

**BANKING WOES**  
 Probashi Kallyan Bank struggles to provide services due to manpower shortage  
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# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 299 | AGRHAVAN 6, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | RABUIS SANI 5, 1442 HIJRI | 12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

**"It sends a horrible message about who we are as a country."**  
 US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EFFORTS TO OVERTURN THE ELECTION RESULTS DESPITE SETBACKS

**"As we confront this generation's biggest economic challenge, we must not repeat the mistakes of history by retreating into protectionism."**  
 NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER JACINDA ARDERN WHILE SPEAKING AT THE APEC CEO DIALOGUES

**"... My mother is in every page of this book and without her I wouldn't be here and my work wouldn't be here."**  
 SCOTTISH AUTHOR DOUGLAS STUART AFTER WINNING THE BOOKER PRIZE FOR FICTION WITH HIS FIRST NOVEL "SHUGGIE BAIN"

## GRADUATION FROM LDC STATUS

# Hope brightens

Bangladesh ahead in all three criteria set by UN for becoming a developing country

	Gross National Income	Human Assets Index	Economic Vulnerability Index	Year
Required	\$ 1230 or above	66 or above	Below 32	
Bangladesh scored	<b>\$1,272</b>	<b>72.8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>\$1,640</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>2020</b>

**REJAUU KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB**

Bangladesh is going to compete in the second review of a UN panel next year for graduation to a developing country from a least developed one as it met all the three criteria for getting out of the LDC bloc.

Dhaka has already sent the latest status report on the three eligibility criteria -- Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Human Assets Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) -- to the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) that makes assessment for the graduation on the basis of the indices.

In all the three criteria, Bangladesh is well ahead of the required thresholds. It has performed better in two categories -- GNI and HAI -- than that in 2018 when it got the first recommendation from the CDP for graduating to a developing country.

However, the country's position in the

third criterion fell, yet it's much above the required threshold.

The UN committee took data from March 2018 to April this year as per the timeframe it set for assessing Bangladesh's progress in its second review. This means the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the country's economy has not been taken into account.

A country must exceed the threshold on two of the three criteria in two consecutive triennial reviews to be considered for graduation.

According to the UN's graduation threshold, the GNI per capita of a country has to be \$1,230 or above. Bangladesh's GNI per capita is now \$1,640 -- well above the ceiling. The per capita income was \$1,272 during the last triennial review in 2018.

In terms of the HAI, a country must have a score of 66 or above. Bangladesh has performed better than it did in 2018 as its



**Retailers throng Karwan Bazar in the capital to buy vegetables around 6:30am yesterday. Traders show a blatant disregard for health safety rules at a time when the country is seeing a spike in Covid-19 cases. Many of the cases are said to be driven by a lack of social distancing and mask wearing.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

### PM for global action against widespread use of antibiotics

**UNB, Dhaka**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought coordinated global action to monitor the nature of infections, implement the required control measures and raise awareness against the widespread use of antibiotics.

"We should also ensure affordable access to new antibiotics by all. For this, I also call for increased internationally coordinated investment for more research for inventing a new generation of antibiotics," she said.

The PM was speaking at the press event of the launching of "One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance"

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## Rehabs in need for revamps

Abuse, not treatment, is what patients experience in many centres; proper monitoring absent

**MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA**

It was "out of curiosity" that Mohammad Limon (not his real name) first took marijuana with his friends nearly two decades ago. But soon he started taking the substance regularly and got addicted.

A few years of dabbling in weed, then heroin and finally yaba, Limon became heavily reliant on drugs. His desperate parents got him admitted to rehabilitation centres in Dhaka and Gazipur several times.

But what he experienced in the centres left a deep scar on his mind. In his own words, he was treated "like a criminal" without any compassion or understanding.

"Beating, punching and being left to starve as punishment or giving sleeping pills are the ways of treatment in the rehabs," Limon told The Daily Star.

"Whenever I became restive because of my addiction, the hospital staff would beat me up with sticks and punch me. This inhuman treatment at times was unbearable for me. I still have nightmares," he added.

Limon's words speak volumes about the approaches of treating patients at many private rehabilitation centres in the country. The Daily Star spoke to 10 such people who got admitted to these centres and got a similar picture.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health survey in 2018, there were around 36 lakh drug addicts in Bangladesh.

Of 351 residential rehabilitation centres across the country, 105 are in the Dhaka metropolitan area, said the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

There are no rehabs in 20 districts.

But the actual number of rehabs could be around 1,200, with many centres, like the Mind Aid Hospital in Dhaka, running without a licence, said sources at DNC.

Many of them do not have trained doctors and nurses despite a gazette notification by the home ministry on July 2, 2005 making it mandatory for those centres to have full-time doctors, psychiatrists, and trained nurses, said sources.

With no proper monitoring by DNC, the responsible government department,

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### TORCHING OF BUS

## Cops identify 3 'arsonists'

31 crude bombs recovered from Uttara house

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Police yesterday claimed to have identified from CCTV footage three arsonists who were allegedly involved in torching a bus in the capital's Paltan on November 12.

Meanwhile, police recovered 31 crude bombs from an under-construction building in Uttara's Sector-10 yesterday afternoon. A bomb disposal unit of police defused those later.

An additional deputy commissioner (Motijheel division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police last night told The Daily Star that they identified more arsonists and were conducting drives to arrest them.

He said the CCTV footage shows that two young men in trousers and shirts threw something inside a parked bus in Paltan and a fire broke out in the vehicle on November 12.

On Thursday, police arrested two Jubo Dal men -- Mamun, general secretary of Dhaka city's ward-54, and activist Suman. Gleaning information from them, DB

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## 4 'militants' held in Sirajganj raid

They rented house identifying themselves as students

**AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, from Sirajganj**

Introducing themselves as students, four youths rented an under-construction building in Sirajganj's Shahjadpur nearly three weeks ago.

But in the guise of this identity, they used to propagate militancy and train fresh operatives in the hideout on different militant activities, Rab said.

Their aim was to establish a strong network of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh in the country's northern area.

Rab said this after four suspected JMB militants surrendered following a six-hour standoff with the force, who cordoned off the tin-roofed hideout early yesterday.

"They are members of JMB... They used the building as their training centre," Col Tofayel Mostafa Sarwar, additional director general (operations) of Rab, told journalists on the spot.

The arrestees are Shamim Hossain alias Kiron, 19, from Sirajganj, Naimul Islam, 25, from Pabna, Atiar Rahman alias Kolom Soinik, 19, from Dinajpur and Aminul Islam alias Shanto, 20, from Satkhira.

The Rab official said Kiron is the JMB commander of Pabna-Sirajganj region.

Rab said they were informed that some militants were staying in Sirajganj, but they only pinpointed the house after two other suspected militants, including JMB's north Bengal Regional Commander Mahmud, were arrested from Rajshahi early Thursday.

Based on their information, the law enforcers cordoned off the hideout at Shahjadpur's Ukilpara around 5:00am. The militants initially responded by firing five to six bullets, Col Tofayel said.

Residents of nearby houses were evacuated to safety as the Rab asked the suspected militants to surrender through a loud speaker and over

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### Covid takes 17 more lives

2,275 new cases found in 24 hours

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Seventeen people died of Covid-19 infection in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, read a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the total number of deaths rose to 6,322 which was 1.43 percent of all confirmed cases.

In the same 24-hour period, a total of 2,275 new infections were recorded, the second highest single-day count in last ten weeks.

On Thursday, the highest 2,364 people tested positive for the virus.

The total number of infected people to 443,434, according to the press release.

Against a total of 15,607 tests in those 24 hours, the positivity rate was 14.58 percent, the highest in the last month.

With this, the overall positivity rate was 16.91 percent.

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**With their school closed for months, siblings Sajeed, in blue shirt, and Hridoy are out on a road to sell fruits from a cart in Sylhet city's Housing Estate. Their father, also a fruit trader, buy the goods for the cart. Hit hard by the pandemic, many low-income families like theirs in the country are forced to send children to work. The photo was taken on Thursday.**

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

### 'BEGUM PARA' IN CANADA

## Mostly govt officials bought houses

Foreign minister tells The Daily Star

**GOLAM MORTOZA**

The "Begum Para" of Toronto in Canada has come up during numerous political discussions in Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshis have bought luxurious residences in Begum Para, spending millions laundered from Bangladesh. Mainly, the wives and children of Bangladeshi millionaires live in these residences, hence the name Begum Para. It is largely believed that mainly politicians have bought residences there.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen recently came up with an eyebrow-raising comment that government officials are forging ahead in the race to purchase luxurious residences in Begum Para. The minister spoke to The Daily Star on this issue on Thursday over phone.

The Daily Star: You have recently given information of government officials purchasing luxurious residences in Canada. We want some more details about this.

Abdul Momen: You, the media men, often write about Begum Para in Canada... that many Bangladeshis have purchased luxurious houses there. Unofficially, we have collected information secretly. These are not verified. An expatriate has given us some information about this issue. We were surprised. We had thought that politicians may have purchased these houses. But we have information that most of the houses there have been bought by government officials. Some are retired Bangladeshi government officials, while others are serving officers. Their children are living there. Besides, a number of businessmen have bought some houses in Canada.

This is something interesting. Normally, we think government officials

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**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**2,275**  
New cases in 24hrs



**4,43,434**  
Total cases



**6,322**  
Deaths



**3,58,431**  
Recoveries



**1,372,662**  
Deaths



**57,662,264**  
Total cases

## 'SALARY DISCRIMINATION'

# Govt health workers to go on indefinite strike from Nov 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All health inspectors, assistant health inspectors and health assistants will start work abstention for an indefinite period from November 26, demanding a solution to "salary discrimination".

As a result, the routine vaccination programmes and the measles-rubella campaign slated for December 5 have now become uncertain.

Sheikh Rabiul Alam Khokon, convener of Bangladesh Health Assistant Association (BHAA) announced their abstention programme yesterday at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Their demands include promotion of all health inspectors, assistant health inspectors and health assistants from grade 16 to grades 11, 12 and 13.

Sheikh Rabiul Alam said, "We are so discriminated against that none of us is awarded promotion even after 20 years in government service. Only a few get promotion five to six months before retirement. We want the government to stop this discrimination."

Health inspectors, assistant health inspectors and health assistants are staffers under the Directorate General of Health Services who work for the vaccination programmes of the government, a BHAA press release said.

In the 1970s, health assistants were

assigned for small pox and malaria vaccination programmes and those diseases were eliminated in the country, it added.

Later, on April 7, 1979, these health staffers were assigned under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), under which vaccinations of 10 types of diseases are being conducted in 1.2 lakh centres across the country, the press release said.

The government is also preparing for the Covid-19 vaccination through the EPI programme, according to the DGHS.

During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, these health workers were assigned for Covid-19 control activities.

So far, more than 800 health inspectors, assistant health inspectors and health assistants have gotten infected with novel coronavirus, claimed BHAA.

They said they were assured at different times that their demands would be met by government high-ups including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Health Minister Zahid Maleque, former health secretary Ashadul Islam and former director general of DGHS Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad.

On February 20 this year, they had postponed a previous work abstention upon assurances that their demands would be met, BHAA said.

## Mostly govt officials bought

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are not so financially solvent. So, how could they buy houses in Canada? We don't know how it is possible. Maybe their credit rating is high. You [journalists] know that handsome amounts of loans can be arranged against high credit rating in North American countries. They may have bought houses this way. Besides, houses may be purchased by depositing only down payments. I don't know the details. That is why, it is not a big issue. We are gathering more information on it.

DS: We understand that this information came from unofficial channels, but we want to know whether the decision to gather information was a policy decision of the government?

AM: We just want to know what the situation is. We often see news reports over money laundering. But I cannot say anything about that. It can also be possible that they may have earned money abroad and purchased the houses using that money. I don't know.

DS: Have you gathered information on behalf of the foreign ministry?

AM: We just want to investigate what is happening. But collection of information is a difficult task. Information cannot be gathered easily.

DS: Is it also difficult if attempts are made officially?

AM: Yes. The Canadian government does not disclose information. You have to go case by case. If you want to get information about a particular house, you will have to visit websites to find out about it. The Canadian government will not give any information.

DS: Is it difficult, too, if the Bangladesh government wants the information officially from the Canadian government?

AM: It is very difficult. If any American citizen deposits money to any bank in Bangladesh, this information can be disclosed because the Bangladesh government has signed an agreement on it. As per the agreement, if any American citizen invests or deposits money in Bangladesh, then Bangladesh Bank

will inform the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As per US rules, the citizen will have to pay tax, if s/he deposits an amount over \$10,000 to Bangladesh Bank. That is why they get information about their citizens easily. Bangladesh has signed this agreement. In that case, the Bangladesh government is transparent. But the situation is different in case of North American countries. These is less opportunity to get information if any Bangladeshi citizen deposits money there.

DS: Is it not a disparity? The Bangladesh government is sharing information, while the American or Canadian government is not.

AM: Their governments cannot disclose the information even if we want it, because North American federal governments don't deal with these issues.

DS: Does that mean that you [the government] are trying to understand the situation for the first time?

AM: Yes, we are trying to know and understand the situation. It is now at a very initial stage. We are just trying to understand.

DS: Do you think that your initiative will give a message to those -- who have already bought houses and those who are planning to buy -- that these will not remain hidden anymore?

AM: Definitely, a message will be sent. Since you (journalists) are writing about it, they will be more cautious.

DS: Bangladeshis, who are living in Canada, are now mobilising. Do you (government) have any communication with them?

AM: Yes, we have communication with those who are mobilising in Canada to bring the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman back to Bangladesh.

DS: We want to know about Bangladeshis in Canada who have started activities against those who have laundered money from Bangladesh to Canada. We want to know whether you have any communication with them.

AM: No, we don't have any involvement or communication with them.

## PM for global action

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virtually from the Gono Bhavan as a co-chair.

She said there is no doubt that antimicrobial resistance has become a global public health challenge both for humans and animals endangering food production and leading all towards catastrophic results.

"We're running out of available antibiotics and soon could face another global emergency, far worse than the current Covid-19 pandemic," Hasina observed.

She mentioned that this menace has the potential of rolling back most of human's medical and therapeutic successes achieved through scientific advancements over the ages.

"The unnecessary use of antibiotics, wrong doses and overall poor infection prevention are causing this grave situation," the PM said.

Inspired by the WHO Global Action Plan in 2015, Hasina said Bangladesh formulated the "National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance Containment 2017-2022".

She said the documents and its associated "roadmap" speak about

the government's policy thrust and commitment to addressing AMR, and this is an important component of the country's efforts to ensure universal health for all.

Saying that prevention is better than cure, she called upon the global leaders to make this timely initiative successful by providing advocacy, technical and financial support for effective implementation of the recommendations by the Inter-agency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance to address the global antimicrobial resistance crisis.

Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Amor Mottley, directors general of World Health Organisation, Food and Agricultural Organisation and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) also spoke at the programme.

The three organisations took the initiative to establish this group for a coordinated action and collective global governance to address the serious challenges of the antimicrobial resistance.



This shabby passenger shed in the capital's Basabo area is on the verge of collapse. The structure poses risk to pedestrians as part of its damaged roof is obstructing their movement. Locals said the shed was set up about a year ago, but no repair work was carried out since then.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Hope brightens

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score has risen to 75.3 from 72.8. The HAI is an indicator of nutrition, health, adult literacy and secondary school enrolment rate.

In the EVI criterion, a country's score has to be below 32. Bangladesh's score is 27.3 against 25 two years ago.

The EVI is a composition of some indicators such as instability of agricultural production and exports of goods and services, population size, and share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in gross domestic product. The lower a country scores in this index the better it performs.

Officials at the Economic Relations Division think that the inclusion of a few indicators in this criterion by the CDP at the beginning of this year resulted in the fall in Bangladesh's performance.

The CDP will scrutinise Bangladesh's progress towards the graduation for the second time at its triennial review in February next year. The country's official graduation from the LDC category will take place after a three-year transition period.

If the country maintains its position in all the three categories for the next three years, it will be recognised as a developing country in the UN General Assembly in 2024.

"We believe that Bangladesh will get the recommendations in the second review as well because we meet all the prerequisites for the graduation," a

top official of the ERD told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

Introduced by the UN in 1971, the LDC category is characterised by low levels of income and severe structural impediments to sustainable development. There were 25 LDCs at that time. In 2018, the number increased to 47.

Bangladesh was included in the LDC list in 1975. In 2015, it crossed the threshold of the World Bank-defined lower middle-income country and became eligible for graduation in 2018.

ERD officials said the CDP will hold a meeting next month where Bangladesh will present the progress towards its transition to a developing country. In the meeting, the UN committee will hold discussions on economic vulnerability assessment it made recently in the wake of the pandemic.

In January next year, a group of CDP experts will meet again to review Bangladesh's position on the indices.

Upon getting the experts' views, the CDP will hold the triennial review on February 7, 8, and 9 and recommend Bangladesh's name for the graduation if the country passes the assessment.

If Bangladesh gets out of the LDC bloc in 2024, it will be given a three-year transition period before it loses duty-free and quota-free market access to the European Union under the Everything but Arms initiative for

LDCs, according to the CDP.

The benefits of technical cooperation and other forms of assistance such as fund support for scholarship, fellowship, participation in special training as well as research will be withdrawn. The scope for credit accessibility will also be reduced.

According to an impact assessment on LDC graduation by the Planning Commission last year, the country would lose \$7 billion in export earnings every year after the end of the transition period.

By 2031, the amount would balloon to \$13 billion, it said.

A taskforce which has been working on Bangladesh's LDC graduation process is also assessing the implications for the country's economy following its graduation to a developing country.

ERD officials said considering the economic fallout of the pandemic, the government wrote to the CDP and requested it to keep the duty-free export facilities and other benefits for Bangladesh till 2030.

