



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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“Even during this Covid-19 pandemic, which has shaken the world, corruption continues in Bangladesh. We need to rein in our limitless greed.”
ACC CHAIRMAN IQBAL MAHMOOD

“In 100 days, we can change the course of the disease and change life in America for the better.”
BIDEN REVEALS PLAN TO VACCINATE 100M IN FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

“The year 2020 is on course to be one of the warmest on record, while wildfires, storms and droughts continue to wreak havoc.”
UNEP CHIEF INGER ANDERSEN AS WORLD SET FOR 3C WARMING DESPITE PANDEMIC, PLEDGES

COVID-19 VACCINE

The poor may face disparity

Many still have no access to testing, treatment; only 1 in 10 in poor countries to get immunised next year

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The poor and people living on the fringes have been enduring inadequate access to coronavirus testing and treatment facilities and now they are likely to have to do the same for vaccines.

International campaigners yesterday said nine out of 10 people in 70 low-income countries are unlikely to be vaccinated for Covid-19 next year because the majority of the promising vaccines have been bought by the west.

Rich countries with 14 percent of the world's population have secured 53 percent of the most promising vaccines, said the alliance, which includes Amnesty International, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now and Oxfam.

While high-risk groups in Britain received on Tuesday the first shots of the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, most people in 67 low- and lower-middle-income countries, including Bhutan, Ethiopia and Haiti, risk being left behind, they said.

Among the three Covid-19 vaccines for which efficacy results have been announced, almost all the available doses of two of them -- Moderna's and Pfizer/BioNTech's -- have been acquired by rich countries, the alliance report said.

AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford have pledged to provide 64 percent of their doses to people in developing nations. But that would only reach 18 percent of the world's population by next year at best, it added.

The EU, US, Britain, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Australia, Hong Kong, Macau, New Zealand, Israel, and Kuwait have acquired 53 percent of

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The last span of the Padma bridge is likely to be placed on the piers today, marking a milestone for the construction of the country's longest bridge. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

PADMA BRIDGE

All set for installation of the last span today

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The last span of the Padma Bridge is likely to be installed on pillars 12 and 13 today linking both sides of the mighty Padma river as the country's people get closer to having their long-cherished dream come true.

The 41st span has already been taken near the pillars and is expected to be installed today unless dense fog creates major problems, project officials said.

“We hope to install the last span tomorrow [today]. The span has already been taken near the pillars,” Belayet Hossain, executive director of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, the executing agency of the project, said.

“Installation of piers and spans had been the main challenge facing the project and is expected to be over. This is going to be a big achievement,” Belayet, also

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Dense fog disrupts life, connectivity

Ferry service on two key routes halted for hrs; 3 flights diverted from Dhaka airport

STAR REPORT

Dense fog enveloped most of the country, causing immense hardships for thousands of people as road, waterway and air communications were severely disrupted.

Hundreds of vehicles queued up on both sides of the Padma river as ferry services on two major routes had been suspended for hours.

At least three flights scheduled to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) on Tuesday night were forced to be diverted to other destinations due to poor visibility.

The Met office said yesterday that except a few

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Manpower-starved railway hiring at last

After a 3-year pause, it will recruit 12,000-15,000 in next 5 years

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The long drawn-out manpower shortage in Bangladesh Railway is likely to be eased as the state-owned rail transport agency will soon resume hiring staff after a pause of nearly three years.

The authorities expect to gradually add 12,000 to 15,000 manpower in the next five years, BR Director General Md Shamsuzzaman said.

They have already held a meeting to start the process, he told The Daily Star recently. “At first, we will start recruitment of very essential manpower like station masters, loco masters, and guards and it will be done online,” he added.

Officials say the railway authorities will recruit these non-gazetted staff of grade 10 to 20 -- the major workforce -- as per new recruitment rules approved recently. Railway officials from grade 1 to 9 are recruited through Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams.

Under the new rules, a committee comprising representatives from BR and

other ministries and agencies will conduct the recruitment process.

Under the previous system, BR hired its staff without involving any other agencies. But the process allegedly lacked transparency and for this it hogged the headlines on many occasions.

Apart from the recruitment, BR is going to have a new organogram with additional manpower, including two new wings to deal with development projects and ICT-related issues.

The finance ministry has already given the go-ahead to 47,637-post organogram, which is 7,362 posts higher than the existing one, following approval of the public administration ministry.

The organogram has to go through some more procedures before final approval, which may take two or three months, the officials said.

However, BR will be able to start the recruitment process following the existing organogram with the new recruitment rules already being effective, they added.

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Working hard for women's empowerment

PM says at Rokeya Padak distribution programme; 5 personalities awarded

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government was working hard to ensure equal participation of women in every sphere of the society so that they could contribute to expediting the country's development with courage.

“A society cannot move forward without the development of women when they are the half of the total population.... How this society will be built if the women can't prepare themselves equally?” she asked.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the Begum Rokeya Day and distribution of Begum Rokeya Padak 2020.

Mentioning that the government wanted to build Bangladesh as a developed country, Hasina said it would be not feasible for a society to stand on its own feet leaving half of its population behind.

“Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, immediately

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GRABBED RIVERLAND, WETLANDS

No bar now to recovering them

HC rules over land in MP Aslam's possession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for the government to carry out eviction drives and recover Buriganga's land in Keraniganj from the possession of three companies of Maisha Group, owned by ruling Awami League lawmaker Aslamul Haque.

The court rejected a writ petition collectively filed by the three companies challenging the eviction activities of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). The three companies are CLC Power Ltd, Dhaka West Power Ltd and Dhaka North Power Utility Company Ltd.

Delivering the verdict on the petition, the HC said the rivers of the country must be protected at any cost.

It also said the boundaries of the rivers have been determined on the basis of Cadastral Survey (CS) record, and probe reports of the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) must be considered with importance in this regard.

A government probe, led by the NRCC, has found that Aslamul, lawmaker of Dhaka-14, filled up more than 54 acres from the Buriganga river and wetland to construct a power plant and a private economic zone in Basila of Keraniganj. The MP started the illegal activity in 2010, according to the probe report.

After the petition was rejected yesterday, NRCC Chairman Mujibur Rahman Hawlader said it has now been proved that the NRCC report is correct and the lawmaker illegally filled up and possessed the land.

“I would request the government agencies concerned to recover the land to implement the HC order. I would also request the Department of

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SWINDLE BY PK HALDER

Enforce zero tolerance to graft: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only the observance of the International Anti-Corruption Day will not be enough to fight graft, the High Court said yesterday.

Zero tolerance must be effectively enforced to prevent corruption and irregularities in the country, the court said.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Sohel came up with the observation while virtually hearing a suo moto rule issued by it questioning the inaction of the authorities concerned in arresting Proshanta Kumar Halder, also known as PK Halder, and bringing him back to the country.

The bench ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to inform it by January 3 next year about the progress of the investigation into the money laundering case against PK Halder and the

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Tiger, the dog, and his owner Abu Taher, a homeless man, wearing matching red shirts stay warm under a quilt and take an afternoon nap by the street near Banga Bazar in the capital as the temperature dipped and the city remained shrouded by fog yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BANGABANDHU'S SCULPTURE

Khaleda, Tarique, Babunagari sued for defamation

Hefajat says it has no intention to make government its foe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Hefajat chief Junayed Babunagari are among the six BNP and Islamist leaders who were accused in a defamation case for speaking against Bangabandhu's sculpture.

The other accused are BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, its Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Hefajat-e-Islam Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque, and Islami Andolan Bangladesh Senior Nayebe-Amir Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim.

The case was filed by AB Siddique, president of pro-Awami League organisation Bangladesh Jananetri Parishad, with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Satyabrata Sikder.

Khaleda has been staying at her residence in Gulshan-2 since March 25, when she was released from prison after 776 days, on the condition that she would not leave home.

Fakhrul said the filing of such a false and baseless case against the BNP leadership was proof that Awami League had been bankrupt.

“Our chairperson has been in jail for the last two years. Our acting chief Tarique Rahman has been in London since 2008. How can they file such a case against them?” he told The Daily Star.

The magistrate heard the case and took it into cognizance. The court will pass an order in the case today, sources said.

Mamunul, also the secretary general of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, and Faizul made the defamatory remarks on November 13, and Hefajat Amir Babunagari on

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,159
New cases in 24hrs



4,84,104
Total cases



6,930
Deaths



4,05,966
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE

1,567,461
Deaths



68,792,445
Total cases

Take action to prevent recurrence of genocide

PM urges global community

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the global community to undertake concerted action to address the root causes of genocide and ensure justice to the victims to prevent the recurrence of any future genocide in the world.

She said Bangladesh is among the few countries that have experienced one of the worst forms of genocide during the Liberation War in 1971.

The PM came up with the remarks in a message on the occasion of the "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime" and the "72nd Anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide".

Hasina said Bangladesh parliament decided to observe March 25 as Genocide Day to pay deep homage to the victims of the genocide of 1971 and to uphold the country's commitment to prevent these crimes against humanity. The Day is observed every year.

She said the persecution of the Rohingyas in Myanmar is yet another

painful example of such crimes.

The premier said Bangladesh has been temporarily sheltering nearly one million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals for the last three years.

She urged the international community to help Rohingyas return to Myanmar at the earliest and ensure that they can live there in safety and security.

PM FOR GLOBAL ACTION TO SAVE PLANET

Addressing the "Thimphu Ambition Summit" virtually, Hasina yesterday stressed the need for robust international climate coalitions to reduce carbon emission effectively and save the future generations.

"I would like to underscore the significance of positive and robust international climate coalitions that can reduce the global carbon emission effectively to move towards carbon neutrality before the mid-century. So, I call for your urgent and decisive action to save our future generations," she said.

The government of Bhutan, the chair of the LDC Group in the UNFCCC, organised the summit on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement.



Rubble and debris of concrete by the road at Phulbaria after Dhaka South City Corporation authorities demolished illegal structures in the area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Manpower-starved railway hiring at last

FROM PAGE 1

The move to increase manpower comes at a time when BR is facing a huge shortage of workforce directly involved in train operations.

A total of 15,350, out of 40,275 existing posts, remained vacant till June this year. The operations of more than 100 stations cannot be resumed due to lack of manpower.

On the other hand, the recruitment of additional manpower will put more financial pressure on BR, which is continuing to incur losses -- Tk 1,738.37 crore in the 2018-19 fiscal year. Last fiscal year's data was not available.

NEW RECRUITMENT RULES

Until 2017, BR had been recruiting employees -- grade 10 to 20 -- under Bangladesh Railway Non-Gazetted Service Recruitment Rules-1985 though it was annulled in June 2013 following a High Court verdict, officials said.

The HC declared illegal the seventh constitutional amendment that had legitimised the military rule of Hussain Muhammad Ershad. The 1985 rules were cancelled as they were enacted during Ershad's regime.

Unaware of it, BR continued to recruit employees from June 2013 till 2017, and some 4,000 employees

were recruited during this period. Knowing about the order, BR stopped recruitment process, sources said.

The officials this correspondent talked to could not explain this "misunderstanding".

Later, following the direct intervention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BR and railways ministry prepared the new rules that already got final approval.

Jobs of the 4,000 employees were given retrospective validity under the new rules, the officials said.

The new rules say a committee led by a joint director general of BR will conduct the recruitment process. The five-member committee will have representatives from the railways ministry, public administration ministry, and Bangladesh Public Service Commission.

BR Director General Md Shamsuzzaman said the previous rules had some inconsistencies. "Now, Bangladesh Railway will follow the same recruitment process that other government agencies follow," he said recently.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujian said the new process will ensure transparency in railway recruitment. "We will start the recruitment process very soon," he told The Daily

Star on November 19.

ORGANOGRAM MYSTERY

In all recent documents, 40,275 posts were mentioned as BR's manpower.

Interestingly, when BR went to change the organogram, they found BR actually has 82,892 posts.

Two officials of BR and the railways ministry with knowledge of the matter said, in 1983, the Enam Committee report stipulated 68,524 posts for BR.

Besides, BR created 14,368 posts, mainly for its workshops in between 1983 and 1997, raising the total number of posts to 82,892, they said.

But in the late '90s, the World Bank suggested BR reduce its manpower significantly to get loans and since then, 40,275 posts were mentioned as BR manpower, one of the officials said.

"I think the organogram [of 40,275] was not approved maintaining all necessary procedure. So we have to follow the organogram of 82,892 when we went to revise the organogram," he told this correspondent recently, wishing to remain unnamed.

As a result, BR had to first cancel 40,728 posts and then it placed a new organogram incorporating some new posts, he said, adding that the finance ministry gave approval to 47,703 posts.

Now, there are two more steps

Australia orders extremism probe amid push to tackle far-right

AFP, Sydney

Australia yesterday ordered an inquiry into combating violent extremism, after a concerted push for the government to ensure it is equipped to face a growing threat from the far right.

The country's powerful parliamentary intelligence and security committee announced it will examine the spread of radical movements and the threat they pose to Australians.

Conservative Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton prevented the probe from focusing solely on emerging far-right terror, ordering it to instead broaden its focus to include Islamist groups.

The announcement came a day after a New Zealand inquiry into the massacre of 51 Muslim worshippers in Christchurch by an Australian white supremacist gunman called for sweeping changes to counter-terrorism operations.

Dense fog disrupts life

FROM PAGE 1

places in Khulna, Rangpur and Chattogram, fog has covered the entire country. The fog may prevail today too, it added.

There may be moderate to thick fog from midnight to morning, the Met office said in its bulletin published at 6:00pm yesterday.

Three flights of China Southern, Saudi Arabian Airlines and Malindo Air could not land at HSI on Tuesday night due to heavy fog, leaving several hundred passengers stranded.

China Southern flight CZ-391 was supposed to land at HSI at 11:20pm, but was forced to return back to Kunming due to heavy fog, said Md Doulotuzzaman, assistant director of air traffic control at HSI.

The Saudia flight, SV 804, from Riyadh was supposed to land at HSI around 11:30pm.

"After entering Bangladesh territory, the pilot saw bad weather and was forced to divert to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata due to poor visibility," Doulotuzzaman added.

Malindo Air's flight OD-162 from Kuala Lumpur, which was supposed to land in Dhaka at 11:50pm, was also forced to divert to Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok.

The situation was no better for those travelling by road.

In Manikganj, passengers of 21 south-western districts were stranded for around 12 hours since Tuesday night as ferry services on the Paturia-Daulatdia route were suspended due to thick fog.

The hardship was greater for women and children as over the period, they were unable to go to the toilet.

"I reached Paturia ferry terminal around 10:00pm on Tuesday night. I have been waiting here for over 12 hours. I don't know when my bus will be allowed to board the ferry," said SS Sourav, a Chuadanga-bound passenger.

"I have taken two days' leave from my office to visit my village home. But I have already spent one day here. I don't know when I can go home and when I will go back to work in Dhaka," said Al Wafiq, a passenger who claimed he had been waiting at Paturia terminal for around 12

hours.

Sabina Yasmin, a female traveller from Kushtia, said, "There is no toilet facility for women. How can we survive without using toilets for around 12 hours?"

Finally, services resumed around 10:00am when the fog started to clear, said Jilur Rahman, deputy general manager (commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation's Aricha ferry terminal.

Four ferries were forced to anchor in the middle of the Padma river, the BIWTC official said.

Over 500 vehicles, including more than 300 goods-laden trucks, were stuck on the Paturia side following the suspension of the ferry services.

In Munshiganj, ferry services were suspended for eight hours from around 10:00pm on Tuesday on the Shimulia-Banglabazar route due to heavy fog.

Over 400 vehicles were stranded on both sides of the river.

Finally, ferry operations resumed around 6:00am yesterday, said Shafayet Ahmed, BIWTC manager at Shimulia ferry terminal.

In Tangail, vehicular movement on Bangabandhu Multipurpose bridge was suspended twice early yesterday due to dense fog.

Hundreds of passengers and vehicle operators faced immense hardship as long tailbacks were created on both sides of the bridges.

The bridge authorities suspended vehicular movement for around one and a half hours in two phases -- around 1:10am and then around 3:30am -- to avoid accidents, said Kazi Aiyubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

The tailbacks of numerous vehicles at one stage spread about 20km to Rabna bypass in Tangail from the east side of the bridge and 22km to Hatikumrul intersection in Sirajganj from the west side of the bridge, said passengers and transport workers.

The long tailback lasted for around 10 hours. Vehicular movement became normal around 12:00pm yesterday, said Kamal Hossain, in-charge of Elega Highway Police Outpost.

[Our correspondents from Manikganj, Munshiganj and Tangail contributed to this report]

The poor may face disparity

FROM PAGE 1

potential doses. Canada is buying enough to vaccinate its population five times over, Oxfam said.

"By buying up the vast majority of the world's vaccine supply, rich countries are in breach of their human rights obligations," Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International's Head of Economic and Social Justice, said in a statement.

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) officials, however, claim that Bangladesh will buy 68 million doses from vaccine alliance Gavi under a global arrangement called COVAX facility and another 30 million doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from Serum Institute of India.

Officials expect the country to receive the first shipment of the doses from Gavi between February and June 2021 while vaccines from Serum may arrive by February 2021.

However, the most pertinent question now is who will be vaccinated first as the government is yet to publish its vaccine distribution plan.

Officials said the priority is likely to be given to healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, health management and support workers, and technicians directly involved in treatment and other Covid-related activities.

In the second phase, frontline professionals such as members of law enforcement agencies and journalists, and people aged above 60 with comorbidity are likely to receive the shots.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the pharmacology department at the BSMMU, told this correspondent recently, "Concern remains as to when the vaccines would reach the country and whether those could be administered to the people timely and

properly."

Prof Nazrul Islam, member of the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19, apprehends that people living in the peripheries may not get vaccines timely, which will create a disparity in vaccination too.

"Have we arranged a separate capacity to store Covid-19 vaccines in upazilas? If not, how will people living in rural areas get vaccines?" he added.

TESTING DISPARITY

The death of 63-year-old Monowara Begum in an ambulance on June 2 after six hospitals in Sylhet refused to treat her fearing she had Covid-19 made headlines.

Like her, many patients seeking emergency treatment died simply because they did not have access to coronavirus testing facilities.

Prof Nazrul told The Daily Star, "When one is refused treatment without a Covid-19 negative certificate, the government has to take the responsibility."

As of December 3, a total of 2,203 people died after developing Covid-19 like symptoms, according to the centre for genocide studies at Dhaka University.

The total number of confirmed deaths due to Covid-19 is 6,930 as of yesterday, according to the DGHS.

Experts said the number of deaths due to Covid-19 is higher than the official figure as most people have no access to testing facilities.

Over the last 30 days, on an average 15,000 people were tested daily. The total tests conducted, as of yesterday, was 29,11,664.

According to ourworldindata.org, Bangladesh did around 0.09 tests per 1,000 people, one of the lowest in the

world.

Against this backdrop, the government has introduced antigen-based rapid testing in 10 districts after months of bureaucratic exercise.

Yet, the number of tests has not increased while the officials, including the health minister, blamed people "for not coming forward for the test".

According to the officials, the DGHS has eight teams for Covid-19 sample collection in Dhaka city who collect up to 150 samples a day.

TREATMENT FOR ALL, A FAR CRY

The Covid-19 treatment situation has not improved notably since the beginning of the pandemic and experts are saying that Covid-19 revealed the "discriminatory" nature of the country's health system, under which the poor and those living in the peripheries are deprived of access to proper health care.

"Before Covid-19, those who had no money were deprived of treatment. During the Covid-19 health emergency, even money can't guarantee treatment. Only the elites have the access," Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Quality treatment facilities are mainly in Dhaka and Chattogram and the tertiary hospitals in divisional headquarters have very little capacity to handle critical patients.

According to the DGHS yesterday's press release, 19 Covid-19 dedicated hospitals out of the 29 are in Dhaka city while the rest 10 are in Chattogram city.

According to last month's information obtained by The Daily Star, only 24 of these hospitals had a central oxygen supply system.

"We had strongly recommended setting up a central oxygen supply system in all district-level hospitals months before. But we saw no progress yet. A Covid-19 patient with severe symptoms having to come to Dhaka cannot be a system," Prof Nazrul said.

He said, "People needing to go to tertiary level hospitals or needing to do everything themselves to get treatment means that those who have no money will die without treatment. This is not only a violation of human rights but also a violation of constitutional rights."

Based on discussion with families of several Covid-19 patients, per day treatment cost for a Covid-19 patient in private hospitals is between Tk 50,000 and Tk 70,000. The cost goes up multiple times in case of comorbidities.

It is not easy even at government hospitals in the capital.

The mother of Dr Ershadul Haque, registrar of National Institute of Kidney Disease and Urology, died from Covid-19 on November 24 at Dhaka CMH.

"When my mother developed severe symptoms ... We took her to BSMMU. As it had no ICU available, we took her to Bangladesh Institute of Health Sciences Hospital. To get better treatment, we took her to CMH. I can't describe how tough it is to arrange ambulances and look for better treatment. It was a nightmare," Ershad told this correspondent.

In addition to the incapacity of the healthcare system, unavailability of proper and real-time information about services available has made the situation even worse for the masses.

He had spent around Tk 4 lakh for her treatment in government hospitals, where she stayed only two weeks.

All set for installation of the last span today

FROM PAGE 1

the secretary of Bridges Division, told The Daily Star last night.

Implementation of the project was possible due to a courageous decision by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he added.

Replying to a question, Belayet said they were hopeful of completing the rest of the project works within 15 months, as the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down the pace of the works.

Once opened to traffic, the 6.15km-long bridge will connect the capital with 21 southwestern districts. It is expected to boost the country's gross domestic product by 1.2 percent.

Following the installation of the 40th span on December 4, discussions began about the installation of the last span. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader on Monday said the last span would be installed by December 10.

The move to install the last span created much enthusiasm among the people as they are waiting with bated breath to see the completion of the span installation work.

