



WORLD MUST HEAL TOGETHER
Says WHO chief, warns against 'vaccine nationalism'
SEE PAGE 5

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EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS, DEATHS IN CUSTODY

No case, probe in most cases

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and WASIM BIN HABBIB

More than two years have gone by but Ayesha Begum, wife of slain Teknaf municipality councillor Akramul Haque, still does not know whether there has been any investigation into her husband's killing.

She said after the killing triggered a huge public outcry, two ministers from the ruling party promised her of arranging a meeting with the prime minister and requested her not to talk to journalists anymore.

But the meeting never happened, nor did the ministers communicate with her ever again.

"None from the authorities came to help us get justice in these two years... I want to know why he [Akramul] became a victim of crossfire. If he was killed at the instructions of some high-ups, then I want to know who gave that order," a frustrated Ayesha told The Daily Star.

Akramul, also a member of the ruling Awami League, was killed in a "gunfight" with

EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS & CUSTODIAL DEATHS

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 2020 (Jan-July 28) | 196 |
| 2019 | 388 |
| 2018 | 466 |
| 2017 | 162 |
| 2016 | 195 |

SOURCE: AIN O SALISH KENDRA

Rab during a nationwide anti-narcotics drive. The incident happened on May 26 in 2018 in Noakhali para on Teknaf Marine Drive Road.

At a press conference after the incident, Ayesha alleged that her husband was murdered in cold blood. She gave journalists four unverified audio clips of conversations in support of her claim.

In one of the clips, a female voice is heard continuously screaming over a mobile phone, hearing gunshots during a phone call. Ayesha claimed that the female voice was hers and the gunshots were fired at her husband.

The Daily Star spoke to her on Thursday after Maj (ret) Sinha Md Rashed Khan was killed in police firing at a checkpoint in Teknaf on the night of July 31.

Sinha had served in the Special Security Force (SSF) and took voluntary retirement from the army two years ago. His killing caused a public uproar. The authorities acted promptly and seven accused policemen

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With no dry place around, a family with its belongings has taken shelter on a road in Char Kashimpur area of Narayanganj's Bandar upazila. The area has been under water for about 10 days due to flooding, which has displaced thousands of people and caused damage to properties and crops. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

BANGLADESH UPDATE

2,851 New cases in 24hrs

2,52,502 Total cases

3,333 Deaths

1,45,584 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

715,802 Deaths

19,141,627 Total cases

GK Shamim has Tk 337cr in 180 bank accounts!

Says charge sheet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction mogul GK Shamim has Tk 337.30 crore in 180 fixed deposit accounts with different banks, two houses in the capital and 52 kathas of land worth Tk 41 crore, according to charges pressed before a Dhaka court on Wednesday.

Shamim, a top contractor of government projects, amassed the wealth through tender manipulation at government departments and extortion at bus terminals and cattle markets, mentioned the chargesheet filed against him and his seven bodyguards.

Abu Sayeed, additional special superintendent of organised economic crime unit at Criminal Investigation Department (CID), who is investigating a money-laundering case against Shamim, gave the information to The Daily Star last night, citing the chargesheet.

Shamim was trying to siphon off the illegal money abroad, Sayeed added.

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BANGLADESHIS IN STRIFE-TORN LEBANON

Beirut explosion throws them into a deeper crisis

PORIMOL PALMA

Mahin Mia was serving guests in a Lebanese restaurant, which is a seven minutes' walk from the warehouse that exploded on Tuesday evening, rocking entire Beirut.

"There was a bang. The window panes broke and fell on us. I suffered deep cuts on my head and right hand," said the 23-year-old Bangladeshi migrant, who has been working there since 2016.

Restaurant employees rushed him and some other injured to a nearby hospital. She required 15 stitches to head wounds and his right hand was bandaged.

The next day, he was asked to return to his home where he lives with some 10 other Bangladeshi migrants.

"I myself had to buy medicines. The doctor has asked me to see him after two weeks," said Mahin, adding that it was a very tough situation for him as he had no idea about when his restaurant would reopen, if at all.

The twin explosion, which is being linked to a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate in the warehouses at Beirut Port, damaged thousands of businesses, homes and other structures and left at least 145 people dead, more than 5,000 wounded and some 300,000 homeless.

At least four Bangladeshis were killed and 102 others, including 21 Bangladesh Navy members, injured.

Mahin said he could hardly send money home in the last few months because the Lebanese Lira was heavily devalued against the US dollar over the last one year.

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Air India plane crash-lands in Kerala

At least 2 killed, 20 critically injured

AFP, New Delhi

At least two people died and more than 20 others were seriously injured yesterday when an Indian passenger jet skidded off the runway in heavy rain, media reports and officials said.

