



The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

SAFAR 30, 1442 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



BELCHING OUT DEATH



This is how we made our cities some of the most polluted ones in the world. A steel rerolling mill in the residential area of Munshikhola in Pagla of Narayanganj is emitting toxic gas but the authorities seem to have turned a blind eye to the assault on the air we breathe. People living in the area face severe problems every day due to the fumes. The whole area seems foggy in the morning but it is actually smog. Air pollution is considered one of the leading causes of death in Bangladesh and one that is also considered avoidable through targeted policy measures.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Anti-rape march attacked in Feni

35 hurt as AL MP Nizam Hazari's followers attack protesters; they allege police joined in

STAR REPORT

The long march by anti-rape protesters from Dhaka to Noakhali came under repeated attacks in Feni yesterday after men of the ruling Awami League and police allegedly carried out "joint attacks" on them, leaving at least 35 protesters injured.

The incidents happened at the Shanti Company intersection in Feni town around 11:30am after the demonstrators concluded a rally in the Feni Shaheed Minar area.

"Goons of the local Awami League launched attacks on us with sticks and rods. At first, police were mere spectators. Then they too joined the ruling-party men and chased us... When we got on the bus, they attacked us again, hurling brick chunks, charging with sticks and ransacking the buses," Mehedi Hasan Nobel, president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, told reporters in Chowmuhani of Noakhali.

"In the two-hour journey from Feni to Noakhali, we saw Chhatra League and Jubo League men take up positions on the sides of the road. Fearing for their security, police did not arrange any treatment for us and so the injured had to remain in the bus," Mehedi said, adding that they

PHOTOS ON PAGE 2

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

VACCINE CANDIDATES WHO includes three made by Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Covid-19 vaccine candidates developed by the Bangladeshi vaccine company Globe Biotech Ltd have been included in the draft landscape of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

With this, Globe Biotech Ltd has entered the global race for a Covid-19 vaccine as a first-ever Bangladeshi company.

This, however, doesn't guarantee the vaccine's effectiveness or success, experts said.

"This is a good progress, but this does not mean these vaccines are successful. There is a long way to go", Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of pharmacology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), told The Daily Star recently.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

CUSTODIAL DEATH, TORTURE VICTIMS Ensure enough compensation

Speakers at webinar urge the govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is not enough that victims of custodial torture and deaths be allowed to seek criminal accountability, they also have to be allowed to seek monetary compensation and there have to be mechanisms that enable it.

While the courts can grant monetary compensation, the victims or their families are still not allowed to voluntarily seek it.

However, there is a cap on how much compensation can be given by the courts, which deters victims from pursuing justice, speakers observed at a webinar titled "Accountability for Custodial Torture: Lessons from the landmark Jonny Case", organised jointly by The Daily Star, Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust and Tort Law Project Bangladesh yesterday.

"My dead brother left behind two children. I have spent all of my savings pursuing justice and I don't know what lies ahead in the future of these two children. Who will take their financial responsibility?" said Imtiaz Hossain Rocky, who was tortured by police in 2014 and lost his brother Jonny during the same incident.

Rocky filed a case against the police and received a verdict on September 9, wherein three cops were given life sentence and fined Tk 2 lakh each to be given to the victims' family. The fine, however, will not be handed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Universities to hold tests for admission

Decides a VC meet

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Vice-chancellors of public universities yesterday decided in principle that admission tests for freshers would be held.

After attending a virtual meeting of Bangladesh Bishwabidyalaya Parishad, an association of public university vice-chancellors, they, however, said the date and the method of the exams would be announced later.

"We have decided that admission tests for enrolling students at universities will take place. But it was not decided how the test will be held; whether it will be held in-person or online," Prof Mohammad Rafiqul Alam, VC of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, told The Daily Star.

Rafiqul and Chittagong University

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Bangladesh asked to be in clinical trials

Says Modi regarding Indian vaccine candidates

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said there are requests from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Qatar and Bhutan for clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine.

Indian scientists and research teams are collaborating and strengthening research capacities in neighbouring countries -- Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Mauritius, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Three vaccines are at the advanced stages of development in India and two of them are in Phase-II and one is in Phase-III.

In an effort to help the global community, Modi directed that they should not limit their efforts to their immediate neighbourhood but also reach out to the entire world in providing vaccines, medicines and IT platforms for the vaccine delivery system.

Modi was reviewing the Covid-19 pandemic situation in his country and the preparedness of vaccine delivery, distribution, and administration, according to the Press Information Bureau of India.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



The by-polls in Dhaka-5 and Naogaon-6 constituencies recorded a noticeably low voter turnout. In the photo, one polling booth at Bornomala High School and College in Dhaka recorded zero vote till 1:03pm. Awami League candidates Kazi Monirul Islam and Anwar Hossain won in their respective constituencies. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

We're hopeful of preventing further Covid spread: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh will be able to prevent the further spread of the Covid-19 in the coming days.

"So far, we're lucky that both the infection and mortality rates of the disease are very low in Bangladesh. We're hopeful that we'll be able to prevent the further spread of the disease in the coming days," she said.

The PM said this in her pre-recorded video message played at the First International e-Conference on Critical Care-2020. Bangladesh Society of Anesthesiologists organised it virtually.

She said united efforts and the hard-labour of physicians and health workers can contain the spread of the deadly virus in Bangladesh.

To face the Covid-19 emergency, she said the government has appointed 2,000 doctors and 5,000 nurses on an urgent basis.

The PM said the conference is being held at a time when the world is reeling under the Covid-19 pandemic fallout.

She mentioned that the anesthesiologists play a crucial role in the management of critically ill patients apart from their work in operation theatres.

"Our anesthesiologists have been doing a wonderful job



SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Newborn back from dead in critical state

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of the baby girl -- declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early Friday but found alive before burial hours later -- is critical. She is under treatment at the Neonatal Intensive Care unit at the hospital.

"Her condition is very critical... We are trying our level best," said Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin, director of the hospital.

A four-member probe body led by Dr Manisha Banerjee, head of the neonatology department, has been formed to investigate the incident. The probe body has been asked to submit its report within three days.

"We will take action upon receiving the findings," the director said.

The baby's father, Yeasin Mollah, said on Friday night he saw the baby moving her limbs.

He sought blessing from all for his child.

On Friday, a doctor at the hospital declared the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



With the Sharadiya Durga Puja less than a week away, neighbourhoods in the port city are excitedly preparing for its festivities. Volunteers, devotees, and artisans across the city are busy setting up mandaps, like this little crew of Pilkhana Puja Udjapan Committee. This photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Muted Durga Puja celebrations due to pandemic: leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the country's Hindu community, will be celebrated on a limited scale amid the coronavirus pandemic, Hindu community leaders said yesterday.

They said there will be no "Kumari Puja", one of the main attractions of the five-day festival, in Dhaka, while celebrations have to be limited for devotees at mandaps earlier than usual.

Besides, distribution of special food items will be held back this time around.

Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad yesterday held a press conference at Dhakeshwari Temple premises in the capital to inform media about festival preparations.

Hindu community members will start celebrating the five-day festival on Thursday, with much enthusiasm and religious fervour.

Community leaders at the press conference also urged devotees to not bring out procession on Bijoya Dashami.

Milon Kanti Dutta, president of the organisation, yesterday told The Daily Star this year Kumari Puja will not be celebrated in Dhaka to avoid excessive crowd to maintain health guidelines.

Different puja organisers were also asked to not distribute spicy rice to avoid crowding, he said.

This year, puja will be arranged at 30,213 mandaps across the country, which is 1,185 fewer than last year, said a statement read out at the press conference.

This year, celebration at the mandaps have to be closed for devotees after 9pm while efforts have to be taken to limit people's presence throughout day, it said, citing a directive taken after meeting held with home ministry on October 4.

Dr Kamal's Gonoforum expels 8 'rebel' leaders

Announces party council on Dec 12

UNB, Dhaka

Expelling its eight rebel leaders -- including Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Dr Abu Sayeed and Subrata Chowdhury -- Gonoforum, led by Dr Kamal Hossain, yesterday decided to hold the party's central council on December 12.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's central committee at the Jatiya Press Club. Gonoforum leader Mostak Ahmed read out decisions of the meeting.

He said the meeting decided to hold the central council of the party on December 12 to make the organisation a stronger, dynamic and well-organised one in light of the current political and organisational reality.

Mostak said the meeting also decided to expel Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Prof Abu Sayeed, Subrata Chowdhury and Zaglul Haider Afrik from the post of primary member of the party, for not responding to a show-cause notice served on them on charge of violating party discipline and being involved in anti-organisational activities.

Helaluddin, Latiful Bari Hamim, Khan Siddiqur Rahman and Abdul Hasib Chowdhury -- who had been expelled previously, have also been expelled from the party as primary members.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Trees, hills razed for housing

Builders cutting greenery, hillocks in port city's Sholoshahar area without DoE approval

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Sanmar Properties Limited, one of the top real estate companies in the country, has been razing greenery along with hills nearby Bangladesh Forest Research Institute in Chattogram city's Sholoshahar area for a twin multistorey apartment block project.

Around hundred of trees and other vegetation were shaved off to make space for the project titled "Sanmar Knightsbridge at Duncan Hills", which is in progress without approval from the Department of Environment (DoE).

Locals alleged that the real estate company engaged its excavator and dump truck to cut the hills at night. A large part of it has been cleared for the project.

DoE Chattogram (metro) ordered Sanmar Properties to stop their work and issued a notice on October 5, asking its director to explain why legal action won't be taken against them.

Mia Mahmudul Haque, deputy director of DoE Chattogram (metro), told The Daily Star that Sanmar Properties applied to secure approval for building retention wall for the project in December last year.

DoE asked them to get approval from Hill Management Committee headed by the divisional commissioner of Chattogram in a letter sent to them on March 10 this year and submit it to DoE, he said.

The company did not respond to their letter yet, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Sitting too much is not good FOR YOUR HEALTH

HERE IS WHY

Let's compare transit drivers, who sit most of the day, and conductors or guards, who don't. Though diets and lifestyles are a lot similar of both groups, the drivers are about twice as likely to get heart disease than the other groups. It is just because of sitting.

People who sit for long hours continuously are more likely to die earlier from any disease. Exercise helps a little in these cases. Sitting elevates the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.



The bad effects of too much sitting are very difficult to counter with exercise. You hardly can reverse the effects of sitting 7 hours at a time.

Surprisingly, you are more likely to have diabetes if you sit all day. It also contributes to obesity and anxiety.

Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT), a clot that forms in the leg, often forms due to long time sitting. It can be serious if the clot travels and lodges in the lungs. Sometimes, it exhibits no symptom.



The prolong sitting habit puts heavy pressure on your back muscles, neck, and spine. An ergonomic chair may not ease the problem. You need to get up and move around for a minute or two every half hour to keep your back healthy.