The authorities, however, have cancelled their planned celebration of the installation of the last span due to the

Covid-19 pandemic.

Visiting the project site on Tuesday, this correspondent found the 150-metre-long span being shifted to a jetty from the shore in the morning. A national flag of Bangladesh was hanging from the frame of the huge steel structure.

"The dreamt Padma Bridge is now on the verge of becoming a reality with years-long efforts of the local and foreign workforce," read a festoon on the span.

The final span was also draped with several other festoons with a message written in a Chinese language.

Mamun, who has been working as a foreman of the project since 2015, said he had the privilege of watching the installation of the first span in September 2017.

"I was there when the first span was installed. Our national flag was there with the first span. Now the last span will also carry our national flag," he told this correspondent.

"When I started working here in 2015, there was no structure over the river. Now an entire bridge is going to be there. It gives me immense pleasure," Mamun said.

Although there was fog on the river yesterday, the span was taken near pillars

12 and 13 around 5:45pm, Dewan Md Abdul Kader, executive engineer and project manager (main bridge), told this correspondent.

"We have a plan to install the last span tomorrow [today] unless fog creates any problem," Project Director Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star.

Railway and roadway slabs are being installed now and some others works, including installation of electricity and gas lines, have to be completed before the opening of the bridge to traffic.

Out of 2,917 roadway slabs, around 1,300 were installed till Tuesday while 1,930 out of 2,959 railway slabs were installed, officials said.

The current deadline of the fast-track project is June 2021, meaning the project is likely to see another extension of its deadline. The project cost rose to Tk 30,193 crore after several revisions of the deadline.

The Pamda Bridge project is being implemented with the country's own funds after the World Bank and other international lenders had cancelled financing over allegations of corruption, which were later found to be not true.

ABC MOURNS



Mr. Zahidul Islam
(1954 - 2020)

With great sorrow, ABC Family mourns the sad and shocking demise of Mr. Zahidul Islam (66), Director of Associated Builders Corporation Ltd. and ABC Building Products Ltd. He breathed his last on Tuesday, 8th December 2020 at 7.20 PM in United Hospital (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Illahi Rajeun).

Mr. Zahidul Islam, born in Jhenaidah in 1954, was the only son of ABC's Founder Director Late Engr. Amirul Islam.

The Management and the employees of all concerns of ABC Family are deeply saddened by this loss and convey deepest condolences to his bereaved family. May his departed soul rest in eternal peace.



ABC FAMILY SINCE 1972

Make healthcare a constitutional right

Activists, civil society urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists and civil society members have called for including healthcare as a fundamental right in the country's constitution, making it a legal obligation of the state to protect peoples' right to healthcare.

The coronavirus pandemic brought to light the weaknesses of the country's health systems where corruption and profit mongering tendencies are rampant, they said yesterday.

The observations came at a virtual seminar titled "Better Health: Stand Up for Human Rights" organised by BDCSOP, a forum of 700 civil society and non-government organisations in collaboration with COAST Trust. The event was organised marking Begum Rokeya Day yesterday and Human Rights Day today.

Speakers expressed concerns that the principles of the country's liberation war -- democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism -- are yet to be achieved fully.

Addressing the seminar as chair, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam said it is shameful that she is being abused to grab the land of indigenous people when this nation

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUJON

Last year around this time, the price of onion shot up beyond the purchasing power of many, forcing them to resort to open-market sales by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. This year, with high import volumes, prices are low in the market and the interest in TCB trucks is low. Salespersons at a truck in the capital's Khamarbari said they are having to stay open late into the night to sell onions at Tk 25 per kg. Customers, meanwhile, said the TCB staff were "push-selling" onions to those who came to buy just edible oil or lentils.

'They targeted the elderly affluent'

Police busts gang for stealing personal info, extortion, embezzlement

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Police yesterday claimed to have arrested members of a gang that used to steal personal information of elderly affluent people and blackmail them to pay anywhere between Tk 5 to 50 lakh.

The information was revealed after police arrested four people, including two sisters, following drives in the capital's Mohammadpur, Hatirjheel and Badda areas from Thursday to Sunday, said Harun-Ur-Rashid, deputy commissioner (DC), Tejgaon Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The arrestees are Parvin Akhter Nupur (28), her sister Shefali Begum (40), Rubel Mahmud Anik (27), customer service staffer of a telecom operator, and Shamsuddoha Khan Babu (40), a travel agent.

Isa, another gang member who introduced himself as a lawyer, is still absconding, police said.

The Tejgaon DC said it is an organised gang of five to six members that target mostly high-ranking service holders, rich businesspeople and industrialists who are over 60 years old.

"We have information about 20-25 victims. A staffer of a telecom operator was helping the gang by giving away personal information, which is provided during SIM registration. If it is so, then how will our personal information remain secure?" he said.

The officer said Shamsuddoha works at a travel agency in Motijheel, where financially solvent people come regularly for travel purposes. He used to collect their phone numbers and give them to Parvin.

Parvin then collected personal information of those people through the customer centre staffer using the numbers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, GIRLS

Mental health of men, boys must get attention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a webinar yesterday said in order to prevent violence against women and girl children, the issue of mental health of men and boys must be given due attention.

The webinar, titled "Mental Health of Men and Boys: What we should do", was organised by National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, and supported by Educo Bangladesh, as part of its "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign.

"We give some wrong message to our children from their childhood," said Psychotherapist Prof Shanjida Shahria at the programme, for example, boys shouldn't cry or be afraid of anything.

"But the basic human emotions are joy, sorrow, fear and anger. If they are refrained from showing their fears and sorrows, they are only having two emotions, joy and

anger. When they are angry, they express it with anger, even if they are sad or afraid, they will express it through anger. These make men violent from their childhood," she explained.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, global vice president and country director of The Hunger Project Bangladesh, said the National Girl Child and Advocacy Forum was formed to create equal opportunities for girls and end inequality. "The vast majority of men who abuse women suffer from a variety of mental health problems. We usually discuss women's issues widely, but the mental health issues of men are not discussed equally," he said.

Human rights activist Sheeba Hafiza also expressed a similar concern, saying men are kept out of the loop while discussing gender-based violence.

"We have to bring reforms in our education system. The mentality of men

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Rein in the limitless greed: ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pointing out that corruption took place even during the pandemic, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairperson Iqbal Mahmood yesterday called upon people to rein in their limitless greed.

"To correct a society, a family needs to be rectified first. Children need to know the source of their parents' income," he said.

The ACC chairperson said this at a virtual discussion organised to mark International Anti-Corruption Day. This year, the theme of the day was "Recover with Integrity".

He expressed his satisfaction over 63 percent punishment rate in graft cases. "We need to know why we could not ensure punishment for 37 percent of the cases," he added.

ACC Commissioner Dr Mozammel Haque Khan said all kinds of corruption need to be given emphasis equally. "We need to show zero tolerance against corruption," he added.

ACC Commissioner AFM Aminul Islam said corruption is a social disease. "Without social awareness and commitment, it is not possible to prevent corruption." "We need to work with integrity to recover from whatever damages the pandemic has caused," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Mobilise the youth against corruption

Speakers tell TIB discussion on Anti-Corruption Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's youths have to be mobilised against corruption to eliminate the menace from the society, said speakers during a virtual discussion yesterday.

They said educating children about morality should start from family and school to fight corruption effectively.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the discussion on "Youth in Anti-Corruption Social Movement: Cartoon and Art", marking International Anti-Corruption Day.

Yesterday, TIB also announced the names of six youths as winners of the Anti-Corruption Cartoon Competition Awards-2020.

There is no alternative but to rely on the youths for the country's progress, said TIB Trustee Board Chairperson Prof Perween Hasan.

Sadly, youths are often subject to

newspaper headlines now because of involvement in unethical practices which is a contrast to the past when best students would get involved in student politics, she said.

She stressed that the Anti-Corruption Commission has to be functional effectively.

If the ACC was functional effectively then there might be no need for a graft watchdog like TIB, she added.

Eminent author and TIB Ombudsperson Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam said different graft allegations regarding health sector support and services started to surface amid the coronavirus pandemic.

However, such incidents reduced and when youths took the responsibility to unearth those, he said.

Children's morality teaching is supposed to start from family and school, said Abul

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin's martyrdom anniversary today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Today is the 49th martyrdom anniversary of Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin.

Only 6 days before the victory in 1971, while fighting in a naval ship, he was killed in bombing by Pakistan Army in Rupsha River, Khulna.

During the 1971 movement, he was Engine Room Artificer-1 in the gunboat PNS Comilla under Bakhtiar Naval Base in Chattogram.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Lone cath lab in M'singh not ready after 9 months

MD AMINUL ISLAM, M'singh

When the first-ever catheterisation laboratory (cath lab) in Mymensingh was set up at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) this year, it brought optimism to the district's cardiac patients.

However, nine months on, it is yet to be operational, gradually becoming a cause for concern for all involved.

Cath lab is an examination room in a hospital or clinic with diagnostic imaging equipment used to visualise arteries and chambers of the heart and treat any stenosis or abnormality found. Dr Laxmi Narayan, deputy director of MMCH, says this is due to the unavailability of an interventional cardiologist, needed to run the lab.

"We sent two letters to Ministry of Health so far, asking for an interventional cardiologist. The process has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic," he said.

The cath lab was set up to support patients admitted to the 1,000-bed hospital. It was inaugurated on February 15 this year.

The hospital is visited by patients from the greater Mymensingh region (Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Tangail), as well as from Sylhet, Sunamganj, Gazipur, Gaibandha, and

Kurigram districts, said Dr Narayan.

The demand for its service is so high, that it often gets patients more than three times its capacity. Normally, around 200 remain admitted to the cardiology department.

But despite its goodwill, the hospital cannot serve patients that require stenting. A stent is a tiny tube that doctors can insert into a blocked passageway to keep it open.

Stents restore flow of blood or other fluids, depending on where it's placed, said sources from the cardiology department.

If the cath lab becomes operational, patients, especially the ones with heart diseases, will be able to avail better treatment from this lab.

Otherwise, many may have to travel to Dhaka to get the same services, said Dr Ganapati Aditya, head of cardiology department at MMCH.

Once operational, a patient will have to pay around Tk 6,000 for angiogram and related tests at the hospital, which is around Tk 25,000 in private hospitals, said Dr Aditya. The doctors also said the lab will need more than one interventional cardiologists and a specialised "Cardiac Surgery Unit" to handle the huge rush of heart patients at the hospital everyday.



With the sun hiding behind the clouds for a large portion of the day in the capital yesterday, the air was nippy. While the adults are still not cold enough yet to break out the big sweaters, young ones sure are feeling the chill. The photo was taken from Hatirjheel.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

United Hospital's 2021 calendar marks 50 years of Bangladesh

CITY DESK

United Hospital has unveiled its 2021 calendar at an informal programme held at the hospital's seminar hall yesterday. As 2021 marks 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, the hospital has published the calendar as a tribute to the occasion.

The calendar is designed to honour the essence of independence and to live and find the meaning of this independence. It features pictures taken by internationally

acclaimed and photographer Dr Rashid Un Nabi, also a senior consultant, at the hospital, said a press release.

Present during the unveiling were Moinuddin Hasan Rashid, chairperson and managing director of United Group; Mohammad Faizur Rahman, managing director and CEO of United Hospital; department directors; consultants; doctors; nurses and higher officials of the hospital.



Officials of the hospital hold up the new calendar.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

PKSF working for poverty alleviation

Kholiquzzaman tells webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) is working to diversify people's choices and come out of poverty, said PKSF Chairman Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad yesterday.

He was speaking at a webinar organised to share the progress of a programme, titled "Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People", being implemented by PKSF with joint funding from UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and European Union, said a press release.

Abdur Rouf Talukder, senior secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, spoke at the webinar as chief guest while Financial Institutions Division Additional Secretary Arijit Chowdhury, FCDO Development Director Judith Herbertson and EU Head of Delegation to Bangladesh Maurizio Cian were special guests.

Popularly known as 'Prosperity', the six-year programme is working to lift 10 lakh people belonging to 2.5 lakh households out of extreme poverty by 2025.

The programme, launched in April 2019, is covering nearly 200 unions of 43 upazilas under 15 districts across the country.

People living in these districts face present and future climate shocks that threaten their lives and livelihoods. During the first year of the prosperity programme, more

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Develop information platform for people with special needs

Speakers tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alongside government-initiated projects, various private initiatives are also in place to serve the needs of the differently-abled members of society. Nevertheless, deficiency in information dissemination and awareness often deprive them of the facilities available for them, speakers said at a webinar yesterday.

As a response to this urgency, authorities concerned have emphasised on establishing an integrated initiative to develop an easy and accessible platform to collectively drive the welfare of people overcoming disabilities, the speakers added.

On the occasion of 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities', Prerona Foundation, The Daily Samakal and The Daily Star jointly organised the special webinar titled 'Integrated Initiatives for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities'. Experts from the government, private, and development sectors participated in it.

Mubina Asaf, Director of Prerona Foundation, said, "It is essential to secure long-term employment for differently-skilled individuals, and also to ensure their engagement into the mainstream economy."

Talking about the plan to launch their online based platform "Aragatir Anuprerna", she said the portal is being created with the aim of building a collective database to ensure availability and easy accessibility of information.

Apart from this, people with special needs will also be able to share stories about their journey and experiences on the platform. If this collective database is established, it will also enable authorities concerned to address and rectify the hurdles faced while working to promote the noble cause, she said.

Zuena Aziz, Chief Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office, said, development sectors participated in it.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Aditya Kabir passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poet, writer and one of the top advertising professionals of the country, Aditya Kabir passed away yesterday at the age of 50.

According to close sources, Aditya Kabir died of a stroke in his sleep at his in-law's house in Uttara.

He led advertising agency CarrotComm Limited, after working for Asiatic MCL for 15 years.

He was son of noted poet and DU teacher Humayun Kabir.

Aditya left behind his wife, a daughter, his mother, two sisters and a brother.

He was buried in Rayerbazar graveyard last evening.

Born on November 13, 1970, Aditya got his bachelor's degree from International Relations department of DU.



Doctors at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University formed a human chain in front of the institution in Dhaka yesterday, protesting damage of Bangabandhu's sculpture in Kushtia.

PHOTO: STAR

They targeted

FROM PAGE 3

Introducing herself as a social worker, journalist or job seeker, Parvin used to call them to start an affair. Throughout the relationship, she used to record personal conversations on her phone, and at one point, would threaten to reveal their relationship to the victim's family.

If they refused to give money, Parvin's sister Shefali would tell the victim that they will file a case under women and children repression prevention act, police said.

Describing their profiles, the Tejgaon DC said Parvin studied till 12th-grade. With her five-year-old daughter, she stays at a luxurious flat in the capital's Niketan area, but does not have a formal profession.

She pays Tk 1 lakh for the flat's rent. Her daughter's school fee is Tk 10,000. She goes to a gym at Banani area, where she pays Tk 30,000 monthly. Earlier, she filed a complaint with Gulshan Police Station, claiming that six of her lipsticks, worth a total of Tk 90,000, went missing.

Her sister Shefali studied till third-grade, and sells clothes at a shop in Chandni Chawk Market.

Shamsuddoha receives a salary of Tk 15,000. He stays at Shefali's flat in Mohammadpur. Rubel works at Tejgaon Industrial Area, police said.

The police official said Parvin embezzled a hefty amount of money from at least 20 people.

He said Rubel used to give her information in exchange for Tk 10,000.

Among the arrestees, Parvin and Anik were placed on three-day remand.

The officer said many people have lost considerable wealth after giving money to the gang, while many do not want to complain in fear of their social status being tarnished.

He said they will see if there is any negligence by the telecom operator. How a service centre staffer could provide confidential information will be investigated.

Develop

FROM PAGE 3

"The primary agenda for SDG is not only to ensure that no one is left behind, but also to make sure that people with special needs become a part of collective prosperity."

In this regard, notable allocations have been provided in the 7th and 8th Five-Year Plan as well, she added. Among others, Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka; Dr AM Pervez Rahim, Chief Coordinator, Autism and NDD cell at Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; Dr Mazharul Mannan, training coordinator of Institute of Pediatric Neurodisorder and Autism, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University; and Shafiqul Islam, Country Director of ADD International Bangladesh, also spoke at the webinar.

Mustafiz Shafi, acting editor of The Daily Samakal, moderated the program while Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star delivered the welcome address.

Bir Shreshtha

FROM PAGE 3

After the barbaric crackdown of 25 March, he left his place of duty and returned to his village home.

Then he organised the students and youths of the village and imparted military training to them.

He along with nearly 500 students and youths reached the sector headquarter 3 in Agartala in the month of May and actively participated in the Liberation War under former Chief of Army Staff Maj Gen Shafiqullah.

Ruhul Amin joined the then Pakistan Navy as a sailor in 1951. Subsequently, he served in a number of naval ships of Pakistan Navy.

In 1968, he was posted to BNS Bakhtiar

in Chattogram and was serving there till the war started.

Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin was born on February 1, 1934 at Baghpachra village in Sonaimuri upazila (then Begumganj) Thana) under Noakhali district.

Shaheed Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin Foundation and Sonaimuri Upazila Administration will arrange a discussion at the village, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tina Pal confirmed.

Besides, Qurankhwani, a memorial meeting and milad mahfil will be held at his village home, Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin Academy and Bir Shreshtha Ruhul Amin Memorial Museum auditorium today, Sonaimuri Upazila Executive Officer Tina Paul told The Daily Star.

Mobilise the

FROM PAGE 3

Momen, a writer and TIB trustee board member.

CARTOON COMPETITION WINNERS

Six youths won this year's Anti-Corruption Cartoon Competition Awards in two age groups.

The group-A (13-18 years) winners are Ismail Mahmud (first), Asif Mohammad Yousuf (second), and Tasneem Sameeha Islam (third).

Group-B (19-25 years) winners are Mahatab Rashid (first), Duronto Shadat Mahub (second), and Rahul Raj Debnath (third).

In each group, first prize-winner will receive Tk 75,000, second Tk 50,000, and third Tk 40,000 alongside crest and certificate.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman announced the winners' names.

He said peoples' perception that combating graft will not be possible without countrymen's awareness reflected prominently in the competition since its inception more than a decade ago.

Yesterday, TIB also announced 42 cartoonists as "special mention" each of whom will receive a certificate.

Some 80 cartoons are on display through a virtual exhibition which was launched during the programme.

The theme of the 15th Anti-Corruption Cartoon Competition was "Graft in Containing Coronavirus".

Some 130 cartoonists in the two categories participated. TIB received about 287 entries -- 119 in group-A, and 168 in group-B.

Judges of the competition were cartoonists Shishir Bhattacharjee, Ahsan Habib, and Shahrier Khan.

NH Khan passes away

CITY DESK

Nurul Husain Khan, former chairman of NBR and secretary of Internal Resources Division, passed away yesterday at his Gulshan residence, says a press release.

He was also chairman of Eastern Bank Ltd and member of the Board of Governors of North South University.

He left behind his wife, a daughter and a son, grandchildren, and a host of well-wishers. NH Khan's namaz-e-janaza will be held today at Gulshan Azad Mosque after the Zohr prayers.

All are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

PKSF working

FROM PAGE 3

than 30,000 households have been brought under its coverage, the release added.

PKSF Managing Director Moinuddin Abdullah hoped that the prosperity programme will make significant contributions in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the government's 7th Five Year Plan.

High officials of different ministries and departments, deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers also spoke among others at the webinar.

Rein in

FROM PAGE 3

"It is not possible to prevent corruption by a single organisation. We need to change our mentality," said the ACC Commissioner.

Earlier in the day, Reporters Against Corruption, a forum of journalists covering the corruption beat, formed a human chain in front of ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters.

Addressing the human chain programme, the anti-graft body's secretary Dilwar Bakht said the ACC Act will be amended, if necessary, to ensure punishment for corrupt people.

"ACC has always been vocal in ensuring punishment of corrupt people," he said.

Mental health

FROM PAGE 3

and women working together has to be developed at an early age," she said.

Shamsul Haque Tuku, president of Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights, also focused on the traditional gender roles, which children learn from their family.

"We have to think about the family, and teach them to equally treat children of all genders," he said.

Md Fazle Rabbi Miah, deputy speaker of the parliament and chief guest of the event, said a proposal on the summary of the discussion should be presented as a private bill in parliament, through the president of the Caucus on Child Rights.

"The proposal can also be presented to parliament through our Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs," he said.

Noted psychiatrist Dr Mehtab Khanam moderated the event. She said, "We focus on remedies, but not on prevention. This is applicable for mental health issue too."

"We don't want to talk about mental health problems at all until the situation gets worse. Compared to women, men are reluctant in sharing problems," she said.

Lawmakers Aroma Dutta and Adiba Anjum Mita, Wahida Banu, Prof Taslima Yasmin and Nishat Sultana, also spoke at the event.

Make

FROM PAGE 3

fought for liberation with the principles of equality and democracy.

COAST Trust Executive Director Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said NGOs as civil society organisations should not only be limited to providing services, but raise their voice on civil rights and demand mediation.

They need to practice the values of human rights in their own organisations and create space for dialogue at all levels for socio-economic and political transformation, he said.

Journalist Bashanti Shaha said freedom of expression is a basic right, but Digital Security Act has created a sense of fear in exercising this right.

Afzal Hossain of RULFAO, Rajshahi; AKM Jashim Uddin of ADAB; Merina Lovely of Channel I; AHM Bazlur Rahman of BNNRRC, Sarati Shaha of SEED; Akbar Hossain of RPE, Rangpur; Anwar Zahid of ICDA, Barisal and Mostafa Kamal Akanda of COAST Trust also spoke at the programme.

