

KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL PROJECT
Sad tale of delays, cost escalation
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The Daily Star

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BANGLADESH UPDATE **3,201** New cases in 24hrs **1,65,618** Total cases **2,096** Deaths **76,149** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **538,273** Deaths **11,639,449** Total cases

Fair price eludes boro farmers

So far, only 1pc could sell at govt-set price, finds a BIGD survey on 2,834 farm households

- ▶ Half the farmers got between Tk 701 and Tk 900 for a maund of paddy.
- ▶ 13% were forced to sell maund of paddy below Tk 600.
- ▶ Production costs increased by 13% this year.
- ▶ 43% of the farmed land not owned by the farmers.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only 1 percent of Boro farmers have been able to sell their produce at the government-set purchase price of Tk 1,040 per maund this year, according to a study by Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

On average, farmers have received just Tk 765 per maund, found the study, based on surveys on 2,834 farm households across the country.

Year after year, Boro farmers have reported having to sell their paddy far lower than the government-fixed prices. Not getting due prices this year came as a double blow to them as they had to bear increased production costs because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Besides, they earned 40 percent less profit compared to previous years.

A nationwide government drive to purchase Boro paddy from farmers began on April 26. It will continue till August 31.

About half the respondents said they got between Tk 701 and Tk 900 per maund. About 13 percent were forced to sell per maund of their produce below Tk 600, according to the study.

On the other hand, production costs increased by 13 percent this year, it said.

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Floodwater inundated the premises of Nuruddin Matborerkandi Model High School in Kajirsura union of Madaripur's Shibchar upazila after the Padma swelled up a couple of days ago. The mighty river has turned furious and devoured several establishments in the union. Locals fear it might also destroy the school. Inset, a family moving all its belonging to safety on a boat in the area yesterday. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Two masters, 2 drivers of Mayur-2 responsible

BIWTA probe finds
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Two masters and two drivers of Mayur-2 launch, which hit a smaller vessel and caused it to sink and drown 34 people in the Buriganga, were responsible for the accident, a probe committee finds.

"They manifested a lack of skill in operating the launch [Mayur-2]," said a member of the body formed by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) yesterday.

"We did not hold the owner of Mayur-2 responsible as we found the accident happened due to fault in the vessel operations," he told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

The committee also made 16 recommendations to prevent such launch accidents in future, he said.

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RISING INFECTIONS AMONG FRONTLINERS

The battle gets even tougher

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

More and more frontline healthcare workers are getting infected, making the country's battle against the deadly coronavirus harder.

At least 5,001 of them have tested positive, and 62 doctors were confirmed to have died from Covid-19 as of Sunday, according to Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

Of the infected, there are 1,724 doctors, 1,352 nurses and 1,925 other employees.

Infection of such a large number of frontline healthcare workers is an immense burden on the country's health system, especially since there are too few of them against such a large population, experts said.

As of yesterday, 11 other doctors, mostly senior ones, died with what appeared to be coronavirus, says Bangladesh Doctors' Foundation (BDF).

"Although there are fewer new cases among healthcare workers lately, the total number is still high," said BMA Secretary General Ehteshamul Huq Choudhury.

More health workers got infected in the Southeast Asian countries, compared to other regions. And the number is the highest in Bangladesh, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Of the total cases in Bangladesh, 3.08 percent were health workers as of Sunday.

This indicates that many health workers still do not have adequate protection against the infection, experts said.

The main causes of infection among health workers are the poor personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied at the beginning of the outbreak and patients concealing their symptoms, according to Ehteshamul.

Delayed introduction of triage at hospitals is also responsible for the situation, he said.

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COVID-19 CASES

Bangladesh may pass France soon

44 more die; 3,201 reported infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 44 people died of Covid-19 and 3,201 tested positive for the virus in the country in 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday.

With this, the death toll rose to 2,096 and the number of infected people went up to 165,618, according to data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The current fatality rate is 1.27 percent in terms of all confirmed cases, DGHS Additional Director General Dr Nasima Sultana said at its daily health bulletin yesterday.

Among the 44 deceased are 33 males and 11 females. Thirty-five of them died at hospitals and the rest at home.

As many as 17 of the deceased were from

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Envoy defended lawmaker Shahid

Allegations against him baseless, he told ministry in Feb letter; ambassador protected MP, Kuwait-based journos claimed

PORIMOL PALMA

Shahid Islam, the Laxmipur lawmaker now detained in Kuwait, was defended by the Bangladesh ambassador to the Gulf country in a February letter to the foreign ministry following media reports on his alleged criminal activities.

Besides, several Bangladeshi journalists, who worked as Kuwait correspondents for Bangladeshi media, accused the ambassador of protecting the MP.

On June 6, Kuwait's Criminal Investigation Department arrested Shahid on charges of human trafficking, visa trading, and money laundering.

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

More information on Shahid alias Kazi Papul, independent MP from Laxmipur-2 and managing director and CEO of Marafie Kuwaitia Group, is surfacing now after the Kuwait Public Prosecution's interrogation.

In February, when local media first mentioned three Bangladeshis, including an MP, involved in human trafficking in Kuwait, Ambassador SM Abul Kalam in the letter to the foreign ministry said these reports were "baseless and motivated".

Arabic-language newspaper Al-Qabas without naming Shahid reported that a Bangladeshi lawmaker was said to have given five expensive cars as gifts to senior government officials of Kuwait to facilitate his company Marafie Kuwaitia Group getting several government contracts.

After these reports were published in Kuwaiti newspapers, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam asked the Bangladesh ambassador to investigate the matter.

In the letter dated February 19, a copy of which has been obtained by The Daily Star, Abul Kalam said he summoned the Al-Qabas reporter to the embassy and asked about his sources of information and if

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PROBE AGAINST LAXMIPIUR MP SHAHID BEGINS -- PAGE 3



ANDREW KISHORE
(1955-2020)

GOLDEN VOICE goes silent

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Eminent playback singer Andrew Kishore, who had been battling cancer for months, passed away at his hometown Rajshahi at 7:00pm yesterday, confirmed his brother-in-law, Dr Patrick Bipul Biswas.

Andrew, 64, left behind his wife Lipika Andrew Eti, daughter Minim Andrew Songa, son Jay Andrew Saptok, along with millions of fans who will miss him dearly.

The president, prime minister, Speaker and state-minister for Cultural Affairs expressed shock at the demise of the singer. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had previously financially assisted Andrew with a cheque of Tk 10 lakh for his

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INDIA-CHINA STAND-OFF

Rivals pull back troops

Sources say buffer zone made in Galwan valley to prevent escalation

AGENCIES

China has withdrawn its troops by at least a kilometre in the tense Galwan river valley in eastern Ladakh, where 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a deadly brawl with Chinese troops on June 15, Indian sources said yesterday.

Indian soldiers have also pulled back and a buffer zone has been created between the troops of both sides to prevent escalation. "We will need to wait to see if this is a lasting, genuine disengagement," the sources told AFP.

China's People's Liberation Army was seen removing tents and structures at patrolling point 14, near the place where the clashes took place, they said.

The one-km withdrawal by China came after special representatives of India and China agreed to disengage, "take guidance from the consensus of leaders" and "not allow differences to become disputes," they added.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who had a conversation over phone on Sunday, decided that both sides should

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Locals gather near a truck to buy vegetables and other essentials in the capital's Wari area. Since Wari was locked down on Saturday to stop the spread of the coronavirus, several online shopping services have been sending these goods to the area.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

MIGRANT WORKERS

Malaysia offers them new hope amid pandemic

Allows them to switch firms in same sector; many Bangladeshis rejoin work

PORIMOL PALMA

At a time when Bangladeshi migrant workers all over the world are having tough times amid Covid-19 fallout, Malaysia gives good news.

The Southeast Asian country has announced that foreign workers can now switch companies in the same sector as some firms ceased operation or sacked workers while some others need foreign workers.

Besides, many Bangladeshis, who had been without work for around three months, have started rejoining work as Malaysia moves to fully reopen its economy following a drop in Covid-19 cases, say officials.

Talks between Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur are going on for regularising undocumented workers, a Bangladesh High Commission official in the Malaysian capital told The Daily Star on Sunday.

"As recruitment of foreign workers has been suspended from July 1 till the end of this year, there is a strong possibility that Malaysia will announce an amnesty for the

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China detains professor who criticised Xi over virus

AFP, Beijing

Chinese authorities yesterday detained a law professor who published essays criticising President Xi Jinping over the coronavirus pandemic and his efforts to consolidate power, according to friends of the man.

Xu Zhangrun, a rare outspoken critic of the government in China's heavily censored academia, was taken from his home in suburban Beijing by more than 20 people, one of his friends said on condition of anonymity.

Xu published an essay in February blaming the culture of deception and censorship fostered by Xi for the spread of the coronavirus in China.

China's "leader system is itself destroying the structure of governance", Xu wrote in the essay that appeared on overseas websites, adding the chaos in the virus epicentre of Hubei province reflected systemic problems in the Chinese state.

The law professor at Tsinghua University, one of the country's top institutions, had previously spoken out against the 2018 abolition of presidential term limits in an essay circulated online.

A friend said yesterday a man claiming to be police had called Xu's wife -- who had been living separately at a university residence -- to say Xu was arrested for allegedly soliciting prostitution in the southwestern city of Chengdu.

Xu visited Chengdu last winter with a number of liberal Chinese scholars, although it is unclear if the arrest was connected to the trip, the friend said, calling the allegation "ridiculous and shameless".

Xu was placed under home arrest last week, the friend said.

After Tsinghua reportedly barred Xu from teaching and conducting research in 2019, hundreds of Tsinghua alumni -- and academics from around the world -- signed an online petition calling for him to be reinstated.



Standing in knee-deep water, a man prays near the grave of his loved one in the flood and erosion-hit Kajirsura union of Madaripur's Shibchar upazila. The Padma has already devoured a nearby mosque and the man fears it could be the last time he would be able see the grave. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Fair price eludes

FROM PAGE 1

"We asked the farmers how much it cost them to harvest paddy this year, and how much it would have cost had the pandemic not struck," said Dr Narayan Das, senior research fellow at the BIGD, while presenting the findings at a webinar yesterday.

The study, based on a rapid survey titled "Effects of Covid-19 on Boro Rice Farmers" was carried out between May 20 and June 3. To ensure that households affected only by the pandemic were taken into account, those hit by cyclone Amphan were selectively taken out.

About 43 percent of the land considered for the survey was rented, meaning the farmers tilling those land were sharecroppers.

In addition to Narayan, the research team comprised of Dr Imran Matin, executive director of BIGD, and research associates Md Saiful Islam and Semab Rahman.

One of the major reasons for a rise in production costs was the labour shortage. Because of the lockdown, movement of labourers was restricted, leading to high labour wages. Sixty-five percent of the farmers interviewed cited increased labour costs as a reason, said the researchers.

Dhaka and Chattogram divisions saw the highest rise in wages, they said.

Meanwhile, 40 percent of the respondents said the cost of pesticides rose, 36 percent said the cost of fertiliser went up, 21 percent talked about irrigation costs and 20 percent pointed at increasing transport costs.

The study found that the yield loss per acre due to the pandemic was 7 percent. "If we extrapolate that for the total amount of land cultivated for Boro, nationally, the yield loss this year amounted to 4.82 crore maunds, worth Tk 3,687 crore," said Narayan.

Labour shortage was also the most highly cited reason for the drop in production volume.

Dr MA Sattar Mandal, emeritus professor at Department of Agricultural Economics and former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University, however, said according to his research, the labour cost was less.

"My personal finding is that the wage rate was in fact less because there was a movement of people from urban areas to rural ones. They were available as farmhands," he said.

Speaking at the webinar, Md Nasiruzzaman, secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, said, "We had a labour shortage during the lockdown, but we tried to overcome that by supplying combined harvester machines."

Sudhir Chandra Nath, business director at ACI Seed, pointed out that while procuring rice, the government prefers rice millers who can maintain moisture control of the harvest, thereby depriving farmers of the government-set prices.

"The government should purchase grain from the farmers instead of rice from the millers," he said.

M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, senior advisor to BIGD, also spoke at the event.

The battle gets even tougher

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Triage is the process of determining the priority of a patient's treatment based on the severity of their condition or the likelihood of their recovery with or without treatment.

After the prime minister's intervention, doctors were provided with proper PPE, and the number of new infections reduced.

No hospital in the country has an infection prevention and control programme, he said, adding that there should have been one or more experts to teach health workers how to use PPE.

In a letter to the health minister last month, the BMA said the health ministry and the Directorate General of Health Services were responsible for the infections among doctors.

The ministry made arrangements for treating journalists, police, lawyers and people of several other professions, but it did not take similar steps to ensure treatment for the frontline fighters, the letter said.

BMA called for dedicating Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital or another facility for the infected doctors.

Nirupam Das, chief administrator at BDE, said hospital infections were happening simply because of a lack of preventive measures.

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Of the 62 doctors who died, at least 42 were aged above 60. Most of them were professors or had long experiences. They could have played a major role in a crisis like this, said Ehteshamul.

Besides giving treatment, they could guide the young doctors to become skilled physicians. They could also play important policy making roles in the health sector, he added.

Many of the senior doctors had comorbidities and it was difficult to save them from Covid-19, he said.

Six to seven of them worked at ICUs. "In our country, no hospital has a negative pressure room. As a result, doctors get infected while working at the ICUs."

Negative pressure is an isolation technique used in hospitals to prevent cross-contamination from room to room.

Doctors who are involved in intubation and nebulisation are more vulnerable to infection, Ehteshamul added.

Golden voice goes silent

FROM PAGE 1

His last rites will take place in Rajshahi, where he was undergoing treatment after returning from Singapore.

Composed by renowned musician Alam Khan, the song Dak Diyachhen Doyal Amare (1982) put Andrew under the spotlight, after it gained massive popularity. His lifelong dedication to music has earned him many awards and accolades.

The multiple-time National Film Award winner is famous for evergreen songs, including Jiboner Golpo Achhe Baki Olpo, Haire Manush Rongin Phanush, Amar Shara Deho Kheygo Go Mati, Amar Buker Moddhe Khane and Amar Bahar Mukhe Prothom Jedin Shunchehilam Gaan, among others.

Andrew Kishore was diagnosed with Diffuse Large B Cell Lymphoma (cancer in both adrenal glands) on September 9 last year.

His treatment started at the Singapore General Hospital, where he underwent chemotherapy. After a nine-month battle, he finally returned to Bangladesh from Singapore on June 11 this year. He was taken to his home in Mirpur upon arrival. However, he

was soon taken to his birthplace in Rajshahi, where he breathed his last.

The maestro mesmerised music lovers with his voice since the '80s and was once the highest-paid playback singer. Born and brought up in Rajshahi, he later came to Dhaka and established himself as a playback legend.

The singer entered the film industry with the song Ek Chor Jaye Chole for the film Protikkha and recorded thousands of songs as a playback singer.

Andrew won the Bangladesh National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer eight times for films Boro Bhalo Lok Chhilo (1982), Surrender (1987), Khotipuron (1989), Padma Meghna Jamuna (1991), Kabul (1996), Aaj Gaye Holud (2000), Saajghor (2007) and Ki Jadu Korila (2008).

As a patriot, he would always wish for the welfare of the country and its people. He had a great faith in the present generation of singers, who he believed to be creative and energetic.

Artists like Andrew Kishore come once in a century. His legacy will forever be etched in the musical history of Bangladesh.

Envoy defended lawmaker Shahid

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he had any specific information about the investigation initiated by the Kuwaiti interior ministry.

"In response, the reporter said he heard it from his sources. I asked him about the name of the MP and two others, but he said he didn't know the names and did not mention the name of the MP as well," he wrote in the letter.

Abul Kalam said human trafficking happens when people illegally travel from one country to another and then asked if any such thing happened in this case. In response, the reporter said thousands of Bangladeshis were taken to Kuwait to work for these companies, the letter continued.

The ambassador then told the reporter that recruitment of foreign workers requires lamina (a no objection certificate) and visas and Bangladeshis were recruited following the same procedures. And he asked how this was human trafficking then.

"The reporter failed to give any good answer to this question. This proves that the news report was motivated," Abul Kalam wrote in the letter.

Kuwaiti authorities ban travel of any foreigner accused in a criminal case and arrest him on entering the country, he told the ministry, but Shahid did not face any such situation during his entry into Kuwait.

"He [Shahid] has been having his normal movement in Kuwait for the last one week and operating his businesses," the ambassador wrote in the letter.

Kuwait's General Department of Criminal Evidence issued a "Good Conduct Certificate" while its interior ministry's Criminal Evidence Department issued a "Not Convicted" certificate to the MP, it continued.

"We also inquired into the matter with Kuwait's ministries and divisions concerned but got nothing of what was published in Al-Qabas. We sent a rejoinder to the newspaper and asked them not to write anything involving the Bangladeshis without confirmation," the letter stated.

After Shahid's arrest last month, Abul Kalam told The Daily Star that he sent a letter to the Kuwait foreign ministry asking for details of why the MP was arrested, but has not yet received a

response.

On June 25, State Minister Shahriar Alam told this correspondent, "We have asked whether the ambassador could give us any more updates on Papul's arrest but there has been no concrete feedback yet."

JOURNOS BLACKLISTED, DEPORTED

In the last two years, the Kuwait government deported at least two Bangladeshi reporters from the country -- allegedly after the Bangladeshi embassy's complaints to the Kuwaiti CID against them.

Ehsanul Haque Khokon, Jamuna TV correspondent in Kuwait, said he was blacklisted and deported by the Kuwaiti authorities, allegedly after a complaint by the Bangladesh Embassy.

In a complaint to the foreign and expatriates' welfare ministries, Khokon said he went to the embassy for an interview of Ambassador Abul Kalam on January 17, 2018.

That was the day when around 500 Bangladeshi migrants were there with complaints of non-payment and at one stage, attacked the embassy.

A few days later, he said, Kuwait CID summoned him to its office and detained him, citing a complaint from the Bangladesh embassy.