They also mentioned that the UN may extend the transition period by two more years till 2026, considering the impacts of the pandemic on the economy.

Bangladesh is in talks with international bodies, such as the LDC Group of the World Trade Organisation, for export duty waivers on its products, added the officials.

## Rehabs in need for revamps

FROM PAGE 1

the centres are virtually run by unskilled professionals, resulting in many patients relapsing even after getting treatment, they added.

More worryingly, there are reports of deaths at the rehabilitation centres. In the last three years, at least 17 bodies have been recovered from rehabilitation centres across the country, according to police data.

The recent death of Anisul Karim Shipon, a senior assistant superintendent of Police (ASP), at the Mind Aid Hospital once again brought the issue to the fore.

Video footage of the incident showed some staff pinning him down and beating him up until his body became motionless. The hospital authorities, however, said Karim died of cardiac arrest.

'SIGNBOARD ORGANISATIONS' Experts working in the drugs prevention and correction fields said most of the rehabilitation centres are "signboard organisations" and lack the necessary trained workforce and other facilities.

"Except for a very few, the majority of rehabilitation centres are not rehabilitation centres at all. Inmates in those centres are kept in locked rooms with shackles in hands and legs. This is not treatment; this is abuse," said Dr Arup Ratan Choudhury, a member of the National Drug Control Board.

Dr Arup, also president of the association for the prevention of drug abuse, said private rehabilitation centres have been mushrooming across the country with the rise of addicts of different kinds of drugs.

A rehabilitation centre must have a psychiatrist, clinical physiologist, counsellors and other health workers.

There should also be enough space for physical activities for patients, according to DNC guidelines that laid out at least 14 criteria for rehabilitation centres to get a licence.

"But those are absent in most of the private centres, and health workers are basically unskilled," said Dr Arup.

Rizmi Akter (not her real name), a private university student, shared her experience of being treated for her addiction to yaba at one such rehabilitation centre in Uttara.

"I stayed in a small room. When I got adamant for drugs, they gave me sleeping pills but when I refused to take medicine, the ayahs and nurses beat me. I became mentally depressed," she said.

What an official of the DNC found during a raid in a rehab centre also paints a grim picture.

"In that facility, we found a ward boy who never worked in any rehabilitation centre before and has no training. His uncle just brought him there to do the job," said the official, wishing not to be named.

He said rehabilitation centres hire strong men and women to serve the admitted patients. They are often called bouncers, a professional group employed by a nightclub or similar establishments to prevent troublemakers and other unwanted people entering or to eject them from the premises.

'IT'S A DISEASE, NOT A CRIME' Mekhala Sarkar, associate professor of the psychiatry department at the National Institute of Mental Health, thinks there is a lack of understanding on treatment of the people on dope. The knowledge to guide them towards a healthy and meaningful life is also

absent.

"Drug addiction is a psychiatric disorder. It's a disease and it's not a crime. We have to understand it first. Treating a drug patient requires a highly organised and systematic approach," she told this newspaper.

A general nurse or ward boy cannot handle drug addicted patients as they sometimes get violent. But finding the right professionals is a challenge too, she said.

"People often do not feel encouraged to take up the job due to social stigma. In rehabilitation centres, attendants of patients are not allowed. So, hospital staff alone have to attend the patients, which is highly risky. Unfortunately, they do not get incentives for taking all the risk. That's why we are not getting enough skilled professionals," said Mekhala Sarkar.

Bazlur Rahman, former director general of the DNC, said a taskforce can be formed with close cooperation of the home ministry to strictly monitor the activities of the rehabilitation centres.

"Now the DNC has a good number of manpower and they can also take action if they find any irregularities."

Contacted, DNC Director Md Nuruzzaman Sharif said they have already monitored all the rehabilitation centres and their status. Actions will be taken against those who violated the rules, he said.

"We will sit with the owners of the rehabilitation centres very soon to send a strong message that any sort of physical or mental torture is strictly prohibited and if any complaints are found, licenses of those will be cancelled," he told this newspaper.

## Cops identify 3 'arsonists'

FROM PAGE 1

police recovered the 31 crude bombs from a flat on the third floor of the six-storey under-construction building around 5:00pm yesterday, police said.

Later, the bomb disposal unit of DMP's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit defused them, Kazi Shafiqul Alam, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch of DMP, told this paper.

Police earlier arrested a man named

Sohel Rana in connection with a bomb blast near a polling centre in Uttara during the by-polls to Dhaka-18 on November 12.

During interrogation, Rana disclosed some names, including Mamun and Sumon, who were involved in the bomb blast, said the DB official.

Shafiqul said Mamun and Sumon had been involved in making crude bombs since 2012 and they also made the 31 crude bombs.

Police were trying to identify those who directed the two Jubo Dal men to make the bombs, added the police official.

Law enforcers have so far filed 18 cases against more than 1,000 people, mostly leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated bodies, with different police stations in the city over torching of buses and carrying out subversive activities.

The cases were filed on November 12 and 13.

## Govt spreading fear to stop criticism: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that the opposition leaders and activists were being made to disappear to stop the criticism of the government's misdeeds.

"The government has been in power for the last one decade by introducing the culture of enforced disappearance. As they are now isolated from the people, they are torturing people by continuing the culture of enforced disappearance, spreading fear and establishing a reign of terror," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Speaking at a virtual press conference, he said the government's main motive behind this is to stop the criticism of its misdeeds. "The government is spreading panic among its critics and making them disappear."

Fakhru alleged that five BNP leaders -- Leon Haque, Mamun Parvez Tamoy, Towhidul Islam Hasib, Ferdous Majumder Masum and Selim Mia -- remained missing since they were picked up recently by plainclothes policemen from different places in the country.

He said police has been denying detaining the BNP leaders and also claiming that they do not have any information about the missing party men.

"The families of those who have gone missing are very anxious and we are also worried about the matter."

The BNP leader said it is the government's full responsibility to trace people if anyone goes missing. "It's unimaginable that plainclothes policemen are picking up people who come out of the High Court after securing bail."

Fakhru also demanded the government release those arrested on "false" charges and withdraw "false" cases filed against them.

## Morgue asst arrested on charges of necrophilia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

CID officers arrested a morgue assistant of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College on charges of necrophilia.

Munna Bhakta was arrested after the forensic lab of Criminal Investigation Department found his sperm on multiple dead bodies of women whose autopsies were done at the SSMC morgue between March 2019 and August 2020.

Officials making DNA profiles first came to the conclusion that the sperm found on five bodies of women, who died by suicide, are from one man, said CID Additional Superintendent of Police Zakir Hossain.

The forensic lab informed CID's Dhaka Metropolitan (West) unit about the matter on November 10.

Investigators initially thought a rapist serial killer was on the loose. But the postmortem reports showed no indication of rape, nor did the bodies bear any bruise mark.

The officers also noted that the five bodies had been kept at the SSMC morgue the night before the autopsies were done.

Upon further scrutiny, they learned about 20-year-old Munna who used to live on the morgue premises. Officials then collected his DNA samples from tea cups and cigarette butts and a test revealed that sperm found on the bodies was his.

The CID in a press release yesterday said they filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station in this regard.

Police said Munna has been working as an assistant for the last two years.

"When we interrogated him, he seemed quite nonchalant. He has a perverse fascination. The bodies are of women who died aged between 12 and 20," the ASP said.

## 4 'militants'

FROM PAGE 1

their phone numbers, which the law enforcers got from those arrested in Rajshahi.

The suspected militants finally surrendered around 10:30am yesterday and came out of the house.

Rab members later searched the house and found two firearms, gunpowder, bomb-making materials and extremism-provoking books there.

The arrestees were regrouping the banned Islamist group in different districts of the north Bengal and providing other operatives training. More operatives were supposed to gather in the hideout, but that did not happen following instructions from a leader, Col Tofayel said.

The Rab official said JMB's north Bengal Regional Commander Mahmud was arrested earlier, but came out of jail on bail and re-engaged himself in militancy. He was organising the banned outfit in the northern region.

Abdullah Al Mamun, a neighbour of the house, said the youths, identifying themselves as students, rented the house from the owner who lives and works in Bogura.

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Arctic Tern, Iceland

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Tern, Tern, Tern

I became interested in Terns upon learning that the Arctic Tern flies roundtrip between the North and South Poles annually. The distance it covers in its average lifespan of 35 years is equivalent to flying to the moon and back three times. To see these birds I went to Iceland where they migrate and breed during the summer. On the golf course in Reykjavik, they mobbed me because I came too close to their nests. In Lake Myvatn, Iceland's premier birding spot, Arctic Terns made the most of twenty hours of summer sunshine by busily diving into the water for food and fattening themselves for the long journey south at summer's end.

Terns are birds of the Laridae family of birds that also includes Gulls and Skimmers. They are usually found near water: sea, coastlines, rivers and wetlands on all continents. There are forty species of Terns in the world. Most of them have a black head, light-grey upperparts, white underparts and a reddish bill. What they lack in colour they make up in grace and speed.

Bangladesh has nine species of Terns. Of these, probably the most common is the Whiskered Tern. A white bird with black head, it can be seen in most major rivers, large water bodies and along the coast. Our other common Tern is the larger River Tern, distinguished by its bright yellow-orange beak. If you travel by boat along any major river, you are likely to see it.

In Hail Haor on an autumn afternoon several years ago, I saw a festival of Whiskered Terns. A fishpond was half-drained. The shallow muddy water that remained held small fish and other marine animals, exposed to predators. A flock of Terns had shown up, diving into the water for fish. They were fast and

athletic. They emerged upside down from their dive with fish in beak. Sometimes two flew over one another, almost touching. They made it all look easy and seemed to immensely enjoy the act of flying.

In Brazil, I saw Little Terns, Yellow-billed Terns and Large-billed Terns on sandbars on the mighty Paraguay River. One memorable moment came when a Tern caught a fish from the water and shot up into the sky to feed another Tern in-flight. They also chased and squabbled with each other in the sky. In Cancun Mexico I saw Royal Terns diving into the waters of the Caribbean, their bright orange beaks contrasting with the aquamarine colours of the water. And in Australia, I saw several Terns gang against a Gull which had just caught a fish in Michaelmas Cay off Cairns, repeating a scene I had witnessed in Nijhum Dwip.

Perhaps the most intriguing Tern – and one I have not seen – is the Inca Tern. Unlike the whitish plumage of most Terns, this one is dark grey except for white feathers on the face resembling a long moustache. It is seen in South America.

Terns are special to me for another reason. The first bird I ever photographed was (unbeknownst to me at the time) a Whiskered Tern while on a boat on the Meghna. This was in 1986, when I did not care much for birding, but I still recall the aggressive bird. Its energy and grace caught my attention and I caught it on black and white film.

So the next time you are on a river, on the coast or in a wetland, keep an eye out for these sleek and graceful creatures.

[www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs](https://www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs) or follow "ihtishamkabar" on Instagram.

## Dhaka seeks greater global support for migrant workers

UNB, Dhaka

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Ambassador Rabab Fatima has sought greater international support for migrant workers to cope up with the Covid-19 job market and beyond.

She said re-aligning public and private financing is needed for creating better jobs, especially for people in vulnerable situations.

Ambassador Fatima was chairing a panel discussion jointly organised by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS) on Thursday.

The theme of the discussion was "Leaving no one behind and building back better from Covid-19: The Future of Work in LDCs", according to the Bangladesh mission yesterday.

She said for unlocking the untapped potentials of global value chains for enhancing trade and investment, capacity building in the LDCs is essential.

This could be done by taking advantage of the evolving digital economy, said the ambassador.

## Nari Pragati Sangha demands action against MP Bablu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights organisation Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) has demanded appropriate steps against Bogura-7 MP Rezaul Karim Bablu for his speech at the parliament that feminists are to blame for the rise of rape incidents across the country. BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir sent a letter to Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in this regard yesterday.

The letter requests the Speaker to remove the speech of Rezaul Karim from the Parliament's minutes.

On November 17, MP Bablu said, "In the name of women's liberation, feminists are continuing to make women vulnerable to rape. This has increased the acceptability of rape so much among rapists that they are encouraged to commit the act."

He even advocated the implementation of the "tamarind theory (women are like tamarinds, men will salivate at the sight of them, and so they must remain covered)" of late Hefajat-e-Islam supreme Ahmad Shafi.

BNPS said, "We strongly protest such utterances as his speech was against the spirit of our constitution, Liberation War and equal rights of women and men."

The organisation demanded necessary action against the lawmaker and asked the Speaker to not let such incidents reoccur.

In the letter, BNPS also thanked the Parliament for passing the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which added death penalty as the highest punishment for rape.

## 'Leader of battery-stealing gang' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) on Thursday claimed to have arrested the ringleader of a gang that steals batteries from auto-rickshaws in Savar.

The arrestee was identified as Ali Haider alias Nahid Hasan (27).

A PBI team arrested Nahid while investigating the murder of auto-rickshaw driver Sheikh Mintu (35), said Mohammad Khorshed Alam, superintendent (SP) of Dhaka district PBI, yesterday.

Mintu was allegedly killed by the gang members around 8:30pm on July 13, he said.

Rashidul Islam, inspector at PBI and investigating officer of the case, told this newspaper that during primary interrogation, Nahid admitted that he is the leader of a battery-stealing ring.

"They have been snatching batteries for some time and selling them in different parts of the country. There are some 10-11 other gang members, and we are conducting drives to catch them," Rashidul said.

Replying to a question, he said the gang was involved in petty crimes, but for the last two years, they started snatching batteries. Besides, they also mugged the drivers.

The criminals would sell the batteries for Tk 20,000-30,000, far lower than the actual price of Tk 40,000.



In response to the authority's strict stance on wearing masks and mobile courts active to fine violators, a section of citizens can now be seen with their faces covered while moving about. Earlier, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina warned everyone of the second wave of Covid-19, as infections may increase in the coming winter, according to experts. The photos were taken yesterday from the capital's Ramna area and Topkhana Road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## One step towards a port city free of waterlogging

Univ buildings built on canal being demolished after 20yrs

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The authorities of Premier University Chattogram have begun demolishing two structures of the educational institution that were built on a canal in the port city at Prabartak intersection around 20 years ago.

The university authorities began the process of demolition last month as per the order of Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

Locals have long been demanding that the structures be demolished as they said they have to suffer every year during monsoon since rainwater cannot flow through the canal as the building stand in the way. This causes severe waterlogging.

CDA is also building a bridge over the canal in the intersection as part of a mega project for reducing waterlogging in the city. As part of the project, the canal would be dredged and widened.

According to CDA sources, Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) authorities built the structures occupying Hijra khal (canal) to establish a private university without taking permission from the CDA. CDA is the authority that gives permission for building structures in port city. A four-storey building was built at the intersection in 2000. A total of 13 shops on the ground floor were then rented out by CCC.

Afterwards, the Institute of Business Technology was established on the first, second and third floors. In 2002, it was transformed into a university -- Premier University Chattogram.

Two more six-storey buildings were built for the university in the area. One of the two buildings was built on the canal, according to CDA officials.

Altaf Hossain, a resident of the area, said waterlogging worsened after the structures were built.

"We have been demanding for a long time that the authorities (CDA) demolish those," he said. "I wonder how a public organisation like the city corporation could build something occupying a water body."

Many also questioned how CDA could allow such a move by the city corporation.

However, CDA officials said they did not give CCC the permission, rather they issued a number of notices to them to demolish the



An academic building of Premier University, which was built obstructing a canal in port city's Prabartak mor area, is being demolished to free up the canal. The photo was taken on Thursday.

structures since 2000.

"We do not give permission to anybody for building structures on canals," said Shahinul Islam Khan, chief town planner of CDA.

Asked why they did not go for eviction in the last 20 years, Shahinul said CCC is a public organisation and eviction drive cannot be conducted against them all of a sudden. "We have served notices to them several times in this regard," he said.

According to CCC sources, the structures were built during the tenure of former mayor late ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury. Later, during the tenure of former mayor M Monjur Alam, a decision was taken in the meeting of the university trustee board on May 19, 2014 to demolish those.

Asked why the structures were built on the canal, Monjur said, "Those were built during the tenure of Mohiuddin Chowdhury and as a ward councillor I was a member of the committee formed to establish a university in 2000."

"Back then, the civil society members asked the then mayor to establish a private university under the city corporation's authority in the city and so he took the steps," he added.

Monjur said the then mayor might have not realised the consequences. Moreover, there was a decision that the campus would be shifted immediately from the area.

Wishing anonymity, CCC officials told this correspondent that the university trustee board is responsible for the buildings and they should demolish it.

Contacted, Prof Dr Anupam Sen, vice chancellor of the university, said as CDA asked them to demolish the structures, they were doing so.

Asked why they did not demolish those sooner, he said CDA had not asked them to do so earlier.

CDA has been implementing the project to reduce waterlogging in the city and so they are widening and dredging Hijra khal. Bangladesh Army is implementing the project.

Contacted, Lt Col Md Shah Ali, project director, said, "We asked Premier University (Chattogram) to demolish the structures, leaving space of 6 metres for the canal and 1.5 metres more for working space," he said.

## World Toilet Day observed

CITY DESK

Unilever's toilet cleaning brand Domex has observed World Toilet Day to generate awareness on improved and hygienic sanitation, says a press release. Domex, in partnership with WaterAid, Brac, 2030WRC, World Bank Group, BHUMIJO and Unilever, organised a webinar on November 19 to reach an audience of around 15 million virtually with Prothom Alo.

Partha Hefaz Shaikh, policy and advocacy director, WaterAid Bangladesh; Dr Liakath Ali, climate change and Urban Development Director, Brac; Farhana Rashid, CEO and co-founder, BHUMIJO; Sayef Tanzeem Qayyum, regional coordinator, 2030 WRG, Water GP, World Bank; and Tanzeen Ferdous, marketing director, Home Care, Unilever Bangladesh, took part in the webinar.

