



# The Daily Star

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## TK 1,21,353CR STIMULUS PACKAGES

# 39pc disbursed in six months

3.54cr people, 76 lakh firms, organisations, entrepreneurs received loans, assistance

REJAU KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

After the government announced 21 stimulus packages involving more than Tk 1,21,000 crore to tackle the pandemic fallout, 39.23 percent of the total amount or Tk 47,615 crore was disbursed till October 31, according to a report of the finance ministry.

A total of 3.54 crore people have received assistance from various stimulus-cash-food support packages over the period, said the report released at a programme at the capital's Osmani Memorial Hall on Thursday.

The report also said 76 lakh firms, organisations, entrepreneurs, and other beneficiaries got loan facilities under the economic bailout scheme as of October 31.

The finance ministry organised the programme to evaluate the progress of the scheme undertaken after the Covid-19 outbreak struck the country in March. The programme was joined by noted economists and members of development partners, local think-tanks and other stakeholders, among others.

The bailout packages were announced at different times after March. The combined support of more than Tk 1,21,000 crore accounts for 4.34 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

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### CATEGORY-2 (4 PACKAGES)

Employment creation and revitalizing rural economy

TOTAL LOANS  
Tk 12,458 crore

DISBURSED  
Tk 4,225 crore

BENEFICIARIES  
37.22 lakh

### CATEGORY-3 (10 PACKAGES)

Enhancing social security and ensuring food supply

TOTAL BUDGET  
Tk 22,125 crore

SPENDING  
Tk 2,237 crore

BENEFICIARIES  
3.24 crore

"The marginalised people in the country did not face any shortage of food because of the cash and food assistances provided under the stimulus scheme."

SAYS FINANCE DIVISION PROGRESS REPORT

### 21 STIMULUS PACKAGES

TOTAL ALLOCATION

Tk 1,21,353 crore

DISBURSED SO FAR

Tk 47,615 crore

### CATEGORY-1 (7 PACKAGES)

Job creation, restoration of demand and maintaining the supply chain

TOTAL LOANS Tk 86,750 crore

DISBURSED Tk 41,153 crore

BENEFICIARIES 73.28 lakh



## All sculptures in country will be torn down

Threatens Hefajat chief; its jecy gen skips event amid protests in Ctg

ARUN BIKASH DEY and MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Hefajat chief Junaid Babunagari yesterday threatened to pull down and destroy all the sculptures no matter which party puts those up.

The prime minister said the country would be run by the Madina Sanad, he added, "We appreciate it. There is no mention of sculptures in Madina Sanad. Sculpture, no matter who it is of or which party makes it, we will take it down and smash [it]."

The Hefajat e Islam Ameer was addressing a mahfil in Hathazari, Chattogram.

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ALY ZAKER  
1944-2020

## A LIFE DEVOTED TO BEAUTY AND THE ARTS

Demise of our greatest theatre personality

MAHFUZ ANAM

Aly Zaker, our most iconic theatre personality, has left us for eternity. He singlehandedly brought theatre out from an obscure corner of our cultural world to its very centre. He along with his co-actors in Nagarik, and fellow travellers in other theatre groups, made the stage the most powerful and effective vehicle of inculcating critical thinking and intellectual freedom so vitally needed for social change and progress. Through acting, direction, scriptwriting, adaptation and translation of plays he transformed the intellectual scope of our theatre from the limitations of what we inherited to the vastness of the world that our newly gained independence gave us the scope to venture into.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## 'Galileo' makes final exit

Tributes pour in for Aly Zaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is fitting that one of Aly Zaker's most iconic stage roles was that of Bertolt Brecht's Galileo.

Much like the 17th-century Venetian who rediscovered truth through a new lens and publicised it in words his countrymen could understand, Bangladesh's great thespian Aly Zaker was a tireless champion of intellectual freedom and critical thinking since the country's liberation, during which he played a valuable role.

Till yesterday, when he breathed his last at the age of 76, his forward-thinking march had continued. Unlike Galileo, when the curtains fell on Aly Zaker, there is not censure but rapturous applause as well as the sorrow of a void that will be impossible to fill.

Glowing tributes and condolences poured in for the eminent cultural personality after he passed away at United Hospital in the capital around 6:45am.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed their profound shock and sorrow at the death of the cultural icon, also a Shabdashainik at Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra and an Ekushey Padak recipient, reports BSS.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

SEE EDITORIAL; MORE STORIES ON PAGE-6



An elderly man sleeping precariously at the foot of a pillar of the Khilgaon flyover in the capital's Shahjanpur early yesterday. With the winter setting in, people, particularly children and the elderly, from low-income families find it more difficult to live under the open sky as the temperature falls at night. Many cannot afford to buy warm clothes either.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Papul denied bail again

Full hearing of trafficking, money laundering case in Kuwait in Jan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Kuwait court on Thursday denied bail of Bangladeshi MP Shahid Islam Papul in a case involving human trafficking and money laundering, and set January 28 next year for the full hearing of the case, reported Kuwaiti newspaper Al Qabas.

With this, the Kuwait court has denied his bail on 12 occasions.

Four staff members of Papul's Marafie Kuwaitia Group were also denied bail. However, three Kuwaiti officials were

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## Covid-19 vaccine doubt emerges

AstraZeneca vaccine to undergo new global trial after mix-up in phase-III; Germany hits million cases

AGENCIES

Questions emerged over just how much protection is offered by one of the leading vaccine candidates as Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's coronavirus nightmare, logged its one millionth case yesterday.

Like much of Europe, Germany is battling a resurgence of a pandemic that is filling hospitals and forcing countries to shut down for business while they wait for help from a clutch of vaccines that could start rolling out for use next month.

Some of the excitement about the new jabs dampened when Britain's pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitted that further research was needed after a mixup in its third-stage trial.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## BRTC revival plan stumbles

Makes profit after 3yrs, then Covid cuts its revenue in FY20

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With 1,100 new buses and trucks in its fleet and strict monitoring enforced, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) made profit in the last fiscal year, after losses for three consecutive years, officials say.

But the coronavirus pandemic has served a blow to the state-run transport agency's economic revival plan, reducing its income considerably in recent months.

BRTC earned Tk 204 crore in the first six months of the last fiscal year. But the revenue dropped to Tk 145.27

crore in the last six months, shows BRTC data.

The decrease in revenue in the last half was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, first detected in the country on March 8.

Although BRTC made Tk 24.85 crore as profit in the fiscal year 2019-20, it had to take Tk 10 crore as loan from the government to meet its expenditure and pending arrears.

Its Tk 57 crore dues -- including arrears and post-retirement benefits of its staffers -- came down to around Tk 40 crore in the last FY, officials said.

The corporation is still struggling

to push the income to the desired level as its buses are not carrying capacity passengers to comply with the government's Covid-19 advisory health protocol, they said.

Amjad Hossain, general manager (accounts) of BRTC, said although operation of public transport resumed from June, they are still carrying less passengers than normal time as the government prohibited standing passengers on public transport. "Things may not be normal until educational institutions are opened," he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Our Giant of an Icon,

You have been our brightest inspiration, our one true guiding light in the wonderful world that you created for us all.

For your vision and genius, it has been our privilege to have known you as the ardent patriot, iconic actor, writer, theatre activist, and the veritable, pioneering force behind the nation's advertising world that you were.

Through your life and works, you have shown us the ways of courage, of dreaming in brighter colors and the importance of bringing more love and beauty into the world.

Our beloved AZ, we thank you for building such a precious place in the world for us to thrive and grow. Thank you for the stories, the patience and the memory of a thundering laugh. The ripples you cast into this world will never cease, and your kindness will live on in us who are still here.

It has been our pride and honor in having been a part of your vision. May your incredible, gentle soul now forever rest in peace.

Your Asiatic 3Sixty Family

ASIATIC  
3sixty



**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**2,273**  
New cases in 24hrs



**4,58,711**  
Total cases



**6,544**  
Deaths



**3,73,676**  
Recoveries



**1,442,610**  
Deaths



**61,576,403**  
Total cases

## Stronger co-op needed among S Asian countries

Says FM on climate change adaptation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has called for stronger collaboration between the South Asian countries for an effective implementation of adaptation activities.

He was addressing a virtual meeting, organised by the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) on Thursday, on setting strategic policies and finalising the work programme of GCA's regional office for South Asia.

The minister appreciated the support of the South Asian countries for the establishment of GCA's regional office in Dhaka.

Momen underscored GCA's contribution towards driving international ambition on adaptation and strengthening the partnerships that are critical to the commitments made in the Paris Agreement on addressing climate change.

He said Bangladesh was determined to support both the GCA and Climate Vulnerable Forum from its hard-earned experience on adaptation.

South Asia is one of the most adversely affected regions of the world due to climate change, he said, adding that all the countries of the region will incur huge per capita GDP losses without large scale and comprehensive adaptive measures.

The minister expressed hope that the South Asian countries could learn and work together, survive and even thrive under challenging circumstances through collaboration between themselves.

Momen called for keeping up the momentum of the creation of the "Global Hub on Locally Led Action".

Speaking at the event, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin emphasised on GCA's priorities for the South Asia region.

Participants from the South Asian countries and different development partners, including the World Bank, UNDP, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Japan International Cooperation Agency, also took part in the discussion.



A police team stages a guard of honour before the coffin of thespian Aly Zaker at Muktijuddho Jadughor in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. The valiant freedom fighter, also an Ekushey Padak recipient, passed away at a city hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## UK to impose tougher rules on Google, Facebook

AFP, London

Britain announced yesterday it will set up a watchdog to regulate tech giants such as Facebook and Google and improve their transparency on using people's data and personalised advertising.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport said in a statement that the new regulator, the Digital Markets Unit, will "govern the behaviour of platforms that currently dominate the market, such as Google and Facebook".

The aim is "to ensure consumers and small businesses aren't disadvantaged", it said.

The unit is being created after the UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said in July that existing laws

were not effective and a new regulatory regime was needed to control internet giants that earn from digital advertising.

The CMA has backed the new rules while it has not taken direct action against Facebook and Google.

"Our new, pro-competition regime for digital markets will ensure consumers have choice, and mean smaller firms aren't pushed out," said Business Secretary Alok Sharma.

Britain acknowledged the online platforms bring "huge benefits for businesses and society" but said the "concentration of power amongst a small number of tech companies" was curbing growth and innovation in the industry, which could have "negative impacts" for the public.

## A life devoted to beauty

FROM PAGE 1

Save the personal, his life was consumed by two love affairs -- one with Bangladesh and the other with the theatre, and through his work he blended both. He was proudest of his involvement in our struggle for freedom and he was most passionate about his work as an actor. Through every action of his life he tried to bring his pride and his passion together. It is this coming together of the two most powerful forces within him that made Aly Zaker the exceptional patriot and the critically acclaimed actor, director, writer that he was.

His patriotism was of the most enlightened kind. It was far more than loyalty to a political entity. It was the people -- simple, tolerant, open-minded, friendly, hospitable and engaging -- that he loved most. His childhood memories of what we call "Gram Bangla" (far more than the term "rural Bengal" signifies), etched deeply in his subconscious from long travels on country boats, horseback and train with his father produced his lifelong love for Bangladesh's natural features to which, he says, he owes the origins of his creativity.

He was most pained to see his "Gram Bangla" exploited both economically -- that we mostly talk about -- and culturally. He strongly believed in the syncretic cultural heritage of Bangladesh and strongly resisted, through his plays, attempts to divide it. In all his television appearances, interviews and writings he tried to warn us against this trend and foresaw the damage that it would do to the future advancement of Bangladesh. Like every freethinker he abhorred prejudice and extremism of all kinds and, as a columnist, relentlessly wrote against them.

His creative work began, as he says, with his involvement with Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendro in Kolkata in 1971, with the invitation of filmmaker Alamgir Kabir to do an hourly English language programme on our Muktijuddho. (I recall with pride my participation in several such programmes). Immediately after Bangladesh's liberation, he plunged himself into the world of theatre. Starting with Munier Chowdhury's play "Kobor", he joined Aranyak in 1972 and then there was no stopping him.

Equally important to his acting was his work in adaptation and translation. He chose the greatest of playwrights -- Sophocles, Shakespeare, Brecht, Ibsen, to name a few -- to translate and adapt, which itself became a greater source of intellectual exchanges. Nagorik and a few other theatre groups became mini-centres of discussion to understand what these great plays meant and how they could stimulate our own intellectual renaissance in post-liberation Bangladesh.

Aly Zaker's acting, intellectual stature, directing and his relentless effort to take Bangladeshi theatre to greater heights inspired thousands of young people to take up this art form as writers, directors, musicians,

scriptwriters, stage managers, light and audio technicians, etc. In other words, he triggered a process that helped to make theatre production in Bangladesh a far more professional endeavour than it was ever before.

Most talented people are not so good at "guru shishya parampara" but his warm, inclusive, engaging and modest personality broke the barriers and inspired generations of youngsters to take to theatre or at least become knowledgeable about this art form. He played a leadership role in triggering what later became a movement that created hundreds of theatre groups, thousands of actors and millions of theatre fans in the newly liberated country. In fact, theatre movement became a beacon of hope for the establishment of the ideals of our independence struggle -- a democratic, prosperous and secular Bangladesh.

A tribute to Aly Zaker would be incomplete without mentioning the magic he would bring to stage the moment he would enter it. The first thing that would strike the audience from the word go was his presence. The moment he would step onto the stage, there was no question that he was the centre of gravity. As he would move around the stage so would our eyes, trying to extract all the meanings that were being conveyed with his facial expressions, gestures of his hands, various postures and looks -- oh those penetrating eyes, that would pierce the audience signalling the drama of what was to come. Then came the dialogue with his thundering voice modulated to perfection so that we would not miss a word or a whisper. For the duration of the play he would make a plaything of us, lingering on his every word, every movement and every dramatic entry or departure from the stage.

His love for the theatre was never more dramatically exemplified than by his reappearance on stage after his bout with cancer that was first detected in 2016. He acted as "Galileo" for the last time in 2018 for a full hour and a half, never showing fatigue or lack of stamina for a moment. Those of us in the audience knew well that we are never going to see our most favourite and perhaps the greatest of our stage personalities, ever again on stage.

During his last years, when he was bedridden, he would enjoy receiving friends. When Shaheen (my wife) and I last saw him, he was ever buoyant and talkative. Not for a moment did he refer to his cancer and the challenges he was facing. He talked about the founding days of The Daily Star (he was one of the few trusted friends I consulted before starting the paper; he was most supportive), the wonderful time we passed together, our meeting in various cities of the world, how much our friendship meant to him, and left us speechless with his enthusiastic prognosis of the future. He was acting his biggest role in life -- shunning pessimism and teaching us to win everything with optimism.

It is that ever optimistic Chotu Bhai, as all of us lovingly called Aly Zaker, that we will remember him as.

## 39pc disbursed in six months

FROM PAGE 1

"The marginalised people in the country did not face any shortage of food because of the cash and food aid provided under the stimulus scheme. The possibility that these people would slide below the poverty line once again has also been reduced," said the progress report prepared by the finance division under the ministry.

The disbursement of the funds also had a positive impact on the business sector's ongoing recovery process and helped retain employment of tens of thousands of people working under different sectors, it said.

The support has been provided in the form of low-cost loans to micro, small, medium, large industries, service-providers and as food security, social protection and special allowances after the pandemic-induced shutdown paralysed the economy, drying up millions of jobs and creating the new poor.

The implementation of the scheme, however, has not been the same in all sectors. For example, fund disbursement rate for the export-oriented and large industries has been quick, but the progress has been slow for small and medium enterprises and farm sectors. The finance ministry divided the 21 packages in three broad categories -- job retention, restoration of demand and maintenance of supply chain; employment creation and revitalising rural economy; and enhancing social security and food supply.

**FIRST CATEGORY**  
In the first category, there are seven packages involving Tk 86,750 crore, which are being financed from the banking system.

Of the amount, around Tk 41,153 crore has been disbursed till October 31. As many as 73,28,251 firms and businesses got the loan assistances, the progress report shows.

The lion's share of the beneficiaries, or 72.80 lakh, are the borrowers who benefitted from the Bangladesh Bank's measure to suspend the payment of loan interests for two months -- April and May.

The total amount of interests for the two months stood at Tk 16,549 crore. The central bank will give Tk 2,000 crore in subsidy in this regard. The government has already started the process to release a fund of Tk 1,390 crore, the report said.

The export-oriented sector, mainly readymade garments, received support from one of the seven packages in the first category. This sector is ahead of all others in terms of fund disbursement. An interest-free loan of Tk 10,500 crore was given in two phases with

a service charge of two percent for providing salaries to workers and employees of 1,992 export-oriented industrial units for four months. The full amount was disbursed by June and an estimated 50 lakh workers got the benefit, says the progress report.

The support in the form of salaries helped save jobs of 50 lakh workers. As a result, the families of those workers have been able to overcome the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, the report said.

A significant progress was made in dispensing the Tk 34,500 crore fund to the pandemic-hit large industries at an interest rate of nine percent, which is to be repaid equally by the borrowers and the government as subsidy.

As of last month, Tk 22,934 crore was disbursed and 2,594 firms got the assistance.

However, the scenario over the pandemic-hit micro and small businesses has not been satisfactory as they were yet to get enough benefit from the packages.

The government announced Tk 20,000 crore as the working capital support for such businesses at an interest rate of nine percent -- four percent to be paid by the borrower and five percent by the government as subsidy.

Till last month, Tk 6,345 crore was disbursed for the sector and 41,069 firms and entrepreneurs got the loan support, said the report.

"As the disbursement rate is slower than expected, the government is augmenting refinancing scheme and credit risk sharing facility to boost the disbursement," the report said.

The pre-shipment credit refinance scheme amounting to Tk 5,000 crore for nine export-oriented industries has also not made any progress. As of last month, only Tk 48.58 crore was disbursed.

**SECOND CATEGORY**  
There are four packages in this category that involve Tk 12,458 crore. Of the amount, Tk 4,225 crore was disbursed till October 31.