Khokon was released by CID after three days. He said he called the embassy and wanted to know about the complaint but was told he wouldn't have any problems.

In September 2018, Khokon came to Bangladesh on leave and flew back to Kuwait on November 27. However, Kuwait CID arrested him at the airport and sent him to jail.

"As I asked for the reason of arrest, CID said it was because of Bangladesh embassy's complaint. If the embassy wants, I could be released because the Kuwait government had no complaint against me."

A month later, Kuwait authorities deported him to Bangladesh, Khokon wrote in his complaint to the ministries complaint on March 11 this year.

Banglavision's Kamrul said he had no complaints from his employer or the Kuwait government but he was arrested by Kuwait CID on October 29 last year, following a complaint by the

Bangladesh embassy. He was deported to Bangladesh a month later.

In a complaint to the foreign and expatriates' welfare ministries on February 19 this year, he said he had been blacklisted from entering the country though he could have worked 10 more years in Kuwait.

"In my experience of working in Kuwait for over two decades, I realised the officials and employees at the Bangladesh Embassy now are more involved in corruption than those in the past," he said in the complaint.

Kamrul told The Daily Star, "We tried to focus on Bangladeshi migrants' sufferings and exploitation. That's the reason we were deported and blacklisted, I guess."

Asked about the matter, State Minister Shahriar Alam said, "I am not aware of such deportation."

Ambassador Abul Kalam did not respond to requests for comment on the allegations brought by journalists.

MP THREATENED JOURNOS TOO

Five Bangladeshi journalists based in Kuwait -- Kamrul Hasan of Banglavision, Jalal Uddin of RTV, Mahmudur Rahman Mahmud of Ajker Surjod, Al Amin Rana of Dainik Yad and Sheikh Nizamur Rahman Tipu of Drishti Nandan Sylhet -- had written to the Bangladesh Embassy back in 2015, complaining that Shahidul and his cohorts had threatened them at various times.

Shahid once asked Kamrul to do a story naming him as the chairman of the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait, read the letter. When Kamrul replied that this was not possible as the MP was the self-declared chairman of the community, Shahid said he would see how he works in Kuwait.

Jalal Uddin of RTV said he was once asked to attend a programme of Shahid at the Hayat Hotel in Kuwait, but he could not cover the event because of office duties. Following this incident, Shahid's associate Abdul Mannan threatened him.

"On several occasions, Kazi Papul threatened us with harassment using the Kuwaiti administration," the journalists said in the letter, sent to the then Bangladesh ambassador on February 18, 2015.

Rivals pull back troops

FROM PAGE 1

"strictly respect and observe" the Line of Actual Control -- the de facto border between India and China -- and should not take any unilateral action to alter the status quo, the Indian government said.

The two sides agreed that "it was necessary to ensure at the earliest complete disengagement of the troops along the LAC and de-escalation from India-China border areas", New Delhi said in a statement.

"In this regard they further agreed that both sides should complete the ongoing disengagement process along the LAC expeditiously," the statement added.

In response to a question on whether China had moved back equipment in the Galwan valley, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said both sides were "taking effective measures to disengage and ease the situation on the border".

"We hope India will meet China halfway and take concrete measures to carry out what both sides agreed to, continue to closely communicate through diplomatic and military channels, and work together to cool down the situation at the border," Zhao told a news conference yesterday.

Reports of the pull back in the last 24 hours have emerged three days after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise visit to a Ladakh forward post, where he addressed thousands of troops and asserted, without naming China,

that "the age of expansionism is over and expansionist forces have either lost or were forced to turn back."

Last Wednesday, commanders of the Indian and Chinese armies met for a third round of talks after the Galwan Valley dash. The talks went on for 12 hours.

The Lieutenant-General-level talks have focused on reducing tension at the LAC after weeks of a tense face-off including physical fights in early May at another disputed hotspot in Sikkim.

The progress from talks, sources had said, would be dependent upon China agreeing to move back to its positions before the tension in the area started building-up in April.

Recent satellite images are proof of multiple Chinese intrusions across the LAC and the deployment of heavy weaponry and Chinese construction activity. The images, widely used by Indian media, had indicated that the Chinese had illegally occupied 423 metres of Indian territory in the Galwan valley.

Images acquired by NDTV from Planet Labs showed a significant consolidation of Chinese forces in Ladakh's Pangong Lake region.

CAUGHT BY SURPRISE

Indian soldiers who died in close combat with Chinese troops last month were unarmed and surrounded by a larger force on a steep ridge, Indian government sources, two soldiers deployed in the area and families of the

fallen men said.

One of the Indian soldiers had his throat slit with metal nails in the darkness, his father told Reuters, saying he had been told by a fellow soldier who was there.

Others fell to their deaths in the freezing waters of the Galwan river in the western Himalayas, relatives have learned from witnesses.

Reuters spoke to relatives of 13 of the men who were killed, and in five cases they produced death certificates listing horrific injuries suffered during the six-hour night-time clash at 14,000 ft (4,267 metres) amid remote, barren mountains.

Three of the dead men had their "arteries ruptured in the neck" and two sustained head injuries caused by "sharp or pointed objects", the death certificates seen by Reuters said.

Three of the Indian families said they had been told by soldiers who were commissioned to bring the bodies back to them that some combatants pushed each other into the fast-flowing Galwan river.

The government official in Delhi also said bodies of some soldiers were fished out of the river the next morning. Some had succumbed to hypothermia, the official added.

The Galwan valley incident was the first time in 45 years that soldiers had died in combat on the Asian giant's long-disputed border.

Two masters, 2 drivers of Mayur-2 responsible

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The recommendations include giving training to launch masters and drivers properly, installing modern technology at launches so that masters can get signals about the presence of nearby vessels earlier, and shifting a dockyard from Mirebagh along Buriganga elsewhere as many launches anchor there to get them repaired, which may cause such accidents.

BIWTA Joint Director Zainul Abedin, who is leading the BIWTA-formed four-member committee, said they submitted the report yesterday.

But the authorities would get it today as they submitted the report after office hours, he added.

Meanwhile, a seven-member probe body, led by Shipping Ministry's Joint Secretary Rafiqul Islam Khan, was supposed to submit its report to the ministry yesterday.

The committee will submit the report tonight [yesterday], and the state minister for shipping will brief the media about the findings of the report at 1:00pm tomorrow [today]," Shipping Secretary Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury told this correspondent last night.

On June 29, the accident happened when Mayur-2 slammed into Morning Brid in the Buriganga at the capital's Shyambazar.

The following day, Shamsul Alam, sub-inspector of Sadarghat River Police

Station, filed a case with Keraniganj Dakshin Police Station accusing seven by name and many unnamed persons.

The seven accused are: Moyur-2 owner Mosaddek Hanif Swad, Abul Bashir Molla, second-class launch master, Jakir Hossain, third-class launch master, Shipon Hawlader, and Shakil Hasan, both second-class drivers, and two other staffers Nasir Mridha and Ridoy.

River police are investigating the case.

Contacted, Khandoker Faridul Islam, superintendent of police (Dhaka region) of River police, told this correspondent that they were trying their best, but could not arrest any of the accused till yesterday.

Malaysia offers

FROM PAGE 1

undocumented migrants," mentioned the official.

The developments come after Malaysia partially reopened its economy on June 10 with Covid-19 cases falling below 10 a day. Between July 1 and 5, the number of daily cases was between 1 and 10. A total of 8,663 people got infected with the virus till yesterday, and of them, 121 died.

Malaysia has also allowed reopening of childcare centres and kindergartens, cinemas and spas since July 1, attaching to it conditions that include social distancing and good personal hygiene practices.

Talking to this newspaper, AbuHayat, an independent Bangladeshi researcher based in Kuala Lumpur, said, "There was a fear that job opportunities will be largely lost. But now many of the Bangladeshi migrants are rejoining work after the reopening. This gives a lot of relief."

Still, there are many who don't have jobs, he pointed out.

Regularisation of undocumented workers and allowing the jobless to switch companies can help them greatly, he said.

Executive Director of Malaysian Employers' Federation Shamsuddin Bardan said a lot of foreign workers in manufacturing and services sectors were affected by the Covid-19 fallout.

On the other hand, the palm oil and rubber plantations are facing a shortage of workers, he mentioned.

"There is a shortage of 65,000 workers in plantations... It caused an estimated loss of 13 billion Malaysian Ringgit [more than \$3 billion] last year," he told this correspondent over the phone from Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

"We are urging the Malaysian government to allow transfer of foreign workers to plantations from other sectors as recruitment of foreign workers has been suspended till the end of this year," he added.

On its Facebook page, Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur on June 22 said Malaysia allowed transfer of foreign workers from one company to another of the same sector, not to a different sector.

But if such transfer is allowed, it will be a very welcome decision, Jahurul Islam, labour counsellor of Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia, told The Daily Star.

Switching companies requires permission from the current and future employers and also the authorisation of Malaysia's home ministry and the labour department, he mentioned.

The Bangladeshi workers, who want to change companies, should communicate directly with the high commission, instead of doing it on their own, he said.

"We are holding talks with the Malaysian authorities for regularising the undocumented workers."

Of around eight lakh Bangladeshis in Malaysia, an estimated two lakh could be undocumented, according to officials.

Bangladesh may

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Dhaka division, 11 from Chattogram, four from Barishal, three each from Rajshahi and Sylhet, and two each were from Khulna, Rangpur, and Mymensingh divisions.

According to latest statistics of worldometers.info, Bangladesh remains 18th worst affected country in the world in terms of all confirmed novel coronavirus cases. In the list of 213 countries and territories, France and Columbia was in the 17th and 19th position respectively yesterday.

On March 8, the authorities reported the first three Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh. The first death was recorded on March 18.

Two of the first three cases were men who returned home from Italy and the other was a woman relative of one of the returnees.

The first deceased, aged over 70, had morbidity.

By the end of March Bangladesh had reported 51 confirmed cases and five deaths.

Last month, the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases rose by around one lakh as the number of daily RT-PCR tests increased significantly. Experts, however, say the number is still inadequate.

Of all the confirmed cases in Bangladesh, 76,149 Covid-19 patients have recovered. Among them are 3,524 who recovered in 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday. The total recovery rate is 45.98 percent.

During the 24-hour period, 14,245 samples were tested in laboratories across the country. The infection rate was 22.47 percent.

The total number of tests rose to 860,307 until 2:30pm yesterday. So far, the rate of positive cases was 19.25 percent.

CLARIFICATION

Novair in a clarification to the report titled "Sloppy Biman stays grounded," published in The Daily Star on 28 June said the airlines' base fare was Tk 2,500, not Tk 2000 as the report claimed, since the private airlines resumed its operation on the domestic routes from June 1.

The clarification also said its Managing Director Mofizur Rahman didn't make the comment that ticket prices are not the biggest concern at the moment.

Probe against Laxmipur MP Shahid begins

67 held in Libya killing incident so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police has started investigation against Laxmipur lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul, who was arrested in Kuwait on charge of human trafficking.

Imtiaz Ahmed, deputy inspector general of CID, disclosed the development yesterday. He, however, did not elaborate further on the matter.

"We have taken steps as per procedure and started our investigation against Papul. We will disclose details with evidence. Have patience," said Imtiaz.

On June 6, the lawmaker was arrested by the Kuwait Criminal Investigation Department.

Imtiaz was speaking at a press briefing organised by CID to give updates on the Libya Human Trafficking case. Barrister Mahbubur Rahman, additional inspector general of police, also the chief of CID, addressed the briefing as chief guest.

Regarding the investigation, Barrister

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Standing atop a dome-shaped structure, these three workers go about their daily grind on a Sunday morning in Bijoy Sarani. Like them, thousands in the capital work in the construction sector without any safety measures and equipment, putting their lives at risk.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

CID expanding to 64 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is expanding its presence across the country, its chief said yesterday.

In order to bolster the law enforcing agency's activities; they have already taken steps to set up office in all 64 districts, said Additional Inspector General Mahbubur Rahman at a press conference at CID office yesterday.

Already, 45 Superintendent of Police (SP) and 19 Additional SP level officers have been appointed as chiefs at district-level offices, who will look into operational and administrative activities, he added.

The district head will also supervise investigation into cases that CID is tasked with, he said.

Previously, CID had offices only at divisional headquarters and some other major districts.

Tasked by courts, Police Headquarters and the home ministry, CID is currently investigating cases filed for 22 types of crimes, such as money laundering, human trafficking, organised crime and sensational murders.

"Currently, the specialised police unit is investigating some 5,811 cases across the country. Of the cases, 23 to 24 percent are murder cases," said the CID chief.

He also said CID has submitted charge sheets of around 82 percent of its investigated cases. However, the conviction rate of those is 24 percent only.

"We have taken steps to find out loopholes to increase the conviction rate. We have already appointed law-background professionals to assess the reasons behind low rate of conviction," he said.

After analysing the cases, court opinions on reasons of not convicting accused, the group is set to submit a report to him in the next one month, said Mahbubur.

Regarding poor convocation rate, he said from the police perception, they are suspecting delay in completing investigation and delayed in trial procedure are some of the main reasons.

"We will from now on make investigation officers (IOs) accountable for the delay in investigation," he said.

The CID boss also said currently 60 to 70 percent of evidence of the cases are oral-based, while 30 to 40 percent are forensic. He further said they would take steps to ensure more forensic evidence of cases.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Even rudimentary health checks prove difficult to avail

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Monirul Alam, a resident of Gendaria, has been suffering from high blood pressure for the last two years.

Last week, while grocery shopping at Dhupkhola kitchen market, suddenly he started feeling unwell. Immediately, he went to a nearby pharmacy to check his blood pressure (BP). But he was refused.

Desperate, Monir searched around 10 more dispensaries in the area, but he was turned down everywhere.

"This is how I always get my BP checked. But now everyone is rejecting out of fear of coronavirus," Monir said. This is a regular service offered by dispensaries, who do it for a Tk 10 fee.

Finally, a young pharmacy owner at Satish Sarkar Road of Gendaria agreed to check his BP. The BP was found to be oscillating between 80 and 60.

Confirmed of his condition, Monir consulted a doctor over phone and took the necessary steps to get the pressure back to normal.

The experience was too much for Monir. Within a couple of days, he went to Jatrabari and bought a BP checker. The checking process turned out to be surprisingly easy. Monir and his wife learned the operation from YouTube tutorials.

BP issues are a common ailment for many across the country, who are feeling the crunch during this pandemic, especially those with lower-incomes.

Pharmacy owners said their hands are tied. Alamgir Hossain, owner of a dispensary at Ibrahimpur, said, "It's not possible to provide the service maintaining social distancing. It's not like we want to refuse people who come to us, but we don't have a choice."

Meanwhile, with the growing demand of BP machines, the price of the medical gadget has seen an upsurge.

A staff of Sayma Pharmacy at Mirpur-10, a store that sells BP checkers, said, "Sales have seen an increase."

Same goes for prices. The staffer said the price of a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Refusing Treatment' Investigate allegations raised against hospitals: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the health secretary to conduct an inquiry into the reported allegations against the hospitals concerned of refusing to provide treatment to the patients during coronavirus pandemic. The government has also been directed to fix the retail and refilling prices of oxygen cylinders in 10 working days.

The health secretary was ordered to submit the report to the HC by July 21.

During a virtual hearing on five writ petitions, the court asked Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to take steps so that patients deprived of treatment can lodge complaints to the office concerned through email.

It asked authorities to take steps so that patients suffering from serious diseases like cancer and kidney problems are tested for Covid-19, test reports are provided within 36 to 48 hours and their treatments are ensured at the hospitals concerned.

'Shutting down jute mills tantamount to destroying sector'

Workers Party calls upon govt to keep the industry running

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shutting down state-owned jute mills in the name of modernisation is tantamount to destroying the jute sector, Workers Party of Bangladesh said yesterday.

The party leaders said this while attending a politburo meeting yesterday morning through video conference, chaired by party president Rashed Khan Menon.

They called upon the government to keep the state-owned jute mills open, said a press release.

They said the government is trying to cover up the corruption in jute sector by categorising jute mills as a loss-making corporation and imposing its responsibility on the workers.

It is a strategy of the government to put "one doth the scathe, another hath the scorn" which is just a follow-up to the previous BNP-Jamaat government's policy, they added. They said that the Prime Minister had formed the Jute Commission in 2010 for the revival of jute industry, which encouraged the discovery of the genome of jute.

"What happened now that led to the suicidal decision to close the jute mills and abolish the jute economy? If the jute mill is closed, darkness will engulf the life of millions of people involved in the sector," they added.

The meeting proposal states that action should be taken against the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), the officials responsible for corruption in the purchase of jute, irregularities in supply during the season, untimely purchase of jute and failure to market the products. "The corrupt officials are ultimately liable for the collapse of the jute industry," the speakers said.

According to the government's calculations, the amount of loss in the jute industry in the last 44 years is Tk 10,500

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Colleges in a fix over promoting 11th graders

Authorities discussing possibility of learning gap

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Colleges following the national curriculum are divided over promoting 11th-grade students to the next grade, as debates on possibility of a learning gap are ongoing, amid closure of educational institutes.

Some college authorities started promoting their students without holding final exams, while others are thinking about holding exams online to facilitate promotion.

Many teachers say promoting students without proper assessment will create a learning gap. The other side, however, differed with them, saying the syllabus was already completed, no such issues should occur.

Rajuk Uttara Model College Principal Brigadier General Kazi Showkat Alam said they have decided to promote students based on their mid-term and class-test performances.

"We could not take final exams due to the pandemic," he said. "There is no question of learning gap, as we have completed the syllabus before school closure."

Notre Dame College authorities, in a notice published on Thursday, announced that all 11th-grade students have been promoted. A teacher there said they have promoted the students based on scores of their previous exams.

He referred to the college's principal, Father Hemanto Pius Rozario, to get an official response, but the principal's phone was found switched off after repeatedly trying to reach him yesterday.