Planning and Development Division Khulna University, Khulna

Tender No. KU/PD-229/2020-155 Date: 08.12.2020

e-Tender Notice No. 06/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of the work	Online tender closing and opening date
515658	WD9i	Construction of Teachers' Students' (TSC) & Auditorium	06-01-2021 13-00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to banking hours on e-GP System. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Dr. Uttam Kumar Majumder
Director (P & D)

GD-1968

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট

ভূমি ও ইমারত শাখা

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
Joydebpur, Gazipur-1701

Memo no. 12.21.0000.010.43.19.261 Date: 08.12.2020

e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender is invited Through National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of following works:

SI no	Tender ID No.	Tendering Method	Description of works	Online (e-GP system) tender publication date & time	Online (e-GP system) tender closing date & time
1.	506498	OTM	Construction of 50 nos. Seed bed at SRC Shibgonj Bogura	07-Dec-2020 16:20	24-Dec-2020 14:30
2	520983	OTM	Installation of Sprinkler Irrigation System at SRC Bogura	07-Dec-2020 16:05	24-Dec-2020 15:00

This is online tender, only e-Tender will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. Registration is essential to submit e-Tender.

Fees have to be deposited for downloading the tender documents from e-GP Portal through any registered bank. For further information please contact e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Engr. Md. Ferozur Rahman
Superintending Engineer (In-charge)

GD-1967

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
College Education Development Project (CEDP)
College Name: Mohammadpur Mohila College
College Address: Noorjahan Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education			
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/ National University			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Principal, Mohammadpur Mohila College			
4	Procuring Entity Code	N/A			
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6	Invitation for	Works			
7	Invitation Ref No	mme/cedp/otm/w-1/24			
8	Date	10/12/2020			
KEY INFORMATION					
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit)			
11	Development Partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
12	Project Code	224017200			
13	Project Name	College Education Development Project (CEDP)			
14	Tender Package No.	W-1			
15	Tender Package Name	Renovation of Classroom, Labs, Laboratories, Library & Toilets			
16	Tender Publication Date	10/12/2020			
17	Tender Last Selling Date	30/12/2020 Time:05:00 P.M			
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	31/12/2020 Time 2:00 PM			
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	31/12/2020 Time 2:30 PM			
20	Name & Address of the office	Mohammadpur Mohila College, Noorjahan Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207			
	Selling Tender Document				
	Receiving Tender Document				
	Opening Tender Document				
21	Place /Date/Time of Pre - Tender Meeting (Optional)	Shall not be held			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	1. The tenderer shall have a minimum number 03 years general experience in refurbishment activities (construction/renovation/repair/extension) and physical services. 2. The tenderer shall have satisfactory completion of refurbishment activities (construction/renovation/repair/extension) of minimum BDT 25,00,000 (Twenty five lac) only under maximum 01 contract in the last 05 years. 3. The required average annual construction turnover shall be greater than BDT 35,00,000 (Thirty five lac) only over the last 03 years 4. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be BDT 25,00,000 (Twenty five lac) only. 5. Other Criteria mentioned in the Tender Document.			
23	Brief Description of Goods	Floor tiles, Paint and sanitary work etc.			
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Contract, Section 6: Bill of Quantities			
25	Tender Document Price	BDT 1,500.00 (One Thousand Five Hundred)			
26	Tender Package Name	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion time in Weeks/Months
	Renovation of Classroom, Labs, Laboratories, Library & Toilets	W-1	Mohammadpur Mohila College	70,000.00Tk Seventy Thousand Taka Only	04 Months
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. AminulHaque			
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Principal			
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	College Name & Address: Mohammadpur Mohila College, Noorjahan Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207			
30	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: (02)9114442	Fax:	E-mail: mmdhakha91@yahoo.com	
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

Md. Aminul Haque
Principal
Mohammadpur Mohila College

GD-1965



A part of the road, near Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Lance Nayek Munshi Abdur Rouf Library and Memorial Museum in Faridpur's Madhukhali upazila, which was washed away by the Madhumoti river.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

Madhumoti erosion threatens Bir Shreshtha museum in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Lance Nayek Munshi Abdur Rouf Library and Memorial Museum in Madhukhali upazila is under threat of erosion by the Madhumoti river.

Eroding away different parts the lone road from Kamarkhali Bazar to Gandhokhali, the river has gradually reached within 150 metres of the museum.

Locals said they have been facing immense sufferings as a 300-metre portion of the road was washed away and 250 metres of another road behind the same museum was also washed away by the river in the last 30 days.

About five acres of cropland and three houses were also eroded by the Madhumoti during the same period, they added.

With large parts of the vital road gone in the river and turned unfit for vehicular movement, communications have become extremely difficult for inhabitants of 20 nearby villages, a number of

villagers told this correspondent.

Over six thousand residents of the villages rely on the road, total seven kilometres in length, for their daily commute. But now, it has become an arduous task to communicate or to reach hospitals in the upazila or district headquarters with critical patients, as they need to take a long detour through a private orchard, they also said.

Rickshaw-van puller Gafur Mollah, from Gandhokhali village, said riding the van on unpaved land like the orchard or others' private properties is a highly laborious ordeal.

Another villager, homemaker Salma Begum, said she and her family members were passing sleepless nights, as the river was now only five metres away from their home.

Rouf Nagar resident Miraj Khan said that although cracks have developed in half of his house already and it might be washed away by the river any moment, he cannot afford to remove it.

Librarian Munshi Saidur Rahman of Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Lance

Nayek Munshi Abdur Rouf Library and Memorial Museum said urgent measures are necessary to prevent the museum from collapsing into the river.

Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Lance Nayek Munshi Abdur Rouf's sister Zohra Begum, 59, said, "I request our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to protect the Bir Shreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Museum and my brother's ancestral land and birthplace from the erosion."

Contacted, Sultan Mahmud, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Faridpur, said they already spent Tk 59.65 lakh to dump sand-filled geotextile bags in a 45-metre-long stretch of the road, but the land there was still washed away.

They submitted a project proposal, with an estimated expense of Tk 950 crore, under which 14 kilometres of the bank of the Madhumoti river would be fortified permanently with boulders, in order to protect the area as well as the museum, he added.

Bangladesh Land Port Authority
T.C.B Bhaban (5th Floor)
Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
www.bsbk.gov.bd

Memo No. 18.15.0000.023.14.127.20-1412 Dated: 09 December 2020

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following Package from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through and registered bank's branches.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Last date & time of submission documents	Tender/proposal opening date & time
1.	Construction of Open Stack Yard, Internal Road, Parking Yard with Land Development at Balla Land Port, Chunarughat, Habiganj.	523989	14/01/2021 14:30pm	14/01/2021 15:00pm
2.	Construction of Boundary wall with Drain Guardroom, Gate and Land Development at Balla Land Port, Chunarughat, Habiganj.	523970	14/01/2021 13:00pm	14/01/2021 14:30pm

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Aminul Islam
Project Director
'Development of Balla Land Port' Project
Phone: 02-55013757

GD-1969



Workers and employees of Panchagarh Sugar Mills and sugarcane growers of the district jointly stage demonstration in front of the mill gate in Panchagarh Sadar upazila yesterday, demanding cancellation of the government's decision to shut down six state-owned sugar mills.

PHOTO: STAR

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Brahmanpara, District: Cumilla
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.1915.000.16.20-931 Date: 09-12-2020

e-Tender Notice No. 04/2020-2021 (Re-Tender)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works details in table-

Tender ID	Description of work
524902	Supplying of different equipment for COVID-19 at Brahmanpara Hospital, Brahmanpara, Cumilla.
524909	Supplying of High & Low Bench different School in Brahmanpara Upazila, Cumilla.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to **31 Dec 2020, 14.30 hour**.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Mohammed Saiful Islam
Upazila Engineer
Brahmanpara, Cumilla
E-mail: ue.brahmanpara@lged.gov.bd

GD-1962

Man, son killed in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Unidentified criminals stabbed a man and his teenage son to death allegedly over previous enmity in Randhunibari area in Sirajganj's Belkuchi upazila on Tuesday night.

The deceased are Siraj Sikdar, 55, of Char-Konabari area in the upazila, and his son Saydee Sikdar, 18.

Quoting locals, Officer in Charge (OC) of Belkuchi Police Station Golam Mostafa said a group of eight to ten criminals waylaid the duo while they were returning home from Randhunibari Bazar on a motorbike around 8:00pm. The gang stabbed them indiscriminately with sharp weapons, leaving them dead on the spot.

Siraj was accused in at least seven criminal case, including for murder and robbery, the OC said.

Missing boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police recovered the body of a seven-year-old boy in Sadar upazila yesterday, six days after he went missing on December 3.

The victim, Fahat Islam, son of Zafar Hawladar, was a Class I student at Jainkathi Government Primary School.

Police said Fahat went out of his house on December 3 afternoon and remained missing since then.

Locals spotted Fahat's body floating in a ditch and informed the police.

BFC
Biman Flight Catering Centre বিমান ফ্লাইট ক্যাটারিং সেন্টার

Invitation for International Tender Notice No. 41/2020

01	Agency	Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd.
02	Invitation for	Supply of Industrial Type Bakery Equipment for BFC.
03	Invitation for Ref:	DACCO/04/Equipments/2019/122 Dated: 06-05-2019
04	Tender document selling date	From 10-12-2020 to 05-01-2021 (During office hours).
05	Tender receiving date and time	Date: 06-01-2021 Time: 1200 Hrs BST
06	Tender opening date and time	Date: 06-01-2021 Time: 1500 Hrs BST
Note: The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. If any unavoidable situation arises during specified date then tender selling/closing/opening date will be shifted to next (working) day without further notice.		
07	Selling address of schedule (local)	(I) Address: a. Manager Finance, Biman Flight Catering Centre, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka. b. Manager Cash & Banking, Balaka Bhaban, Biman, Bangladesh Airlines, Dhaka.
08	Selling tender document (foreign)	(II) Address: Manager Finance, Biman, Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore, London, Jeddah, Riyadh and Kuala Lumpur.
09	Receiving tender document	a. BFC Main Security Gate, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka. b. Biman Balaka Bhaban, Security Counter Gate (Ground Floor), Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka.
10	Price of tender document (USD/BDT)	USD 25.00 (twenty-five) or BDT 2,000.00 (two thousand) only (non-refundable).
11	(i) Location	(ii) Tender security amount (USD/BDT)
	BFC/Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka	USD 4,800.00 (four thousand eight hundred) or BDT 4,00,000.00 (four lac) only.
12	Procuring entity & fund	General Manager, BFC, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka. Biman/BFCs own fund.
13	Official inviting tender	Dy-General Manager, BFC, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kurmitola, Dhaka. Phone: 880-2-8901760-64, Ex-46 Fax: 880-2-8901638.
14	Tender schedule and other related information will also be available at Biman website: www.biman-airlines.com for ready reference.	

GD-1963 Dy-General Manager, BFC

IBA INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

MBA ADMISSION TEST
(REGULAR PROGRAM)
Session 2020-2021

Required Academic Qualifications

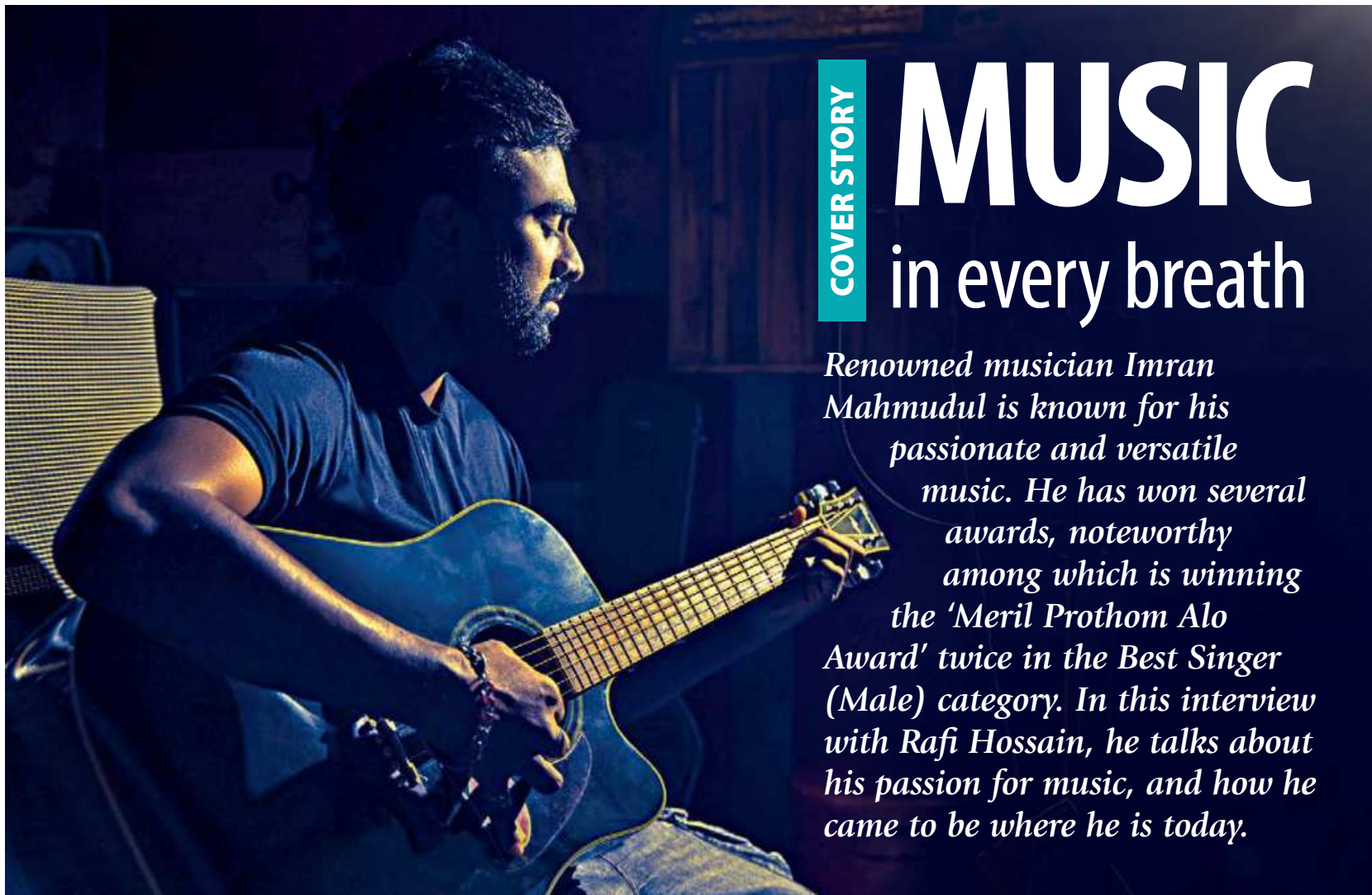
- Bachelor's degree in any discipline with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 out of 4.00 (or 2nd class).
- Minimum GPA of 3.00 out of 5.00 (or 2nd division) in both SSC and HSC exams.
- No 3rd division/class at SSC/HSC/bachelor's level of education.
- Minimum GPA of 2.00 in both O level and A level exams. For details, please visit our website.

Note: In order to be eligible for the test, an applicant must obtain published official result of his/her bachelor's degree on or before 31 December 2020.

- Launched in 1966, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program is the flagship program of Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka. Written test for the 2020-2021 session of the MBA program will be held on **Saturday, 09 January 2021 at 10:00 am**. The test is aimed at evaluating applicants' aptitude in Language, Mathematics, and Analytical Ability. An applicant must obtain a minimum qualifying score in each of these areas to pass the test.
- After qualifying in the written test, candidates must appear before an interview board and secure satisfactory marks to be admitted to the MBA program.
- An applicant with foreign degree(s) having a GMAT score of minimum 75 percentile may be exempted from taking the written test. However, s/he is required to appear before the interview board.
- For all foreign certificates/degrees (excluding O and A Levels), equivalence will be determined by the Equivalence Committee of IBA. Without such equivalence, applicants are not eligible to sit for the admission test.
- The application fee is Tk. 1200/-. The application must be submitted online by **Thursday, 31 December 2020**.
- For detailed application procedure, please visit: www.iba-du.edu or <http://iba.registrationbd.com>
- For further information, please call 01764119001 or 01764119002 between 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on any working day until 31 December 2020.

Director
Institute of Business Administration
University of Dhaka

GD-1966



COVER STORY MUSIC in every breath

Renowned musician Imran Mahmudul is known for his passionate and versatile music. He has won several awards, noteworthy among which is winning the 'Meril Prothom Alo Award' twice in the Best Singer (Male) category. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, he talks about his passion for music, and how he came to be where he is today.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we are here with popular singer Imran Mahmudul. Thank you so much for being with us. You are extremely popular among music lovers now, and are even compared to Arijit Singh. How do you view that?

Imran Mahmudul: Thank you so much for having me. Everyone has a different way of expressing their love, and I realise that comparing me to him comes from a place of love, so I respect it. However, I think that Arijit Singh is far more talented than I am. Comparing me to him doesn't seem fair, in my opinion.

Rafi Hossain: Can you talk about your journey into music?

Imran Mahmudul: As a child, I used to listen to music on the TV and of different artists and be inspired to follow their footsteps. I started learning music from fourth grade and kept practising. I later found out about a reality show, *Closeup 1 Bangladesh*. I participated in it for the first time in grade nine, but I got eliminated soon as I was so young. I knew I wasn't good enough yet to win the show, but I had this drive to succeed at some point. Then, I got to know about another reality show, *Shera Kontho*. I liked the judges there, so I decided to participate. I somehow managed to become the first runner-up even though I never thought I could. From then, my struggle began to establish my career. I was completely new in this scene, so I had no idea about the ropes of the industry. It took me 2008-2009 to slowly find my way and make original music.

Rafi Hossain: We don't see many artists making it who participate in reality shows. How were you able to beat that?

Imran Mahmudul: I can't speak for anyone else. My main target was making original music and taking them to the audience. I worked on my music from 2008 to 2014. I didn't do many stage performances during that time as many people do. I utilised it to groom myself and learn what to do to stay relevant in the industry. That really helped me in my career. I think this is what every musician coming from reality

shows should do.

Rafi Hossain: You are very popular among female music listeners and have definitely received many proposals. How do you deal with that?

Imran Mahmudul: I know their love is coming from a place of loving my music, and I appreciate all the love my fans shower me with. It inspires me to work harder on my music. However, I haven't received that many proposals as I'm not on social media often. Even if I do receive some, I very respectfully respond to them.

Rafi Hossain: You have shown interest in music direction very early on in your career which isn't very common. Why is that so?



Imran Mahmudul: When I was in the reality show, I was asked by interviewers what I wanted to do as a career. I would always say that I wanted to be a music director which would surprise them since I'm a singer. However, even as a child, I always wanted to direct music and was really interested in the music and composition. Previously, we used to only make the singers the centre stage at the expense of the music directors. Habib bhai and Fuad bhai were the ones who brought the concept of giving credit to the music directors where credit is due and that inspired me to pursue it. I even got the chance to learn from and work with Habib bhai who I'm a huge fan of. This really helped me.

Rafi Hossain: You have worked with many people, but fans seem to love the pairing of you and Kona. Do you

want stick with this pairing or stray away from it?

Imran Mahmudul: It really isn't up to me which pair of me with another singer the audience will love and accept. I have worked with many people, but fans saw something in our pair. The entire credit goes to the audience. Whether I stick with it or stray from it, is totally up to them. I don't think we have much of a hand in it.

Rafi Hossain: People say that some music has a techno or electronic sound to it which they seem to not like. What is your take on it?

Imran Mahmudul: It depends on how we use these sounds. Habib bhai and Fuad knows how to utilise these sounds well and incorporate them into his music. Even if we talk internationally, the song A. R. Rahman received an Oscar for, *Jai Ho*, has many electronic elements to it. If used correctly, we should definitely appreciate and accept it.

Rafi Hossain: Do you ever approach senior artists to sing to their tunes?

Imran Mahmudul: I have had the fortune of working with Bulbul chacha on a film's song. I haven't been able to work with some artists who I would have loved to.

Rafi Hossain: There is this saying that you aren't fully a singer if you aren't a playback singer. What do you think about it?

Imran Mahmudul: Being a playback singer is the ultimate dream of any singer here. We did not have the concept of albums back when we were little; we used to listen to the songs in films. However, I do not agree with that thought. Films' music does do a lot to establish a singer, but it isn't everything. If a singer doesn't get to sing for a film, their music is still worthwhile. Not being a playback singer can be just as fulfilling.

Rafi Hossain: Have you been able to make music for films?

Imran Mahmudul: Yes, I have made music for a number of films, both through singing and composing.

Rafi Hossain: Is there something specific you have always wanted to be asked in an interview that you have unfortunately never been asked?

Imran Mahmudul: I haven't ever thought of it like that. In my career of twelve years, I would like to think that my fans have been able to know quite a bit about me. Right now, I really don't have anything specific I want to talk about.

Rafi Hossain: Do you have a parting message?

Imran Mahmudul: I would like to request the readers to pray for my wellbeing and theirs as well. During this pandemic, being safe is the top priority. I hope that everybody maintains safety precautions. I would request you all to keep supporting me, so that I can keep making more music.

Rafi Hossain: It was lovely having you today.

Amina Hossain

GRAPE VINE

TANVIR TAREQ'S PROUD MOMENT



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A popular name in the entertainment journalism, Tanvir Tareq, is a singer, composer and television anchor. He has been associated with the music industry for more than two decades. Recently, the singer received the *Bangladesh National Film Award 2019* as the best composer for the song *Amar Mayer Achol* in the movie *Maya: The Lost Mother*. Tanvir said, "I feel overwhelmed to have received this prestigious award. I thank the jury board for honouring me. I consider an artist's life fulfilled upon receiving a *National Award*. It is one of the biggest achievements of my career. I lost my father thirteen years ago. He would have been the happiest to see me get the award."



