





It is here in Golahat on Saidpur-Chilahati rail line where at least 448 people, mostly Marwari Hindus, were taken off a train and brutally killed by the Pakistani army and razakars led by Biharis on June 13, 1971.

PHOTO: STAR

A TRAIN TO MASSACRE The 1971 Golahat mass killing in Saidpur remains a lesser

known part of Liberation War history

PINAKI ROY and EAM ASADUZZAMAN

It was past midnight at Saidpur Rail Station.

In the dim light, mostly Hindu Marwaris and some Bangalees from all walks of life could be seen standing beside the platform. Tense, even those who knew each other

were not talking.

They were all anxiously waiting for the train that would leave for Jalpaiguri in West Bengal through the Chilahati border.

More than 450 Marwaris boarded that train, but little did they know that it would take them just 2km near Golahat point. from the railway station. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3 RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 3, 5

On that fateful night, they were betraved and subjected to a preplanned massacre by Pakistani army troops and armed razakars led by two Bihari men -- Qaiyum Khan and Izahar Ahmed -- and their associates, who were lying in wait



VICTORY DAY

Sixty-one more recognised as Biranganas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recognised 61 more Biranganas (war heroines) for their contribution and sacrifice during the country's Liberation War in 1971. The recognition comes a day before the country goes

into its 50th Victory Day celebration. The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

yesterday issued a gazette notification in this regard. With the latest inclusion, SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Won't tolerate chaos in name of religion

PM says in address to nation on the eve of Victory Day, urges harmony, respect to all faiths

UNB, Dhaka

Issuing a strong warning against religious fanatics, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would not let anyone create any division and anarchy in the country over religion.

"This Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Lalon Shah, Rabindranath, Kazi Nazrul, Jibanananda... this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Shahjalal, Shah Poran, Shah Mokdum, Khanjahan Ali; this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Sheikh Mujib and 16.5 crore Bangalees -- this country is for all. We won't allow anyone to create any division and anarchy in the name of religion," she said. The premier was addressing the nation on the occasion of Victory Day.

"The people of Bangladesh are pious, not religious bigots. Do not make religion a political weapon. Everyone has the right to perform their own religion."

1971 are out to confuse the religion-loving Muslims

MEET WITH HOME BOSS Hefajat sticks to its stance on sculpture

RASHIDUL HASAN

Calling sculptures anti-Islamic, Qawmi madrasa-based clerics, many of whom are Hefajat leaders, have proposed that the government construct minarets instead of sculptures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Led by Mahmudul Hasan, chairman of madrasa education board (Befaq), a 12-member delegation came up with the proposal at a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his residence in the

DECEMBER **HAPPY VICTORY DAY** PADMA CONQUERED IN

THE MONTH OF VICTORY

The Padma Bridge is no longer just a dream. The robust leadership of Deshratna Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the worthy daughter of Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has now made visible all of the 6.1 kilometres of the Padma Bridge. The Padma Bridge is a unique milestone for the Bangalees as we enter our 50th year of victory. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had expressed his determination to build a prosperous Bangladesh by overcoming dependence on foreign aid. Bangabandhu wanted this country to truly become one day a Golden Bengal.

Following the path shown by Bangabandhu, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ignored all obstacles and constructed the Padma Bridge with fully national funding, showing the world that any false pressure cannot suppress Bangladesh. Bangladesh has never succumbed to any conspiracy and will never do so in the future.

Born of the sacrifice of three million martyrs, Bangladesh has overcome thousands of obstacles to reach where it is today. Statistics show the huge number of achievements in the last 49 years, proving that Bangladesh has come a long way from being once a war-torn country with almost no infrastructure. In some cases, Bangladesh has surprised the world with its success. Even with a small territory, this country of 160 million people is now self-sufficient in food.

Bangladesh has made unprecedented progress in the last decade in any indicator of

Hasina said a section of the defeated force of

through providing false, fabricated and fictitious information as they want to create anarchy in the society.

"In 1972, the Father of the Nation had said not to make religion a tool of politics. But the SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

capital on Monday night. Coming out of the hour-long meeting,

Hefajat-e Islam Nayeb-e-Amir Ataullah Hafezzi termed it fruitful. He claimed that the minister did not oppose their argument against the establishment of sculptures or idols. SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the nation yesterday on the eve of Victory Day celebrations. In her 18-minute speech, she issued a strong message to religious fanatics and remembered the sacrifices made for an independent secular Bangladesh.

economic growth and social development. Bangladesh has come a long way in overall growth since 1990, compared to the average growth of developing countries. The rate of poverty has dropped by more than half. Women's contribution to economic activities has increased rapidly. Bangladesh could be able to overtake many other developing countries, including neighbouring India, in many social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, female education rate, birth control usage of able-bodied couples etc. The most visible progress has been made in building "Digital Bangladesh". In the meantime, "Bangabandhu Satellite" has been successfully launched.

Bangladesh is ahead of India in a lot of areas and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has reiterated this point on numerous occasions. In his book titled "An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions", he dedicated a whole chapter to Bangladesh.

After independence, the life expectancy of an average Bangladeshi was 46 years, and it has now gone up to 72.6 years. Meanwhile, the average life expectancy in South Asia remains at 65 years. In low-income countries, the infant mortality rate is 70 deaths against 1,000 births; in South Asia, it is 52 deaths against 1,000 births; while in Bangladesh, the status is 37 deaths against 1,000 births. Bangladesh has now graduated itself into a middle-income country. With the firm leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister, we aptly tackle the Rohingya crisis. Complex initiatives for ensuring the safe return of the Rohingyas to their homeland are underway. The Honourable Prime Minister has also handled the COVID-19 pandemic as efficiently as any leader of developed countries

This is the year of Golden Jubilee of independence for Bangladesh. The country steps into 50 years of its glory. In this moment of great achievement and on the occasion of Victory Day, we are remembering the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At the same time, we are also paying our respects to all the martyrs of the independence war. Along with that, I also remember every freedom fighter who took part in the liberation war,

Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamt that one-day Bangladesh would be a prosperous country, free of hunger and poverty, standing tall in the world. To fulfil that dream, a 20-year plan, 'Vision 2041', has been adopted, and the Prime Minister herself is leading the implementation of it. After Bangabandhu, she is the true leader for a modern Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's first perspective plan 2010-2021 will end in the golden jubilee of its independence. The journey to become a middle-income country and a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 is on course to meet its target even in the midst of the on-going pandemic. Today, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country has found a way to achieve its security and prosperity.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.







She only went to buy chips

8-yr-old found dead after rape in Bogura

STAR REPORT

An eight-year-old girl has been killed after rape in Bogura's Dhunat upazila.

The victim, Tabassum Khatun, was a second grader at a primary school in Nosrotpur village of the upazila.

Police said the girl along with her grandparents went to a waz mahfil near their home in the same village on Monday night. At one stage of the religious event, the girl went to a nearby shop to buy chips around 10:00pm.

As she was late to return, her

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All air travellers must be Covid free

CAAB threatens int'l carriers with flight suspensions if they carry people with no coronavirus-free certificates

STAR REPORT

Airlines carrying passengers without Covid-19 negative certificates will have to face flight suspension penalty from now on.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) came up with the directives as multiple airlines recently carried passengers to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport without Covid-19 negative certificates.

In some cases, some airlines also carried passengers despite having Covid-19 positive certificates.

Group Captain Chowdhury Zia-ul-Kabir, member (Flight Standards and Regulations) of CAAB, said with great concern, CAAB observed several airlines carrying passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificates in RT-PCR lab. "Even some airlines are carrying Covid infected passengers."

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40 more die, highest in 12 weeks STAFF CORRESPONDENT

PHOTO: PID

The country yesterday reported 40 deaths due to Covid-19 -- the highest for a single day in more than 12 weeks.

died from Covid-19 in 24 according to a DGHS press release.

Earlier, the 21st day of September saw the same number of deaths due to novel coronavirus infection. After that, the number of daily deaths continued to go down and SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Besides, 1,877 people

hours till 8:00am yesterday,



4,26,729 Recoveries

Won't tolerate chaos

FROM PAGE 1

associates of the defeated forces are now dreaming of taking the country to a situation which prevailed in the country 50 years back.

The PM alleged that these bigots with political patronage were showing their audacity.

"The people of Bangladesh are pious, but not fanatics. We must not make religion as the weapon of politics. Everyone has the right to perform his own religious rituals."

Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony. The country achieved its independence in an exchange of blood of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. "The people of the country will move on towards prosperity, progress and development keeping the religious morale high.

She briefly described various development programmes of Bangabandhu and Awami League governments for flourishing Islam in the country.

DEBT OF BLOOD

In her 18-minute speech, the PM urged all to take a vow on the eve of the Victory Day not to forget the debt of blood of millions of martyrs.

"We must not let the noncommunal spirit of the Liberation War fade away. My request to the youths and the new generation is that you must not forget the supreme sacrifices of your predecessors ever. You must not let someone dishonour the red and green flag that they have gifted [us]," she said.

The premier said youths must take a vow to transform the country into Golden Bengal imbued with the spirit of Liberation War.

VICTORY DAY AMID COVID

Talking about the Covid-19 pandemic, Hasina said the country is going to celebrate the Victory Day this year in a different situation.

"We have to bring changes to our daily routine due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are carrying out our personal, social and national activities avoiding public gatherings. Each life is invaluable...the death of a single person due to negligence is not desirable."

The PM urged all to perform their everyday works and celebrate the

Victory Day following health safety rules. "Make sure that you are masked up while going out of home and clean hands with soap or sanitiser regularly. Your protection is the safeguard for all." She said the whole nation faced

the coronavirus unitedly and set an example in the world.

"In Bangladesh, we have been able to tackle this adverse shock to some extent with timely steps and programmes. We have announced a stimulus package worth Tk 121,000 crore which is 4.3 percent of the GDP."

After absorbing the initial hit, the remittance inflow, agricultural production and export have bounced back, the PM added.

Hasina said the government has changed the celebration programmes of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman due to the pandemic.

"Our independence will step into the 50th year next year. Had there been no pandemic, we would have celebrated the Golden Jubilee of independence in a befitting manner simultaneously with the programmes of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation."

The premier said Bangabandhu used to say that nobody honours a beggars' nation.

"We have erased that bad name of Bangladesh in the international arena as Bangladesh is now the name of a dignified country. Today's Bangladesh is not a country of a fragile economy; today's Bangladesh is self-dependent Bangladesh.

Hasina said Bangladesh has fulfilled the eligibility criteria for graduation from the list of least developed countries to a developing country.

She said it was the dream of the Father of the Nation to establish secular Golden Bengal which would be free from hunger and poverty.

"We are at the doorstep of implementing his dream... we have to continue this development. With this, we will be able to fulfil our dream to become a developed and prosperous country by 2041," the PM added.

State-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television simultaneously broadcast the prime minister's address. Private television channels and radio stations also aired the speech.

GLOBAL

Candidates of the exam for enrollment into Bangladesh Bar Council line up in front of its Paribagh office in the capital yesterday to collect admit cards for the December 19 test. Although most of the candidates were wearing masks, they did not maintain social distancing in line with Covid-19 safety guidelines. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A train to massacre

FROM PAGE 1

They stabbed all the passengers on the train to death with knives and bayonets, except for around 10 to 12 young boys and men who made a run for it in the dark

The Daily Star spoke to three of these survivors who lost their family members and witnessed the barbaric Golahat massacre in Nilphamari's Saidpur upazila, which saw at least 448 people, mostly Marwaris, killed on June 13, 1971.

Nijhu Kumar Agarwal, now 65, narrowly escaped death but lost nine family members -- including his father and elder brother.

"From the afternoon of June 12, two military lorries from Saidpur cantonment were engaged to carry us from our homes to the railway station. We were told by the soldiers to hurry as there would be no space in the train compartments for those who were late."

reached the station, they were escorted by soldiers in civil dress and the Biharis,

"From the spot, Pakistani soldiers make even the slightest protest," Nijhu

In the early hours of June 13, the train began its short journey on the Saidpur-Chilahati route.

Tapan Kumar Das, a 70-year-old survivor, said the train moved very slowly along the steel tracks before it reached near railway culvert No 338 in the Golahat area and rolled to a stop.

To their horror, he said, those inside found that all gates and windows of the train were locked from the outside and peeping through a crack, he noticed the few remaining survivors.

Binod Agarwal, 65, said some victims requested they be killed by shooting but they were kicked at and the soldiers shouted that the Pakistan government would not waste their bullets on them.

Survivors Nijhu and Binod said during the massacre, the killers were shouting "kharcha khata, kharcha khata".

Later, the bodies were carelessly buried in knee-deep holes on one square kilometre area on both sides of the rail tracks. They were mostly eaten by jackals and dogs, he said.

The incident was described in the 2014 book "Golahat Ganohatya" written by Ahmed Sharif, who works with the organisation 1971 Genocide and Torture Archive and Museum Trust.

"All the victims of the Golahat massacre were lured to that train being assured that they would be sent to India. They were later killed," Ahmed

Sharif told The Daily Star. The massacre is also documented in Zahangir Alam Sarkar's "History of Nilphamari", published by Bangla

Academy. SAIDPÚR IN 1971

A large number of Marwaris, from various parts of undivided India during the British era, lived in a part of Saidpur which came to be called "Marwari Patti". They stayed on in the railway

town, home of an important railway workshop in the region, trading in jute and other lucrative industries.

Bangalee residents of Saidpur who witnessed those days of turmoil in 1971 said after the March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, it was clear that Bangalees were heading towards independence.

However, Urdu-speaking Biharis who migrated here after 1947 came to

country, the Biharis in Saidpur opposed this, instead hoisting Pakistani flags from house-tops.

After the night of March 25, Pakistani plainclothes soldiers and Biharis began looting and killing Bangalee homes and also attempted to attack the wealthy Marwaris, though they were not Bangla speakers.

Before that fateful June day, many local Marwaris and Hindu young men estimated to be from 185 to 300 -- were forcibly taken to the cantonment to work at the under-construction Saidpur airport.

From June 5, Pakistan army officers and local Bihari leaders spoke with Marwari community leaders, assuring them the Pakistani government had arranged a special train for all of them to be taken to India.

They also announced this by loudspeakers in different parts of Saidpur over a few days, asking them to prepare to leave for India, which came as a great relief for the under-siege Marwaris.

NEGLECTED MARTYRS

Survivor Nijhu Kumar Agarwal, who recently visited the killing ground with our Nilphamari correspondent, pointed a finger to the spot where he last saw his loveď ones.

"Just there, my father and brother were killed," he said, tears rolling down his eyes.

Starting in 2015, the Saidpur upazila administration, along with local bodies, built a memorial at the spot which was finished in 2018.

Saidpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nasim Ahmed said they have a list of 448 victims of the Golahat massacre. "We pay homage to those martyred

at the memorial site," he said. Earlier, the number of dead was

1,635,363 Deaths **73,539,033** Total cases

Sixty-one more

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a total of 400 Biranganas received the status of freedom fighters.

At least 1.62 lakh women were raped and another 1.31 lakh Hindu women went missing during the War, according to the War Crimes Facts and Findings Committee led by Dr M Hassan.

The Hindu women were believed to have been raped and killed in the Pakistan army camps.

The process of recognising Biranganas as freedom fighters started following a High Court order on January 27, 2014.

It asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to upgrade the social status of war heroines and provide them with state honour and facilities like those of freedom fighters.

Every recognised Birangana will now receive a monthly allowance of Tk 12,000 and special quota in government jobs and benefits for their children and grandchildren.

This year, the nation is going to celebrate its Victory Day, the most prestigious day for Bangalees, in a different manner on the account of ongoing pandemic.

The government has initiated elaborate programmes to celebrate the day at the national level, maintaining Covid-19 health guidelines.

The programmes include a 31gun salute, placing of wreaths at the monuments to pay homage to martyrs, hoisting the national flag atop all government, semi-government and private offices, as well as offices of autonomous bodies across the country, decorating city streets with miniature national flags and colourful festoons, and illumination of important buildings and establishments, roads and street islands at night.

This year, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will not visit the National Memorial at Savar.

On behalf of them, tributes will be paid to Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths.

Besides, the traditional parade with the participation of different contingents of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as Freedom Fighters' contingent, Para-military forces and law enforcement agencies at the National Parade Ground on the victory day will not be held this year due to Covid-19.

Special prayers will be offered at mosques and other places of worship, seeking eternal peace for the departed souls of martyrs and good health of injured freedom fighters as well as beace, progress and prosperity of the country.

To mark the day, a public holiday, national dailies will bring out special supplements on the occasion while Bangladesh Postal Department will release memorial postal stamps to mark the dav.

State-owned and private television nd radio channels will broadcast special programmes highlighting the Liberation War.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages for the eve of Independence

As soon as the unsuspecting Marwaris

and were pushed into the compartments of the standing train, he said. abducted 20 young Marwari girls, and out of panic, their guardians couldn't

continued.

"We will resolve all those issues through discussions."

About Hefajat's demand for building "Mujib Minar" with 99 names of Allah, nev also discussed the matter "We have told them that sculptures are not meant for worshiping. State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan, Befaq Secretary General and also a top Hefajat leader Maulana Mahfuzul Haque, Maulana Farid Uddin Masud, Maulana Nurul Islam, and Maulana Ruhul Amin, among others, were present at the meeting on Monday. A section of Qawmi madrasa-based clerics on December 5 came up with their five-point proposal. On December 7, two sedition cases were filed with Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Court against Hefajat Amir Junayed Babunagari, its Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque and Nayeb-e-Amir of Islami Andolon Bangladesh Syed Faizul Karim. Under its new leadership, Hefajat has recently been speaking against the construction of Bangabandhu's sculptures, terming them anti-Islamic. They demanded that the government finds an alternative way in light of Islamic rules to show respect to Bangabandhu. Several top ministers of the government have been arguing that sculptures and idols are not the same and that sculptures exist even in many Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Hefajat sticks to its stance discussions took place with the clerics

FROM PAGE 1 "We have also told the minister not on their five-point demand, including to set up Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's establishment of "Mujib Minar" instead sculpture in the city's Dholaipar as of sculptures of Bangabandhu. there are many mosques, madrasas

Ataullah told The Daily Star.

Commission.

He said even Prime Minister Sheikh and Islamic institutions in the area," Hasina may hold discussions on a larger scale to resolve the issue. Ataullah is also the chairman

Replying to another question, of Khelafat Andolon, a political the minister said the construction of party registered with the Election Bangabandhu's sculpture in Dholaipar was underway. He, however, said: "No A Hefajat leader, wishing not to decision has yet been made on whether be named, said they told the minister that the government could build

the sculpture will exist there."

to Bangabandhu. A government official present at the meeting said its atmosphere was nice and that both sides placed their arguments in an amicable way.

monuments like the Qutab Minar in

India at different places inscribing 99

names of Allah on them to show respect

Asked about the meeting's outcome, the home minister, Asaduzzaman Khan, yesterday said discussions with the Islamic clerics on the sculpture issue was fruitful and that the talks would continue.

"I want to make it clear that the government will not go beyond the constitution. We will not do anything that hurts people's religious sentiment," he told reporters at the secretariat.

In reply to another query, the home boss, however, claimed that his party Awami League was not maintaining a policy of "bowing down before anyone" to resolve the ongoing crisis over Bangabandhu's sculpture.

More discussions would be held to settle all issues, raised by the Alems, in a friendly manner, he said.

"We think a beautiful environment has been created ... They have agreed with us that no one should vandalise anything or violate law. They told us to remain vigilant to stop propaganda being spread on Facebook over opposing Bangabandhu's sculpture. They also said they won't wage any movement. They want to solve the issue through talks," he said.

Asaduzzaman mentioned that

She only went to buy chips

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grandparents started looking for her, but did not find her anywhere.

Later, her family members, relatives and locals began a search for her across the village. Around 1:30am, they found her body near a bamboo grove, said Gaziur Rahman, additional superintendent of police (Sherpur circle) of Bogura.

The girl was rushed to Dhunat Upazila Heath Complex.

Ashraful Kabir, medical officer at the health complex, said she died before being taken to the hospital around 2:00am yesterday.

The body was sent to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College morgue for an autopsy

"We primarily found evidence of rape. There were injury marks on her chest and blood in her private parts," said the additional SP.

Police were trying to identify and arrest the culprit(s), he said.

The number of rape and sexual harassment has apparently increased in recent times, triggering public outcry

countrywide protests Amid

denouncing violence against women, the "Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2020" was passed in parliament November 17 keeping death penalty as the highest punishment for rape.

Meanwhile in Savar, Rab on Monday rescued a 12-year-old girl in Ashulia's Dendabar area. The law enforcers said she had gone missing from Sherpur 15 days ago and was allegedly raped multiple times since then.

Rab arrested two people in this connection.

