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



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"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 Mugda. 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

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

















**SUGAR** (LOOSE)



## 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 20,000 to make ends meet.

WORLD FOOD DAY

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 aujibur kanman 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

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.

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

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.

US adds fresh vigour

to ties with Dhaka

Deputy Secretary of State Biegun's visit

opens doors for greater cooperation

Stephen Biegun

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

"Unfortunately,

are facing a number of

cnailenges 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

Hotel Westin in the afternoon SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

#### Extend help in Rohingya repatriation

PM urges int'l community, US

UNB, Dhaka

we Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her call to the internationa 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

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 Charaljani 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





5,608







## Take measures to prevent rape

PM asks admin officials to create public awareness

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 programme from the Gono Bhaban through a video conference.

participants 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 after 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

Public Administration Secretary Shaikh Yusuf Harun delivered the welcome speech, while BPATC Rector Md Rakib Hossain, on behalf of the cadre service officers. She joined 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

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

"Evidence shows that the certainty of punishment, rather than its severity,

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

## EC sues MP Nixon Chy

by-election was held for the post of UNO SUES SUSPENDED MAYOR IN chairman of Charbhadrasan upazila BERA arishad 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 Bari in the by-election.

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

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

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 Charaljani in Madhupur

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

Then Sagar raped the girl at the

house the same night.

In the morning (January 18), the

phone. Later, her family members went there and took her to the

The girl filed a case against the five 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

also arrested.

investigation, 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

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.

#### Quoting Biegun, Ihsanul said the

Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after 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 Bangladeshis students would be reopened once the Covid-19 situation

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

Extend help in Rohingya said he has already discussed the issue of economic cooperation with Bangladesh

"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.

## Too pricey to be on menu of many

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

latest chapter of cooperation that has

bound Bangladeshi and American

about Bangladesh has improved

manifold because of the country's

growth,

He said he was pleased to have the

Momen said the US impression

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

vaccine cooperation to trade and

investment, agro-processing industries,

IT, pharmaceuticals and energy, US

companies were showing increased

Biegun arrived Wednesday afternoon

Yesterday morning, he visited the

Around noon, he called on Prime

and had a meeting with State Minister

for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam that

Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in

Biegun said from Covid-19

stability,

"The US sees Bangladesh as a key

cooperation.

for about two hours.

people for many years.

geopolitical location.

achieve many goals."

interest in Bangladesh.

sustained

issues, including defence

strategies where the US participates.

Tk 2 profit. If the wholesaler adds Tk 2 per kg profit, the price would be Tk 25 and it is

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

of storage in an attempt to stabilise the

and due to transport and labour crisis for Covid-19 only 40 lakh tonnes of potatoes was kept in cold storages. However, DAM Director General Mohammad Yousuf disputed BCSA's

potato has already been sold in the market. Of the remaining, 10 lakh tonnes are seed potato which will be used for

read the BCSA letter. by the end of December as potato

cultivation was delayed by the flood. "Farmers and traders who kept potato

potato is sold at Tk 23 per kg, persons at cold storages understand that there who kept potato at cold storage will get will be a crisis in the market. That's why they are releasing potato slowly to get more profit," said the source with nowledge about potato business.

Contacted, DAM Director General Mohammad Yousuf said they have taken measures and within a day or two the price of potato will drop. Claiming that potato cultivation was

Yousuf also said winter vegetables will

hit the market in 15-20 days. After that the vegetable price will start dropping. Replying to a question related to onion price, he said they have already taken an initiative to import seven lakh tonnes of onion from Turkey. "It takes 25-45 days to reach Bangladesh," he added.

of Bangladesh (CAB) opined that the government had failed to effectively monitoring the market. The government is relying on

businessmen to control the market.

Because of this policy, they fail to intervene when prices escalate," he said.

## particularly Azythromycin, followed

Very few of the patients mentioned Amoxicillin plus Clavuronic acid etc. In very few cases, the positive

Hydroxychloroquine.

patients have used hydrocortisone and Besides, all of the respondents took precautionary measures and

medicine and regular foods. Hot water gurgling (84%), steam nhalation (79%), drinking hot water (76%) were the most used items by the patients, followed by breathing exercise

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

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

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

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

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

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 wav.

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

## in favour of BNP candidate KM Obaidul

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

on the same day.

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.

girl, with the help of locals, went to Madhupur Bus Stand and informed

people with Bhuapur Police Station

164 the next day (January 19). Later the four other accused were

Dhanmondi before his meeting at the 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

not reasonable to charge over Tk 30 per kg at retail stage, read the letter.

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

The association said that this year the production of potato was 85 lakh tonnes

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

the next cultivation season in November. 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

US adds fresh vigour to ties with Dhaka sought large US investments, including of rights of the Rohingyas. in energy, IT, pharmaceuticals, agroprocessing, blue economy, relocation

of US companies, climate-change

We want big investments. I said

adaptation, said Momen.

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," 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

"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.

a big economy and that they encourage signing a free trade agreement. Asked if Washington sees Bangladesh in the eyes of New Delhi, Momen

Biegun, however, said Bangladesh has

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

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION Bangladesh sought a strong US role for Rohingya repatriation.

here," he said.

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 not hampered in Rangpur, he said, "The newly harvested potato will start hitting the market early December, after that the crisis will end.

Asked, SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of Consumers Association

He suggested that the government create an alternative market to control price hike. "We saw success in the Open Market Sale [OMS] in the past. But this time they are silent. Their silent role is creating frustration among people," he

outspokenness to the government of Myanmar to take steps necessary to end this crisis," he said. Biegun said apart from immediate humanitarian support to the Rohingyas, the international community should

'All countries need to work shoulder

to shoulder ... This is a global priority.

Every major country in the Indo-

Pacific should be speaking in equal

redouble its efforts to reach a long-term solution, which lies in the sustainable return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar. Some one million Rohingyas, 750,000 of whom fled a military crackdown in Rakhine State of Myanmar

in 2017, are in Bangladesh. US REVIEWING RASHED **CHOWDHURY'S EXTRADITION** 

In response to Dhaka's request to extradite Rashed Chowdhury, a selfconfessed killer of Bangabandhu living in the US, Biegun said US Attorney General William Barr's office was

reviewing the matter. "Those matters are beyond the department of state," he said, but assured of cooperation towards this "It's deeply moving for me and all

of how severe the nature of the event was," Biegun said about the killing of Bangabandhu and most of his family members on August 15, 1975. He had visited the spot earlier in the day. TACKLING COVID-19 Biegun appreciated Bangladesh for manufacturing world-class PPE and

Covid-19 medicine Remdesivir, and

apprised that Bangladesh was one of

Americans. It is another impression

the countries with priority for getting US Covid-19 vaccines once they are approved following phase-III trials. Asked if US companies would collaborate with Bangladesh for phase-III trials, a US official said that would

be unlikely given that the US has a large

number of Covid-19 patients. Biegun said his country seeks a longterm partnership with Dhaka to tackle the pandemic as Bangladesh wants early access to prospective vaccines to be developed by the US, BSS reports.

