

US ELECTION 2020

Democrats secure control of House with reduced majority; GOP extends lead in Senate
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"Why don't we throw away all the old thinking? We have to be outrageously bold... to adopt things which were never adopted before."
NOBEL LAUREATE MUHAMMAD YUNUS CALLS FOR "OUTRAGEOUSLY BOLD" THINKING TO RESHAPE POST-COVID SOCIETY

"We, from the pro-democracy camp, will stand with our colleagues. We will resign en masse."
WU CHI-WAI, CONVENOR OF PRO-DEMOCRACY HONG KONG LEGISLATORS, TELLS A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER OUSTING OF 4 OF HIS COLLEAGUES

"I honestly believe that the Indian team will be better off in Twenty20 cricket being led by Rohit Sharma."
FORMER ENGLAND CAPTAIN MICHAEL VAUGHAN AFTER SHARMA'S FIFTH IPL TITLE PAGE 11

MRT-6 EXTENSION TO KAMALAPUR

Change plan, go for alternative

Japanese govt body suggests in letter to rail ministry saying the current extension plan will jeopardise Kamalapur transport hub plan

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A panel formed by the Japanese government has given Bangladesh an alternative plan for the MRT-6 extension to Kamalapur, saying the existing PMO-approved design would seriously hamper the prospect of the country's premier railway station becoming a true transport hub.

The Japanese ministry of land, infrastructure, transport and tourism said the alternative plan would also reduce the construction and land acquisition cost.

Kamalapur Multimodal Transport Hub (MmTH) Sub Working Group, formed by the Japanese ministry, wrote to Salim Reza, secretary of railways ministry, about the matter last week and attached its alternative plan, sources said.

The Japanese ministry itself wrote to the Public Private Partnership Authority of Bangladesh (PPPA) where it said the

alternative plan of the sub-working group would bring down the cost when compared to the existing plan.

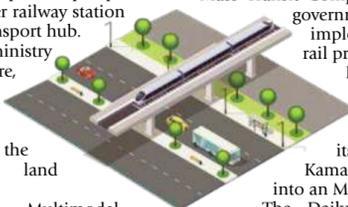
The move comes two months after the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) gave the go-ahead to the MRT-6 extension plan of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), a government-owned company implementing the metro rail project.

Bangladesh Railway had then opposed the move saying it would jeopardise its design to turn Kamalapur Railway Station into an MmTH.

The Daily Star correspondent could not reach Salim Reza, the railways ministry secretary, over the phone or get a response from him via texts.

On Wednesday, Chief Executive Officer of PPPA Sultana Afroza, who received the letter from the Japanese ministry, asked this paper to contact one of the directors of PPPA.

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The crowd could not have been denser in front of Ideal School and College in the capital's Motijheel yesterday when students of grades VI-IX and their parents went there to hand in their assignment papers to the school authorities. This happened at a time when the prime minister urged the nation to follow the coronavirus rules to stay safe during winter.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ASP ANISUL'S DEATH

Director of Mind Hospital arrested, 4 others on run

MUNTAKIM SAAD and SUSHANTA GHOSH

Three days into the death of senior ASP Anisul Karim allegedly due to beating by staffers of Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital in the capital's Adabor, four of its shareholders are still on the run.

The four are Abdullh Al Mamun, Sakhawat Hossain, Sazzad Amin and Fatema Khatun Moyna.

The other shareholder, Dr Md Niaz Morshed, was arrested on Tuesday night from the capital's National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital in the murder case filed by the father of the deceased. The arrestee was undergoing treatment there for paralysis.

Walid Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they have prayed to a local court to show Niaz arrested in the case. The arrestee would continue receiving treatment under police custody, he added.

Law enforcers earlier arrested the hospital's 10 staffers, now on seven-day

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

MP Papul sued for laundering Tk 148cr

ACC says he used his sister-in-law's accounts; his wife, daughter, sister-in-law too are accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam deposited Tk 148.41 crore in dirty money to different bank accounts of his sister-in-law Jesmin Proshan to cover his tracks, finds the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The accused lawmaker, popularly known as Kazi Papul, his wife Selina Islam MP, and their daughter Wafa Islam have all transferred their ill-begotten money to Jesmin's account, said an ACC official.

The ACC yesterday filed a case against all four of them over the matter. ACC Deputy Director Salahuddin also brought charges against the main accused, Jesmin, of illegally accumulating Tk 2.31 crore.

The allegations surfaced, after newspapers in Kuwait reported in February that Papul was running a human trafficking racket in the Middle Eastern country.

The reports said that the Bangladeshi lawmakers and their daughters occupied sensitive positions in three major companies that brought over 20,000 Bangladeshi workers to Kuwait in exchange for an amount believed to be more than Tk 1,391.6 crore.

Talking to reporters yesterday, ACC Commissioner Mozammel Haque

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



HC seeks all docs of graft case against Haji Salim

Orders lower court to submit those by December 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked for the record of a corruption case in which independent lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Mohammad Salim was sentenced to 13 years in 2008.

Haji Salim was sentenced by a lower court in the case but the HC acquitted him after he appealed. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, after another appeal by the Anti-Corruption Commission, later scrapped the acquittal order and asked the HC to rehear the appeal.

The HC yesterday

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Off-season spike in dengue cases

Experts say it's not a seasonal disease anymore

HELEMIUL ALAM

Dengue fever appears to be reemerging in the country as the number of people infected with the mosquito-borne disease rose sharply this month.

Since February, there has been a significant decrease in the number of cases till September compared to last year, but the number of patients admitted to hospital increased mostly in November -- the month when the number of dengue cases usually drops.

Last month, 163 dengue cases were reported in the capital and elsewhere. Whereas, the number stood at 165 in the first 11 days of this month, according to the control room Directorate General of Health Services.

There were around 47 dengue patients recorded in September and 68 in August.

From March to the next five months, the number was less than 30 each month, while the first two months of this year saw 199 and 45 cases respectively.

A total of 792 patients were admitted to public and private hospitals from January till yesterday, while some 698 of them had recovered and been released.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) found one out of five suspected deaths caused by dengue, said DGHS data.

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Post-Covid world needs 'outrageously bold' vision

Says Yunus, calls for new type of bank for covid-hit workers

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, London

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus yesterday called for "outrageously bold" thinking to reshape post-Covid society, including the creation of a new type of bank to help millions of workers whose livelihoods have been hammered by the pandemic.

The economist, nicknamed "banker to the poor", said the crisis presented an opportunity to carve out a fairer, greener future for the world, which was currently "a ticking time bomb".

He highlighted three

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The pursuit of a dignified life

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Giving away her hard-earned income to the destitute, Dil Afroze Khuki of Rajshahi chose a life of constant battles.

In her 60s now, she has been a newspaper hawker in the northern city for 30 years.

Khuki collects newspapers from agents near her home in the city's Seroil area, and walks the city's wide streets and narrow alleys.

Sometimes, she narrates personal stories and sometimes discusses morality and life lessons -- as exemplified by great personalities including Socrates, Girish Chandra Sen and Begum Rokeya -- with strangers.

When she comes across someone, particularly women, in need, she extends a helping hand. She often lends money, but never claims interest. She is not known to lie.

Khuki's pursuit of a self-reliant, dignified life rarely receives appreciation. Many call her "insane" for her ramblings on values and morality, and her seemingly carefree attitude.

"Being born is easy, but living life is difficult. Life is like a boat that has

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A man buys a newspaper from Dil Afroze Khuki in Seroil area of Rajshahi city. The widow in her 60s chose the hard life, giving much of what she owns to women and families she thought needed help and support. Khuki buys newspapers from agents near her home in Seroil, and walks the city's wide streets and narrow alleys selling them. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Shut down all unauthorised hospitals, clinics

DGHS asks civil surgeons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate has asked civil surgeons to ensure that all unauthorised private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres are shut down as soon as possible.

The order comes at a time when nearly 3,000 private healthcare-providing organisations have failed to apply online for licences within the August 23 deadline.

As per a decision made in a meeting between Health Minister Zahid Maleque and DGHS Director General Prof ABM Khurshid Alam on Sunday, the hospital and clinics unit of the DGHS sent the order to civil surgeons the next day, Farid Hossain Miah, director of the unit, said yesterday evening.

Earlier around noon, following a meeting at the health ministry, the DGHS boss told reporters that government officials would visit all private healthcare establishments soon, reports UNB.

Asked about it, Farid said, "Nearly 13,000 such organisations applied online for licences within the deadline. We've information that there are nearly 2,800 others who did not apply. Those will be closed as soon as possible."

"There are probably some other establishments, which are not on this list. We will have to work on this. We need some time as we are already overburdened with work due to a lack of manpower amid the pandemic."

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,733
New cases in 24hrs



4,25,353
Total cases



6,127
Deaths



3,43,131
Recoveries



1,286,691
Deaths



52,271,282
Total cases

DU FACULTIES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, FINE ARTS Scrapping of separate entry tests may complicate things

Say a number of experts

ASHIK ABDULLAH APUI

Complications may arise in evaluating subject-based skill and choosing eligible students if Dhaka University authorities approve the Deans' Committee's recent decision to abolish separate admission tests for Social Science and Fine Arts faculties, some academics opined.

It will also act as an impediment for students who want to change academic streams, they observed.

In a meeting, the Deans' Committee of the DU on Sunday decided against arranging separate admission tests for Social Science and Fine Arts faculties ("Gha" and "Cha" units) from the 2021-22 academic year.

It means the DU will hold admission tests in three units instead of the usual five from the next academic year, with the two faculties to be merged with the three main disciplines -- science, arts and business.

The decision is subject to approval of the Academic Council, the apex body of the DU.

Talking to The Daily Star, Professor Sadeka Halim, dean of Faculty of Social Sciences, said the decision surprised her.

"I was surprised that the matter was discussed in the meeting... The VC raised the issue at the very last stage of the meeting. I had then thought that maybe he was saying this after giving it some thought, because I have seen some deans echo the VC," said Sadeka Halim.

She also said that the issue was not even in the agenda of Sunday's meeting.

"I am not just a dean; I am also a representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The admission test of 'Gha' unit has been taking place for 25 years and that is because of the decision of the multi-disciplinary committee. Neither I nor the VC has the jurisdiction to shut admission tests of any unit in DU. Admission test of a unit cannot be stopped by force," she said.

There are about 300 teachers and they also have their opinions, she added.

"The matter will definitely come up in the Academic Council. Our teachers

will give their feedback there," she said.

Prof Halim said she was expecting the VC to talk about more pressing issues in Sunday's meeting, like modernising the online education programme, providing electronic devices or data packages at cheap rates.

"But without discussing it, he talked about not taking admission tests in two units. Why is that? Is it the vice-chancellor's job to drag the university back 100 years?"

She said such a decision is illogical, ridiculous and against DU's achievements over the last 100 years.

Another academic, preferring not to be named, said the decision would bar students from switching academic streams.

"Gha (social science) unit is a unit that allows students to change streams. And without a separate test how can the skill of a student who does not want to study science be judged?" he questioned.

"The remark the VC made in the media has confused us a bit," said Prof Nisar Hossain, acting dean of Fine Arts. "Students do not appear in any test related to Fine Arts up to twelfth grade. That's why we admit students with a separate test on the subject of drawing and we have been applying this method for the last 72 years," said Prof Nisar Hossain.

"But yesterday, the VC sent a single letter to the deans in which he wrote that fine arts subjects -- dance, music and drama -- are creative and they will come up with a strategy on how to evaluate the students in these subjects," he said.

"If so, I have no objection in the case of fine arts. It doesn't matter whether it is a unit or not. What I am worried about is taking the test in the right way."

Contacted, DU Vice-chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said fewer tests would "alleviate the suffering of teachers, students and parents, bridge the gap between rural-urban students and reduce dependency on coaching centres."

He also said question papers would be prepared in such a way that a textbook-centric study habit grows among students.

Change plan

FROM PAGE 1

The director could not give any information immediately.

MAN Siddique, managing director of DMTCL, said they did not receive any letter in this regard.

"We have got approval from the PMO and we have already started our work for expansion of the line," he told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

The MRT-6 is the country's first-ever metro rail, now under construction at a cost of Tk 22,000 crore with soft loan from Japan.

The Kamalapur hub is going to be implemented under a government-to-government public-private partnership project.

A Japanese consortium, led by Kajima Corporation, has already outlined a concept to turn the railway station into a multimodal transport hub.

The government has signed a memorandum of cooperation with Japan, and the basic concept was approved in the third Bangladesh-Japan joint platform meeting in March last year, read BR documents.

DEBATE OVER EXTENSION

The mass rapid transit (MRT) line-6 was initially designed as an elevated line from Uttara to Motijheel. Later, a skywalk was planned to connect the line with Kamalapur Railway Station.

Last year, DMTC planned to stretch the MRT line-6 directly to the rail station, following the prime minister's directive.

Bangladesh Railway opposed the proposal and cited its plan for the MmTH.

"After detailed discussions, it is found that the extension of MRT Line-6 will confront the basic theme of development of MmTH [Multimodal

Transport Hub] and other railway development work," read meeting minutes of the railways ministry.

Railway officials said they were not against the extension of MRT line-6 up to Kamalapur, but the DMTCL's current design would upset their MmTH plan. They had asked DMTCL to modify its blueprint.

The DMTCL sought the PMO's help in resolving the issue. A meeting, with Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmad Kaikaus in the chair, gave the go-ahead to the DMTCL plan on September 3.

The meeting also directed the railways ministry to take immediate steps for allowing a station of MRT line-6 and a scissors crossover at Kamalapur Railway Station.

But the Kamalapur MmTH Sub Working Group said the plan was not "recommendable" because the elevated structure of MRT-6 would "fully close" the railway station, sources said.

Besides, the extension would reduce function of the plaza there, they said, apprehending that the plan could be a serious obstacle for the MmTH project.

It also requested the railways ministry to re-evaluate the alternative plan and sought time so that it could be explained directly.

The DMTCL authorities have already completed a topography survey and finalised the alignment for the additional 1.16km of MRT line-6.

The DMTCL MD earlier said that apart from some makeshift structures on the alignment of their MRT line-6 extension plan, 31 buildings would have to be demolished and their land acquired.



Villagers catching fish yesterday morning as the flood water began to recede from the low-lying Baliapur area in Aminbazar, Savar.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The pursuit of a dignified life

FROM PAGE 1

to find a shore," she says rhythmically, as if she was reciting a poem.

"I'm a candle that doesn't know when it will be put out," she says.

She says she sells newspapers to people -- most of whom mistreat her.

"How miserable is the life that's dependent on others!" she says, adding, "I sustain myself by selling newspapers. Is it dishonourable? How am I offending anyone?"

Born into a well-off family, Khuki's life could have been different.

According to family members, Khuki is 10th among seven sisters and five brothers. She attended Bharateswari Homes boarding school in Tangail in the 1980s, and was married off, widowed at an early age.

Her husband's untimely death came as a shock and Khuki decided not to remarry.

In 1991, she started working as a newspaper hawkker by selling the now defunct Rajshahi-based weekly Duniya.

Ahmed Shafi Uddin, a retired official of Rajshahi University was the helmsman behind the weekly. He recalled how Khuki got started as a hawkker.

Khuki's brother-in-law Abdul Aziz took her to meet Shafi Uddin -- looking for a job for her at the weekly.

"She was in her 20s. I could not find a job for her, as she didn't know how to write. I asked them to go home and joked that I couldn't find her any other job besides that of a hawkker," he said.

"A few days later, Khuki came to me and insisted for the job of a hawkker.

We were worried about her but she overcame all the hurdles. She started with 20 copies, and in no time was selling 500 copies a week. Gradually, she began selling daily newspapers," he said.

"She was well-mannered and well-versed. Subscribers liked her," he added.

"Sadly, she had to endure repeated harassment and assaults," Shafi Uddin said.

Jamiul Karim Sujon, former president of the city's newspaper hawkers' association, said Khuki sells over 300 copies of newspapers every day now.

"She sold more before. Now, because of wider access to internet and digital news, the demand for newspapers is on the wane. She buys newspapers with cash, never leaves anyone unpaid. She denies handouts if offered. Rather, she tries to help out whoever is in need," he said.

This correspondent met Khuki at Sagarpara area recently while she was resting on a footpath.

She said she inherited properties from her parents and husband.

She bought sewing machines and bicycles for several young women and their husbands, and regularly donated to orphanages, mosques and temples.

She has helped a number of families become self-reliant by buying them cattle.

She took this correspondent to her home in Seroil area -- a one-storey building with three rooms, surrounded by a wall covered in weeds.

Her room looked like it hadn't been

cleaned in days. Hundreds of empty plastic bottles were strewn about and there was dirt on her bed and in her living room.

Khuki showed old, laminated photographs, bringing them out from a steel almirah.

In one photograph, she was receiving a bouquet; in another, she was addressing a rally -- glimpses of her life in the 1990s.

She buys food from street vendors, Nahid Akter Tania, a neighbour said.

"She has none to look after her. Most of her neighbours are her relatives, yet they never cared for her enough," she said, adding that Khuki has been offered assistance but refuses to accept.

Locals said some of Khuki's relatives tried to deprive her from her inheritance, but the locals helped her secure her ownership to her home. They mentioned attempts to grab her home.

When contacted, Khuki's nephew Shams-ur Rahman denied the allegations.

He said, "She is an embarrassment to the family. She doesn't like being assisted, and neighbours get the impression that the family is not helping her. It is the family who takes care of her when needed."

Khuki says her last wish is to be buried in Kushtia -- where she spent some of her fondest childhood years with her family -- and wants to leave her properties to orphans and students of the school she went to in that district town, but says she doesn't know how she would ensure that.

MP Papul sued for laundering Tk 148cr

FROM PAGE 1

Khan said enquiries were progressing and more cases would be filed over Papul and his family's illegal wealth.

If necessary, the investigation officer might take steps to detain the accused, he said, "If it is necessary to bring him [Papul] back to Bangladesh, we'll take measures according to the international law."

FINDINGS
According to the case filed yesterday, Jesmin's national identity card mentioned that she was born on August 20, 1995, but her passport said her date of birth was November 4, 1997.