Television pictures showed part of the fuselage of the Air India Express jet ripped apart, although there was no sign of any fire, at Kozhikode airport in the southern state of Kerala.

The airline said more than 190 passengers and crew were on board the plane, which left from Dubai.

One television channel reported there had been a problem with the jet's landing gear.

"I am arranging hospitals for the injured passengers in the city and can confirm two deaths," local police official Sujith Das told AFP.

"There are injuries too but we don't yet have a number."

A Kerala state deputy said the pilot had died in the crash, while reports

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Virus fears echoed in booters' reports

15 nat'l players and a coach test positive after testing negative; BSMMU asst prof says 20-30% may be false negatives

ANISUR RAHMAN

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, a persistent fear has been that of false negatives -- cases of those infected with the transmissible virus testing negative and being allowed to carry on with their regular lives, risking further infection. That fear was fuelled by the very public development of 15 out of 24 national footballers and a coach testing positive for coronavirus in their second test within three to four days of testing negative in the first.

Two other footballers had failed to take the coronavirus test before reporting to the team management on August 6 for the national camp, and they too tested positive for the virus.

Around 9:00pm yesterday, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) announced the latest batch of eight footballers -- Md Faisal Ahmed Fahim, Md Manik Hossain Molla, Monjurur Rahman Manik, Md Abdullah, Yeasin Arafat, Biplob Ahmed, Mahabubur Rahman -- and coach Md Masud Parvez Kaiser testing positive. All had tested negative before reporting for the camp on August 5.

The infected footballers had tested negative in various private and government hospitals around the country two to three days before reporting for the camp, as part of the BFF's guidelines. They were then made to undergo a second test under the BFF's supervision at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) on Wednesday and Thursday.

The test reversals have also upended the planned preparations for the national team for the Joint Qualifiers of Qatar World Cup and China Asian Cup. Till Thursday, only 15 footballers out of 24 checked in at Sarah Resorts in Gazipur for residential training but all of them are now under

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Hiker's dream of climbing Everest ends in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The life of a mountaineer was cut short at the age of 34 as a microbus hit her bicycle on Lake Road, adjacent to Chandrima Udyan, in the capital yesterday morning.

Reshma Nahar Ratna was also a teacher at Ayub Ali Government Primary School in New Market area. She was from Narail and used to live in Mirpur.

The microbus fled after the incident.

On being informed, police rushed to the spot and took Reshma to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead, Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, inspector (investigation) of Sher-

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Electricity connections to many houses in Norsinhgpur area of Narayanganj's Fatulla have been set up using bamboo poles. Such connections put the power users and locals at risk of accidents. Locals say they are forced to use bamboo poles as the concrete ones, installed by the authorities, are far apart from each other. Inset, a tangled mess of wires on a pole in the area. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Thousands out of work in flood-hit areas

Over 50 lakh people affected in 33 dists

STAR REPORT

Thousands of people in flood-hit areas in the country's northern and north-eastern regions are struggling with their livelihood as they have been left unemployed for weeks.

Some 54.60 lakh people of 10.18 lakh families have been affected in 163 upazilas of 33 districts since June last week, said a report of the Department of Disaster Management yesterday.

The flood situation would take another week to improve, it said.

Apart from distributing rice, the government has allocated Tk 4.18 crore for the flood victims. Of the amount, Tk 2.75 crore has already been disbursed, the report mentioned.

Meanwhile, some fresh areas around the capital have been inundated as water levels of the Buriganga and Dhaleswari have increased.

The areas include Kashipur, Narsinghpur, Boktaboli, Gopalnagar, and Enayt Nagar in Narayanganj Sadar upazila. Some areas there have gone under knee-to-waist-deep water. Many people have taken shelter at flood centres or on other high grounds.

People of the areas are facing crisis of food and drinking water as tube-wells have been submerged.

"Everything inside our house has been inundated," said Lucky Begum, of Uttar Narsinghpur area, adding that their semi-concrete building collapsed.

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Release 2 young film students

Demand teachers, students, filmmakers at a rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted filmmakers and Stamford University students and teachers yesterday called for action to release Shahedul Islam Sifat and Shipra Debnath from jail.

The two students of film and media studies at Stamford, who were travelling with Major (retired) Sinha Md Rashed Khan, got arrested after the latter was shot dead allegedly by police in Teknaf on July 31.

At a rally in the capital's Shabbagh yesterday, National Film Award winning-director Giasuddin Selim said, "We know the police of our country. If they want, they can make anyone fall into a trap. Please stop this culture."

He added that he knows the two students and they do not deserve to be in jail.