"Long-term partnership has become crucial for two countries to fight Covid-19 ... combined efforts between Bangladesh and the USA are needed to deal with the pandemic," he told a press briefing after a meeting at the state-run Kurmitola General Hospital.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque who joined Biegun at the briefing said Dhaka urged the US to provide it with a vaccine soon after it is developed.

#### 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 pecific medicines were not available in the pharmacies and they had to procure it from alternative sources. Patients who were interviewed

followed by Vitamins C, B and A, read the study which was based on the interviews of 101 Covid-19 patients.

during the survey took Paracetamol

They were interviewed over phone between Jue 4 and Aug 30. The study found, almost 70 percent of the respondents took the antibiotics 10 percent by Doxycycline, and nine percent jointly Chloroquine and

of taking other antibiotics such as Amoxicillin, Levofloxacin and

supplementary food besides taking

(35%), free hand exercise (10%) and

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

Health Services (DGHS).

people infected rose to 384,559. Against 14,104 tests in the same

have recovered in those 24 hours, raising the total number of recoveries to 299,229. This almost 78 percent of all confirmed cases.

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 40-year-old, who has led New

## the matter to her brother over



(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







## 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.

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.

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 hit the screen of this hall today. ticket counters.

capital's Ananda Cinema Hall are the government's decision," said in full swing since this morning. Electricians are busy taking care theatre. "We were starting to think

are working to make every inch of now, I see hope. 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. back and resume their duties. We're very happy that we'll finally be open again.

The film "Shahoshi Hero Alom" starring Ashraful Alom Saeed, best known as Hero Alom -- 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. "Rajdhanir Raja", starring Shakib Khan, will

been working Preparations for reopening the relentlessly after we got to know Liton, a security staffer of the

of technical issues, and cleaners of alternative ways to survive, but Complex, will be functional from

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 "They have all been asked to come 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 vicepresident of Film Exhibitors' Association and owner of Sathi Cinema Hall, said he has decided to reopen today with "Shahoshi Hero Alom".

Star Cineplex, the one located inside Bashundhara City Shopping

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 vet," informs security staffer Mahbubur Rahman Khan.

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

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

Activists believe the rape incidents in

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

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 extreme adverse conditions of 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

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 years 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 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

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 Akhtaruzzaman 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 Mahbub 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.



## 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 Mulitplan 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 schoolfrom-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.



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 vesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

waterbodies STAFF CORRESPONDENT Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is going to use a new insecticide for water bodies to kill mosquito breeding

introduce new

insecticide for

DNCC to

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

## 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

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

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

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 subinspector, also the in-charge of Bandarbazar 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

On Wednesday, Sylhet Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate M Kazi Emdadul Islam permitted to exhume the body. Rayhan Ahmed, a resident of Neharipara 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 Moday 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.

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

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.

## Long way

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

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

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

a comprehensive family policy and practising responsible parenting. "Along with formal education, we must focus on the importance of moral and sex education," she said.

"We also need to rethink objectification of women in the media," she added.

Member of Shujan's national committee CR Abrar said the government hurriedly changed the law without consulting with citizens and handled everything whimsically. "Citizen's opinion must be ensured on any issue of public interest and the participation of citizens must be increased," he

Shujan assistant secretary Zakir Hossain stressed on the creation of a network for survivors and take necessary action for their compensation and rehabilitation.

Prof Dr Sharin Shajahan Naomi of Asian University for Women urged for research initiatives to understand the psychology of rapists and other perpetrators.

Among others Syeda Rezwana Hasan, executive member of Shujan; Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum; Nasima Akhter Jolly, secretary of National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, spoke at the event.

The programme was presided over by Shujan president M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government.

#### DNCC to

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

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

### 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 ournalism 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, You the Next Start Up Competition, etc.

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, ISBSP, Get in the Ring Competition, Are

#### 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

SI. 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 Hazart Shah Tayab (R) (Horizonal-8 Rooms (3H+3V+Stair) GPS under PEDP4	498805	ОТМ
2.	e-Tender/ PEDP4/SYL/DAK/2019- 2020/W14.0833	Construction of Boundary wall Dadudpur & Trukkhola Primary School including gate under PEDP4	450580	ОТМ
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



#### Bangladesh Bank

Sustainable Finance Department **Head Office** 

Dhaka

Website: www.bb.org.bd

#### Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Hiring Consulting Firm (National)

: Sustainable Finance Department.

2.	Expression of Interest (EOI)	:	Selection	n 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	:	05/11/20	20 at 3.00pm.	
9.	Brief description of the assignment		Bangladesh Bank (BB) has received financing from Green Climate Fund (GCF) to implement & 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 ( <a href="https://etender.bb.org.bd">https://etender.bb.org.bd</a> ) or through e-mail stated below. Interested candidates may obtain "Terms of Reference (ToR)" from the website of Bangladesh Bank ( <a href="https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php">https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php</a> ) or the address below, during working days, from 10.00am to 05.00pm. Application/proposal will not be accepted after EOI closing time.		
PRO	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
12.	<ol> <li>Name of the official inviting EOI</li> </ol>		:	Khondkar Morshed Millat.	
13	13 Designation of the official invitin		· ·	General Manager (Project Director)	

Sustainable Finance Department, 19th Floor, 2nd Annex Address of the official inviting EOI Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000. Contact details of the official inviting 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 whatsoeve The details EOI and ToR are available at BB website (https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php)

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

পত্র নং-ডিসিপি: ৪৮/২০২০-২৮৯৪

তারিখ: ১৫/১০/২০২০

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

morshed.millat@bb.org.bd

#### 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

Ensuring

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

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

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

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 Bangalees. You see, women were at the forefront of the movements launched by Bangalees. 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 prev 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) Zuena Aziz, and Inspector General of Police

(IGP) Benazir Ahmed joined a panel discussion.

### PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION



This is for information of all concerned that ONE Bank Limited had applied to Bangladesh Bank and Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission for approval to issue Perpetual Bonds (Additional Tier-I Capital) for BDT. 4,000 million. Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) approved the same. Bangladesh Bank has also issued NOC for the issuance of the Bonds, with an additional condition that if the Bank's consolidated CET-1 ratio ever falls below the Bangladesh Bank's CET-1 requirement of 4.50% and stays below that level for three (03) consecutive quarters, the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter-end date of consecutive quarters having below-minimum CET-1 Ratio will be then considered as the Trigger-Point or Trigger- Date and the shortfall amount to maintain the Minimum Required Consolidated CET-1 Capital of 4.50% will then be Converted into Common Equity.