Dhaka College Principal Prof Nehal Ahmed, said they had started 11th-grade final exams before closure.

"Now, we are looking for ways for complete the assessment. We have kept online education as an option. After everything is settled, we will promote the students," he said.

"In our country, students study the most just before and during exams. If you do not hold final exams and just promote them, there is chance of a learning gap," he said.

Dhaka Residential Model College Principal Brigadier General Kazi Shameem Farhad said they will arrange an evaluation test for promotion purposes.

"We will decide after considering results of earlier tests and the upcoming evaluation. Students lose interest in studying if you just promote them without exams. As a result, there can be a learning gap," he said.

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College Principal Prof Fougia said they will decide after discussing the matter at a governing body meeting next week.

Ideal School and College, Motijheel, Principal Shahan Ara Begum said they have already completed 11th-grade final exams before closure.

Dhaka Education Board Chairperson Prof Ziaul Haque said as final exams are internal assessments, college authorities can decide the best course of action.

"We're aware that some colleges are promoting students based on past assessment. All colleges can do that," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

POLICE BRUTALITY ON STUDENT High Court orders judicial inquiry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to conduct a judicial inquiry into the allegations of police torture on college student Imran Hossain and taking "unethical benefits" from his father for releasing him from their custody. Imran Hossain, a second-year student of Kazi Nazrul Islam Degree College under Jashore Sadar upazila, was reportedly tortured by police on June 3 without any specific allegations. The torture left Imran with damaged kidneys, his family claims.

Yesterday, the HC said the probe into the allegations of torture will be carried out by a judicial officer not below the rank of a district and sessions judge.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan also asked the authorities concerned to submit the inquiry report to this court in 60 days. It came up with the directive during holding a virtual hearing on a writ petition filed seeking necessary order.

During the hearing, writ petitioner Barrister Humayun Kabir Pallob told the HC bench that the probe reports submitted by the civil surgeon and superintendent of police of Jashore were not fully correct as they, in the reports, said that Imran was "under the influence of drugs". He also said Imran Hossain was brutally tortured by the police although he is innocent.

Yesterday, Jashore Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Abu Shahin submitted documents of the treatment of Imran, saying that he is not doing well, Humayun Kabir Pallob told The Daily Star. Nothing was found in the dope test report of Imran, he added.

On June 28, Jashore SP Ashraf Hossain reported to the High Court that three police personnel had taken "unethical benefits" from Imran's father for releasing him.



A seller pushes his cart full of lotkon, an underrated delicacy of the season. He sells it for around Tk 100-150 per kg, and it's best to grab some before the season is over. This photo was taken at Dhaka's Sabujbagh area last week.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BTRC restrictions on Grameenphone remain in force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission's restrictions on Grameenphone will remain in force as the High Court yesterday dropped a writ petition, filed challenging the BTRC decision from its hearing list.

According to the restrictions, GP will have to secure prior approval from the telecom regulator before rolling out any packages or offers. The mobile operator will also have to have all of its existing packages and offers validated by August 31. However, for new offers and packages, the directive will become effective on July 1.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim made the petition filed by the mobile operator "out of list" after virtually hearing it.

During the hearing, GP's lawyer Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Khan told the bench that his client would not proceed with the petition as it is moving for a settlement over the issue with the BTRC.

BTRC lawyer Barrister Khandaker Reza-E Raqib told The Daily Star that the restrictions imposed by the BTRC on GP will remain effective following the HC order.

Grameenphone has recently filed the petition with the HC, challenging legality of BTRC decision. The petition was submitted on June 28, also seeking a stay on the restrictions imposed on June 21.

GP's lawyer Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Khan earlier told The Daily Star that his client filed the petition as it did not violate any rule or law concerned.

Even the BTRC itself has not brought any allegation against GP of abusing its dominant position in the market, he said citing the petition.



Masks on at all times, until it's time to take a selfie. Two girls document a now-rare rickshaw ride together at Dhaka's Tikatuli area, hoping this small break from the mask won't cause much harm.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVE

DNCC fines another 18 house owners Tk 2.22 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the third day of Dhaka North City Corporation's (DNCC) anti-mosquito "combing operation", the DNCC team found Aedes mosquito larvae in 85 houses and establishments.

The 10-day drive to protect city dwellers from the mosquito menace was simultaneously launched across all 54 wards under the city corporation on Friday.

During yesterday's drive, the DNCC team visited at least 13,688 houses and establishments, said a DNCC official.

During the operation, DNCC mobile courts fined owners of 18 houses and establishments around Tk 2.22 lakh.

The team found conditions favourable for the breeding of Aedes -- any place where stagnant water can accumulate -- in 7,909 establishments, including houses and under-construction buildings, officials added.

The larvae were found in abandoned tyres, buckets, flower tubs, bottles, water-metres, garages, broken mugs, floors,

water-tanks, plastic containers, roof-drains, yogurt pots, abandoned commodes, coconut shells, broken pots, basement and spaces between two houses.

A team comprising four garbage management workers and one spray-man is taking part in the operation in each sub-sector, while 40 garbage management workers and 10 spray-men are taking part in each sector in the drive every day.

The teams are visiting different establishments, houses and under-construction sites to check breeding grounds of Aedes mosquitoes in the area.

They are also collecting pictures and addresses of houses and other establishments and phone numbers of owners if they find Aedes larvae or mosquito breeding sources there.

All data will be stored to prepare a database in monitoring the breeding sources properly afterwards, said a DNCC press release.

Nine entomologists of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), three entomologists, and officials of health and garbage management of DNCC are present during the drives.

Colleges in

FROM PAGE 3

"The 11th-grade syllabus is usually completed by March, so there would be no learning gap. The problem can arise for 12th-grade, so we will look into the matter," he added.

All educational institutions have remained closed since March 17. The closure was extended till August 6.

On April 27, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said all educational institutions may stay closed till September, if the situation does not improve.

Educational activities of about four crore students have been disrupted due to the crisis. Higher Secondary Certificate exam has been deferred for an indefinite period. First-term exams of primary schools and half-yearly exams of secondary schools have also been deferred.

CID expanding

FROM PAGE 3

PLANS OF A 'CYBER POLICE STATION' CID is planning to set up a police station which will only be dedicated to dealing with cybercrimes across the country, Mahbubur Rahman said, adding that they have sent a proposal seeking approval of the "Cyber Police Station".

Once approved, the first Cyber Police Station of the country will be set up in the capital, at CID's Cyber Police Centre, the CID chief.

The number of police station would

be increased if necessary in the upcoming days, he said.

"Cybercrime related victims across the country will be able to file cases with the police station to be manned by personnel having expertise in cybercrimes," said Barrister Mahbub.

The police station will investigate the cases, prepare probe reports and submit it to the courts, the CID chief said.

He, however, did not disclose detailed manpower plan of the police station, or budget required to set it up.

Shutting down

FROM PAGE 3

crore, which means the yearly loss was only 236.63 crore, they said.

"But who will answer for the amount of subsidy given every year in other sectors including air, rail and electricity. For this reason, all those institutions will be closed? In all these cases, the amount of money being wasted is much less than the amount of loss in 50 years in the jute industry," the party leaders said.

In the proposal, they said the potential of this industry should be utilised by removing the old and outdated machines at jute mills and installing modern, sustainable technology at a cost of Tk 1,200 crore instead of the so-called golden handshake of Tk 5,000 crore which comes at the cost of closing down the jute mills.

Probe against

FROM PAGE 3

Mahbub said they have started collecting information. As it is an international issue, CID has to work considering many things, he said. "We hope we will be able to disclose details soon," he said.

The CID chief further said they have progressed in the investigation of the killing of 26 Bangladeshis in Libya on May 28.

Some 67 people were arrested across the country, he said, adding, among them, CID arrested 36 people and 20 of them already gave confessional statements in the court.

Barrister Mahbub said they are investigating 15 human trafficking cases out of 26 filed after the Libya incident. But the organised crime unit of CID is monitoring all the cases and if necessary, they would take over those, he said.

He said CID is now working to confiscate wealth of these traffickers, which they earned through illegal means. For example, the CID chief said they have found transaction details of around Tk 20 to 30 crore from an agency's clerk's account.

Regarding the development, DIG Imtiaz

Ahmed said they have already completed primary investigation against three arrested human traffickers and their properties. Money laundering cases would be filed against them shortly.

He said they have also identified three masterminds behind the trafficking syndicate. Asked about their details, Barrister Mahbub said they are now abroad. "We are waiting for their return and will disclose details after arrest or else they may get alerted," he said.

"While investigating trafficking cases, we have found that some people are involved in human trafficking in different districts. For this reason, we are updating the list of human traffickers," said the CID Chief.

CID has also received two lists of human traffickers from two ministries after the Libya incidents.

Sheikh Nazmul Alam, DIG of CID, who was also present at the briefing, said they are also keeping an eye and analysing activities of previously arrested human traffickers.

Even rudimentary

FROM PAGE 3

manual BP machine has increased by Tk 30 to Tk 100, and is now selling between Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,500.

Contacted, Prof Md Mujibur Rahman, head of department of medicine of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said, "It is better and safer to buy a machine for use at home

during the pandemic."

However, going to pharmacies is inevitable for those who can't afford it.

"If pharmacies have to do it, they must make sure that staffers are wearing masks, gloves, and use sanitisers while providing the service," Prof Mujibur told this newspaper.



The pandemic may have made buses take in fewer passengers, but disregard for traffic rules continue. This bus was spotted dropping off a passenger in the middle of a road yesterday in the capital's Gulistan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. জেলা সুপারের কার্যালয়. জেলা কারাগার, মুন্সীপুর. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি. সূত্র নং-৫৮.০৪.৫১০০.০৮৮.০৪.০০১.২০-১২৬০(২) তারিখ ০৫-০৭-২০২০

Rajshahi City Corporation Engineering Department. e-Tender Notice (IFT-01/2020-21). e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following works:

দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ. গাজীপুর-১৭০৩. সূত্র নং-৫৩.১৮.৩৩০০.০১৯.০৭.০০২.২০২০-৬৬. তারিখ ০৭/০৭/২০২০ইং. ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Office of the Inspector General Bangladesh Police. Corrigendum Notice. Memo No. 44.01.0000.029.01193.2020/202. Date: 06 July 2020. Invitation for National Tender Notice published in different national dailies as per Memo No. AIG (Health Services)/Tender-01/2020-2021 Date: 23/06/2020 for purchase of medicine in FY 2020-2021 is hereby amended the Tender Security as follows:

Table with 3 columns: Published, Revised, Tender Security in Taka. Items include Capsule (1550000), Syrup (300000), Tablet (7500000), Injection (2620000), Eye & Ent (155000), Topical Preparation (170000), Others (200000).

This amendment would be an integral part of tender notice. Shorif Mostafizur Rahman AIG (Health Services) Bangladesh Police Police Headquarters, Dhaka Tel & Fax: 88-02-55101621



The bridge on the Rangapani river, in Khayerbagan area of Debiganj upazila under Panchagarh, now lies without its approach road. The road was washed away in flash floods on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

FLASH FLOODS

One lakh villagers cut off from upazila town

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Sudden collapse of an approach road on both sides of a bridge in flash floods has left about one lakh people in great sufferings.

The residents of four unions under Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh use the bridge frequently for their day-to-day activities. The bridge, over the Rangapani river in Khayerbagan area, connects Bhaulaganj and Debiganj.

People residing in Chilahati, Tepriganj, Debiganj and Shaldanga unions are now taking a 15-kilometre-long detour to reach the upazila headquarters.

The approach road to the bridge was washed away on Friday by onrush of water from upstream, caused by incessant rain in the past few days, said Mohammad Samsuzzaman, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Panchagarh.

The river might have changed course, leading to the destruction of the approach road, he also

said.

During a visit in Khayerbagan area on Friday afternoon, this correspondent witnessed the extent of the damage to the road on both sides of the bridge and gushing of strong current in the river.

Locals said water in the river started swelling since Wednesday night. After heavy downpour began on Thursday morning, strong current started to erode the approach road on both sides of the bridge.

By Friday, about 40 to 50 feet of the road, on both sides, along with electric poles and roadside trees disappeared in the river, they added.

Sheikh Farid, from Ramganj Bilashi village in Tepriganj union, said for over 30 thousand inhabitants of Chilahati and Tepriganj unions, it was the only means of communications with the upazila headquarters.

Chilahati Union Parishad Chairman Kamal Mostaharul Islam said people of Chilahati and Tepriganj are dependent entirely on the road

for their day-to-day activities, while the people of Debiganj and Shaldanga unions also use the road often.

About one lakh frequent users of the road will now have to travel an additional 15 kilometres to reach the upazila town and the distance could be fatal during a health emergency of a resident, said Golam Rahman, chairman of Tepriganj Union Parishad.

Contacted over phone, Prattoy Hasan, Debiganj upazila nirbahi officer, said they deployed village police at the spot to avert accidental damage to life and property.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon visited the spot on Saturday and directed the authorities concerned to take immediate steps for the restoration of the road.

Mohammad Samsuzzaman, the executive engineer of WDB in Panchagarh, said after water recedes in the river, they would assess damage to both the road and the bridge and start repair work accordingly.

UZ chairman, his men sued as huge govt sand illegally sold

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

A staggering 50 lakh cubic feet (cft) of sand extracted by Bangladesh Water Development Board from the Meghna River in Ashuganj upazila of Brahmanbaria district has been illegally sold out.

Faruk Hossain, surveyor of Dhaka divisional estate office of Bangladesh Railway (BR), filed a case with Ashuganj Police Station on June 21 against Jony Munshi, son of incumbent Upazila Parishad Chairman Hanif Munshi, and Hanif's two nephews Rony Munshi and Chanchal Munshi on charge of involvement with the incident.

The local authorities of BR filed another case with the police station against Hanif Munshi and 12 others while a written complaint has been lodged to the railway minister in this connection.

According to the case filed by surveyor Faruk Hossain, the extracted sand was piled on an 9.5-acre land owned by Bangladesh Railway in February, 2018, but Hanif Munshi's men sold out the sand before completion of the tender process.

It was mentioned in the complaint lodged to the railway minister that the railway authorities arranged a tender on September 8 last year for selling the piled-up sand and Upazila Chairman Hanif Munshi was shown as the highest bidder.

But following allegations of a dubious tender process that secretly arranged

participation of only three persons – the upazila chairman, his brother Zahangir Munshi, and personal assistant Ismail, the railway authorities cancelled the tender on December 19 that year.

Hanif Munshi filed a writ petition with the High Court on June 15 this year.

After three days, Hanif's son Jony Munshi and nephews Rony Munshi and Chanchal Munshi started selling the huge quantity of sand kept there, goes the complaint.

During a visit to the spot on July 1, it was found that almost all of the sand had been sold out.

Local sources said, the purchasers were given receipts in the name of firm 'Mizan Construction' and the sand was sold at Tk 4/5 per cft. The total selling price thus stands between Tk 2 to Tk 2.5 crore.

Contacted, Nazrul Islam, estate officer of Bangladesh Railway's Dhaka Division, said, "Although two cases have been filed with the police station concerned and a writ petition is pending with the court, the sand piled on the railway land has been surreptitiously sold out."

Countering the allegation of selling out the government-owned sand, upazila Chairman Hanif Munshi said, "I have filed a writ petition with the High Court. Hopefully, the decision will come in favour of me after the hearing. If I get the order, I can sell the sand."



Remains of government-owned sand, illegally sold earlier, being cleared from a railway land in Ashuganj upazila of Brahmanbaria. The photo was taken on July 1.

PHOTO: STAR

Jamuna Oil Company Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
Jamuna Bhaban, Agrabad, Chattogram

e-Tender Notice No. 02/2020-21

Memo No. 28.24.0000.250.13.012.20 Date: 05.07.2020
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works.

Tender ID	Name of works	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
422866	Renovation of Storage Tank No. 14 at Daulatpur Depot.	26.07.2020 17:00 hrs	27.07.2020 13:00 hrs	27.07.2020 13:00 hrs

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

Md. Mahidur Rahman
DGM (Engineering & Development)

GD-1089

Locals receiving 'wrong treatment' amid pandemic

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Many ordinary people are compelled to receive 'wrong treatment' from so-called local doctors amid the pandemic. In some cases, such treatment has even led to the death of the patient.

Locals said at present, a number of residents in different upazilas of the district are not visiting the hospitals to avoid risk of coronavirus transmission. Finding no other alternative, they are compelled to visit the so-called local physicians.

On June 24, Tushar Sheikh, 14, a student of Class IX of Pirojpur Town High School, died due to alleged wrong treatment.

Police and family members said on the same day, relatives took Tushar to Pirojpur District Hospital after his right leg was broken in a road accident.

After giving primary treatment, the on duty doctor at the hospital referred him to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

But on the way to KMCH, ambulance driver Kabir Hossain took the victim to a house in Pirojpur town where a group of fake doctors, led by Sachin Roy, a pharmacist of Pirojpur District Hospital, treated the patient. Later, the boy died there.



After receiving treatment from a so-called local physician for over a week, this road accident victim from Indurkani upazila came to know that a tendon of his left leg was cut off.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

The following day, the deceased's father Shohag Sheikh filed a murder case with the police station, accusing five named and two to three unnamed people. Ambulance driver Kabir of Pirojpur District Hospital is the prime accused in the case.

Another road crash victim Shahin Sheikh, who came to Pirojpur District Hospital for treatment on June 27, said after receiving treatment from a so-called local physician in Indurkani upazila for ten days, he came to know that one of the tendons of his left leg had been severed.

"Almost every day we have to give treatment to many patients who took wrong medicines prescribed by so-called local physicians," said Ishtiaq Ahmed, a medical officer of Pirojpur District Hospital, adding that the so-called physicians gave the patients unnecessary high power antibiotics.

Nijam Uddin, resident medical officer (RMO) of Pirojpur District Hospital, said after completing Medical Assistant Training School (MATS), Diploma of Medical Faculty (DMF) and Rural Medical Practitioner (RMP) courses, a person can prescribe medicine. But there has been limitation too.