The senior citizens who are inactive may be more likely to develop osteoporosis (problem with weak bones) and could gradually become unable to do the basic tasks of everyday life, like bathing or using toilets.

Your chance of developing different kinds of cancers increases due to sitting more. The more you sit, the higher your odds are.

The only remedy is to be more active and move on. You need to stand up and stretch every half hour or so. You can touch your toes. Take a stroll around places. You can arrange a treadmill at your workplace. All these things can help prevent the bad effects of uninterrupted sitting and keep you a healthy life.

Source: World Health Organisation



A man haggles with a vendor over the price of veggies at "Fokinni Bazar". Set up on both sides of the rail tracks under Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon Flyover, this market used to be the last resort for low-income people to purchase greens at a minimal price. But the recent price hike of produce has affected this bazaar too, making it difficult for many to afford.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Even 'Fokinni Bazar' not spared from price hike

At market for 'discarded' produce, customers, vendors distraught as budget gets strained, profit declines

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MATHEWS CHIRAN

It had nearly been an hour, but Khadiza Khatun was still moving from vendor to vendor with her empty bazaar bag in Tejgaon kitchen market.

With the bag folded in her hand, Khadiza was looking for some vegetables within her tight budget. But wherever she went, she found the prices beyond her reach. Eventually, she decided to go to another bazaar for low-income people, popularly known as "Fokinni Bazar", under Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon Flyover, along

the rail tracks.

When Khadiza went to buy a kg of brinjal there, to her utter surprise, she found that the price is also catching up with the mainstream market.

"One kg of brinjal is Tk 70 in normal markets, and here it's Tk 50 now. But a few months back, I would buy them for Tk 30," she said.

"Due to the pandemic, my husband couldn't find a regular job. Now, because of such high prices, we can't manage three meals a day, especially for my children," lamented Khadiza, who has been living with

her two school-going children and day labourer husband at Purbo Nakhhalpara for the last 10 years.

This is the current picture of Fokinni Bazar, which has been a godsend for the poor. But now, it too is a victim of price hike like regular markets.

The transient bazaar is set up on both sides of the rail tracks, where people living in shanties nearby sell daily goods. The sold produce is not particularly in good condition, as most are on the verge of rotting.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

BNP leader Mosharrif Hossain dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister and BNP leader AKM Mosharrif Hossain died at a private hospital in Dhaka last night, said the party's press wing.

He had long been suffering from different ailments before being diagnosed with Covid-19.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held today at Mymensingh Eidgah Ground after Zuhr prayers and then a second janaza will be held at Muktagachha playing ground after Asr prayers. He will be buried at family graveyard in Muktagachha.

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman and Secretary General Mirza Fakhru'l Islam Alamgir expressed deep shock at his death.

BATCHING TRANSIT MIXING PUMPING

LET'S BUILD BANGLADESH!

OPEN FOR DEALERSHIP!!

Interested firms (experienced in construction equipment), contact us right away

Call or message us on WhatsApp **+91 94376 97807**

Mail us today bikram@sunbeampower.com
info@sunbeampower.com

www.sunbeampower.com

1.1m in Rakhine barred from voting

AFP, Yangon

More than 1.1 million voters in Myanmar's western Rakhine state will be disenfranchised in upcoming national polls, according to data released by the election commission Friday, a move experts warned could fuel yet more conflict.

Civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) is widely expected to be returned to power in the November 8 election — only the second since the country emerged from outright military rule.

But with virtually all Rohingyas stripped of citizenship and voting rights, many observers had already dismissed the polls as lacking credibility.

On Friday, citing security reasons, the election commission said security reasons meant voting would not take place in areas with hundreds of thousands more people — including more than 800,000 in Rakhine. Over half of the 600,000 Rohingyas remaining in Myanmar live in Rakhine, bringing the total number of disenfranchised in the state to more than 1.1 million, nearly two thirds of the state's population.

More than one million more stateless Rohingya languish in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Arakan Army (AA) militants are locked in battle with the military in Rakhine's northern fringes as they fight for more autonomy for ethnic Rakhine Buddhists. The unrest has killed or injured hundreds and forced 150,000 from their homes since the civil war intensified in late 2018.

But the ethnic Rakhine Arakan National Party (ANP) secretary Tun Aung Kyaw said the decision to cancel the vote had been taken for political rather than security reasons.

"Most townships in Rakhine state where elections will not be held are areas the ANP would definitely win, so this is a deliberate ploy," he told AFP, adding it was "discrimination" against ethnic minorities.

Yangon-based analyst Richard Horsey agreed this would likely tilt the election in Rakhine decisively in favour of Suu Kyi's NLD. "There is a very serious risk that this will provoke increased armed conflict and political violence in Rakhine," he said.



A mother mourns over the coffin of her son in Stepanakert during fighting over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, yesterday. Inset, A man carries the body of his 10-month-old daughter, who was killed with five other relatives, including her mother, when a rocket hit their home in the city of Ganja, Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev yesterday vowed to take revenge on Armenia after a missile strike killed 12 sleeping people in Ganja, a dramatic escalation in the conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Pakistan ex-PM accuses army chief of ousting his government

REUTERS, Lahore

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday accused the country's army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa of toppling his government, pressuring the judiciary, and installing the current government of Prime Minister Imran Khan in the 2018 elections.

Sharif was speaking via video link from London to a gathering of tens of thousands of people organised by opposition parties to kick-off a nationwide protest campaign in the eastern city of Gujranwala aiming to oust Khan's government.

"Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, you packed up our government, which was working well, and put the nation and the country at the alter of your wishes," Sharif told the gathering - the largest since the 2018 elections.

The former prime minister also accused the chief of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence spy agency of being involved in conspiring against his government.

US ELECTION 2020 15 DAYS TO GO

Trump 'is the most flawed person I ever met'

Former White House chief of staff allegedly told his friends; CNN to air warnings from former officials

CNN ONLINE

Former White House chief of staff, retired Marine Gen. John Kelly, has told friends that US President Donald Trump "is the most flawed person" he's ever known.

"The depths of his dishonesty is just astounding to me. The dishonesty, the transactional nature of every relationship, though it's more pathetic than anything else. He is the most flawed person I have ever met in my life," the retired Marine general has told friends, CNN has learned.

The reporting comes from a new CNN special scheduled to air Sunday night, "The Insiders: A Warning from Former Trump Officials," in which former senior administration officials — including former national security adviser John Bolton, former Health and Human Services scientist Rick Bright and former Department of Homeland Security general counsel John Mitnick — explain why they think the president is unfit for office.

Kelly's sentiments about the president's transactional nature and dishonesty have been shared by other former members of the Trump administration who also appear in the special.

Olivia Troye, a former top adviser to Vice President Mike Pence, has said the president knew about the coronavirus pandemic would have on the US by mid-February, but that "he didn't want to hear it, because his biggest concern was that we were in an election year."

Elizabeth Neumann, another former DHS official, had criticized Trump for not condemning White supremacy after the first presidential debate in September.

Trump did say on Thursday during a town hall on NBC that he condemned White supremacy. "I denounce White supremacy, OK?" Trump told NBC's Savannah Guthrie. "I've denounced White supremacy for years."



NY POST REPORT ON BIDENS' GRAFT Twitter backtracks

AFP, Washington

Twitter has altered its policy on hacked content after its decision to block a news report critical of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden provoked Republican fury.

The social media behemoth -- used by hundreds of millions worldwide -- said late Thursday it would in future only block stolen information which was posted directly by hackers, and label any other information of questionable provenance.

Senate Republicans earlier said they would subpoena Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey to testify before two different committees on why the company blocked links to an article in the New York Post alleging corruption by Biden in Ukraine.

Republican senator Ted Cruz called the decision "election interference," while Trump -- who trails Biden in polls 19 days before the presidential poll -- decried the blockage by both Twitter and Facebook.

The Post's story purported to expose corrupt dealings by Biden and his son Hunter Biden in Ukraine. The newspaper claimed that the former vice-president, who was in charge of US policy toward Ukraine, took actions to help his son, who in 2014-2017 sat on the board of Ukraine energy company Burisma.

But the outlet's source for the information raised questions. It cited records on a drive allegedly copied from a computer said to have been abandoned by Hunter Biden, that Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani gave to the Post.

The Biden campaign rejected the assertions of corruption in the report.

'ISLAMIST TERROR ATTACK' IN FRANCE

Nine arrested after teacher beheaded

Teen Chechen suspect shot dead

AFP, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine

The man suspected of beheading a French teacher who showed his students controversial anti-Muslim cartoons was an 18-year-old Chechen, a source said yesterday, in what President Emmanuel Macron called an "Islamist terror attack".

Police have detained nine people over Friday's attack near the middle school where the teacher worked in Conflans-Saint-Honorine, a usually quiet northwestern suburb around 30 kilometres (20 miles) from central Paris.

The assailant was shot by police and later died of his injuries.

Police said the victim was history teacher Samuel Paty, who recently showed the cartoons as part of a class discussion on freedom of expression that had prompted complaints from parents.

Four of the suspect's relatives -- two brothers and his grandparents -- were initially detained by police for questioning. A judicial source told AFP yesterday that five more people had been detained, including the parents of a child at the school where the teacher was working.

The attack came as a trial is in progress over the January 2015 massacre at the offices of Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine, which had published the cartoons that unleashed a wave of anger across the Islamic world.

The attacker shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is greatest") as police confronted him, a cry often heard in jihadist attacks, a police source said.

Visibly moved, Macron said that "the entire nation" stood ready to defend teachers and that "obscurantism will not win". His Elysee Palace said Saturday that a "national tribute" would be held in Paty's honour, without setting a date.



Nine major opposition parties formed a joint platform called the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) last month to begin a nationwide agitation against the government.

Sharif was sacked by the Supreme Court in 2017 on corruption charges and left for London last November for medical treatment. He blames generals and judges for what he says were trumped up charges.

Pakistan's powerful military denies meddling in politics.

Maryam Nawaz, the daughter and political heir of Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto, the son of assassinated former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto who heads her Pakistan People's Party (PPP), also addressed the gathering.

Speakers at the gathering called for Khan's resignation and an end to military's interference in politics.

The next general election is scheduled for 2023.



A policeman gives the three-finger salute to pro-democracy protesters from a police bus at Wongwian Yai in Bangkok yesterday, as they continue to defy an emergency decree banning protests.

Thai protesters return to streets after clashes

AFP, Bangkok

Thousands of Thai pro-democracy protesters massed in multiple locations across Bangkok yesterday, defying an emergency decree banning gatherings for the third consecutive day after confrontations saw riot police use water cannon on peaceful demonstrators.

But the escalation in police tactics has not cowed the burgeoning youth-led movement, which is demanding the resignation of a premier first brought to power in a military coup and reform of the kingdom's powerful monarchy.

"I'm concerned for my safety but if I don't come out, I have no future," said business student Min, 18, equipped with a helmet and gas mask as she arrived in Bangkok's northern Lat Phrao district where more than 2,000 protesters took over a major intersection.