She opened an e-TIN account on October 25, 2017, when she was a student, but she had never submitted her income tax returns.

"It appears that she does not have an income," reads the first information report of the case.

Jesmin has 34 FDRs of Tk 2.31 crore with the NRB Commercial Bank and "during interrogation, she could not show any legal source of the money."

The anti-graft watchdog found that Jesmin opened a High Value Savings

account with the City Bank on July 23, 2014. As of July 7, 2020, she deposited and withdrew about Tk 1.66 crore to and from that account.

Jesmin opened another savings account with the United Commercial Bank on June 02, 2012. Between 2012 and 2019, about Tk 10.34 crore was deposited and withdrawn.

She has another savings account with the UCBL corporate branch where she deposited about Tk 1.16 crore between October 2013 and June 2014. She withdrew about Tk 96.46 lakh from that account.

Jesmin also opened a current account for what she said was clothing store JW Leelabali with NRB Commercial Bank's Hatirpool Branch with Tk 20 lakh.

Between October 6, 2016 and August 20, 2019, different individuals and she herself deposited and withdrew about Tk 135.22 crore there, reads the FIR.

The ACC finds the money came from Papul and his wife who concealed the information about the money in their tax returns.

"Analysing the information, it is found that Jesmin used to work as the

medium and JW Leelabali only existed on paper."

This correspondent, however, found JW Leelabali in the capital's Mirpur. The boutique shop sells wedding outfits.

Preferring to be unnamed, a staff of the store told this correspondent over the phone that Jesmin was the owner.

Papul was arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department in Kuwait on June 6. He was sent to prison there.

According to Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Rai, Papul also admitted to paying large sums of money to high officials including a security official. He also revealed to interrogators that former and serving Kuwaiti lawmakers were involved in the racket.

The ACC on February 16, opened an enquiry into the illegal wealth of Papul and his family members.

On July 22, the ACC quizzed Jesmin and Selina. Selina then told reporters that she and her husband had no undisclosed or illegal wealth. "All documents have been given to the ACC... we'll give all out assistance to the ACC."

Jesmin was with her at the time.

Director of Mind Hospital arrested, 4 others on run

FROM PAGE 1

Rapid Action Battalion, and the Police Headquarters.

Hailing from Kapasia of Gazipur, he was father of a child.

COPS VISIT GAZIPUR HOME

Four-year-old Safran, son of the deceased Anisul, is too small to understand what happened to his father.

He was looking for his father yesterday when police officers in uniform visited their house in Gazipur's Jorpurk Boruda area to console the bereaved family members. Among the visitors were officials from Gazipur, Tejgaon of Dhaka and also Anisul's batchmates.

Speaking to journalists, Anisul's sister Dr Umme Salma said, "We took our brother there [hospital] thinking that he would get relief from stress if he undergoes psychiatric counselling for two to three days. But you have seen what happened after that... It's unbearable."

DMP Deputy Commissioner (Tejgaon division) Harun-Ur-Rashid assured family members of filing the charge sheet in the murder case very soon. He termed the incident "an obvious murder."

Police officers, including at least 20 batchmates of Anisul, also visited his grave.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said action would be taken against those found responsible for the death of the senior ASP.

"An investigation into the hospital and its employees is underway. The health department will be informed in this regard, if needed," he told reporters at the home ministry.

'AN HONEST OFFICER'
Files, telephones, chairs and tables at Anisul's office room at the traffic department of Barishal Metropolitan Police are there, but he will never return.

His colleagues remembered his last day at work on Saturday. He went to Dhaka on November 8 with his family on a 10-day leave due to a family necessity, said BMP sources.

"Anisul Karim sir was an honest officer," said Traffic Inspector Abdur Rahim.

BMP Deputy Commissioner Jakir Hossain Majumder said he did not notice anything unusual in the ASP's behaviour at the office.

"We are deeply saddened by the death of such a hardworking police officer. He had scored 194 out of 200 to stand first in the police special BCS exam. It's a great loss for all of us," he added.

MUIB BORSHO SESSION

Ensure freedom of press, make all constitutional bodies effective

JP lawmaker says at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party lawmaker Anisul Islam Mahmud has called for ensuring freedom of press and making all constitutional institutions meaningful and effective to build "Golden Bengal" as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He made the call in parliament while participating in the general discussion on a resolution on Bangabandhu's life and activities.

Taking part in the discussion, lawmakers from treasury and opposition benches stressed the need for implementing the ideology and philosophy of Bangabandhu to build the country as "Sonar Bangla".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday tabled the resolution in parliament under rule-147 of the Rules of Procedure of the House to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation through holding a special discussion on his colourful political life, activities, and philosophy.

Yesterday was the third day of the discussion marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu.

Anisul said freedom of media will have to be ensured to make sure that there is accountability for the media.

The opposition MP said Bangabandhu spent his lifetime for the welfare of the people.

"Bangabandhu wanted democracy. Elections are always necessary for a democracy. But the elections have to be meaningful and acceptable to the people. This requires a strong and independent Election Commission."

Participating in the discussion, Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah demanded inclusion of Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech in the school and college curriculum.

Awami League MP Abdul Matin Khashru said there should not any rank like Brigadier or Colonel before the names of killers of Bangabandhu.

He demanded that the government ensure capital punishment for all masterminds of Bangabandhu's assassination through forming a commission.

The resolution is scheduled to be passed in the House today.

AL activist murdered in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

An activist of the ruling Awami League was killed by a group of unidentified miscreants in Cumilla city around 8:00am yesterday.

The dead is Jilur Rahman Jilani, 42, of Chowdhury Bari Chouara in the Cumilla City Corporation area.

The victim was beaten, hacked and shot before being killed, said Komol Krishno Dhar, inspector (investigation) of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station.

According to the victim's family members, around six to seven miscreants attacked Jilur around 7:00am while he was returning home leaving his child at school.

As the miscreants were wearing helmets, none of the witnesses could identify them. Jilur sustained serious injuries during the attack and was rushed to Cumilla Medical College Hospital (CuMCH).

He breathed his last around 8:00am while undergoing treatment at the hospital.

No one was held and no case was filed in connection with this incident as of 8:14pm yesterday.

2 shot dead in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Two men were shot dead by unknown miscreants in Rangamati area of Waggya union in Rangamati's Kaptai upazila around 3:00am yesterday.

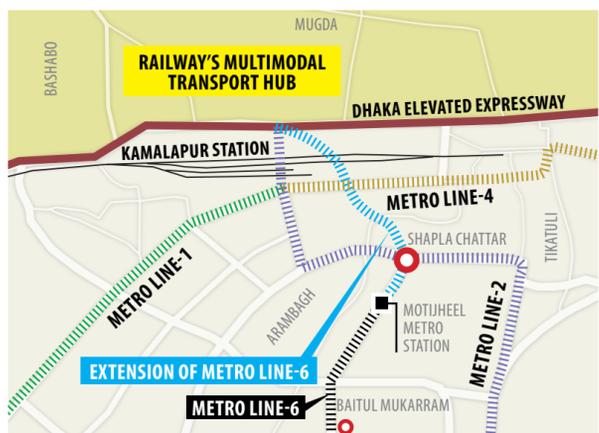
The dead are Suvash Tanhangya, 45, of Rajostoli upazila, and Dhananjay Tanhangya, 32, of Gorjonia Para.

Quoting locals, police said Subhash came to visit Dhananjay at the latter's house in Gorjonia village yesterday afternoon. The group of miscreants intruded into the house around 3:00am, and asked the duo to open their door.

As soon as they opened the door, the miscreants opened fire on them and fled the scene. The duo was killed on the spot.

Muhammad Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kaptai Police Station, said a police team recovered the bodies and sent those to Rangamati General Hospital morgue for autopsies.

No case was filed in connection with the incident as of 8:41pm yesterday.



Akbar's arrest a 'cross-border' effort: police

Involved help from Bangladeshis, Indians and 10 lakh rupees, officials say

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

With speculations and rumours running rife on social media as to who actually detained suspended sub-inspector Akbar Hossain Bhuiyan from near the border area, Sylhet district police have said it took a "cross-border operation" to arrest him.

On Monday morning, Akbar, the prime suspect in the killing of Rayhan Ahmed in police custody in Sylhet, was detained along Bangladesh-India border in Dona area of the district's Kanaighat upazila.

Sylhet district police officially said Akbar was arrested by them at the border, with the help of some "trusted friends".

However, several videos went viral on social media the same day where it appeared that Akbar was detained by the people of the Khasi community in India's Meghalaya before he was handed over to a Bangladeshi citizen in Kanaighat.

Law enforcers were criticised for their claims.

After the arrest, Mohammad Farid Uddin, superintendent of police in Sylhet, without specifying much said Akbar was detained under direct supervision of police and some trusted friends helped them catch him.

However, while talking to this correspondent, many officials of the Sylhet district police said it was a joint operation of the law enforcers and locals from both the countries that eventually made the arrest possible.

HOW AKBAR WAS ARRESTED

A day after Rayhan's death, Akbar fled from Bandarabazar police outpost and two days later, he crossed the Bangladesh-India border in Bholaganj

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Workers were seen chopping down a huge tree at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. They said that officials plan on building a public toilet at the location, so the tree had to be felled.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

By-polls to Dhaka-18 and Sirajganj-1 today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka-18 and Sirajganj-1 constituencies are going to by-polls today.

Election Commission (EC) sources said necessary measures to follow health guidelines have been taken during the by-elections amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Electronic Voting Machines will be used in both the by-polls, which will be held from 8am to 4pm without any break.

Dhaka-18 fell vacant following the death of Awami League lawmaker Sahara Khatun and Sirajganj 1 fell vacant following the death of AL MP Mohammad Nasim.

Habib Hasan of Awami League, SM Jahangir Hossain of BNP, Mohammad Nasir Uddin Sarkar of Jatiya Party, Mohammad Omar Faruque of Bangladesh Congress, Kazi Mohammad Shahidullah of Gonofront and Mohammad Mahibullah Bahar of PDP are participating Dhaka-18 by-polls.

There are 5.77 lakh voters in the area. The total number of polling stations is 217 and the number of polling booths is 1,353.

AL candidate Tanvir Shakil Joy and BNP-nominated Selim Reza are contesting in Sirajganj-1 by-polls. The total number of voters in this constituency is 345,603. There are 168 voting centers in this constituency.

On September 28, the EC announced the by-election schedules for the two parliamentary constituencies.

Most students don't watch TV lessons: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ninety-four percent of students are aware about TV education being broadcast during the pandemic, but 89 percent of them do not watch the lessons, reveals a study.

The study of Bangladesh Education Reporters Forum was unveiled yesterday.

About 65 percent of secondary students of cities said online education increased their educational expenditures, and it is putting additional financial burden on parents.

Of them, 54 percent said expenditures increased by Tk 501-1,000 per month, 10 percent said it increased by up to Tk 500. Only one percent said they had to spend additional Tk 1,000-1,500, said Mustafa Mollick, president of the forum, while presenting the study.

Many educational institutions have introduced online classes to continue academic activities amid the pandemic. They took the measures as physical locations of all the institutes remain closed since March 17 and will not reopen till November 14, as per the latest government directive.

The forum carried out the study on 1,126 secondary and higher secondary students of Dhaka, Chattogram, Barishal, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet

cities.

Expenditures increased as they need to buy internet packages and routers, and other equipment for attending online classes, forum leaders said.

The study also found that 97 percent of students reported that their family income has reduced, while 63 percent of students are taking part in online education.

The government had started television education through Sangsat TV, so secondary and primary students can make up for losses due to school closure.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, at the programme, said students of cities nowadays prefer attending online classes over taking lessons via TV.

Although physical classes have remained halted for over seven months, schools and colleges continued collecting tuition fees; 93 percent of students said their educational institutes realised full tuition fees.

Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury said as parents are financially struggling, the government should provide some incentives for the education sector.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Jewel Aich in ICU with Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned magician Jewel Aich, who recently contracted Covid-19, is



undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of Combined Military Hospital in the capital.

His wife Bipasha Aich told The Daily Star that she and their daughter Keya Aich recently recovered from coronavirus.

As Jewel Aich's fever persisted, he underwent tests that was tested positive. His lungs were also infected, she said.

On Monday, he was taken to a hospital, and was later admitted to CMH on Tuesday afternoon.

Aich, a freedom fighter, has also been suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure for long.

Country's youth are full of ideas

They must be encouraged to start enterprises, speakers say, urging govt to create capital fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A capital fund must be created by the government to encourage young people to start enterprises, said speakers at a webinar organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation and Environment and Social Development Organization yesterday.

"Every year, 22.5 lakh youths enter the job market but the government can only employ 1.5 lakh people," said Md Anwarul Islam Sarkar, additional secretary (youth) of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

This leaves a huge population without employment security, he told the webinar titled "Youth in Active Citizenship Role".

The government cannot provide all youths with jobs, but the youth can be encouraged to begin enterprises, pointed out Syed Manzur Elahi, chairperson of Apex Group and noted industrialist.

"A fund can be created by the government to provide capital to the youth. The biggest barrier for young people entering business is the lack of capital. This fund can be done in partnership with the private sector," he added.

The youth should be encouraged not to rush to cities but focus on building opportunities where they live, Manzur Elahi asserted.

Elahi also said the sheer number of online businesses that have started up during the pandemic is proof that the youth are full of ideas.

"Young people should not just have things done to them, but also have the opportunity to do things on their own behalf," said British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson. He also reflected on the fact that the pandemic presented extraordinary challenges for the youth.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal stated that without intervention, the youth run the risk of going wayward. He warned the youth against getting involved with drugs.

"Some 245 youths from urban and peri-urban areas of Dhaka and Chattogram were surveyed and it was found that for a vast majority, their critical thinking skills were what would be a 'D' grade in Dhaka University," said Zahid ul Arefin Choudhury, associate professor of political science at University of Dhaka.

The number of youth with less-than-optimum critical thinking skills was over 150 out of 245, the academic added.

Shomy Chowdhury, a youth activist also spoke, while Md Shahid Uz Zaman, executive director of Environment and Social Development Organization, moderated the event.

The event was funded by UK Aid.

REPRESENTING OC PRADEEP

Rana Dasgupta's resignation as ICT prosecutor demanded

He says he's doing nothing illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Organising secretary of Cox's Bazar District Awami League Naznin Sarwar Kaberi yesterday demanded resignation of advocate Rana Dasgupta from his prosecutor post of International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), over disrespecting the constitutional secularism through representing former Teknaf Police Station Officer-in-Charge Pradeep Kumar Das in court.

Kaberi also said the veteran lawyer's legal move -- for the prime accused in Maj Sinha Rashed murder case -- has been instigating communalism.

She made the demand from a press conference at a restaurant in port city's Cheragi Pahar area.

While reading out a written statement, the AL leader said, "According to the Legal Remembrancer's manual, there are two kind of law officials -- full-time salary-paid, and contractual. Rana Dasgupta is a salary-paid law official who is equivalent to a state minister rank. As per the state's warrant of precedency, his post is an Attorney General Category post. He cannot stand for a known criminal like Pradeep. If he wants, he should quit from his constitutional post."

Replying to a query, Kaberi said "Rana Dasgupta is a renowned lawyer and also a pro-liberation person. But he has intentionally stood for Pradeep as a lawyer, demeaning the secular spirit of constitution."

"He has committed a seditious act through fighting for a murderer. He should seek apology for his act," she added.

Thought there is no prior allegation against Pradeep over rape, the AL leader at the press conference claimed that Pradeep allegedly raped a number of women when he went for drives to arrest people in Teknaf.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rana Dasgupta said, "Prosecutor post of ICT is not a constitutional post and I am not paid salary, but an honorarium."

"I am neither the Attorney General nor the Additional Attorney General. The prosecutor post is created in the rank of additional attorney general's post," said the lawyer.

"Yes I am given police protocol by the government, but it is not given for my post but for my security, as ICT is a sensitive tribunal," he added.

The veteran lawyer said, "Pradeep is an accused in a criminal case. What is the relation between this case and spirit of secularism?"

"I think there is a conspiracy by a vested quarter who are using the AL leader. Neither do I care about any conspiracy, nor their baseless talks, as I am legally right on my track," said Dasgupta, who is also general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad.



After the pandemic swept the nation, Md Badshah of Kurigram, like many others, saw his income disappear. This forced him to leave his family and travel all the way to the capital to earn a living by giving rickshaw rides. In between trips, he finds the time to park his rickshaw and dial home, checking up on his wife and children. This photo was taken recently from the capital's Central Shaheed Minar area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Juvenile pneumonia ignored due to Covid-19 pandemic: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With no necessary tools, including oxygen support, in most hospitals, the issue of childhood pneumonia -- which causes more than 24,000 preventable deaths of children under five in the country annually -- is getting little importance during the pandemic, experts said yesterday.

To prevent premature deaths, there is need for multi-sectoral efforts to strengthen the country's health system and invest in low-cost local solutions, they said in an evidence sharing session with Health Reporters Forum (HRF), held at icddr,b in Dhaka, marking World Pneumonia Day.

It was jointly organised by Research for Decision Makers Activity of icddr,b and Data for Impact, with support from United States Agency for International Development.

Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman, an associate scientist at icddr,b, discussed the pneumonia situation globally and in Bangladesh. Referring to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2017, he said, "Only

five percent of government health facilities in Bangladesh are prepared to properly treat pneumonia."

Besides, not even half of the health facilities had oxygen concentrator, while other oxygen sources were not available in one-third of the facilities under the study.

BDHS also found that only one-third of district hospitals had basic tools to measure oxygen saturation.

Referring to Bangladesh Health Facility Survey 2017, he said more than half of the children under five who die from pneumonia were not brought to hospital for treatment.

"When a hospital has lack of tools to treat pneumonia, it is normal for parents to be discouraged to bring their child for treatment. Intervention is needed to ensure availability of tools in hospitals," Dr Ehsanur said.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), any healthcare setting needs to ensure 10 items -- including guidelines, trained staff and certain equipment and medicines -- for providing child curative care.

