

## Jeremy Corbyn is like Stalin

Says UK PM as he starts polls campaign

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's election campaign launch was marred by the resignation of one of his ministers, a gaffe about the victims of a deadly tower blaze and a doctored video of an opponent released by his party.

Johnson called a snap Dec. 12 election in a bid to break the Brexit deadlock that he says has paralysed Britain for more than three years and had started to undermine confidence in the world's fifth largest economy.

But just an hour after meeting Queen Elizabeth to formally begin the election campaign, Johnson's minister for Wales, Alun Cairns, resigned after being accused of lying about his knowledge about an aide who allegedly sabotaged a rape trial.

At the start of the campaign, Johnson's Conservatives enjoy a lead over the opposition Labour Party of between 7 and 17 percentage points, though pollsters warn that their models are wilting beside the Brexit furnace.

"Let's get Brexit done," Johnson, 55, said outside his Downing Street official residence, adding that Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn would bring yet more turmoil with fresh referendums on EU membership and Scottish independence.

"Come with us, get Brexit done and take this country forward, or, and this is the alternative next year, spend the whole of 2020 in a horror show of yet more dither and delay," he said.

Johnson said Corbyn hated wealth and was thus like Soviet leader Josef Stalin - who sent millions to their deaths in labour camps. Corbyn said such remarks were "nonsense" that the super-rich came up with to avoid paying more tax.

Earlier, Conservative Party Chairman James Cleverly spent the morning defending distributing a doctored video clip of a rival Labour Party politician instead of touting Johnson's election campaign launch.

Another prominent Conservative, Jacob Rees-Mogg, apologised on Tuesday after he suggested that victims of the blaze at London's Grenfell Tower should have used common sense to ignore firefighters' instructions to stay in the burning building.

## Editors

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editors have received this honour all four times since the journalist category was introduced.

Both the editors are also publishers of the newspapers.

Apart from the individual taxpayer, out of the four top taxpaying companies in the print and electronic media category, three are linked with Transcom Group: Prothom Alo owner Mediastar, The Daily Star's owning company Mediaworld Ltd and the printer of the dailies Transcraft Ltd.

East West Media Group Ltd is another of the highest taxpayer in the category.

The dailies Bangladesh Pratidin, Kaler Kantha and The Daily Sun are published from East West Media group Ltd. The media organisation also has a private television channel, a radio and an online news portal.

This year NBR is honouring 76 top taxpayers in different professional categories and 67 organisations. The NBR made the list evaluating last year's tax return submission.

## Climate deal

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"We advocate for openness, inclusion and for mutually beneficial cooperation, and are opposed to protectionism and a zero-sum game."

China's efforts against climate change are key as it is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Xi also called on the international community to "jointly protect our homeland planet Earth", saying "we are against the attempt to place national interests above the common interests of humanity".

In a document titled the "Beijing Call for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change", the two leaders voiced their determination to improve international cooperation to "ensure a complete and efficient implementation of the Paris accord".

The document includes a commitment to restoring almost a third of degraded land as well as eliminating fossil fuel subsidies in the medium term.

On Iran, Macron said the two countries agreed to deepen joint efforts to convince Tehran to "fully respect its obligations" under the 2015 nuclear deal with major powers.

Washington's abandonment of the agreement in May last year followed by its reimposition of crippling sanctions prompted Tehran to begin a phased suspension of its own commitments.

President Hassan Rouhani said Tuesday that Iran would resume uranium enrichment at an underground plant south of Tehran -- a move Macron decried as "grave".



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping following a signing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## KL to reopen labour market

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agent in Dhaka said migrant workers go through medical tests twice -- once in Bangladesh and another in Malaysia. If any worker is found medically unfit in Malaysia, he is deported.

A good number of the Bangladeshis who go to Malaysia face deportation due to double medical tests. The decision of medical tests once at home from that perspective is praiseworthy, he added.

Labour migration experts say it appears to be a good progress on labour recruitment in Malaysia, especially as the two countries spoke on social and financial protection of migrants.

However, they warn that there should not be any rush as the experience of labour recruitment in Malaysia from Bangladesh has been bitter time and again.

Only 10 Bangladeshi recruiting agents were authorised by the Malaysian government under G2G Plus deal in 2016 to recruit workers. The initial recruitment cost was fixed

at Tk 40,000, but it went up to Tk 4 lakh.