A certified medicine seller can only sell over the counter (OTC) listed medicines without prescription, said the RMO.

Contacted, Pirojpur Civil Surgeon Dr Md Hasnat Yousuf Jaki said if they receive any allegation of wrong treatment, they will take action against those responsible for the offence.

Deputy Commissioner Abu Ali M Sazzad Hossain said they will conduct mobile court immediately to punish the culprits.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Water Resources
Water Resources Planning Organization
72 Green Road, Dhaka-1215

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Water Resources
2. Agency	Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO)
3. Name of Procuring Entity	Project Director, Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018 Project
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5. Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting Firm (National)
6. Title of Service	Consultancy Services for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and baseline study of the State of Water Resources in the High Barind Region
7. EOI Ref. No.	42.02.0000.005.14.002.20-01
8. Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	07/07/2020
9. Procurement Sub-Method	Quality and Cost based Selection (QCBS)
10. Budget & Source of fund	Development Budget and Grant
11. Development Partner	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
12. Project/Programme Name	Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018
13. EOI Closing Date & Time	27/07/2020
14. Brief Description of the scope of work	The study is formulated with a view to perform baseline study to identify water resources availability, use and demand in the High Barind region through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach for supporting pilot operationalization of the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018. Details are furnished in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which can be obtained from the office of the Procuring Entity as well as in the website of WARPO: www.warpo.gov.bd
15. Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required	The EOI shall be evaluated on the basis of 1) Registration of the firm 2) Updated trade license, VAT registration and income tax certificate 3) Availability of key professionals 4) Audit report for last 3(three) years including turnover 5) Minimum 10 (ten) years of experience in similar task/assignments with respective certificate from employer.
16. Other Details	Interested firm(s) may form Joint Venture, Consortium or Association (JVCA) with other local firms to enhance their qualification and experience. The Proposals in four sets (1 original + 3 duplicates) shall be submitted in sealed envelope, delivered to the address of the under signed and clearly marked "Expression of Interest for the Consultancy Services for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and baseline study of the State of Water Resources in the High Barind Region".
Procuring Entity Details	
17. Name of the Official Inviting EOI	Md. Rezaul Karim
18. Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Project Director, Operationalizing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in compliance with the Bangladesh Water Rules, 2018 Project
19. Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Water Resources Planning Organization, WARPO Bhaban, 72 Green Road, Dhaka-1215
20. Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	Phone: +88-02 44819003 Email: rezaul.warpo@gmail.com

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the EOI's or annul the EOI process at any stage without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected application(s).

(Md. Rezaul Karim)
Project Director

Chittagong Development Authority
CDA Building, Chittagong

Ref. No. Tp-2/Master Plan/EOI/2020/02/07 Date: 06/07/2020

Amendment Notice

This is for information to all concerned that the notice for invitation of Expression of Interest, for the Preparation of Chattogram Metropolitan Master Plan (2020-2041) Project under Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), published in The Dainik Azadi, Dainik Kaler Kantha, Dainik Ittefaq, The Daily Star on 21-06-2020, has been amended as follows:

Description	Original	Amended
Last date for submission of application of Expression of Interest	12/07/2020	2.00pm on 22/07/2020
Experience, resources & delivery capacity required	The Consulting Firm must be legally registered in Bangladesh with annual turnover has to be at least BDT 50 crore per year for last 5 (five) years.	The Consulting Firm must be legally registered in Bangladesh.

All other terms and conditions of the above Expression of Interest will remain unchanged.

Mohammad Abu Issa Anshary
Town Planner
&
Project Director
Chattogram Metropolitan Master Plan Project
Chittagong Development Authority
CDA Building, Chittagong
Telephone: 031-632247
E-mail: pd.ctg.masterplan@gmail.com

GD-1090

The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd.
Gazipur-1703

e-Tender Notice for procurement of the following items for The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd., Gazipur as per e-Tender schedule.

Name of the items of e-Tender for procurement:

- Supply of 5,013 Reams or 25,065 packets White Art Card Board Paper (01 ream=500 sheets and 01 packet=100 sheets)
- Supply of 1,166 packets Green board.

For details, please visit our website:

Website : www.spcbd.org.bd
Telephone : 88-02-9205110-15, 9205116
Mobile : 88-01534002183 & 88-01534002184
Fax : 88-02-9205108, 9205109
E-mail : info@spcbd.org.bd
e-Tender site : etender.spcbd.org.bd/114.130.43.56

Rashid Ahmed
General Manager (Local Purchase & Sales)
Phone: 88-02-9205103

GD-1088

Taiwan risks China ire with Dalai Lama visit

Taiwan would welcome a visit by exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, its foreign ministry said yesterday, a trip that would infuriate Beijing which views him as a dangerous separatist.

Israel launches spy satellite

Israel yesterday launched a new spy satellite that it said would provide high-quality surveillance for its military intelligence. Israel has been building up its surveillance capabilities to monitor enemies such as Iran, whose nuclear program it sees as a major threat.

UK's Royal Mint celebrates Elton John with new coin



Elton John yesterday became the second artist to be honoured by Britain's Royal Mint with a commemorative coin paying tribute to the decorated British singer-songwriter.

SOURCE: ANN, REUTERS, AFP



Rescue workers search for missing people at a landslide site caused by torrential rain in Tsunagi town, Kumamoto Prefecture, southwestern Japan, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

HONG KONG SECURITY LAW China rebukes UK for 'interference'

REUTERS, London

China's ambassador to London yesterday accused Britain of gross interference and making irresponsible remarks over Beijing's imposition of new security legislation in Hong Kong that he said could damage future Chinese investment.

Britain has described the security law as a "clear and serious" violation of the 1984 Joint Declaration under which it handed back its colony to China 13 years later and said that London would offer around 3 million residents a path to British citizenship.

"The UK government keeps making irresponsible remarks on Hong Kong affairs," Ambassador Liu Xiaoming told reporters in the strongest rebuke Beijing has issued to London since Britain criticised the security law.

On the British offer to give British National (Overseas) (BNO) passport holders in Hong Kong a path to British citizenship, he said: "This move constitutes gross interference in China's internal affairs and openly tramples on the basic norms governing international relations."

He said China would decide on its response after seeing how Britain proceeded with its passport offer.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also toughened his language on a provisional decision to allow China's Huawei to be involved in the development of Britain's 5G infrastructure, saying he would protect critical infrastructure from "hostile state vendors".

Accusing Britain of "bouncing to the tune of the other countries," Liu said that, although China wanted friendly relations with Britain, there might be many consequences if Britain treated Beijing as an enemy or with suspicion.

TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH BHUTAN

China doubles down on claims

THE HINDU, TIMES OF INDIA

Days after Bhutan sent China a demarche protesting Chinese claims to the Sakteng wildlife sanctuary in Eastern Bhutan, Beijing has doubled down, including Bhutan's "Eastern sectors" to the boundary dispute between the two countries for the first time.

"The boundary between China and Bhutan has never been delimited. There have been disputes over the eastern, central and western sectors for a long time," said the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in a statement to the media in Beijing.

According to written records, there has been no mention of Eastern Bhutan, or Trashigang Dzongkhag (district), where Sakteng is based, that borders

Arunachal Pradesh, in 24 previous rounds of boundary negotiations held between the two countries between 1984 and 2016. The negotiations have not been held since the Doklam standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in 2017.



This is the first instance when China claimed he area in eastern Bhutan, well inside Bhutan territory. Sakteng sanctuary is in Trashigang province of Bhutan.

Sources in New Delhi see this move as part of the larger Chinese tactics of putting pressure on India's smaller

neighbours, to punish them for any closeness to India.

In 2017, the PLA had intruded into Doklam plateau which is Bhutanese territory, leading Indian forces to show up in strength to prevent China from building a road up to the Jhampheri ridge. The stand-off went on for 72 days before status quo ante was restored.

This year, too, there have been reports that China had started building yet another road along Torsa/Amo Chu, apparently aiming for the Siliguri corridor in India.

Bhutan does not have any formal diplomatic relations with Beijing. "Such claims undermine the boundary talks and wild claims on either side by officials will only exacerbate issues as Bhutan too can lay claims far north," said Tenzing Lamsang, Editor of the Bhutanese newspaper in Thimphu, in a series of tweets last week.

"Ultimately Bhutan and China need to resolve its boundary disputes or such false claims will come up as a pressure tactic," he added.

Pink ice worry in Alps

AFP, Passo Gavia

Scientists in Italy are investigating the mysterious appearance of pink glacial ice in the Alps, caused by algae that accelerate the effects of climate change.

There is debate about where the algae come from, but Biagio Di Mauro of Italy's National Research Council said the pink snow observed on parts of the Presena glacier is likely caused by the same plant found in Greenland.

"The alga is not dangerous, it is a natural phenomenon that occurs during the spring and summer periods in the middle latitudes but also at the Poles," said Di Mauro, who had previously studied the algae at the Morteratsch glacier in Switzerland.

The plant, known as Ancyronema nordenskioldii, is present in Greenland's so-called Dark Zone, where the ice is also melting.

Normally ice reflects more than 80 percent of the sun's radiation back into the atmosphere, but as algae appear, they darken the ice so that it absorbs the heat and melts more quickly.

More algae appear as the ice melts more rapidly, giving them vital water and air and adding red hues to the white ice at the Passo Gavia, altitude 2,618 metres (8,590 feet).

Tourists at the glacier lament the impact of climate change. "Overheating of the planet is a problem, the last thing we needed was algae," said tourist Marta Durante.

"Unfortunately we are doing irreversible damage. We are already at the point of no return, I think."



BUBONIC PLAGUE

China city on high alert

AGENCIES

Authorities in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia are on high alert after a suspected case of bubonic plague, the disease that caused the Black Death pandemic.

The case was discovered in the city of Bayannur, located northwest of Beijing, according to state-run Xinhua news agency. A hospital alerted municipal authorities of the patient's case on Saturday.



By Sunday, local authorities had issued a citywide Level 3 warning for plague prevention, the second lowest in a four-level system.

The warning will stay in place until the end of the year, according to Xinhua.

Plague, caused by bacteria and transmitted through flea bites and infected animals, is one of the deadliest bacterial infections in human history. During the Black Death in the Middle Ages, it killed an estimated 50 million people in Europe.

Bubonic plague, which is one of plague's three forms, causes painful, swollen lymph nodes, as well as fever, chills, and coughing.

Bayannur authorities warned the public to report findings of dead or sick marmots -- a type of large ground squirrel that is eaten in some parts of China and the neighboring country Mongolia, and which have historically caused plague outbreaks in the region.

The marmot is believed to have caused the 1911 pneumonic plague epidemic, which killed about 63,000 people in northeast China. It was hunted for its fur, which soared in popularity among international traders.

The advent of antibiotics has helped to contain plague outbreaks, preventing the type of rapid spread witnesses in Europe in the Middle Ages.

But while modern medicine can treat the plague, it has not eliminated it entirely -- and it has made a recent comeback, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to categorize it as a re-emerging disease.

Anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 people get the plague every year, according to the WHO.

Summer hope fades as cases soar

Coronavirus pandemic escalates despite warmer weather raising questions on sun's effect and human behaviour

AFP, London

Drunken celebrations on English pub reopening night and US beach closures prompted a global rethink of coronavirus measures during the summer holiday season.

Hopes of the sun making the new disease go away are fading as the United States racks up record daily infection numbers and quarantines return to parts of Europe.

Cases are also rising fast in India while Iran recorded its highest single death toll and Madagascar was forced to lock down its capital because of a new spike.

The latest batch of bad news is confronting governments with the pains of calibrating a response that is both safe and sufficient to get stalled economies going and mentally exhausted people out of their homes after months of lockdown.

Saturday presented the twin tests of England's pub culture resuming after a three-month hiatus and the US marking its July 4 celebrations under the leadership of President Donald Trump.

The head of the police federation for England and Wales said the sight of thousands of people thronging the streets of London's Soho nightlife district made it clear "that drunk people can't/won't socially distance".



Spainiards endured one of the world's toughest lockdowns in which people were confined to their homes unless they could provide the police with a valid excuse for stepping out.

Britain's infection numbers are falling and any new spike from the big night out could undermine PM Johnson's optimistic message of the worst being in the past.

His government has already been forced to impose a partial lockdown on the city of Leicester and is watching infection rates trending at uncomfortably high levels in London and other parts of the UK.

The mood in Spain is even grimmer after two separate outbreaks saw 200,000 people put under lockdown in the northeastern Catalonia region on Saturday and another 70,000 in the northwestern Galicia region on Sunday.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Sukt Paribahan Corporation regarding the procurement of e-Tender for the construction of health and family welfare centers.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh e-Tender Notice for the construction of health and family welfare centers.

LAW DESK WEBINAR

Towards a consumer rights-based approach to healthcare

THE COVID-19 pandemic is taking a huge toll on the healthcare sector across the globe. The situation is seemingly more unfortunate in a developing country like Bangladesh. The challenges permeating the healthcare sector are innumerable and the same are accounted for by many things – ranging from loopholes in the legal framework to raw realities in the field. Allegations of denial of treatment (of COVID and non-COVID patients alike), sale of counterfeit pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical products and services of utmost need for COVID patients, irregularities in the private healthcare sector, are some of the challenges among many others. There are shortcomings in establishing an accountability mechanism in instances of medical negligence and malpractice as well. All these lacunae are making it difficult to ensure a rights-based approach to healthcare services amid the current coronavirus crisis.

In this backdrop, a webinar on 'Rights of Consumers relating to Health Care Services' was organised by 'Law & Our Rights', The Daily Star on 30 June 2020. In the webinar, experts and stakeholders expressed their views on possibilities, challenges and opportunities of consumer rights-based approach to healthcare services within the current legal framework of Bangladesh. Mohammad Golam Sarwar, from Law Desk and also a Lecturer in Law, University of Dhaka moderated the webinar.



Prof. Dr. Md. Ziaul Islam, Head, Department of Community Medicine, National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM)

The current pandemic has gone beyond the capacities of developed and developing countries. For Bangladesh in particular, we do not have sufficient resources to provide healthcare to the large number of patients, and as a result, on preventive, promotive or curative levels we face limitations. However, we should work within this capacity and properly utilise our logistical and infrastructural resources. The government is trying to provide necessary resources, but some shortcomings are still noticeable. There should have been a holistic preparedness.

Another important area that needs our focus is of creating a balance between medical malpractice and violence against doctors. Consumers seeking healthcare are fundamentally

different from consumers seeking other services. There are psychological impacts associated with the loss of near and dear ones which may result in tension and violence. A comprehensive protection legislation incorporating the rights of both the doctors and the patients should be enacted. With regard to complaints against doctors, alongside legal routes, the possibility of administrative measures, can be considered. The Consumers Rights Protection Act 2009 is also not adequate to protect rights of the patients. Even there is no representative from health service sector in the National Consumer Rights Protection Council under the Act.

In the age of globalisation, health market is booming. But due to its unique nature, the rights of the consumers are not delineated. Costs differ widely – consumers have little to no idea about the reasonable price of these services. In other markets, consumer and seller are more on par with regard to their knowledge on the costs of goods and services. A collaborative framework involving public health experts, civil societies and government agencies should be ensured.



Prof. Dr. Mohammad Morshed, Director, Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital

It is now quite evident that a good percentage of COVID-19 patients are dying at home. Even among the ones who are going to the hospitals there have been allegations of denial of treatment. We are not blaming the patients, but the fact is that they should act responsibly also. We often see that they themselves fail to identify between mild and severe symptoms and unnecessarily over-crowd the hospitals – whereas they could have taken some minor treatment-measures at home instead of coming to the hospitals. There is a lack of coordination, information and understanding as to at what moment the patients should take resort to hospital services. Sometimes asymptomatic patients come to the hospital and insist upon getting admitted. They even do not want to understand that they create pressure on the healthcare system and the medical personnel.

The pandemic has shown us that management is an important aspect of the health sectors. A proper

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hospital management and administration should be brought within a system of central regulation.
- Transparency and accountability should be ensured and patients should be provided with accurate information.
- Digital healthcare systems should be fortified to provide need-based healthcare to peripheral areas.
- Public health institutions should be strengthened so that they can conduct proper research and play an effective role in decision-making.
- A robust monitoring mechanism should be established for proper regulation of private hospitals and clinics.
- Complaint mechanisms under different laws should be publicly accessible.
- Existing schedules laying out charges for medical services should be updated in a time-befitting manner.
- In concrete terms, laws should recognise patients as consumers. Existing laws as well as policies be amended where necessary and rules should be used to spell out the implementation aspects of laws.

coordination between healthcare professionals and the management team is crucial. Often doctors face the wrath of public for managerial decisions. Another important consideration is transparency and accuracy of information that the consumers receive. Also, there remains general crisis of transparency and accountability, in dealings with logistics, equipment, protective clothing, etc. There is lack of management in the private sector mostly and they need to be brought under proper management and into a proper system of regulation.



Barrister Rasha Imam, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Various provisions of the Consumers Rights Protection Act 2009 contain penal sanction to protect rights of the consumers. For instance, section 52 provides penalty for doing any act detrimental to life or security of consumers. Section 53 punishes the act of negligence resulting in loss of life or damage to health. Apart from this, section 45 provides punishment for selling or delivering substandard services. Under these provisions, criminal cases can be lodged. However, the consumer in question on his/her own cannot lodge the case. The condition is of complaining to the Director General within thirty days. This is the first inadequacy or loophole in the law. Under the law,

civil claims can also be made for compensation up to five times the loss suffered. However, there is no standard guideline to calculate the quantum of compensation.

Administrative actions can be taken by the Director General when he gets a written complaint. As part of administrative actions, licenses of the service providers may be revoked, and their commercial activities may be closed down. However, the law does not flesh out the detailed procedure of administrative actions or measures that may be taken. This is yet another loophole.