They are Anzika alias Trisha, 20, a resident of Balyadi village in Sherpur's Nakla upazila, and Ridov Khan, 21, of Darulhuda village of Patuakhali's Bhandaria upazila.

The victim and Anzika knew each other. Anzika tricked her into coming to Ashulia on November 29, promising her of giving a job, said Rab officials.

Anzika then handed over the girl to Ridoy, who allegedly raped her on multiple occasions, said Maj AHM Adnan Tofadar, company commander of Rab-4.

[Our correspondents in Bogura and Savar contributed to this report]

that the train was encircled by local Biharis carrying knives and bayonets and Pakistani soldiers in civil dress at a slight distance.

The killers then opened the gates of each compartment one by one to drag out the men, women and children -first looting all their belongings and finally stabbing and cutting them down to their harrowing deaths, according to dominate Saidpur from the morning of March 23, Pakistan's Republic Day, with the help of the Pakistani army.

Marwaris, Bangalee Hindus, and those who supported independence of Bangladesh in Saidpur remained confined in their homes out of fear during the month of March.

On March 23, when the Swadhin Bangla flag was hoisted across the

All air travellers must be Covid free

FROM PAGE 1

Such activities are putting a negative impact on the initiatives taken by the government to contain Covid-19 pandemic.

A circular issued by CAAB read the penalty would start from suspension of one flight to four weeks of suspension depending on how many times an airline makes the same mistake.

On December 4, CAAB issued a circular mentioning anyone enters the country from December 5 would have to carry a Covid-19 negative certificate within 72 hours of their flight schedules. The regulatory authority also asked all airlines operating to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport not to issue boarding passes to the passengers if they don't have Covid-19 negative certificates.

Recently, the rate of incoming passengers without having Covid-19 certificate has been on the rise.

In November alone, more than 4,000 passengers arrived without a Covid negative certificate.

Therefore, the government this time made it mandatory to have Covid-19 certificate for incoming passengers.

Sources at the HSIA said around 1,400 passengers came to Dhaka by different airlines without having Covid-19 negative certificate.

Besides, the airlines also carried five passengers despite having infected with Covid-19, said the sources.

Four foreigners -- three Indians and one Italian citizen -- were sent back to their countries as they didn't have Covid-19 negative certificate with them.

Mobile Court at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on December 13 fined Air Asia, a Malaysia based budget airlines, Tk 1 lakh for carrying an identified Covid-19 positive passenger who had Covid-19 positive certificate with him.

The mobile court at HSIA on Saturday also fined Biman Bangladesh

Airlines Tk 30,000 for carrying six 4 announced that anyone wants to passengers without having Covid-19 come to Bangladesh from December 5 negative certificate through RT-PCR test.

Earlier on December 11, Maldivian Airlines was fined Tk 238,000 for carrying passengers to Bangladesh without Covid-19 negative certificate.

passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificate will have to face flight suspension penalty for different terms.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh came up with the strict directives following a number of airlines bringing passengers to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport without having Covid-19 negative certificate in the recent weeks.

carried passengers despite having the certificate that they are positive for

certificates in RT-PCR lab.

Even some airlines are carrying Corona affected passengers. Such activities are putting a negative impact on the initiatives taken by the government to contain Covid-19 pandemic.

An airlines will face suspension for one schedule flight for the first time's mistake for carrying passengers without a Covid-19 negative certificate or carrying Covid-19 affected passenger.

For same mistake for the second time, three schedule flights of the airlines will be suspended and for the third time's mistake, flights will be suspended for one week. The airline's flight will also be suspended for at least four weeks in case of mistake for fourth times.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in a circular on December

reported as 437 but local journalist MR Alam Jhantu, also a martyr's son, said after extensive interviews in the area, the number was revised to 448.

Jhantu also said more than 4,000 people were martyred in Saidpur during the Liberation War.

"But successive governments did almost nothing to preserve the memory of those martyred.

must need Covid-19 negative certificate

asked not to issue boarding pass to the

passengers if they don't have Covid-19

passengers without having Covid-19

passengers arrived without a corona

made it mandatory to have Covid-19

certificate for incoming passengers.

Covid-19 negative certificate.

Covid-19, said the source.

negative certificate with them.

with him.

test

certificate has been increased

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Sources at the HSIA said around

1400 passengers came to Dhaka by

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Mobile Court at the Hazrat Shahialal

International Airport on December

13 fined Air Asia, a Malaysia based

budget airlines Tk 1 lakh for carrying an

identified Covid-19 positive passenger

who had Covid-19 positive certificate

Saturday also fined Biman Bangladesh

Airlines Tk 30,000 for carrying six

passengers without having Covid-19

negative certificate through RT- PCR

Earlier on December 11, Maldivian

Airlines was fined Tk 2,38,000 for

carrying passengers to Bangladesh

without Covid-19 negative certificate.

The mobile court at the HSIA on

Besides, the airlines also carried five

4 foreigners-three Indians and one

negative certificate.

negative certificate.

In his message, President Hamid put emphasis on institutionalising democracy and developing a culture of absolute tolerance and mutual respect to provide the benefits of independence to people's doorsteps.

The PM in her message urged everyone to unite against all communal evil forces and thwart any conspiracy against the country, democracy and government.

She also urged all to follow nealth guidelines and play their due roles in maintaining the country's development, progress and continuity of democracy.

40 more die

FROM PAGE 1

remained stagnant around 20 till mid-November. The daily death cases, however, started to rise again since then [last one month] and was stagnant around 35.

With yesterday's count, the highly transmissible virus claimed 7,129 lives in the country which is 1.44 percent against the total number of confirmed cases so far

Dr Mushtuq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), told The Daily Star that "death cases usually rise three weeks after the infection rises. Maybe, today's [yesterday] figure is a beginning as the infection was high in the past several weeks. We are observing a rising trend in the daily death cases over the last few weeks."

Over the past two months, the number of daily cases has also increased.

Covid-19 cases rose by 33.49 percent n the last month compared to the number recorded in October.

With the latest, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 4,94,209.

Against a total of 19,054 tests in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, the positivity rate was 9.85 percent, while the overall positivity rate stands at 16.44 percent.

In the same period, a total of 2,884 Covid-19 patients have recovered from their illnesses, according to the press elease

With this, the total number of recoveries rose to 4,26,729 and the recovery rate at 86.35 percent.

Among yesterday's deceased, 26 were nales and 14 were females.

Two of them were aged between 31 and 40 years, three between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60, and 28 were above 60 years, added the release.

within 72 hours of their flight schedule. CAAB came up with the strict measure to contain the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic. The regulatory authority also asked From now on any airlines carrying all airlines operating to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport

In some cases, several airlines also Covid-19

Group Captain Chowdhury Ziaul-Kabir, member (Flight Standards and Regulations), CAAB said with great concern CAAB is observing that several airlines were carrying passengers without having Covid-19 negative

Police station not a place to plan murder

IGP warns officials STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed yesterday said a police station cannot be a place to plan murder.

Recently, media published reports that such plans were hatched inside a police station. So, question arises whether police stations are safe? Will the police chief take any initiative to bring transparency in this regard?

In reply to these queries from a journalist, the police chief came up with the statement

He said police stations should work for protecting peace and people's lives. It's not a place to plan murder.

"There are many complaints against police stations but we are working on them," said the police chief.

He said these at an event organised to introduce operational gears (tactical belts) for law enforcers at Rajarbagh Police Auditorium in the capital.

On last Sunday, Rab submitted the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



The High Court was a majestic sight in the colours of the Bangladesh flag on the eve of the country's Victory Day today. The city's many major structures were lit up at night to mark the occasion, celebrating the victory earned 49 years back after a ninemonth bloody war with Pakistani occupation forces in 1971.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Wait for justice continues

Court still dealing with appeals of war-crime cases, years after verdicts

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

After so many years, people are still waiting to see justice for the crimes committed during the Liberation War, as appeal hearings of 27 war-crime cases were halted for years at the Supreme Court (SC).

When hearings resumed last year after more than three years, justice seekers were hopeful to complete the long-drawn trials.

But the process came to a halt again. No appeals were heard in the last one year, as the apex court is overloaded with pending cases and its regular functions slowed down due to the pandemic.

Now, the newly-appointed attorney general, AM Amin Uddin, said he will take initiative for hearing the appeals.

"I will inquire about the war-crime appeals pending with the Appellate Division. If they are ready for hearing, I will take an initiative in January for their hearing," he told this newspaper.

The last war-crime related appeal hearing took place at the Appellate Division of Supreme Court on December 3, 2019. Convicted war criminal Syed Mohammad Qaisar filed the appeal, challenging the death penalty handed to him by a warcrimes tribunal in 2014.

The Appellate Division has so far disposed of only nine such appeals, including the one Qaisar filed, in the last seven years.

Three appeals filed by former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Ázam, former BNP minister Abdul Alim and former Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdus Sobhan, against their jail sentences, were declared "abated" by the apex court, as the convicted died while their

After the verdicts, 39 appeals have been filed with the Appellate Division of SC.

An amendment to International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 in February 2013 made a provision for disposing appeals against sentences in 60 days, raising hope that the SC would quickly deliver judgments.

But that hope died down when legal experts, including then law minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed, made it clear that the provision was merely a directive, and not mandatory to follow.

The Appellate Division is taking time for holding hearings and disposing appeals related to war crimes, as the court must deal with many other important cases, advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, one of the defence lawyers, told The Daily Star.

He said the SC needs a long time for hearing and disposing a war-crime related appeal, and backlog of cases keeps growing. Besides, court functions slowed down

due to the pandemic, he said. On July 20, a virtual bench of the

Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, said it will hold hearing on the review petition of war criminal ATM Azharul Islam when its regular functions resume after the pandemic.

On July 19, Azharul, convicted Jamaate-Islami leader, filed the petition with the SC, seeking review of its verdict that upheld his death penalty for genocide and crimes against humanity during the war.

Attorney General AM Amin said the Appellate Division is running judicial functions virtually due to the pandemic, and that is why it is now mostly hearing

with HC order STAFF CORRESPONDENT Bangladesh Energy **Regulatory Commission** (BERC) Chairman Md Àbdul Jalil yesterday offered unconditional apology to the High Court for not complying with its directive over fixing the price of liquefied

apologises for

petroleum gas (LPG). He tendered the apology through submitting a petition to the HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim during hearing a contempt of court rule issued against

him over the issue. The HC bench fixed January 11 next year for a detailed hearing on whether it will pardon the BERC chairman, his lawyer Abdul Matin Khasru told The Daily Star.

On November 29, the same HC bench issued the contempt of court rule against the BERC chairman for not complying with its directive over fixing the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

In the rule, the HC asked the BERC chairman to explain in two weeks

BERC chairman | STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES Many missing out not complying on remote learning

Speakers blame lack of technical support; stress more budgetary allocation in edu STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of students with disabilities may drop out of schools due to the pandemic as they are not attending online classes for lack of technological support, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) organised the "Shikkha Sanglap (episode-4) on Education for Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Way Forward" to share grassroots experience on the impact of Covid-19 on education and livelihood of children with disabilities.

The event also sought recommendations from experts and civil society actors for strengthening policy advocacy particularly on SDG-4 (inclusive and equitable quality education).

AHM Noman Khan, founding executive director of Centre for Disability and Development, in his keynote, suggested to increase community awareness through mobilising accessible media and strengthening and expanding basic learning sessions through online communication.

Due to lack of appropriate communication methods such as sign languages, large screens and audio texts, students with disabilities are being affected severely, said Noman.

He said more engagement of experts and development organisations are needed in this regard.

Noman suggested home education supported by community teaching assistants and educators for students and also stressed the need for motivating parents through, if needed, counseling.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campe, stressed the need for ensuring rights for all persons with disabilities.

More importantly, people need to change their mindset towards a person with disability, said Rasheda, also former adviser to a caretaker government.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Youths' interest in agri training skyrocketing

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Youth Dev DG tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Give indigenous people

stewardship of land

Speakers tell webinar

Indigenous people should be granted stewardship for the land they exist

the residents collectively responsible for maintenance of the land and

its biodiversity. The webinar, titled "Inclusion, Cultural Integrity and

Land Rights of the Indigenous Peoples in Asia" was jointly organised

by Kapaeeng Foundation, Bangladesh; Association for Land Reform and

stewardship instead of ownership. They do not own the land but we are

guided by nature itself to maintain the land in a way that will be good for

all of humanity," said Dr Meghna Guhathakurta, advisor, International

"It is only in the indigenous culture we can promote the culture of

"There is no indigenous custodian role over the reserve forests," pointed

Meanwhile, the reserve forests are being destroyed by those exploiting

no need to take it into state ownership," said Gam A Shimray, secretary

Muraichhara Eco Park in Kulaura, Moulvibazaar affect the Khasi and Garo

The Modhupur Eco Park and Reserve limits the access of Garo, Koch

and Barman ethnic groups to lands they have traditionally used, while the

Pallab Chakma, executive director, Kapaeeng Foundation said the

Stewardship is a concept different from ownership because it makes

on, said speakers at a virtual seminar vesterday.

Development (ALRD), and The Daily Star.

out Raja Devasish Roy, chief of the Chakma Circle.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ethnic groups.

Admission to the government's training programmes on agriculture has apparently become highly competitive as a section of jobless youths is trying to survive the Covid-19 impact through farming.

The competition has become so intense that the Department of Youth Development (DYD) is struggling to accommodate candidates.

"There are 60 seats for training on agriculture but we're seeing number of applicants reaching 800-1,200," said Akhtaruz Zaman Khan Kabir, director general of DYD, yesterday while addressing a webinar.

ActionAid organised the programme to aunch a survey report titled "Impact of Covid-19 in the life of young women for advocacy and policy intervention in a post-Covid world″

The survey was conducted on 550 young women aged between 18 and 35 in 10 districts -- Dhaka, Chattogram, Kushtia, Nilphamari, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jamalpur, Dinajpur, Naogaon and Kurigram.

Addressing the programme as chief guest, Akhtaruz Zaman said many youths who have lost their livelihood due to Covid-19 left Dhaka for villages. Now, they are turning to farming.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

appeals were pending with the court.

Two International Crimes Tribunals (ICT) have so far delivered verdicts in 41 cases filed in connection with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the war.

and disposing old cases.

The nine war criminals whose appeals have already been settled by the top court are Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

why contempt of court proceedings should not be brought against him and why he should not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



বঙ্গবন্ধু সার্বজনীন পেনশন বীমা (আর্থিক নিরাপত্তা ও ভাবনাহীন অবসর জীবন)

বার্ধক্যে স্বচ্ছলতা একজন মানুষকে ভাবনাহীন, নিরুদ্বেগ, নিশ্চিন্ত, স্বচ্ছল রাখে।

আয়বিহীন জীবনে অন্যের উপর নির্ভরশীল না হয়ে আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতা নিশ্চিত করে।

আপনার জন্য অন্যতম সেরা সুবিধাযুক্ত পলিসি

বঙ্গবন্ধু সার্বজনীন পেনশন বীমা

এ পলিসি গ্রহণের মাধ্যমে আপনি ভাবনাহীন, স্বাচ্ছন্দ্য ও স্বচ্ছল অবসর জীবন কাটাতে সক্ষম হবেন।

> সুখে দুঃখে আপনজন, জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশন।



জীবন বীমা কর্পোরেশন (একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় জীবন বীমা প্রতিষ্ঠান) প্রধান কার্যালয়, ২৪ মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০ ফোন: ৯৫৫১৪১৪, ৯৫৫২০৪৭-৪৯ ই-মেইল:tad@jbc.gov.bd www.jbc.gov.bd

বৈশিষ্ঠ্যাবলী:

- এ বীমা একটি লাভসহ মেয়াদী (Endowment) বীমা। মেয়াদ শেষে লাভসহ সম্পূর্ণ বীমা অংক অথবা 30/36/20 বছর মেয়াদে গ্যারান্টিকৃত পেনশন পাওয়া যায়।
- বীমা গ্রহণকালীণ বয়স সর্বনিম্ন ২০ বছর ও র্সবোচ্চ বয়স ৬০ বছর।
- পেনশন শুরুর বয়স ৫৫ থেকে ৬৫ বছর।
- বীমার মেয়াদ সর্বনিম্ন ৫ (পাঁচ) বৎসর।
- সর্বনিম্ন বীমা অংক ৫০,০০০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা)।
- সর্বোচ্চ বীমা অংক বীমাগ্রাহকের আর্থিক সামর্থ্য অনুযায়ী অর্থাৎ যে কোন পরিমান পেনশন গ্রহন করার সুযোগ।
- মেয়াদ শেষে বোনাসসহ এককালীন টাকা 300% অথবা 20% উত্তোলনের সুযোগ। অথবা গ্যারান্টিকৃত 20/20/20 বছর পেনশন গ্রহণের সুযোগ।



Rickshaw vans loaded with water hyacinth from Savar's Baliapur are headed to the capital. These aquatic plants, a fast-growing and invasive species of weed that is the bane to fish farmers, will be used as cattle feed at a dairy farm in Adabor. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

বিশ্বাস ছিল বিজয়ে

গইকে মহান বিজয় দিবস এবং ইভ্যালি'র

PBI charges Delwar

FROM PAGE 12

PBI officials in a press conference at PBI's Noakhali office around 11:00am.

After the press conference, the PBI officials went to the court and submitted the charge sheet around 12:30pm.

The accused in the case are Delwar Hossain, Jamal Uddin, Noor Hossain Badal, Abdur Rahim, Mohammad Ali, Shamsuddin Sumon, Israfil Hossain Miah, Mainuddin Saju, Noor Hossain Russel, Anwar Hossain Sohag, Abdur Rob Chowdhury, Mostafizur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman and Moazzem Hossain Sohag.

PBI submitted the charge sheet within 69 days and 48 working days of receiving the responsibilities to investigate into the case, said Mohammad Iqbal.

A gang of criminals brutally tortured a woman after entering her residence in Noahkhali's Begumganj upazila at Joykrishnapur village of Eklashpur union on September 2. A footage of the incident went viral on social media on October 2.

It drew huge outrage across the country forcing the law enforcement agencies to take action against the criminals. Later, the victim filed three separate cases in this connection.

'Democracy prevailed'

FROM PAGE 12

assumed outsized significance in light of Trump's extraordinary effort to subvert the process due to what he has falsely alleged was widespread voter fraud in the November 3 election.

California, the most-populous US state, put Biden over the 270 votes needed to win the Electoral College when its 55 electors unanimously cast ballots for him and his running mate, Kamala Harris. Biden and Harris - the first woman, first Black person and first Asian American to become vice president-elect - will be sworn in on January 20.

Several senior Republican senators acknowledged Biden as the country's presidentelect, and rejected the idea of overturning the 2020 presidential election in Congress.

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday congratulated Biden on his victory in the election, the Kremlin said

"For my part, I am ready for interaction and contact with you," the Kremlin cited Putin as saying in a statement.

In a roughly 13-minute speech, Biden, the Democratic former vice president, called for unity while voicing confidence that the country's democratic institutions had held in the face of Trump's attempts to reverse the election outcome.

"The flame of democracy was lit in this nation a long time ago," Biden said. "We now know that not even a pandemic or an abuse of power can extinguish that flame."

Biden emphasized that Trump and his allies filed "dozens and dozens" of legal challenges to the vote totals without success, including a Texas lawsuit that asked the US Supreme Court to invalidate four states' results. The court, including three Trump appointees, rejected the bid with no dissents last week.

He also noted that his 306-232 margin in the Electoral College was the same as Trump's 2016 victory, which the Republican described as a "landslide."

Under a complicated system dating back to the 1780s, a candidate becomes US president not by winning the popular vote but through the Electoral College system, which allots electoral votes to the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on congressional representation.

In 2016, Trump defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton despite losing the national popular vote by nearly 3 million ballots. Biden won the popular vote in November by more than 7 million votes.

Meanwhile, US Attorney General William Barr said on Monday he will step down next week, shortly after the Electoral College confirmed Trump's loss to Biden.

RU will want to know why said. The ministry on Sunday issued

FROM PAGE 12

until further notice due to "administrative reasons". In separate orders on Sunday,

the government asked Sobhan to explain in seven working days why the appointments of his daughter and son-in-law to the university as teachers should not be cancelled.

It also asked the VC to take necessary steps to relieve Registrar Abdul Bari from his post for not properly assisting a University Grants Commission (UGC) committee in probing allegations of irregularities at the university.

The UGC in its probe report October submitted in 20 recommended taking actions against the VC, Pro-VC Prof Choudhury M Zakaria and others concerned over the matter. It also suggested scrapping the appointments of 34 teachers, who were recruited under "relaxed university rules".

"They [education ministry] cited administrative reasons while giving order [regarding the recruitment postponement]. We will want to know the reasons from them. We will see how this can be resolved," Sobhan

'Sheikh Mujib never compromises'

time.

university.