As many as 37.22 lakh people, firms and beneficiaries got assistance under this category, according to the progress report.

Of the beneficiaries, a large chunk or 35 lakh families received cash incentives -- Tk 2,500 a month -- under a stimulus package named cash transfer to the targeted poor. Of the allocated Tk 1,258 crore, around Tk 880 crore was spent.

However, the government had initially planned to give the cash incentives to each of 50 lakh families under this package. But it had to stop midway following allegations of anomalies over the lists of beneficiaries.

On the other hand, some 2.22 lakh firms and beneficiaries got the assistance under the three other packages -- credit expansion for employment creation, agriculture refinance scheme, and refinance scheme for farmers and small traders.

**THIRD CATEGORY**  
There are 10 packages in this category and the government allocated Tk 22,125 crore. So far, around Tk 2,237 crore has been disbursed under different packages that benefitted around 3.28 crore people.

Free food was distributed under one of the packages. The government distributed five lakh tonnes of rice and one lakh tonnes of wheat among 2.54 crore people in 496 municipalities and upazilas.

Around 50 lakh families across the country were allowed to buy rice at Tk 10 a kg under the OMS of rice package. The government also helped nearly 18 lakh families in the urban areas to buy rice at Tk 10 per kg.

"As a result, these people did not have to spend days starving," said the report.

But the progress has been slow in implementing some packages in this category.

The special honorarium allowance for healthcare professionals is a case in point.

The government has failed to provide frontline health professionals with the incentives after its announcement over four months ago.

A Tk 100-crore fund was earmarked to this end, but it could not be released as the health ministry has not yet sent the list of the recipients.

Similar is the case for handing compensation to the healthcare professionals. The government allocated Tk 750 crore for this purpose, but it could spend Tk 16.25 crore till October 31.

Speaking at Thursday's programme, Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), suggested that the government should come up with an independent evaluation of the packages that have been executed so far.

Finance Secretary Abdur Rouf Talukder said they have a plan to carry out an independent assessment of the packages so that they can make adjustment to those packages whose implementation lags behind.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmad Kaikaus said no initiative can ever be hundred percent successful. He, however, claimed that they have done an assessment of the food and cash supports and found that they have been able to reach nearly 21 percent of the population.

It earned only Tk 14.80 crore in April and May against the expenditure of Tk 27.41 crore. In these two months, BRTC buses remained off the roads; only its trucks were operational.

At that time, BRTC had to take a Tk 10 crore loan from the government to pay salaries and Eid bonuses, the chairman told this newspaper.

The state-owned company paid Tk 88.65 crore as salary and other allowances in one year, which is Tk 23.27 crore more than the corresponding period of the immediate past year, according to a special bulletin BRTC published in August this year.

Ehsan-E-Elahi said they have taken some strict measures to control some irregularities in depots and have taken actions against more than two dozen staffers.

"We are planning for full automation of the depots and training centres to prevent malpractice fully," he said, adding that they were going for central procurement of tires and batteries soon for the same reason.

He said that BRTC has been making profit for the last three months, adding that if that trend continues, they will be able to pay all the dues sooner rather than later.

## 'Galileo' makes

FROM PAGE 1

In a condolence message, President Abdul Hamid said, "Thespian Aly Zaker was a shining star in country's cultural arena ... The country lost an eminent actor and cultural figure with his death. His death is an irreparable loss to the cultural arena of the country."

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her condolence message recalled with profound respect Aly Zaker's contribution to the Liberation War and the country's art and culture arena.

"Zaker's contribution to the Great Liberation War and the country's art and culture arena will be remembered for long," the PM said.

She then prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

People from all walks of life, including members of the cabinet, different cultural, social, political organisations, and civil society, also expressed shock and sorrow at Aly Zaker's death.

He was battling cancer for the last four years and tested positive for Covid-19 two days ago. On November 17, he was admitted to Bangladesh Specialised Hospital due to cardiac issues.

"We are grateful to everyone who kept him in their prayers," his son Iresh Zaker wrote on Facebook.

After his namaz-e-janaza, Aly Zaker was laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard after Asr prayers.

Earlier, his body was taken to the premises of the Liberation War Museum in the capital's Agargaon around 11:00am, reports BSS.

Maintaining health guidelines cultural personalities, friends and admirers paid their tributes to Aly Zaker, who was a trustee of the Liberation War Museum.

Family sources said the celebrated actor tested positive for coronavirus two days before his death, which is why his body was not taken to the Central Shaheed Minar, said the BSS report.

Ramendu Majumder, Nasiruddin Yousoff, Ferdousi Majumder and Mamunur Rashid, Liberation War Museum Trustees Dr Sarwar Ali and Modiful Hoque placed wreaths on his coffin.

On behalf of Awami League, the party's Cultural Affairs Secretary Asim Kumar Ukil and Office Secretary Barrister Biplab Barua paid homage to Aly Zaker by placing wreaths on the coffin.

Aly Zaker was born on November 6, 1944 in Chattogram to Muhammad Taher and Rezia Taher.

He was the third among four siblings and spent his early childhood in Kushtia and Madaripur. His father was a high-ranking government official who was transferred every few years.

He studied at Notre Dame College and graduated from Dhaka University.

During the Liberation War, Aly Zaker was trained at Sector-8 under Maj Gen Manzoor.

Eminent filmmaker Alamgir Kabir asked him to join Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. During the Liberation War, he travelled to the frontier many times to do interviews and Aly Zaker was an integral part of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra's English broadcasts.

Aly Zaker not only inspired freedom fighters on the frontier during the Liberation War as a Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste and vocalist of Mukti Shangrila Shilpi Shangstha, he also played an important role in creating global opinion in support of the Liberation War, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee said in a condolence message.

Besides, Aly Zaker was an important "witness" of the Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam-led civic movement Gana Adalat (people's court) launched on March 26, 1972 for the trial of war criminals and the then Jamaat-e-Islami chief Ghulam Azam, the committee said.

In 1972, Aly Zaker joined Aranyak Natya Dal. His first stage appearance was in the troupe's rendition of the Munier Chowdhury play "Kabor".

Later, he joined Nagorik Natya Sampradaya, where he did some of his best work, including "Dewan Gazir Kissa", "Nuruddin-er Shara Jibon", "Macbeth", and "Galileo".

He directed plays like "Baki Itihash", "Bidogdho Romonikul", "Toilo Sankat", "Ei Nishiddho Polli Te" and "Achalayatan".

On television, he is known for iconic roles in classics such as "Bohubrihi" and "Aaj Robibar".

Aly Zaker married eminent theatre personality Sara Zaker in 1975. Together, they have a son Iresh Zaker and daughter Sriya Sharbojya.

Aly Zaker was also the chairman of Asiatic 3Sixty.

Besides the Ekushey Padak (1999), Aly Zaker also received the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award, Bangabandhu Award, Munier Chowdhury Award, Naren Biswas Award, among other accolades.

In a condolence message, Road Transport and Bridges Minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader expressed shock at the death of the veteran cultural personality.

"Celebrated actor Aly Zaker was a shining star in the cultural arena," Quader said.

BNP said he was a glittering star in the cultural arena of Bangladesh.

"People will always remember him for his glorious achievements and contributions to the country's cultural arena," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, reports UNB.

Besides, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad, Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman, Jahangirnagar University VC Prof Farzana Islam, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Gono Forum, Bangladesh National Awami Party, former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Sammilita Samajik Andolon, 1971: Genocide-Torture Archive and Museum Trust, Bangladesh Peace Council, Bangladesh Medical Association, and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in separate messages condoled the death of the thespian.

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Yellow-wattled Lapwing with Chicks.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Bringing Up Baby

Stories of baby birds can be fascinating.

The Australian Brushturkey is a bird found mostly on the ground. It is black and the size of a large chicken, with red wattles hanging down its cheeks. It prefers to stay on the ground, flying only if it has to. I found this bird bland, but that was before I heard how it brings up babies. Before laying eggs, the father collects organic, compostable material to make a mound several feet in size. The mother then lays eggs inside the mound and leaves. The father keeps adjusting the mound contents so that the heat generated by the organic decay stays within 33-35 degrees Celsius. This works like incubation. When the eggs hatch, the chicks are ready to fly from day one.

Then there is the story of the Cuckoo family, including the Koel, or *Kokil*. The Cuckoo lays one egg amongst the eggs of the Crow in the Crow's nest. The Crow, unaware of the plot, incubates all eggs in its nest with great care. The Cuckoo egg hatches first and the chick sometimes pushes out the Crow's eggs off the nest. It also calls in a manner similar to a Crow. The Crow continues nurturing the baby Cuckoo until it is grown enough to fly off. This is an uncommon phenomenon called "brood parasitism."

Stories like the above are extraordinary, but the breeding cycle of ordinary birds is no less interesting and challenging. They build a nest, find a tree cavity, or revisit last year's nest to lay their eggs. When the chicks

hatch, the parents must nurture them by feeding them and protecting them from predators. At some point the chicks start flapping their wings; soon they are making short flights. But not all chicks can learn to feed themselves at the same time they fly. Birds of prey, for example, must learn to hunt while flying. So even after they learn to fly their parents must keep feeding them until they can hunt for themselves.

It is not easy to observe baby birds while they are growing up. But such moments are rewarding.

Some years ago I ran into a mother Yellow-wattled Lapwing with her brood. The chicks walked the fields with her and learned to forage in the ground for worms and vegetable matter. However, they could not fly and were vulnerable to predators from above. Whenever there was a hint of a moving shadow from above they immediately dived under the wings of the mother.

In weeks the colour of their plumage changed from salt-and-pepper to reddish brown. They strayed farther and farther from the mother. One day I saw one of them flapping its wings. The first flight came soon. In no time they were showing off their flying skills like kids with the first bicycle or teenagers with the first car.

For most birds bringing up baby is best done discreetly away from prying eyes. But if you do happen to find a full nest, you will find joy in observing life unfold for these young ones.

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

## 39th span of Padma bridge installed

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

The 39th span of the Padma bridge was installed yesterday, making 5.85km stretch of the main structure visible.

Only two more spans are needed to complete the 6.15-kilometre long bridge, said officials concerned.

The "2D" span was installed over the pillars 10 and 11 at Munshiganj's Mawa end within six days of installation of the 38th span, said Dewan Abdul Kader, executive engineer and project manager (main bridge).

A specialised floating crane took the span to the designated poles from Mawa's Kumarbhog Construction Yard at around 9am. The procedure was completed at 12:22pm with no glitches amid favourable weather, the engineer added.

With this, a total of four spans were installed in November as per target.

Officials said they have the target to install the rest two spans by December 16, the Victory Day.

The construction of Padma bridge started in 2014 and the first span was installed on September 2017.

The main bridge, which is being constructed with concrete and steel, will be two-storied. China Major Bridge Engineering Company (CMBEC) is constructing the bridge, while another Chinese company Sinohydro Corporation is working for Padma river training.

## Left out in the cold

Around 34 families become homeless as fire rips through slum in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Thirty-four families are now passing their days in severe hardship, having to live under the open sky as their homes at a slum in Narayanganj were gutted in a fire on Thursday night.

The slum is at Moslem Nagar Notun Bazar under Narayanganj Sadar Upazila.

There were 40 rooms there owned by a local named Giasuddin. Thirty-four of these were completely gutted in the fire that broke out at around 10:45pm on Thursday. Fire service doused the blaze at around 12:15am.

Many of the slum-dwellers had television set, refrigerator, cash and other valuables in their rooms. But everything has been burnt, they said.

"I along with my family members was having dinner. Suddenly, we heard our neighbours' screams. So we hurriedly exited our room," recounts Fulhori Bibi, "That was the end. That was the last we saw of our home and our belongings."

"I had Tk 25,000 in cash, a TV and a fridge.



A child looks at a burnt book she picked out of the rubble. Her family was among the 34 households that lost all their belonging in the fire. PHOTO: STAR

I could not save anything," she told this correspondent yesterday.

A four-year-old Rashed was looking for books that were burnt. "The books belonged to my elder sister. All our books and clothes have been destroyed," he said.

"The fire spread so quickly that we could only save our lives. We could not take anything out of our room. Now I have no money to buy food," said Kalam Miah, a garments worker.

"Even my identity card for my workplace has been burnt. Security guards at the factory will not allow me to enter now," he added.

Contacted, Abdullah Al Arefin, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defense in Narayanganj, said the fire originated from "agarbati" (incense sticks) at one room. Losses are roughly estimated to be around Tk 15 lakh.

Narayanganj Sadar's Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nahida Barik said they were preparing a list of the affected families, who will be provided government assistance.



This boy is ecstatic after catching a Shoal fish with his bare hands. Low-lying areas in Savar's Amin Bazar has been left with fish that failed to move on with the current as floodwater receded, and many including him are getting down and dirty in the mud to catch fish. This catch is not just a good source of protein for the boy, the sense of satisfaction from stealthily catching the wiggly fish is also unparalleled. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Bejoy N D'Cruze installed as the new Archbishop of Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bishop Bejoy N D'Cruze OMI was installed as the Archbishop of Dhaka yesterday, two months after the Vatican announced its appointment.

Cardinal Patrick D' Rozario, CSC, and Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio to Bangladesh Archbishop George Kocherry, other bishops, priests and Christians were present at the installation ceremony at Saint Mary's Cathedral Church in Dhaka. Archbishop D' Cruze, during the holy mass with limited presence, called for unity among people of all churches, religions, caste and creed.

He is now the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh. He replaces Cardinal Patrick D Rozario, who retired as the Archbishop of Dhaka in September.

Archbishop D'Cruze was born on February 9, 1956, at Tuitail in Nawabganj, Dhaka and was ordained a priest on February 20, 1987. He was appointed the bishop of Sylhet on July 8, 2011.

## Farmer stabbed to death over land dispute in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A farmer was allegedly stabbed to death over a land dispute in Dinajpur's Biral upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased is Abdul Kader (75) of Biral's Ballabpur village. Police, quoting witnesses, said Abdul was ripping paddy of land that his relatives claimed belonged to them. His nephew Naimul Islam (35) asked him to stop, but Abdul continued, said OC Sheikh Nasim Habib of Biral Police Station.

Later, they locked into an altercation, and Naimul stabbed him and fled.

## A ray of hope for the little one

Born a triplet, sole surviving tiger cub being taken care of by Ctg zoo staff as mother refuses to nurse him

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

On November 14, one of Chattogram Zoo's tigresses gave birth to three cubs. Initially, this was met with great optimism for zoo staffers, but it soon turned sour as two of the cubs died after their mother refused to nurse them.

"We were happy to see that Joya, a tigress in the zoo, gave birth to three cubs for the first time," said Shahadat Hossain Shuvo, a veterinary surgeon and curator of Chattogram Zoo. "Two of them were male and the other was female."

"However, we were worried to see the mother turning her back to the cubs since the very first day," he said.

"Usually, a tigress starts taking

care of her cubs from their birth, nursing them and playing with them. But Joya was acting differently. She didn't even feed them," said the curator. "As a result, the female cub died on November 15."

Zoo authorities have been trying to keep the surviving cubs alive ever since, but they couldn't do much but watch another one die.

"We immediately took the other cubs out of Joya's cage and decided to isolate them to take care of them," he said. "But unfortunately, one of the cubs died on November 18."

"We have been feeding the third one bottled milk," he continued, "If the cub survives, it will be the first tiger in the country to have survived

by artificial care." The official said the cub's health condition is now stable. After birth, it weighed 1.3 kg.

The cub is a second-generation tiger born at the zoo. His grandparents were two Bengal tigers bought from South Africa on December, 2016 at a cost of Tk 30 lakh. The tiger was named Raj while the tigress was called Pori.

The couple gave birth to three cubs in 2018. Of those, a white cub did not survive. The surviving white tigress was named Shubhra while the orange one was named Joya.

The zoo now has six tigers, including the newborn cub and another Pori gave birth to on December 31, 2019.



Only one cub survived from the trio birthed by Joya, one of Chattogram Zoo's tigresses. As the mother refuses to nurse the baby, he's now being taken care of by zoo staffers. This photo was taken on Thursday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Prayer for peace

Kathin Chibar Dan observed in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Kathin Chibar Dan (robe offering), one of the biggest religious festivals of the Buddhist community in Rangamati, where new robes are gifted to monks, was observed yesterday with due solemnity.

On the occasion, the Kathin Chibar, a special kind of robe worn by monks, is spun within 24 hours and given to them. However, this year saw an exception to this tradition due to social distancing restrictions.

This year, the programme ended through seeking peace, prosperity and happiness for people of the CHT and all over the world.

Goutam Dewan, president of Upashak Upashika Karjonirbahi Parishad, gave a welcome speech to inaugurate the function. After this, the programme began with a religious song led by Ranjit Dewan, a prominent singer of CHT.

Among others, Brisho Ketu Chakma, chairman, Rangamati Hill Districts Council (RHDC); Moni Swapan Dewan, ex-state minister of CHT ministry; Nirupa Dewan, ex-member of National Human Right Commission, and local representatives of different sectors in the district were present at the programme.

At the event, speakers said all Buddhist devotees have to avoid greed, illusion, and envy in order to follow the path of Buddha.

In the evening, the Pradip Puja (candle lighting) was held at Rajban Bihar.

## 3 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and one was injured in road accidents in two districts during the last two days, report our correspondents.

In Cumilla, two youths were killed at Kalakachua area of Burichang upazila when a covered van hit their motorbike around 2:30pm yesterday.

Safayet Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Mainamati Crossing Highway Police Station, confirmed the incident to the Daily Star.

He said, "We rushed to the spot but relatives and friends took the bodies away before highway police reached. We seized the covered-van but could not detain its driver and helper."

The deceased were identified as Nazmul Haque Sajal (26) of the district's Sadar upazila, and Sariful Alam Sohag (27) of Burichang. Another person on the motorbike was injured.

According to locals, a speedy covered-van hit a motorcycle carrying three people from the back, killing two on the spot.