"To the leaders who run our country, stop extrajudicial killings now. This is not a police state. This is a democratic and modern Bangladesh."

He added that Shipra had worked with him as a script supervisor in his film, Paap-Punno.

"The young filmmaker has a dream to make movies. She left studying engineering at Buet to make films."

Ex-Major Sinha, who used to make travel videos for his YouTube channel, went to Cox's Bazar for filming with Stamford students Shipra, Sifat and Tahsin Rifat Nur.

Police charged Sifat with killing Sinha and possessing drugs and Shipra with possessing drugs and handed Rifat to his parents' custody.

Shakira Parvin, assistant professor at Stamford's film and media studies department, said she and her fellow teachers were worried about the young filmmakers' future.

"They are well-mannered and good students. Sifat is a quiet boy... and Shipra worked on many renowned productions. Their family members and friends knew what they were doing in Cox's Bazar."

Shipra's brother Suvojit Debnath told The Daily Star that his sister was framed in the case.

"They are trying to create a story with which they can hide their misdeeds. This is their most-known technique, framing people with drugs," he said.

Sifat's uncle Masum Billah, a producer at Sangsad Television, said they appealed for Sifat's bail at a Cox's Bazar court on Thursday, but he was sent to jail.

Masum termed the police cases "fictional".

"Police wrote in the FIR that Sinha was killed by their guns and bullets. But they charged Sifat. How is that possible? It is self-contradictory."

Directors Mostofa Sarwar Farooki and Dipankar Dipon, Wahid Ibn Reza, and actress Jaya Ahsan also demanded release of the young filmmakers.



People on a boat and a tube raft navigate flood waters in Uttar Medinimandal village of Munshiganj's Louhajang upazila. Flooding has marooned several thousand people and submerged large areas of farm land in the area. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Virus fears echoed in booters' reports

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close observation for any symptoms of coronavirus.

Seven more footballers are scheduled to take the Covid-19 test at BSMMU today.

On July 16, the National Teams Committee (NTC) decided to have a 14-day pre-preparation camp in August for the national players.

BFF announced the 36-member preliminary squad on July 26 and the available players, in groups, started to report on August 5.

The first batch, comprising 12 players with the exception of Bishwanath Gosh (who tested positive in the first test and did not turn up) reported to national team manager Satyajit Das Rupu on Wednesday and the 11 other players, furnished with negative test reports, underwent their second test on the same day at the BSMMU. Three footballers -- Suman Reza, Nazmul Islam and MS Bablu -- tested positive within only two days of the negative result.

On Thursday, 12 more footballers, of whom 10 had negative reports and two failed to undergo the coronavirus test prior to reporting, took the Covid-19 test and seven tested positive.

According to information from the team management, of the 10 positive cases, three footballers -- Sushantha Tripura, Mohammad Ibrahim and Anisur Rahman Zico -- from Cox's Bazar took their first Covid-19 test at Cox's Bazar General Hospital and Chakoria Hospital.

Goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel and Sohel Rana underwent tests at Imperial Hospital in Chattogram and Anwar Khan Modern Hospital in Dhanmondi respectively while Tutul Hossain Badsha from Dinajpur and Rabiul Hasan of Tangail did not turn up with test reports.

Suman Reza was tested at Sheikh Hasina Medical Hospital in Tangail,

while MS Bablu and Nazmul Islam had their tests at Evercare Hospital in Dhaka.

The reversal in results is a microcosm of the plight the country faces with the virus -- except one or two cases, players from regions of high infection have been found infected, and the false negatives add to the atmosphere of fear.

It was not possible to ascertain where the eight players and the coach -- who were revealed to be infected last night -- had undertaken their original tests before reporting to the camp.

"20-30% MAY BE FALSE NEGATIVES"

Asked about the reversals in results, BSMMU Assistant Professor and BFF medical committee Deputy Chairman Dr Ali Emran said, "First, we have to be clear about negative and positive results, which is done by RT-PCR and efficiency of RT-PCR is almost hundred percent.

"Some 20 to 30 percent of Covid-19 negative reports may prove to be false negatives, which means reports coming back negative may not really be negative.

"Coming to positive results, if anyone tests positive, then there is no doubt about it except when that person recovers and again tests positive due to having the dead particle of virus in his or her body.

"There is no doubt about the authenticity of Covid-19 tests at BSMMU. Besides, BSMMU is giving it the highest priority because of the national football team," said Emran, who is also a member of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) medical committee.

'NO WAY TO STOP, MUST GO FORWARD'

These developments also forced the National Teams Committee Chairman and BFF Vice President Kazi Nabil Ahmed to reconsider plans for the national team's preparation camp.

