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The unlucky 7

Uncertainty grips students of DU-affiliated seven colleges as their education thrown into disarray once again following pandemic

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Hazrat Ali is more worried than ever. A master's student of chemistry at Dhaka College who was planning to finish post-graduation a while ago, he is now waiting impatiently for his remaining exams to be over so that he can shoulder some of the family responsibilities that his father bears alone.

"At this age, does it feel good to take money from my father who earns meagre pay by weaving handlooms back home?"

"I used to give tuitions, but that also got suspended due to the pandemic. I need a job immediately to support my family," said a frustrated Hazrat, who hails from Sirajganj.

After a delay of two and a half years, his final examinations began in March. But he could appear in only two out of the four exams, before the country was hit by the coronavirus outbreak, suspending exams indefinitely.

"We don't know when our master's exams will resume. Even after they start, it will take at least four to five months more for the results to come out. I will be 27 in January and am really worried about how many BCS exams I can avail," he said.

Hazrat added he cannot even apply for chemist jobs in many private companies as these require a master's degree.

"We contacted our teachers time and again -- they only said the Dhaka University authorities will take all the decisions as our college is being supervised by DU now. We are the unlucky ones, no one cares for us," Hazrat said, all in one breath.

Students of the seven colleges recently affiliated with DU are worried about their future as the pandemic threw their already delayed education into further disarray.

These seven colleges are: Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Mirpur Government Bangla College, and Government Titumir College.

PROTEST ANNOUNCED, THEN POSTPONED

The students of these colleges had announced a plan to hold a protest in the capital's Nilkhet area yesterday but it was postponed. A number of policemen were seen to be present in the Nilkhet area since morning.

Shahriar Mahmud, one of the protesters, told The Daily Star that they didn't receive the necessary police permission to hold the protest. The college principals also called them the night before requesting them not to hold the protest and asked for a week's time to resolve their issues, he added.

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Sixty-five-year-old Abdul Kuddus, right, and his son-in-law had been suffering from fever for nearly a week. They went to Mugda General Hospital from their home in Rampura yesterday morning to give samples for Covid-19 tests. They, however, had to wait in lines for nearly three hours as the number of people seeking to get tested there has increased in the last couple of days. In this photo taken around 10:00am, both are seen tired inside the hospital compound.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH
Freeze 613 bank accounts of MP Papul, his family
ACC asks central bank, moves to confiscate their 30.27 acres of land, flats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday requested the Bangladesh Bank to instruct eight commercial banks to freeze 613 bank accounts of independent lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam Papul, his wife, daughter, and sister-in-law.

The graft watchdog has also decided to seize 30.27 acres of land in different parts of the country and flats in the capital's Gulshan owned by them, sources said.

Papul, now behind bars in Kuwait, was arrested in the Gulf country in early June. He faces trial on charges of human trafficking and money laundering.

He was accused of taking up to 3,000 Kuwaiti dinars (around Tk 8 lakh) from each migrant workers, mostly Bangladeshis, for sending them to Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigation

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

UK RETURNNEES
7-day quarantine mandatory

Says health minister; experts urge strict measures to fight new coronavirus strain

MOUJID AHMED SUJAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Air travellers from the UK without Covid-19 negative certificates would be quarantined for seven days.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque said this yesterday after a new variant of the coronavirus emerged in the kingdom and more countries shut their borders with the UK in an effort to keep the new strain out.

He said discussion on whether to suspend flights to and from the UK was going on. "The decision will be announced soon."

Experts have warned that the new variant, which appears to be more transmissible, could turn the situation in Bangladesh severe if the planned measures were not imposed strictly.

Officials concerned said those without a Covid-19 negative certificate from the UK will be sent to Ashkona or Diabari quarantine camps in Dhaka where they would be tested on the sixth day. They will be released if they test negative.

Passengers landing in Chattogram and Sylhet would go through the same process.

The minister yesterday inaugurated a mobile laboratory for Covid-19 testing at the Ashkona Hajj Camp in Dhaka. There will be Covid-19 testing, RT-PCR and rapid antigen-based, facilities in the lab for the incoming passengers.

Another mobile lab will be taken there soon, the minister said.

At another event in the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahub Ali said the government was observing the situation closely.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Formulate another stimulus package

PM directs ministries concerned, asks them to keep in mind 2nd Covid wave



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the finance ministry and other related ministries and divisions to formulate another financial stimulus package plan keeping a possible second wave of Covid-19 in consideration.

The premier gave the order at a meeting at the Gono Bhaban. The meeting was held to finalise the 8th Fifth Year Plan (2021-2025).

PM's Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Jahid Tusher briefed reporters after the meeting.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

CURBING ROAD CRASHES
Govt steps confined to talks, committees

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Government steps for curbing road crashes and bringing discipline in the road transport sector continue to remain confined to holding meetings and forming committees and sub-committees.

The committees make similar recommendations time and again, but those are hardly implemented.

In the meantime, road crashes continue to take a heavy toll on lives and properties.

Experts made the observation while talking to The Daily Star yesterday after a taskforce, formed for the government cause, held a closed-door meeting to discuss recommendations by four sub-committees.

After the meeting, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told reporters, "The four sub-committees made recommendations on implementing 111 recommendations [given by a committee] on curbing road crashes and bringing discipline in the transport sector. We have discussed those. We will hold more discussions in the next meeting."

"We are implementing those recommendations slowly," he said, referring to the Covid-19 pandemic as a reason.

The committee, led by transport leader and former shipping minister Shajahan Khan, had submitted its report to the prime minister in April last year along with the 111-point recommendation.

Later in October last year, the government issued a gazette, forming the 33-member taskforce, led by the home minister, to implement the recommendations.

Among others, secretaries of 11 ministries and divisions were made ex-officio members of the taskforce.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

ABRAR DEATH CASE
SC upholds HC order staying trial of Matur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court order that stayed the trial proceedings of a case filed against Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matur Rahman over the death of Dhaka Residential Model College student Naimul Abrar Rahat.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed "no order" on a petition filed by the state seeking stay on the HC order.

The HC stay order on the trial proceedings of the case will now remain in force, Matur's lawyer Mustafizur Rahman Khan told The Daily Star.

Assistant Attorney General Md Saiful Islam appeared for the state at the hearing.

On December 13, the HC stayed for six months the trial proceedings of the case filed against the Prothom Alo editor.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



A section of lawyers of Dhaka Bar Association demonstrates outside the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court building yesterday, demanding immediate withdrawal of an additional chief metropolitan magistrate for keeping a lawyer on the dock for two hours. The lawyers staged the demo for around two-and-a-half hours from 9:30am, disrupting judicial activities.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Pornography spreads amid futile govt ban

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

The government initiative to block pornography websites has proved a futile exercise due to lack of technological knowhow and concerted efforts from the state agencies.

On January 1, 2017, the government launched an anti-porn campaign to create safe and secure internet space for all. In the process, it has blocked 22,000 porn sites in the last three years.

But statistics show only blocking websites has had little effect on Bangladeshi internet users as they are increasingly visiting pornographic websites. Besides, such videos can be easily downloaded and circulated.

The country has a very rigid law titled Pornography Control Act-2012, which says preservation, distribution, selling, displaying, advertising of pornographic contents is a punishable offence.

The offender can be sanctioned with two years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Tk 100,000.

Production of pornography, forcing people to act in pornography, sexual harassment through pornography, displaying and distributing pornography through internet and electronic devices come with more severe punishments.

However, the government agencies are at a loss how to enforce the law.

Mustafa Jabbar, minister of post, telecommunication and ICT declared war against pornography soon after he was appointed to this position in January 2018.

"We have been facing a lot of challenges to tackle pornography. We have blocked 22,000 major porn sites but every day new sites are being launched," he told this correspondent in October this year.

"Pornographic and semi-pornographic contents are being spread also on social media. Again, people are accessing the blocked sites using VPN. We don't have sufficient manpower

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

HC grants bail to mother of two children crying on court premises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following media reports on two children crying at a lower court premises in Dhaka for their detained parents, the High Court yesterday granted bail to their mother Washima Akhtar (41) for six months in a criminal case and asked authorities to release her immediately from jail custody.

It also issued a rule asking authorities of the state to explain in four weeks why Tofail Ahmed (41), father of the children, and Washima should not be granted bail.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order and rule on a suo moto (voluntary) move following reports on Channel 24 and Shomoy Television on December 22 on the plight of the children.

Supreme Court lawyers Moniruzzaman Asad, Mohammad Shishir Manir and Cumar Debul Dey placed the written version of the reports along with relevant documents before the HC bench for necessary order on this issue.

Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that Tofail Ahmed and his wife used to live

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Vendors have once again stationed their stalls and brought back the Santa hats, indoor decorations and confetti ahead of Christmas, and people are busy deciding which items to get for the big celebration. Usually, Christmas brings with it many programmes across the country, however, the pandemic will surely affect this year's festivities. This photo was taken on Tuesday from the capital's Holy Cross Road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Open dorms before exams: DU students

UNB, Dhaka

A group of Dhaka University students yesterday demanded ensuring residential facilities for them before hosting exams for honour's final year and masters from December 26 amid the coronavirus pandemic.

They put forth six demands from a human chain held at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture on the campus, including reopening dormitories; taking review classes of every course for those who couldn't join online classes; and ensuring transportation facilities for non-residential students.

They also urged authorities not to hold two semester final exams at the same time, and to give students enough time to prepare for exams.

Mehedi Hasan, a final-year student of Islamic studies, said, "Where are we going to stay in Dhaka if the dorms remain shut? We come from low- and middle-income families and can't afford to stay in hotels during exams."

"The risk of a second Covid-19 wave is looming. Many of us can't afford to pay the security deposit that most landlords demand," he said.

Atik Morshed, another student from international business department, termed the university's decision to hold exams without ensuring residential facilities "illogical". He said, "It's a matter of shame that our vice-chancellor says he doesn't know where students will stay. It's the university's responsibility to ensure residential facilities for its students."

The students threatened to intensify their protest if the university authorities fail to manage accommodation facilities.

Meanwhile, some leaders and activists of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Parishad held a separate protest at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture to press home four demands, including reopening dorms maintaining health guidelines, ensuring security for examinees and setting up a separate Covid-19 unit at Dhaka University medical centre for students.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal also gave a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman with similar demands.

DUMMY EXPLOSIVE RECOVERED FROM US EMBASSY Security guard staged it for reward: police

He was awarded in 2015 for recovering crude bomb

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recovery of a bag with a dummy explosive from US embassy earlier this month was staged by a security guard of the embassy, police said yesterday.

Two youths supposedly threw a "black bag" at a security guard of the embassy following an altercation and ran away on December 2. Later, the bomb disposal unit of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police found a matchbox, a cup wrapped with black tape, some wire and a knife inside the bag.

Law enforcers yesterday said the whole incident was staged by security guard Zakir Hossain Mollah, who apparently did it for reward.

Seeking anonymity, an official of CTTC said the bag was kept there by Zakir himself.

"He wanted reward from the authorities," the official said, adding that earlier in 2015, Zakir had received 'Guard of the Year' award for recovering a crude bomb from the premises during the political unrest going on at the time.

Zakir was sent to jail yesterday after police produced him before a court showing him arrested under section 54.

According to police, law enforcers were looking at the footage of closed-circuit cameras installed at the embassy where they saw a security guard opening the window of the guard's room, removing the curtain and throwing the bag.

Zakir was on duty at the station at that time.

Later, during interrogation, Zakir, who has been working at the US embassy for 17 years as an employee of a security agency, admitted his involvement.

Prioritise hiring consultants with local expertise

Says JS body on railways ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended discouraging foreign companies or individuals to be hired as consultants for various rail projects, and encouraging selection of qualified companies or individuals with domestic experience.

The parliamentary standing committee on railways ministry came up with the recommendation at its meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Awami League MP and chairman of the parliamentary watchdog ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury presided over the meeting. Committee members and Railways Minister Md Nurul Islam Sujan, Md Shafiqul Azam Khan, Gazi Mohammad Shah Nawaz and Nadira Yasmin Jolly, among others, attended the meeting.

Different issues including action taken against lease-holder for violating the condition of parking in front

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Body cameras for police need of the hour: experts

Say it will ensure transparency, accountability; no decision yet to implement across country, says home minister

MUNTAKIM SAAD

In the wake of "gunfight" incidents involving law enforcement agencies and instances of lethal use of force, equipping police with body-worn cameras can ensure transparency and accountability, according to criminologists and rights activists.

A body camera is a wearable audio, video, or photographic recording system used to record events in which law enforcement officers are involved. They are typically worn on the torso, attached to the officer's uniform.

Law enforcers in the country at present use such cameras for traffic control at some places, but it is not mandatory. Besides, there are many check-posts where CCTV has not been installed, according to a home ministry official.

Every time a "gunfight" or any incident involving law enforcement agencies takes place, police give their own versions, which often contradict reality, said rights activists.

They said the recent killing of Maj (ret'd) Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan by police and

subsequent narrative of the shooting once again exposed the lack of public trust and confidence in law enforcement.

After the incident at Shamlapur check-post on the night of July 31, police claimed that their officer had to open fire on Sinha as he tried to raise his gun.

However, Rapid Action Battalion, the agency investigating the incident, stated the complete opposite, saying that Sinha had no gun in his hand at that moment.

The probe committee formed by the home ministry to investigate the killing could not confirm whether it was premeditated or an instant action.

It recommended use of body cameras for on-duty police officers and CCTV at check-posts, according to a home ministry source.

An effective source of record, the device can also help connect the dots in the course of an investigation, as it offers real-time information when used.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Rab arrests 6 with cocaine worth Tk 60cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have arrested six drug peddlers with two kgs of cocaine in their possession in separate drives at Dhaka's Jatrabari and Gulistan areas on Tuesday.

The arrestees are Sultan Hasan (50), Hannan (35), Uzzal (28), Uday Das (52), Palash Dey (58), and Firoz Alam Khan (50).

A team of Rab first arrested three of them from Jatrabari's Konapara area around 4pm and recovered one kg cocaine, Maj Shahrer Ziaur Rahman, second-in-command of Rab-10, told The Daily Star.

Later, based on their information, Rab conducted another drive at a hotel in Gulistan and arrested three others with another one kg drugs, he added.

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SYLHET TRANSPORT STRIKE CONTINUES Commuters left helpless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET

Commuters of Sylhet continued to suffer, as road communication of the division with rest of the country remained suspended for the second consecutive day yesterday.

Greater Sylhet Stone-related Traders and Workers Union along with transport workers reportedly enforced the strike on Tuesday at 6am, demanding resumption of stone extraction.

Since that morning, transport workers blockaded all important roads around Sylhet city, district towns and other major upazila towns of the division. They were seen blocking ways of private vehicles too.

Sobibur Rahman, a vegetable trader, said a covered truck carrying his vegetables could not enter the city, as protesters blocked Humayun Rashid Chatter, one of the entry points.

"I needed to hire push-carts to take the vegetables to the depot. That will raise prices of vegetables and consumers will have to bear the brunt," he said.

Visiting several kitchen markets in the city, this correspondent witnessed shortage of necessary daily perishable commodities. Their prices had gone up as well.

As no public transport vehicles, including CNG-run auto-rickshaws, are plying the

roads, city dwellers are being forced to use rickshaws and ride-sharing motorcycles to reach their destination.

Rickshaw-pullers raised fares significantly and ride-sharing bikers are charging extra over the base fare, adding more trouble for regular commuters.

Nagar Express, a dedicated bus service initiated by Sylhet City Corporation, remains suspended, as they are in fear of protestors beating people and vandalising.

Moklisur Rahman Kamran, convenor of City Bus Owner Group and a city councillor, said, "We are not part of the strike, but our bus drivers and helpers were intimidated, and in some areas beaten, for plying on the roads. That's why we are not being able to provide the service."

Abdul Jalil, convenor of the union that called the strike, said, "The 72-hour strike will continue till Friday morning, if the government does not meet our demand. There are lakhs of people in need and we must think of them."

Till this February 10, several HC and government orders were issued to stop stone extraction, and during the first months of the pandemic, the administration started enforcing laws in this regard. The Bureau of Mining Development also stopped leasing out quarries.



Vegetable traders are being forced to hire rickshaw-vans, incurring extra costs, to take the products to their destinations, as the transport strike in Sylhet division continues. Many reported seeing protesters blocking all kinds of vehicles, and roads looked almost deserted. This photo was taken yesterday from Humayun Rashid Chatter, on the outskirts of Sylhet city.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Since her husband, a tailor, became paralysed, Farida Begum has been struggling to survive. She used to make some money through selling food to offices and shops, but that income stopped during the pandemic. Recently she has begun selling cooked food in front of Engineering University School in the capital. She makes around Tk 300-400 per day in profit after buying groceries worth Tk 500 for the business and her family. She manages rent and living with this income.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

SIX-YEAR-OLD'S MURDER IN COX'S BAZAR SC stays three death row convicts' acquittal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for eight weeks a High Court verdict that acquitted three who were sentenced to death by the trial court in a case filed for abducting and killing a six-year-old schoolboy in Cox's Bazar in 2013.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the stay order following a petition filed by the state seeking a stay on the HC judgement.

Deputy Attorney General Dr Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star that the three convicts of Hridoy abduction and killing case will have to remain in condemned cell following the apex court's stay order.

He said the Appellate Division passed the stay order considering his arguments that the three convicts had given confessional statements to the magistrate concerned and two witnesses had seen them abduct Hridoy.

The state will move a leave to appeal petition before the Appellate Division challenging the HC verdict, DAG Bashir Ullah added.

The HC on December 7 acquitted convicts Abdul Khaleque, Bahadur Miah and Abdus Shukkur of the charges of abducting and killing Md Hridoy, saying that the allegations brought against them were not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

The HC bench of Justice Krishna Debnath and Justice ASM Abdul Mobin delivered the verdict after hearing the appeals filed by accused Khaleque and Bahadur, death reference (lower court record) of the case and examining relevant documents and evidence.

Khaleque and Bahadur are now in the jail while Shukkur is now on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

POST-COVID LABOUR MARKET Govt training workers for skilled manpower: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is training workers to send skilled Bangladeshi workforce to the post-Covid global labour market, said Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday.

The ministry has taken different initiatives during the pandemic for the wellbeing of migrant workers and their family members while more initiatives will be taken in future, he said.

The minister was addressing a views exchange meeting with migration sector stakeholders at Prabashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital, said a press release of the ministry.

Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited organised the meeting to inform stakeholders about its services and activities, marking the International Migrants Day 2020, said the release.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Imran Ahmad said a specialised technical training centre (TTC) was under construction in Manikganj's Singair to provide modern and practical skills training to the workers.

Mongla port getting 4,000-tonne water treatment plant

Town residents will also get water from it

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

A surface water treatment plant, costing Tk 25 crore, is being constructed near Mongla port to supply freshwater to port users as well as the crew members and passengers of ships sailing in and out of the port.

People living or working in areas adjacent to the port will also be benefitted from the plant, said officials of the construction project.

According to data provided by Mongla port authorities, the modern water treatment plant is being built on 33 decimals of land at Digraj intersection on Khulna-Mongla highway, five kilometres away from the port building.

With the tentative completion of the work set by the end of 2021 or the beginning of 2022, boundary walls of the plant premises are already near completion.

Availability of freshwater has been scarce at the port since its inception in 1947. The supply of freshwater is also scarce for residents of Mongla municipality due to high level of salinity in local rivers and natural water bodies that are connected to the Bay of Bengal.

Due to the scarcity, most employees of the port and other offices in Mongla had been commuting from Khulna city or Bagerhat town.

While speaking with this correspondent, a number of the employees who commute regularly, said they were relieved after hearing the news of the water treatment facility as it will ease their sufferings immensely.

Mongla port employee Abul Hossain hoped that supply of freshwater from the water treatment plant will improve lifestyle of everyone in and around the port.

Jahirul Haq, chief planning officer of Mongla port, said out of the water to be supplied from the water treatment plant, 50 percent would be



The under construction water treatment plant at Digraj intersection on Khulna-Mongla highway.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

consumed by port users and its employees, 10 percent would be sold to subscribers around the port and the remainder would be supplied to ships using the port and factories near the port.

The people who had been commuting from Khulna will eventually start moving in Mongla once the supply of freshwater is available there, he also hoped.

Anupam Gain, director of the water treatment plant construction project, said they so far completed 40 percent of the work.

He also said that as opposed to a demand of 3,000 tonnes of freshwater at the port and the

ships, the facility will deliver 4,000 tonnes of treated freshwater per day and it might bring in 10 dollars per tonne from sales to the ships.

Rear Admiral M Shahjahan, chairman of Mongla Port Authority, said as a means to facilitate rising number of ships using the port, they have been undertaking various development projects for the port.

As part of the development and to solve the longstanding scarcity of freshwater, they are building the surface water treatment plant, he added.

Govt steps confined to talks, committees

FROM PAGE 1

In its first meeting, held on November 24 last year, the taskforce coopted three additional members and assigned four secretaries to recommend and plan how the recommendations can be implemented.

The second meeting of the taskforce was held yesterday. Many of its members attended the meeting virtually.

SAME DISCUSSION, NO ACTION
Noted transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque, also a member of the taskforce, said he joined the meeting but did not take part in the discussion since there was nothing new.

"The same issues, which were discussed after the formation of the NRSC [National Road Safety Council] in late 90's, were discussed again in the meeting. I found I would not be able to add any value [to the discussion]," he said.

Shamsul, also a former director of Accident Research Institute of Buet, said what should have been done is well documented. Still, it has not been done. "Why those [recommendations] could not be implemented? A problem cannot be solved without finding the reasons," he said.

Without strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring accountability and executing time-bound action plans, formation of such taskforce will not yield any results, he added.

Noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud, another member of the taskforce, said instead of forming committees after committees, some concrete steps must be taken since deaths in road accidents are on the rise.

Despite the Covid-19-induced shutdown for two months, 2,891 people were killed in 3,000 accidents till September, according to police figures.

According to organisations working for road safety, the numbers are higher.

Last year, 4,138 lives perished in 4,147 road accidents, says a police report.

Among the 111 recommendations given by the Shajahan Khan-led committee, 50 were supposed to be implemented by 2019, 32 by 2021 and the rest by 2024.

ARI Asst Prof Kazi Shifun Newaz, another taskforce member, said as the 50 recommendations could not be implemented in 2019, those should

be implemented within 2021.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation General Secretary Osman Ali, also a taskforce member, said they urged the authorities to implement the recommendations quickly.

Asked why the taskforce was taking so long to start implementing the recommendations, the home minister said, "We're not taking too much time."

Mentioning that most bikers and pillion riders now wear helmets, he said, "We are implementing those recommendations gradually. We have discussed how those could be implemented quickly."

Road Transport and Highway Division Secretary Nazrul Islam, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Shafiqul Islam, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation's acting president Shajahan Khan, Mashiur Rahman Ranga and Khondaker Enayet Ullah, who are president and secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, also took part in the meeting.

Digital record room inaugurated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A digital land record room was inaugurated at Tangail deputy commissioner's (DC) office yesterday in an attempt to ease sufferings of the service seekers.

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury inaugurated the record room through a video conferencing yesterday noon with Secretary of Land Ministry Md Maksudur Rahman Patwary in the chair.

Tangail DC Dr Ataul Gani and other officials of different government and non-government offices were present among others.

60 indigenous families in fear of further attack

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Indigenous people of Ishachhara punjee (village) in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila have started guarding their betel leaf gardens (paan jum) in a bid to resist any attempt to evict their families and grab their land.

General Dhar, headman of the punjee, said a person was injured and a chapel and several houses were ransacked when a gang of 50/60 armed men carried out attack at Ichhachhara on November 9, hours after authorities evicted a man from land. Due to the attack, the Christmas hardly bring any joy for 60 indigenous families.

Rafik Mia, son of Abdus Sattar of Tattuli village in Karmadha union under Kulaura upazila, who recently lost a legal battle over ownership of a land to an indigenous villager, led the attack, said the headman.

Local priest Father Joseph Gomes OMI said Rafik Mia got angry after the administration evicted him from the land, which he had illegally occupied in the village of Indigenous people.

"This chapel is yet to be repaired. We demand justice for the attack," said Joseph Gomes, also the coordinator of Indigenous Environment Movement of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) in Sylhet division.

Jasper Amlorong inherited Katabari Paan Jum from his family. He has been

suffering from cancer for three years.

He said, Rafik grabbed it by force with fake documents. The administration was supportive to him as it is his only income came from the land.

Flora Bably Talang, general secretary of KUBORAJ (Kulaura, Barlekha and Rajnagar upazilas), an organisation working for the rights of indigenous people, said armed with sticks and divided into small groups, the indigenous people now guard their houses and betel leaf gardens night and day.

Robin Arjo, 48, a local of the punjee, said, "We have been living here for generations. Many Indigenous families earn their livelihood by growing crops on the land. Without this land, it would be impossible for them to survive."

Micheal Rangsa, another resident of Punjee, said, "We would like to live and die on this land they way our ancestors did. We will sacrifice our lives but won't move from here."

Jamal Marlia James, a resident of the punjee said, as Rafik continued threatening them to evict them from the land, they are guarding day and night to protect the land.

Contacted, Rafik Mia declined to make any comment about the allegations brought against him.

Kulaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer ATM Farhad Chowdhury said they have kept the matter of Katabari Paan jum under their strict observation.



Indigenous people of Ishachhara punjee (village) in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila guard their betel leaf gardens to resist any attempt to grab their land.

PHOTO: STAR

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Electronic tenders (e-tenders) are hereby invited from the competent local/international manufacturers/suppliers for supply of the following items for this Corporation as per under noted schedule. e-Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specifications will be available at web: [etender.spcbd.org . bd/114.130.43.56](http://etender.spcbd.org.bd/114.130.43.56). It is to mention here that this is online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted and no hard copy will be accepted except price of e-tender schedule and earnest money. To submit e-Tender bidders need to register on etender.spcbd.org.bd/114.130.43.56. For more details please contact cell: 880- 1534002183 & 880-1534002184. Necessary information is given below:

Sl. No.	Names of the items	Nature of e-tender	Date of publishing e-tender	Last date and time for submission of e-tender	Date & time for opening of e-tender	Value/set of e-Tender Schedule (non-refundable)
1.	Supply of 18,400 kgs UV Curing Varnish with Photoinitiator for 100 Taka & 200 Taka Bank Note.	International e-tender	24.12.2020	28.01.2021 upto 11.00 A.M	28.01.2021 at 11.15 A.M	Tk. 5000.00
2.	Supply of 3000 kgs Stapling Wire.	Local/International e-tender	24.12.2020	28.01.2021 upto 11.00 A.M	28.01.2021 at 11.15 A.M	Tk. 200.00

Bidder may collect e-tender schedule from the aforementioned website. Earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price shall have to be submitted in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Irrevocable Bank Guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favour of The Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd., Gazipur along with the price of e-Tender schedule in the form of a separate Pay-Order/DD in the tender box kept at Corporation's office in Gazipur on or before the scheduled deadline for submission of e-tender. In the case of international tender, Irrevocable Bank Guarantee may also be given as earnest money from any international commercial bank abroad with a counter guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh. e-Tender (s) without earnest money and price for procurement of e-tender schedule shall not be acceptable. The e-Tender shall have to be submitted as per e-Tender guidelines mentioned at the above website. Offer(s) will be opened as per schedule mentioned above in presence of the tenderer(s) if any. 01 (one) e-Tender schedule is applicable only for one supplier/manufacturer for submitting one offer along with earnest money and price of e-Tender schedule. The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any e-tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of e-tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

(Rashid Ahmed)
General Manager (Foreign Purchase)
Phone : 88-02-9205103.

GD- 2050



ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড

DHAKA POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)

Website: www.dpdc.gov.bd

Memo No: 87.404.401.02.01.001.2020. 220

Date: 22.12.2020

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The last date of submission of application for the following position is extended till January 02, 2021.

Sl. no.	Name of the post	Advertisement publication date	Name of the newspaper
01.	Executive Director (Technical) [Memo No: 87.404.401.02.01.001.2020.188; dated: 07.12.2020]	08.12.2020	The Daily Ittefaq and The Financial Express
		09.12.2020	The Daily Star and The Daily Bangladesh Pratidin

Please visit www.dpdc.gov.bd for detail job circular.



ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড

DHAKA POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
(An Enterprise of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh)

Website: www.dpdc.gov.bd

Memo No: 87.404.401.02.05.001.2020. 221

Date: 22.12.2020

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The last date of submission of application for the following position is extended till January 02, 2021.

Sl. no.	Name of the post	Advertisement publication date	Name of the newspaper
01.	Executive Director (ICT & Procurement) [Memo No: 87.404.401.02.05.001.2020.189; dated: 07.12.2020]	08.12.2020	The Daily Ittefaq and The Financial Express
		09.12.2020	The Daily Star and The Daily Bangladesh Pratidin

Please visit www.dpdc.gov.bd for detail job circular.

J&K LOCAL POLLS Anti-Modi alliance wins most seats

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

An alliance of political parties in Indian-administered Kashmir opposed to India's policies in the region has won a majority of seats in local elections, the first since New Delhi revoked the disputed region's semi-autonomous status last year.

The Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), which is pro-India but favours self-governance in Kashmir, won 112 of a total of 280 seats in District Development Council elections, which were held in a staggered eight-phase process from November 28 through December 19.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 74 seats. Independent candidates won 49 seats while India's main opposition Congress party won 26 seats.

Political activities in the region came to a halt after the abrogation of Article-370 in August last year when most of the political leaders were detained in the region.

The election is part of a process in which residents directly elect their village representatives, who then vote to form development councils for clusters of villages. The councils have no legislative power.

The Kashmir-based politicians said the election results made it clear that Kashmiri people have rejected last year's decision.

Ties with US going 'bad to worse'

Says Russia; Biden says cyberattack
against US won't go 'unanswered'

AFP, Moscow

With less than a month before Joe Biden moves into the White House, Moscow yesterday accused the incoming US administration of "Russophobia" after the president-elect promised to punish Russia for a major cyber attack.

Biden is expected to take a tougher stance against Russia than Donald Trump, whose ascent to the US presidency in 2016 was plagued by accusations of Russian interference to boost his campaign.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was one of the last leaders to congratulate Biden on his election victory, sending his congratulatory message six weeks after the November 3 vote and saying he was ready for "collaboration."

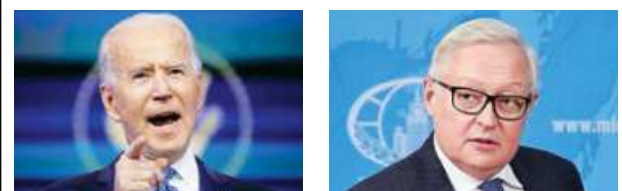
Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, speaking to reporters on Wednesday, said the Kremlin was expecting "nothing positive" in ties with Washington.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov struck a similar note, speaking about Moscow's expectations from the future US administration.

"We are definitely not expecting anything good," Ryabkov said in an interview with Interfax news agency.

"And it would be strange to expect good things from people, many of whom made their careers on Russophobia and throwing mud at my country," he added.

Washington has recently accused Russia of a major cyber attack on government agencies -- a claim Moscow has denied. Biden on Tuesday said the attack cannot go "unanswered", promising to retaliate once he steps into office on January 20. The US president-elect also accused



Trump of downplaying the gravity of the attack.

Ryabkov said Moscow should move to a "total containment" approach in relations with the United States and retain "selective dialogue" on subjects that are of interest to Russia.

Both Peskov and Ryabkov said that Russia would not initiate any contacts with Biden's transition staff.

Referring to fresh US sanctions imposed this week on 45 Russian organisations over their military connections, Ryabkov said the outgoing administration was trying to "loudly slam the door".

"We are going from bad to worse," Ryabkov said.



A farmer's son sleeps on a tractor at the site of a protest against new farm laws, at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border in Ghaziabad, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump pardons two linked to Russia probe

Blackwater guards
also pardoned

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump granted pardons Tuesday to two people

linked to a probe into alleged collusion between his campaign and Russia along with a list of others as time ticks away on his remaining weeks in office.

They add to pardons already issued to political allies of Trump, due to leave office on January 20.

The White House said in a statement that Trump had granted full pardons to 15 people and commuted all or part of the sentences for five others.

A full pardon was given to George Papadopoulos, a former Trump campaign adviser who admitted lying to federal investigators about his contacts with Russians.

Papadopoulos was a member of Trump's foreign policy advisory panel when he ran for president in 2016. He pleaded guilty in October 2017 to lying to the FBI about contacts with a professor who promised to connect him to senior Russian officials.

Another full pardon was granted to Alex van der Zwaan, a Dutch lawyer who was also convicted in connection with Mueller's probe.

Full pardons were also granted to four Blackwater security guards convicted over the 2007 killing of 14 Iraqis. The four convicted over the 2007 shootings in Baghdad's crowded Nisur Square included Nicholas Slatten, who had been sentenced to life.

Others included on the list were three former Republican members of Congress.

Hopes for Brexit trade deal hang on leaders' calls

AFP, Brussels

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen and Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson held the fate of a post-Brexit trade deal in their hands yesterday as talks hung in the balance.

The focus of the negotiations has shifted to cross-Channel calls between the leaders after officials failed to close the gap on how to share access to UK fishing waters.

Asked whether a deal was possible on Wednesday or Thursday, a European source close to the talks said: "Yes, but as ever nothing is guaranteed."

If there is no breakthrough in the next two days, teams are expected to take a Christmas break, leaving only a narrow window to reach any deal before New Year. And, with or without a trade deal, Britain will leave the EU single market at midnight on December 31, ending a half-century of deepening economic partnership.

The remaining differences between the two camps are narrow but deep, in particular over fishing, with EU crews

facing a dramatic cut in their catch from British waters.

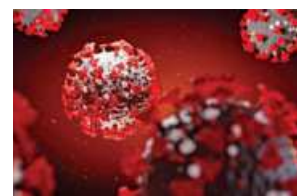
London wants to reduce EU fishing fleets' share of the estimated 650-million-euro annual haul by more than a third, with changes phased in over three years.

The EU, in particular countries with northern fishing fleets like France, Denmark and the Netherlands -- are insisting on 25 percent over at least six years.

And there are thorny details to be hammered out. There are quotas for more than a hundred different species of fish, and EU members want to share the cuts equally.

EU negotiator Michel Barnier briefed ambassadors and then senior MEPs on Tuesday that he had made his last offer on fish and that it was now up to political leaders to decide.

Brussels will continue to negotiate until the end of the year -- or even "beyond", as Barnier suggested -- but time is running out for any deal to be provisionally applied.



Coronavirus reaches end of the earth!

REUTERS, Santiago

The coronavirus has landed in Antarctica, the last continent previously free from Covid-19, Chile's military said, as health and army officials scrambled to clear out and quarantine staff from a remote research station there.

Chile's armed forces said at least 36 people had been infected at its Bernardo O'Higgins base, including 26 army personnel and 10 civilian contractors conducting maintenance at the base.

The permanently staffed research station, operated by Chile's army, lies near the tip of a peninsula in northernmost Antarctica.

Base personnel "are already properly isolated and constantly monitored" by health authorities in Magallanes, in Chilean Patagonia, the army said, adding there had so far been no complications.

Research and military stations in Antarctica -- among the most remote in the world -- had gone to extraordinary lengths in recent months to keep the virus out, canceling tourism, scaling back activities and staff and locking down facilities.

Researchers with the British Antarctic Survey estimate about 1,000 people at 38 stations across the frozen continent had safely navigated the southern hemisphere winter without incident. But an uptick in travel to and from the region this spring and early summer have heightened infection risk.

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute		
"Seaweed Culture & Seaweed Product Development in Bangladesh Coast" Research Project		
Marine Fisheries and Technology Station, Cox's Bazar		
Memo No. 33.04.0000.124.03.005.20-55		Date: 23.12.2020
Request for Expressions of Interest		
Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh.	
Agency	: Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Mymensingh.	
Procuring entity	: Director General.	
Expression of Interest for Selection of	: An International Seaweed Culture & Value Addition Consultant (1 No.); Package No. S1 and an International Seaweed Culture Technician (1 No.); Package No. S2.	
Duration	: 06 months in two phases.	
Eol Memo No.	: Memo No. 33.04.0000.124.03.005.20-55	
Date	: 23.12.2020	
Procurement sub method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).	
Budget and source of funds	: Development Budget and GoB.	
Development partners	: N/A.	
Project/programme code	: 224256500	
Project/programme name	: Seaweed Culture & Seaweed Product Development in Bangladesh Coast Research Project.	
Eol closing date and time	: Date: 13/01/2021 and Time: 05.00pm.	
Information for applicant:		
Outline of the assignment and required qualifications & experiences [Details provided in the Standard Request for Application (SRFA)].		
Position	Outline of the assignment	Qualification & experience
An International Seaweed Culture & Value Addition Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Seaweed resources in the Bangladesh coast and assist in identification of Seaweed species. Explore the different Seaweed cultivation techniques and adapted them to local conditions. Develop techniques for potential use of Seaweed as food items and other industrial uses. Explore export potential of Seaweed: where, how and in which form Seaweed can be exported. Explore different alternative uses of Seaweed, where and how Seaweed can be used. Explore import of high yielding sea weed germ ling from abroad for cultivation in Bangladesh coast. To assist the scientists of BFRI in Seaweed culture, processing and product development. Prepare periodic project reports. Relevant any other task assigned by the Project Director/project management as and when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The position requires minimum Master's degree in Marine Fisheries/Biology with 10 year's experience in Seaweed Culture & Value Addition. Preference will be given to PhD holder in relevant field with experience in Asian countries. He/she must have a broad international exposure in his field of specialization.
An International Seaweed Culture Technician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical guidance and support about the seaweed culture, identification, processing and product development of seaweed processing laboratory complex. To assist the scientists of BFRI in Seaweed culture, processing and product development. Prepare periodic project reports. Relevant any other task assigned by the Project Director/project management as and when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must have minimum graduation degree in Fisheries/Aquaculture/ Marine science with at least 6-8 years working experience on Seaweed Culture in abroad. Or In case of highly practical experienced person educational qualification might be relaxed. Highly trained person will be preferred.
Other details:		
Applicants are requested to provide information as per the format provided in Standard Request for Application (SRFA) indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (complete CV in prescribed form with other details as applicable). SRFA may be obtained from the websites: fri.portal.gov.bd or www.mofli.gov.bd or from the address below either through email or in person from the office of the undersigned. The applicants shall submit supporting documents in favor of their experience and qualifications along with the SRFA. The services of the specialist will commence as per practical need of incumbent which will be determined once recruitment process is completed. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Eol(s) without assigning any reason thereof.		
Procurement entity details		
Name of official inviting Eol	Md. Mohidul Islam.	
Designation of official inviting Eol	Project Director.	
Address of official inviting Eol	Seaweed Culture & Seaweed Product Development in Bangladesh Coast Research Project, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Marine Fisheries and Technology Station, Cox's Bazar-4700, Bangladesh.	
Contact details of official inviting Eol	Cell: +88-01719355655 Email: seaweed.projectbfri@gmail.com , mohidbfri@gmail.com	
Md. Mohidul Islam Project Director		



Students receive face masks from an elephant dressed as Santa Claus, in an effort to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease, ahead of Christmas celebrations at a school in Ayutthaya, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

Nepal SC begins hearing petitions

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Nepal's Supreme Court yesterday started hearing petitions challenging Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's sudden dissolution of parliament and call for fresh elections, a move denounced by his opponents as unconstitutional. Oli's decision, the culmination of months of political turmoil in the Himalayan country situated between China and India, has triggered unrest in his party and protests on the streets of the capital Kathmandu.

"Hearing on 12 petitions against the dissolution of parliament has begun," said Bhadrakali Pokharel, a Supreme Court spokesman.

Lawyers opposed to Oli's decision argued that the prime minister had no prerogative to dissolve parliament under the constitution. Seven ministers have stepped down to challenge the dissolution and stated that it was a violation of the "popular mandate" given to them in 2017 general election.

Oli recently lost support within his own Nepal Communist Party (NCP), with some members accusing him of sidelining senior party members in decision-making and key appointments.

They called for him to step down. Oli this week said he decided to dissolve the parliament after facing non-cooperation from his party officials, and a fresh mandate was the only way to settle disputes. Nepal's President Bidhya Devi Bhandari over the weekend set April 30 and May 10 for the general election, a year ahead of schedule.



মহারাজপুরহাট ব্রাঞ্চ
আব্দুল কামেম মার্কেট
মহারাজপুরহাট
চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ সদর
চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ।



ব্যংকিং সুবিধায় অমূল্য হোক শিল্প ও বাণিজ্য
উন্নত হোক সুবিকা বঞ্চিত মানুষের আগামী জীবনধারা

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT BANK LIMITED
(A State Owned Commercial Bank)
Website: www.bdbl.com.bd SWIFT Code: BDDBDH

আমের রাজধানী
চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ জেলার
মহারাজপুরহাট এ
আমাদের ৪৭তম
ব্রাঞ্চার আজ

শুভ
উদ্বোধন

২৪ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০

BOOK REVIEW: GEOPOLITICS

The Politics of Losing Home

MD TOUHID HOSSAIN

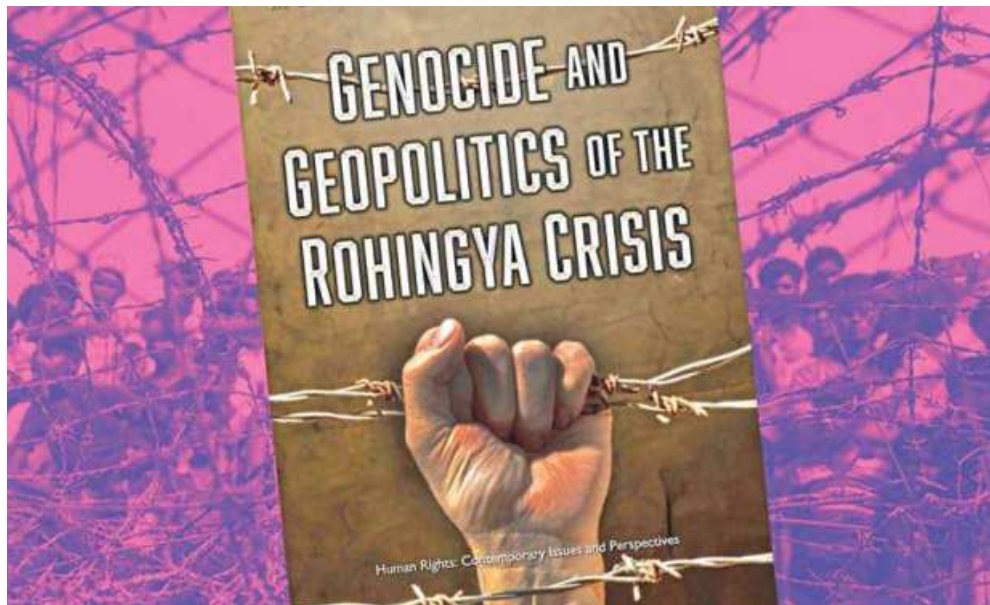
In August 2017, the Myanmar military perpetrated a genocide on the Rohingyas, an ethnic group residing in Northern Rakhine. Large numbers of Rohingyas were killed, women and girls were raped, villages burnt and upwards of 800,000 men, women and children were driven out of their homes. They crossed the border into Bangladesh to save their lives and are now sheltered in camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya, in the southern tip of Bangladesh.

Although this outrageous event was sort of a 'final solution', atrocities on Rohingyas have a long history. The first mass expulsion took place in 1977-78 when 250,000 were driven across the border. Most of them were sent back through negotiations. However, following the second mass expulsion in 1989-90, many of the 250,000 refugees could not be sent back. Meanwhile, the Burmese Citizenship Act of 1982 disenfranchised the Rohingyas of their citizenship. Under continued atrocities by the military and the local Rakhines led by extremist Buddhist monks, a slow exodus continued till 2016, when another 80,000 were expelled. At least 300,000 Rohingyas were displaced in Bangladesh before 2017.

In his book *Genocide and Geopolitics of the Rohingya Crisis* (Nova Science Publishers, 2020), the scholar General Aminul Karim uncovers the broader canvas of the topic, painstakingly consulting the plethora of existing literature, interviewing various experts, and offering his own analysis and conclusions.

General Karim begins with a background of the Rohingyas in Arakan and of modern Burma including its various insurgencies. He then moves on to the strategic importance of the area. Being resource rich, the oil and gas fields are controlled by an enterprise, in which the senior military officers who run the country have economic interests. Major world powers and big corporations have their eyes on these resources. Added to this is the location along the Bay of Bengal, which is vital for Chinese access to the Indian Ocean. Removing Rohingyas strengthens the control of these forces on the area and consequently, upon the resources.

Examining the legal issues in subsequent chapters, the author concludes that the Myanmar regime is certainly guilty of committing genocide, but because Myanmar is not a member of ICC and because implementation of the ICJ decision depends largely on the UNSC, punishment of the perpetrators cannot be guaranteed.



COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Chapters 11 and 12 enter into the main theme of the book—geopolitics, and the possibility of a local Muslim insurgency. Through the BRI, coupled with large investments, China has established a firm grip on Myanmar. This allows China to bypass the Malacca strait choke point. China's adversary India wants alternate access to its North-East through Myanmar and a possible land route to ASEAN countries from Moreh in Manipur. The United States, on the one hand, is pressuring Myanmar by funding Muslim insurgency through Saudi Arabia, and on the other, Western oil giants are cosying up with the Myanmar regime to get a hold on the oil and gas fields.

The author considers the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) as a "well organised Muslim insurgency" and suggests that Myanmar might someday ask for US intervention to contain them. This seems a little farfetched. So far, ARSA's only major act has been the supposed attack on some security outposts that triggered the 2017 genocide. It is even possible that the Myanmar military allowed this to happen to create a pretext for the pogrom. In containing myriad insurgencies in the country, Myanmar would probably find China a more reliable partner than the US. However, US overtures could give Myanmar an additional advantage.

In his concluding chapters, through interviews, the author suggests some solutions. Sadiql Islam of Laurentian University, Canada, considers the expulsion

of the Rohingyas into Bangladesh an act of war. Professor Delwar Hossain of Dhaka University thinks even a limited war on this issue is quite unlikely. This reviewer has looked into history, and seen that no such problem involving a crime of genocide has been resolved peacefully. The issue is likely to be prolonged and in such a case, the growth of an insurgency and recruitment of young zealots by international terror groups is a distinct possibility.

To resolve the problem, General Karim suggests that great powers like China, Russia, the US, and the UN and other international organizations work together to ensure citizenship for Rohingyas and their repatriation, and federalism and autonomy in Myanmar. Alas, the Myanmar state looks unlikely to proceed this way; nor are the great powers showing any such inclination. The author agrees that this sounds like tall-talks, but he would still like to be optimistic. Unfortunately, going by the proceedings so far, there seems little space for such optimism.

All said and done, this book is unique in as much as it has the intellectual dimension of an academic. It also reflects the strategic perspective of a professional who has had a decades-old career in military and security matters. A remarkable work, this book would be useful both for researchers as well as policymakers who can devise strategies to handle the issue in the years to come.

Md Touhid Hossain is former Foreign Secretary.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

The Hypocrisy of Marriage in South Asia

SAMEIRAH NASRIN AHSAN

It is a truth universally acknowledged by her many fans that Jane Austen's sharp wit, complex characters, subtle social reproach, and tantalising storytelling are almost unparalleled. As a great fan of Austen myself, I was skeptical when I picked up *Unmarriageable* (Ballantine Books, 2019). Soniah Kamal's South Asian retelling of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. To my greatest delight, this book turned out to be a bold study of the many hypocrisies of modern day South Asian societies: the superficial marriage system which reduces a woman to a baby-making entity and a man to the digits on his pay check, the careful hand picking of religious and cultural practices to serve patriarchal norms, the omnipresent nepotism and classism, and the push for women's empowerment while also demanding traditional servitude and obedience from them. Kamal's storytelling is rich in logic and brimming with intelligent assessment of these social failures.

Set in modern day Pakistan, the Binat family is faced with difficult financial circumstances. Mr Binat hides from his responsibilities by tending to his garden and Mrs Binat spends her days brooding over the futures of her five unmarried daughters. Her only goal in life is to score rich sons-in-law for her girls so that she too can show off wealth and status to the other conceited women of her circle. When the family is invited to attend one of the most prestigious weddings of the season, Mrs Binat puts on her scheming hat and zooms in on handsome, expensively-dressed bachelor guests at the wedding, much to the great embarrassment of her two eldest daughters, who are just trying to make something of themselves in their stunted circumstances.

Kamal adds an interesting South Asian twist to the characters and their love interests made iconic by Austen. Alysba Binat, our Pakistani Elizabeth Bennet, is 31 years old and her older sister Jenazba is 32, to the great chagrin of their mother. Their age is a hot topic among the *desi* aunts of their community, as both women are considered far too old for marriage or bearing children. Worse still, their love interests, Darsee and Fahad Bingla, are a good few years younger than

them at 25 and 26. With this, Kamal sheds light on how, as a society, we have somehow internalised the idea that the definition of a woman's worth is her age and her chastity. I greatly appreciate how *Unmarriageable* stresses that age cannot be the defining factor of a woman's credibility as a person. Sonia Kamal uses powerful examples from our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s life to back up these ideas: the financial independence and intellectual freedom of Khadija (RA)—who was a widow and several years his senior when our Prophet married her—and her right to choose and propose to a man she deemed a worthy life partner.

Unmarriageable is charming and funny, but it is also deep, it will make



PHOTO: SAMEIRAH AHSAN

you question and think. It takes a contemplative look at the practices and traditions that we have normalised and often celebrate with pride. The novel is full of unmatched interpersonal conflicts, delicious satire, and clever humour and banter. It has skyrocketed to one of my favourite books from this year and if I ever have the privilege to meet Sonia Kamal in person, I'd have to borrow part of Fitzwilliam Darcy's famous monologue to express my admiration of her work: "You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

Sameirah Nasrin Ahsan is a mechanical engineer based in Dhaka. She aspires to be an author someday. For now, she is content with reading and sharing the stories that make her think beyond herself. Instagram: @booksnher

BOOK REVIEW: INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE 2020

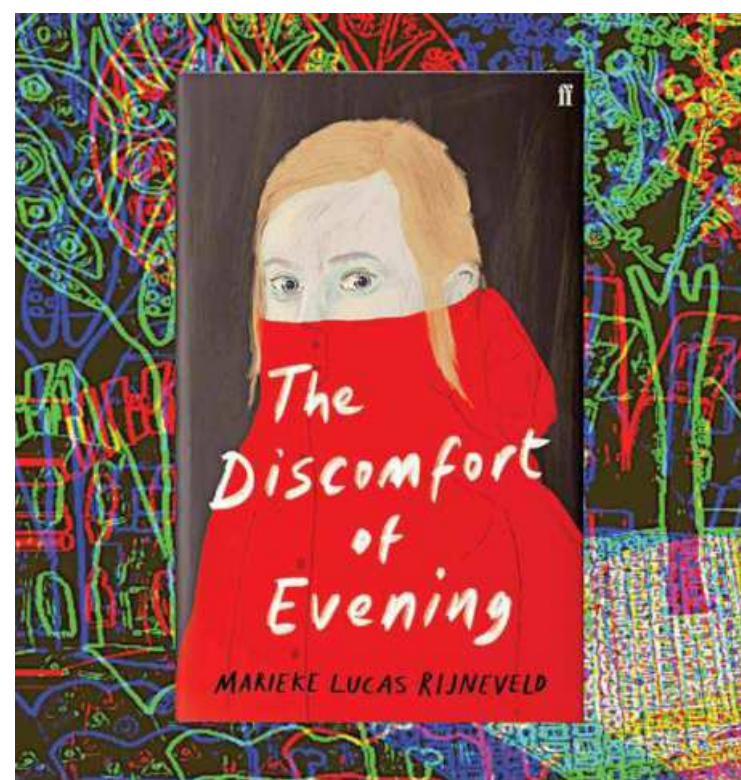
Repulsive, But For A Reason

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

The mind of ten-year-old Jas—the narrator of Marieke Lucas Rijneveld's 2020 International Booker Prize-winning *The Discomfort of Evening* (Faber Books, 2018)—is a canvas with one enduring quality: the whimsical innocence of a child. And when brushstrokes of a variety of unpleasant experiences drift across it, the reader is left with an image that is dark and at the same time poetic, humorous, and peculiar. Consider these: Imaginary Jewish people hiding from a 20th century war in a 21st century basement. The froth of milk forming a Hitler-like moustache bordering the lips of Jas's father. Jas fearing that her parents might die and holding a tooth fairy captive to wish for new parents. "A mass grave of milk biscuits". And a dead rabbit's teeth growing from the earth, which could possibly puncture Jas's father's torso.

Jas's brother, Matthies, is dead. After losing him in an ice-skating accident, a gloom rolls over their lives, enveloping the farm in which they live in a thick film of grief and longing. His absence is everywhere: "In the middle of the mattress, there's the hollow of my brother's body... a hollow that I try not to end up in." But Jas is also desperate for a Discman, even though she suppresses the urge to ask her parents for one. After all, her "parents' loss is much worse—you can't save up for a new son."

This is what the book is essentially about—the



COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

disintegration of a conservative family in the wake of a tragedy.

Jas has two other siblings: Obbe, who tortures butterflies and animals by suffocating them, and Hanna, who thinks Jas' nails are turning black because she's pondering about death too much. Obbe is that bullish sibling who will use the dirt on someone else to resort to unthinkable ways of punishment. Hanna is supportive, easily led to saying yes to every scheme, be it performing a ritual to ward off death or giving into incestuous intimacy. In the presence of

few characters, the exploration of the relationship shared by these siblings is what drives the narrative forward. It results in philosophical insights and adds conflict and thrill to the story.

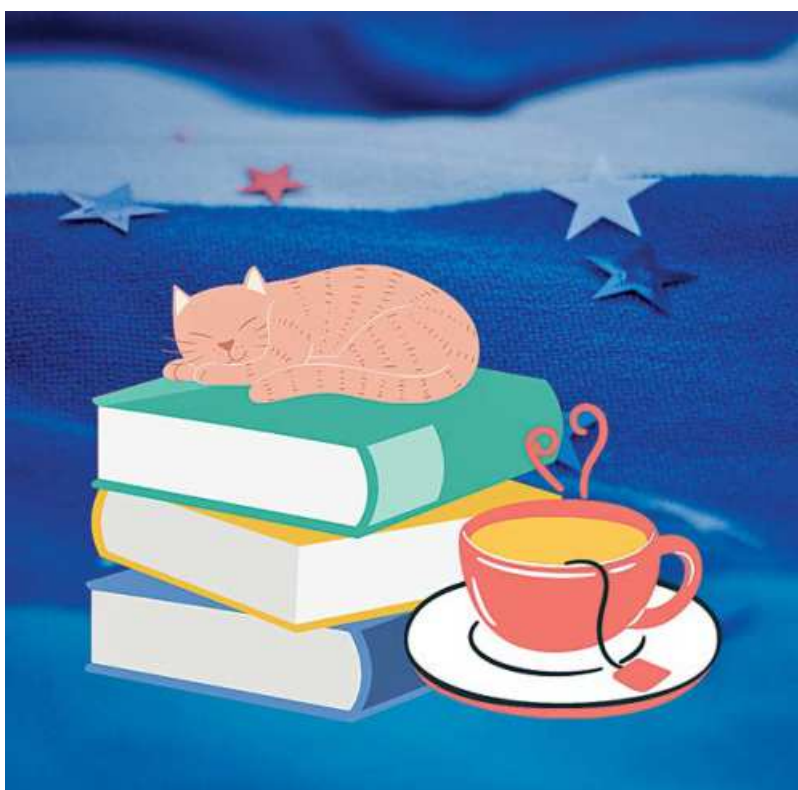
Before reading this novel, I did not know that the "unrolled wall" of one's small intestine can sprawl over the length of a tennis court, that ants can carry 5,000 times their own weight, and that an earthworm has nine hearts. Strange bits of information such as these are peppered throughout the story, but they serve the additional

purpose of revealing the inner workings of a child's mind, whose whimsy is often a means to processing the dark and grand mechanisms of life on earth. For example, the weight carrying capacity of ants allows Jas to think of how humans so often buckle under the weight of their emotions. Aside from being a shrewd observer, in many ways, Jas is also a rebel. She lives in a religious household, but doesn't want to go to God, only to herself. She wants to be invisible and disassociate herself from the realm of humans.

The characters in the novel are at times obsessed with their own and others' bodies. This can feel discomfiting. It is the poetry and fluidity of the writing that make reading through the vividly unpleasant bits bearable. Even then, the portrayal of the discomfiting offers a glimpse into human nature when it is stripped of normalcy, revealing the lust and violence beneath.

Originally Dutch, this novel was translated into English by Michele Hutchison. But a reader cannot find any uneasy, confusing, or incomprehensible crack in the language that can reveal a failure of translation. Perhaps, that is the beauty of perfect translation—besides the blurb on the cover, there's no way of knowing that the book was not originally written in English.

Shah Tazrian Ashrafi is a contributor.



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

THE SHELF

The Season of Comfy Reads

STAR BOOKS DESK

Is it just us, or do the cold winds of December make you want to bring down your favourite childhood stories, classics hardcovers, and delicious thrillers from your shelves too?

Read this story online to find out what the staff writers of Daily

Star Books are reading as we try to recreate the illusion of end-of-year holidays. To find the article, follow us on @thedailystarbooks on Instagram, @DailyStarBooks on Twitter, and fb.com/DailyStarBooks on Facebook. Send us your book reviews (600-800 words) to thedailystarbooks@gmail.com.

Only 4.5 percent of special loans for migrants disbursed so far

The authorities must ensure greater accessibility and efficient use

SINCE the onset of the pandemic, the fate of migrant workers from Bangladesh have hung in the balance. Time and again, we have seen reports of our migrant workers struggling to survive in host countries, or being forced to return to Bangladesh after losing their jobs or failing to renew their visas/contracts. According to data from the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry, about 2.72 lakh Bangladeshi expatriates returned home between April 1 and November 11 this year after the coronavirus struck.

Since their return, there have been growing concerns about how these migrants, whose remittances have hugely contributed to our economy over the years, would support themselves and their families in an already depressed economy. Therefore, the decision to offer a Tk 200 crore special loan package for coronavirus-affected returnee migrants' reintegration, allocated by the Wage Earners' Welfare Board and disbursed through the Probashi Kallyan Bank, was welcomed across the board. Even then, experts warned that this amount was woefully inadequate given the far-reaching impact of the fallout on households and communities dependent on these migrants' incomes.

Against this backdrop, it is extremely frustrating to find out that so far, the Probashi Kallyan Bank has disbursed around Tk 9 crore from this Tk 200 crore fund, and till November 20, the disbursed amount was only about Tk 4.6 crore. Experts have cited the terms and conditions of the loans as one of the reasons behind the poor response, saying the four percent interest rate for a loan up to Tk 5 lakh is too high considering the financial condition of the returnees. Besides, the grace period against loans in most ventures is limited to one month only, which means the returnees have to start paying instalments almost immediately after taking the loan. Migrant rights organisations have also found that government support mechanisms for the returnees—like how one should prepare a proposal to get a loan from the special fund—were unavailable at the upazila level.

It is unacceptable that our authorities have thrown our migrant workers in the deep end like this. A survey from BRAC suggests that almost 87 percent of returnee migrants have been left without income opportunities—especially when their labour is one of the driving forces behind our progress towards eventually becoming a middle-income country. Can we truly be proud of our achievements if the workers who make up the backbone of our economy are living hand to mouth during a time of crisis? The authorities must step up and ensure that there is greater accessibility to these finances, as well as training and support to returnee migrants to ensure that they are actually able to put these loans to good use. In the long run, we must also enter into negotiations with host countries and explore the option of re-migration, which, according to an IOM study, is the preferred option for the majority of returnee migrants.

Interruption in oxygen supply averted in public hospitals

Govt's prompt action commendable

WE commend the government for taking immediate action to import oxygen from India as the country's major oxygen supplier plant went out of order due to a technical glitch recently. Reportedly, Linde Bangladesh Limited, a multinational company, provides the government hospitals with 90 percent of their daily demand of liquid oxygen, which is 100 tonnes. However, on December 11, the plant, situated in Narayanganj's Rupganj, went out of service following a technical problem. Its fallout could have been disastrous for the hospitals but, thankfully, prompt action by the authorities to bring oxygen from India averted the crisis. Linde Bangladesh is now bringing in life-saving oxygen from India using tankers and delivering it to the hospitals on a temporary basis.

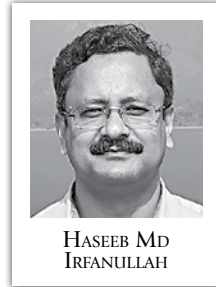
Uninterrupted oxygen supply is extremely crucial during this time of the pandemic, as lives of critical coronavirus patients depend on continuous oxygen supply. According to DGHS officials, the number of critical Covid-19 patients seeking oxygen support at hospitals has been increasing as winter set in. Unfortunately, the majority of our public hospitals and health complexes still do not have a proper oxygen supply system. Only a few district level hospitals have a central oxygen supply system, while others use oxygen cylinders for emergency situation. And there are still many hospitals that have no oxygen supply system at all.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, health experts have been urging the government and the public hospitals to install a centralised oxygen supply system. But only a few of them took any step to do so. While with cylinders a patient can be given oxygen at the maximum rate of six litres per minute, a central oxygen supply system can provide much more oxygen in an uninterrupted manner. That is why it is essential to have such a system in every hospital.

Coming back to the problem of oxygen supply by Linde Bangladesh Limited, we think they have managed the situation quite skilfully for the time being. What they must ensure now is that the supply from India does not get disrupted. They should repair the plant as quickly as possible and start supplying oxygen to our hospitals from their plant. While they do so, the government should also make some alternative arrangements for getting emergency oxygen supply, just to avoid any future crisis.

2020 has been a year of nature-based solutions.

So what awaits us in 2021?



HASEEB MD
IRFANULLAH

IN 2020, Nature-based Solutions, or NbS, has emerged as a much-talked-about environmental concept in Bangladesh. While the Covid-19 pandemic has put the whole world in turmoil, we do have other challenges to tackle—climate emergency, disaster risks, food and water insecurities, extreme poverty, and unprecedented biodiversity loss. In simple terms, NbS are the actions we take with the help of nature to overcome these societal challenges.

When we protect our ecosystems like forests and wetlands, sustainably manage their resources, restore them when these are in bad shape, or create a new one to get its services, we practice NbS. But we perform these activities keeping in mind one or more societal challenges, like climate change. And, most importantly, we design and implement our activities in a way that they improve our wellbeing and also give biodiversity benefits.

So, we can see that NbS is not a completely new idea. It is rather a recent attempt to bring together different existing nature-based activities and approaches—like establishing protected areas like the Sundarbans, creating a "green belt" along our coastline since 1965, participatory management of Hakaluki haor, or ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in Satkhira—under one umbrella called NbS.

As I look back now, I see three milestones generating strong interest in NbS in Bangladesh in 2020.

First, NbS activities in Bangladesh now have a go-to platform—the NbS Bangladesh web portal (www.nbsbangladesh.info)—thanks to the collaboration between the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and the University of Oxford, UK. This portal has created a good opportunity to bring together cases and documents capturing Bangladesh's long NbS experience in the form of peer-reviewed research papers, grey literature, and relevant policy and planning instruments.

The ICCCAD-Oxford initiative has also established the NbS Bangladesh Network. By being part of this network, interested individuals and organisations can take forward the NbS conversation in Bangladesh, share experiences, and undertake joint actions.

The second milestone is an improved understanding of NbS in Bangladesh through discussions and publications. The first webinar on NbS was organised by ICCCAD in May, giving the audience an opportunity to learn about NbS and how to harness their benefits. The American Center's NbS webinar provided a platform for sharing NbS experiences from experts from Bangladesh Forest

Department, UNDP, and the Center for Natural Resource Studies. The "NbS Digital Dialogues" organised by the University of Oxford was this year's largest global NbS event. In the session on people's participation in NbS, Bangladesh government's 20-year effort to sustainably manage Tanguar haor was showcased, which was later captured in an op-ed by *The Daily Star* in August.

The ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis started its fourth year on August 25, 2020. An opinion piece in *The Daily Star* highlighted the nature-based actions that different agencies were taking in the highly degraded camp areas through plantation, hilly slope and stream bank stabilisation, and wetland creation, for example.

In September, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) published a brief entitled "Rethinking

Just before the Covid-19 lockdown, on March 15, a meeting was held at the Bangladesh Planning Commission with ICCCAD to discuss how NbS could be integrated in the country's planning processes, such as in the Eighth Five-Year Plan. An analysis presented in that discussion showed that Bangladesh was well ahead in appreciating nature-based actions and approaches as seen in the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP, 2009), the Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020), and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015. Among others, the participants recommended inclusion of NbS in government project formulation documents, like the Development Project Proforma (DPP),

two webinars to discuss the experiences, challenges, and opportunities they share on nature-based solutions and approaches to fight climate change.

Despite the restrictions and limitations imposed by the pandemic, it has been a promising year for raising the profile of NbS as a concept in Bangladesh. So, what awaits us in 2021?

There are a number of events already lined up to continue the NbS conversation. The first Gobeshona Global Conference (January 18–24, 2021) will have NbS as one of its central themes. The University of Oxford is organising a NbS conference in July where Bangladesh's experience is expected to be highlighted. Given that NbS is one of the core themes of the COP26, we can expect more activities in Bangladesh in this regard leading up to November 2021.

In terms of creating new knowledge of NbS, a number of ongoing research projects are expected to give us more understanding of and insight into Bangladesh's NbS, once these are complete. We may also expect the NbS Bangladesh Network to gain further momentum and contribute towards evidence-informed policy discussions.

Regarding broader policy and strategic planning scopes, we believe the Eighth Five-Year Plan will maintain its focus on nature-based approaches as it did in the Seventh Five-Year Plan. The projects to be designed under the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 will include NbS, as discussed on March 15 at the Bangladesh Planning Commission. Bangladesh is currently preparing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Given the country's long-term commitment and experience with nature to protect its people from climate change impacts, NbS should be one of the core adaptation approaches of the "Bangladesh NAP" due in May 2021. We also expect that the revised NDC, to be submitted to the UNFCCC by December 31, will keep NbS as the core actions as Bangladesh updates its targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2025.

While we show our enthusiasm in using nature to solve our problems, we must be careful not to interpret the NbS concept wrongly. NbS means creating forests with diverse species and maintain biodiversity, not planting the same species mile after mile. NbS must empower the indigenous and local people and engage them in their design and implementation, and must not be injected from the outside. NbS is not the ultimate solution to climate change by reducing carbon from our air, however. Without rapidly decarbonising our economy and adopting clean energy strategies, it is impossible to survive the climate crisis. As we continue the conversation in 2021, we must be careful about possible misapplication and abuse of the NbS concept.

Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah is an independent consultant working on environment, climate change, and research systems. His Twitter handle is @hmirfanullah



NbS must empower the indigenous and local people and engage them in their design and implementation, and must not be enforced from outside.

PHOTO:
PHILIP GAIN

Nature: A Pathway towards Sustainable Development?" Written by two Bangladeshi environmentalists, this article showed that NbS is not only about climate action (SDG 13) or biodiversity conservation (SDGs 14 and 15), but also about improving urban resilience (SDG 11), community empowerment and ensuring gender equality (SDGs 1, 2 and 5), promoting sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12), and achieving economic growth (SDG 8).

Young environmentalists working in different research organisations showed increasing interest in NbS. They tried to understand different aspects of it, like the role of indigenous knowledge in NbS, or NbS as an alternative development pathway for Bangladesh, and shared their understanding and thoughts on different platforms.

The third milestone took the NbS conversation to a higher level so that our policies and practices appreciate the benefits of ecosystem-based actions.

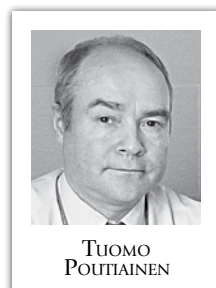
and establishing a NbS database to guide planners and practitioners to choose appropriate nature-based solutions and include them in development projects and programmes.

In August, the ICCCAD and the University of Oxford analysed the NbS scenarios in Bangladesh from the perspectives of knowledge, practice, policy, and planning. Their policy brief, entitled "A Roadmap for Nature-based Solutions in Bangladesh: Promises and Challenges", gives us a comprehensive direction towards nature-based actions for Bangladesh.

The UK holds the presidency of the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to be held in November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland. The UK has long been a partner of Bangladesh in fighting climate change, which has gained further momentum in 2020. On December 8 and 9, the UK-Bangladesh Climate Partnership Forum brought together experts, practitioners, and politicians from both countries in

Why every migrant worker should travel with a 'skills passport'

The multiple benefits of skilling, reskilling, upskilling and skills recognition for overseas workers



TUOMO
POUTAINEN

DURING the early months of the Covid-19 global pandemic, almost 400,000 migrant workers were forced to return home, not knowing when the crisis would end or when they would return to their jobs.

Each year, millions of Bangladeshi men and women travel afar to work as masons, plumbers, carpenters, drivers, gardeners, cleaners and vendors. Almost all leave these shores without any formal recognition of their skills or experience. To make matters worse, they return home, as many did in April/May of 2020, without any further recognition of the considerable skills and experiences acquired overseas. This not only leaves them unable to get good jobs in Bangladesh, but also leaves Bangladesh unable to capitalise on this pool of skilled human capital.

According to the World Bank, migrant workers remit over USD 15 billion each year to their families to buy food and other essential goods. What is often overlooked is how much they contribute—in tens of billions—to the GDP of the country of destination.

Migration is a key defining feature of this country's economy, with tens of millions seeking overseas job opportunities over the past 50 years. The theme for the International Migrants Day this year was "reimagining the future of mobility". The future of mobility for

migrant workers must be envisioned better.

This migrant workforce has the potential to make significant contributions to Bangladesh's economic development by investing their hard-earned savings in the country, as well as monetising human and social capital acquired abroad, such as new skills and competencies. However, without any recognition of their improved skills or any formal certification—even after several years of good international work

migrant workers too to help them obtain formal recognition of the skills acquired through hands-on experience and informal employment/training overseas. The NSP is an invaluable document for jobseekers when it comes to finding jobs and keeping tabs on future reskilling, retooling and/or upskilling. It's also a godsend for employers looking to hire certified, skilled and experienced labour.

The ILO and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE) is now

Each year, millions of Bangladeshi men and women travel afar to work as masons, plumbers, carpenters, drivers, gardeners, cleaners and vendors. Almost all leave these shores without any formal recognition of their skills or experience.

experience—many remain stuck with low wages, in low-skilled jobs with low status.

A recent study by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that 60 percent of migrant workers who have recently returned home expressed a desire to upgrade and seek recognition of their newly-acquired skills. In fact, 75 percent said that once overseas working opportunities resumed, they would prefer to work in a country where their skills would be justly recognised and rewarded.

Sri Lanka offers a good example of skills recognition wherein the government, in partnership with the ILO and local employers' groups, offers all skilled workers a National Skills Passport (NSP). The NSP is offered to returnee

exploring ways to introduce a similar scheme in Bangladesh, one that will help employers find the right person for the right job with the right skills. It also benefits the government by helping to streamline migrant workers and returnee workers by skills-type and bridge gaps in the labour market. It also helps the government with long-term skills planning for the economy and future employment creation.

The government of Bangladesh currently uses the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme to measure and certify a worker's skillsets. The RPL system was introduced as part of the 2011 National Skills Development Policy to help recognise the evolving, informal

and on-the-job skills gained by workers. While many Bangladesh-based workers have acquired RPL certification, millions of migrant workers and returnees remain unaware of the system or its multiple benefits in terms of increased earning power and access to better-paid jobs at home and overseas.

ILO Bangladesh is now working closely with the MOEWOE and Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) to certify returnee migrant workers for their reintegration and re-migration. The country is making steady progress in establishing and implementing a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system. According to BTEB, there are 411 RPL centres dotted around the country, and they have certified the skills of 41,560 workers, including 15,000 migrant workers.

The MOEWOE is now looking to strengthen and expand RPL and national skills' passports for Bangladeshi workers across Asia. The Bangladesh High Commission in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has already taken the lead and introduced RPL for migrant workers in the kingdom. The plan is to now roll out the scheme to dozens of destination countries, which have high numbers of Bangladeshi workers.

A migrant workforce that is skilled, respected and certified has the potential to be one of the country's most valuable financial assets. Ultimately, the more these decent hard-working men and women earn, the more their families, and their beloved homeland, will prosper.

Tuomo Poutainen is Country Director for ILO Bangladesh.

How the private health sector can help achieve SDG 3



THE Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were adopted in 2015 by

the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030.

The third goal of SDG, or simply SDG 3, which has health at its core aims to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages". Under this overarching ambition, the focus areas of SDG 3 include maternal, neo-natal and infant mortality, communicable and non-communicable diseases, tobacco use, universal health coverage, sexual and reproductive healthcare, R&D in health, increasing health financing, training and risk reduction capacities, etc.

The private sector healthcare providers do not only cover doctors and hospitals but also include all prevention, primary through tertiary care facilities, support organisations, and all the technicians, support staff, general employees, and volunteers who are engaged in delivering healthcare services. NGOs—there are about 15 national and 40 international ones—are also a key part of the private healthcare sector.

Here is a general plan on how this sector can be mobilised to help make the SDG 3 a reality.

Public-private partnership

Private sector entrepreneurship covers around 60 percent of the health sector in Bangladesh, having approximately 70,000 doctors and 100,000 hospital beds, providing employment to around 10 lakh people, and investment to the tune of USD 3,500 crore. With proper support and conducive conditions, this sector can be made more efficient and effective bringing

in better quality and outcome for the citizens. The foreign currency of about USD 1,000 crore that is going abroad every year for the purpose of treatment, according to one estimate, can be saved by building people's trust in this sector.

EMR and use of National ID card

EMR, or electronic medical records, can be incorporated or interlinked with our National ID (NID) cards so that basic health-related information of the people can be recorded along with their sociodemographic information. The Emergency ID card will contain the medical records of an individual, and doctors can access them easily, allowing them to provide treatment swiftly and safely.

Separate Directorate for private sector

A separate Directorate General for private health sector will help the sector run smoothly by providing one-stop service for the purpose of licensing, etc. which at present is provided from 17 different offices.

Zonal health workers and national referral

In every zone of every district, there should be zonal health workers who will be responsible for the health and welfare of the local community, along with family physicians. There should be a proper referral system to the district hospital for specialist advice. In this way, the burden on specialist medical professionals will be minimised.

Health insurance

Everyone should be brought under the universal health coverage. There should be different packages of health insurance according to the socioeconomic quintiles of people.

Clear paths for health professionals

Healthcare professionals like doctors, nurses, and allied health workers should be categorised according to their type of work, such as academic, administrative and practicing. It should be done in both the government and private healthcare facilities.

Health education and promotion are key



What happens in the private-sector healthcare is of vital importance not only to the vast number of patients who are dependent on it, but also the policymakers who are under pressure to handle the country's growing health needs.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

A person's physical, mental, social and spiritual health and healthcare needs should be assessed and taken care of. NGOs, which are already covering many of these areas, can play a pivotal role in this regard. Some of their interventions that contribute to the concept of holistic health include literacy programmes, nutrition, social awareness, primary and preventive healthcare, essential and professional skills building, mass-scale counselling for the workforce in high-risk industries (such as ship breaking), etc. So this can be strengthened by more investment and infusion of private equity.

Environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG)

These should be the three central factors in measuring the feasibility and societal impact of healthcare facilities and interventions. These criteria help to better determine the future impact and sustainability of the healthcare industry.

Grading

All healthcare facilities should be graded like Grade I, Grade II and Grade III, according to the pricing, type and quality of services provided. However, the general quality of clinical services has to be similar across all the grades—the difference will lie only in hospitality and other non-essential perks that can vary from one facility to another.

Non-branded (generic) drugs

Hospitals categorised in grades 2 and 3 will get the opportunity to provide non-branded medicines (generic) to cut the cost of services while preserving quality, as it can be assumed that low-income people will generally frequent those facilities.

Focus on local community clinics

Existing community clinics can be strengthened by organising them under committees, which should be comprised

of members from local authorities, public representatives, and led by doctors or medical professionals. Private sector players can support the clinics as part of a social enterprise model.

Accountability

First, Bangladesh Medical & Dental Council (BM&DC) should be strengthened and made the highest body responsible for overseeing activities related to the medical profession, and entrusted with the tasks of registration, recognition, maintenance and monitoring of all medical/healthcare facilities and professionals. Second, there should be a Health Service Ombudsman, answerable to parliament, who will be responsible for protecting the interests of patients as well as health service providers. Third, there should be an independent Health Commission free from the influence of the government and the private sector to oversee all accountability exercises.

Research and Development

Private-sector R&D is critical for future development of the health sector. The research findings can be helpful for the policymakers and should influence decisions related to costing, accountability, and governance. This will also have a critical role while responding to health emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic—in treatment, vaccination, post-Covid-19 complications, etc.

Accreditation and quality of services

A national accreditation system for healthcare providing organisations, under Bangladesh Accreditation Body (BAB) or some other competent authority, is a must to ensure the quality of services provided and build trust in local health facilities among the general populace.

Finally, to achieve the SDG 3 targets, the public and private sectors should work hand in hand to improve the health and wellbeing of the population in Bangladesh.

Dr A M Shamim is Managing Director, Labaid Group.

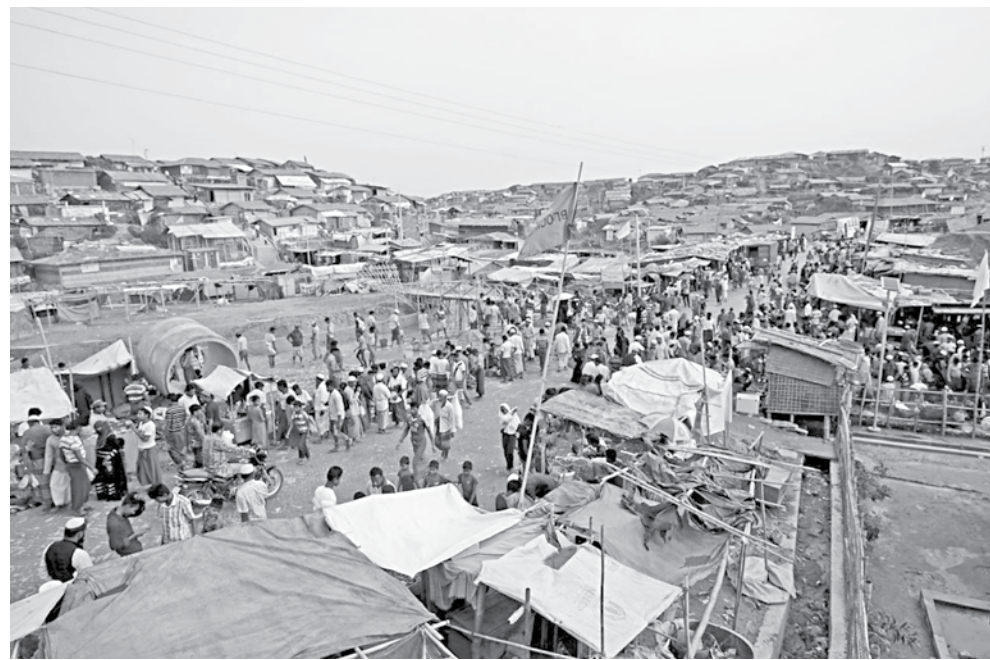
Reinforcing Respect: Considering dignity in the Rohingya humanitarian response

MOHAMMAD AZIZUL HOQUE and JESSICA OLNEY

IN our work as researchers with the Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ), BRAC University, we strive to understand refugee community concerns, which we share in turn with the humanitarians and decision-makers. From June to November 2020, 30 Rohingya refugee volunteers working with us under CPJ's Refugee Studies Unit in Cox's Bazar consulted over 3,000 other camp residents to address emerging concerns and questions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

One frequent complaint from the refugees is about the lack of consultation by humanitarian actors and the failure to reflect community concerns in programme planning and implementation. There is a perception that community feedback is inadequately collected and reflected in programming and aid distribution. As one Rohingya woman shared, "Humanitarian agencies never come listening to our opinions and preferences. We have said that we dislike lentils and certain other foods. Nevertheless, they have yet to replace them with other items." Another Rohingya man said, "Even though we complain frequently, NGOs do not respond to our needs and challenges, which makes us feel as if we are not esteemed."

While NGO staff do sometimes undertake a cursory consultative process, there is insufficient communication to explain if and how community requests end up reflected in programme planning. Refugees are unclear whether agencies' priorities are simply pre-identified—the legacies of a cookie-cutter approach in which identical programming is carried out across different humanitarian responses globally—or whether they do indeed have the right to voice their needs and have them responded to. They



Rohingya refugees living in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar experience a sense of indignity for various reasons.

PHOTO: REUTERS/MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN

want to know that NGOs recognise them as dignified human beings, instead of as passive beneficiaries of aid.

NGOs face many unavoidable limitations in regard to their work with Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, such as the short time span allotted for aid projects, inadequate funding, donor demands, and a shortage of human resources. Despite these, respectful treatment should be placed at the heart of conversations around accountability of humanitarians to the affected population. Fortunately, matters of dignity and respect

can always be addressed regardless of these restrictions. Humanitarian agencies can ensure that all staff are equipped with these soft skills as a matter of principle.

Rohingya respondents consulted by the CPJ volunteers emphasised specific social, religious and economic dimensions of dignity. Many of them view formal, polite speech and greetings as expressions of dignity. For instance, according to one Rohingya youth, "You don't need to give us a million dollars to make us happy... just soft behaviour and communication,

with empathy and emotional support." Community members widely complained that field-level staff such as security guards sometimes shout at, verbally abuse and even physically hit refugees with sticks. This often happens in an effort to control crowds waiting in food ration distribution queues or at hospitals.

As a result, refugees—including those who are highly esteemed within their own community, such as elders and teachers—often feel insulted and demotivated to engage with humanitarian agencies to receive further services. The resulting lack of trust is compounded by a sense of resentment that arises as people see NGO staff holding higher social status, earning good salaries, and displaying wealth in the form of vehicles, clothes and equipment. Numerous camp residents have expressed to CPJ volunteers that they feel used by NGOs as a means to personal and organisational enrichment.

For the Rohingya, dignity is also linked with religious and cultural practices. Several respondents said that women's conservative lifestyle of staying inside the home is a matter of prestige. Thus, many camp residents say they would prefer gender-segregated queues during rations distributions. In instances where international norms around gender equity do not mesh well with traditional cultural norms, such as women being required to receive aid directly to ensure equitable distribution, these differences can and should be clearly explained to those who receive services by the responsible agencies.

Rohingya respondents also frequently complained about perceived poor treatment in camp health facilities. They explain that a patient's dignity is affected by the doctor or nurse's style of communication and the amount of time that he or she spends talking

to a patient, listening with empathy and fostering a comforting interaction. Many Rohingya women also hesitate to receive medical treatment from male doctors. Again, women sometimes feel disrespected if they have to wait in queues with men to receive medical services.

The task of feeding and protecting nearly a million Rohingya, a population larger than that of Bhutan and many Western countries, is not a small one, and over 100 Bangladeshi and international NGOs are working from dawn to dusk across the 34 camps to uplift the lives of refugees. Despite their complaints, Rohingya do show ample gratitude to the government of Bangladesh and its people for their incredible support. A cookie-cutter approach was useful in the early stages of the humanitarian response, but a more responsive situational approach is now needed which is more conducive to meeting the expressed needs and preferences of the Rohingya.

The nature of authoritativeness and power distance between the NGO staff and beneficiaries, and bias due to stereotypes, prejudice and preconceived perceptions against the Rohingya, leads to discrimination that should be proactively addressed by those with the power to do so. Finally, while CPJ has not yet studied the ways in which similar dynamics transpire between host community beneficiaries and humanitarian actors, this is an additional area that should be addressed in the interest of overhauling asymmetrical power issues affecting dignity and respect across the aid response in Cox's Bazar.

Azizul Hoque is a Research Associate and Jessica Olney is a Visiting Researcher at the Centre for Peace and Justice, BRAC University. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the centre or the university.

QUOTABLE Quote

CONFUCIUS
Chinese philosopher (551 BC-479 BC)

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	30 Battery part	5 Derby prize
1 Court player	33 Way off	6 Frying mess
6 Wise ones	34 Buddy	7 Jason's ship
11 - acids	36 Pi follower	8 Italian designer
12 Use a press	37 Tall wardrobe	9 Is jealous of
13 Emotional states	39 Spotted	10 Place
14 Tequila source	40 Long for	17 Blue
15 Goof	41 Not dozing	22 Links number
16 Latvia neighbor	43 Copier need	24 Rent out
18 Fall back	44 Track horse	26 Some swords
19 Popped down	45 Mixes up	28 Prop for Bugs
20 Homer's neighbor	46 Lock	29 Paving stuff
21 Faux pas	DOWN	31 Diner drinks
23 Sub shops	1 Caravan critters	32 Castle parts
25 Crew tool	2 Unconcerned	33 Almanac contents
27 Gun, as a motor	with ethics	35 Bounded
28 Rock unit	3 Italian designer	38 Finished
	4 Stop	42 Combat

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	P	A	S	S	T	O	P	S	
A	R	C	H	S	T	U	D	I	O
P	E	T	A	L	A	N	D	E	D
S	P	I	T	T	A	K	E		
C	A	P	E	R	S		B	E	N
U	S	E	R	S		P	I	L	E
T	I	E		B	I	C	E	P	S
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

COVER STORY

THE LOVE OF MUSIC

Pinto Ghosh and his wife Shukonna Mazumder Ghosh had already proven their musical talents with their own respective music careers, but with the 'Tomake Chai' track, they proved that they can be just as good when working together. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the dynamic duo talks about how they met and their careers.



Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored with Rafi Hossain*. Today, we are joined by two extremely talented musicians, Pinto Ghosh and Shukonna Mazumder Ghosh. Their music is very popular among music lovers nowadays. Pinto and Shukonna, thank you for giving us your time.

Pinto Ghosh: Thank you so much for having us. We are very happy to be here and talk to you.

Rafi: How did you two come together? Did you know each other before?

Shukonna Ghosh: I was once on a reality show where I got the chance to sing with Chirkutt, and that was where I first met Pinto. During that time, both of our families were looking for someone for us to marry, so we told our parents about each other and that is how we got together. What really brought us together was our love for music. I was a very cynical person when I was younger, and I never would have believed that I could ever fall in love with someone. I was very interested with the kind of music he was involved with, so that made me more interested in him. We would talk a lot, but it was as if we never ran out of topics to talk about. We always talked about music. Even now, we talk about music most of the time.

Pinto Ghosh: At that time, I was facing a lot of pressure from my family to get married. So, I decided that if I must marry, I should marry someone who is a right fit for me. For me, the most important thing in life is music. I spend most of my waking hours being involved with music. There have even been instances where I forgot to eat because I was practising music. So, I needed someone who would understand that, and also be like that. That is why I felt that Shukonna was a right fit for me, and once we started our life together, I knew that I had made the right choice.

Rafi: Now that you both have shown the audience that you can make amazing songs together, will this limit you both from expanding your horizon?

Shukonna: No, absolutely not. We have never felt

that just because we made something amazing together, it should limit us. We will still continue to work with other amazing musicians and continue expanding our horizons. There are many rumors circulating about how I will not do playbacks with other singers, but that is absolutely not true. I am even working on some songs with Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb currently. We have some differences in the types of music we make, and I want to continue working with what I prefer making. The same goes for him here. He is also working on some projects, and his work will appear on *Bishwo Shundori* which I did not sing. So, we both are going to continue working with other people. However, I must add that when we made *Tomake Chai* for the film *Fagun Haway*, I never expected to receive such love from audience. I am very grateful to everyone that told me how much they loved the



song and also to the people who are listening to it.

Pinto: We are together, but we like to keep our work lives separate. About the song we did for *Fagun Haway*, it is an interesting story. I made a demo for the song from home and gave it to the filmmaker Tauquir Ahmed. He really liked the song, and I even told him that I should try some other vocalists with it, but he was adamant that I do it in the style of the demo with Shukonna.

Rafi: Pinto, what was the first movie that you gave your music to?

Pinto: I first did the background score for *Dub Satar* by Nurul Alam Atique. I also did the background score for *Manpara*. Aside from these, I also did playback for some FDC based films. I have been fortunate enough to do the music for many other films. I was the music director in *Ochena Hridoy*, which was also Shukonna's debut of having her song on a film.

Rafi: What was the first song that brought you to the spotlight, Pinto?

Pinto: It is a very funny story. The first song I made

Please promote Bangla music, and especially the Bangla songs which you enjoy. I would request people to share Bangladeshi songs more than songs from other countries.

which gained popularity was actually stolen from me. This was back in 2006 or 2007, and I was making a song for a film. The whole team of the film was a lot of newcomers, including myself. So, when the film went into postproduction, it took us around two years to finish. During that time, the song which I made was already released, and a lot of people had heard it and made covers of it. People thought that it was by an Indian artist, and since we did not know much about copyrights, someone else came and claimed the song. I did not know how to handle those things back then. I was very hurt at the time. What hurt the most was that the person who stole it never mentioned my name, and just recorded the whole thing in their own voice. However, when the film was released on YouTube, I saw that the song on it was the version I made. My journey in music has been filled with ups and downs. So, whenever someone asks me to tell my story, I am always a little confused as to how I should say it.

Rafi: Do you have any final message for the readers?

Pinto: I am very grateful to those who have continued to support me over the years and will continue to support me. Please promote Bangla music, and especially the Bangla songs which you enjoy. I would request people to share Bangladeshi songs more than songs from other countries. If we share good content on social media, more people will find good Bangla songs, and that will help the music scene in our country. Since a lot of music is released nowadays, people might not find many good Bangla songs. So, please support Bangladeshi music by spreading good songs. I also want to ask people to take care of their health, especially since we are in a global pandemic now.

Shukonna: I will also ask everyone to take care of themselves and their families. Please take care of your hearing, as musicians like us who work to give you entertainment need you to listen to our music. So, please make sure not to expose your ears to loud noises. I also want to ask everyone to support our music. We are living in a very difficult time now, so please take care of yourselves, and keep on fighting.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

GRAPE VINE

Bappy at the end of the year



At the end of the year, actor Bappy Chowdhury is set to begin shooting for his new film, *Give and Take*. The film is being directed by Apurba Rana, and the screenplay is being done by Ferari Farhad. Starring alongside Bappy are actors Adhora Khan and Bipasha Kabir. Bappy said, "I will be playing a deranged person in this movie. It has a very modern story; it can be classified as a romantic thriller with elements of horror in it." Aside from this, Bappy is awaiting the release of another film, *Priyo Komola*, which also stars Apu Biswas.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Faria Shahrin as Mona Lisa

Model and actor Faria Shahrin will soon be seen on some dramas which are being made. Among the dramas she will appear on, one is titled *Mona Lisa*. She will be acting alongside Manoj Pramanik in this drama. The screenplay is done by Ahmed Farooq and it is directed by Kazi Saif Ahmed. It will be released this coming Valentine's Day. Aside from those, Faria Shahrin is also busy shooting for a television series, *Bachelor's Point*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



The film *Mission Extreme* could not be released last Eid-ul-Fitr due to the COVID-19 outbreak, but now, a new release date has been set for the film. A poster was released for the action-thriller that showed that the movie will be released on this upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr. The story and screenplay are written by Sunny Sanwar who is also co-directing the film alongside Faisal Ahmed. The cast for the film includes Sadia Nabila, Arifin Shuvoov, Iresh Zaker and Fazlur Rahman Babu, alongside many others. Arifin Shuvoov said, "After a long-time people are starting to come back to the cinema halls. I think that once *Mission Extreme* is released, it will cause more people to return to theatres."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

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

The flight attendant

The Flight Attendant is a comedy-drama miniseries, aired on November 26, 2020 on HBO Max. It was developed by Steve Yocke, produced by Erika Kennair, Jennifer Lence and Raymond Quinlan under the banners of *Berlanti Productions*, *Yes, Norman Productions* and *Warner Bros. Television Studios*, and stars Kaley Cuoco, Michiel Huisman and Zosia Mamet, among others. The series, which is based on the eponymous novel by Chris Bohjalian, follows the events that unfold after a flight attendant wakes up in an unknown hotel with a dead man. Could she be the killer?



THE CROODS: A NEW AGE

The Croods: A New Age is an animated adventure-comedy film, directed by Joel Crawford, produced by Mark Swift under the banner of *DreamWorks Animation*, distributed by *Universal Pictures*, and stars the voices of Nicolas Cage, Emma Stone and Ryan

Reynolds, among others. A sequel to *The Croods* (2013), the storyline follows the lives of the prehistoric Croods family and their bitter rivalry with another family, the Bettermans, who claim to be more evolved. It was first released on November 25, 2020 in theatres.

Andhaghaaram

Andhaghaaram is a Tamil supernatural-horror film, following the lives of three men who realise that they may be connected after mysterious supernatural events occur surrounding them. It was written and directed by V. Vignarajan, produced by Priya Atlee, Sudhan Sundaram and Jayaram under the banners of *A for Apple*, *Passion Studios* and *O2 Pictures*, and stars Arjun Das, Vinoth Kishan and Kumar Natarajan, among others. It was aired on Netflix on November 24, 2020.

Amina Hossain





Saif Sporting Club players celebrate one of their three goals against Arambagh during their Walton Federation Cup fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Saif SC see off Baridhara

SPORTS REPORTER



Title aspirant Saif SC began their Federation Cup campaign in fine fashion with an emphatic 3-0 win over lightweights Uttar Baridhara Club in the Group B opener at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Saif SC might posted what seemed an easy triumph based on the scoreline, but they faced a stiff challenge and they kept at bay for 48 minutes before a suicidal mistake from Baridhara -- perhaps a consequence of just 10 days of practice ahead of the tournament -- handed them the breakthrough.

The youthful Saif SC team, featuring three to four national players, dominated pre-season discussions after vibrant performances in warm-up matches against Sheikh Russel, Mohammedan and Bangladesh Police. However, they found the going tough in their first competitive match under Belgian coach Paul Put.

Saif SC, playing in a 4-1-2-3 formation, tried to penetrate from the flanks, with left-back Rahmat Mia and right-back Yeasin Arafat delivering numerous crosses that were fended

off effortlessly by Baridhara's Egyptian defender Abdel Rahim.

Coach Zahidur Rahman Milon saw his side go close to taking the lead twice in the first half but Saif SC goalkeeper Pappu Hossain denied Uzbek midfielder Evgeniy Kochnev in the 21st minute while Sujon Biswas tumbled inside the box after receiving a nice cut-back from Egypt's Abdel Khalek Hammad and let a scoring chance

SCORE	
ARAMBAGH 2-0 BROTHERS UNION	
CHIZOBA CHRISTOPHER 44	
MURAD HOSSAIN 90	
SAIF SC 3-0 UTTAR BARIDHARA CLUB	
ABDEL RAHIM (OG) 49	
KECHUKWU NGWOKE-63	
FAISAL AHMED FAHIM-68	

pass him by two minutes from the break.

"First of all, we could not maintain the tempo that we have seen during training session. So I found my players were not that good," Put said. "After the break, I briefed them to have patience and changed the tactics to expose the opponent's backline. We dominated the second half and had 70 to 75 per cent possession. We

were also a bit lucky to get an own goal from the opponents. Still we have a long way to go and it is always important to have a good start."

Saif SC gained a stranglehold in the second half and Abdel Rahim bundled into his own net while attempting to clear a low cross from Saif SC's Uzbek midfielder Sirojuddin Rakhmatullaev four minutes into the second half.

Instead of whipping in crosses as they had been doing, Saif SC employed crisp passing while inviting their opponents to press and effectively exploited the spaces left behind.

Nigeria's Ikechukwu Ngwoke collected the ball near the halfway line and made a daunting run into the box before firing a powerful shot past goalkeeper Azad Hossain in the 63rd minute before Faisal Ahmed Fahim ran into the box down the left and found the inside of the near post to ensure victory in the 68th minute.

In the day's second match, Arambagh posted a 2-0 win over Brothers Union, courtesy of strikes from Murad Hossain Chowdhury and Nigeria's Chizoba Christopher.

Brothers, who came into the tournament on the back of just two days of preparation, could have left the field with a point but the forwards squandered a few good chances.

MESSI MARVELS AT OWN RECORD

AFP, MADRID



LaLiga

Lionel Messi beat Pele's record of goals for a single club when he scored his 644th for Barcelona in a 3-0 victory against Valladolid on Tuesday.

The Argentina forward scored Barca's third goal when he collected Pele's backheel and struck the ball past goalkeeper Jordi Masip in the 65th minute.

"When I started playing football I never thought I would break any records. And even less the one I achieved today," Messi posted on Instagram shortly after the game.

"I can only thank all those who helped me over the years, my teammates, my family, my friends and all those who support me every day."

Messi had equalled Pele on Saturday in a 2-2 draw with Valencia. The two men scored at almost an equal rate for their clubs.

It was the 33-year-old Argentine's 749th competitive match for Barca, meaning he has scored a goal every 1.16 games. The Brazilian scored 643 goals in 757 matches with Santos, where he played between 1956 and 1974, or one every 1.17 matches.

"Like you, I know what it's like to love wearing the same shirt every day. Like you, I know that there is nothing better than the place we feel at home," Pele wrote to Messi on Instagram after the Argentine tied the record.

"Congratulations on your historic record, Lionel. But above all, congratulations on your beautiful career at Barcelona. Stories like ours, of loving the same club for so long, unfortunately will be increasingly rare in football. I admire you very much."

Messi, a six-time Ballon d'Or winner, is by far the highest scorer in Barca history (Cesar Rodriguez is next on 230 goals), the highest scorer in the history of the Spanish league championship (451 goals, ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo's 311), and the player who has won the most trophies with the Catalan club (34, including four Champions Leagues).

"I see Messi happy. He is working hard, and he is a very important part of our attacking game," said Koeman after the win. Pele claims to have scored more than a thousand goals, counting all the matches he played, official and unofficial.

MOST GOALS FOR A SINGLE CLUB

Lionel Messi (Barcelona)	644
Pele (FC Santos)	643
Gerd Muller (Bayern Munich)	565
Fernando Peyroteo (Sporting CP)	544
Josef Bican (Slavia Prague)	534
Jimmy McGroarty (Celtic)	522
Jimmy Jones (Glenavon)	517
Uwe Seeler (Hamburg)	507
Eusebio (Benfica)	473
Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)	450



Ronaldo, Bonucci apologise for 'worst' of season

AFP, MILAN



Cristiano Ronaldo and Leonardo Bonucci on Wednesday apologised to Juventus fans for the "worst" performance of the season as the Italian champions' fell to their first Serie A defeat this term against lowly Fiorentina.

The 'Bianconeri' played most of the match a man down after Juan Cuadrado was sent off after quarter of an hour in their Allianz Stadium, losing 3-0 to the Tuscan side who are 15th after ending an eight-match winless run.

"The worst Juventus of this first part of the season. I apologise to the fans in my name, first of all. There is nothing to add," defender Bonucci wrote on Instagram.

Ronaldo blasted "a far from acceptable result" as the Portuguese star failed to add to his Serie A-leading tally of 12 league goals so far. "Yesterday, with a poor performance and a far from acceptable result we closed our scheduled games for 2020, a special year in many ways," said the five-time Ballon d'Or winner

on Instagram. "Empty stadiums, COVID protocols, postponed games, long stoppages and a very tight calendar.

"But this is no excuse for anything. We know that we have to give more of ourselves, in order to play better and to win in a more consistent way. "We are Juventus! And we simply cannot accept anything less than excellence on the pitch!"

"I hope this short stoppage may help us to come back stronger and more united than ever, because the season is still far from over and in the end we believe that we will, once again, celebrate with our fans.

"Believe in us, trust our team as much as we trust you, and we will deliver! Fino Alla Fine!" The defeat came hours after the nine-time reigning Serie A champions learned they must play the match against Napoli which was cancelled on October 4 after the southerners decided not to travel to Turin because of coronavirus cases.

Napoli won their appeal to the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) after being handed a 3-0 defeat and a one-point deduction.



Juventus defender Matthijs de Ligt is on the ground as Fiorentina players celebrate one of their three goals at the Allianz Stadium in Turin on Tuesday. PHOTO: TWITTER

Saifuddin hoping latest injury mends before WI series

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh

pace-bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin's fledgling career, and the latest setback is a ligament injury from which he is currently recovering.

The 24-year-old suffered an ankle injury ahead of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup while training, but managed to make a comeback in the middle of the tournament for Minister Rajshahi.

However, the cricketer from Feni has been struggling with his ligament despite recovering from the ankle injury and an MRI showed that Saifuddin has injured the ligament on his right leg. The cricketer currently going through a rehabilitation programme will be under the

observation of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's medical team for three weeks.

"I was in the bio-secure bubble during the Bangabandhu T20 Cup which is the reason I couldn't do the MRI then. So, after doing the MRI it was found that there are some issues



in my ligament. Usually the pain [from an ankle injury] goes away after a week, but since I was still experiencing pain after that, I thought there may be some issues. I am doing my rehabilitation programme,"

Saifuddin told reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

The cricketer, however, will have to undergo a fitness and bowling test ahead of the three-match ODI series against the West Indies, who are scheduled to arrive in Bangladesh on January 10. "Obviously I am hopeful of making it for the upcoming three-match ODI series against the West Indies. But I have to go through the fitness and bowling test and only if everything goes well, will I get the green signal to play the series," he added.

The pace-bowling all-rounder, who has been injury-prone from a very early age, looked for inspiration at the examples of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Rubel Hossain, who managed to overcome numerous injury hurdles and represent Bangladesh for a long time in international cricket.

Navy ease into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Star-studded Bangladesh Navy made it three wins out of three with a 5-3 win over Bangladesh Army in the Victory Day Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The win eased Navy into the final with a match in hand against Sonali Bank, who also raised their hopes of qualifying for the final with a 4-0 win over Bangladesh Police.

Ashrafur Islam slotted a treble for Navy, who also saw Mahbub Hossain and Abed Uddin scoring one goal apiece. Abdul Malek, Ahsan Habib and Monoj Babu netted one goal each for Bangladesh Army.

Warner, Abbott out of 2nd Test

AFP, Sydney



Star Australian batsman David Warner will miss the Boxing Day Test against India after failing to shake off the groin injury that kept him out of the opening fixture, Cricket Australia said Wednesday.

The governing body said Warner and paceman Sean Abbott had also been excluded from the Australian team's bio-secure bubble in Melbourne as a precaution due to a Covid-19 outbreak in their hometown Sydney.

"While neither player has been in a specific hotspot as outlined by NSW Health, Cricket Australia's bio-security protocols do not allow them to rejoin the squad in time for the Boxing Day Test," it said.

The second Test against India starts at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 26 and the teams have been training in bio-secure bubbles.

Warner and Abbott flew to Melbourne on Saturday hoping to avoid quarantine issues arising from the Sydney Covid-19

outbreak.

But the team's Covid-19 protocols prevented them from joining the squad in time for the Test, and Cricket Australia said Warner would not have recovered from in time anyway..



No captaincy thoughts for Markram

REUTERS, JOHANNESBURG

Aiden Markram must first cement his place in the side before he can realise his dream of captaining South Africa, though the opening batsman feels refreshed ahead of a two-test home series against Sri Lanka that starts on Boxing Day.

Markram, 26, was earmarked early in his career as a future test captain, but the poor form in a turbulent 18 months where he lost his place in the side means he is back to square one and looking to reignite his career.

White-ball skipper Quinton de Kock has agreed to lead the test team for the 2020-21 international season until a long-term appointment can be made, and Markram is concentrating only on scoring runs before thinking of anything else.

"In terms of captaincy, it is something I really enjoy doing, but I have not put much focus on that," Markram told reporters on Wednesday.

"I am playing for my spot again, so for me to be thinking about the captaincy is certainly not on my radar. I haven't been good enough over the past 18 months."

The tall opener scored exactly 1,000 runs in his first 10 tests, averaging 55.55, but managed just 424 in the next 10 at 22.31 with no centuries.

"I played a lot of cricket where I was struggling, so I didn't have time to reflect on things that maybe worked in the past and just slow things down," he said.



আবাস বাংলাদেশ!



MATARBARI POWER PLANT
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PROUD
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PARTNER



INTER-DISTRICT BUSES Govt plans 4 terminals on city fringes

Aims to cut traffic jam by phasing out Gabtoli, Mohakhali, Sayedabad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has primarily selected four sites on the periphery of the capital to set up four bus terminals to stop inter-district buses from entering the city.

After setting up these four terminals, it will phase out the three existing inter-district terminals at Mohakhali, Gabtoli and Sayedabad, which will become city bus terminals under the new system.

The four new terminals will be built at Savar's Birulia and Hemayetpur, Keraniganj's Teghria and at Kanchpur.

The move was made to stop inter-district buses from entering Dhaka city, which worsens the traffic congestion, said the two city corporation mayors while visiting one of the spots in Savar yesterday.

With an aim to increase discipline in the capital's public transport, the government in 2018 had formed a 10-member bus route rationalisation committee to bring all public buses under a fixed number of companies.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Trash collectors dumping waste collected from nearby households at a roadside ditch in Beribandh area of the capital's Hazaribagh. As piles of garbage fill up the yard, a lot of the waste is burned, which causes air pollution. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Partex Group chairman MA Hashem passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MA Hashem, eminent industrialist and founder of Partex Group, passed away early today.

He was 78. The former member of parliament had been in critical condition and undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka since December 16 after testing positive for Covid-19.

He breathed his last at 1:20am, said Arif Mahmud, head of medical service of Evercare Hospital Ltd.

His son Aziz Al Kaiser also confirmed the demise of the entrepreneur who built industries in several sectors since he began his journey as a businessman at the beginning of 1960.



Scientists achieve quantum teleportation



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Quantum teleportation - sending qubits of photons through a fiber-optic cable - has been demonstrated by researchers for the first time.

The achievement could be used to develop a quantum internet service, which would revolutionise data storage and computing; scientists also claim it will usher in a new era of communication.

Scientists sent qubits through 44 kilometers of fiber-optic network with a 90 percent degree of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Work to establish a happy society: Bangabandhu

December 24, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

SWADHIN BANGLA BETAR WORKERS' ROLE LAUDED

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today makes a fervent appeal to all to work for the establishment of a happy and exploitation-free society on the ashes left by the enemy. He says the lakhs of shaheeds of the Liberation War would never come back. But those toiling people who survived the war must be enabled to enjoy the fruits of independence. He asks all to work in

this spirit.

The prime minister speaks at a function at the Gono Bhaban organised by the Swadhin Bangla Betar Karmi Samity, a body of artists, announcers and others who had been connected with the Swadhin Bangla Betar, which used to operate from Mujibnagar during the months of the Liberation War. Appreciating their role in the Liberation War, Bangabandhu says in an



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Farmers fear crop loss as cold spell lingers on

STAR REPORT

As the cold spell lingers on, farmers are in fear of incurring losses because their crops might be affected by the bitter cold.

Now, they are applying different tactics to protect their crops, specially Boro seedlings and potato.

"I keep my entire seedbeds covered with clothes or polythene at night and uncover these when the sun is visible," said Animesh Barman, a farmer of Thakurbathina village in Thakurgoan Sadar upazila.

He has prepared the seedbeds on five decimals of land.

"We will have to do it until the weather improves. If the cold spell lingers on, it will be difficult for us to protect the seedlings," said Shahidul Islam, another farmer of Panditpara village of the same upazila.

"We have to spray

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

KSA'S SUDDEN FLIGHT BAN 100 Bangladeshis sent back from Abu Dhabi Airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 100 Bangladeshi workers heading to Saudi Arabia were forced to return from Abu Dhabi Monday night following the sudden decision of the Saudi government to suspend all international flights, including to and from Dhaka.

According to the workers, they were flying to Saudi Arabia via Abu Dhabi from Dhaka on Sunday, Shariful Hasan, head of Brac migration programme, said yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

US under siege from Covid-19

Hospitals overwhelmed before holidays as Trump rejects Covid relief bill

AGENCIES

Americans were warned again not to travel for Christmas as the latest Covid-19 surge left hospitals struggling to find beds for the sick and political leaders imposed restrictions to try to curb new infections, making for a grim holiday season.

A new, even more contagious variant of the coronavirus quickly spreading across Britain caused more fear in Americans already weary from nine months of the pandemic and prompted talks among top

US officials to ban travel from the United Kingdom.

The United States is already grappling with a nationwide spike in infections that added more than a million new cases in just six days, according to a Reuters tally, a total of more than 18 million since the pandemic began.

In California, an epicenter of the latest surge, intensive care unit (ICU) beds were scarce and hospitals said they lacked enough doctors and nurses to care for patients.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

BSF kills another Bangladeshi amid zero killing talks

STAR REPORT

India's Border Security Force shot dead a Bangladeshi citizen along the border in Mymensingh Tuesday night while the director general of the force was participating in a conference with their Bangladeshi counterparts where the top agenda was to stop border killings.

Khairul Islam, 40, the man who was killed, was a cattle trader of Gubrakura village in Haluaghat, Mymensingh, reports our correspondent in the district.

Khairul was shot in Gubrakura area along the border by BSF personnel patrolling near the international border pillar 1124 around 8:30pm, according to police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Today is the 47th Death Anniversary of Begum Firdaus Rizvi

We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember her in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of her soul

PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 24

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
5-25	12-45	3-45	5-24	7-00	
JAMAAT	6-00	1-15	4-00	5-27	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের এপিএস প্রকল্পের আওতায় প্রণীত "কিশোর-কিশোরী বিষয়ক জাতীয় কৌশল পত্র" এর খসড়াটির বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ভার্সন জনমতের জন্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট <https://mowca.gov.bd>-তে ১৩/০১/২০২১ তারিখ পর্যন্ত আপলোড থাকবে। আপনার মূল্যবান মতামত এই E-mail: apc.mowca@gmail.com ঠিকানায় প্রেরণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

Branch Opening

BANANI 11 BRANCH

www.ucb.com.bd

Journey towards prosperity UCB is now at Banani 11

UCB with its 200th branch, is going to start the journey from today, December 24, 2020 at Banani 11. We are looking forward to serve you with all modern banking facilities. We cordially welcome you to our new branch to experience the difference.

Mr. Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Land, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will inaugurate the branch as **Chief Guest**.

Mr. Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Chairman, Executive Committee, United Commercial Bank Limited will attend as **Special Guest**.

Address:
AWR NIB Tower,
Bir Uttam Khadimul Bashar Sarak,
Ward No: 19, Dhaka North City Corporation,
Banani 11, Dhaka.

UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK LIMITED **UCB**