Prof Ruhul Amin, pulmonologist at

the paediatrics department of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, said 18 percent of children under five die due to pneumonia.

To prevent such deaths, he stressed on ensuring nutrition of children by exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding; looking into environmental factors such as pollution; and timely treatment of children with respiratory distress.

Prof Samir Kumar Saha, executive director of Child Health Research Foundation, said, "We do not know the reason behind 50 percent of pneumonia cases. It is important to know this if we want to eliminate it, and we need combined efforts for this."

Dr Md Jobayer Chisti, senior scientist at icddr,b, stressed on having pulse oximetry devices in hospitals and investing on low-cost local innovations.

"The low-cost bubble CAP machine invented by icddr,b can help reduce such deaths by 75 percent. We are now piloting the device in two district hospitals in Kurigram and Narsingdi to know its feasibility," he informed.

We Deeply Mourn

Paramount Family expresses deep grief and sorrow over the demise of a recognized and leading entrepreneur

Md. Ali Azim Khan
MD of Shonest Group

A pioneer of Garments and allied industries in Bangladesh for decades. He was a valued mentor who always imparted innovative ideas. We warmly remember his enthusiastic and skillful advises towards Paramount Group.

A great loss indeed for all of us. We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to his family for this irreparable loss.



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Shegufa Bakht Chaudhuri passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former governor of Bangladesh Bank Shegufa Bakht Chaudhuri passed away at a city hospital yesterday. He was 86.



He had been suffering from old-age complications, according to a press release issued by Bangladesh Bank. He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter and a host of admirers and well-wishers. Chaudhuri was the fourth governor of Bangladesh Bank, between 1987 and 1992.

Black marketeers

Bangabandhu pays an unscheduled visit to rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam today and spends about half an hour at his government-allotted Dhanmondi residence. He enquires about the welfare of the ailing poet and also his needs from his daughter-in-law, who looks after him. Bangabandhu is informed that the general condition of the poet has seen appreciable improvement since his arrival in Dhaka last May from Calcutta at the invitation of the Bangladesh prime minister. He is further informed that the poet, who previously could not move without aid, can even walk down to the ground floor from the first floor of his residence nowadays.

DR MALIK'S TRIAL BEGINS TODAY The trial of Dr AM Malik, governor of the then East Pakistan, will begin tomorrow before Special Tribunal-1 in Dhaka headed by Session Judge Abdul Hannan Chowdhury. The former governor was first produced before the tribunal on October 6 when he made a prayer for adjournment of the hearing in his case on the ground that he required some time to prepare his defence. Dr Malik will face trial on charges of collaboration with the military regime of Pakistan and waging war against the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. SOURCES: November 13, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

BSF returns 2 Rab men

members and druggies attacked the Rab team, leaving its members dispersed.

Chased by the attackers, Shyamal and Abu Bakkar crossed into India and took shelter in the house.

Acting on information about the incident, a BSF team went to the house around 2:00pm on Tuesday and took the two into custody.

As the news of the incident spread in Saraswatipur village, senior officials of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), police and the civil administration went there in the evening and took initiatives to bring the two Rab men back.

The BSF handed the two Rab men to the BGB through a flag meeting around 10:45pm on Tuesday.

A member of Punatri Union Parishad in Chirirbandar upazila said the Saraswatipur village was controlled by drug dealers, druggies, their family members and relatives.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Lt Col Ashik Billah, director of Rab Legal and Media Wing in Dhaka, said the five-member Rab team conducted the raid in the village based on specific information.

The BSF rescued them after the two Rab men took shelter in the house of an Indian national, he added.

Chirirbandar OC Subrata Sarkar said they were yet to receive any complaint about the attack as of 3:00pm yesterday.

This correspondent phoned the commanding officer of Phulbari BGB 29 Battalion for comments, but he did not answer the phone.

BRTA moves to implement

may be conducted, along with other issues in this regard.

"We have to hold more meetings. We are giving the highest priority as it's a directive from the PM," he added.

Delivering her speech on October 22 to mark National Road Safety Day, Hasina directed the authority concerned to bring drivers under a dope testing system.

"We need to know whether those who are driving [vehicles] use drugs. They need to undergo dope testing. This test is absolutely essential for each driver. You must do it," she said.

The premier gave several other directives on this occasion.

On October 27, the Road Transport and Highway Division held a meeting with all the heads of the agencies concerned to discuss how to implement the directives and the BRTA was asked to call a meeting over this issue, sources said.

WHY IS THE TEST IMPORTANT? Kazi Md Shifun Newaz, assistant professor of Accident Research Institute of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology, said a driver can feel drowsy after taking drugs and they may lose control over the steering, causing accidents.

In many cases, a driver may feel overconfident and try to dangerously overtake other vehicles after taking drugs, he added.

"In order to ensure road safety, dope testing is important so that an addicted driver or a driver under the influence of alcohol cannot run a vehicle," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

There was a move last year when a transport leader said the authorities will start running random drug tests on motor vehicle drivers at different points across Dhaka city from December 1st 2019.

Mobile courts will conduct drives because almost half of the public vehicle drivers in the capital are believed to be addicted to various drugs, and the addiction has become the main and main reason for accidents in the capital, Khondaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, said at a joint meeting between transport owners and workers on September 18 last year.

"We came to know about it by talking to bus company owners, workers and by making field visits," he added.

However, they could not start the dope testing programme, despite wanting to, as transport workers had started a demonstration against the Road Transport Act-2018, he said.

Duty-free benefits to continue for Bangladesh

making sure that the world's poorest countries can continue to take advantage of the opportunities that free trade offers them by allowing them to export their products to the UK at preferential rates," said UK's International Trade Secretary Liz Truss.

She said this would assist developing economies in establishing strong industries, creating jobs and help them reduce their reliance on overseas aid in the long term.

The UK left the European Union on January 31. Britain is now in an 11-month period, known as the transition, that keeps the UK bound to the EU's rules. The transition (sometimes called the implementation period) will end on December 31, 2020. It cannot be extended beyond that date, BBC reports.

After the US and Germany, the UK is the third largest export destination for Bangladesh. Currently, more than 700,000 Bangladeshis live in the UK. Demand for Bangladeshi apparels, vegetables, pharmaceutical items and processed foods is growing there.

Bangladesh exported goods worth \$4.83 billion to the UK in the fiscal 2018-19. Garment products constituted 93 percent of the exports. But the pandemic hurt the businesses in the next fiscal.

"I think the only benefit is that we will continue to enjoy the same preferential treatment, that is duty free access by complying single transformation process," said Rubana Huq, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) on the UK's decision.

"Since the UK may not change its tariff regime after Brexit, this will save a market of \$3.17 billion dollars..." Huq told The Daily Star in a WhatsApp message.

The UK takes around 11.3 percent of our garment exports, so the continuation of existing tariff structure would keep

the employment and export earnings of this sector protected to a significant extent, she said.

Britain imported approximately £8 billion-worth of textiles and apparel products from eligible countries last year. This accounted for 30 percent of all textile and UK apparel imports, according to the statement from the UK Department for International Trade.

The country also imported approximately £1 billion-worth of vegetables from eligible countries, accounting for around 8 percent of all vegetable imports. It is planning on improving the scheme to better support developing countries, the statement said.

More details will be announced next year. British importers will continue to pay zero or reduced tariffs on everyday goods such as clothing and vegetables from the world's poorest countries, the statement said.

The UK's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) will cover all the same countries that are currently eligible for trade preferences under the EU's GSP, it added.

Liz Truss said the scheme would also help British businesses continue trading seamlessly after the UK leaves the EU, as well as giving British consumers continued access to some of their favourite products at affordable prices.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said globally Britain is a partner of choice for developing countries.

"As today's announcement demonstrates, we take a liberal approach to trade, recognising that many developing countries want to trade their way to greater prosperity," he said.

"We back that up with the integrity of the investments UK businesses make, and our commitment to be a force for good in their communities through our support for green jobs, climate change mitigation and programmes to deliver girls education," he added.

Off-season spike

Experts say the dengue season's longevity is increasing and it is not a seasonal virus anymore.

The dengue issue is critical as the country has reported having more than one lakh cases of the disease last year. Mosquito species like Aedes Aegypti Albopictus transmit the dengue virus into humans through bites.

Most cases in the country are reported in June due to monsoon, high temperature and humidity. The World Health Organisation says dengue outbreaks can occur any time that mosquitoes are active.

High temperature and humidity favour the insect's survival, increasing the likelihood of transmission.

Pigeon message

town of Colmar, is recounting German military exercises in the area.

Father, son found dead

(DMCH) for autopsy, said the SI.

"We found the hanging bodies of Khairul and Shaharat tied to ceiling fans with a piece of cloth in their rooms," said the police official.

SI Selim further said Khairul's wife Najmun Nahar Nupur, who had gone out for shopping, found the house door locked from the inside after she returned home in the afternoon, and then informed police.

The police official said Areen was a differently abled boy, while his father Khairul developed a mental illness six months earlier due to the loss of his business. He was being treated at a hospital.

Khairul, hailing from Ramganj of Laxmipur, used to live in the rented flat in Nayatola area with his wife and son, said the police officer.

Police suspected that Khairul may have killed himself after killing his son, said the SI, adding that the exact cause behind their deaths will be known after getting the autopsy reports.

HC seeks

ordered the special judge's court-7 of Dhaka, which had sentenced Haji Salim, to send all relevant documents of the case by December 7.

The HC bench of Justice Md Moinul Islam Chowdhury and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq also fixed December 7 for rehearing the appeal filed by Haji Salim challenging the trial court verdict.

The bench came up with the order following a prayer moved by the Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan for fixing a date for rehearing the appeal.

Lawyer Sayeed Ahmed Raza appeared for Haji Salim.

The ACC filed the case against Haji Salim with Lalbagh Police Station on October 24, 2007, on charge of amassing illegal assets. On April 27, 2008, the special judge's court-7 of Dhaka convicted Haji Salim and sentenced him.

Haji Salim filed the appeal with the HC on October 25, 2009.

Following the appeal, the HC on January 2, 2011, acquitted Haji Salim.

The ACC then appealed against the HC verdict before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. The Appellate Division on January 12, 2015, scrapped the HC verdict and directed the HC to rehear Haji Salim's appeal and to dispose of the appeal again.

The ACC recently took an initiative for rehearing the appeal of Haji Salim after Irfan Salim, son of Haji Salim, was arrested in connection with beating up a navy officer.

Nothing will stop power

Taking questions from the media for the first time since his victory, Biden was asked what he would say if Trump were watching. He said: "Mr. President, I look forward to speaking with you."

Some 80% of Americans, including half of Republicans, say Biden is the rightful winner, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Tuesday.

21st death anniversary of Hasna Hena

CRY DESK

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Hasna Hena Qadir, one of the founders of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee.



To mark the day, a milad mahfil will be held at her elder son's residence in the capital, a press release said.

Hasna Hena Qadir was the wife of martyred freedom fighter and intellectual Lt Col Abdul Qadir, who was killed by the Pakistani army during the Liberation War, and the mother of eminent journalist Nadeem Qadir and US-based IT expert Naweed Qadir.

Missing JnU

According to her family members, Tithy went missing on October 25 morning after leaving her Pallabi home for the local police station. Her elder sister Srity Rani Sarker filed a missing persons report with Pallabi Police Station on October 27.

However, Tithy's family was not informed of her arrest. The news took them by surprise when they were contacted. "Around 8:00pm in the evening, Tithy's friends told me that her Facebook account showed 'active' status. We have been wondering what happened. Now we know."

Tithy was suspended from the university on October 26 as well as from her post as the office secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Odhakar Parishad's JnU unit on October 23.

Some screenshots of Tithy Sarker's Facebook posts and comments that allegedly hurt religious sentiments went viral on social media that day.

On the same day, Tithy filed a general diary with Pallabi Police Station, stating that her Facebook account had been hacked.

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2020-9163052

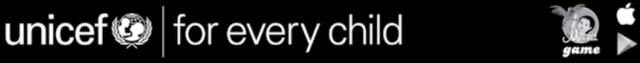
Request for Proposal (RFP): Establish Long Term Arrangement (LTA) for Media Monitoring Services for UNICEF Bangladesh.

UNICEF-Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong record and credibility of providing the above required service. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to "supplybangladesh@unicef.org"

The deadline to submit proposal is **Thursday, 26 November 2020; Time: 11:00 Hrs.**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of solicitation process.

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VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following positions under different contractual modalities:

- Immunization Consultant (Roster) - SSA7, SSA8, SSA9, NOA, NOB, NOC
- Surveillance & Immunization Medical Officer (Roster)- SSA7, SSA8

For further details on the terms of reference and deadline for applications, please visit our website:

https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment

Qualified female candidates are highly encouraged to apply

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

Akbar's

area of Companiganj upazila in Sylhet, said police sources.

At Meghalaya, he took shelter at one Naresh Singha's house for a couple of days and then on October 18, he moved to one Gopal Das' house at Silchar of Assam. Gopal is a relative of one Panna, who is a friend of Naresh.

Through a source, police found out that Akbar is at Gopal's house. They contacted Gopal through the source and cut a deal with him -- Gopal will hand over Akbar to Bangladesh police in exchange for 10 lakh rupees.

Gopal agreed. As per the agreement, Gopal brought Akbar to Meghalaya's Dona bordering area and handed him over to Khasi people, who were there working with Bangladesh police.

The money was also given to Gopal via the Khasi people. They then brought Akbar to the bordering area of Kanaighat upazila.

There, one Rahim Uddin, a resident of Kanaighat, and some locals crossed the border on behalf of the law enforcers and received Akbar from Khasi people.

They then handed him over to the district police around 9am on Monday.

According to the officials of Sylhet

district police, the Khasi people made several videos of Akbar while quizzing him. They did not know these videos would cause such issues afterwards, police added.

The officials also said Rahim later claimed to have found Akbar using his own connections just to get reward for detaining him as declared by some expatriates.

"Tracking down Akbar in India and then bringing him back to Bangladesh involved a joint effort of police and many trusted friends in both the countries," SP Farid Uddin told The Daily Star.

"It was Sylhet district police's operation from the very beginning... but we are not discrediting anyone who helped us detain Akbar. We are grateful to all of them," he said.

An official said Sylhet district police paid the money to Gopal, while Rahim and some others involved also got small monetary rewards.

On October 11, Rayhan, a 33-year-old resident of Akhalia Neharipara area in Sylhet city, was allegedly detained and tortured by police.

He died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital at 7:50AM. His wife filed a case with Kotwali Police Station accusing several unnamed people the next day.

Most students

There should be mapping on how effectively distance learning is reaching students, and the government can plan according to that, she said.

Education Minister Dipu Moni said the government has taken various measures, and telecom operators are offering different packages, so students can get internet access.

আহ্বান প্রকাশের আহ্বান Request for Expression of Interest (EOM/CO/2020/001) কোস্ট ট্রাস্ট (COAST Trust) ও মাল্টিসার ইন্টারন্যাশনাল (Malters International) জার্মানির ফেডারেল পররাষ্ট্র অধিদপ্তর সহযোগিতায় বাংলাদেশে 'Towards Greater Effectiveness and Timeliness in Humanitarian Emergency Response (TOGETHER)' পিআইআই একটি প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন করছে।

এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড ৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা ঢাকা- ১২০৮ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমগুলি প্রকৃত স্থানীয় প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট বাবসার সাথে জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করছে -

Boro Maath being shrunk by 'cattle, fish farm'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

People call it "Boro Maath" because the 25-acre field is the largest of all playgrounds in Dinajpur town.

But crooks were on the prowl to change the geometry of the historic ground, where one of the largest and exquisite Eidgahs in the country is located. Besides, the offices of the deputy commissioner (DC) and the superintendent of police of Dinajpur district are just a stone's throw from the ground.

Taking advantage of a reduced human traffic during the months of Covid-19 lockdown, a contractor firm has encroached on a circular structure, made on almost one-third of the playground.

The structure, made for holding Dinajpur Trade Fair, organised annually by Dinajpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DiCCI), lied abandoned after the event was cut short on March 26 when a lockdown was enforced across the country.

Instead of removing the structure after the fair was cancelled, Monta Decorator, the contractor firm of the

fair, started to use the entire area of the fair to rear poultry, cattle and fish. They even built a large water reservoir at the site for their fish farm.

Locals alleged that while the large area of the playground remains occupied by the abandoned structure, the areas around the structure become hotspot for drug addicts and dealers at night.

Taking advantage of a reduced human traffic during the months of Covid-19 lockdown, a contractor firm has encroached on a circular structure.

Sanowar Ali and Rubel Islam, identifying themselves as caretakers of the site, employed by Monta Decorator, barred this correspondent from entering the site when he went there on Monday.

The caretakers, however, admitted that the firm has constructed a large water tank inside the fair site for cultivating fish.

Around 50 cows and over 100 ducks, belonging to locals, were also being reared there, they also claimed.

Jewel Islam, a local, said the structure made for the fair has turned into an eyesore.

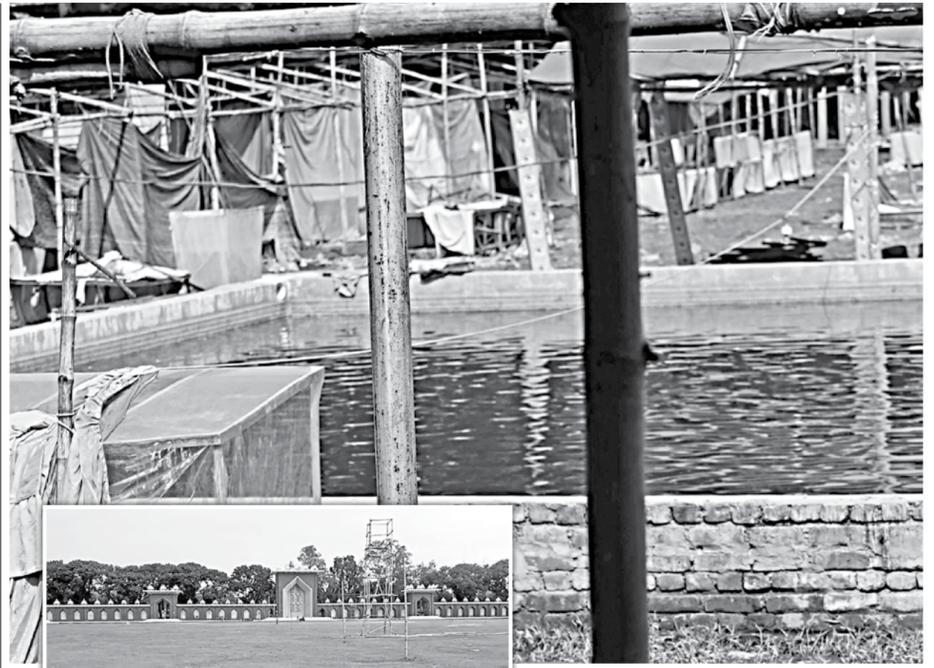
He also said that the fair ended seven months ago and the structure should have been removed by now.