Another issue is of protection of the frontline doctors and medical personnel. Although we do not have any specific legislation for the protection of doctors, they are protected under the constitutional safeguards of right to life and health. For example, not providing protective gears to doctors and sending them to the frontline is like trading one life for another and that is in no way constitutional. Regarding the public sentiment resulting in violence towards doctors, mob justice prevails when there is absence of accountability and when people lose faith in the processes.

Another legal issue comes up with regard to the testing of COVID-19 disease. Earlier, the testing was done under the auspices of the government and was free. Private testing had a price. Recently, the decision has been made on buying government testing services too with a price. Interpreting the constitution and existing laws would indicate that testing should be free and

accessible for all.

In order to address medical malpractice or negligence, we must have a comprehensive law of tort and compensation. Private tort of negligence has not developed in Bangladesh because the civil suits take many years to be resolved, among others. This adds to other procedural matters such as court fees and fees for advocates discourage people from coming forward. Another challenge is the matter of evidence. No laws provide for a record-keeping obligation on the hospitals. Without the records, the court cannot properly scrutinise the case. Often, in cases that involve powerful parties like owners of big hospitals, there is also a concern of witness intimidation. Since we do not have any witness protection scheme, this may lead the party to withdraw the suit. However, public tort law has developed to a certain extent. Some cases are instances of *res ipsa loquitur* where evidence is not as big of a challenge.



Ghulam Rahman, President, Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB)

During this pandemic, due to alleged mismanagement and corruption in health sector, there is a huge crisis. Many things are wrong not just with the hospitals but also with equipment and medicine as we can see in the news every day. We need a stringent legal framework and responsible as well as dedicated leadership to ensure a proper healthcare system.

The Consumers Rights Protection Directorate has not filed a single criminal case until now. They have kept their measures limited to administrative fines. Not many complaints regarding the healthcare sector has been raised either – mostly the complaints deal with expired medicine or similar and minor offences. The law should be amended to ensure the aggrieved persons can directly approach the court.

Right to healthcare is one of the recognised rights in the country. Hence, discrepancies in consultation fees and cost of diagnostic tests should be centrally regulated. The government needs to undertake an overseeing role and corruption needs to be properly addressed. Otherwise, despite increasing the budget for the healthcare sector, nothing will change.

FROM LAW DESK.

LAW VISION

The global race to patent a COVID-19 vaccine

MUNIZA KABIR

WHILE people are facing the greatest public health crisis, the world's largest economies are in a fierce competition to be the first to develop a COVID-19 vaccine and ensure its accessibility to their citizens. Quite evidently, the mysterious virus has introduced a whole new global race – the race to win exclusive patent rights to a Covid-19 vaccine.

Patents are a form of intellectual property rights providing creators of new inventions, such as vaccines and medicines, with limited term monopoly over those inventions. During this period, the patent holders own exclusive rights to manufacture and sell their inventions or can choose to licence it to others to do the same. Usually, research and development for a single vaccine, drug or diagnostic test costs billions of dollars, but patents help the inventor to recoup their costs and provide an incentive to invent or innovate. The licences include a specified time limit and geographical area to exploit the patent. In exchange, the patent holder receives royalties and/or licence fees. To sum up, the desperate search to find a COVID-19 cure is not just about saving lives but about owning the patent rights and monopolising the vaccines to make huge profits.

Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 but many pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in the United States, China and Europe are optimistic about producing successful treatments. Although, Europe has already assured that if they are the first to discover a vaccine, it will be licensed around the world. Contrarily, the

United States and China have been engaged in a trade war since 2018 because of China's lack of enforcement of intellectual property rights to non-chinese citizens. Therefore, both countries have responded to this pandemic with strong nationalist sentiments. The political tension between the two countries has already affected the way their laboratories would have otherwise cooperated to invent a COVID-19 antiviral.

Remdesivir, a nucleoside analogue prodrug, is patented by an American pharmaceutical

similar to those of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to impel a licence, in case their licensing request was denied. Rather unsurprisingly, the Wuhan Institute filed a patent for using Remdesivir, which portrayed nothing but a defensive measure to secure access to Remdesivir in China and lower possible licensing fees they might owe Gilead for using it.

This defensive patent filing will not only initiate a deeper mistrust between America and China but other foreign laboratories like



laboratory named Gilead Sciences. It was first developed to treat Ebola which, after proved to be ineffective for that purpose, was discovered by Gilead that Remdesivir could be effective at mitigating coronaviruses including COVID-19. When Gilead donated Remdesivir to Chinese hospitals in response to covid-19 outbreak to test its effectiveness, the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China ("Wuhan Institute"), filed a competing method of using patent instead, that involves using Remdesivir with Chloroquine (a common malaria antiviral). Gilead deliberated that if the Wuhan Institute wanted, they could have approached them for licensing Remdesivir or, apply their "compulsory licensing" statutes

Johnson & Johnson, CureVac, GlaxoSmithKline, Moderna, Sanofi etc. may become reluctant to test their vaccine in China, thinking that their intellectual property rights will not be protected.

Currently, about 80 groups around the world are researching on COVID-19 vaccines and some are entering clinical trials. How will this new kind of space race to patent a vaccine affect Bangladesh in terms of accessibility and price?

Section 22 of the Patents and Designs Act 1911 allows any person to present a petition to the Government to grant compulsory licence, alleging that demand for a patented drug in Bangladesh is not adequately met and on reasonable

terms. Compulsory licensing is a process by which a government licences companies or individuals besides the patent owner to make, sell or import a product under patent, without the patent owner's permission. However, Article 66 of TRIPS Agreement grants all Least Developed Countries a waiver till 2033, permitting the production of pharmaceutical products which are still on patent. This means, if a COVID-19 vaccine is patented by some other country, it will not enjoy patent protection in Bangladesh. Therefore, Bangladesh can produce a COVID-19 vaccine at a low cost without requiring to invoke compulsory licenses.

China, now in their phase-2 clinical trials, has assured Bangladesh to receive priority in terms of cooperation and support if they can successfully produce a vaccine. Led by the European Union, a virtual summit was held on 4 May, where world leaders from more than 30 countries including the United Nations and the World Health Organisation, called for international efforts to make COVID-19 vaccine a global public good. Conversely, America disassociated itself from such a cause to rather support - Vaccine for Americans first, while the rest can queue up to pay the patented drug.

So, who will win the race? Definitely, not someone who invents first. A true winner will be the one who will view their invention as a public necessity rather than business profiteering. When the inventor of polio vaccine, Jonas Salk, was asked who owned the patent, he responded: "Well, the people, I would say. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?"

THE WRITER IS A LECTURER AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW, NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY.



GLOBAL LAW UPDATES

UNSC adopts resolution supporting a global ceasefire

ON 1 July 2020 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2532 (2020) supporting the Secretary General's appeal for global ceasefire. The resolution calls for immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations. The Security Council has called on all parties to armed conflicts to immediately engage in a humanitarian pause for 90 consecutive days at least and enable the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance. It also asked for the provision of related services by impartial humanitarian actors in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. A cessation would enable medical evacuations as per the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law where applicable.

The UNSC also said that military

operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Al-Nusra Front, and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida or ISIL, and other Council-designated terrorist groups will not come under the purview of cessation of hostilities.

The Council called for a coordinated and accelerated response to the COVID-19 pandemic from all relevant organs of the UN system including the country teams and requested the Secretary-General to instruct the peacekeeping forces to assist the host countries in tackling the pandemic. Furthermore, the Council called for concrete actions to minimise the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls, children, refugees, internally displaced persons, older persons and persons with disabilities.

COMPILED BY LAW DESK; SOURCE: UN.ORG.

Leave the forest alone!

Trees being felled in Bandarban village threatens livelihoods

It is unfortunate that despite all the warnings from environmentalists regarding the dangers of loss of forest cover in the context of our planet's existence, tree cutting even in protected areas continue unabated. This suicidal activity is highlighted by a report in this paper: residents of a remote village in Bandarban's Lama upazila, have appealed to the authorities to protect the nearby forest, where unnamed "criminals" are cutting trees indiscriminately and with apparent impunity. The forest is known as a Village Common Forest (VCF) which collectively benefits the communities living nearby who use the forest's natural resources as sources of food and water. The community benefits from the forest and the forest benefits by being preserved by the community.

Unfortunately such sustainable practices are often threatened by the greed of the influential and powerful. This particular case indicates that local administration officials have played a dubious role by turning a blind eye to those individuals engaged in this crime. Although the villagers have protested several times against this, the tree felling and bamboo cutting have gone on.

Written complaints have been given to the Union Parishad Chairman and Upazila chairman with no result. Already 6,000 bamboos and 40 big trees have been cut down. Why are the local officials so reluctant to take action against individuals who are violating the law and more importantly, threatening the livelihoods of families as well as causing irreparable harm to the common forest? Elephants used to fell the trees are destroying the water sources of these people. Why would local authorities allow the main source of water to be jeopardised?

The Kalu Mro Para incident is a microcosm of the unabated denuding of forest areas that continue all over the country. So far almost 1.6 lakh acres of forest land has been handed over to different government agencies and establishments, making recreation centres, guest houses, offices, cottages or used for development projects (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change). This contradicts with its SDG goal to stop deforestation by 2020 and have 20 percent of the landmass as forests by 2030.

According to the UP chairman the forest area where the trees and bamboo were felled is not part of the VCF and the felling is being done with permission of the person in charge of these affairs. It is the concerned ministry's responsibility to immediately investigate this incident and see if trees of the VCF were cut down. Even if they weren't part of the community forest, the felling of trees in this manner cannot be justified when we have already lost so much of our forest cover. The government must recognise the crucial need to conserve these precious natural resources and not allow them to be destroyed in the name of development or by criminals connected with the powerful. Our survival depends on the sincerity of such efforts.

Education and employment for the physically challenged

Potential remains large, but not opportunities

JAHANARA Akhter's story (published in this paper yesterday) is nothing short of exhilarating. A young girl born in an impoverished family in Ghatail upazila and with physical disability has managed to secure GPA 5 in her Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams and is determined to continue with her studies. The odds against her were many. She and all of her family members, except her mother, have speech and hearing impairment. Jahanara's mother, a domestic help, could see the promising potential in her daughter since she was young and thus, devoted all her efforts in educating her. But now she worries how her daughter will continue her education after her SSC as it would mean relocating in order to attend college. She also worries about who would constantly assist Jahanara, as it is essential, especially during her studies. For individuals with disabilities, their dreams are often cut short because there are little or no provisions for them to get the assistance they need to pursue them.

Say Jahanara manages to finish her education which would be a formidable feat given the circumstances, what about getting a job? How hard would that be for a person with disability? Last year during this time of the year, visually impaired jobseekers went on hunger strike demanding special recruitment at government, autonomous, semi-autonomous offices, as well as an unemployment allowance, until they secure jobs after graduation. Likewise, this year too, they have pushed forward similar demands as they are facing hardships like never before in the face of the ongoing pandemic which has put our economy to a near halt. A council of job-seeking visually-impaired graduates recently wrote an open letter to the prime minister, stating their struggles to survive the jobless market. The letter further cited that it has been nine months since the PM gave certain directives to address their problems but the designated government agencies did not make any progress till now.

While it is assuring to learn from our report that the Ghatail Upazila Secondary Education Officer will assist Jahanara in her upcoming endeavours, including arranging a free scholarship to fulfill her dreams, the bigger question remains what will happen to her and other graduates with disability when comes to getting a job? Without any support in the current situation especially, these students are likely to fall into poverty and will lose all hope of overcoming the odds and be employed. The government's rescue packages and budget allocations must include them. To establish an inclusive society, the government as well as other organisations must come forward to employ people who are physically challenged. As the pandemic continues, we hope the government will not hesitate in providing the necessary support, especially to the underprivileged, physically challenged individuals who are among the most vulnerable groups under the current circumstances. With support and compassion, these individuals can pursue their academic and career dreams and be productive citizens of the country.

High stakes in the Himalayas

ALI AHMED ZIAUDDIN

BORDER clashes reflect shared suspicion at best and animosity at worst between neighbouring states. The Indo-China border clash is a classic example. India claims the McMahon Line drawn in 1914 including Arunachal Pradesh as its border with China in the north-east and the Johnson Line drawn in 1899 including Aksai Chin in the north. Since China never recognised either of these colonial maps the border remained contested ever since.

Neither has any clear policy on how to mark the border and where. In its absence, both insist its version of the LAC (line of actual control). This led both to clash over it several times. Although an unmarked border is a recipe for clashes, they nevertheless reflect tension on so many other issues of mutual interests, some in the open and some in the background. Though the frequency of the friction has increased in recent times, neither wants to escalate it to a full blown war even if there is no dearth of hostile jingoism on both sides. It seems the only visible policy is to continue with the claim and counterclaim until an accord is reached on multiple key but fuzzy issues in other areas. There is so much at stake. With this background it seems both are testing each other's resolve at the border.

Apart from the fact that there were fatalities on both sides the whole episode is shrouded in such rhetorical statements from both sides that it is very difficult to take an objective view of what really happened. However, two clear statements from the top seem intriguing. On May 14 after one of the off and on border skirmishes, Indian army chief blamed aggressive behaviour by both sides ("Army chief says LAC tensions being resolved along guidelines given after India-China summit", The Print). And on June 19, Prime Minister Modi said, "nobody has intruded into our border, neither is anybody there now, nor have our posts been captured" (The Wire). This is a clear indication that the brawl took place in China's side of the LAC, which India claims is theirs. The PM's office has not retracted this statement. Does it mean India is trying to change the status quo? If so then it's a repetition of India's "Forward

Policy" in the late fifties that among many other factors ultimately culminated in the 1962 war.

In the late fifties, India, believing the above mentioned lines to be its international border, started building outposts in the forward regions. Since China didn't recognise the lines right from the start it objected. After many rounds of talks at different levels right from the top down, China offered a compromise to give up claim on Arunachal Pradesh which it considers to be South Tibet; in exchange India should give up claim on Aksai Chin in the north.



It seems the only visible policy is to continue with the claim and counterclaim until an accord is reached on multiple key but fuzzy issues in other areas. PHOTO: AFP

India refused, and set a precondition of China giving up Aksai Chin for any further negotiation. (China's Decision for War with India in 1962, John D Garver in New Directions in the Study of China's Foreign Policy). A deadlock ensued, and after a lot of jostling in the border region it came down to a war that ended very badly for India. For the next half a century the border dispute continued to remain calm but unresolved. In the past several years, however, dynamics have changed. India has grown stronger both militarily and economically compared to 1962, and it can now count on the support of the lone superpower of the day. So naturally India may feel confident to try to change the

status quo and if possible recover some of its lost ground. It will also regain some of its prestige lost in 1962 while at the same time tell China unless it attends to Indian concerns in several other areas it runs the risk of facing a hostile India and perhaps eventually a formidable frontline state of US's China containment policy.

In 1962, three key hazy issues played a vital role behind the scene in the hardening of position on the border issue in both states. China wrongly assumed India wanted to grab Tibet and that's why it was assisting the insurgency there, moreover, it was also concerned that India

dialogues but looms in the background, which each expect the other to understand. Differing perceptions on these become a source of tension in both states. If they are not amicably settled, conflict resolution on the border issue will be a far cry.

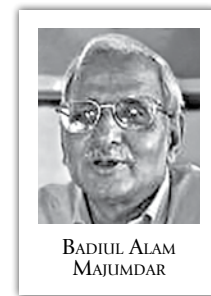
First, Kashmir being a highly sensitive issue for India; it expects China to have a hands off policy on how India deals with it, especially in its border regions. Second, India wants China to recognise the McMahon Line as the international border. Third, India's huge trade gap with China keeps widening each year; unlike the US it can't start a trade war but expects China to address it positively. Fourth, India is wary of China's strategic alliance with Pakistan and wants a freehand in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. These are India's wish lists. But it is also aware of China's economic strength and its dependence on it. On June 17, just a day after the brawl in the border, India received a credit of USD 750 million from the Chinese development bank. While China's sharp response is a way of telling India not to get too cosy with the US, it also needs India's vast market for investments as well as selling its products. Can either do without the other? Negotiations on the non-border areas are urgently needed.

Is India willing to become the frontline state of the US's imperial game plan of containing China that may not only ruin the entire subcontinent but well lead to an Asia wide destabilisation? The US has been goading India for some time to become just that, but India till now was unwilling to fall in line. On the other hand, is China seriously willing to push India into such an alliance with the US that may lead to facing the Quad in China's eastern seaboard while simultaneously facing a fearsome enemy to the south? If both India and China are unable to find some common ground, God help us all.

Taking sides in this battle of nerves between two giant neighbours is a luxury Bangladesh can't afford. Rather as a friend, a trading partner, a close neighbour to both, it can only wish that good sense will prevail and both sides find a solution in negotiations rather than in conflict.

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Why Kerala has succeeded in controlling coronavirus



BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR

A recent headline in Prothom Alo (June 26, 2020) stated, "Amartya Sen and Noam Chomsky showered Kerala with praise for their successful containment of the coronavirus". Kerala's

advancement in education, primary healthcare and human development are generally considered the main reasons for such success. But there are other factors behind Kerala's stellar performance against the coronavirus, the most important of which is a strong and effective panchayat system, and the political commitment to make the best use of it by engaging and empowering the communities.

Through sustained efforts of many years—Rome was not built in a day—an effective three-tier system of local government was established in Kerala, whose dividends the state derived during the current coronavirus pandemic. At the rural level, Kerala now has 941 gram panchayats, 152 block panchayats and 14 district panchayats. In urban areas, there are 87 municipalities and 6 municipal corporations. The average population of a gram panchayat is 25,000. In Kerala, the average number of gram panchayat employees is 10-25, however, the 8-13 institutions working under them, including the primary healthcare institutions, have an average of 200 employees. It is to be noted that in Bangladesh at present there is only one employee of the Union Parishad and the amount of resources under its direct control is very small.