"We are on course to play the World Cup Qualifiers because we don't have any option to avoid it. We are thinking of making those players, who have already tested positive but have no symptoms, take a second test within a week to see whether there are any false positive reports," said Nabil, hinting that they may test players at a private hospital this time following the first test done at a government hospital.

"If some players test negative, then we will keep them under observation before taking them to the national camp and the positives ones will be released for home quarantine," said Nabil. "If more players test positive in the second tests, we will call new players to the national team and they will also undergo the tests."

Head coach Jamie Day is perhaps a bit worried about the increasing rate of infection among national players but he is still scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on August 16 before taking over the team from the local coaches on August 23.

"He is certainly worried about the Covid-19 reports of the players but we don't have any option to stop, because we have to go forward," said Nabil.

With the increasing rate of infection among players, there has also been a fear of the impact of staging the qualifying match against Afghanistan on time.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said, "We must hold the qualifiers maintaining the AFC protocol and we are hopeful of maintaining all protocols to hold the match on time."

"For now, we are not thinking much of any impact on the match due to the players' positive results because they are all asymptomatic and may get negative results in their second test. However, we will certainly think about it if we get any instruction from AFC or FIFA," said Shohag.

No case, probe in most cases

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have already been sent to jail. Three have been placed on remand.

"I heard three committees were formed after the killing [of the former army officer]. Why such steps were not taken when my husband was murdered?" Ayesha asked.

"He [Akramul] was the president of Teknaf Jubo League for 13 years and also a local Awami League leader. Then why wouldn't he get justice?" she further asked and broke down in tears.

"... I want justice, I want justice from the prime minister," said Ayesha, who along with her two school-going daughters, now lives on the allowance her brother-in-law Ehatashamul Haque receives as a councillor.

Ehatashamul said the government would act by carrying out an investigation if it really wanted to do so.

"We didn't get justice. We don't even know whether any investigation was carried out ...," he said.

Meanwhile, rights defenders said human rights violations in the name of "crossfire" or "shootout" has become a "new normal" with law enforcement agencies dishing out the same old, clichéd crossfire story.

Welcoming the government's promptness in probing Sinha's killing, they stressed the need for investigating similar extrajudicial killings, which have been continuing for years. Unfortunately, the authorities seem to have remained indifferent to these issues, they said.

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), at least 196 people became victims of extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths between January and July 28 this year.

Rab was involved in 57 of the incidents, while police in 96, Rab and police in one, Detective Branch (DB) of police in 14 and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in 28 incidents.

At least 388 people became victims of extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths last year. Of them, 356 people were killed in so-called shootouts during the anti-narcotics drive, and 14 others died in custody.

The number of killings in so-called shootouts and deaths in custody was a record 466 in 2018, while the figure was 162 in 2017, according to ASK.

Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, a Supreme

Court lawyer who dealt with many cases involving human rights violations, said every person has the right to justice and extrajudicial killings provides for no trial or even investigation.

He claimed more than 160 people fell victims of extrajudicial killings in Teknaf after OC Pradeep Kumar Das took charge of Teknaf police station, but no one except some rights activists had raised any questions about those murders.

"But the killing of a retired army major has triggered this huge discussion. It looks odd," he said.

"This is actually called selective justice. Law is supposed to eliminate discrimination but here law is being used to create discrimination," he said.

He also said different quarters have long been demanding formation of an independent commission to inquire into each and every incident of extrajudicial killings or at least judicial inquiry into such incidents, but to no avail.

Law enforcement agencies have no such internal mechanism to deal with the matters independently. Besides, departmental proceedings fall short of expectations to address the issues effectively. Maintaining neutrality remains a major concern till date, he added.

Talking on Akramul's killing, prominent rights activist Nur Khan Liton said it was a much-discussed issue, but no neutral probe was visible and anyone involved has not been brought to book.

He said whenever any such incident happens, it gets huge media attention and the public becomes outraged, prompting the authorities to take some immediate steps to calm the situation. But no visible step was taken to stop extrajudicial killing altogether.

Rather, in many cases, members of law enforcement agencies, involved in such incidents, were awarded, he said.

"Although law enforcers claim that investigation is carried out after each and every incident, we never saw any neutral investigation ... As per the constitution, everybody is equal before the law. But in reality, the way the state responds when an important person becomes the victim is different from when it happens to a common citizen.

"It seems those who are governing

the state are not following the constitutional directives in this regard."

Nur Khan also said, "One thing should be settled first: Whether such incidents can go on years after years without the directives or silent approval from the high-ups. Head of the agencies can't avoid responsibility for such incidents."

Asked about trial and justice in other extra-judicial killings, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said, "I have no knowledge [about such incidents]. Besides, no army person got killed this way ever before."