They raised a three-finger salute as passing vehicles honked in support and flashed a thumbs-up at the mostly black-clad protesters. At least 10,000 protesters rallied at different points of the city.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha announced Friday an emergency decree banning gatherings of more than four people.

The former army chief also rebuffed calls for his resignation.

At least 65 prominent protesters have been arrested since Tuesday.

COVID-19 VACCINATION DRIVE

India to pick 300m first

Curfew, new curbs come into force in France, UK

AGENCIES

India yesterday began to identify about 300 million people who would be given Covid-19 vaccine first when it is ready as millions of Europeans faced tough new coronavirus restrictions due to spiraling second wave of infections.

Globally the novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,105,691 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally prepared by AFP. At least 39,368,710 cases have been registered.

On Friday, 6,118 new deaths and 403,629 new cases were recorded worldwide.

The Times of India said that frontline health and sanitation workers, police officials and elderly people with co-morbidities will get the vaccine on priority. The plan, which is still in the draft stage, aims to cover 23% of the population in the first phase. The final plan is likely to be ready by end October-November, the report said. The selected individuals will be given an estimated 600 million doses.

In France, about 20 million people in Paris and several other French cities were facing the start of a 9 pm-6 am curfew after the country on Thursday saw a new high of 30,000 cases in 24 hours. The move will last at least a month.

In Britain, restrictions are being ramped up with bans on indoor meetings between members of different households in London and several other English cities.

About 28 million people -- half of the population of England -- are now subject to tight social restrictions.

Elsewhere in Europe, Poland, the Czech Republic and Belgium all announced daily record caseloads.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh			
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education Directorate of Primary Education Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III) 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205			
No. 38.01.0000.191.02.049.17-1042		Date: 12/10/2020	
Invitation for Re-Tender			
KEY INFORMATION			
1. Ministry	Ministry of Primary & Mass Education.		
2. Agency	Directorate of Primary Education.		
3. Procuring entity name	Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III).		
4. Procuring entity code	4112202.		
5. Procuring entity district	Dhaka.		
6. Invitation for	Laptop (70 Nos.) & Printer (70 Nos.)		
7. Invitation Ref. No.	38.01.0000.191.02.049.17-1042.		
8. Date	12/10/2020.		
KEY INFORMATION			
9. Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).		
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10. Budget and source of funds	Government of Bangladesh (GOB).		
11. Development partners	N/A.		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
12. Project/programme code	224010700.		
13. Project/programme name	Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III).		
14. Tender package No.	LP 01.		
15. Tender package name	Laptop & Printer.		
16. Tender publication date	18/10/2020.		
17. Tender last selling date	27/10/2020.		
18. Tender submission date & time	28/10/2020 at 12.00 Noon.		
19. Tender opening date & time	28/10/2020 at 03.00pm. In presence of tender submitting person (if any).		
20. Name & address of the office(s)	Office of the Project Director, Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III), 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205.		
Selling tender documents	Office of the Project Director, Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III), 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205.	Director (Pl. & Dev.), Directorate of Primary Education, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216.	
Receiving tender documents	-Do-		
Opening tender documents	Office of the Project Director, Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III), 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205.		
21. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Office of the Project Director, Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III), 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
22. Eligibility of quotations	i) The tenderer must be authorized distributor or dealer or manufacturer of the brand. ii) The tenderer shall have a minimum 3 (three) years specific experience in the supply of similar goods in Bangladesh. iii) The tenderer have to submit attested copy of the following documents: a. Valid and up-to-date trade licence. b. Up-to-date income tax clearance certificate with TIN number. c. VAT registration certificate. d. Original and updated bank solvency certificate. e. Experience certificate on similar type of works. f. Photocopy of Treasury Chalan of buying tender documents. iv) All activities in connection with the said work will be guided as per "The Public Procurement Act-2006 & Public Procurement Rules-2010".		
23. Brief description of goods or works	Supply of Laptop & Printer.		
24. Brief description of related services	03 (three) years warranty for the system unit supported by the manufacturer website.		
25. Price of tender documents Taka	Tk 1000/- is to be deposited through Treasury Chalan (non-refundable). (Code No. 1-2431-0001-2366).		
26. Lot & identification	Location	Tender security amounts in Tk	Completion time in weeks
Laptop & Printer	147/F, Green Road, Dhaka	1,00,000/- (one lakh) only	2 weeks from the signing of contract
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
27. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Eusuf Ali.		
28. Designation of official inviting tender	Project Director.		
29. Address of official inviting tender	Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III), 147/F, Green Road, Dhaka-1205.		
30. Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 9113595, Email: pd.pesp02@gmail.com		
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.			
GD-1648			
 Project Director Primary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III)			

National vitamin A campaign

Delivering a lifesaving micronutrient to children in Bangladesh

SAIQA SIRAJ

Vitamin A deficiency is a public health concern all around the world, affecting children under five in more than half of all countries. In South Asia, which has one-fifth of the world's population, 44-50% of pre-school children are affected by severe vitamin A deficiency (VAD). This causes visual impairment and night blindness, and weakens the immune system, putting a child at greater risk of disease and early death.

In 1973, to safeguard the health of children and provide them with this critical micronutrient, the government of Bangladesh initiated the 'Nutritional Blindness Prevention Programme', which evolved into the 'National Vitamin A Plus Campaign' (NVAC) in 2003. The programme has been a major success in reducing under-five mortality in the country and improving community awareness about VADs, foods rich in vitamin A, and vitamin A supplementation (VAS).

To ensure that no child gets left behind in receiving biannual doses of vitamin A, NVAC has initiated the targeted child-to-child search strategy proposed by Nutrition International. The unique approach tracks children residing in the 240 'hard-to-reach' unions and administers VAS to them through door-to-door visits by healthcare providers.



PHOTO: LANKESWAR BARMA

With such targeted health and nutrition interventions, Bangladesh has made significant strides in improving child health and nutrition. The prevalence of VAD among preschool children of the country remains at 20.5%, much less than the world's average.

However, with the advent of COVID-19, like many other developing nations, Bangladesh is facing a malnutrition crisis. A study conducted by the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) predicts chronic stunting to rise to 41% – a full ten-point increase over 2017-18 levels – setting back progress by almost a decade.

Addressing nutrition and food insecurity needs to be a key component

of the nation's COVID-19 response. The reinstating of the NVAC in October 2020 is a welcomed step that will provide the lifesaving micronutrient to approximately 20 million children all over the country, including half a million in hard-to-reach areas.

The NVAC has adapted to COVID-19 realities and has reinstated the administration of vitamin A to all children 6-59 months old. Health workers involved in this process have been trained in safety protocols developed by the Global Alliance for Vitamin A (GAVA), which is hosted and chaired by Nutrition International. Considering that VAS has shown to contribute to an all-cause

mortality reduction of more than 12% when provided twice yearly to children under five, it is evident that such reliable and safe distribution of vitamin A both during and after this pandemic will have multiple benefits.

Although there is no current evidence on the effectiveness of vitamin A for the treatment of COVID-19 or the reduction in the severity of the specific symptoms it causes, VAS is especially important for vulnerable children in the context of an infectious disease outbreak. Not only does it reduce the incidence of diarrhoea by 15% and the incidence of measles by 50%, but it also contributes to reducing the odds of child stunting, which can have lifelong health benefits.

Vitamin A supplementation remains an essential health and nutrition intervention, and all children aged 6 to 59 months – including those who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 – should continue to receive vitamin A supplementation.

The frontline of any country's health system is the immune system of its people, which is fueled by good nutrition. It is crucial to invest in nutrition now so that a generation of children are not robbed of their full potential.

The author is the Country Director of Nutrition International, Bangladesh.
E-mail: ssiraj@nutritionintl.org

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT



Herd immunity approaches to COVID-19 control are a 'dangerous fallacy'

A group of researchers warn that a so-called herd immunity approach to managing COVID-19 by allowing immunity to develop in low-risk populations while protecting the most vulnerable is "a dangerous fallacy unsupported by the scientific evidence".

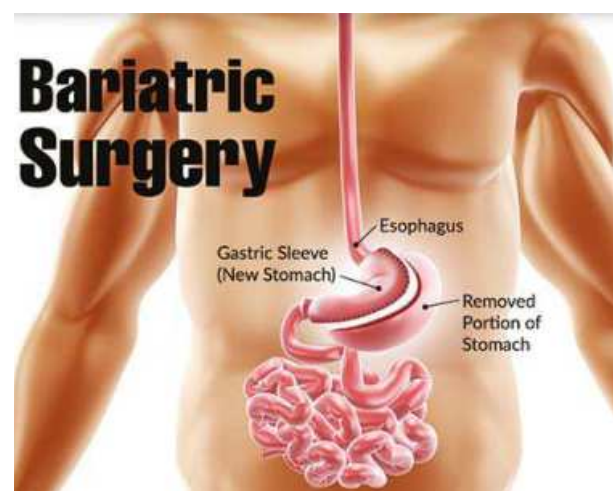
Faced with a second wave of COVID-19, and more than a million recorded deaths worldwide, the authors present their view of the scientific consensus on our understanding of COVID-19, and the strategies that need to be put in place to protect our societies and economies.

The open letter, referred to by its authors as the John Snow Memorandum, is published recently by The Lancet. It is signed by 80 international researchers with expertise spanning public health, epidemiology, medicine, paediatrics, sociology, virology, infectious disease, health systems, psychology, psychiatry, health policy, and mathematical modelling.

They state: "It is critical to act decisively and urgently. Effective measures that suppress and control transmission need to be implemented widely, and they must be supported by financial and social programmes that encourage community responses and address the inequities that have been amplified by the pandemic."

The letter concludes: "The evidence is very clear: controlling community spread of COVID-19 is the best way to protect our societies and economies until safe and effective vaccines and therapeutics arrive within the coming months. We cannot afford distractions that undermine an effective response; it is essential that we act urgently based on the evidence."

HEALTH bulletin



Bariatric surgery tied to longer life expectancy among obese

Obese adults who undergo bariatric surgery have longer life expectancy than those who do not have surgery — but their life expectancy still lags behind that of the general population — according to long-term follow-up from an observational study in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Researchers in Sweden followed some 2,000 obese adults who underwent bariatric surgery, 2,000 matched obese controls who did not have surgery, and 1,100 adults from the general population for roughly 20–24 years.

The median life expectancy in the surgery group was 3 years longer than among controls, with surgery patients showing significantly lower cardiovascular and cancer mortality. However, the surgery group's life expectancy was still 5.5 years shorter than that of the general population.

The researchers note that the higher mortality in the surgery group relative to the general population may be attributable to "the above-normal Body Mass Index (BMI) even after bariatric surgery" and "irreversible effects of obesity-related metabolic dysfunction," among other factors.