In Kerala, the gram panchayat members are elected directly from the ward level and the panchayat head and co-head are elected by ward members. Women from reserved seats for women are elected using a "rotational system" and they enjoy the same responsibilities and powers as those elected from regular seats. Elected panchayat representatives are accountable to the people and corruption is not a problem in Kerala.

On the other hand, our current local government representatives have come to power through extremely controversial elections. Most of them are victims of "nomination-trade"—buying party nominations with money. We are thus not surprised that during the current pandemic, about 100 local government representatives were punished for corruption. In addition, the prevailing structure of corruption and "partyarchy" that has developed at the local level makes it almost impossible for elected representatives to perform their duties without becoming corrupt.

One of the key contributors to Kerala's success was the People's Plan Campaign,

a statewide people's movement for local planning launched in 1998. As part of this campaign, 35 percent of the state's development budget was transferred to local government institutions. This movement was implemented through the state's Department of Local Self-Government and the State Planning Board, which resulted in deepening public engagement with the panchayat system in Kerala, magnifying the role of the panchayat in ensuring the overall welfare of the people.

As part of this role, each panchayat formulates plans to deal with disasters and climate change, which brings ordinary citizens and public servants to work together in emergencies under one command structure. The plan created "First Responder Teams" with people having deep knowledge of their communities. The formulation of the disaster plan requires assembling all relevant information about the community. This disaster plan was used to deal with the floods of 2018 and, in light of that experience, the plan was updated and made more effective.

At the onset of the coronavirus

community engagement to contain the coronavirus and mitigate it locally. For communication, they started a campaign to promote three Ws: washing hands, wearing masks and watching physical distance. As part of this campaign, Rapid Response Teams created websites as repositories from which citizens received relevant and accurate information. They also set up call centres, help desks, online counselling and WhatsApp groups.

Rapid Response Teams identified those who were infected and ensured their home and institutional quarantine. They carried out contact tracing to break the chain of infection. In addition, they set up mobile clinics in their communities to provide essential health services.

Rapid Response Teams arranged home delivery of medicines and other emergency items. They set up community kitchens to provide food to those in need. They also inspected grocery stores and fish markets to prevent the spread of the virus.

With the realisation that they were in it together, Rapid Response Teams ensured the safety of all, irrespective of race, religion and political identity, which



Through sustained efforts of many years and effective three-tier system of local government was established in Kerala, whose dividends the state derived during the current coronavirus pandemic. PHOTO: AFP

pandemic, a "Rapid Response Team" was formed in each ward of the gram panchayat under the leadership of elected members. All health workers, panchayat workers and other volunteers became part of this team. Members of the Kudumbashree (women's self-help groups) and Angawanwadi (childcare centres), which are centrally sponsored schemes, and Resident Associations were included in these teams. In 2020, volunteer teams of 336,000 citizens were formed in Kerala for managing natural resources.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the members of the Rapid Response Team did, broadly speaking, three Cs: communication, coordination (including planning, managing and monitoring) and

has been a tradition in Kerala. At the same time, they made lists of the most vulnerable and provided special protection for them. They created GIS maps of migrant camps and provided support to the migrant workers.

Rapid Response Teams, formed at the ward level under the leadership of elected representatives, mobilised and brought together the whole community to stop the virus at its track. Their success was largely due to the trust, cooperation and involvement of every person of the community. The communities also set up check-posts in their respective boundaries to prevent the spread of the virus beyond their neighbourhoods. All the institutions of the state were involved in

Rapid Response Teams identified those who were infected and ensured their home and institutional quarantine. They carried out contact tracing to break the chain of infection. In addition, they set up mobile clinics in their communities to provide essential health services.

this work, although the elected panchayat representatives provided leadership in the field. The state also provided budgetary support and flexibility.

It should be noted that during the coronavirus pandemic, the political leadership of Kerala built a relationship of trust with the people. Every day the Chief Minister and his colleagues arranged briefing sessions to freely share all relevant information in order to take people into confidence. This created a relation of mutual trust and confidence between the leaders and the people, contributing to the successful containment of the coronavirus in Kerala.

The political commitment of the state government has also played a significant role in this regard. In an article in the Economic and Political Weekly (June 13, 2020), Kerala's Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said, "In times of pandemics like Covid-19, the relationship between the state and the people needs to be strong, trustworthy and organic. This will not be possible in a centralised system of governance, wherein even minor decisions are taken at the highest tier of the government, which is the farthest from the people... centralisation violates the principle of subsidiarity, which states that the tier closest to the people can discharge local functions more effectively. In our view, when you are faced with a contagious disease that could quickly attain the stage of community spread, the best strategy to contain it is a participatory mode of governance. The prime role in this is to be discharged by the local governments with community participation."

Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, Global Vice President and Country Director, The Hunger Project Bangladesh.

For the honour of Scouter, Lt Gen Robert Baden-Powell



CHINTITO SINCE 1995
NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

Edward Colston. Perplexing though was the inclusion of the statue of Baden-Powell, the founder of the worldwide Scout Movement, in their "Topple the Racists" list of sixty statues.

BLM activists claim that Baden-Powell aka Lieutenant-General Robert Stephenson Smyth of the British Army, while besieged in the Mafeking garrison during the 2nd Boer War (1899-1902), starved two thousand black Africans of food and water, even of their own, which he had earlier forcibly taken over. However, about 30 years ago, his biographer Tim Jeal had categorically stated in *Baden-Powell* (1989), "This is an absolute lie. He (actually) opened soup kitchens and shot all of his cavalry horses so that he could feed them."

Baden-Powell's 217 days of "somewhat voluntary" siege at Mafeking was all heroic. He had demonstrated lack of military wisdom, and was guilty of insubordination. Whereas he was ordered to maintain only a mobile cavalry force on the frontier with the Boer republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State), Baden-Powell amassed stores, established a garrison, and deactivated half his force to remain surrounded in Mafeking by a Boer army of at times 8,000 men, against his two thousand.

Baden-Powell had sufficient forces to escape throughout much of the siege, especially since the Boers lacked adequate artillery, but he questionably remained in the town to the point of his intended

mounted soldiers starving to death.

Historian Thomas Pakenham had opined in an earlier book *The Boer War* (1979), that Baden-Powell sacrificed the lives of the native African soldiers and civilians by drastically reducing their rations. Conversely, after subsequent research over two decades, Pakenham reversed the allegation in *The Siege of Mafeking* (2001), but in which he distressingly stated that Baden-Powell's "failure to properly understand the situation and abandonment of the soldiers, mostly Australians and Rhodesians, at the Battle of Elands River led to his being removed from action".

Another more serious breach of protocol landed him in further trouble. Baden Powell judged and executed prisoner of war, the African Chief Uwini of the 1896 Matabeleland rebellion, who had surrendered in response to a pledge that his life would be spared. BP was later cleared by an inquiry conducted by his victorious country.

At Mafeking, Baden-Powell had witnessed his Chief Staff Officer, Lord Edward Cecil forming the Mafeking Cadet Corps of white boys below fighting age (12 to 15 years old), who stood guard, carried messages, assisted in hospitals, and released the men to fight, wrote David C Scott in *The Siege of Mafeking* (2008), a fact duly acknowledged by Baden-Powell in his *Scouting for Boys* (1908). The cadets' phenomenon inspired Lt General Baden-Powell to organise an experimental camp at Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour, Dorset, in August 1907 for UK boys to benefit from the Mafeking sort of activities. The Boy Scouts movement was born. Three years later his younger sister Agnes initiated the Girls Guides movement.

Baden-Powell or BP, as he is lovingly known to over 54 million active Scouts and Girl Guides, and millions others in 216 countries and territories, dedicated his post-military life 1910 onwards to the development of young people as responsible, supportive and dutiful citizens of their country and the world through achieving

their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials as individuals.

Baden-Powell was among the few brave ex-soldiers to admit as early as 1908 about (British) colonies, "... in the past many mistakes have been made... The first consideration now is, how can we best help the peoples—whatever their colours...". BP instituted the "worldwide brotherhood" of Scouts within a decade of the Mafeking "racial" allegations, declaring that a scout is "a friend of all the world". It is therefore hard

in London, and was invited to meet Adolf Hitler, which did not transpire. Wrote BP: "... true peace between the two nations (Britain and Germany) will depend on the youth being brought up on friendly terms together in forgetfulness of past differences". BP noted in his diary (1939): *Mein Kampf* was "a wonderful book, with good ideas on education, health, propaganda, organisation, etc.," written years before Hitler showed his brutal Nazi colours.

Perhaps it was naïve of Baden-Powell to

1934). Hitler Youth were a compulsory Nazi formation, which had consciously sought to breed hate, treachery and cruelty into the mind and soul of every German child.

BP's biographer Tim Jeal said any admiration for the Nazi leader's autobiographical manifesto *Mein Kampf* was confined to their shared ideas about boys' education, and outward bound life, and not Hitler's hatred of Jews, which became pronounced much later.

Three decades earlier, BP had written, "Scouts from all parts of the world are ambassadors of goodwill, making friends, breaking down barriers of colour, of creed, and of class". He must have meant it to include the German youth. Was it BP's lion heart talking in 1937 because of the Scouting principles he laid out, "promoting friendship among all"?

BP was never in the Nazi good book, and would have been killed among 2,800 others "in the event of a successful invasion of Britain", as outlined in the Nazi's 1940 plan. Inclusion in the list of Nazi targets exonerates BP from supposed Nazi fraternising.

Gifted with the flair to stimulate the imagination of the young, BP cast them challenges of camping, hiking, trekking, discovering nature, and working in small groups to pick up lifesaving leadership skills. Committed to inclusion of all and valuing the diversity of nations, BP promoted camaraderie, tolerance and global solidarity. Young and old of every creed, colour, country, community and class adopted Scouting as a means of involving youth towards "creating a better world".

The man's character is enshrined in the Scout promise and law that has lasted now over a century and a dozen years: "... to do our duty to Allah and our country, to help others at all times, to obey the Scout Law. The spark of Baden-Powell ignited passion across the face of the earth.



A statue of Robert Baden-Powell is seen in Poole, Britain, on June 11, 2020.

PHOTO: PETER NICHOLLS/AFP

to imagine that Baden-Powell was driven by the vile of racism.

BLM activists further claim that Baden-Powell was "enthusiastic about Nazism, and an admirer of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*, 1925) and the Hitler Youth movement", an inference possibly deducible from BP's 1937 letter, after he held talks with the head of the Hitler Youth movement

stretch the hand of friendship because since Hitler's appointment as chancellor (1933), the Nazis were operating concentration camps to incarcerate and intimidate anti-Nazi political, social, and cultural leaders. Simultaneously, Hitler Youth's proclamation that it alone represented German youth led to the Scout Movement being prohibited as young enemies of the new state (May

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed is a practising Architect, a Commonwealth Scholar and a Fellow, a Baden-Powell Fellow Scout Leader, and a Major Donor Rotarian.

Has Trump found a solution to America's Afghan problem?

SAYEED AHMED

America's recent peace agreement with the Taliban in Doha makes many ponder whether it has lost the war. However, before coming to such a conclusion, we should revisit the aims of this decades-old bloody conflict.

According to President Bush Jr, its mission was "to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime." But the Taliban are still a formidable foe, and terrorists have spread to far-flung countries. By signing the agreement with the Taliban, sidelining the elected government of Afghanistan, the US has only accepted its legitimacy, abandoning the mission President Bush stated at the outset.

One particular aspect of this war is unmissable; it's nearly impossible to plan and mobilise such a large-scale military mission thousands of miles away in less than a month.

What was the aim of the war then, and is the peace agreement just a change of tactic to achieve it? To find an answer, we must go back many years.

'The Geographical Pivot of History'—the Heartland Theory

In 1904, British geographer Halford Mackinder proposed a theory—which he called the "Heartland" theory—in a paper titled "The Geographical Pivot of History." The essence of this theory is that Eurasia is the global pivot point, and whoever controls the Eurasian continent—the "Heartland"—can exercise global dominance. Today, the Heartland consists of Russia, the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, and the Caspian basin. Russia has long been the de

facto controlling power of this region.

The new player in this game is China, as it's projecting its influence through land routes in Central Asia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US adopted a policy of expanding in this region, made explicit

in a Pentagon document in early 1992. It stated that the first objective of the US was to prevent any rival power dominating this region, and it would preclude the emergence of any potential future global competitor.

In February the same year, the USAID prepared a report titled "Mineral Resources in Afghanistan," providing a comprehensive

picture of the vast amounts of oil, gas, rare earth elements, and other minerals. It made Afghanistan an integral part of America's Eurasia policy.

Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski, the US National Security Advisor from 1977 to 1981, contributed further to the Pentagon policy through his seminal work "The Grand Chessboard" (1997). In it, he said: "The most immediate task is to make certain that no state or combination of states gains the capacity to expel the United States from Eurasia or even to diminish significantly its decisive arbitrating role."

Securing Afghanistan was, therefore, crucial, and the 9/11 incident was a God-

send opportunity.

By 2010, the Afghan war had been dragging on for a decade but made little discernible progress. The Taliban were steadily getting stronger. Al Qaeda was still present and had since spread to several other countries.

In June that year, in an apparent bid to buy more time for the war, the Pentagon reported the "discovery" of nearly USD 1 trillion in untapped mineral deposits in Afghanistan. But despite continued efforts until 2016, the situation didn't improve much. Afghanistan became a blaring case of American foreign policy failure.

'To the victor belong the spoils'

In January 2017, Donald Trump took over as America's 45th president. In the same month, he declared at the CIA headquarters: "To the victor belong the spoils." But picking up the spoils of the Afghan War was a dangerous and costly endeavour as most mine sites were still under Taliban control, and security remained ever elusive.

Trump, the businessman, was on the search for a cost-effective way to guard the mines and carry the ores to the ports.

'Prince' to the rescue

Remember Erik D Prince of the private security firm Blackwater International, that gained notoriety in Iraq? Prince is now in the Afghanistan arena, promoting a new idea that could enable the US to reduce its troops and, at the same time, ensure the security of the mine sites and transport of the minerals outside the country. How? By privatising the war.

Since the Blackwater saga in Iraq, Prince had moved on to set up Frontier Services Group Ltd (FSG) in Hong Kong. For Afghanistan, he has proposed a smaller active

presence of US forces, combined with some 20,000 private contractors, supported by air through a fleet of contracted aircraft flown by joint teams of Afghans and contractors. Prince says—based on his previous experience in Iraq, UAE, and Pakistan—the plan won't cost tens of billions of dollars on a large number of troops but would be adequate to ensure security at the mine sites. Once the minerals are outside Afghanistan, it would pay off all the costs the Americans have incurred so far, several times over.

Trump may find Prince's idea too hard to resist.

The human cost

Meanwhile, the human cost of the war is rising, as a study by Brown University in October 2019 indicates. Crossfire, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), assassinations, bombings, night raids into houses of suspected insurgents, and American cluster bombs—all are killing civilians in disproportionate numbers. Poverty, violence, insecure infrastructure, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to healthcare, environmental degradation all are contributing to premature death. A rough estimate puts the total number of war deaths to 157,000 since 2001. Of this, more than 43,000 are civilians.

As I write this, President Donald Trump has imposed sanctions on the court officials who are investigating the alleged war crimes of US forces in Afghanistan. It could lead to a repeat of the chaos and anarchy of Iraq, and the resource curse of Congo, combined. The Doha agreement is an ominous sign that mercenaries may conduct the war, and Afghanistan will bleed for many more years.

Sayed Ahmed is a consulting engineer with experience in infrastructure project management in South Asia.



A US military Chinook helicopter in Afghanistan in 2019.

PHOTO: AFP

QUOTABLE Quote

DESMOND TUTU
 (Born 1931)
 South African archbishop

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Dollop
- 5 Football team
- 10 "Damn Yankees" role
- 11 Singer Twain
- 12 Historic times
- 13 Golf's Palmer
- 14 Like a well-read page in a book
- 16 Wizarding school
- 20 Secant's reciprocal
- 23 Needle feature
- 24 Give an address
- 25 Congo's former name
- 27 Roadhouse
- 28 Like losing wrestlers
- 29 Unable to see in

DOWN

- 1 Delighted
- 2 Company symbol
- 3 Designer Cassini
- 4 Batter's goal
- 5 Smallest mammal
- 6 Lecture follower
- 7 First numero
- 8 Suffer
- 9 June honoree
- 11 Private's boss
- 15 Top-notch
- 17 Horse strap
- 18 Brit's spare
- 19 Canary snack
- 20 Hairstyle
- 21 Yes - (answer choice)
- 22 Warbled
- 25 Brass ingredient
- 26 Moderate tempo
- 28 Sound of Washington
- 30 Wild party
- 31 Seeps
- 33 Money for release
- 34 Midmonth day
- 35 Pathfinder launcher
- 36 Bill dispenser
- 37 Arthur of TV
- 38 - Palmas

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	A	G	S		M	A	T	H	
C	L	O	U	T	D	E	C	R	Y
A	L	A	M	O	E	A	T	U	P
N	O	W	O	N	E	T	I	M	E
T	W	O	S	T	A	R	O	A	R
S	L	E	E	T	I	N	N		
					C	R	A	B	S
G	A	T	S	A	L	S	A		
A	R	M	T	H	R	E	E	R	S
F	O	U	R	W	A	Y	D	I	E
T	O	S	E	A	O	F	U	S	E
E	V	E	N	S	N	I	C	E	R
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND? THEY WERE SHOOTING A TV SHOW AT THE DINER IN TOWN. GREG & MORT WALKER. GUY FIERI AUTOGRAPHED A BAGEL FOR ME.

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

LET'S JUST PUT MOM'S PHONE BACK AND HOPE SHE DOESN'T NOTICE THE CRACKED SCREEN. BUT WHAT IF SHE DOES? WHATEVER HAPPENS, JUST ACT INNOCENT. INNOCENT. OHAY. GOT IT. MY PHONE!!! WE DID IT! PUNISH US! WAAAAA!

Six of a family

FROM PAGE 12
around 2:30pm when a Rangpur-bound bus of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation hit a van coming from the opposite direction in Pachishmile Bazaar area.

