

'DANGEROUS FALLACY'
More than 80 global experts
slam concept of coronavirus
herd immunity
SEE PAGE 6

THE DAILY

SECOND EDITION
Star

ON FRIDAY

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

SAFAR 28, 1442 HUIRI

16 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE PRICE : Tk12.00



"Evidence shows that the certainty of punishment, rather than its severity, deters crime."
UN RIGHTS CHIEF MICHELLE BACHELET ON BANGLADESH'S
DECISION TO IMPOSE DEATH PENALTY FOR RAPISTS



"It has been seen that mostly ruling party men are behind the crimes [recent rape incidents]. It is the ruling party's responsibility to clean up the party..."
NARIPOKKHO FOUNDER MEMBER SHIREEN HUQ



"The EU is working on a deal, but not at any price. Conditions must be right."
CHARLES MICHEL, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL,
AHEAD OF MAKE-OR-BREAK EU SUMMIT ON BREXIT

Too pricey to be on menu of many

Prices of 5 basic food items rose by Tk 5 to Tk 110 a kg over 2 months

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

While people of middle- and low-income groups are still struggling to get over the loss of income caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, soaring price of daily essentials is compounding their problems.

The situation has become so dire for some that the minimum amount of food on everyday menu -- rice, potato, edible oil, green chili and onion -- is being considered luxury as prices of these five basic items have increased by Tk 5 to Tk 110 per kg over the last two months.

"If the situation persists, people like us will start starving," said Amir Ali, an auto-rickshaw mechanic.

Amir's wife Jotsna used to work in a garment factory but that has been closed. She now works as a domestic help to meet their expenses.

"In normal times, we find it difficult to provide our children with good food. It has turned worse now," said Amir, a father of two who lives in the capital's Muga.

Two months ago, the price of a kg of potato was Tk 26. Yesterday, it was Tk 50. The price of onion is yet to drop from Tk 90 per kg. Onion price doubled between September 15 and September 17 from Tk 40-45 after India banned export of the key ingredient.

Green chili which was Tk 105 per kg on August 15 is now being sold at Tk 220 per kg. Not only that, the price of vegetables sharply rose in recent weeks. The price of coarse rice has gone up by Tk 3 to Tk 5 per kg.

Price of edible oil also soared. A week ago, the price of a 5-liter container of soyabean oil was between Tk 495 and Tk 505. Now, these are being sold at Tk 515 to Tk 530 at different markets.

The Daily Star correspondent visited different kitchen markets in the capital and compared the prices with the TCB price list for the last two months.

"You won't find any vegetable less than Tk 70 per kg," said Hosne Ara, who runs a tailor shop.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



POTATO
TK 50-52
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 25-26

RICE (COARSE)
TK 52
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 48

ONION
TK 90
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 45

SUGAR (LOOSE)
TK 60
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 55-58

GREEN CHILLI
TK 220
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 105

BITTER GOURD
TK 80
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 60

PAPAYA
TK 35
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 20

OKRA
TK 60
TWO MONTHS AGO
TK 40

Double trouble for the poor amid pandemic

Rising prices of essentials force many to cut food intake, use up savings

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

House help Salma Khatun and her rickshaw-puller husband Forkan Ali saved their hard-earned money for the future of their two daughters.

But the outbreak of the novel coronavirus and the subsequent shutdown threw their life into disarray, leaving them jobless for three months. The crisis forced them to spend their entire savings of around Tk 50,000 and borrow an additional Tk 20,000 to make ends meet.

Although the couple is now trying hard to turn things around, they are grappling with the ever-increasing prices of food and other basic commodities.

"Our earnings have been fallen, but expenditure is on the rise. And the soaring prices of essentials are making matters worse. Before the pandemic, we used to eat fish and meat more often. Now, we have no option but to cut down on those," said a frustrated Salma.

"I slash other expenses to cover the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

EC sues MP Nixon Chy for violating polls code

STAR REPORT

The Election Commission filed a case against Faridpur-4 lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, known as Nixon Chowdhury, for violating the election code of conduct during the Charbhadrasan upazila parishad by-elections.

Nawabul Islam, the returning officer of the Charbhadrasan by-election, filed the case against Nixon with Charbhadrasan Police Station yesterday morning, within 24 hours of the chief election commissioner (CEC) talking about filing of a case against Nixon.

On October 10, a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

US adds fresh vigour to ties with Dhaka

Deputy Secretary of State Biegun's visit opens doors for greater cooperation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Amid rising security concerns in Asia-Pacific region, the US is showing new enthusiasm for its ties with Bangladesh due to the country's sustained growth and political stability over the last decade and its geopolitical location, officials and foreign relations analysts said.

The visit of US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, following a number of engagements between the two countries over the last one and a half months, is a testament to the vigorous moves by the US, they said.

Biegun came to Bangladesh from India. His visit comes at a time when the US is advancing its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) in a new Asian reality.



Stephen Biegun

"Unfortunately, we are facing a number of challenges in the Indo-Pacific. I would not deny that there are security concerns, a fact that concerns many of us, the Pacific or the Indo-Pacific nations," said Biegun.

He specifically mentioned the Indo-China tension over the Line of Actual Control in Galwan Valley, tension in Taiwan, repression in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Tibet, and increasing economic hostility towards the people of Australia.

"There are a number of challenges and tensions in the region that have alarmed the US and other countries in the Indo-Pacific," he said at a press conference at Hotel Westin in the afternoon.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Extend help in Rohingya repatriation

PM urges int'l community, US

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her call to the international community, including the United States, to help Bangladesh rehabilitate Rohingyas in their homeland Myanmar.

Putting emphasis on immediate repatriation of the Rohingyas, she said Myanmar should take their citizens back.

The premier said this when visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E Biegun paid a courtesy call on her at the Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PHOTO ON PAGE 2

COVID-19 ANTIGEN TESTS Govt to start rapid testing in 36 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to launch antigen-based Covid-19 rapid testing in 36 districts which don't have RT-PCR testing facilities, officials of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said.

For this, the DGHS has procured about 2 lakh rapid testing kits from two companies -- Abbott GmbH & Co of Germany and SD Biosensor of South Korea.

Speaking to The Daily Star on Tuesday, DGHS Director General Prof ABM Khurshid Alam said, "Hopefully, we will receive the kits within a few days and we will start rapid antigen testing in at least 36 districts this week."

Dr Habibur Rahman, spokesperson for the DGHS, said the use of antigen kits would be started soon. He, however, couldn't give any specific date.

Officials said both the kits are WHO prequalified and they have also met the standard set by the DGHS.

They could not confirm the cost of each antigen test.

Each antigen kit developed by SD Biosensor will cost

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Death penalty for rapists not the answer

Says UN rights chief

AFP, Geneva

Sentencing rapists to death, as Bangladesh did yesterday, is not an appropriate punishment even for such a heinous crime, the UN rights chief said.

"Tempting as it may be to impose draconian punishments on those who carry out such monstrous acts, we must not allow ourselves to commit further violations," Michelle Bachelet said in a statement.

Her comment came after a Bangladesh court sentenced five men to death yesterday for the 2012 gang-rape of a 15-year-old girl.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

UNIVERSITY ADMISSION Decision soon on whether to hold any tests

VCs to meet tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vice-chancellors of all public universities will hold further discussions on whether this year's HSC exam results will be given no or less weight in the university admission process.

VCs will hold the discussion at the meeting of Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad, an association of public university vice-chancellors, on October 17.

It will also hold a discussion on whether any admission tests for public universities will be held this year.

"There will be a discussion on admission exams -- how it will be held, whether it will be in-person or online -- at the meeting on Saturday," a vice-chancellor of a university in the capital said after attending a virtual meeting between the University Grants Commission and vice chancellors of public universities yesterday.

He also said that the topic of whether this year's HSC exam results will be given any weight in the university admission tests was discussed in the meeting and it was proposed that further discussions will be held at the meeting.

At the meeting, some VCs said that it would be up to each university to decide

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



A mother makes sure her child stays hydrated during the hot and humid morning of yesterday. The visually impaired parents of the child was taking part in a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club to mark the White Cane Safety Day.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

5 to die for gang-raping madrasa girl

Tangail court also fines them Tk 1 lakh each

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Tangail court yesterday sentenced five people to death for gang-raping a madrasa student in 2012.

Khaleda Yasmin, judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Tangail, passed the order and also fined the convicts Tk 1 lakh each.

The convicts are Sagar Chandra Sheel, Sujon Moni Rishi, Rajan Chandra, Sanjit Chandra Moni Rishi and Gopi Chandra Sheel of Charalajani and Golabari village in the district's Madhupur upazila.

Of the convicts, Sanjit and Gopi were in the dock during the pronouncement of the verdict. The other three have been on the run since they obtained bail in the case from higher court.

AKM Nasimul Akter, public prosecutor (PP) of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Tangail, told The Daily Star that the verdict was given under Section 9(3)/30 of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

As the allegations were proved by the witnesses and evidence, the court gave capital punishment to the all five accused, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT RAPE: PM -- PAGE 2

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,600
New cases in 24hrs



3,84,559
Total cases



5,608
Deaths



2,99,229
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,099,560
Deaths



38,942,937
Total cases

Take measures to prevent rape

PM asks admin officials to create public awareness

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the administration to take extensive measures against rape and raise public awareness against such incidents in society.

“We will have to take extensive measures to resist such rape incidents. And after all, we need to create public awareness,” she said.

The PM was virtually addressing the concluding ceremony of the 70th Foundation Training Course for fresh cadre service officers. She joined the programme from the Gono Bhaban through a video conference.

The participants were connected from Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) at Savar and the offices of seven divisional commissioners.

Hasina said the government has amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Act 2000 and an ordinance has already been promulgated to check rape incidents.

She said the rape incidents that take place these days are publicised widely. “The more it is publicised, the more its prevalence increases.”

Noting that people have the right to get justice, the PM said she knows the pain of not getting justice.

Hasina said she did not have access to justice following the assassination of her father, mother, brothers and others on August 15, 1975 as indemnity was given to the killers.

She said this culture (of injustice) should not remain in the country. “It has been possible to try the killers only because I could come to power.”

Hasina said the government wants people not to fall victims to any injustice.

Focusing on the government’s vision and plans to develop the country, she asked the new cadre officers to take Bangladesh forward being imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War.

She said as the government wants to make Bangladesh a developed country by 2041, the young generation, including the trained officers who would be running the country till that time, should take the country forward in such a way that Bangladesh does not fall back any more.

The PM asked the new officers to work for the welfare of the people.

Hasina said the government wants to develop every village equipped with all civic amenities so that rural people get urban facilities.

She put emphasis on modern training for government employees so that they can cope with the pace of the world.

Public Administration Secretary Shaikh Yusuf Harun delivered the welcome speech, while BPATC Rector Md Rakib Hossain, on behalf of the PM, distributed certificates among the trained officers.

Cadre officers Monia Sirat and Mehedi Hasan Kawsar, on behalf of 663 participants of the six-month foundation training course, spoke at the function.

Death penalty

FROM PAGE 1

It marked the first conviction since the government this week introduced the death penalty for rape.

Gang-rape already carried the death sentence, but rape by a single offender had previously been punishable only by life imprisonment.

Bachelet cited the law change in Bangladesh, but also calls in a number of other countries to impose the death penalty for rape.

She highlighted calls in Pakistan for public hanging and castration of rapists, and a law introduced in the northwestern Nigerian state of Kaduna last month imposing surgical castration followed by execution in rape cases where the victim is under 14.

“The main argument being made for the death penalty is for it to deter rape – but in fact there is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more than other forms of punishment,” Bachelet said.

“Evidence shows that the certainty of punishment, rather than its severity, deters crime.”

She stressed that in most countries, “the key problem is that victims of sexual violence do not have access to justice in the first place.”

This was due to a range of factors, including “stigma, fear of reprisals, entrenched gender stereotypes and power imbalances,” she said, stressing that handing the death penalty to perpetrators would not remove those barriers.

EC sues MP Nixon Chy

FROM PAGE 1

by-election was held for the post of chairman of Charbhadrasan upazila parishad in Faridpur.

According to the case statement, Nixon, 42, called Atul Sarkar, deputy commissioner of Faridpur, over mobile phone around 8:00am the previous day and expressed his displeasure over the appointment of more magistrates.

On the day of the election, AC (Land) of Bhanga arrested an activist of Nixon’s for violating the election code of conduct.

Nixon then used abusive language directed in a phone conversation with Jasmin Sultana, Charbhadrasan Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

Nixon also violated the election code of conduct by participating in a victory rally after the announcement of Charbhadrasan upazila election results, the case statement read.

Nazneen Khanum, officer-in-charge of Charbhadrasan Police Station, who accepted the case, said they would investigate the matter.

The district Awami League unit expressed regret to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Faridpur for Nixon’s unedifying behavior on Wednesday. Members of Bhanga upazila AL unit also formed a human chain demanding his punishment.

However, at a press conference, Nixon denied the allegation of using abusive language and sought legal action against the Faridpur DC, claiming that he acted in favour of BNP candidate KM Obaidul

Bari in the by-election.

UNO SUES SUSPENDED MAYOR IN BERA

In an unrelated development in Pabna, Bera Upazila Nirbahi Officer Asif Anam Siddiquee filed a case against the suspended mayor of Bera municipality for assaulting him during the upazila law and order committee meeting.

The UNO filed a case with Bera Police Station on Wednesday night, police said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the Bera UNO said suspended mayor Abdul Baten proposed to include the unlawful allotment of Kazirhaat and Nagarbari ghat to Bera upazila parishad so that they could be leased out.

When the UNO refused to sign the proposal, the mayor allegedly misbehaved with him during the meeting on Monday. He was suspended the following day.

Later, the UNO filed a case with Bera police station on Wednesday night accusing Abdul Baten of assaulting him and obstructing the regular work of the government.

Officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station said the case was recorded and they were investigating the incident. Police are trying to nab the accused, the OC added.

Abdul Baten, also the younger brother of lawmaker of Pabna-1 Samsul Haque Tuku, in a press conference earlier refuted the allegation of assaulting the UNO.

5 to die for gang-raping

FROM PAGE 1

Quoting the case statement, the PP also said that the victim and Sagar have known each other through mobile conversation since 2012.

Sagar took the girl to Elenga by a CNG-run three-wheeler when she reached in Shaldair area on her way to the madrasa on January 15 the same year. He later took her to the house of Rajan, his friend and another accused in the case, at Charalajani in Madhupur on the same day.

Sagar, by the four other accused, pressurised her for marrying him. The girl, however, refused as Sagar was a Hindu man.

Then Sagar raped the girl at the house the same night.

They later took the girl beside the Bonshi river at night on January 17 and Sagar and two others raped her again. They later left her there in unconscious state.

In the morning (January 18), the girl, with the help of locals, went to Madhupur Bus Stand and informed

the matter to her brother over phone. Later, her family members went there and took her to the house.

The girl filed a case against the five people with Bhuapur Police Station on the same day.

Police arrested Sujon Chandra Moni Rishi, one of the accused, the same day and Sujon gave confessional statement to the court under Section 164 the next day (January 19).

Later the four other accused were also arrested.

After investigation, police submitted a charge sheet against the five. Later, the trial of the case started with framing charges against the accused on October 29.