Saying that he likes fish, poultry and cattle farming, Montazul Islam, proprietor of Monta Decorator, gave assurance to this correspondent that he would soon relocate his farm.

Mizanur Rahman Patwari, convener of the fair and also a member of DiCCI executive committee, was taken by surprise when this correspondent contacted and raised the issue of the structure that is being used to encroach on Boro Maath.

He said verbal instruction to remove the structure was given to Montazul Islam a long while ago.

When the attention of Mahmudul Alam, the DC of Dinajpur, was drawn on the matter, he said necessary steps in this regard would be taken after consulting with leaders of DiCCI.



A fish tank was made encroaching on Boro Maath, home to the iconic Eidgah. Inset, in Dinajpur town.

PHOTO: STAR, COLLECTED



The three-storied trauma centre building in Habiganj's Bahubal upazila lies unused for six years.

PHOTO: STAR

Built in 2013, trauma centre unused

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Construction of the trauma centre in Habiganj's Bahubal upazila was completed in 2013 but it is yet to be opened due to lack of electricity and gas connections.

As a result, road crash victims are being deprived of getting medical treatment. Especially serious patients are the worst sufferers.

According to the Health Department, the government launched a project named 'Physical Development' to develop 10 trauma centres on six national highways aiming to provide rapid treatments to those people injured in accidents on highways.

Construction of a 10-bed trauma centre was started near Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bahubal Upazila Health Complex area spending Tk 3.18 crore. It was scheduled to complete construction work of the three-storey building on October 30, 2012. But it ended at the end of 2013.

In January 2014, the Public Works Department (PWD) sent a letter to the Health Department to accept the building. But the health department did not accept it as there is no gas and electricity connection.

On March 22 in 2013, Habiganj Palli Biddut Samity sent a demand note to PWD to pay Tk 48,120 for electricity connection.

Habiganj PWD then received the demand note and deposited the money. It then sent two letters to Habiganj Palli Biddut Samity for the power connection on May 26 in 2014 and January 29 in 2015 respectively.

But Palli Biddut Samity later demanded an additional Tk 6 lakh for power connection, said an official of Habiganj PWD, wishing anonymity.

Afterwards, they did not make any progress in this regard except informing the higher authorities, he said.

Meanwhile, on June 23 in 2013, the then executive engineer of PWD wrote a letter to the Jalalabad Gas Company asking for a demand note for gas connection. Since then, all sorts of new gas connections have been suspended across the country. As a result, the gas connection to the trauma centre has become uncertain.

Sherpur Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ershadul Hoque Bhuiyan said a number of people, who faced road accidents on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in the previous years, died for not getting treatment.

If any accident occurred on the highway, it took more than one hour to reach Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. Some injured people died on the way due to delay in reaching the Hospital.

If the trauma centre is operational, the people on the highway will receive immediate medical treatment, said the OC, adding that so it is very important to open the centre as soon as possible.

Tofazzal Sohel, coordinator of Sankhubdo Nagorik Andolon Habiganj unit, said windows and inner instruments of the building are getting damaged due to negligence.

Habiganj Deputy Civil surgeon Dr Mukhlesur Rahman said the centre is yet to become operational as there is no gas and electricity connection.

Shut down

FROM PAGE 1

Following a meeting with the owners of private hospitals on August 9, Health Secretary Abdul Mannan said all private medical colleges, hospitals and clinics must apply for licences - either to renew them or get new ones - by August 23.

The announcement came after the much-talked-about Regent Hospital scam involving Covid-19 tests came to light during the first week of July.

Talking to journalists yesterday, the DGHS boss said they had issued licences to 6,067 private healthcare establishments. Of those, 2,130 were hospitals, 3,856 diagnostic centers and 81 blood banks.

About the death of a senior assistant superintendent of Police (ASP) Anisul Karim in Mind and Hospital in the capital recently, Prof Khurshid said, "They [the hospital] said they got licence from the Department of Narcotics Control. But they must be authorised by the DGHS to provide any mental healthcare. That's why we have shut it down."

COVID-19 DEATH TOLL KEEPS GROWING

Covid-19 death toll in the country rose to 6,127 as the health directorate reported 19 deaths in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

The death rate is 1.44 percent of all confirmed cases in the country - 4,25,353, according to a statement from the DGHS.

As many as 1,733 infections were recorded in the same 24 hours, it said.

Bangladesh is now 22nd worst affected country in the world in terms of the number of coronavirus cases, according to worldometers.info.

On March 8, the DGHS reported the first three cases in the country. It reported the first Covid-19-caused death on March 18.

Against 14,524 tests conducted in those 24 hours at 114 labs, the positivity rate was 11.93 percent, while the overall positivity rate was 17.12 percent.

Meanwhile, 1,715 Covid-19 patients recovered in the same 24 hours, raising the total number of recoveries to 3,43,131. It was more than 80 percent of all confirmed cases, according to the press release.

Among the deceased, 16 were males and three were females.

All of them died in hospitals. Seven of them were aged between 51 and 60 years while the rest were above 60 years old.

As of yesterday noon, 2,521 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds while 273 in ICU beds hospitals dedicated for Covid-19 treatment across the country, added the press release.

Post-Covid world needs

FROM PAGE 1

priorities: halting climate change, tackling wealth inequality, and preventing mass unemployment as artificial intelligence threatens to wipe out jobs.

Yunus told the Thomson Reuters Foundation's annual event, Trust Conference, that COVID-19 had shown up the weaknesses in the global economy and society.

But he added: "When you hit the darkest part you come up with the brightest ideas."

"Why don't we throw away all the old thinking? We have to be outrageously bold ... to adopt things which were never adopted before."

Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 with Grameen Bank, a microfinance organisation he founded in 1983 to provide loans to poor people who cannot access mainstream banks - an initiative that has since inspired similar programmes worldwide.

The 80-year-old economist told the online conference that a post-Covid future should be built on social businesses - enterprises dedicated to

tackling social and environmental problems through commercial means.

People are not "money-making robots" and collective interest, not maximising profits, should be the driving force for business, he said.

Yunus said the pandemic had had a particularly devastating impact on people in the informal sector who make up 70% of workers in countries like Bangladesh and often have no savings.

He said informal sector workers should be recognised as entrepreneurs and called for the creation of "social business micro-entrepreneurial banks" to help them get back on their feet.

Social businesses could also be a solution for flawed healthcare systems whose failures had been exposed by the pandemic, Yunus said.

He criticised "selfish" rich countries buying up the production of Covid-19 vaccines, but warned that the pandemic could only be defeated together.

"If you keep one person unprotected, nobody's protected," he said.

SELF-DESTRUCTING WORLD
Yunus said it was also time to rethink

the world's "urban-centric" economy which forces many people to seek work hundreds of miles from their homes.

In an age of modern technology, he questioned why many businesses, including call centres, could not be built in village areas.

The economist said he did not understand everyone's eagerness to rush back to a pre-COVID era.

A world where about 1% of the population owns 99% of the wealth is a ticking time bomb and will "explode in anger, dissatisfaction and political upheaval", he said.

"Why do you want to go back to that world? That world was a terrible world," he added, alluding to climate change as well as the growing wealth gap.

"That world was like we (were) riding a big train, rushing to our death ... We want to go back to ride that train again?"

Yunus called instead for a "world of three zeros" - zero net carbon emissions, zero wealth concentration, zero unemployment.

"This is the time to do it," he said.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director (ACE, RHD)
Technical Assistance for Road Transport
Connectivity Improvement Project Preparatory Facility
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.
www.rhd.gov.bd**

Memo No.35.01.2690.071.07.001.2020- 104

Date: 12.11.2020

**Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)
(Consulting Services for Environmental and Social Management)
- Firms selection)**

Bangladesh Western Economic Corridor & Regional Enhancement Program (WeCARE) Phase-I

Assignment Title: Environmental and Social Management Consultancy

Reference No.: SP-06

The Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh has applied for financing from the World Bank for implementing the Western Economic Corridor & Regional Enhancement Program (WeCARE) Phase-I and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the Consulting Services of Environmental and Social Management.

The broad scope of consulting services ("the Services") include carrying out the tasks mentioned below along the Jhenaidah- Jashore National Highway segment and Bhomra-Satkhira-Navaron National & Regional Highway segment.

1. Update the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) prepared for 'Phase - 1: Jashore-Jhenaidah (48.5 km) National Highway' of the Program based on the final alignment and detailed engineering design;
2. Prepare the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) for investments proposed under 'Phase - 1: Jashore-Jhenaidah (48.5 km) Highway';
3. Conduct a Strategic Environment and Social Assessment (SESA) applicable for the entire WeCARE Program across the multiple phases to be implemented by RHD and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) as well as the sections of the highway which will be widened with funding from Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB).
4. Conduct an ESIA and prepare the ESMP for Phase - 3 activities to be implemented by RHD (58 km long Bhomra - Satkhira - Navaron Highway);

Expected date for commencement of the services is April 2021 and the tentative duration of the entire assignment is about 24 (Twenty-four) months. A draft TOR can be found at the following website: (www.rhd.gov.bd; www.cptu.gov.bd; or can be obtained at the address of the undersigned given below).

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) under Road Transport and Highways Division, Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Government of Bangladesh now invites eligible Consultancy Firms to express their interest in providing the specified Services. Interested consulting firms should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The qualifications and experiences for shortlisting are:

1. Experience in conducting ESIA conducting for infrastructure project;
2. Experience in preparing and implementing RAP for infrastructure project, preferably in Bangladesh;
3. Experience in conducting SESA for infrastructure project, preferably in South Asia Region;
4. Availability of appropriate skills among in-house staff; and
5. Experience in development partner's funded similar projects.

The attention of interested International Consultants is drawn to the Section III, Para 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016 and updated in August 2018," setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Short-listed consultants would be given an opportunity to enhance their qualification by associating with other firms in the form of association or sub-consultancy. However, if firms would like to form a JV, that must be done at this EOI stage. After short-listing, firms would not be allowed to form Joint Ventures.

A Consultancy Firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address of the undersigned given below during office hours from 9:00 AM to 17:00 PM Bangladesh Standard Time (BST).

Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in a written form to the address of the undersigned (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by 14:30 PM (BST), December 21, 2020.

The client will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the firm(s) in connection with the preparation or delivery of the EOI. The Executing Agency reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without assigning any reason.

(Riaz Ahmad Jaber)
Project Director (ACE), RHD
Technical Assistance for Road Transport
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GD- 1803

NEWS IN BRIEF

India takes control of online news media, social sites

The Indian government has issued an order bringing online news portals and content providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Hotstar under the Information and Broadcasting ministry. The notification, signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, was issued on Monday. The government regulations also apply to news on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Films, audio-visuals, and news and current affairs content on online platforms will come under the domain of the ministry. Until now, there was no law or autonomous body governing digital content.

Thousands flee as typhoon menaces Philippines

Thousands of people were evacuated from their homes in storm-battered parts of the Philippines yesterday as the third typhoon in as many weeks barreled towards the country. Vamco was expected to graze Catanduanes Island -- which was devastated by Typhoon Goni less than two weeks ago -- before making landfall on the most populous island of Luzon later Wednesday or early Thursday. Destructive winds and torrential rain were expected in parts of central and southern Luzon, the state weather forecaster said. The Bicol region, which Vamco will cross as it heads towards Manila, is still reeling from deadly typhoons Molave and Goni, which killed dozens of people and left thousands of families homeless.

Bahrain PM Khalifa, world's longest-serving, dies at 84



Bahrain's Prince Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa, the world's longest-serving prime minister who had held the post since independence in 1971, died Wednesday at the age of 84, state media announced. Prince Khalifa was a controversial figure during his five decades in office -- and deeply unpopular with the Sunni-ruled kingdom's Shia population. When Shia-led protesters occupied Manama's Pearl Square for a month in 2011, before being driven out by Saudi-backed security forces, their main demand was for Khalifa to step down. He played a key role in Bahrain's political and economic affairs, including setting the stage for a referendum that put paid to the Shah of Iran's claims to the tiny Gulf archipelago. Prince Khalifa died at the Mayo Clinic Hospital in the United States, the official Bahrain News Agency said.

Australian House to probe Murdoch media dominance

Australia's parliament will launch an inquiry into media ownership, a prominent senator said yesterday, after more than half a million people signed a petition demanding a probe into Rupert Murdoch's news dominance. The Australian arm of the New York-headquartered News Corp is the country's largest media organisation, owning papers in nearly every major city as well as cable television networks and magazines. The country's opposition parties united behind the move in the Senate to effectively sidestep the conservative government, which enjoys strong support from the Murdoch press and had not acted on the petition's demand for a royal commission.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A man is taken away by law enforcement officers during an opposition rally to demand the resignation of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan following the signing of a deal to end the military conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, in Yerevan, Armenia yesterday. Thousands of Armenian demonstrators, chanting "Nikol is a traitor", expressed their anger after the announcement of ceasefire. Pashinyan has called it a disaster but said he had no choice but to sign it to stave off a defeat.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'UNFAIR' MYANMAR ELECTION
Opposition snubs results, demands new vote

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's military-aligned opposition party yesterday rejected the results of this week's election as "unfair" and called for a fresh vote -- a demand immediately rebuffed by the election authorities.

Official results are still trickling in, but Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party has already declared a landslide victory based on its own tallies from across the country.

The opposition Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) went further, however.

"We reject the election because it was unfair," spokesperson Win Win Aung said, alleging that many ineligible people had cast ballots. "We call on the election commission to hold a new, disciplined election in cooperation with the military as soon as possible."

Observers broadly approved the overall conduct of the polls on Sunday.

Suu Kyi remains a heroine for many in Myanmar, even though her international reputation lies shattered over the Rohingya crisis.

Rights groups denounced the vote for its almost absolute disenfranchisement of Rohingyas, either living in refugee camps in Bangladesh or "apartheid" conditions in Myanmar.

The UEC's decision to cancel the election in many ethnic minority areas left a further 1.6 million more people -- from an electorate of 37 million -- without a vote.

US ELECTION 2020

Democrats secure House with reduced majority

Republicans wins another seat in Senate

AGENCIES

The Democratic Party secured control of the US House of Representatives but with a slimmer majority after winning at least 218 seats, the Associated Press reported.

Democrats secured the majority after AP declared three winners late on Tuesday; incumbents Kim Schrier in Washington, Tom O'Halleran in Arizona and Jimmy Gomez in California.

The 435-member chamber will now be controlled by the Democratic Party for another two years, but with a slimmer margin.

The Democrats went into Election Day with a 232-197 House advantage, along with one independent and five open seats. This will be only the second time since 1995 that they will control the chamber for four consecutive years.

However, the Democrats fell short of their goal of taking a Senate majority and lost seats in the House of Representatives, making Republicans well positioned to block major legislative initiatives of President-elect Joe Biden.

Republicans held on to a seat in the US Senate on Tuesday after a close race in the state of North Carolina Republican Senator Thom Tillis was assured re-election after his Democratic opponent, Cal Cunningham, conceded the race.

Cunningham said in a statement that he had called Tillis to congratulate him even though complete results from the November 3 election have not yet been announced.

Republicans now hold 49 seats in the 100-seat Senate compared to the Democrats' 48.

All eyes are on a pair of runoff Senate elections set to take place in Georgia on January 5 likely to decide which party will control the legislative body. A third seat -- in Alaska -- remains undecided, but Republican Senator Dan Sullivan is ahead there for now.

In the case of a tie, incoming Vice President Kamala Harris would break it, according to Senate rules.

The new Congress convenes on Jan 3.

CONTENTIOUS COMMENT OVER US TRANSITION

Pompeo softens tone after criticism

AGENCIES

Facing criticism, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo softened his tone after he voiced confidence that once every "legal" vote was counted, it would lead to a "second Trump administration."

Chuck Schumer, the top Democrat in the Senate, said Pompeo was out of touch with reality.

"Secretary Pompeo, Joe Biden has won. He's won the election. Now move on," Schumer told reporters. "We have a Covid crisis raging. We don't have time for these kinds of games."

Representative Eliot Engel, chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, said the State Department should begin preparing for Biden's transition now.

"Secretary Pompeo shouldn't play along with baseless and dangerous attacks on the legitimacy of last week's election," he said.

Richard Boucher, a retired diplomat who was the longest-serving State Department spokesman, said Pompeo's comment about a second Trump administration could be passed off as a joke but also served to protect him from White House criticism.

Hours after withering criticism over his comments, Pompeo, a close ally and appointee of Trump, in a Fox News interview appeared to soften his tone.

"I am very confident that we will have a good transition, that we will make sure that whoever is in office on noon on January 20th has all the tools readily available so we don't skip a beat with the capacity to keep Americans safe," Pompeo said.

Earlier at a State Department

briefing, he said: "There will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration."

Those comments drew praise from Trump, who tweeted a video late on Tuesday of Pompeo's comments, saying: "That's why Mike was number one in his class at West Point!" referring to the US Military Academy.

Biden said earlier that nothing would stop the transfer of power in the US government. The former vice president secured more than the 270 votes in the Electoral College needed to take the presidency by winning Pennsylvania on Saturday.