In line with Bangladesh Bank's aforesaid condition, the Board of Directors of ONE Bank Limited in its 319th Meeting held on Thursday, October 15, 2020 from 3:00 p.m. at its Board Room of the Corporate HQ, Dhaka, has recommended the issuance of "ONE Bank Unsecured, Fully-Paid up, Non-Cumulative, BASEL III compliant, perpetual bond eligible for Tier I Capital of BDT. 4,000 million with 'Conversion' feature as per the above condition of Bangladesh Bank subject to approval of the Shareholders in the 7th Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be held as under:

Schedule of EGM:

Dhaka

October 15, 2020

Record Date: November 8, 2020

EGM Date and Time: December 3, 2020 from 11.00 a.m EGM mode: Virtual (Through Digital) Platform

By order of the Board

John Lake John Sarkar DMD & Company Secretary

## Silver lining

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

Bangladesh Cholochitro Shilpi Samity General Secretary Zayed Khan has also positively embraced the decision. "The authorities have taken this decision and I respect

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

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

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 ndividual house in Road-23/A Gulshan-1, Office/ Restaurant/ Doctor's chamber preferred. Cell: 01713-187740

TO-LET@GULSHAN outhEast faced front apt.in 3rd floor outh faced 6 storied corner buildi beautiful location of Gulshan-2,R#79,H #1 2262 Sft.(with 1 car parking).Developed b ASSET with all modern facilities. Contact: 01721791707, 01711636132



& Visa Processing Centre BASHATI CONDOMINIUM

M: 01406 252 275 / 70

**RING TOWER** M: 01406 252 221 / 33 / 20

## Slow road work leading to wildlife endangerment in Lawachhara

Our Correspondent, Moulvibazar

Movement of cargo traffic -transporting import and export goods from India -- is increasingly becoming a threat to wildlife and biodiversity at the Lawachhara National Forest as a vital road between the towns of Moulvibazar and Kamalganj upazila remain unrepaired for at least three years.

The 33 kilometre-long road is the only means of communications for 1.5 lakh residents of 16 surrounding unions. Widely known as Chatlapur Check Post Road, it connects Moulvibazar and Shamshernagar in Kamalganj upazila.

Finally, on September 15 last year, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) undertook a repair project for the road, at a cost of Tk 42.11 crore.

Even though deadline to complete the work ended on the same date this year, the road still lies in a deplorable state as the contractor firm completed only 30 percent of the work within the stipulated time.

During a visit to the area recently, this correspondent found the road and its sides strewn with various construction materials. In many parts of the road, there was not even any sign of construction work.

In order to evade accidents or damage to precious cargo as well as

Ministry / Division

GD-1644

the vehicles, heavy trucks were seen traffic on the Lawachhara road for taking a detour through Lawachhara in Srimangal.

Nurul Muhaimin Milton, a resident of Patanushar area in Kamalganj upazila, said the Cumilla based contractor firm, RAB-RC Pvt Ltd, dug up the road in many places



Strewn with construction materials, the dilapidated Chatlapur Check Post Road now causes nightmare to locals and truckers.

and left the site after the outbreak of Covid-19 in the country.

Sufferings of locals, especially of critical patients, pregnant women and the elderly, are inexplicable, said Chatlapur resident Abdul Muhith, a

Joly Paul, convener of Lawachhara O Jiboboichitra Rokhya Andolon, said, they have long been demanding a ban on through

the protection of wildlife in the Lawachhara National Forest. But lately, huge trucks and lorries started plying the road day and night.

The road work had been slow from the beginning and local on various occasions protested negligence of the contractor firm, she also said.

Contacted, Muhibur Rahman, the proprietor of the firm, said they submitted an application to the authorities, seeking extension of the deadline so they can resume the

Executive Engineer Zia Uddin of RHD in Moulvibazar said the contractor firm in its application said they could not complete the work due to Covid-19 situation and the monsoon.

He also said that they have asked the firm to finish the work at the soonest and the RHD was in the process of undertaking another project to repair the remaining 13 kilometres of the road.

After the attention of Mir Nahid Ahsan, deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, was drawn on the matter, he told this correspondent that the contractor firm has been asked to finish the work within the stipulated time while ensuring quality of work.

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Local Government Division (LGD)

Income Support Program for the Poorest (ISPP) -JAWTNO Project

Level 8, DPHE Bhaban

14 Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Sarani

Kakrail, Dhaka 1000

#### Request for Expression of Interest for Individual Consultant

-			Cooperatives		
2	Agency		Local Government Division		
3	Name of Procuring	Entity	Income Support Program for the Poorest (ISPP)-		
4	mid co		JAWTNO Project		
4	Title of Service		(i) Financial Management Specialist (Accounts)		
	Provide Park Birth		(SI-2a) Dhaka		
6	Procuring Entity District Expression of Interest		Financial Management Specialist (Accounts) (SI-2a)		
O	for Selection of		Individual Consultant-Time based		
7	EOI Ref. No.		ISPP/PMU-85 (part-1)/Individual Consultant/2020(SI-2a)		
8	Date		15 October, 2020		
	Date	KEY	INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Sub-M		Selection of Individual Consultants (SIC)		
			NG INFORMATION		
10	Budget and Source		Development Budget – Aid Grants/Credit		
11	Development Partne		IDA/World Bank		
12	Project/Program Co		LAR INFORMATION 224041200		
13	Project/Program Na		Income Support Program for the Poorest (ISPP)-		
	l rojour rogium ru		JAWTNO Project		
14.	EOI Closing Date a	nd time	05 November, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.		
		INFORMAT	TION FOR APPLICANT		
15	Brief Description	<del></del>	anagement Specialist:		
	of the		with the Project Director and Deputy Project Director/Focal		
	Assignments		ecessary updates of Operational Procedures for the Cash		
		Transfer Progra			
			counting and budgeting systems to ensure proper fund		
			ble performance analysis, ensure regular reconciliation, etc.;		
			and relevant interim financial reports for IDA reporting		
			ject's accounting software; awal applications for IDA funds to the Designated Account;		
			rs to BPO and ensure proper reconciliation of expenditure		
		statements;	to be a suita onburo propor reconomitation or expenditure		
			e internal controls for funds management, separation of		
			cy for authorization of transactions, etc.;		
			h internal and external auditors to provide information and		
		address queries			
			dic reports required by LGD or IDA, and ensure proper		
		follow-up.			
16	Qualification,	Qualification ar	nd Experiences		
	Experience,	Professional accounting qualifications (FCA or FCMA); with at least a			
	Resources &	Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Business Administration or Finance <b>Experiences:</b>			
	Delivery Capacity				
	Required		years of work experience in financial management in i-government institutions, or with international donors,		
			evelopment projects		
			ledge of Government budgeting, fund release and reporting		
		requirements			
			ledge of IDA's financial management and disbursement		
		procedures			
		Excellent spoker	and written Bengali and English		
17	Indicative starting	December 01, 2020	0 to June 15, 2022		
I, /	and completion	December 01, 2020	0 to June 13, 2022		
	date (Duration of				
	service)				
			NG ENTITY DETAILS		
18	Name of the Officia		Shaikh Md. Kabedul Islam		
19	Designation of the C				
20	Address of the Office	nai inviting EOI	Level 8, DPHE Bhaban		
			14 Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Sarani Kakrail, Dhaka 1000		
21	Contact Details of the	ne Official Inviting	Level 8, DPHE Bhaban		
	EOI 14Shaheed Cap		14Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Sarani		
			Kakrail, Dhaka 1000		
			Phone:88-02-55130514		
			E-mail: pd.ispp.lgd@gmail.com		
22	Two copies of Expression of Interest (EOI)/ application along with copies of certificates academic/professional qualifications, copies of experience certificates and a passpor photograph of the applicants in a sealed envelope shall be submitted to the office of the I Director at the address given above within the closing date and time specified above. On the				
			write the name of the post. The procuring entity reserves the		
	right to accept or reject all EOIs without assigning any cause or reason.				
	and the state of the				
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			( ) (Y) / lot		
			(Shaikh Md. Kabedul Islam)		
			Project Director (Additional Secretary) ID 4541 (Admn.)		
			Income Support Program for the Poorest (ISPP)-		

