

BANKING WOES
 Probashi Kallyan Bank struggles to provide services due to manpower shortage
SEE PAGE 12

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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"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	\$1,272	72.8	25	2018
	\$1,640	75.3	27.3	2020

REJAUJ 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"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1