## Fake medicine factory sealed off in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Detective Branch of Chattogram Metropolitan Police sealed off a fake medicine factory and arrested a man in the port city's Chandgaon area early yesterday.

The arrestee, Md Hossen, is the owner of the factory.

Ali Hussain, deputy commissioner (north) of DB, said during the drive, the DB team also found raw materials used for manufacturing fake medicines.

## Pomacentrus Bangladeshius

## New species of fish found on the shores of St Martin's Island

MD ASADUZZAMAN

Researchers from Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University have discovered a formerly unknown species of fish from St Martin's Island.

A team from the university's Aquatic Bioresource Research Lab discovered the new-to-science fish. Known as 'Pettoli' by local anglers, the fish has been named Pomacentrus Bangladeshius (Bengal demoiselle).

Project lead Prof Kazi Ahsan Habib said, "We have listed about 150 species of fish that inhabit the coral ecosystem of St Martin's Island. We used scuba diving to conduct underwater observation. During our research, we found this new species which lives in the shallow reef flats around rock and coral outcrops."

"The new species belongs to the Pomacentridae family, which are commonly called damselfish. It has a prominent notch present between its preorbital and suborbital, is olive to dark-brown in colour, and has a yellow iris with a narrow bronze eye ring."

The new species was discovered during an investigation on the current biodiversity status of fishes associated to the corals of St Martin's Island, which ran from 2018 to 2019.

Alongside Prof Habib, the team is comprised of three research assistants: Md Jayedul Islam, Najmun Nahar, and Amit Kumer Neogi. Prof Habib is currently serving as dean of Faculty of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Science at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University. The research was conducted through a competitive research grant of National Agricultural Technology Program Phase-II project of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council.

Researchers and academics around the country are seeing this as a positive development. Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Md Manzoarul Kibria of Chittagong University's zoology department said, "Adding a new name to the list of Bangladeshi fish is certainly a positive news. In the country's hilly and coastal regions, we have already discovered some new fish species. But when it comes to St Martin's Island, this is definitely a new phenomenon."

This is the second new species discovered from Bangladeshi waters by the team. The first one was discovered from the Sundarbans. This research was published in the international taxonomic journal "Zootaxa".

According to the Catalogue of Fish of California Academy of Science, 422 species of damselfish have been identified all across the world.



COURTESY OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

### Dr Sabur Khan elected first vice president of AUAP

CITY DESK

Dr Md Sabur Khan, chairman, Board of Trustees at Daffodil International University (DIU), has been elected the first vice president of Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP) for 2021-2022, says a press release.



The announcement came on November 18 at the 14th general conference of AUAP hosted by Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas.

Dr Peter P Laurel was elected president of AUAP and took oath and Dr Hari Mohan Gupta, chancellor, Jagran Lake City University, India, was elected as the second vice president of AUAP. After two years, Dr Khan will lead AUAP as the 17th president for two more years till 2024, the release adds.

The conference was also addressed, among others, by Prof Dr Wiclit Srisa, founder president of AUAP; and Dr Mohammad Nili Ahamadabadi, immediate past president of AUAP.

### Vaccine roll-out

FROM PAGE 12

when Pfizer and BioNTech file an emergency use authorisation request with the US Food and Drug Administration.

"The documents will be finalised today and tomorrow and submitted to the FDA," BioNTech co-founder Ugur Sahin told AFP on Thursday.

The scientific head of the US operation to develop a vaccine said the final green light would probably come in December.

The BioNTech/Pfizer shot and another one being developed by the US firm Moderna have taken the lead in the global chase for a vaccine.

EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said the European bloc could also approve both before the end of the year.

### DU suspends evening MBA admission test

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University yesterday postponed the admission test for the evening programme of Master of Business Administration (MBA).

The test was supposed to be held between 11:00am and noon yesterday at the Azampur Government Girls School and College centre.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman told reporters that he requested the Dean concerned to postpone the exam.

Prof Abdul Moin, acting dean of the Faculty of Business Studies, said the test was postponed for the time being due to a "misunderstanding".

Earlier on February 24, a meeting of the university's academic council decided to suspend the admission of students to evening courses until a policy is formulated in this regard.

Since then, no process has been made on formulating the policy due to Covid-19 pandemic, said sources.

A week after the country reported its first novel coronavirus cases on March 8, the DU authorities suspended all academic activities till March 28. The suspension was later extended for an

indefinite period.

Amid such a situation, the Business Studies faculty announced the schedule of the admission without notifying the VC and the two pro-VCs.

The VC and Pro-VCs said they were not informed about yesterday's exam.

Soon after the news of holding the admission test spread on social media on Thursday, it drew a huge flak from former and current students of the university. They slammed the decision saying that the authorities should not hold the test amid the Covid-19 situation and without formulating a policy.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Akhtaruzzaman said, "I was not aware of the admission test being held. I came to know about it through some media reports. I asked the Dean to suspend the exam and formulate a guideline regarding the evening MBA courses."

Prof Moin claimed that they were preparing for holding the test following the university's rules and regulations and that they have postponed the exam because of a "misunderstanding".

### Monowara Habib appointed DCAG (senior)

CITY DESK

Monowara Habib, an officer of the 8th batch of BCS (audit & accounts) cadre, has been appointed the deputy comptroller and auditor general (senior) on November 16, thus becoming the executive head of Audit & Accounts Department, says a press release.



This appointment made her the 44th officer to hold this post of DCAG (senior) and also the very first among the female officers in the history of the department.

Before joining this post, Monowara Habib worked at various important capacities of the government during her long career as a civil servant.

The newly appointed DCAG (senior) vowed to do everything within her might to fulfill everyone's expectations.

### Georgia recount

FROM PAGE 12

confirmed Thursday that Biden is the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the southern state in almost three decades.

The recount showed Biden had won by 12,284 votes, according to figures posted on Georgia secretary of state Brad Raffensperger's website -- slightly fewer than the approximately 14,000 he originally led by.

Trump campaign legal advisor Jenna Ellis attacked the outcome and pledged the campaign will "pursue all legal options."

After initially making baseless claims of widespread fraud, Trump has appeared to shift his strategy to asking states to overrule the will of voters.

In Michigan, Trump placed a telephone call to a Republican on a once-obscure board who wants to withdraw her certification of the election result in a heavily Democratic county that includes majority-Black Detroit.

### Pakistan to repatriate

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh and the Federal Republic of Germany.

CANADA READY TO HELP IMPLEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN

Canada is willing to participate in the first five-year plan of Bangladesh, informs Jacque Gerrin, vice president of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Earlier, a three-member CIDA delegation under his leadership called on the Bangabandhu at the Gono Bhaban today. Gerrin is learnt to have discussed with the PM a long-term bilateral assistance programme. Canada

also pledges 30 million dollars' aid to Bangladesh during 1973-74.

NATIONAL POPULATION COUNCIL FORMED

A national population council with the Bangabandhu as the patron-in-chief is formed. The national body will sit once a year. It will be set as the supreme policy-making body on the population problem in the country. Its policies will be executed by the National Family Planning Board.

SOURCES: November 22, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

### India keen to work

FROM PAGE 12

Dhaka and the Indian Defence Ministry organised the programme.

Raj said the close proximity of Indian shipyards to Bangladesh is an additional advantage for both the countries.

"This may result in a long-term strategic partnership in production, development and maintenance. It will be a win-win situation for both the nations to achieve their common objectives. The strategic partnership between India-Bangladesh can become a pillar of regional strength and economic cooperation," the FICCI quoted Raj as saying in a press release.

Sanjay Jaju, additional secretary (defence production) of the ministry, said the Indian defence sector has a lot of potential and invited Bangladeshi companies to invest in this sector.

"We have opened up two defence industrial corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and both corridors

will leverage existing ordnance factories and private manufactures in the region. We invite investments from Bangladesh in these corridors and explore opportunities where we can co-produce and co-develop equipment for mutual use," Raj said.

Addressing the programme, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, minister of shipping in Bangladesh, said Bangladesh is the third largest economy in South Asia with a rich history in ship-building.

"Today, ship-building is a growing industry in Bangladesh and has great potential. Since independence, Bangladesh has created a large fleet of 20,000 inland and coastal commercial vessels," he said.

Vikram K Doraiswami, Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka, said, "There is a natural synergy between India and Bangladesh in working together to develop and leverage each other's capacities as a matter of jointly harnessing capabilities for each other."

### Armed Forces Day today

FROM PAGE 12

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina already issued separate messages on the eve of the day. Besides, the PM's speech, marking the Armed Forces Day-2020, will be aired simultaneously through Bangladesh Television and private TV channels and radios at 7:30pm today.

As part of the day's programmes, military secretary to the president, on behalf of him, and military secretary to the prime minister, on behalf of her, will place wreaths at the Shikha Anirban (the Eternal Flame) at Dhaka Cantonment this morning, paying homage to the martyred armed forces' members who laid down their lives in the Liberation War.

Later, Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed, Navy Chief Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal, and Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serriabat will place wreaths at the Shikha Anirban on behalf of their

respective forces.

On the occasion, chiefs of the three services will call on the president at the Bangabhaban and the prime minister at the Gono Bhaban on the day.

PM's Security Affairs Adviser Major General (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division will be present at the meeting with the PM.

The authorities, however, have decided to celebrate the day this year on a limited-scale due to the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, Bangladesh Navy ships in Dhaka, Khulna, Chandpur, Barishal and Chattogram will not be open for the general public this year.

The Bangladesh Betar will broadcast the "Special Durber" programme at 7:30pm today, while the national dailies will publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

### Climate change devastated

FROM PAGE 12

Except this time, it was global warming rather than global cooling that did them in, with the planet heating up more quickly than the dinos' capacity to adapt.

Scientists have found evidence of this traumatic event some 179 million years ago in plant fossils in Argentine Patagonia.

### Crippled by manpower shortage

FROM PAGE 12

The government established the bank in 2010 to provide collateral-free loans to migrant workers for employment, loans to returnees to assist them in getting employment in the country, facilitate sending remittance, and encourage wage-earners to invest in the country, according to the bank's official website.

On April 20, 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the bank during the Dhaka Consultation of the Colombo Process, a forum of labour-sending countries in Asia.

The bank accepts deposits, extends loans to migrants and returnees, and buys and sells foreign currencies.

Up to August 2020, it has sanctioned migrant loans worth Tk 516 crore with a recovery rate of about 86 percent. The loan amount was disbursed to 42,613 people, said the bank's website.

Besides, it provided rehabilitation loans to 170 people with a recovery rate of about 62 percent.

The bank usually grants migrant loans of up to Tk 2 lakh for each individual, while rehabilitation loans for returnees range from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 10 lakh. Both loans are sanctioned at nine percent interest rate.

Besides providing loans, the bank also handles fees collections from about 2,000 overseas job-seekers per day across the country.

The bank's assets value is about Tk 628.83 crore, according to the audit report on its financial statements for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Mahtab Zabin, managing director of Probashi Kallyan Bank, pointed at manpower shortage and said the bank has submitted a proposal for additional manpower, which was at the final stage.

"Once we get the manpower, we will be able to fulfil all targets swiftly," she told this newspaper over phone recently.

### Douglas Stuart wins

FROM PAGE 12

that my mother is in every page of this book and without her I wouldn't be here and my work wouldn't be here," he told the award ceremony on Thursday, which had to be mostly held remotely because of a lockdown in England to stop the spread of Covid-19.

"My mother unfortunately suffered with addiction and didn't survive that addiction," he said.

"And so for 30 years I've carried an awful lot of sort of loss and love and pain, and I wanted really just to tell the story of what it was like to grow up queer in Glasgow, to grow up with a parent who you love but you couldn't save."

He described the book as a "love story" looking at the kind of "unconditional, often-tested love" that children can have for flawed parents.

He said that he had carried "a lot of love and pain" and writing the book was "incredibly healing for me."

He also paid tribute to his native city, saying that "growing up in Glasgow I think is one of the greatest inspirations of my life."

### Mystery shrouds

FROM PAGE 12

went to Jordan from Saudi Arabia.

According to a report of a Bangladeshi private television channel, she was employed at the residence of a Saudi Arabian diplomat in Jordan.

The mission official said they learnt about the incident after a report was published by a local media outlet. Later, it was known that Asma was employed as a domestic help. She went to Saudi Arabia for a job.

The family that employed her in Saudi Arabia had taken her to Jordan. The family now lives in Jordan, added the official.

Bangladeshi migrant worker Mosammat Begum was found dead in Egypt in May last year, about a month after she went to Saudi Arabia.

She died after falling from the roof of a five-storey building, according to a report run by this daily citing the Bangladesh embassy in Egypt.

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme, said incidents like the recovery of bodies of Bangladeshi migrants in Jordan and Egypt after their migration to Saudi Arabia should be investigated thoroughly.

It should be properly probed under which procedure a Bangladeshi worker was allowed to migrate to a third country, he said.

### Man held for raping Jashore madrasa student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapol

Police arrested a man on charges of raping a madrasa student in Jashore town early yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Faruk Hossain, 35, son of Joyal Mollah of Lakhoati village in Dighalia upazila of Khulna.

At present he lives in Ismail Hossain's rented house behind the mosque on Khaldhar Road in Jashore town.

Police arrested Faruk from his rented house after the girl's mother filed a case with the Jashore Kotwali Police Station alleging rape yesterday night.

She mentioned in the case that the accused used to go to her house almost all the time.

On November 19, around 8:00am, she left his teenage daughter at home and went outside.

At that time, the accused entered her house, found the girl alone and tried to rape her.

When her daughter screamed, she quickly returned home and found that the accused left her daughter and ran away.

Moniruzaman, officer-in-charge of Jashore Kotwali Police Station, said they arrested the accused after a case was filed with the police station.

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যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১৩-৯০৯০৮৮

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কল্পনা করুন নিজেকে এমনি একটি বাসস্থানে ঘেঘোনে ঘরে ঘরকার পরও মনে হবে বাইরের মতোই খোলা মেঝে। উত্তর-পশ্চিম গুলশানে গিরিগোলা কনস্ট্রাক্ট ফে-সুই এপার্টমেন্ট (২০১৬)। অত্যাধুনিক, বিলাসী এবং নান্দনিক ইন্টেরিওর। পূর্ব, দক্ষিণ ও উত্তর দিক সম্পূর্ণ বেলা, চমককার আসনে-বাতাস খোলে। ৪ বেড (১ টি বেড কিতচেনে মার্জ করা হয়েছে), ৪ বাথ, সু-কিচেন আধুনিক ফিটস (গেট এট ড্রাইং কিচেন অফেন), ডব্লিউ, ডাইনিং, প্রেন্স লাউন্ড্রি, সার্কট বেড, বাথ, স্মিট-গ্লাস। ৩০০০ বর্গফুট + অতিরিক্ত ১২০ বর্গফুট বাগান ও বার-বি-কিউ এয়ার। ৩ টি কার পার্কিং সহ আধুনিক রন্ধন সুবিধা। রেজিস্ট্রেশন, দলিলপত্র আপডেটেড। যোগাযোগ: ০১৩১১৮৬৩৬৪১; am.baashaar@gmail.com

**Consultant for Developing Training Module on Supply Chain Resilience**  
National Resilience Program (NRP) under Programming Division requires service of a National Consultant for Developing Training Module on Supply Chain Resilience for 30 days to be contracted by UNDP. For TOR and application procedures, please visit following link:  
[https://jobs.undp.org/cj/view\\_job.cfm?cur\\_job\\_id=95340](https://jobs.undp.org/cj/view_job.cfm?cur_job_id=95340)  
Application deadline: 25 November 2020 D-141

**brac**  
**Invitation for Tender (IFT) for Baseline and Follow-up Investigations for MDR-TB Patients Between Diagnostic Centre And Communicable Disease (TB Control Programme), BRAC**  
Tenders are hereby invited from Diagnostic Centres for Baseline and Follow-up Investigations for MDR-TB Patients Between Diagnostic Centre And Communicable Disease (TB Control Programme), BRAC.  
Project Name: TB Control Programme  
Source of Fund: The Global Fund  
Tender Package No: BPD-TB/05-2020  
Reference No & Date: IFT/BRAC/BPD-TB/20-10 Date: 18 November, 2020  
Tender Name: Baseline and Follow-up Investigations for MDR-TB Patients  
Time for Delivery: As per Tender Documents  
Price of the Tender Documents: Tk. 1000/- (Non-refundable)  
Tender Security: As per tender documents  
Tender Documents Available: BRAC Procurement Department, 4th Floor, Gulshan Tower (Opposite to BRAC Center), Mohakhali, Dhaka - 1212  
Date & Time for Selling Documents: 22 November, 2020 to 05 December, 2020 Between 11 AM to 3 PM  
Tender Dropping Place, Date & Time: Tender Box - 03, BRAC Procurement Department, Ground Floor, BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka -1212. 06 December, 2020 between 10 AM to 2:00 PM  
Tender Opening Place, Date & Time: Ground Floor, BRAC Center 06 December, 2020 at 3:00 pm.  
BRAC Procurement Department, BRAC Center, 75 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Phone 9881265 Ext 3020