The PP expressed his satisfaction over the verdict saying that the victim got justice.

On the other hand, Golam Mostofa, one of the lawyers of the accused, said they were not satisfied over the verdict and they would appeal to the higher court against it.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E Biegun exchange gifts as the latter calls on the PM at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Too pricey to be on menu of many

FROM PAGE 1

Already hit hard by plummeting income due to the novel coronavirus, Hosne Ara is now looking for alternative ways to make ends meet.

“I’ve curtailed my grocery shopping list and I buy vegetables at night to get comparatively lower prices,” she added.

Egg, a good source of protein for the poor and limited income group, has also become dearer.

Farhad Hossain, who runs a grocery shop in Jatrabari, said he bought 100 eggs for Tk 890 a week ago. “Now it is sold at Tk 920 in the wholesale market. I will sell each dozen at Tk 144,” he said, adding that he earlier sold a dozen for Tk 100-110.

The price of broiler chicken, another good source of protein, has also increased to Tk 130 from Tk 120 a kg.

MYSTERY OVER POTATO
Fixing the retail price of potato at Tk 30 a kg, the Department of Agriculture Marketing (DAM) issued a letter to deputy commissioners on October 7.

In the letter, DAM claimed that about 1.09 crore tonnes of potato was produced last year against an annual domestic demand of 77.09 lakh tonnes. Though the country exports potato, there is less possibility of crisis, read the letter.

According to DAM, the price of a kg of potato when kept in cold storages was Tk 14.

The cost of cold storage rent, interest, collection charge, and weight loss stand at Tk 9. Considering that factor, if the

potato is sold at Tk 23 per kg, persons who kept potato at cold storage will get Tk 2 profit.

If the wholesaler adds Tk 2 per kg profit, the price would be Tk 25 and it is not reasonable to charge over Tk 30 per kg at retail stage, read the letter.

A farmer spent Tk 8.32 to produce one kg potato, it said.

Four days after the DAM’s letter, Bangladesh Cold Storage Association (BCSA) on October 11 called upon farmers and traders to get the potato out of storage in an attempt to stabilise the price.

The association said that this year the production of potato was 85 lakh tonnes and due to transport and labour crisis for Covid-19 only 40 lakh tonnes of potatoes were kept in cold storages.

However, DAM Director General Mohammad Yousuf disputed BCSA’s potato production figure of 85 lakh tonnes. He said about 1.09 crore tonnes of potatoes was produced this year.

About 55 percent of 40 lakh tonnes potato has already been sold in the market. Of the remaining, 10 lakh tonnes are seed potato which will be used for the next cultivation season in November, read the BCSA letter.

A source said with the remaining potatoes, another one and half months will be covered. The newly harvested potato is supposed to hit the market by the end of December as potato cultivation was delayed by the flood.

“Farmers and traders who kept potato

US adds fresh vigour to ties with Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

He explained that the IPS is a vision for peace and stability and not directed at any specific country. For long, South Asia has been left out of most Asian strategies where the US participates.

Stephen Biegun arrived just weeks before the US elections and at a time when nearly 1.1 million people have died from Covid-19. Last month, US Defence Secretary Mark T Esper called on the prime minister and discussed many issues, including defence cooperation.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Biegun yesterday spoke with warmth and new hope of solid relations at a meeting at the State Guesthouse Padma in the capital yesterday morning. The meeting lasted for about two hours.

“The US sees Bangladesh as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region ... we are committed to growing our partnership in this regard to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific. Bangladesh will be the centrepiece of our work in the region,” Biegun told reporters at an open-stage press conference afterwards.

He said he was pleased to have the latest chapter of cooperation that has bound Bangladeshi and American people for many years.

Momen said the US impression about Bangladesh has improved manifold because of the country’s sustained growth, stability, and geopolitical location.

“We have a very stable government and democracy. We believe in the same values and principles. Therefore, our relationship is becoming more solid ... we look forward to it. I have no doubt it will continue to improve. We hope to achieve many goals.”

Biegun said from Covid-19 vaccine cooperation to trade and investment, agro-processing industries, IT, pharmaceuticals and energy, US companies were showing increased interest in Bangladesh.

Biegun arrived Wednesday afternoon and had a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam that day.

Yesterday morning, he visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi before his meeting at the guesthouse.

Around noon, he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban and then visited the Kurmitola General Hospital where he donated some medical equipment.

TRADE, INVESTMENT
During the meetings, Bangladesh

sought large US investments, including in energy, IT, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, blue economy, relocation of US companies, climate-change adaptation, said Momen.

“We want big investments. I said we want to build a dedicated Dhaka-Chattogram train line. We want to stop river erosion, build embankments to check the impacts of climate change,” he said.

Biegun said they would work on it and apprised that many US companies were interested in investing here and that Bangladesh should be part of the global supply chain.

At the Westin press conference yesterday afternoon, he said Bangladesh and US have recently kicked off an economic dialogue. The two countries appointed representatives who have started developing a work plan that would be a roadmap for deepening economic relationship.

Biegun said the US is the second largest investor in Bangladesh after the UK.

“Our business community is having increased interest in Bangladesh because of the size of your consumer class, skilled labour, and the geographical location on the bank of the Bay of Bengal. It makes an attractive place for US investors,” he said.

Bangladesh also sought post-Covid-19 economic recovery assistance that America is giving countries that have good relationships with the US.

Biegun, however, said Bangladesh has a big economy and that they encourage signing a free trade agreement.

Asked if Washington sees Bangladesh in the eyes of New Delhi, Momen replied in the negative.

“The media says that. It’s not right. We are an independent and sovereign country. We have values and principles. We do what we need to do for our interests. The US looks at us independently. If the US saw us in New Delhi’s eyes, he would not have come here,” he said.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Bangladesh sought a strong US role for Rohingya repatriation.

Biegun said the US has been the biggest contributor of humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas and it will continue. However, a permanent solution lies in the Rohingyas’ return to Myanmar, which should create conducive conditions and ensure rights.

He said the US has been using its political influence as much as possible to influence decisions inside Myanmar regarding the treatment and restoration

Extend help in Rohingya

FROM PAGE 1

Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Quoting Biegun, Ihsanul said the United States also wants a permanent solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis.

“We will continue to extend our support to Bangladesh on this issue,” the press secretary quoted Biegun as saying.

Hasina mentioned that over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh at the moment, which is an extra burden on the country.

“The problem has been created by Myanmar and we are holding dialogues with them ... they should take their citizens back,” she said.

The PM said the Rohingya issue is a social problem, and a large number of the displaced Myanmar nationals are living at camps in Cox’s Bazar.

“Some quarters could mislead them and get them involved in anti-social activities. So, we need their immediate repatriation to their homeland,” she said.

The premier and the US deputy secretary of state discussed the issue of bringing back Bangabandhu’s convicted fugitive killer Rashed Chowdhury, now in the USA.

Biegun informed that the case was being reviewed by the US attorney general’s office.

He said the visa services for Bangladeshi students would be reopened once the Covid-19 situation improves.

The US deputy secretary of state, who arrived in Bangladesh on Wednesday,

said he has already discussed the issue of economic cooperation with Bangladesh officials.

“The US government will closely work with Bangladesh for promoting economic and trade relations,” he said.

He discussed with the PM the coronavirus situation in the USA and said that over two lakh people have died there after being infected with the deadly virus.

“We are close to making vaccines available and hopefully those will be available in the market in the next two weeks,” he said.

According to Biegun, several US companies are manufacturing the vaccines as widespread vaccination will start from next year.

The US deputy secretary of state highly appreciated Bangladesh’s tremendous economic stability and progress under the leadership of Hasina.

He said Bangladesh is attracting foreign investment in huge volumes. The United States wants to further strengthen cooperation with Bangladesh in the energy sector, he added.

Hasina said her government is setting up 100 special economic zones across the country to attract more investment from home and abroad as well as generate employment.

She also briefly highlighted her government’s steps to contain the Covid-19 alongside keeping the wheels of the country’s economy moving.

US Ambassador in Dhaka Earl R Miller and PM’s Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus were present during the meeting.

Covid patients have to spend Tk 12,000 each for medicine

Shows a study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A study conducted by Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW) reported that coronavirus patients spent Tk 12,000 each on average as medicine cost.

The respondents of the survey said specific medicines were not available in the pharmacies and they had to procure it from alternative sources.

Patients who were interviewed during the survey took Paracetamol followed by Vitamins C, B and A, read the study which was based on the interviews of 101 Covid-19 patients.

They were interviewed over phone between June 4 and Aug 30.

The study found, almost 70 percent of the respondents took the antibiotics particularly Azithromycin, followed 10 percent by Doxycycline, and nine percent jointly Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine.

Very few of the patients mentioned of taking other antibiotics such as Amoxicillin, Levofloxacin and Amoxicillin plus Clavulonic acid etc.

In very few cases, the positive patients have used hydrocortisone and Ivermectin.

Besides, all of the respondents took precautionary measures and supplementary food besides taking medicine and regular foods.

Hot water gurgling (84%), steam inhalation (79%), drinking hot water (76%) were the most used items by the patients, followed by breathing exercise (35%), free hand exercise (10%) and prone breathing (20%).

In this context, the study recommended that the government should have a thorough review of how and what Covid-19 positive patients are doing while staying at home.

DAILY UPDATE

A total of 1,600 people tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Fifteen people have died from Covid-19 in the country over the same 24 hours yesterday, read a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of deaths has now reached to 5,608 and the death rate stands at 1.46 percent.

With new cases, the total number of people infected rose to 384,559.

Against 14,104 tests in the same 24 hours, the positivity rate was 11.34 percent while the overall positivity rate stands at 18.08 percent.

Meanwhile, 1,780 Covid-19 patients have recovered in those 24 hours, raising the total number of recoveries to 299,229. This almost 78 percent of all confirmed cases.

Among the deceased, nine were men and six women.

Ardern vows to quit if she loses NZ election

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday she will step down as leader of the centre-left Labour Party if opinion polls prove wrong and she loses Saturday’s general election.

The prospect appears remote, with Labour enjoying a 15 point lead in the polls, but Ardern responded with a firm “No” when asked during a televised debate whether she would remain as opposition leader if the vote does not go her way.

The 40-year-old, who has led New Zealand through a string of crises in the past three years culminating in the Covid-19 pandemic, said her commitment to the job had demanded sacrifice.



(Clockwise from top) A man sweeps down the floor inside Ananda Cinema Hall in Farmgate, that is opening its gates today to film lovers of the capital. Its twin theatre Chhanda Cinema Hall is also ready to open, with staff fixing up the chairs. Meanwhile, Balaka Cineworld on Mirpur Road is still not ready to open, while the gates of Modhumita in Motijheel also remain locked. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



Silver lining for the silver screen?

Some movie theatres reopen today, while some err on the side of caution

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The government has given the nod to open doors of all cinema halls in the country and welcome in movie lovers who have been deprived of their favourite pastime for several months. After remaining deserted for quite a while, many halls in the capital are preparing to reopen today.

Hall owners, however, are still in a dilemma. While many have decided to follow the authority's decision, more than five owners are yet to finalise their steps for opening.

Halls that are opening from today are taking proper precautions. The maintenance staff and cleaners are taking extra care to ensure safety and hygiene -- starting from entrance to seats and ticket counters.

Preparations for reopening the capital's Ananda Cinema Hall are in full swing since this morning. Electricians are busy taking care

of technical issues, and cleaners are working to make every inch of their premises spotless.

"We have a total of 35 staffers. Most of them were on leave since the beginning of the pandemic," said Alauddin, the hall's manager. "They have all been asked to come back and resume their duties. We're very happy that we'll finally be open again."

The film "Shahoshi Hero Alam" -- starring Ashraf Alom Saeed, best known as Hero Alam -- is releasing at Ananda today.

Chhanda Cinema Hall, located right next to Ananda, is also preparing to reopen. The cleaning staff were seen working at the location this morning. "Rajdhani Raja", starring Shakib Khan, will hit the screen of this hall today.

"We've been working relentlessly after we got to know the government's decision," said Liton, a security staffer of the theatre. "We were starting to think

of alternative ways to survive, but now, I see hope."

New Market's Balaka Cinema Hall, however, is still closed till further notice. The authorities have not taken any steps yet to reopen.

"We have decided to observe the situation for a few more days," said Shahin Hossain, the hall's manager.

A similar scenario was seen at Modhumita Cinema Hall. "I don't think we'll have many visiting the halls now," said theatre owner Iftekhar Uddin. "There are no new releases and staffers are also on leave. I don't want to incur more losses by opening the doors at this moment."

Mia Alauddin, senior vice-president of Film Exhibitors' Association and owner of Sathi Cinema Hall, said he has decided to reopen today with "Shahoshi Hero Alam".

Star Cineplex, the one located inside Bashundhara City Shopping

Complex, will be functional from October 23, informed their senior manager. Their screens at Shyamoli Square will also remain closed until further notice.

Ovishar Cinema and Neptune Cinema Hall, located on Hatkhola Road, will also remain closed. "The owners have not decided to reopen the halls yet," informs security staffer Mahbubur Rahman Khan.

Meanwhile, Chitra Mahal movie theatre, located on English Road, will be opening today with "Shahoshi Hero Alam". One of seven screens will welcome moviegoers today at Blockbuster Cinemas inside Jamuna Future Park.

Most movie theatres outside the capital, however, have not decided to reopen yet. Many hall owners believe old films are their only option at the moment.

This scenario has put film producers in a new crisis. At least

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Gender-based violence an epidemic: feminists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hasty decision of enacting death penalty in the law is not only appalling but harmful too, and the government should instead reform the social and legal system that actually tackle root causes behind impunity for rape and other sexual violence against women, a feminist alliance has said.

Terming gender-based violence an epidemic in Bangladesh, Feminists Across Generations said the culture in society which has allowed this violence to breed needs to be uprooted.

The coalition of activists fighting gender based violence made the remarks at a press briefing at Naripokkho office in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday.

They placed a 10-point demand to take action and eliminate gender-based violence.

Activists believe the rape incidents in

the country are on the rise because of social stigma, a lengthy justice process, low conviction rates and fear of harassment by offenders.

"Death sentence was already a provision for gang-rape or rape-murder convictions. Now it's a deception, a play to the gallery. Without upholding human rights, what the law minister did is a stunt. There is no proof or research that death penalty can reduce rape. What happened now is not only appalling but harmful too," said Shireen Huq, founder member of Naripokkho.

Now the path of women has become harder too, as most victims will not report the crime now. Their families will discourage them if it happens within close relatives. At the same time, the rapist will be more aggressive to kill the victim to eliminate the proof, she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Shujan Roundtable Long way to eradicate rape culture: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a virtual roundtable yesterday discussed ways to prevent and remedy the ongoing incidents of violence against women.

Titled "Prevention and remedy for violence against women: What needs to be done?" the virtual roundtable was organised by Shujan-Citizens for Good Governance.

Keynote presenter Prof Dr Shahnaz Huda of law department at Dhaka University, also an executive member of Shujan, presented recent statistics of rape and violence against women and talked about causes behind them, such as the prolonged legal battle of cases, the culture of impunity and political affiliation of the perpetrators, all of which hinder the conviction of the rape cases.