FROM PAGE 12

minister explains that prisoners of war and war criminals are not the same. "The war criminals will be tried and must be tried; nobody can stop this," he reiterates. "Sheikh Mujib never compromises.

The prime minister recalls in a plaintive voice that war criminals carried out a systematic genocide in Bangladesh, killing 30 lakh people. They murdered intellectuals, they forced the exodus of 10 million people, dishonoured two and a half lakh women, made 40 lakh children orphans and let loose a hell of

destruction and pillage in Bangladesh. "How can they go unpunished?" he asks.

separate orders asking the pro-VC,

the registrar, Prof Mujibur Rahman

of physics, Prof Mohammad Abdul

Hannan and Assistant Prof Shibli

Islam of law, Assistant Prof Gazi

Towhidur Rahman of material science

and engineering and Deputy Registrar

Shakhawat Hossain to explain in

seven working days why legal actions

would not be taken against them for

relaxing education qualifications for

Hannan and Mujibur said they

received the letter and would give their

explanations within the stipulated

Mujibur said he was not involved in

"The UGC probe found evidence

any process of relaxing the education

qualifications for recruitment to the

of corruption of the VC, this had

also proved his moral turpitude. He

should resign from his post taking the

responsibilities of all these misdeeds,"

said Prof Sultan ul Islam of geology

and mining, also the convener of

Teachers' Society against Corruption,

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday,

recruitments to the university.

Referring to some external pressures, Bangladesh Bangabandhu says was born through bloodshed and if necessary, the sovereignty and independence of the country would be defended through sacrifice of blood. "The flag of Bangladesh will fly forever; Bangladesh has come to stay," he adds.

CONSTITUTION COMMENCES

Republic of Bangladesh comes into force today. A resolution seeking the

FROM PAGE 3

said Chakma.

rights, there are no rights.

Indigenous Peoples Forum.

commencement of the constitution from December 16, 1972 was adopted by the Gono Parishad on November 4. British Prime Minister Edward Heath congratulated Bangladesh on the inauguration of the constitution today. In a message to the Bangabandhu, Heath says, "I send my congratulations and best wishes to the government and people of Bangladesh on the introduction of

Observer.

Suspend

FROM PAGE 12

Yesterday, the HC also issued a rule asking the government authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why their inaction in cancelling the state gallantry awards of Nur Chowdhury, Shariful Haque Dalim, Rashed Chowdhury and Moslehuddin Khan, as the convicted killers of the Father of the Nation and most of his family members, should not be

declared illegal. The gallantry awards of the four killers will remain suspended until the disposal

of the rule, the court said. The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Subir Nandi Das seeking necessary directives on this

issue. Subir Nandi submitted the writ petition as a public interest litigation to the HC on December 2 saying that the convicted killers of the Father of the Nation cannot have the state gallantry awards.

The state can cancel their awards under section 14 of the General Clauses Act, he said in the petition, adding that many countries, including the USA, have cancelled such awards for different reasons.

Lawyer Abdul Kaiyum Khan appeared for the petitioner while Assistant Attorney General Kalipado Mridha represented the state during the hearing on the petition yesterday.

Many

FROM PAGE 3 Rasheda, who chaired

the webinar, urged all to come forward to speak up in favour of persons with disabilities.

Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri, director and trustee of Impact Foundation Bangladesh, said there are laws that ensure rights of persons with disabilities in the country, but those are not being implemented.

Ashrafun Nahar Misti, executive director of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation, said as a person with disability, she continues to face obstacles in her life. She highlighted the importance of increasing budget allocation for persons with disabilities in

She said budget in the sector is the same compared to last year, though it should have been increased. Among others, Indrajit Kumar Nandi, senior teacher, Buddhi Protibondhi & Autistic Bidyalaya, Mymensingh, and Iqbal Hossain, education specialist, Unicef, spoke at the event, moderated by KM Enamul Hoque, deputy director of Campe.

'Take Bangladesh-South Korea relationship to new heights'

Say speakers at webinar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and South Korea want to take their bilateral relationship to new heights - going beyond textile to ICT, energy, blue economy, climate change and infrastructure development, said diplomats and academicians, as the two countries celebrate 47th year of diplomatic relationship on December 18.

They suggested going for free trade agreement (FTA) quickly, as Bangladesh is on track to graduate from least developed country (LDC) category by 2024, when duty-free facilities could be withdrawn.

Emphasising the cordial relationship between Bangladesh and Korea, Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-Keun, at a webinar, said the relationship needs to be elevated to new heights.

The event "Bangladesh-Republic

technical skills for placement in Korea or Bangladesh.

Shin Dong Woo, director at South Korea's foreign ministry (Asia and Pacific Division 2), said Korean companies have interests but they sometimes question about red tape, unknown risks and business environment before considering investment in Bangladesh.

Youngone Corporation Chairperson Ki-hak Sung said Youngone is the first Korean company that set up business in Bangladesh about four decades back, and had an excellent experience throughout the period

Prof Choe Wongi, head of Center for ASEAN-Indian Studies in Korea, said Korea has been too focused in East-Asian countries, but gradually it is moving to ASEAN and South Asia. Over the years,

Give indigenous FROM PAGE 3 be punished for not implementing its directive.

BERC chairman

The HC bench issued the rule during hearing a petition filed by Consumers' Association of Bangladesh. Petitioner's lawyer

Jyotirmoy Barua told the HC bench led by Justice Md University of Dhaka said that our constitution does not Mozibur Rahman Miah that protect the land rights of the indigenous people. following the same petition, another HC bench on and traditions," she pointed out. "Indigenous people are 5 August 25 ordered the BERC

and its chairman to fix LPG price after holding a mass hearing on the issue and to submit a report to this court in 30 days after complying with the directive. But, the BERC chairman has not implemented the August 25

order which is tantamount to contempt of court. Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua

on November 29 told The Daily Star that the BERC

new constitution." The constitution of the People's Sources: December 17, 1972 issues of

Barapukuria Coal Mine affects the Santal and Munda.

Meanwhile the Sajek Tourism Complex in Rangamati

"At Sajek, indigenous people have very little or no

affects the Tripura, Lushai and Pankhua indigenous groups.

share in these tourism complexes. All this development is

forcefully driving away indigenous people from their lands,"

Dr Sadeka Halim, dean of social science faculty at

"The constitution talks about protecting their culture

percent of the world's population but hold stewardship of

80 percent of its biodiversity," said Mai Thin Yumon, Asia

Shankar Limbu, secretary general, Lawyers Association

for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples from

Nepal stated, "For indigenous people if there is no land

legislation protecting their rights. The government made

a commitment to form a land commission for plain land

indigenous people in 2008, but that never went anywhere,"

said Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary, Bangladesh

"For the plains land indigenous people, there is no

Focal Person, Global Indigenous Youth Caucus.

Dainik Bangla, Ittefaq and The Daily

Youths' interest

FROM PAGE 3 Akhtaruz Zaman said compared to other fields, youths have shown more interest in agriculture. "To cope with the pressure of candidates, we have increased the number of sessions," he said.

According to the survey, 95 percent of the 550 respondents faced detrimental effect on their lives and livelihoods during the pandemic. Their average monthly income came down from pre-pandemic level of Tk 6,273 to Tk 4,408 by September.

Some 74 percent said they needed immediate food, 61 percent said they were in need of healthcare, and 48 percent said they required a source of livelihood and income.

Nazmul Ahsan, manager

He said the government should remove the VC if he does not step

According to the UGC probe report, VC Prof Sobhan occupied a duplex of the university for 18 months showing various excuses. A government order issued on Sunday asked the VC to deposit Tk 5.61 lakh as rent into the public exchequer.

During the investigation, the UGC probe committee found evidence of 25 kinds of irregularities and corruption committed by top members of the university administration.

that has been protesting irregularities

in RU.

down.

The probe found that the VC provided false information to the chancellor on voluntary retirement and practiced nepotism in recruiting teachers; the VC and the others appointed heads of different departments violating university rules, and officials were involved in irregular financial transactions.

"The teacher recruitment rules were relaxed with an ill intention.... Candidates having lower qualifications were recruited instead of qualified ones," it said.



Recall Notice

Guardian Healthcare Ltd. manufactured medicine, Generic name: Omeprazole BP. Commercia name: Omilant 20, Batch No. 1, Expiry date: 12/21, DAR No. 346-12-067, due to out of standard, all Pharmacy owners are requested to return this batch medicine to the local representative within 07 days. D-152 Authority

আবশ্যক

বরিশাল জেলার বানারীপাড়া উপজেলাধীন বানারীপাড়া পৌরসভার প্রাণ কেন্দ্রে অবস্থিত দক্ষিণ নাজিরপুর মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়ে সরকারি নিয়োগ বিধির সর্বশেষ ২০১৮ এর জনবল কাঠামো ও এমপিও নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী শূন্য পদে প্রধান শিক্ষক আবশ্যক। বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের ১৫ দিনের মধ্যে ২০০০/- টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার (অফেরতযোগ্য) ও প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আবেদন করিতে হইবে।

সভাপতি দক্ষিণ নাজিরপুর মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয় D-151 বানারীপাড়া, বরিশাল

(67)

D-150

Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties" was jointly organised by the South Korean Embassy in Dhaka and the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU)

yesterday. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said Bangladesh is rapidly growing and becoming a lucrative investment destination.

Khondker Talha, director general of Bangladesh Foreign Ministry's East-Asia wing, proposed establishment of a human resources development centre, where Bangladeshis can receive advanced

Wait for

FROM PAGE 3

Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed, its leaders Delawar Hossain Sayedee, Muhammad Kamaruzaman, Abdul Quader Mollah, Mir Quasem Ali and ATM Azharul Islam, BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and former Jatiya Party leader Syed Mohammad Qaisar.

Among them, Nizami, Mojaheed, Kamaruzzaman, Quader Mollah, Quasem Ali and Salauddin were executed, after the apex court dismissed their review petitions against verdicts, confirming their death sentences.

Sayedee, whose imprisonment until death was affirmed by the SC, is now in jail.

The list of convicted war criminals whose appeals are now in the pipeline

about 1,000 Korean companies relocated to Vietnam from China. In South Asia, Bangladesh is a priority country after India.

NSU Vice Chancellor Prof Atiqul Islam said his university is eager to exchange students with Korean universities and train graduates to be employable in Korea.

Shahidul Haque, former foreign secretary and senior fellow at SIPG, moderated the discussion, also addressed by Bangladesh Ambassador to Korea Abida Islam, Prof Delwar Hossain of Dhaka University, and Prof Abdul Hannan Chowdhury and Prof Tawfique M Haque of NSU.

Brahmanbaria Mobarak Hossain, Azizur

Rahman from Gaibandha and Saifuddin

The ICT-1 in July 2013 sentenced

The ICT-2 in October 2013 sentenced

former BNP minister Abdul Alim to

imprisonment till death for committing

genocide and crimes against humanity

Maulana Abdus Subhan died at Dhaka

Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on

On February 18, 2015, the ICT-2

দুটেন <u>শ</u>

sentenced Subhan to death for crimes

against humanity and genocide during the

War criminal Jamaat-e-Islami leader

Ghulam Azam to a total of 90 years in jail

Ahmed from Noakhali.

on five different charges.

during the war.

war.

February 14 this year.

has not fixed any LPG price after 2009 although it is supposed to fix the price every year comparing with the international market.

"It is time to fight back. This awareness is not being spread to the indigenous people; these discussions are happening in rights based seminars," commented Mayfereen Ryntathiang, president of Grassroots from Shillong in India. Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD also spoke at the event.

(Young People), ActionAid, Morium Nesa, manager (Women Rights and Gender Equity), ActionAid Bangladesh, also spoke.

Police station FROM PAGE 3

charge sheet in the Maj (retd) Sinha Rashed Khan murder case.

Regarding the charge sheet, Rab's Legal and Media wing director Lt Col Ashique Billah in a media brief said the plot to assassinate Rashed Khan was hatched at Teknaf includes expelled Awami League leader of Police Station.

At yesterday's event, the police chief also said those who joined the force to commit corruption should leave the profession. "We have already started looking into the allegations of abuse and corruption against police," he said. Earlier, the IGP launched

the tactical belts for officials involved in operational duty and patrols, as part of their effort to better equip the force and make the policing system more efficient. Made of nylon and polyester, a belt will have six chambers where a small water bottle, wireless set, PO fiı ba be

POS machine for traffic
fines, torch, collapsible
baton and handcuffs can
be kept. A small thigh belt
will be attached with the
tactical belt to hold the
gun, said officials of PHQ's
equipment section.
The belts will initially
be provided to operation
and patrol teams of Dhaka
Metropolitan Police and
Chattogram Metropolitan

Police. Later, they will be distributed among all other police unit members across the country in phases, said the IGP.

Around 7,000 belts will be distributed amid DMP officials and 3,000 among CMP members tomorrow.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় বাঁশখালী, চট্টগ্রাম

E-mail: banshkhali@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

এম.এস.আর দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা ২০০৮ (সংশোধিত ২০১৯) মোতাবেক ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের বাঁশখালী ৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, চট্রগ্রামের জন্য নিম্নোক্ত ছকে বর্ণিত প্রদন্ত শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক এম.এস.আর সামগ্রী সংগ্রহের লক্ষ্যে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান/ঠিকাদার/প্রস্তুতকারক/সরবরাহকারীদের নিকট হইতে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলের মাধ্যমে সীলগালাযুক্ত পৃথক পৃথক দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইতেছে।

2	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ			স্বাস্থ্য স্	াবা বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও প	রিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত	গৌলয়।					
২	সংস্থা/এজেসী/প্রতিষ্ঠান			স্বাস্থ্য অধিদণ্ডর।								
৩	সংগ্রহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম			উপজেল	পজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বাঁশখালী, চট্টগ্রাম।							
8	সংগ্ৰহ প	କାତି	8		উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম)।							
¢	বাজেট ও টাকার উৎস			রাজস্ব	রাজস্ব ও থোক বরাদ্দ/জিওবি বাজেট (২০২০-২০২১ইং অর্থ							
				বছর)।								
৬	কাজের ন	াম	8	এম.এস	এম.এস.আর সামগ্রী ক্রয় ও সংগ্রহ।							
٩	মোট গ্রুপ		8		। থী(ছয়) ৬০							
ዮ	দরপত্র সূত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ				ইউএইচসি/সেক-একাউন্টস/এমএসআর/টেন্ডার/২০২০-							
	A				২১/১৩০৬/১৩ তারিখঃ ১৩-১২-২০২০ইং।							
2		র যোগ্যতা	8		দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক।							
১০		াণ্ডির স্থান	8		উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বাঁশখালী, চট্টগ্রাম।							
22		কাশের তারিখ	8		১৬-১২-২০২০ইং তারিখের মধ্যে।							
১২	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের আরম্ভের তারিখ			২৭-১২	১২-২০২০ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে)।							
১৩	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ			০৬-০১	২০২১ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে)।							
28	দরপত্র সিডিউল জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও				০৭-০১-২০২১ (দাখিলের সময়ঃ সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর							
	সময়			১২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে)।								
26	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়			০৭-০১-২০২১ দুপুর ১২:০১ ঘটিকায়। দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।								
১৬	দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার স্থান ৪ উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বাঁশখালী, চট্টগ্রাম।					খালী, চউগ্রাম।						
	গ্রুপ	গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক কাজের বি	বরণ		সিডিউলের মূল্য	আর্নেষ্টমানির	পারফর্মেন্স					
					(অফেরতযোগ্য)	পরিমাণ	ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি					
	"ଏ"	এম.এস.আর ঔষধ সামগ্রী	(ই	ডিসিএল	৭৫০	90,000	কার্যাদেশের					
		বহির্ভূত)					30%					
১৭	"বি"	" যন্ত্রপাতি সামগ্রী			१৫०	80,000	-উ-					
27	"সি"	" ক্যমিক্যাল রি এজেন্ট ও সামগ্রী	এক্স	800	\$6,000	-ঐ-						
	"ডি"	" আসবাবপত্র সামগ্রী		800	۵৫,000	-ঐ-						
	"ই"	" গজ, ব্যান্ডেজ ও কটন সাম	ম্ম্রী	800	\$6,000	-র্ড-						
	"এফ"	" লিলেন সামগ্রী			800	\$6,000	-ঐ-					
۶p.	বিশেষ জ্ঞ	1 0 0										
	ক) দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে অত্র কার্যালয় হতে সংগ্রহপূর্বক এবং ট্রেজারী											
	চালান কোড নং ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ তে সোনালী ব্যাংকে জমা প্রদানকরতঃ স্ব-স্ব এলাকার হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তার											
	নিকট থে	কে সিটিআর/প্রত্যায়নপত্র সংগ্রহপূ	ৰ্বক চ	গলানের মূৰ								
						ঃ মোঃ শফিউর রং						
~ ~					উ	শজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও প						
জিডি-	২০০৩					বাঁশখালী, চ	উগ্রাম					

LARSEN & TOUBRO Tender Notice

Tenders are hereby invited from reputed manufacturers for the supply of 9000MT cement (Portland cement in accordance with BS EN 197-1 strength grade 42.5N) and 1700 MT of TMT Rebars (Yield strength: 500Mpa conforming to BS4449). Material will be used in the Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Power Transmission Infrastructure for Rupsha 800 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant on Turnkey Basis, NOA No. 27.28.0000.306.07.003.20.69 dated: 25/02/2020, Contract Agreement No. 20057/NWPGCL/EPC/P2/RUPSHA800MW/2020. The payment shall be made in USD. The price shall remain firm for a period of 18 months. Tenders shall be received up to 20:00 Hrs of 25-Dec-2020 at the project office of Larsen & Toubro Limited - Road No. 2, Plot No. 352, Sonadanga, 2nd Phase, Khulna, Bangladesh. We reserve the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Subhrajit Sengupta Project Manager Larsen & Toubro Limited Sonadanga, Khulna

জিডি-২০০৪

www.bsc.gov.bd বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন (২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বছর) এবং অনলাইনে বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় যোগদানের লিংক

বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশন

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation

ংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ ২০ অর্থ বছরের বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদন বিএসসি'র ওয়েবসাইট <u>www.bsc.gov.bd</u>-এ গত ০৮-১২-২০২০ তারিখে প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে। সন্মানীত শেয়ারহোন্ডারবৃন্দ বিএসসির উক্ত ওয়েবসাইট থেকে বার্ষিক প্রতিবেদনটি ডাউনলোড করতে পারবেন।

এছাড়া, আগামী ২৩/১২/২০২০ তারিখ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকায় অনলাইনে অনুষ্ঠিতব্য বিএসসির ৪৩তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় গত ০৩/১২/২০২০ তারিখের রেকর্ড ডেট অনুযায়ী বিএসসির শেয়ারহোন্ডারগণ নিম্লোক্ত লিংক এর মাধ্যমে যোগদান করতে পারবেন

অনলাইনে বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় যোগদানের লিংক- <u>https://bsc.bdvirtualagm.com</u>

উল্লেখ্য, এজিএম শুরুর ২৪ ঘন্টা পূর্ব থেকে শেয়ারহোন্ডারগণ উক্ত লিংক এর মাধ্যমে ৪৩তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার নোটিশ অনুযায়ী আলোচ্যসূচীতে উল্লেখিত বিষয়সমূহ অনুমোদনের বিষয়ে পৃথব পৃথকভাবে তাঁর মতামত ভোটের মাধ্যমে প্রদান করতে পারবেন। এছাড়া, প্রয়োজনীয় মতামত ও । ারামর্শ (যদি থাকে) কমেন্ট বক্স এ প্রদান করতে পারবেন।

বাংলাদেশ শিপিং কর্পোরেশনের পক্ষে, স্বাক্ষরিত 38/32/2020 খালেদ মাহমুদ সচিব, বিএসসি



A local elderly resident shows rods sticking out of a broken pole on the premises of the primary school, established to commemorate martyred intellectual Munier Chowdhury, at Gopairbagh village in Noakhali's Chatkhil upazila. The school has remained shut for 22 years over land dispute.

> Martyrs who still remain unrecognised

S DILIP ROY WITH FIROZ A MUZAHID

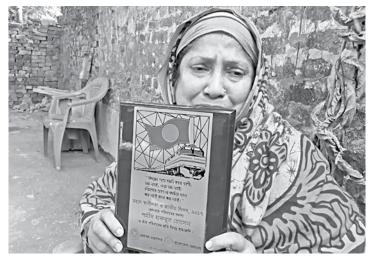
It was time to rebel. It was time to revolt. It was 1971.