**CAREER OPPORTUNITY**  
**NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY**  
Center of Excellence in Higher Education  
The first private university in Bangladesh, seeks applications for the following position:  
**Technical Writing Specialist, Office of Research: 1 position**  
**Job Description:**  
• Assist and support the Director, Office of Research-NSU and the Director, Office of the Graduate Studies in the training of NSU faculty in using the "Grammarly" software (to which NSU has subscribed) for initial editing of draft research papers.  
• Provide technical editing support to individual faculty in the organization and structuring of research papers according to a variety of journal style requirements, improving the logic of presentation of the narrative in the papers, editing according to standards of English grammar and accuracy of technical concepts, etc.  
• Proofreading final versions of papers as requested by faculty prior to submit to journals  
• Assisting individual faculty with editing papers as required when papers are accepted on condition of revision of writing style  
• Assist Office of Research-NSU staff in production of office newsletters and documents  
• Any other duties as assigned by the Director, Office of Research-NSU  
**Qualifications:**  
• Master's degree in Technical writing, Technical Communication, English as a Second Language, or equivalent.  
**Age limit:** Ideally 25-32 years  
**Research Grant Writing Specialist, Office of Research: 1 position**  
**Job Description:**  
• Keep track of and inform core faculty of calls/requests for applications (CFA/RFA) for research grants from within Bangladesh and externally internationally, consistent with core faculty research interests within the schools and departments  
• Receive and review draft grant research proposals from NSU core faculty, editing proposal narratives as appropriate to the grant requirements and assisting with budget justification  
• Review the specific grant application criteria of the grant agency to assure draft grant proposals satisfy the main grant component requirements as specified in the CFA/RFA  
• Coordinate with core faculty on a timely scheduled revision of grant applications consistent with best practices and in view of grant submission deadlines  
• Track applications through submission to award decision and maintain Office of Research-NSU data accordingly for quarterly and annual reporting  
• As appropriate to each School and its department areas of specialization, draft templates and sample grant writing guidelines to facilitate initial draft writing  
• Any other duties as assigned by the Director, Office of Research-NSU  
**Qualifications:**  
• Master's degree preferably in a natural science or engineering discipline  
**Job Experience:**  
• At least 2 years of experience in grant writing in a research organization, including proprietary research organizations and/or institutions of higher education.  
• Grant writing skills should be sufficient to support grant writing in the natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, and the humanities.  
**Age limit:** Ideally 25-32 years  
**Monthly Salary:** An attractive salary packages & benefits will be offered to the successful candidate.  
**Other Benefits:** Provident Fund, Gratuity, Festival Bonuses, Group Insurance, in-house free Medical Consultation etc.  
**Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview.**  
Candidates may apply with complete CV, two photographs, copies of certificates, transcripts and other credentials by 12 December, 2020 by e-mail or in hard copy.  
**Department of Administration**  
**NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY**  
Bashundhara, Dhaka - 1229  
E-mail to: nsuhr@northsouth.edu

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Ethiopia: UN plans for 200,000 refugees as violence rages on**

Rebel forces from Ethiopia's Tigray region fired rockets on Friday at the distant capital of the neighbouring Amhara region, Amhara authorities said, raising worries the conflict could spill into a wider war. Two weeks into the conflict, the United Nations said it was making plans for as many as 200,000 refugees fleeing into neighbouring Sudan, and made an urgent appeal for \$200 million to assist them. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people have been killed and tens of thousands of refugees have fled from fighting in Tigray, raising questions of whether Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed can hold his ethnically diverse nation together.

**Uganda's Bobi Wine gets bail as protest death toll rises to 37**

Ugandan pop star and presidential candidate Bobi Wine, whose arrest this week triggered protests that led to at least 37 deaths, was released on bail yesterday after being charged with holding rallies likely to spread the coronavirus. Authorities have deployed the military across the capital Kampala and surrounding areas to help police forces disperse protesters. They have used live bullets, tear gas, water cannon and arrested hundreds. Uganda, a nation of 42 million people, is due to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on Jan. 14, with Wine emerging as a serious threat to veteran Museveni, 76, who aims to extend his rule.

**EU hopes for US's return to multilateralism**



The EU hopes the US will adopt a more multilateralist stance when president-elect Joe Biden takes power, the bloc's chief said yesterday, on the eve of a G20 summit. "The next (US) administration has already committed to increase multilateral cooperation. ... I'm very hopeful now with the new president elect that this will change," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. Under Trump's presidency, the United States retreated from several multilateral accords and institutions, including the Paris climate agreement, the Iran nuclear deal, the World Health Organization, UNESCO, the UN Human Rights Council, a Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, funding of the UNRWA agency providing support for Palestinian refugees, and the Open Skies Treaty allowing countries to make surveillance flights over other nations' military installations. Saudi Arabia is hosting the G20 summit this weekend.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



People flash the victory sign as they gather outside a church during a memorial service for Roman Bondarenko, an anti-government protester who died in hospital following what witnesses said was a severe beating by security forces, in Minsk, Belarus, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

**Trump, Xi join Apec summit amid trade war**

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

A virtual summit of Asia Pacific leaders started yesterday with US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in attendance to discuss the coronavirus crisis and global economic recovery amid lingering trade differences.

The pair joined a meeting of the leaders of the 21-nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) hosted virtually by Malaysia just two weeks after Trump lost his re-election bid.

Asia Pacific leaders have called for more open and multilateral trade to support the economic recovery and warned against protectionist trade policies, with Xi saying unilateralism has added to global economic risks.

At the last Apec summit in 2018, member countries failed to agree on a joint communique for the first time in the bloc's history as the United States and China disagreed on trade and investments.

Trump has slapped tariffs on billions of dollars worth of Chinese products, which launched a trade war between the world's two largest economies. In opening remarks at the leaders' meeting, Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said the bloc's top priority should be to reaffirm its support and commitment for a rules-based multilateral trading system.

Other leaders who joined the virtual meeting include New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Japanese premier Yoshihide Suga, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

In the run-up to yesterday's meeting, several Apec leaders warned against protectionism as the world grapples with the economic impact of the novel coronavirus.

"As we confront this generation's biggest economic challenge, we must not repeat the mistakes of history by retreating into protectionism," Ardern said on Friday, speaking at the Apec CEO Dialogues. "Apec must continue to commit to keeping markets open and trade flowing."



Other Asia Pacific leaders have also expressed hope that the incoming US administration of Joe Biden will engage more and support multilateral trade.

Trump pulled US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact. The United States is also absent from the world's largest free-trade bloc, the Regional Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (RCEP) - a 15-nation pact backed by China that was signed last week.

**Thai police to charge pupils over protest**

REUTERS, Bangkok

Two Thai high school student leaders will be charged for joining a banned protest last month, police said yesterday, a day after embattled Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha threatened tougher action against protesters.

The students said they had been summoned for violating an emergency decree by joining a protest on Oct 15, when tens of thousands of people defied a ban by Prayuth aimed at halting protests demanding his removal and reforms of the monarchy.

"Even if you arrest protest leaders, there is not enough space in prison because hundreds more will rise up," one of the students, 15-year Benjaminorn Nivas, told Reuters in an instant message.

Youth- and student-led protests since July have become the greatest challenge to Thailand's establishment in years and dozens of arrests and attempts to quell them have so far only brought more people into the streets.

Prayuth has refused the protesters' demand to resign. Protesters also seek to redraw the constitution written by his former junta and curb the powers of King Maha Vajiralongkorn, saying the monarchy has enabled decades of military domination.



**Covid reinfection unlikely for at least 6 months: study**

REUTERS, London

People who've had Covid-19 are highly unlikely to contract it again for at least six months after their first infection, according to a British study of healthcare workers on the frontline of fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

The findings should offer some reassurance for the more than 51 million people worldwide who have been infected with the pandemic disease, researchers at the University of Oxford said.

"This is really good news, because we can be confident that, at least in the short term, most people who get COVID-19 won't get it again," said David Eyre, a professor at Oxford's Nuffield Department of Population Health, who co-led the study.

Isolated cases of re-infection with Covid-19, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, had raised concerns that immunity might be short-lived and that recovered patients may swiftly fall sick again. But the results of this study, carried out in a cohort of UK healthcare workers - who are among those at highest risk of contracting Covid-19 - suggest cases of reinfection are likely to remain extremely rare.

The study, part of a major staff testing programme, covered a 30-week period between April and November 2020. Its results have not peer-reviewed by other scientists.

During the study, 89 of 11,052 staff without antibodies developed a new infection with symptoms, while none of the 1,246 staff with antibodies developed a symptomatic infection. Staff with antibodies were also less likely to test positive for COVID-19 without symptoms, the researchers said, with 76 without antibodies testing positive, compared to only three with antibodies. Those three were all well and did not develop Covid-19 symptoms, they added.

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

Office of the Executive Engineer  
Jamalpur PWD Division  
Jamalpur  
Phone/Fax: 0981-63666  
[www.pwd.gov.bd](http://www.pwd.gov.bd)

**Invitation for International Re-Tender IFIT No. 01/2020-2021**

Memo No. 25.36.3900.164.07.001.20/794 Date: 19/11/2020

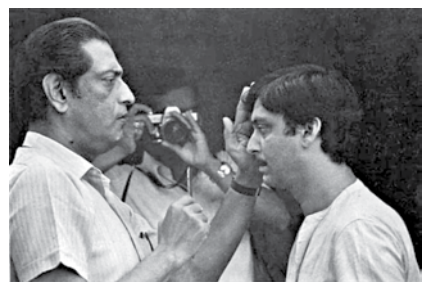
Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible tenderers as defined in the tender documents for the undermentioned work as per terms and conditions stated below:

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
2.	Agency	Public Works Department (PWD).
3.	Procuring entity name	Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur.
4.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
5.	Invitation for	ICT (Works).
6.	Reference for invitation of tender	Memo No. 25.36.3900.164.07.001.20/794 Dated: 19/11/2020.
7.	Budget and source of funds	GOB (Development Budget) and LOC from India.
8.	Tender No.	01/2020-2021.
9.	Project name	Establishment of Sheikh Hasina Medical College and Hospital & Nursing College, Jamalpur.
10.	Tender package name	Establishment of Sheikh Hasina Medical College and Hospital & Nursing College, Jamalpur. Sub-Head: Construction of hospital building (6-storied building with 10-storied foundation) including internal sanitary and external water supply, internal electrification, compound drain, gas connection etc. FY: 2020-21.
11.	Tender last selling date	20/12/2020 at 05:00pm.
12.	Tender closing date & time	21/12/2020 at 12:00pm.
13.	Tender opening date and time	21/12/2020 at 03:00pm.
14.	Name & address of the offices	
	Selling tender document (principal)	Office of the Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur.
	Selling tender document (others)	Office of the Executive Engineer, Mymensingh/Kishoreganj/Tangail/Sherpur/Netrakona/ & Dhaka PWD Division III/IV/Dhaka Maintenance/Mohakhali/Savar/Gazipur/Chittagong PWD Division-I/Rajshahi PWD Division-II/Khulna PWD Division-I/Barisal PWD Division/Sylhet PWD Division/Rangpur PWD Division. The tender notice will also be available in the official website <a href="http://www.pwd.gov.bd">www.pwd.gov.bd</a> and CPTU website <a href="http://www.cptu.gov.bd">www.cptu.gov.bd</a> .
	Receiving tender document	i) Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Sheikh Hasina Medical College and Hospital & Nursing College, Jamalpur. ii) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Jamalpur. iii) Office of the Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur. iv) Office of the Police Super, Jamalpur. v) Office of the Executive Engineer, Sherpur PWD Division, Sherpur.
	Opening place of tender document	Office of the Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur.
15.	Eligibility of tenderer	(i) <b>General experience:</b> Experience of minimum 10 years in construction/EPC contracts for construction of commercial buildings, in the role of prime contractor or a JV member. (ii) <b>Specific experience:</b> The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor or JV Member in construction works of at least 1 (one) contract(s) of minimum 6 (six)-storied RCC frame structure building with 10 (ten)-storied foundation having single basement in the health sector in Bangladesh/India successfully completed within the last 10 (ten) years, with a value of at least USD 16.50 million (USD sixteen point five million only) or equivalent amount in other currency. The experience certificate for successful completion of a building work shall have to be enclosed along with the tender documents in prescribed format as

16.	Brief description of works	As per BOQ.
17.	Price of tender document	USD 100 (USD one hundred) only (non-refundable).
18.	Tender security amount	USD 0.65 million (USD zero point six five million only).
19.	Work completion time	27 (twenty-seven) months.
20.	Name of official inviting	Md. Mubarak Hossain.
21.	Designation of official inviting tender with address	Executive Engineer, Jamalpur PWD Division, Jamalpur.
22.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel. & Fax No. 0981-63666. E-mail: <a href="mailto:ee_jmlpr@pwd.gov.bd">ee_jmlpr@pwd.gov.bd</a> .
23.	Special instruction	a) If the tenderer submits any false/incorrect or forged certificate, the tender security may be forfeited. b) If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue. c) Rate must be quoted both in figures & in words for each item up to three digits beyond the decimal points. d) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. e) According to the minutes of the discussion meeting on Indian Line of Credit (LOC), (Reference: 45.185.024.00.00.012.2015-40) and LoC agreement, Tenderers only from India are allowed to participate in the tender process.

Md. Mubarak Hossain  
Executive Engineer  
Jamalpur PWD Division  
Jamalpur

# Revisiting Soumitra Chatterjee's iconic roles



Satyajit Ray and Soumitra Chatterjee



Madhabi Mukherjee and Soumitra Chatterjee in 'Charulata'.



Soumitra Chatterjee as Feluda in 'Sonar Kella'



With Babita in 'Ashani Sanket'.

SHABABA IQBAL

We recently lost one of the most celebrated Bengali actors with the demise of Soumitra Chatterjee. Having started his film career in 1959, the actor went on to play an array of memorable characters over the years. He received the Padma Bhushan in 2004. He was also honoured with the 2011 Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Government of India's highest award in cinema for lifetime achievement. In 2018, he received France's highest civilian award, the Legion of Honour. Although Chatterjee's importance in the world of cinema can be talked about for days on end, his greater legacy is that of an artiste whose passion for his craft was unparalleled. That being said, here are only a few of Soumitra Chatterjee's iconic performances.

**Apu in Apur Sansar (1959)**

The third and final installment of Satyajit Ray's Apu trilogy marked Chatterjee's silver screen debut, as well as the beginning of a cinematic relationship of both collaboration and mentoring between Ray and him. The actor's cerebral presence and meticulous delivery as Apu is remarkable, while the fiery chemistry between him and Sharmila Tagore is unforgettable.

**Mayur-Vahan in Jhinder Bandi (1961)**

Audiences saw the first proper exploration of Chatterjee's acting range in director Tapan Sinha's "Jhinder Bandi", based on a novel by Saradindu Bandyopadhyay, which in turn was inspired by Anthony Hope's "The Prisoner of Zenda." Chatterjee was uncharacteristically cast in the villainous role of Mayur-Vahan against Uttam Kumar's conventional hero. Scenes featuring the two titans and sarod maestro Ali Akbar Khan's compositions make it a memorable film.

**Narsingh in Abhijan (1962)**

Chatterjee was a fascinating choice to play Narsingh in "Abhijan". His character is a cynical and hot-headed taxi driver who struggles to balance passion, pride and guilt. Chatterjee highlighted the complexity and ambiguity of the taxi driver brilliantly. His chemistry with Waheeda Rahman as Gulabi and Ruma Guha Thakurta as Neeli in the film is wonderful.

**Amal in Charulata (1964)**

Perhaps the pinnacle of Satyajit Ray's cinematic achievement, "Charulata", based on Rabindranath Tagore's story, was also a milestone in Chatterjee's

career. He portrayed the naive and energy of artistic aspiration as Amal with brilliance and sensitivity. The forbidden love between Charulata (Madhabi Mukherjee) and Amal is remembered fondly to this day.

**Subir in Teen Bhubaner Pare (1969)**

One of Chatterjee's most popular films, "Teen Bhubaner Pare" was a turning point in his career. The film, directed by Ashutosh Bandyopadhyay, was a huge hit, owing largely to the compositions of Sudhin Dasgupta and Chatterjee's performance as the working-class hero

mannerisms of the rural populace, by accompanying the director for location scouting. The film stars noted actor Babita, alongside Chatterjee.

**Shyam in Basanta Bilap (1973)**

This romantic comedy released when Chatterjee was at the peak of his career, and it was unlike most other films that he had acted in. It is his third film with Aparna Sen. The plot revolves around a group of women who live in a working women's hostel, and their hilarious interactions with a group of four boys from the neighbourhood. This film is a celebration



Soumitra Chatterjee and Swatilekha Chatterjee in 'Ghare Baire'.

Subir, who tries to juggle the energetic spirit of youth with societal expectations. Chatterjee's carefree dance to the tune of "Jibone Ki Pabo Na Bhulechi Shey Bhabona" is a delightful watch.

**Doctor Gangacharan in Ashani Sanket (1973)**

Set against the backdrop of the devastating Bengal famine of 1943, Satyajit Ray's "Ashani Sanket" is a significant film. Doctor Gangacharan, played by Chatterjee, highlighted the greater realities of the struggles of rural India in the face of poverty and starvation. Chatterjee picked up the Nadia dialect used in the film and the

of Chatterjee's comedic strength.

**Feluda in Sonar Kella (1974) and Joi Baba Felunath (1979)**

For generations of cinema and literature enthusiasts, the mere mention of Soumitra Chatterjee is likely to bring up Satyajit Ray's Charminar-smoking answer to Sherlock Holmes – Feluda. Although the role has been reprised by numerous talented actors under the direction of Ray's son, Sandip in modern times, Satyajit Ray only directed two Feluda movies from the dozens of stories he wrote – "Sonar Kella" and "Joi Baba Felunath." Chatterjee brought the genius detective to life brilliantly.

**Udayan Pandit in Heerak Rajar Deshe (1980)**

Chatterjee's performance as Udayan Pandit in Satyajit Ray's "Heerak Rajar Deshe" left quite a mark on the minds of cinemagoers. Even though Goopy and Bagha save the day with their magical powers, it is Udayan Pandit who starts a revolution in his quiet and level-headed way in the dystopian world of the film. Udayan Pandit is the only character who does not speak in rhyme, symbolising that although everyone else's thoughts are bound, he is a free thinker.