Prof Shahnaz also presented some recommendations for the policymakers, such as repealing of archaic section 155 (4) of the Evidence Act-1872, that allows defence lawyers to introduce character evidence against rape complainants, redefining the archaic rape law by widening the scope of acts to be

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Gender equality begins at home'

Says Saima Wazed

UNB, Dhaka

Stressing the need for educating children on gender equality at home, CRI Trustee and Co-chairperson Saima Wazed Hossain said she wants everyone in the country to be taught women and men are no different.

Children's gender education must start from home, she said, urging everyone to raise their voice in unison against violence against women everywhere -- in schools, colleges, workplaces, streets, or elsewhere.

Saima Wazed, also a thematic ambassador at Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), was speaking at a webinar to launch a campaign titled "Women's Safety in Public Places (WSPP)" on Wednesday night.

The campaign was launched by Young Bangla -- a youth wing of ruling Awami League -- and research organisation Centre for Research and Information (CRI) in collaboration with UNDP and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Earlier in March, Young Bangla and Human Rights Programme of UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote the "Women's Safety in Public Places" campaign.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Ensuring post-Covid food security the key

Says agriculture minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the country has continued its food production despite the pandemic and natural disasters including cyclone and flood.

In this current fiscal, rice production has increased to about 3.87 lakh tonnes, he said.

The minister was speaking at a press briefing at his secretariat office on the occasion of World Food Day 2020. Agriculture Secretary Md Nasiruzzaman was also present at the event.

The minister said since the onset of coronavirus outbreak, the prime minister has instructed not to leave even an inch of land uncultivated in tackling the possible food crisis.

Like other countries, World Food Day 2020 will be celebrated in Bangladesh today at the joint initiative of the ministry and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The theme of this year is -- "Grow, nourish, sustain, together. Our actions are our future."

In the briefing, the minister said, "Even after the success in food production, we need to be aware of food and nutrition security in post-Covid Bangladesh."

"We must continue our initiative. With this target in mind, this time we are going to celebrate World Food Day," he said.

He said his ministry is working relentlessly to ensure food security during and post Covid-19 situation. Target of Aus and Aman paddy production has been increased.

Tk 10 will be given as subsidy against per kilogramme of boro paddy seeds to increase production in the coming season.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Mourning Day observed at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday observed Mourning Day, commemorating the tragic deaths of students, employees and guests in a building collapse at Jagannath Hall in 1985.

Some 39 people, including 26 students, died as the roof of the auditorium of the Assembly Building (now October Smriti Bhaban) collapsed on this day 35 years ago.

To mark the day, university authorities organised various programmes and hoisted black flags atop all student dormitories and kept the university flag at half-mast.

Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruazzaman placed a floral wreath at the memorial inside Jagannath Hall and later attended a discussion held on dormitory premises.

He said all have to take lesson from the incident and remain alert so such incident does not recur.

Special prayers were also offered at Jagannath Hall and university mosques.

India seeks reduction of charges for using Bangladeshi airports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly-appointed Indian High Commissioner Vikram K Doraiswami yesterday requested Bangladesh to reduce all general charges for using Bangladeshi airports by Indian airlines for the time being, as Covid-19 has affected them like other airlines of the world.

He said this at a meeting with State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahub Ali at his office at the secretariat.

During the meeting, the high commissioner also proposed to launch Agartala-Dhaka-Agartala flight and work on digitisation in all airports of Bangladesh, the ministry said in a release.

Meanwhile, while meeting with Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque at the latter's office in the city, the Indian high commissioner mentioned that his father had fought in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh as a member of the Allied Forces and that Bangladesh-India relations were tested.

The high commissioner noted that the memorial constructed by Bangladesh in memory of the Allied Forces would further strengthen Bangladesh-India friendship.

During the meeting, India's friendly relations with Bangladesh, Bangladesh's Liberation War and various bilateral issues were discussed, the ministry said in a release.

The minister said Bangladesh does not have complete lists of the members of the allied force, Mujib force, refugee camps, training camps and the list of Indian hospitals providing wartime services.

The minister sought cooperation of the high commissioner to get these lists in preserving the correct and complete history of the Liberation War.

The high commissioner assured him of full cooperation in this regard.



Shops have encroached this footpath at port city's Muradpur area to turn it into a display spot for their motorbikes, narrowing the way for pedestrians. Bikes are a common menace on footpaths; some move about on it to evade traffic, others get parked on top. Whatever it may be, authorities generally seem to ignore these violations. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

DNCC to introduce new insecticide for waterbodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is going to use a new insecticide for water bodies to kill mosquito breeding grounds on pilot basis.

According to officials, the new insecticide poses low risk to the environment compared to the present one being used. Named Novaluron, the tablet is manufactured by a company from England.

DNCC Deputy Chief Health Officer Lt Col Md Golam Mostofa Sarwar said, "These tablets will be disseminated at watery areas, which are mosquito breeding hotspots. Once used, the insecticide will be active for three months. A gram of the tablet can be used for 10 litres of water."

According to the official,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

MINI BYTES

Laptops disappearing from the market as pandemic drives demand

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Amidst the global pandemic, a spike in demand and crunch in supply has resulted in a shortage of laptops, particularly affordable ones, in the local market.

As more and more businesses and schools are moving online, so are laptops flying off the shelves. Particularly, laptops ranging between Tk 25,000 to Tk 50,000 are especially hard to find now, as the existing stocks are plummeting and new shipments are yet to arrive.

Several retailers in IDB Bhaban and Multiplan Centre -- two most frequented destinations for tech products in Dhaka, said laptops and tablets are high on demand and low in supply for the last few months.

Shahnaj Parvin, who came to IDB Bhaban with her eight-year-old daughter, told this writer she was looking for a laptop. "We've been looking for a budget laptop for my daughter's classes, but couldn't find any device within our budget yet."

Seeing the spike in demand, some retailers are asking up to Tk 2,000 to 6,000 more than the retail prices.

Turjo Roy, a university sophomore who was on his way out from Multiplan Centre after buying a laptop, said he had to pay Tk 2,000 more than the listed price.

Owner of a renowned distributor, requesting anonymity, admitted the issue and remarked it as an

"unfortunate outcome" of the pandemic.

When asked why this situation emerged to begin with, Atiqur Rahman, country manager of Dell in Bangladesh, said, "On the supply side, due to the pandemic, we have seen the component manufacturer were not able to forecast the rise in demand globally. Also, our distributors made some conservative forecast. On the demand side, we are seeing a huge rise in the work-from-home and school-from-home trend which pushed the demand too. But we expect things to change very soon."

Muzahidul Al Biruni Sujon, Director of leading tech product distributors Smart Technologies, echoed Atiqur.

"Due to worldwide production shortage, we are seeing a rise in demand which has grown around 30 percent. It's a shame we haven't been able to capture that market. But we are optimistic of catching up hopefully in a month or so," he said.

Local tech conglomerate Walton too has seen an uptick on their laptop sales and are able to meet their demand. "We are seeing a growth of around 20 percent per month for the last several months. We are comfortably meeting the demand and there's no shortage of supplies. We are even offering a laptop exchange offer now," said Liakat Ali, CEO of Walton Computer.

CORRUPTION CASE

Mir Nasir, son disallowed to move appeals before SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday refused to allow former BNP state minister for civil aviation Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and his son Mir Mohammad Helaluddin to move appeals before this court without surrendering to the lower court against the High Court verdict that upheld their jail sentences in a corruption case.

The HC on November 19 last year upheld a lower court verdict that sentenced Mir Nasir to 13 years and Mir Helal to three years in the case.

The HC also ordered them to surrender before the trial court within three months after the trial court receives the certified copy of its verdict.

Yesterday, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain dismissed two petitions filed by the two seeking its permission to move leave to appeal petitions before it challenging the HC verdict without surrendering to the trial court concerned.

Nasir and his son Helal must surrender to the trial court concerned to serve their jail sentences following the apex court order, Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

He said the trial court concerned has received the HC verdict in the first week of August this year.

Lawyers AJ Mohammad Ali and AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon appeared for Mir Nasir and his son during yesterday's hearing.

On July 4, 2007, an anti-graft tribunal sentenced Nasir to 13 years for committing two corruption offences and his son Helal to three years for abetting his father.

The Special Court-2 set up at the MP Hostel in the parliament complex also fined Nasir Tk 50 lakh and said in default, he would have to spend another two years in prison.

Nasir was handed 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for illegally accumulating wealth and three years' simple jail for concealing information of wealth worth Tk 6,72,68,000 in the report he had submitted to the ACC.

Helal was jailed for three years and fined Tk 1 lakh for trying to withdraw and transfer about Tk 5.64 crore from their family joint accounts to the accounts of his wife and mother-in-law to help his father conceal property information, the ACC lawyer said.

The special court also directed the government to confiscate their wealth worth Tk 27,94,91,000 which is disproportionate to the known sources of income of Nasir and his son.

On March 6, 2007, ACC Deputy Director Sharmin Ferdous filed a graft case against Nasir with Gulshan Police Station for amassing properties illegally.

According to the charge sheet, Nasir, his wife late Dalia Naznin Nasir, their daughter and son have wealth worth Tk 29.22 crore. But they showed properties worth about Tk 22.50 crore in the wealth statement, hiding information of properties worth Tk 6.72 crore.

'CUSTODIAL DEATH' IN SYLHET

PBI tells immigration to be on lookout for fugitive sub-inspector

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has warned all immigration points of the country to keep a lookout for Sub-inspector Akber Hossain, who is on the run since the death of Rayhan Ahmed at a Sylhet hospital after allegedly being tortured in police custody.

On behalf of the home ministry, the alert has been circulated so that SI Akber cannot flee the country since PBI needs him for the investigation, said Banaj Kumar Majumder, deputy inspector general of police and chief of PBI, at a press conference yesterday at PBI headquarters.

"After PBI started investigation into the case filed in connection with the death, we believe that the sub-inspector, also the in-charge of Bandarabazar Police Outpost, is important for the sake of the investigation. We are also preparing a team to detain him," he said. Meanwhile, Rayhan's body was exhumed yesterday morning for another autopsy in presence of magistrates and buried again in the afternoon.

The autopsy was completed by a three-member committee headed by Dr Shamsul Islam, assistant professor of forensic department of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, in presence of executive magistrates.

On Wednesday, Sylhet Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate M Kazi Emdadul Islam permitted to exhume the body. Rayhan Ahmed, a resident of Noharipara of Sylhet city, was taken into the outpost on early Sunday and was allegedly beaten. He died around an hour after he was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital by police.

His wife Tahmina Akther Tanni filed a case with Kotwali Police Station on early Monday accusing several unknown persons, stating that he was tortured inside the outpost.

Police suspended four cops of the outpost including the fugitive sub-inspector and withdrew another three.

Except SI Akber, who is on the run since Monday afternoon, all others are at the police lines following an order of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

On Tuesday, Police Headquarters ordered to shift the case's probe to PBI and upon receiving documents of the case, PBI started investigation from Wednesday.

Two Rab imposters held while stealing truck in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested two people who were trying to steal a truck impersonating Rab members in port city's Sholoshahar Gate-2 area yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Mansur Alam (35) from Raozan upazila and Mintu (35) from Satkania upazila.

Witnesses and police said the on-duty police personnel stopped the truck seeing that a scuffle was taking place inside it. Timon Barua, a constable of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (North Traffic Division), said a person sitting beside the driver was telling him to leave the spot.

Long way

FROM PAGE 3

considered as rape, including special provisions for rape incidents for the male child, and criminalising marital rape, raising awareness and educate the people at large about the concept of zero tolerance towards all forms of sexual violence and emphasising the concept of consent, ensuring gender-sensitive training for the agencies related to justice, and challenging the existing social prejudice that emphasises on victim-blaming and victim's attire.

Speaking as the moderator of the event, Shujan secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder said along with the coronavirus pandemic, a "rape pandemic" has also been spreading across all spheres of society.

"The government has imposed the death penalty as the maximum punishment for rapists. But what is more important is to ensure justice for rape," he said.

Rights activist Salma Ali, president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), highlighted how survivors are discouraged by the family, police stations, medical practitioners and courts from seeking justice, due to the absence of a women-friendly environment in the judicial system.

Tania Haque, professor of women and gender studies at DU, stressed the necessity of having

Then the driver sought help from police, he said. At that time, the person, and two others who were escorting the truck riding on two motorbikes, introduced themselves as Rab personnel although they were in plainclothes.

"When I attempted to inform senior police officials, they tried to escape," said the constable, adding that police later detained two with a motorbike.

Other motorcyclist managed to flee, he said. Traffic Inspector Anil Chakma of Sholoshahar area said the betel nut-laden truck was heading for Dhaka from Kutupalong in Teknaf and the muggers intercepted it in Shah Amanat Bridge area of the city.

DNCC to

FROM PAGE 3

even if mosquito eggs are laid and they hatch, the insects will not be able to fly due to the insecticide's effect.

"However, the tablet is not harmful for humans," he said, adding that currently, DNCC has 500 kilogrammes of tablets at their disposal, and more testing is required to fully implement the insecticide.

DNCC spotted 629 breeding grounds in areas under the corporation, and the tablets will be introduced from tomorrow, starting from Uttara Zone-6, and will continue for 10 days on pilot basis.

As breeding season of Culex mosquitoes starts from November, DNCC has started to work ahead to keep mosquitoes in check.

Currently, the corporation is using the liquid insecticide Temephos for killing larvae, and Malathion for adult mosquitoes.

Sabur Khan gives masterclass at Indian university

CITY DESK

Dr Md Sabur Khan, chairman, Board of Trustees, Daffodil International University (DIU), conducted a master class on "Entrepreneurship in Action" at Jagran Lakecity University in India on October 10 through a webinar, says a press release.

The webinar was moderated by Prof Diwakar Shukla, dean, Faculty of Journalism and Creative Studies JLU, India.

During the class Dr Sabur Khan inspired the students wished to be entrepreneurs and urged to have the qualities of risk management, patience, skill development,

foresight, perseverance in achieving goals.

At the same time, one must have knowledge about technology because it is impossible to be an entrepreneur during the pandemic without proficiency in it.

Referring to DIU as an entrepreneurial university, its chairman also pointed out that the university has many initiatives to develop students as entrepreneurs: like Innovation and Entrepreneurship Department, Employable 360 Degree Course, Start Up Market, Venture Capital, ISBP, Get in the Ring Competition, Are You the Next Start Up Competition, etc.

Ensuring

FROM PAGE 3

The minister said "nutrition gardens" have been set up with 1.40 lakh families in 4,397 unions at a cost of Tk 37.36 crore to ensure family nutrition security by bringing every inch of land under cultivation.

Besides, 100 new family nutrition gardens are being set up in each union to mark the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The ministry has taken various programmes on the occasion of World Food Day 2020, including an international seminar today at a city hotel. The prime minister will attend the seminar as chief guest.

Gender equality

FROM PAGE 3

To this end, the youth organisation has already set some stepping stones towards women's safety and empowerment, and the latest campaign is set to be one of those.

With a strict stance against stereotyping of women in society, Saima said, "If my voice is discouraged at home, if I'm hushed up, if I'm reminded every now and then - 'Stay calm, cool, and don't protest', that wouldn't be something befitting of the history of Bangladesh. You see, women were at the forefront of the movements launched by Bangladeshis. When our history inspires us, we must protest before anyone else does. Why should we keep silent?"