He asked this correspondent to give an example of any extra-judicial case. Being informed about Akramul's incident, he said perhaps there was an investigation into the incident.

But when this correspondent informed him about the family's versions about investigation, the minister said, "Then I cannot say without seeing the documents."

Hiker's dream

FROM PAGE 1

e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

He said the victim died probably when she was being taken to the hospital.

The body was kept at the hospital morgue, he said in the afternoon, adding that they were yet to trace the microbus and detain its driver.

Reshma's brother-in-law Moniruzzaman said they filed a case with the police station over the incident. Reshma did her basic mountaineering course from Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in India's Uttarakhand. She scaled the Keokradong peak in Bandarban in 2016, said her family members.

She also scaled the Stok Kangri (6,153 metres), the highest mountain in the Stok Range of the Himalayas in the Ladakh region of north India, last year. Besides, she used to run marathons and cycle, they said.

One of Reshma's friends, Sakhawat Hossain, said she was a member of the Bishwa Sahitya Kendra's study circle. "She was dreaming she would go up the Everest one day and was preparing for it. But with her, that dream is gone too," Sakhawat added.

Bangladesh sees no drop in Covid infection rate

It still hovers around 20pc; cases cross 250,000-mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many Asian countries have seen a drop in coronavirus infection rate in the last couple of months but in Bangladesh's case it remained over 20 percent.

Since May 24 the country has seen a fluctuation in the number of daily Covid-19 tests, but the infection rate has persistently remained over 20 percent which means one out of each five tests came out positive each day.

In terms of total Covid-19 cases, Bangladesh ranks fifth in Asia, according to worldometer.info.

The first four countries are India, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The infection rate in the countries are 9.35 percent, 10.25 percent, 2.52 percent and 4.8 percent respectively on Thursday.

On the same day, the infection rate was 23.43 percent in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has crossed the 2.5 lakh grim milestone with 2,851 new cases in 24 hours between Thursday and Friday morning.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the total number of Covid-19 cases reached 252,502 in the country.

A total of 12,699 samples were tested in 84 labs across the country in the 24 hours and 22.45 percent of the tests resulted positive, said Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of DGHS.

However, comparing the data of Thursday of the 49 Asian countries, it is found that Bangladesh was second after Oman in terms of infection rate.

Oman lags far behind Bangladesh in terms of daily new case.

On Thursday, Oman had 427 new case whereas Bangladesh reported 2,977 cases, according to worldometer.info.

According to the WHO, Bangladesh is the top 15 countries in the world for its huge population infected with Covid-19.

Besides other countries of different regions in the world, Bangladesh crossed Turkey and Qatar in the last couple of months.

The infection rates in Turkey and Qatar are now 2.1 percent and 9.8 percent respectively.

Yesterday at the briefing, Dr Nasima said that a total of 27 died from coronavirus infections in the said 24 hours.

With this, the death toll due to Covid-19 in the country reached 3,333 and the death rate now stands at 1.32 percent of total COVID-19 cases.

Meanwhile, 1,760 Covid-19 patients have recovered in those 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 145,584 and the recovery rate at 57.66 percent.

A total of 815 people were put on isolation in those 24 hours, the DGHS official added during the briefing.

Among the dead, 24 were male and three were female. Four of aged between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60, 12 between 61 and 70, four between 71 and 80, and one was between 81 and 90.

Malaysian ex-FM

charged in graft case

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's ex-finance minister, now a key opposition figure, was charged with corruption yesterday over a \$1.5 billion construction project, the latest government critic to be targeted since a scandal-plagued party returned to power.

Lim Guan Eng is the highest-profile figure yet to face a criminal probe in a sweeping crackdown on dissent launched by the new administration, and says the case against him is politically motivated.

A crowd of journalists and supporters, including fellow MPs, were waiting for him as he arrived at a Kuala Lumpur court yesterday morning, following his arrest by anti-graft officials the previous evening.

Air India

FROM PAGE 1

said dozens of passengers were taken to hospital and that there were at least 20 critically injured.

Dozens of ambulances were being rushed to the scene, reports said.

Air India Express said in a statement that there was "no fire reported at the time of landing."

It said there were 174 passengers, 10 infants, two pilots and five cabin crew on board the aircraft.

"As per the initial reports, rescue operations are on and passengers are being taken to hospital for medical care," it said.

An emergency services official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP: "Rescue operations are on but the rains are making it difficult." Television pictures showed emergency services personnel working in the dark and spraying the wreckage with water.

Kerala has been battered by heavy rains in recent days.

News18 reported that there was a problem with the aircraft's landing gear, citing unnamed sources.