College student Dara Islam's blood was boiling. Infuriated by the disparity and oppression he saw all his life, the youngster from Sahebpara area of Lalmonirhat town sets alight Pakistan's state flag -- the emblem of injustice on the Bangalees.

In the aftermath, the Pakistani occupation forces hunt the youngster down at his home and later kill him brutally.

To 'teach a lesson' to the 'insolent' Bangalees, the Pakistan

In 1971, the Pakistan army in collaboration with non-Bangalee settlers killed nearly



Shilpi Akter Jharna from Sahebpara area of Lalmonirhat town hopes that her father and elder brother will receive the formal recognition as martyrs of 1971. PHOTO: STAR

army takes Dara's father Maqbul sister Shilpi Akter Jharna. Hossain, a railway employee, to Her father or brother's body

people, including 84 railway employees, at Rickshaw Stand near the train station in Lalmonirhat town, said SM Shahan, a member of a martyr's family from the same area.

600

PHOTO: **STAR**

But unfortunately, the government never officially recognised the 600 people killed at Rickshaw Stand as martyrs of 1971, he said heaving a sigh of discontent.

Fatema Begum from the same area said her elder brother Hashem Ali, a college student, was killed before the very eyes of their father Umar Ali, who was also a railway employee, by the Pakistan forces during the Liberation War of '71.

Wiping away tears, she added that the Pakistan army later killed her father in Rickshaw Stand area near the train station as the father-son duo had been preparing to join the nation's fight for freedom.

Tribute to Munier Chy, education for children lost to land dispute

ANWARUL HAIDER, Noakhali

Land dispute has locked up, over two decades, a primary school that had been opened up, in 1972, to commemorate martyred intellectual Prof Munier Chowdhury.

City

Numerous attempts to reopen the school, which was located at Gopairbagh village in Shahapur union No 1 of Noakhali's Chatkhil upazila, went in vain as a case remains under trial stage over the dispute.

Locals urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures to reopen the school for preserving the memories of Munier Chowdhury. Even, there is no school in the village till now.

During a recent visit, it was seen that there are some poles on the school premises. It is very difficult to understand that once there was a school in the village.

In 1972, former late chairman of local union parishad Shamsuddin, cousin of Munier Chowdhury, established the school.

A local woman, Karimun Nesa, donated 54 decimals of land for the school, said Golam Haider Kajal, nephew of Munier Chowdhury and son of Shamsuddin.

Even, the land was registered in the name of the school in government's field survey in 1986, said Kajal, also chairman of local union parishad.

But later Karimun Ness's son - in - law Anwar Hossain Iran filed a case challenging legality of donating the land.

The land dispute has been going on

between the school authorities and Anwar since filing of the case.

The case remains under trial in court, said Nazrul Islam, a former headmaster of the school.

Even, special financial allocations were approved twice for infrastructural development of the school.

But the money was sent back as a case remains under trial over the school's land, said Nazrul.

Around 22 years ago, the school collapsed during storm, said Tapan Malakar, a local resident, adding that the school has been remaining shut since then.

In December 2014, the issue was brought to light again by Chatkhil upazila parishad chairman Md Jahangir Kabir in Upazila Monthly Coordination Meeting.

Since then, several discussions and attempts were made to rebuild the school. But no progress has so far been made.

Contacted, Anwar said "I also want reopening of the school. Negotiation is going on with the school authorities to settle the issue."

Chatkhil Upazila Nirbahi Officer ASM Mosa said he was not aware of the issue. He would take necessary measures in this regard.

Talking to The Daily Star, Chatkhil upazila parishad chairman Jahangir Kabir, local lawmaker HM Ibrahim and Noakhali Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Khorshed Alam said they all would take coordinated measures to reopen the school.



Long queues of vehicles on the west side of Bangabandhu Bridge in Sirajganj. Poor visibility due to dense fog disrupts vehicular movement through the bridge for nearly four hours yesterday. PHOTO: STAR



Office of the Upazila Engineer

600 people, including 84 railway employees, at Rickshaw Stand in Lalmonirhat town.

the train station in the town and guns him down too.

While narrating the heartwrenching events that took place 49 years ago, tears rolled down the cheeks of Dara's younger

the Rickshaw Stand area near was never found, but her father's pen and cap were found at the murder site, she said in tearful

whimpers. In 1971, the Pakistan army in collaboration with non-Bangalee

It is now time to heal and time to recognise the martyrs of Rickshaw Stand killing site, the living members of the martyrs settlers in the area killed nearly said.

They sell dreams, deliver violence

FROM PAGE 12

to get my family out of poverty," Hasan told AFP, recounting the promises of the low-level smuggler in the camp who was his main contact for organising the trip.

Instead, after enduring beatings by crew members and watching others die during more than six weeks at sea, Hasan's boat returned to Bangladesh and he is back in his squalid home.

"I will never forget what I've been through. The traffickers, the brutality of the sailors... I'd never do it again," Hasan said.

AFP spoke to Hasan as part of an in-depth investigation into the people smuggling network that included dozens of interviews with refugees in Bangladesh and Indonesia, where hundreds arrived this year after months at sea.

AFP also interviewed fishermen involved in the trade, police, government officials, community leaders and aid workers

The investigation revealed a sophisticated and always-evolving operation worth many millions of dollars in which members of the Rohingya community play a key role in trafficking their own people.

Thai-registered fishing boats capable of holding 1,000 people, satellite phones, a mini-armada of smaller supply vessels and corrupt officials across Southeast Asia, as well as in the Bangladeshi camp, are also integral to the network.

"It's a big business that uses humanity as its cover," said Iskandar Dewantara, cofounder of the Geutanyoe Foundation, an Indonesia-based refugee advocacy group. It can also be brutal.

Hasan provided to AFP footage from a mobile phone he said had belonged to one of the Burmese crew members showing them beating the passengers.

In the video, a trafficker uses what appears to be a whip to repeatedly strike shirtless men huddled together, with rakethin children and women crowded around them.

The sailor who owned the phone left it when the crew abandoned the boat following a mutiny at sea, according to Hasan

Rohingyas have for decades endured persecution in Myanmar, where they are

not recognised as citizens, and smuggling routes out by land and sea have long existed.

Relatively affluent and Malaysia has been the main destination. More than 100,000 Rohingya now live on the margins of society in Malaysia, registered as refugees but not allowed to work, forcing the men into illegal construction and other lowpaid jobs.

A Myanmar military crackdown in 2017, which UN investigators said amounted to genocide, turbo-charged the exodus, forcing 750,000 Rohingya to flee across the border into Bangladesh's southeast coastal district of Cox's Bazar.

That is now a sprawling refugee camp of one million people from where the only way out is the dangerous boat journeys.

Spurring the demand are the Rohingya men in Malaysia who pay smugglers to bring over families, or new brides from arranged marriages, according to advocacy groups and women involved.

Malaysian authorities frequently turn back boats, and fears over Covid-19 have amplified their intolerance for more refugees. However, nearly 500 Rohingya made it to Malaysia in three vessels this year, according to an AFP tally from the landings.

Since June, about 400 Rohingya have also landed in northern Indonesia -- all trying to reach neighbouring Malaysia -- in the biggest wave of arrivals there in five years.

Hundreds more are believed to have died at sea from beatings, starvation or dehydration, while other boats have returned to Bangladesh.

Escaping the Bangladesh camp starts with a down payment that can reach the equivalent of \$2,000, often paid by a refugee's husband or other relatives Malaysia using mobile banking in applications.

Refugees then get a phone call typically from someone they do not know.

"The call came after a few days and a man instructed us to go to the rickshaw stand in the main food market area of the camp," said 20-year-old Julekha Begum, who married a Rohingya man in Malaysia via a video chat app.

HC unhappy with cyber FROM PAGE 12

before the court on November 24, was asked to appear before it again with the explanation yesterday.

However, he neither appeared nor submitted the explanation before this court, the judge said during the hearing of two bail petitions filed by accused Shafiqul Islam Kajol in connection with the cases.

The HC bench asked the IO to appear before it tomorrow to give the explanation. It also fixed tomorrow for hearing of the bail petitions and asked Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi to communicate to the IO so that he appears before it on that day.

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua appeared for photojournalist Kajol during virtual hearing on the bail petitions yesterday.

On November 24, the same HC bench granted bail to Shafiqul Islam Kajol in a case filed under the Digital Security Act. However, Kajol could not be released from jail following the verdict as he is arrested in two other cases.

On the same day, the bench also asked the investigation officer of the cases lodged against Kajol with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations whether he has taken permission from the cyber tribunal to probe the cases after 75 days of filing of the cases.

The investigation officer and the tribunal had then been ordered to submit separate reports to the HC by December 15.

The HC bench passed the order after Jyotirmoy told the court that the investigations into the two cases were illegal as the probes had to be concluded within 75 days of the cases being filed.

The investigation officer has not completed investigations of the cases in 75 days, which is a violation of the relevant provision of the law, Jyotirmoy argued.

Two cases under the Digital Security Act were filed against Kajol on March 10 and 11 with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations.

Fifty-three days following his disappearance after leaving his office in the capital's Hatirpool, Kajol was found by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on May 3.

He was then arrested, initially on charges of trespassing, but was granted bail after being produced before a Jashore court.

Later, he was shown held under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) after police informed court that three more cases against Kajol were filed with different police stations in the capital.

The court then sent him to Jashore jail.

Bride, 6 others drown

FROM PAGE 12

wedding party members left Shantirbazar Ghat in Hatiya for Daalchar of the Meghna river.

It could not be known immediately how many guests remained missing.

The trawler capsized due to strong currents, local sources said

Kazipur, Sirajganj www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.8850.000.99.067.20-757

Dated: 14/12/2020

Invitation for Tenders (Works) e-Tender Notice No. 02/2020-21

The following e-Tenders (OTM) are invited through the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

- /	(-				
SI. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Description of works	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	527489	INF-2018- 19-438850- 01	Supplying High and Low Benches to various institutions at Kazipur, Sirajganj.	10-Jan- 2021 16:00:00	11-Jan- 2021 11:00:00
02	527500	INF-2018- 19-438850- 02	Construction of wash block for 07 (seven) Nos. Educational institute at Kazipur, Sirajganj.	10-Jan- 2021 16:00:00	11-Jan- 2021 11:00:00

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. Registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required to submit e-Tender. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any scheduled bank branch up to 04.00pm of 10-Jan-2021. Tender security amount has to be deposited online through the bank up to 10:30am of 11-Jan-2021. The abovementioned e-Tenders will be live from 11:00am of 17-Dec-2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk.

Spitzopilano

Md. Rokanuzzaman Khan Upazila Engineer LGED Kazipur, Sirajganj E-mail: ue.kazipur@lged.gov.bd

GD-2000



Special Supplement

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications (DFP)
Assistance : Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information

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بت واللوالكات التحذيد PRESIDENT PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH Message

December 16th is our great Victory Day. On this day in 1971, we achieved our long-cherished victory after a long struggle and bloodshed war. On the eve of the joyous victory day, I extend my sincere felicitations and warm greetings to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

In the history of eternity, Independence is the greatest achievement of the Bangali nation. It enabled us to achieve a sovereign country, independent nationhood, a sacred constitution, own map and a red-green flag. However, it was not too easy to attain in a day. Behind the achievement, there was a prolonged history of deprivation, sanguinary struggle and supreme sacrifice of our people. The seeds of independence that was sown in the Language Movement in 1952 subsequently came into being on 26 March in 1971 through the proclamation of Independence by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, overcoming various ups and downs and staging long movement and agitation. The final victory was achieved through a nine-month long war of liberation against Pakistani invading forces under Bangabandhu's leadership and guidance on 16 December in 1971.

Today, I recall with profound respect Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bangali of all time. I pay my deep homage to the valiant freedom fighters who made supreme sacrifice in the war of liberation for the cause of country's independence. I remember with gratitude the four national leaders who led the government during the war of liberation on behalf of Bangabandhu. I also pay my respect to the people of all walks of life, including the heroic freedom fighters, the organisers and supporters of the liberation war, foreign friends, war-wounded individuals and members of the martyrs' families, who directly and indirectly contributed to our victory. The nation recalls their contributions with utmost respect.

The aims of our independence were to attain political sovereignty as well as people's economic emancipation. Returning to the newly independent country after being freed from Pakistan's prison, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu started his journey for achieving economic self-sufficiency by rebuilding economy and infrastructure of the war-ravaged country, keeping the aims of independence in mind. He called for an agricultural revolution and launched a movement against corruption, black marketeers, profiteers and looters. But the progress of country's democracy and development came to a halt after the brutal assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his near and dear ones being committed by a group of anti-liberation forces on August 15, 1975. Subsequently, the autocratic and undemocratic government was emerged.

Overcoming various ups and downs, now a democratic government has been established in the country. With the spirit and values of our liberation war and independence, the Government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken 'Vision 2021', 'Vision 2041' and hundred-year long 'Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100' to materialise the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu. The objectives of these plans are to attain the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and to turn Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous country by 2041 respectively. Despite various adversities, sustained economic growth in recent years is continuing due to manifold public welfare-oriented programmes being implemented by the government. Country is advancing in every socio-economic index, including health, education, women's empowerment, etc. The per capita income and average life expectancy of our people has also increased. Bangladesh, in the meantime, has been recognised as a developing country from a least developed country.

The construction work of the Padma Bridge, which is being constructed by our own resources, is about to completion. Besides, some mega projects like Metro Rail, Payra Sea Port, Karnaphulli Multipurpose Tunnel, Elevated Expressway, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant are being implemented. Bangladesh is now a proud member of the elite

Dream of Victory Day in the Mujib-Year

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

If those who had witnessed 1971 are asked what their most joyous moment in life was, then they would certainly answer '16 December 1971'. In my view, those who had witnessed 1971 with their own eyes are the most fortunate people in the whole world. That was because, they had seen with their own eyes what great sacrifices the ordinary people of this land made by imperilling their own lives during the most terrible episode in life, and how they could give away their lives by loving the country so dearly. Above all, they could observe how the biggest achievement of this country was brought about. If they were not fortunate, then who else were? Again, looking at it from another angle, they might have been another band of unlucky people, because they had witnessed one of the cruellest genocides in world history with their own eyes. Also, it would not have been surprising if they had lost faith in the entire mankind after seeing such brutality of the Pakistani military and their feet-licking adherents.

Luckily, that was not how things happened. The memory of terror ultimately got covered by the recollection of joy with the soft touch of time; the intensity of sorrow has crystallised within the confines of tolerance; people have learned to dream about a fresh life anew. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that those who had seen 1971 not only became witnesses of history,

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they had most in the world. the about optimistic. consider my most fortunate one.

Even after half a clearly recall those days day in 1971. We could besieged city of Dhaka that December the nature of war had change. It was going to end, say how much additional to be shed. Dog-fights of be seen from the rooftops of

war-planes could houses

night-sky was lit by the synchronous firings from anti-aircraft guns, and places all around trembled due to the harsh sound. Military convoys were passing nearby; the stern-looking Pakistani troops were sitting atop those vehicles with stony faces. Those who were living on the borders of Dhaka could see the passing of tanks moving over the pitch-laden roads with groaning sound. There were also the roars of cannons and uninterrupted shelling. The BBC reported that the US Seventh Fleet was advancing towards Bangladesh over the Bay of Bengal with hundreds of fighter jets. Then announcements could be heard after tuning in to the local radio, which urged the Pakistani military to surrender: "Drop the weapons, surrender the arms". Leaflets were thrown from the sky, relentlessly calling for surrender. We were realizing that a war was not merely exchange of fire; it also exerted tremendous mental pressure. We did not know even then that the Al-Badar forces - the students' front of Jamaate Islami had started to kill the illustrious offspring of this land one after another.



PRIME MINISTER **GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S** REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH Message



Today is 16 December, our Great Victory Day and National Day. This is one of the glorious days of the Bangalee Nation. Responding to the clarion call of the greatest Bangalee of all time. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangalee Nation earned ultimate victory on this day in 1971 after 23 years of intense political struggles and a nine-month bloody war against the Pakistani occupation forces. I extend my sincere greetings and warm felicitations to the countrymen marking the 50th Victory Day. I also express deep gratitude to those countries and persons who helped us by various means during our War of Liberation.

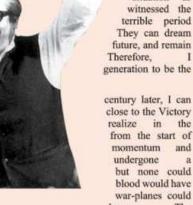
I pay deep homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 3-million martyrs, 2-hundred thousand dishonored women and the bravest sons of the soil- our freedom fighters, for whose supreme sacrifices we have got an independent and sovereign Bangladesh.

The Bangalee nation started movement for independence through Language Movement of 1948-1952, Education Movement of 1962, 6-Point Demand of 1966, and 11-point Movement and Mass Upsurge of 1969 under the undaunted leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib. The Awami League secured an absolute majority in the general elections of 1970. However, Pakistani Military Junta did not allow the Bangalee Nation to assume power. The Father of the Nation realized that the oppression, persecution and deprivation meted out to the Bangalee Nation would not be ended without achieving independence. Accordingly, on the historic 7 March of 1971, he in front of a million of people at the then Race Course Maidan firmly pronounced, 'The struggle this time is the struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is the struggle for independence.' At the call of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, country-wide non-cooperation movement began. Preparation for waging armed struggle also continued

On the fateful night of 25 March of 1971, the Pakistani occupation forces launched a brutal onslaught and committed genocide on the innocent and unarmed Bangalees. At the early hours of 26 March, Bangabandhu declared independence of Bangladesh. Formal War of Independence began. The first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh formed with Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the President, Syed Nazrul Islam as the Vice-President and Tajuddin Ahmad as the Prime Minister was sworn-in on 17 April 1971 at the historic Mujibnagar and led the Liberation War. The valiant freedom fighters earned ultimate victory on 16 December 1971 by defeating Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators- Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Sham. We got our red-green flag.

When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib had engaged himself in rebuilding the war-ravaged Bangladesh, the anti-liberation war criminal cliques assassinated the Father of the Nation along with most of his family members on 15 August 1975. Through this heinous killing, they initiated the politics of killings, coup and conspiracy and blocked trial of Bangabandhu's killers through promulgating Indemnity Ordinance; thwarted democracy by declaring Martial Law; distorted the glorious history of Liberation War; destroyed its spirit; tailored the Constitution and restricted the freedom of the press. Later, the BNP-Jamat alliance government continued this trend.

Today's Bangladesh is a self-reliant Bangladesh. During 1996-2001 and the tenures of successive Awami League governments from 2009 to date, Bangladesh has made incredible socio-economic progress. Per capita income rose from US \$543 in 2005-06 to US \$2,085 now. Bangladesh has qualified to graduate to a developing country. We have made substantial progress in every field, including macroeconomics, agriculture, education, health, communications, information technology, infrastructure, power, rural economics and diplomacy. Various mega projects, including Padma Bridge, Metro Rail and Elevated Expressway are being implemented in road, rail, sea and air communication sector. With the launch of Bangabandhu Satellite-1, we have joined the list of Satellite technology savvy countries as the 57th nation in the world. Bangladesh today is one of the top five countries in the world in terms of economic progress; a country of 'Role model' of development. We have relentlessly been working to turn Bangladesh into a developed-prosperous country by 2041. We have started the implementation of the world's first 100-year 'Delta Plan 2100'.



satellite club through launching the Bangabandhu-1 Satellite into space. All-out cooperation as well as a positive change of outlook of our people is imperative to take this ongoing development trend forward.

Our foreign policy is being exercised in accordance with the principle of "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by Father of the Nation. Bangladesh believes in world peace and harmony. Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in international arena by providing shelter to millions of forcibly displaced and tortured Rohingyas fled from Myanmar. We believe in a peaceful resolution of the crisis. I urge the UN and the international community including Myanmar to take immediate effective measures to settle the problem permanently. Our expatriate Bangladeshis are making a significant contribution to the national economy by sending their hard-earned remittances to the country. The nation acknowledges their contribution with gratitude.

The global epidemic COVID-19 has put human civilization to the brink of one of the worst disasters in history. Everyday thousands of people are adding to the procession of death and being infected. The economy of the whole world has collapsed; billions of people have become unemployed. Bangladesh is no exception. Bangladesh is successfully coping with the Corona situation, due to the 31-point directives and the timely decision given by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and tireless efforts of all concerned to deal with this unexpected situation. To win the Corona War, I call upon the people to follow health guidelines properly.

The whole nation is celebrating 'Mujib Year 2020', the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in a befitting manner this year. The Golden Jubilee celebration of our independence will be observed in 2021. Observing the two magnificent and landmark events with the participation of all, irrespective of party affiliation, I believe, will add a new dimension to the history of Bangali. We shall have to give institutional shape to democracy and the political parties will have to nurture the culture of mutual respect and of tolerance of others' opinion in order to deliver the benefits of independence at people's doorstep, which attained through the sacrifice of millions of martyrs. Let us contribute more from our respective position in implementing the spirit and values of war of liberation and take the nation towards the path of development and prosperity. Let our country turn into 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) as dreamt of by our Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is my expectation on the great Victory Day.