Referring to a documentary played during the webinar depicting how women fall prey to sexual harassment, she said any form of violence against women -- not just rape -- must be properly addressed.

As part of the event, UNDP Country Director Sudipto Mukherjee, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira, State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Chief Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Zuenia Aziz, and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed joined a panel discussion.

Silver lining

FROM PAGE 3

22 films have received clearance from Bangladesh Film Censor Board. However, they will not be able to release their productions if halls remain closed.

"I thank the government for this decision," shares popular actor Shakib Khan. "I'm very excited to see my posters outside ticket counters and hopefully the day is not far."

Bangladesh Chalachchitra Shilpi Samity General Secretary Zayed Khan has also positively embraced the decision. "The authorities have taken this decision and I respect them," he said.

Bangladesh Film Directors' Association General Secretary Badiul Alam Khukon and Bangladesh Film Producers and Distributors Association President Khorshed Alam Khasru said they are also content with the decision.

Gender-based

FROM PAGE 3

Shireen Huq said, "Most of the times it is seen that the ruling party men are behind the crimes. It is the ruling party's responsibility to clean their party..."

Activists also demanded an end to all gender-based violence by private and state actors, zero tolerance for victim-blaming at all levels of society, comprehensive sex education --including consent -- be made mandatory in all school curricula, and swift action against those weaponising cyber tools to commit violence against women.

The group demanded women's right to occupy all public spaces without 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 said.

The alliance further demanded 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 victims are treated with respect and due responsiveness during reporting, investigation and prosecution.

SPACE TO LET
3 Storied Building, (First Floor)
2300 sqft for Rent at an individual house in Road-23/A, Gulshan-1, Office/ Restaurant/ Doctor's chamber preferred.
Cell : 01713-187740

TO-LET@GULSHAN
SouthEast faced front apt.in 3rd floor of South faced 6 storied corner building in beautiful location of Gulshan-2.Road# 415, 2262 Sft.(with 1 car parking).Developed by ASSET with all modern facilities.2 lift. Central Geyser.Heavy generator.
Contact: 01721791707, 01711636132

Study Abroad
Global University Admission & Visa Processing Centre
BASHATI CONDOMINIUM
House # 15, Road # 17, Banani, C/A, Dhaka
M: 01406 252 275 / 70
RING TOWER
06/A, Ring Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka
M: 01406 252 221 / 33 / 20

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Dakshin Surma, Sylhet
LGED website: www.lged.gov.bd
Memo No. LGED/UE/D.Surma/Sylhet/2020/502 Date: 15-10-2020
Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 01/2020-2021
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as stated below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Method of tender
1.	e-Tender/ PEDP4/SYL/DAK/2019-2020/W2.01724	Construction of Additional Classroom of Hazrat Shah Tayab (R) (Horizontal-8 Rooms (3H+3V+Stair) GPS under PEDP4	498805	OTM
2.	e-Tender/ PEDP4/SYL/DAK/2019-2020/W14.0833	Construction of Boundary wall Dadupur & Trukkhola Primary School including gate under PEDP4	450580	OTM
3.	e-Tender/ PEDP4/SYL/DAK/2020-2021/W14.1081	Construction of Boundary wall Bagor Khola Primary School including gate under PEDP4	494084	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any branches of registered bank up to 17 November 2020, 13.00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
Afsar Ahmed
Upazila Engineer
Dakshin Surma, Sylhet
Email: ue.dakshinsurma@lged.gov.bd
GD-1659

Bangladesh Bank
Sustainable Finance Department
Head Office
Dhaka
Website: www.bb.org.bd
Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Hiring Consulting Firm (National)

1.	Name of procuring entity	: Sustainable Finance Department.
2.	Expression of Interest (EOI)	: Selection of Consulting Firm.
3.	EOI Ref. No. & date	: SFD/GBMS/1003/6/2/2020-1745 Date: 14/10/2020
4.	Procurement sub-method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
5.	Budget and source of funds	: Foreign Grant.
6.	Project title	: Up scaling regulatory landscape of Green Banking for Shariah Based Banks and Financial Institutions in Bangladesh.
7.	Assignment title	: Hiring Consulting Firm (National) for Preparation and Commission of the Policy Guidelines for Sustainable Finance for Shariah Based Banks and Financial Institutions.
8.	EOI closing date and time	: 05/11/2020 at 3.00pm.
9.	Brief description of the assignment	: Bangladesh Bank (BB) has received financing from Green Climate Fund (GCF) to implement a policy framework or a white paper on Shariah based green financing. To carry out the project successfully, consultancy service is needed to prepare green banking and green financing guidelines for Shariah based banks and financial institutions.
10.	Qualification and experience	: The firm should have at least 05 (five) years experience in the relevant type of services mentioned above. Firm will engage banking specialist and climate finance specialist to perform the said services.
11.	Other details	: Expected term of the assignment is 20 months. The prospective consulting firm shall submit all supporting documents in BB website (https://etender.bb.org.bd) or through e-mail stated below. Interested candidates may obtain "Terms of Reference (ToR)" from the website of Bangladesh Bank (https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php) or the address below, during working days, from 10.00am to 05.00pm. Application/proposal will not be accepted after EOI closing time.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

12.	Name of the official inviting EOI	: Khondkar Morshed Millat.
13.	Designation of the official inviting EOI	: General Manager (Project Director).
14.	Address of the official inviting EOI	: Sustainable Finance Department, 19th Floor, 2nd Annex Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
15.	Contact details of the official inviting EOI	: Phone: 9530320, Fax: 9530327.

This Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is in compliance with relevant government rules and regulations e.g. Public Procurement Rules 2008. By responding to this EOI, consultant firms are conforming to those rules and regulations. The procuring entity reserves all right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.
The details EOI and ToR are available at BB website (<https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php>).

বা্যকিক ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে স্বরাশ্রিত শিকার হলে কিবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Khondkar Morshed Millat
General Manager (Project Director)
Phone: 9530320
E-mail: gm.sfd@bb.org.bd
morshed.millat@bb.org.bd

পত্র নং-ডিপিপি: ৪৮/২০২০-১৮৯৪
তারিখ: ১৪/১০/২০২০
জিডি: ১৪৯৪

NEWS IN BRIEF



Hyderabad flood toll hits 30

At least 30 people have been killed because of sudden torrential rains and flooding in southern India, officials said yesterday. In Hyderabad city, home to top IT companies, nine people were killed when a wall collapsed on them and 10 others died from electrocution and drowning, a local official told AFP. Dramatic images showed cars being washed away by swirling waters, bridges submerged by swollen rivers and trucks stranded on roads inundated by flooding Wednesday. Personnel from the army and the National Disaster Response Force have been deployed to evacuate stranded residents.

Kyrgyzstan president resigns

Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov resigned yesterday after days of unrest following a disputed election, saying he wanted to prevent clashes between security forces and protesters who have demanded his removal from office. He becomes the third president of the Central Asian nation since 2005 to be toppled in a popular uprising. Kyrgyzstan, a Russian ally that borders China, has been in turmoil since the Oct 4 parliamentary polls, which the opposition rejected after Jeenbekov's allies were declared the winners. After the election, opposition supporters took to the streets and seized government buildings, prompting the authorities to annul the vote.

Oxford scientists develop 5 mins Covid-19 antigen test

Scientists from Britain's University of Oxford have developed a rapid Covid-19 test able to identify the coronavirus in less than five minutes, researchers said yesterday, adding it could be used in mass testing at airports and businesses. The university said it hoped to start product development of the testing device in early 2021 and have an approved device available six months afterwards. The device is able to detect the coronavirus and distinguish it from other viruses with high accuracy, the researchers said in a pre-print study.

Anwar summoned over list of backers for Malaysia PM bid

Malaysian police have summoned opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to assist investigations into a viral list of federal lawmakers allegedly backing his bid to claim the premiership, a senior police official said yesterday. Anwar had been asked to give a statement today over complaints filed with the police about a list of 121 lawmakers said to be backing his bid for the premiership, which had gone viral on social media. Huzir said investigations were guided by provisions under the penal code and a separate multimedia law covering statements that could cause public mischief or harassment.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Vote early, vote massively

Democrats tells Americans as Trump stokes fears of contested election

AGENCIES

Democratic leaders have been urging Joe Biden supporters to show up in huge numbers and vote early amid concerns that nothing short of a decisive victory will prevent Republican President Donald Trump from contesting the results, potentially opening the way for state legislatures, the courts or Congress to decide the outcome.

Trump continues to trail Biden by as much as 17 points in the national

The US president admits concern over polls and begs for fresh support

Biden camp raised record \$383 million in September

polls and acknowledged his concern during his latest rally appearance in Des Moines, Iowa, on Wednesday night, telling his loyal crowd: "For me to only be up six [in Iowa], I'm a little bit concerned, I'll tell you that."

In a further sign of his desperation, the president later tweeted an astonishing plea to voters in the solidly-Democratic state of California, asking them "WHAT THE HELL DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE?" in voting for him.

US ELECTION 2020 17 DAYS TO GO



Biden announced via Twitter that his campaign raised a record \$383 million in September, adding to a campaign war chest that is already dwarfing the Trump campaign. Biden has \$432 million cash on hand, the campaign said.

Trump has repeatedly and without evidence declared mail voting to be riddled with fraud and the election "rigged" in favor of Democrats, all the while refusing to commit to ceding power peacefully if he loses.

Nationally, 14.6 million people have already cast ballots by mail or through in-person voting, compared to roughly 1.4 million at the same point four years ago, according to the United States Elections Project. And, data shows, most of them are Democrats.



While early turnout is encouraging for Democrats, the Biden camp is preparing for the worst.

Democrats say their turnout campaign is especially critical this year as Republicans seek to restrict mail-in voting despite the pandemic, and both parties fight over how votes are tallied in key states. Dozens of lawsuits have been filed in multiple states, many focused on mail-in voting.

Then there are the post-election preparations. Biden's national legal team is examining a series of scenarios, including those in which Trump casts doubt on the integrity of a close contest, campaign advisors said. Among them is the possibility that a lengthy or disputed count

of mail ballots could result in Republican-controlled legislatures in key states intervening to award their Electoral College vote to Trump.

The US presidency is clinched by winning a majority of the 538 votes apportioned to the 50 states and Washington DC in the Electoral College. Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic nominee, won the national popular vote by nearly three million votes but lost the Electoral College, and thus the presidency.

Typically, governors certify the results in their respective states and share the information with Congress. But it is possible for "dueling" slates of electors to emerge, in which the governor and the legislature in a closely contested state could submit two different election results.

The risk of this happening is heightened in states where the legislature is controlled by a different party than the governor. Several battleground states, including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, have Democratic governors and Republican-controlled legislatures.

According to legal experts, it is unclear in this scenario whether Congress should accept the governor's electoral slate or not count the state's electoral votes at all.

Fate of Brexit talks hangs in balance at EU summit

AFP, Brussels

European leaders meet yesterday seemingly determined to resist pressure from Prime Minister Boris Johnson to give ground in post-Brexit trade negotiations.

The 27 leaders have tried to keep Brexit off the agenda at their recent summits, trusting in EU negotiator Michel Barnier to defend their interests. But Johnson, frustrated at the slow progress towards a new trade deal, warned on Wednesday that he would decide after the meeting whether to pull the plug on talks.

He has warned that he could walk away from the negotiations unless the results of the latest two-day Brussels' summit point the way to a breakthrough, but EU officials do not recognise his deadline, and insist they remain united in their demands.

The leaders were to tackle Brexit first when the gather for their summit in Brussels yesterday, but a draft of their



conclusions seen by AFP offered little to London.

A earlier version circulating on Wednesday had proposed that Barnier "intensify" his discussions with UK negotiator David Frost in order to reach a deal quickly that could be ratified and implemented before Britain leaves the single market on December 31.

But the latest draft seen by AFP as the leaders gathered had dropped this word and says merely that the summit urges negotiators "to continue negotiations in the coming weeks, and calls on the UK to make the necessary moves to make an agreement possible."

During a cross-Channel call on the eve of the crunch talks, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen warned that there was "still a lot of work ahead of us" adding that Brussels wants a deal but "not at any price".

If no deal is reached, trade rules will revert to the bare bones of World Trade Organization regulations.

US moves on Tibet, Taiwan anger China

REUTERS, Washington

China yesterday accused the United States of seeking to destabilise Tibet, after the Trump administration appointed a senior human rights official as special coordinator for Tibetan issues.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday that Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, would assume the additional post, which has been vacant since 2017.

China has consistently refused to deal with the US coordinator, seeing it as interference in its internal affairs.

The appointment comes at a time when US-China relations have sunk to the lowest point in decades over a range of issues, including trade, Taiwan, human rights, the South China Sea and the coronavirus.

Meanwhile Beijing said yesterday accused Washington of seriously undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait after a US Navy destroyer sailed through the waters amid escalating tensions between Beijing and Taipei.

China considers Taiwan a wayward province that needs to be reunited with the mainland, by force if needed. The US, on the other hand, has stepped up support, including high-tech military equipment and fighter jets, for the island recently to support what it considers an important democratic outpost.

PROTESTS IN THAILAND

THINGS TO KNOW



WHAT DO THE PROTESTERS WANT?

The protesters are rallying against the government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha. The former army chief led a coup in 2014 and kept the kingdom under military rule for five years. Under the junta, a new constitution was drafted before elections were held last year. Prayut was voted in to lead a civilian government -- a win analysts say was tilted by the new charter's provisions. Protesters say the whole process was a stitch-up and are calling for parliament to be dissolved, the constitution rewritten. They also have a list of 10 demands for the monarchy, including throwing out a defamation law that shields the powerful royal family from criticism.

WHY NOW?

Discontent has been simmering since February when the leaders of Future Forward Party, popular among young people, were banned from politics. A pandemic lockdown, which sent Thailand's economy into freefall, exposed the chasm between the billionaire class and the poor. And in June, prominent activist Wanchaleam Satsakrit disappeared triggering huge outcry online. The online campaign spilled offline mid-July and a wave of protests across the country began. Wednesday's demonstration in particular has drawn the ire of authorities because of the reaction of protesters encountering a royal motorcade.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

True, Thailand has seen a cycle of violent street protests and military coups over the decades. But in the past the protest movements had vast financial and political clout behind them. Today's student demonstrators say there is no single leader -- a strategy partly inspired by the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. Daring to take on the taboo topic of the monarchy is also a first. Under the constitution, the royals -- including super-rich King Maha Vajiralongkorn -- are supposed to stay out of politics, but they wield enormous clout in politics and military.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Despite the emergency decree banning protests and gathering of more than four people, protest leaders vowed to push ahead with demonstrations. Political analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak from Chulalongkorn University says the situation is now "fluid and combustible". While the movement has suffered a setback because of the arrests of key leaders, it is likely to "maintain traction because popular grievances are so wide and deep", Thitinan says. "Repression without any reform will lead to more radicalisation and conflict... This is Thailand's grinding transformation to arrive in the 21st century."

SOURCE: AFP



Pro-democracy protesters hold up flashlights on the phones during a demonstration in Bangkok yesterday, after Thailand issued an emergency decree following an anti-government rally the previous day.