Saudi Arabia seeks to tame powerful cyber armies

AFP, Riyadh

Online armies of self-styled Saudi patriots riding a wave of state-led nationalism attack critics and what they call "traitors" of the kingdom -- but their growing clout has left the government uneasy.

Their rise has coincided with the ascent of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has overseen Saudi Arabia's shift from austere religion towards hyper-nationalism as he pursues an ambitious transformation of the petro-state.

Trolls distorting political discourse are common in many countries, but Saudi Arabia's so-called cyber "flies" -- feisty defenders of state policy who often choose pictures of Saudi rulers as their avatar image -- are an

increasingly powerful force.

Their posts frequently tag Saudi security agencies, and their collective roar often leads to detentions, sackings and harassment.

These "phantom accounts" were long thought to be linked to the government, arising as part of a policy driven by former royal court advisor Saud al-Qahtani.

Qahtani, sacked over the October 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, earned nicknames such as "Mr Hashtag" and "lord of the flies" for managing an electronic army to defend the kingdom.

But a rare debate on state television in June sought to distance them from the government.

Beirut explosion

FROM PAGE 1

Last year, protestors took to the streets in Lebanon against the then ruling party for years of mismanagement in the country's economy. With many businesses closing since then, thousands of Bangladeshis and other nationals lost jobs.

The situation worsened with the Covid-19 lockdown being enforced since March this year.

Tuesday's explosion added insult to the injury of Lebanon, home to some 150,000 Bangladeshis. The damage caused by the explosion is estimated to be up to \$15 billion, Lebanon government officials told the media.

"I don't know what I will do now. It's a panicky situation in Lebanon," Mahin, who hails from Brahmanbaria's Kasba upazila, told this correspondent over phone yesterday.

Before the pandemic, officials of the Bangladesh embassy in Beirut estimated that some 30,000 Bangladeshis were undocumented. The situation has worsened by now, they said.

Ripon Khan, another Bangladeshi expatriate in Beirut, said he used to work as a security guard at a school, but he has been jobless for six months now.

"Since then I have been bringing money from home. How long can I survive like this?" he said.

There are many Bangladeshis who neither have jobs nor can bring money from home. Even those who are working can a save little amount because of the high price of US dollars and daily essentials.

Ripon said Lira has become so cheap against dollar that his monthly

GK Shamim has

FROM PAGE 1

A Rab team on September 20 last year arrested Shamim and his seven bodyguards over extortion and tender manipulation.

Rab raided his house and office in the capital's Niketon in the morning and seized eight firearms, a large stash of ammunition, around Tk 1.8 crore in cash, \$ 9,000 and 752 Singaporean currency, and some bottles of foreign liquor.

His bodyguards are Delwar Hossain, Murad Hossain, Zahidul Islam, Shahidul Islam, Kamal Hossain, Samsad Hossain and Aminul Islam.

The chargesheet mentioned that Shamim's transaction with different local banks was over Tk 6,058.51 crore between 2009 and 2019. Most of the transactions took place in 2018 and 2019.

Of the amount, over Tk 3,042.83

crore was credited and the rest was debited.

Sayed said the Tk 337.30 crore in fixed deposit accounts was frozen with court orders while the taka and dollars seized from him in cash were deposited to the government exchequer. Besides, his two houses and around 52 khatas of land were confiscated.

The chargesheet also mentioned that between 2009 and 2019, Shamim's firm GKB and Company got work orders for 154 projects. Before Shamim's arrest, he completed 61 projects and received around Tk 743.77 crore in payment. The work of the 93 other projects worth Tk 4,810.49 crore have yet to be completed.

Shamim is now being treated at the prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



The Team. Late Sheikh Kamal is third from right on the second row. Our Russian coach is on the front row. Author is leftmost on the last row. Some players are not shown.

Basketball Days

When I stepped into the court on that first day, the elite team of basketball players was already there. I scanned the faces. Most were unfamiliar but my eyes stopped at one. I had seen this face before. It was Sheikh Kamal, and I was one of two schoolboys selected into the same team as him!

At first I was awestruck and nervous. But over the next few weeks I found that Kamal Bhai was completely approachable. He played with the grace and ability of a natural athlete: jumping high, running fast and scoring. He was popular among his contemporaries in the team, liked because of his quick wit. At the same time, he had a soft spot for the youngsters in the team and treated us with great affection. I admired his friendly smile, the twinkle in his eye, and his well-groomed moustache - mine had just started to appear - which gave him a distinguished look. After the demanding early morning practice, when we were ravenously hungry, he often treated us to a special breakfast or snacks.

How did I get there? I had set my sights on basketball, a new game for me, when I was in Class Eight at St. Joseph's High School. I was often the first one on the court every afternoon for practice. Brother Ralph, who joined our games, often coached me. I worked on my game at a feverish pitch, practicing at all hours.