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2020

My Care, My Comfort

PROF DR KAZI MANZUR KADER

The incidence of cancer as a non-communicable disease is increasing globally. Bangladesh is no exception to this. The total number of cancer patients in Bangladesh is about 1.5 million.

Cancer is controllable in many cases due to advanced treatment in oncology. The treatment modalities are surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, targeted and biological treatment. It is very important to diagnose cancer in the early stages and start treatment at the right time, which will provide better results.

Cancer is not always detected in the early stage in Bangladesh. As a result, diagnosis is late due to which cancer spreads and causes severe complications that need palliative therapy.

Throughout time, people have suffered life-limiting illnesses but there was not always a system in place to make sure that their last days were comfortable. In the 19th century, the action of hospice care was taken on primarily by women. The attention hospice care would achieve in the next century would be because of these women.

By the 20th century, more hospitals with hospice care were established. 'The Sisters of Charity' was an organisation in Ireland that helped the impoverished population of Dublin in the 19th century, and by the 20th century, they had developed other facilities across the globe. This included St. Joseph's Hospice, which was critical in the history of palliative care.

In 1987, Dr Declan Walsh established the first hospital-based palliative care centre. Today, there are thousands of hospice agencies across the globe and it continues to grow. The first World Hospice and Palliative Care Day was observed in 2005 and it has been going strong ever since. World Hospice and Palliative Care Day takes place on the second Saturday of October. The concept of palliative care is broadly

will have advanced, uncontrolled and terminal stages of the diseases, where adequate symptoms control and comfort in life would be the aims of treatment.

Cancer does not trouble the patient alone, the agony spreads to their relatives and friends too. There is not much awareness amongst the general practitioners and the doctors of other specialties regarding the care of advanced



based on the role of a physician, as stated in a 16th century aphorism - "To cure sometimes, to relieve often, and to comfort always."

Cancer cure rates with our current practice of multimodality cancer therapy are in a range of 40-50% in most of the developed nations. Thus on a current estimate, approximately 50-70% of patients in developed and developing countries respectively

cancers. Only recently, WHO has taken a firm step in the care of these desperate advanced cancer patients. The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) of our country has included cancer pain control as one of its agendas.

The writer is the Head of the Department of Oncology, Delta Medical College and Hospital, Bangladesh.
E-mail: manzur2001bd@yahoo.com

New electronic survey manual supports countries to combat micronutrient deficiencies

A new micronutrient survey manual (2020) and toolkit, developed in collaboration by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Nutrition International were published recently to meet the demand of countries interested in assessing the micronutrient status of their populations.

Addressing micronutrient malnutrition is one of the greatest global health challenges. Surveys assessing micronutrient status provide a basis for policy makers and programme implementers to understand the magnitude of micronutrient deficiencies and to gather the evidence needed to improve programming.

This user-friendly resource enables programme managers, government officials and researchers alike to access the entire knowledge library of best practices and resources for conducting micronutrient surveys through an interactive website.

Certain population groups, especially women and children, are at greater risk of micronutrient deficiencies. Micronutrients are critical for a well-functioning immune system, which is of utmost importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. If a population has a poor status for key micronutrients, such as vitamin A, zinc or vitamin D, then they may be less well equipped to mount a proper immune response when exposed to viral or bacterial infections than if they had adequate micronutrient status.

  /StarHealthBD

What is Osteoporosis ?

- Osteoporosis, or "porous bones", is a condition that causes bones to gradually thin and weaken, resulting in increase risk of fractures.
- Common bone sites include the spine, hip, and wrist.
- Bone begins to lose calcium faster than they can replace it.
- Less bone remodeling takes place and the bones begin to thin
- Osteoporosis affects one in three women and one in five men over the age of 50.

Prevent/Delay Osteoporosis

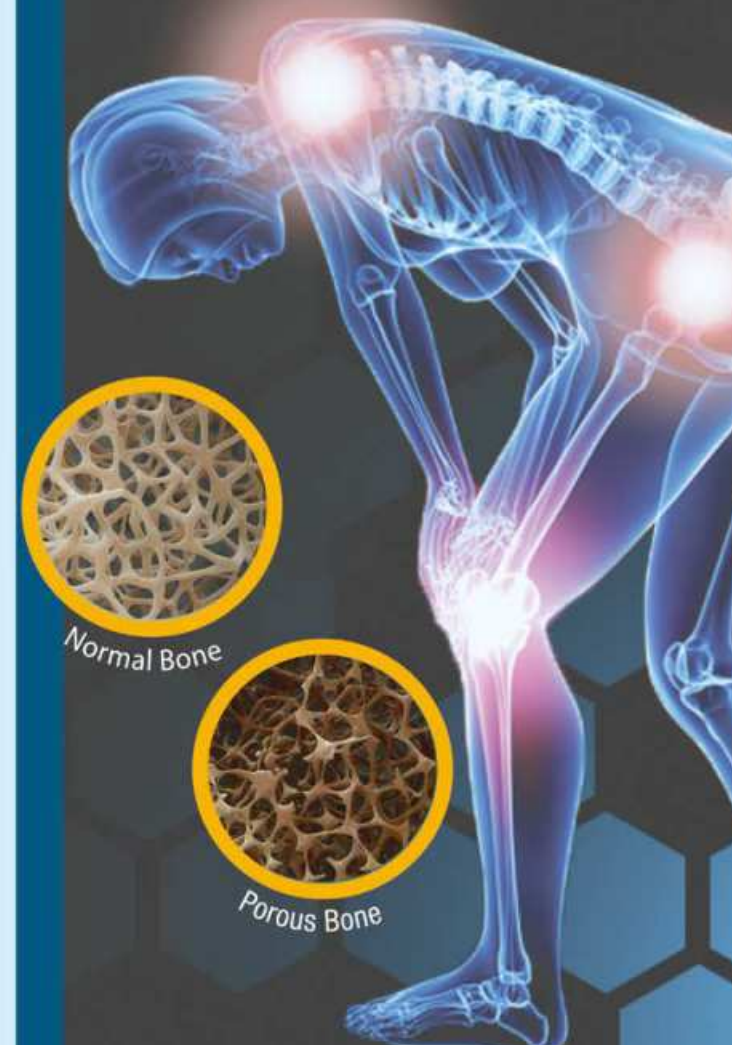
- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium & Vitamin D

Best sources of Vitamin D

- Exposure to sun
- Eggs
- Fish
- Exercise regularly
 - 30 minutes of weight-bearing exercise (walking or jogging) 3-4x a week
 - Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Best dietary sources of calcium

- Dairy products (i.e. milk, cheese, yogurt, cream soups and pudding)
- Green vegetables (i.e. broccoli, spinach & greens)
- Seafood
- Dried peas
- Beans



In Search of Excellence

One by one, the doors are being shut

The ever-shrinking space for freedom of opinion

Bangladesh performed better in combating hunger

But we still have a long way to go

IT is good news that Bangladesh has moved 13 notches up from last year's 88th position, ranking 75th out of 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020. We commend the government for making this progress. We did better than Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, particularly in the agriculture sector. However, we are lagging far behind Sri Lanka and Nepal among the South Asian countries in combating hunger. The report also mentioned that Bangladesh has a level of hunger that is "serious".

The GHI score is calculated based on four indicators—undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. Although the government, along with national and international NGOs, have been working hard to overcome these four obstacles to free the nation of hunger, we still have a long way to go. Data between 1991 and 2014 for Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan shows that stunting is concentrated among children from households facing multiple forms of deprivation, including poor dietary diversity, low levels of maternal education and household poverty. Also, the rates of child mortality and undernourishment are still quite high in these countries.

While Bangladesh has made extraordinary progress in reducing extreme poverty over the last few decades—between 2000 and 2018, the proportion of the population living below the international poverty line dropped from 34.5 percent to 11.3 percent—still, approximately 20 million people are trapped in poverty in the country. To free this large population from the curse of hunger and poverty, our poverty eradication programmes need to be strengthened through innovative and multi-dimensional approaches.

Although, according to the GHI report 2020, we did better in the agriculture sector, it has to be noted that the report has not presented the impact of Covid-19 on hunger and undernutrition. The pandemic and this year's devastating floods have created much uncertainty in the employment sector and in food production, which will undoubtedly increase hunger and poverty in the country, as influential think tanks of the country have predicted. Since the pandemic has undermined food and nutrition security for many, its effects will likely ripple into the future. This means special attention needs to be given to increase and diversify our food production and to reduce hunger, undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

Global brands continue to squeeze suppliers

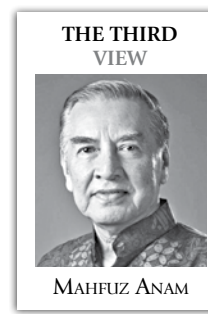
High time brands put their money where their mouth is

SEVEN months since the onset of Covid-19, the RMG industry in the country appears to be reeling from the initial shock of losing out billions of dollars in cancellations and postponement of orders from at least 1,931 global brands. Following a massive international #PayUp campaign, some of the biggest brands made public commitments to pay in full for orders completed and in production, which helped the industry turn around within a short period of time—although not before tens of thousands of workers were laid off and terminated at the height of the pandemic. However, a recent report by the Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR), published in association with the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), warns that the worst may be far from over, as brands and retailers are continuing to exert undue pressure on suppliers as they place new orders during the continued Covid-19 pandemic.

A survey of 75 suppliers from 15 countries between July 5 and August 21, 2020 shows that in 65 percent of cases, buyers demanded price cuts on new orders and on average, buyers told suppliers they must cut prices by 12 percent, relative to last year's price for the same product. Furthermore, suppliers surveyed said they have to wait 77 days after they complete and ship customers' new orders to receive payment, as opposed to 43 days prior to the pandemic. A majority of suppliers said they have less than half the order volume now relative to the same period last year and that they dismissed at least 10 percent of their workers, and are anticipating another 35 percent if current trends continue.

The global supply chain is inherently unequal, in which big brands exercise tremendous power to negotiate terms that suit their interests at the cost of suppliers—which, in the end, are borne by workers. The pandemic has brought to the fore how little brands, who otherwise make grand statements about upholding worker rights, truly care about the vulnerability of workers down their supply chain. Thus far, some brands, such as H&M, have signed a Call to Action which commits them to work with governments and financial institutions to mobilise sufficient funding to keep manufacturers in business including payment of wages, as well as income-support and job-retention schemes to address the impact of the crisis. However, it does not obligate the signatory brands to commit to any payment themselves.

It is high time we ask them to put their money where their mouth is, and honour their commitments to their suppliers, rather than use the latter's financial stress in the pandemic as bargaining leverage to further squeeze them on price. Furthermore, if and when workers are laid off due to unfair purchasing practices, brands must commit to paying a significant share of the workers' unemployment benefits. We urge countries that are home to these brands to play their part in ensuring fair practices and prices.