'Apur Sansar' featured Soumitra with Sharmila Tagore.



Soumitra in 'Abhijan'.

**Sandip in Ghare Baire (1984)**

The story of "Ghare Baire", based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel of the same name, is set in 1907 on the estate of the rich Bengali noble Nikhilesh (Victor Banerjee). In the chaotic aftermath of Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal into Muslim and Hindu states, the nationalist movement tries to impose a boycott of foreign goods by claiming that imports are at the root of Indian poverty. In the film, Chatterjee played Sandip, a nationalist battling the British through the Swadeshi movement. The actor always spoke out on controversial issues such as societal intolerance.

## GOODBYE APU

### Stars mourn Soumitra Chatterjee's demise

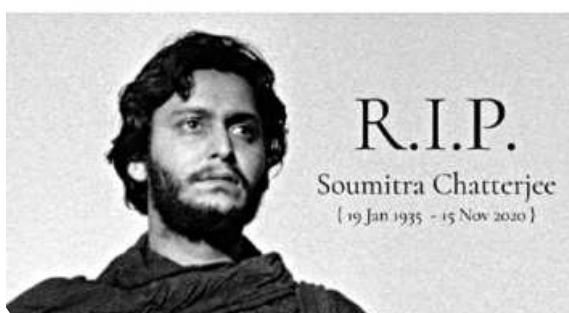
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Stars in the entertainment industry mourned the loss of one of the brightest minds to grace the silver screen. Here are a select few of the heartfelt tributes from Soumitra's fans within the industry.

Chanchal Chowdhury

Yesterday at 6:17 PM

অবনত শ্রদ্ধা  
হে কিংবদন্তী অভিনেতা...  
সৌমিত্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়



Jaya Ahsan

15 November at 14:12

পদার্থ তিনি যখন অভিনয়ের গরিম বোঝে ফেলে চরিত্রের আচরণ ফুটিয়ে তুলেছিলেন, তারতর্ক্যের শিল্পত্ববনে সেটা শুধু বিশ্বকর, একটা ঘটনাই ছিল না, ছিল এক নতুন যুগের শুরু। বিশ্ব-চলচ্চিত্রের অভিনয়ের প্রথম সারিতেই তাঁর স্থান। কিন্তু অমর যে ইতিহাসের স্রষ্টা, অমর যে শিখরে ওঠা শিল্পী, মানুষ হিসেবে তিনি ছিলেন এক মহাসাগর। যে মহাসাগর অতলান্ত, কিন্তু শান্ত। তাঁর মৃত্যু নেই।

Aamir Khan

1 hr

Indian Cinema has lost one of its leading lights. My heartfelt condolences to Soumitraj's family, and to all his fans. His work will continue to bring joy to all of us.  
RIP Shri Soumitra Chatterjee

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is with Shubham Nimbalkar and 5 others.

15 November at 18:04

It's a huge loss to the world of Art & Cinema - The Great Thespian #SoumitraChatterjee bids his last goodbye leaving behind an extremely rich legacy to be cherished forever.  
Rest In Peace

Anupam Roy is in Kolkata.

6 h

শুধু আমার বুকের ভেতর মৃত নদীর মতো শীতে, তুমি আমার থেকে দূরে হেঁটে চলে গেছ রাজ, ওভাবে কেন ডাকো আমাকে? #SoumitraChattopadhyay

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

It is no secret that Feluda was Satyajit Ray's answer to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Nonetheless, for at least three generations, Feluda has been a household name in most Bengali families. When Ray brought Detective P C Mitter from pages to the screen, his hand drawn illustrations hinted to just one name— Soumitra Chatterjee.



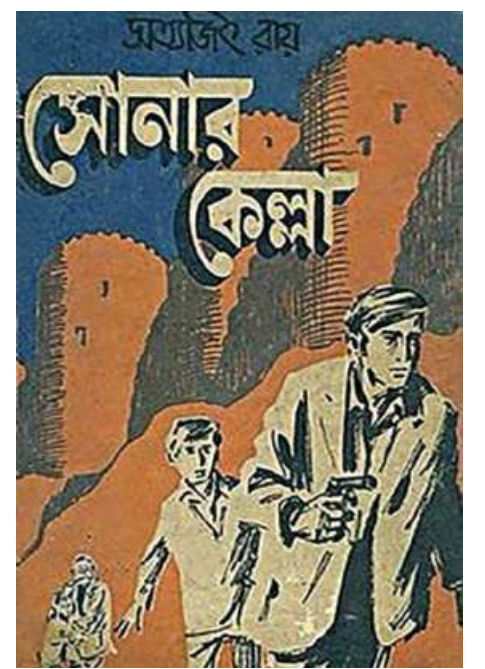
Soumitra as 'Feluda'.

Among the novels and stories that Ray wrote especially for young readers, the detective stories of Feluda are by far the most popular. With calculated amounts of wit, humour, suspense and action, these stories are considered classics of Bengali literature — so, it is not surprising that Ray directed two of them for the big screen. Soumitra made a cult figure of Ray's famous detective, playing the role in the two blockbusters, "Sonar Kella" (1974) and "Joi Baba Felunath" (1979).

Over time, the role has been reprised by many talented Bengali actors, but Soumitra's portrayal of Feluda remains iconic.

If Feluda is Holmes, the role of Watson goes to his goody two shoes cousin Topshie. Feluda also has the very Bengali, bumbling pulp writer, Lalmoan-babu, also known as Jatayu, by his side.

"Sonar Kella" takes Feluda and his associates to Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, in search of the 'Golden Fortress' while fighting off criminals. The film is a



thriller, with a bellyful of laughs. In "Joi Baba Felunath", the characters take on the dreaded criminal mastermind Maganlal Meghraj in Varanasi. These films left quite a mark on my mind, as a young viewer.

Soumitra was 5 feet and 11.5 inches tall, while Feluda's height is 6 feet and 2 inches on the pages. The actor's appearance held an uncanny resemblance to the detective.

Many believe that Ray made Feluda's illustrations with Soumitra in mind. Similarly, the character of Jatayu truly resembles actor Santosh Dutta. However, on numerous occasions, Soumitra suggested that Feluda actually is like Ray.

While many have downgraded Ray's two Feluda films as being more popular than intellectual, Soumitra's brilliant portrayal of the detective charmed audiences across different generations.

Ray's passion for riddles, as impersonated by Feluda, is also significant. For instance, in "Joi Baba Felunath", when Ruku challenges Feluda with, *Panch bhai ek sath, marche ghushi khache bhat, aro panch sathe tar, kemon achen, Nomoskar*, solving the riddle, Feluda displays his ten fingers with a memorable smirk.

When Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the 'death' of Sherlock Holmes, the author was under immense pressure to bring him back to life. Unfortunately, for the Bengali audience, the demise of the on-screen Feluda is an irreplaceable loss. Nonetheless, Soumitra Chatterjee's legacy as the Charminar-smoking, curious detective will keep him ageless and immortal in our hearts.

Priyanka Chowdhury is an art researcher and art writer in the making. She can be reached at priyanka.chowdhury@gmail.com.



Tariq Anam Khan

2 h

অপু আজ চলে গেল !!!  
অবধারিত ছিল এই যাওয়া । তবু মনে মনে বড় আশা ছিল এই যুদ্ধে  
অপু জিতবে ।  
লড়াই করেছেন শেষ পর্যন্ত ।  
আমৃত্যু শিল্পে নিবেদিত মানুষ সৌমিত্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় ।  
আমার, আমাদের শিক্ষক । কঠ, উচ্চারণ, আবৃত্তি, স্বাভাবিক চরিত্রানুগ  
অভিনয়, চরম নির্ভা কত কিছু !!! সর্বোপরি বাংলার... See more



Amitabh Bachchan

T 3722 - Soumitra Chatterjee - an iconic legend - one of the mightiest pillars of the Film Industry, ... has fallen ... a gentle soul and abundant talent ... last met him at the 1971 in Kolkata ... Prayers



Sourav Ganguly

U have done so much .u can rest in peace ...



parambrata

To return to the city bereft of you is a very weird feeling...





## CAN YOU SPOT THE SATIRE?

### DESK REPORT

Below are two reports. They are either satire or not satire. Sometimes even we don't know what satire is. And in today's world, the lines are more blurred than ever before. Satire here is like our rape laws: no one knows what it is or should be.

#### BANGERS HAVE A LOT TO TEACH USA ABOUT DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

There are many things that the USA can learn from Bangladesh, Boss of Election Commission (BC) Hudai Kotha said after casting his vote last week.

"We can learn good things from the US as well," the BC told journalists.

"Counting votes [in the US presidential election] took four to five days, but we can finish counting votes in four to five minutes," he said.

"In fact, sometimes we don't even count votes since we know who will win," he added.

He also binned the opposition party's allegations of their polling agents not being allowed to stay in polling centres. He said the election was peaceful and the few opposition party people they beat up were just anomalies.

"We have been very helpful. Sometimes, we voted on behalf of others so they didn't have to take the trouble themselves," he said.

"Transfer of power will not be normal if the elections are not fair, impartial, participatory and acceptable. If the elections are not acceptable and fair, there are chances of social anarchy," he added, although this was probably him speaking on a tangent.

#### 'RAPES CAN BE PREVENTED IF GIRLS ARE TREATED LIKE TAMARIND'

A lawmaker in parliament found the perfect solution to rape: shut the feminists up and treat women like tamarinds.

He later backtracked and said people

misunderstood him. "Listen to the whole thing. I wanted to use the 'tamarind principle' but you journalists don't even know the full thing," he said.

"I had compared women not to tamarinds, but to flowers first. Whenever people see flowers, they want to smell the fragrance. So I was asking women not to go outside without purdah [veil]."

"I did not label them as tamarinds. I had only likened them to tamarinds because when you walk beneath a tamarind tree, or see someone eating tamarind, you want to taste it. No one understood the difference..." he said while sweating profusely.

When asked what the hell he meant, he began to get even more nervous.

"Listen, let me bring a beautiful female in front of you. Sit and stare at her for four minutes straight and then describe your feelings to me. You will see what I meant," he meant.

When this reporter told him he would not stare at a girl for four minutes and perhaps that staring was also a big problem, the minister pulled out his gun which he had taken a selfie with a few days ago.

"Stop twisting my words," he said, before storming out.

Earlier, the MP in parliament had also said, "In the name of women's liberation, feminists are encouraging women to become freer. This has increased the acceptability of rape so much among rapists that they are encouraged to commit the act."

This, however, could not be discussed with him as he dug himself a deep hole and then threw a hissy fit.



## Masks with voice muffling feature made mandatory after people can't stop having opinions



### DISGUISED CORRESPONDENT

Students, doctors and social media users, along with everyone else, have been asked to wear the Shut Your Mouf range of masks at all times after November 1.

The masks, which come with a voice muffling feature, was made mandatory after people kept talking about the inefficiency of the government and corruption of government workers.

"These people constantly talk about negative things. Our GDP is higher than India's and all they can talk about is how there is a

dominating criminal element embedded in our political structure," House Minister Tokpal said.

Experts believe donning the Shut Your Mouf masks will prevent people from catching the talking-too-much virus which has been going around this country since before its birth.

The masks will also help curb the spread of *Cujob*, a highly contagious disease which picks up just before the election period.

Detractors of the plan, however, point out that this was nothing but a money grab. "The Shut Your Mouf brand is owned by a person who holds a position in a government

office. Allowing him to produce and sell this line of masks stinks of something underhanded," Abedin Shoumik, director of The Centre for Politics and Dialogue, said.

Others also said they did not believe in the plan and it might not work as well as thought.

"These masks are of low quality. You can still not fully muffle the noises. We are thinking of promoting gag orders instead, which is a sock stuffed in your throat," an official of the Ministry of Information said.

Although he worked in the information ministry, he refused to give his name.

## Very Private University expels student for being an open socialist snowflake

### LUBNAN KHALEESI

Tajuddin Akhmed, who went viral in August this year for putting socialism on blast on Facebook live, was today expelled from A Very Private University (VPU), which he had just joined.

His expulsion came after another *bideshi*-coffee fuelled tirade, but this time siding with socialism. "Look, if our lecturers are getting paid less, then our tuition fees should also be lower," he was heard saying in the video.

After the video went viral with 69 views, VPU sprang into action. "We tolerate dissent; encourage it even. But it has to be moderated," VPU's Dean Aassad Aaqib said. "We are A Very Private University. What we do should remain private. Airing your dirty laundry is so lower-middle class, we won't tolerate it," Aaqib said.

"Plus, private is literally in our name. If we said liberal, would we not be liberal? It's so basic, that breaking this rule boggles the mind," the dean

added.

When asked about their not-for-profit status, the dean said that did not count. "We are hundred percent non-profit. We do not want profit but we still seem to make a lot. But that doesn't mean we can bend rules willy-nilly. If you wanted cheap education, why go private?" he asked with a smirk.

Contacted for comments, Tajuddin, however, could not be reached, with literally no one claiming he "has gone missing", but we want to plant that thought in the reader's mind.

Tajuddin's friends say his newfound zeal for communism started after he blew through his semester fee instead of paying the university. They, however, agreed with the overall sentiment and have planned a protest to free "our main man Tajuddin".

*Lubnan Khaleesi now boasts an envious garden, with some plants turning yellow, but that's ok since it's a favourite colour.*



## Slow-moving vehicles are risky and banned by law

*So why are thousands of them still operating?*

ISN'T it a mystery that although the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, the High Court and the Road Transport Act 2018 have all banned slow-moving three-wheelers from plying on the highways, you still see thousands of them riding around especially in the districts, upazilas and rural areas? Actually, when you come to think of it, it isn't such a mystery. These risky, unfit contraptions driven by untrained drivers who are poor and need to survive have an unofficial clearance from influential quarters. To ensure that the ban is honoured, it is necessary to find out those kingpins who make a quick buck from this illegal business.

According to a report in this paper, the drivers who usually are untrained and have no license operate these unfit vehicles by bribing local syndicates consisting of political leaders, policemen and administration officials.

It is sad that even the Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has, on several occasions, admitted that the government could not enforce the ban because of the opposition from politicians including public representatives who are behind it. The general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation has been quoted in the report saying that some of these vehicles operate under ministers' names, some under MPs' names, and others under the local mayors' names. Another transport leader informed that owners of these vehicles have to pay Tk 2,000 to Tk 3,000 just to get listed with the "transport organisations" usually run by political leaders. Thus it seems that even the ministry and the government as a whole have no power to stop these unscrupulous public officials (who are all paid from taxpayers' money) from breaking the law and making money out of a business that has led to countless deaths and disabilities.

On Wednesday, one such vehicle flipped into a roadside ditch in Shibganj upazilla in Chapainawabganj, killing nine people and injuring several others. Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare body, estimates that 15 percent of the total road crashes (around 5,516) last year involved these vehicles and illegal easy bikes. Most of these vehicles are motorised by single-cylinder diesel engines meant for power tillers or water pumps. Their brakes are faulty. It does not take much imagination to realise how risky they are when plying highways where trucks and buses speed by, some of them recklessly overtaking another vehicle.

It does not take a committee to find out how to solve this problem. Everyone concerned knows what to do—hold those public officials involved in this illegal business accountable, take action against them and find alternative livelihood opportunities for the drivers. These officials are on the government's payroll and answerable for their actions. Unless such corrupt practices are rooted out from the system, laws and High Court directives will not have any effect. And these slow-moving vehicles will continue to kill people.

## Rivers being killed by haphazard dumping of waste

*At least three maunds of junk recovered every day from Barishal River Port!*

A report published in this paper recently revealed the challenges faced by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials when they began a dredging project (required for smooth navigability) to remove silt from Barishal River Port around October 16. The hazardous amount of polythene, plastic and other trash dumped into the water slowed down the project, and more than a month later, not even half of the work could be completed. It transpired that violating existing rules, passengers and port staffers have been indiscriminately polluting the waterbody with large quantities of cloth, ropes and plastic waste which later collect with the silt. Needless to say, apart from hampering the dredging process, dumping such waste pollutes the water and affects marine biodiversity.

The 40-km-long Kirtankhola river—100-150 feet in the middle—stands at just around seven feet during low tide, and launches get stuck on their way to the port if there isn't at least 10-12 feet of depth. In the last two weeks, two launches got stuck near the port due to siltation. Hence, dredging is the only way forward. Two machines will be carrying out the dredging across 30 points on the Dhaka-Barishal route, including a few points at the river port area, but a lot of time and money is being wasted due to the accumulated waste including plastic.

It is disconcerting that despite the huge threat being posed to the navigability of the river by the accumulating waste, the relevant authorities have failed miserably to keep it under control since the pandemic struck. The waste is also a threat to the very life of the river. The administration, including the office of the local department of environment, must be firm in carrying out their responsibilities in stopping this pollution. The government has time and again stressed on saving our rivers which are the lifelines of our cities and villages. But we have ruined many of them already. The government must make concerted efforts to raise awareness about the damage caused by such wayward dumping of waste. It must also enforce penalties on polluters who, despite knowing the consequences, continue to pollute. These initiatives should not be limited to the Barishal port only, but should extend to all rivers across the country suffering from a similar fate.

# The MP's words are an insult to all women

*Why did no one in the House object?*

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

ONE would think it to be the rantings of a madman had it not been the words of a parliamentarian—that feminists are to blame for the rape incidents across the country.

Such a preposterous remark was made by Rezaul Karim Bablu, an independent MP of Bogura-7 constituency. But he didn't stop just there. He endorsed the obnoxious "tetul theory" of late Hefazate-e-Islam head Shah Ahmad Shafi.

Late Allama Shafi, as we unpleasantly recall, compared women to "tetul" (or tamarind) because they are like this sour fruit and cause "men's hearts to salivate when they see them" and hence should not be "seen" outside the confines of the four walls of the house.

But what is most shocking is the total silence in parliament after such abominable words regarding women were uttered. Forget all the men in the House, how could not a single woman member of parliament or other women holding high positions object to such an outrageous and clearly misogynistic comment? The occasion was the passing of the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill 2020 which added the provision of the death penalty for rapists, when several MPs proposed circulating the bill to get public opinion on it and sending it to a select committee. The MP in question claimed that feminists were continuing to "expose" women in the name of women's liberation, which was actually encouraging rapists to rape. Pray tell, what is the reasoning behind such twisted assumptions?

Human rights activists and feminists are appalled at such remarks in an institution that is supposed to represent the people, men and women. They are especially dismayed at the silence of the women MPs, the Speaker of the House, and the leader of the House at such objectionable statements about women. We may recall that the prime minister herself had categorically criticised the comments of Allama Shafi in a congregation which showed such disrespect for women. Surely, reiterating those ideas cannot be something that can be acceptable to her or any of her cabinet colleagues. Apart from the sheer crassness of his words, MP Rezaul

Karim's statement runs contrary to all the goals that the government is trying to achieve in terms of empowering women through its ministries and international commitments. These include access to education for girls, opportunities for employment and earning an income, encouraging women to enter male-dominated professions such as in the police, army and air force.

What he said cannot be dismissed as a careless remark made without thinking. It was made by a sitting member of parliament over a bill on rape at a time when we are deluged

*What he said cannot be dismissed as a careless remark made without thinking. It was made by a sitting member of parliament over a bill on rape at a time when we are deluged with incidents of rape, gang rape and all kinds of sexual violence against women and girls, crimes that you would think would be universally condemned.*



**It is tragic that a lawmaker who represents the people and takes part in passing laws would chose to use the cheapest misogynistic scapegoat imaginable: "how women are dressed".**

with incidents of rape, gang rape and all kinds of sexual violence against women and girls, crimes that you would think would be universally condemned. The "tetul theory" that the MP was referring to included a prescription for women given by the late religious leader that declares that they do not step outside of their home and just stay inside, dust the furniture and take care of the children—the only tasks they are meant for. During his infamous "tetul" sermon, the cleric condemned men for "allowing" their wives and daughters to work, to go to schools and universities to be doctors, to work as garment workers—which somehow meant they were of "loose

character". Girls should have a maximum of grade 4 or 5 education so that they could help their husbands to calculate household expenses. At that time, we were outraged, as was our prime minister, but we did not really take it as seriously as we perhaps should have.

One cannot deny that religion is a powerful tool to influence people. So when these regressive, anti-woman ideas are spewed out misusing the name of religion at gatherings attended by hundreds and thousands of men, many of whom will blindly support anything prescribed by a religious leader, it is something to be worried about. When an MP advocates these ideas in parliament, implying that the victims of rape had brought it upon themselves, it basically absolves the rapists of their crime and is, therefore, dangerous and damaging. And when no one in parliament, not even those women holding such high positions of power, objects to them, it is shocking and disturbing.

The lawmaker has shown extreme contempt for the tireless work of human rights activists and feminists in trying to bring to the forefront the gross gender inequalities that have led to women being physically, emotionally and economically abused. If it weren't for their continuous protests condemning violence against women especially, the resolute demanding of justice for survivors and victims, their nationwide campaigns to create consciousness about such violence and their determination to get their voices heard by those in power, we wouldn't have seen the changes in laws and policies to protect the rights of women; we wouldn't have seen the murderers of Yasmin and Nusrat be brought to justice. If it weren't for these feminists who have dedicated themselves to helping women survivors escape indescribable torture by providing shelter or through pro bono

legal aid, many would not have survived. To try and make "feminist" sound like a dirty word is the oldest trick in the book of patriarchy that cries of blatant ignorance and a total disconnect with the ideas of equality and justice which our constitution guarantees.

In an interview with *The Daily Star's* Golam Mortoza, MP Rezaul Karim gave a somewhat befuddling explanation for his statement. In a nutshell, what he said was that the onus of not getting raped fell on how women dressed and appeared in public. So when girls wear T-shirts, it is only natural for men to want to rape them. When asked why girls like Nusrat and Tonu who adhered to the religious dress code had been sexually abused and raped, before they were murdered, MP Karim was evasive and said those examples did not apply here. How convenient! And how would MP Karim explain why rapists rape children (including small boys), babies and women who stay at home and in front of their husbands, and why children are sexually abused inside their homes by close relatives?

It is tragic that a lawmaker who represents the people and who takes part in passing laws would—instead of condemning rapists and sex offenders and advocating for sensitisation of the male members of society including law enforcers in treating all women and girls with respect, and for removal of the culture of impunity of rapists—chose to use the cheapest misogynistic scapegoat: *how women are dressed.*

The MP in question has shown extreme disrespect to all the women in the House as well as to all women and girls of this country. He has also sent the wrong message to rapists and other sexual predators.

Aasha Mehreen Amin is Senior Deputy Editor, Editorial and Opinion, *The Daily Star*.

## PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

# Slow death or new direction for the UN?



MARK MALLOCH-BROWN

FOR much of its life, the United Nations has hidden behind the comfortable maxim that "If we didn't have it, we would have to invent it." Now at the venerable age of 75 (old enough

to have been a 2020 US presidential candidate), the organisation still enjoys widespread approval in global opinion polls.

But beneath the surface, the UN faces difficulties that cannot be ignored. Judging by traditional and social media, the issues that the UN pushes tend to get little traction. Worse, when it comes to maintaining peace and security, the UN is often stymied by its dysfunctional Security Council, which itself reflects an increasingly divided world. Whether in Syria, Yemen, or Libya, progress toward securing peace has been glacial, with much more being decided on the battlefield than at the Security Council. These same divisions have also hampered human-rights advocacy, as has the recent election that awarded seats on the UN Human Rights Council to Russia, Cuba, and China.

*Of course, the UN has always mirrored the world it represents. There was broad member support for a strong UN only in its initial years and during the early years of Kofi Annan's tenure as secretary-general in the late 1990s. Otherwise, the UN has typically operated against strong headwinds.*

Of course, the UN has always mirrored the world it represents. There was broad member support for a strong UN only in its initial years and during the early years of Kofi Annan's tenure as secretary-general in the late 1990s. Otherwise, the UN has typically operated against strong headwinds; and now, a number of political and demographic changes are rapidly reshaping the UN's world.

Today's world is younger overall. US power appears to have peaked, and the

Trump. At the UN General Assembly in September, Chinese President Xi Jinping took an extraordinarily consequential step, pledging that China would become carbon neutral by 2060. Yet the same regime that has committed to environmental sustainability is also brutally persecuting China's Uighur minority.

This points to the UN's central dilemma. In terms of population, most of today's world is under authoritarian rule, ranging from despots without even



PHOTO: REUTERS

global distribution of power is being redistributed to China and others. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic has ensured that the world will be poorer, just as digitalisation has made it less equal.

With a charter that rests squarely on the liberal-democratic values of the winners of World War II, the UN has struggled to accommodate the changing global order. Under its current secretary-general, António Guterres, the UN has admirably continued to pursue gender parity and more diversity in its staffing. Still, too many top jobs remain in the hands of the founding member states. And, more fundamentally, the organisation seems out of touch with the world beyond its doors.

China, the second-largest contributor to the UN's assessed budget, has increasingly tried to assert global leadership on climate change and other issues, following America's abdication under outgoing President Donald

a pretence of democratic legitimacy to elected autocrats who have eroded democratic institutions and checks on their power.

With no choice but to contend with this increasingly undemocratic world, the UN's challenge now is to fashion a practical, achievable agenda without betraying its founding charter and its commitment to human rights and other freedoms. It will have to tap into its current strengths. As a representative of "collective rights," the UN is uniquely positioned to mobilise action on issues like climate change, which threatens poor farmers in developing countries as much as it does rich Manhattanites who are exposed to rising sea levels.

Likewise, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to tackle inequality and exclusion everywhere, remain an example of the UN at its best, as does Guterres's call for "A New Social Contract for a New Era." The UN provides an indispensable global good

by producing league tables of human development and organising broad coalitions to achieve steady progress on key indicators of well-being.

But just because the UN is a leading voice for social, economic, and environmental justice does not mean that it should be given a pass on human rights. The organisation has a duty to report human-rights abuses wherever it finds them. Though it should be smart about passing evidence on to others and issuing denunciations, it must remain fearless in its advocacy. Here, its best allies are civil-society groups and the few brave countries that are willing to defy narrow commercial or political interests to take on the likes of China, India, or Saudi Arabia.

By contrast, the UN probably will have to bow to the logic of the twenty-first-century cold war. The Security Council will remain ineffectual until it is reformed, which is a distant prospect. But there are ways around this paralysis. During the original Cold War, the UN, without reference to the Security Council, launched major initiatives to address humanitarian crises and to support new members emerging from colonial rule. UN development and humanitarian agencies often drew on their own mandates and international law to intervene when the circumstances required it.

Today, UN Special Representatives in conflict areas and UN Resident Coordinators elsewhere do much unsung good, working tirelessly behind the scenes to avert local conflicts, defend civil society, and address inequality and other root causes of political instability. This field-based UN thrives out of sight and out of mind, safely removed from the obstructive state-driven politics of the Security Council in New York City.

It is here that the UN's future will be secured or lost. In a younger, angrier, increasingly impatient world, a distant club of men in dark suits is doomed to irrelevance. Where the UN matters is on the ground, deploying its remarkable mandate to fight for those who need it most.

Mark Malloch-Brown, a former deputy United Nations secretary-general, is Co-Chair of the UN Foundation. This text was adapted from his UNU-WIDER annual lecture.

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# The Shame of Being a Man

"The shame of being a man – is there any better reason to write?" — Gilles Deleuze



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

I woke up with a colleague's hesitant post on Facebook wishing his friends well on the International Men's Day. The comment thread is filled with issues ranging from locker room banter to

the high theory on the dominant form of masculinity. Frankly, I didn't know that there was a day reserved for men (November 19). Now that I do, maybe I will be better prepared to defend March 8 against the charge of being discriminatory.

I, therefore, turned to my daily dose of morning news. The man accused of raping a DU student at Airport Road has been given life imprisonment. Good. The Daily Star has talked to a Member of Parliament about his comments that wearing T-shirts makes women vulnerable to rape, reminding one of the infamous "tamarind theory" promulgated by a recently deceased religious leader. Dreadful. The Samakal reports that a mortuary assistant of the Suhrawardy Hospital in Dhaka has been allegedly found guilty of necrophilia; his secret came out when a forensic team started investigating the presence of semen in the body of a young suicide victim. Disgusting.

The news samples taken that morning revealed a pathological crisis and are enough to blur my position on the dominant masculinity that pervades our society. Is it possible for me to detach myself from the samples that I just shared?

In my introductory class on gender, I often ask my students to close their eyes and tell me about the first image that comes to their mind when they hear the word "man". Most think of a muscle-

bound homo sapien (usually sports or media icons with ribbed bellies); a few mention their fathers or brothers. But no one has ever mentioned Newton, Einstein, Churchill or Hitler. I wonder why and how such image of masculinity is injected in our system!

With the rise of wide-reaching #MeToo or #MasculinitySoFragile movements, men are fast being touted as nothing more than unthinking and emotionless sexual predators. The proof is in the pudding, and there is little room to deny such an allegation. For instance, when you watch the clip from the "subsequent" Borat film in which a conservative politician reaches for his manhood during an interview with an undercover actress-journalist, you know that the fairytale wolf of Red Riding Hood is not a thing of the past. Men are dangerous. They always have been. They pose threats. They can be the most powerful man in the world with a finger on a nuclear bomb or a druggie Md Majnu roaming the sidewalks of Airport Road.

There was a time when we could sing the greatness of men, ignoring their follies and foibles. The medieval church once promoted the concept of Great Chain of Being in which God sits atop with man conveniently niched between angels and animals. The vertical arrangement with man at the third place is summed up brilliantly by Shakespeare, who made Hamlet ponder: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals." Indeed, man has the qualities of an angel, animal and God.

Unfortunately, we have slid down the chain to lose sight of "noble reason" and "infinite faculty" to become mere animals. I am sure there are many animals and animal-lovers who will take offence at such a comparison. Trust me, I love animals too.

On a serious note, do we really need

a day to celebrate men when there are so many reasons to be ashamed of being a man? This made me look up the six objectives of the day, which include: "Valuing male role models; acknowledging the contribution of men and boys; improving male health; tackling discrimination and disadvantage; fostering positive gender relations; and making the world a safer place for everyone."

Ah, the last point. Yes, we need to protect the vulnerable groups of the world from the evil eyes and deeds of

time, their well-being should also be taken into account. This year's theme is pertinent in this context. It says, "better health for men and boys."

While reading about this year's theme, I learned that men are three times more likely to commit suicide than women. The pressure of being a man is often overlooked. These are complex issues, and they cannot be separated from the violence exhibited by men.

The mental makeup of boys and men is conditioned by an environment



"I suffer from the twin attack of shame and guilt: one that rusts outside and the other that corrodes from inside." PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

men. The danger from men, after all, can come in different shapes and sizes: they can come as political or religious leaders, soldiers or solicitors, employers or teachers, relatives or strangers. Then again, we should not paint everyone with the same brush. We need to acknowledge the contributions of men and celebrate those who could be role models. He could be a fire fighter, a frontline worker, a bread earner. The positive role played by the gender should not be overlooked. At the same

that both involves and expects violence. The macho image while growing up in the sports field, the fight-club model in which a boy grows into a man, allows men to expect violence to be normal. It is a sign of power. It is an enactment of power.

A four-wheeler driver can, therefore, beat up that of a two-wheeler at his will and knock out his teeth, not realising that the uniform that he was wearing was more powerful than the sticker that the jeep was donning. So when a civilian

driver caused a serviceman to lose his dignity in public, the men behind the two-wheeler ganged up and sized up the perpetrator in an episode of "who's the man, now?" Such daily display of machismo is normalised as hormonal tide and ebb. The violence committed against the weak and the vulnerable is no different from those done against the women and female children; they all involve a deviation from the normal—even if in different degrees. I have no intention of slighting the violence done against women, but I think November 19 has provided an opportunity for us, the male, to reflect on the daily battles and realities that we face as males. After all, can I deny the fact that I am privileged as a man in a patriarchy?

I know what my spouse has to go through to become who she is in her career today even though we shared the same educational, social and cultural backgrounds; yet our experiences in terms of gender expectations in our professional careers have never been the same. When it comes to the issue of property or promotion, the male card has always come handy. And as a father of a bright young daughter, I sometimes feel ashamed of having brought her in a world that does not have gender parity. I suffer from the twin attack of shame and guilt: one that rusts outside and the other that corrodes from inside.

What then are my options: to continue to recognise myself as someone who silently approves and accepts these conditions of violence and gives consent to identify with the givers of such violence? Or to dissociate myself from the essential solidarity that I have with my fellow beings? Or is there a promise of moral sensibility and sanity that can one day be attained with the right education and orientation?

I look forward to a day when I am not ashamed—not as a man or a woman, but as a human being.

Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at Dhaka University (now on leave). Currently, he is Pro-Vice-Chancellor of ULAB.

## Trump's enablers – a grave threat to a nation in crisis

"I could spend a full-time job just responding to the ridiculously illogical, inconsistent, and blatantly stupid arguments supporting Trump... But here's the thing: his supporters DON'T CARE about facts or logic. They aren't seeking truth... And this is the cumulative reason why this nation is in such terrible shape: We don't have truth seekers; we have narcissists." — Former Colorado law professor Jenna Ellis in a Facebook post in March 2016.

"My mind was changed based on fact and personal knowledge. President Trump is a sincere Christian, the best president in modern history, and made and kept his promises to the American people. I am proud to stand with him and his goals for the future of this country and all of its citizens." — Ellis, in a statement on November 18, 2020 in response to CNN's report of her previous Facebook statement. Ellis, one of Trump's most ardent defenders since joining his campaign as a legal adviser a year ago, has joined former New York Mayor Rudolf Giuliani in a futile, almost farcical legal effort to reverse the projected victory of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.



ASHFAQ SWAPAN

Pundits are wondering about what Trump will do next. Will he start a media company? Will he continue



Trump's belligerence and his enablers' silence have resulted in a disquieting refusal of his supporters to accept the people's verdict. PHOTO: JIM WATSON/AFP

to be a Republican kingmaker? Will his influence simply peter out? They miss the broader, existential threat to American democracy.

It is Trumpism that is the real threat. This is a profound sickness in the American body politic, driven by a gut Republican hatred of Democrats so deep that policy or facts are irrelevant. Just one quick example: Republicans hated Obamacare so much that when they ruled the House, they repealed it 50 times. What's their alternative? Now that's the best kept secret in the world.

To be sure, the Democratic Party also has its share of firebrand partisans, but over the past few decades, it is the Republican Party that's gone off the deep end. Way back in 2012, Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, two scrupulously nonpartisan scholars of politics, wrote in their book "It's Even Worse Than It Looks": "One of the two major parties, the Republican Party, has become an insurgent outlier—

ideologically extreme; contemptuous of the inherited social and economic policy regime; scornful of compromise; unpersuaded by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition."

In the Trump era, I wish to single out a particular set of enablers of the greatest opprobrium: People who ought to know better, but have nevertheless made a Faustian bargain for political expediency.

Jenna Ellis, the fierce Trump defender quoted at the beginning, cannot be dismissed as some clueless rural rube. She is a knowing accomplice to Trump's destructive, mendacious, post-election belligerence. Don't take my word for it. She spelled out how toxic Trump supporters are in the quoted Facebook post. Her claim to CNN about her change of heart about Trump rings hollow. If President Trump is a sincere Christian and the best

president in modern history, then I'm Cleopatra.

Many influential Republican leaders like former Energy Secretary Rick Perry, US senators Ted Cruz and Lindsay Graham, are similarly complicit. When Trump was fighting to win the Republican primary, Perry, Cruz and Graham made incisive, scathing observations of Trump just as Ellis did. Yet, what are we seeing today?

Pretty much the entire Republican Party establishment is playing dead as Trump continues to break all norms. Their silence is acquiescence to monstrous, unprecedented behaviour in the US—or for that matter, any developed Western country.

The media unanimously projected Joe Biden as the president-elect on November 7. It is unprecedented for a losing US presidential candidate to refuse to concede a full 10 days after his loss. Meanwhile, courts have thrown out a slew of frivolous lawsuits. There is no possible way to change the results, but Trump continues to tweet unsubstantiated claims of fraud.

This feels like a banana republic, and could well degenerate into one, no small thanks to Republican enablers who ought to know better. President Trump on November 18 fired Chris Krebs, the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and directly tied it to Krebs' statement that said there "is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised."

As the conservative media echo chamber fans the flames of Trump's false claims of fraud, the damage to the American polity is profound.

A loser's concession is critical to the healing process following an election campaign. Yet Trump's belligerence and his enablers' silence

have resulted in a disquieting refusal of his supporters to accept the people's verdict. According to a new survey from Vox and Data for Progress, 73 percent of likely Republican voters say that the allegations of voter fraud have made them question Joe Biden's victory. Similarly, 75 percent of likely Republican voters said they believed voter fraud took place during the election that benefited Biden. These findings are similar to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that found that 68 percent of Republican voters think that the election was "rigged" and about half believe that Trump "rightfully won" it.

No wonder Ellis, the attorney from Colorado, remarked on her 2016 Facebook post: "His supporters DON'T CARE about facts or logic. They aren't seeking truth."

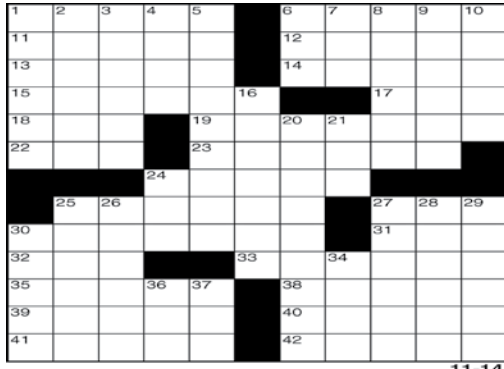
So here we are, with America reeling from the double whammy of a pandemic getting scarier by the day and an economic crisis where millions are staring at possible ruin. This is a time when tough choices need to be made, and compromises need to be thrashed out. There's about a snowball's chance in hell of that happening when you have an opposition party hamstrung by a rabid base untethered from fact, policy and logic, run by politicians too pusillanimous, or unprincipled, or both, to take on a former president who is happiest when he can rile up his base and throw a spanner in the works.

It will be the unenviable task of President-elect Joe Biden to rescue America from the greatest crisis in a century in the most hostile political circumstances imaginable. I sure hope you have the luck of the Irish, Mr President-Elect, because you sure as hell are going to need it.

Ashfaq Swapan is a contributing editor for Silicooner, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- |                     |                    |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>       | 31 Oscar winner    | 6 Implore          |
| 1 Hard stuff        | Mahershala         | 7 Sense of self    |
| 6 Chicago team      | 32 Groom's garb    | 8 Kitchen come-ons |
| 11 Book section     | 33 Catchphrase     | 9 Vacation spot    |
| 12 Snowy bird       | 35 Sun Valley      | 10 Rider's horse   |
| 13 Precipitous      | setting            | 16 Spirit sessions |
| 14 Silly one        | 38 Fuming          | 20 Shining         |
| 15 Angry cat        | 39 Ultimate        | 21 Miniature       |
| sounds              | 40 New parent, for | 24 Supply with     |
| 17 "The Simpsons"   | example            | staff              |
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| 19 Away from the    | 42 Pane material   | e.g.               |
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| 22 Soup sphere      | <b>DOWN</b>        | 28 Cheers          |
| 23 Least strict     | 1 Diagonal mover   | 29 Frisco team     |
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| 25 Posture          | 3 Black Sea city   | 34 Test type       |
| 27 Cubby hole?      | 4 Last letters     | 36 Possesses       |
| 30 Baseball's Casey | 5 Kicking out      | 37 Corrida cry     |



### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

MASON RECAP  
EXTRA ARUBA  
RERAN GARBS  
ATOM STAT  
BRIE IDEA  
LAG EARRING  
OTHER ASNER  
GET LOST RIO  
REST SANG  
WHAM YETI  
HAZEL RESET  
ALONE REEVE  
TORTE SPREE

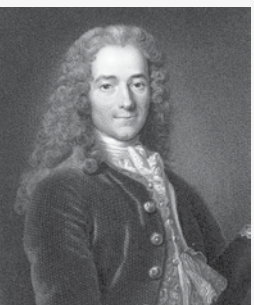
### BEETLE BAILEY



### BABY BLUES



### QUOTABLE Quote



VOLTAIRE (1694-1778) French philosopher and author.

Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.

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



FICTION

# The First Session

NABILA MURSHED

It was a mild Fall afternoon. The sky was clear and the sunlight was pouring into a medium sized office with floor length windows at 86 Nutt Road in Phoenixville, PA. My office was minimally decorated with some artificial plants. There was a three seater sofa and two single seaters

my last patient, Alina Kumar for her first therapy session. She entered the office quickly, seated herself on the couch and began speaking right away.

"When he told me, in late December, I sat transfixed, listening with rapt attention to his brand new love story of heart meeting heart, mind meeting mind, soul meeting soul and the imminent meeting of bodies, in the idyllic continent, far away from me, his petite, unendowed, average wife! I could not move as I wanted to hear more and more about this amazing union of oneness, even as I felt the crushing of my soul and the poisoning of my blood. I took all of it in as I love good stories.

"To my surprise, I found myself liking my husband's goddess. He made me believe that she has been abundantly endowed with all that is impressive in a person; beauty, brains, sterling accomplishments and a winsome personality. When I looked her up on social media I could see why my husband fell for her. She seemed to be the kind of person people flock to.

"In my eyes, my husband is good looking, smart, fiercely independent and successful. He is a self made man. I like that about him the most. He loves with passion and can hate with disdain. He attracts people with his wit and altruism. Though it may sound strange, he can be merciless and avenging. God help those who try to tame his free spirit!

"In his eyes we are Jack Sprats, which was not funny but maddening. It is true that he wouldn't have done what I did after the bombshell disclosure. He wouldn't have become the unwitting co-creator of my romantic saga, forgetting himself, forgetting everyone else in his life. He wouldn't have read copiously

and shared frantically all about love, marriage and relationships with me. He wouldn't make any crazy attempts to win me back. But I did."

Palpable shame quietly engulfed the room.

"So, when he came to break off our three decade knot, all he could do was to thank me for helping them mould their union perfectly. He heartlessly disclosed that I enabled them to find answers to their unsolvable problems. He confided that they read my mails to him, together. That enraged me as I felt betrayed and cheated all over again. I couldn't contain myself. I dumped my hot ashes on him complacently as I felt I was plundered from something sacred. How dare he do this? The letters were meant for us, not for them! I felt like serving his head on a platter to the hungry tigers in the zoo! That was my intellectual property! That was my copyrighted work!"

There was an exhausted silence after the long outpour. Alina wandered off somewhere. I sat quietly, waiting for her to resume.

"You know, I regret being a Robin Hood. How could I not have known? I had completely tuned out that he had repeatedly shoved me off with one excuse after another, as long as I can remember. It had slipped my mind that he never connected emotionally with me all those years. So, when he physically moved out after our children graduated from college, he could dampen my earnest chase with that 'I have moved on' insistence. He reiterated that he waited for a lot of things to happen before he could tell me the truth. He had assumed that I could not live without him. It didn't feel good to hear that. It hurt my pride. He said he knew instinctively that someday he would find his serendipity.

When he did, he would not let her go. He said he won. I say we lost. We selfishly hurt our children by staying in a marriage that was half-hearted, one sided and so volatile.

"But I want you to know, Nabila, I married with feelings and a dream about having a marriage that people admire without envy, even though it was an arranged marriage. The matchmaker who was a trusted face in both our families, could confidently entice me with a well-spun tale of mutual happiness and compatibility. So, when I first beheld him I agreed to this arrangement thoughtlessly, as I arrogantly believed that we would get along. That was a mistake."

So said Alina, sitting on the couch, closest to me and sizing me up, eager to be heard, eager to be understood. I spoke for the first time in the session.

"What would you like from our journey together?"

"Kindness," Alina blurted out without batting an eyelid.

It was time for us to wrap up. Her forty-five minutes were up ten minutes ago.

When she left, scheduling another session at the same time on the same day the following week, I summed us up. We had legerity. I liked the narrator and analyst in her. She would like the listener and the sapiosexual in me. We are a good fit. I believe I can help her. I, too, was once scorched. In that moment of seeking and giving kindness, in our first meeting, I already felt the pang of our separation. There would come a time when Alina would not need my support and service anymore. She will heal and move on. And then we will become memories in each other's lives in the distant future.

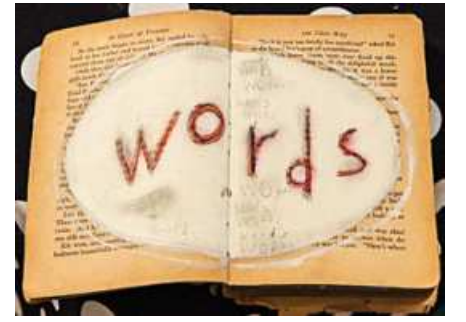
Nabila Murshed is a psychotherapist in private practice in the USA.



POETRY

# Words

RADHIKA MENON



Words are strangers  
On a hospital bed  
Fighting for life.

Words are food crumbs  
on a footpath.

Words are blankets  
For a beggar.

Words march on with candles and torches  
Singing lullabies of the outcast.

Words cross borders  
Without panicking of surgical strikes,  
Words are not afraid  
Of the government stooges.

They sign petitions  
And give speeches that disturb the sensx.

Words don't build fences  
Instead they build bridges  
For a better path,  
An impartial law.  
While others push them  
Into concentration camps  
And behind prison bars  
Words are you and I  
On a boat with no oar.

Radhika Menon is a content writer and freelance copy editor from Kerala. When she's not writing, you can find her binge watching her way into the world of witches, gypsies and dragons.



arranged rectangularly without a table in between. The desk was pushed way back to the wall by the entrance with my credentials displayed on it. There was nothing in the office that betrayed confidentiality. I opened the door to greet

## REVIEWS

# Beyond the Rebel Poet: Nazrul's Versatility

REVIEWED BY SHAHID ALAM

Kazi Nazrul Islam: Selections, Volume 2, Niaz Zaman edited, writers.ink, 2020.

A bland, matter-of-fact statement about Kazi Nazrul Islam would be that he is the National Poet of Bangladesh. Not an honour to be sneezed at, but Nazrul was/is a bit more than that. More than a bit more. Niaz Zaman, educationist, prolific writer, and prominent in Bangladeshi literary circles, in conjunction with The Reading Circle group and an assemblage of generally competent translators, has compiled the more than a bit more in two volumes: the book under review, and its first volume. And thank goodness for the two. Nazrul's genius deserves to be recognized beyond the boundaries of the Bangla language. The translation of his myriad works in the global lingua franca, English, should go some way towards familiarizing him outside Bangla.

The first volume restricted itself, appropriate considering Nazrul's prime claim to fame being that of a poet, to selections from his poems; the second deals with his prose in various forms. And there is a tangential reference here as well. After all, as Niaz Zaman notes in her Introduction, Nazrul's "first printed work was a short story, 'Baundeler Atmakahini,' published in *Saogat*, May 1919." He went on to write nineteen more short stories, eight of which (including "Baundeler Atmakahini," translated by Nuzhat Amin Mannan as "The Autobiography of a Vagabond") are presented in this volume in the section "Short Stories." Besides this grouping, there are three others: "Letters" (containing ten entries), "Essays" (twelve), and "Speeches" (two): making it a total of thirty two pieces under four broad heads. Significantly, attesting to the possibility of fresh perspective relating to the translation, Zaman states, "As with Volume 1, a number of the pieces were translated earlier. Most of the translations, however, were specially commissioned for this volume." Furthermore, an extensive glossary and notes section has been appended at the end of the thirty two presentations, and it should be helpful, particularly for those unfamiliar with Bengali/Indian society and customs.

The Letters section opens with "the first extant mail of Kazi Nazrul Islam" (editor).

Written on a postcard on 23 July 1917, it was addressed to one Moulvi Abdul Gafur, and translated by Mohammad Shafiqul Islam. Its relevance lies in only its chronological sequence. The next two, written to two well-known personalities in Indian, specifically Bengal, history, attest to the poet's thoughts and queries regarding life and objectives as a writer. To Muzaffar Ahmed, he had recorded his indebtedness to him as a budding writer: "If you keep inspiring me this way, I'll really prove to be a great poet and writer one day." Well, Nazrul did, and the rest is history, but, going by his statement, Muzaffar Ahmed had something to do with it, if only as an inspiration. This letter has been competently translated by Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, as has the next one, to Principal Ibrahim Khan, where he expounds on great literature having to be secular: "If it's true literature, it belongs to all nations. But it must have its own distinct religion as well. Literature may be written on the ideals of Islam, but not on its scripture.

**"To successfully achieve a lasting influence in Bangla literature, in the first place, we have to expel the present plodding heaviness that afflicts our writing and bring in a lightness and ease of expression. Literature which is inert and lifeless will bring us no benefits, nor will such writing achieve permanence. There are few writers in Bangla, except for Rabindranath, who project this kind of liberated lightness in their choice of words."**

Why only Islam? I believe no one should create literature on any religious scriptures of the world. The true essence of Islam includes humanity, democracy, universal brotherhood and equality.

The next three letters presented are



addressed to Professor Qazi Motahar Hossain, and all have been competently translated by Nashid Kamal. Unlike the deferential ones to Muzaffar Ahmed and Ibrahim Khan these read like a friend writing to another of a similar age. In fact, the first is addressed to Friend! And the next two to Motihar, an obvious pun of familiarity on the name Motahar. His literary impulses were never far from the surface and, in fact, he might have harboured notions of attaining greatness as a bard or, at least, yearned to be one. He expressed his feelings to Hossain: "Why do I feel Shelley and Keats coursing through my blood?" He longed to be with the best, and Shelley and Keats were, and continue to be, right up there with the best. In a separate letter he harangues his friend, a Mathematics don, on a bewildering topic, the education of women in one particular subject: "I understand you. But I cannot tolerate that a woman --- an epitome of beauty --- should fall prey to mathematics." Huh? Say what! And thereby hangs a tale of love. Nazrul praises Hossain as "Selfless, soft, sensitive, lover --- but you wish to hide these facets of yours," but he teaches Mathematics,

and Fazilatunnessa was a Mathematics student at Dhaka (then spelt Dacca) University. And Nazrul developed a crush on her. That is one whole fascinating story, glimpses of which may be gleaned from the third letter to Hossain. There is also a letter from Nazrul to Fazilatunnessa in this collection, translated by Shafiqul Islam, where he expresses himself this way to her: "There is just a touch of carelessness in its writing."

In "The Autobiography of a Vagabond" (Baundeler Atmakahini), Nazrul encapsulates a period in history's viewpoint regarding the requisites of a suitable bride (and other social norms): "Young men these days quite shamelessly choose their own wives. Even young men darker than ebony or with rough and crude features look for brides who have complexions white as milk in which red *alta* has been mixed, eyes like a doe's, a waist like a lion's, a face like the moon, a voice like the *kokil's*, a deportment like a swan's. She must have delicately small feet, for if such a circumstance arises when one needs to cajole this precious creature by touching her feet when she is sulking, God forbid that those feet should be as hard and large as Godadhor's aunt's."

"The Rakhshashi," translated by Zerin Alam, is an indictment on the status of women vis-à-vis men in those days. The afflicted woman resignedly laments: "If I had done what my husband had, and if he had murdered me, men would have said nothing. The women would have agreed with them. Yes, this is what evil women deserve. Women see that men can get away with anything." Much time has passed from when Nazrul wrote this till now, but not a huge lot has changed from his observation. There is still much ways to go before women's rights are brought up to par with men in our society (and in so many others).

There are quite a few serious essays in this collection. "Untouchability" (*Chhutmargo*), translated by Debjani Sengupta, contains this cryptic line with a lot of implied ramifications: "Untouchability is followed by false practitioners of religion." "Muslims in Bangla Literature" (*Bangla Shahitiye Mussalman*), translated by Shirin Hasanat Islam, contains

these profound thoughts: "To successfully achieve a lasting influence in Bangla literature, in the first place, we have to expel the present plodding heaviness that afflicts our writing and bring in a lightness and ease of expression. Literature which is inert and lifeless will bring us no benefits, nor will such writing achieve permanence. There are few writers in Bangla, except for Rabindranath, who project this kind of liberated lightness in their choice of words." World Literature Today, translated by Syed Sajjad Husain, is an interesting essay. I Am a Soldier, translated by Ayesha Kabir, contains lines that depict the essence of soldiering: "O bitter bitter force within me, blazing fury, poisonous torture! O my perpetually cruel, harsh soldier-soul, let me never belittle you with the temptation of praise. Let me never have the hypocrisy to call you a god. Let me present myself as I am. Down the ages, victory to me, the beast, the soldier!" Translated by Shirin Hasanat Islam, The Temple and the Mosque exemplifies Nazrul's secular spirit: "I hear the call of the *azan* from the mosque, the sound of the conch from the temple. They rise together, upwards to the throne of the Creator. I see the entire heaven reverberating with joy."