Joi Bangla.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Bangabandhu's Independent Bangladesh

Imdadul Haq Milan

Holding a long-thin bamboo pole with the flag of Bangladesh on top, a boy was running across the green field. The flag, shinning in the afternoon sunlight, was waving keeping rhythm with the race of the boy. With the utmost excitement, the boy was exclaiming at the top of his voice, "Bangladesh is independent. Bangabandhu's Bangladesh is independent. Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.'

This was an incident of 15 December, 1971. A rural open ground in Bikrampur.A huge regions of Bangladesh had already been freed from the enemy ahead of 16 December. The Pakistani military suffered severe onslaught by the freedom fighters. Thousands of the Pakistani soldiers were killed and many more injured. Those who escaped somehow fled to Dhaka. Same had been the fate of Razakars, Al-badars and Al-shams. Many were captured by the freedom fighters while many went into hiding. Those who were caught could realize how to pay for the torture unleashed on the Bangalis during the nine months.

The surrounding area of the field the boy was running through became enemy free. The sun was setting on the other side of the field. Only one night! That very auspicious moment was knocking. The Niazi forces would surrender in that very Race Course Maidan from where Bangabandhu delivered his historic 7 March Speech in which he proclaimed, "The struggle this time is a struggle for freedom - the struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation."That very Race Course Maidan would witness the emergence of Bangabandhu's independent and sovereign Bangladesh. The sun of independence would rise in the sky of Bangla tomorrow. At that magnificent moment, the bereaved Bangalis would recall the nine month long agonies. So many savageries! Innumerable sacrifices, chastity of women and blood had to be paid for this Bangla - all would be recollected.

It was the month of December. The weather was very cold. There were some small children at the place where I had taken refuge. We held our breath while we were waiting inside a bunker covered by blankets. There was acute uncertainty. We did not know what would happen and how things would turn out. Suddenly, at that very juncture, we heard somebody shout in an intensely razor-sharp voice, 'Joy Bangla'. All uncertainties were gone in a moment. All worries evaporated. Nobody told us, but we understood that the day for which we had been waiting had arrived. The days we passed running to nooks and crannies of the country like wild beasts were over. The country for which so many of our near ones had shed blood from their bosom has now materialised. What could be more mirthful than this? But what a surprise! There were tears in the corners of our eyes when we got that news for the first time.

I cannot believe even now that this slogan 'Joy Bangla' was in exile in this country for a long time.

The country was born with innumerable dreams. We dreamt about a new life on that Victory Day, Although the land was rid of enemies, Bangabandhu was still in a Pakistani prison. He returned on 10 January, and we were greatly elated! He put in his efforts for building a Bangladesh of our dreams. At that time, there were lakhs of homeless and uprooted people in the country. There were families without fathers, mothers who had lost their sons, tortured daughters, disabled freedom fighters, and people living in abject poverty. Many of them did not have houses or homes for taking shelter. Many did not have anything to eat. The roads, ports and bridges of the country were destroyed. Many schools and colleges were non-existent as they were turned into military camps by the Pakistanis. Dwelling houses were burnt down; consequently the students did not have books or note-pads. The economy was shattered. But even then people had huge expectations. Surely, this country would stand up by raising its head high. All exploitations and deprivations would then be eliminated. There would be no injustice in this land, no irreligious practices. There would be bountiful love for all people irrespective of their religion or colour.

But Bangabandhu was not granted the required time for building up the country. Within three and a half years, Bangabandhu was assassinated along with his family members in the early hours of 15 August during one of the most gruesome killings in world history. The soil of this forsaken land was coloured by the blood of Bangabandhu. A modern Bangladesh lost her way at that very juncture by moving

(Continued to the next page)

The Pakistanis launched mass killing in the name of 'Operation Searchlight' on the fateful night of 25 March. They divided Dhaka in to four zones and pounced. On that night, they brought the students of Iqbal Hall and Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University together. They compelled the students to dig a huge grave in front of the Jagannat Hall then killed and buried them all. They killed the university teachers and the ordinary employees. Near-by slums were put on fire, shaheedminar was demolished. Dhaka city became a hell. Fire and fire all around. Only sounds were of bullets and cannons.

The Bangali police raised

number of Bangali

resistance at the Razarbagh Police Lines. A huge policemen were killed. Same had been the fate of EPR Jawans. All those who were waiting for launches to aboard on in the evening at Saderghat Terminal were killed. Corpses were everywhere. Black pitch roads were blood stained. Dead bodies were piled up near the Jagannath College Gate, Narayanganj Bus Stand. In some places, fire continued till the following morning.

> Curfew was relaxed for two hours on 27 March. In the meantime, the people of Dhaka crossing the Buriganga took shelter in Jinjira, Keraniganj areas. During the Fazr time on 2 crossingthe

Buriganga attacked on the sleeping Bangalis and killed thousands. What a huge number of killing grounds in Bangladesh! Rayerbazar and Mirpur in Dhaka. During Our government has adopted 'Zero Tolerance' policy to combat militancy, terrorism, repression on women and drugs menaces. We have established the rule of law in the country by executing the verdicts of the killers of the Father of the Nation. The verdicts of war criminals are being executed to rid the nation of stigma. We have peacefully resolved the land boundary issue with India. We have also peacefully resolved maritime boundaries with India and Myanmar. Bangladesh has been playing a commendable role in various international forums and in establishing world peace.

UNESCO has joined Bangladesh in celebrating the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation. Next year we will celebrate the golden jubilee of our Independence. Inspired by the spirit of the great War of Liberation, let us unite against all communal evil forces and thwart any conspiracy against the country, democracy and the government. In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, we must follow the health guidelines, and play our due role in maintaining the country's development, progress and continuity of democracy. May this be our firm pledge on this great Victory Day.

> Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu May Bangladesh Live Forever.

por Engan Sheikh Hasina

the long nine months, they killed people, loaded them on trucks and carried away to Rayerbazar, Mirpur for dumping. The Biharis joined hands with the Pakistanis. A bamboo pierced youth was brought to Nababpur. They snatched kid from the mother's lap and threw in the air. Then they pointed the sword or spear at the kid and the kid got impaled.

Now it is about Chooknagar at Dumuriathana, Khulna. It was easy to enter India throughChooknagar. To save life, the people were then taking refuge in India crossing the border. Around 10 million people as refugees went to India

It was 20 May. A great number of people rushed to Chooknagar to take shelter there. They were due to enter India through the market. The Indian government opened the border. Getting the news, the Pakistani soldiers went there. They killed 20 thousand people within four hours from 11am to 3pm.Chooknagar Bazar had turned into a death valley. The water of the nearby river got red with blood. A bleeding dead mother was among the thousands of corpses. Without realizing what happened, the survived infant was trying to suck the mother ...

Women of different ages were dragged to the Razarbagh Police Lines everyday. They were kept nude and continuously tortured. The whole environment was groaning with the screaming of the victim-women. The naked bodies of the women were kept hanging from the ceiling keeping heads low and legs high. So many women had died in that hanging conditions!

Vaghirathi, a young woman of 18 or 19. She was from Baghmara Kadamtala village of Pirojpur. A truck full of Pakistani military arrived at that village one afternoon in May. The whole village was burnt into ashes, and the villagers were killed indiscriminately. Vaghirathi was brought to the camp and brutally tortured for days. In course of time, Vaghirathi earned confidence of the beasts. Being expert at cooking, she served them with food. But fire of revenge was burning inside her. She secretly contacted with the freedom fighters. Inviting the beastly Pakistanis in their village, she made the freedom fighters kill 40 out of 45. Then Vaghirathi disappeared. She, however, had not been able to save herself. She was caught. Vaghirathi was made naked and tied with two jeeps side by side. Then the two legs and two hands of Vaghirathi were tied to the two jeeps which were driven to the opposite directions. Vaghirathi was torn apart like a paper

Thousands of Bangalis were brought to Pahartali in Chittagong and killed there. The Bangalis were killed getting down from the trains that moved from Pahartali to Hathazari. In that very spot, more than 10 thousand Bangalis were killed. On 20 Ramadan, hundreds of slaughtered dead bodies were found at Foy's Lake. At the (Continued to the next page)

Pakistanis April, the brutal

The Daily Star 7

Special Supplement

Ballad of Victory Mohammad Nurul Huda

Bangla is my mom's idiom, my mother's country Bangla is my father's mystic mingling, his strolling free. In the silt and water and currents of her numerous rivers Free people of this free land voyage by boats as sailors. Father of the Nation Sheikh is the charismatic boatman here, O the sons and daughters of the Nation, keep vigil with care.

The final call came on March Seven, 1971, from Mujibor, And the victory crowned us all exactly on 16 December. Since that day all homes of brave Bengalees are liberated, In a free land everyone is free, none as another is treated. We are prepared for this victory for centuries together, For time eternal the glow of this victory shall glitter.

Marking his birth centenary, the free father of the free land Mujib is blessed with multiplying births without any end. His forefinger is the scepter of justice, freedom of winners, Humans are born-free, the essence of all mundane creatures. Nationality, Democracy, Equality, Individuality, Nation, Fraternity and Justice are protected in our Constitution.

Mother Bengal gave us all her milk and gifts affectionate, Human-birds are all flying on their mind's wings enchanted. The years shall pass, and the decades, and the countless centuries, People of Bengal shall live happily with their parents, without worries. In a free universe Bengal is free, victory shall continue here as well, Bengalees are now world-people, daring and fearless they do dwell Daring and fearless they do dwell, daring and fearless they do dwell.

Translation: Poet himself

Arms Surrender Helal Hafiz

Killing weapon, remember the love between two of us. Nine months I have known you as a friend, just a friend. Killing the enemy many a day with no reason I have entered the tent to look at you, again and again.

Remember I well, as my heart burning ceaselessly Touched your bosom, you burst into shouts, Your explosion reverberating the sky, our love In no moment captured the tyrant enemy's sighs.

Remember I well, placing my drowsy forehead On your hard barrel, hands folded on my chest, Many a dark night of ours passed inside the forest! I remember it, so you keep in your mind too, History of all these love-makings of ours.

True, today I am going back; yes, I am going back home surrendering you In the prison, since I love humans.

If ever comes bad time in the days to come, When love shall end, or if no love grows among humans, I shall surely break that black prison, And shall make love again with you, O killing weapon.

Translation: Mohammad Nurul Huda

The Glorious Victory Day

Wednesday, 16 December 2020

Bangabandhu Prepared Us for Victory valiant Bangalis could take up arms in time and force the enemy troops to surrender unconditionally at the Dhaka Racecourse Ground on 16 December 1971 due to the well-planned and phase-wise steps taken by Bangabandhu.

The people of Bangladesh had taken up arms just at the right time. Within two weeks of the start of the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani invading forces, the elected people's representatives of Bangladesh formed a Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the president and Tajuddin Ahmad as the prime minister despite living in a death-valley. At that juncture, the government sent hundreds of thousands of students and youths to the warfront after imparting training to them on guerrilla and direct warfare within the quickest possible time. Side by side, the government made arrangements for the food and lodging of 10 million refugees who had taken shelter in India. While the liberation war was in progress, the government performed numerous tasks including running a full-fledged 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' (Radio Station of Independent Bangla), constituting a Planning Cell for preparing an outline of future socioeconomic development, pressing for the release of Bangabandhu imprisoned in Pakistani jail, and conducting a vigorous diplomatic campaign for generating world opinion in favour of Bangladesh.

The members of the allied forces went back home by leaving Bangladesh territory within three months of the liberation of Bangladesh from enemy clutches because of the grooming of Bangladesh for that great victory by Bangabandhu. Those who had raised questions about the preparedness of Bangladesh and tried to make fun by terming the country as a 'basket case' or 'bottomless basket' observed in amazement that the preliminary reconstruction of the war-ravaged land was completed within a short time; the constitution was formulated by incorporating the main state principles of nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism. It also did not require much time to frame policies on education, energy and maritime resources. Bangabandhu called for a second revolution before completion of the fourth year of independence, which was aimed at eliminating the garbage of colonial rule like corruption and irregularities as well as attaining self-reliance. He said while visiting the USA that self-reliance was not anything imaginary, as we have that raw-material for achieving it.

After obtaining membership of the United Nations, Bangabandhu went to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1974 for delivering his speech. After delivering that speech in Bangla language on the global podium, he went to Washington DC where he held talks with the then president Gerald Ford. Prior to that, the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and two senior economists of the World Bank had contemptuously termed Bangladesh as a 'basket case'. They held the view that 'if Bangladesh could develop, then any other country of the world could also develop'. This could have been spelt out in a simpler manner – if that boy could pass SSC exam, then even a banana tree could also pass.

Bangabandhu chose Washington for giving a fitting reply to the scornful comments made by Henry Kissinger and the World Bank economists. In his book 'Some Incidents Surrounding Bangabandhu and Bangladesh', Dr. M A Wajed Mia had written – "Bangabandhu had said during a press conference in Washington – 'Some people mock Bangladesh by terming her an International Basket Case. But Bangladesh is not a Basket Case. Bangladesh had been plundered for two centuries. The riches of Bangladesh were used for beautifying London, Dundee, Manchester, Karachi, and Islamabad. ...Bangladesh still has infinite riches. We shall certainly see Bangladesh standing on its feet one day".

Bangabandhu was brutally assassinated on 15 August 1975 immediately after he made the call for a second revolution. After that, not only the war-cry 'Joy Bangla' of the liberation war and the ideals of the Father of the Nation, even the articulation of his name was banned.

Finally, the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Hasina took up the responsibility of the Prime Minister after being blessed with a huge support of the masses. Bangladesh has now risen to the rank of a middle-income country by shedding the blight of a least developed nation because of her pragmatism, farsightedness and leadership quality. The country is taking resolute steps for occupying a place in the rank of developed countries of the world. Bangladesh is now self-sufficient in food. Despite being a country that was dependent on foreign assistance for implementation of



even culverts and rural road projects over many years, the country is now able to construct a unique infrastructure project like the Padma Bridge by ignoring the threats of World Bank. It could also demonstrate an independent outlook by providing food and shelter to over one million Rohingya refugees year after year alongside shifting a segment of these distressed people to the Bhashanchar Island.

Just as Bangabandhu had prepared Bangladesh for freedom and victory, similarly he inspired the populace for making sacrifices in order to achieve those noble objectives. Responding to his call for freedom, millions of people 'confronted the enemy with whatever they possessed'. Not only did he groom the public for making sacrifices, he believed in individual freedom in the practice of religion. He spent over half of the 24 years of Pakistan's existence in the darkness of prison-cells. His two sons Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Jamal had fought against the Pakistani invading forces as members of the Muktibahini. His wife Bangamata Begum Fazlatunnesa was defiant even while under agonizing house-arrest supervised by Pakistani military.

Bangabandhu had written to Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy on 14 June 1952 - 'Please don't think for me. I was born to suffer' [Intelligence report, second volume, page 239].

He had smilingly embraced this sorrow and pain for Bangladesh and its people. His sacrifices as well as those of the Bangalis did not prove to be futile. Bangladesh is the name of a proud country on the global podium. Bangabandhu's daughter and leader of the masses Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is holding a torch of luminosity on the path shown by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We shall certainly achieve our noble goal.



Ajoy Dasgupta

The renowned litterateur Annada Shankar Ray had written in an essay titled 'Indrapat', which was included in the book 'Great Hero of History: Bangabandhu',

about meeting the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman - "I wanted to know from him after the program of Ekushey

Final Victory: Surrender of the Pakistani Forces (Race Course Maidan, 16 December 1971) Photo: Collected

February in 1974 – 'When did the idea of Bangladesh come to your head for the first time?" His prompt response was – "From the year 1947".

Bangabandhu wrote in his book 'The Unfinished Memoirs' – 'I was in Kolkata City on the day of Pakistan's founding on 14 August 1947. The central leadership of Muslim League had unfairly removed Husyen Shaheed Suhrawardy from the position of Bengal's prime minister and put in his place Khwaja Nazimuddin. The latter declared without consulting with anyone that Dhaka would be the capital of East Bengal. Due to this announcement, we no longer had any claim on Kolkata. But the British Government had not yet decided then whether Kolkata would remain in India or Pakistan. Even if Kolkata remained with India, there was a possibility that Shealdaha (territory extending from Jashore and Khulna to Bongaon-Barasat-Ranaghat-Krishnanagar-Bashirhat-24Pargana) would fall in Pakistan. The Kolkata that was built with the money coming from East Bengal, we gave up that city voluntarily. If Kolkata was in Pakistan, then Pakistan would have been forced to make the city its capital' (pages 76-78).

Bangabandhu was then only 26 years old. He was participating actively in the programs of Chhatra Federation and Muslim League while continuing his studies. He was elected unopposed the general secretary of the renowned Islamia College students' council. He also ran gruel-kitchens in the famine-ravaged and riot-affected areas. He wrote in 'The Unfinished Memoirs' – "I do whatever task I decide to carry out after due contemplation. I correct myself if there is any mistake" (page 80).

Bangabandhu had visualised his future ever since his student days. The people trying to exert authoritarian control over Pakistan had decided to corner East Bengal politically, economically and culturally. Their power-base would be centred in Karachi and Lahore. Although East Bengal did not get the city of Kolkata or its adjoining areas, it was ahead in terms of population among the two wings of Pakistan. The British East India Company had captured the territory of Bengal first because of its economic affluence. Bangabandhu was not ready to accept fresh deprivations and negligence in this region. When the Bangla language came under attack immediately after the establishment of Pakistan, he realized that more such dangers were ahead. He then took three steps – generate public opinion in favour of making Bangla the principal state language of Pakistan; strengthen the movement in its favour; and establish an appropriate organization for the purpose.

The establishment of East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League was an important stage in this process. We often say, 'From language movement to the great struggle for independence'. The Chhatra League was a vital and essential weapon for achieving Bangabandhu's objective. The first formal conference of Chhatra League took place on 16-17 September 1949. In his presidential address, Bangabandhu had advised the Chhatra League workers to form reading circles and debating societies, and become active in eradicating illiteracy alongside studying their text-books. At the same time, he put forward the demand that all adult citizens should be provided arms and imparted military training, so that the people of East Bengal could confront the enemy in case of foreign aggression. But the Pakistani regime did not accept this demand. They continued to treat us like a colony for over two decades. Bangabandhu then united the masses for our liberation. The Pakistani rulers wanted

Dream of Victory... (Continued from previous page)

towards the dark alleyways of hopeless, dreamless religious bigotry. The war criminals kept in jails for trying on charges of crimes against humanity came out of prisons en-masse on 31 December. The country became a safe haven for war criminals.

Then many things happened, and that history was blighted. At one juncture, Bangladesh once again got back that lost path under the leadership of Bangabandhu's worthy daughter Sheikh Hasina. The country has been rid of blemishes by trying the killers of Bangabandhu. The nation got back its lost sense of honour by trying the war-criminals. The children are once again able to know about Bangabandhu, they are learning to take pride in the liberation war. The economic capacity of the country is flourishing with jumps and leaps. Who would now dare to term the country as a 'bottomless basket'?

But has our dream of 1971 been fulfilled? We all know that the real dreams touch the sky, but they never materialise. We continue our work by merely looking at those dreams throughout our lives. But apprehensions develop when we find those dreams absent from our eyes.

We still have many challenges before us. These challenges relate to nature, the environment, economic disparities, education and healthcare. But the biggest challenge is to build a non-communal country. Bangabandhu's lifelong dream was a non-communal Bangladesh. We have not yet achieved that Bangladesh. We still have to listen to the bragging of religious fanatics and fundamentalist groups.

Let our dream be a genuinely non-communal Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu during this Victory Day of the Mujib-Year.

Author : Educationist , Writer Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



Photo: Collected

Bangabandhu's Independent...

bottom of the hill, opposite to the Foy's Lake, there were only young girls' dead bodies. Almost all of them were pregnant. One thousand 82 dead bodies were there. Thousands of such brutal incidents occurred throughout the nine months of 1971.

Following the directives of Bangabandhu's historic 7 March Speech, the Bangalis built up forts at every house. The Bangali nation launched the War of Independence literally after 25 March. That war eventually took a look of the mass people's war. Each and every Bangali other than the sycophants of Pakistanis turned into a warrior. For the independence of the country, responding to the call of Bangabandhu, the Bangalis encountered the enemies with whatever they had.