But Trump and his allies insist

"illegal" ballots may have been cast despite no evidence of mass voter fraud, which is extremely rare in US elections.

Pompeo did not make any comments in either set of remarks to suggest he recognized Biden as the president-elect.

Asked during the Fox News interview if he was being "serious" regarding his comments about a "second Trump administration," Pompeo did not say either way but did not repeat the phrase.

He spoke as leaders of other countries, including Washington's close allies the UK, France and Canada, have already congratulated Biden.

Asked if the United States can still be issuing statements urging free elections around the world, Pompeo called the question "ridiculous" and said the United States was following standard procedures.

In his first official travel since the election, Pompeo is due to go to France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia from Nov. 13 to 23. The leaders of some of those countries have already congratulated Biden.

Trump has fired his defence chief on Monday, in a sign that experts say may be a part of a tactic that might come useful in case of wide scale unrest in US over the election outcome.



Pan-democratic legislators in Hong Kong announce their resignation from the Legislative Council yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Remembrance Day attack in Saudi city wounds several

Says France, condemns 'cowardly' attack

REUTERS, Paris/Riyadh

A blast at a World War One remembrance ceremony in Jeddah wounded several people yesterday, France said, urging its citizens living in Saudi Arabia to exercise maximum vigilance following what it called an attack using an explosive device.

The explosion was the second security incident to take place in the Red Sea port city in the last couple of weeks, and the first attack with explosives in years to attempt to hit foreigners in the conservative kingdom.

France's Foreign Ministry said the attack had taken place at a ceremony in Jeddah involving foreign embassies. A Greek official told Reuters four people had been wounded. "There was some sort of a blast at the non-Muslim cemetery in Jeddah. There are four slightly injured, among them one Greek," the Greek official told Reuters, declining to name.

The Makkah governorate said the attack caused two injuries - a Greek consulate employee and a Saudi guard.

A source with knowledge of the matter said the attack happened early yesterday when several diplomatic delegations from the European Union and other countries were present at a Remembrance Day event organised by the French Embassy.

On Oct 29 a Saudi man was arrested after attacking and wounding a security guard at the French consulate in Jeddah.

It followed the beheading earlier in October near Paris of a French school teacher by a man of Chechen origin who had said he wanted to punish the teacher for showing pupils cartoons of a topic deeply sensitive to Muslims in a civics lesson.

French officials have since reasserted the right to display the cartoons as a matter of free expression, stirring anger in parts of the Muslim world.

OUSTING OF FOUR HK LAWMAKERS
All pro-democracy lawmakers to resign

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong's pro-democracy lawmakers yesterday said they would all quit in protest at the ousting of four of their colleagues by the city's pro-Beijing authorities.

The four were disqualified in line with a resolution adopted earlier in the day by China's parliament authorising the local government to expel any politician it deemed a threat to national security.

The resignations will reduce the semi-autonomous city's once-feisty legislature to a gathering of Chinese loyalists, effectively ending pluralism in the chamber.

They also mark another blow to Hong Kong's beleaguered pro-democracy movement, which has been under sustained attack since China imposed a sweeping national security law earlier this year.

"We... will stand with our colleagues," Wu Chi-wai, convener of the 15 remaining pro-democracy legislators, told a press conference.

"We will resign en masse."

Earlier Wednesday, Hong Kong authorities ousted the four members just minutes after one of China's top lawmaking committees ruled the city's government could remove any legislator deemed a threat to national security without going through the courts.

Hong Kong's leader is chosen by pro-Beijing committees, but half of its legislature's 70 seats are directly elected, offering the city's 7.5 million residents a rare chance to have their voices heard at the ballot box.

China passed the sweeping security law in June to quell the protests, describing it as a "sword" hanging over the heads of critics.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the move against the lawmakers was "a further assault on Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and freedoms."

Chris Patten, the city's last colonial governor, also criticised the removals. The disqualified lawmakers were defiant.

"If observing due process, protecting systems and functions and fighting for democracy and human rights would lead to the consequence of being disqualified, it would be my honour," said Dennis Kwok, one of the ousted four.

The quartet had initially been banned from running in the city's legislative elections -- which were scheduled to be held September 6 -- after calling on the United States to impose sanctions on Hong Kong officials.

Those elections were postponed, with authorities blaming the coronavirus.

Hong Kong's pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam defended the disqualifications yesterday saying they were "constitutional, legal, reasonable and necessary".

National Academy for Planning and Development
Ministry of Planning
3-A, Nilkhet, Dhaka-1205
Website: www.napd.gov.bd

Inviting Nominations for "French Language Course DELF A1 Level" (Online) from 29 November 2020 - 12 May 2021

The National Academy for Planning and Development is inviting nominations for 'French Language Online Course' from 29 November 2020 - 12 May 2021. This course will be organized by the professional French Language experts. Course time will be 06:30-09:00pm (2.5 hours a day, 2 days a week- Monday and Thursday). Nominations should be sent to the Director General, National Academy for Planning and Development, 3/A, Nilkhet, Dhaka-1205 or the undersigned along with a Cash or Bank Draft of Tk 35,000/- (Tk Thirty-five thousand only) as course fee for each participant. Participants can also register online (www.napd.gov.bd). For any query or further information please contact the undersigned or Md. Sirajul Islam, Associate Instructor & Course Coordinator (Cell: 01688-738283 & Email: siraj04cu@gmail.com).

Md. Hasan Tarik
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GD-1805

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Inviting Nominations for "Arabic Language Course" (Online) from 13 December, 2020 - 28 February, 2021

The National Academy for Planning and Development is inviting nominations for 'Arabic Language Online Course' from 13 December, 2020 - 28 February, 2021. This course will be organized by the professional Arabic Language experts. Course time will be 06:30-08:30pm (2 hours a day, 3 days a week- Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday). Nominations should be sent to the Director General, National Academy for Planning and Development, 3/A, Nilkhet, Dhaka-1205 or the undersigned along with a Cash or Bank Draft of Tk 25,000/- (Tk Twenty-five thousand only) as course fee for each participant. Participants can also register online (www.napd.gov.bd). For any query or further information please contact the undersigned or Md. Nurul Amin, Assistant Programmer & Course Coordinator (Cell: 01818357782 & Email: nurulamin.cse@gmail.com).

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GD-1806

BOOK REVIEW: NON-FICTION

How To Build A World For Persons With Disability

SELIMA SARA KABIR & ADEPTO INTISAR AHMED

Sarah Hendren's *What Can a Body Do? How We Meet the Built World* (Riverhead Books, 2020) is a collection of case stories in which she helps one understand the lives of those living with disabilities, and how able-bodied perceptions on assistive technology and prosthetics can fail in practice.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15 percent of the world's population—a full billion people—live with disabilities. According to the most recent estimates, around 11.4 million people in Bangladesh live with at least one disability, according to the latest Household, Income and Expenditure Survey. And yet, living with disabilities as an experience and as a mode of being continues to be widely misunderstood and, as a result, allowed for very poorly.

Broadly, there are two distinct ideas of what a "disability" even is. The "medical model" defines it as a condition that happens due to some "impairment" of an individual's body. A "social model" takes a broader approach, taking a look at how an impairment (or any other condition) interacts with the world and its beliefs, attitudes, taboos, planning, design and infrastructure, among many other factors. Hendren introduces us to this latter model by mixing scientific literature with individual anecdotes, to reveal that the problems associated with disability are primarily caused by the way the world is built, holding "able" bodies as the standard. Yet able-bodied people are dependent on others too, in need of care and nurturing. So the very act of creating the conceptual categories of "extra" or "special" assistance unfairly privileges some human experiences over others.

As a narrator, instead of presenting them as characters in a case study, Hendren always names the person and adds details about their personality and



ILLUSTRATION: ZAREEN MAHIA

physical appearance. Such deliberation helps us keep in mind that disability is individualistic and personal. The book begins with Amanda: "an art historian and a curator of contemporary art. She is Australian by birth and still speaks in the swinging lilt of her native accent. She has a comfortable professorial air, at ease in the front of the room in the geometric clothing that's favored by the gallery set, and she's also a Little Person."

As Hendren's engineering students work to create a simple, portable lectern for Amanda, we begin to realize how everyday objects can be exclusive, unfairly forcing some people to have to "cope". A more inclusive world can begin with building a bespoke lectern that is height appropriate for a little person—thereby bringing the room to them, instead of making them reach for the room.

Hendren also discussed the need for a fairer system for pe-

destrian crossing—the duration of time allotted for the 'walk' sign to be lit up on crosswalks may be insufficient for those with disabilities, or even the aged. She shares with us an example: in Singapore, they have introduced machine readable cards to allow card-bearers an extra few minutes to cross the road.

She also introduces us to baby Niko, who suffers from a rare genetic condition which hinders everyday motor skills including walking and talking. To assist Niko, and promote muscular and neurological development, the Adaptive Design Association designed a chair especially for him made of cardboard. The use of such a commonplace material makes the chair affordable, while also providing room for customisation and upgrades as Niko grows older.

The types of assistive technology Hendren highlights are based on a zero-loss model,

meaning that creating disability-friendly public spaces can actually make them more inclusive to everyone—both able bodied and otherwise. Her examples have reason to pique the interest of a reader from Bangladesh. We understand how bad planning and design on a societal level makes so much of our space so hostile, if not somewhat inaccessible. But her examples make one wonder, surely we also have the potential to remove at least some of the barriers to participation for persons with disabilities?

For the longest time, Bangladesh had an overwhelming shortage of rehabilitative services. New legislation was passed in 2018 however, which formalized rehabilitation work and defined the standards for quality of service and qualification of service providers. One can hope that this standardization will help scale up rehabilitative services, perhaps even to the point where individualized solutions like Niko's can be offered in Bangladesh.

As researchers, this book was helpful in reaffirming the need for the kind of research that institutions like BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association, and others are doing. To understand the experiences, needs, and wishes of some one billion people better, we must encourage and undertake more research that not only seeks to identify aggregate patterns, but also to place persons with disabilities at the forefront of uncovering their truths.

Adepto Intisar Ahmed is a research assistant at BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, where he tries to put his interest in discovering people's truths to practice.

Selima Sara Kabir is a research associate at the BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, where she combines her love for reading, writing, and anthropological research.

INTERVIEW

Revisiting 'Talaash' with Shaheen Akhtar and Seung Hee Jeon

SARAH ANJUM BARI



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

On November 1, 2020, author Shaheen Akhtar was awarded the 3rd Asian Literary Award for the Korean translation of her 2004 novel *Talaash*—which traces the lives of Birangona women decades after the 1971 Liberation War. We spoke to Shaheen Akhtar and translator Seung Hee Jeon about their writing process and the book's legacy.

Sarah Bari/Star Books: Most of us are familiar with *Talaash* and its critical acclaim. For yourself as a reader and author, how has *Talaash* evolved over time?

Shaheen Akhtar: Honestly, *Talaash* has grown a bit distant to me. It was published 16 years ago in 2004. I finished writing it even before that. I actually wanted to create a distance between the novel and myself—I haven't written about the liberation war since 2004 and writing *Talaash* triggered a lot of trauma in me. I wanted to erase the subject from my mind.

Of course, I never expected the kind of acclaim it received upon publication and it was back then that I tried to re-read the book through the eyes of readers or critics. Naturally I wanted to change some things.

But the Asian Literary Award came as the real surprise. By then, Seung Hee Jeon had gotten in touch with me in 2016, having read the English translation of the book, *The Search* (Zubaan Books, 2011). I was touched by her interest because Seung Hee's country also has a terrifying history of war, particularly the experiences of the "comfort women" who were tortured at the hands of Japanese imperial forces during the Second World War—just like the Birangona women of our own country.

I was elated to think that *Talaash* was able to capture the emotions of the Korean people. I could see how the characters stepped out of their borders, and exchanged

places with the female victims of a war that took place almost 25 years ago, in another frontier of Asia. We could hear it resonate with the jury of the Asia Literary Awards.

SB: How and why did you decide to translate *The Search* into Korean?
Seung Hee Jeon: I grew up in South Korea, a country that, ever since my birth, and until today, has been struggling with the legacies of colonialism and the enormous influence of superpowers. One might even attribute the wonderful liveliness of South Korean society today, such as K-culture and its successful industries, partially to the energy of trauma survivors.

So, as a student and scholar of literature, I wrote my dissertation on the search for truth by female war-survivors through creative writing, what might aptly be called "docu-fiction". Soon it was clear to me that belonging in a minority group or colonised nation brings one a different perspective on the experience of war. This realisation led me to Asian literature, as I believe most third-world countries share a common history of modern colonisation by powerful nations.

In 2006, I had the opportunity to serve as an editorial board member for a bilingual Asian literature quarterly, published in Korea, *Asia*. And I encountered *The Search*. I was immediately absorbed in it: its stories sound so familiar and were so moving in the author's superb mastery of literary techniques, which were both so personal, and yet historical and typical, tragic and farcical at the same time. As a literary translator, I felt that I had to make it available to Korean readers.

Read the entire interview online on The Daily Star's website, and on the Daily Star Books Facebook and Instagram pages.

THE BOOK REPORT

'Dhaka Sessions' brings music to a bookstore

MRIITKA ANAN RAHMAN

Cramped amidst the rows and rows of books at Bookworm Bangladesh, performers, instruments, and cameras came together to produce music over the past few weeks. On Saturday, November 14, 2020, the first episode of *Dhaka Sessions* will be aired on YouTube, with the cult favourite band Nemesis as the first performers.

Dhaka Sessions is a promising new project which plans to stream music performed live at Bookworm along with interviews of artists and authors every week, in the same format as NPR's *Tiny Desk* concert series.

About five years ago, lead singer of cover band Stone Free Chotu Khan came across NPR's *Tiny Desk*. "I was amazed by the concept. We had to have something like that but of course with our own unique twist," he tells *The Daily Star*. The idea was to curate a set of musicians who would represent Bangladeshi music—both popular musicians like Nemesis, Sagor Baul, and other less known but talented musicians. All of the music performed would be original—no covers, each episode between 16-22 minutes.

"Musicians, stage hands and technicians have all been hit hard by the pandemic," says Chotu Khan. "Our work involves everyone. I have gotten in touch with street *bauls* who would come in front of my house and sing with a *mondira*, and her guru who played the *dotara*. They have performed as well."

"A bookstore is an interesting space for a project like this because of its unique setting," says Amina Rahman of Bookworm Bangladesh, explaining the choice of location. "Being surrounded by books makes one feel embraced and enriched. The acoustics at a bookstore are also ideal for high quality recording as the books themselves absorb sound and stop it from bouncing, just like a sound proof studio."

Bookworm had to move shelves around and shut down a section of the store, while ensuring everyone was wearing masks and staying sanitised. "A few of the musicians and their entourage were surprised and excited to see such a unique collection of



PHOTO: TANZIM AHMED BIJOY

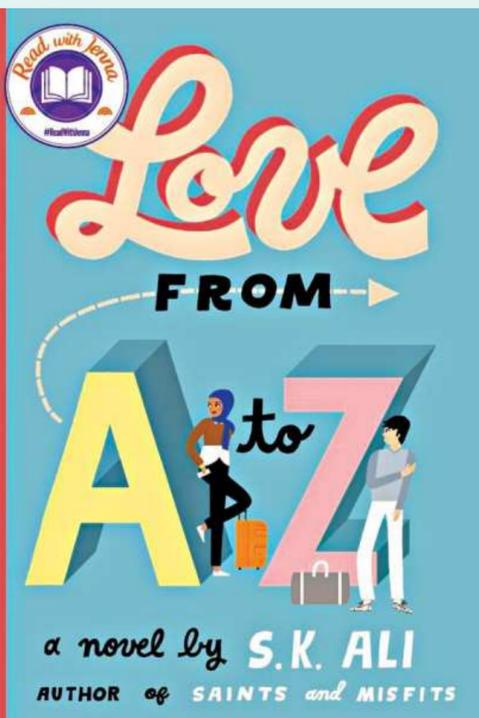
original books available in Dhaka. Each and every artist commented on how unusual and cosy they felt while performing," she shares. "As people watch the performances, they will also see books around them. I hope that *Dhaka Sessions* will introduce Bookworm to new audiences."

"I don't read but there is always something common between writers and musicians," adds Chotu Khan. "I was wondering what kind of space I'd use and I happened to visit Bookworm at the time, which had expanded. Bookworm told me the space was all mine to use for the series. Amina under-

stood the value of what was going on. To be able to take over a place like Bookworm for a day was amazing," he says.

The sound will also be recorded separately for the series and then mixed at a studio so viewers can hear as close to the natural sound as possible. "See people are starved for entertainment. So I want to do this weekly so people have something new coming up that they can enjoy," he shares.

Mrittika Anan Rahman is subeditor, SHOUT, and a contributor to Daily Star Books.



BOOK REVIEW: YA FICTION

Of Love and Faith

SAMEIRAH NASRIN AHSAN

DS Books is excited to launch this new series comprising reviews of "light reads" which explore heavier, sensitive topics. In this first instalment, we look at a young adult romance novel that depicts the challenging experiences of adolescent Muslims.

Read the review online on *The Daily Star* website, and on fb.com/DailyStarBooks, @thedailystarbooks on Instagram, and @DailyStarBooks on Twitter.

Police officer's death reveals horrific abuse of patients in mental hospital

Authorities must ensure patients are not humiliated, beaten, killed

CTV footage from the Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital in the capital's Adabor, where Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Anisul Karim met an untimely death on Monday, paints quite a clear picture of what the Tejaon Division Deputy Commissioner has called an "obvious murder"—it shows Anisul being wrestled to the ground by five to six people, who tie his hands behind his back and push him into a small room. During this attack, he becomes increasingly motionless. Later, a woman in an apron enters the room, locks the door and performs CPR, but to no avail.

An investigation by this daily revealed that this room was used to deal with "angry patients"; one member of the hospital staff called it a "soundproof torture cell." The police have also revealed that the hospital authorities could not show a valid license or any of the legal documents required to run a mental hospital. This is hardly a shock—in July this year, *The Daily Star* reported that two-thirds of the country's over 15,000 private clinics and diagnostic centres have been running without a valid licence since 2018, facing almost no consequences. What is hugely disappointing, however, is that the DGHS and health ministry are still failing to deliver on their responsibilities, despite the public outcry over unlicensed hospitals and their unlawful and unethical practices during the pandemic.