Release of the film 'Bishwa Bundori'

Popular actor Siam Ahmed is currently passing a busy time with his film shoots. His film *Bishwa Sundori* directed by Chayanika Chowdhury is releasing tomorrow, December 11, 2020. In the film, Siam will be sharing his screen with actor Pori Moni. Siam said, "The movie is family friendly and has a great storyline. I hope the audience will appreciate it. My job as an actor is to perform and I have given my best. The success of the film depends on how the viewers will connect to it." Besides, Siam is still awaiting release of *Shaan*, *Operation Sundarban*, *Adventure of Sundarban*, and *Paap Punno*. Currently, he is shooting for the film *Damal* directed by Raihan Rafi.

Sarika in the Unknown

Recently, actor Sarika was spotted shooting in different locations in Dhaka for a new drama, *Chena Mukh Ochena Thikana*. The drama is directed by Shakhawat Manik and scripted by MD Saifur Rahman Kajol. The cast includes Irfan Sajjad, Mili Bashar and Fakhru Bashar, among others. The director said, "It is made based on a romantic story which I feel the audience will enjoy. Each and every moment in the story will connect to the viewers. I hope this project becomes a success." The drama will be released on *Silver Screen YouTube* channel, and also be telecasted on a private television channel.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

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

TAISH

Taish is an Indian Hindi-language thriller drama film. It has been directed by Bejoy Nambiar, produced by Deepak Mukut Bejoy Nambiar and Nishant Pitti, and stars Pulkit Samrat, Kriti Kharbanda, and Jim Sarbh, among others. The film explores friendship, love, and loss, and focuses on two friends who get involved with criminals, while attending a wedding. It was released on October 29, 2020.



ANOTHER ROUND

Another Round is a Danish-Swedish drama film. It has been directed by Thomas Vinterberg, produced by Sisse Graum Jørgensen and Kasper Dissing, and stars Mads Mikkelsen, Thomas Bo Larsen, Magnus Millang, and Lars

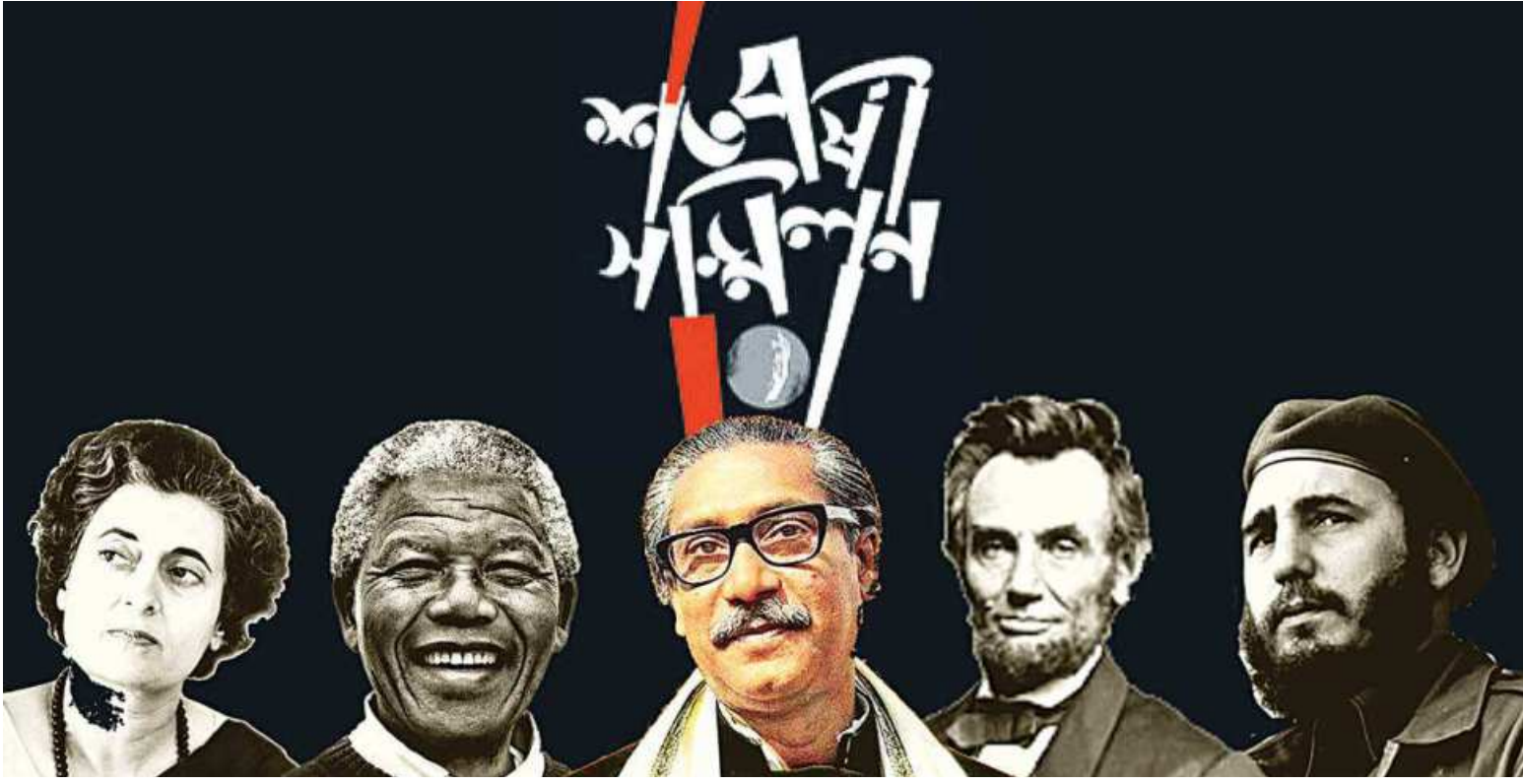
Ranthe, among others. The story focuses on the experience of four teachers, who, as an experiment, begin drinking at work, and gradually increase the alcohol content overtime. It was released on September 12, 2020.



Tale of the Nine Tailed

Tale of the Nine Tailed is a South Korean television fantasy, action, and romantic drama. It has been directed by Kang Shin-hyo, produced by Park Jin-hyung and Park Seung-woo, and stars Lee Dong-wook, Jo Bo-ah, and Kim Bum, among others. The series focuses on the human form of a mountain guardian searching for the reincarnation of his lost first love, while also fighting evil forces. It was released on October 7, 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta



COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

BOOK REVIEW: DRAMA

A Conference of World Leaders

ASIF NAWAZ

There are instances when fiction and history go in synchrony and historical accuracies demand an artistic touch. The play titled *Shotoborshi Shonmilon* (*The Centennial Conference*) written by Abdus Selim and Jayed Ul Ehsan, published by the Bangladesh Theatre Archives, could well be on that list. Drawing inspiration from the two memoirs written by Bangabandhu, the authors focus on the personality and charisma behind one of the most revered world leaders.

The premise takes the audience to the ascension of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to an elite club of past world leaders. It starts in the New York Public Library amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. As the library closes in a hurry with books unattended, we are led to the other world with Bangabandhu, Indira Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln,

Anwar Sadat, Martin Luther King Jr. and Fidel Castro, while in the background, on television, President Donald Trump is declaring an emergency.

Upon Bangabandhu's request, the ceremony at the New York Public Library is shifted to the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum. The leaders begin talking about world politics, literature, class struggle and human emancipation. Fidel Castro is initially refused access due to age restrictions, but Bangabandhu requests the others to give Castro special access to the conversation that follows. Most of the talks centre on Bangabandhu's work, his feelings towards his people, and his life in prison.

"Those who never went into a prison would never be able to perceive it! People think that prisons are enclosed with walls, with prisoners crammed together—they aren't. People in prison aren't humans, they become machines. Inside a prison, there are many small prisons. Many small prisons..." (translated)

Shotoborshi Shonmilon reveals Bangabandhu beyond his political identity; we see him as a person who is sensible, compassionate, and a Bengali man from whom love emanates towards his family, his fellow inmates, plants, animals, and chiefly towards the people of Bengal. His famous quote, "I can't deceive my people," reflects his ironclad will and the positivity that he clutched on to until the end of his life. The playwrights deserve accolades for

their portrayal of Bangabandhu's prison life, during which he dealt with loneliness and was saddened by the suffering of his fellow inmates. He cooked and distributed food for them, planted seeds in the gardens, took care of an ill rooster and even took lessons from the crows, all while being vehemently attacked by mosquitoes.

A surprise guest appears in honour of Bangabandhu as the play is about to end where it started, at the New York Public Library. The aura of the luminaries remains, offering hope that the world can heal itself from the raging pandemic and ignorance.

Historical drama is not a new premise for these authors. Abdus Selim is the Bangla Academy Prize-winning veteran translator, academic, playwright, and a celebrated face in theatre. Jayed Ul Ehsan is an academic with a deep understanding of performance arts from both the artistic and theoretical perspective. This play displays their individual contributions and their strengths of showmanship in harmony, through a bold attempt to display the inner workings of Bangabandhu, who has mostly been explored through his political life. The subtle contrasts between past and present leaders is a major strength of the script. A play of this length has to be seen performed on stage.

Asif Nawaz teaches English Literature at Central Women's University.

Shotoborshi Shonmilon reveals Bangabandhu as sensible, compassionate, and a man from whom love emanates towards his family, his fellow inmates, and chiefly the people of Bengal.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

An Ethiopian Story of War

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

The first Italo-Ethiopian War broke out in 1895, as Italian soldiers marched from Italian Eritrea towards Ethiopia. The Battle of Adwa witnessed Ethiopia's decisive victory in warding off Italian invaders from its soil. This lasted until 1935, when Mussolini's fascist military launched another invasion, plunging the two countries into another two year long war.

Maaza Mengiste's novel *The Shadow King* (Canongate, 2019), which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize this year, takes place against this landscape. As much as it is a story about war, it is also one of women's involvement on the battlefield. In a Literary Hub essay titled "Writing About the Forgotten Black Women of the Italo-Ethiopian War", Mengiste wrote, "...when we speak of war, we speak of tested resolve and broken spirits and wounded bodies and imagine them as masculine figures." She contradicts this impulse by fictionalising the story of her great-grandmother, Getey, who joined the war to fight against Italian troops.

In this regard, *The Shadow King* does an excellent job by narrating in great detail what it means to be a woman and a soldier.

Hirut, an orphaned maid, struggles to navigate her life in Kidane and his wife Aster's suffocating household. But Aster, who has recently suffered a miscarriage, grapples with jealousy and rage as she senses the rumblings of a romance between her husband and the maid. Just like Mengiste's great-grandmother, Aster had been married off as a child to an adult Kidane, and a particularly chilling chapter in the book portrays the violence wrought by this child marriage, which may remind readers of a similar scene from Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2008).

After the first few chapters, the scenes of domesticity give way as Italy begins its invasion and all the characters move into



tents up in the hills. To Kidane's dismay—and much like Mengiste's own great-grandmother, who sued her father when he objected to her enlisting—Aster makes an abrupt decision to join the troops. The new reality in this part of the text revolves around wartime necessities including medical and battle training, chalking out ambush strategies, and designing flanks for the battlefield. At one point we witness Aster's trials in prison, where others like herself are subjugated and reduced from fierce soldiers to insignificant mounds.

Meanwhile, characters like Captain Fucelli and the soldier-photographer Ettore

bring in the Italian perspectives—and therefore the antagonists' psychology—on the war, making the story more layered and dynamic. While Captain Fucelli is the typical, hyper-masculine villain with an overpowering sense of narcissism and nationalism, through Ettore we observe the ethical turmoil inside a human-mind that is witnessing violence, and, in this case, is becoming complicit by preserving the acts through photography.

Throughout these events, the clear, unpretentious, and lyrical prose buoys the narrative—particularly during the battle scenes—to cinematic heights. Consider these sentences: "Look: a heap of burnt huts, Ibrahim, openmouthed and lionhearted, leading his men across the rubble field... See: thick red ribbons of blood. See: vicious sun curving against the belly of the sky." This style of narration offers a vantage point from which the reader can take everything in, be it the ragged, rocky slopes of the mountains or the Italians and Ethiopians melting into dust and sound on the battlefield.

The text is also peppered with short supplementary segments titled "Photos", "Choruses", and "Interludes", which serve as commentary on the scenes unfolding in the text. While they do help to add context, I personally felt worn out by them, because they do not contribute much to the story.

Given its hype, I had expected that *The Shadow King* would leave me thinking long after it ended. But the attention to detail which had a calming effect on me in the first half began to wither away in the second. I felt increasingly disconnected from the characters and their emotions from that point on. The novel is engaging when it begins, but this does not persist until the last page.

Shah Tazrian Ashrafi is a contributor.

BOOK REVIEW: NON-FICTION

All The President's Stories

STEVE DONOGHUE

A Promised Land (Crown Publishing, 2020), former US President Barack Obama's long-heralded post-presidency memoir, is now here, and it arrives at a national moment when a pandemic is surging at steep, horrifying numbers in the US and when Donald Trump, the outgoing President, is loudly claiming he was cheated of victory by the Deep State and the late Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. Obama's two-term Vice President Joe Biden was elected President over a month ago and will take office in a country where over 80 million of its citizens have been convinced by his predecessor that he's a thief and an impostor.

It's a natural human impulse to want *A Promised Land* to speak to the moment, and it decidedly, almost obstinately does not.

There are hints, of course. Looking at the seismic changes in the political landscape during his lifetime, Obama watches for warning tremors and centres on the same one many earlier commenters have: John McCain's selection of Alaska governor Sarah Palin as his running mate in 2008, despite the fact that, as Obama observes, "on just

even so, he's no fool; long, long after he must have seen Donald Trump for the thuggish proto-fascist he is, he still remained silent.

And, maddeningly, he mostly remains silent still in *A Promised Land*. As readers might expect from the spellbinding author of *Dreams from My Father* (1995) and *The Audacity of Hope* (2006), this new book is both unfailingly engaging and often wonderfully written (about the Illinois state capitol building, for instance: "On any given day, under the high dome of the capitol, you'd see a cross section of America on full display, a Carl Sandburg poem come to life"). Its gallery of characters, from foreign leaders to White House staff to the author's family, are realised in vivid, memorable prose throughout. Likewise the drama of Obama's unlikely rise to the presidency and the key points of his two terms in office—including dealing with the Bush-era economic recession and finding and killing Osama bin Laden—makes for gripping storytelling. The language can be salty (surely this book has more f-bombs than all previous Presidential memoirs combined), but the narrative bristles with intelligence.



COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

about every subject relevant to governing the country she had absolutely no idea what the hell she was talking about." In one of his book's few gestures at the current state of the country, Obama writes that elevation of Palin to national politics in order to appeal to an extremely uninformed rural Republican base of voters was a harbinger of worse things to come, "a larger, darker reality in which partisan affiliation and political expedience would threaten to blot out everything—your previous positions; your stated principles; even what your own senses, your eyes and ears, told you to be true."

There can hardly be a reader at the end of 2020 who doesn't wish that *A Promised Land* dealt more often with that darker reality. Obama at one point worries that over the last few years he might have been too reticent and reserved, "too tempered in speaking the truth as I saw it, too cautious in either word or deed."

This is putting it mildly. For years, while Donald Trump's administration ripped apart his legacy, separated little children from their parents at the southern border (and destroyed the records necessary to reunite them), attempted to coerce foreign countries to provide propaganda against Trump's political rivals, and debased the dignity of the Oval Office, for years of this, Obama stayed silent when his immense popularity and oratorical gifts would have been a great boon to the forces of resistance against the evils of the Trump years. No doubt Obama thought he was upholding the unspoken tradition that former US Presidents refrain from pointedly criticizing their successors. But

All of which feels infuriatingly beside the point, like reading a four-star review of the dinner service on the *Titanic*.

A Promised Land appears in bookstores at the same time when Donald Trump is calling the election he lost "fake" and "rigged" and fomenting sedition among his millions of followers and minions inside and outside the government. This is unprecedented behaviour in a US President and unbelievably dangerous for the country. It strains the patience to watch it all accumulate day by day while reading Obama rehash—however eloquently—the quotidian of his time in office.

As clearly as he sees everything else, he sees the dangers Trump represents, sees the kind of person he is. "[Trump] understood instinctively what moved the conservative base most, and he offered it up in an unadulterated form," Obama writes. "He'd figured out that whatever guardrails had once defined the boundaries of acceptable political discourse had long since been knocked down."

A Promised Land is the most engrossing and effective US Presidential memoir since Bill Clinton's *My Life* (2004), an unfailingly good reading experience through its whole considerable length. If its target readers are a bit distracted by the fact that the US is teetering on the edge of destruction, well, maybe someday Obama will write a book about that too.

Steve Donoghue is a book critic whose work has appeared in the Boston Globe, the Wall Street Journal, the Christian Science Monitor, the Washington Post, and the National.

BOOK NEWS

THE DS BOOKS-ROKOMARI ONLINE BOI MELA!

STAR BOOKS DESK

From December 9-14, 2020, Daily Star Books and Rokomari will be jointly hosting an online book fair! All Daily Star Books publications will have special discounts on Rokomari. For more information, follow fb.com/DailyStarBooks, @thedailystarbooks on Instagram, and @DailyStarBooks on Twitter.



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 10, 2020, AGRAHAYAN 25, 1427 BS

ACC full of sound and fury

But we need results!

WITH corruption entrenched in every artery and vein of society, the Anti-Corruption Commission keeps having to shift its focus from one sector to another and, as a result, investigations into major corruption scandals have slowed. At the start of the year, the ACC pledged to expose those responsible for the casino business and hold them to account. A few big names, including some ruling party lawmakers, had even surfaced during the early stages of the anti-casino drive. However, with the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and investigations into irregularities in the health sector thereafter, the anti-casino drive has petered out.

While one can sympathise with the ACC when it comes to the amount of corruption cases that it has to deal with, it has to be noted that the ACC is at least partially responsible for this piling up of cases. Where was the ACC when corruption started to take root in all of these sectors and grew deeper and deeper? It is well-known throughout the world that once corruption establishes itself, it is extremely difficult to prevent it from metastasising, which is why it is most prudent to address corruption as early as possible. In Bangladesh, it is the exact opposite, as it seems the ACC is only allowed by government higher ups to investigate corruption once it becomes near intolerable to the masses—at which point the ACC prosecutes a few small fish to prevent the pitchforks from coming out.

But corruption cannot be addressed like this. Without cutting off the head from which it arises, corruption will continue to plague the nation. And herein lies the weakness of the ACC, that it is either reluctant or is fearful to prosecute members of influential and powerful quarters who are mainly at the root of corruption.

This must change if corruption is to be addressed and for the nation to prosper. If the government is really interested in curbing corruption, it has to empower the ACC and other concerned authorities to the point where they are no longer fearful to go after the masterminds behind all these corrupt initiatives. If need be, they must also be equipped with adequate manpower and whatever else is required. Otherwise, no matter how many cosmetic drives and investigations are conducted, corruption will continue to be the biggest impediment to Bangladesh's progress and its prosperity.

Banking sector vulnerable to cyber crimes

Why is the central bank's directive not being followed?

IT is worrying that almost five years after the USD 101 million cyber heist from the Bangladesh Bank's account with the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, most banks in the country still do not have an effective cyber security system. Reportedly, only four out of 60 banks in the country have set up cyber security operation centres in line with a Bangladesh Bank directive to prevent large-scale cyberattacks. After giving the directive in 2016, the central bank has also written to the banks from time to time asking them to put in place a cyber-security system, but to no avail.

While most banks seem uninterested in setting up such a system as they would need additional funds for the purpose, there are also many banks which cannot set up the system despite having the financial capability. The problem they are facing is the lack of a skilled manpower to do the job.

As more and more people are becoming dependent on online banking during this pandemic, our banking system is now even more vulnerable to cyber risks, according to experts. And the risks will increase further in the days ahead due to the rapid expansion of digital banking. Therefore, there is an immediate need to install such a system in all banks which would monitor and improve their security posture while preventing, detecting, analysing and responding to cyber-security incidents.

Since a lack of skilled manpower is one of the main reasons for many banks' failure to put the system in place, the government agencies should help create skilled manpower in the banking sector through their IT security units. As we know, the police and Rab have strong wings to tackle cyber-attacks, so they can also play a positive role in improving the skills of the IT officials in banks. The central bank should also fix a deadline for the banks for setting up the cyber security operation centres. Given what is at stake, this must be done immediately and followed through by the central bank.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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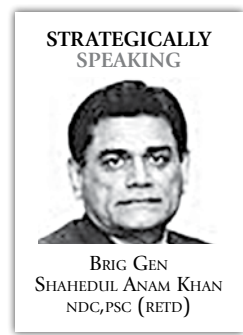
More female-friendly public toilets needed

Commuting has become essential for both men and women in their daily lives. But female travellers often face a lot of problems during their journey due to the dearth of female-friendly public toilets across our country. And most of the existing toilets are without locks, proper lighting and adequate water. There is no facility to manage menstruation hygienically. Female travellers need a safe toilet to change their feminine hygiene products and dispose them properly.

It is easier for men to urinate outside than it is for women. Female travellers often restrict their food and water consumption to delay the urge to use toilets which can trigger many physical complications. I hope the concerned authorities will take appropriate measures to establish more female-friendly toilets everywhere so that we can travel safely and our mobility remains unhindered.

Fawzia Khanum Ahona, by email

Why can't Iran have its own Samson Option?



STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

IT is now officially known that Israel carried out the targeted killing of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. According to a senior US administration official, Israel was behind

the assassination (CNN, Kylie Atwood, December 2). It's a fair guess too that the US was privy to the act, since in the past, Israel had shared information about their covert killing missions with the US, although the latter would not admit it. Killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh by a remote-controlled weapon, as alleged by Iran, was among the many acts of Israeli aggression in violation of international laws and norms. He was also not the first Iranian scientist to have been assassinated—many before him fell victim to Israel's targeted killings too. They were targeted as part of Israel's plan to decapitate Iran's nuclear programme. Between 2010 and 2012, four Iranian nuclear scientists were assassinated, while another was wounded in an attempted murder.