MAHFUZ ANAM

THE THIRD VIEW
LAST Tuesday, the home ministry issued a statement warning social media users from home and abroad against spreading "false, fabricated, confusing and inciting statements about the government, military, police and other law enforcement agencies." The statement, signed by senior information officer of the ministry, further condemns "spreading false and baseless news about the security forces that is threatening to ruin the peace in the country and spreading fear, concern and confusion among the general public." The statement ends with the threat that anyone not complying will face legal consequences.

Nothing is told, no information shared and no explanation given as to what triggered such a dire and all-encompassing gagging statement and what are the facts that brought the home ministry to such conclusions. We know from experience that an informed public is the most effective bulwark against rumours, fake news and attempts to disrupt peace, and conversely an uninformed one is most vulnerable to "incitements and confusion."

The general public and the media have no idea what the home ministry is talking

those forces of destabilisation. Without an elaboration, we consider such statements to be disingenuous at best and downright harmful to the nation at worst. The best way to fight a "threat to peace" and the spreading of "fear, concern and confusion among the general public" is to prepare the public to fight such attempts by sharing information and equipping them to counter rumours and false information. Telling the public of imminent danger without any explanation

sharing, "liking" or posting anything that "ruins the image of the government or the state" or "disrespects any important person, institution and profession" on social media. They were also told not to post anything that could create "dissatisfaction among the general public". The heads of institutions were asked to take action against any teacher or student who violated this directive. What sort of education are we aiming to impart? Are we planning to produce a

anything that affects the "image of the government", what sort of knowledge will they be imparting?

The issue of concern is that the notice to the department of secondary and higher secondary education was not about quality control but about thought control. For decades, we have written about the quality of education, of the archaic nature of our curriculum and the need to modernise it, of the quality of our textbooks, about the quality of our teachers, the lack of their retraining programmes, the differences between the quality of urban and rural schools, etc; and yet, the note does not address any of these vital issues but focuses on whether anything is being said or done that is critical of the government.

At each level, we are throttling the development of the free mind.

The fundamental question is, where does freedom of thought and expression, guaranteed by our constitution, stand in light of all these directives? Nurses and doctors cannot talk about the health sector, teachers and students cannot talk about education, and the general public cannot talk about the police, other law enforcement agencies and the government. I suppose the question to ask of the government is, what can we talk about?

The biggest harm that these statements by various ministries are doing to the government is sowing a seed of mistrust. It seems that the government does not trust the nurses, doctors, teachers, students and the general public. Doesn't this amount to the biggest show of no confidence by the government on its own people? Doesn't it mean that the government assumes that if the people are allowed to speak, they will speak against them? Otherwise, why these restrictions? It must be said that we already live under many restrictive laws, the most prominent and obnoxious being the Digital Security Act. With these new restrictions by different ministries imposed on people under them, the government is further stifling the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression.

Exactly when the people need to be in touch, need to exchange ideas, strengthen each other's morale through shared experiences and articulate divergent views so that we can devise a way out of the pandemic, point out what's working and what's not—fewer restrictions are being put on our freedom of expression.

One by one the doors are being shut, the lights are being extinguished, windows are being shuttered and voices are being throttled, leading to an overwhelming sense of fear, anxiety, claustrophobia and frustration.

Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star.



An informed public is the most effective bulwark against rumours, fake news and attempts to disrupt peace.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Can't a student express the view that he or she is unhappy with the what, how and why, and the manner of what is being taught? Will reporting the frequent absence of a teacher amount to showing "disrespect"?

about. What does phrases like "threatening to ruin the peace in the country" mean? What are we to understand from such statements emanating from the home ministry itself that is charged with maintaining internal order and peace? Is the country facing some sort of danger? We need and must know, so that we can defeat

creates the very situation that the home ministry statement is trying to prevent.

However, the home ministry's directives follow several other gagging orders that came before. On April 16, 2020, when media started revealing the unpreparedness of our public health system in handling the spread of Covid-19 and depicting the sufferings of ordinary people, instructions were issued to all nurses working in government establishments not to talk to the media. Then on April 23, Health Minister Zahid Maleque ordered all health officials, including doctors, not to talk to the media without approval of appropriate authorities.

On May 3, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University—please note that it is a university whose teachers are among the most qualified and whose students are fully capable of holding fact based and scientifically supported views—silenced their staff from talking to the media.

Recently, on October 7, the department of secondary and higher secondary education issued a circular forbidding students and teachers from writing,

generation of problem solving learners or slogan chanting scophants? When students are prevented from doing anything outside their prescribed syllabus and when the syllabus is itself extremely restrictive, then obviously the students will be prone to rote learning which, we know from experience, produces only paper pushers and not thought expanders. Are they going to take us to a place of pride in the 21st century world?

Take the issue of posting anything on social media that "disrespects any person, institution and profession". Can't a student express the view that he or she is unhappy with the what, how and why, and the manner of what is being taught? Will reporting the frequent absence of a teacher amount to showing "disrespect"? If a teacher posts about the corruption in his or her own institution, will that be "disrespecting" an institution? Will reporting the sexual misconduct of a teacher amount to disrespecting the teaching "profession"?

Teachers are supposed to perform the vital task of imparting knowledge. When they are warned against doing

Covid-19 and the economic challenges for South Asian countries



ABDULLAH SHIBLI

AN OPEN DIALOGUE
ONE of the industries hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown policies has been the travel and hospitality (T&H) sector. This slowdown in T&H resulted in the complete shutdown of

international in-person conferences for academic disciplines. International professional conferences have over the years provided an invaluable platform for researchers, academics and students to network and exchange ideas.

In a noble effort to circumvent the hurdles of the pandemic and to restart academic dialogue, the South Asian Network for Economic Modelling (SANEM), a Dhaka think-tank, organised a three-day online international conference on October 1-3. The theme for the SANEM International Development Conference (SIDC) 2020 was "Covid-19 and Development Challenges."

While most of the 24 papers presented at the conference came from researchers working outside Bangladesh, mostly in India, the concerns they raised had direct relevance for Bangladesh. The scholars swapped ideas with each other on a diverse set of issues: policies to revive their respective economies; how to cope with a possible resurgence of Covid-19 cases; the role of stimulus support in rejuvenating an economy and the importance of effective targeting; and the impact of the emerging vaccination undertaking on a battered healthcare system next year.

One of the take-aways from the excellent papers is the validity of the familiar theme of "uniformity in diversity" and that many countries are struggling with the same headaches. An African case study highlighted an important paradox with relevance for Bangladesh. Nigeria, like many other countries, is witnessing an economic recovery, and everyone appears to have

gone back to their jobs. But micro-level data also shows that job growth has been beset by shorter work hours plus less pay. In other words, people are working alright but for fewer hours and 20 percent less per hour.

The three-day zoom conference discussed a wide range of issues and offered some interesting findings from India, Nepal, Nigeria, China and other countries. For me, a big attraction was the last session, where a blue-chip panel

to guarantee the U-shaped recovery that everyone aspires to. The conferees concurred on the following propositions: weaker institutions prolong recovery, poor governance is the Achilles Heels of Bangladesh, India and Nigeria, the healthcare infrastructure was weak and has been decimated by the pandemic, and national governments need to pay special attention to vaccination distribution and administration.

Prof Rehman Sobhan did not mince words from the get-go. "The notion that exists in South Asia regarding reducing poverty, which is largely derived from improved GDP growth, has to be reconsidered."

Rehman Sobhan emphasised the inequities in our healthcare system and appealed again for a renewed effort to address this age-old problem. He also said that there should be strategies to integrate the informal sector into the formal stream and acknowledge their contributions.

Discussing the issue of poverty measurement, he said, "The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vulnerable economic status of the people living slightly over the poverty line."

Francois Bourguignon supported the viewpoints of Prof Sobhan and said, "During this crisis, the economic recession is likely to raise absolute poverty with unambiguous effects on inequality."

Kunal Sen pointed out that the pandemic has hurt the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in all areas, except one. "The Covid-19 pandemic has affected most SDGs, except SDG-13 (climate action). It has caused a reversal in gains in alleviating poverty and backtracking in globalisation," said Sen.

Prof Selim Raihan, the moderator of the panel discussion, was kind enough to invite me to ask a few questions. I asked Kunal Sen to touch on the question Abhijit Banerjee asked: Should we reformulate or reorder the 17 SDGs? On Bangladesh, my concern was triggered by a recent Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey which establishes that while an economic recovery was happening, there were doubts about bounce backs of income and consumption. According to

The informal sector is vital for economic recovery and more attention needs to be paid to policies to revive this sector. All the countries, both developing and developed, are scratching their heads to come up with ideas.

discussed Covid-19 and development challenges in Bangladesh. The discussion brought together Francois Bourguignon, former chief economist at the World Bank, Prof Kunal Sen, Director, United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Helsinki, and Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud and Prof Rehman Sobhan of Bangladesh.

The lively presentations and the discussions focused on setbacks suffered by many developing countries and the effect on vulnerable groups including women, school-going children and low-income earners.

There was a broad range of agreement on the impact of the pandemic and the areas that need to be addressed

BBS, household monthly income dropped by around 20 percent while expenditures also decreased by 6.14 percent during the pandemic. While government employees and teachers suffered the least, students and labourers fared the worst. These weak spots would impede our growth next year once vaccines become available. Not only would the vaccines need to be distributed to the neediest citizens but might give rise to a logistics, storage (with dry ice) or refrigeration nightmare and overwhelm the poor health infrastructure. Also relevant were the cost and the burden of vaccination, as well as the equity of the distribution.

Obviously, it is hard to summarise all the excellent ideas and information in a short essay. Nonetheless, I will list a few in one-liners. The informal sector is vital for economic recovery and more attention needs to be paid to policies to revive this sector. All the countries, both developing and developed, are scratching their heads to come up with ideas to meet the challenge of entitlement but also to boost demand. If the public saves the stimulus checks, the economy will hurt.

The conference also provided a learning opportunity for future conference organisers. First of all, online conferences have their limitations. Conferees are able to doze off or step out of the "room" without raising hackles. Secondly, the quality of sound and available bandwidth speed can create problems. Because the network strength in different countries vary considerably, audio or video can be dropped at critical moments. Finally, participants who have to rely on the chatroom to ask a clarificatory question or "raise their hand" may often find themselves waiting for their turn when the moderators are going by the clock. On the brighter side of things, while the pandemic closed down international conferences and exchange of ideas face-to-face, researchers now have more time to connect via electronic means since travel time is zero!

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and currently works in information technology. He is also Senior Research Fellow, International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-tank in Boston, USA.

Reining in the rogue state

Rohingyas, Bangladesh and the international community



C R ABRAR

It was a blatant charade of epic proportion. On September 29, the minister of the Office of the State Counsellor of Burma blamed the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and its supporters for “hampering the bilateral repatriation process” at the UN

General Assembly session. He accused Bangladesh, now saddled with 1.1 million Burmese nationals, of allowing ARSA and Arakan Army elements to use Bangladeshi territory as a sanctuary. Audaciously, the Burmese minister urged the Government of Bangladesh to “show its genuine political will to cooperate, by strictly adhering to the terms of the agreement signed in 2017”. Reminding that his country “does not respond well to pressure”, he urged the UN audience to provide “time, space and respect for its domestic accountability processes”. The Burmese representative appealed others “to examine the negative narratives on Myanmar carefully and impartially, before drawing their independent conclusions.”