However, Anisul's death does not just tell us of the blatant mismanagement and lack of accountability of certain private hospitals that act with impunity in the absence of any regulation from the relevant authorities. It shines a spotlight on the reprehensible treatment of patients suffering from mental health issues in Bangladesh. Anisul's family denied that his behaviour was aggressive on the day but even then, what gives hospitals the authority to manhandle "aggressive" patients so violently that they die from it? On what grounds are staffers, ward boys and cleaners allowed to deal with sensitive patients with psychological problems, with no medical personnel involved? Despite the Mental Health Act 2018 replacing the 106-year-old Lunacy Act 1912 to ensure the safety and dignity of mental health patients in Bangladesh, why are they still being treated like they have no agency and no rights?

If a police officer with mental health complications can be beaten, abused and ultimately killed in this way, we dread to think how ordinary citizens, especially those with more severe issues that could lead to aggressive behaviour, are mistreated by healthcare providers. The DGHS and health ministry must fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that all mental health hospitals and service providers are regularly monitored and held accountable. We urge the authorities to also take speedy legal action against the persons and hospital authorities responsible for Anisul's death.

Corruption, political bias hampered govt's cash assistance programme

Correct the beneficiaries' list and support those left out

A recent survey by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has revealed a shocking picture of the government's cash incentive programme which was initiated at the beginning of the pandemic to provide financial assistance to 50 lakh poor families—those who lost their livelihoods and were worst affected by Covid-19. TIB took interviews of 1,050 beneficiaries of the programme and found that 69 percent of them were yet to receive anything, while 18.9 percent bribed to be included in the list and around 10 percent had to prove their political identity to be enlisted. The anti-graft watchdog held another survey on the government's OMS (open market sales) programmes and found that 36.8 percent of OMS cardholders got less rice than they were supposed to, while 92 people said they never managed to get any rice even after having the cards. According to the TIB findings, 79.2 percent of the people eligible for cash assistance and 65.7 percent of the OMS cardholders said they faced corrupt practices from the local parliamentarians, chairmen, Union Parishad members, councillors or mayors.

The government's cash assistance programme faced many challenges from the very beginning. It was reported in this daily that many of the beneficiaries' national identification (NID) numbers did not match the ones on the Election Commission's database, and several other gross anomalies were also found when the finance ministry cross-checked the names of the beneficiaries. There were names of government officials, pensioners, and beneficiaries of other social safety net schemes on the list. Names of people who owned Tk 5 lakh in savings certificates were also on the list, while around three lakh names were included more than once.

We expressed our concerns during that time over the NID mishap and other anomalies in making the list, and urged the government to solve the problem immediately and disburse the funds to people who were starving. During that time, TIB also demanded exemplary punishment for those involved in irregularities in preparing lists of beneficiaries. However, as it seems now, no amount of criticism could change the situation on the ground. According to the finance ministry sources, the project was stopped after funds were handed to 35 lakh beneficiaries, whereas the TIB survey found that 69 percent of people surveyed did not receive anything. So how many people actually benefitted from the scheme?

We think the government should immediately work out a plan to verify details of the beneficiaries who could not be given any cash support and provide them with the promised assistance. At the same time, the lists of all beneficiaries of social safety net programmes must be made public and published in the government websites, as recommended by TIB. The inefficiency and corruption in carrying out the social safety net programmes have exposed the many administrative challenges currently facing the government. We hope the authorities will address these issues urgently.

First transgender madrasa: Let it be the spark for a social revolution



BADIUZZAMAN BAY

ON Friday, November 6, the first madrasa for transgender Muslims in Bangladesh was opened in Dhaka through a private initiative. Until now, there has been no madrasa (or even school) exclusively dedicated to the transgender people in the country. This makes it a historic moment for this long-marginalised community, perhaps no less significant than the 2013 official recognition of a "hijra sex", the 2019 granting of full voting rights through the creation of a "third gender" category on the national voters list, or the 2020 decision to include them in the national census to be carried out in January 2021.

According to media reports, the madrasa, named Dawatul Quran Third Gender Madrasa, has been set up in a three-storey building near Lohar bridge in the Kamrangirchar area of Dhaka. Up to 150 students can study in the non-residential seminary. There is no age limit for enrolment, no fee for education. Besides traditional Islamic teachings, the madrasa authorities plan to provide lessons in Bengali, English, maths and some vocational training which will give them the opportunity to pursue better work opportunities and even more formal education in the future, if they so desire.

While talking to journalists at the inauguration ceremony, Abdur Rahman Azad, secretary general of the madrasa, explained what drove him to take this initiative. "For too long, they (transgender people) have been living a miserable life. They can't go to schools, madrasas or mosques. They have been victims of discrimination. We, society and the state, are to blame for this," he said. He added: "We want to end this discrimination. Allah does not discriminate between people. Islam treats everyone as a human being. Hijras should enjoy all rights like any other human being."

To those following the event, it was a truly uplifting moment—coming as it did on the eve of the global Transgender Awareness Week—and the first step, as the clerics called it, towards integrating the minority group into the wider social network.

You don't normally put the words "transgender" and "madrasa" together in the same sentence. School, maybe. But not madrasa, not in a country increasingly plagued by militant intolerance and more doctrinaire forms of Islam where the transgender community, commonly known as hijras, are often viewed as deviant or "sinners". The madrasa is thus a statement, a potent symbol of pluralism, a way to bring these people from the edge of society to the

centre of Islam, thereby the centre of life in Bangladesh. Equally, and perhaps more strikingly, it also challenges common assumptions about where the progressive ideas of pluralism and tolerance come from. Normally, we associate such ideas with secular activists and individuals, who we expect to lead movements for the rights and dignity of traditionally marginalised groups. Seldom do we expect to see *mawlanas* at the forefront of such a movement. The founders of the transgender madrasa have thus shown that the clerics, if properly motivated, can be a powerful driver of positive social change because of the influence religion holds over this country.

Education is of course an important

official recognition and other favourable decrees. Today, the hijras continue to endure transphobic slurs and attacks. They are still cast away by their own family, and forced to choose a life of dependence. They remain deprived of their inheritance as the inheritance law only recognises males and females. They are also not considered for jobs and other rights and services which are taken for granted by most people, people who have little idea about their gender-nonconforming counterparts but continue to hold sway over their life anyway.

How entrenched our biases are, and how dangerous our ignorance about them is, can be understood



Members of the hijra community read the holy Quran inside the newly-formed Dawatul Quran Third Gender Madrasa in Dhaka, on November 6, 2020.

PHOTO: AFP/MUNIR UZ ZAMAN

means to that end. And going forward, we need to make sure more such citizen-led institutions are formed, while the authorities begin a process of reintegrating students from the hijra and other marginalised communities into the mainstream education system. The objective should be to empower them so they can start fighting for their own rights, rather than being dependent on others to do so. Education has historically played a crucial role in empowering minority groups. An uneducated group can neither speak for themselves nor help those who want to help them, prolonging their crisis in the process.

But the magic of education is unlikely to work in this case unless we, the state and society in general, also go through a process of (re)educating ourselves. While we talk about their education and social reintegration, we must also remind ourselves to cleanse our minds of anti-hijra biases and prejudices, which are precisely why this community has had little change in their luck despite the

from the government's first attempt to implement the "hijra" category through an employment scheme, following the 2013 recognition. A report by the Human Rights Watch thus describes the incident: "In December 2014, the Ministry of Social Welfare invited hijras to apply for government employment—a major boon for a population usually consigned to begging, ritual performances at ceremonies, and sex work, and who invariably rely on hijra leaders (or *gurus*) for protection. At first welcoming this potentially empowering development, hijras seeking government jobs lined up for the initial interview."

But it didn't go as expected. They were humiliated by the ill-informed Social Welfare Department officials who asked them inappropriate questions about their gender identity and sexuality. Twelve of them were finally selected.

Then in January 2015, the health ministry called for a "thorough medical check-up" to identify "authentic hijras" among them. So the 12 finalists reported

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where "physicians ordered non-medical hospital staff such as custodians to touch the hijras' genitals while groups of staff and other patients observed and jeered—sometimes in private rooms, sometimes in public spaces. Hospital staff instructed some of the hijras to return multiple times, stretching over a number of weeks, to undergo additional examinations. Following these abuses at the hospital, photographs of the 12 hijras were released to online and print media, which claimed the hijras were 'really men' who were committing fraud to attain government jobs. Some hijras reported that publication of the photos sparked increased harassment from the general public and economic hardship for those involved."

If this is the outcome of a state trying to help, imagine the outcome of its inaction or indifference. Imagine how hard it must be for the hijras "enjoying" no such affirmative action or support or legal protection or whatever people need to lead a dignified life. All this points to the need for educating the "educators", those of us who sit in judgment of them but have no real knowledge of their challenges and sufferings. It also points to the need for sensitising state officials and policymakers responsible for undertaking measures related to the rights and welfare of the hijra community.

While the establishment of a transgender madrasa marks a much-needed first step—setting a precedent that should inspire other religious leaders, secular activists and even ordinary folks to come forward in this regard—it will be wise to remember how zealots in other Muslim countries tried to undermine such efforts. In 2008 in Indonesia, transgender activist Shinta Ratri founded Pondok Pesantren Waria al-Fatah, the first madrasa for transgender people in the world. It was built as a safe haven for the transwomen to learn and pray. No prejudice. No bigotry. No discrimination. But all that changed in 2016, when the madrasa was closed after threats of violence from conservative groups claiming that it was "violating Islamic precepts". We must remain careful that no such untoward incidents take place here.

The only way to counter any possible fundamentalist backlash is to establish more such institutions and also schools and vocational training centres, which will eventually bolster the pro-hijra campaign. The ultimate goal of all such initiatives, however, should be to create the path to empower them socially, legally, economically, politically, and psychologically. The same goes for all other marginalised minorities also. Let's hope the Kamrangirchar madrasa sparks off a social revolution to bring about the much-needed change for hijras.

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Covid-19 Is a Call for Unity

MIA SEPPO and BARDAN JUNG RANA

COVID-19 has swept across the planet like a tsunami. It is up to us how many waves of infection will follow. As we approach the year mark for the worldwide Covid-19 crisis, it is important to reflect on the progress made and on the challenges we must meet to emerge from this stronger than before.

As the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres remarked at this year's virtual UN General Assembly, marking the 75th anniversary of the UN, "Covid-19 is not only a wake-up call, it is a dress rehearsal for the world of challenges to come."

What strengths of the Covid-19 response can we build on?

Collaboration is vital to battle a virus that respects no boundaries and does not discriminate. Although time is never on our side in a swiftly moving pandemic, UN agencies and humanitarian partners worked with the government of Bangladesh to take quick action to support communities in responding to this virus.

Following the first official reports of Covid-19 in Bangladesh in March, frontline workers leapt into action. UN staff have been working alongside them, without interruption, despite restrictions on movement, risks to their health, and even after seeing colleagues lose their lives to Covid-19. The courage of the frontline workers including doctors, nurses, midwives, police officers, and sanitation workers—as they continue supporting those most vulnerable to Covid-19—is an inspiration for us all to do our part to control this virus.

The UN and partners have worked closely with the government in developing the Covid-19 Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan (BPRP) which lays out guidance for a response that spans a range of interventions. This includes strengthening the health system, testing capacity, training health workers, and creating guidelines for Covid-19 management which have all been top priorities in support of the government for the World Health Organization (WHO), the leading authority on the new virus.

WHO and the World Food Programme (WFP) are coordinating a UN Supply Chain Task Force to secure and distribute

essential supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), testing kits, and medical devices for treatment of severe cases. Despite disruptions to global supply chains, UN agencies and partners have supported the government's Covid-19 response by securing more than USD 13 million in medical supplies for Bangladesh, with another USD 30 million of supplies in the pipeline. This support has been made possible through a partnership with the World Bank, FSCO and USAID and other donors, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNHCR, UNDP and international partners including MSF and

is well-prepared for an immunisation drive.

In a country of 165 million people, Bangladesh has so far kept Covid-19 deaths below 10,000. But despite the relatively low death rate, even one life lost is one too many and the negative impacts of Covid-19 are felt in other ways too. There may be long-term health problems stemming from Covid-19 infections, economic ramifications for years to come, a rise in gender-based violence, rampant misinformation, and the erosion of trust in health systems and government. Surviving a wave of infection is like winning a battle, but the fight is far from over and we must

#MaskUpBangladesh and abide by the "no mask, no service" national policy. This means wearing a mask properly over your nose, mouth, and chin when around other people, and of course, keeping a safe distance from others, minimising potential exposure time in public places, and regularly washing our hands and high-contact surfaces.

Covid-19 can take a serious toll on mental health which calls for investment in socio-economic safety nets and psychological support services. Physical distancing doesn't have to become socially isolating! We can nurture a culture of kindness where we regularly reach out to our friends, family, and neighbours to check that they are okay. We can extend kindness to strangers and volunteer to help our communities. In this way, we can overcome stigma and discrimination and use Covid-19 as an opportunity to foster greater compassion and solidarity.

Pandemic fatigue has already begun to settle in, but we are seeing the impact of relaxing infection prevention and control measures, as multiple countries experience a surge in cases which is straining their health systems. The solution to pandemic fatigue is not to ease restrictions while transmission is rising, but to invest in stronger risk communication campaigns and community programmes that bolster support to keep up the good fight. Better understanding the different levels of risk in different situations will help people to make informed decisions about their activities.

This year, we have learned many lessons, and keeping an open mind to new evidence will help us learn many more. We have reasons to be hopeful. Concerted action and a willingness to change course in response to changing information will help us catch up and get ahead of this virus. We will continue working with the government to meet the challenges of Covid-19 and to build back better for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Covid-19 is a call to action for unity because this virus cannot be defeated by any country or community alone. Good health is a fundamental human right, and the foundation for global peace and prosperity.

Mia Seppo is the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh. Dr Bardan Jung Rana is WHO Representative to Bangladesh.

This year, we have learned many lessons, and keeping an open mind to new evidence will help us learn many more. We have reasons to be hopeful. Concerted action and a willingness to change course in response to changing information will help us catch up and get ahead of this virus.

Save the Children.

The UN has been working closely with BRAC and civil society to encourage infection prevention and control practices, such as mask wearing, distancing, and regular disinfection, and to support the government in accelerating post-lockdown recovery. The UN is supporting online education for students, providing new opportunities for migrant workers to make a living, and tackling a rise in gender-based violence with UN Women leading the charge. The Community Support Team (CST) initiative has been particularly helpful to families in urban Dhaka by providing an evaluation of Covid-19 symptoms, referrals to health providers for care, and giving families food and essential supplies to safely quarantine at home to slow community transmission.

The government of Bangladesh has already joined the WHO COVAX initiative, which aims to ensure equitable access and distribution of vaccines across the globe, because no one is safe until everyone is safe. WHO and UNICEF are working with the government to make sure the country

not get complacent.

What are the challenges ahead?

We cannot fight an enemy that we do not understand. We must support research and a science-based approach to pandemic management in order to be successful. The research and innovation in Bangladesh on Covid-19 will provide insights to help guide the national response and contribute to the global knowledge base. We all have a part to play and can commit to a #PledgeToPause before sharing information so that we can check first that it is true.

We must support the strengthening of health systems and ensure universal access to quality health care. This means expanding the number of skilled health workers and building robust health information systems with the capacity for managing large-scale emergencies. As long as this virus is actively circulating in the world, there is a chance of getting infected and a risk of reinfection that isn't guaranteed to be milder than the first. The safest course of action is to

US ELECTIONS

Fascism has not left the building



SHARBARI AHMED

I didn't burst into tears of relief and joy when it was finally announced that Joe Biden Jr. had won the presidency of the United States. A quiet sonic boom

released in my heart, radiating up to my brain. I sat still for ten minutes exactly. I know, because I checked my phone. A friend sent me a message on WhatsApp. It was matter of fact, strictly information, telling me Biden was the winner. I know how happy she was. Like me, I think she was shell-shocked. This is how trauma presents itself in some people. The cause of the trauma might be gone but the feelings of abuse do not dissipate immediately, if ever. And traumatised is exactly what the American people have been since 2016, though it must be unequivocally understood that Black America, Indigenous America and all BIPOC have been traumatised since the inception of the United States. But since more white people have fallen victim to the ever-insidious spectre of American fascism, the collective trauma of the nation has been front and centre.

For Black, indigenous and minorities of all stripes, white America has always been a fascist state. For Muslim Americans, we understood that we were the latest group to be labelled "The Big Bad", like communists were before us. Politicians, on both sides of the aisle, have always attempted to unify the country by presenting a collective enemy we can all get behind fearing and hating. It is how, in part, wars are justified and sometimes won. In the end, it's the lowest hanging fruit, appealing to the basest, bigoted instincts in all of us—and a mainstay of the American political playbook. Trump certainly did not invent bullying and race-baiting. Remember it was a beloved Democrat, Franklin

D. Roosevelt, who herded Japanese Americans into internment camps for the duration of WW2.

When Trump was elected, it didn't come as a shock to many of those who have always been victims of systemic racial oppression. Washington DC was the seat of an imperialist power for many citizens, not a haven of democracy and freedom. Most people, including myself, thought that Barack Obama's election indicated that the

(University of Delaware and North Carolina, 2016). This horrific statistic actually reflects a ten-year period, and thus the issue of missing and murdered Native women did not abate under Obama, nor did police brutality against Black men, women and children, even though the sitting president was half-Black and decidedly more vocal about racial profiling. Why is that?

The murder of George Floyd further propelled police violence against Black

the West Wing, dismantling white American privilege, and making nice with foreigners was too much for the segment of the population that believed the nation was being muddled by immigrants and minorities and those who espoused non-Christian values, such as being pro-choice or gay. Never mind that Obama's White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel was both an Israeli and an American citizen and decidedly pro-AIPAC

build a wall. These are irrefutable facts. Perhaps Obama, understanding that large swathes of White America and the GOP would find his presence intolerable, wanted to show his might, and that he was not going to favour POC at all costs, simply because he was one, and that he was willing to be hawkish against foreigners.

If we follow that line of reasoning, it points right back to the underlying truth that America, at least 70 million of them, the number that voted for Trump in spite of his mishandling of the pandemic, are most likely complete and utter bigots. At the very least, they are only concerned with their own needs and security, the rest of their fellow citizens and the world be damned. As one woman said to me when I asked her why she was voting for Trump, "I need to protect my wealth." She said it without batting an eyelash. What she said doesn't reflect what America has become under Trump; it's what it always was. Trump just allowed it to come to full light.

Perhaps that is why I wasn't immediately joyful when I knew Trump would finally be gone. Seventy million voices made themselves heard. They expressed that they were fully committed to supporting this atmosphere of venality, violence and cruelty. I am surrounded by 70 million fellow Americans who think I am a terrorist, or less than them, or that I don't deserve affordable health care or they want to police my uterus or tell me who I can love. Seventy million Americans who want to protect their bubble of privilege, even if it means fellow Americans may die. And not all of them are white. Yes, a new day is dawning, and I do feel a certain measure of relief, but 70 million is too great a number to think the national nightmare is over. They are already amassing strength and planning on how to extinguish the light in 2024. Fascism has not left the building.

Sharbari Ahmed is a Bangladeshi-American writer living in the US.



People celebrate on Black Lives Matter plaza across from the White House in Washington, D.C. on November 7, 2020, after Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 US presidential election. PHOTO: AFP

nation had evolved past its racist roots. This was naive on our part. Obama's presence did move the needle forward in many respects. One example involves Native American issues. Obama launched an Indigenous Initiative to address the cycle of poverty and denigration faced by Native Americans, yet in some areas of the country, Native American women are still more than 10 times more likely than the rest of the population to be murdered, according to a Department of Justice-funded study

Americans into the spotlight and, I think, contributed to the downfall of Trump, but his death was not an anomaly. Not by a long shot. Plainly put, America is an intrinsically racist country, and Trump's election in 2016 just reminded white Americans and others not directly and daily impacted by systemic racism, such as myself, that this is the case and always has been.

Eight years of having to watch a half-Black man, his Black wife, and their coterie of liberals gambol around

and not a proponent of Palestinian rights, and what of the number of drone attacks on foreign soil under the Obama administration? Under his watch, he took over the programme set out by George W. Bush and doubled the attacks in one year, dropping more bombs in that period than Bush did during his entire presidency. Also, we must acknowledge that the separation of children from their parents at the US-Mexico border was begun by Obama, not Trump. He just didn't

What does the second wave of Covid-19 mean for the apparel industry?



MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

URING the past few months, I had worked on a documentary for the BBC which looks at the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the apparel industry

of Bangladesh. That documentary caught me at an exceptionally low ebb. I was struggling amid the cancellation of orders and some brands being unwilling to pay for orders which had already been shipped.

Since that time, things briefly did pick up again for our industry as retail outlets began to reopen in the West, following huge self-imposed lockdowns. Since mid-summer, most European markets and the US, the main destinations for Bangladesh apparel exports, have been open for business. I was hopeful that we might be over the worst of the coronavirus in terms of economic impacts, although I was always aware it was going to be a bumpy road ahead.

In recent weeks, however, the mood has changed once again. Brands are putting major orders on hold. I have witnessed this first-hand, as well as hearing anecdotal evidence of this across the industry. The reason for this is clear: as we head into winter, and schools and other educational establishments return from summer

holidays, coronavirus cases are once again on the rise. In the wake of overflowing hospital beds, governments feel they have no choice but to impose lockdowns again in an attempt to control the virus.

This is not to complain about the brands. Since the pandemic started, there have been good brands and bad brands in terms of payments—some have been more supportive of their suppliers than others, and that will always be the way.

Instead, I want to raise the alarm

bells for what a second lockdown might mean for Bangladesh's apparel industry and, more importantly, its workers. In the BBC documentary alluded to above, it was made very clear that many garment workers suffered a lot in the wake of the pandemic in March. Some spoke on film of their fears not being about the coronavirus killing them but about poverty if the factories where they are employed could not continue their operation.

I read that for most people, coronavirus is not a serious illness.



PHOTO: REUTERS/MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN

File photo of women working at a garment factory in Dhaka after factories reopened in April following a month-long lockdown.

Its mortality rate among 20 to 30-year olds—the core demographic of garment workers in Bangladesh—is tiny. Coronavirus kills mainly people who are over 65 and the obese and/or people with serious underlying health conditions. I am not trying to downplay this virus which, after all, has killed a great many people around the world. Rather, I wish to bring into focus the problems facing Bangladesh in the here and now.

Bangladesh has a fairly young population and obesity is certainly not a problem in our country compared to western nations. Bangladesh has had just over 6,000 deaths from Covid-19. By way of comparison, the UK, a country with a far smaller population, has had almost 50,000 deaths. The US has had more than 200,000 deaths from Covid-19.

This, then, is the cruel irony: while our customer countries, with their ageing populations and serious obesity issues, face the Grim Reaper of coronavirus hanging over their heads, in Bangladesh our fear is about something entirely different—poverty and associated starvation. The coronavirus might not kill us directly, but its impacts on global apparel supply chains threaten the very fabric of our industry and its people.

Our apparel industry was teetering on the brink in autumn. We thought we were through the worst but further lockdowns in our key markets this winter could take us right over the edge and into the abyss. The impacts on

workers and their families do not bear thinking about. I fear a future in which many will face destitution if this crisis goes on for many more months.

Is there a solution? As well as support from the Bangladesh government, we need support from the global community to provide a safety net for garment workers. We as an industry have talked for years about inclusiveness and fairness, and now is the time for all of us to stand up and be counted on these issues.

Are we, as an industry, serious about the Sustainable Development Goals? SDG number 8 is about promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

At full employment, the apparel industry in Bangladesh employs more than four million people, many of them young women. Without support, our industry faces a financial Armageddon, with the potential loss of hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of factories and millions of jobs.

With no safety net for those right at the bottom of our industry pyramid, the ramifications are poverty, malnutrition and even death. An industry that prides itself on sustainability, and whose main actors have repeatedly cited the SDGs in recent years, cannot afford to stand by and allow to happen the slow-motion car-crash we are seeing in supply chains.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE). Email: mostafiz@denimexpert.com

QUOTABLE Quote



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

Scottish essayist, poet, and author.

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

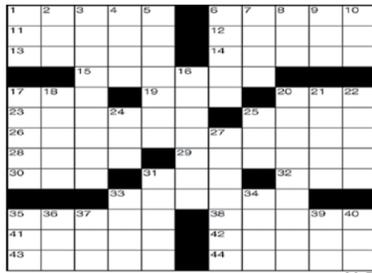
- 1 Worries
- 6 Outspoken
- 11 Man of morals
- 12 Entertain
- 13 Paris subway
- 14 Shop turner
- 15 More black
- 17 Flock father
- 19 Crumb carrier
- 20 Vacuum lack
- 23 Galahad's mother
- 25 Make sound
- 26 Fellow puppies
- 28 Great serves
- 29 Surname in punk rock
- 30 "You bet!"
- 31 Write hastily
- 32 Convened

- 33 Yacht spot
- 35 Light fare
- 38 Party prep
- 41 Blow away
- 42 Handle
- 43 Used a keyboard
- 44 Car of the '50s

DOWN

- 1 Rick's pianist
- 2 Kicker's aid
- 3 Some guesses
- 4 Frayed
- 5 Washington city
- 6 Man's servant
- 7 Poet Khayyám
- 8 Director's cry
- 9 Fire product
- 10 Writer Harper
- 16 Wrong
- 17 Track event

- 18 Ralph Kramden's wife
- 20 Add machines and conveyer belts
- 21 Papas of "Z"
- 22 Stopwatch button
- 24—"a deal!"
- 25 Motor part
- 27 "The Dance" painter
- 31 Blasé
- 33 Puzzle book feature
- 34 Call for
- 35 Was inactive
- 36 Writer Tan
- 37 Pet perch
- 39 Salt Lake City player
- 40 Campaign pro



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

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

GRAPE VINE

Kazi Shuvo's Two New Songs

Kazi Shuvo recently sang on a song, titled *Ice*, which was written by Jasim Uddin and given tune to by Murad Noor. Aside from that, Kazi Shuvo has also released another song, called *Nithur Faki*, which was written by Prosenjit Mondal and given tune to by Obhi Akash. Music videos for both songs have been planned and will be released in the near future. Kazi Shuvo said, "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to release any music for quite some time. I was very happy to finally make two songs after seven long months. I hope that the audience will enjoy both songs."



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

Airin's NEW PROJECT



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A talented young actor who has been showcasing her talents in Dhaka cinemas is Airin. She is currently working on a new film, *Black Light*, which is being directed by National Film Award winning director Riazul Rizu. The film will also feature actor Shahed Sharif. Airin said, "The story has an amazing plot and shares a unique message. For the film, we had to work at different tourist spots. I believe that the audience will love this film." Airin has also appeared in movies like *Bhalobasha Zindabad*, *Ek Prithibi Prem* and *Mayabini* among others.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

Chanchal Chowdhury's New Project

Chanchal Chowdhury is beloved for showing his acting prowess in projects like *Aynabaazi* and *Monpura*, among several others. Now, he will be seen in a new film, *Darkroom*. The film, which is being directed by Sohrab Dodul, will be released on a web-platform. Actors Tarin Jahan and Azmeri Haque Badhon will also be starring in this project. Sohrab Dodul said, "We finished shooting for the film some time back. This is a paralogical thriller story. I was very impressed by the acting here, and I am certain that audiences will enjoy this."



Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

COVER STORY

A GUIDING MELODY

Renowned singer Fahmida Nabi continues mesmerising her audience with her sweet melodic voice and versatility. Over the years, the singer released various albums starting from classical to modern songs. The artiste has been honoured with many prestigious accolades, including the 'National Film Award' as the Best Female Playback Singer in 2007 for the song 'Lukochuri Lukochuri Golpo'. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the singer talked about her life achievements, family and music.



Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we have with us my dear friend and everyone's beloved singer and composer, Fahmida Nabi. Fahmida Nabi: Thank you for having me here! I also want to thank the audience for being with us today.

Rafi Hossain: As a singer who has been a part of the mainstream media for many years now, what do you want to say about the current state of the music industry?

Fahmida Nabi: Music is something that provides people with comfort and happiness. Music is a form of art, and looking at it or its success through the number of views or likes received would be illogical. You can't judge the talent or contribution of a musician this way, and an artist will never view music in such a manner either. Only businessmen looking for profit might see it that way. For instance, I was listening to a song by Shirley Bassey recently, and it had very few views. However, you definitely cannot use that to say that she is an unsuccessful artist. I think this obsession with the number of likes and views is a very new, and incorrect, phenomenon. If a song is truly exceptional, it will stand the test of time and remain a favorite in audience's hearts even in the long run.

Rafi Hossain: Your family has always been heavily involved with music, including your sister, Samina Chowdhury. Do you want to share anything about that?

Fahmida Nabi: Aside from being my sister, I really admire Samina as a singer. She puts her love into her songs and sings them with charisma, and she always captivates her audience. I can't think of a single song of hers that have been received poorly. This takes a lot of effort and hard work.

Rafi Hossain: Is there ever a sense of competition since you both are in the same industry?

Fahmida Nabi: When we work together for a duet, our goal is to sing the song perfectly. We hope that our song will be well received by the audience, and I believe they are as *Chiquitita*, for example, gained a lot of popularity. Duets are about teamwork, and so the focus is always on our efforts to get a satisfactory result, rather than a sense of competition.

Rafi Hossain: Does your family provide feedback on your songs?

Fahmida Nabi: My family is my biggest critique. My mother, especially, points out even the smallest of flaws. Other than that, Samina and Antora also give their feedback and try to highlight areas that can be improved. My daughter is also a very big critique of mine. In my album where I sang Rabindra Sangeet, she helped me find my mistakes and perfect the song.

Rafi Hossain: Usually, when singing someone else's song, everyone brings their own twist to it. What are your thoughts on that?

Fahmida Nabi: I think that is quite natural as it is not possible to copy or sing a song exactly the way the artist has sung it. It's rather a sign that someone has treated the song as their own, and added their unique style to it. I'm sure this happens when we sing our father's songs. I remember going to Shahnaz Rahmatullah's house many years back, where she asked me to sing one of her songs. I unintentionally sang one part slightly differently, which she pointed out and said that it meant the song had touched me deeply. It was amazing to have received such a compliment from an exceptional singer like her. Similarly, I love when someone sings my songs in their own way. Someone might even like that version better! It doesn't matter how the song has been sung.

What's truly rewarding is when it has been sung with affection and care.

Rafi Hossain: How many albums of yours have been released?

Fahmida Nabi: I have sixteen solo albums. Other than that, there are many duets, mix albums, and YouTube singles released as well. Among these, *Dupurer Ekla Pakhi* is very special as everyone involved with it worked very hard and gave their best. It was also a sort of turning point for me as I was a little distant from the industry during that time. The album had slow and sad songs, and it was released during a difficult time for many people. I believe it resonated with the audience and their emotions, and that is why it was well received by them as well.

Rafi Hossain: Unlike many established artists, you work quite frequently with new people in the industry. What is

"I remember going to Shahnaz Rahmatullah's house many years back, where she asked me to sing one of her songs. I unintentionally sang one part slightly differently, which she pointed out and said that it meant the song had touched me deeply."

his assistant to tell me to add a line to one of his songs, which was a farewell. He said that it would be me who would deliver his songs to the masses.

Rafi Hossain: Lucky bhai always praised you all. How was your experience learning from him?

Fahmida Nabi: Samina learned to play the harmonium like piano chords from Lucky chacha. He gave us his songs orally, and asked us to share them with the public. The last song he composed is in one of my albums. He gave us his love, teachings, and trust, for which we are truly grateful. He truly loved music, and surrounded himself with it until his last days.

Rafi Hossain: Tell us about the song 'Lukochuri'.

Fahmida Nabi: When I was first approached to sing *Lukochuri* composed by Debojyoti Mishra, I was surprised. I hadn't been singing for films at that time, and it was an exceptionally beautiful song. The recording was delayed by a year, and I was eagerly waiting for it. Later, it was loved by the audience and was a turning point in my career as well. I even won the National Film Award for The Best Female Playback Singer for it. *Ongshobishes*, similarly, is a very special song. The track for the song was changed ten times! Enamul Karim Nirjhar is a perfectionist, and he wanted proper enunciation, and ensured that the music did not overshadow the song itself.

Rafi Hossain: I find you to be very inspiring. Where do you get your strength and perseverance?

Fahmida Nabi: I achieved my strength through my experiences. I learn new lessons as I go through life every day. I think that is essential for everyone. My career has also helped me develop this strength, as I have had to face many personal obstacles, but still had to continue pursuing my work and giving it my best. Rather than suffering during my struggles, I try to learn from them. My daughter, Anmol, is also a source of my strength. In life, she grounds me. I want to pass this strength onto her.

Rafi Hossain: It was great to have you here today. Thank you so much for being with us.

Fahmida Nabi: I had a lovely time as well, since I enjoy discussing music and the arts in general. You called me a fighter and praised me for my strength, but I want to tell the audience that I am not the only one. Especially during this time, everyone is persevering, and I would only ask them to take things easy, be cheerful, and to love themselves. I want to thank everyone for being here today.

Shreya Shomoyeeta



your philosophy behind that?

Fahmida Nabi: I always enjoy a challenge. When working alongside another artist, I don't think about how long they have been in the industry. What matters to me is if their sense and choice of music matches mine, and if we can connect. If it does, then the result will undoubtedly be great. I worked with many new artists like Nipo, Tomal, Shajib. I even worked with *Borno* on their first song. They usually have new and interesting ideas, and applying it to my knowledge and experience works really well. Moreover, I try not to establish any sense of seniority, but rather form a friendship and connection with them.

Rafi Hossain: Could you share your experience with Selim Al Deen sir?

Fahmida Nabi: I believe it will take some time for an audience to be developed for Selim Al Deen sir's songs. Initially, I could not interpret their meaning accurately either. But, with experience, I understood that they were about life and living it simply. When I did understand and connect with them, it suddenly felt much easier to sing them. I constantly try to apply sir's teaching in my life and work. I am forever indebted to him. Even during his last days, he asked

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.

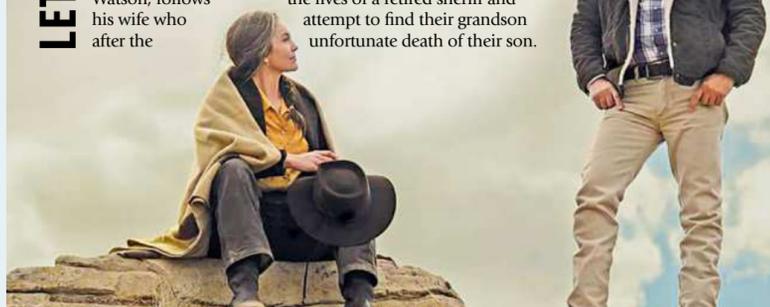
I Told Sunset About You

I Told Sunset About You is a Thai romantic-drama series, following the lives of two high school friends who reunite after years of silence and their journey of discovering complicated feelings. The show was directed by Naruebet Kuno, produced by Kriangkrai Vachiratamporn under the banner of *Nadao Bangkok*, and stars Putthipong Assaratanakul, Krit Amnuaydechkorn and Juraporn Bos, among others. It was first released on October 22, 2020 on *Line TV*.



LET HIM GO

Let Him Go is a neo-Western drama film, released on November 6, 2020 in theatres. It was written and directed by Thomas Bezucha who also produced it alongside Mitchell Kaplan and Paula Mazur under the banner of *Mazur Kaplan Company*, distributed by *Focus Features*, and stars Diane Lane, Kevin Costner and Lesley Manville, among others. The storyline, which is based on the eponymous novel by Larry Watson, follows the lives of a retired sheriff and his wife who attempt to find their grandson after the unfortunate death of their son.