Given the Israeli article of faith—not to allow Iran or, for that matter, any Middle Eastern country to acquire nuclear capability, because that would pose an existential threat to Israel—its nuclear policy has received the endorsement of successive US governments since the Nixon administration. And its nuclear weaponisation programme has been helped by several western countries, France giving the lead.

The purpose of the latest killing may have been motivated by several factors. One of those could be to force a precipitate reaction from Iran which would then provide an excuse for Donald Trump to bomb the country, something he was raring to do since his defeat in the US presidential election became clear. But whatever may be the reason, the killing will likely harden Iran's position on the nuclear issue and compel it to hasten its nuclear programme. Whichever way Iran chooses to react, and the time of that, will wait until after the inauguration of the new US president, Joe Biden, on January 20, 2021.

The killing of Fakhrizadeh should fall in the category of acts of terror. Fakhrizadeh's is among the many targeted killings that have become a tool of war being justified as acts of self-defence. Several other countries have perfected this stock-in-trade art led by the US and Israel, the most brazen and blatant manifestation of which was the drone killing employed frequently by the Obama regime in Afghanistan, and the latest being the killing of the IRGC Commander Qasem Soleimani in January this year. But no one has the gumption to call these killings acts of terrorism, because these are being perpetrated by states with big and powerful armies. The question that one is forced to ask is, when is an act of terror not an act of terror? The answer is—when such acts are committed by the US or Israel. Recall how the EU reacted to the Russian poisoning of opposition leader and outspoken Putin critic Alexei Navalny by

slapping sanctions on six senior Russian officials to "combat the use of chemical weapons". Not a word expressed in this case. So much for principles!

Fakhrizadeh's "crime" was that he was leading Iran's nuclear programme. What, may I ask, would have been the international reaction—Israeli reaction in particular—if Ernest Bergmann, known as the father of the Israeli bomb, had been assassinated in the late 50s during the mid-stages of Israel's nuclear programme? From an apparently innocuous "atom

right of self-defence by any means, it won't accord others the same right. Iran is accused by the West—the US and Israel in particular—of supporting Hamas and the Islamic jihad in Palestine and of exporting arms to support conflicts in the Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and Iraq. And to them, such an Iran possessing weapons of mass destruction would be a threat to international peace. These detractors would do us a world of good if they would draw up statistics to show the number of conflicts and resultant

in a way that an Iranian programme would not be, both because of Israel's roots in the Holocaust and because it fought a series of defensive wars against its neighbours. Israel has never given any reason to doubt its solely defensive nature. Israel has never brandished its capabilities to exert regional influence, cow its adversaries or threaten its neighbours." They forget that Israel is occupying Lebanese and Syrian lands illegally. As for browbeating and intimidating other countries, Israel



A protestor holds a picture of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iran's top nuclear scientist, during a demonstration against his killing in Tehran, Iran, on November 28, 2020.

PHOTO: MAJID ASGARIPUR/WANA VIA REUTERS

for peace programme" commenced during the Eisenhower regime, Israel now has reportedly 90 nuclear warheads (400 by some accounts). There is no ambiguity regarding its nuclear weapons programme. All doubts were erased when Mordechai Vanunu spilled the beans to the media in 1986.

It is not only that Israel has a substantial stockpile of nuclear warheads in its arsenal, the country is also adding to it regularly—all for its security. According to a SIPRI report of June 2020, the number of nuclear warheads in Israel rose to 90, up from 80 in 2019. And these weapons are meant to deter Israeli enemies. And if a situation were to occur where Israel's survival was threatened, it would exercise its "Samson Option." The Israeli nuclear programme was initiated during the time of David Ben-Gurion. As Seymour Hersh says in his book "The Samson Option", Ben-Gurion and other Israeli leaders "were determined that no future enemy would be able to carry out another Holocaust. Just as Samson bought down the temple and killed himself along with his enemies, so would Israel destroy those who sought its destruction."

But while Israel arrogates to itself the

deaths and killings caused by the US policy of intervention, pre-emption and illegal wars since the end of the WWII, and how much population displacement those have caused. Iran can't be trusted with the bomb, but it was the US, the most "civilised" country in the world, that perpetrated the most uncivilised, heinous and inhuman act in recent history, dropping nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The US accuses Iran of being the greatest threat to world peace but international public opinion informs us otherwise. It is the US that is considered the greatest threat to world peace.

I must state a disclaimer here. I am a pacifist despite being a soldier (I believe there are none more pacifist than soldiers). I also believe that possessing nuclear weapons is immoral and indefensible, and all nuclear weapons must be done away with. But we have a hypocritical situation where Iran is undergoing rigid sanctions on "suspicions" only of attempting to acquire the bomb, while the Western world is happy to live with a nuclear Israel, asserting that "Israel's weapons are morally and historically defensible

doesn't have to do any of those things. The US is there to do it for them.

Like Israel felt after its forced inception, Iran is in danger too. It faces a hostile neighbourhood. A wedge has been driven through the Muslim world, exploiting the Shia-Sunni divide. Some Arab countries have established diplomatic ties with Israel; a few others may follow. This is to isolate Iran and force its submission. And it seems that some Indian scholars are selling the Israeli position in South Asia espousing the benefits of recognising Israel. While the US shamefacedly blames Iran for its alleged support of terrorism, it has no qualms to be in bed with its Arab allies that are alleged to be doing the same.

Every country, big and small, has the right to employ every means and measures it deems appropriate and adequate to defend itself. International compacts that perpetuate double standards must be rectified to become equitable documents. Iran has the right to defend itself—and it should have its own "Samson Option" to the extent of a credible deterrence.

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (Retd), is a former Associate Editor of The Daily Star.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Denial of access to family planning – another form of gender-based violence

CAROLINE CROSBIE and SHAMIMA PARVEEN

HISTORICALLY, around the world women's decision-making capacity regarding reproductive health choices had been limited by their husbands and society. Bangladesh has been a leader in family planning programming transforming women's access to essential services. Currently, over 52 percent of women have access to and use a modern contraceptive. However, more is needed to ensure all have access to these options.

There are currently 7.4 million women in Bangladesh who would like to use a family planning (FP) method, yet do not have access to them. Despite services being available, many women are unable to exercise their right to access them. The Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey 2015 conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics indicated that women do not enjoy equal participation as men in household decisions. Furthermore, inequality in household decision-making and finances affects women's ability to independently access family planning.

But even with access, women often face challenges in negotiating with their spouses regarding their FP method choices. Almost two-thirds (72.6 percent) of ever-married women experienced one or more forms of violence by their husbands at least once in their lifetime (VAW 2015, BBS). Shahina, a family welfare visitor



PHOTO: DECCANCHRONICLE.COM

from Sitakunda, Chattogram, has often addressed gender-based violence while providing family planning services. She remembers an incident when a husband brought his wife to the facility, who experienced a method failure and became pregnant. The husband openly scolded his wife for becoming pregnant in front of everyone and was about to beat her when Shahina had to intervene to stop him. Shahina was able to provide counselling to that couple which led to better understanding between them, and the husband supported his wife's maternal health care afterwards.

There is a correlation between women who experience gender-based violence and a decreased ability to negotiate using family planning methods, making them more vulnerable to unintended pregnancies. Furthermore, as mobility is restricted during this Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a spike in gender-based violence in Bangladesh requiring recognition of the impact that gender has on access to family planning and other health services. Greater collaboration among all social services is needed to address and eliminate violence.

New strategies are needed to increase men, boys, and other family members' positive engagement in reproductive health as well as innovative approaches to help health service providers overcome barriers to providing gender-responsive services and effectively address violence against women.

As we observe the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, we call upon all, including men and boys, to actively contribute to gender equality and to help eliminate gender-based violence. We applaud the government of Bangladesh's commitment to zero tolerance for gender-based violence. The United States Agency for International Development through its USAID Accelerating Universal Access to Family Planning Project, also known as Shukhi Jibon, is supporting the government of Bangladesh to address gender integration in reproductive health services to reduce the unmet need for contraception as well as to contribute to the elimination of gender-based violence.

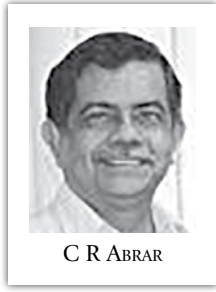
We all can contribute to eliminating such violence, especially during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, by supporting women and girls in the decisions they make and help them to stay safe and free of violence.

Caroline Crosbie is Senior Country Director, Pathfinder International, Bangladesh and Project Director, USAID Shukhi Jibon Project. Shamima Parveen is Gender Manager, USAID Shukhi Jibon Project, Pathfinder International, Bangladesh.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

State, Intellectuals and Dwindling Civic Space

The state of freedom of expression and academic freedom in Bangladesh



C R ABRAR

D ECEMBER is a month of celebration. Early in this month in 1971, the final assault on the barbarous Pakistani army was launched by the gallant freedom fighters. By mid-month, the triumphant fighters stomped the streets of the capital as the city-dwellers, breathing the fresh air of independence, welcomed them by unremittingly showering petals on the open jeeps that carried their brave sons and daughters.

The unadulterated festivity and mirth soon tapered off as the news of the killing of intellectuals began to emerge. Even in the throes of being routed, the retreating enemy and its local cohorts dealt a severe blow to the nation. They brutally killed a host of eminent intellectuals—doctors, engineers, professors, journalists, and the like.

Despite their differences in age, vocation and gender, the underpinning commonality of the martyred intellectuals was their free spirit. They were guided by their conscience and professed what they stood for. Theirs were unfettered souls that longed for freedom, not only for their own selves but for the people as a whole. They acted as the nation's beacon in those difficult but vibrant times of long democratic struggle and occupation. It is precisely because of this non-violent act of nurturing the aspiration of the nation that they had to pay the ultimate price. In their pursuit of chasing their dream for an egalitarian society that would ensure justice, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, their eventual loyalty was to the people. As individuals, they might have had political preferences, but it was their conscience that guided them.

Unfortunately, almost 50 years after independence, the role of public intellectuals appears to have suffered a major reversal. Instead of being led by the reason of right or wrong, in most instances, intellectuals of the day are steered by partisan fidelity. It is not the principles that shape their actions—rather a blind trust in the party, its nebulous ideology, and the leader, as well as aspirations for posts, positions, perks and pecuniary gains often become their motivating factors. All these have resulted in the gradual erosion of the civil society in Bangladesh. It will not be incorrect to claim that by now, the civil society

has largely been split along party lines. Principles and ideology that underline any robust civil society gradually gave way to conformism, self-seeking and kowtowing. All these have contributed to the emergence of an all-powerful state.

The civic institutions that played a formidable role in resisting the military dictatorship of the Pakistani period—such as the bar, journalists' unions and teachers' associations—have, by now, for all practical purposes, become appendages of the ruling establishment. Instead of mounting a challenge to the status quo, those have become bastions for defending state action, often rationalising patent onslaught on citizens' rights and entitlements.

The absence of effective people's resistance has enabled the state under successive regimes to frame laws and regulations curbing their

exacerbated as election, as a method to change government, was effectively weakened. This, in turn, has resulted in beefing up coercive apparatuses of the state. The securitisation process adversely impacted on the people as their fundamental rights, including those of freedom of expression, press and assembly as well as academic freedom, were substantially curtailed. All these are critical elements for the sustenance of a democratic polity.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has thrown further challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. This new reality has put inordinate pressure on the state institutions, particularly in the health sector. The government's management of the crisis triggered a range of responses from different quarters, including researchers, health professionals and academics. What's striking is the state's responses to such

cell was expanded to monitor if such misinformation is propagated in the social media. Towards the end of May, the media and publicity wing of police headquarters informed that Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission had announced the disbanding of 50 websites and launched an enquiry to check who are involved in the administering of 82 more social media accounts that spread rumours (Somoy TV, 01.02.2020).

In a bizarre development, an institutional investigation was launched against a researcher of Brac University for conducting unauthorised research along with a researcher of North South University on the likelihood of the spread of the virus that may affect 500,000 people in the absence of effective measures by the government. The researchers based their study on the model developed by a renowned epidemiologist of the prestigious Imperial College of London. Disseminating findings of a scientific study concerning a public health emergency surely falls within the ambit of academic freedom.

On May 13, in a circular issued by the authorities, the teachers of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology were asked to adhere to the said Order of the department of public administration. Likewise, on May 2, the doctors, teachers and nurses of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University were asked to refrain from engaging with the media without prior permission of the authorities.

For expressing their reaction to the death of a former minister, two university teachers were charged with defamation. Kazi Zahidur Rahman of Rajshahi University commented on the alleged corruption in the health sector during the tenure of the minister, albeit without naming him. Likewise, Sirajum Munira of Begum Rokeya University was also accused of insulting the deceased minister. Following an outcry of the ruling party, the university authorities filed a complaint with the police despite the fact that Munira had apologised and deleted the comments. Munira was put in custody for days, and unable to take the pressure, her father passed away, a day before she secured bail.

Intolerance of diversity of opinion also triggered violence on different groups. On November 4, 2019, students belonging to the student wing of the ruling party, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), swooped on the students of Jahangirnagar University demanding an investigation into allegations of corruption against the Vice Chancellor. In another infamous case, now-suspected members of BCL brutally killed Abrar Fahad of BUET for

his alleged Facebook comments critical of a deal signed between Bangladesh and India.

A number of students, many in their teens, were detained for days and improperly treated in custody for their involvement in the quota reform movement (July 2018) and road safety movement (August 2018). On August 4, 2018, the police reportedly fired rubber bullets and tear gas on high school students demanding improved road safety. The students were exercising their constitutional right to express views on those issues. Faculty members expressing solidarity with the quota reform movement were not spared either.

On September 19, 2019, a student of Cox's Bazar International University was suspended after a video featuring Rahima Akter went viral, in which she revealed her Rohingya identity and expressed her desire to pursue education in human rights. The university authorities took the action after a campaign gained traction calling for Akter to be sent back to Myanmar. The action was in breach of fundamental human rights to education and academic freedom.

In another worrisome development in September 2020, a Dhaka University professor, Hasan Morshed Khan, faced trumped-up sedition charges, had his position terminated and was denied access to his residence on campus, all for publishing an opinion piece in a national daily.

The contempt for academic freedom was brazenly demonstrated when the launching of Professor Ali Riaz's book *"Voting in a Hybrid Regime"* at Heidelberg University, Germany was disrupted by Bangladesh government loyalists on December 7, 2019. The representative of the Bangladesh mission present at the meeting noted that "some leaders and activists of Bangladesh Awami League came from Frankfurt and some other places... They might not have liked the discussion he wrote in his book."

The above narrative clearly demonstrates that the civic space allowing freedom of expression and academic freedom is under threat in Bangladesh. This deters critical thinking and intellectual debate. Restraints, censorship, sanction and retaliation by the state, other institutions and special interest groups are fast eroding the much-celebrated Muktiyuddher Chetona (spirit of the war of liberation) which the martyred intellectuals stood for. It's time we, the citizens, stood in union to protect our rights.

C R Abrar is an academic with an interest in rights and migration issues. He acknowledges the support of Rezaur Rahman Lenin.



rights. Included among those were the Special Powers Act, Printing Presses and Publications Act, sedition law, blasphemy law, defamation law and the like. The rise of the phenomena of violent extremism and terrorism has provided a fresh opportunity to the state to flex its muscles, further encroaching on people's rights. A plethora of laws legalising wiretapping and regulating internet, NGOs and the media, including the draconian Digital Security Act, were enacted.

Over time, the executive branch became disproportionately powerful, and the structures and institutions that helped uphold pluralism, rule of law, separation of power, transparency and accountability augmenting the democratic dispensation began to lose efficacy. The alienation of the ruling elite from the masses was further

observations, which led to further shrinking of rights to freedom of expression and academic freedom.

From the beginning of the pandemic, the government imposed restrictions on the free flow of news about the impact of Covid-19 and its handling of it. The purported aim of the effort was to shield state's weaknesses in managing the crisis, such as timely acquisition and distribution of personal protective equipment, setting up of testing centres, ensuring supply of testing equipment, giving priority to certain groups of people in testing and treatment and the like.

On March 25, the government issued a memo announcing the formation of a cell tasked to monitor if 30 private television channels spread misinformation and rumours. The following day, the remit of the

Intolerance and a repressive legal regime: A twin threat to freedom of expression

SULTAN MOHAMMED ZAKARIA

O N October 6, Robiul Islam Khandokar, 35, a district correspondent of the national daily Sangbad in Rajbari, wrote a Facebook status appealing to the prime minister: "Honourable Prime Minister[,] an utterly deranged person is trying to cause unrest in the peaceful Rajbari." (My translation)

Robiul was apparently trying to alert the prime minister to the unlawful activities of someone in the district. He, however, forgot to place a comma after the title of the country's leader. Little did he know that this oversight would be construed as an attack on the prime minister himself. As soon as he was alerted to the typographical error, Robiul corrected his Facebook post. But it was too late. On October 9, a member of the student wing of the ruling Awami League filed a defamation case against Robiul under the draconian Digital Security Act (DSA), accusing him of "defaming the prime minister". He was arrested the next day. This Kafkaesque sequence of events has become depressingly familiar in Bangladesh where even the perception of a slight is enough to invite official retribution.

Like Robiul, hundreds of people—journalists, academics, activists—have been charged and detained under the Digital Security Act simply for exercising their right to freedom of expression online. Many of these cases have been filed by members of the ruling party, or people acting on their behalf. According to the government's own Cyber Crime Tribunal data, more than 800 cases were filed under the DSA between January and October in 2020. Nearly 1,000 people were charged. More than 350 people were

detained.

The DSA is not the only tool used to silence critical voices. It is often accompanied by others in an arsenal of repression that includes threats, harassment, intimidation, physical attacks and even enforced disappearances. According to Ain o Salish Kendra, a local human rights group, at least 219 journalists have been targeted this year by state agencies or individuals acting on behalf of the government.

On March 10, the editor of the daily Pokkhokhal, Shafiqul Islam Kajol, was forcibly disappeared from the capital Dhaka, a day after a ruling party lawmaker filed a case against him under the DSA for his Facebook post. Kajol was later "found" by police under mysterious circumstances along the Bangladesh-India border—53 days after he was last seen in Dhaka—only to face an unlawful detention since then. In April, the acting editor of jagonews24.com, Mohiuddin Sarker, and editor-in-chief of bdnews24.com, Toufique Imrose Khalidi, were charged under the DSA for publishing reports on alleged embezzlement of relief materials meant for poor people affected by the Covid-19 lockdown. In May, a news editor of daily Grameen Darpan, Ramzan Ali Pramanik, staff reporter Shanta Banik, and publisher and editor of the online news portal Narsingdi Pratidin, Khandaker Shahin, were arrested for reporting on a custodial death at the Ghorashal police station. In June, the editor of the Bangla national newspaper Inqilab, AMM Bahauddin, was charged for publishing a story about an advisor to the prime minister.

Even children have not been spared. On June 19, a 14-year-old boy from Mymensingh district, who is in his

ninth grade at school, criticised the government's decision of increasing Value Added Tax on mobile phone calls alleging that the extra revenue earned would fill the prime minister's coffers. The next day, he was detained under a DSA charge by police for "defaming the prime minister" in his Facebook post.

Bangladesh's academy was once regarded as a relatively safe space for airing of critical views. But this year, several academics have also been targeted and prosecuted for exercising their right to freedom of expression. In June, two professors at Rajshahi University and Begum Rokeya University were sacked for their Facebook posts about a deceased ruling party MP. In September, the Dhaka University authorities terminated BNP-linked professor Hasan Morshed Khan for publishing an opinion piece in a national newspaper allegedly distorting history. In the same month, the National University authorities suspended AKM Wahiduzzaman, an assistant professor, for posting on Facebook "offensive" and "indecent" remarks about the prime minister.

The DSA is a successor to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, widely criticised by human rights groups for its draconian Section 57, which was abused to file more than 1,271 charges between 2013 and 2018. But instead of remedying the repressive elements of the ICT Act, the DSA is arguably more abusive in character. The law was passed in 2018 in the face of strong opposition from journalists, civil society organisations, and human rights defenders. At the time, there were serious warnings of how an already restricted space for dissent online could be further squeezed to

the point of near-suffocation. These warnings seem prescient now.

Some sections of the law that raised serious concerns were too vague and too broad to be able to define a crime, and also provided for disproportionately harsh punishments. For instance, Section 17 of the DSA can punish anyone for 10 years' imprisonment for "making any kind of propaganda or campaign against liberation war, spirit of liberation war, father of the nation, national anthem or national flag." The actions that would specifically constitute a violation under this provision were not at all defined. Besides, the terms are dangerously vague and overly broad, and the suggested punishments are not only disproportionate, but they also punish acts that shouldn't be considered a crime in the first place.

Provisions such as this create a situation where any political position deemed to be contrary to the regime narrative could land an individual in prison for 10 years. Similarly, Sections 25(b) (publications "damaging the image or reputation of the country"), 28 (publications "hurting religious values and sentiments"), 29 ("publications of defamatory information"), 31 ("publications deteriorating law and order"), and 32 ("breaching the secrecy of the government")—all criminalise legitimate forms of expression and suffer from the same vague and broad definitional issues, giving law enforcement authorities too much leverage to determine what act(s) would constitute a crime.

What the country has now is a legal regime under which the government's intolerance for criticism means that anyone even publishing the faintest whispers of dissent can be severely

punished. Instead of a system where people can express themselves to promote the accountability of those in power, the reverse applies. A climate of fear now pervades society, with people filled with a sense of foreboding for what may happen if they dare to speak out, or even forget to place a comma correctly.

The right to freedom of expression is essential to all societies, and crucial to advance human rights. It is how people can claim their other human rights, speaking up for their rights and that of others—whether that's education, food, or healthcare. It is also the right on the basis of which societies thrive, testing old ideas and generating new ones. Without the right to freedom of expression, which is protected in Bangladesh's constitution and in its international commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Bangladesh stands to lose in a global knowledge-based economy.