The Pakistani army occupied Kustia. In the dawn at 4 am on 30 March, the valiant Bangali soldiers, police and ansar along with students and mass people attacked on every military camp in Kustia. Thousands of mass people with sticks, spears joined



Photo: Collected

the Bangali soldiers, police and ansar. Within the afternoon of that day, the freedom fighters captured all the Pakistani camps. The camp in Kustia Zila School was left only. After two days of such a battle, the Pakistani military started fleeing leaving their camp. The mass people of the area and the freedom fighters cut the roads. They put bamboo mat on the road-trenches and poured tar on those in such a way that nobody could understand the trenching. Plunging into the trenches, the trucks and jeeps of the Pakistani Army remained overturned on road. The freedom fighters continued to open fire and kill the Pakistanis. Those who survived the attacks scattered over the surrounding villages. Not a single Pakistani soldier could return alive from there. The masses vanished them.

The Pakistanis planned to supply arms and ammunition from the Chattogram Port to various regions of the country through Feni. The freedom fighters built up a huge resistance in this region. Due to their hindrance, the Pakistani forces got vanquished. The valiant freedom fighters freed Belonia, Feni on 6 December. The war strategies adopted by the freedom fighters are now being studied at different military colleges all over the world.

Our seven 'Birshresthos', highest gallantry award winners, sacrificing their lives rendered unparallel contribution to the Independence of Bangladesh. The Great Liberation War is marked by so many heroic stories. The indomitable boys along with the mass people of Bangla fought for the independence from their respective positions. As per Bangabandhu's directives, each and every Bangali except some traitors was a freedom fighter.

As stated by the Pakistanis, nothing happened in the East Pakistan. And to prove it, journalists from the powerful countries were brought. They were accommodated in the Intercontinental Hotel in Dhaka. They were to show peaceful(!) Dhaka city in the following morning. The Bangali guerrilla fighters crumbled walls of the



Photo: Collected

Intercontinental Hotel through continuous grenade attacks. The news of the attacks spread across the world instantly. And the world came to know what happened in the East Pakistan! And thus Bangabandhu's Bangladesh was steadily aheading towards independence.

It was 9 August. Seven Pakistani Ships anchored on the bank of Dhaleshwari river in the Tangail region. The arms loaded ships would be unloaded at the Fulchari Ghat of Bogura. From there, the arms would be carried to Rangpur and Syedpur cantonments. The freedom fighters led by Major Habib took control over the ships. Thus, the freedom fighters acquired a plenty of arms.

Another massive drive of the valiant freedom fighters was "Operation Jackpot". A number of large ships loaded with arms were anchored in the Karnaphuali Jetty. In the mid August, our 60 naval commandos splitted into 3 groups, silently swimming in the dark night, reached near the ships. Diving, they attached limpet mines to the vessels. They backed as silently as they came. Explosions started at 1.40 at night and continued one after another. The large ships, loaded with arms brought for the Pakistani soldiers, started to sink one by one in the Karnaphuli. And thus we earned our independence.

To create an intellectual void in the Bangali nation, the evil Pakistanis in collaboration with the Razakars, Al-Badars made the last attack two days ahead of 16 December and killed uncountable intellectuals. After that, on 16 December, 93 thousand Pakistani soldiers led by Niazi surrendered with bowing heads. The beloved Bangladesh became independent.

In that very climactic moment of excitement, the Bangali nation had only one aspiration, when would our beloved leader come back in his liberated Bangladesh? The sky of Bangla, the soil of Bangla awaited the return of Bangabandhu. On 10 January, 1972, Bangabandhu returned to his Independent Bangladesh. The whole nation got illuminated in a moment. The standstill river started flowing in its own rhythm. The birds started chirping. Flowers bloomed, Crops fields became full to the brim. The lovely breeze of the free country began to flow. And the heart of Bangladesh started singing, "Amar sonar Bangla, Ami tomayvhalobashi"----"My Bengal of gold, I love you".

Author : Novelis and Editor, The Kalerkantha Translation Md. Saifullah



Photo: Collected

EDITORIAL



DHAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2020, POUSH 1, 1427 BS

A Victory Day like never before

It comes amidst a pandemic, testing how much we've grown as a nation

ODAY marks the 49 years of our existence as a

sovereign nation. On this day in 1971, our struggle for independence following a nine-month war was rewarded with a richly deserved victory that came at the cost of unimaginable loss of life and persecution. While we honour the memory of the fallen, we cannot but recall, with a deep sense of gratitude, the enormous contributions of the freedom fighters who fought and bled on the ground and the leading role of Bangabandhu and his four trusted lieutenants in steering us to this moment. Together, their efforts and sacrifices, as well as that of countless other individuals both at home and abroad, paved the way for the fulfilment of the Bengali dream for self-determination.

This is indeed the brightest moment in our history, one that we observe amidst a raging pandemic this year. Ironically, perhaps it is fitting that the run-up to the 50th year of our existence should coincide with the emergence of the biggest challenge we've ever faced—a litmus test, in other words, for how much we've grown as a nation over the past decades. Covid-19 continues to test our resilience and integrity in ways never seen before. Besides infecting nearly five lakh people, killing over 7,100, and exposing the dark underbelly of our economy and nearly all sectors, it has created an unprecedented crisis in our lives, the effects of which will be felt long after the pandemic is over. In a way, it is stress-testing our foundation as a nation, and how we respond to it will show how far we've progressed, or regressed.

Today, our society remains deeply divided, scarred by injustice, intolerance and extremism. The values and traditions that once held us together are being threatened. We no longer seek unity in diversity. Narrow nationalism and self-serving individualistic aspirations have replaced our dream for a fair, rights-based society where everyone is treated equally regardless of their gender, class and religious/political affiliation—a dream that was central to our struggle for independence. There is an abject lack of compassion manifesting itself through crimes and cruelties of all sorts, in greater number every day. The list of things going haywire is astounding, which calls for deep introspection and a renewed commitment if we want to see a reversal in the current trend.

That said, Bangladesh has also achieved a lot over the decades that we can be proud of. We've reached many milestones, especially in various socioeconomic sectors. But a true tribute to the Victory Day is not about uncritically romanticising the journey we've had as a nation, but about being reasonably proud of our achievements while making a conscious effort to understand and learn from our mistakes and failures. If the priority after December 16, 1971 was to start nation-building, the time has come to embark on a journey of nation-rebuilding in light of our founding principles, a fight made more urgent by the pandemic. Only then can we truly honour the legacy of all those who gave their lives for our freedom.

On the road to a cherished dream

Graduating to a developed country HOSE who labeled us a basket case should eat their

VICTORY DAY 2020

Secularism past, secularism present

■ HE emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state on December 16, 1971 was a major event in the political history of the subcontinent, whose significance needs to be studied from different perspectives. This does not mean an immersion in the past, but rather an exercise for the future.

MOFIDUL HOQUE The legacy of the past has greatly influenced the postcolonial

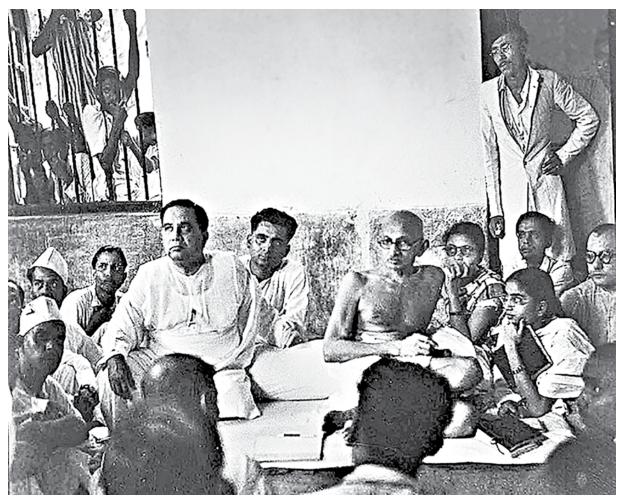
development of the newly independent nations. The colonial legacies of India, especially in the first half of the 20th century, has been determined by diverse factors, but the rupture in the body politic was most evident on the issue of Hindu-Muslim relations. The end of colonial domination in 1947 was not a celebration, rather it was a "chequered mourning" as poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz depicted. Independence was marred by unprecedented violence and the period remained engraved in people's minds, not as the first day of freedom but as the time of Partition. India was divided on religious lines to carve out Pakistan as a land of the Muslims of India, with the declared aim to solve the Hindu-Muslim conflict once and for all. Pakistan became an Islamic republic while India proclaimed itself as a secular democratic state.

The acceptance of partitioning the land to separate the Muslims and Hindus as two contesting religious groups who failed to define their life together as a community, has opened the path to disrupting the communal harmony essential for the development of society. The result is evident in the subsequent developments in the subcontinent, which showed that the line of separation was drawn not only on the map but also in the minds and psyches of communities everywhere. Moreover, Pakistan as a country defined its neighbour as a Hindu state, the other part of its two-nation theory. Right from the beginning, India also failed to establish a healthy relationship with its neighbour. The tension between the two states culminated into bloody riots in 1950 and 1964, as well as brutal wars in 1948 and 1965.

In this backdrop, the role of the Bengali people, specifically the Bengali Muslims, needs to be analysed in historical context. There are myths created by various quarters which have been busted by later day historical developments. The emergence of Bangladesh as a secular republic upholding its national identity was a landmark event, a clear departure from the two-nation theory and the postcolonial reality of communal conflict. Thus, the concept of secularism as one of the fundamental principles of the state showed the path to the future, amending the rupture in the subcontinental body politic.

Bengali Muslims, who voted overwhelmingly for Muslim League and endorsed the creation of Pakistan, became disillusioned very soon. This is the common belief that mainstream historians are putting forward for long and has become a kind of meta-narrative. But if we take a deeper look at the historical events of the time, we will be able to identify the other narratives that help us to explain the journey made by Muslim communities at large. A careful reading of The Unfinished Memoirs by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reveals what Pakistan meant to Mujib, then a young activist of the Muslim League and the undisputed leader of the students of Islamia College of Kolkata, who can rightly be considered as the voice of the educated Muslim youth. He belonged to Muslim League, but to the other faction of the League, led by Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim, both related to each other and belonging to the Muslim gentry, and more concerned with Muslim rights than a separate homeland for Muslims. Their vision of a separate homeland was a Muslim majority united Bengal, where Hindus and Muslims could live as a composite community.

Bangabandhu quoted the Lahore resolution verbatim



Indian National Congress leader Mahatma Gandhi visiting a house in Bengal in 1946 accompanied by Bengali premier Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (sitting to Gandhi's right) and a young All India Muslim League activist Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (standing). PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Muslims were a majority. His vision of Pakistan was not a Muslim dominated state, but a space where both communities would live together in peace and harmony with equal rights. During the heydays of the struggle for Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib could easily endorse the idea of united or akhanda Bengal as proposed by Sarat Bose and Suhrawardy. However, the move never got momentum and soon Bengali society became entangled in bloody riots in Kolkata on August 16, 1946, followed by riots in the rural hinterland of Noakhali, and subsequently in Bihar. Society dived into a deep abyss and Hindu-Muslim unity became a dream never to be fulfilled. The dark scenario blinded the politicians to look beyond the existing reality and search for other options. Bengal and Punjab were partitioned on the basis of the religious identity of the people. Partition happened to stop the violence, but it brought more violence and death. The mad frenzy quickly culminated in the absurd policy of population exchange, where under the interim administration, the total Muslim population of East Punjab was taken to West Punjab and vice versa for the Hindus and Sikhs of West Punjab.

The birth of independent India and Pakistan has been marred with blood and the memory of Partition is one of victimisation unbound. The suffering it brought to millions still haunt us. But what is overlooked is that in 1947, when Punjab burnt and bled, Bengal was peaceful. Riots erupted in Bengal later in 1950, resulting in indiscriminate killings and mass exodus. At that time, a few of the right-wing politicians called for population exchange, but fortunately, that didn't happened. In historical narratives, not much attention is given to Bengal in 1947. It is also important to look where

Hindus and Muslims. As a mark of his political action, he spend the day fasting at the Haideri Manjil, the Muslim house at Beliaghata which was looted and burnt by the rioters in August of the previous year. A photograph found many years later showed Gandhi sitting on the floor with Suhrawardy at his side and the lanky young man standing at the door was Sheikh Mujib.

The day when India was divided, Mujib was standing not with politicians blinded by their communal outlooks, but with a handful of leaders who defied the prevailing mood. They represented the future, and the emergence of Bangladesh as a secular state has endorsed that dream which few others could uphold and struggled for.

Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country, opted for secularism as an essential part of its national identity. In the name of creating an Islamic state and its purity, the Pakistani rulers adopted the policy to impose a sole religious identity, obliterating the cultural-linguistic traditions of our people. That contradiction was there right from the beginning and national identity and culture became the rallying point for the survival of the nation. Nationalism with a strong cultural component united the people and Sheikh Mujib transformed that unity into a massive political struggle. A poster of the Bangladesh government during the war depicted the secular basis of the Bangladeshi state eloquently as it proclaimed: Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims of Bengalwe are all Bengali. Thus religion and nationalism are mingled together, creating spaces for all. In the striferidden reality of today, the state of Bangladesh points the way to the future of peace, tolerance and harmony with its commitment to secularism. The ideal needs to be protected under all circumstances.

words. It has been a hard grind but Bangladesh is

at the threshold of joining the ranks of developed countries. The news couldn't have come on a better dayon the eve of the country's 49th Victory Day. It has been a long 49 years since the day in December when the UN included Bangladesh in the list of 25 Least Developed Countries after the world body formally endorsed the three criteria. According to the UNCTAD, Bangladesh is well on its way to graduate to a developing country from a least developed country as, according to its estimates, our score in all three criteria, namely, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Human Assets Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI), would be much higher than the required score for graduation next year. It was only in 2015 that Bangladesh became eligible for graduation in 2018 by crossing the threshold of the World Bank-defined lower middle-income country. The UNCTAD forecast is even more encouraging given that the country had to combat a global pandemic that stunted the steady growth of nearly eight percent year on year.

However, while we can rightly rejoice at our soon-tobe newly acquired status, what the planners should stress upon is the equitable distribution of income across the board to make growth and development meaningful. The negative consequences that our graduation to a developed country would entail should also be taken into cognisance. Scholars foresee certain predictable impacts. According to the Committee for Development Policy of the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, the most important impact of Bangladesh's graduation would be on trade, which might affect specific market access provisions accorded to LDCs. Equally importantly, we are likely to lose access to the benefit of duty free quota for LDCs and to simplified rules of origin reserved for LDCs. That will pose an impediment to our garment exports. Our future policy, therefore, should be crafted to offset all the likely adverse impacts so that the road to further progress is unhindered.



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A cervical cancer-free future

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is marking Červical Cancer Awareness Month in January to support the WHO Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer. According to IARC, more than 50 million Bangladeshi women are at risk of developing cervical cancer, and 17,686 new cases and 10,362 deaths occur annually. If diagnosed at the precursor stage, however, cervical cancer is a condition that can be successfully treated through vaccination and screening. It is high time we discuss the issue in depth and help fight this cancer.

Iftekhar Ahmed Sakib, Dhaka

to highlight its call for independent states to be formed in the Western and Eastern part of India where the

leading politicians stood in mid-August, 1947. We found Mahatma Gandhi in Kolkata, calling for peace between

Mofidul Hoque is a war crimes researcher and trustee of the Liberation

Remembering the hardships we faced in 1971

ANGLADESH is celebrating the 49th anniversary of the nation's Victory Day today. As we look back, in awe and pride, we must marvel at the achievement of this young nation and the difficulties we've

overcome in such a short period of time. We can't but also pay tribute to the sacrifice made by the countless millions during the Liberation War, and in the years before 1971, as well as after. Many of those who helped build this nation did not survive to see victory and we remember them all with gratitude and deference.

AN OPEN

DIALOGUE

Abdullah

Shibli

It is only appropriate that we keep in our mind and our hearts the hardship and challenges that the people of this country faced to break the shackles put on us by the colonial rulers. Some of us lost family members, near ones, friends and neighbours, and it is appropriate that we pay tribute to them. Even today, I never get tired of listening to the stories of how millions escaped the rage of the Pakistani Army, the trials and tribulations of those crossing over to the Indian border, then on to Kolkata or Agartala, and the hospitality of our hosts in India. It seems that, with age, these memories rekindle the pride and passion we felt, and they grow brighter as time passes.

Like every year, today I pay homage to the friends I lost in the War of Liberation. My classmates from Dhaka College and Dhaka University, Nazrul Islam and Nizamuddin Azad, my kindergarten classmate Nasim Mohsin, my senior Zaheen Chinku, a thespian of immense promise; my friends Arun Choudhury and Shafi Imam Rumi, and many many others. My classmate Sraboni Endow Choudhury, occasionally tells us stories, sometimes on Facebook, of the sufferings during the early stages of the War when Pakistani bloodhounds were on the loose looking

for young girls to kill and molest, and how they managed to dodge that bullet. However, ten of her family members perished by December 16, most of them killed by a bomb in Sylhet town in an area known as Manipuri Rajbari. Her young cousin who died was denied a decent burial, forcing her Kakima to carry the corpse to the water's edge, letting it float away in the river Surma.

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down with some of the elders who had similar harrowing experiences and close encounters with death during those months. While memory is fast fading for



many of them, their tales of the Liberation War, from March 7 to December 16, is one of great pride for them. I have heard from hundreds of people about attending the historic meeting at the Dhaka Race Course on March 7, and of the horrifying acts of betrayal and manslaughter committed by Yahya Khan and his cohort on the night of March 25 and the early hours of March 26. Those memories, the escape and the struggles in April, May and June onwards until the early breakthrough in November and the final surrender of the Pakistani Army at the ceremony in the Race Course, are fresh in all of our minds. Who could have imagined that this ground, now

renamed the Suhrawardy Uddyan, would be witness to so much of our history, our hopes and determination, and the ultimate climax with the surrender of General Niazi, who had vowed to eliminate the dreams of the Bengali nation?

I talked with Gulshan Anwara Haque, an octagenarian, and past President of Dhaka Ladies Club, who after attending the historic speech at Dhaka Race Course on March 7, travelled the following day from her house in Dhaka to Sylhet for a wedding and was stuck there for a few days as the Non-Cooperation Movement and the negotiations between Awami League

and the Pakistan Peoples Party dragged

in Sylhet town and immediately took

on. On March 25, she and her family were

shelter in a "Chairman bari" on the other

Searchlight was launched by the Pakistani

Army in Dhaka. Following the crackdown,

they along with a few others, ferried scores

of people from the town in their small cars

over the rickety Keane Bridge spanning the

river Surma to the safety of the villages on

the other side. Subsequently, they escaped

to an interior location with her two young

town. They first went to Kaliti Tea Estate in

daughters and son to evade the Pakistani

Army that had been let loose in Sylhet

side of the River Surma after Operation

PHOTO: ARCHIVES

Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar. However, when the blood-thirsty Pakistani Army and their collaborators also crossed the Keane Bridge, they targeted the tea gardens and started going from one estate to another to flush out the "muktis".

She tearfully recalled one encounter with the Pakistani troops at a roadside checkpoint. Their small car, a Fiat 650 with six passengers, was stopped and lined up on the roadside to be taken down with one brushfire. The entire family, along with her late husband, started reciting the Kalima and Surah Fatiha in anticipation of the massacre. But they survived when one of the commanders had a last-minute change of heart and let them continue their onward journey. The trauma still haunts her and she says, "I don't know what happened. The Almighty looked down and foresaw what might happen if that lunatic soldier decided to pull the trigger. Maybe the captain also had young children and saw something that reminded him of his own family back home in the West!

Finally, let us also recognise the contribution of our friends amongst the rest of the world, who rose up in arms to defeat the nexus of Bhutto, Yahya and the marauding Pakistanis. Even some of the sober Pakistanis, then and now, admit that the nexus got itself into a corner, in a nowin situation. In a recent paper, entitled, History: Bhutto, Mujib and the Generals, Prof Dr Moonis Ahmar, Meritorious Professor of International Relations and former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Karachi, wrote that by March 25, 1971, there were sufficient indications to "convince the Awami League that the nexus would never hand over power to the Bengali majority because of their suspicion, mistrust, antagonism and hatred against them." I only wish that the power-hungry military-political junta in Islamabad had recognised this truth then and spared us the nine months of bloodshed, mayhem and pain.

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VICTORY DAY 2020

Our pride and glory: The Mukti Bahini in 1971

Ahmad Ahsan

ANGLADESH belongs to a select group of countries that fought their way to independence. We won our freedom by winning a fierce nine-month Liberation War against a very well trained, well-armed Pakistan Army. We remember with solemnity and gratitude the sacrifice of the millions of our people who achieved martyrdom, who were assaulted, brutalised and raped by the occupation army and had to flee their homes during the war. The occupying Pakistani Army brutalised us because they wanted us to surrender to them. Instead, the Pakistani Army's 93,000 soldiers laid down their arms on December 16, 1971, in one of the largest surrenders in history. On that day, Bangabandhu's Declaration of Independence of Bangladesh on March 26, 1971, became a reality.