## Millions to earn from malta

Today is the World Food Day and this year's theme is: Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together, its actual meaning during this time of COVID-19, we must reflect on our most basic needs. Food is the quintessence of life and core of our cultures and communities. Access to safe and nutritious food will continue to be an indispensable part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for deprived and vulnerable communities. I completely agree with the theme of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and it is a timely one indeed. Today, I will share with you a story about one of the heroes of our country whose contribution alike others is extremely significant and so much contributing at this critical moment of the pandemic.

In May-June this year, when the corona infection was at its peak in our country several news on malta fruit was published in different newspapers. Since malta has an abundance of vitamin C, the demand for it was also high. On the other hand, the whole world was in lockdown during that period. Imports and exports were also somewhat sluggish. Taking this opportunity, the syndicates unusually raised the price of malta. After reading the investigative reports, I came to know that malta was sold in the wholesale market at Tk 85 (USD 1) per kg at the beginning of the holy Ramadan this year. The demand for malta was increased so much during Ramadan. unscrupulous syndicate increased the price like the way they wanted. Malta has also been sold at Tk 180 (USD 2.12) per kg at the retail markets. In the last few years, there has been a massive increase in malta cultivation throughout the country. The taste of our malta is no less than that of imported malta, rather, the sweetness is 10 to 15 percent higher.

The impact of coronavirus has taught the people of the world that Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received

country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.

and sweetness of this variety were far higher than the imported ones. After the episode went air on Channel i's Hridoye Mati O Manush, I kept on receiving phone calls, text messages, emails and whatnot. Especially the youth group became eager to cultivate malta. Malta was soon spread all over the country. It is not only the youth of the country who started dreaming about malta farming, but even the Bangladeshi expatriates also called and emailed me and showed interest in farming BARI-1 malta. I would also like to remind you about a successful malta farmer from Chuadanga, Sakhawat Hossain. You probably would remember Sakhawat's 40 bighas (13.22 acres) malta orchard. Three years back in 2017, I became fascinated to see the malta orchard of Sakhawat. Since 2016, people from different professions took the enterprise of cultivating malta and surely the contribution of so many,

After returning to the country, Ismai started his malta orchard. He thinks malta farming is comparatively easy and profitable. The first-vear investment was Tk 20,000 (USD 235.76). After taking care of the trees with some fertilizer and cleaning for a year or so, he saw malta fruits in the second year. He sold malta, the second year and earned about Tk 20,000. He earned Tk 70,000 (USD 825.15) next year. Afterwards, his profit crossed Tk 1 lakh (USD 1178). Hridoye Mati O Manush brought the images of Ismail's success. He even made more profit by selling malta saplings. Malta has changed all the calculation of profit for Ismail. In the year 2020, Ismail spread his orchard from 12 katha to 19 bighas (6.28 acres) with 4,000 malta trees. It's a mind-blowing success. The market price of Ismail's malta is around Tk 120 (USD 1.41) per kg. Ismail says, in three to four years of sowing the BARI-1 variety, any tree can give around 40 kgs of malta, a season. For example, if you have 4,000 trees in a big orchard, you would certainly get around 4,000 maunds (Approximately 1,50,000 kgs) malta. f you can get Tk 100 (USD 1.17) per kg, you would perhaps earn around 1,50,00,000 (USD 176816.26). Ismail also planted the short-variety Vietnamese coconut. He's also doing orange. Ismail certainly has become a hero of agricultural success in Bangladesh and an inspiration to the entrepreneurs.

When I visited Ismail's orchard in 2016, his malta orchard in Meherpur was about 6 bigha (1.98 acres), but it has increased to about 350 bighas (115.70 acres) in 2020. This is what is called by 'extension.' That's what accomplishment is all about. True entrepreneurs like Ismail could spread the spirit of farming across the country. So many others are now following his footsteps.

Dear readers, farming has evolved and went through many diversified paths. I have always said that a class



Shykh Seraj at Ismail's malta orchard at Monakhali village in Meherpur's Mujibnagar area.

boosted up the production of this of enterprising and confident youth very special fruit across the country.

food is not just a taste of the tongue, it is not only a pleasing experience but it has to be the source of nutrition. If the body does not get balanced nutrition from food, it can break down in any disease. The body's immune system, which comes from food-nutrition, also needs to be boosted to fight the deadly virus. So nutrition is a must. Fruits should be included in the daily food menu along with other foods. Talking to the fruit sellers, I learned that the demand for fruits in the market during this corona period is many times higher than the last few years. And this market was largely captured by the country-made malta, which have been sold at Tk 150 (USD 1.76) per kg in the retail markets. The small malta orchard of Reboti Sikder at Dakatia village in Pirojpur worked behind the spread of malta cultivation all over the country. I was astonished by the taste and sweetness of Reboti's malta, which is our country's BARI-1 variety. The taste

A man from the south-west district of Meherpur, living in Mujibnagar called me. His name is Ismail. In 2016, he came back from Korea with the dream of his farm. Later on, he started his malta orchard on 12 kathas land (0.19 acres) in Monakhali village, 10-km south of Meherpur Sadar upazila. I saw the possibility in him of another Reboti Sikder. When I went there, I saw Ismail has 48 malta trees in his orchard. The trees filled with so many maltas were all bent down. Ismail shared his story with me. He chased the dream of settling in South Korea. After five and a half years of living abroad, he didn't find anything that could make him prosper. The soil of the country was always in his mind. "When in South Korea, I used to watch episodes of Hridoye Mati O Manush on YouTube," shared Ismail. Reboti Sikder became his inspiration.

is taking the Bangladeshi farming scenario forward. Ismail is one of those brilliant agro-entrepreneurs. I believe that his success will also open the eyes of many new entrepreneurs

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

in the country. This corona pandemic informs us that agriculture is one of the most reliable sectors at the moment. Relying on which, dreams can be seen and achieved. I wish Ismail continued success and look forward to numerous success stories in the farming sector of the country. In a desperate time like this,

it is more significant than ever to recognize the need to support our food heroes. I dedicate this article to all the food heroes of Bangladesh, the farmers and workers in the food system, the policymakers and the media, whose combined efforts have ensured that food is making its way from farm to fork, even during unprecedented COVID-19 the catastrophe.

#### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Road Transport & Bridges **Bridges Division** Bangladesh Bridge Authority Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka-1212 www.bba.gov.bd

Memo No. 50.01.0000.407.38.006.20-593

Date: 15/10/2020

#### Request for Expression of Interest (International) Cancellation Notice

This is to inform all concerned that the Tendering process for the Request for Expression of Interest (International), for "Selection of Service Provider for Supply, Customize, Implement and Maintain a Proven Off-the-Shelf Modern Real-Time web based On-Line Centralized Toll Collection System with Web Based Monitoring and Related Services with Complete Technology Transfer to BBA for Toll Collection of Bangabandhu Bridge" which was issued vide Memo No. 50.01.0000.407.38.006.20-590; Dated: 12 October 2020 published on 13 October 2020 on www.dgmarketbd.com, www.bba.gov.bd and on 14 October 2020 in the 4 (four) National Dailies, "Daily Prothom Alo", "Daily Ittefaq", "The Daily Star" and "The Financial Express", has been cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Quazi Muhammad Ferdous

Chief Engineer Ph: 02-55040313 E-mail: chiefengineer@bba.gov.bd

GD-1642

Income Support Program for the Poorest (ISPP)-

#### **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.

# 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 warchest 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 encouraging for Democrats, the Biden camp is preparing for the

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

Tibetan issues.

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. battleground Several including Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, have Democratic and governors Republicancontrolled 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.

US moves on Tibet,

Taiwan anger China

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

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on

Wednesday that Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State

for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, would assume

China has consistently refused to deal with the US

The appointment comes at a time when US-China

elations have sunk to the lowest point in decades over a

range of issues, including trade, Taiwan, human rights, the

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

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.

amid escalating tensions between Beijing and Taipei.

South China Sea and the coronavirus.

coordinator, seeing it as interference in its internal affairs.

the additional post, which has been vacant since 2017.

#### PROTESTS IN THAILAND

#### **THINGS TO KNOW**



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

> family from criticism. **WHY NOW?**

defamation law that shields the powerful royal

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 Wanchalearm Satsaksit 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."

## Fate of Brexit talks hangs in balance at EU summit

AFP, Brussels

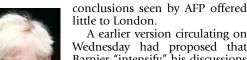
European leaders meet yesterday seemingly determined to resist pressure from Prime Minister Boris Johnson to give ground in post-Brexit trade negotiations.

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



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.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bangladesh Climate Change Trust



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

## 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

#### 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 Iudiciary 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.

GD-1645



Old "Ban Bhaban (6th floor)-101, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

3. Procuring Entity Name	1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
4. Procuring Entity Code 5. Procuring Entity District 6. Invitation for 6. Invitation for 7. Number of Consultant 7. Number of Consultant 8. Invitation Ref. No 8. Invitation Ref. No 9. Date 1. (Tone) 1. Development Partners (if applicable) 1. Development Partners (if applicable) 1. Development Partners (if applicable) 1. Project/Program Code (if applicable) 1. Project/Program Code (if applicable) 1. Project/Program Name (if applicable) 1. Project/Program Name (if applicable) 1. Project/Program Name (if applicable) 1. EOI Package Nos 1. (Procurement Of Service) and 1. (Service)	2.	Agency	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT).
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11.   Development Partners (if applicable)   None	9.	Date	08th October 2020
12. Project/Program Name (if applicable)   None	10.	Budget & Source of Funds	BCCT Knowledge hub Project (GoB)
Institutionalization of BCCT as a Centre of Excellence through Co-ordination of Climat Finance, Research and Knowledge Management.	11.	Development Partners (if applicable)	None
Finance, Research and Knowledge Management.	12.	Project/Program Code (if applicable)	None
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27. Contact details of Official Inviting Ph: 01716414659			Director (Development, Planning & Negotiation) and Project Director
	27.		



The EOI will be available in the website of Bangladesh Climate Change Trust.

The authority reserves all rights to accept or reject any/all EOIs without assigning any reason thereof.

Those who have applied for the same post against the previous circular, need not to apply.



## Yearning Aches Foundation advocates for food safety and sustainable development

#### 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

Barishal and Rangpur. These people had

lost their sources of livelihood and were

has played an important role in connecting

us to the masses. We took on our social

The future plans of the organisation

underprivileged students. They further

programmes for the youth and support

middle and lower middle-class families to

include designing a sustainable

development project to educate

intend to organise skill training

survive, post the pandemic.

## **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

**DEADLINE:** November 30, 2020 | Workshops



#### WGH/Novartis Foundation #BuildBackBetter Digital Innovation and Al 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 womenled 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





(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 ACHES FOUNDATION

## CARTOOM PEOPLE instagram.com/cartoonpeoplecomics OISHIK'S KARTOON AND STUFF I HAVE DONE IT! A TIME MACHINE. HAVE CREATED IT! I CAN FINALLY TRAVEL BACK IN TIME AND ... STOP MYSELF FROM MAKING ALL THOSE STOP! ON'T DO BAD DECISIONS THIS. S A BAD YOU'LL NEVER CONVINCE ME LOSER!

·SIGH -

## 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

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.

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LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2020, ASHWIN 31, 1427 BS

### Bangladesh as a transit for drug smuggling

Masterminds of the drug trade have to be caught

HILE 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

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

CTOBER 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 omen, 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 lowinterest 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.

## 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

#### World Food Day

## Our Food System in a New Normal



Irfanullah

that while between 2000 and 2019, the world GDP grew by 260 percent, two billion people still do not have regular access to safe, healthy, and sufficient food they still do not

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 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. Communitybased 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

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

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, financers, 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

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

MOHAMMED PARVEZ IMDAD

**¬**HE 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 conflictaffected 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 Hungerthrough 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

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



STAR FILE PHOTO

access and uneven distribution. UN reports confirm over 80 percent of the world's hungry live in disaster-prone and conflictdriven 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 ÚSAID'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 Faminewould 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

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: mpinayefmimdad@gmail.com

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



N October 13, 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.