We must remember that when people fear to express themselves freely, when journalists are afraid to write or report on what they see, without fear of reprisals, it only corrodes and undermines the accountability and transparency pillars of the state. Such an outcome may prove ultimately self-defeating for any government that wants to serve the public good. Only an open, deliberative, and discursive political culture resting on the respect of the right to freedom of expression can arrest such a drift. As the noted American Justice Louis Brandeis once said, "Sunshine is the best disinfectant."

Sultan Mohammed Zakaria is South Asia Researcher for Amnesty International. His Twitter handle is: @smzakaria

Sinopharm's vaccine 86pc effective: UAE

AFP, Dubai

The United Arab Emirates yesterday officially registered the coronavirus vaccine produced by Chinese drug giant Sinopharm, saying it was 86 percent effective according to analysis of third-phase trials.

The vaccine has been undergoing third-phase trials in the Emirates since July, and it was approved for emergency use for healthcare workers in September.

UAE health officials have reviewed Sinopharm's interim analysis of the third-phase trials which shows it is 86 percent effective against coronavirus, the report said.

"The analysis also shows the vaccine to have 99 percent seroconversion rate of neutralising antibody and 100 percent effectiveness in preventing moderate and severe cases of the disease.

"Furthermore, the analysis shows no serious safety concerns."

China has four vaccine products in the final stages of development, three of which -- including Sinopharm -- use an inactivated form of the novel coronavirus to boost immunity.

This means they only need to be refrigerated and can be easily distributed compared to jabs developed by rivals Pfizer and BioNTech or Moderna, which have reported efficacy of 95 percent and 94 percent respectively but need to be transported at minus 70 to 20 degrees Celsius.

Oxford vaccine better at stopping Covid than slowing spread: report

Pfizer vaccine raises 'no specific safety concerns': FDA

AGENCIES

A vaccine from the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca shows only a limited ability to stop transmission of the coronavirus despite preventing Covid-19 illness in a majority of those who are infected.

As promising vaccine data keeps rolling in, one of the central unanswered questions has been whether inoculations can not only stop people from getting sick but also slow the spread of the virus, a key element for reopening economies.

Oxford and Astra are the first vaccine developers to unveil data on asymptomatic infection rates in people who received their shot. Overall, it reduced such transmissions by 27% in a large study, according to peer-reviewed results published in the Lancet medical journal on Tuesday.

That's well below the vaccine's 70% effectiveness at preventing symptomatic Covid-19 cases overall, though even those results are clouded by questions over its benefits in older recipients aged above 55.

Researchers tested more than 6,000 study participants in the UK for Covid-19 infections on a weekly basis and found 29 asymptomatic infections in the vaccinated group. That compared with 40 cases in the control group, which was roughly the same size.

Vaccine efficacy against asymptomatic transmission was higher, at 59%, in a smaller group that received a half dose, followed by a full second dose, rather than two full shots. The data support Oxford's preliminary finding that the low-dose, full-dose regimen appears to elicit a stronger immune response, preventing 90% of infections. Two full doses were only 4% effective against asymptomatic transmission.

Although vaccines that prevent illness but not transmission could be widely used and help lower the disease's death toll, they

could also lead to complacency within populations, experts say. Those who are immunized with them could still spread the virus to other, more vulnerable people, including those who've yet to receive a shot or can't get one for medical reasons.

Andrew Pollard, the Oxford professor who led the study, called the data "tantalizing" but said it was too early to draw firm conclusions. He said researchers are trying to analyze the amount of virus in the swabs to determine whether vaccination reduced viral loads, which would help limit contagion.

"What would be fantastic would be vaccines that prevent transmission so you reach the point where you not only protect the people who are vaccinated but also those who can't be vaccinated or haven't been vaccinated yet,"

he said in an interview.

Similar questions surround other early Covid vaccines, including one from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE that's been approved in the UK -- where the first shots were given Tuesday. It's possible that shot didn't work as well at preventing asymptomatic cases as it did at preventing illness, according to a report by staff of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Pfizer-BioNTech and US biotech firm Moderna have reported efficacy of 95 percent and 94 percent respectively and have given data to regulators.

Meanwhile, the FDA issued a briefing document Tuesday saying the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe and effective, raising expectations the regulator is poised to grant emergency approval. It added that the vaccine worked uniformly across age groups, genders, and racial groups, as well as people with underlying conditions who are at high risk.



Activist from the All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) shout slogans during a protest march against the newly passed farm bills, in Kolkata, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US tops 15m Covid cases

Biden eyes mass inoculation as Trump orders priority vaccine access for citizens; Germany battles soaring virus deaths

AGENCIES

US coronavirus cases crossed the 15 million mark on Tuesday as regulators moved a step closer to approving a Covid-19 vaccine and President-elect Joe Biden laid out his plan to fight the pandemic during his first 100 days in office.

Record cases in at least three states - Arizona, Alabama and Ohio - pushed the cumulative case load to over 15 million, according to a Reuters tally of state and county data. With the virus showing no sign of abating, leading health officials are once again sounding the alarm of further spread when people gather for the year-end holidays.

"We're in for a very challenging

period," top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci told a virtual summit on Tuesday.

At a briefing in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden said he needed Congress to fully fund delivering vaccines to all corners of the United States. Getting children back to school will be a national priority in the first 100 days, Biden said.

"In 100 days, we can change the course of the disease and change life in America for the better," said Biden, who takes office on Jan. 20. "Whatever your politics or point of view, mask up for 100 days."

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday, which

his administration says will ensure that "Americans receive priority access" to the new coronavirus vaccines procured by the US government before they are made available to other nations.

A senior administration official confirmed that the vaccine will be given for free to US citizens.

In Europe, Germany was battling a second virus wave much more deadly than the first yesterday with record fatalities.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is urging regions to take much more drastic action to curb the spread, after state leaders agreed measures that would see comparatively modest social restrictions eased even further for the Christmas holidays.



A worker uses a conveyor belt to transport ice blocks from the frozen Songhua river in Harbin in China's northeastern Heilongjiang province yesterday, as ice is collected for the Second Harbin Ice Harvest Festival.

PHOTO: AFP

ARBITRARY DETENTION IN XINJIANG

China uses big data to target Muslims: HRW

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

A big-data program in China's Xinjiang "arbitrarily selects" Muslims for detention, flagging behaviour such as wearing a veil, studying the Quran or going on the Hajj pilgrimage as reasons for arrest, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

In a new report yesterday, the rights group said it analysed a leaked list of more than 2,000 detainees in Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture and found that the programme -- known as the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) -- also flagged people for their relationships, their communications, their travel histories, or for being related to someone the authorities consider suspicious.

"The Aksu List provides further insights into how China's brutal repression of Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims is being turbocharged by technology," said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at HRW.



"The Chinese government owes answers to the families of those on the list: Why were they detained, and where are they now?"

The United Nations estimates that more than one million Turkic Muslims -- most of them ethnic Uighurs -- have been detained in camps in far-western Xinjiang.

Activists say the purpose of the detention was to "erase the ethnic and religious identities of" Turkic Muslims and ensure their loyalty to the Chinese government.

Beijing denies the accusations, describing the camps as vocational training centres to help stamp out "religious extremism" in the troubled province.

HRW said the Aksu List -- which dates from late 2018 -- shows further evidence of the role big data and technology plays in helping officials select targets for "coerced thought transformation". Earlier this year, campaigners documented how officials in Xinjiang's Karakax used the IJOP to assess whether an individual should remain in detention.

HRW said it obtained the Aksu list from an anonymous source in Xinjiang and verified the list's authenticity by checking it against official records, social media records, and consulting Uighur diaspora communities and two experts who have extensively documented Beijing's crackdown in Xinjiang.

'Concerned' about religious freedom in France: US

AFP, Washington

The US envoy on international religious freedom on Tuesday voiced concern about France, warning against "heavy-handed" measures as President Macron targets radical Islam.

"I am concerned, obviously, for what's happening in France," Ambassador Sam Brownback told reporters when asked about Macron's initiative.

"I think there can be constructive engagements that I think can be helpful and not harmful. When you get heavy-handed, the situation can get worse."

Macron has ordered a crackdown on extremism amid shock in France over attacks carried out by radicalised Muslims.

Under the initiative, France -- which is avowedly secular and home to Europe's largest Muslim population -- will shut down mosques if they are found during inspections by authorities to be promoting extremism.

Macron's efforts have triggered protests in several Muslim-majority countries, with the leaders of Turkey and Pakistan alleging that he is attacking Islam.

Defenders of Macron have accused his critics pointing to severe repression of religious faith elsewhere in the world.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education

Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000



Request for Expression of Interest (Firm)

1.	Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Education			
2.	Agency	: Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education			
3.	Procuring Entity Name	: Project Director National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND, Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education			
4.	Project/Procuring Entity Code	: 224012200			
5.	Procuring Entity District	: Dhaka			
6.	Expression of Interest for Selection of	: Consulting Firm for the Preparation of Architectural & Structural Design and Supervision to Construct Autistic Academy Complex.			
7.	EOI Ref No & Date	: স্মারক নং: মাউশি/আটি.একা.স্ব.প্র./EOI/১০/২০১৮/১৭৫, তারিখ: ০৮/১২/২০২০			
Key Information					
8.	Procuring Method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)			
Funding Information					
9.	Budget & Source of Fund	: GOB			
10.	Development Partners (if applicable)	: Not Applicable			
Particular Information					
11.	Project/Programmed Name (If applicable)	: National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND			
12.	EOI Closing Date and Time	: 31/12/2020 and Time 4.00 pm (Local Time)			
Information For Applicant					
13.	Brief Description of Assignment	: Consulting Services for the Preparation of Architectural, structural electro mechanical drawing, documentation and design, plumbing, monitoring, reporting and top supervision for Autistic Academy Complex for special need children (Autistic). Preparation of technical specification cost and quantity estimates with necessary support to Education Engineering Department or any other department in bidding process and post construction monitoring during defects liability period.			
14.	Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity required	: The EOIs will be reviewed on the basis of the following criteria: a) Having 10 years working experience in Architectural & Structural Design and Supervision of large scale building especially on 15 storied building construction. b) Having overall and technical manpower as well as financial capacity. c) Support Services (Office space, Support Staff, Logistics, Equipment) [Provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures; description of similar assignments; financial resources; availability of appropriate skills among staff; etc.)]			
15.	Other Details (if applicable)	:			
16.	Association with Foreign firms is	: Not Applicable			
	Re no	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
		1 st Phase	Dhaka	-----	-----
Procuring Entity Details					
17.	Name of Official inviting Expressions of Interest	: Professor Dr. Mohammed Didarul Alam			
18.	Designation of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	: Project Director ; National Academy for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities-NAAND			
19.	Address of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	: Room No # 113, Shikha Bhaban 16 Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000			
20.	Contact Details of Official Inviting Expression of Interest	: , 02-41050041, 02-9588455 e-mail : naand2015@gmail.com			
21.	The procuring entity reserves the right to delete/reject all EOIs				



(Professor Dr. Mohammed Didarul Alam)
Project Director
National Academy for Autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities-NAAND
Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education
Bangladesh, Dhaka-1000

GD-1964

World set for 3C warming despite pandemic, pledges

AFP, Paris

Earth remains on course to warm more than 3 degrees Celsius by the century's end despite a dip in greenhouse gas emissions due to the pandemic and pledges to curb pollution, the UN said yesterday.

In its annual assessment of emissions levels, the UN's Environment Programme found that 2020's 7-percent fall in carbon pollution would have "negligible impact" on warming without a broad and rapid shift away from fossil fuels.

The Emissions Gap report analyses the gulf between action required under the Paris climate deal and emissions cuts currently planned by countries.

With just over 1C of warming since pre-industrial times, Earth is already experiencing stronger and more frequent droughts, wildfires and superstorms rendered deadlier by rising seas.

"The year 2020 is on course to be one of the warmest on record, while wildfires, storms and droughts continue to wreak havoc," said UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen.

UNEP said last year that emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually through 2030 in order to keep the more ambitious Paris temperature goal of 1.5C in play.

While 2020 is likely to see emissions fall broadly in line with that figure, it took an unprecedented slowdown in industry, travel and manufacturing to achieve.

Experts fear that a rebound in carbon emissions is nearly inevitable in 2021; last week the UN said that countries planned to increase fossil fuel production by 2 percent each year this decade.

Yesterday's assessment found that

emissions in 2019 -- a year scientists still hope will represent a peak in annual carbon pollution -- stood at 59.1 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent. This represents a 2.6 percent increase compared with 2018, largely driven by an increase in forest fires, UNEP said.

UNEP said a green recovery from Covid-19 would see emissions hit 44 GT in 2030 compared with a predicted 59 GT,



giving humanity a 66 percent change of holding temperature rises under 2C.

It said reduced travel, industrial activity and electrical generation due to the pandemic would see emissions fall 7 percent compared with last year. But that would only translate to a 0.01C reduction of global warming by 2050.

This would need widespread switches to renewable energy, direct support for zero-emission technology and infrastructure, reducing fossil fuel subsidies, no new coal plants and widespread reforestation, it said.

The report also laid bare the vast inequality when it comes to carbon pollution: the wealthiest 1 percent account for more than twice the combined emissions of the poorest 50 percent.



A woman stands in flooded St. Mark's Square during high tide as the flood barriers known as Mose failed to prevent flooding, in Venice, Italy, yesterday. Residents -- long accustomed to perennial "acqua alta" or high water events -- pulled on their rubber boots once more to deal with flooding that reached a high of 1.37 metres (4.5 feet) above sea level in the afternoon.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Fears of chaotic Brexit rise

Hope for a deal low as Johnson heads for last supper in Brussels

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrived in Brussels yesterday for talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in a push to secure a trade deal and avoid a turbulent breakup in three weeks.

With growing fears of a chaotic no-deal finale to the five-year Brexit crisis when the United Kingdom finally leaves the European Union's orbit on Dec. 31, the 1800 GMT meeting over dinner is cast as a chance to unlock the stalled trade talks.

A British government source said a deal may not be possible, as did EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier.

The main sticking points have been over fishing rights in British waters, ensuring fair competition for companies on either side, and ways to solve future disputes.

"There is still the chance of an agreement," German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Europe's most powerful leader, told German parliament. "One thing is clear: the integrity of the (EU's)



internal market must be preserved."

"If there are conditions from the British side which we cannot accept, we are prepared to go down a road which is without an exit agreement," she said.

Michael Gove, a senior minister in Johnson's government dealing with Brexit issues, told Times Radio the EU would have to compromise if it wanted a deal.

Britain formally left the EU in January, but has since been in a transition period during which it remains in the EU single market and customs union, meaning that rules on trade, travel and

business have stayed the same.

That all ends on Dec. 31, and if by then there is no agreement to protect around \$1 trillion in annual trade from tariffs and quotas, businesses on both sides would be hit.

Failure to agree a deal would snarl borders, shock financial markets and sow chaos through supply chains across Europe and beyond as the world faces the economic cost of Covid-19.

Johnson portrays Brexit as a chance to give Britain an independent and more agile economy. The EU's biggest powers fear London wants the best of both worlds - preferential access to EU markets but with the advantage to set its own rules.

That, they say, would undermine the post-World War Two project which aimed to bind the ruined nations of Europe - and particularly Germany and France - into a global trading power. Britain said on Tuesday it had clinched a deal with the EU over how to manage the Ireland-Northern Ireland border, and would now drop clauses in draft domestic legislation that would have breached a Brexit withdrawal agreement signed in January.

Do aliens exist?

Israel's ex-space boss says 'yes'

NDTV ONLINE

Aliens are real and US President Donald Trump knows about it, Israel's former space security chief has made an unprecedented claim in an interview, stressing they're keeping their existence a secret as "humanity is not ready for them".

Haim Eshed, 87, in an interview to Israel's Yediot Aharonot newspaper, spoke extensively about the extraterrestrial life, and also elaborated about "an agreement" between the US government and a "Galactic Federation" of aliens. Eshed has headed Israel's space security programme for nearly three decades, say reports.

There is an agreement between the US government and the aliens as they wish to research and understand "the fabric of the universe", the Jerusalem Post, another daily, quoted him as saying, citing the original interview published in Hebrew. This cooperation apparently includes a secret underground base on Mars.

Donald Trump stopped short of revealing their existence because the Galactic Federation insisted "humanity is not ready yet", Mr Eshed is believed to have told the daily. The aliens insisted humans need to "evolve and reach a stage where we will... understand what space and spaceships are".



US judge orders partial release of Khashoggi murder files

AFP, New York

A New York judge on Tuesday ordered US intelligence agencies to acknowledge they possess a tape recording of the 2018 murder of Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi, in a ruling hailed by rights activists.

The judge also instructed the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence to explain why they are withholding the tape and a CIA report on the gruesome killing.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist, was suffocated and dismembered inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate after going inside to get documents for his marriage to his Turkish fiancée.

The October 2, 2018 murder sparked an international outcry and tarnished the reputation of oil-rich Saudi Arabia and its powerful crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

The CIA concluded that the young royal had been responsible for the killing. President Donald Trump later said he protected Prince Salman from Congress, boasting "I saved his ass," according to a book by veteran journalist Bob Woodward.

The judge ordered the US government Tuesday to produce within two weeks a "Vaughn index" describing the documents it is withholding and providing legal justification for their non-disclosure.

NEWS IN BRIEF



'Sabre-toothed tiger' skeleton sells for more than \$84,000

A nearly 40-million-year-old skeleton belonging to what is popularly called a sabre-toothed tiger has sold for \$84,350, a year after its discovery on a US ranch. The skeleton, about 120 centimetres (nearly four feet) long, was snapped up by a private collector in just one minute at an auction in Geneva on Tuesday. The original bones are those of a Hoplophoneus -- not technically cats, they are an extinct genus of the Nimravidae family and once stalked the plains of North America. Such extinct predatory mammals are commonly known as sabre-toothed tigers.

Singapore 'cruise to nowhere' cut short after virus case

A "cruise to nowhere" off Singapore was cut short yesterday after a passenger tested positive for the coronavirus, officials said, a blow to efforts to revive the hard-hit industry. Early yesterday morning the holiday calm was shattered by an announcement the cruise was being cut short after an 83-year-old passenger had tested positive. The vessel had 1,680 guests and 1,148 crew on board, and arrived early morning in the city-state after turning back on day three of a four-day cruise, the Straits Times newspaper reported. The Singapore tourism board added that all on-board leisure activities were halted and passengers were asked to stay in their cabins.

Yoko Ono urges gun control on Lennon's death anniversary

John Lennon's widow Yoko Ono on Tuesday marked the 40th anniversary of the legendary musician's shock murder with a call for gun control. "The death of a loved one is a hollowing experience," tweeted the 87-year-old artist, who still lives in the Dakota building in Manhattan outside of which her husband was shot four decades ago. Ono, who witnessed her husband's murder at close range, also tweeted an image of the former Beatle's shattered and bloodied spectacles, which included the words: "Over 1,436,000 people have been killed by guns in the U.S.A. since John Lennon was shot and killed on December 8, 1980." In her tweet, Ono included a number of hashtags including #guncontrol now and #end gun violence.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

8 percent of Amazon forest lost in 18 yrs

AFP, Sao Paulo

Deforestation in the Amazon destroyed an area bigger than Spain from 2000 to 2018, wiping out eight percent of the world's largest rainforest, according to a study released Tuesday.

The Amazon plays a vital role in curbing climate change, but destruction of the rainforest has only accelerated in recent years, found the study by the Amazon Geo-Referenced Socio-Environmental Information Network (RAISG).

Since the turn of the millennium, 513,016 square kilometers of the rainforest have been lost, according to the updated Amazon atlas produced by the organization, a consortium of groups from across the region.

"The Amazon is far more threatened than it was eight years ago," RAISG said in a statement.

The consortium found that after making gains against deforestation early in the century, the Amazon region has again slipped into a worrying cycle of destruction.

Deforestation hit a high of 49,240 square kilometers of forest loss in 2003 -- a record for this century --



then eased to a low of 17,674 square kilometers in 2010, the report said.

But the destruction has since surged to startling levels.

"Deforestation has accelerated since 2012. The annual area lost tripled from 2015 to 2018," the study found.

"In 2018 alone, 31,269 square kilometers of forest were destroyed across the Amazon region, the worst annual deforestation since 2003."

The destruction is fueled by logging, farming, ranching, mining and infrastructure projects on formerly pristine forest land.

The report comes as world leaders prepare for a virtual summit this weekend aimed at breathing new life into the 2015 Paris climate accord, whose goals on slowing the warming of the planet are currently set to be missed.

Forests such as the Amazon play a vital role in controlling climate

change because they absorb carbon from the atmosphere.

However, when their trees die or burn, they release carbon back into the environment.

The Amazon stretches across eight South American countries -- Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Suriname and Guyana -- and the territory of French Guiana.

Brazil, which holds most of the Amazon -- about 62 percent -- is also responsible for the worst deforestation, the study found: 425,051 square kilometers from 2000 to 2018.

The destruction in Brazil has only accelerated since far-right President Jair Bolsonaro took office in 2019.

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon surged to a 12-year high of 11,088 square kilometers from August 2019 to July 2020, according to government figures.

That was a 9.5-percent increase from the previous year, when deforestation also hit a more than decade-long high.

Deforestation is also surging in Bolivia and Colombia, RAISG found. Bolivia lost 27 percent of its Amazon forest cover to fires from 2000 to 2018, it said.

Hunger beats Covid fears in Philippines

AFP, Manila

Daniel Auminto lost his job and then his home when the coronavirus pandemic sent the Philippines into lockdown. Now he and his family live on the street, relying on food handouts to survive.

Charities are struggling to meet the ever-growing demand for food as millions of families go hungry across the country.

"I've never seen hunger at this level before," said Jomar Fleras, executive director of Rise Against Hunger in the Philippines, which works with more than 40 partners to feed the poor.