The agencies were selected by the then Malaysian government without providing any basis, though Bangladesh had proposed the names of 745 recruiting agencies.

Dato Amin or Datuk Seri Mohd Amin Bin Abdul Nor, who was granted Malaysian permanent resident status, was the Bangladeshi man considered to be a major player in this industry.

Before that, a G2G deal was signed in 2012. Under it, only 10,000 workers could secure jobs in Malaysia allegedly because powerful lobbies in both the countries opposed the deal. Also, Malaysia then allowed recruitment of workers only in the plantation sector -- something that was not preferred by the Bangladeshis.

Earlier in 2006-08, migration cost was set at Tk 84,000, but it went up to Tk 2 lakh. More than four lakh Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia that time, but joblessness, underpayment and non-payment of wages had led to recruitment freeze

in early 2009.

"Migrants should not be the centre of experiment in Malaysia," said independent migration expert Asif Munier, adding that the two countries must work out a very strong agreement that serves the migrants' interests.

Bangladesh and its people have been the victims of previous anomalies, and Dhaka has to be very cautious about any new deal, he said.

According to the ILO convention on migrant labour, workers should not bear any cost for a job abroad. That's what is being promoted across the globe, and Bangladesh also should go for that, Asif added.

Andy Hall, a UK expert on Nepal-Malaysia and Bangladesh-Malaysia migration corridor, said Nepal inked a labour recruitment deal with Malaysia last year, stipulating that the employers would pay all the cost required for labour recruitment.

"Bangladesh also should follow the same," said Hall, who lives in Nepal, over phone.

## Mad rush for updating docs

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August last year.

Mohammad Morshedul Alam, assistant director of BRTA, said it was a positive sign that people were visiting their office to keep the documents up to date.

"As the penalties were nominal under the previous law, many did not care much about it. But people are now crowding our office as they fear that they might face tough penalties," he told The Daily Star.

He had to spend almost three hours to get his job done.

Under the new Road Transport Act, the maximum penalty for driving without a licence is six months' jail or a fine of Tk 25,000 or both. The punishment will apply in a case for running an unfit vehicle. Under the previous law, the maximum fine for the offence was only Tk 500.

Jahangir Alam, who has been a driver for about 15 years, said the provisions of fines in the new law were "illogical". "I earn Tk 15,000 a month. How will I maintain my family if the police fine me Tk 10,000?"

"At times, the manual signals of the traffic policemen at the city's roundabouts cannot be noticed. Police will fine us even if we move the vehicles a few yards ahead at the intersections unintentionally.... What will we do if they fine us under the new law?" said a worried Jahangir.

Another driver Milon went to the BRTA office to get the fitness certificate and digital number plate of a car. Expressing worries over the provisions of fines in the new law, he said, "May be we will have no other option but to stop driving cars and start pulling rickshaws."

He had to spend more than five hours at the office to get his job done.

licence as he lost the old one three months ago.

He said police fined him twice in the last three months for driving car without a licence, but he did not care much as the fine was nominal.

"The maximum fine is now Tk 25,000. I am not capable of paying such a big amount. So I took a one-day leave from the office to collect my licence," he told The Daily Star.

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## Voyager 2 charts interstellar space

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"As it moves through the interstellar medium" -- the vast expanses of space between stellar fields -- "there's a wave in front, just as with the bow of a ship," Stone told journalists by phone.

Scientists hoped to answer a number of questions by comparing data sent back by the two probes, which pierced the Sun's protective bubble at different angles and locations.

"We didn't have any good quantitative data of how big this bubble is that the Sun creates around itself with supersonic solar wind and ionised plasma speeding away in all directions," Stone said.

Voyager 2 confirmed, for example, the existence of a "magnetic barrier" at the outer edge of the heliosphere that had been predicted by theory and observed by Voyager 1.

"But contrary to all expectations and predictions, the magnetic field direction did not change when Voyager 2 crossed the heliopause," Leonard Burlaga, a scientist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and lead researcher for one of the studies, told AFP.

The so-called heliopause is the relatively thin contact boundary where solar wind of charged particles and interstellar wind collide.

Scientists were also surprised that it took 80 days for Voyager 2 to cross this magnetic barrier, while its sister probe did so in less than a day.

And then there's the leakage enigma. As Voyager 1 crossed the heliosphere threshold, it detected particles from outer space -- notably cosmic rays -- racing the other way.