One of the selected pieces, Deposition of a Political Prisoner, translated by Sajed Kamal, contains these thoughts on the unjust nature of colonialism: "Today, India is subjugated. Its people are slaves. This is the absolute truth. In this kingdom, to call a slave a slave, to call injustice, injustice, is sedition.... Today, if instead of India being subjugated, England had been subjugated by India and if the defenseless, oppressed people of England, like the people of India, had been anxious to liberate their own motherland, and, if at that time, I were the judge and, like me, this judge, charged with sedition, were to be tried by me, then, this judge standing in the defendant's dock, would have said what I am saying and in the same way." Kazi Nazrul Islam was altogether something else.

Shahid Alam is a thespian; Professor, Media and Communication Department, Independent University of Bangladesh.

# Can youth make up for lack of experience?

With the Bangabandhu T20 Cup starting from November 24, cricket enthusiasts in Bangladesh are eager to watch local stars battle it out against each. In the lead-up to the tournament, The Daily Star tries to assess and analyse each of the five teams. Today, we present the fourth part, an overview of Fortune Barishal.

**Background:** Fortune Barishal wasted no time in roping in Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal from Grade A with their first call during the players' draft. Tamim has been off-colour since the ICC World Cup last year and that continued in the BCB President's Cup. However, he showed glimpses of a return to form in the just-concluded Pakistan Super League playing for Lahore Qalandars. The left-hander will have to take responsibility and showcase his leadership while guiding a relatively inexperienced Barishal side.

**National Stars:** Apart from Tamim, Barishal have pacer Taskin Ahmed, who was in terrific rhythm during the BCB President's Cup. The tall pacer seems to grow as a bowler, which will surely help Barishal in the tournament and bolster their pace bowling unit with also features Abu Jayed and Kamrul Islam Rabbi. The promising Afif Hossain, off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz and leggie Aminul Islam Biplob also feature, as well as batsman Saif Hasan.

**Local Performers:** Compared to the other teams in the tournament, Barishal lack depth in their batting unit. Apart from the national stars at the top, it seems Barishal have a dearth of firepower and variety in both the batting and bowling



Fortune Barishal's Taskin Ahmed cranks up the pace as teammate Sumon Khan (C) watches him bowl and a BCB coach takes pictures of the pacer's run-up during a training session in Mirpur recently. (Bottom) Nazmul Hossain Shanto gets tested for Covid-19 yesterday as BCB ran tests on all the cricketers and coaches involved with the upcoming Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

PHOTO: STAR/BCB

departments. They did however pick up Irfan Shukkur, who was adjudged the best batsman of the BCB President's Cup, alongside pacer Sumon Khan, who was the man of the final for his five-wicket haul. Towhid Hridoy was another pick for his recent performances alongside Mahidul Ankon and Pervaz Emon from the Under-19 side. They also included left-arm spinner Sohrwardi Shuvo, wicket-keeper batsman Abu Sayem and Tanvir Islam, none of whom have been able to showcase

their talent in the shortest format. **What sets Chattogram apart:** According to head coach Sohel Islam, it is their youthful fielding department that will make a huge difference. "We banked on recent performers from the BCB President's Cup along with the seniors. I tried to keep the belief on those who were in the game as we all know everyone will be coming after a long gap due to the pandemic. Fielding will play a big part and being a young team, we can make a huge difference with

our fielding and it will play a big role," said Sohel. **Key Player:** Tamim is the obvious choice, but Barishal will also heavily rely on young all-rounder Afif Hossain. The youngster was in fine touch during the BCB President's Cup and his ability both with the bat and his off-spin can prove handy for Barishal. His electrifying presence on the field will surely add a lot of energy to the side and his diverse role as a batsman will offer options for the skipper.



Bashundhara Kings defender Nargis Khatun heads in one of her two goals against Begum Anwara Sporting Club during their Tricortex Women's Football League match in Kamalapur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## BPL clubs begin training amid second-wave fears

SPORTS REPORTER

The majority of Bangladesh Premier League clubs have started pre-season preparations ahead of the start of the upcoming season from December 19 amid apprehension about a second wave of coronavirus.

After a seven-month coronavirus-induced break that saw with the cancellation of the 2019-20 season, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has taken initiatives to start the 2020-21 season in December. The transfer window opened on November 1 and will close on December 15, just four days before the start of the season's curtain-raising tournament, the Federation Cup.

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings, Abahani, Saif SC, Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russel, Mohammedan, Bangladesh Police, Arambagh and Muktiyoddha Sangsad have started pre-season preparations while Chattogram Abahani, Brothers Union, Rahmatganj and Uttar Baridhara Club will start in the coming days.

Most clubs started preparations after conducting Covid-19 tests. Only Arambagh started training without conducting tests, but their players were kept in isolation for seven days before the start of training.

"Players were asked to report on November 7 with coronavirus certificates. They were in quarantine for three days at the club before all the players and coaching staff underwent another test under the supervision of the club," said Abahani manager Satyjit Das Rupu. "Everyone is worried about the pandemic and we are observing the situation. We are also worried about a second wave because the foreign players have yet to reach here."

Sheikh Russel sports director Sale Jamal Selim said: "We were a bit late in starting training, which got underway on Thursday at the Fortis ground after all the players and staff underwent tests. Now the boys will

have two sessions each day for seven days to regain their fitness. But we are a bit worried about the current coronavirus situation, which has been worsening day by day."

"We can't understand the situation and we are even in doubt whether the season will start on time because of increasing cases of coronavirus," said Chattogram Abahani manager Arman Aziz. "The players are reporting from today [Friday] and we will have a three-week pre-season camp in Mymensingh from November 25 and all players and officials will undergo testing."

Rahmatganj general secretary Imtiaz Hamid Sabuj said: "We are really worried about the increasing number of Covid-19 cases because we don't know whether to pay the salaries of the foreign players again without playing." The players have started to report at the camp and the rest of the players will come within a few days with their test results. The club will conduct further testing before starting the camp within a short period of time, added Sabuj.

"Three foreign players from Congo and Ivory Coast were supposed to arrive on November 24 but they are now scheduled to arrive on November 27 following the cancellation of international flights. I am really tense about their arrival because international flights are being closed again," said Uttar Baridhara Club general secretary Jahangir Alam, adding that they would start training on December 1 after carrying out the testing for all players and staff.

Arambagh started their training in Nilphamari on Nov 17 after keeping all the players in isolation for seven days.

"The number of Covid-19 cases has been increasing and we can't deny reality, which seems to heading in same direction as last season. But we are positive that we can continue training ahead of Federation Cup. We are also thinking of appointing a doctor at the camp," said Arambagh vice president Eazzaz Mohammad Jahangir.

## He should have opted for harmony

AL-AMIN



Bangladesh's most celebrated cricketer Shakib Al Hasan has been in the news recently, and not in the sports pages.

On Monday, Shakib -- a famous citizen of a secular country -- apologised for being present at a puja mandap in Kolkata and denied going to the Indian city to inaugurate Kali puja after backlash from a section of his social media followers.

That has raised questions about the responsibilities someone in his position has in the wider social context.

The world's top ODI all-rounder is the most followed among Bangladeshis on social media--he has over 1.3 million followers on Facebook.

The 33-year-old has already elevated himself as one of the great all-rounders with his feisty batting and wily left-arm spin bowling.

Still, the champion cricketer is yet to become a role-model. We all expect him to be one because of his ability to influence and because he is the most decorated sporting ambassador of the country.

But as is the hallmark of all role models, does Shakib embody the ideals of the society he inhabits and encourage others to aspire to the country's wider social goals?

Shakib has so far been a cricketer whose performance on the field is admired by all and sundry. But off the field, his actions have drawn criticism and, as in the most recent case, fomented division.

He has been embroiled in controversy since his return from the United States earlier this month.

This is not unusual as if one considers Shakib's track record, which also includes not reporting to the International Cricket Council corrupt

approaches by a bookie, for which he was banned for a year by the global body -- a ban that just ended on October 29.

Within hours of returning from the US on November 6, he flouted a standard advisory Covid-19 self-isolation protocol. According to media reports, it took Shakib only 12 hours after his arrival to attend a commercial endorsement programme.

With Shakib attending the launching ceremony of a super shop, people understandably thronged to watch him from close quarters, forgetting all about social distancing. Many newspapers, including The Daily Star, published a picture of the event with neither Shakib nor those surrounding him wearing a mask.

A spokesperson for Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), when asked by this newspaper, said if anyone left home during the two-week quarantine period, he or she would have broken quarantine rules.

But Shakib could not care less. He did not even show the minimum courtesy of publicly acknowledging that his action was ill-advised, something a role model should not have committed in the first place.

Then, as part of his slew of commercial engagements, he went to India on November 12. Bdnnews24.com carried the news, saying that the star cricketer went to India to be a part of the inauguration of Kali Puja mandap in Kolkata's Kakurgachi area. Hindustan Times Bangla also carried the news. People closely associated with Shakib said the cricketer also met his agent in Kolkata during the short trip and discussed future endorsements.

But Shakib had little idea that his participation in the launching of a puja mandap would draw backlash from some of his followers. The



most extreme reaction came from a Facebook live video on November 15 by a Sylhet user brandishing a sharp weapon and saying Shakib must be killed for "hurting Muslims' feelings".

The threat was a cause for concern not only for Shakib but for a country that preaches religious harmony.

Being a celebrity and adored by everyone, irrespective of creed and culture, Shakib has not done anything wrong by attending that function. His decision to comply with the request of taking photos with his followers belonging to a different faith in front of the mandap has nothing to do with his religious belief, or hurting it.

Shakib is an entertainer. On the field, he entertains not just Muslims, Hindus or Christians, but people belonging to all other faiths. And as a public figure, his role is no different off it.

With that in mind, Shakib's response to that threat was no less disturbing and damaging to religious harmony, especially considering that many do see him as a role model.



## Amer, Fuad test positive in Doha

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team manager Amer Khan and physiotherapist Fuad Hasan Hawlader tested Covid-19 positive after all 34 members of the Bangladesh contingent took tests on Thursday following their arrival in Doha ahead of the World Cup qualifier on December 4.

They are asymptomatic and are being kept in isolation at the hotel.

"Because of the positive cases, everybody is in isolation at the hotel. We will be tested again tomorrow. If everything is alright, then we can resume the training. I will speak to the physio and fitness trainer if they can come up with a programme the players can execute in their rooms. It is not an ideal situation because we can't afford to miss any day of training for the build-up for Qatar tie," assistant coach Stuart Watkiss said.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan said: "Everyone is good and staying in separate rooms. We are in three-day quarantine but we are mentally fit. We are all safe and looking forward having training in coming days."

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**BSRM Xtreme**  
**B500 DWR**  
 the tough steel

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# PROBASHI KALYAN BANK Crippled by manpower shortage

**JAMIL MAHMUD**

Probashi Kalyan Bank, a specialised financial institution for migrant workers, is struggling to conduct its day-to-day activities due to manpower shortage.

The bank has 64 branch offices all over the country, including a principal branch located at the Probashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital. It also has a booth at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

But it currently has only about 210 officials, apart from some drivers and office assistants, said a top official of the bank, on condition of anonymity. As a result, they are facing difficulties, especially at field level, as they need to do field-level inspections before disbursing every loan, irrespective of amount.

"It is tough to cover the whole country with the bank's existing manpower," the official added.

Bank sources said it submitted to the authorities concerned a proposal for eight additional personnel, including officials and other employees, for each branch, which is at the final stage of approval.

The bank's work rate will increase significantly once it gets the required manpower, the top official said.

In addition to its regular activities, Probashi Kalyan Bank has recently been tasked with disbursing the "special reintegration loan" from a Tk 200-crore fund created for returnee migrant workers economically affected by the coronavirus pandemic.



Motorcycles and rickshaws gathering dust in front of Bangshal Police Station in the capital. Seized at different times, generally due to not having valid documents, these vehicles take up a substantial amount of the road in front of the police station. This photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Douglas Stuart wins Booker Prize for 'Shuggie Bain'

**AGENCIES**

Scottish author Douglas Stuart was awarded the 2020 Booker Prize for his acclaimed debut novel "Shuggie Bain," set in his home city of Glasgow.

The 44-year-old Stuart, who wins 50,000 pounds (\$66,000) and is only the second Scot to have won the prestigious literary prize, said he was stunned.

The book, based on his own childhood, tells of a young boy growing up during tough years in Glasgow with a mother who is battling addiction. Stuart's own mother died of alcoholism when he was 16.

In an emotional speech, the 44-year-old said: "My mother would be thrilled, she would be absolutely thrilled and I think she would be proud."

"I think I've been clear



SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# Georgia recount affirms Joe Biden victory

Judges rule against Trump in three more lawsuits

**AGENCIES**

US President-elect Joe Biden yesterday accused Donald Trump of brazenly damaging democracy, as the incumbent's campaign to reverse his election loss through fraud claims was dealt another blow with a recount in Georgia.

Trump was behind "incredibly damaging messages being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions," Biden told reporters in his home state of Delaware.

"It's hard to fathom how this man thinks," said Biden. "I'm confident he knows he hasn't won, is not going to be able to win and we're going to be sworn in January 20th."

Trump has refused to accept his loss on November 3, despite his opponent getting over six million more votes.

Biden won the state-by-state Electoral College votes that ultimately decide who takes the White House by 306 to 232, flipping five states that went to Trump four years ago.

That includes Georgia, where a hand recount of its five million ballots

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

# Pakistan to repatriate 10,000 Bangalees

November 21, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**BHUTTO'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Pakistan President ZA Bhutto announces at a jirga meeting today that 10,000 Bangalee women and children would be allowed to go back to their homes as a gesture of goodwill to "Muslim Bengal," according to a Radio Pakistan broadcast. A spokesman of the Pakistan government, also quoted by the radio, made the same announcement today at Islamabad and said this is in response to the "Indian offer" of repatriating 6,000 women and children of the families of Pakistan civilian internees and prisoners of war. The spokesman is further quoted by Radio Pakistan as saying that this step would help solve the humanitarian problems in the subcontinent.

**BANGABANDHU FELICITATES BRANDT**

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today extends warmest felicitations to Chancellor Willy Brandt on his victory in the West German elections. The prime minister in a telegraphic message to the Chancellor wishes continued progress and prosperity for the people of Federal Republic of Germany under his wise and able leadership. Bangabandhu also wishes for further development of friendship and cooperation between

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



# Mystery shrouds death of female migrant worker

Body recovered from a dustbin in Jordan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of a Bangladeshi female domestic help was recovered from a roadside garbage bin in Jordan's capital Amman over a week ago.

The victim is Asma Akhter, 31. Her other personal details were yet to be confirmed.

Bangladesh Ambassador in Amman Nahida Sobhan yesterday said the mission contacted Jordan's labour and interior ministries and requested them to provide it with detailed information about the incident after a proper investigation.

The embassy was expecting a report from the Jordanian authorities soon, Nahida told The Daily Star over WhatsApp.

Police were investigating the incident.

Preferring anonymity, an embassy official said Asma

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# Climate change devastated dinosaurs twice



AFP, Paris

Most people know that land-dwelling dinosaurs were wiped out some 66 million years ago when an asteroid roughly twice the diameter of Paris crashed into Earth.

If the explosive fireball didn't get them, the plunge in global temperature on a planet with little or no ice -- caused by a blanket of heat-shielding debris in the atmosphere -- did.

What most people don't know is that more than 100 million years earlier, another climate change cataclysm devastated a different set of dinosaur species, with many going extinct.

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# Armed Forces Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The Armed Forces Day is being celebrated today amid festivity and enthusiasm, marking the establishment of the forces during the Liberation War.

The day's programmes begin with offering of special prayers after Fajr prayers at all mosques in all the cantonments and naval and air force bases throughout the country on the day, seeking divine blessings for the well-being and prosperity of the nation and progress of the armed forces, said an ISPR press release.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



**PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 21**

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

# DEFENCE HARDWARE India keen to work with Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India is keen to work with Bangladesh on defence hardware platforms like Akash missile, radars, mortars, artillery guns and ammunitions, said Raj Kumar, secretary (defence production) of Indian defence ministry.

Addressing a virtual session on "India and Bangladesh-Make for the World" yesterday, Raj also said that Indian shipyards were willing to partner with Bangladeshi shipyards for joint ventures, co-development and collaboration for both commercial and defence requirements.

He said that the defence cooperation and partnership between India and Bangladesh has made significant gains in the last few years.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI), jointly with the High Commission of India,

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The Shuvadya canal in Keraniganj -- which connects the Dhaleshwari and Buriganga rivers -- is in a sorry state and all but dried up due to dumping of waste from small garment factories in the area. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# Vaccine roll-out nears in US

Hope rises as Pfizer/BioNTech seeks emergency approval; global cases soar

AGENCIES

US giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech was preparing yesterday to file an emergency request to roll out their vaunted vaccine while New York shut its schools and California braced for nighttime curfews heading into the US holiday season.

The world is seeking salvation from scientists and pharmaceutical giants as it returns to the grimly familiar shutdowns and closures that traumatised nations and upturned the global economy at the start of the year.

India's hospitals are once again struggling to cope and its graveyards are filling as infections crossed nine million in the Asian giant -- second only to the United States.

New Delhi quadrupled fines for those without masks in a desperate effort to stave off the dual scourge of the virus and winter pollution enveloping the megacity of nearly 22 million people.

And Mexico became the fourth country Thursday to see its death toll breach 100,000.

Worldwide deaths are approaching 1.4 million and total infections nearing 57 million -- although the true numbers are unknown since countries have different reporting methods and many cases go undetected.

Governments are now pinning their hopes on a vaccine that can save them from business closures that force families to seek dwindling government assistance -- and stay at home orders that put people's mental health under severe strain.

The first tangible signs of relief could come yesterday

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