The following year I made the school team, scoring well during the season. Our great rival was St. Gregory's High School, who beat us in several games. But in the Finals of the School League, we defeated them - a win that many of our team still savour.

One day in 1974, when I was in Class Ten, our school had a group of visitors including two Russians: a basketball coach and his interpreter. They auditioned the basketball players on court. The following week I was invited to a training camp for the first ever Bangladesh Basketball Team. I was one of two schoolboys chosen for the camp; the rest were older, more established national players. The Russians, winners of Olympic gold medal in basketball, would coach our team.

The next few months were like a dream. I had the opportunity to play basketball with the nation's best players including Kamal Bhai. The team's youngsters, Dastagir and I, had to work extra hard to keep up with them. But it was the experience of a lifetime.

A few months after our training ended, on the darkest day of this nation, August 15, the world changed as Bangabandhu and most of his family including Kamal Bhai were assassinated. Had he lived, he would have been 71 this year.

The following month, big changes came into my life. I moved abroad for further studies. My interests also changed. I quit playing basketball.

Three decades later I returned to the game. When my son had turned ten I started playing basketball with him to keep him engaged in a sport. He eventually went on to captain his school basketball team. Nowadays I have quit playing basketball for good (really!) but the game will always have a special place in my heart.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow 'ihtishamkabir' on Instagram.

Brac to disburse Tk 10cr among flood-hit people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac has announced to assist 50,000 severely flood affected families with Tk 2,000 as cash assistance for each family.

A total of Tk 10 crore will be given to families in 15 worst-flood hit upazilas in seven districts -- Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Bogra, Sirajganj, Jamalpur and Sunamganj, said a press release of the world's largest NGO.

It said the assistance will be sent through bKash service. "We are committed to stand by people seriously affected by this year's flood and give cash assistance which will help them meet their urgent necessities," said Asif Saleh, executive director of Brac.

He also called on individuals and institutions to extend their generosity towards these families in distress.

"BRAC has taken up an initiative to collect funds so that more families can be reached with assistance."

Some 4.7 million people in 31 districts have been affected by flood this year with Jamalpur having most of its region inundated. So far, 41 people have died, mostly by drowning, while nearly one million households are waterlogged. Around 90,000 people with around 76,000 cattle are staying at emergency flood shelters, said Brac.

Early warning messages were sent through four community radio stations, social media platforms and its field staff in the remote and worst hit regions, by incorporating Covid-19 measures.

Besides, dry food and oral saline packets were distributed to the waterlogged families in Islampur and Dewanganj upazilas of Jamalpur.

Brac also installed sanitary latrines adjacent to the flood shelters at Porsha of Naogaon district. Assistance was reached to the worst suffering families in Kurigram from a fund contributed by Greta Thunberg Foundation, it said.

Bangamata's birth anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka

The birth anniversary of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib will be observed today.

Begum Fazilatunnesa, wife of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mother of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, embraced martyrdom along with Bangabandhu and other family members on August 15 in 1975.

Fazilatunnesa, who struggled for an independent Bangladesh alongside Bangabandhu, was born in Tungipara village of Gopalganj on August 8, 1930. The Women and Children Affairs Ministry has taken elaborate programmes to observe Bangamata's birth anniversary nationally. The theme of the day this year is "Bangamata is a courageous symbol of sacrifice and beauty".

The prime minister is expected to join the celebration on virtual platform from Gono Bhaban as chief guest.

Marking the birthday, the ministry will distribute sewing machines and money through mobile banking to the distressed women who have been affected during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A total of 3,200 sewing machines will be distributed and 1,300 women will get Tk 2,000 each. At the same time, 100 laptops will be given to poor and meritorious students in Gopalganj.



FOOTBALL FREESTYLE CATEGORY

Barishal youth sets world record



SUSHANTA GHOSH

On July 30, Ashikur Rahman Zubayer received a letter from Guinness World Record at his house on Masjid Bari Road in Jhalakati. Eight months ago, Ashikur had submitted his world record attempt entry to the organisation under football freestyle world records category.

The letter contained the world record recognition certificate Ashikur had been waiting for.

"I have broken the world record on the football freestyle category! I played the ball 625 times per minute, three more than the last record, which was 622 times per minute by a German national," he told the Daily Star.

Ashikur, son of Reksona and Jalal Ahmed, is a fourth-year honors student at the management department of Barishal Government Brojomohun College (BM College).

"I have been trying to be a world famous freestyler for three years. I have practised heart and soul, often learning skills from YouTube videos. I have finally got the recognition I deserve," an elated Ashikur said.