Asma, Namia and Abul died on the spot while the rest breathed their last after being taken to Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

The angry villagers overturned the bus on the road as the driver and his helper fled.

Meanwhile, four people were killed and three others injured in separate road accidents in Mymensingh in the last two days.

Two brothers were killed and their parents injured in a road crash in Masterbari area on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Bhaluka upazila early yesterday.

The victims are Joy Morshed Tushar, 32 and his brother Jaber Morshed Akash, 30.

Quoting locals, Sub-Inspector Hadiul Islam of Bhoraduba Highway Police said the accident took place when a Dhaka-bound private car, in which the victims were travelling, collided head-on with a covered van, killing Tushar on the spot and injuring four others around 3:15am.

Doctors pronounced Akash dead after being taken to Bhaluka Upazila Health Complex.

Their father Monjur Morshed, 60, mother Jesmin Morshed, 54, and uncle Mahbubul Haque Lucky, 50, were referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said the SI.

In another road accident, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver and a passenger of the vehicle were killed when the Nandail-bound auto-rickshaw had a head-on collision with a truck in Merenga area on Mymensingh Kishoreganj road around 11:30pm on Sunday.

The victims, Hanif Mia, 22, and Ariful Islam, 20, died on the spot, said Monsur Ahammed, officer-in-charge (OC) of Nandail Police Station.

On information, police recovered the bodies and handed them over to family members, the OC said, adding separate cases were lodged.

Our Dinajpur and Mymensingh correspondents contributed to this report.

4 killed

FROM PAGE 12
criminals came out of the vehicle and started firing at the law enforcers to flee away through a nearby water body, he said, adding that the DB men also fired back in self-defence.

As the two caught in the line of fire, they were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared them dead, Mashur said.

Two of their accomplices – Shafiqul Islam and Siddique – were arrested from the spot, the DB official said.

A pistol, two bullets, a machete and sedative ointments were recovered from the spot, the DC said, adding two police personnel sustained injuries during the incident.

Mashur said the two had been involved in various crimes for long and served jail terms.

Quoting the arrestees, the DB official said this gang picked up one small trader named Harun as a co-passenger in the auto-rickshaw from Mohakhali on the night of June 17 and mugged him near Kurmitola General Hospital.

As Harun tried to resist them, the muggers put a scarf around his neck, strangled him to death and dumped his body beside 300-feet road, Mashur said.

Meanwhile, the two Rohingya “drug peddlers” killed in a “gunfight” with members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Teknaf upazila were identified as Md Alam, 26, and Md Yasin, 24.

Lt Col Mohammad Foyzal Hasan Khan, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2, said they had information that a group of smugglers were entering Bangladesh from Myanmar with a big consignment of drugs.

A BGB team took position in Wabrang Nanirbari area on the bank of Naf River in Hnila union around 3:00am.

After a while, they noticed three men entering the area crossing the Naf River. The BGB team then signaled them to stop, he told our local correspondent.

Seeing the law enforcers, the smugglers tried to flee.

As the BGB men chased them, they opened fire on the law enforcers, forcing them to retaliate, triggering a “gunfight”, claimed the BGB official.

At one point, one of the criminals fled the scene leaving behind his two injured cohorts.

The BGB members found the two bullet-hit bodies of the drug peddlers on the spot. They also recovered 50,000 yaba tablets, one Chinese gun and two bullets.

Two of the BGB men were also hurt during the incident, the official claimed.

Drones light

FROM PAGE 12
The drones created images of a mask surrounded by coronavirus particles, quickly shuffling to form two hands and water droplets against the dark night sky.

The 10-minute show shifted to messages of gratitude for medical personnel in the frontlines of the pandemic as well as all South Koreans for their collective efforts.



Visitors wearing face masks queue in front of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece “Mona Lisa” also known as “La Gioconda” at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France yesterday, on the museum's reopening day. PHOTO: AFP

Pandemic highlights South Asia's

FROM PAGE 12
are excluded from fully participating in them and securing these benefits,” said Johan Swinnen, director general of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

“In times of crisis like today, inclusion is an even greater imperative for protecting the most vulnerable.”

IFPRI South Asia headquartered in New Delhi, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and New

Delhi-based Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences organised a virtual conference yesterday.

“IFPRI-WFP's Transfer Modality Research Initiative in Bangladesh found that providing young mothers with cash transfers, combined with nutrition behavior change communication reduced child stunting by three-times the national average decline,” said Akhter Ahmed, senior research fellow and country

representative of IFPRI-Bangladesh.

Ramesh Chand, member of a think tank in India, said, “Covid-19 has struck the world at a time when experts were already deliberating on the need for a paradigm shift in the agri-food sector that could address the broader challenges of sustaining humanity. Covid-19 is expected to lead to a significant shift in dietary preferences, adding new dimensions to the food system thinking.”

Sad tale of delays, cost escalation

FROM PAGE 12
The report, which was published last month, also forecast that the project cost may escalate further as “the scope of work was going to be increased.”

WHY THE PROJECT UNDERTAKEN?
In an attempt to reduce the dependency on Chattogram Port, the government has taken several steps to boost the capacity of Mongla seaport.

Bringing Mongla Port under a railway network is one of them. Once the broad gauge rail line is installed between Khulna and Mongla, the port would directly be connected with the capital as a rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through Padma Bridge, which is expected to be operational in June 2021.

Besides, regional connectivity would get a boost as Nepal and Bhutan would be able to use the port.

The project is being implemented with the money came under the first line of credit from India.

Executive Committee of the

National Economic Council (Nec) on December 31, 2010 approved the project involving Tk 1,721 crore.

The deadline was initially extended to December 2014, then to June 2018 and finally to June 2020.

In the meantime, project cost rose to Tk 3,801 crore, of which India would provide Tk 2371.34 crore as soft loan.

Apart from the rail line, the project includes a 21.11-km loop line, eight stations, 716-metre Rupsha Bridge, and 31 major and minor bridges.

REASONS BEHIND DELAY
According to IMED report, the project was supposed to see 87 percent progress till April this year. But it witnessed only 63.01 percent physical progress during this time.

A delay in selecting the alignment of the rail line postponed the final survey and detail design.

When the detail design was prepared, the district administrations in Khulna and Bagerhat could not handover the

total land to the project authority on time, causing further delay.

When the physical works started in 2016, design of the project had to be reviewed “due to the soil quality”, which caused an additional delay, the IMED report says.

The report recommended necessary and skilled manpower be deployed and necessary budgetary allocation be ensured to complete the work within the target time.

WHAT THE PROJECT AUTHORITIES SAY?
Contacted, Project Director Ramzan Ali said works of the project remained halted for around one and a half months due to Covid-19 pandemic. “We have restarted works in May but progress is very slow due to manpower and equipment shortage,” he told The Daily Star on July 5.

“Although we have sought a one-year extension, it may not be possible to complete the work within one year. It may require two more years,” he said.

Erosion adds to woes

FROM PAGE 12
Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Jadurchar union of Kurigram's Rowmari.

He, along with his five member-family, live on others' land.

Another victim Abdus Samad, of Char Gokunda in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said, “Our house went into the Teesta on Saturday noon. Now, we live on a road.”

In Tangail, although the overall flood situation has slightly improved, erosion of the Jamuna continues, damaging embankment and dwelling houses.

At least 29 houses were washed away after a part of newly constructed village protection embankment collapsed at Beltia in Kalihati upazila.

The erosion took place from Saturday night to Sunday, sources said.

The erosion affected area is only around 1.5km south of the eastern end of Bangabandhu Bridge.

Engineers of the site office of Bangladesh Bridge Authority in Tangail said BBA recently completed construction of 400 metres of embankment for protecting the nearby villages from the erosion.

About 30 metres of the embankment were devoured by the river, and a number of houses of Beltia village went into the river, they said.

Local lawmaker and government officials visited the spot and assured the affected of giving them relief materials.

Meanwhile, a paved road was

damaged by floodwater at Adabari in Mirzapur. It might cause nearby houses and farmland to erode.

In Jamalpur, floodwater has started going down from the flood-hit areas. The victims, who took shelter at flood centres, relatives' houses, on roads, and high grounds, have begun to return home.

Some 13,343 hectares of crop fields were inundated, according to the local agricultural office.

Over 8,000 families have been waterlogged in Faridpur as the Padma is swelling up to the danger mark. The flood-hit people are passing hard days due to shortage of food and drinking water.

“Water entered into our houses around five days ago. We cannot cook food. But we have not got any relief,” said Nazma Begum, of Shadipur village in Faridpur Sadar upazila.

However, officials of the local administration said they were distributing relief materials among the victims.

In Munshiganj, over 300 families at the risk of being flooded as the Padma was swelling up to the danger mark.

Many people have already shifted to safer places. But they said they were suffering from shortage of food and drinking water.

Officials of the local administration said the victims would be provided with sufficient relief materials.

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Tangail, Faridpur, and Jamalpur contributed to this report.

Priority to ongoing projects

FROM PAGE 12
significant scale, adds the minister.

Tajuddin Ahmad discloses that the Planning Commission is working on a five-year plan to be launched next year. The proposed plan would have retrospective effect from the current fiscal year and this year would be considered as the base year. The minister further says that a systematic plan could not be made within such a short time for various reasons. First, he says, whatever assistance was received was spent on feeding the people. Secondly, there is serious paucity of dependable data essential for preparation of a systematic plan.

BANGABANDHU IMPROVING
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was taken ill on July 5 night is improving satisfactorily, according to the prime minister's

personal physician Prof Nurul Islam. Bangabandhu has still some

discomforts in the abdomen, he says. He requests the visitors not to disturb the prime minister for a few more days. Best wishes may be conveyed to him by signing a visitors' book kept for that purpose. This is essential for the treatment and recovery of Bangabandhu, he adds.

31% RISE IN FOODGRAIN PRICES
The prices of foodgrains have registered a rise of 31 percent during the period January to June, 1972. Prices of essential commodities however increased by 20 percent over the same period, according to Annual Development Plan for the fiscal year 1972-73.

SOURCES: July 8, 1972 issues of *Bangladesh Observer*, *Dainik Bangla* and *Dainik Ittefaq*.

India surges to 3rd-highest

FROM PAGE 12
the state as “the smart call, the right call at this time, given the significant challenges we face in containing this virus.”

There was an illustration of the lingering threat of the virus in Fiji, with the Pacific nation confirming its 78-day run without any cases had ended with a 66-year-old man testing positive.

US STRUGGLING
The US -- the worst-hit nation -- has struggled to respond to the devastation wrought by the virus, with its national death toll rising to nearly 130,000 out of 2.8 million confirmed cases, and many states hit by increasing infections after lockdowns were eased.

Hospital beds are full in parts of Texas, while calls for fresh stay-at-home orders are growing. Some mayors have said their cities reopened too early, as President Donald Trump tried to downplay the disease that has gripped much of the country.

The annual July 4 holiday weekend was overshadowed by growing evidence that the fractured pandemic response has exacted a heavy price across the south and west of the country, after previous hotspots such as New York emerged from the worst of the virus.

“Our hospitals here in Harris

County, Houston, and 33 other cities... they're into surge capacities. So their operational beds are taken up,” said Lina Hidalgo, chief executive of Texas's Harris County, which includes Houston.

“Restaurants are still open. Indoor events can take place no matter the size,” she told ABC. “What we need right now is to do what works, which is a stay-home order.”

Steve Adler, the mayor of Austin, Texas, also expressed concern that the healthcare system could buckle as the disease spreads rapidly.

“If we don't change the trajectory, then I am within two weeks of having our hospitals overrun. And in our ICUs, I could be 10 days away from that,” he told CNN.

The US is now recording 40,000 new cases a day, with a peak of 57,000 on Friday alone.

MILITARY MEDICS
In South Africa, dozens of military medics were deployed on Sunday after a surge in infections in East Cape province.

Like India, South Africa imposed some of the strictest stay-at-home measures in the world in late March in a bid to limit the spread of Covid-19, but the number of infections is rising daily as lockdown rules are gradually eased.

Two labour leaders detained

FROM PAGE 12
Speaking to The Daily Star last night, Kanai Lal Sarkar, additional deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said the two were detained from their homes for interrogation.

Legal actions would be taken against them after the interrogation, added Kanai Lal, also the spokesperson of KMP.

Md Jewel, son of Nur, said some unidentified people went to their home in Khulna city's Khalishpur area around 3:30am on Sunday.

Introducing themselves as firefighters, they asked the residents of the house to come out as “there was a fire”, Jewel told The Daily Star.

As a family member opened the door, the unidentified people caught Nur and left the home immediately, said the detainee's son.

Waliar's son Naeem Sheikh said nine people went to their home in Mashiyali area under Khanjahan Ali Police Station around 2:30am on Sunday and asked the residents to open the door.

Naeem said some of them were carrying rifles and wireless radios. As a family member opened the door, they

caught Waliar and said they would take him to a jute mills. They left the place soon.

Meanwhile, Janardan Dutta Nantu, coordinator of Khulna district Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, and Abdul Karim, general secretary of Khulna district Socialist Workers Front, have condemned the “arrest” of the two labour leaders and demanded their immediate release.

In a statement issued yesterday, they said the two leaders actively took part in the recent workers' movement demanding withdrawal of the government's decision to close 25 state-owned jute mills.

The two have been arrested in the dark of night to suppress the movement, the statement added.

Murad Hossain, joint convener of Bangladesh State Jute Mills CBA-NonCBA Sangram Parishad, said he heard that some temporary workers arranged secret meetings with some left-leaning parties in Khalishpur.

“I have heard that some of the workers have been arrested. They are not leaders of our organisation. I don't know who picked them up and why they were arrested,” he added.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার			
তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়			
২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ			
Email No. manikganj@hospi.dghs.gov.bd			
স্মারক নং ২৫০ শয্যাবিজ্ঞাপন/মানিক/দরপত্র/২০২০-২০২১/১৪৪৪		তারিখঃ ০৬/০৭/২০২০ইং	
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি			
২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জের ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছরে রোগীদের পথ্য, মনোহারী ও কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী/বিবিধ দ্রব্যাদি, পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা, আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ এবং রোগীদের ব্যবহৃত ময়লা কাপড় (লিনেন) খোলাই (ইন্ডিসহ) করার জন্য ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারীদের নিম্নে উল্লিখিত পিপিএ-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।			
০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।	
০২	সম্প্রদায়িক সত্ত্বা	২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ।	
০৩	সম্প্রদায়িক সত্ত্বার নাম	তত্ত্বাবধায়ক।	
০৪	সম্প্রদায়িক সত্ত্বার কোড নং	প্রয়োজ্য নহে।	
০৫	কাজের নাম	পথ্য, মনোহারী ও কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী/বিবিধ দ্রব্যাদি, পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা, আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ এবং রোগীদের ব্যবহৃত ময়লা কাপড় (লিনেন) খোলাই (ইন্ডিসহ)।	
০৬	সম্প্রদায়িক পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত (ওটিএম) দরপত্র।	
০৭	বাজেট ও টাকার উৎস	জিওবি, রাজস্ব/উন্নয়ন বাজেট।	
০৮	দরপত্র/সিডিউলের মূল্য	ক্রম নং	ক্রমের নাম
		০১.	পথ্য সরবরাহ
		০২.	মনোহারী ও কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী/বিবিধ দ্রব্যাদি, পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা, আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ
		০৩.	লিনেন সামগ্রী যৌতকরণ (ইন্ডিসহ) কাজ
			৭৫০/-
			৫০০/-
			৫০০/-
০৯	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	০৭/০৭/২০২০ইং	
১০	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও প্রান্তির স্থান	অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে তত্ত্বাবধায়ক- ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ ও পুলিশ সুপার- মানিকগঞ্জ এর কার্যালয় হইতে সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ অফেরতযোগ্য টাকা ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সোনালী ব্যাংক ১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬তে জমাদানপূর্বক ট্রেজারী চালানের মূলকপি দাখিল সাপেক্ষে সিডিউলসহ শর্তাবলী ২৮/০৭/২০২০ইং পর্যন্ত পাওয়া যাবে।	
১১	দরপত্র সিডিউল জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	তারিখ ২৮/০৭/২০২০ইং সময় সকাল ১০.০০ হইতে বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত গ্রহণ করা হইবে। স্থানঃ তত্ত্বাবধায়কের অফিস কক্ষ, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ।	
১২	দরপত্র সিডিউল খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৮/০৭/২০২০ইং তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০মি, তত্ত্বাবধায়কের অফিস কক্ষ, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণ কমিটির মাধ্যমে।	
১৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	ডাঃ মোঃ আরশাদ উল্লাহ।	
১৪	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের ওয়েবসাইট	www.cplu.gov.bd	
১৫	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	তত্ত্বাবধায়ক।	
১৬	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর ঠিকানা	২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ।	
১৭	বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা	(ক) পিপিএ ২০০৬, পিপিআর ২০০৮ ও সংশোধনী পিপিআর ২০০৯ অনুসরণসহ সত্ত্বা কর্তৃক আরোপিত সকল শর্তই শর্তাবলী হিসেবে গণ্য হইবে। দরপত্র/সিডিউলের সহিত সংযুক্ত সকল শর্তাবলী যথাযথ অনুসরণ করিতে হইবে। (খ) সরকার কর্তৃক এতদসঙ্গে কোন বাধ্যতামূলক বিধি-বিধান নতুনভাবে আরি করা হইলে তাহাও কার্যকর হইবে। (গ) শর্তাবলী অনুসরণপূর্বক বর্ণিত কাপড়পত্রসহ দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিল করিতে হইবে। (ঘ) কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রয়োজনবোধে দরপত্র গ্রহণ খোলার তারিখ ও সময়সহ যে কোন সংশোধনী স্থানীয় নোটিশ বোর্ডে স্বাক্ষরকালীন বিজ্ঞপ্তির মাধ্যমে পরিবর্তন করিতে পারিবেন। (ঙ) দরপত্র কমিটি কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে আংশিক অথবা সম্পূর্ণ দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। (চ) এতদসঙ্গে বিজ্ঞপ্তি তথ্য জানার জন্য আশ্রয়ী টিকাদারগণকে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ এর কার্যালয় যোগাযোগের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।	
ডাঃ মোঃ আরশাদ উল্লাহ কোড নং-৪১৭৮৬ তত্ত্বাবধায়ক ২৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, মানিকগঞ্জ			
জিডি-১০৯৩			

SPORT

Arsenal's taunt and Mourinho's reply

Jose Mourinho hit back at Arsenal's ridicule of Tottenham's defeat at Sheffield United on social media, saying "you only enjoy the problems of others when you are also in trouble". The Gunners poked fun at their north London rivals on Facebook when they posted highlights of Spurs' defeat with the caption: "It's not easy beating Sheffield United at Bramall Lane." "I think if they were top of the league or fighting for top four in a really good moment they wouldn't enjoy the problems of others. You only enjoy the problems of others when you are also in trouble," Mourinho said. "In the end it says more about them. They don't have much to celebrate, they have to get every opportunity to do it." — AFP



Sprinter takes up sickle with eyes on the track

ANISUR RAHMAN

Promising sprinter Al Naim Sheikh has turned into a day labourer, working on agricultural fields in Khulna as his bread and butter has been snatched away by the coronavirus pandemic.