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



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

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

AMRAN HOSSAIN

would be foolish to think that the absence of

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

death penalty for single perpetrator rape is

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

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

## China-US War: A Frightening Possibility

ALI AHMED ZIAUDDIN

S 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

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

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

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-millionmiddle-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

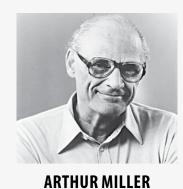
used to squeeze Bangladesh. One, India is sure to apply its utmost persuasive power; if that doesn't work, the US might step in with several lucrative offers; and if that fails too, it will restore to its typical muscle-flexing tactics. Bangladesh holds USD 38 billion reserve with the Fed, which the 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

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

## QUOTABLE



(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 0mit 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 Mideastem fruit 26 Painters' aids 27 Showed the use of 28 Kenya neighbor 30 Wore away

YESTERDAY'S **ANSWERS** H A W S A T I O HR ALIVE C A P O N E N D A N A L O G RECAP ARRLOP M A 31 Smitten ones A F G H A N I S S L U E O N E 33 Cavalry posts 39 Julep need SUMUSS 41 Tell tales OTTAWA PROXY TINTS WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com. HOVE





BY MORT WALKER

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

**BABY BLUES** 



KL agrees
FROM PAGE 12

pandemic.

sending workers, arranging next

joint working group meeting, and

stranded Bangladeshi workers' return

to Malaysia amid the coronavirus

Bangladesh will send a list of all

licensed recruiting agents and Malaysia will select a required number

of agents from the list to ensure safe

The whole recruitment process,

including workers' selection from

database and due payment through

banking channels, will be monitored

using an integrated online system, it

Both ministers further agreed

The ministers agreed to hold the

to enhance monitoring on the

next joint working group meeting

soon, while Malaysia in principle

agreed to take effective steps to

ensure return of stranded Bangladeshi

Bangladesh will be informed later

During the virtual meeting,

Imran Ahmad sought Saravanan's

intervention in regularisation of

Bangladeshi migrant workers who still

remained undocumented in Malaysia.

High-placed officials from both

recruitment process.

workers to Malaysia.

about this, the release said.

labour migration, said the release.

Both ministers agreed that

food budget, yet I fail to ensure adequate food for my family. Even buying eggs and potatoes have now become difficult for many of us," she

Like Salma and Forkan, hundreds of daily wage earners, including day labourers, hawkers, rickshaw-pullers, roadside vendors, and small business owners, are facing double the crisis a dwindling income and rising food prices, shrinking their access to adequate and sufficient food.

According to World Hunger Index (GHI) 2020, published on October 12, Bangladesh has reduced hunger by a significant margin, but the severity of the crisis still remains serious. The country has moved 13 notches up to the 75th position among 107 countries in the index.

Arif Hossain, chief executive officer and executive director of Farming Future Bangladesh (FFB), thinks the country may not face the worst adversity of pandemic in the food and nutrition sector as it is self-sufficient in food production due to the government's various measures.

"But a coordinated and long term multi-sectoral strategic approach will be vital to ensure nutrition and food security for the future of Bangladesh,"

"We need science and advanced agricultural innovations for healthier and nutritious food. We also need nation-wide awareness through evidence-based information to ensure equal access to nutritious food for the poor and ultra-poor people," said Arif, also a visiting scientist at Cornell University.

Experts said the availability of food must be increased along with the food production to ensure sufficient access to food for marginalised people. Besides, a proper distribution channel along with a smooth supply chain has to be ensured, they added.

According to finance ministry sources, some 2.54 crore families in 496 upazilas and municipalities had received rice and cash handovers in April, May and June.

Food Secretary Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum said although the food assistance programmes and open market sales are going on, no fresh programmes would be launched any time soon targeting the new poor.

food assistance Under the programmes, a total of 155,813 tonnes of rice was sold at Tk 10 in September and around 1.5 lakh tonnes rice was allocated for the month of October, she said.

"We are thinking of the new poor but no programme has yet been initiated," she said.

Agriculture Minister Razzaque said, "Even after the success in food production, we need to be aware of food and nutrition security in post-Covid-19 Bangladesh."

"We must continue our initiative," he said at a press briefing at the secretariat office vesterday.

Against this backdrop, the country

Ismail Samrat, member secretary

of the committee, said, "In February,

Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar

Sangrakkhan Parishad, which led

the quota reforms movement, was

renamed Chhatra Adhikar Parishad.

With the change in name, principles

and norms of the organisation was

also changed. The organisation is now

had initiated the formation of three

affiliated organisations -- Bangladesh

Jubo Adhikar Parishad, Sharimik

Adhikar Parishad and Prabasi Adhikar

a country where the constitution says

there is a ban against public gathering

of five or more," said police spokesman

Kissana Phathanacharoen. "We will

Three months of protests in the

"The people who came know that

He said Chhatra Adhikar Parishad

University student.

being run arbitrarily.

he must be revered.

take things step by step.

Chhatra Adhikar Parishad

commemorates World Food Day today with the theme "Grow, nourish, sustain together - Our actions are our future".

The day comes as Bangladesh and the rest of the world continue to fight the pandemic, which has caused unprecedented economic and social disruption, leaving thousands out of work or working for less pay, making

According to the government's estimate, the pandemic has doubled poverty in Bangladesh, raising the number of the country's ultra-poor from 10.5 percent of the population to 20.5 percent as of June.

The planning ministry in August estimated that poverty increased from 20.5 percent to 29.4 percent as a considerable number of people lost their income due to the Covid-19

A Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey on the impacts of the pandemic on livelihood released last month said 46.22 percent households wiped out savings and 11.26 percent had either sold property or kept mortgaged them.

The survey styled "Perception Survey on the Impacts of Livelihood", said some 43.11 percent had to rely on handouts from relatives and 17.93 percent on private borrowing in order

It further said 68.39 percent of the families went through financial problems from April to July with rickshaw/van-pullers and day labourers taking the worst hit.

In this situation, the ongoing price hike of food and essential items is adding salt to the injuries to hundreds of urban poor households, leading to a decrease in food consumption.

This has become a major concern for food and nutrition safety, experts

"A huge number of people are at risk of nutrition insecurity as they had to compromise with nutrition intake,' said noted economist Hossain Zillur

He said the price hikes of essential commodities have already hit the urban poor harder than the rural ones.

Zillur, also the chairperson of Brac, said, "We are fortunate that our boro production was good. The government has to keep an eye on aman production and food pricing. If any of these two falters, the situation will be grave."

He suggested that the government should continue the special food assistance package for the poor.

The nutrition status of the country had improved due to a diversity in diet as the per capita consumption of meat, eggs, fish, fruits, vegetables and milk had increased.

But the Covid-19 pandemic has put that status under threat.

The BBS survey said some 63.42 percent of households had to cut consumption of quality foods during the April to July period.

Similarly, a World Bank study published last month said that 69 percent of households reduced their overall food consumption.

Parishad. "The aims and objectives of

these organisations are still unknown

was expelled from the organisation.

"And this [the split] might have been

done to put pressure on us under

the patronage or persuasion of the

government ... . However, everyone

has the democratic right to form a new

organisation. People will know which

claimed that the expulsion of Suhel

was the decision of a "DU syndicate"

of Chhatra Adhikar Parishad, led by

Leaders of the new committee

is real and which is fake."

Asked about the split, Nur said Suhel



French health workers gather in front of a post office to send postcards to the French President with their grievances, in Nice yesterday as part of a nationwide day of actions to urge the government to increase staff as hospitals fill once again with Covid-19 patients. PHOTO: REUTERS

### Decision soon on whether to hold

how they would arrange the admission

member Muhammed Alamgir said it was decided that VCs will discuss the first-year admission test process at the Bishwabidyalaya Parishad meeting.

"They will discuss a range of issues, including the use of HSC exam GPAs in the university admission tests... and after that we will analyse the matter," Alamgir said.

Debate about the weightage of HSC GPAs in the university admission process for the upcoming academic session emerged after the government decided to award grades to candidates of HSC and equivalent exams without holding the public exams amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead of the exams, candidates' evaluation would be based on their results in the Junior School Certificate,

voters this year, and they are just as

likely to pick Biden as they are Trump.

holding a 10-percentage-point lead

nationally, with a tighter margin in

the battleground states that will help

Trump - needs to win undecideds at

a disproportionate rate to catch up.

So, if that isn't happening, he's not really cutting into Biden's lead," said

Kyle Kondik, an election analyst at the

Center for Politics at the University of

Compounding Trump's challenge

has been a record rush of early voting

Record early US turnout with three

weeks to go: Georgians, Texans line

up to vote that far outpaces the rate

in 2016 - more people want to avoid

Election Day crowds because of the

Almost 15 million Americans have

already voted, according to the US

Elections Project at the University of

Florida. That compares with about 1.4

novel coronavirus pandemic.

to decide the election.

The polling also shows Biden

"The candidate who is behind -

Secondary School Certificate and equivalent tests.

HSC and equivalent exams were cancelled out of fear that they would increase risk of coronavirus transmission. More than 13.65 lakh students were expected to sit for the

The government postponed the exams following the closure of all educational institutions on March 17. They are to stay closed until at least

Usually, universities took the GPA of SSC and HSC exams into account, alongside admission tests, while holding the entry exams at public universities.

Alamgir said that at yesterday's meeting they also urged all public universities to strengthen their online education process and take steps so that students can continue their education in that manner.

Trump can't count on last-minute deciders

million early votes by October 16 in

voters have settled on their choice,

reducing the opportunity for large,

found that only about 8% of likely

voters appear to be undecided, saying

either that they do not know whom

to support or that they are thinking

about backing a third-party candidate.

the campaign, more than twice as

many people were similarly wavering

between Trump and his Democratic

opponent Hillary Clinton, injecting a

volatile element late into a race that

Among those voters who made up

their minds in the final week of the

2016 campaign, 55% picked Trump

while 36% picked Clinton, according

to a Reuters/Ipsos poll of voters on

success: a majority of late deciders

in the battleground states of Florida,

They were critical for Trump's

Clinton had been expected to win.

Four years ago at this stage of

But the opinion polls suggest more

The Reuters/Ipsos national poll

the 2016 election.

He said UGC informed the VCs that they are keeping contact with the government, seeking grants or soft loans for students who would need to buy digital devices to attend online classes. UGC in a statement after the

meeting said that Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad, from its meeting on October 17, will made a decision in principle regarding the admission tests. "But UGC wants that no question

regarding the tests," the arises statement said.

UGC Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah at the meeting said that the nation wants a specific guideline from the VCs regarding the admission

UGC said that it would not be wise to reopen the universities amid the pandemic as many VCs opined that it would be a suicidal decision.

Michigan and Pennsylvania backed

Trump over Clinton that year, tipping

those tight races in his favor on

election night. Trump won Michigan

and Pennsylvania by less than 1 percentage point and he won Florida

over the 2020 election has been

whether there will be a repeat of

2016's 11th hour surge of support for

Trump. The new Reuters/Ipsos poll

indicates that is unlikely to happen

when forced to choose, undecided

voters broke evenly for Trump and

Biden, with each getting 4% support.

The poll also found that 9 out of

10 likely Trump voters say they have

locked in their decision and will not

Nevertheless, the Trump campaign

"Our campaign is confident in the

said it remains confident that

undecided voters will ultimately break

big tent, diverse coalition of support

we've built over the last six years," said

Ken Farnaso, a Trump spokesman.

One of the big questions hanging

by less than 2 points.

change their mind.

#### countries also attended the meeting, the release said. They won't

FROM PAGE 12

being. The decision came from the ministry's regular inter-ministerial meeting.

"We have also invited applications or registration of YouTube channels or IP TVs. They are under investigation. We will start registering them after completion of the preliminary investigation," he said.

The minister said YouTube channels and IP TVs won't be able to provide regular news. "That's why when a television channel gets permission, they are not allowed to broadcast news at the beginning. They need to fulfill some parametres and need to re-apply for the permission. They are then allowed to present news. For now, IP TVs won't be able to provide news."

Asked about the stage of registration of online portals, he said the registration process was underway.

"Many online news portals have already been registered. The rest will be given. The registration process will take several months because we are able to register only after the investigation agency reports. But I hope we will be able to complete most of the registrations this year," Hasan added.

#### Problems

A cabinet sub-committee on food and other essential commodities also holds a meeting today. They discuss how to improve the supply position of rice, wheat and other essential commodities.

FORD FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE 10 likely Biden voters and 9 out of | CALLS ON PM

Ford Foundation Executive President David E Bell, now on a five-day tour in Bangladesh, calls on the Bangabandhu. He informs the prime minister about the ongoing schemes of Ford Foundation. He says the Ford Foundation is exploring the future possibilities of helping the development of Bangladesh in its economy, education and

SOURCES: October 17, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

#### Govt to start rapid testing in 36 districts planned to introduce antigen testing Abbott and SD Biosensor and the Bill

Election Day.

Tk 700-800 if procured in bulks, according to a health ministry document obtained by this newspaper.

Earlier last week, officials at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) said they were validating antigen-based rapid testing kits of several companies, including those mentioned above. Apart from the two companies, the

government will also procure more kits through the World Bank and the Unicef, said DGHS officials.

On September 17, the government permitted antigen-based rapid testing at the public healthcare centres after months of bureaucratic tangles.