"On Voyager 2, it was just the opposite," said Stone. "Once we left the heliosphere, we continued to see particles leaking from the inside out."

In at least one case, it was a similarity between the two missions that was perplexing.

- Johnny B. Goode -

"This is very strange," said Tom Krimigis, a scientist in the Applied Physics Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University and senior author of a study reporting on measurements of charged particles.

"One crossing (of the heliopause) occurred at the solar minimum, when solar activity is the least, and the

## ACC sues

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of income.

The ACC also found that Rajib, councillor of ward-33 of Dhaka North City Corporation, has a duplex house, a five-storey, a three-storey and three four-storey buildings in the city's Mohammadia Housing Society area.

He spent about Tk 8.3 crore on these buildings, reads the First Information Report of the case. According to the FIR, Rajib owns a plot worth about Tk 60 lakh in Katusar of Mohammadpur. He also has moveable properties worth Tk 12.14 crore and eight cars worth around Tk 1.19 crore.

The enquiry officer found that the councillor, a former joint general secretary of Jubo League's Dhaka north unit, accumulated the wealth in only nine years.

The Rab had arrested him on October 19, eight days after picking up Councillor Habibur Rahman Mizan of ward-32.

Jubo League expelled Rajib following his arrest.

Yesterday, ACC Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Prodhan also filed another case against Mizan for amassing wealth worth Tk 30.16 crore beyond his known source of income.

Mizan spent Tk 18 crore for constructing three six-storey buildings in the city's Lalmaia. Besides, he owns an under-construction building near Swapnupuri Housing Complex.

"It was learnt that he spent Tk 19 crore to acquire the properties," reads the FIR of the case.

Besides, Mizan bought four flats in Mohammadpur for Tk 1.89 crore.

The accused is a former general secretary of Mohammadpur Thana Awami League.

The FIR says the councillor has moveable properties worth Tk 9.26 crore which were also amassed beyond his known source of income.

Misuse of power and amassing wealth illegally by some ward councillors came to light after the law enforcers launched a drive against illegal casino business recently.

## A 'carbon bomb'

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standards, while chromium was 8,025-18,675 times higher, according to the new report.

The coal ash pond also overflows onto cropland, contaminating food production areas, it says.

On the other hand, if the proposed 29 projects, most of which are located in three "power hubs" on the south coast at Payra, Matarbari and Maheshkhali, are built, the country's coal power capacity would increase by 63 times, the report mentions.

Once operational, the projects, which are either under construction or at a pre-construction stage at present with the capacity to generate 33,200 megawatts electricity together, will emit 115 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) annually by 2031, it said.

Such a level of CO2 emission would be higher than the upper emissions of 110 MtCO2 per year estimate for the "controversial" Keystone XL oil pipeline between Canada and the US, it added.

The 525 MW Barapukuria is much smaller than the 1,320 MW Payra, 1,200 MW Matarbari and 1,320 MW Rampal coal plants, which are currently under construction.

The Rampal plant continues to face mass protests, demanding a halt to its development as it threatens the World Heritage listed Sundarbans mangrove forest.

Also, 4,600 MtCO2 would be emitted through the operating lifetime of Bangladesh's proposed coal plants. This is 20 percent greater than the lifetime emissions from all of the currently operating coal plants in Japan, it added.

Furthermore, all of Bangladesh's coal-based projects are "inconsistent" with the Paris Agreement's climate goals of "limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius," the report says.

On the other hand, the September 2019 Prices estimated the cost of importing 61 metric tonnes per

annum of thermal coal as Bangladesh plans to do by 2041. The estimated cost would be \$2 billion annually, it adds.

During the fiscal 2018-19, the country experienced trade deficits of \$18 billion and \$16 billion respectively, it says, referring to media reports.

The pipeline plants would lock Bangladesh into a huge volume of coal imports for decades. Unless exports increase significantly, coal worth billions purchased from abroad would add to the trade deficit.

Bangladesh has jumped to sixth place from 12th in the last three years in the global ranking of coal power capacity in "active development", which includes coal plants in pre-construction and construction stages, it further says.

The report recommended that a clean, sustainable energy future is possible for Bangladesh, adding that of the 29 proposed projects, only 10 percent have progressed to construction.

Renewable energy can replace planned coal power projects as a lower cost alternative