In the 1971 Liberation War, we were victors, not only victims. Alongside paying homage to our people's immense sacrifice, we must also equally celebrate the pride and glory of our Mukti Bahini—the Bangladesh liberation army—in achieving victory and making independence a reality.

To say this is not to diminish the contribution of the Indian armed forces' leading role in achieving victory, for which we will always be indebted. It is, instead, to highlight the critical role that the Mukti Bahini played. The Mukti Bahini's victory with the aid of allied Indian forces in December 1971 was precisely analogous to the American Revolutionary Army's victory over the British Army in October 1783, aided by *their* allies, the French Army and Navy.

Two crucial tasks await. First, we must embed the stories of bravery of our Mukti Bahini in our national consciousness, telling our children how they fought relentlessly in the nine months before the Indian Army joined the battle to form the Allied Forces and jointly defeat the Pakistan army. Our school curricula, history books, movies and theatres need to tell stories of their tremendous acts of courage, heroism and dedication during the war. Second, we need to reach a more profound appreciation of the strategic role played by the Mukti Bahini in achieving victory. They were not merely auxiliaries as depicted in several Indian accounts, and as even some Bangladeshis believe. In nine months of war, the Mukti Bahini's attacks systematically destroyed the Pakistani Army's morale and supply routes and restricted their mobility. That, and only that, enabled the Allied Forces' lightning campaign, victory and liberation.

As a schoolboy in Chattogram in 1971, I saw and heard the Bangladesh Liberation War's first battles in all their intensity. On the evening of March 27, 1971, I saw, with awe, Bangladeshi troops—then East Pakistan Rifles—setting up positions and machinegun nets on the Railway hill. I felt humbled knowing that they were getting ready to fight and die for Bangladesh. Later, reading the memoirs of a Pakistani Special Services Group Commander (Brig ZA Khan, *The Way It Was*), I realised that those soldiers and their comrades in Halisahar wiped out two companies of Pakistan's 2nd Commandos that had flown to reinforce Chattogram.

The Pakistan Army had to fight through Chattogram, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, to take over the city. In late March, we saw shells fired from PNS Jahangir on Bangladeshi soldiers resisting the Pakistan army's advance and Pakistani Air Force jets carrying out air raids to shut down Bangladesh's first independent radio station at Kalurghat. The Pakistani casualties in these March battles were so numerous that when they reached Dhaka, it caused widespread shock. After that point, to avoid demoralising their soldiers, the Pakistani military ordered that fallen soldiers' bodies not be returned to Dhaka.

Through the nine months, Mukti Bahini guerrillas kept continuous pressure at night through attacks on power lines, substations, buildings and other targets. On August 15, Chattogram's ground shook from the exploding limpet mines laid by Bangladeshi naval commandoes sinking Pakistani ships. In December, Chattogram's earth and the sky became fused by the cloud of dense smoke of the bombed oil refineries. The bombing of the Chattogram oil refineries was a heroic act by Flight Lieutenant Alam and Captain Akram of the emergent Bangladesh Air Force, who flew a single-engine Otter plane hugging the ground to avoid radar to make this daring attack.

What happened in Chattogram happened all over the country. After regrouping and training in India and the beginning of the monsoons, more than 70,000 Mukti Bahini soldiers, guerrillas, and sailors in river gunboats started continuous attacks on the Pakistani Army. These attacks took place not only in the border areas but also in the interior. Tiger Siddiqui's forces in Dhaka's North and the Toha faction of the East Pakistan Communists in the South fought unyieldingly from bases inside the country.

The Mukti Bahini's attacks over the nine months destroyed or damaged 231 bridges including the vital rail bridge near Feni connecting Dhaka and Chattogram—and 122 railway lines, disrupting the Pakistan army's supply lines and mobility. Internal Pakistani Army briefings by June 1971 described the war outlook as a stalemate: they would hold the towns while the Mukti Bahini would control the countryside.

Even that assessment proved to be too optimistic as the Mukti Bahini started attacking in cities and towns. Bomb explosions inside and around prominent buildings such as the DIT, Hotel Intercontinental, government offices, and automatic gunfire became part of Dhaka and Chattogram evenings. Towns would plunge into darkness as guerrillas blew up 90 power substations and transmission towers. Army jeeps with mounted machine guns and Army jeep patrols became a familiar sight. As we know from the brilliant account of Jahanara Imam in *Ekatturer Dinguli*, Pakistani soldiers were not safe inside the city as the Crack Platoon could brazenly attack them.

One of the most significant attacks took place in Dhaka on June 6, when Governor Tikka Khan was hosting a dinner for a visiting high-powered World Bank mission that had come to evaluate the situation. Just when the Governor and his officers were making the case that everyday life had resumed, the Mukti Bahini launched coordinated attacks around the Government House. As Hassan Zaheer, later Pakistan's Cabinet Secretary, writes in his memoirs, "bomb explosions and machinegun fire at regular intervals drowned out any attempt by Pakistani government officials to persuade the visiting mission that things were normal."

By November, the Pakistani Army had been fought to a standstill with enormous casualties: 237 officers and more than 3,695 soldiers had been killed or wounded by Mukti Bahini attacks. The demoralisation of the Pakistani Army was nearly complete, as evident from the following anguished passage from *The Pakistan Army 1966-71*, written by General Shaukat Riza: "[Pakistani] troops facing the enemy in one direction found themselves outflanked, their rear blocked. Troops moving from one position to another got disoriented and then encountered hostile fire when they expected friendly succour. By November 1971 most of our troops had... fought for nine months... in a totally hostile environment. For nine months they had moved on roads, by day and night, inadequately protected against mines and forever vulnerable to ambush... By November 1971, most of the troops had been living in waterlogged bunkers, their feet rotted by slime, the skins ravaged by vermin, their minds clogged by an incomprehensible conflict."

So, was the Mukti Bahini only another allied unit of the Indian Army, or did they play a critical role in the Pakistan Army's defeat? The evidence is compelling. The Mukti Bahini's contribution to victory was strategically decisive in at least five ways: first, their attacks broke the Pakistan Army's morale, as the previous paragraph makes abundantly clear. Second, the Mukti Bahini forced the Pakistanis to weaken their positions by spreading their forces thinly over the country. Third and fourth, they largely confined the Pakistanis to their bases, without reliable supply lines. Finally, they made the Pakistani army blind, devoid of that critical ingredient for battlefield success: information about what was happening around them. In his book Surrender at Dhaka, General Jacobs, then Indian Army's Chief of Staff in the East, recognises some of these factors even if in passing.

The plea here is that over the next few months, as we approach the 50th anniversary of our Independence and Victory Day, we launch a national campaign to tell stories about the glory of the Mukti Bahini and reach a national appreciation of the strategically decisive role of the Mukti Bahini. To make this effort creative and scholarly, let the Liberation War Museum take the lead in this campaign with the government's support. The Liberation War Museum's valiant efforts have collected many exhibits and artefacts, but surely the Museum appreciates that narratives by historians still await. Such a national campaign must quickly build up a library of oral histories of our freedom fighters and commanders. They should also draw on excellent books by General Shafiullah, Major Rafiq, Captain (Retired) A Qayyum Khan, and not least the 12 volume Liberation War Documents. These sources provide a wealth of tactical-level information. Finally, we have the brilliant book by Muyeedul Hassan, Muldhara *Ekattor,* that provides the most thoughtful and informed account of the Mujibnagar Government's historical leadership in 1971. We should draw on that book both as a source and as an example. Let what Muyeedul Islam's book has done for the Mujibnagar government be done for the Mukti Bahini.

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Members of the Mukti Bahini preparing for their next guerilla attack.



PHOTO: ARCHIVES

During the last three days of April and the first week of May, Pakistani forces repeatedly attacked the Mukti Bahini's lines.

URING the 1971 Liberation War, the Pakistan Army's 9th Infantry Division was deployed in the Khulna region. Supported by two additional tank squadrons, the Division was the strongest one in East Pakistan. Fighting such a Division was nearly impossible for the Mukti Bahini (the Bangladesh Liberation army), which did not have sufficient troops and arms. But on March 31, even before the Sectors of the Bangladeshi forces were formed, the Mukti Bahini, under Bengali soldiers and bureaucrats, launched a surprise operation and liberated Jashore. However, seven days later they had to retreat due to intense artillery firing by the Pakistani troops, and Jashore fell to the enemy. Pakistani troops then rapidly advanced to Jhenaidah and occupied the town on April 17. Then they took

Sartaj Alim

Kushtia, which had been liberated on March 30. As a result, retreating freedom fighters from all over the Khulna front were withdrawn and gradually pushed towards Benapole.

The Pakistani forces were superior in every category and quickly made their way up to Benapole by outrunning the freedom fighters. Benapole remained the only unoccupied zone in the Khulna region. Major Abu Osman Chowdhury planned to hold Benapole at any cost.

Major Osman built a defence line in front of Benapole in the Kagojpukur area. Three Bengali paramilitary companies were deployed to hold the defence line, and one more East Bengal Regiment company was put on reserve at the Benapole headquarters of the Mukti Bahini. Some of the soldiers on the front lines didn't even have a rifle. They were outclassed by weapons but superior in courage. Pakistani troops encircled them from all three sides. The Pakistani military's strategy was penetrating the defence line, pushing them to India and sealing the border.

The refugees coming from Jashore informed the freedom fighters that the Pakistan army had deployed long range artillery pieces near Navaran. All of Benapole was under their range, and it could even shell Indian territory if needed. The artillery available to Pakistan could have turned the whole area to dust.

On April 21, a raiding party consisting of 20 Bangladeshi soldiers led by Captain Hafizuddin Ahmed raided Navaran. Marching eight kilometres to the west, they engaged their targets with mortars and rockets. The Pakistani enemy fired tracer rounds to find them but they crawled back. The next day, the Indian Signal Corps intercepted Pakistani radio messages and found that they had lost two artillery pieces. It was a successful raid but it was the opening round of a furious battle.

From April 23, enemy troops launched attacks on the Mukti Bahini. They tried to flank them from both sides. The north flank retreated but the south side was able to hold the Pakistani forces back. In the middle point, the Mukti Bahini was about to retreat but Nayeb Subeder Mujibul Haque fired his machine gun and wiped out a whole enemy platoon. The Pakistani army then resorted to deceptive tactics. Putting on East Pakistan Rifles (EPR, fighting for Bangladesh) uniforms, they started to walk to the Mukti Bahini's line like friendly troops. The right flank discovered their trick and started firing immediately. Pakistani troops failed to break through their position. Meanwhile, there were no field telephones on the battlefield. This incident in the south remained unreported to other positions.

The Pakistani army dressed as EPR came very close to Nayeb Subedar

Mujibul. He refrained from firing, thinking them to be part of his own force. He understood the trick later, but by then it was too late. Bullets pierced his body. In the meantime, the mortar battery was advancing from the Mukti Bahini headquarters to behind Mujibul Haque's position. A car was carrying ammunition for the mortars. As the unprepared driver faced enemy soldiers, he abandoned the car and the mortars and ammunition fell into Pakistani hands.

After retreating from Kagojpukur, the freedom fighters quickly assembled behind the Customs Colony. There, they built new defensive positions just behind the Colony, near the border. This time, two companies of the East Bengal Regiment were put on the front line of the defence. The southern defences were set up one mile behind the Benapole checkpost.

During the last three days of April and the first week of May, Pakistani forces repeatedly attacked the Mukti Bahini's lines. They bombarded them continuously and charged with infantry again and again. The Mukti Bahini endured the barrage of shells, wave after wave, but they managed to hold their positions. The enemy used to fire 30/40 rounds of shells and charge infantry, but they failed to capture the Mukti Bahini or drive them back. The situation was a stalemate, which was costly and humiliating for the 9th Division and a tactical victory for the freedom fighters.

In early May, high ranking military and government officials met at Benapole to build a strategic plan. Foreign journalists and photographers used to come to Bangladesh during the war through Benapole. The newly formed Immigration Department of Bangladesh put an entry seal on their passports. When the BBC's *Panorama* broadcasted the interviews of Major Osman and Captain Hafizuddin, the world came to know that this area was part of independent Bangladesh, even in the face of the modern weapons of the Pakistani army.

The 9th Division had to send portions of their troops to other fronts as they were bogged down by hit and run attacks in parts of Khulna. Despite the Pakistan army's best assaults, the freedom fighters continued to maintain the stronghold. This part of Benapole, after being liberated by the Mukti Bahini, not once felt the boots of enemy troops on its soil.

Sartaj Alim is a final year student of Economics at Jahangirnagar University.

QUOTABLE	CROSS	NORD BY THOMAS	JOSEPH	1	2 3	4	5	6 7	8	9 10	BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER
Quote	ACROSS 1 Folded food 5 Cube face	35 Radio's Glass 38 Minty rum drink 41 Party time, for	18 Lotion additive 19 Bobwhite's cousin	13 15 22	1	7 18	16	24 25	19	20 21	HOW'S DINNER? WITH THE RANCID CHIPPED BEEF SMOTHERING BURNT TOAST IS AN ASSAULT ON CREATIVE GASTRON-
60	11 Not quite closed 12 Pound parts 13 Foal's mother	short 42 Roused 43 Fairy-tale	20 Buffalo's lake 21 Orderly 22 Move slowly 23 Griticing barebly	26 28 31		34	29 32 33	30	35	26 27	ASSAULT ON CREATIVE GASTRON- OMY. AVOID THIS ESTABLISHMENT AT ALL COSTS!
\$	14 Western contests 15 Work phone no. 16 White House power	monster 44 John of Monty Python 45 Honey bunch	23 Criticize harshly 25 Tempo 29 Lists of candidates	38 42 44	39 4			41 43 45			
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(1887-1940) Jamaican political activist, publisher and journalist.	online 24 Tire in the trunk 26 Ray of films 27 Diva's piece	2 Trojan War hero 3 Copier insert 4 Smelter supply 5 Tender areas	woods 36 Quite uncommon 37 Pro votes		I N	NE	R OS		K A	E S S A	KANLA BROKE HER LEG OH HORSEBACK PIDING, MY! THAT MAKES HORSEBACK PIDING, MY! THAT MAKES ME FEEL PECAUSE SHE'S A GOOD FRIEND? BECAUSE NOW LET'S TALK A GOOD FRIEND? BUN NEVER ABOUT EMPATHY.
The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself	28 Wise ones 30 Duo quadrupled 31 Needle feature	6 Brokers' numbers 7 Edit menu choice 8 Tennis feat	38 Buddy 39 Symbol of wisdom		S	A	ES	: F	I A	WS	HUPPSE.
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CPJ'S 2020 REPORT Record number of journos jailed AFP, New York

A record number of journalists were behind bars this year, a US-based watchdog said yesterday, accusing governments worldwide of suppressing the media and fueling misinformation amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The annual report by the Committee to Protect Journalists found that 274 journalists were imprisoned in 2020 -- the highest number since the non-profit organisation began its survey in the 1990s.

The report also found that 26 journalists and media workers had been murdered this year, with Mexico listed as the world's most dangerous country for the press.

"It's shocking and appalling," CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon said in a statement.

"This wave of repression is a form of censorship that is disrupting the flow of information and fueling the infodemic," he added.

The worst offender was China for the second consecutive year, the survey found, with 47 reporters behind bars. Other top jailers were Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, with Belarus and Ethiopia.

While the US had no reporters in jail as of the report's release, the survey noted an "unprecedented" 110 had been arrested or detained through the course of the year.

The CPJ said the outgoing Trump administration bore some of the blame for the worsening global press freedom -- not only for the US president's lack of global leadership on human rights, but also his emboldening of authoritarians abroad with his hostility towards the media.

AGENCIES



A Congress party activist waves a national flag sitting on a police barricade during a demonstration to protest against the government's agricultural reforms near the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party headquarters in New Delhi, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP



US vaccination drive gathers pace Part of Europe set for tighter curbs as new virus variant emerges in England

EU to unveil measures to rein in tech giants

AFP, Brussels

The European Union was scheduled to unveil tough draft rules targeting tech giants like Google, Amazon and Facebook, whose power Brussels sees as a threat to competition and even democracy.

The landmark proposals -- which come as Silicon Valley faces increasing scrutiny around the world -- could shake up the way Big Tech does business by menacing some of the globe's biggest firms with mammoth fines or bans from the European market.

EU sources told AFP the long-trailed legislation would see the internet behemoths facing fines of up to 10 percent of their EU turnover for breaking some of the most serious competition rules.

The United States kicked off a mass vaccination drive Monday hoping to turn the tide on the world's biggest coronavirus outbreak, as the nation's death toll passed a staggering 300,000.

The start of the desperately awaited vaccine program coincided with several European countries announcing new lockdowns amid spiraling infections, highlighting the long road to ending the global pandemic.

The vaccinations come at one of the darkest phases of the pandemic, with cases in the US and many other countries soaring, and health experts struggling against vaccine skepticism, lockdown fatigue and uneven adherence to safety rules.

An initial 2.9 million doses are set to be delivered to 636 sites around the country by Wednesday, with officials saying 20 million Americans could receive the two-shot regimen by year end, and 100 million by March.

The coronavirus has killed at least 1,621,397 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

In Britain, Health Minister Matt Hancock announced that London will move into the highest level of restrictions from today with theatres, pubs and restaurants forced to close except for takeaway food.



UN says teachers should receive vaccine on priority basis

Oxfam says third of world's people get no state aid during pandemic

Hancock said scientists had identified a "new variant" of the virus in the south of England that may be causing infections to spread faster, though he added it was "highly unlikely to fail to respond to a vaccine." WHO Health Emergencies Programme Executive Director Mike Ryan said that there was no evidence to suggest that the mutation will impact the effectiveness of vaccines against the disease.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said schools and

all non-essential shops would shut from Tuesday for five weeks over Christmas, while Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced a nationwide curfew from December 31 to January 4.

Germany also will enter a partial lockdown from today with non-essential shops and schools closed.

The head of the UN children's agency, UNICEF, called Tuesday for teachers to be among those given priority access to the Covid-19 vaccines.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on children's education around the globe. Vaccinating teachers is a critical step towards putting it back on track," UNICEF chief Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

Teachers should be "prioritized to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, once frontline health personnel and high-risk populations are vaccinated," she said. "This will help protect teachers from the virus, allow them to teach in person, and ultimately keep schools open."

Meanwhile, Oxfam yesterday said that more than a third of the world's population - some 2.7 billion people - has not received government aid during the coronavirus pandemic.

An analysis of World Bank data conducted by the Nairobi-based charity found that while \$9.8 trillion of aid was spent by 36 wealthy nations, 59 low-income countries spent only \$42 billion to cope with the economic fallout of the pandemic.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia nursing fire kills 11

A fire ripped through an overcrowded retirement home in central Russia overnight, killing 11 vulnerable people as the blaze swept through the small wooden building, investigators said yesterday. The Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it had opened a criminal investigation into possible negligence over the blaze in the Bashkortostan region south of the Ural Mountains. The victims -- seven men and four women -- were between 57 and 83 years old. Different possible causes for the fire were being considered, the official said, including faulty wiring or human error like smoking a cigarette in bed.

Kabul deputy governor killed A deputy governor of Kabul province and his aide were killed yesterday by a bomb in the Afghan capital, officials said, the latest in a wave of targeted killings in the country. Mahbobullah Mohebi was killed when a bomb attached to his vehicle detonated while he was on his way to his office, the interior ministry said. Mohebi's secretary, who was travelling with him, was also killed and two bodyguards were wounded. In a separate attack in Kabul on Tuesday, a policeman was killed and two others wounded when gunmen attacked their checkpoint, officials said.

US takes Sudan off sponsors of terror blacklist

The United States on Monday removed Sudan from its state sponsors of terrorism blacklist and declared a "fundamental change" in relations, less than two months after the Arab nation pledged to normalise ties with Israel. US President Donald Trump had announced in October that he was delisting Sudan, 27 years after Washington first put the country on its blacklist for harbouring Islamist militants. As part of a deal, Sudan agreed to pay \$335 million to compensate survivors and victims' families from the twin 1998 al-Qaeda attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and a 2000 attack by the jihadist group on the USS Cole off Yemen's coast.

UK PM to visit India



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will travel to India next month in his first major bilateral visit to another country since taking power last year, his office said yesterday. During the trip, Johnson will invite India to join next year's G7 summit, which Britain is hosting, as one of three guest countries, alongside South Korea and Australia. The Indian trip is aimed at strengthening bilateral trade ties and investment, and cooperation in various areas including defence, security, health and climate change. The visit will coincide with India's annual Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

JRCE: AFP, REUTERS





ABDUCTION OF 333 STUDENTS IN NIGERIA Boko Haram claims responsibility

It also proposes banning them from the EU market "in the event of serious and repeated breaches of law which endanger the security of European citizens", one of the sources said.