PHOTO: AFP

Experts slam 'dangerous fallacy' of herd immunity

WHO chief warns thousands more underfed children may die due to coronavirus pandemic

AGENCIES

Proponents of allowing the new coronavirus to circulate among populations in the hope of achieving herd immunity are promoting a "dangerous fallacy" devoid of scientific proof, dozens of health experts said Thursday.

In an open letter published in The Lancet medical journal, more than 80 specialists from universities across the world said that the only effective way of limiting excess deaths during the pandemic was to control the disease's spread.

The letter comes after numerous US media this week reported that senior Trump administration officials had voiced support for an online declaration advocating herd immunity which gathered more than 9,000 signatories worldwide.

The authors of yesterday's letter said that the social and economic impacts of confinement had led to "widespread demoralisation and diminishing trust" in government measures to get a handle on the virus.

The second wave has also led to a renewed interest in so-called herd immunity, which suggests allowing a large uncontrolled outbreak among people considered to be at low risk of death or serious illness from the virus.



The health experts listed numerous flaws in the concept.

Firstly, "uncontrolled transmission in younger people risks significant morbidity and mortality across the whole population," the letter said.

This would have a catastrophic human and financial cost, besides overwhelming healthcare systems.

The authors also noted that it is possible to become reinfected with Covid-19. Herd immunity offers no guarantee that those who caught the virus would remain immune to it for any meaningful length of time. This would present a risk to vulnerable populations for "the indefinite future", the authors said. Such a strategy would result in "recurrent epidemics" of Covid-19 similar to those caused by numerous infectious diseases before vaccines were invented.

Meanwhile, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday said an extra 10,000 children per month may die this year from malnutrition due to the Covid-19 crisis. He told a UN Food and Agriculture (FAO) conference that due to the pandemic he expected a 14% rise in cases of severe child malnutrition this year - or 6.7 million more people - mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia.

Presidential self-pardon an 'open question'

Says Trump's SC pick

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, said on Wednesday it was an "open question" whether Trump could pardon himself and added that the top US judicial body "can't control" whether a president obeys its decisions.

She also sought to allay Democratic fears that she would be an automatic vote to strike down the Obamacare healthcare law in a case due to be argued Nov. 10, promising an "open mind."

Barrett wrapped up about eight hours of questioning on the third day of her four-day Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing. The committee was to hear yesterday from witnesses both for and against her confirmation, but Barrett herself will not be present.

Trump has said he has the "absolute power" to pardon himself, part of his executive clemency authority. Asked by Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy whether a president could pardon himself for a crime, Barrett said the "question has never been litigated."

"That question may or may not arise but it's one that calls for legal analysis of what the scope of the pardon power is. So because it would be opining on an open question when I haven't gone through the judicial process to decide it, it's not one on which I can offer a view," Barrett added.

Trump also has issued executive clemency to political allies and friends.

Barrett, a conservative federal appellate judge, is Trump's third selection for a lifetime Supreme Court post. Trump has asked the Senate to confirm Barrett before the Nov 3 US election.

<div>গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ</div> <div>Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh</div> <div>Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change</div> <div>Bangladesh Climate Change Trust</div> <div>Old "Ban Bhaban (6th floor)-101, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.</div> <div>Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)</div>		<div>BCCT</div>
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.	
2. Agency	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).	
3. Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).	
4. Procuring Entity Code	None	
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
6. Invitation for	Hiring of Consultant for delivering expert services to the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust for being 1. National Implementing Entity (NIE) to access Green Climate Fund and 2. To formulate a unique and coordinated work-plan for BCCT considering its dynamic activities.	
7. Number of Consultant	1 (One)	
8. Invitation Ref. No	22.06.0000.120.14.25-2018	
9. Date	08th October 2020	
10. Budget & Source of Funds	BCCT Knowledge hub Project (GoB)	
11. Development Partners (if applicable)	None	
12. Project/Program Code (if applicable)	None	
13. Project/Program Name (if applicable)	Institutionalization of BCCT as a Centre of Excellence through Co-ordination of Climate Finance, Research and Knowledge Management.	
14. EOI Package Nos	S1 (Procurement of Service) and	
15. EOI Package Name	Selection Consultant	
16. Procurement Method	QCBS (Quality and Cost base Selection)	
17. EOI Publication Date	10th October 2020 03.00 pm	
18. EOI submission Closing Date & Time	05th November 2020 03.00 pm	
19. EOI Opening Date & Time	05th November 2020 03.10 pm	
20. EOI submission Place	Old "Ban Bhaban (6 th Floor), 101 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.	
21. Brief description of Assignment	Considering the demands of the accreditation process, Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT under MoEFCC) requires the services of consultants who are familiar with environmental, climate change, gender and development issues and have an understanding and experience of the funding landscape for Climate Change related activities and of the workings of the Green Climate Fund. The consultant's main responsibility would be (1) to prepare and fulfill the requirements of the accreditation process, assess BCCT's readiness and take adequate steps, produce as well as formulate any additional required papers and policies for being National Implementing Entity (NIE). (2) a unique and coordinated work-plan formulation for BCCT considering its dynamic activities.	
22. Qualification & Experience of the Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum 10 years of experience in the field of Environmental/Climate Change and/or social sustainability and assessment in an national and international development context• Minimum master's degree in field related to Development studies, Economics, Environmental and/or social Science, Finance, Environmental Politics, International Relations, Geography and Environment, Agriculture, Climate Change and others related subjects/studies.• Familiarity with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and its procedures relating to Accreditation of National Implementing Entities (NIE).• Excellent communication and drafting skills in English.• Ability to work with limited supervision, self-motivated, objective-oriented. The details will be available in ToR	
23. Other information	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Public Procurement Act 2006 & Public Procurement Rules-2008.2) Interested applicants may obtain related information (if required) from the office of undersigned from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. (except holidays).3) Envelop containing one original application/proposal (EOI) along with relevant supporting documents to be maked on envelop "Expression of Interest (EOI) for selection of Consultant".4) Late Submission will be rejected.	
24. Name of Official Inviting EOI	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).	
25. Designation of Official EOI	Director (Development, Planning & Negotiation) and Project Director	
26. Address of Official EOI	Old "Ban Bhaban (6 th Floor), 101 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.	
27. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Ph: 01716414659 E-mail: nasir6318@gmail.com	
28. The EOI will be available in the website of Bangladesh Climate Change Trust.		
29. The authority reserves all rights to accept or reject any/all EOIs without assigning any reason thereof.		
30. Those who have applied for the same post against the previous circular, need not to apply.		
<div>(Signature)</div> <div>Director (Deputy Secretary)</div> <div>Planning, Development & Negotiation, BCCT</div> <div>and</div> <div>Project Director</div>		
GD-1645		

Yearning Aches Foundation advocates for food safety and sustainable development



www.youthop.com

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

The Young SDG Innovators Programme 2020

The Young SDG Innovators Programme is an opportunity for participating companies of the UN Global Compact to identify young talent within their organizations to collaborate and accelerate business innovation towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

DEADLINE: November 30, 2020 | Workshops



WGH/Novartis Foundation #BuildBackBetter Digital Innovation and AI Challenge 2020

Applications are open for the WGH/Novartis Foundation #BuildBackBetter Digital Innovation and AI Challenge 2020. As the world learns to live with the Coronavirus, the #BuildBackBetter Digital Innovation and AI Challenge will offer a platform for women-led start-ups to advance both gender equity in health security and systems, with a special focus on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

DEADLINE: October 23, 2020 | Competitions

Apply for World Bank Group Winter Internship Program 2021

The World Bank (WB) Internship Program offers highly motivated individuals an opportunity to be exposed to the mission and work of the World Bank. The internship allows individuals to bring new perspectives, innovative ideas, and research experience into the Bank's work while improving skills in a diverse environment. In addition, it is a great way to enhance CVs with practical work experience. Internships are available in both development operations and other business units (such as Human Resources, Communications, Accounting, etc.) however, availability during a given internship term is based on business needs.

DEADLINE: October 31, 2020 | Internships

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Founded by Mahmud Hossain Amin, a student of Dhaka Residential Model College, Yearning Aches Foundation is a youth organisation that works to build a better society, by eradicating social problems. The idea behind its inception was inspired by various social leaders and youth-based organisations determined to uplift the underprivileged communities.

"We started this journey with a hangout where I was casually discussing my plans of working for social welfare. Two years ago, with just BDT 50 in our pockets, we embarked on the path of transforming lives," shared Amin. In their initial days, the team neither had enough ideas nor adequate funds to run an organisation, but with enthusiasm and passion, they have conducted over 14 events and have successfully reached out to 27,000 people so far.

The organisation has arranged several programmes on food safety, where they distributed sanitation materials among roadside food hawkers and small food shops in the city. They further spread awareness among people by discussing food hygiene protocols and ideal



A volunteer distributing masks during their event, 'Safer Places'.

nutritional values.

The team continues its earnest efforts to tackle the city's pollution by providing free masks to pedestrians. They were also active during the road safety protests and conducted multiple awareness programmes to familiarise people with the use of zebra

crossing and over-bridges. Furthermore, the team also reached out to slum dwellers to propagate hygiene awareness. "Currently, we are organising online events to generate awareness about the spread of the virus," said Ayman Tahmid, a student of Rajuk Uttara Model College and the Vice

President of Yearning Aches Foundation.

The organisation is continuing its activities to combat the pandemic as their volunteers are delivering food packages among underprivileged communities for the past few weeks. "We have helped around 3,000 families across Dhaka, Barishal and Rangpur. These people had lost their sources of livelihood and were finding it difficult to make ends meet," added Alif Mahmud Akkhar, a student of Notre Dame College and the General Secretary of the organisation. They have also initiated a social media challenge chain called, '8 Kotir Jonno 8 Koti', during which the team members provided a food package to a nearby underprivileged family and tagged other people to do so. "Social media has played an important role in connecting us to the masses. We took on our social responsibility through an online challenge," shared Amin.

The future plans of the organisation include designing a sustainable development project to educate underprivileged students. They further intend to organise skill training programmes for the youth and support middle and lower middle-class families to survive, post the pandemic.



(L) Volunteers of Yearning Aches Foundation with kids, during their event, 'Warm Hearts 2018'. (R) At 'Taste with Health 2019', the volunteers distributed face masks, gloves and shower caps to street-food vendors.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF YEARNING ACES FOUNDATION

Committed to the service of others



Members and volunteers of We, Not I at their event, 'Bin of Hope.'

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WE, NOT I

ZAREEN NAWAR

After completing his education from abroad, Rahmatuzzaman Rumon, the Founder of the non-profit organisation We, Not I, came back to his homeland with the goal to help the youth. To keep impressionable youths from succumbing to behavioural problems, drug addiction and depression, the NGO was formed at the start of 2018.

Graduating students volunteer at various events for We, Not I. The organisation's funds come from the registration fees of their volunteers. It also has several established clubs for volunteers so that those who are interested can sharpen their skills.

They have English Language, Science, Sports, Debate and Literature clubs. The volunteers are asked to attend meetings and seminars as per the requirements. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, the involvement of volunteers has been very restricted. 300 volunteers are currently involved with We, Not I.

The organisation intends to instill good habits in young kids. "We hope that the kids will learn to keep the community clean and will grow up to be respectful towards people from all walks of life," explains Rumon. "Much like the rest of the world, we had to delay our plans and events due to the pandemic. We did, however, try and help



At 'Bin of Hope', the volunteers cleaned up roads and set up 50 sustainable garbage bins around Mirpur.

people as much as we could by taking the necessary safety precautions while we were out and about." They provided PPE suits to those who were likely to require it and maintaining social distancing as strictly as possible.

Their latest event, 'Project Ekannobotti', is about supplying food for at least 15 days to families that are unable to afford their own food during the pandemic. So far, they have been able to feed around 1,500 people. During Ramadan this year, they sold iftar packages at BDT 10 to destitute communities. Through their project,

'Eduguard' they tried to help laid off teachers financially. To campaign for a clean environment, they arranged the event 'Bin of Hope' and setup 50 sustainable bins around Mirpur. They provided Eid gifts to around 50 families and they also provided iftar packages to the police to commend their hard work.

"In the future, we hope to expand our reach through workshops and engage the youth more and more towards the betterment of the country," said Rumon. We, Not I can be reached through their website and Facebook page.



Bangladesh as a transit for drug smuggling

Masterminds of the drug trade have to be caught

WHILE investigating a case filed after the recovery of 12.32 kg of amphetamine powder from the cargo village area of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport last month, the Department of Narcotics Control found that a transnational syndicate is using Bangladesh as a route to smuggle amphetamine powder to other countries. The powder is initially being smuggled into Bangladesh from India, and in this particular case, was meant to be flown to Australia via Malaysia. The presence of such a syndicate is extremely worrying. However, a number of international media reports had previously revealed similar suspicions.

For example, some international media reports had suggested that Bangladesh was being used as a transit to smuggle drugs to places like South America and the Middle East—and in the process of doing so, some of the drugs were being diverted for domestic consumption. Since around 2008, Bangladesh has witnessed an explosion in the trafficking of yaba into the country and its consumption. The social cost this has had on Bangladesh has been enormous.

Now that the DNC has confirmed the existence of a transnational drug ring that is using Bangladesh as a transit to smuggle narcotics (or their preparatory substances), the authorities must take effective steps to prevent these drugs from coming in. For one, it would be naïve to believe that there aren't more such syndicates. And ignoring the restrictions and costs that might be slapped on Bangladesh by authorities in other countries in order to stem the flow of drugs that are being smuggled to their countries from Bangladesh would be suicidal. Moreover, a lot of the drugs will slip into the domestic market as well as lead to the establishment of other illegal practices, such as human trafficking (for the purpose of carrying the narcotics across borders), weapons trafficking and money laundering.

We urge the authorities to investigate this matter with a fine-tooth comb. We believe it to be impossible for such sophisticated operations to function without any assistance from some internal sources or influential quarters. And the only way these operations can be dealt a serious blow is for the authorities to apprehend the real masterminds behind the drug trade. At the same time, it is extremely difficult for any government to deal with transnational criminal syndicates on their own, due to a number of jurisdictional factors. Therefore, it is essential that the Bangladesh government seek assistance of other governments and agencies to stop these syndicates from functioning on and using its territory.

Rural indigenous women farmers must be recognised

Govt must support them during this crisis

OCTOBER 15 marked the International Day of Rural Women. According to the United Nations, the Day was established to recognise "the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty." From domestic work and rearing livestock to farming vegetables, rural indigenous women, especially in the districts of Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT), play an integral role in ensuring sustainability and rural development. Many of them are involved in farming, but the pandemic-induced shutdown has burdened them with added hardship as it became more difficult to sell their produce. However, if the women farmers are registered in the digital database of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), they would then become eligible for state support, which aims to enhance their livelihoods. Also, many indigenous women farmers are not yet aware of the fact that the government is providing a Tk 5,000 crore stimulus package to small and medium farmers in rural regions.

Although women farmers rank higher in number than their male counterparts, they usually remain as unregistered farmers. In some cases, their husbands are registered in the database—as DAE enlists only one name from an agricultural family—and therefore, the men are the recipients of the benefits. An overwhelming majority of women are kept out of the loop in terms of any state support such as agricultural cards, seeds, fertilisers, or low-interest loans, when in fact they too are toiling day and night to make important contributions to the country's society, agriculture and subsistence economy.

As the DAE lacks specific data on the rural indigenous women's farming activities, they must immediately make a comprehensive list of these women farmers. The government along with NGOs and other agencies can work out policies to protect the rights, healthcare and economic development of the rural indigenous women. Indigenous communities going through financial hardship at this time must be supported by the government. When it comes to indigenous female farmers, extra attention must be paid so that they are not left out of the government's rescue package as they play an important part in contributing to the production of food and to our economy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

No room for complacency

According to a survey by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), around 45 percent of people surveyed in Dhaka were found to be carrying Covid-19 antibody. And the presence of such antibody among slum-dwellers was about 74 percent. At a time when many countries have been hit by the second wave (we have been cautioned too), such news gives us hope. It means we might be on the way to develop herd immunity. However, 82 percent of the Covid-19 cases surveyed were asymptomatic. That means we must still remain extremely careful and not take the virus lightly, as seems to be case with many on the streets.

Nipa Chakma, Chattogram



HASEEB MD IRFANULLAH

have food security.

In the middle of the pandemic, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published the 2020 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report which notes that before the pandemic hit the globe, almost 10 percent of the world population (about 750 million people) were facing severe food insecurity. The worst scenario predicts up to 828 million people to be undernourished in 2020; 132 million of them would suffer because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic affected our food system and food security primarily within countries, and in different ways. The global food price by and large remained stable. But, at the retail level, different food items saw increased pricing.

Restricted economic activities significantly decreased the earnings of the lower-income groups. This in turn affected their purchasing power leading to a severe food crisis. A study done in July 2020 estimated that 87 percent of vulnerable families in Bangladesh were passing through a nutritional crisis. If the World Bank's latest prediction is right, this pandemic may push an additional 115 million people in the world into extreme poverty in 2020—a rise that did not happen in the last 20 years—increasing social inequality and food insecurity worldwide.

The pandemic also hindered the food supply chain all over the world due to transport restrictions within a country and export-import restrictions between countries. Many producers, especially those that dealt with perishable items such as vegetables, fruits and milk, also lost their businesses due to low prices of the produce.

Moreover, while millions of people go to bed hungry, disruption in food supply increased food waste globally. Before the pandemic, the FAO reported, food waste was responsible for 8 percent of the total global carbon emission. This has been worsened by the pandemic.

To immediately respond to the pandemic-forced food crisis, governments and their agencies established food

support systems. The government of Bangladesh, for example, provided food support to tens of millions of its citizens. In April, the government allocated Tk 50 billion to small and medium farmers as soft loan to reduce the negative impact of Covid-19 on agriculture.

All around the world, including Bangladesh, numerous businesses and not-for-profit organisations adopted innovations to reduce food waste, improve the food distribution system, and manage

Tk 11 billion worth of damage). Between late June and mid-August, devastating monsoon floods put half of the country under water. The ministry of agriculture estimated crop damage worth Tk 13.23 billion.

Despite all odds posed by the pandemic, I saw an encouraging food situation in the country as I listened to the secretary of the ministry of agriculture speaking at a public meeting, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Research and



We need a resilient food system that will function amidst global shocks like the pandemic, natural disasters, conflicts and economic stresses.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

and repurpose extra food. Community-based networks were created to donate food to the people in need, via food banks and charities, especially in the areas where unemployment rose high due to the lockdown.

Bangladesh also faced an unprecedented challenge during the early months of the nationwide lockdown—harvesting *boro* rice from 4.8 million hectares of land. This urgency prompted the opening of agro-related transports in late April, allowing labourer movement, and ensured emergency purchase and deployment of rice harvesters. The successful harvest and storage initiatives eased the pressure on the country's food grain supply, which was otherwise stressed by panic buying.

This year, there was no flash flood before the *boro* harvest, which was a blessing for Bangladesh. But it was not the case after the harvest. The super-cyclone Amphan rampaged the south-western part of the country on May 20. It damaged 176 thousand hectares of cropland, washed away 10,000 shrimp farms, and caused heavy damage to infrastructures (totalling

Training on Applied Nutrition (BIRTAN) in Dhaka in early October. This year, for example, Bangladesh is cultivating *aus* rice in 1.3 million hectares of land and *T-aman* rice in 5.5 million hectares, both exceeding the regular annual targets. Bangladesh usually cultivates hybrid rice varieties in 0.9 million hectares of land; this year, to overcome the flood damage, 1.2 million hectares have been targeted with the provision to supply free seeds to the farmers.

In 1979, the FAO member countries established October 16 as the World Food Day. Coming in the wake of Covid-19, this year's theme is "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together." Over the past four decades, we have achieved a lot by tackling famine, hunger, and malnutrition. But there have been depressing trends that show our fight for global food security is far from over. The global data also indicates that we are going to fail to achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger by 2030, unless drastic actions are taken to improve our food system.

Our experience of maintaining food supply during the pandemic, the grave

WFP's Nobel Peace Prize underscores the need to combat hunger first

MOHAMMED PARVEZ IMDAD

THE Nobel Committee awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize to World Food Program (WFP) "for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict." This is all the more relevant in these times as recession and economic uncertainties loom large. The award may also be viewed as the Nobel Committee's priority reminder to countries and international development organisations to be alert to probable hunger and famine, should the pandemic linger further.

The award also highlights the importance of placing additional focus on food security, especially in developing countries. In the current context, bilateral and multilateral development assistance should ensure higher budgetary support to countries in transition from Least Developed and Developing statuses to Mid-Income categories.

Another critical implication that warrants attention is renewed focus on poverty and inequality. There are concerns that poverty might rise to critical levels due to rising unemployment and declining incomes. The addition of new poor may aggravate poverty levels. Based on the Global Hunger Index (by the International Food Policy Research Institute), regions that are conflict-ridden and most critically exposed to environment challenges are prone to hunger and famine.

Some pertinent questions would relate to considering whether hunger should be assessed along with food security. Food security would be a necessary element to ensure hunger prevention but may not be sufficient to combat hunger in the long run. There is a renewed global thrust on checking hunger with a focused approach. This year's Nobel Peace Award gives further indication that food policy and programme impacts should view hunger prevention both as strategy and outcome. It is important to emphasise the responsiveness and efficiency with which the WFP undertook and implemented effective and results-based programmes to help countries counter the pandemic. WFP's Mid Term Program Framework (MTPF) envisions sustainable programmes that build on three pillars of emergency intervention: support to national social protection systems, improved basic services delivery, and efficient food management without

disruption. WFP also closely reviewed implications of the pandemic on the world's poorest in terms of food security, monitored trends in country economic indicators for required interventions, and reached out to countries to support respective national efforts in checking tendencies towards hunger.

Regions and communities adversely affected by climate change, environmental degradation, disasters and conflicts face greater risks of hunger and famine. This is mainly due to massive disruptions in production and supplies, insufficient

in poverty and inequalities to reduce hunger and malnutrition in a sustainable manner. Poverty reduction programmes should relate to investments in food security and sustainable transformation in agriculture.

The UN may consider specific initiatives in this context, such as convening World Hunger Forum and Global Commission on Preventing Hunger through close coordination of WFP, FAO and IFPRI. The UN could facilitate a structured operational mechanism that would align national and regional initiatives. An International Food



STAR FILE PHOTO

access and uneven distribution. UN reports confirm over 80 percent of the world's hungry live in disaster-prone and conflict-driven countries. While resolving conflicts and promoting environment would be useful solutions to preventing hunger, it is extremely important to review and address the key causes of global hunger—rising inequalities, unequal distribution of assets and resources, landlessness, severe lack of access to credit, declining incomes and inadequate employment opportunities. The situation worsens when disadvantaged and vulnerable groups cannot afford minimum access to land, farming inputs and agricultural resources, resulting in reduced access to food.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and USAID's "Food For Peace and Feed The Future" findings emphasise higher investments in agriculture and food security to reduce risks of hunger. The United Nation's "End Hunger by 2030" suggests drastic reduction

Bank & Global Institute For Initiatives and Research on Hunger and Famine would add value and ensure credible and efficient outcomes in this regard. The UN may like to consider these proposed initiatives in the medium term.

In view of the current pandemic, from country perspectives, the key element would be to extend structured support to most vulnerable groups and segments of the population that are more prone to hunger risks. They include poor women and children, other vulnerable groups, unemployed individuals and communities without access to credit and resources for livelihood. This pandemic resulted in intensifying poverty and inequalities that would deepen levels of indebtedness and deprivation leading to increased hunger. The existing bilateral and multilateral development discourse should concentrate on strengthening respective country programmes to address these concerns.

Due to Covid-19, there is a need

poverty scenarios due to economic shocks, increasing natural calamities under the changing climate, and socioeconomic and political challenges around food demand (re)defining our food system in the Covid-19's new normal.

We need a food system that will maintain its functions and structures against global shocks like the pandemic, frequent natural disasters, conflicts, economic stresses, and the climate change. It will adapt to the changing situations and transform to respond to the changes as needed. We need a resilient food system.

Our food system should be supportive to the small and medium farmers, on the one hand, and the poor consumers, on the other. Bangladesh superbly reduced poverty from 40 percent in 2005 to 20.5 percent in 2019. By June 2020, Covid-19 pushed the poverty level up to 29.5 percent, according to the General Economic Division of Bangladesh. Our food system needs to appreciate this reality. Our post-pandemic recovery plans and the Eighth Five-Year Plan need to revitalise livelihood opportunities for the poor to bring them out of the poverty trap.

Actions supported by technologies, innovations, and new knowledge are crucial for a resilient food system. Our food production should sustainably manage soil and water, and use chemicals to nurture and protect crops without harming the nature with pollution and greenhouse gas emission. It should use crop improvement technologies—such as biotechnology—to invent crops to cope with diseases, heatwaves, floods, droughts, and salinity, as well as with better nutritional quality.

Appropriate and timely weather information and good early disaster warnings are vital for food production. Our food system needs affordable technologies to reduce food waste in the processes of harvest, storage, and utilisation. We also need advanced tools and techniques to monitor and stabilise food price and to identify and track food safety related crimes. We need innovations to identify the people facing food crisis and to reach out to them without delay.

A plate of food is not only a source of nutrition but also a sculpture created by numerous people—farmers, labourers, suppliers, financiers, scientists, agricultural extensionists, sellers, policymakers, cooks, and diners—and by their knowledge, experience, tradition, and devotion. We must not forget to put a human face on a resilient food system.

Dr Haseeb Md Irfanullah is an independent consultant working on environment, climate change, and research systems. His Twitter handle is @hmirfanullah

to consider enhanced safety nets and broadened social protection programmes to cover all sections of the population confronted with critical inadequacies of inputs, resources and opportunities. The issue here is to ensure the effectiveness of current protection mechanisms based on how these have worked so far, and addressing deficiencies and subsequently reshaping these in accordance with best practices. It would be pertinent to expand conventional safety net programmes to welfare net programmes that would enable convenient access to basic needs


including food and shelter and easy credit access. Policy interventions should aim at mitigating risks and concerns due to the addition of new poor (for instance, loss of jobs, rising unemployment and drastic reduction in employment or reduced opportunities for inter-sector transfer of skills). To address these, entrepreneurship expansion support and easy credit access are credible and effective solutions.

It is also crucial to enhance the efficiencies of institutions and improve management and governance frameworks within country systems as well as within the ambit of development partnership. Performance-driven and results-based approaches, extensive coordination of government and NGO programmes, comprehensive community engagement and extensive stakeholder participation and buy-in should also be useful.

Dr Mohammed Parvez Imdad is an economist, governance specialist and former national and international civil servant. Email: mpinayefnmdad@gmail.com

Why the death penalty will do nothing to end impunity for rape

‘JUSTICE’
IN PRACTICE



TAQBIR HUDA

ON October 13, the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 was passed making some changes to our central law on violence against women and children. The most significant and discussed change is that it “introduces” the death penalty as the maximum punishment for single perpetrator rape under section 9(1) of the 2000 Act.

Before this amendment, the only available punishment for single perpetrator rape was a mandatory life sentence. Before we delve into the efficacy of this reform, two important points must be noted by way of contextualisation.

Firstly, popular discourse in support of the death penalty for rape (and therefore this reform) tends not to acknowledge that death penalty already existed as an available punishment for three out of the four categories of rape in our law, even before the amendment. That means, the death penalty was already prescribed as the maximum punishment for three of the more serious categories of rape under section 9 of the 2000 Act. These are: rape leading to death, gang rape, and gang rape leading to death. Therefore, the only form of rape which did not involve the death penalty was single perpetrator rape, perhaps owing to it being the least severe of the four categories. This contextualisation is important because many fail to realise that the death penalty was already available as a punishment for the Noakhali rape case which triggered the protests, since it was not single perpetrator rape, but a case of gang rape.

Secondly, this amendment does not “introduce” the death penalty for even single perpetrator rape, because section 6(1) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Special Provisions) Act 1995—which the 2000 Act repealed—had first introduced the death penalty for single perpetrator

rape, which the 2000 Act removed. This is, therefore, a “reintroduction” of the death penalty for single perpetrator rape, and the existence of the death penalty for a single perpetrator for five years between 1995 and 2000 did not have any particularly significant impact on justice for rape.

Now coming to the central question: will this reform do anything to improve justice for rape? The short answer is no. The death penalty has already existed for the three other forms of rape for at least 25 years, but can we really say that has at all been able to decrease rape leading to death (such as Rupa and Tonu’s cases) or gang rape (such as the recent Noakhali case)? Research by the Death Penalty Project, an international organisation, has shown that there is no evidence that the use or existence of death penalty has especially helped deter crime anywhere. Instead, research from around the world tends to show that increasing the severity of punishment tends to decrease conviction rates in criminal cases. This is because the more severe the punishment becomes, the more cautious and reluctant judges become in handing out guilty verdicts, since their judicial conscience tells them to exercise extra care by gaining extra surety. This effectively results in the standard of proof being pushed up in practice and only the most severe forms of the crime being recognised. Making the two most severe punishments in law—life imprisonment and death penalty—the only possible penalties for rape will, therefore, have two damaging effects. Firstly, it will push the standard of proof for rape to an unattainable standard. Secondly, it will lead to only the most severe rape cases resulting in conviction.

Rape is an offence that, due its very nature, is already incredibly difficult to prove. Most of the rape cases will not be equally brutal or have a video recording of the crime taking place, as in the Noakhali case. Following the amendment, the vast majority of rape survivors will be deprived of justice either because they are unable to satisfy this unattainable standard or their rape is not on the severe end of the spectrum, which therefore would mean the rapists get

acquitted. This is because the law would not allow any alternative punishments. Allowing judges enough sentencing discretion to order punishment that is proportionate to the crime committed is a basic requirement in any justice system. Yet under our rape laws, our judges hardly have any discretion. Little wonder, then, that a report by *Prothom Alo* has shown that the conviction rate in rape cases filed in Dhaka’s tribunals is only 3 percent.

The ongoing discussion about death

would be foolish to think that the absence of death penalty for single perpetrator rape is what was deterring around 90 percent of rape survivors from taking legal action against their rapists. A more realistic answer would be the misplaced social stigma on rape survivors and their inability to file a rape case due to fear of facing violent reprisals from the rapists, who are usually more powerful—and the death penalty does nothing to address either of these. Due to space constraints, I will discuss

having filed the case, and returns home, the police is not bound to ensure their safety. They are fair game, yet again. If we had an effective victim and witness protection system, as proposed by the Law Commission as far back as 2006, then this would no longer be a problem, as it would then become the state’s responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of not only rape complainants, but also witnesses who testify on their behalf. It would do so by posting police officials outside their residence to ensure safety, or providing them safe custody.

Secondly, section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872 specifically allows defence lawyers to raise questions about a rape complainant’s character in open court, in order to undermine their credibility as a witness. In practice, this provision essentially allows the defence lawyer to use the very misplaced social stigma that a rape survivor experiences as a weapon to humiliate them to the point where they reach their breaking point and abandon legal proceedings to avoid further humiliation. This tactic shifts so much of the focus on a rape complainant’s lifestyle, clothing and life choices that the rape survivor often feels they are the ones on trial, and not their rapist. Countries around the world have recognised the discriminatory and damaging impact such a legal provision can have on justice for rape, and have limited or completely prohibited the use of character evidence against rape complainants. For example, India and Pakistan, who inherited this same provision from our British colonisers, have already abolished it, while we have consciously retained it.

If we are serious about ensuring justice for rape survivors, we must introduce reforms which actually help achieve that objective. At the very least, our state must have in place a system which will ensure their protection throughout the justice-seeking process, and the state must repeal the colonial law which essentially puts a rape survivor on trial, instead of their rapist.

.....

Taqbir Huda is a Research Specialist at Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and leads the Rape Law Reform Now campaign. Email: taqbirhuda@gmail.com

A protester sitting on the street in front of the National Museum in Dhaka wearing a sari printed with anti-rape slogans, on October 10, 2020.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

penalty for rape makes two very big presumptions: that a rape survivor has been able to file a case and the trial has reached the ending point where the judge has to decide what punishment to give. Importantly, a multi-country study by UN agencies which interviewed rapists found that on average over 90 percent of respondents from Bangladesh reported facing no legal consequences for raping a woman or girl. This means that the vast majority of rape survivors are precluded from taking legal action in the first place. It

only two reforms that could very much have addressed these two barriers to justice for rape survivors.

Firstly, since rape takes place due to a power imbalance, the rapist can utilise this very imbalance to preclude the survivor from seeking justice for the crime done to them, through use of threats or actual violence. Therefore, seeking justice then becomes akin to facing more violence. Rapists are able to do so because they know that once a rape survivor steps outside the police station after

China-US War: A Frightening Possibility

ALI AHMED ZIAUDDIN

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, speaking at an Atlantic Council Front Page event on September 15, called for building an international coalition against China. Meanwhile, Michèle Flournoy, widely expected to be Pentagon chief in a Biden administration, said, “American military and its partners should consider developing capabilities to sink the entire Chinese Navy within 72 hours to deter Beijing.”

From what we understand from these hawkish statements by the incumbent and possible future key cabinet members of the US, the country is on an irreversible collision course with China, irrespective of who wins in November. To sustain its war economy that mostly benefits its plutocracy, the US needs to be on a war footing. How and when the two countries collide is a matter of conjectures. But the indicators of a gathering storm are getting alarmingly visible.

After the recent China-India spat, it seems India has finally decided to shed its reluctance and actively engage with the anti-China Indo-Pacific military alliance in the making, known as the “Quad”, when it invited Russia to join the initiative. Moreover, India and the US are expected to sign the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for geo-spatial cooperation on October 26-27, according to *Hindustan Times*. In layman’s words, it’s the basis of a future military alliance, under which both can draw from each other’s military assets and resources if and when needed.

To put the above facts into perspective, these are indications that the US’s growing aggression against China will only get worse in near future even without Russia joining the Quad, which seems highly unlikely. The US can turn up the heat on China using two possible strategies: i) diplomatic, financial and economic pressure, and ii) military means. As part of the first strategy, it may try to strangle China in the following ways.

First, it may put immense pressure on Japan, ASEAN and the EU to fall in line behind the US sanctions and economic decoupling from China. Japan will be willing, unlike the other two, but if the US stops its present hostility towards the EU, things may change. And this will definitely create a huge problem for Chinese accessibility to the EU market.

Second, the US may ask banks across the world to not have dollar transactions with China. In case of non-compliance by any bank, the US Federal Reserve may penalise that bank by seizing all its dollar assets or barring it from trading in dollars. It can also preclude Chinese banks from using the SWIFT, the interbank dollar transfer tool. In both cases, China’s overseas trade of goods and services against dollar payment can be stopped almost immediately. This will in effect mean that any supply chain anywhere or third country doing business with China, or wanting to make payment in dollars to China, will be barred from doing business with the US. Yes, alternative payment in Chinese yuan is possible, but to establish it as a mode of payment first will take a lot of time, and more importantly, many states may be unwilling to accept it instead of dollars.

Third, the US can raise the tariffs on Chinese goods further, making it impossible for the latter to remain competitive. This means virtually preventing Chinese market access into the US, which it has already started by forcing Chinese tech giants to cease their business in the US.

Fourth, the US may get tempted to apply the nuclear option, and seize all Chinese dollar assets.

All these measures will, in effect, be akin to a declaration of Cold War 2. Well, some key policy planners are keen to do precisely that considering how the first Cold War had created full employment and a prosperous economy. But a key difference is, back then the US was the world’s number 1 creditor nation, whereas today it’s the biggest debtor

nation. By the end of the year, the US is expected to incur a debt of USD 30 trillion, more than its GDP, meaning it has entered a permanent debt trap. If, in this context, the US decides to adopt the above measures, it will definitely harm China by cutting it off from the global market, but in the process will also wreak havoc on the world economy in general and the US economy in particular. Because, in a globalised world economy where innumerable supply chains are so integrated, disruption anywhere is sure to create havoc everywhere. It means the cost of goods and services will rise in the US as it’s the biggest consumer.

Moreover, the US will lose the biggest market of its agro products, and all its major companies based in China will lose the most if they are shut off from the 500-million-middle-class Chinese market. The fourth option will surely be a death blow to the dollar’s dominance and status as the reserve currency. If this option is used, it is highly unlikely that any country will want to buy dollars as foreign exchange reserve or even buy US treasury bonds. This in turn will stop bankrolling the chronic US budget deficit. Yes, it still can go on printing its currency, but that will trigger inflation and make the dollar even more valueless.

Given this overall negative impact of pursuing the above measures, can the US afford to start a prolonged Cold War? In all probability, the most tempting course of action might be to look for a quick fix, as Ms. Flournoy has suggested, hoping China will bend to US diktats. More so, because the conventional thinking is, the US’s presently far superior military capability holds a good chance of defeating or crippling China for good. In 5-10 years’ time when it is sure to reach parity with the US, this may be impossible. But it’s inconceivable to imagine that, despite the US’s military advantage, China will give in without a massive retaliation if its survival is threatened. If the US is seriously considering such a disastrous

undertaking, there is no way China will submit without a regime change—meaning all-out war, boots on the ground, and in the worst-case scenario, a nuclear exchange. Here is where Bangladesh comes in the picture.

If we look at the map of Asia, there are several entry points to mainland China both on land and by sea. In any military showdown between China and the US, the South China Sea will obviously be the main theatre because that’s the main entry point to mainland China. In all probability, neither Russia nor any Central Asian states will allow the US to encroach China from their land in the north or the west. The ASEAN till now has expressed a desire not to take sides in any hot conflict between China and the US. That only leaves South Asia which looks like the obvious second theatre. Afghanistan has no interest in getting involved unless, of course, the US forces stationed there impose an unwanted war upon it. Pakistan, being a nuclear state and a close defence partner of China, will definitely not side with the Quad to wage war against it.

It is natural for India as a member of the Quad and a military ally of the US to lead the assault on China’s border, which will definitely turn the entire region including Nepal and Bhutan into a destructive battlefield of superpower hostility. There will be immense pressure on both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to join the war effort, but far more on Bangladesh, because of the Bay of Bengal. From its shores, the US naval forces can fire hypersonic missiles that can reach deep inside China in a few minutes with a speed between 4-5 thousand mph—a few more minutes perhaps for supersonic jets with a speed close to 2000 mph. The Bay, and by extension Bangladesh, may turn into a key war zone.

Although Bangladesh has no interest whatsoever to get involved in this superpower rivalry, it may well be dragged forcibly. Before the Afghan invasion, the US threatened Pakistan to either join it or get bombed “back to the Stone Age”. Three levers can be

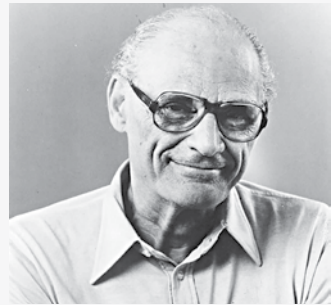
used to squeeze Bangladesh. One, India is sure to apply its utmost persuasive power, if that doesn’t work, the US might step in with several lucrative offers; and if that fails too, it will restore to its typical muscle-flexing tactics. Bangladesh holds USD 38 billion reserve with the Fed, which the US may threaten to confiscate like it did to Iran and Venezuela. In addition, it may also threaten high tariffs on garments and render it impossible for Bangladesh to remain competitive.

Yes, all these possibilities may seem far-fetched, but no one had imagined the outbreak of World War I even before one month of it. The whole of Europe was already a powder keg—all that was needed was a spark, which came in the form of a murder in Sarajevo. Today, the sharp and growing polarisation and increasing civil/military alignment of antagonistic powers are indicators of a gathering storm. The US and the EU are extremely perturbed to see China beat them in their own game and not bending to their will unlike the rest of the developing world, over which they held full sway for over three centuries—first by colonial occupation, and then by market and financial control which is slowly ebbing away. The developing world has an alternative now. Moreover, throughout history, all major socioeconomic crises had led to warfare. The frequency of close encounters between the US and Chinese forces in the South China Sea may cause accidents anytime, triggering a flare-up.

Like all rational minds, I hope this frightening possibility never occurs. But for that to happen, America will need to make peace with China. Will rational sense prevail? The history of all declining empires says otherwise. All had tried their best to sustain the status quo with the help of the most advanced weaponry, but all eventually imploded and got sucked into the ravages of time.

.....

Ali Ahmed Ziauddin is a researcher and activist. Email: aliahmedziauddin@gmail.com



ARTHUR MILLER

(1915-2005)

American playwright.

Don't be seduced into thinking that that which does not make a profit is without value.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Floats on the breeze

6 Wall worker

11 Figure of speech

12 Texas player

13 "Search me"

14 Herrings' cousins

15 Yale student

16 "Krazy -"

18 Stadium cry

19 Ave crossers

20 UFO fliers

21 Make a knot in

22 Casual top

24 Discover

25 Pancreas product

27 Easy two-pointer

29 Pestered

32 Omelet start

33 Flowed into

34 Old hand

35 Fellow

36 Unmatched

37 Go bad

38 Studio sign

40 Omit phonetically

42 Decree

43 Kitchen gadget

44 Valleys

45 Garden starters

DOWN

1 Most board

2 Full-price payers

3 Carpenter's fastener

4 Cargo unit

5 They light up

6 Ship staffs

7 Cabinet wood

8 First negotiating number

9 Decree

10 Had a snack

17 Brought into harmony

23 Tattoos, slangily

24 Mideastern fruit

26 Painters' aids

27 Showed the use of

28 Kenya neighbor

30 Wore away

31 Smitten ones

33 Cavalry posts

39 Julep need

41 Tell tales

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO

dsopinion@gmail.com.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

10-9

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

W A N E D T H A W S
A L I V E R A T I O
R E C A P O N E N D
A N A L O G
A R R L O P L A D
M I A S M A S I N E
A F G H A N I S T A N
S L U E O N E H I T
S E A S U M U S
P R O X Y T I N T S
H O V E L E L I O T
I N A N E S E A M Y

BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Mahedi rallies the troops as batsmen disappoint again

SPORTS REPORTER

The BCB President's Cup may have witnessed the first 200-plus total courtesy of Mahedi Hasan's blistering 57-ball 82, but questions can still be raised regarding a lack of intent from the batsmen yesterday.

Tamim XI posted 221 for nine against Najmul XI following Mahedi's late flourish, recovering from a batting disaster that had reduced them to 108 for seven.

Coming in at number nine, Mahedi joined Taijul Islam -- who remained unbeaten on 20 provided valuable support -- for a magnificent 115-run ninth-wicket stand.

Mahedi departed in the final over of the innings as he went for a big shot, but it was enough for Tamim XI to post a challenging total in the rain-affected game.

After folding for just 103 in their first game, all eyes were on Tamim XI, who needed a win to keep their hopes of reaching the final of the fifty-over competition alive.

There was talk of rust among cricketers featuring in the three-team tournament, which was understandable given the of seven-month gap in activities. But even that should have been overcome by



A batsman finally offered some resistance to the bowlers as Mahedi Hasan, coming at number nine, smote three sixes and nine fours during his 57-ball 82 to help Tamim XI recover from 108 for seven and post a commendable 221 against Najmul XI during BCB President's Cup match in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

the time the tournament reached its mid-stages.

Fans were eager to witness the two Tamims opening the innings together -- Tamim Iqbal and Tanzid Hasan Tamim. Although the younger Tamim showed promise in getting 27 in the first game, he departed for eight after his attempt to pull a banged-in delivery from

pacer Al Amin Hossain resulted in a simple catch at mid-wicket.

Anamul Haque again showed glimpses of his talent with two beautiful boundaries but the right-hander's tendency to play away from his body cost him dearly. He departed for 12, caught at slip by Soumya Sarkar after going fishing for a length delivery well outside

the off stump from Taskin Ahmed. Although Tamim looked solid at one end, wickets kept tumbling at the other. Mohammad Mithun fell four four and the batsmen did not live up to the expectations of putting high prices on their wickets, which made life easy for the Najmul XI bowlers.

Taskin, Al Amin, Mukidul Islam, Nayeem and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain picked up wickets at regular interval.

Tamim had reached the thirties and looked set but, perhaps due to the mounting pressure from losing partners, fell victim to a classic off-spinner's dismissal. The experienced left-hander, who has suffered failed to cash in on innings in the past despite getting set, was dragged in front by a beautifully flighted delivery from Nayeem and could only manage to edge to slip. He fell for 33.

Like the seniors, Shahadat Hossain walked back after an encouraging 31, while Akbar Ali, who captained Bangladesh's Under-19 World Cup-winning side, failed to make an impact in his first game.

It will be important for batsmen to come up with a better approach or the tournament, which was arranged to bring back competitiveness among cricketers, will continue to miss that spark.

Players upset as pay hike falls short of promises

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation's professional football league committee yesterday declared a six-week transfer window for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League, from November 1 to December 15, and decided to increase players' payments from clubs from 25 per cent to 35 per cent of their contracts.

The decision was made at the first meeting of the new committee in the presence of its chairman and BFF senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy, just two days after BFF president Kazi Salauddin promised players he would increase their payments to 40 per cent for the upcoming season, which will start on December 19 through the Federation Cup.

The players, who waited outside the BFF House for nearly three hours while the meeting was held, refused the decision and sought another appointment with four-time BFF president Salahuddin.

Abahani and national team midfielder Sohel Rana said: "We came here to learn the outcomes of the meeting. They decided to pay 35 per cent but we are not happy with this decision because the BFF president promised us 40 per cent. We will again sit with the BFF president because we haven't demanded much from the clubs."

Meanwhile, Murshedy maintained that the clubs had shown generosity.

"We had decided to pay 25 per cent of their new contacts for the upcoming season but players spoke to the BFF president and it was discussed at the executive meeting. During the pandemic,

practically most clubs have depended on donations because they don't have permanent sources of income," Murshedy said after the meeting.

"So we have decided to increase the payment of the players to 35 percent from 25 percent of new contracts for the 2020-21 season. The new contracts will also include dues from last season.

"As a former footballer and organiser, I believe clubs have shown generosity amidst the pandemic. I also believe the players won't be unhappy with this



decision," he added.

Replying to a query, the long-serving senior vice-president said: "There is no question of honor or dishonor [for the BFF president]. It is a discussion among club officials and players. The decision we made is the reality and what the president told the players were the thoughts of the BFF president, who may make an additional announcement because he is the head of the BFF."



NORTJE'S LIGHTNING PACE

The Dubai International Cricket Stadium, which is dubbed the 'Ring of Fire', witnessed one of the most hostile spells in IPL on Wednesday as Delhi Capitals pacer Anrich Nortje provided thrills to millions of fans. The South African bowled the fastest delivery in the history of the IPL, demolishing the wickets behind Rajasthan Royals batsman Jos Buttler with a 156.22 kmph delivery.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Riding the Begboti wave to the top

AZIBOR RAHMAN from Jhenidah



"It is from small streams that big rivers rise." Similar to the sentiment in Canadian writer Matshona Dhliwayo's words, Sohagi Khatun, Mukti Khatun, Mehnaz Khatun, Antara Khatun and Hossain Mondol completed an inspiring journey from a remote village swimming club in Jhenidah on the shores of Begboti River to the top levels and top sports institution.

Bikoshito Swimming Club has been helping realise local swimmers' dreams by utilising the river to provide them training.

The club's authorities bear the expenses of training students, as well as the rent of the office and its running expenditures.

The club was established in 2001 on the banks of the Begboti River running through the heart of Hatbakua village under Sadar Upazila

Since its inception, students, both male and female, have been given training and so got a chance at BKSP. At present, there are 30 students in the club who are trained from here.

Among them, Mondol, Mukti, Mehnaz and Antara have gotten admitted to the BKSP in Dhaka.

15-year old Sohagi Khatun said she won a national award being trained here.

Now she is swimming at the national level. She got a place in the list of "Sera Satarur Khoje Bangladesh" (Search for the



Best Swimmer in Bangladesh), the joint initiative of the Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Swimming Federation.

Daughter of Shakhawat Hossain of Dhanaojoypur village, a rickshaw-puller, their family consists of five members. She said, "All this has been possible because of the benevolence and untiring efforts of the Bikoshito Club president and secretary."

Fighting poverty and various adversities, she has overcome and reached her goal.

Hossain Mondol said he got a chance at BKSP in 2016 after a frantic effort, encouraged by Sirazul Islam, secretary of the club. During the ongoing pandemic, Mondol -- an expert in diving -- is at home and continues his diving practice at the Begboti River. His father is a well-to-do

farmer in the area.

"I am chasing a dream of becoming a famous swimmer," said 14-year old boy.

Mukti Khatun burst into tears while talking to this correspondent about her family and her own hardships.

Her mother divorced her father and married another man and her father left home to work in a garments factory.

"He does not take care of me. At last the trainer Sirazul Islam gave me shelter and trained me properly," 13-year old Mukti said, adding that Sirazul sir bears all her expenses.

"Students are trained by two trainers and we pay them Tk 10,000 per month and spend more Tk 15,000 more for office rent and the students' expenses, like training

materials. We are committed to doing something good for the distressed and helpless ones," said club secretary Sirazul Islam.

"Mukti is in class seven at BKSP. She was admitted in 2017. She won four silver and one bronze medal in the Under-12 competition," Sirazul added.

"Mehnaz is a student of class eight at BKSP. She finished third in 50-metre freestyle swimming in 2019. Her father Anwar Hossain is a barber and they live in a tin-shed house. Her [BKSP] fees of Tk 700 a month is difficult for her father to pay," he said.

Sumon Shikdar, president of Bikoshito swimming club said they do not charge the



trainees any fee.

"Every year, two-three students get a chance at BKSP, which makes us very happy. A big budget is needed, which is difficult for us. We have already started to set up another swimming centre at Gopinathpur water body. If we get any monetary support, we will be able to train more students."

Arteta urges for 'shared vision'

REUTERS, London

Premier League clubs have an obligation to protect those further down the football pyramid, Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said on Thursday, the day after top-flight clubs voted against Project Big Picture.

"I think we have to protect the lower leagues as well, this is our obligation," Arteta told reporters ahead of his side's trip to his old club Manchester City on Saturday. "We want to produce grassroots and opportunities for everybody in this industry. I think it's fair to assess the situation and find the best possible way to achieve that. This is our responsibility as well."

Arteta said he believed unity was vital in decisions regarding a re-structuring of the Premier League.

"I think that's a massive strength so as much as we can, we can maintain that unity and sustain our way of doing things," Arteta said. "I think that's very valuable and the image that we project to the outside world is really, really strong.



Robert Lewandowski (L) showed his predatory instincts with two superb goals in Poland's 3-0 home win over 10-man Bosnia while Portugal brushed off Cristiano Ronaldo's absence and outclassed Sweden, a brace from Diogo Jota (C) giving them a comfortable 3-0 win in the Nations League matches on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Kylian Mbappe celebrates his late goal in a 2-1 win against Croatia with Antoine Griezmann, who had fired France into an eighth-minute lead.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Maguire the villain as Danes storm Wembley

AGENCIES, London



England's prospects of returning to the finals of the Nations League suffered a big hit as Gareth Southgate's side lost 1-0 at home to Denmark on Wednesday.

Harry Maguire was sent off for England in the first half at Wembley for two clumsy yellow cards before Christian Eriksen converted a 35th-minute penalty on the occasion of his 100th cap.

Maguire was already under intense

scrutiny after a difficult period for both club and country in the wake of his arrest in Greece and the Manchester United captain endured a 31-minute nightmare in what was one of the toughest nights of Gareth Southgate's reign.

However, Southgate said he had no intention of taking Maguire out of the firing line when England next meet up in November, while captain Harry Kane said he expected the defender to "bounce back."

"For me, he is a top player and a massive part of what we do. He is having

a period where he is getting a lot of stick thrown his way. He is big enough to deal with that and he will be stronger for it. He has our full support and I know his club will be the same," he told Sky Sports.

"He will be getting all sorts. He has been getting all sorts for a while from some people who should know better. None of us like to be at the centre of that sort of summer, do they? He is having one of those periods where things are going against him but you have to hang on in there and things will turn."

Belgium won 2-1 in Iceland on

Wednesday with Romelu Lukaku scoring twice while, in Zagreb, Kylian Mbappe missed an open goal early on but got the winner in the 79th minute as France beat Croatia 2-1 in their latest re-run of the 2018 World Cup final. Antoine Griezmann had put France ahead with Nikola Vlasic equalising in the second half for Croatia before around 7,000 fans.

Meanwhile, the Dutch came from behind to draw 1-1 with Italy in Bergamo, with Donny van de Beek netting for Frank de Boer's side after Lorenzo Pellegrini put Italy ahead.

'Training while in quarantine is a must'

REUTERS, Sydney

The Australian Open will only go ahead in January if agreement can be reached with local authorities to allow players to practice while they undergo quarantine in Melbourne, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Thursday.

"If a player has to quarantine and be stuck in a hotel for two weeks just before their season, that won't happen," Tiley told Australian Associated Press. "You can't ask players to quarantine for two weeks and then step out and be ready to play a Grand Slam."

"We completely accept that everyone coming from overseas has got to have two weeks in quarantine," he added.

"What we are negotiating, or what we're trying to have an agreement on, is that we set up a quarantine environment where they can train and go between the hotel and the courts in those two weeks."

He also revised expected crowd numbers from the 50% he predicted in August to a likely 25%.



4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BS RM XTREME

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



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM

SHAH CEMENT

Thais defy protest ban, emergency

Tens of thousands occupy central Bangkok; curb imposed on publication; 20 held

REUTERS, Bangkok

Tens of thousands of Thai protesters cheered and chanted into the night in central Bangkok yesterday in a show of mass defiance to a ban on demonstrations designed to end more than three months of anti-government action.

The growing demonstrations have targeted King Maha Vajiralongkorn as well as Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader, in the biggest challenge for years to an establishment long dominated by the army and palace.

"Like dogs cornered, we are fighting till our deaths," Panupong "Mike Rayong" Jadnok, one of the high-profile protest leaders who remains free, told the crowd. "We won't fall back. We won't run away. We won't go anywhere."

Protesters ignored police appeals to disperse and spilled from the Ratchaprasong Intersection across streets and walkways, their mobile phones shimmering in the night. The location was the scene of bloodshed in 2010, during more than a decade of violence between supporters and opponents of the Thai establishment.

Protesters chanted for the release of some 40 activists arrested this week. Some also called out insults against the king - until recently almost unheard of behaviour in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



People coming to the Bir Muktiyoddha Sirajul Islam Railway Station in Panchagarh to see the Banglabandha Express train, which was launched yesterday by the railway minister around 12:30pm. The new train was introduced to ease communication between northern districts and Rajshahi on the Panchagarh-Rajshahi route.

PHOTO: KAMRUL ISLAM

KL agrees to reopen labour market for Bangladeshis

Says expatriates' welfare ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia has agreed to reopen its labour market for Bangladeshi migrant workers soon, according to a press release of expatriates' welfare ministry.

During an online meeting with Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday, Malaysia's Human Resources Minister M Saravanan hoped labour recruitment will start once the Covid-19 situation improves, said the release.

Malaysia suspended hiring Bangladeshi workers in September, 2018 on allegation of malpractices in the recruitment process and high recruitment costs.

At the meeting, both ministers discussed several other issues including signing of an agreement, introducing an online system in labour recruitment, recruiting agents' role in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Chhatra Adhikar Parishad splits

A faction of the forum forms a new platform, declares ex-Ducus VP Nur persona non grata

DU CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Chhatra Adhikar Parishad yesterday left the organisation and formed a new one declaring the parishad's joint conveners Nurul Haque Nur, also former Ducus vice-president, and Muhammad Rashed Khan personae non gratae.

They announced a 22-member convening committee for the new organisation and named it "Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad", the old name of Chhatra Adhikar Parishad.

"Expelled" joint convener of the Chhatra Adhikar Parishad, APM Suhel, made the announcement at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Suhel is the convener of the new committee.

The faction alleged that Nur was doing "dirty politics with people's sentiments", accused him of opaque financial transactions, running the Chhatra Adhikar Parishad undemocratically, and politicising the rape case filed by a Dhaka

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Problems of every area will be tackled: Bangabandhu

October 16, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today provides assurance that all possible measures would be taken to remove the difficulties confronting people of the northern districts. While talking to the MCAs belonging to the northern districts when they call on him at the Gono Bhavan today, Bangabandhu says the government is fully aware of the problems created by the wholesale devastation and destruction of the Pakistani occupation forces for the people of the northern districts.

Bangabandhu gives the MCAs an account of what the government has been doing to solve the problems one after another and says there would be no dearth of initiative on the part of the government to stand by the people.

"It is only a question of time," he says. The prime minister also cautions them against regional bias and says it is the declared policy of the government that all regions of the country will develop equally.

CABINET MEETS

Topics of national interest are discussed in a full cabinet meeting held at the Gono Bhavan today. The one-hour cabinet meeting is presided over by Bangabandhu.



SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

4 of a family murdered at Satkhira home

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A family of four, including two children, was killed during a robbery in their house in Satkhira's Kalaroa upazila early yesterday.

The victims are Shahinur Rahman, a 40-year-old fish trader, his wife Sabina Khatun, 35, their son Siyam Hossain, 10, and daughter, Taslima, 8.

Haran Pal, officer-in-charge of Kalaroa Police Station, said that around 6:30am, Helatola Union Parishad Chairman Moazzem Hossain informed police about a family being killed by robbers at Khalisha village.

A team of police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies.

Police, however, found no evidence of a robbery during their primary investigation as nothing was missing from the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Shakespeare First Folio sold for record \$10m



AFP, New York

A copy of the first collection of plays by William Shakespeare was sold Wednesday for \$9.97 million at auction in New York, setting a new record for a work of literature.

The price paid for the work, widely known as the First Folio exceeded by far the estimated range of \$4-6 million set by Christie's, which held the auction.

The collection, printed in 1623 and containing 36 plays by the English master, is frequently described as the greatest literary work in the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

IP TV, YOUTUBE CHANNELS

They won't be allowed to air news

Says info minister

UNB, Dhaka

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said YouTube channels and IP TVs would not be allowed to present news.

They can only be run as entertainment channels, the minister said at a dialogue organised by Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum at the Secretariat.

Hasan said IP TVs can do everything else, but they cannot do the job of providing news for the time

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 16

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:50 12:30 4:00 5:38 7:15
JAMAAT 5:25 1:15 4:15 5:41 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

US ELECTION 2020

Trump can't count on last-minute deciders

Shows new Reuters/Ipsos polling

REUTERS, Washington

Four years ago, US President Donald Trump rode a wave of late-deciding voters to a shocking election victory. But those voters are unlikely to rescue him again, new Reuters/Ipsos polling shows.

With less than three weeks to go until the November 3 vote, and Republican Trump trailing his Democratic rival Joe Biden nationally and in battleground states, his campaign is counting on a surge of last-minute votes to reverse the tide and give him a second term.

But Reuters/Ipsos polling conducted between October 9-13 shows there are far fewer undecided

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



SEARCHING FOR GAME: A black kite sits on a structure in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, while another flies by. Opportunistic hunters, they spend most of their time soaring and gliding in search of prey. They are often spotted at the stadium, looking for food.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Step up controls now to save lives

WHO urges Europe as Covid 2nd wave forces curfews in France

AGENCIES

Imposing tighter controls to curb Covid-19 contagion could save hundreds of thousands of lives across Europe before February as the continent battles an exponential surge in infections already forcing curfews and lockdowns, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

Urging governments to "step up" swiftly to contain in a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the WHO's European Director Hans Kluge said the current situation was, "more than ever, pandemic times for Europe".

New infections are hitting 100,000 daily in Europe, and the region has just registered the highest weekly incidence of Covid-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic, with almost 700,000 cases reported.

"The fall (autumn) and winter surge continues to unfold in Europe, with exponential increases in daily cases and matching percentage increases in daily deaths," Kluge told an online media briefing.

"It's time to step up. The message to governments is: don't hold back with relatively small actions to avoid the painful damaging actions we saw in the first round (in March and April)."

More than 38 million people globally have been reported as infected with Covid-19, and 1.1 million have died. Swift tightening measures now - such as enforcing widespread mask-wearing and controlling social gatherings in public or private spaces - could save up to 281,000 lives by February across the 53 countries that make up the WHO European region, Kluge added.

VIRUS RESTRICTIONS

France on Wednesday became the latest European country

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3