In Thakurgaon, a passenger of a three-wheeler was killed after a tractor hit the vehicle at Maheshpur village of Ranishankoil upazila on Thursday night.

The victim was identified as Abdul Majid (40) of Maharaja village in the upazila.

Ranishankoil Police Station Officer-in-Charge SM Jahid Iqbal said the accident occurred around 7pm, when a Ranishankoil-bound tractor hit the three-wheeler, killing Majid on the spot.

Police seized the vehicles but drivers and helpers managed to flee.

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

that Bangabandhu called a labour conference in the first week of April, 1972 where a decision was taken to formulate a labour policy after considering the views of the labour organisations.

The labour policy was accordingly formulated. Since the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has been adopted by the Constituent Assembly and will come into force from December 16 this year, a review of the labour policy in the light of the constitutional provisions has become necessary.

### CABINET MEETING HELD

The Cabinet in a meeting today finalises the programme for the celebration of the first Victory Day on 16 December, 1972. The Cabinet meeting is presided over by Bangabandhu and discusses various matters besides finalising the Victory Day programme.

**SOURCES:** November 29, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

## 2 'members'

FROM PAGE 12

"jihadi books", said a press release.

DB Inspector Abdur Razzak said the arrestees admitted during primary interrogation that they have been members of Ansar-Al Islam for the last five years.

They used to raise money from people for the organisation and visited 14 districts to collect funds, the DB officer said, adding that they had reached Bogura hours before they got arrested around 1:00am.

## Scientists

FROM PAGE 12

to be detected through radio observations. Usually, these stellar objects are detected via infrared sky surveys.

While brown dwarfs do not undertake fusion reactions, they do emit light at radio wavelengths in a similar way that Jupiter does - accelerating charged particles like electrons to produce radiation including radio waves and aurorae.

Radio emissions have only been detected from a small number of brown dwarfs, and all of those had been detected by infrared surveys beforehand.

Discovering this brown dwarf through radio telescopes shows that astronomers can detect objects too cold and faint to be picked up by infrared surveys. This opens the doors to the detection of other bodies like free-floating gas-giant exoplanets.

"We asked ourselves, 'Why point our radio telescope at catalogued brown dwarfs?'" said Harish Vedantham, lead author of the study and astronomer at ASTRON (the Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy).

"Let's just make a large image of the sky and discover these objects directly in the radio."

## Cancel lease

FROM PAGE 12

They called for resolving of the land dispute in the area through the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Dispute Resolution Commission.

Kwe Shwe Hla, chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council, at a press conference at his office on November 22 said 20 acres of land was leased out to an organisation for tourism purposes.

Earlier this month, Mro people in Chimbuk hill area in a protest programme alleged that a welfare organisation and Sikder Group were trying to grab about 1,000 acres of jhum land spanning from Kapru Para Bazar to Jiban Nagar in the name of constructing a hotel and creating a tourist spot.

They expressed fear that the initiative, if implemented, would directly affect the Mro community people in six villages and indirectly affect people from the same community in another 70 to 116 villages.

The Mro people claimed that the initiative would leave around 10,000 jhum cultivators landless. Besides, many houses of the Mro people and their cremation site would be affected.

On October 7, a group of Mro people submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner of Bandarban urging her to save their ancestral villages in Naitong Hill area.

## Covid-19 vaccine doubt emerges

FROM PAGE 1

"We need to do an additional study," AstraZeneca boss Pascal Soriot told Bloomberg.

The vaccine will undergo a new global trial as questions remain of the claims whether it could protect up to 90 percent of people.

Researchers accidentally discovered it performed best when a half dose is given followed by a full one, rather than two full doses.

Sir John Bell, Oxford's regius professor of medicine and the UK government's life sciences adviser, rejected claims that the previous trial had not been properly conducted.

The British government said yesterday it has asked its independent medicines regulator to assess AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine as part of the formal approval process for the drug to be rolled out by the end of the year.

But Russia unexpectedly stepped in with an announcement that an Indian generic drug maker would start producing 100 million doses of its government-backed vaccine in early 2021.

Germany had largely contained the spread when the virus descended on Europe from China at the start of the year after first emerging in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

Yet its careful approach failed to avert a second wave, imperilling the health of Europe's biggest economy and dampening the mood heading into the winter holidays.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute recorded more than 22,000 new daily cases yesterday, pushing the country's total beyond the one million mark.

More worryingly, number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care soared from around 360 in early October to more than 3,500 last week.

It has shuttered restaurants, bars, sporting facilities and cultural venues, though schools and shops remain open.

Globally, more than 1.4 million deaths and over 61 million infections have been recorded, according to a tally compiled by AFP from official sources.

Most countries hope to ease their virus rules for Christmas and New Year, allowing families a respite before bracing for what the world hopes is one last wave of restrictions until the new vaccines kick in.

**BLACK FRIDAY**  
In the meantime much of the world faces a gloomy winter dampened by lockdowns, economic anxiety and mental strain.

Bulgaria allowed its stores to enjoy one last spurt of business on Black Friday - usually the day shops are packed with people looking for holiday deals - before closing almost everything for three weeks shortly before midnight.

"People have only just started returning in the past three days and now we'll be shutting down for three weeks," one Sofia restaurant owner lamented.

The mood was just as sour in

the West Bank, where police in face masks set up road blocks on the first day of new restrictions that included weekend curfews.

"I doubt the curfew will be fully respected," said Amer Salamin, an accountant in Ramallah.

Lockdown fatigue is spreading even as governments unfurl new measures to save healthcare systems from collapse.

Restaurant owners in Istanbul organised a protest after Turkey - hitting one-day records of 174 deaths and more than 29,000 infections on Thursday - switched to takeout and delivery service nationally.

**AFRICA READINESS**  
The World Health Organization warned African countries are "far from ready" for mass immunisation.

Other experts said more research is needed to develop vaccines more suitable to the continent. The most promising vaccines discovered so far must be kept at -70 degrees Celsius - all but impossible for most hospitals in Africa.

The African region is so far only 33 percent ready to roll out Covid-19 vaccines, WHO said in a statement.

That figure, based on data provided by 40 countries on a series of "readiness criteria", is well below a desired 80 percent benchmark.

"Planning and preparation will make or break this unprecedented endeavour," WHO Africa Director Matshidiso Moeti said during a virtual press briefing.

## Unexpected idyll at JU

FROM PAGE 12

they have been spotted since early September.

Both the number and species of the migratory birds have seen an uptick this year.

A census conducted by the JU's Zoology department last year counted between 4,000 and 5,000 birds on campus.

However, a fresh survey conducted earlier this month on November 8-9 shows this year's count has already exceeded last year's number.

This figure might be even higher by January 2021, said Prof Kamrul.

Around the same time last year, four to five bird species had arrived. This winter, however, eight bird species have so far come to the four lakes in the campus.

These species are the Lesser Whistling Duck (Chhoto Sarali); Greater Whistling Duck (Boro Sarali);

Pintail Duck; Common Pochard; Garganey; Mallard Duck; Northern Shoveler; and the African Comb Duck, which has been spotted at JU for the first time in 10 years.

Of these, only the Chhoto Sarali comes from the haor region of the country.

The larger species of birds migrate from Siberia, Nepal, China, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in India.

Prof Kamrul said, "More birds have already arrived than at any other time. It's a good sign, the pandemic situation has been fortunate for them."

They are seeing a respite from the constant noise of vehicles honking and people, at least for a little while, he said.

However, Prof Kamrul said the largest lake of the university, Jayapara lake, has not been maintained for years - making it difficult for guest

birds to move around in - and is filled with aquatic plants, algae, and garbage.

"It should be maintained and the garbage cleared. If we aren't conscious about pollution now, the migratory birds may turn away. Many people usually throw plastic bottles and polythenes in these lakes," he added.

Rahima Kaniz, acting registrar of the university, said the administration has been vigilant about the unnecessary entrance of outsiders to campus.

"Necessary steps have already been taken to save the birds like every year. However, it is not being possible completely due to the unconsciousness and non-cooperation of the people," she said.

Asked about the annual bird fair at JU, Prof Kamrul said, "Let us not lose our hope, if the pandemic situation becomes normal, we will take initiatives in this regard."

## Top Iranian nuke scientist assassinated

FROM PAGE 12

Israeli journalist Yossi Melman, who wrote: "Fakhriyadeh-Mahabadi assassinated in Damavand, east of Tehran according to reports in Iran. He was head of Iran's secret military program and wanted for many years by Mossad. His death is a major psychological and professional blow for Iran."

The Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri warned of "severe revenge" against "the killers" of Fakhriyadeh, state-news agency IRNA reported.

"The assassination of this capable and worthy manager, although it was a bitter and heavy blow to the

country's defense complex, but the enemies know that the path started by the martyr Fakhriyadeh will never be stopped," Bagheri said, according to IRNA.

The Trump administration said it was closely monitoring the apparent assassination. The death "would be a big deal," a US official told CNN.

Trita Parsi, the co-founder and executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, said it was not clear who was behind the apparent assassination, but that "there are not that many candidates."

"At the end of the day the only countries that actually have the intent, the motivation and the capacity - and the capacity is really important - really

reduces the number of candidates to no more than Israel and potentially the United States," he told CNN's Becky Anderson.

In April 2018, Netanyahu mentioned Fakhriyadeh by name when he unveiled a nuclear archive he said Mossad agents had taken from Tehran. He called him the head of a secret nuclear project called Project Amad. "Remember that name, Fakhriyadeh," Netanyahu told reporters.

Iran began to withdraw from its commitments to the 2015 landmark nuclear deal in 2019, a year after US President Donald Trump pulled out of the agreement and unleashed crippling sanctions on the country.

## All sculptures in country will be torn down

FROM PAGE 1

Joint secretary general of the organisation, Mamunul Haque, who was supposed to attend the programme, didn't go to Hathazari amid demonstrations by mostly Bangladesh Chhatra League activists.

Hundreds of BCL leaders and activists took to the streets in Chattogram to prevent Mamunul from attending the event.

Mamunul angered many after reportedly speaking against the sculptures of Bangabandhu earlier this month. Babunagari said Mamunul didn't attend the event "for the sake of peace".

Law enforcers remained vigilant in the upazila to maintain law and order.

Several hundred BCL leaders and activists went to Airport Road in Patenga around 10:00am. At a rally held there, Mohiuddin Bachchu, convener of Chattogram City Jubo League, said Mamunul would be resisted in Chattogram.

Chittogram University BCL activists kept Chattogram-Hathazari road blocked by burning tyres for half an hour from 10:30am while Chattogram District North BCL demonstrated at Oxygen intersection in the afternoon.

Earlier on Thursday, BCL leaders and activists held a rally in front of Chattogram Press Club, denouncing Mamunul.

The three-day mahfil Mamunul was going to attend was organised by Al Amin Sangstha on the premises of Hathazari Parbati Model Government High School.

Zakaria Dastagir, general secretary of Chattogram city BCL, told The Daily Star yesterday morning that Mamunul was trying to create anarchy in the country.

BCL sources said their central committee leaders asked them to avoid engaging in clashes anywhere. Babunagari said government officials had contacted Hefajat over the unrest. "We told them that we are in favour of maintaining peace and order."

He said, "A quarter tore Mamunul's picture and burnt his effigy despite knowing that Mamunul would not join the mahfil. It is our earnest request to the government to bring the perpetrators under the purview of law and bring them to book."

## Two Indian soldiers killed

FROM PAGE 12

along the LoC and the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir.

On November 13, eleven people, including five security personnel, were killed after multiple ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops along the LoC in north Kashmir.

On October 1, one Army jawan was killed and another injured when Pakistan army violated the ceasefire and resorted to heavy firing and mortar shelling along the LoC in Krishnagati area of Poonch district, the officials said.

## HK prison wrong to cut 'Long Hair' locks: court

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong prison staff were wrong to cut off the locks of veteran dissident "Long Hair", the city's top court said yesterday, in the second significant ruling against authorities this month.

The decision comes as pro-establishment voices call for an overhaul of the judiciary - something opponents fear could muzzle the Hong Kong legal system's vaunted independence as Beijing cracks down on critics.

The ruling by the Court of Final Appeal is the culmination of a long legal battle by Leung Kwok-hung, 64, who served a brief jail sentence in 2014 linked to his protesting.

Better known by the sobriquet "Long Hair", he is one of the city's veteran dissidents, beginning his career campaigning against British colonial rule and later becoming a fierce critic of Beijing.

## Papul denied bail again

FROM PAGE 1

granted bail in exchange for 20,000 Kuwaiti dinars each.

A source in Kuwait told this correspondent that Papul was taken to the criminal court of Kuwait, headed by Counsellor Abdullah Al-Othman, around 9:00am. The hearing that began at 2:00pm continued until 7:30pm.

Papul's lawyers prayed for his bail, but the judge denied it and set January 28 for the full hearing.

Kuwait's Criminal Investigation Department detained Papul, an MP from Laxmipur-2 constituency and also the managing director and CEO of Marafie Kuwaitia Group, a conglomerate in Kuwait, on June 6 this year.

He was accused of charging each foreign worker, mostly from Bangladesh, up to 3,000 dinars in exchange for taking them to Kuwait. Many of the workers, however, alleged that they were not provided with the jobs or wages that were promised. Much of the wages they got was also appropriated by Papul's company.

Papul has confessed to bribing Kuwaiti officials with millions of dollars for recruiting Bangladeshi workers and getting contracts for his company.

Sources said Papul, who went to Kuwait nearly 30 years ago as a worker and later started business, earned a

large amount of black money. He had several companies, mostly cleaning, and had contracts with Kuwaiti government agencies.

Al Qabas reported that the public prosecution demanded maximum penalties for the accused in the case, confirming that it has strong evidence of the allegations made in the case.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission opened an inquiry into the allegation that Papul amassed Tk 1,400 crore by trafficking people into Kuwait and laundered the money to different countries.

The ACC said the inquiry was to look into the charges of loan forgery and money laundering by NRB Commercial Bank Director Papul, his wife Selina Islam, their daughter Kazi Wafa Islam and Selina's sister Jesmin.

On July 17, the ACC imposed a foreign travel ban on all of them, saying that the embargo would be implemented for Papul after his return to the country.

He had no involvement in politics back home before 2016. Sources say he invested crores of taka to block the paths of other potential candidates in Laxmipur-2 constituency and became an independent MP in the 2018 elections. His wife Selina also became an MP from the women's reserved seat in the same manner.

## Average daily death 27

FROM PAGE 12

The number of Covid-19 new weekly deaths, according to the report, was increased by 52.8 percent.

The highest number of weekly cases - 25,481 - was reported in the 26th epidemiological week dated between June 22 and June 28, the report added.

The highest weekly death - 314 - was recorded in the following 27th epidemiological week.

Till the third week of August, the infection rate remained 20 percent.

After that the number of new infected people started decreasing and one stage it went down below 10 percent.

From early November, the infection rate started shooting up.

In the last 15 days, the daily Covid-19 cases remained below 2,000

in four days only.

At least 2,223 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 373,676 and the recovery rate at 81.46 percent.

Among the 20 dead, 17 were men and three were women.

One of them aged between 21 and 30 years, one between 31 and 40, one between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60, and 10 were above 60 years old, added the press release.

All of them died at different hospitals in the country.

So far, 5,024 men and 1,520 women have died of Covid-19 in the country.

The mortality rate against the total number of cases detected so far stands at 1.43 percent.

## Trump inching towards exit

FROM PAGE 12


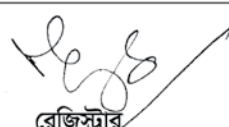
The electors are scheduled to meet on December 14 to formalise the outcome. Biden also leads Trump by more than 6 million in the popular vote tally.

Trump has so far refused to fully acknowledge his defeat, though earlier this week - with mounting pressure from his own Republican ranks - he agreed to let Biden's transition process officially proceed.

Frenzied efforts by Trump and his aides to overturn results in key states, either by lawsuits or by pressuring state legislators, have failed, and he is running out of options.

"President-elect Biden won 306 electoral votes. States continue to certify those results, the Electoral College will soon meet to ratify that outcome," Michael Gwin, a spokesman for the Biden campaign, said when asked about Trump's comments. "Biden will be sworn in as President on January 20, 2021."

Showing that he intends to stay in the political fray until the end of his term, Trump said on Thursday he would travel on December 5 to Georgia, a once solidly Republican state he lost narrowly to Biden, to campaign for two Republican US Senate candidates.