Love and Monsters is a monster-adventure film, written by Brian Duffield and Matthew Robinson, directed by Michael Mathews, produced by Shawn Levy and Dan Cohen under the banners of *21 Laps Entertainment* and *Entertainment One*, and stars Dylan O'Brien, Jessica Henwick and Dan Ewing, among others. The plot, which is set in a world plagued by monsters, follows the dangerous journey of a boy to be with his girlfriend. The film hit the theatres on October 16, 2020.

Amina Hossain

Qatar match gets FIFA nod

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite having insufficient preparation, Bangladesh are finally playing their Asian Cup and World Cup Qualifying fixture against Qatar next month as FIFA approved Qatar's proposal to host Bangladesh on December 4 outside of the FIFA calendar.

"Qatar and Bangladesh will play the first fixture of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 in over a year, with their Group E clash rescheduled for December 4, 2020," read a statement on the AFC website yesterday.

"Clubs will not be obligated to release their players for the December 4 fixture, which will be staged outside of FIFA's international match calendar, however, both national teams are overwhelmingly comprised of players based in their respective domestic leagues."

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Abu Nayem Shohag said they haven't received the official letter from Qatar but his Qatar counterpart verbally ensured the confirmation of FIFA's approval.

Amid Bangladesh's preparation for two Nepal friendlies on Friday and Tuesday, Qatar proposed Bangladesh to play outside the FIFA window as the World Cup Qualifiers were deferred on August 12 to the next year due to the coronavirus pandemic. The local game's governing body also gave their nod to play, subject to meeting some conditions and FIFA/AFC approval. "The national team are supposed to leave the country on November 19 for Qatar. The boys are also scheduled to play two practice matches on November 25 and 28," said Shohag.



Teammates converge on Biplu Ahmed to celebrate the forward's birthday during the national team's training session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

First friendly to be a test of booters' prep

SPORTS REPORTER



With a day to go before the first friendly against Nepal tomorrow, the Bangladesh footballers -- who started training less

than three weeks ago -- seem happy with their fitness, but Australian fitness trainer Ivan Razlog believes it will still take some time to become fully fit.

"We had started training with the friendly matches of November 13 and 17 in mind. We are more or less 90 to 100 percent ready to play the first match. The fitness levels of the players have improved significantly, along with the mentality. So, we are expecting a good result tomorrow," said centre-back Tapu Barman after a two-hour training session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"Whatever deficiency we have at the moment, we can overcome it if all the players can give their 100 percent on the ground, and I believe the 10 percent gap will have no impact," said the long-serving Tapu.

The charges of Jamie Day started training on September 24 under local coaches before the British coach took charge on November 1, while the Australian fitness trainer has been working for just four days since joining the team on November 7.

"The players have been positive during training and they have been training well and positively. We can say after the friendly game how they are, and it will take time. They are very good in training and have been very positive in the short time since I have been here," said Razlog when asked about the players' current level of fitness.

Razlog may want to be noncommittal on the players' fitness after just four days, but the booters at the camp seemed to be very energetic in their short run, passing and positioning drills after a half-hour stretching session. It was also seen that coaching staff used fitness monitors to gather key information about the players ahead of tomorrow's match.

"Our fitness level is much better than when we had started. It was possible because of the training schedules the coaches set and which

we followed at home during the coronavirus [shutdown]. That training is now helping us to regain our fitness in the national camp. So, we are hopeful of doing well in the match," said left-back Rahmat Mia.

Head coach Jamie was also seen working with a set of players in a bid to settle on his playing eleven, which feature one or two new faces, but the 41-year-old coach generally wants to continue with proven players for the rest of the eleven.

"After dividing the players into two groups, Jamie has worked technically and tactically with us. So, I think he has a playing eleven in mind and he also worked on it today," said Tapu.

Rahmat said, "All the players in the squad are good and anyone can secure places in the starting eleven because the calculation of old or new won't work here; instead, the performance of the players in practice will be play the key role when picking the eleven."

Tapu and Rahmat both believed that the lack of a practice match has been the only shortcoming in preparation, but were happy that they improved physically and mentally for the matches against Nepal.

Five in Grade A for draft

SPORTS REPORTER



The players' draft of the upcoming Bangabandhu T20 Cup will take place at a hotel in the capital today as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is set to crank the cricket's resuming process up a notch after the coronavirus-induced break.

The board did, however, arrange the BCB President's Cup -- a three-team 50-over competition -- as the first step towards resuming cricket in the country last month and it managed to successfully complete that ensuring health safety through creating a bio-bubble. But the tournament was more of a test-case from the BCB's point of view before resuming domestic cricket, involving more players.

Fortune Barishal, Beximco Dhaka, Minister Group Rajshahi, Gemcon Khulna and Gazi Group Chattogram are the five teams that will be participating in the T20 tournament.

The BCB is yet to announce the schedule of the tournament that is expected to begin later this month.

The month-long tournament will be played in a double-round system with each team playing against each other twice before the top two teams play the final.

Players in the draft are divided into four grades -- A, B, C and D. Shakib Al

Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mustafizur Rahman are in Grade A and will receive Taka 15 lakh each.

Although the Tigers' T20 skipper Mahmudullah has tested Covid-19 positive, the all-rounder is expected to complete his 14-day quarantine by the time the tournament begins. Meanwhile, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who pulled his hamstring last month during practice, will also be available from the first week of December.

A total of 157 cricketers are included in the draft. Aside from the aforementioned five Grade A players, 20 Grade B players will receive Tk 10 lakh each, 25 Grade C players will receive Tk six lakh each while 108 Grade D players will get Tk four lakh each. Each team can have a maximum of sixteen cricketers in the squad in an open draft with teams calling through a lottery system.

All the teams will stay at the same hotel in order to create an effective bio-bubble. The drafted cricketers, except for the ones in the national team, High Performance unit and Under-19 side, have already undergone a mandatory fitness test.

Although the benchmark for the beep test was set at 11, players who are worthy and have scored close to 11 in the beep test have also been included in the draft. The BCB has already invited an Expression of interest (EOI) for the live broadcasting as all the matches will be telecast live.



It seems as if Shakib Al Hasan just cannot stay away from the spotlight. While he had often grabbed headlines for negative reasons in the past, the ace all-rounder had nothing to do with yesterday's incident. In fact it was a case of miscommunication on the part of BCB fitness trainer Tushar Kanti Howlader, who announced that Shakib had scored 'something above 13' points in the beep test -- taken by a group of cricketers as a prerequisite for the upcoming Bangabandhu T20 Cup. Soon, rumours were doing the rounds that Shakib, who returned to cricket after a year-long ban, had top-scored in the beep test with 13.7 points and that, understandably, created a massive hype among fans and media. But hours later BCB clarified that the all-rounder scored just close to the benchmark score of 11.

PHOTO: BCB



'Rohit should be India's T20 captain'

REUTERS, New Delhi

India should embrace split-captaincy and put Rohit Sharma in charge of their T20 squad, several former cricketers said after the opener led Mumbai Indians to a fifth Indian Premier League (IPL) title on Tuesday.

Virat Kohli leads India across formats, while Rohit usually deputises for him in limited-overs cricket.

Rohit topscored with a fluent 68 as Mumbai crushed Delhi Capitals in the final to cement their position as the IPL's most successful team. Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore, who are yet to win an IPL title in 13 seasons, were eliminated in the playoffs.

"If Rohit Sharma doesn't become India captain, it's their loss, not Rohit's," former test opener Gautam Gambhir told the

ESPNcricinfo website.

"Rohit has won five IPL titles, he is the most successful captain in the history of the tournament. "It would be a shame if he is not made the white-ball captain after this. Because there's nothing more Rohit Sharma can do." Gambhir, who led Kolkata Knight Riders to two IPL titles, said Rohit was a significantly better captain than Kohli in these formats.

"Why can't you have split captaincy? It's not a bad idea." "I'm not suggesting Kohli is a terribly bad captain but both got the same platform and you can judge who's better. For me, Rohit Sharma stands out as leader."

Former England captain Michael Vaughan felt delegating T20 captaincy to Rohit would help reduce Kohli's workload.

"I honestly believe that the Indian team will be better off in Twenty20 cricket being led by Rohit Sharma," Vaughan told Cricbuzz website.

Brazil, Argentina grapple with injuries

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil must confront a growing injury list that includes star forward Neymar as they resume World Cup qualifying this week, while Argentina are out to extend their perfect start at home to neighbours Paraguay.

Brazil host Venezuela in Sao Paulo on Friday (Saturday morning in Bangladesh) chasing a third win in as many matches after launching their Qatar 2022 campaign with victories over Bolivia and Peru.

However, Brazil coach Tite will be without Neymar after the world's most expensive player injured his thigh while on Champions League duty. Neymar, 28, bagged a hat-trick in a 4-2 win in Lima last time out to surpass Ronaldo as Brazil's second leading scorer in history. His tally of 64

goals leaves him 13 shy of Pele's record.

Despite his latest setback Neymar will still travel with the squad amid hopes that he may recover in time for the trip to Uruguay on November 17.

However, national team coordinator Juninho Paulista said Tite told PSG sporting director Leonardo that he "would never risk a player's health". Defender Thiago Silva has tightened up the Chelsea defence since his arrival in England, but the 36-year-old has warned the crowded global fixture list is taking its toll on players.

"You have to keep endlessly reinventing yourself. We're losing players infected by Covid-19, or others who get hurt because we're playing too many matches. We're not machines," he said.

"We saw recent studies showing it's more than likely you get injured after four or five matches come one after another (every three days). It's very

worrying for us."

While goalkeeper Alisson Becker and forward Gabriel Jesus return after injury, Brazil will also be without Casemiro, Philippe Coutinho and Fabinho.

Argentina, who began qualifying with narrow wins over Ecuador and Bolivia, are hoping Lionel Messi will be fit for both their games against Paraguay (On Friday, Bangladesh time) and Peru.

The Barcelona forward is said to be nursing a sore ankle, leaving Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni considering his options if his captain is unavailable.

Paulo Dybala is again missing from the squad along with Sergio Aguero, although Angel Di Maria has been recalled for the first time in over a year. Lautaro Martinez will likely start up front while super-sub Joaquin Correa could be rewarded for his winning goal in the altitude of La Paz.

Lucas Alario has also forced his

way into contention after scoring seven goals for Bayer Leverkusen in his past four Bundesliga appearances. Uruguay meet Colombia in Barranquilla on Friday (Saturday in Bangladesh) attempting to bounce back from last month's 4-2 loss in Ecuador.

Luis Suarez is the joint leading scorer in qualifying with three goals, all of them penalties, carrying over his form from club level with Atletico Madrid.

Real Madrid midfielder Fede Valverde is out with a fractured shin and Maxi Gomez is absent due to a knee problem for Uruguay.

Last year's Copa America runners-up Peru on Friday (Saturday in Bangladesh) play Chile -- the country that won the tournament in 2015 and 2016.

Both nations are looking to breathe life into their qualifying bids in Santiago after collecting just a point from the opening two rounds.



Although Argentina and Brazil players seemed joyful during their training sessions, both South American giants are struggling with a number of injuries. Brazil are without the likes of Neymar, Casemiro and Philippe Coutinho as they host Venezuela in a World Cup qualifier on Saturday morning (Bangladesh Time) while Argentina will have to make do without Paulo Dybala and Sergio Aguero when they take on Paraguay on Friday (Bangladesh Time).

PHOTO: TWITTER



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 Cox's Bazar

PROUD
 CONSTRUCTION
 PARTNER

SHAH CEMENT

Nothing will stop power transition

Says Biden, brands Trump's refusal to concede an 'embarrassment'

AGENCIES

President-elect Joe Biden said that nothing would stop the transfer of power in the US government, while President Donald Trump remained defiant, hoping to cling on to power somehow defying all odds.

Trump has declined to concede, instead lodging unsupported charges of election fraud that have gained little traction. His campaign said on Tuesday it planned to file a lawsuit in Michigan to halt the state from certifying its results, a day after it brought a similar action in the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

Judges so far have tossed out lawsuits in Michigan and Georgia brought by Trump's campaign, and legal experts say the litigation has little chance of changing the outcome of the Nov 3 election.

"We're going to be going, moving along, in a consistent manner, putting together our administration, the White House, and reviewing who we're going to pick for the Cabinet positions, and nothing's going to stop that," he said on Tuesday.

"I just think it's an embarrassment, quite frankly," he said when asked what he thinks about Trump's refusal to acknowledge defeat.

"How can I say this tactfully? I think it will not help the president's legacy," Biden told reporters in his home town of Wilmington, Delaware.

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A trader sorting through medical waste out in the open after collecting them from different hospitals and clinics in Chattogram city's Gol Pahar area. Most of the hospitals do not bother to comply with the regulations for proper waste disposal, risking the spread of various deadly diseases.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Post-BREXIT UK Duty-free benefits to continue for Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will continue to enjoy duty free benefits for the export of its products to the United Kingdom after the end of the Brexit transition period, the UK government has said.

Bangladesh and 46 other least developed countries will not face any tariffs after that period. Low-income and lower-middle income countries will also benefit from lower tariffs compared to the UK Global Tariff, UK Department for International Trade, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office said in a statement on Tuesday.

The trade preference scheme will cover any eligible countries that do not have their existing trade agreements transitioned into a new agreement with the UK.

"Free trade helps businesses to grow, boosts the economy and creates new jobs. We are

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DOPE TEST FOR DRIVERS BRTA moves to implement PM's directive

Sits today to devise plan

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The authorities concerned have started planning the implementation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's directive to bring public transport workers under a dope testing system.

Drug addiction is considered one of the major reasons behind road accidents.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has called a meeting today to find a way to bring the huge number of public transport drivers under the test.

With BRTA's Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder in the chair, leaders of transport owners and workers, along with police officials, are expected to take part in the meeting held at the BRTA's head office.

"This is a preparatory meeting to find the way to implement the prime minister's directive," Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

They would later talk with health experts and officials of the narcotics department to set how and where the tests

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Black marketeers, hoarders warned



Representatives of Bangladesh Teachers' Association present a flower bouquet to Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on November 12, 1972 on the occasion of his being awarded the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal.

November 12, 1972
 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

DON'T CHARGE EXORBITANT PRICES: BANGABANDHU

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman says the government is determined to take stern action against forces responsible for aggravating the miseries of the people. In a stern note of warning against profiteers, hoarders, black marketeers and spurious traders the prime minister says if they don't mend their ways, the government would take stringent measures against them. He asks the traders not to charge exorbitant prices from the public, who are victims of oppression and atrocities during the occupation period.

BANGABANDHU VISITS POET NAZRUL

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Missing JnU student in CID custody

She was arrested over 'derogatory' FB remarks on religion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department in a text message to reporters yesterday evening said they arrested Jagannath University student Tithy Sarkar who had been missing since October 25.

She was sued under the Digital Security Act yesterday for making "derogatory" comments about religion on Facebook.

The message stated that CID would hold a press briefing at 12:00pm today about the arrest.

Contacted, Jisan Haque, senior assistant superintendent of CID (media), said, "CID arrested Tithy in the evening. That is all we can disclose at the moment. The rest will be revealed at the press briefing."

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Pigeon message found 110 years after it was sent



CNN ONLINE

A message lost by a carrier pigeon has been found some 110 years after it was sent.

Found in a field in mid-September by a couple out hiking in Ingersheim, northeastern France, the message was sent from one German military officer to another in 1910, when the area was still part of Germany, according to Dominique Jarde, curator of the nearby Linge Memorial museum.

Jarde told CNN the message was folded up inside a small aluminum capsule and the script is difficult to decipher.

A German friend, whom Jarde asked to translate the message, said the officer, who was based in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Father, son found dead in a city flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the hanging bodies of a man and his son from a Moghbazar flat in the capital last evening.

The deceased were identified as Khairul Islam Sohag, 55, and his son Shaharat Islam Areen, 14, said Selim Shahriar Jibon, sub-inspector of Hatirjheel Police Station.

The bodies were recovered from separate rooms of the flat on the fourth floor of a building at Nayatola around 5:30pm and later sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 12

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
 AZAN 5:00 12:45 3:45 5:25 7:00
 JAMAAT 5:35 1:15 4:00 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BSF returns 2 Rab men after 9 hrs

Attacked by narcos, they took shelter in Indian village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force has returned two Rab members to the BGB on Tuesday night, about nine hours after they were taken into custody from the house of an Indian national along the border in Dinajpur's Chirirbandar upazila.

The two -- ASP Shyamal Sharma, 32, and constable Abu Bakkar, 38, -- took shelter in the house on the Indian territory after coming under attack from a group of drug dealers and their family members in Saraswatipur village of the same upazila, said Rab officials.

According to officials of the elite force, a five-member team of plainclothes Rab men went to Saraswatipur around 1:30pm on Tuesday to arrest drug dealers. But drug dealers, their family

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Workers at a publishing house are busy binding textbooks for school students who are to begin the new year's session. The photo was taken at the capital's Sutrapur area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

US records over 200,000 Covid cases in 24 hrs

Russia says its Sputnik V vaccine 92pc effective

AGENCIES

The United States on Tuesday far exceeded its previous daily record of new Covid-19 cases, adding 201,961 cases in 24 hours, according to the tally compiled by Johns Hopkins University, as pandemic continued to wreak havoc in Europe.

The high number, partly due to data delayed over the weekend, took total cases in the US to 10,238,243, with a total of 239,588 deaths, as of 80130 GMT. In the 24-hour period, 1,535 deaths from Covid-19 were registered, a record in recent months as the US struggles to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,275,113 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday.

At least 51,531,660 cases of coronavirus have been registered. Of these, at least 33,300,900 are now considered recovered.

On Tuesday, 10,601 new deaths and 662,214 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were the United States with 1,535, followed by France with 1,220 and Mexico with 587.

The United States is the worst-affected country with 239,695 deaths from 10,258,090 cases. At least 3,961,873 people have been declared recovered.