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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.

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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



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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

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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.

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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

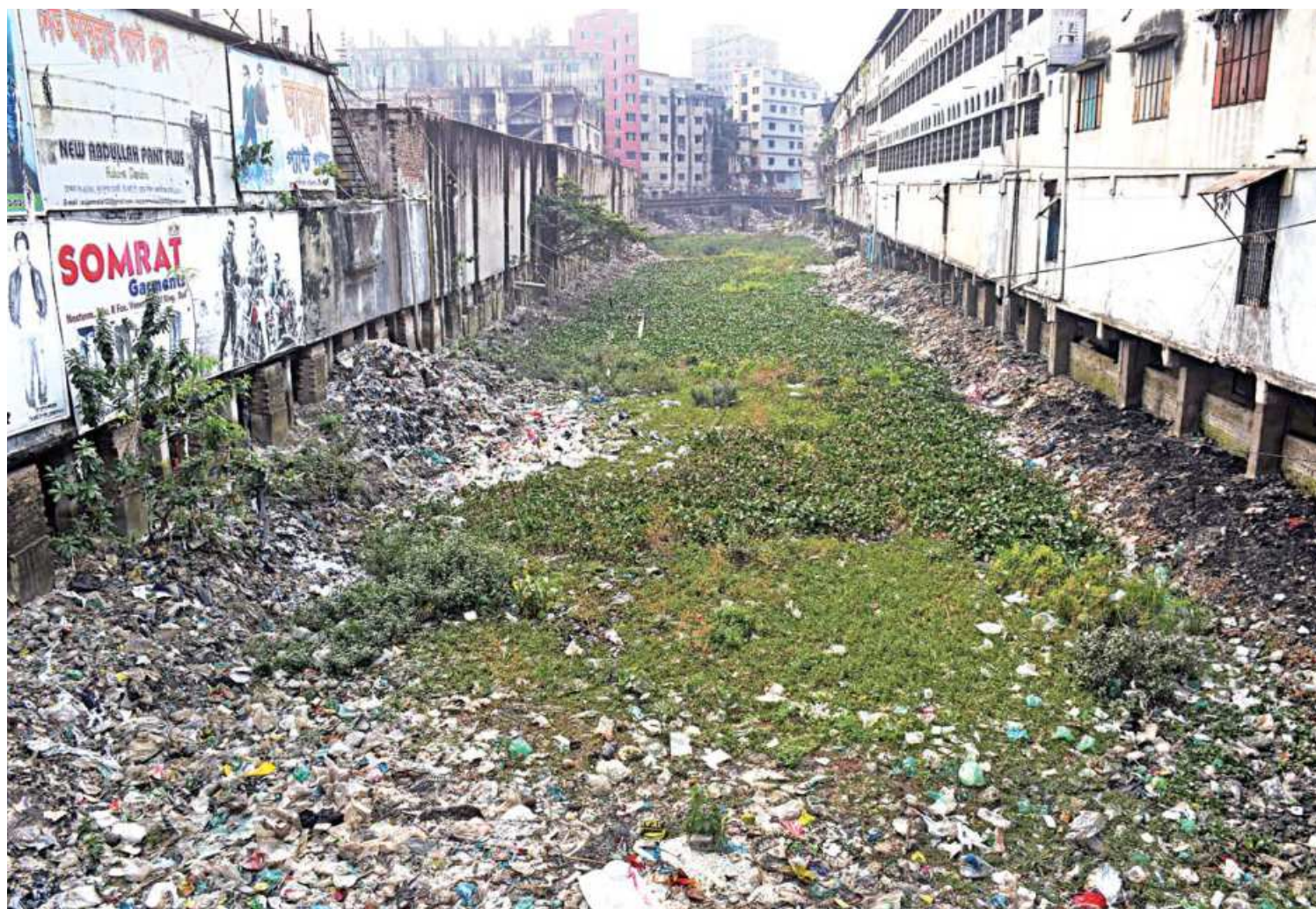
India is keen to work with Bangladesh on defence hardware platforms like Akash missile, radars, mortars, artillery guns and ammunitions, said Raj Kumar, secretary (defence production) of Indian defence ministry.

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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