"If you go out there everybody will tell you that they're more afraid of dying from hunger than dying from Covid. They don't care about Covid anymore."

Nearly one-third of families -- or 7.6 million households -- did not have enough food to eat at least once in the previous three months, according to pollster Social Weather Stations September survey.

Among them were 2.2 million families experiencing "severe hunger"



-- the highest ever.

The numbers have been going up since May, two months after the country went into a severe lockdown -- reversing a downward trend since 2012.

Virus curbs have been eased in recent months to allow more businesses to operate as the government seeks to revive the economy, which is expected to shrink up to 9.5 percent this year.

Auminto, 41, spent years sleeping on the streets and eking out a meagre living by selling trash for recycling. His fortunes changed in 2019 when he found stable work as a building painter.

That gave him enough money to rent a room in Manila, which he shared with his wife and their two-year-old daughter,

buy food and even save a little towards their dream of opening a small store.

Then Covid-19 hit.

"We lost our home, my job. We even lost our clothes which were stolen from us," said Auminto as he sat in a park where the family sleeps on a flattened cardboard box at night.

Every day they join long queues of mostly homeless people to receive a free meal from an outdoor food pantry.

Hunger was already a major problem in the Philippines before the pandemic struck. About 59 million people were "moderately or severely food insecure" between 2017 and 2019 -- the highest in Southeast Asia -- the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization said in a report.

The impact of the virus on hunger has been exacerbated by a series of typhoons which destroyed tens of thousands of homes.

Auminto said it was "painful" to have lost everything and be back on the street where he says the police treat them "like animals". "They should understand our situation, not treat us like pigs," he said. "We're already living like pigs."

UN: Record 80m displaced globally

AFP, Geneva

Despite calls for ceasefires and compassion amid the Covid-19 pandemic, violence and persecution have continued to force people from their homes, with record numbers now displaced, the UN said yesterday.

By the end of 2019, 79.5 million people were living uprooted and displaced, including nearly 30 million refugees -- more than one percent of the world's population. And the UN refugee agency said preliminary figures showed more people had been forced to flee in 2020, pushing the number past 80 million.

"We are now surpassing another bleak milestone that will continue to grow unless world leaders stop wars," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said in a statement.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called in March for a global ceasefire while the world fights the pandemic, which has now killed more than 1.5 million people. But while some factions heeded the call, UNHCR said preliminary figures through the first half of 2020 showed that violence in Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Somalia and Yemen drove fresh displacement.

Africa's central Sahel region also saw significant new displacement due to brutal violence, including rape and executions, UNHCR said.

The UN agency pointed out that instead of calming conflict, the coronavirus crisis had "disrupted every aspect of human life and severely worsened existing challenges for the forcibly displaced and stateless".

No threat can

FROM PAGE 14
Convention to see if these innocent Bangladeshers stranded in Pakistan committed any such crimes as Pakistani hoarders and their local collaborators did in Bangladesh during the Liberation War.

\$25M IDA CREDIT FOR BANGALDESH

The International Development Agency has extended 25 million dollars' credit to Bangladesh to finance its massive rehabilitation and cyclone protection programme in coastal areas. The main elements of the programme being financed by IDA are water transport, equipment, landing facilities to improve land water transportation, telecommunication and improved warning system.

SOURCES: December 11, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

24 more die

FROM PAGE 14
Bangladesh reported its first case on March 8. The infection number reached the 300,000-mark on August 26.

The first death was reported on March 18 and the death toll exceeded 6,000 on November 4.

Until now, 2,911,666 tests have been carried out, including 16,972 new ones, and 16.63 percent of the patients turned out to be positive.

Bangladesh is seeing 2842.55 infections, 2383.74 recoveries, and 40.69 deaths per million.

Kamal Ibne Yusuf

FROM PAGE 14
formation led by Ziaur Rahman. He was elected an MP the same year. In 1981, he became a minister in the government of Justice Abdus Sattar. In 1991, he was elected again and was made the minister for health.

He was elected again in the general elections in 1996 even though the BNP lost the national polls to the Awami League. He also won in the 2001 elections after which he was made minister for food and disaster management.

He lost his seat in the 2008 general elections.

Family members said Yusuf would be laid to rest in the family graveyard in Faridpur after his namaz-e-janaja at Rajendra College ground tomorrow.

His daughter Nayab Yusuf is a local BNP leader. She is contesting for the post of Faridpur municipality's chairman, which goes to polls today.

Yusuf was born on May 23, 1940, in Faridpur. His grandfather Chowdhury Moizuddin Biswas was a Jamindar. His father Chowdhury Yusuf Ali (Mohan Mia) was a central leader of Muslim League.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir expressed deep shock at the death of Yusuf.

Hasina 39th most

FROM PAGE 14
access to education, and health care during her fourth term, the Forbes listing said.

250kg bomb

FROM PAGE 14
Ahsan told The Daily Star that as soon as the matter came to their notice, the authorities informed the bomb disposal unit of Bangladesh Air Force.

The bomb disposal unit of the Air Force's Bangabandhu Base rushed to the spot and defused the bomb, said Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR).

Later, the bomb was taken to Rasulpur Firing Range in Paharanchanpur with the necessary precautions to destroy it in a safe place, ISPR said in a press release.

Bomb experts believe the bomb was dropped sometime during the Liberation War in 1971, it said.

US SC refuses

FROM PAGE 14
supreme court, the plaintiffs turned to the national Supreme Court, asking it to freeze all electoral operations while they developed their arguments.

In dismissing the case, the Court put an end to the procedure and signaled that it was not inclined to get involved in post-election litigation.

Trump had hoped that the high court, whose bench he has tipped solidly to the right, would intervene in his favor.

In 2000, the Supreme Court halted a recount in Florida, where George W. Bush was only 537 votes ahead of Democrat Al Gore, allowing the Republican to win the election.

Nasa unveils plan

FROM PAGE 14
by the end of the decade, located at the lunar south pole, as well as conducting experiments to understand the origin of the sun and our astronomical environment.

This could increase human understanding of how the moon formed and evolved, how it interacts with the Sun, and how water and other resources developed on the moon and are preserved.

"The moon holds vast scientific potential and astronauts are going to help us enable that science," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for Nasa's Science Mission Directorate.



A passenger (L) who just landed from New York on an Alitalia flight undergoes a rapid antigen swab test for Covid-19 yesterday at a testing station set up at Rome's Fiumicino airport, as part of Italy's first coronavirus-free corridor with the United States.

PHOTO: AFP

HC hearing on appeals may start soon

FROM PAGE 14
documents and judgment reach the HC as death references from the lower court within seven days of delivery of the verdict.

On August 21, 2004, at least 24 people were killed and around 300 injured in the grisly attack on an Awami League rally at the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue. Sheikh Hasina, now prime minister and then the opposition leader in parliament, narrowly survived with an ear injury.

A Dhaka court, on October 10, 2018, sentenced 19 people -- including former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar -- to death, and 19 others -- including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman -- to life imprisonment in the two cases filed in relation to the

grenade attack. HC sources said the authorities prepared the paper books in the first week of August this year and these finally reached the HC on August 16, clearing the way for the court to start a hearing on the death references and appeals of the cases.

The murder case filed over the attack has 585 paper books containing around 10,500 pages.

A total of 22 appeals have been filed by the convicts independently through lawyers while 12 jail appeals have been filed by convicts through jail authorities, in connection with the murder case.

Meanwhile, the case filed separately under the Explosives Substances Act, has 495 paper books containing around 10,000 pages.

A total of 17 appeals have been

filed by the convicts independently thorough lawyers while 12 jail appeals have been filed by convicts through jail authorities, in connection with the explosives-related case.

The death references on the August 21 cases reached the HC on November 27, 2018 for examination of the trial court's verdict.

On January 13 last year, the HC accepted the appeals filed by the convicts.

The same day, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman also stayed the part of the trial court verdict that fined the convicts.

The bench passed the order as the appeals filed by the convicts, who are now in jail, were included in its cause list on that day.

Enforce zero tolerance to graft: HC

FROM PAGE 1
steps taken for arresting him and bringing him back.

PK Halder is the former managing director of NRB Global Bank and Reliance Finance.

The court also allowed Uzzal Kumar Nandi, a former colleague of PK Halder, and Halder's cousin Amitabh Adhikary to submit their statements by the time in connection with the allegations against them of assisting PK Halder in embezzling a huge amount of public money.

The HC bench gave permission to Uzzal and Amitabh to submit their statements as they filed two separate applications through their lawyers with the court seeking permission to become a party in the case to place their statements.

The court said investigation in the corruption case against PK Halder will not be hampered after the two were made party in the suo moto rule.

It also fixed 12:00pm on January 3 for holding further hearing and passing an order on this issue.

During yesterday's hearing, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told the HC bench that the Senior Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka on November 25 issued an arrest warrant for PK Halder following an application from the

ACC and that the court sent the order of arrest warrant to the Interpol through the home ministry to arrest him.

The lawyer added that the authorities concerned confiscated 53 bank accounts and unmovable properties worth Tk 43 crore of PK Halder.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik, who represented the state, vigorously opposed the applications from Uzzal and Amitabh, saying that they submitted the applications with a view to hampering the probe and saving PK Halder.

Lawyers Mosharrif Hossain and Shah Monjurul Hoque appeared for the two respectively.

Issuing the suo moto rule, the HC bench on November 18 wanted to know what steps have been taken to arrest PK Halder, who fled the country after allegedly siphoning around Tk 10,200 crore from some non-banking financial institutions, and to bring him back to the country.

The court ordered the authorities concerned of the government and the ACC to explain the steps taken to arrest and bring PK Halder back home.

In the rule, the court also asked the authorities to show causes as to why their inaction and failure in arresting

and bringing PK Halder back home should not be declared illegal.

On October 21 this year, another HC bench directed the law enforcement authorities to arrest PK Halder immediately after his return home.

According to Canadian media reports, PK Halder is now staying in Toronto. He is director of P&L Hal Holding Inc, a Canadian corporation.

In an investigation, the central bank found that Tk 1,596 crore was transferred from International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFSL) in violation of the rules through 48 accounts of various organisations related to the directors and shareholders of the firm, according to BB officials.

PK Halder came to the limelight during the anti-casino drives last year.

The ACC opened investigation into the involvement of 43 people, including PK Halder, in the illegal casino business.

The government issued a travel ban on him on October 3 last year. But he managed to flee the country.

On January 8 this year, the anti-graft body filed a case against PK Halder on charges of illegally amassing wealth worth Tk 275 crore.

No bar now to recovering

FROM PAGE 1
Environment to cancel the clearance certificates of those companies," he said.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Mohammad Ali also observed that the HC's 2009 directives in a case regarding four rivers around Dhaka had opened the eyes of all for protecting the water bodies.

The writ petition filed by three companies in September this year are not acceptable as their claims are disputed question of fact, and therefore, the petition is rejected, the HC bench said.

After the HC delivered the judgment, NRCC's lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that the BIWTA must resume the eviction activists immediately to recover the land of the rivers from the illegal possession of the three companies of Aslamul.

In the petition, the companies prayed to the HC to direct the BIWTA to stop demolishing and damaging their structures, to order the authorities concerned to conduct a joint survey to determine their ownership and possession of the land and to pay them compensation for the eviction and demolition.

The companies claimed that they had all relevant documents over their possession of the land.

Following the same petition, the HC on October 22 issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain why the BIWTA's action of demolishing and damaging structures of the companies should not be declared illegal. It also ordered to conduct a joint survey to determine the ownership and possession of the land in question.

In response to the rule, the NRCC on November 30 submitted a probe report to the HC through its lawyer Manzill Murshid saying that the companies

of Maisha Group owned by Aslamul filled up more than 54 acres from the Buriganga river and wetland to construct a power plant and a private economic zone in Basila.

Out of that 54 acres, at least 12.78 acres was part of the Buriganga, according to the oldest land record available, known as the Cadastral Survey (CS) record map. But later it was illegally recorded as a private property in the Revisional Survey (RS), says the NRCC report.

The rest of the 54 acres was wetland along the river and marked as flood-flow zone in the detailed area plan (DAP) of Dhaka city. The characteristics of the flood-flow zone cannot be changed without permission as per the Bangladesh Water Act-2013.

The NRCC prepared the report in line with the 2009 High Court verdict that directed the government to measure the river areas based on the CS record.

After holding hearing, the HC bench yesterday delivered the verdict rejecting the writ petition.

Lawyer Md Ozi Ullah appeared for the writ petitioner while lawyer Qamrun Nahar Deepa represented the BIWTA.

Contacted, Aslamul's lawyer Ozi Ullah told The Daily Star that his client would move a petition before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the HC verdict.

A lawyer has already been engaged in moving the stay petition before the apex court, he said.

Ozi Ullah added that the HC in its observation said the writ petitioner (Aslamul) could seek necessary remedy from the civil court concerned if his companies don't occupy and fill up the land of the river, and accordingly, he will move an application before the civil court for remedy in line with the HC observation.

Working hard for women's

FROM PAGE 1
after the country's independence, had taken various measures such as reserving 10 percent quota of government jobs for women and that is why Bangladesh has made a huge progress in women empowerment today."

She said Awami League after forming the government took many initiatives to turn women into entrepreneurs as well as give them more opportunities so they can hold a position in the society with courage.

The government always wanted to develop the country's socioeconomic condition and that is why it has prioritised women education and their employment, she added.

The PM said the government has ensured strong presence of women in all types of jobs. "It would be good for the society as employment of women brings solvency to families and subsequently frees the country from poverty."

Hasina joined the ceremony at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium virtually from the Gono Bhaban. The ministry of women and children affairs organised the event marking the birth and death anniversary of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira chaired the function, moderated by PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikas.

The winners of Begum Rokeya Padak 2020 are: Prof Dr Shireen Akhter in education, Brig Gen Dr Nazma Begum in women's professional development, Manjulika Chakma in women's socioeconomic development, Begum Mushtari Shafi in literature and culture, and Farida Akter in women's rights.

Fazilatun Nessa Indira handed the awards to the winners on behalf of the prime minister.

The premier said after forming

the government in 1996 she had taken necessary measures to appoint women justices to the higher court and promoted women as secretaries of the government for first time to ensure women empowerment.

Hasina said her government has introduced legal aid services so women can receive legal aid free of cost and get justice. In addition, the government is also providing widow allowance, old age allowance and allowance for women abandoned by their husbands to keep them financially solvent, she added.

She said women have stepped to a dignified position in the country now and they are working in higher capacities in the administration, judiciary, armed forces and other sectors.

Parliament Speaker, leader of the House, leader of the opposition and deputy leader in parliament are all women in Bangladesh, which is a unique example in the world, she said, adding that it is praised abroad regularly.

Referring to the dreams of Begum Rokeya, she said the great woman wanted to see women stand on their own feet by attaining proper education.

She said her daughter Saima Hossain was also born on the birthday of Begum Rokeya and she sought doa from all for Saima.

The premier said Saima was working with differently abled and autistic people who were neglected in the society. Awareness has been created about it and a resolution was passed in the United Nations at her initiative, the PM added.

Hasina said the government is working to provide treatment and other facilities to the differently abled and autistic people.

Talking about the Covid-19 situation, she reiterated her call to the people to maintain health guidelines to stop the spread of the virus.

Khaleda, Tarique, Babunagari

FROM PAGE 1
November 27, the case statement said.

The complainant did not mention any charges against Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir even though they were accused in the case.

HEFAJAT STATEMENT
Meanwhile, Hefajat said that it has no intention of making enemies of the government, but reiterated its call for not constructing a sculpture of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the capital's Dholaipar.

"Islamophobic groups" are persuading the government to engage in clashes with Islamic scholars or Alems, the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation said in a statement issued Tuesday.

Hefajat again urged the government to find a way in the light of Islam for the salvation and peace of the departed soul of Bangabandhu.

Hefajat Secretary General Nur Hossain Kasemi in the statement called upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the authorities concerned not to allow any conspiring groups to destroy the peace and stability in the country.

The Hefajat secretary general said the religious freedom of the citizens has

been guaranteed in the constitution of Bangladesh.

Therefore, it is the constitutional right and religious duty of the Alem community to give a correct explanation of religion and to call for the avoidance of misguidance, he said.

No individual, organisation or the government has the legitimacy to interfere in the performance of this duty by the Alems, he added.

Liberation War Minister AKM Mozammel Haque yesterday said there are sculptures in all the major Muslim countries of the world.

The minister said no one ever talked about the sculptures in Bangladesh. But suddenly, the anti-Liberation War elements are showing the audacity to speak against the sculpture of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"The heroic freedom fighters will not tolerate such an audacity. At the call of Bangabandhu, the heroic freedom fighters surrendered their weapons, but did not surrender their training," he vowed.

The minister was speaking at a discussion held on the occasion of Kapilmuni Mukto Dibos in Khulna.

Indian farmers to step

FROM PAGE 14
The majority of farmers believes the news laws could pave the way for some of India's leading corporations to enter the Indian agriculture trade, leaders said.

In a separate statement, Adani Group said the company had no role in the direct purchase or sale of the

farm produce, and was only hired by the government agencies for storage of the produce.

Earlier, Indian government officials looked for ways to tweak new laws liberalising the agricultural sector, after they put off a second day of talks with farmer organisations that have mobilised mass protests.

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তারিখ: ০৮/১২/২০২০খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/২০২০-২১

২০২০-২১ অর্থ বছরে উপজেলা পরিচালন ও উন্নয়ন প্রকল্পের (UGDP) আওতায় খুলনা জেলার তেরবাঙ্গা উপজেলায় অর্কটামো উন্নয়ন উপ-প্রকল্প (৪র্থ পর্যায়) এর কাজ বাস্তবায়নের জন্য সর্বশেষ সন্মোচিত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রুল-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী উনুত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত তথ্যসমূহ:

ক্রমিক নং	প্রকৃতি	উপজেলা পরিচালন, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা।
১	প্রকৃতি	উপজেলা প্রকৌশলী, এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা।
২	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী	JICA/বাংলাদেশ সরকার।
৩	অর্থের উৎস	উনুত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
৪	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	১) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, খুলনা ২) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, এলজিইডি, খুলনা ৩) উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয়, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা ৪) উপজেলা প্রকৌশলী, এলজিইডি, রপসা, খুলনা এবং ৫) নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয়, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা।
৫	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি ও দাখিলের স্থান	০৪-০১-২০২১ইং, বিকাল ৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত।
৬	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৫-০১-২০২১ইং, দুপুর ১২.০০টা পর্যন্ত।
৭	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	উপজেলা প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা, ০৫-০১-২০২১ইং, বিকাল ৩.০০টা।
৮	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	উপজেলা প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা, ০৫-০১-২০২১ইং, বিকাল ৩.০০টা।
৯	প্রি-টেন্ডার মিটিং এর স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	উপজেলা প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা, ০৫-০১-২০২১ইং, সকাল ১০.০০টা।

কার্যের বিবরণ:

ক্রমিক নং	প্যাকেজ নং	কার্যের নাম	দরপত্র জামানত (টাকা)	দরপত্র মূল্য (টাকা)	কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়সীমা
১	INF-2019-20-404794-01	তেরবাঙ্গা উপজেলায় 'স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স-এ' অগ্রজেন সিলিভার ব্যাক ও হাইড্রো নেজাল ক্যানেল (HNC) সরবরাহ।	৮৫,০০০.০০	১০০০.০০	৩০দিন
২	INF-2019-20-404794-02	তেরবাঙ্গা উপজেলার ৪টি শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের (সরকারি ইন্ডি কাটোপা ফজলুল হক মডেল মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়, শহীদ স্মৃতি মাধ্যমিক বালিকা বিদ্যালয়, ইন্ডি দাখিল মাদ্রাসা, হাডিকালী টেকনিক্যাল এন্ড বিএম কলেজ) শ্রেণীকক্ষে বেঞ্চ সরবরাহ।	৩১,০০০.০০	৭৫০.০০	৩০ দিন

শর্তাবলী:

- ১। বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে Tender Document এর শর্তানুসারে সাপেক্ষ Quality Based কার্যের যাচাইঅন্তে বিল পরিশোধ করা হবে।
- ২। দরপত্র জামানত যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক থেকে বিডি/পে-অর্ডার আকারে উপজেলা এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে সযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- ৩। কোনরূপ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিল করা যাবে।
- ৪। দরপত্র জামানত যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক থেকে বিডি/পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি আকারে উপজেলা প্রকৌশলী, এলজিইডি, তেরবাঙ্গা, খুলনা অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে সযুক্ত করতে হবে।

তারিখ: ১৯২২

শেখ ওয়ালিদ ইবনে হাসান
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T SPORTS

Bangabandhu T20 Cup
Dhaka vs Khulna
Live from 12:30 pm
Barishal vs Chattogram
Live from 5:30 pm

TEN 1

UEFA Europa League

Napoli vs Real Sociedad
Live from 11:55 pm
Sparta Prague vs Milan
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

TEN 2

UEFA Europa League
Dundalk vs Arsenal
Live from 11:55 pm

Tottenham Hotspur
vs Royal Antwerp
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

SONY SIX

UEFA Europa League
Wolfsberg vs Feyenoord
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

Rajshahi on the brink; Dhaka aim to qualify

SPORTS REPORTER



Following the exciting play on the opening day of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup, the tournament seemed to have slowed down due to the lack of competitive cricket and low scoring affairs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Many pointed to the slowness of the Mirpur surface as one of the reasons for low-scoring encounters. The average first-innings total after the first half of the tournament was around 140 and teams twice being bundled out below 100 runs raised concerns over a lack of competitiveness.

But Tuesday's high scoring encounter between Minister Rajshahi and Fortune Barishal changed the scenario after both sides displayed an exciting brand of cricket.