Rejecting such “concocted and misleading assertions”, the representative of Bangladesh persuasively dispelled the claim that the Rohingya issue was a bilateral concern. She reiterated that the Burmese state has created the protracted problem through “inhumane treatment” and by “unleashing a carnage” on the Rohingya. She further alleged that Naypyidaw is resorting to “distorting history and facts to justify its genocidal acts”. The Bangladesh representative noted that the prevailing reality of Rakhine of “isolation, discrimination and clearance operations... obliterating villages and changing maps” are clear indications that the rogue state has no intention to create enabling conditions for the repatriation of Rohingyas.

The timing of the Burmese tirade against Bangladesh is of little surprise. Several factors may have contributed to this.

Firstly, with the national elections scheduled on November 8, to garner the support of the ultra nationalists and religious zealots, the contending parties across the political spectrum of Burma are ratcheting up their anti-Rohingya (and by default, anti-Bangladesh) rhetoric with fresh vigour. They have even rolled out the fictitious claim that it is the (non-existent) Rohingya returnees from Bangladesh who have spread the Covid-19 virus in Rakhine.

Secondly, the scaling up of military operations of the Arakan Army (AA)—a rebel group seeking more autonomy for ethnic Arakanese Buddhists in Arakan and Chin states in recent times, and the increased incidences of clashes between AA and the Tatmadaw (the Burmese military), have thrown a major challenge to the Burmese politico-military establishment. Scores of civilians have been reported killed and tens of thousands displaced. Both parties have traded allegations

of abuse. Expressing its concerns over “reports of intense fighting”, the United Nations has called for “urgent measures to spare civilians”. Furthermore, the recent confession of two Burmese soldiers about their participation in the Rohingya genocide has provided a major fillip to global accountability processes. The deserters have testified that they were instructed by their commanding officers “to shoot all that you see and that you hear” and “exterminate all Kalars (a derogatory term for Rohingya), including babies,” validating the widely held view that the massacres, rapes and other crimes

strategic initiative to collaborate with Rohingya Muslims in their quest for international justice” and presenting the two Burmese army deserters to international justice mechanisms—have been an important development with major ramifications for the political landscape of Arakan. The Arakan Army/UILA’s ultimate goal is “to establish political autonomy for the Arakan or Rakhine region as well as peace and reconciliation with all co-inhabitants of Rakhine, most specifically Rohingya, who also belong to Rakhine as their shared birthplace,” according to Maung

Bangladesh’s past policy of ignoring the reasons for the arrival of the Rohingya from Arakan—presumably viewing them as economic migrants, whose number subsequently rose to 200,000-300,000 prior to August 2017, and thereby failing to alert the international community of the slow-burning genocide that went unabated in Arakan—proved to be grave. Since 1991, its refusal to recognise the incoming Rohingyas as “refugees”, pandering to the Burmese decision to deny the Rohingya their right to self identify and bestowing on them the dubious label of “forcibly displaced persons” rather than refugees (despite fulfilling stiff conditions of the 1951 Refugee Convention), all stem from its efforts to cajole, if not placate, the Burmese. This was no less evident as Bangladesh appeared to be uncritically subscribing to the discourse of “border, law and order and human mobility” skillfully crafted by Naypyidaw on the Rohingya question.

In all likelihood, the policymakers in Bangladesh under successive regimes were guided by the false optimism that through trade, investment and connectivity arrangements under the much fancied “look east” or “constructive engagement” policies, they would eventually be able to address the Rohingya problem. Time has proven that such myopic policies bereft of principles were grossly erroneous.

Addressing the Rohingya problem is the most important foreign policy challenge that Bangladesh has faced since its independence. Therefore, in the light of recent experiences, there is an urgent need for re-strategising Bangladesh’s Rohingya plan. Guiding principles of such a strategy should be the recognition that Burma has thrust upon Bangladesh more than a million Rohingyas through a deliberate policy of discrimination,

engagement with Burma. Its trade, commercial, communication and other forms of interactions should be reviewed. Downgrading the status of its diplomatic mission in Burma is likely to send a strong signal about Bangladesh’s stance on the Rohingya issue, not only to the concerned country but also to its ASEAN partners and other allies, who have doggedly supported the rogue state on pretexts of “state sovereignty” and “non-interference in internal affairs” in breach of international human rights and humanitarian principles.

Bangladeshi negotiators need to be mindful that strategic, trade and investment considerations of the major players are not necessarily a zero sum game favouring Burma. They need to work out and argue what tangible and intangible benefits partners gain from their relationship with Bangladesh, and that Bangladesh expects its core interests are not dispensed off when other states pursue their bilateral relations with Burma. The issue is particularly important in view of the unacceptable Indian response to concrete measures that Bangladesh had taken over more than a decade to allay the former’s crucial security concerns in the northeast, trade, transit, transshipment, communication and other matters. Also, there is a case in point to examine why our diplomatic efforts have thus far had very limited success in garnering support, not only from the powerful states but also from neighbours in the region.

So far, Burma has enjoyed near complete impunity from world bodies. The UN Security Council’s inaction has been patent, despite a plethora of statements from the UN Special Rapporteurs and resolutions of the General Assembly and Council on Human Rights. With pressures mounting on Burma, this is perhaps an opportune time for Bangladesh to lead a campaign to urge the UN Secretary General to invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter “to bring the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security”. In all likelihood, such a move will not yield desired results; however, it will at least expose the hypocrisy of the mighty and powerful states, which over the decades have only prioritised their narrow national interests, failed to uphold the lofty human rights standards that they preach to others, but also contributed to a situation that has the potential to morph into a threat for “international peace and security”.

Burma is beginning to feel that its ride on deceit and propaganda is reaching its limits. Recent developments in Arakan, international accountability mechanisms and burgeoning dissatisfaction of western states have exposed the crevices in the foundation of international support that Burma once enjoyed. It’s time for Bangladesh to make a break from its past policy of appeasement and provide the rightful moral leadership to address the Rohingya problem. Let Bangladesh’s act at the General Assembly on September 29 be the beginning of that process.

C R Abrar is an academic with an interest in migration and rights issues.



Rohingya refugees hold up placards during a visit by a UN Security Council team to Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh on 29 April, 2018.

PHOTO: SAM JAHAN/AFP

were army directed. The deserters also claimed that his unit “wiped out” 20 villages and the killings were sanctioned by the battalion commander. They also admitted to looting at the prodding of their superiors. These revelations have become a major source of anxiety for the Burmese authorities as they have come under further international scrutiny.

In addition to that, The Gambia filed case of genocide in the International Court of Justice has also gained some traction. The decision of Canada and the Netherlands to formally join the legal bid to hold Myanmar accountable over allegations of genocide has been described by observers as “historic”. Calling the lawsuit “a concern of humanity”, the two countries have agreed to intervene in the case “to prevent the crime of genocide and hold those responsible to account”. Earlier, EU and the US had announced targeted sanctions against key functionaries in phases. Daw Suu Kyi’s magic wand, which has so far worked in charming the world, appears to be losing its shine.

And finally, the recent overtures of the Arakan Army, the armed resistance group of younger generation Rakhine Buddhists and its political wing, the United League of Arakan (UILA)—“to embark on a new

Zarni, writing in the Andalou Agency last month. This is a refreshing development in an otherwise vitiated, protracted stalemate dominated by the Burmese state meting out brute force, aided and abetted by their international patrons of all hues.

Thus, while pressure mounts on Burma on different fronts and the political reality in Arakan undergoes a subtle transformation (albeit at a slow pace), the wheels of justice and accountability mechanisms gain traction and shimmers of hope appear on the horizon for the Rohingya. Bangladesh, a country that has provided sanctuary to 1.1 million refugees, has to shore up its efforts to continue to exert more pressure on Burma.

The policymakers in Dhaka need to come to terms with the hard truth that a business-as-usual approach based on “good neighbourliness”—expecting “reconciliation of the communities in Rakhine through dialogue” and hoping that “congenial conditions for repatriation”, with the Burmese honouring the conditions of the lopsided repatriation arrangement that freed Burma from any time-bound and international monitoring mechanism and retained their final say on verification—will never succeed, nor was ever meant to.

Bangladeshi negotiators need to be mindful that strategic, trade and investment considerations of the major players are not necessarily a zero sum game favouring Burma.

exclusion and genocide, pursued over decades and thus far, not accounted for. Therefore, by taking a cue from the past, an all out diplomatic offensive should be launched. This may include giving the Rohingya issue its due priority in all foreign policy decisions, including bilateral and multilateral engagements. The perceived friends of Bangladesh should be communicated to in no uncertain terms that along with the humanitarian support that Bangladesh welcomes, it expects their active support in all regional and international forums in solving the Rohingya problem.

There must be a major shift in Bangladesh’s

Death penalty minus political will to stop rape is just good optics



BADIUZZAMAN BAY

FROM harsh legal penalties to severe moral reprimands, from street protests and sit-ins to virtual seminars and teach-ins, from increasing mobilisation and visibilisation of pro-choice activists to critical interventions by state and non-state

actors—nothing, and no one, seems to be able to deter the rapists or protect women and children.

Are we missing something?

Before we dig into that, we must acknowledge that few causes in recent times have united society in the way the fight to end violence against women did, especially after the Noakhali and Sylhet gang rapes. People are naturally outraged. Protestors are refusing to leave the streets even after the government hurriedly approved the death penalty as the maximum punishment for single perpetrator rape. On Friday, hundreds of demonstrators led by some left-leaning parties embarked on a two-day march from Dhaka’s Shahbagh area to Noakhali’s Begumganj upazila to protest against the growing incidents of rape. Earlier, the Rape Law Reform Coalition, a platform comprising 17 organisations, proposed a 10-point to-do list that includes changing the definition of rape to include all victims, regardless of their gender identity or marital status, prohibiting the use of character evidence in rape trials, enacting a Victim and Witness Protection Act, training police and court officials on sexual and gender-based violence, and providing consent classes to all children.

These legal and institutional reforms are long overdue and may prove vital in preventing rape and substantially increasing Bangladesh’s appallingly low rape conviction rate. Will the government accede to the demands of the activists? Will it move away from the ill-advised adoption of death penalty (which, experts say, may exacerbate the problem for the victims rather than solving it)? In the unlikely event that it does, we will still have to contend with the fact that a law in Bangladesh, however well-made, is

only as effective as the law enforcement. We have a history of having wonderful pieces of legislation rendered ineffective by lack of accountability within the institutions responsible for carrying out laws. So unless the reforms being sought are also accompanied by a strong political commitment to enact them, we may never be able to end our pervasive rape culture.