The Digital Services Act and its accompanying Digital Markets Act will lay out strict conditions for doing business in the EU's 27 member countries as authorities aim to rein in the spread of disinformation and hate speech online, and Big Tech's business dominance.

Around ten of the largest companies -- including Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon and Microsoft -- would be designated as internet "gatekeepers" under the legislation and subjected to specific regulations to limit their power over the market.

A Ukrainian law enforcement officers uses a pepper spray to restrain a demonstrator during a rally of entrepreneurs and representatives of small businesses amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, Kano

Boko Haram yesterday claimed it was behind the abduction of hundreds of students in northwestern Nigeria, in what appears to be a major expansion of the jihadist group's activities into new areas.

At least 333 students are still missing since the attack late Friday on the all-boys Government Science Secondary School in Katsina state -- hundreds of kilometres (miles) from Boko Haram's stronghold in northeastern Nigeria.

UIGHUR GENOCIDE ICC rejects complaint against China AFP, The Hague

"I am Abubakar Shekau and our brothers are behind the kidnapping in Katsina," the leader of Boko Haram said in a voice message.

More than 100 gunmen on motorcycles stormed the rural school north of Kankara town, forcing students to flee and hide in the surrounding bush. A number of boys were able to escape, but many were captured, split into groups and taken away, residents told AFP. #BringBackOurBoys has been trending on social media since the weekend in reference to a similar hashtag sed after Boko Haram abducted 276 girls in 2014 in Chibok, in northeastern Nigeria.

The weekend attack was initially blamed on armed groups locally known as "bandits". The army has said it has located the hideout of the "bandits", and that a military operation was under way.

The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2009 in northeastern Nigeria before spreading to neighbours including Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Since then, more than 36,000 people have been killed in Nigeria and two million forced to flee their homes, sparking a humanitarian crisis in the region.

PURCHASE OF RUSSIAN S-400 DEFENSE SYSTEM **US** sanctions Nato ally Turkey

Ankara says measures unjust; Russia, Iran condemn move

AGENCIES

The United States imposed longanticipated sanctions on Turkey on Monday over Ankara's acquisition of Russian S-400 air defense systems, further complicating already strained ties between the two Nato allies.

Turkey condemned the sanctions as a "grave mistake" and urged Washington to revise its "unjust decision." It said sanctions would inevitably harm mutual relations.

Senior US officials said in a call with reporters that Ankara's purchase of the S-400s and its refusal to reverse its decision, despite repeated pleas from Washington, left the United States with no other choice.

The sanctions target Turkey's top defence procurement and Presidency development body of Defence Industries (SSB), its chairman Ismail Demir and three other employees.

The measures, which received a bipartisan welcome from the US



Congress, were announced under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) - the first time the act has been used against a fellow member of the Nato alliance.

Ankara acquired the Russian S-400 ground-to-air defenses in mid-2019 and says they pose no threat to Nato allies. But Washington has long threatened sanctions and last year removed Turkey from an F-35 jet program.

Ignoring the advice of aides, President Donald Trump had resisted imposing penalties on Turkey until giving the green light several days ago, sources familiar with the matter said.

It is not immediately clear what impact the sanctions will have on third countries such as European states that supply arms or defence components and work with Turkish defence firms.

But the Trump administration held off on more severe options that were presented for consideration, including sanctions that would hit the financial system or Erdogan personally.

Iran's foreign minister yesterday condemned the imposition of US sanctions on Turkey, saying it showed "contempt for international law".

"We strongly condemn recent US sanctions against Turkey and stand with its people and government," Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, using the hashtag "#NeighborsFirst".

"US addiction to sanctions and contempt for international law at full display again," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called the sanctions "another manifestation of an arrogant attitude towards international law" by the US.

UN calls for urgent shift to planet-friendly development

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, Barcelona

lights for the planet and societies are "flashing red" - and now is the time to choose a safer, fairer path for human development, the United Nations said yesterday.

"We are at an unprecedented moment in the history of humankind and in the history of our planet," it said in a report, urging efforts by governments, business and citizens to pursue a new kind of progress that protects the environment.

"The Covid-19 pandemic is the latest harrowing consequence of imbalances writ large," said the Human Development Report 2020, adding that the health catastrophe comes on top of pre-existing crises of global warming, species loss and inequality.

The report, which for the first time used a new global index factoring in environmental indicators, concluded that no country had yet been able to achieve a very high level of development without putting strain on natural resources.

"Many countries have achieved a great deal of progress but they also have done

so at the expense of great damage to the planet," said Achim Steiner, head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which produces the report.

Over the past three decades, the Human Development Index has ranked nations each year according to health, education and standards of living.

But this year, the new version draws on two additional elements: a country's per capita carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint, which measures the amount of things like fossil fuels and metal used to make the goods and services it consumes.

The results paint "a less rosy but clearer assessment of human progress", the UNDP said. More than 50 countries dropped out of the very high human development group as measured by the new index, reflecting their large impacts on the climate and nature.

They include, for example, small nations such as Singapore and Luxembourg, with high levels of trade, movement and fossilfuel energy, as well as oil and gas-rich Gulf states. Australia fell 72 places in the ranking of about 190 nations, while the United States lost 45 places and Canada 40.

International Criminal Court prosecutors have rejected calls by exiled Uighurs to investigate China for alleged genocide and crimes against humanity, the chief prosecutor's office said in a report on Monday.

The Uighurs handed a huge dossier of evidence to the court in July accusing China of locking more than one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in re-education camps and of forcibly sterilising women.

But the office of prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said it was unable to act because the alleged acts happened on the territory of China, which is not a signatory to The Haguebased IĆC.

In its annual report Bensouda's office said ^{*î*}this precondition for the exercise of the court's territorial jurisdiction did not appear to be met with respect to the majority of the crimes alleged." There was also "no basis to proceed at this time" on separate claims of forced deportations of Uighurs back to China from Tajikistan and Cambodia, the ICC report said.

The Uighurs had argued that even though the alleged deportations did not happen on Chinese soil, the ICC could act because they happened on Tajik and Cambodian territory, and both of them are ICC members.

China has called the accusations baseless and says the facilities in Xinjiang region are job training centres aimed at steering people away from terrorism.

Under huge pressure from Covid-19, climate change and natural destruction, warning

e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net HAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2020, POUSH 1, 1427 BS

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<u>.</u>	FACEBOOK
Ĕ	LA LIGA
X	Barcelona vs Real Sociedad
\geq	Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)
2	TEN 1
	SERIE A
H	Genoa vs AC Milan
3	Live from 1:45 am (Thursday)

TEN 2 SERIE A Juventus vs Atalanta Live from 11:30 pm Inter Milan vs Napoli Live from 1:45 am (Thursday) ONY SI **T20 BIG BASH LEAGUE** Perth Scorchers vs Melbourne

Stars Live from 2:15 pm Lanka Premier League Final Galle vs Jaffna Live from 7:30 pm STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE Arsenal vs Southampton

Live from 12:00 am (Thursday) Liverpool vs Tottenham Live from 2:00 am (Thursday) **STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE** West Ham United vs Crystal Palace Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

Gazi Group Chattogram's left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam jumps in the air to celebrate one of his two wickets against Beximco Dhaka in the second qualifier of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Shoriful conceded only 17 runs as Dhaka were bowled out for 116, a total Chattogram chased down comfortably. РНОТО: **ВСВ**

Chattogram ease into final

Gazi

Will face Gemcon Khulna on Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

After conceding 210 runs in the first qualifier against Khulna, Gemcon Group Chattogram's bowlers bounced back and dismissed Beximco Dhaka for just

116 to set up a comfortable seven-wicket win and reach the final of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup yesterday.

It was a walk in the park for in-form Chattogram batsmen as Liton Das continued his fine form and top-scored with 40. Soumya Sarkar also got a start and added 44 with Liton for the opening wicket, but the left-hander was run out after scoring 27

Skipper Mohammad Mithun added 34 as Chattogram reached the target in the last over of the innings. Chattogram will face Gemcon Khulna in the final on December 18.

It was rather a disappointing show from Dhaka's point of view as Mushfiqur Rahim's men were unable to put up any sort of fight to defend the small total.

Dhaka had come up with a different approach after electing to bat and surprisingly opted for Muktar Ali to open the innings as a pinch-hitter alongside Sabbir Rahman. That mean Naim Sheikh, who struck a hundred at the top few games back, had to drop down.

But the ploy did not work and Dhaka lost both openers, Muktar (7) and Sabbir (11), early and were left struggling on 19 for two inside four overs.

Naim, who came at number three, also failed after scoring twelve as Nadif Chowdhury took a brilliant catch while running forward followed by a miscued slog off the bowling of left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan.

Once again, the pressure was on skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (25) and Yasir Ali to re-build the innings. But that would not prove to be the case yesterday as Mushfiqur fell victim to yet another brilliant piece of fielding, this time by Rakibul at the deep.

Dhaka never looked capable of a comeback since then, losing wickets at regular intervals as Mustafizur Rahman at his very best made life difficult for the batting side.

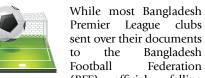
The left-arm seamer even broke the stumps when he bowled Nasum Ahmed with a fiery delivery and ended with figures of three for 32 from four overs. He now sits comfortably top of the wicket-takers' list with 21 scalps.

Yasir and Al Amin scored twenties but it was never going to be enough to help Dhaka post a fighting total. Apart from Mustafizur, another left-arm seamer, Shoriful, bagged two wickets for Dhaka.

Mohammedan enliven final day of registration

Bangladesh

Sports Reporter



Federation (BFF) officials, falling giants Mohammedan turned up to the BFF headquarters with all their players to complete formalities on the final day of players' registration yesterday.

There were no surprises in the monthlong players' transfer window, with teams retaining most of their players from the previous season, which was cancelled due to Covid-19.

different direction and sought blessings in the top four in the Bangladesh Premier from former players and honoured them League. at the club premises before going to the

Mohammedan coach Sean Lane said after completing the registration formalities.

The Brit added: "I think the biggest difference will be the local players who understand what I want. I think my foreign players will also be good. One of the foreign players [Nigeria's Abiola Nurat] has been training under my assistant, Jean Maclin, in Vietnam for the past six months. I think he will be able to reach his level and the difficult thing is to ensure he plays the way I want to play and settles into Bangladesh.

Lane came to Bangladesh to take charge of Mohammedan in the middle of the 2018-19 season and saved the Black and Whites from relegation. He then took them to the semifinals of last season's Federation However, the Black and White went a Cup. This time around, he wants to finish

"Bashundhara Kings

MAZHAR UDDIN

pandemic, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is also now gearing up to get back on the International stage by hosting West Indies in January 2021.

that the West Indies side will arrive on January 10 for three ODIs and two Tests.

After such a long gap --



Long-term view imperative

as international cricket set to return

to plan with a long-term view when extent in the ODIs, to prepare a fresh ongoing Bangabandhu T20 Cup.

Islam or Sumon Khan, all of whom have shown a lot of talent in the pace bowling department recently?

Although T20s are not part of West Indies' schedule in Bangladesh, there may be hard decisions for the selectors to make on that front as well. Tamim's approach in T20s has raised questions of late as the lefthander's strike rate in the shortest format of the game has not set the world alight.

Despite being the most successful batsman for Bangladesh across all formats, perhaps Tamim needs to assess his game when it comes to the shortest format and it would not be surprising if he makes way to allow youngsters to settle in.

T20 cricket requires energy

ITINERARY



resumed Covid-19

The BCB confirmed yesterday

Bangladesh last played international cricket in March this year -- the time has come for the national selectors shortest format and, to a lesser Khulna in the middle of the





BFF headquarters.

The club management also invited late Mohammedan great Badal Roy's wife, daughter and son. They were joined by club legends like Jakaria Pintu, Pratap Sankar Hazra, Imtiaz Sultan Jonny, Rummon Bin Wali Sabiir, Kaiser Hamid, Riaz, Kanon, Ata, Gorgy and many others to inspire a new generation of players.

Mohammedan, whose biggest regret is not winning the professional football league since its introduction in 2007, have retained the services of old guns and strengthened their squad with eight new local players and two new foreign players from Nigeria and Burkina Faso. They retained Japanese midfielder Uryu Nagata and Malian striker Souleymane Diabate.

"Most of the eight new signing players are young. They signed one or two years for a professional team and maybe one or two will play in the regular eleven. I have different types of players this time,"

Chattogram Abahani and Sheikh Russel have spent a lot of money, so If I want to surpass any of those clubs and finish among the top four, it will be a massive achievement," said Lane. "In the Federation Cup, I first want to get out of the group and then anything can happen in the knockout stages. I think we can beat any team on any day.

Chattogram Abahani completed their registration formalities and retained most of last season's local and foreign players, but Sheikh Russel made changes to their foreign quota by signing foreigners who have experience in Bangladesh.

Saif SC also completed their players' registration formalities, retaining most of their squad -- which has an average age of just 22. Belgian coach Paul Put can also field four new foreign players from Nigeria and Uzbekistan.

All 13 teams registered for the upcoming season, including Muktijodhha Sangsad -- who completed the procedures despite a financial crisis.

forming the national team across three formats.

Bangladesh cricket is nearing a transition period with the likes of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad all into their mid- to late-thirties. Now is the time to prepare for the vacuum that will be created when retire from ODI cricket as early as these stalwarts, inevitably, leave the scene.

Apart from Mashrafe, the four others are still expected to go on playing till the 2023 World Cup as well as in the longest format, fitness and performance permitting.

There was talk of selectors blooding some youngsters in the

Green to make Test debut?

REUTERS

All-rounder Cameron Green will make his Test debut against India in the first game of the series in Adelaide on Thursday if he comes through concussion protocols, Australia coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday.

Green was struck on the head when bowling to Jasprit Bumrah last week in an Australia 'A' game and replaced under the sport's concussion rules.

batch before the next World Cup.

Mashrafe retired from T20Is in 2017 and quit the ODI captaincy in March this year, with the board handing over the baton to Tamim. However, the 37-year-old pacer has not announced his retirement from ODIs yet, even though there were murmurs that Mashrafe may at the end of the 2019 World Cup. But that did not happen and

technically. Mashrafe is still available for national selection in the fifty-over format. The pacer made a strong statement coming back from a long gap of eight months after battling with injuries as he was roped in by Gemcon

The veteran pacer bowled a

great line and length and his clever variations of pace managed to undo the batsmen. But it was his five-wicket haul against Gazi Group Chattogram, that too in the crucial first qualifier on Monday, which once again bring him back in the limelight.

With three ODIs in the West Indies series, the question now is whether the selectors will consider Mashrafe for based on his performances in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup? Or will they move on from Mashrafe to look forward and give opportunities to youngsters like Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Shohidul Islam, Mukidul

January 10: West Indies arrive in Dhaka January 18: One-day warm-up match, BKSP, Savar. January 20: 1st ODI, SBNCS, Mirpur. January 22: 2nd ODI, SBNCS, Mirpur. January 25: 3rd ODI, ZACS, Chattogram.

January 28-31: 4-day warm-up match in Chattogram February 3-7:1st Test, ZACS, Chattogram February 11-15: 2nd Test, SBNCS, Dhaka

and excitement and the likes of Naim Sheikh, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das have got the potential, which has been reflected in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup.



THE DREAM TEAM

Agencies

Lionel Messi, Ronaldo Nazario and Cristiano Ronaldo have found place in the greatest team of all time announced by France Football -- Ballon d'Or Dream Team.

Having cancelled its annual Ballon d'Or award for the world's best footballer because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the weekly magazine instead has announced its best XI in history, as voted by journalists from 170 countries and regions.

The esteemed line-up includes Brazil's three-time World Cup winner Pele and legendary Argentinian Diego Maradona as well as goalkeeper Lev Yashin; defenders Cafu, Franz Beckenbauer and Paolo Maldini; and mid-fielders Xavi and Lothar Matthaus.



The Baily Star



BANGABANDHU KILLERS Suspend their gallantry awards HC orders government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to suspend the state gallantry awards for four convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members.

The four are: Nur Chowdhury, Shariful Haque Dalim, Rashed Chowdhury and Moslehuddin Khan.

Nur Chowdhury was awarded the title Bir Bikram, Shariful Haque Dalim Bir Uttam, and Rashed Chowdhury and Moslemuddin Khan were awarded the title Bir Protik for their contributions during the Liberation War in 1971.

The then government had given them the awards in 1973 and also issued a gazette notification to this effect on December 15 of the same year.

According to the gazette notification, seven valiant freedom fighters were awarded the title Bir Shrestha, 68 Bir Uttam, 175 Bir Bikram and 426 were awarded the title Bir Protik for their contributions during the Liberation War. SEE PAGE 4 COL 8





FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Sheikh Mujib never compromises



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur **Rahman laying** the foundation of the National **Memorial at Savar** on December 16, 1972.

PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 16

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha AZAN 5-20 12-45 3-45 5-22 7-00

December 16, 1972 Shamsuddoza Sajen

BANGABANDHU'S VICTORY DAY SPEECH

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reasserts in unambiguous terms today that the trial of war criminals must be held on Bangladesh soil. Addressing a huge crowd at the Suhrawardy Udyan on Victory Day, the prime SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Gang-rape in Noakhali **PBI** charges Delwar, 13 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) yesterday submitted charge sheet before court against 14 persons in a case filed over gang-rape and torture of a woman in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila.

The charge sheet was submitted to the court of Noakhali Chief Judicial Magistrate Utpal Chowdhury.

Of the accused, two are still on the run, said SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

RECRUITMENT SUSPENSION RU will want to know why

Says VC embroiled in controversy Mohiuddin Alamgir and Arafat Rahaman

> The High Court yesterday expressed grave the investigation officer explained the delay in photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol under the Digital Security Act.

'Democracy prevailed' Says Biden after Electoral College confirms his win; Putin congratulates

PHOTO

RASHED SHUMON

REUTERS, Lansing

President-elect Joe Biden delivered a forceful rebuke on Monday to President Donald Trump's attacks on the legitimacy of his victory, hours after winning the stateby-state Electoral College vote that officially determines the US presidency.

"In this battle for the soul of America, democracy prevailed," Biden said in a prime-time speech from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. "Now it's time to turn the page, as we've done throughout our history – to unite, to heal. Monday's vote, typically a formality,

JAMAAT 5-55 1-15 4-00 5-25 7-30 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



dissatisfaction that neither nor the cyber tribunal has concluding investigations into two cases filed against

Traffic has been single file on Rokeya Sarani in the capital's Mirpur for the last three months

since Dhaka Wasa excavated for development work a part of the road already narrowed

down by work on the metro rail project. Vehicles could ply this road three abreast once.

JOURNO KAJOL PROBE

HC unhappy

with cyber

tribunal, IO

over delays

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The court had sought SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Rajshahi University authorities would want to know from the education ministry the reasons for postponing all kinds of appointments to the university until further notice.

RU Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan yesterday also said he would talk to the media later regarding his steps to relieve Prof Abdul Bari from the post of university registrar.

"We will respond to the orders regarding the recruitment policy," Sobhan said while talking to reporters after a programme on the campus.

He made the comments as the ministry in an order on December 10 postponed all kinds of appointments to RU SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Bangladesh hands another list of

secret yaba labs to Myanmar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control handed over a list of 49 clandestine labs in Myanmar to that country's Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC), hoping that they would take stern actions to stop yaba smuggling into Bangladesh.

We have handed over the list to Myanmar's anti-narcotics authorities based on our intelligence information," Muhammed Ahsanul Jabbar, director general of DNC, said yesterday.

The DNC handed over the list during the fourth bilateral talks between DNC and CCDAC, held online this year, titled "Prevention of Illicit trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances'

The last bilateral meeting was held in 2017.

Ahsanul briefed the media after the meeting.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

deliver violence

ROHINGYA TRAFFICKING NETWORK

They sell dreams,

AFP investigation reveals operations worth millions

AFP, Cox's Bazar

Auto rickshaws slip easily past barbed-wire checkpoints at the world's biggest refugee camp, their drivers among the smallest players in a complex human trafficking network involving high-seas extortion gangs, corrupt police and drug lords.



Aboard the spluttering rickshaws are small groups of

young men, women and children hoping to escape the misery of life with other members of their stateless Rohingya group who are crowded into shanties in Cox's Bazar.

Nineteen-year-old Enamul Hasan was aboard one of the rickshaws early this year, taken to the coast and then by small boat into a bigger fishing vessel anchored in the Bay of Bengal where he joined hundreds of other Rohingya hoping to reach Malaysia.

"I was told I'd get the opportunity to finish my studies and earn money SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

বিজয়ের ৪৯ বছরে কেডিএস গর্বিত ২২,০০০ পরিবার নিয়ে।

From the house of KDS



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