Gemcon Khulna's star player Shakib Al Hasan plays football with his teammates during training in Mirpur yesterday. The all-rounder has been out of form since his return to cricket and will be hoping to come good today when they take on (bottom) Mushfiqur Rahim's Beximco Dhaka in their Bangabandhu T20 Cup fixture, which is scheduled to start at 12:30pm.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Rajshahi posted 220 for seven courtesy of Najmul Hossain's century but Barishal went on to complete the highest successful chase in T20s in Mirpur after a sublime century from young Parvez Hossain.

All of a sudden, the tournament got its excitement back and it seemed clearer that quality of cricket mostly relies on the players' approach and attitude rather than the nature of the pitch.

After their second win of the tournament against Rajshahi, Tamim Iqbal's Barishal remain bottom of the points table but still have hopes alive to qualify by making the top four. They today face table-toppers Gazi Group Chattogram, who have qualified for the top four with five wins from six games.

On the other hand, Rajshahi have four points from seven games. Najmul's side will be desperate to

win their last game but even that would not confirm a top-four spot as they have to wait on results of other games. Beximco Dhaka, with three wins from six games, will be looking to seal a place in the top four today when they take on the star-studded Gemcon Khulna, who are in second place with four wins from seven matches.

Meanwhile, chief selector Minhajul Abedin said that they had already started to chalk out plans for the upcoming West Indies series in January, when the visitors are expected to take part in a two-Test and three-match ODI series.

"We have almost finalised the 20-member Test and ODI side for the upcoming West Indies series. You need to realise that it was important for us to start competitive cricket first in this pandemic situation. So this Bangabandhu T20 Cup will certainly help them return to the groove before we start the national camp on December 25. We are glad to see youngsters performing well with the seniors and it will help them in the future," Minhajul told The Daily Star.

There was some bad news as pacer Abu Jayed, who is a vital member of the Tigers' Test squad, was ruled out for at least 15 days after tearing a muscle while running in to bowl during Tuesday's game for Barishal.

Juniors primed to push seniors for places

SPORTS REPORTER



Following a long layoff due to the coronavirus pandemic, some senior players of the national hockey team are likely to face a stiff challenge from junior players to retain their places in the squad for the Men's Asian Champions Trophy to be held in Dhaka next March.

The national hockey team were supposed to start their preparations in early December but the training has been pushed to January due to the arrangement of the Victory Day Hockey tournament, scheduled to be held from December 21-27 with the participation of six teams.

The tournament will no doubt give an edge to the junior players who have just played the President's Cup on the back of a six-week training camp for the Bangabandhu Junior (U-21) Asian Cup, which was also pushed back to July from its scheduled February start date amid the second wave of the pandemic.

National team head coach Mahabub Harun will have just nine weeks to prepare his charges before facing strong opponents like India, Pakistan, Korea, Japan and Malaysia and he wants to pick the players after watching their performance in the upcoming Victory Day tournament.

"We haven't started national training yet but the players have been training under various services teams, from where most players come to form the national side," Mahabub told The Daily Star. "The players have been out of action for a long period due to the pandemic, so I don't know how their condition is at the moment. But I can get a clear picture

after watching the performance in the Victory Day tournament and plan the drills for each individual accordingly in the national camp, which is likely to start in early January."

The former national player is thinking of calling up 30 to 32 players, with 18 players in the Asian Games squad getting automatic call-ups. The rest of the players are likely to come from the national U-21 squad as he sees little possibility of being impressed by players outside these two groups because of the long pandemic-induced gap as well as the fact that there has been no hockey league for more than two years.

National U-21 hockey team's head coach Mamunur Rashid however believes junior players will be ahead of seniors in terms of physical fitness as the juniors trained under him for 47 days and played the President's Cup.

"I think the junior players have already regained 50 to 60 percent fitness through training and playing the President's Cup. They will get sharper in upcoming tournaments and in national training if they get call-ups."

"I can tell you that senior players may face tough challenges in some positions from junior players like forward Mahabub Hossain, who was the top scorer in the last two tournaments [President's Cup and the Shaheed Smriti tournament], midfielders Al Nahian Shuvo, Shamanto Lal Prince and Abed Uddin, defenders Mehdi Hasan and Shawon, who have all been playing really well," said Mamunur, who also believes his U-21 team can put up a good fight in the Junior Asia Cup if they get the chance to play the six matches of Champions Trophy for the senior team.

'Football at tipping point'

REUTERS, Undated



Former defender Rio Ferdinand says football is at a "tipping point" and those in power must make a stand after Istanbul Basaksehir and Paris St Germain players walked off the pitch on Tuesday amid accusations a match official used a racist term.

The Champions League Group H match at Parc des Princes was suspended in the 13th minute when fourth official Sebastian Coltescu was accused of directing a racist term towards Basaksehir's assistant coach Pierre Webo.

The incident comes days after some fans at Millwall's English Championship match against Derby County booed the players when they took a knee in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement on Saturday.

"We're at a disturbing tipping point," former England international Ferdinand told BT Sport. "We've got Millwall, the PSG game today, all in the same week. Not a week goes by at the moment without an incident involving race."

"We're at the point now where something needs to be done, we're saying it all of the time, but the powers that be within this game need to make a huge stand."

UEFA said it will launch a "thorough investigation" into the incident and that the remainder of the match would be played on Wednesday with a new team of match officials taking charge.

PSG playmaker Neymar posted a picture of himself on Twitter alongside the caption: 'Black Lives Matter' while teammate Kylian Mbappe expressed his support for Cameroonian Webo. "SAY NO TO RACISM," he wrote on Twitter. "WEBO WE ARE WITH YOU."

Former Australia striker John Aloisi was angered by the incident but praised the action taken by the players.

"It is very powerful. Let's hope it's a turning point," Aloisi said on Optus Sport's coverage.

"I played with Pierre Webo -- a great guy -- to see him get so angry. It hurts."



Istanbul Basaksehir striker Demba Ba remonstrates with the referee after the fourth official had allegedly used a racial slur against the team's assistant coach Pierre Webo during their Champions League fixture against Paris Saint-Germain in Paris on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Leipzig players congratulate each other following their 3-2 win over Manchester United, a result which saw the Germans qualify for the knockout phase while consigning the Red Devils to a group-stage elimination for the first time in five years.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Never saw Messi as a rival: Ronaldo

AGENCIES



Cristiano Ronaldo said he has always got on well with Lionel Messi and never saw him as a rival after scoring twice in Juventus' 3-0 win over Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Ronaldo, 35, scored two penalties as the Italian champions ended Barca's 38-game unbeaten run at home in Europe to reach the last 16 as group winners. Barca progress as runners-up.

It was the first meeting between Ronaldo and Messi in more than two years, since the Portuguese forward left Real Madrid for Juventus in 2018. "I have always had a cordial relationship with Messi," Ronaldo told Movistar after the game. "As I have said before, for 12, 13, 14 years [I have been] sharing prizes with him."

"I never saw him as a rival. He always tried the best for his team, and I tried the best for mine. I always got on well with him. I am sure he will say the same if you ask him." "But we know in football, people always look for a rivalry to create more excitement." Messi, 33, and Ronaldo, who between them have won the Ballon d'Or in 11 of the past 12 years, came to define the Clasico rivalry between Barca and Real Madrid over the past decade.

However, both find themselves in the latter stages of their careers now, and their respective sides have made below-par starts to their league campaigns domestically. However, Ronaldo said he doesn't think Messi -- who had all seven of Barca's shots on target on Tuesday -- is in decline.

"Messi is the same as ever [on the pitch]," he said. "Barcelona are in a difficult moment, but they are still Barca. I am sure they will come out of it. All teams have bad runs, but Barcelona are a very good team."

KOEMAN'S SPAT WITH JUVE

Barcelona boss Ronald Koeman was

involved in a bizarre touchline spat as his side suffered a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Juventus.

Koeman endured a frustrating night seeing his side outplayed by the Italian champions at the Nou Camp but he also found their stars on the bench just as much as a nuisance.

His side were already 2-0 down following a Cristiano Ronaldo penalty and a Weston McKennie effort in the first half.

The Portuguese veteran proved just as deadly from the spot again in the 52nd minute after a Clement

laughing in response to Koeman's outburst, which only appeared to annoy him further on a terrible night for the Spanish side.

PAID THE PRICE FOR SLOPPY START, SAYS SOLSKJAER
Manchester United have only themselves to blame for their exit following a 3-2 loss to RB Leipzig on Tuesday, launching their comeback far too late, coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said.

United only needed a point from their final Group H game to advance to the knockout stage but



Juventus talisman Cristiano Ronaldo shakes hands with Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi prior to the kick-off of their Champions League fixture at Camp Nou on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Lenglet handball. The Barcelona defender's offence inside the box was spotted by VAR calls, and already on a booking led to appeals from Juve stars on the bench for the French defender to be sent off.

According to Football Italia, Koeman responded to the claims by shouting at opponents in the opposite dugout to 'shut up.' However it did little to silence the Juventus substitutes who soon turned their attention to the Barca boss. Paulo Dybala was among those

left themselves with a mountain to climb after falling three goals behind against Leipzig. "We started too late. Great spirit and comeback again," Solskjaer said. "We were unlucky towards the end and you almost thought it was in at the last minute there," Solskjaer said of a stoppage-time save by Gulacsi.

"Of course you can't say we were good enough, we weren't. Today we were close but we knew we had to defend crosses and balls into the box and we just couldn't clear them."

Messi pays tribute to Sabella

AGENCIES

Lionel Messi has paid tribute to Alejandro Sabella, crediting the former Argentina coach with inspiring some of his best football in the build-up to and during the 2014 World Cup finals.

Sabella, 66, passed away in hospital on Tuesday after almost two weeks battling the effects of an acute heart condition, which was aggravated by infection during his stay at the facility.

Aside from his spell in England at the two Yorkshire clubs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Sabella was best known outside his home country for taking Messi and the Albiceleste agonisingly close to their third World Cup title in Brazil six years ago.

The ex-Estudiantes boss made Leo captain in 2011 and his faith was rewarded with some of his finest performances in international colours, culminating in his star turn as Argentina battled to the final against Germany.

Messi, who had been gearing up for Barcelona's Champions League meeting with Juventus when the news broke, offered a heartfelt homage to another of his national team coaches.

"It was a pleasure to share so much with you," the star said on Instagram.

"Alejandro was a great person, aside from being a model professional who shaped my career and helped me learn much from him."

"We enjoyed together some of my favourite footballing memories during qualification for the World Cup and in the World Cup itself. My condolences to all his family and friends."

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AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASES HC hearing on appeals may start soon

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court is expected to start soon the hearing on the death references and appeals against the verdict of the August 21 grenade attack cases, as the paper books have already been prepared and appeals accepted for hearing.

The files relating to the sensational cases have been placed before Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain recently for taking necessary decision, an official of the HC told The Daily Star on December 4, requesting anonymity.

He said the chief justice may now assign an HC bench for hearing and disposing of the cases.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq told this correspondent that paper books of August 21 cases have been readied, and now the HC is supposed to start hearing of the death references and appeals.

He said it might be difficult for the HC to hold hearing on such big cases during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, as most of the HC benches are performing judicial functions virtually using information technology.

"Nevertheless, let us see whether the High Court can start hearing of the cases as soon as possible," the law minister added.

A paper book, which contains all the details of a case, trial proceedings, evidence, order and verdict, is necessary for the HC to hear and dispose of a death reference or an appeal.

If a lower court sentences a person to death in a case, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The case

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2



A cyclist making use of the newly painted cycling lane on one of the capital's biggest and most iconic streets, Manik Mia Avenue. Dhaka South City Corporation has been making separate lanes for the safety of cyclists. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



FORBES LIST Hasina 39th most powerful woman in the world

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been ranked 39th on Forbes' list of the most powerful women.

Angela Merkel, Christine Lagarde and Kamala Harris have been ranked first, second and third respectively.

Queen Elizabeth II has been ranked 46 in the list.

Hasina, the president of ruling Awami League, is the longest-serving prime minister of Bangladesh. It is her fourth and third consecutive term in office.

She plans to focus on issues such as food security.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

PENNSYLVANIA POLLS RESULT US SC refuses to overturn Trump's loss

AFP, Washington

The US Supreme Court has dealt the latest blow to Donald Trump's effort to overturn his election loss when it denied his allies' attempt to block the certification of votes in key state Pennsylvania.

The nation's highest court, which includes three Trump-appointed justices out of nine, did not explain its decision, and none of the members expressed dissent.

More than a month since the November 3 election, Trump still refuses to concede to Democrat Joe Biden -- who has a seven million-vote lead -- and continues to make baseless claims of fraud.

Trump and his allies have filed dozens of lawsuits in several key states, almost all of which have been thrown out by the courts.

One of them, brought by Republican congressman Mike Kelly, challenged the legality of mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania, a crucial battleground state.

Biden carried Pennsylvania in November's vote, four years after Trump won the state.

After the case was rejected by the state

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

No threat can stop war criminals' trial: Samad

December 10, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

USSR, CHILE FOR BANGLADESH'S EARLY ENTRY

The Soviet Union and Chile today call for the speedy recognition of the lawful aspiration of the People's Republic of Bangladesh as regards its admission to the United Nations. It is mentioned in a joint communique issued today in Moscow at the end of the four-day visit to the Soviet Union of President Salvador Allende of Chile. The Bangladesh reference is identical in content to those in recent communiqués signed by the Soviet Union with Bulgaria and Hungary after high-level exchanges.

SAMAD'S REPLY TO BHUTTO
 Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today reiterates the government's determination to put the people responsible for genocide in Bangladesh on trial. Those who organised the genocide scheme and were linked with committing the genocide should be tried under the Bangladesh laws and in accordance to the Geneva Convention, he adds.

Referring to Bhutto's threat to try the innocent Bangalees stranded in Pakistan, the foreign minister asks the world conscience to consider Bhutto's speech as part of the scheme of Pakistan rulers to wipe out the Bangalee nation. He asks those who are questioning the trial of war criminals in the name of Geneva

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



DHAKA AIRPORT 250kg bomb found at 3rd terminal site

It was probably buried there during 1971 war, says security official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 250-kilogramme bomb was found buried at the construction site of the third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday.

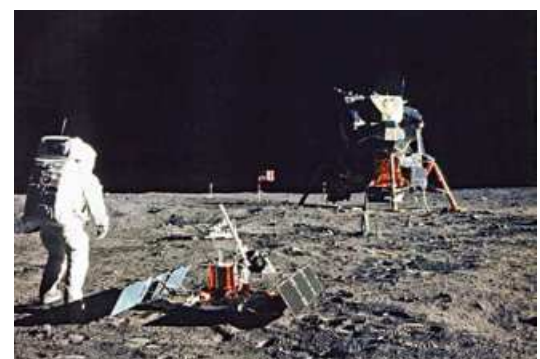
Workers first found the cylinder-like bomb about three metres deep when they were excavating for construction work of the third terminal around 9:00am, said a high-placed official of the airport's security department.

"It is a live bomb weighing 250kg. There are explosives inside of it. It is usually called a general-purpose bomb," the official said, wishing to remain anonymous.

HSIA Director Group Captain AHM Touhid-ul

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

Nasa unveils plan for 'gateway to the rest of solar system'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa has revealed the priorities for the Artemis II mission, which will take the first woman and the next man to the moon.

This includes bringing back 85 kilograms of lunar samples from the surface and sub-surface of the moon, 21 kilograms more than was originally collected by the Apollo missions.

The samples collected could contain evidence of water and other chemicals, which could help scientists develop plans for mission into deeper space.

Nasa also aims to establish an Artemis base

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

Kamal Ibne Yusuf dies from Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice Chairman and former Lawmaker Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf died from Covid-19 yesterday. He was 80.

He breathed his last at Evercare Hospital Dhaka around 1:00pm, Syrul Kabir Khan, an official of the BNP chairperson's press wing, told The Daily Star.

He left behind his wife, four daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Yusuf, a former MP from Faridpur-3, was taken to the coronary care unit of the private hospital in Gulshan on November 22. Later, he tested Covid-19 positive. He had also been suffering from lung complications for a long time, said family members.

Yusuf joined the BNP in 1979 after the party's

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

COVID PANDEMIC 24 more die, 2,159 infected in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Amid rise in Covid-19 infections in Bangladesh, health authorities yesterday reported 2,159 new cases in 24 hours, pushing the country's total tally to 484,104.

Besides, 24 more people died from the disease during the period, raising the death toll to 6,930.

The mortality rate, however, is still at 1.43 percent, said the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

So far, 405,966 patients -- 83.86 percent -- including 4,772 new ones in the last 24 hours have recovered.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 10
 Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
 AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00
 JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Passengers of a speedboat in Mawa sitting in close proximity, with many not wearing masks and some wearing the face coverings improperly. The lack of adherence to health guidelines among the general public amid fears of a second Covid-19 wave has become a common sight. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Indian farmers to step up protests

Reject govt offer to amend new farm laws

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's farmers yesterday rejected the government's proposal to amend three controversial laws and said they would step up protests seeking withdrawal of these laws which they said would harm their economic interests while helping big food retailers.

Farmers have been demonstrating since late last month over reforms enacted in September that loosened rules around the sale, pricing and storage of farm produce, that had protected farmers from an unfettered free market for decades.

In the proposal sent earlier to 13 agitating farmer unions, the Indian central government yesterday promised a written assurance for minimum support prices, allowing farmers to go to court to resolve disputes instead of a sub-divisional magistrate and scrapping of the Electricity Amendment bill, which they opposed.

"The farmers have rejected the government's proposals," Darshan Pal, president of Krantikari Kisan Union, told reporters after the meeting of over 30 farmers' unions.

Farmers leaders said they would intensify nationwide protests from Saturday that would include boycott of the leaders of Modi's ruling party, blocking of national highways and picketing at toll plazas.

Expressing their anger towards some large domestic corporations and retailers, including Reliance Industries and Adani Enterprises, farmer leaders said they would boycott the products and services of these companies.

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ON THE PATH TO CONNECTING DREAMS



*Creative Visualization

The 41st span of the Padma Bridge structure is being installed. This will be the last one to conclude the span installation work. Now, the entire 6.15 kilometer structure of the double-deck bridge will be visible to everyone.



**Proud Construction Partner of
Padma Bridge Project**

Born to Build



The Daily Star

2 | Cover

On the Path to Connecting Dreams



Bangladesh is running several mega projects. These projects will change the face of the country. It is immense pride that Shah Cement is a proud partner in shaping future Bangladesh.

Padma Bridge at a Glance



The Padma Bridge is a multi-purpose road-rail bridge across the Padma River; connecting Mawa of Munshiganj to Zajira of Shariatpur

Main Bridge Length: 6.15 km

Total Piers 42

Pier to Pier Distance 150 Meter

Total Span 41

An Emotional Moment of Dream Coming True



Naushad Chowdhury
Director, Brand Marketing
Abul Khair Group

The Padma Bridge is not just an architectural structure of rod, cement and concrete; it represents the hope and compassion of 160 million people. The joy and celebration of the whole country after the installation of each span of the double-deck bridge is unique and unprecedented.

The road to materialize this dream project is an adventure journey by itself. The mighty Padma carries the most water after the Amazon River. Adamant in its flow, it was difficult to govern! The unstable nature of the eroding soil at the bottom of the river required the piling to be done much deeper, which was technically very challenging. The structure needed to be futuristic and earth-quake resistant. There were challenges of land acquisition, rehabilitation and environmental protection.

Bangladesh Government decided to build the dream project with its own fund, which gave a roaring message of a vibrant, uprising Bangladesh to the world. Padma Bridge is expected to revolutionize the lives of the millions in south-west Bangladesh. The uninterrupted transportation will result in further improvement of Education and Healthcare facilities in that region. The agro-businesses will flourish, industrial investment will increase and employment will see a record high with the expansion of trade. The balanced development of the whole country is expected to further boost the GDP growth by an additional 1 to 1.5%. Connectivity with the South-east Asian Road Network and the Trans-Asia Railway is likely to generate further momentum in the economy.

We are very happy to be a part of the Padma Bridge project. When the bridge becomes operational, we will be able to deliver Shah Cement to the south-west districts with more speed and less time, ensuring better customer service. Shah Cement is expected to play a significant role in urban development and establishing new industries on both sides of the Padma River.

At this glorious crossroad of dream fulfillment; gratitude and best wishes to everyone.

Proud Partner of Bangladesh's Infrastructural Expansion



Hafiz Sikander
Director Operations
Shah Cement Industries Limited

Bangladesh is rapidly changing. It is roaring with its head held high. Bangladesh is humble but adamant on its course. Padma Bridge - is another feather on the crowning glory of the country, a glowing testament to the commitment towards prosperity. Shah Cement is ready to accompany Bangladesh in the quest for development and to take the nation to the next level.

With a big vision, Bangladesh is running several mega projects at once. These projects will change the face of the country once they're finished. The economy will get a boost. Employment will increase. Our GDP growth will continue to soar. It gives me immense pride and joy to think that Shah Cement is a proud partner in shaping the future of Bangladesh, including the Padma Bridge.

We are always ready to serve the call for the development of the nation with the latest technological advancement in the cement producing world. The world's largest and most advanced VRM (Vertical Roller Mill) has been added to the Shah Cement production facility. It has become the first Guinness World Record holder in Bangladesh in terms of such technological excellence.

The world's largest vertical roller mill of Shah Cement is equipped with 'Intelligent Monitoring Control System', that automatically ensures high quality in every cement bag. Shah Cement is the first choice among home-builders, and also a favourite among the megastructure builders of the country. The VRM of Shah Cement also has a 'multi-compartment silo', which is capable of producing customized and specialized cement for different mega structures. With all the top-notch technology - Shah Cement is always ready to meet any sort of demands in cement production with the highest efficiency.

It is just the beginning of the journey on the country's road to development. Shah Cement is reiterating its promise to continue its efforts to support all development initiatives along the way.

*www.padmabridge.gov.bd



SUPERBRAND OF MEGA PROJECTS