The decision is yet to come into

Initially, the government has

facilities at 10 specialised and 39 district hospitals, including those designated to treat Covid-19 cases, across the country. These healthcare installations do not have coronavirus testing facilities. Private hospitals have not been

allowed to use antigen-based rapid testing yet. Meanwhile, the World Health

Organization (WHO) has delayed the supply of 10 lakh antigen kits to Bangladesh.

On September 28, the WHO announced that 120 million antigen rapid diagnostic kits for Covid-19 would be made available to low- and middle-income countries under an agreement between manufacturers

& Melinda Gates Foundation.

They said they will give us kits within a week. Now they are saying they will need more time. They will give 10 lakh kits. If we get those, we will not need to go for procurement," Prof Khurshid said.

the sophisticated RT-PCR test, which detects the presence of the novel coronavirus.

a saliva sample and it can usually determine whether a person is infected within 15-30 minutes.

government Tk 3,500 to Tk 4,000, said DGHS officials

The antigen-based rapid testing is a molecular test, an alternative to

The antigen test involves taking

An RT-PCR test now costs the

#### Shakespeare First FROM PAGE 12 English language.

It was published after the death of the Bard, who lived from 1564 until 1616, and was compiled by two of his friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell. It contains major works which

were it not the collection, including 'Macbeth" and "Twelfth Night." Several books have brought in

would probably have been lost

higher prices, such as the Codex Leicester of Leonardo De Vinci, which Bill Gates bought for \$30.8 million in 1994. But none is a literary work of

### Step up controls

to toughen anti-coronavirus measures, imposing a curfew in Paris and eight other cities from Saturday, while Germany and Ireland also ramped up restrictions.

We have to act. We need to put a brake on the spread of the virus, President Emmanuel Macron told public television, announcing a shutdown between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am that will remain in force for as long as six weeks.

Other major French cities such as Lyon, the Mediterranean port Marseille southwestern Toulouse will similarly impose curfews, with around 20 million people affected in all, out of a total population of some 67 million.

French police searched the home of Health Minister Olivier Veran yesterday as part of an inquiry into the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis, his office said.

London, the world's international financial capital, will enter a tighter lockdown from midnight today as Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to tackle a swiftly accelerating second wave.

#### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer Chittagong PWB Division-3 Agrabad CGO Building No. 1 Agrabad, Chittagong Phone: 031-726045 Fax: 031-727990

Memo No. 25.36.1500.210.00.000.00/১৩৮৯

**Tender Notice (OTM)** 

Date: ১৫/১০/২০২০

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a>) for the procurement of given tenders:

Description of item Tender ID No. Tender document last Tender closina selling date and time date and time Construction of Boundary wall Road Drain and site Development 504440 28/10/2020 29/10/2020 works of Mirsharai Farmars Training Center under the Project titled Farmars Training at the Upazila Level for Transfer of Technology 15/11/2020 Construction of 6-Storied Simulator Building under the Project titled Procurement of Simulator for National Maritime Institute Chattogram. 11:00 11:15

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

Md. Mainul Islam Executive Engineer Chattogram PWD Division-3 Agrabad, Chattogram E-mail: ee-Ctg3@Pwd.gov.bo

a wheelchair.

country of 70 million have been largely peaceful, as was a march by tens of thousands of people on Wednesday. But in one incident, police pushed jeering protesters away from a motorcade carrying Queen Suthida. Overnight the government banned

political gatherings of five or more people and the publication of news and online information that could threaten national security. Riot police swiftly cleared a protest camp outside Prayuth's office. "The measures were necessary

to ensure peace and order and to prevent further incidents after protesters affected the royal motorcade and violated the monarchy with provocative language," government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said in a statement.

He rejected accusations from some government critics that the motorcade incident was an excuse to crack down.

Thai media reported that arrest warrants had been issued against two people for injuring the queen - which can carry a life sentence, whereas the maximum penalty for insulting the monarch under lese majeste laws is 15 vears in jail.

Police said they had arrested protest leaders Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak and rights lawyer Arnon Nampa overnight. Student leader Panusaya "Rung" Sithijirawattanakul was taken away in

Arnon said on Facebook he was

Thais defy protest ban taken to Chiang Mai, where he faces sedition charges over a speech in August. Panusaya and Parit also face sedition charges over comments at previous protests, their lawyer said. They all deny the charges.

The protest movement aims to remove Prayuth, saying he manipulated an election last year to keep hold of power. He says the election was fair.

Those marching on the streets also want a new constitution and have called for a reduction in the powers of the king. They want his role to be clearly subject to the constitution and seek the reversal of orders that gave him control of the palace fortune and some army units.

The protests have largely been driven by young people.

"We don't want anyone or the next generation to have to put up with this. We have to end it with us," said Mameaw, 17, who came to the protest right after school exams. She declined to give her full name.

#### 4 of a family FROM PAGE 12 house, he added.

brother's room

The initial investigation shows that it was a planned murder, Haran Pal said. Shahinur's younger brother Raihanul Islam said he was sleeping in the next

room when he heard groans from his

locked from outside, and found the four in a pool of blood. One of the children was still alive when he opened the door but died

He opened the door, which was

moments later, Raihanul said. He added that they were in dispute with some neighbours over land, but he was not sure about who committed the murder

ST PETERSBURG OPEN Live from 4:00pm

## Mahedi rallies the troops as batsmen disappoint again

SPORTS REPORTER



The BCB President's Cup may have witnessed the first 200-plus 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 Naimul 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

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.

Mahedi departed in the final

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 threeteam tournament, which was understandable given the of sevenmonth gap in activities. But even



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 commendabe 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

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

Anamul Haque again showed glimpses of his talent with two beautiful boundaires but the righthander's tendency to play away from his body cost him dearly. He departed for 12, caught at slip by Soumya Sarkar after going fishing that should have been overcome by to pull a banged-in delivery from 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 Bangadesh'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 professional Federation's football league committee yesterday declared a sixweek 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, 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



"It is from small streams that big rivers rise. Similar to the sentiment Canadian

Matshona Dhliwayo's words, 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 Dhananjoypur 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

'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

"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.

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.

## 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.

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 Novembe, while captain Harry Kane said he expected the defender to "bounce

"For me, he is a top player and a Maguire was already under intense massive part of what we do. He is having

scrutiny after a difficult period for both 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 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 BSRM XTREME** 





## Thais defy protest ban, emergency

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

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 Chanocha, a former junta leader, in the biggest challenge for years to an establishment long dominated by the army and

"Like dogs cornered, we are fighting till our deaths," Panupong "Mike Rayong" Jadnok, one 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 Muktijoddha 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.

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 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 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-Ducsu 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 Ducsu 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 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 Bhaban 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 MCA

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 Bhaban 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-incharge 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

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 TV do everything else, but they cannot do the job of providing news for the time

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



**PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 16** 

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**



## 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



## 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