What causes rape? The answer is obvious. But what causes rape to keep happening with such morbid regularity? I would like to argue that it is the result of a climate where the world circles around political beings, granting them and those in their orbit near-immunity to any fallout of their action. Acknowledging this will require a painful reckoning for the ruling party of Bangladesh, and by extension all other parties.

Often, what emboldens a rapist in the first place is their belief that they can get away with it owing to their connection with some political leader or local boro bhai. They think either their victims will never dare to report them, or police will never accept charges against them, or investigators will never find incriminating evidence, or their case will fall through the cracks in the long, winding road to justice—all because they’re “well-connected”. Everyone is bound or beholden to someone in this giant orbit of power and money. How do you cure this with just legal reforms or even a “social resistance” (as one minister vaguely proposed)? Criminals know, as we should too, that beyond the carefully constructed facade of rules and laws and lofty ideals seemingly governing this country, what really runs it is a criminally motivated system of patronage, and politicians sit at the top of the heap.

There are ample cases to prove this thesis. Let me cite the two that triggered the ongoing national protests.

Exhibit 1: Delwar Hossain, the prime accused in the Noakhali gang rape case, committed various crimes under the protection of local politicians from both the ruling Awami League and the BNP. After the 2014 elections, Delwar reportedly joined Jubo League’s politics and formed his now-infamous “Delwar Bahini”. Prior to that, he was a follower of a BNP-leaning criminal. Despite being wanted in three other cases, two for murder and one for possessing illegal

arms, he was never arrested before.

Exhibit 2: All the men behind the gang rape at Sylhet’s MC College were involved with Bangladesh Chhatra League.

It suits some politicians to claim that rapists don’t belong to any political party. This is partly true and partly false—the first because no political parties encourage their members and activists to commit rapes; the second because such claims are orchestrated to shield them from any blowback for their action and to dodge scrutiny of the inner workings of their organisations. The truth is, all such rapes

After the Sylhet incident, Chhatra League naturally demanded punishment for the perpetrators, but then sought to distance itself from the accused by denying their involvement with the organisation. For too long, such denial has been a cornerstone of the damage control policy of major political parties when hit by scandals involving their members or associates or operatives. They denounce such crimes and either expel the accused or outright deny their involvement.

One may recall that after the casino scandal hit the Jubo League last year, it followed the



Few causes in recent times have united society in the way the fight to end violence against women did.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

are “political”. Most of the rapists in recent times were reported to have been involved, directly or indirectly, with the ruling party’s student or youth or other wings. This can’t be explained away as coincidental. Serial rapists like Delwar and other political operatives who committed rape drew their courage from their party affiliations. Their “marriage” is one of convenience. It ends—does it always?—the moment it ceases to be beneficial for their party.

same strategy of expelling the accused and restructuring the party hierarchy, instead of restructuring how it functions. Chhatra League’s strategy was more of the same when allegations of various criminal activities were raised against its then president and general secretary, who were subsequently removed from their posts. But the system that empowered them survived. It always does. We get an idea of how the system works from the confessional statement of Anik Sarker, a

key accused in the Abrar Fahad murder case, given to the court last year. Anik, who too was expelled from his secretarial position at BUET’s BCL wing, said, quite candidly, “We would beat students, regardless of whether they were senior or junior. Abrar’s death was an accident. The Chhatra League high command would laud us if we beat someone whose view didn’t match with ours. It’s the system that made us merciless.” The system gave them immunity until immunity was no longer in the interest of the system.

If we really want to end the culture of immunity emboldening the criminals, we need to investigate the interaction between crime and politics and how one pivots around the other. Rape is but the most socially distasteful manifestation of what comes out of this union, a tipping point reached through the building blocks of various other crimes. Rapists, murderers, arsonists, thugs, vandals, corrupt policemen or investigators or public officials... all draw water from the same well today. Rape cannot be seen in isolation from this interplay of crimes and politics. Yes, our rape conviction rate is very low, but in what areas of crimes is the rate not so? Unless we rob all criminals of their source of power, they will go on to commit crimes or be replaced by new players who will, regardless of how harsh the punishment is or what legal reforms we bring in.

Political parties may not encourage their operatives to rape, but they stand guilty of not doing enough to discourage them. This in turn encourages the non-political rapists. So unless political parties and their affiliated organisations are also held accountable for the crimes committed by their operatives, past or present, they will always find a way to deflect blame and not do what’s really needed. A principle of zero tolerance against all crimes, not just rape, must be firmly embedded in how political organisations function in Bangladesh. Otherwise, we can’t expect other public institutions and authorities including police, local governments and even courts to be free from its corrupting influences.

Rape culture is as much a political problem as a social one. We need a strong political commitment to end it.

Badiuzzaman Bay is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star. Email: badiuzzaman.bd@gmail.com

No-nonsense Afif leads batsmen's resistance

SPORTS REPORTER

After rather disappointing batting displays across the first three games of the BCB President's Cup and more talk of rust, all eyes were on the batsmen. Ahead of the tournament, selectors stated they would keep a close eye on the attitude and approach of the players regardless of their score and perhaps they will be impressed to see someone like Afif Hossain finally stepping up.

Rated as one of the cricketers with the most potential, Afif was unable to make an impression in his first two games, scoring just four and 15. Finally, the 21-year-old, who has already made his international debut in the limited-overs format, showed his class and played a magnificent 98-run knock.

It was yet again a pressure situation for Najmul XI, who found themselves struggling on 31 for three after being sent in to bat. That is when the left-hander strode onto the crease to join Mushfiqur Rahim, who followed up his century in his last outing with a half-century.

The duo added a magnificent 147-run fourth-wicket stand and, coupled with left-hander Irfan Shukkur's quick 48, Najmul XI posted a challenging total of 264 for 8 in fifty overs.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Known for his electrifying presence, Afif took no time to get settled and kept pushing for cheeky singles. The pair gradually started to accelerate, with young Afif assuming the role of the aggressor and caught the eye with his stroke-making ability.

There was also concern about

throwing wickets away after being set, but Afif this time utilised the opportunity and looked hungry to score big.

His hand-eye coordination and good use of feet made life difficult for the bowlers and he reached his 50 off 69 balls with a gorgeous inside out drive to the boundary

off off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

At the other end, Mushfiqur took his time despite being in brilliant touch as Afif took bowlers all over the ground.

The left-hander calmed after reaching his fifty and paced his innings well in the middle overs, rotating the strike every now and then.

But after getting into the seventies, Afif once again started to put pressure on the bowlers without taking any extra risks and employing proper cricketing strokes. His classical cover drive for a boundary to pacer Sumon Khan off the full face of the bat was perhaps the shot of the day.

He then took Mahmudullah Riyad for a six over deep mid-wicket, followed by a boundary to reach his nineties.

But, as in the previous game, Mushfiqur was involved in some miscommunication while taking a quick single and Afif's knock ended two runs shy of a well-deserved century.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NAJMUL XI: 264 for 8 in 50 overs (Mushfiqur 52, Afif 98, Irfan 48 not out; Ebadat 2-60, Rubel 3-53).

MAHMUDULLAH XI: 133 all out in 32.1 overs (Nurul 28 not out; Nasum 3-23, Rahi 3-34, Rishad 2-26)

Result: Najmul XI won by 131 runs.



Dominic Calvert-Lewin continued his sublime run of form, scoring late into the Merseyside Derby to ensure a point for Everton yesterday. He is the leading scorer in Europe's top five leagues with 10 goals from seven games. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dominic denies Reds

AGENCIES



Liverpool were foiled by VAR as they were held to a 2-2 Premier League derby draw with Everton at Goodison Park on Saturday after a late effort from Jordan Henderson was ruled out.

The champions were humiliated 7-2 by Aston Villa just before the break but they quickly set about putting things right when Sadio Mane scored in the third minute. Liverpool suffered a blow, though, eight minutes later when defender Virgil van Dijk went off injured after a reckless challenge from Everton keeper Jordan Pickford.

Everton took advantage of the Dutchman's absence, when, from a corner, Michael Keane rose at the near post to power a header past Adrian.

Liverpool were on top for long stretches

and Mohamed Salah restored their lead in the 72nd minute, pouncing on a headed clearance from Yerry Mina and drilling a drive past Pickford.

But Everton, determined not to lose their unbeaten record, got back on level terms when James Rodriguez sent Lucas Digne down the left and his perfectly floated cross was headed home by the leaping Dominic Calvert-Lewin. Liverpool thought they had won the game in stoppage time through Henderson but VAR ruled that Mane had been narrowly offside and the goal was chalked off.

"The performance was top. It was a good game from both teams. The Henderson goal, I didn't see offside, but maybe somebody can explain it to me. Should we have three points? Maybe but we cannot change it," Jürgen Klopp said in a grim mood.

'Don't do that again'

AGENCIES

"Don't do that again," Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene told Quinton de Kock after the South African went out to bat in his training apparel, and was seen pulling his match jersey down over an orange jersey, which he had forgot to change out of.

De Kock was adjudged man of the match for his 44-ball 78 as Mumbai Indians comprehensively beat Kolkata Knight Riders on Friday, but there was one thing he did which made some Mumbai Indians personnel 'go nuts', said Mumbai head coach Jayawardene after the match.

As De Kock and Rohit Sharma were seen walking out to bat in the chase, the South African was seen suddenly rushing back towards the dugout. However, with time possibly being a constraint, he was then seen making his way back to join Rohit again, adjusting his match jersey to conceal an orange band that was showing.

Rohit Sharma, waiting and watching his opening partner's discomfiture, burst out in laughter.

A STADIUM INDEED!

The Rangpur Stadium has been in shambolic state for quite a while now. Built in 1968 near Islampur, the stadium which used to stage both football and cricket matches has now been left to rot due to a lack of maintenance and renovation. The ground and the gallery have become breeding grounds for shrubs while the premises have developed massive holes, posing a danger to anyone venturing into the area. A year ago, talks had initiated over converting the venue into an international standard stadium and a meeting was held in this regard with the participation of the city mayor, but talks did not progress. A part of the stadium was declared abandoned five years ago, but no renovation or reconstruction has taken place since. The National Sports Council is the owner of the stadium while the District Sports Association is the authority in charge of managing and maintaining infrastructure. But it seems like no one is keen on either owning or maintaining the stadium, which could have been the centre of sporting activities of the northernmost division. When contacted, Monjur Ahmed Azad, vice-president of District Sports Association (DSA) in Rangpur, said: "The old part of the stadium was declared abandoned five years back. A new structure will be built after demolition of the old ones." Advocate Anwarul Islam, secretary of DSA in Rangpur, added: "The front part of the stadium already declared vulnerable. Its demolition to be started soon. Tender will be invited to build a 4-storey building there very soon. A proposal of the international stadium has already been sent to concern department for approval."



PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER



We have so many options, says Jose

AGENCIES

Gareth Bale is expected to make his second Tottenham debut against West Ham tonight, but Jose Mourinho claims even the Welsh star's place is not guaranteed as he revels in the squad depth at his disposal.

"We have a squad where every player has to fight a lot and play very well to deserve a place in the team," said Mourinho.

"The squad is so good, so strong. We have so many options that I refuse to say this player is a first choice. I can feel even in the players this feeling I love. They are happy but they are worried."

"They are happy that the squad is good, that people are coming to make the squad better. But they are worried about themselves, 'am I going to play?' This is the kind of feeling you have in the top teams and we are having that now."

Bale has plenty of experience of those demands from his time at Madrid, which is regarded as bittersweet despite winning 13 trophies.



A VERY HAPPY RETURN

Kylian Mbappe's double strike confirmed that Paris St Germain would make a happy return to the capital ahead of their Champions League opener against Manchester United at the Parc des Princes. Le Parisiens left it late to wrap up a 4-0 win at 10-man Nimes on Friday and move top of the Ligue 1 standings. PSG, however, lacked Neymar's creative touch as he was rested for the trip south after returning from successful international duty for Brazil.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

PCB warns players for breaching protocols

REUTERS

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) warned players and officials of expulsion if they breach Covid-19 protocols after 12 people violated the "bio-secure bubble" at the ongoing National Twenty20 Cup in Rawalpindi.

Nine players and three officials tested negative for the new coronavirus after they were found to have spent time outside the bubble area near their hotel.

The people, identified as senior players and officials, received warnings and were made to pay for the tests.

"They have put at risk the integrity of the tournament and, health and safety of their colleagues," PCB director of high performance Nadeem Khan said in the statement.

'Nepal fixtures ideal use of FIFA window'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team will be eager to earn a few ranking points when they end their long hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic with two international friendly fixtures at home against Nepal next month.

Football in the country came to a halt in the middle of March due to the pandemic and despite a resumption of camp in the first week of August, the postponement of World Cup qualifiers have kept footballers out of the game for the last seven months.

With no other international assignment left for this year, the November FIFA window comes as an opportunity to improve rankings for Bangladesh, who languish at 187th position in world football. Nepal, ranked 170th, have had no football of their own, too, during this period.

Despite the lack of preparation, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag believes Nepal's consent to playing the two matches gives them an ideal

opportunity to use the FIFA window.

"We want to utilise FIFA windows more and more and this is an ideal opportunity. If we can start preparation soon, there is enough time for the players to prepare for the matches. Furthermore, Nepal won't have an advantage as they have not stated training yet either," Shohag told The Daily Star yesterday.

The proposed matches will be held between November 11 and 19 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka and the BFF high-ups are eager to get the players back on the pitch. The BFF spokesman said that they would engage in talks with the foreign coaching staff today.

"We invited quite a few South Asian teams, including Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, for two friendly matches in November about a month ago. Nepal have verbally corresponded to us about its government's green signal. So we will now start our preparations with a meeting with our national team coaches," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to an ANFA press release, Nepal team will start their preparation for the matches after the Dashain festival (Durga Puja), which ends on October 28.

Bangladesh coach Jamie Day was a bit concerned about the amount of time left for the two games, according to the BFF spokesman, but he said that the head coach and assistant coach, Stuart Watkiss, are eager to come to Bangladesh and start preparation.

"The two coaches will be there in the meeting and so will Paul Smalley (BFF's technical director). We will discuss all the aspects of preparation, including whether we will need to add a fitness trainer or any other personnel. And then after the meeting, we will have a series of meetings with government agencies regarding Nepal team's mode of arrival, state of health protocol, quarantine, practice facilities and access of spectators at the venue," Shohag said.

The last time Bangladesh met Nepal was during the SAFF Championship in Dhaka in September 2018, with the home team suffering a 2-0 defeat.

The mosque of harmony

Old common prayer site binds two villages of Bangladesh, India

S DILIP ROY

The Partition in 1947 could not keep them apart. Inhabitants of two bordering villages in Bangladesh and India have co-existed in peace for decades now. They have long-standing ties and a common site of prayer where they regularly gather to observe religious traditions and festivals. It is an old mosque which is the root of such example-setting harmony between the people of the two countries, said locals. The two-century-old mosque is located in Banshjani village under Bhurungamari upazila of Kurigram district, near the zero line of the northern Bangladesh-India border. The mosque's north side faces Jhakuatari village in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal in India. People of both the villages offer their prayers at the semi-pucca mosque, which is built on around 15 decimals of land. "Muslims of both villages come together in the mosque to offer prayers every day. After prayers, they exchange greetings. It is not possible to understand that they are citizens of different countries," said Nazrul Miah, 62, a resident of Banshjani and muazzin of the mosque. Another Banshjani villager Jahangir Alam, 32, said, "People from different districts of both Bangladesh and India come to visit our mosque to see our unique bond." The mosque is particularly vibrant on Fridays as a large number of people from both villages come there to offer Juma prayers, said Abu Bakkar Siddique, 45, another villager. SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



An Indian citizen distributing Tabarak after prayers at Simanta Jam-e-Masjid beside sub-pillar 9 at Banshjani border of Kurigram's Bhurungmari upazila. The mosque hosts Muslims from either side of the border and is known for communal harmony in the locality. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Police hold anti-rape rallies across the country

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday held countrywide rallies against rape and all sorts of violence against women in a bid to create public awareness. The rallies started simultaneously at all the 6,912 police beats across the country at 10:00am, according to a press release sent by Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of Police Headquarters, yesterday. Civil society representatives, women and children rights activists, esteemed locals, school and college students took part in the programmes. The participants called on all sections of society to create mass awareness to prevent any kind of violence against women and children, including rape, and to stand by abused women and children, added the release. The programmes of every police beat were broadcast on Facebook Live. The gang-rape and SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

US ELECTION 2020

RIVALS STORM SWING STATES

Biden focuses on pandemic in Michigan

Trump stumps in Florida, Georgia
MACON, United States

President Donald Trump fought Friday to recover from sinking election polls by campaigning with a hardline pitch to America's right wing, claiming at rallies in Florida and Georgia that his Democratic opponent Joe Biden would deliver communism and a "flood" of criminal immigrants. While Trump put on a brave face, the fact that he was fighting at all for the two southern states he won four years ago illustrated how much ground he has to make up against Biden in the 15 days left until the election. With his polls sliding and US Covid-19 infections spiking, Trump is focusing entirely on his core Republican base, in hopes that highly energized supporters will turn out in huge numbers. In Ocala, Florida, the coronavirus was an afterthought. SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Greetings from Cuba, Chile

October 18, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CASTRO, ALLENDE GREET BANGABANDHU President Allende of Chile and President Fidel Castro of Cuba expressed their good wishes to the people and the government of Bangladesh and high esteem for Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This was stated by Ali Aksad, general secretary of Bangladesh Peace Council, who had arrived in Dhaka from Santiago after attending the World Peace Council Presidential Committee meeting.

President Allende expressed hope for growing friendship between Chile and Bangladesh. Fidel Castro, commenting on the emergence of Bangladesh, said, "More and more progressive republics are emerging in the world map and Bangladesh is the latest example."

He also stressed on Cuba-Bangladesh friendship and expressed hope that Bangladesh would play her role in maintaining world peace.

BANGLADESH VOTED TO UNESCO AGENDA

The general conference of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) votes today to include the admission of Bangladesh on its agenda. This virtually assures that Bangladesh will become the 130th member of the organisation when a membership vote will be taken tomorrow. China casts a negative ballot in today's agenda vote.



SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

ISPs suspend shutdown for a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internet service providers and cable operators postponed their decision to shut down their services across the country for three hours every day from today, for a week.

The Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) and The Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) took the decision after an emergency meeting with the Post and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar at 6:00pm yesterday to resolve the issue.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT, and Md Afzal Hossain, posts and telecommunications division secretary, were also present at the meeting held on a digital platform.

"As the minister assured us that the issue will be resolved soon, we postponed our decision for one week," ISPAB President SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Telescopes capture black hole devouring star



AFP, Paris

Astronomers have captured the moment a supermassive black hole shredded a star the size of our sun, releasing images that show the devastating process in unprecedented details.

Using telescopes from the European Southern Observatory (ESO), they were able to monitor light flaring from the process -- known as a tidal disruption event -- from a black hole just over 215 million light years from Earth.

They observed the star being physically torn apart as it was sucked into the black hole's giant maw.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Housewife gang-raped in Patuakhali

2 held; 6 others held in 3 districts on rape-related charges

STAR REPORT

A housewife was gang-raped, allegedly by three people, in a remote char area under Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali on Friday night.

Being informed by locals, police arrested two alleged rapists -- Sakib (27) and Habib (25) -- from their houses yesterday morning, said Belal Hossain, sub-inspector of Char Montaj Police Probe Centre.

Besides, a total of six persons were arrested in Jamalpur, Habiganj, and Madaripur districts on rape-related charges between Friday evening and early yesterday.

In Patuakhali's gang-rape incident, quoting the 30-year-old woman, SI Belal said three youths -- Sakib, Arif and Habib -- entered the woman's house SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

CASE AGAINST NIXON

Section 144 imposed in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The local administration yesterday imposed a one-day ban on holding any public gathering in Faridpur's Sadarpur upazila town.

The ban, from 9:00am yesterday to 9:00am today, was imposed as supporters of independent lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, popularly known as Nixon Chowdhury, and Kazi Zafarullah, former lawmaker and also Awami League presidium member, called programmes on the same spot.

According to sources

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 18

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-45 7-15
JAMAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-50 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A Sampan boat race underway near Avaymitra Ghat in the port city. The event was organised by Chattogram Metropolitan Awami League to demand the end of river pollution and grabbing at the Karnaphuli river and marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

'THE COVID ELECTION'

Ardern scores landslide win in New Zealand

AFP, Wellington

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a landslide victory in New Zealand's general election yesterday, leveraging success battling Covid-19 into an unprecedented majority she said gave her a mandate for progressive reform.

Ardern's centre-left Labour Party took 64 seats in the 120-member parliament with 49 percent of the vote, after the youthful and charismatic leader steered the nation through the upheaval wrought by the global pandemic.

"Thank you to the many people who gave us their vote, who trusted us to continue leading New Zealand's recovery," the 40-year-old told cheering supporters.

Ardern had dubbed the vote "the Covid election" and campaigned on her government's success in eliminating community transmission of the virus, which has caused just 25 deaths in a population of five million.

The pandemic is one of a string of emergencies that tested Ardern's leadership during a torrid first term, after she rode to an unexpected victory in 2017 polls on the back of a wave of support dubbed "Jacinda-mania".

She displayed both empathy and decisive action on gun control after a white supremacist gunman killed 51 Muslim worshippers in the Christchurch mosques attack last year.

Ardern again found herself comforting a shocked nation

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