Naim, who won gold medals in 200m and 400m sprint events in junior athletics championships in 2018, has been forced to work on jute and paddy fields to earn a living for his five-member family, which includes a sick father and a mentally challenged elder sister.

However, Naim is still continuing his training with the hope of returning for the national athletics championships and he hopes to repeat the feat of the 2018 meet and draw attention of services teams to get a government job.

"As a contractual athlete of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), I used to help my father with solid financial support but now I can't do so since losing the job last year. I also used to earn Tk 500 to 600 for each match when I used to play on hire, but that opportunity also went away due to coronavirus. So I was not left with any option but to work on jute and paddy fields five to six days a week. I



earn Tk 200 to 250 each day," Naim told The Daily Star over phone from Khulna's Fulbaria Thana yesterday.

"My father also works as a farmer on others' fields but sometimes he can't work due to illness. I am buying our daily essentials through my income as we have some rice at home," explained Naim, who had also won silver medal in 100m sprint in 2018.

Naim was hoping for some monetary support from the Bangladesh Athletics Federation and the sports ministry, but he was disappointed after not receiving any support from either institution. "I saw on television that the

federation and sports ministry would help athletes and I was hoping to get some help from them but I didn't get any," said Naim.

The 18-year-old could not attend the 2019 junior athletics championships due to a hamstring injury. After recovering from the injury, he continued training to participate in the 2020 edition of the junior meet which was scheduled to take place in June but later got cancelled due to coronavirus outbreak.

"My target was to win three gold medals in the 2020 meet but the meet did not take place due to

coronavirus. I want to participate in the next championship whenever that takes place. I am preparing myself accordingly as I follow a training schedule prepared by my coach. I am working on the field in the morning but training in the afternoon," Naim said. "I am hopeful of producing good results in the next junior national meet because I have improved my timing."

Though Naim is temporarily taken up a farmer's work due to the hardship caused by the pandemic, the youngster is eager to get a job in services teams by his impressing in upcoming junior meets.

Juggling between cricket and volleyball

While much fandom surrounds Bangladesh's male cricketers, the story is not the same for women cricketers who have nevertheless been growing in stature on the international arena. Since the halt in cricketing activities, The Daily Star has been talking to women cricketers to learn stories of their early days. In today's instalment, we talk to right-arm pacer Panna Ghosh, who made her ODI debut back in 2011 against Ireland.

MOSTAFA SHABUI

At a time when the world offers challenges in every step, it is not often that you find someone who takes multiple challenges head-on and thrives in those pursuits. Bangladesh women's cricket team pacer Panna Ghosh is one of the courageous ones who represents the national team all the while playing volleyball professionally. Panna, the right arm pacer, is also a member of Bangladesh Ansar's volleyball team.

Cases like Panna's are, however, not uncommon in our country. Mashura Parvin, who now represents Bangladesh under-19 football team, has previously played age-level Kabaddi before switching to football. Mirona, now a football coach, represented the national football team while also being long-distance runner. There were more instances of players, especially in the mid-70s and the 80s, playing in multiple disciplines simultaneously.

Panna's advantage was her height, which helped in her becoming a fast bowler and a volleyball player. But in Bangladesh, a girl often needs to show persistence and determination to pave her own path even after having natural athlete-like qualities.

"I used to play volleyball, cricket since I was seven or eight years of age. I was a bit stubborn and I decided to arrange a cricket tournament by myself. I even bought some medals for the tournament. Even in that tournament, a few boys did not want to see me participate but they could not do much as I was the one who arranged it," Panna said.

Panna had, however, played volleyball professionally before getting into the



women's national cricket team. The 30-year-old, who hails from Rajshahi, was first inspired chosen for her school's volleyball team for her height. She played in volleyball tournaments in the early and mid-2000s. It was while playing in such a tournament that Panna got attracted to cricket.

"I was playing in a volleyball tournament at the Dhanmondi Mohila Complex representing Rajshahi division. There I saw 10-12 girls playing cricket and I was intrigued. I started practising cricket under the tutelage of Mijanur Rahman (local coach of Rajshahi) and continued training for five years," recalled Panna.

"In 2006, an open tournament was held in Dhaka where a number of teams participated. It was the year when the BCB was trying to form a women's team. I trained under Farida Begum for six months and played for Bhola district. I was declared the player-of-the-tournament as Bhola emerged champions," explained Panna.

Soon Panna was called for the very first batch of women's cricketers. "We [Bangladesh women's team] went to Thailand to play in the Asian Games in 2007. I was adjudged player-of-the-series with Bangladesh winning that tournament," said Panna.

Panna has been representing Bangladesh team since 2007 and in 2008 she secured a job in the Ansar under the [volleyball] players' quota. The 30-year-old sometimes had to make interesting decisions while balancing both cricket and volleyball.

"Even last year I fled from the Ansar camp in Gazipur and went to Rajshahi to play cricket. At that time a volleyball tournament was being held in Dhaka. However, I returned from Rajshahi later and played in the final of the volleyball tournament representing Bangladesh Ansar and became champion," said Panna, who holds the dream of becoming a volleyball coach at the end of her career.

LA LIGA TABLE	Club	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Real Madrid	34	23	8	3	41	77
2	Barcelona	34	22	7	5	42	73
3	Atlético Madrid	34	16	14	4	21	62
4	Sevilla	33	15	12	6	15	57
5	Villarreal	34	16	6	12	10	54



Everything seemed to fall into gear for Barcelona with Antoine Griezmann (R) scoring a spectacular goal against Villarreal, assisted by Lionel Messi as they cut down Real's lead to four after Sergio Ramos (L) penalty at Bilbao had stretched Los Blancos' lead to seven earlier in the day.

Barca dazzle in win, but Real maintain lead

AGENCIES

Barcelona responded to a trying week by producing a scintillating display to thrash Villarreal 4-1 away on Sunday and stay alive in the Liga title race.

The Catalans had drawn their last two matches to hand more momentum to league leaders Real Madrid but Sunday's win took them to 73 points after 34 games, four behind their arch-rivals who won 1-0 at Athletic Bilbao earlier in the day.

They entered the day trailing Real Madrid by four points, but that deficit became seven points Sunday morning following Real's win as captain Sergio Ramos scored his 22nd straight

penalty kick in 1-0 win.

"Getting all three points here was a group effort, and we knew they were crucial in our hopes of winning the league," said Ramos.

"It was crucial to get the three points to stay in the hunt but the way we played was important too because that's a part of our identity so we need to keep playing like that until the end of the season," said Barca defender Gerard Pique.

There had been also plenty of speculation surrounding coach Setien after he had brought Griezmann on in added time against Atletico, a move described in the Spanish media as an act of humiliation against the World Cup-winning forward.

Griezmann was named in the lineup against a Villarreal side who had won five of their last six games and was lively from the kick off, helping force the opening goal as well as working tirelessly in midfield and combining well with Messi and Suarez.

He adorned his performance with a sumptuous goal, receiving a back-heeled lay off from Messi and coolly delivering a chip that skimmed off the crossbar and into the net.

Messi produced an outstanding performance but failed to score as the Argentine had one effort ruled out for offside after a thrilling team move and then hammered the bar with a late free kick.

Messi reached 19 assists for the La Liga season with the two assists against Villarreal. He previously racked up 18 assists in 2010-11 and 2014-15. One more would see Messi equal all-time highest number of assists in a single season currently held by former teammate Xavi Hernandez.

Messi also became the only player to notch 20+ assists (all competitions) in two different seasons among players in Europe's top leagues in the last 20 years.

It is the 12th consecutive time Messi has been involved in 50 goals for Barcelona in all competitions



WHAT TO WATCH

- LA LIGA (FACEBOOK)**
Valencia v Real Valladolid
Live from 11:30pm
Celta Vigo v Atletico Madrid
Live from 2:00am (Wednesday)
- ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE**
Star Sports Select 1
Crystal Palace v Chelsea
Live from 11:00pm
Arsenal v Leicester City
Live from 1:15am (Wednesday)
Star Sports Select 2
Wartford v Norwich City
Live from 11:00pm
- (Ten 2) SERIE A**
Lecce v Lazio
Live from 11:30pm
AC Milan v Juventus
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)



Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim, who yesterday went to the BCB headquarters in Mirpur to get some gym equipments, took a picture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium ground -- a place where he hoped to return soon.

Int'l cricket returns tomorrow

REUTERS, LONDON

When the players of England and West Indies walk out on to the lush Ageas Bowl pitch on Wednesday it will be a landmark moment for international cricket after a 117-day hiatus.

It will also be a milestone in the career of England's talisman Ben Stokes as he captains the side for the first time.

The circumstances will be surreal with the COVID-19 pandemic meaning no fans will be present in the bio-secure environment -- the only sounds being the thump of leather on willow, the chit-chat between the players and some piped-in crowd effects.

Once the strangeness of the 'new-normal' sinks in, however, an intriguing series looks on the cards between the sides ranked fourth and

eighth on the ICC's test list.

With England captain Joe Root missing for the birth of his second child, Stokes will get to pit himself against West Indies counterpart Jason Holder.

Holder, embarking on his 33rd test as captain, is first on the ICC's all-rounder rankings while Stokes is second. Both have similar problems to solve, namely fragile batting lineups that could be at the mercy of top-class bowling attacks.

West Indies won the last series between the sides in 2018-19 on home soil, but have not won a series in England since 1988.

They will be buoyed by virtually the same pace attack that England found such a problem in the Caribbean with Kemar Roach, Shannon Gabriel, Alzarri Joseph and Holder complimented by Bajan quickie Chemar Holder.

"It's an exciting time for us. We've

got a group of fast bowlers we think can challenge any team in the world," West Indies assistant-coach Roddy Eastwick said.

"The fast bowling is key to us and we're beginning to get blessed again."

The batting is more problematic and the form of Shai Hope, who scored two centuries when West Indies claimed a famous victory at Headingley two years ago, will be vital.

With Root missing, England's shaky top-order will be under scrutiny. Rory Burns and Dom Sibley look set to open with Joe Denly or Zak Crawley likely to bat at four. Whatever the pairings, West Indies bowlers will fancy their chances.

Stokes will have numerous pace bowling options with James Anderson and Jofra Archer, both of whom struggled with injuries in England's 3-1 win in South Africa last winter, refreshed.

KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL PROJECT

Sad tale of delays, cost escalation

Almost a decade gone yet over a third of work remains

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When the government approved the Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line project in December 2010, construction of the 64.75km rail line was supposed to be completed within December 2013.

Implausible though it may sound, physical work of the project started in September 2016, allegedly due to complications concerning various issues, including land acquisition and changes in the design.

In the meantime, the project missed several deadlines and the cost rose more than doubled the original estimate.

The project was undertaken to bring the country's second-largest seaport under a railway network and boost the regional connectivity.

As the latest deadline expired in June this year, the project authority has sought another extension period of at least one year as they could complete only 63 percent work till April this year, documents show.

"Possibility of completing the project in due time is unlikely. It may take up to December 2021 to complete the work," according to a report of the planning ministry's Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



A motorcycle struggles to move on the battered road in front of Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital. Locals say the road has been in such a condition for the last eight months. The road is heavily used by intercity buses, trucks, and articulated lorries that carry goods to and from Chattogram port.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Erosion adds to woes in flooded areas

STAR REPORT

River erosion has taken a serious turn in several flood-hit districts, rendering many people homeless.

Many victims, along with their livestock, have moved to safe places.

Meanwhile, floodwater has started receding in some districts, while fresh areas are feared to be inundated in the region adjacent to Dhaka.

Erosion has started at 35 points in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

At least 700 houses in the two districts, including 500 in Kurigram, already went into rivers, and a vast tract of arable land with crops and fruit orchards were devoured in the last three days.

Those who became homeless take shelter on roads, dykes, and other high grounds in the affected areas.

"My house and farmland were eroded by the Brahmaputra on Sunday morning. We are now homeless," said

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

4 killed in 'shootouts' in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar

STAR REPORT

Two alleged muggers and two suspected Rohingya drug peddlers were killed in separate "shootout" incidents in the capital and Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The muggers, who were killed in a "gunfight" with detectives in city's Khilkhet area, were identified as Nannu and Mosharraf.

The incident took place around 2:30am, said Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Culshan Division) of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A team of detectives signaled an auto-rickshaw near Shewra bus stand area but muggers inside tried to speed away.

The DB team chased their auto-rickshaw and asked another team ahead to put a barricade on the road, he said.

At one point, two of the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Priority to ongoing projects



Bangabandhu, who is sick, is attended by Begum Mujib and General Secretary of Awami League Zillur Rahman. The photo was published in The Daily Ittefaq on July 6, 1972.

July 7, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

LITTLE ROOM FOR NEW PROJECTS

Minister for finance and planning Tajuddin Ahmad today says that the Annual Development Plan for 1972-73 has been prepared with special emphasis on reconstruction and rehabilitation of the shattered economy and completion of the ongoing projects. The development programme is severely constrained by the legacy of ongoing projects launched earlier by the Pakistan regime. Most of these projects are well on their way of implementation and resources had to be provided for their completion in order to protect the investment already made. This left little room for the inclusion of new projects on a



SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Six of a family die in Dinajpur road crash

Brothers die after crash in Mymensingh

STAR REPORT

At least seven people, including six of a family, were killed in a road accident in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

Two children were among the dead.

The deceased are Abul Hossain, 60, his wife Asma Begum, 45, her sisters Nasrin Begum, 50, and Nargis Akter, 32, Nasrin's daughter Rupa Akter, 8, and Asma's niece Namia Akter, 8 and a van driver whose identity could not be confirmed immediately.

All of them were from Kaharol and Birganj upazilas in Dinajpur.

The family was going to a relative's house to attend an invitation.

Quoting locals, police said the accident took place

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Drones light up Seoul sky with virus messages



AFP, Seoul

Hundreds of drones lit up the night sky in Seoul for a spectacular showcase of motivational and awareness messages as the world battles the coronavirus pandemic.

Three hundred unmanned aerial vehicles were programmed to form images above the Han river -- which runs through the South Korean capital -- for the eye-catching flash mob.

The show began with messages reminding people of key precautionary measures, including wearing masks, washing hands and keeping a two-metre distance from others.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

FOOD SECURITY

Pandemic highlights South Asia's weaknesses

Says IFPRI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of making South Asia's food systems more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient, the International Food Policy Research Institute said yesterday.

Disruptions in supply chains and overwhelmed social protections have led to increased food and nutrition insecurity in the region, said a statement.

The need to work towards inclusive food systems have amplified in all countries in the region, it added.

"Food systems provide opportunities to improve food and nutrition security, generate income, and drive inclusive economic growth, but even in prosperous times, too many people

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

JUTE MILLS CLOSURE Two labour leaders detained

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Law enforcers detained two jute mills labour leaders from their Khulna homes early yesterday for interrogation.

The detainees are Waliar Rahman and Nur Islam, temporary workers of Eastern Jute Mills and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills.

The two mills are among the 25 state-run jute mills closed down by the government on July 1.

Waliar is the convener of Jute Industry Protection Youth Alliance and Nur is an adviser to Jute Industry Protection Youth Alliance.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Two doctors speaking to the people waiting in a queue for coronavirus testing in front of Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital yesterday. The hospital has a capacity to test 190 samples every day. It issues 80 tickets for walk-in patients and keep the rest for staffers and the patients admitted to the hospital.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

COVID-19 CASES India surges to 3rd-highest

Reports 24,000 infections in 24 hrs; US hospitals struggle to respond

AGENCIES

India yesterday became the third-highest coronavirus caseload in the world, as officials warned hospitals in the United States were in danger of being overwhelmed by a surge in infections.

Despite signs of progress in parts of Europe -- where the Louvre in Paris reopened yesterday -- total global infections are fast approaching 11.5 million, with more than 534,000 deaths.

The Indian government -- like many around the world -- has gradually lifted virus restrictions to help the battered economy, but the number of cases has continued to climb, with 24,000 reported in 24 hours to take the total to nearly 700,000 yesterday.

India's major cities including New Delhi and Mumbai are the hardest-hit, and critics say too few tests are being conducted and that many Covid-19 infections are likely to go undiagnosed.

The surge has forced authorities in India to convert hotels, wedding halls, a spiritual centre and even railway coaches to help provide care to coronavirus patients.

And in Australia, where the virus outbreak had largely been brought under control, a new spike in cases in Melbourne forced authorities to effectively seal off the state of Victoria from the rest of the country.

Home to more than 6.6 million people, Victoria announced a record 127 new cases yesterday. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews described the decision to close off

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



PRAYER TIMING JULY 7

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION