money from the families of patients to "manage" an appointment with a doctor inside the hospital or lure them to privately-run clinics, the credentials of which are unknown. The result is increasing suffering for the patients and their families.

This is not surprising. Unfortunately, mental health facilities are grossly inadequate in our country despite the growing number of people with mental health issues. And this has been the case long before the pandemic. The Pabna Mental Hospital is the main public hospital in the country where the majority of patients from all over the country seek treatment. It has only 500 beds and has always been understaffed. Out of the 25 allotted posts for doctors, 13 remain vacant. The hospital management has repeatedly sent letters to the higher authorities requesting that the posts be filled, but so far nothing has happened.

The Daily Star report, published on the World Mental Health Day, gives a grim picture of how far behind we are in providing proper care to the mental health patients. The theme of this year's Day is increased investment in mental health programmes—which is obviously the need of the hour for Bangladesh.

While the immediate step to take would be to identify the brokers and take action against them, the long-term problem of understaffing and lack of facilities has to be addressed on an urgent basis. Apart from filling the vacant posts, the capacity of the hospital needs to be increased by hiring more qualified doctors and nurses and improving the existing facilities. The mental health wards of other public hospitals need to be evaluated with the gaps in staffing and facilities identified and filled. There needs to be more investment in improving the quality of mental healthcare in all these hospitals.

According to the National Mental Health Survey in Bangladesh from 2018-19, around 17 percent of Bangladeshi adults are undergoing mental health problems like depression, anxiety, stress and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Isolation and loss of income during this pandemic has resulted in more people experiencing various mental health issues. Mental healthcare must be made affordable to all people and be part of primary health care. The pandemic has exposed the neglect with which this crucial area of healthcare has been treated, and should prompt the government to make the investments needed to improve existing facilities and increase the number of medical graduates who will become therapists and psychiatrists and be recruited to mental health hospitals and wards.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

How effective is the law restraining child marriage?



TASLIMA YASMIN

HE demand of girls worldwide to live free from the harmful practice of child marriage is one of the key focuses of this year's International Day of the Girl Child. Bangladesh has

committed to eliminating child marriage by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, despite some signs of progress in recent decades, the child marriage situation in the country remains alarming, with Bangladesh having one of the highest prevalence of child marriage in the region.

Although many factors interact to place a child at risk of marriage, an inadequate legislative framework plays a crucial role in perpetuating the practice and decelerating the progress of policy efforts. Bangladesh set up a new legal regime by enacting the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 and its corresponding Rules in 2018, replacing the old Act of 1929. The new Act, no doubt, introduced certain effective provisions which, if properly implemented, can positively contribute to the prevention of child marriage in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, there are several areas where the law lacks clarity, and the Rules also does not address those loopholes

Retaining the previous legal position, the 2017 Act prescribes 18 for girls and 21 for boys as the marriageable age. However, such unequal marriageable age between males and females is not only discriminatory, it also creates some significant legal anomalies in the enforcement of the law. For example, if an adult woman of 18 years marries a man of 20 years, it will still be considered as "child marriage" (as one party is below the marriageable age), and the woman will have to face penal sanctions applicable for an adult contracting party under the Act—which is unreasonable, to say the least.

Discontent among the civil society actors was quite evident when the law retained the much-debated "special provision" allowing child marriage with courts' permission. It was expected that the Rules adopted in 2018 would substantially restrict the scope of application of the special provision; it nevertheless failed to do so. The Act

and the Rules do not mention anything about the requirement for obtaining consent of the minor in an application under the special provision, neither does the Act provide any guideline or criteria to the courts in order to determine a child's "best interest". There is also no minimum age mentioned for allowing the exemption under the special provision.

Another significant problematic area

Another significant problematic area in the 2017 Act is that although the law

provision of release of an accused person upon signing of an affidavit or bond stating simply that he will not be involved in child marriage in the future and will take initiatives to prevent child marriage in his locality. The Rules does not provide any details as to how the accused's participation in child marriage preventive initiatives can be monitored to ensure accountability against future violations. Thus the presence of such a provision

perpetrator. This is as per section 375 of the Penal Code of 1860 which defines and punishes rape. The definition given in the Penal Code is still applicable. Although we had enacted a separate law in 2000 for prosecuting violence against women and children related cases, the law chose to remain silent on such an archaic provision. The 2017 Act also does not address the issue of rape of a child bride. This is clearly contradictory to



To stop child marriage, it is critical to address loopholes in the relevant law and to introduce effective monitoring over its implementation at all levels.

refers to the minor involved in a child marriage as a "victim" or "aggrieved person", it imposes penalty on minors for contracting child marriage (up to one month's detention and a fine of Tk 50 thousand). The law thus clearly creates contradictions by imposing criminal sanctions upon the victims whose interests it aimed to protect.

The 2017 Act is also silent about giving an option of annulment of the marriage if the minor so wishes. A victim of child marriage would have to follow the procedures prescribed under applicable personal laws for dissolution of the marriage, which are often discriminatory in application and can be quite difficult to access for a minor victim of child marriage.

Besides, the 2017 Act introduced a new

may undermine the purpose of the law to deter child marriages by imposing criminal sanctions.

The Act also makes provision for issuance of injunction by the court. However, neither the Act nor the Rules clarifies which court would be able to issue such injunction. Similarly, for the application of the special provision, the law is silent regarding the court that may have jurisdiction to hear such application for special permission. There are also inconsistencies in the law in terms of exercise of jurisdiction by the Mobile Courts in intervening in a child marriage.

Other than the 2017 Act, one of the most challenging gaps with regard to child marriage is the law that allows rape of a girl child who is 13 years or above, if the child is married to the

Bangladesh's international commitment to protect a girl child from sexual exploitation and could encourage the culture of forced marriage of a child rape victim with the offender.

The new legal regime for eliminating child marriage, thus, needs to be reviewed extensively. Keeping in mind that Bangladesh is committed to ending child marriage, it is critical to address the gaps in the new law and to introduce effective monitoring over its implementation at all levels. Strengthening the laws would create clear benchmarks to address child marriage and would ultimately enable the policy efforts to succeed in preventing child marriage.

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We must do more to end child marriage



Laila Khondkar

char of
Lalmonirhat
to a slum in
Khulna, I have met
many adolescent
girls across
Bangladesh who
are united in their
resolve to continue
education, who
make extraordinary

efforts to go to schools. For example, a girl in Khulna has been collecting and selling scrap papers in order to earn money to pay for her tuition fees and related costs. She persuaded her mother to go to the local councillor to explore if any funding is available to purchase educational materials. I can share many stories like that. But most of the girls are also afraid of dropping out of schools, as their parents may arrange their marriage—a fate many of their classmates already had to accept.

of their classmates already had to accept. I am reminded of all these girls as we observe the International Day of the Girl Child today with the theme: "My voice, our equal future". What is the future of our girls, especially against the backdrop of a time when we are facing a global pandemic?

According to "Ending Child Marriage: A Profile of Progress in Bangladesh" (a report launched by Unicef on October 7, 2020), Bangladesh has the highest prevalence of child marriage in South Asia and ranks among 10 countries in the world with the highest incidents. The prevalence of child marriage in Bangladesh has dropped from over 90 percent in 1970. Still, the rate remains very high. About 51 percent of women who are currently aged 20-24 were married while they were still children.

Child marriage is a serious violation of children's rights. It's a problem that the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3 aims to eliminate by 2030. In addition, child marriage has an impact on the realisation of other SDGs related to education, health and well-being. Child marriage is one of the most significant reasons for school drop-out of girls, essentially marking the end of childhood for them. It also increases the risk of domestic violence for the girl children. Married adolescents are also not able to participate in the decision-making

process of families. Adolescent mothers are more likely to suffer from birth-related complications than adult women.

In Bangladesh, a girl's risk of child marriage is aggravated by certain factors. Girls living in rural areas and poorer households are more vulnerable. This is also linked to girls' education. The rate of child marriage begins to decline only among those with at least 10 years of schooling, and prevalence falls below 50

countries of the world. Children are at an increased risk of sexual violence and exploitation, trafficking, child labour, etc. There are heightened risks of child marriage while children and families cope with school closures, loss of income, and increased pressure in the home. Girls face an unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work, which will increase as they stay at home. Many may not be able to return to schools due to caregiving



File photo of children forming a human chain in Dhaka protesting against child marriage.

percent among those with at least 12 years of schooling. Moreover, lack of social safety for adolescent girls, natural disasters, and weak enforcement of laws are some of the reasons contributing to child marriage. Our patriarchal society places a disproportionate emphasis on girls' and women's caregiving and reproductive roles. As a result, there is a high level of social acceptance of child marriage, which is a significant barrier to ending this practice.

Covid-19 has hit men and women, and boys and girls differently. Girls, especially those belonging to marginalised groups, are being particularly affected by the secondary impacts of the outbreak. This is due to harmful social norms and discrimination based on age and gender.

There has been an increase in domestic violence during Covid-19 in different

responsibilities and the decline in family income. That is what happened in West Africa after the Ebola crisis.

Africa after the EDOIa Crists.

Some NGOs are already reporting an increase in incidents of child marriage following the outbreak of Covid-19 in Bangladesh. According to the Building Better Future for Girls project of Plan International Bangladesh, there were 291 child marriages in Kurigram alone between January and August this year. There are reports of increasing sexual harassment in different parts of the country, as many returned to their villages. Some parents are arranging the marriage of girls due to safety concerns.

Are we really serious about achieving the SDG target to end child marriage by 2030, and the national target to end child marriage by 2041? If yes, progress must be made at least 8 times faster than the rate of the past decade to meet the national target, and 17 times faster to meet the SDG target.

In addition to strict enforcement of the relevant law against child marriage, proper birth and marriage registration must be ensured. The government should also prioritise the safe re-opening of schools, as the longer girls stay out of school, the higher the risk of child marriage,

In addition, there should be more investment in girls. The government should develop and implement fully-costed, multisectoral national action plans with strict accountability mechanisms. This should involve not just the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, but also the ministries of health, education, justice, and finance.

Targeted measures should be taken to protect and support incomes of families with girl children, including social protection. Specific attention should be given to the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work during this time so that it does not hinder girls' return to schools.

For a wider impact, government and non-government actors must also ensure the engagement of communities, parents, and particularly girls and women to address the harmful gender norms and build support to end child marriage.

We are celebrating the International Day of the Girl Child at a time when the nation is seething with anger against the rise in incidents of rape and sexual violence against women and girls. In addition to bringing the perpetrators to justice, we need a movement to create a society where girls and women really feel safe and get treated as equal citizens. We must ensure an environment where girls can grow up to be empowered women—economically, socially and politically—and contribute to our society in meaningful ways. Child marriage hinders the possibility of girls in realising their full potential.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic threatens to roll back progress on ending child marriage. We cannot let that happen. All of us—government, NGOs, media, parents, communities—must do more and be more effective. The question is, are we doing enough?

Laila Khondkar is an international development

A Tale of Newspaper Reading

This is a revised version of a piece previously written by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in which she recalls how she developed the habit of reading newspapers, influenced by her father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and how newspapers became an essential part of her day-to-day life.



Sheikh Hasina

morning, we all used to gather, one by one, at my mother's bedroom. With a cup of tea in everyone's hand and newspapers

scattered on the bed... everyone would read a news item one after another, while others would listen to it and give their opinion. Sometimes, there would be debates on what was written in the newspapers or what messages the papers wanted to give. All would give their opinion as per their thoughts. This way, both the morning tea party and our newspaper reading gained momentum.

Our days would start in this way, and it would continue for at least three hours. My father got ready to go out. We also got ready to go to school. My father was very punctual in going to his office. We learned the lesson of punctuality from him.

Noticing our newspaper reading and the different opinions we gave, one day my father asked: "Tell me, who read which news items more attentively?"

We were surprised. No one could utter a single word. Kamal, Jamal, Rehana, Khoka uncle, Jeny and I-we all were there. Even little Russel was also among us. He did not read, but was busy snatching away the newspapers.

When he saw we could not say anything, my father disclosed what would be of interest to each of us. We were surprised. How attentive he was! My mother mostly read small news items on the inside pages, particularly those on social issues. She also kept track of what happened where. Kamal read sports news mostly. As did Jamal. I was more interested in the literature pages and cinema news. So, everyone had their favourite topic.

From her early age, Rehana paid special attention to newspapers. Sitting in the veranda and putting her on his lap, my father would drink tea and read the papers. When Rehana saw a newspaper, she would try to grab it, as if she could read it. And then, when we came to our Dhanmondi residence, she started reading newspapers with the rest of us. When she grew up, she developed the habit of reading newspapers quite diligently. She would read every news item whether it was related to cinema or other issues. There were many stories, poems and quizzes on the page for young readers, which never failed to catch her attention.

Rehana now lives in London but she reads the newspapers of the country regularly through internet. Not only does she read the papers, she also sends me messages whenever she reads something about people's suffering, asking me to help someone or the other, questioning why an incident took place there, etc. For example, there was a news story during the coronavirus pandemic. A beggar had saved money to build a house but then donated it for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The news of his generosity deeply moved her. She informed me of the matter immediately. So we built a house for him. This is how we have been able to stand by people—because of Rehana's compassionate heart and her habit of regularly reading newspapers. Staying abroad, she always thinks about the welfare of the people. Being constantly informed about what is happening in her country through the pages of the

newspapers, she serves the people. Kamal and I passed our childhood days in our village home of Tungipara. At that time, it took two nights and a day to go to Tungipara from Dhaka. That meant, if we boarded a steamer in the evening of a day, we had to pass the next day on the steamer and then it reached the Patgati station late at night. And from there, it took around two

hours to reach Tungipara by boat.

Newspapers did not reach that area regularly. At that time, we had yet to learn the value of newspaper reading. But one newspaper would reach our house and we observed how the grownups took a huge interest in reading it.

We came to Dhaka in 1954, during a tumultuous period in politics. We did not have the company of my father. He was elected as a member of the provincial assembly. He became a minister too. He was naturally very busy and would return home at the dead of night, when we were already asleep. In the morning, Kamal and I went to school. Sometimes when my father returned home to have lunch, we met him. This brief interlude was very precious. No matter how brief, those moments when we got our father's affection and love became the most cherished gift for us

He sacrificed his life for the people of Bengal. He dedicated his whole life for the welfare of the deprived people of Bengal.

Then he was detained in jail. When our father was free (out of jail), we hardly got his company due to the crowds waiting to see him. And when he was detained in jail, we could meet

my father got involved with another newspaper named "Natun Din". Poet Lutfar Rahman Zulfiqar was its editor.

After the creation of Pakistan, the "Ittefaq" newspaper was published with the financial assistance of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah was the editor of the newspaper. My father was also involved with the newspaper and worked for it.

In 1957, after getting the charge of Awami League general secretary, my father resigned from the cabinet. He stepped down from the post of the minister to concentrate on organisational activities to strengthen the foundation of Awami League. In 1958, Ayub Khan imposed martial law. My father was arrested. On December 17, 1960, he was released

After his release, he started a job at Alfa Insurance Company, as he was banned from politics at that time. He even had to inform the police station and intelligence agency if there was a

need for him to go out of Dhaka. But this period brought for us a great chance to spend more time with our father. Waking up at dawn, we used to go for morning walks with him. At that time, we lived at a residence at Segunbagicha. Ramna Park was under construction then. We used to walk to

At that time, my father started publishing a weekly named "Banglar Bani". A machine was set up after taking a place in Segunbagicha. Banglar Bani was published from there. My brother Moni was studying at Dhaka University. He was given the charge of the newspaper.

My father was arrested again in 1962. At that time, we shifted to the Dhanmondi residence. When my father was captive in jail, newspapers were the only way to get information from outside. But those newspapers were censored before delivery.

If you read "Prison Diaries" written by my father, you will realise his interest in reading newspapers during his captivity. It revealed how important newspapers were in a prisoner's life, particularly if one is a political prisoner. However, my father did not face any hassle in getting information from outside, because my father easily got information from those who worked inside the jail or fellow prisoners.

When my mother went to meet him, she apprised him of the country's political situation. And she conveyed my father's directives to the party leaders and workers. Particularly, all the credits of the movement, which was

hand, my whole day would seem dull

I always thought of my father and mother. They had taught me to think about the well-being of the country's people and thus created in me dutifulness towards the people. They also taught us the principle of simple living and high thinking and created awareness amongst us about humanity and dutifulness. Since I was groomed with that ideology, I have been able to accomplish the important task of serving the nation. I have been able to undertake plans and thus implement those in running the country through giving priority to human welfare. And the people of Bangladesh are getting its benefits.

Criticisms and discussions will remain in political life, but if one works with honesty and integrity and can take decisions with self-confidence, then its good results will surely reach the people.

The mass media could create awareness in society, and after forming the government, I gave all the government newspapers to the private

But those who were previously against nationalisation or were very critical of it made accusations when I went for privatisation; they even waged a movement and staged hunger strikes

I often wonder why they had started making criticisms against my father after enjoying all the facilities as the jobs of journalists, representing the newspapers that could exist in the warravaged country, were nationalised, and they started getting their salaries from the government.

On the other hand, when I left all of those media with the private sector, again they resorted to all meanswaged a movement, made criticisms, staged hunger strikes—as I privatised the government newspapers. Why? I know no one will be able to answer

When Awami League formed the government in 1996, there were only a small number of newspapers in Bangladesh, and those were also controlled from a special place. There were the state-run radio and television. But there was no radio or television in the private sector.

Acting on my own initiative, I opened up the private sector. In this regard, I had two targets—one was to create employment and the other was to let our culture flourishincorporating modern, technologybased culture and art with the current era so that modernism could be brought forth and the people at the grassroots level could enjoy its benefits.

In our election manifesto of 2008, we had pledged to build a Digital Bangladesh, and digital devices are now making a special contribution to our daily life, especially as it helps us tackle the challenges we face because of the coronavirus pandemic. For this, we could maintain our economic activities by taking timely steps. We opened up the mobile phone industry in the private sector in 1996, and for this, mobile phones are now in everyone's hands.

Bangladesh's film industry started at the hands of my father, and there is a huge scope for entertaining the mass people by making this industry modern and technology-based. Besides, this industry could play a role in the overall development and also in poverty alleviation.

We are now going through an abnormal situation due to the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. I am hopeful that this black cloud will go away soon and a new, bright sun will rise. I wish that the lives of all become successful and beautiful. May everyone stay healthy and safe—that is my desire.

The article was previously published by Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

BY MORT WALKER



The undated photo shows Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with daughter Sheikh Hasina and grandson Sajeeb Wazed Joy.

him for only one hour in every 15 days. That was our life!

My mother used to lessen our sorrow with her affection and love. And my grandparents and uncle Sheikh Abu Naser used to meet all our demands. He brought us everything we needed. And my father's cousin, Khoka Uncle, used to stay with us always. Khoka Uncle was always willing to extend his help—from taking us to school to going to lawyers' residences regarding the cases filed by the Pakistani government against my father.

My mother liked to read. My grandfather used to keep various types of newspapers in the house. In his "The *Unfinished Memoirs*", my father wrote about how my grandfather would buy and read newspapers. That's how my father acquired the habit of reading newspapers. And from him we learned to become avid newspaper readers too.

My father had an intense connection with newspapers. When he was studying in Kolkata, he was involved with the publication of a newspaper. Mr. Hashem supervised the newspaper and Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah served as its editor. My father was involved with the publicity of the newspaper.

At that time, two other newspapers, "Millat" and "Ittehad", were also published. My father was involved with those newspapers too. In 1957,

the park from No 76—our house in Segunbagicha. There was a small zoo which had several deer, peacocks, birds and other animals.

After returning home, my father used to sit with the newspapers and have a cup of tea. My mother and father used to read the newspapers together. They used to discuss different issues. A children's page named

Kochikachar Ashar was published in the Ittefaq every week. I remember one Jalal Ahmed who used to write articles under the title "Japaner Chithi" (Letter from Japan). There was a section for puzzles too. Sometimes I would try to solve the puzzles. Sometimes I was successful in solving them!

At that time, newspapers had specific pages for literature. It was our regular task to read the newspaper sitting in the veranda and having a cup of tea. My mother used to read newspapers very meticulously. After lunch, my mother used to sit with newspapers and letters from the post box.

The "Begum" newspaper would be delivered at our residence regularly. There were also Reapers, National Geography, Life and Reader's Digest some were weekly, some monthly and quarterly publications. The literary newspaper "Samakal" was also kept at the residence. My mother liked it very much. Write-ups in the "Begum" and "Samakal" were favourites of my

built up following the announcement of the Six-Point demand, were of my

mother. She had a sharp memory.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

I too know the companionship of newspapers during imprisonment. I used to buy four newspapers with my own money when I was in jail during the 2007-08 period. But it was not possible to take newspapers of my own choice. The then government gave names of four newspapers and I took those. But at least, I could get some

My father, Bangladesh's president and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was killed brutally by assailants on August 15, 1975. At the same time, 18 of my family members, including my mother and three brothers, were also killed.

My younger sister Sheikh Rehana and I were abroad at that time. Though we were spending our life as refugees after losing all our near and dear ones, we used to collect newspapers and went through those regularly.

In 1980, I went to London from New Delhi and stayed with Rehana for a few days. We used to take children to school and back home—for that, we got one pound for each child. Usually, the first thing I did with the money would be to buy a newspaper. On my way home from school, I would buy a newspaper, bread and other essential items. If I couldn't have at least one paper in my





KOFI ANNAN (1938-2018)Ghanaian international civil servant, who was the secretarygeneral of the United Nations (UN).

When women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 1 Lacking 5 Satyr's kin 9 Man of many words 10 Parcel out 12 Madrid month 13 Critical asset 14 Canal boat 16 Even score 17 Gallery fill 18 Armada ship 20 Girls 22 Coffee dispensers 23 Useful skill 25 Fight memento 3 Bookish sort

28 New York tribe

32 Speedy

warship

34 1002, in old Rome 35 Galley item 36 Fishing boat 38 UV stopper

40 Drain cover 41 Juan of Argentina 42 Diner patron 43 Blowgun ammo 44 Went 90

DOWN 1 Mexican state 2 FBI employees 4 Patsies

5 Deadly

6 Imitating

7 Loose overcoat 8 Idea 9 Fit for a king 11 Most new drivers 15 Rodeo participant 19 Sitar's cousin 21 Indian gown 24 Angers

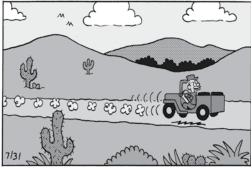
25 Reporter's hope 26 In a frenzy 27 Dawn goddess 29 White Rabbit's cry

30 Tried to lose 31 Drying rack 33 Artery opener 37 Sandwich type 39 Negative link

YESTERDAY'S **ANSWERS** H I C A D E S G|R|I|PRACER ADAGE ATOLL I M E N T O TOTTERS SCALE BCS APPBOATMA ROLLINGEMO ASYE P|L|A|I|D|SLIME LOOS Ε







BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

FROM PAGE 12 officer of a case filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, was with the PBI team

The PBI officials stayed at house for about 20 minutes and visited the surrounding areas. They did not talk to anyone at that time.

Policemen have been deployed at the victim's house since she was rescued from Maijdi town on the night of October 4.

The woman's elderly father, sister and her seventh-grader son are staying

Alamgir Hossain, superintendent of Noakhali police, said two cases filed in this connection -- one under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act and the other under the Pornography Control Act -were handed over to the PBI on Thursday night following the police headquarters' instructions.

The rape case lodged over the incident would also be handed over to the PBI soon, the SP said.

AL organising
FROM PAGE 12
that the people would welcome the constitution which would meet their expectation and reflect their hopes and aspirations. The ALOC reiterate its demand to dissolve the Gono Parishad immediately after the passage of the constitution. BANGLADESH FOOTBALL TEAM WILL VISIT INDIA: MUJIB Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman says today that Bangladesh football team would visit India to play exhibition matches as part of an exchange programme between the two countries. Talking informally to the members of East Bengal Club of Kolkata who called on him, the prime minister expresses his happiness over the week-long visit of the team to Bangladesh. While expressing gratitude to the people of India particularly those of West Bengal and the neighbouring states of Bangladseh for the help given to the people of Bangladesh during the liberation struggle, Bangabandhu also narrates how the Pakistani hordes persecuted the Bangalee sportsmen. He expresses grief over the killing of Moshtaque Ahmed, a popular sports enthusiast in Dhaka by the Pakistan army.

SUBIMAL CALLS ON MUJIB Subimal Dutta, Indian high commissioner in Bangladesh, calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman this evening at the Gono Bhaban and discusses various bilateral issues with him. SOURCES: October 12, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Three juvenile

FROM PAGE 12 by Jamir Uddin Ahmed, company commander of Rab-4 (CPC-2), conducted a drive in Savar Anandapur City area around 1:00am

yesterday, rescued Hridoy and

arrested the three. Contacted, Jamir Uddin said they came to know that the arrestees were members of a juvenile gang and they were involved in criminal activities.

A case was filed with Savar Model Police Station in this regard and the three were handed to the police station, he told The Daily Star.

Man arrested

disembarked to buy food and missed the train, said the OC, quoting the

An auto rickshaw driver Rocky Islam took the girl, telling her that he would take her to Kaunia, but took her instead to a secluded place where he and three others who joined him gang-raped her.

Locals rescued the girl the next morning, police added, and with the help of some journalists from the local Press Club, she went to the police station and filed a rape case.

The victim filed a rape case with police accusing four named and several unnamed persons on Friday night, said Farhad Hossain, officer-in-

charge (OC) of Kaliganj Police Station. Hours later, police arrested the prime accused Rocky, 26, of Baninagar

village in Kaliganj upazila. The victim's medical test was completed yesterday afternoon, said the Kaliganj OC, adding the police are

continuing drives to arrest the rest of the accused. In Dinajpur, several hundred members of the local indigenous community staged a demonstration

yesterday demanding trial of the "killers" of 23-year-old Rukit Rout, who was allegedly killed after gang-rape. The demonstration, which started at 10:30am and lasted two hours,

was held at Shaheed Minar mor in Parbatipur upazila.

At the demonstration, members of the indigenous community alleged that she was killed after gang-rape.

Rukit, an honours final year student of Carmichael College in Rangpur city, was on her way to her dormitory from her home in Adivasi Palli Missionpara in Badarganj upazila of Rangpur on the

afternoon of October 5, said her father. Police recovered Rukit's body the next day from Panchpukuria village in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur.

The victim's father, Dinesh Rout, filed a murder case with local police, who arrested three persons in this connection on Thursday.

One of the accused, Anisur Rahman, 24, gave confessional testimony before a court admitting to his involvement with the killing, said police. The trio was later sent to jail.

[Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur contributed to this report.]



Special forces perform during National Day celebrations in front of the Presidential Building in Taipei, Taiwan, yesterday. Taiwan wants to have "meaningful dialogue" with China on an equal basis, President Tsai Ing-wen said yesterday, extending an olive branch at a time of heightened military tension with Beijing, which claims the island as sovereign Chinese territory.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

On the road to ancient Srihatta

In Nidhanpur, which is in the vicinity of the temple, seven copperplate inscriptions of early 7th century Kamrupa King Bhaskaravarman were found in 1912.

More than 200 Brahmins were Jamindars through these made copperplates.

Dwarkesh Chandra Nath, president of Basudeva Sebak Sangha, the managing authority of the temple, said, "In the copperplates, seven percent of total land granted was meant for some religious rituals related to idol worship. The temple might have been established Centring the rituals."

Several ancient idols were found in ponds of Supatala village.

DHYANI BUDDHA STATUE

The Dhyani Buddha statue was found

along with the Basudeva and the Mahamaya (Durga) statues in the early 19th century while digging a pond of Durgadalai's house in Supatala. In the book "Srihatter Itibritta",

Achyut Charan Choudhury cited that Durgadalai was an employee of the last Jaintia King Rajendra Singha.

Durgadalai gifted the Mahamaya statue to the king while Basudeva statue was restored in the temple. These happened before 1835 as the king died that year in British captivity, the book mentioned.

The miniature statue of Buddha seated and meditating is 4 inches tall and 2.5 inches wide. The face and back are damaged and left hand is broken.

Swadhin Sen, professor of the Department of Archaeology at University, Jahangirnagar and

of the government's Department statue looks older compared to of Archaeology, said the statue was one of Panchatathagata -- the five Tathagatas or five great Buddhas.

Though the left hand is broken, seeing the pose of right hand, they opine that the hands are posing as a representation of Dharma Chakra (Wheel of Dharma).

According to the Buddhist explanation of Panchatathagata, this pose is the Vairocana, the principal deity or mediator. Other Dhyani Buddhas are Amoghasiddhi, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava Akshobhya.

Swadhin Sen said it might be of 8th-12th century while Mosharraf Hossain opine of 12th-13th century.

Historian Himadri Das Purkayastha "During 9th-10th century, Mahayana Buddhists, particularly of Vajrayana belief, were influential in greater Sylhet. Finding the statue is the archaeological proof of the Mahayana Buddhism's practice in the region".
THE GARUDASHIN VISHNU

The Garudashin Vishnu statue was found in 1982 while digging pond of the temple.

According to Hindu Triad or Great Trinity, Vishnu represents goodness and preservation.

In ancient and medieval period, Vishnu statues are found in different common in Bangladesh, while the Garudashin form is rare.

Archaeologist Mosharraf Hossain said, "Among more than six hundred Vishnu statues found in Bangladesh, only seven are of Garudashin Vishnu. Mosharraf Hossain, former director It's a rare antiquity. This particular

others".

The statue is of 2.7 feet tall and 1.2 foot in width. The four handed statue clock-wisely holds club, wheel, conch and lotus.

In this statue, Vishnu is seated on the Garuda with his feet on the hands



of the mythical creature. The Garuda forms and names -- of different count is posing to start flying with one leg of hands. His Basudeva forms are on top of lotus and another in the

keeper of Bangladesh National Museum, said, "The statue doesn't look still, but very lively. Carved in stone with excellent efficiency and of exact ratio. It's a work of a master

sculptor".

"A unique sculpting method flourished in Bangla-Bihar region by 8th-13th century and 10th-11th century as the golden era of sculpting. This statue represents the features of the golden era and I think it's of that era," she said.

THE STATUES: IMPORTANCE AND **CONSERVATION**

As the Panchakhanda Basudeva Angan is dedicated to lord Vishnu, the Garudashin Vishnu statue is being worshipped along with the Basudeva statue.

The Buddha statue is also being worshipped as an idol of Narayana.

Swadhin Sen said, "The idols are very important in terms of their findspots and location, as the Nidhanpur copperplate inscriptions are found in the area.

"The time of issuance of the inscriptions and the stylistic date on these idols are not same. Two idols of Vishnu belong to a later date, tentatively to 11th-12th century. They, however, points at the continuous occupation of this area of Barak-Surma Valley from 8th-12th century."

In contrary to the practice of collecting and displaying such religious statues in the museums, he said, "These are an essential part of around 11:00am. living religious traditions as they are being worshipped. These valuable archaeological objects must be kept in the temple and their ownership by the local community must be protected."

[Tarun Sarker is a freelance journalist who writes for The Daily Star. Translated

ground with bended knee. Niru Shamsun Nahar, former

by Dwoha Chowdhury]

World reels from Covid-29 2nd wave

than 400 new cases daily -- also covers all shops except pharmacies and petrol stations, although they will be banned from selling alcohol.

"This is not the time to party," said Berlin's social democratic mayor Michael Muller. "We can and we want to prevent another more severe confinement." Chancellor Angela Merkel had

already warned Friday that highinfection areas would be given 10 days to bring down cases or face tougher action, calling big cities the "arena" to keep the pandemic under control.

In neighbouring Poland, the authorities told people to wear face

coronavirus cases hit a new record batters the global economy. daily high of 4,280.

To the south, the Czech Republic faced the prospect of a new lockdown as the growth in Covid-19 cases set a fourth straight daily record. The number of 8,618 was the fastest spike in Europe. Governments on several continents

are struggling to keep up with a sharp rise in infections as the pandemic's second wave arrives ahead of the northern hemisphere's influenza Since it emerged in China late last

year, the virus has killed more than one million worldwide, infected more than 36 million and forced millions masks in all public spaces after more out of work as the pandemic

Latin America and the Caribbean marked 10 million cases yesterday and with more than 360,000 deaths, the region is the worst hit in terms of fatalities, according to official figures.

EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel was the latest high-profile figure to test positive for Covid-19. She announced the news yesterday, the first top Brussels official known to have caught the coronavirus.

And British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who himself spent time in hospital for the virus, is to outline a new three-tier lockdown system

On Friday, the Spanish government declared a state of emergency and a limited.

it faced increasing public resistance to anti-virus measures. People were barred from leaving

new partial lockdown for Madrid, as

the city except for work, school or medical reasons, measures denounced by the city's rightwing authorities. The resistance in Madrid echoes

problems the French government faced last month when it shut bars and restaurants in Marseille, provoking the fury of local officials. Partial shutdowns have since been

extended to Paris and other major urban areas, and another four French cities were placed on maximum coronavirus alert Thursday, with bars ordered closed and public gatherings

Trump eyes come back with White House speech

Trump-Biden showdown election day on November 3.

accusations That prompted of bias from Trump campaign director communications Tim Murtaugh, who said "there is no medical reason to stop" the October 15 debate from proceeding.

Knocked off the campaign trail by his three-night hospitalisation last week, the president is in the midst of a frenetic bid to catch Biden.

On Friday, during an extended media blitz, Trump falsely claimed that Covid-19 now has a cure.

He also revealed that he'd been told he was near death at the worst of his bout with the virus, which has killed more than 213,000 Americans and severely dented his chances of winning a second term.

The speech, which a senior administration official said would be on Trump's favored theme of "law and order," will give him a chance to dispel lingering doubts about his health.

The crowd will be on the South Lawn of the White House, while the

A source with knowledge of the planning said all attendees will be required to wear masks and have their temperature checked.

Tomorrow, Trump will take another

president will speak from the balcony.

major step by holding a rally in a crucial battleground state. "Will be in Sanford, Florida on Monday for a very BIG RALLY!"

Trump tweeted.

The events come despite continued questions over how sick Trump was and how complete his recovery is now, with White House officials refusing to answer basic queries including when the president first contracted the virus and whether he has tested negative

After Trump spent months mocking Biden for staying at home during the pandemic, it is Biden who has barnstormed swing states this week.

He visited Arizona Thursday and campaigned Friday in Nevada. Trump won both states in 2016 but they are now narrowly tilting Democratic in

At a drive-in style event in Las

Vegas, Biden slammed the president. "His reckless personal conduct

since his diagnosis, the destabilizing effect it's having on our government, is unconscionable," Biden said. As he boarded his campaign

plane he offered a message for those attending Trump's public events: "Good luck. I wouldn't show up unless you had a mask and were distanced." On Friday, Trump gave a marathon interview to right-wing

talk radio host Rush Limbaugh in which he said the experimental Regeneron antibody cocktail that he took as part of therapeutic treatment was "a cure."

It's "a total game changer" and "better than a vaccine," he said. In fact, there is no cure and still no

approved vaccine for the coronavirus. Later Friday he appeared in his first televised interview since he was diagnosed with the virus, telling Fox's Tucker Carlson show he is now

"medication-free." Trump has repeatedly asserted that he feels fine, and he has been backed

physician Sean Conley. But in his Limbaugh interview, Trump suggested for the first time that he had been close to death, had it not been for his aggressive regimen of

up by statements from presidential

"I'm talking to you today because of it. I could have been a bad victim," he said, adding that doctors told him: "You were going into a very bad phase.

therapeutic drugs.

Polls show Biden leads heavily in key demographics including women and the elderly, prompting analysts to talk increasingly of a possible

landslide victory. Trump's biggest liability overwhelming public dissatisfaction over his handling of the pandemic -- has returned as the headline issue of the campaign thanks to his own infection.

the Adding to pressure, Democrats who control the House of Representatives unveiled plans for a commission to investigate a president's fitness for the job -- a move clearly meant to jab at Trump.

Space internet

FROM PAGE 12

Musk tweeted following the launch.

"Other countries to follow as soon as we receive regulatory approval."

The Starlink network has already been tested on a limited scale, providing internet to emergency responders in the US following recent wildfires.

The Washington Emergency Management division was able to set up a Starlink-powered WiFi hotspot for residents in Malden last month after 80 per cent of the town was destroyed by fire.

Musk said at the time that SpaceX was prioritising emergency services and locations with no internet connectivity at all.

In April, the billionaire

entrepreneur said that 800 satellites would be enough for "significant" global coverage, though speeds will be nowhere near the 100 megabits per second speed promised by SpaceX until the network grows. "With performance that far

surpasses that of traditional satellite internet, and a global network unbounded by ground infrastructure limitations, Starlink will deliver highspeed broadband internet to locations where access has been unreliable, expensive, or completely unavailable, Starlink's website states.

Areas that will fall within the public beta test include the Detroit metropolitan area and Ann Arbor in Michigan, according to Musk.

Users will be able to get signal for the network using a personal antenna device that will serve as a WiFi hotspot.

The network has faced criticism from some astronomers, who claim that the long trains of satellites disrupt observations and could hinder scientific progress.

SpaceX has made efforts to reduce the impact of the satellites, however a recent report by the Satellite Constellations 1 (Satcon1) workshop warned that "no combination of mitigations can completely avoid the impacts of satellite trails on the science programs of the coming generation."

Tortured

FROM PAGE 12

the camp in a critical condition. Locals later took him to the hospital, Jalal said.

No case was filed in connection with the death of the boy till filing of this report last night.

1 killed FROM PAGE 12

Saeed stabbed Yasin indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured. Yasin was rushed to Chandpur Sadar Hospital. He died on the the way to Dhaka Medical College.

Addressing a press conference at his election office in Chandpur town, BNP mayoral candidate Akhter Hossain alleged that their activists Jewel Dewan, Shahriar, Ibrahim Khalil, Tajul Islam and Momin were injured as AL activists attacked them outside the same polling centre

Another BNP activist Jalil Majhi was injured in an AL activist attack outside the Sabdar Khan Government Primary School polling centre, he alleged.

at the Voting municipality election began at 52 centres at 9:00am. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were used in 15 wards of the municipality polls that continued till 5:00pm.

There were three candidates for the post of mayor in the polls. Fifty candidates contested for 15 general councillor posts in 15 wards and 14 candidates for five reserved women

councillor posts. Treat NGOs

FROM PAGE 12

the technical area.

moderator of BDCSO Process and also the executive director of Coast Trust, said the UN's role is irreplaceable when it comes to multilateralism. He stressed the need for UN role in

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief

einforcing civil society space.

Roberto Bissio, a renowned development activist in Uruguay, said one of the functions of the civil society, recognised by the UN agenda 2030, is to exercise the accountability of the government.

On a global level, international institutions should be held accountable so that multilateralism works, he said, adding that one way to make institutions accountable is to follow their money flow.

The UN was created 75 years ago to bring peace and development, and free the world from war, Roberto said.

However, \$1.7 trillion is the annual global military expenditure now, whereas the total UN expenses that include work for peace, development, humanitarian work, and full functioning of its human rights system is \$48.3 billion, he added.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, which have the most responsibility in maintaining peace, have by far the most military expenditure, the development activist said.

Lauding the activities of BDCSO Process, newly-appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Ethiopia Nazrul Islam said the platform has been complementing the government's nation building process.

Mohsin Ali, executive director of Wave Foundation, and Smruti Patel and Koenraad Van Brabant, both Switzerlandbased development activists, among others, addressed the session.

TEN 2 **UEFA Nations League** Ireland v Wales Live from 7:00pm **England v Belgium** Live from 10:00pm France v Portugal Live from 12:45am (Monday)

SONY SIX UEFA Nations League Croatia v Sweden Live from 10:00pm Poland v Italy Live from 1:15am (Monday) **STAR SPORTS SELECT 1** Indian Premier League

Hyderabad v Rajasthan Live from 4:00pm Mumbai v Delhi Live from 8:00pm **STAR SPORTS SELECT 2** French Open Live from 3:30pm & 7:00pm

All eyes on Mirpur as cricket returns to Bangladesh

FIXTURES

October 11: Mahmudullah XI v Najmul XI October 13: Mahmudullah XI v Tamim XI October 15: Najmul XI v Tamim XI October 17: Mahmudullah XI v Najmul XI October 19: Mahmudullah XI v Tamim XI October 21: Najmul XI v Tamim XI October 23: Final

**All the matches will be day-night and will start from 1.30 pm.

**All the games will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur.

** All matches will be shown live on BCB's official Facebook page while Bangladesh Betar will also provide live commentary.

SPORTS REPORTER



March 16, 2020 was the last time Bangladeshi cricketers played a competitive game. The backdrop was

the first round of the Dhaka Premier League, which was cancelled shortly after following the outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

After that long seven-month gap, cricketers will once again return to the field through the BCB President's Cup today.

Mahmudullah XI will take on Najmul XI in the opening game of the 50-over tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur today.

All matches will be daynight affairs and it will mark the Bangladesh Cricket Board actually resuming cricket in an attempt to gradually host international teams.

Cricketers from the national team, high performance team and members of the 2019 ICC Under-19 World Cup-winning side were divided into three teams, with Tamim XI the third team.

three-team this tournament may not be as more delighted to return to the field financially beneficial as the DPL or in a competitive tournament. Even told The Daily Star. first-class competitions since the the selectors have their eyes on the sports sector has been hard-struck tournament after the tour of Sri by the pandemic, the BCB did try to Lanka was postponed recently. encourage players by announcing Tk 15 lac for the champions.

Obviously, we feel great as we were never out of the field for such a long time. We are excited for the tournament and there are high expectations on the team. Our aim is to become champions and if we can play our natural game, we can achieve that. The positive thing is that we are a young side so our fielding department is expected to be better.

NAJMUL HOSSAIN

I think the team that will play good cricket on the field will have the chance to win. Talking about expectation, we are returning to competitive cricket after a gap of six-seven months and around fifty to sixty cricketers will take part in this tournament. We should not just think about returning to cricket but also about whether we can gain something individually from this tournament. Suppose a batsman plays really well or a bowler impresses everyone, that will help them get into the national team. TAMIM IOBAL

It feels good to return to cricket as we had been practising for a long time now. At the end of the day, it's our job. The expectation is obviously to be champions but the fact is that all the best players of the country will be playing this tournament, which itself fosters good competition among us. As all of us will be playing after a long time, it will work as an inspiration for everyone. We all are eager to play this tournament.

MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD



Tk 2 lac for the man of the series and a Tk 1 lac reward for the best batsman, bowler and fielder of the tournament. The player of the final will also receive Tk 1 lac.

However, for cricketers, the monetary remuneration is a secondary thought. They will be

to have a squad for the Sri Lanka tournament. We will keep a close The runners-up will receive Tk series and we were planning to eye on each and every single 7.5 lac while there are rewards of have a look at the players during tournament from now on. But at the

the training camp. Unfortunately, the series got postponed in the end but we do have a group of players in mind. This tournament may not fulfil the expectations of the players financially but it has its own significance," member of the national selection panel and former Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar

as serious as they were during the Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- will take on practise matches and how they "Obviously, we were willing remain during any competitive

same time, we are also not going to pressure the players. We want to see their attitude and observe whether they give their hundred percent or not," he added.

It will be a battle between experience and youth in the opening game. Mahmudullah's side -- featuring the likes of Liton Das, Mominul Haque, Imrul Kayes, "I am sure the players will be Sabbir Rahman, Rubel Hossain and Najmul's relatively younger side, featuring Afif Hossain, Saif Hasan, Soumya Sarkar, Towhid Hridoy and guided by the experienced hand of Mushfiqur Rahim.



Who will make history?

AGENCIES



Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal have faced each other more than any other players in the Open Era, and they will certainly write a new chapter in their legendary

rivalry today in the blockbuster final at Roland Garros with history on the line for both men.

They have met in eight Grand Slam finals, with each great winning four times, but this result will shift the tide in the alltime battle for most major trophies.

World number one Djokovic is seeking an 18th Grand Slam title and a second French Open to become the first man in half a century to win all four Grand Slams twice. Meanwhile, defending champion Nadal is bidding to win a record-extending 13th Roland Garros and 20th major, which would tie the all-time men's record held by Roger Federer. Victory would also give the 34-year-old Spaniard a 100th match win in Paris against just two defeats in 15 years. One of those losses came against 33-year-old Djokovic in the 2015 quarterfinals, the last time the pair clashed on the crushed red brick surface of Court Philippe Chatrier.

But Nadal has a 6-1 advantage at the French Open, including wins in the 2012 and 2014 finals. "This is the house of Rafa," said Djokovic, describing facing him on clay as the sport's "biggest challenge".

The Serb has won 37 matches in 2020 with his one defeat self-inflicted via his infamous default at the US Open. "The only thing I know is to play against Novak, I need to play my best," said Nadal.

UNHAPPY NADAL

Nadal had complained about the cold weather at the rescheduled French Open, which is usually held in May-June, the new balls being used for this edition, and the late finishes. But the unusual conditions have had little impact on his performances since the Spaniard has not dropped a set in his six victories at this year's edition.

NOT DJOKOVIC'S BIGGEST MATCH

Djokovic insisted that he had played far more significant finals and pointed to his first win over Nadal at a Slam at Wimbledon in 2011. "I don't think this is the biggest match that I have ever played in my life," he said.

DREAM FINAL

For me, it's the dream final," said Eurosport tennis expert and Spain's twice Roland-Garros finalist Alex Corretja.

Chris Evert, the winner of 18 Grand Slams titles, said, "I look at Nadal and see a warrior, fighting for everything, he's going to leave blood on the court." "I look at Djokovic and I see more of a robot but in a good sense. The mental part of his game is a level ahead of everyone else, it's

NOVAK DJOKOVIC (SER)

Age: 33 Ranking: 1 Career record: 924/188 Career titles: 81 Grand Slam titles: 17

Roland Garros 2020: Dropped three sets so far. **RAFAEL NADAL (ESP)**

Age: 34 Ranking: 2 Career record: 992/201 Career titles: 85 Grand Slam titles: 19 Roland Garros 2020: Hasn't dropped a set yet.

Grand slams Roland Garros

High-octane match on cards at the Stade de France



The UEFA Nations League will return to the fold tonight as France take on Portugal in a high-octane fixture at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis. Both European giants have maintained a

perfect record so far in the competition and will want to win this fixture. The first two matchdays of the second

edition of the competition went ahead in September. Some of the more notable results saw both France and Portugal thrash Croatia, Italy won away at the Netherlands, Germany drew 1-1 with Spain, and England scraped past Iceland with a last-minute Raheem Sterling penalty.

France have won both their opening fixtures and are behind Portugal only on goal difference. The reigning World Champions thrashed Ukraine by a 7-1 margin earlier this week and will be filled to the brim with confidence going into this game. Portugal are currently on top of Group 3 in League A of the European competition and have one of the most lethal attacking forces on the continent. Fernando Santos oversaw a 0-0 stalemate against Spain this week and will make a few changes to his starting line-up going

France and Portugal have faced each other a total of 25 times on the international stage. The French have historically been the dominant side in this fixture, winning 18 games against their opponents. Portugal have managed six victories and will want to make a statement with a victory this weekend.

Portugal famously edged France to a victory in the final of Euro 2016 and won their first major trophy on the international stage. The French will be baying for revenge in this game and are likely to field their best eleven.

second victory when they continue their campaign away to Poland on Sunday night. Roberto Mancini's side are currently top of Group 1 of League A, having picked

up four points from their opening two matches against Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Netherlands.

The Azzurri will bring a 17-game unbeaten run into this weekend's contest, while they thumped Moldova 6-0 in an international friendly on Wednesday

Belgium will be looking to extend their advantage at the top of their group when they travel to Wembley Stadium to face England on Sunday evening.

Roberto Martinez's side have beaten Denmark and Iceland in their two fixtures in Group 2 of League A to sit at the top of



"These boots are beautiful and I cannot wait to wear them for my next @ selecaoportugal match to celebrate my career milestone!," Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo wrote as he posed with his new boots ahead of clash against France.

the section, two points clear of England. The Red Devils will enter the match off the back of a 1-1 draw with the Ivory Coast in an international friendly on Thursday night, but they have won 12 of their last 13 games during an excellent run. Croatia Italy will be aiming to record their and Switzerland were both winners in their respective friendly clashes during the week and they will each hope to build on their success having lost both of their opening UEFA Nations League matches.





Despite the ongoing pandemic, sports events are slowly returning to life in the country. The Bangabandhu Federation Cup Basketball Tournament, an eight-team five-day event, kicked off at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. Players of Bangladesh under-19 hockey team, meanwhile, started their training camp at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium for next January's Junior Asia Cup in Dhaka.

Siddikur wants to go to USA

SPORTS REPORTER



Ace folder Siddikur Rahman said he wants to go to the United States to pursue a training and take part in tournaments there to try to get

himself into reckoning for next year's Olympic Games. The two-time Asian Tour

winner, who has been sitting idle at home since the first week of March due to the pandemic, sees the break in play as an ideal option to train and improve his ranking ahead of next year's Olympics, which will be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021.

"I have been idle since March and I don't think there will be any more event of Asian Tour this season. So I have applied to the Bangladesh Olympic Association for a one-year scholarship worth one lakh 60 thousand dollars so that I can go and train and play in USA," the golfer told media at



a press briefing at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday.

"Whether or not my appeal gets accepted, I will go to USA, even through my own savings. I want to train there for at least three months and play tournaments which offer ranking points," said Siddikur, who was the first Bangladeshi athlete to earn direct qualification for the Olympics in 2016.

Siddikur is currently ranked 660th in world. The cut-off date for qualification for Tokyo Olympics is middle of June next year, with 60 male golfers entitled

Confusion prevails on World Squash Day

SPORTS REPORTER

Marking the World Squash Day yesterday, the Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation (BSRF), at a press conference, laid out an elaborate five-year plan with the immediate target of regaining medals in next South Asian Games and long-term target of getting the game off to good heights, not only in the region but also in world squash.

The crowded press conference, however, was less keen on the extravagant plans and more on the authority of the speaker, Brigadier General (retd) GM Kamrul Islam, who introduced himself as the general secretary of the federation.

However, when asked whether there has been any circular from the National Sports Council on his appointment, the former general secretary of the Bangladesh Golf Federation could not provide a satisfactory answer. "We don't want to get into those arguments. Even if there are mistakes, we should see those in a positive light. We need



to look forward and not dwell on legalities, for the sake of the game, said Kamrul, who later claimed to be the acting general secretary of the federation.

An ad-hoc committee was installed in 2015 and that committee is still in place, with the general secretary of that committee, Sohel Hamid, stepping down earlier this year due to ill health. However, his resignation has not yet been ratified by the NSC.

When contacted by media, NSC secretary Masud Karim said they 'did not approve of any such committee' since the ad-hoc committee in 2015.



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





Treat NGOs as equal partners

Speakers urge UN, international organisations, donors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a virtual session yesterday said the local and national NGOs in Bangladesh want to be recognised and appreciated for their important role in the development of the country.

Addressing the event, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "The NGOs want to be treated as equal partners."

She said the NGOs in Bangladesh have come a long way since 1971. They are no more the aid or relief-giving organisations that they used to be.

We have come a long way in terms of skills, experience and bargaining power," she added.

Shaheen Anam chaired the virtual session titled "UN in 75: Interfacing Government and Civil Society for Development and Sustainable Peace".

She said it would be "sad" if NGOs were not being treated as equal partners by the United Nations, international organisations, and donors.

The MJF executive director said her organisation has been working relentlessly as an intermediary funding organisation for local NGOs, bridging the gap between small NGOs and donor agencies.

The session, organised by BDCSO Process, a platform of local NGOs and civil society organisations, was part of its annual conference that ended yesterday.

Earlier on Tuesday and Thursday, the organisation held similar sessions. Speakers yesterday said the UN needs to continue

supporting NGOs in Bangladesh to flourish, especially in the technical area.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Farmers in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila cultivated bitter gourd on their land but recent floods in the country's northern region damaged most of their crop. Due to lack of supply, bitter gourd was being sold at Tk 2,000 per maund in the district's markets.

MOSTAFA SHABUJ

CHANDPUR MUNICIPAL POLLS

1 killed, 6 hurt in violence, AL man wins

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

candidate Zillur Rahman Chandpur won the municipality yesterday.

A youth was killed and six others were injured in violence over Chandpur municipality elections.

The dead, Yasin, 18, of Koralia area of the municipality, was an Awami League activist.

Meanwhile, BNP mayoral candidate Akhter Hossain Majhi boycotted the polls around 2:30pm yesterday, alleging irregularities and

attacks on their activists. Witnesses said Yasin, a supporter of an AL councillor candidate, locked in an altercation over a trifling matter with another supporter of the candidate Saeed outside the Gani Model High School polling station in Koralia

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Trump eyes comeback with White House speech

Hundreds invited; Biden calls it 'reckless'; second presidential debate cancelled

US President Donald Trump was gearing up for a public speech at the White House for the first time since testing positive for Covid-19, as he prepares a rapid return to the campaign trail just three weeks before

The 74-year-old commander-inchief has also announced a Florida rally tomorrow in an attempt to relaunch his stumbling reelection campaign against surging Democratic rival Joe Biden, who called the president's behavior "reckless."

Seeking to project strength and improved health, Trump had refused to participate in next week's scheduled debate after organizers shifted it to an online format out of coronavirus concerns.

On Friday the Commission on Presidential Debates made it official, saying next Thursday's debate is scrapped, leaving an October 22 event the final

SEE PAGE 10COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

AL organising committee suggests constitutional amendments



Awami League Organising Committee meeting with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban.

October 11, 1972

Shamsuddoza Sajen

ALOC'S MEETING WITH BANGABANDHU

The Awami League Organising Committee (ALOC) suggests some amendments to

the draft constitution, mainly related to fundamental rights, in its meeting held today at the Gono Bhaban with the party chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The meeting lasts for about two and a half hours and the draft constitution is elaborately discussed. Initiating the discussion, Bangabandhu expresses his confidence

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ABDUCTION IN SAVAR Three juvenile gang members

Our Correspondent, Savar

arrested

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday claimed to have rescued a kidnapped youth from Savar's Anandapur area and arrested three juvenile gang members in connection with the incident.

The arrestees -- Musha Kazi, 19, Zahid Hasan, 19, and Ashik Hossen, 18, -- are residents of the same

Rab-4 sources said ne Hridov. 18. from Manikgonj's Machain village, went to Savar on Friday noon to do a job.

In the evening, the arrestees picked up Hridoy and called his father from his cell phone. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of Tk 30,000 for Hridoy's return.

Around midnight, the father lodged a complaint with the Rab over the incident

A team of Rab-4, led SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Space internet is ready for people



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said his space internet project is ready for public use following the latest launch of Starlink satellites.

SpaceX delivered a further 60 satellites into low-Earth orbit this week, bringing the total number close to 800.

The private space firm hopes to eventually launch tens of thousands of Starlink satellites to create a constellation capable of beaming highspeed broadband down to 99 per cent of the inhabited world.

"Once these satellites reach their target position, we will be able to roll out a fairly wide public beta in northern US and hopefully southern Canada," SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

PBI officials visit gangrape spot in Noakhali

area around noon.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Naokahla

with Along accused, Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) officials yesterday visited the spot in Noakhali where a woman was gang-raped last month.

The PBI team went to the victim's home in Eklashpur union of Begumganj around 10:00am with Badal, Kalam, and Saju. Inspector Mamunur

Rashid Patwari, investigating



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-45 7-15 JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-50 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Tortured Rohingya boy dies in hospital

Our Correspondent, Cox's Bazar

A 14-year-old Rohingya boy died of his wounds at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital early yesterday, four days after he was brutally beaten up inside a refugee camp and abducted by some Rohgingya criminals.

The victim, Ziabur Rahman, died around 3:00am, said Shahin Mohammad Abdur Rahman, resident medical officer of the hospital.

The boy was a resident of Kutupalang registered Rohingya camp in Ukhiya, said camp in-charge Khalilur Rahman.

Hafez Jalal Ahmed, chairman of the camp's Rohingya Community, said Rohingya criminals had abducted the boy on Tuesday when two groups of Rohingyas clashed inside the camp. The incident left four Rohingyas dead. On Thursday, the

criminals left Ziabur under a road bridge inside

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Poland's Iga Swiatek kisses the trophy as she celebrates after winning the French Open at the Roland Garros, Paris, France yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

World reels from Covid-29 2nd wave

US infections hit two-month high; record cases in Europe force more curbs

New cases of Covid-19 in the United States hit a twomonth high with over 58,000 infections as the number of cases surged in Europe yesterday, and breached 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ten of the 50 states reported record one-day rises in cases, including the Midwestern states of Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and Ohio. Wisconsin and Illinois recorded over 3,000 new cases for a second day in a row - a two-day trend not seen even during the height of the previous outbreak in the spring, according to Reuters data.

The Western states of Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming also reported their biggest one-day jumps in

cases, as did Oklahoma and West Virginia. Nineteen states have seen record increases in new cases so far in October.

In Europe, Germany and Poland enforced new restrictions to fight the coronavirus yesterday after Britain and France forced to take similar measures in face of surging cases

Bars and restaurants are to close at 11:00 pm (2100 GMT) in Berlin until October 31 in a partial curfew, a measure already imposed -- but starting an hour earlier -in the financial capital Frankfurt.

The shutdown in the German capital -- with more

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