 <b>বাংলাদেশ ইউনিভার্সিটি অব প্রফেশনালস্ (বিইউপি)</b> মিরপুর সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২১৬ <b>নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি</b>				
স্মারক নং-১৪/৭৮৬/নিয়োগ-৩৩/প্রভাষক				২৫ নভেম্বর ২০২০
বাংলাদেশ ইউনিভার্সিটি অব প্রফেশনালস্ (বিইউপি)-এ জরুরি ভিত্তিতে নিম্নে বর্ণিত পদসমূহে জনবল নিয়োগ করা হবে। এ লক্ষ্যে জনসমূহে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। বর্ণিত বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত পদসমূহের কর্মস্থল হবে বাংলাদেশ ইউনিভার্সিটি অব প্রফেশনালস্ (বিইউপি) এবং বিইউপি, ফ্যাকাল্টি অব বিজনেস অ্যান্ড সোস্যাল সাইন্স (বাংলাদেশ মিলিটারী একাডেমি, আট্টারী, চট্টগ্রাম)। চাকুরী জীবনে ন্যূনতম ০৩ (তিন) বৎসর বিইউপি, ফ্যাকাল্টি অব বিজনেস অ্যান্ড সোস্যাল সাইন্স (বাংলাদেশ মিলিটারী একাডেমি, আট্টারী, চট্টগ্রাম)-এ চাকুরী করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্র জমা দেয়ার শেষ তারিখ ৩০ ডিসেম্বর ২০২০। বিস্তারিত তথ্য ও শর্তাবলী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট এর লিংক <a href="https://bup.edu.bd/careers">https://bup.edu.bd/careers</a> হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।				
ক্রমিক	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	বেতন গ্রেড	কর্মস্থল
১।	প্রভাষক-ইংরেজি	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
২।	প্রভাষক-ডিজাস্টার এন্ড হিউম্যান সিকিউরিটি ম্যানেজমেন্ট	০১	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৩।	প্রভাষক-পাবলিক অ্যাডমিনিস্ট্রেশন	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৪।	প্রভাষক-ইকোনমিক্স	০৩	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৫।	প্রভাষক-ডেভেলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজ	০১	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৬।	প্রভাষক-সমাজ বিজ্ঞান	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৭।	প্রভাষক-মার্কেটিং	০৪	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৮।	প্রভাষক-অ্যাকাউন্টিং	০৩	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
৯।	প্রভাষক-ম্যানেজমেন্ট	০৩	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১০।	প্রভাষক-ফাইন্যান্স	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১১।	প্রভাষক-আইন	০৩	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১২।	প্রভাষক-মাস কমিউনিকেশন এন্ড জার্নালিজম	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১৩।	প্রভাষক-আইসিটি	০৩	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১৪।	প্রভাষক-পরিবেশ বিজ্ঞান	০১	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১৫।	প্রভাষক-বাংলা	০১	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১৬।	প্রভাষক-ফ্রেঞ্চ ল্যাংগুয়েজ	০১	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
১৭।	প্রভাষক-ইন্টারন্যাশনাল রিলেশন্স	০২	৯ম	বিইউপি এবং বিএমএ
সর্বমোট				৩৬ জন
 রেজিস্ট্রার জিডি-১৮৯২				বাংলাদেশ ইউনিভার্সিটি অব প্রফেশনালস্ (বিইউপি)

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## CIA controlled 2nd Swiss encryption firm, says report

AFP, Geneva

Swiss politicians have voiced outrage and demanded an investigation after revelations that a second Swiss encryption company was allegedly used by the CIA and its German counterpart to spy on governments worldwide.

"How can such a thing happen in a country that claims to be neutral like Switzerland?" co-head of Switzerland's Socialist Party, Cedric Wermuth, asked in an interview with Swiss public broadcaster SRF late Thursday.

He called for a parliamentary inquiry after an SRF investigation broadcast on Wednesday found that a second Swiss encryption firm had been part of a spectacular espionage scheme orchestrated by US and German intelligence services.

A first investigation had revealed back in February an elaborate, decades-long set-up, in which the CIA and its German counterpart creamed off the top-secret communications of governments through their hidden control of a Swiss encryption company called Crypto.

SRF's report this week found that a second but smaller Swiss encryption firm, Omnicsec, had been used in the same way.

That company, which was split off from Swiss cryptographic equipment maker Gretag in 1987, sold voice, fax and data encryption equipment to governments around the world until it halted operations two years ago.

SRF's investigative programme Rundschau concluded that, like Crypto, Omnicsec had sold manipulated equipment to foreign governments and armies. The findings unleashed fresh outrage in Switzerland, which is still reeling from the Crypto revelations.



A demonstrator holds a Palestinian flag in front of Israeli border police officers during a protest against Jewish settlements, in Beit Dajan in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Sri Lanka bans Tamil remembrance of war dead

Commemorations for Tamil Tiger rebels killed in Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war were banned yesterday after court petitions by the government of strongman President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Sri Lanka's 37-year conflict began in 1972 when Tamil Tigers waged a bloody war against government troops in a campaign for a separate homeland for their ethnic minority group. Rajapaksa was defence chief when the Tigers were finally defeated in 2009 while his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa was president, winning them the adoration of many in the Sinhala majority population. For years, Tamils were not allowed to commemorate their war dead, but a ban on "Heroes' Day" ceremonies at cemeteries was lifted after Mahinda was voted out of office in 2015.

#### Brazil's Bolsonaro says won't take virus vaccine

Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro has said he will not take a vaccine against the coronavirus even after it receives approval from his own government. "I'm telling you, I won't take it (the vaccine)," he said in a video posted to social media on Thursday. "It is my right." Brazil has recorded over 170,000 coronavirus deaths, according to an AFP tally, behind only the United States. Bolsonaro faces criticism for his handling of the pandemic, which has included playing down the virus,



opposing lockdown measures and relentlessly promoting the drug hydroxychloroquine despite studies showing it is ineffective against Covid-19.

#### Iran diplomat refuses to appear at bomb plot trial

An Iranian diplomat on trial in Belgium for allegedly plotting to bomb an Iranian opposition rally outside Paris has refused to appear in the dock, his lawyer said yesterday. Assadollah Abbasi, formerly based at the Iranian Embassy in Austria, is claiming "diplomatic immunity" his lawyer Dimitri de Beco told reporters outside the court in Antwerp, adding that he would be representing his client. In June 2018, Belgian authorities thwarted what they said was an attempt to smuggle explosives to France to attack a meeting of one of Iran's exiled opposition movements which was attended by close allies of US President Donald Trump. Later that year, the French government accused Iran's intelligence service of being behind the operation a charge the Iranian government has denied.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP

### HACKING OF COVID VACCINE MAKERS

## S Korea foils North's attempt

India to produce 100m doses of Russia's Sputnik vaccine

AGENCIES

South Korea's intelligence agency foiled North Korean attempts to hack into South Korean companies developing coronavirus vaccines, lawmakers said yesterday.

Ha Tae-keung, a member of the parliamentary intelligence committee, said after being briefed by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) that the agency did not specify how many and which drugmakers were targeted but said there was no damage from the hacking attempts.

The revelation came after Microsoft said early this month that hackers working for the Russian and North Korean governments have tried to break into the networks of seven pharmaceutical companies and vaccine researchers in Canada, France, India, South Korea and the



United States.

The closed-door briefings by the NIS, which shares intelligence and analysis with counterparts among key neighbours, provide rare public access to information about the reclusive North.

Ha and another member Kim Byung-kee said North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had taken some "unreasonable" actions due to

Covid-19 "paranoia."

They said those actions included banning fishing and salt production because of fears that seawater might have been contaminated with the virus, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, one of the developers of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine announced yesterday that India-based drugmaker Hetero will produce over 100 million doses of the jab.

"Hetero, one of India's leading generic pharmaceutical companies, have agreed to produce in India over 100 million doses per year of the world's first registered vaccine against the novel coronavirus infection -- Sputnik V," the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said in a statement, adding that production was expected to start in early 2021.

## Refugees in Ethiopia set to run out of food: UN

REUTERS, Geneva

Nearly 100,000 Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia's Tigray region will run out of food as early as next week if parties to the conflict do not allow humanitarian access, the UN refugee agency said yesterday.

African peace envoys met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed yesterday, a day after he said that the military was beginning the "final phase" of an offensive which rights groups fear could bring huge civilian casualties.

The UNHCR says 96,000 Eritrean refugees are living in four camps in Tigray, with some reported to have been in the vicinity of recent clashes.

"They would be running out of food as of Monday - we are ready with our supplies trying to reach these populations," UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch told a Geneva briefing, saying the estimate was based on calculations since the last distribution some weeks ago.

"What is needed is unhindered humanitarian access to reach them as soon as possible," he added.

He declined to specify who was blocking access but said that the call for access applied to both the Ethiopian military and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.

The United Nations, which still has staff in Tigray, has been negotiating with all parties to the conflict for access but there is no sign yet of a breakthrough.

Communication with remaining staff has been poor due to a telecommunications blackout, Baloch added. The conflict has forced some 43,000 people to flee across the border to Sudan.

## Video games are 'under-regulated'

Says EU anti-terror czar

AFP, Brussels

Online video games can be used to propagate extremist ideologies and even prepare attacks, the EU's anti-terrorist coordinator told AFP in an interview in which he urged more regulation.

The official, Gilles de Kerchove, made the argument ahead of the European Commission's presentation on December 9 of a proposed Digital Services Act that aims to rein in Big Tech excesses and internet hate speech.

"I'm not saying that all the gaming sector is a problem. There are two billion people playing online, and that's all very well," said de Kerchove, a Belgian appointed to his post 13 years ago.

But, he warned, "you have extreme-right groups in Germany that have come up with games where the aim is to shoot Arabs, or (Hungarian-born US billionaire George) Soros, or Mrs (German Chancellor Angela) Merkel for her migration policy, etc."

"That can be an alternative way to spread ideology, especially of the extreme right but not only them, a way to launder money... there are currencies created in games that can be exchanged for legal tender," he said.

"It can be a form of communicating. It's encrypted. It can also be a way to test attack scenarios," he continued.

De Kerchove also raised concerns over "algorithmic amplification", where platforms such as Facebook and YouTube put "problematic" and "borderline" content up high, exploiting emotional reactions to boost user engagement.



Pro-democracy protesters hold up the three-finger salute in front of a stage next to a large inflatable alien figure during an anti-government rally in Bangkok yesterday. Protesters demand the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader who seized power in the last coup in 2014, but say they do not want him replaced by another general.

PHOTO: AFP

## We want a referendum soon

Scotland's Sturgeon puts UK on independence warning

REUTERS, London

Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon said an independence referendum that could wrench apart the United Kingdom after Brexit should take place in the earlier part of the next parliament's term, which begins next year.

If there was another referendum and if Scots voted out, it would mark the biggest shock to the United Kingdom since Irish independence a century ago - just as London grapples with the impact of Brexit.

The pro-independence Scottish National Party leader said she anticipates that a vote will take place "in the earlier part" of the next Scottish parliament, which begins next year.

"The referendum for a whole variety of reasons should be in the earlier part of the next parliament," Scottish First Minister Sturgeon told the BBC.

Scots voted 55-45 percent against independence in a 2014 referendum but both Brexit and the British government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis have bolstered



support for independence among Scots.

The past 14 opinion surveys have shown that Scots support independence. Those surveys show support ranging from 51-59% though views on independence have been volatile over previous years with most polls in 2017-2019 showing Scots opposed to breaking up the United Kingdom.

Sturgeon's Scottish National Party (SNP) is expected to perform strongly in elections to the Scottish parliament in May. The SNP will argue that winning that election would be a mandate for another independence referendum.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said the 2014 independence referendum was decisive and a once in a generation event, so should be respected. His government says there should not be another independence referendum in the near future.

But if Sturgeon wins the May 6 Scottish election, Johnson will have a difficult choice: refuse a referendum and thus allow Scottish discontent to simmer or allow a referendum which could break apart the union he says is so dear to him and his party.

The nations of Britain have shared the same monarch since James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603 and a formal union created the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1707.

Today, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The United Kingdom as whole voted 52-48 to leave the EU in a 2016 referendum: England and Wales voted to leave but Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to stay.

### POLICE BEATING OF BLACK MUSIC PRODUCER

## French govt under pressure

Macron 'very shocked'; 4 cops suspended

AFP, Paris

Pressure on the French government and police leadership intensified yesterday after the police beating of a black music producer in Paris sparked outrage across the spectrum, from top politicians to football stars.

Images published by the Loopsider website show how music producer Michel Zecler was repeatedly beaten by police for several minutes and subjected to racial abuse as he tried to enter his music studio last Saturday evening.

The incident was condemned by football World Cup winners Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann.

A presidential official said yesterday that President Emmanuel Macron, too, was "very shocked" by the images.

The incident raised questions over the future of Paris police chief Didier Lallement, already in the spotlight after the forced removal of a migrant camp in Paris earlier in the week which has been widely condemned.

It also put the government on the backfoot as it tries to push through

controversial new security legislation that would restrict the right of the media to publish the faces of police agents.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, who is in charge of the police forces, told French television that the officers "had soiled the uniform of the republic" and that he would press for their dismissal.

Police sources said four officers had been suspended.

The four, all men, have been summoned for questioning at France's National Police Inspectorate General (IGPN) which has launched an investigation into use of violence and making a false statement, a source close to the investigation said.

Zecler was initially himself detained for causing violence, but prosecutors threw out that probe and instead began investigating the police themselves.

Macron on Thursday held talks with Darmanin to call for tough punishments for those involved in the beating, a government source added.

"Nausea," said the front page headline in the leftist Liberation daily over a close-up picture of Zecler's swollen and bloodied face.

# 4 BED

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# In fond memory of 'Chhotlu bhai'

## REMEMBERING ALY ZAKER

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ekushey Padak-winning stage and TV actor, director, Shadhin Bangla Betar activist, Freedom-fighter Aly Zaker was a legendary persona.

The noted thespian passed away at Dhaka's United Hospital at 6:45 am on Friday morning. The legendary actor made a mark on stage with stage plays such as "Acholayatan", "Baki Itihash", "Bidogdho Romonikul", "Kanthal Bagan", "Toil Shongkot", "Ei Nishiddo Pollite", and "Nuruldiner Sharajibon" among many others.

Aly Zaker's powerful presence in television dramas as "Aj Robibar", "Bohubrihi", "Tothapi", "Pathor" and "Deyal" among others, entertained the audience for years on end.

In 1972, Aly Zaker made his theatre debut with Arannyak Natyadal's "Kobor" and later went on to work with Nagorik Natyasampradaya in 1973. The actor's popularity later spread on to television as well.

Born on November 6, 1944 in Chattogram, Zaker's father Muhammad Taher was a government officer. Aly Zaker won the prestigious Ekushey Padak, for his contributions in 1999. He bagged numerous awards and accolades including Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award, Selim Al-Deen Padak, Shaheed Altaf Mahmud Padak, Munier Chowdhury Padak and Meril Prothom Alo Lifetime Achievement Award, among many other accolades.

Several colleagues and well-wishers shared a few words with The Daily Star, mourning this iconic legend.



PHOTO: IRESH ZAKER

**ABUL HAYAT**

I lost one of my closest friends. I was to be able to call him that. Aly Zaker's loss has created a never to be filled void for our country. I cannot yet fathom that he has left us all - it has left me speechless and heartbroken. I don't know how to express his loss.

People will forever remember him as Bengali theatre's Dewan Gazi, Nuruldin, Macbeth and Galileo.

**TARIQ ANAM KHAN**

Aly Zaker and I had a long-lasting

relation for decades, but personally, he was my inspiration. He was also a valuable critique of my life.

I met him a few days before he got sick and we had a discussion on various aspects of culture, theatre and art. Aly Zaker was an ever-smiling presence in our life, he tried his best to keep everyone around him as happy and smiling as him. He used to view art as a holistic experience for everyone.

His death is a huge loss for us all

and I also lost one of my most favorite people.

**JAYA AHSAN**

Though Aly Zaker left us, he took Bangladesh theatre onto much greater heights through his acting and directions.

He was a towering presence, not only physically but also by artistic standards. As a freedom fighter, he gave the theatre Liberation War's true essence, also contributing greatly to the establishment of the Liberation War Museum. I express my heartfelt respect to this legendary actor and freedom fighter.

**SUBORNA MUSTAFA**

I am at a loss for any words or expressions. Aly Zaker, our beloved 'Chhotlu Bhai', is no more, he has set out on his eternal journey. I hope Sara Bhabi, Iresh and Sriya gathers the strength to endure this grief.

Farewell to our beloved 'Chhotlu Bhai', until we meet again.

**SHIMUL YOUSUF**

We are now forever deprived of a trusted shade of love,

affection and adoration. His troubled heart gave into peace at long last. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made our lives so complicated, that we cannot even say farewell to our beloved person. How helpless we really are, how painful his loss is!

I hope 'Chhotlu Bhai', finds his peace now, he was our pride and God's favorite son. I hope he can forgive us all.

**ASADUZZAMAN NOOR**

Aly Zaker was such an actor, who enlightened the world of acting with his talent and presence. Be it on stage, on television or in any other medium, he has enlightened every step of his path. He is his own comparison, he is incomparable to others.

He loved the stage more than anything and I lost a colleague and friend of many years.

**NAWAZISH ALI KHAN**

The news of Aly Zaker's death has left me heartbroken. He was known for his versatility and talent, in theatre, television and also as a person.

As also a leader in the advertising industry, our country has lost an outstanding personality in many incomparable creative fields. May his soul rest in peace forever!



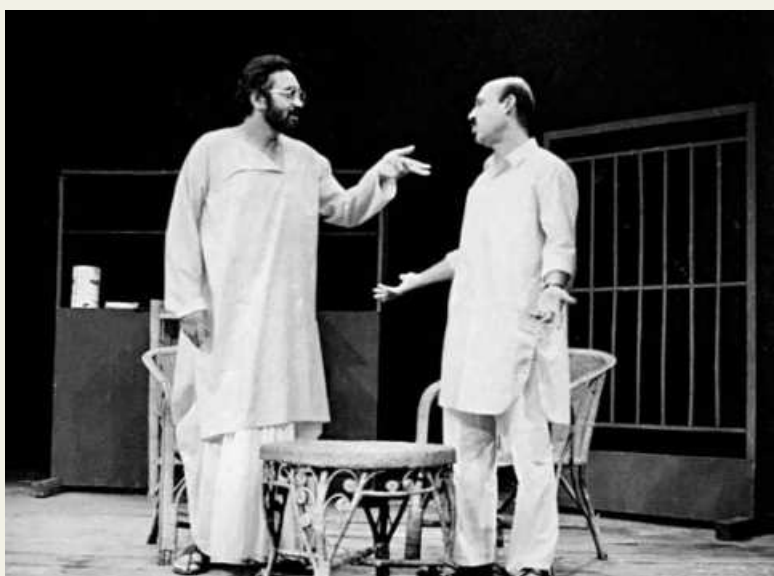
## THE THESPIAN

in his element

Aly Zaker was one of the greatest actors to step foot on a stage in Bangladesh. Here is the thespian in some of his most memorable appearances in theatre.



Aly Zaker in 'Galileo'.



Aly Zaker and Abul Hayat in 'Baki Itihash'



In 'Bohubrihi' with Asaduzzaman Noor.



With Humayun Faridee in 'Ekdin Hothath'.



In 'Aj Robibar' as Boro Chacha.

## Revisiting Aly Zaker's iconic roles on television

SHARMIN JOYA

We lost one of the most celebrated actors of the country with the demise of Aly Zaker on November 27, 2020. The freedom fighter and Ekushey Padak-winning artiste enthralled the audience with his remarkable performances on the stage, television, radio and big screen over the years, beginning his career in 1972. He shared the screen with renowned actor Salman Shah in the film, "Pathor Shomoy" (1990).

Besides being an actor, he was a writer, director, photographer and columnist. His passion towards his craft was unparalleled. Although his importance in the entertainment arena can be talked about for days on end, here are only a few of Aly Zaker's iconic roles on television.

He acted in numerous television projects, most notably "Aj Robibar", "Bohubrihi", "Ochinbrikkho", "Ekdin Hothath" and "Nokkhoter Raat".

In the 1988 BTV classic, "Bohubrihi", he played the role of Farid, fondly known as Chhoto Mama. Even though Chhoto Mama is a nagging man, he is witty and humorous.

Written by Humayun Ahmed and directed



As the village chairman in 'Ochinbrikkho'.

by Nawazish Ali Khan, "Bohubrihi" recently returned to BTV.

In the classic "Aj Robibar" (1999) written by Humayun Ahmed and directed by Monir Hossain Jibon, he played Boro Chacha (Dr S Asgar), a role that earned him immense popularity and acclaim.

Dr S Asgar, a PhD holder, thinks everyone at his house is mentally unstable. He tries to read their minds and evaluate their psychological states constantly.

Boro Chacha experimenting with a coffin, playing chess and punishing people who peep through the hole in his door, are some of the funniest and most memorable scenes of the series.

Aly Zaker had a guest appearance in "Nokkhoter Raat", another masterpiece penned and directed by Humayun Ahmed. The actor was seen in the last few episodes.

In "Ochinbrikkho", another Humayun Ahmed show, Aly Zaker played a dominating village chairman, a role that truly showcased his acting range.

Legendary actor Humayun Faridee played the role of a teacher on the show, and his chemistry with Aly Zaker was remarkable.

"Ekdin Hothath" is another delightful watch directed by Mustafizur Rahman, where Aly Zaker played the role of Mama.

Some other notable television projects of Aly Zaker include "Deyal", "Tothapi", "Ghoroawarir Shopno", "Goni Miar Pathor", "Nitu Tomake Bhalobashi", and "Pandulipi" among others.



In the show 'Ekdin Hothath'.

## ALY ZAKER

laid to rest

Aly Zaker was laid to rest yesterday at Banani Graveyard after Asr prayers. His Namaz-e-Janaza took place at the Banani Graveyard Mosque, after a special munazat session took place in front of Asiatic 3sixty office in Banani. Even amidst the pandemic, the legend's friends, well-wishers, colleagues and fans made their presence felt to bid adieu.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



## Opinions can be formed by reading news headlines only, research finds

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recent research by the University of Lingua has found that readers can instantly form opinions by reading the headlines of a report only.

Commissioned by the Newspapers of the World, a not-for-profit, the research looked into 1,000 different newspaper reports and 10,000 opinions of those who had read the selected pieces.

"Test subjects demonstrated the ability to form an opinion on a particular topic just by skimming the headlines. They did not have to read more to do so," Jamat Azmat, lead researcher, said.

"This is a breakthrough, really. For years, we have ridiculed people who formed opinions on things just by reading headlines. We felt that because they had not invested the time to pore through the content in its entirety, they should not have

a right to an opinion about it. Turns out we were gravely wrong," he said.

"It seems an opinion can be both informed or misinformed. It does not have to be based on facts or even logic. It can simply be based on a whim," Dean of the language department Hakimi Inayat said.

The research, conducted over six months, is expected to be of great use to newsrooms around the world. "There should be ample space left for headlines. As attention spans

decrease, we must use whatever tools we have at our disposal to make most use of whatever time readers are giving us," Inayat said. Although the research and its findings are yet to be peer-reviewed, there is widespread confidence in the methodology undertaken. The results may also put an end to arguments breaking out in social media on whether commenters have or have not read the article they are talking about.

## 'I can't be sexist', says man accused of sexism again

### NONE-OF-YOUR-BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

"If I was sexist, how is it that I have a wife AND a girlfriend at the same time? I love women!" said Sadman Sakib (28) before quickly telling us that he's joking. Owner of the popular food blog @fatboyslies, he rose to fame notably for his sarcastic reviews but recently has been heavily criticised for certain remarks he made on social media.

"First off, I want it to be absolutely clear that I am deeply and sincerely sorry for the hurt I have caused with my words. That was never my intention," Sadman told this correspondent as soon as they sat down.

Now removed, the photo uploaded by @fatboyslies on Instagram showed Sadman at a bakery, holding two donuts of different sizes accompanied by a rude joke in the caption. This caused quite a stir as screenshots from Instagram were posted on Facebook which were then taken to Twitter.

This would not be the first time Sadman Sakib was accused of being sexist either. Almost a year back, he was in hot water due to a photo posted of him at a fish market with another unfortunate caption. Critics and certain bloggers have even gone as far as to accuse him of engineering social media publicity stunts

whenever his content dips in engagement.

"That is an understandable reaction to what's been happening to me ever since my account blew up but that does not make it true. Us bloggers have to make content daily and at that speed, mistakes do happen and I sincerely apologise for my mishaps. All of them were extremely valuable learning experiences for me," he continued "You have to understand that if I was truly sexist, why would I only hire women to work in production with me? I believe in equity."

Upon asking whether hurting so many people is a fair price to pay for his valuable lessons, Sadman gave us an insight into how he sees life.

"Hurting someone is never okay and what I'm saying is my own personal belief. People may disagree as is their right but I don't think that being offended on the internet is such a good idea. We all know how the internet is so why go there with the entitlement that people owe you your feelings? Being online is a whole lot like being covered in honey and out in the summer evenings -- unless you are okay with flies landing on your body, you shouldn't be doing that."

Sadman Sakib is currently under investigation for insurance fraud.



### READERS CAN WRITE

## Bangladeshi-origin Bangladeshi Boy claims ownership of Google after new logo change A proud moment for the country, apparently



### MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Google recently changed its email service's logo, only to change it again. But this time, their logo looks like the letter M and this has caused a huge controversy.

Mahdi Munshi, a 24-year-old Bangladeshi-origin boy from Bangladesh, recently claimed ownership of Gmail service! He claimed that he had changed the logo of Gmail into letter M as his name starts with M. In one of his Facebook posts, he wrote, "I am delighted to announce that I have bought the Gmail service of Google. After buying it, I have changed its logo into my name's first letter. Those who were wondering why Google changed its logo into the letter M, should know that, Google didn't change it, but I did. I did it to represent my name among the people of the world. I hope, this post has removed your confusion regarding the Gmail's new logo."

The unusual claim soon went viral. The claim stands as truth since Google is yet to clarify the issue.

The claim also has a solid ground in a country without intellectual property rights and loose copyright laws.

"When it was in Google's hand, we saw a huge G in the logo. Now that G is gone and has been replaced by M, meaning its ownership is up for grabs..." Mahdi said.

Though no official statement from Google hasn't been seen yet, this correspondent can say, "We are really proud of you, Mahdi. You have earned global recognition. It's a proud moment for all the Bangladeshis, specially whose names start with the letter M." Would you like to see your work on the hottest page in the country? Send in your illustrations, art work and writings to [satireday@thedailystar.net](mailto:satireday@thedailystar.net) or give us a buzz on our dying Facebook page [facebook.com/Satireday](https://www.facebook.com/Satireday)

## The loss of a legend

*Galileo, you will be missed*

**I**N the early hours of yesterday, we lost Aly Zaker, an extraordinary actor, valiant freedom fighter, progressive cultural activist, successful businessman, long time columnist of *The Daily Star* and an icon of Bangladeshi arts and entertainment. After battling cancer for the last four years, the thespian was admitted to the hospital on November 17 for cardiac issues, where he was also being treated for Covid-19 at the time of his demise. We mourn the death of the maestro whose loss will be felt not just by his family and friends but by the nation at large, though he will no doubt live on in people's memories and the vast and diverse body of work he leaves behind.

Aly Zaker mesmerised audiences for almost five decades with numerous memorable performances, from Nurulddin to Galileo, from Dr Asgor to Farid mama, and his remarkable skills, magnetic presence and boundless charisma lit up not just the stage but the small screen and silver screen as well. His troupe, Nagorik Natya Shampraday, was an integral part of developing Bangladesh theatre post-Liberation and brought in a whole new generation of actors on to the stage. He believed in the power of theatre as a tool to challenge oppression and bigotry, and many of the memorable plays he acted in and directed highlighted important social and political issues of the times. For his contribution to Bangladesh theatre, he was awarded with the state award of Ekushey Padak in 1999.

His unflinching belief in a brighter future for Bangladesh was reflected in his insightful columns for this newspaper, many of which focused on how to build the nation through innovative thinking, especially among the youth. While deeply submerged in the world of literature and theatre in which he was regarded a mentor and an icon, he was also very much in touch with contemporary thinking regarding the development of the country. He was a true Renaissance man—not only did he excel at everything he did but he did them with the utmost conviction.

As a freedom fighter and founding trustee of the Liberation War Museum, he also played a really important role in preserving Liberation War history. He always said with great pride that he was honoured to be a part of a fully people-funded museum which upheld the pro-people values of 1971. He believed in a secular, liberal Bangladesh and he was at the forefront of cultural movements that promoted tolerance, equality and democracy. We can only hope that his legacy will guide us towards a future that is every bit as egalitarian and secular as he had dreamt of.

## Blatant disregard for workers' safety

*When will workers' lives matter?*

**A** photo published in this paper on November 26 of two men working on a high-rise building without any safety gear or protective measures depicts the vulnerability, precarity and disposability of our construction workers. Only last month, three construction workers met their demise falling from a 10-storey under-construction building in the capital. On November 2, a construction worker died after falling from the sixth floor of an eight-storey under-construction building. But no one—not the errant employers, contractors, building owners nor the relevant government agencies—are ever held to account for these unwarranted and unacceptable deaths.

Despite the construction sector playing a major role in our economic development, we are still lagging behind miserably in creating safe workplaces for our construction workers. Many a time, we have brought the issue of safety of construction workers to the attention of the authorities concerned, but to no avail, and there continues to be a lack of significant measures to ensure the occupational safety and compensation for workplace injuries, namely in the construction sector. According to Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), at least 131 construction workers died in 2019.

The construction workers—one of the worst hit by the pandemic, as they hardly get any government aid or other assistance—precariously toil on sites, risking their lives to make ends meet on a daily basis. We simply cannot turn a blind eye to their rights and well-being. The Labour Act, unfortunately, covers only the formal sector and the construction sector, still being an informal one, does not get the necessary attention that has long been due. We need to address their hazardous situation with due diligence and leave no stones unturned to end our apathy towards the safety of construction workers. We urge the authorities to take note of the shortcomings that are putting people's lives at risk, and to address them immediately as there can be no substitute to ensuring the safety of workers first.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Air pollution on the rise

Without effective measures in place, our country's air is becoming poisonous day by day. When the quality of the air becomes poor, the chances of suffering from respiratory diseases and infections are significantly higher. Even more so during the ongoing pandemic, when people are more prone to such sufferings.

Brick kilns, exhaust fumes from vehicles and dust from construction sites are some of the main causes behind the deterioration of the quality of air that we breathe. I urge the concerned authorities to look into the matter with urgency. We have lost many to the pandemic already. We simply cannot afford to continue losing more because of reasons that can be brought under control if we remain diligent.

Sadia Afrin, Chattogram



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

**O**N a day like this, 33 years ago, I became a man. To be precise, on November 28, 1987 at 12:10 pm in the emergency ward of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), I became a man. On that day, I changed my phrasal verb status from "growing old" to "growing up". Just ten minutes before that the Indian opening batsman Dilip Vengsarkar had hit a century in a test match against Pakistan, receiving a standing ovation from the TV audience full of doctors at the DMCH canteen. Ten hours earlier, I was memorising the question bank for the forthcoming medical college test, while my mother was attending to my father's pain. He was on the fourth stage of his cancer, undergoing chemotherapy. Three more bottles to go, as prescribed by his doctors from Nanavati Hospital in Mumbai. The doctors in India had tried to arrest the tumour of "half the size of a cricket ball" that grew in his pancreas with radiotherapy, and told us to mentally prepare for the eventuality with a predicted life inning of seven to eight years. I wanted to make my father proud by joining a profession that would save the lives of many others. He himself had been ill-fortunate to suffer not only from the malignant growth in his personal body but also from the dangerous growth in our social body that lacks empathy.

Just two weeks earlier, on November 10, 1987, one of the most known pro-democracy martyrs Noor Hossain was shot dead at a place near DMCH. There was a nationwide curfew to arrest the spread of political violence. While Bangladesh was battling against a cancerous dictator, my father was engaged in his personal battle. The doctor in Mumbai was surprised that his counterpart in Dhaka did not remove the tumour when he had the chance to do so while operating on my father for his gallbladder stones. A very renowned surgeon of Bangladesh saw the tumour, touched it with his knife expediting its spread—but did not remove it as it was not part of his "treatment package". During a post-operative session, while handing us a bundle of black stones wrapped in surgical gauze, the surgeon suggested that

## EDITORIAL

# On being 'silly'

we should take him to India for further check-up if we could afford it.

And the doctors at Nanavati screamed, "Is he a real doctor or what? How can you open a body, touch a tumour and not remove it? He has simply limited our option." First ray, then chemicals. So, on that fatal morning, following a series of other complications over the next six months, my father had his intestinal obstruction. My mother woke me up early in the morning stating his discomfort. I went to the oncologist's house through

There was no monitor or anything—just the stethoscopes of some intern doctors hovering around "a man" who would soon become "a body" with no BP. I did not cry. I kept on staring at the man who said, why did you bring such a silly case? Meanwhile, there was a guy whispering in my ears, "please buy the shroud and coffin from me. I will give you discounts."

To cut a long story short, I did not become a doctor. That was the last day I stopped learning the names of the chemical components of human cells or



ILLUSTRATION: LUKE BEST

the alleys amid curfew; he told me to take my father to DMCH for an enema. And my younger brother, who was 15 at that time, ran to the Rajarbagh barrack, with police guns being pointed at him during a shoot-to-kill curfew, to get an ambulance. And when we took my father to the DMCH, the intern doctors chided us saying, "Do you really need to bring a silly enema patient during this emergency?" Then the only senior doctor started getting busy demonstrating the CT scan plates of my father to the juniors which was an unknown technology in Bangladesh in 1987.

After a while my uncle took me to the canteen, while the ward boys started preparing him for the enema. The doctors in their white aprons celebrating sports in such close proximity to death made me aware of the greatest paradox of life, and of death too. By the time we returned to the ward, it occurred to me that my father was in the process of breathing his last.

labelling the parts of human bodies. You can call me a quitter. But on that day, I realised how helpless the doctors were in the grand scheme of things. I also realised how inhuman the system could be. For most of us, we find comfort in raising our hands to the divine almighty thinking that the soul has passed on to a better place. The suffering body has come to an end. We pray for the soul's journey to the next level to shift focus to an earthly journey involving the others who depended on the man who had just died.

I am sorry to bore you with personal details of something "silly" that had happened so long ago. Every day, my Facebook newsfeed is being flooded with such "silly" death news of people or relatives of the people I know or don't know. There is a viral hearse, an endless procession of funeral news during this pandemic. Some touch us like feathers, some hit us like stones. Losing a loved one is never easy. Trying to comfort someone

## PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

# America's captured courts



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

Leader Mitch McConnell will do nothing but confirm outgoing President Donald Trump's appointees to the federal judiciary. It's strange behaviour.

The explanation is a special-interest lobby operating largely out of public view—a political creature that has stalked America's judiciary for generations and is determined to capture as much control as it can, while it can.

In fairness, McConnell is not the only one acting strangely. In the fall of 2016, Republicans invented the convenient "principle" that the Senate shouldn't confirm Supreme Court nominees in an election year, and blocked President Barack Obama's nominee, the well-respected Merrick Garland. Senator Lindsey Graham was unequivocal about the precedent: "If an opening comes in the last year of President Trump's term, and the primary process has started, we'll wait till the next election."

"Hold the tape," Graham added. Fast-forward to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death in September—a mere six weeks before the election—and Republicans ignored the tape. Within 80 minutes of the announcement of Ginsburg's passing, McConnell signaled that the Senate would ram a Trump nominee through the confirmation process and onto the Court. Republicans quickly fell into line. Some members even declared their total support for the nominee before a nominee had been named.

From there, Republicans cast aside one norm after another in the mad rush for the open seat. They ignored Ginsburg's wish that the president elected in November pick her replacement. They violated the normal process and timeframe for confirming a Supreme Court nominee, compressing months of consideration into a few weeks. They ignored a raging pandemic and positive Covid-19 tests among their own members (the result of a White House super-spreader celebration for the nominee). And, of course, they hypocritically reversed their own "Garland principle," holding the Barrett confirmation hearings even as early voting in the presidential election was underway.

The force behind these blown norms and bare hypocrisy can be difficult to

spot. But if you find hypocrisy in the daylight, look for power in the shadows.

Decades ago, a wealthy group of corporate interests and right-wing ideologues hatched a plan to influence US courts in systematic fashion. They recognised that the unpopular policies they sought—reducing voters' access to the polls, flooding elections with unlimited corporate money, and unwinding vital environmental protections—faced steady headwinds in the elected branches of government. But courts, stocked with amenable judges and presented with the right cases, could reliably deliver political wins without answering to the voting public.

At the instruction of soon-to-be Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, the group set about building an influence machine to pack and manipulate the courts. This work culminated when Leonard Leo, an entrepreneur of conservative politics, constructed a pipeline for judicial nominees through the Federalist Society, the organisation Trump "in-sourced" to the White House to handle his judicial selections.

The group operating the Federalist

platform to deliver to the judges the donors' programme—all while keeping their role concealed. In effect, corporate interests have run a covert operation against their own country.

Dark money is the lifeblood of this sprawling scheme. Enormous quantities of anonymous funding mask the special interests behind the court capture machinery and obscure the coordination that sustains it. According to the *Washington Post*, Leo's network of front groups accounts for at least USD 250 million.

Consider the Judicial Crisis Network, which coordinates public-relations efforts and runs campaign ads for right-wing judicial nominees. It received anonymous donations of USD 17 million in the fight over Justice Antonin Scalia's Supreme Court seat; USD 17 million for Brett Kavanaugh's troubled nomination to the Supreme Court; and USD 15 million to help confirm Amy Coney Barrett as Ginsburg's successor. If it was the same donor, then one person spent nearly USD 50 million to influence the makeup of the US Supreme Court. And we have no idea who that person is, much less what



PHOTO: AP/JON ELSWICK

Society pipeline also orchestrated political-style campaigns to ease nominees' confirmation, including attack ads against senators who might stand in their way. It backed organisations that troll for plaintiffs of convenience to bring forward cases that advance the big donors' agenda. And it propped up flotillas of supposedly independent nonprofit groups to lobby the courts as amici curiae ("friends of the Court"), filing legal briefs to signal judges on how to rule.

This gave a small group of anonymous donors effective control over Republican judicial appointments, and a lobbying

business he or she may have before the Court.

Then there are the flotillas of coordinated amicus filers. The right-wing influence machine channels funds through identity-laundering organisations, such as DonorsTrust and Donors Capital Fund, to groups which then submit a hail of briefs supporting the donors' preferred outcome. We saw this in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau case this year: a watchdog group found that a handful of identity-laundering organisations had funneled more than USD 68 million to fund 11 amicus briefs, which naturally all argued for weakening the CFPB, a

who has lost her or his loved one is even worse. Trying to make sense of death is probably the worst of the lot, especially in a country like ours where death is silly, seeking medical services is sillier, and falling ill is the silliest!

Imagine a father going to the Supreme Court with an ambulance carrying his twin newborns because three city hospitals refused to admit them for treatment. On November 2, the wife of court staff Md Abul Kalam Azad's wife Saira Khatun gave birth to two babies in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on her way to Islami Bank Hospital in Mugda. The hospital authorities informed the couple to take the babies to Dhaka Shishu Hospital. They got an ambulance and went to Dhaka Shishu Hospital only to learn that the ICU was occupied and that the newborns would have to be admitted for normal beds costing Tk 5,000 per child per day. A lawyer from his office advised him to meet the director of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital with his reference. The director, however, was busy attending a meeting and later went home, forgetting to attend to Azad's children waiting in the ambulance. By the time a doctor inspected the newborns inside the ambulance, the children were dead. The news of an aggrieved father showing up on the court premise with his two dead children appeared on the TV scroll bar like a snake crawling under the news of the world. I would have cried had it been Priam holding the body of Hector in an episode of a Greek epic. The snaky news can be easily ignored.

There is bliss in ignorance. Not knowing, not feeling the pain of the others, can be blissful. Such bliss is for hypocrites like me who did not take up the challenge of knowing the medical mystery and trying to heal the world; instead, finding comfort in hurling criticism every now and then. The 'Dr' prefix I have before my name makes the irony even more acute. Then again there are the others, the real 'Drs.', who took the oath of Hippocrates stating that they will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm. How can a doctor intentionally endanger the life of a patient sending him on a wild hospital search without giving primary attention?

Silly! Life is silly. Death is sillier. Our existence is the silliest.

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

*Dark money is the lifeblood of this sprawling scheme. Enormous quantities of anonymous funding mask the special interests behind the court capture machinery and obscure the coordination that sustains it. According to the Washington Post, Leo's network of front groups accounts for at least USD 250 million.*

nettlesome adversary of corporate special interests.

The result of this scheme is a disturbing record of decisions favouring an array of special interests. Over the course of Chief Justice John Roberts's tenure, the Court has delivered 80 partisan 5-4 decisions that benefit identifiable Republican donor interests. Some of the more flagrant and damaging decisions—like the infamous 2010 *Citizens United* ruling that paved the way for unlimited dark money spending in elections—drew public ire. But most have gone unnoticed, as when the Court quietly undermined Americans' access to civil juries or weakened the independence of regulatory agencies.

Left unchecked, the list of partisan victories at the Supreme Court would grow, possibly even faster with the Court's new 6-3 Republican-appointed majority.

One measure to counter this clandestine, corrupting machinery is sunlight. Exposing its workings and funding will lead to informed public scrutiny and overdue introspection within the US judiciary. The public will be able to demand change, and the courts will be able to safeguard themselves from future special interest intrusion.

Of course, those financing the court capture operation will spare few resources to defend it. But the more light we can shine on their creature, the less able it will be to operate in the shadows.

Sheldon Whitehouse is a member of the US Senate from Rhode Island.

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(Exclusive to The Daily Star)



# In his words: The last conversation with Aly Zaker

*Conversing with Aly Zaker has always been a treat. From talking in detail about the early theatre days to his first taste of a liberated Bangladesh—Aly Zaker would become an animated storyteller, mesmerising his audience and listeners with his added footnotes and mischievous smiles. The Daily Star's Elita Karim retrieved a recording from 2018, where Aly Zaker talked about how he became an advertising man. The 15-minute interview turned into an hour-long chat where he reminisced about his days from Kolkata, Karachi and Dhaka. Below is a small part of the interview, minus the infectious guffaws and the beautiful modulation of the storyteller's voice.*

I have written my life story from the time that I can remember till early 1971. It was published by Ittadi Prokashoni. The one I am writing is the second part where I talk about my philosophy of life; so much happened after independence—theatre, love, marriage, children. More importantly, my ideas changed. So this will be a very comprehensive document; 30,000 words have been written, I need to write 50,000 more! I am calling it *Modhyanno Oporannyo*.

I did not complete my Masters, I just did my Honours from Dhaka University. You see, there were many ups and downs in my family. I lost my father, my mother and within a year I lost my eldest sister who was like my mother. Three deaths in my family in a row, and I was devastated. My brother worked in PIA back then. I wanted to leave Dhaka, so he presented me with a one way ticket to Karachi.

I was looking for work and ended up at a UK based advertising agency, where I joined for Rs 400 a month and would write English copies. Eventually, Asiatic, an advertising company in Karachi, offered me a job. A separate company was being formed in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and I was asked if I wanted to go back home. I grabbed the opportunity immediately! I joined as Senior Client Executive at the age of 24 and this was back in 1967.

I was posted in Dhaka and joined the company called East Asiatic Advertising Limited. I also worked with Enayet Karim and Latifur Rahman back then in Interspan, which later changed to Interspeed. The history of my career has no colour in it, it has been the same—advertising! I know no other trade.

I think I had always had an inclination towards the theatre. My nana (maternal grandfather) had settled down in Kolkata, though he belonged to Comilla. Every summer vacation my mother, my siblings and I would visit him. My father could not go because he was a senior bureaucrat

in the Pakistan government and he was not allowed to go to India.

My mother and I would go watch stage plays and the theatre regularly. The curtains would go up and everything would play out like magic in front of me. I would tell myself that if I ever wanted to act, I would do this. This inspired me to work in this field professionally after Liberation.

I want to share an interesting story with you. I joined Nagorik in 1972. In Kolkata, Mamunur Rashid would occasionally act and participate in the Shwadinh Bangla Betaar Kendra plays. I remember, there was a horrible restaurant nearby which would serve equally horrible food. They would serve a beef dish made from the worst possible pieces—but one plate of it cost around one taka, along with two rutis. This was our regular lunch. One



ALY ZAKER (1944-2020)

*The new process would bring about a regularity where staging and watching plays were concerned. Only then could we call ourselves professional actors in a proper industry. Of course we had challenges, but we could take steps to face them.*

day in November 1971, after eating there, Mamun asked me what my plans were now that the country would be liberated. I said, I will do stage plays. Mamun would not forget this!

In 1972, my older brother and

I rented a flat in Rajarbagh, where Mamun came to visit us one day. He said, "I hope you did not forget what you had told me. I am building a team of stage actors. We want you to act with us as well." I said, sure I will. We were doing Shahid Munier Chowdhury's *Kobor*. I played the role of a Pakistani *neti*, because I was well built. We started to rehearse at Chayaneer, the building where our rented flat was located. I remember, Shubhash Dutta, the famous film director and actor, played the role of the police inspector—the conscious of the play.

Professor Zia Haider from Chittagong University and theatre personality and also my friend, Ataur Rahman, had come to watch the play. Zia bhai had formed Nagorik in 1968, but could not organise any stage play as such. After liberation, he wanted to revive the group and start actual theatre and stage plays.

Immediately after our play got done, they came to see us and asked if I would continue with my acting. I said yes, I would, but I would have to speak to Mamun first. Mamun was fine with it

and that's when I joined Nagorik.

If I have any contribution, this is the contribution that you should write about and I want you to write about this—changing the concept of staging plays in Bangladesh. At a Nagorik meeting, I said that we would need to introduce a process whereby, every evening, a person will have the option of buying a ticket and watching a play, like how it happens in every other major city in the world. Mind you, back then people did buy tickets to watch stage plays, but the plays would be staged on three random days in a year.

The new process would bring about a regularity where staging and watching plays were concerned. Only then could we call ourselves professional actors in a proper industry. Of course we had challenges, but we could take steps to face them. For instance, we would work our way around the budget, spend less, sometimes act without a set, do one-act plays—but we would not stop staging plays, every evening.

Golam Rabbani, one day, shared a book with me called *Baki Itihas* by a young writer from Kolkata, Badal Sarkar. I read it and I was charged—we had to stage this soon! I gave it to Zia bhai and Ataur and they loved it as well. We were organising rehearsals, looking for actors—the preparations had begun. Naila Ehmar Zaman, who is now Dr Naila Khan, had joined us and was playing the role of Bashanti in the play. We had Abul Hayat playing a very powerful role as well. But we needed someone to play the role of Kona Chakraborty. It was difficult to find young women back then, who would act or work in theatre. It was Naila who told me that she knew a young woman, who was slightly younger than Naila. Her brother, who was lost in the war, used to be a very good actor. Naila wanted to ask the young woman and her parents as well, if she would play the role of Kona Chakraborty. And that was Sara. She came and did a wonderful job with Kona. Incidentally, we booked the hall at the British

Council for eight Sundays in a row and staged the play at 11:00am in the mornings. The first three shows had between 16-40 people in the audience. The fourth show onwards, we would have a house full every Sunday—all 300 seats! Ticket prices were kept at Tk 3 and Tk 5.

I remember returning to Dhaka the same day Bangabandhu returned, January 9, 1972. I couldn't return on December 16, Victory Day, because I was the programme producer for the English language programme for Shwadinh Bangla Betaar Kendra. My boss Alamgir Kabir asked me to stay on for a while. He said that I would have to hand over the tape recorders and devices to the Indian army and only then could I return home. So that took some time.

The journey back home was fabulous! Very early in the morning at 4:00am, we started from Kolkata by bus, through Jessore. There were 22 men and women on the bus. All the ferries were devastated and bombed by the Pakistani army. So we had to hire boats to reach Aricha Ghat, from where we would take another bus and continue with the journey. We even had to spend a night there. I wrote about it in my memoirs—how the wind and soil from an independent Bangladesh were now a part of me, while I spent the entire night by the river. When I reached Independent Bangladesh, I saw celebrations everywhere. The whole country was rejoicing. I remember roaming about the streets of my country at 2am!

*And the conversation continued for a good quarter of an hour, in between sips of tea and snacks. Aly Zaker mentions names of old friends, stories of family members, and of course, loved ones who are now no more. Aly Zaker himself is now no more; however, he will forever be alive through his work. The retrieved recording has turned out to be a gift.*

Elita Karim is Editor, Arts & Entertainment and Star Youth. Her twitter handle is @elitakarim.

## 16 days of activism and our obsession with 'commonsense' violence



ALONG with many other countries in the world, Bangladesh is currently observing the UN system's 16 days of activism against gender-based violence—an annual international campaign calling individuals and organisations to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls. While the campaign plays a vital role in mobilising our communities against violence against women and girls, it is also essential to think about gendered violence that does not fall under the purview of the hegemonic way of framing "violence against women and girls" as an interpersonal act stemming from patriarchal cultural norms.

Feminist scholar Elora Chowdhury, who has conducted extensive research on women's organising against gendered violence in Bangladesh, points out the importance of understanding women's oppression beyond the lens of "male violence" and investigating how gendered violence is a product of structural violence. Her book *Transnationalism Reversed: Women Organizing against Gendered Violence in Bangladesh* demonstrates how men throwing acid against women and girls is not just an "aberrant cultural practice" and how it stemmed from a long history of social-economic-political-cultural transition in Bangladesh. The decline in the agriculture-based economy, growth of landlessness and unemployment, migration to urban areas, economic liberalisation programmes with the support of World Bank and IMF, the rising demand for cheap, feminised labour in the manufacturing industry, women's increasing participation in the labour market, changing norms around gender roles and relations, and the rise of under-regulated mechanic, leather, and garment industries making sulfuric and nitric acid readily available—all created an abundant ground for acid violence against women and girls (Chowdhury 2011). Without analysing and addressing the subtleties, interventions that solely rely on a "commonsense" understanding of violence—a phrase borrowed from another prominent transnational

feminist scholar Dina Siddiqi (2015)—can only go a limited extent to challenge root causes of gendered violence. It may be harder to pinpoint structural violence at a glance, and instances of structural violence may appear to be isolated from one another. However, a careful investigation can unravel how capitalism, neoliberalism, heterosexism, militarism, imperialism, and other systemic forces continue to promote gendered violence.

This year's United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign UNiTE's main theme is: "Orange the World: Fund, Respect, Prevent, and Collect!" The colour orange symbolises a brighter future free of violence and signifies global solidarity for eliminating all forms of violence. The UN concept note for engagement published in the UN Women website notes that violence against women and girls, and particularly domestic violence, has escalated around the world due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The UN proposes an umbrella political engagement strategy to unite activists around the world. The advocacy focus for the next year will be: Fund, Prevent, Respond, and Collect.

According to the UN Women website, advocacy on "funding" would prioritise things like providing funding for a minimum package of essential services that include gender-based violence prevention in Covid-19 stimulus packages and making flexible funding available for women's rights organisations working at the nexus of Covid-19 and gender-based violence. "Preventing" would promote the declaration of a national zero-tolerance policy and action addressing gender-based violence. It would support launching a Covid-19 behaviour change social mobilisation programme addressing shifts in social norms, positive masculinities, gender-based violence, and intersecting inequalities. "Responding" would ensure essential support services for survivors of gender-based violence during Covid-19 lockdowns and adequate criminal justice responses. Lastly, "collecting" would include collecting data for improving gender-based violence services and programmes while ensuring the data is ethically collected with informed consent, and the conditions under which the survivors agreed to provide information are carefully considered.

The Covid-19 emergency focus of the UNiTE campaign did a good job of promoting a survivor-centric narrative, prioritising a "do no harm" approach that respects a contextual understanding of informed consent, acknowledging the role of women's movements, inviting multiple sectors to engage in transformative changes, and elevating voices of young feminists. Nevertheless, it is still important to ask what a "Fund, Respect, Prevent, Collect" model can do to address violence against women and girls that is not done in the name of culture or tradition or religion, that is not done by individual patriarchal men, and that is done in



PHOTO: FARIYA RAHMAN BRISHTI

the name of economic empowerment and economic development within a neoliberal framework and perpetuated by multi-layered actors and institutions in transnational circuits of commodities and labour.

For example, how would the UN political engagement strategy help more than 2.3 million Bangladeshi garment workers, most of whom are women and have been affected by more than USD 3.18 billion worth of suspension or cancellation of orders by global retailers due to the global Covid-19 crisis? Will the sufferings of these women garment workers, who work in an industry that capitalises on the extreme exploitation of their cheapened feminised labour, be framed

as "gender-based violence" under the proposed conceptual framework of UN Women? Will these workers be able to secure any funding support as part of this year's UN global political engagement strategy? Will women's rights organisations in Bangladesh run campaigns as part of their 16 days of activism against gender-based violence against the way North American and European buyers arbitrarily sought resort to the force majeure clause and cancelled or suspended orders creating an unprecedented crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic or the way powerful factory owners presented the impossible choice of "dying of hunger versus dying of the virus" (Siddiqi

needed research on women garment workers' experiences or focused on skill development or provided services to women garment workers. Nevertheless, very few moved beyond the charity-based model of providing service and meaningfully engaged in grassroots labour rights movement with women garment workers. How will the simplistic call for lighting and decorating buildings and landmarks in orange by the UN as a key tool for "unifying all activities" as described in the UN concept note for engagement be able to merge the gap between feminist movements and labour rights movements? How will it challenge the way powerful transnational corporations, governments, local suppliers, and oppressive local and global trade and labour laws continue to oppress women workers and perpetuate systemic violence?

Or, will the hyper-focus on local and individual forms of violence of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence do any good to female migrant workers whose own country failed to offer them livelihood security and "exported" them to the Middle East in exchange for foreign exchange? Will these workers—who were forced to accept withholding or reduction of wages or unjustly deported from their host countries due to the pandemic—get any funding support under "gender-based violence prevention" initiatives? What kind of preventive measures or support services can be expected by women who experienced violence not just by individual men but by their own state, by their employers, by the dysfunctional labour and immigration laws and policies of their host states, by their non-responsive embassy, by *dalals* and recruitment agencies and other transnational syndicates?

It is time to move beyond the individualistic framing of violence against women and girls. It is time to think creatively how we can address everyday gendered precarity that is created and sustained not just by sexist men and oppressive cultural norms but also by the imperialist, capitalist, neoliberal, heteropatriarchal world order and its intersecting violent systems of oppression.

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FICTION

# DREAM-CATCHER

NADIA RAHMAN

The two-storeyed house stood lonesome with paddy fields behind it. A big pond lay on the opposite side of the narrow alley. Taltoli is still a quiet neighborhood, yet to be devoured by the urban landscape because of its situation.

Haji Din Mohammad Ali spat out betel leaf juice and walked hurriedly out of the house. He could hear the loud sound of music coming from the first floor where his wife, Nazma Begum, was watching a Hindi movie of Amitabh Bachhan. He could also hear the equally loud voice of Putul, his thirteen year old daughter, who was devouring the Hindi cinema with her mother and singing along whenever the opportunity came. Haji Din Mohammad Ali uttered some inaudible *ayats* in an attempt to seek help from Allah to mend these *bidat* activities. He needed to reach his rice mill quickly. He heard that the creditors were again creating problems. He needed to fix Kadam Hossain who had been paying back the money every month to clear the credits. He hailed a rickshaw and got on it with a worried look on his face.

Upstairs, Nazma Begum was quite irritated when the maid entered the room and reminded her that lunch was yet to be cooked. Nazma Begum called out loudly, "Putul, Putul."

Putul made a face at her mother's call and went to stand on the verandah and pretended not to hear Nazma Begum. From the ceiling a colorful wind-chime hung which tinkled in the breeze. Putul preferred to call this a dream-catcher which was given to her by her father from his last trip to the Bandarban. Nazma Begum did not like it, saying the sound gave her headache. Putul did not move from the verandah and continued to play with her dream catcher as her mother called again and again. Nazma Begum appeared at the door. "Putul, how many times have I told you not to stand here and play with that stupid thing! People will stare at you! Come inside!"

Putul again made a face and went inside to sit in front of the dresser. She started rummaging through the drawer and fumed. She screamed, "Lina, Lina!" The 7 year old younger sister gingerly came inside the room and stared at her.

"Yes, Apu?"  
"Have you taken my compact again?"

Fumed Putul.

"Apu, it makes my dolls look pretty like you!"

Putul got up and slapped Lina across her face. Lina burst into tears and rushed out of the room to complain to the mother.

Putul felt better and decided to pester her father to buy a new one. The very thought of shopping excited her and she started listing all the others things she will need.

Nazma Begum ordered the maid to cook chicken and daal.

"Amma, there is no chicken in the freezer. You did not remind *shaheb* to do the bazaar in the morning. There is nothing except potatoes and lentils."

Nazma Begum quickly tried to think of a way. Her husband would be mad if he sees only daal and mashed potato on the

Apparently, Haji Din Mohammad Ali had taken a lot of credit from the market and failed to pay them. Kadam Hossain brought eager customers to sell the rice mill. The ground floor of the house was rented out to pay their bills.

table! She went to the backyard garden which had been newly weeded. On one side, she has started growing the seasonal vegetables and on the other side were rows of flower beds ending with a small water body. She quickly went to the vegetable garden, squatted beside the radishes and pulled some out. She looked around for other options, but saw none. The cauliflowers and cabbages were too young.

It was already *Duh* time. The nearby *muazzin's* call seemed too loud to Nazma Begum who quickly pulled the *orna* over her head and went to the kitchen with her radishes.

When Hazi Din Mohammad Ali entered the house, he wrinkled his nose at the smell of something unsavory. He yelled, "Putul's ma, why do I smell radish in the house? Don't I have enough money



to have chicken or fish?"

Nazma Begum came out of the kitchen saying, "Don't you see it on the TV how a vegetarian diet is good for your health?"

The master of the house said something under his breath and went to take a shower.

The next day, Putul went to the market with her mother and Lina after school. They shopped to their heart's content, ate biriyani and came back home by *Asr* prayer. This time Nazma Begum remembered to bring some chicken biriyani. This would take care of her husband's lunch. Then she looked at the clock in the dining room. It was 4.30 pm, and he had not come for his lunch yet.

Putul's day was not very good. She had again failed the half-yearly examination. Her father would be surely mad. But what could she do? Studying was so boring.

But then her mother said she would be married off when she gets older. She did not need to study so much, did she? She had just finished storing the newly bought make-up kit in a safe place away from Lina's hand and came to stand at the veranda when she saw Kadam Hossain, the manager of their mill, approaching in quick steps. Kadam Hossain ran up the stairs and called out to Nazma Begum, "Bhabi, Bhabi!" Nazma Begum became irritated at being disturbed during her movie time. Nevertheless, the urgency of the call drew her to the main entrance.

"What's wrong, Kadam?" an irritated

Nazma Begum asked standing near the main door of the house.

"Blood, blood, Bhabi. I tried to stop them, Bhabi!" Cried Kadam Hossain.

Nazma Begum and Putul did not know that he was talking about and stared at him dumbfounded.

"Bhabi, they just came in and hacked him to death. I must inform the police. We have taken him to Dhaka Medical. I have to go." Kadam Hossain again stormed out of the house.

With a shrill cry, Nazma Begum fell on the ground. Soon Nazma, Putul and Lina with their maid rushed to the Medical College Hospital and then to the morgue.

It was late night before they could bring him back to the house. The whole house was swarming with relatives. Putul did not hear the words of consolation, the *kalima* or the recitation of the Holy Quran. She stood in the verandah and just stared out. Suddenly, the tinkling sound drew her back to reality. She touched the dream catcher. She suddenly realized that her father was not coming back and nobody would scold her for failing the exams. Her mind went blank.

In the next few months, things changed rapidly. Apparently, Haji Din Mohammad Ali had taken a lot of credit from the market and failed to pay them. Kadam Hossain brought eager customers to sell the rice mill. The ground floor of the house was rented out to pay their bills. Nazma Begum tried very hard to understand these monetary dealings, but Kadam Hossain would intervene and say that she did not need to be concerned about these. He would find excuses to come into the house without prior notice and talk for hours of nothing with Nazma Begum. Putul did not understand any of these.

There was a singing competition at the school and Putul was participating. Nazma Begum and Lina were getting ready to go to the school. Putul stood at the verandah touching the dream catcher as if getting the blessing from her *Abbu*. A strong breeze blew and made the dream catcher tinkle. Putul smiled and went inside to see if her mother and sister were ready. She did not want to be late.

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POETRY

# Dhaka Lives in My Backbone

DILRUBA Z. ARA

The chestnut tree in my courtyard is in full bloom, clusters of flowers scattered on the green beneath. Who said this is the time for designing summer dreams? For going home, to Dhaka, to my hometown.

Cranes are sailing over boundaries to attend Burials of their parents and friends. Covid 19 has set me in a cage — This spring of two thousand twenty.

Dhaka comes to me in random snapshots Via Messenger, Facebook entries And through flickering video clips on YouTube Dhaka lives in my backbone, in rice and curry stores.

And in frozen food departments. Ilsha fish lie cold with open eyes — Echo the face of an ancient fisherman carrying heat From my grandma's stove.

Now summer has left with its blackout dreams, The chestnut tree stands bare of its promising allure. Covid 19 still blowing in the wind Navigating boundaries. I breathe in my glass bowl. And in my head, Dhaka lives on.

03.11.20

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## REVIEWS

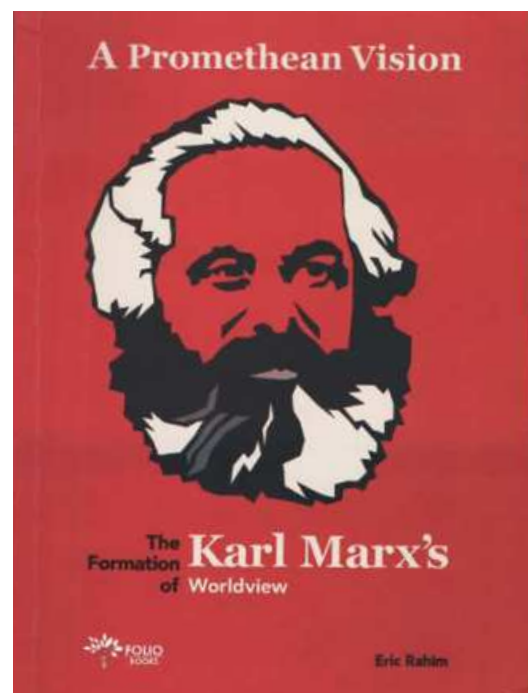
# Revisiting Karl Marx - Yet Again

REVIEWED BY SHAHID ALAM

Eric Rahim, *A Promethean Vision: The Formation of Karl Marx's Worldview*. ISBN-10 : 1899155082. Lahore: Folio Books, 2020.

When Waqar A Khan, Founder, Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies, requested yours truly to take a look at a book written by a nonagenarian academic from the UK named Eric Rahim, born in 1928 in what later on became Pakistan, on Karl Marx, I was, to say the least, intrigued. I readily agreed to go through the slim volume of less than two hundred pages. Rahim was a journalist who worked for two quality newspapers of Pakistan, first *Dawn*, and then, *The Pakistan Times*, before embarking for doctoral studies in Economics in the UK, and landing a teaching job at Scotland's Strathclyde University.

The title, *A Promethean Vision: The Formation of Karl Marx's Worldview*, says it all about its content, though probably not as comprehensively as one might expect in the exploration of a brilliant mind whose thoughts continue to have an influence on human minds and plans of action to this day. But what Rahim has provided is enlightening enough, if at times rather heavy going, like for yours truly, who are less than adequately informed on the vast subject. Modern political economy is usually traced back to Adam Smith who is generally recognized as



development are the outcome of opposing forces competing for economic survival.

It was this thought, along with a few related ones, that Rahim characterizes as promethean and, he explains, "This book is an exposition of Karl Marx's worldview, generally referred to as the materialist conception of history or historical materialism." After acknowledging that the concept of historical materialism is a combined outcome from Marx and Engels, the author proceeds to inform us that his focus in this book is exclusively on Marx. And so we are informed that Marx's worldview has already developed considerably before he had turned thirty, and that Rahim has concentrated on studying the evolution of his thought up to this point.

Rahim traces the development of Marx's political philosophy as a young Hegelian who had borrowed two ideas from that source and which would be

crucial to the development of his thought. In his view, "Marx's first, and momentous, breakthrough in the development of his worldview came in his comprehensive critique of Hegel's political philosophy, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law...written in 1843*." In 1844, he embarked on a serious study of several political economists. Rahim argues that "the work that had the most significant and lasting impact on Marx's thought was *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith." He further proposes that "the contribution from Adam Smith was of the same magnitude, in terms of the development of Marx's worldview, as the inversion of Hegel...."

Rahim asserts considerable independence of viewpoint in analyzing Marx: "I have rejected the conventional interpretation of Marx's conception in which a clear separation is made between the 'base' made up of the 'forces of production,' and the superstructure of thought, and in which the base is treated as an independent variable determining the character of the dependent variable, the superstructure. (It is this relationship that supposedly makes the conception 'materialist')." Rahim further asserts that neither is the materialist conception a description of reality, nor is it a scientific law. The author is categorical in his interpretation of a widely attributed philosophy of Marx: "He (Marx) specifically denied that his worldview was a 'general historical-philosophical theory.' By implication, in this conception, there is no room for the view ('evolutionism') that all societies are inevitably moving towards a final destination, a communist society. Such a view would be un-empirical, supra-historical and, therefore, contrary to Marx's thought." Strong assertion, this, and a possible forum for some intense debate!

Rahim provides glimpses of other insights into the life of the young Marx. We learn that he enjoyed the company of the German poet Heinrich Heine, more than twenty years his senior, who "was a democrat and a mild kind of socialist who had no

sympathy with communist ideas...." He was also on good terms with another German poet, Georg Herwegh. In Rahim's estimation, Marx believed that poets were exceptional people and should be judged by rules other than those appropriate to ordinary mortals.

The author is often very assertive about his own viewpoints regarding Marx, and he backs his writing up with erudite scholarship and much sound analysis. And so he comments, "Marx's own theory of political economy, taking the classical theory as its starting point, sought to identify forces within the capitalist economy that would provide the dynamic of historical development, that is, changes in the capitalist mode of production. The fundamental point here is that the capitalist society, like all earlier societies based on the division of society between property owners and those who work for them, is based on antagonism."

Eric Rahim sums up his narrative of Karl Marx's formative years and his evolution as a brilliant social thinker with some emphatic observations of his own, something that draws attention to his own scholarship on his subject and his ideas and breakthroughs: "In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote that just as political economists were the 'scientific representatives' of the bourgeoisie, the communists were the 'theoreticians' of the working class. So long as the working class does not sufficiently develop in size and class consciousness, utopian thinking prevails. With the development of the working class, however, the communist theoreticians' science, which comes from the historical movement and conscious association with it, ceases to be doctrinaire and, instead, becomes revolutionary. This is the vision to which Marx's theory of political economy sought to give effect, to theoretically demonstrate the mechanism of transition from capitalism to communism."

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the first philosopher of capitalism. The counterpoint to his philosophy was advanced by Karl Marx, who, in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, argued in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 that unplanned capitalism must inevitably collapse and should be replaced by planned production. His proposition is also known as dialectical materialism, the idea that all growth, social change, and economic

## Maradona death kept from Bilardo

AFP, Buenos Aires

Carlos Bilardo, the coach of Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning team who is in poor health, was still unaware on Thursday of the death of Diego Maradona, because of his family's wish not to upset him.

Maradona, who captained the 1986 team, died on Wednesday from a heart attack at the age of 60.

"I cannot tell him that Diego is dead," Carlos's brother Jorge Bilardo told Radio Provincia, because he had a "father-son" relationship with Maradona. Carlos Bilardo had



repeatedly said during interviews that Diego was "the son that (he had) not had". The former coach, 82, is suffering from neurological disorders.

He lives in an apartment in Buenos Aires where he is treated by nurses who are prohibited from letting him watch television.

"The nurse already knew that if this happened, the television had to be turned off," said Jorge Bilardo. "She did so by telling him that the cable had been cut."

Carlos Bilardo took Argentina to three World Cups, from 1982 to 1990. They won the title in 1986 and, with Maradona still very much the playmaker, reached the final four years later when they lost to West Germany.



(Bottom) The coffin of Diego Maradona rests at the burning chapel of Casa Rosada presidential palace in Buenos Aires ahead of his burial on Thursday. (Top L) A kid sits on the shoulders of a man holding a poster of the football legend in front of the presidential palace while (Top R) players of Napoli, all wearing Maradona's name and No. 10 printed on their shirts, observe a minute's silence ahead of their UEFA Cup fixture against FC Rijeka at the San Paolo Stadium.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS/TWITTER

# Maradona laid to eternal rest

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina's Diego Maradona, one of the world's greatest ever football players, was buried on Thursday amid a global outpouring of grief from the streets of Buenos Aires to Naples in Italy.

The death of Maradona at the age of 60 on Wednesday, following a heart attack, has sparked both mourning and celebrations of a true sporting star, who was a genius on the soccer field but lived a life marred by struggles with addiction.

In a day of high emotion, the World Cup winner was taken by hearse late on Thursday to the Bella Vista cemetery on the outskirts of Buenos Aires - where his parents are also interred - for a private ceremony of his family and close friends.

Thousands of Argentines lined the roads as the procession passed on the hour-long journey from the presidential palace in central Buenos Aires, where Maradona had lain in state during the day.

Earlier, there were clashes between police and fans and a febrile atmosphere more akin to a rowdy soccer game than a wake, with fans clambering up the palace gates to get as close as possible to their hero.

In Italy, crowds tied hundreds of blue and white scarfs to the railings



outside his former club Napoli, while in France, sports paper L'Equipe's front page blared out: "God is dead".

In Argentina, three days of national mourning were called for the player who led the country to a 1986 World Cup win and is revered with cult-like status. Tens of thousands took to the streets, not all wearing masks, despite fears over the COVID-19 pandemic. Some left flowers and messages at his childhood home.

"Maradona for me is the greatest thing that happened to me in life. I love him as much as my father and

it's like my old man died," Cristian Montelli, 22, a supporter of the star's former club Boca Juniors said with tears in his eyes after he had filed past the coffin.

"If I die young, hopefully upstairs I can play ball and watch a Boca game with him," added Montelli, who had a tattoo of Maradona's face on his leg.

During the day, Maradona's body lay in state in a closed casket at the Casa Rosada presidential palace on the central Plaza de Mayo. It was covered with the blue and white national flag and an Argentina soccer jersey with the number 10

that had been part of his nickname "D10S" - a play on "dios", the Spanish word for God.

Starting at dawn on Thursday, thousands of fans had formed a snaking line estimated at over a mile (1.6 km) long through the streets of Buenos Aires near the plaza, after a night of mourning and reminiscing.

Fans who got inside the palace - many missed out - threw soccer shirts, flowers and other items towards the casket.

"He was someone who touched the sky with his hands but never took his feet off the ground," President Alberto Fernandez said. He visited the casket on Thursday.

In Naples, fans laid out flowers, pictures, candles and even a bottle of wine in a rapidly expanding, makeshift shrine. Major athletes and world leaders have paid their own tributes.

"Diego belongs to the people, Diego belongs to Argentina, Diego belongs to the country," said Dario Lozano, waiting in line to view the casket. Massimo Vignati, owner of a Maradona museum in Naples, said the player had become almost like family.

"My mother was the Neapolitan mother of Maradona. He was our twelfth brother," he told Reuters, surrounded by memorabilia.

## 'He was there for me in tough times'

AFP, London

Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho has revealed that Diego Maradona would call him after defeats, paying a warm tribute to the late Argentine great with a "big, big" heart.

"I spent the day today telling stories to my guys about him and the time we spent together and that's the guy I miss," Mourinho told BT Sport.

"I especially miss the phone call that was always arriving after defeats and never after victories. He knew that after victories I don't need phone calls, he knew that in difficult moments he was always there and he was always saying after defeats and in difficult moments 'Mou, don't forget you are the best'. It was always with this kind of approach, so I miss Diego."

The Spurs boss said those who had been able to spend time with Maradona had been privileged, drawing a line between the footballer and the man.

"There is Maradona and there is Diego," said Mourinho. "Maradona, I don't need to speak about because the world knows and nobody will forget."

"Diego is different. The people that are the big friends of him, the people that share dressing rooms with him, colleagues, these guys are privileged. I can say he was a good friend of mine, but my contacts with him were by telephone and we met of course a few times."

Mourinho said he would miss Maradona's generous larger-than-life character.

"He had a big, big, big, big heart," said Mourinho, whose side beat Ludogorets 4-0 on Thursday to move to the brink of qualification for the Europa League knockout phase.

"That's the guy I miss, because his football we can find every time we miss him, if we Google we will find it. But Diego, no."



## Overcoming hurdles and flying high

SPORTS REPORTER



Selim Reza, a high jumper with a physical disability, hogged all the spotlight from his able-bodied fellows on the first day of the National Junior Athletics Championships as track and field made a comeback at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday after a long coronavirus-induced break.

Selim, a student of Grade 12 at the MM Haque Technical College in Narail, cleared 1.80 metres to win the gold medal in the adolescent high jump event after leaving Ismail Sheikh of Narail (1.75 metres) and Emadul Haque (1.75 metres) of Jashore to stun all and sundry in the championships, which was marked by the cheerful dispositions of participants who had been confined indoors so long because of the pandemic.

Taking inspiration from South African blade-runner Oscar Pistorious, Selim started dreaming of participating in the Paralympics and has been preparing by competing against capable athletes. He left his home district of Kushtia and moved to Narail to avail better training facilities under renowned grassroots coach Deelip Chakrabarti, who along with the district sports association and others is providing facilities to realise Selim's dream.

"I was born with my right leg shorter than the left and my parents could not go to any doctors due to financial constraints. However, I don't face any problems in walking," Selim described his disability to The Daily Star after winning the gold medal for the first time. He won bronze in the last edition after returning home with a wooden spoon in the 2016 edition of the junior championships.

Asked how he jumped so high, Selim said, "It has been possible because of my belief and confidence, which were also strengthened when



I started participating in inter-school championships and won four gold medals.

"Deelip sir has inspired me to compete against capable athletes and I am still dreaming of participating in the 2021 Paralympics, where someone won the gold medal clearing 1.85 metres in the last edition in Rio," said Selim. "If the federation can provide me better facilities, then I can improve myself to win a medal from the Paralympics."

Selim said he had only 15 days' preparation for the junior athletics championships as he had been working as a day labourer to meet the expenses of his studies and other things. His three elder brothers also work as day labourers in Kushtia. With last edition's fastest

sprinter Samiul Islam of Khulna bedridden following the injury he sustained while playing football, neighbouring district Jashore's Akram Hossain Akash became the fastest sprinter in the adolescent group after clocking 10.9 seconds (hand-timing) while Mohammad Limon of Kurigram and Nayeem Islam of Sherpur grabbed the silver and bronze medal, clocking 11.1 and 11.2 seconds respectively. Akash has also won gold in the long-jump event and became the fastest sprinter in his first-ever sprint event of the championships.

In the female adolescent group, Suriya Dewan of Manikganj became the fastest sprinter, clocking 12.8 seconds while Mossammatt Suriya of Naogaon bagged the silver with 13.1 seconds.

## NZ go 1-0 up against WI

AFP, Auckland

New Zealand defeated the West Indies by five wickets in a rain-affected first Twenty20 international at Auckland's Eden Park on Friday.

The Black Caps finished on 179-5 after being set a target of 176 in a match where the innings were reduced to 16 overs because of persistent showers.

New Zealand bowler Lockie Ferguson was match of the match after claiming a career-best haul of 5-21.

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard was the stand-out performer for the tourists with an unbeaten 75 from 37 balls.

The next fixture in the three-match series is in Mount Maunganui on Sunday.

## Smith, Finch tons smash India

REUTERS, Sydney

Steve Smith and Aaron Finch led the way with centuries as Australia opened their home summer with a one-day victory over India by 66 runs on Friday in the first men's international played in front of a crowd since March.

Finch scored 114 in an opening stand of 156 with David Warner (69) to lay a platform before his predecessor as captain Smith smashed 105 off 66 balls to drive Australia to 374 for six -- their highest total against India.

Hardik Pandya thumped four sixes in a bright 90 to give India hope but the innings petered out after his fifth-wicket partnership of 128 with opener Shikhar Dhawan (74) was broken and India limped to 308-8 in their 50 overs.

## Can Khulna's stars step up against Ctg?

SPORTS REPORTER



After two final-over thrillers on the opening day, the Bangabandhu T20 Cup dulled down a bit with Minister Group Rajshahi and Gazi Group Chattogram registering rather comfortable victories over Gemcon Khulna and Beximco Dhaka respectively on the second matchday on Thursday.

From a neutral perspective, spectators will want more edge-of-the-seat stuff when Khulna take on Chattogram in today's day game before high-flying Rajshahi take on Barishal under lights at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Khulna looked to be the strongest side on paper after the players' draft concluded. Led by Bangladesh T20 skipper Mahmudullah Riyad, Khulna also boast the likes of premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan -- who made his return to cricket through this tournament after serving a year-long ban -- and other national stars like Anamul Haque, Imrul Kayes and Shafiqul Islam.

However, they have failed to live up to the hype and their star power went unseen in their first two games. Surprisingly, it was Ariful Haque who took the match away

from Barishal in their first game by hitting Mehidy Hasan Miraz for four massive sixes in the final over. Even in their next encounter against a young Rajshahi side, Ariful came up with yet another unbeaten knock, this time helping the star-studded Khulna save face as they fell to a six-wicket defeat.

Khulna, going up against a Chattogram side that started their campaign by demolishing Mushfiqur Rahim's Dhaka by nine wickets on Thursday, will be facing their toughest challenge so far in the tournament. Chattogram, inspired by magnificent batting displays from Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar in their opening game, will be hoping their mixed bag of domestic and national talents do the trick once again today.

In the second game of the day, Rajshahi will be hoping to make it three wins out of three while Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal will be desperate to register their first win.

Najmul Hossain Shanto-led Rajshahi, the only team to not have picked a Grade A player during the draft, will continue without top all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, who hurt his ankle during training two days before the competition started. The Rajshahi team management is supposed to provide updates about Saifuddin on Sunday.



Captain Aaron Finch (L) and Steve Smith hit hundreds as Australia put on a mammoth 374 for six against India in the first ODI at the SCG yesterday. Josh Hazlewood and Adam Zampa then inspired with the ball in an easy 66-run for the hosts.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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# Top Iranian nuke scientist assassinated

Armed assailants fired at his car near Tehran; Iran FM points to 'Israeli role'

CNN ONLINE

Iran's top nuclear scientist was killed yesterday in an alleged assassination that the country's foreign minister linked to Israel.



Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, considered one of the masterminds of Iran's controversial nuclear program, died after his car was apparently ambushed in a district east of Tehran. Photos from the scene showed the shattered windshield of a car, and blood on the road.

Iranian state media said the killing appeared to be an assassination. Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif called the death "cowardice -- with serious indications of Israeli role."

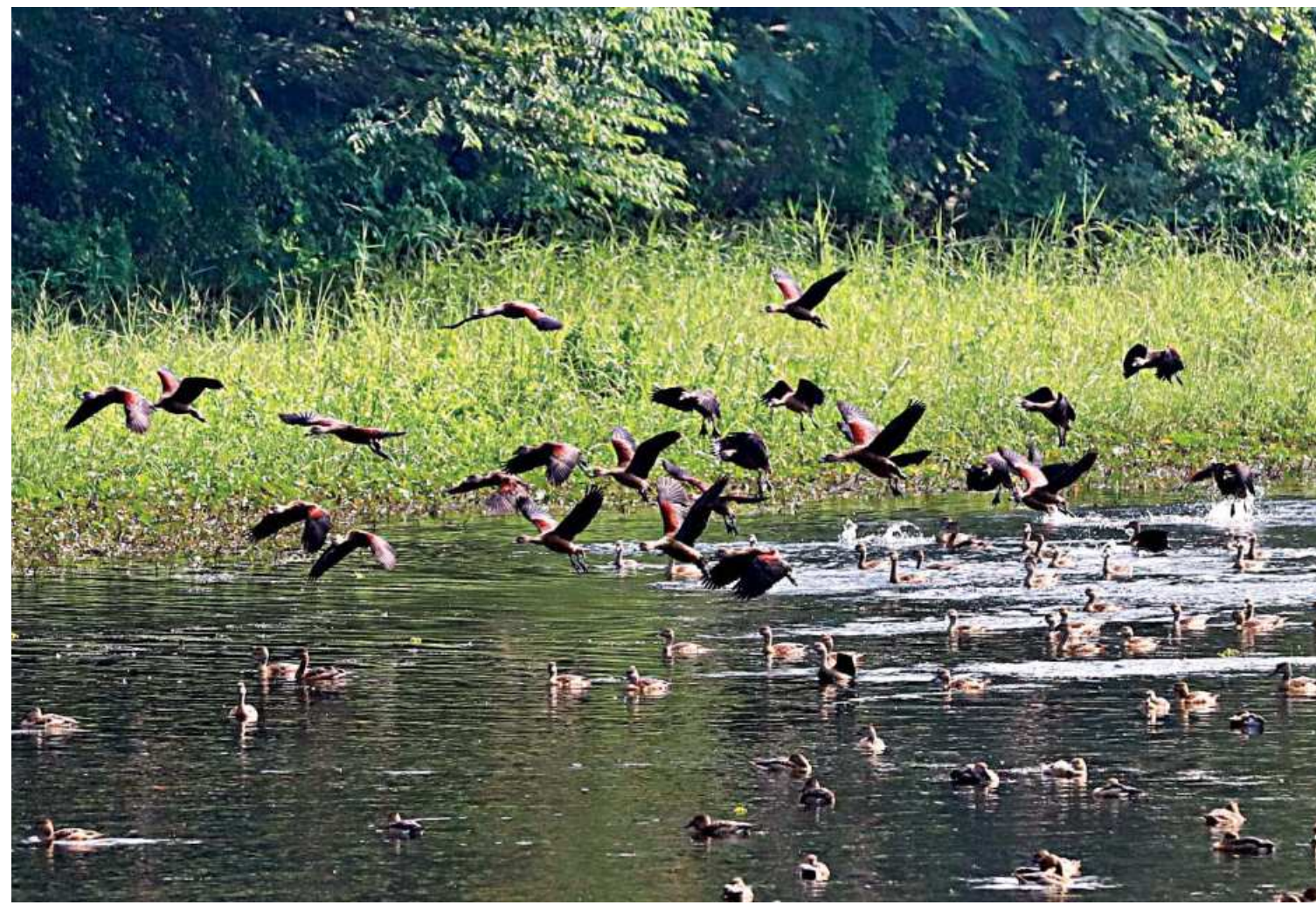
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office declined to comment to CNN.

Fakhri-zadeh was head of the research center of new technology in the elite Revolutionary Guards, and was a leading figure in Iran's nuclear program for many years.

"Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today," Zarif said in a tweet. "This cowardice -- with serious indications of Israeli role -- shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators Iran calls on int'l community -- and especially EU -- to end their shameful double standards & condemn this act of state terror."

US President Donald Trump retweeted prominent

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A flight of migratory birds at Jahangirnagar University in Savar. Escaping extreme cold in their homes in the northern countries, they make the campus their temporary habitat every winter. Ornithologists say some rare migratory birds, including African Comb Duck, have been spotted on the campus this year, thanks to reduced traffic and movement of visitors due to Covid-19 restrictions. The photo was taken last week.

# Unexpected idyll at JU

Number of migratory birds higher this year than in 2019

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN, JU

Thanks to drastically reduced traffic and visitor movement due to Covid-19 restrictions, migratory birds which arrive to spend out the winter on the lakes of the Jahangirnagar University campus have seen a less disruptive, more idyllic environment this season.

Limited movement of people on campus has meant birds are less affected by human disturbance. Other than staff, there have been very few visitors to campus in past months, though this is now increasing.

Some rare migratory birds have been spotted on the lakes and some birds have made their nests and hatched eggs recently, said ornithologist Prof Md Hasan Kamrul of JU's zoology department.

Usually, the birds appear in the beginning of November, but this year

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# COVID INFECTION

## Average daily death 27 for last 15 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-seven people died of coronavirus each day on average in the last 15 days.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), about 2,100 people tested positive each day in these 15 days.

Meanwhile, the DGHS recorded 20 more deaths from the virus in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total death toll to 6,544.

In those 24 hours, another 2,273 new infections were recorded and 16,378 samples were tested, according to the DGHS.

The current positivity rate is 13.88 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 16.81 percent.

The infection rate started crawling up from mid-May and shot up to 20 percent at the end of May.

According to the WHO Situation Report, on November 23, the world stepped into 47th epidemiological week.

The report says the number of new weekly Covid-19 cases was increased by 24.1 percent compared to the previous epidemiological week.

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

## Bangladesh resolutions finalised

November 28, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

**AGREEMENT REACHED ON A 'COMPROMISE' FORMULA**  
 An agreement has been reached by the sponsoring nations on a 'compromise' formula relating to the admission of Bangladesh into the UN. The sponsoring delegations are at present engaged in last-minute consultations on the formulation which consists of three elements. One of the resolutions tabled by Yugoslavia and 22 other countries expresses the desire of the Assembly that Bangladesh should be admitted into the world body.

Another resolution sponsored by Argentina and a few others, including Iran and Turkey, expresses the desire that the parties concerned should make all possible efforts to reach a fair settlement of the pending issues and urges the return of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and the relevant provisions of the Security Council Resolution last December.

The third element of the formulation is a statement to be made by the General Assembly President Stanislaw while commending the two resolutions to the unanimous acceptance of the assembly. **PM'S DIRECTIVE TO REVIEW LABOUR POLICY**  
 Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has issued a directive for the review of the labour policy in the light of the provisions of the Constitution. The review will be carried out in consultation with different labour organisations. It may be recalled

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



# 2 'members' of militant outfit Ansar-Al Islam held in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Detectives held two suspected members of banned militant outfit Ansar-Al Islam from a mosque in Baghopara area of Bogura early yesterday.

Police accused Md Iqbal Hossain, 40, and Jahedur Rahman alias Abdullah, 38, in three cases filed with Bogura Police Station under arms, explosive substances and anti-terrorism acts.

The suspects are from Brahmanpara and Debidwar upazilas of Cumilla. Police said they were members of the Dawu unit of the outfit which was formerly known as Ansarullah Bangla Team.

A team of Detective Branch (DB) officials were tipped off about their presence in the area and they held the duo with a firearm, two bullets, 475 grams of explosive powder, a sharp weapon and some

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# Scientists find hidden 'super planet'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have discovered a cold brown dwarf – otherwise known as a "super planet" – for the first time using a radio telescope.

Brown dwarfs are vast, sized between 15 and 75 times the mass of Jupiter, and have gaseous atmospheres similar to some of the planets in our solar system. They are also often known as "failed stars" because of the way that they shine.

Planets shine by reflecting light, while stars shine by producing their own light. Despite being so big, brown dwarfs are not able to sustain the nuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium – which causes stars to shine – hence their name.

This brown dwarf, classified BDR J1750+3809 and named "Elegast", is the first substellar object

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# Cancel lease of jhum land in Bandarban

Demand students in the hill district

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Several hundred students staged demonstrations in front of Bandarban Press Club yesterday demanding immediate cancellation of the lease of jhum land to an organisation for tourism purposes.

Speaking at a protest rally, students also demanded the authorities stop the "eviction of Jumma people from their ancestral land" in the name of development.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



**PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 28**  
 Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
 AZAN 5-05 12-45 3-45 5-21 7-00  
 JAMAAT 5-40 1-15 4-00 5-24 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# JAMMU AND KASHMIR

## Two Indian soldiers killed by Pakistan forces

TNN, New Delhi

Two Army jawans were killed in ceasefire violation by Pakistan in Sunderbani Sector of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir yesterday.

Naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and rifleman Sukhbir Singh were critically injured in the firing by Pakistan forces. The jawans later succumbed to injuries, said PRO defence, Jammu.

On Thursday, a junior commissioned officer of the army was killed and a civilian injured as Pakistani troops shelled and fired on forward posts and villages along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

Last Saturday, an Indian Army soldier was killed and three others, including two women, were injured as Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing on forward posts and villages in different sectors

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This road in Prapatnagar union of Satkhira's Assasuni upazila has been badly damaged for about six months since Cyclone Amphan hit the area in May, causing hardships for local people. A large area of the union is still submerged due to entry of water through some breaches in the Kopotakho and Kholpetua river embankments.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

# Trump inching towards exit

Says he'll leave if Biden wins Electoral College vote

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he will leave the White House if the Electoral College votes for President-elect Joe Biden, the closest he has come to conceding the November 3 election, even as he repeated unfounded claims of massive voter fraud.

Speaking to reporters on the Thanksgiving holiday, Republican Trump said if Democrat Biden - who is due to be sworn in on January 20 - is formally declared the winner by the Electoral College, he will depart the White House.

Asked if he would leave the White House if the Electoral College votes for Biden, Trump said: "Certainly I will. Certainly I will. And you know that."

But Trump said it would be hard for him to concede because "we know there was massive fraud."

"It was a rigged election ... at the highest level," Trump insisted in a sometimes rambling discourse at the White House, while continuing to offer no concrete evidence of widespread voting irregularities.

It was the first time Trump has taken questions from reporters since Election Day, and at times he turned combative.

In the United States, a candidate becomes president by securing the most "electoral" votes rather than by winning a majority of the national popular vote. Electors, allotted to the 50 states and the District of Columbia largely based on their population, are party loyalists who pledge to support the candidate who won the popular vote in their state.

Biden won the election with 306 Electoral College votes - many more than the 270 required - to Trump's 232, and

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