On Thursday afternoon, Barishal Deputy Commissioner SM Azfar Rahman hosted a reception for Ashikur at his office. There the deputy commissioner and the district sports body greeted him with flowers, honored him with a crest, and awarded him a cash prize of Tk 10,000.

"We are proud of Ashikur. The name of Barishal has flourished along with his," the deputy commissioner said.

Ashikur's mother Reksona Ahamed said, "We could never imagine our son would achieve such a prestigious title. We seek blessings and good wishes for him."

Newly crowned Guinness World Record holder Ashikur freestyles in front of a small but enthralled audience at the Barishal Deputy Commissioner's Office in the city.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Somapura Mahavihara losing lustre

World heritage site at Paharpur in need of care within three years of renovation

ANWAR ALI

Within three years of the completion of several conservation and development projects, the Somapura Mahavihara has started to lose its shine.

The 1,300-year-old Unesco World Heritage Site, located at Paharpur area in Badalgachhi upazila of Naogaon district, bears the evidence of an ancient higher learning centre for Buddhists.

Between March 2014 and December 2016, the Department of Archaeology (DoA) implemented the Asian Development Bank funded "South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project" on the site.

Under the project, the main temple and its surrounding architecture were polished and renovated. Separate wooden structures including staircases were built on the main temple and other places of the site for visitors to go up and move around safely, according to officials.

However, within a few years of completing the projects, the effects of the renovation have begun to fade from the site, making archaeologists and visitors question the quality of renovation and maintenance works.

"As we walk around the place and imagine how the monastery worked in those days, one feels excited. But then it becomes evident that this historic and archaeologically important place lacks the care it needs," said Md Roknuzzaman, a teacher at a private university in Rajshahi.

Since 2019, walls around the main temple started turning black with algae, while salinity took hold on the terracotta plaques. The wooden staircases and pavements got damaged too, due to being exposed to open air and use by too many visitors.

Considering the situation, authorities have suspended visitor



Despite restrictions, people use a wooden staircase to reach the top of the main temple, inset. The photos were taken before the pandemic when the site was open to public.

PHOTO: STAR



movement to the main temple at the end of last year. Visitors now have to use the broken stairs and pavements to the site, which can be quite risky.

After the implementation of the renovation projects, the revenue collection from visitors on entry, car parking and other purposes were increased by more than two-and-a-half times. However, ticket prices were reduced after the site began losing its splendour.

According to the DoA, the revenue in 2014-15 and 2015-16 was around Tk 27 lakh. In 2016-17, the income soared to Tk 72 lakh, and increased further to Tk 77.25 lakh in the following year. In 2018-19 the revenue was Tk 76.60 lakh. However, following the change in ticket price, it came down to Tk 56 lakh in 2019-20.

Talking to The Daily Star, Swadhin Sen, a professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University, said the historic site had a "troubled history" of going

through development projects since 1985.

"When we talk about conserving an archaeological site, we mean the site has to be maintained as it is -- which means changing the appearance of an archaeological site is prohibited by law. A large number of visitors are using the stairs for climbing to the main temple. This is damaging the 1,300-year-old historical architecture," he said.

The site had a longstanding problem of waterlogging and salinity. The projects achieved success in controlling waterlogging, but the problem of salinity still persists, he said.

Meanwhile, in the name of protecting the terracotta plaques from the site, DoA did a questionable thing, archaeologists and officials said.

During the excavation, 265 terracotta plaques were taken to the Barind Research Museum in Rajshahi while remaining 3,000 terracotta plaques were on the

main temple. To protect those from thieves and salinity, most terracotta plaques were removed under the projects and replicas were placed, Prof Sen added.

Of the original terracotta plaques, only 17 are on display at the Paharpur Museum on the site, while the rest have been stored "without proper care", site officials said.

The traditions and customs of the Pala dynasty could be traced in these plaques. Evidence of their secular ideas is also found because these plaques reflect the Hindu gods and goddesses as well as Islamic symbols, along with a multitude of arts, culture and practices of the Buddhists of the time, archaeologists said.

Contacted, Naheed Sultana, regional director (Rajshahi and Rangpur) of DoA, said the conservation and development activities were carried out following proper rules and with involvement of local and foreign experts.

"It is very difficult to stop visitors from climbing to the main temple. When there were no wooden stairs, visitors were seen climbing to the top, taking risks. The wooden stairs were helping reduce the risk. Moreover, after the implementation of the projects, the revenue increased," said Naheed Sultana.

The official said they wrote to headquarters to repair the damaged wooden infrastructure, but were yet to receive any response to this end.

Implementation of the projects was directly controlled by the DoA, Sultana said, adding that local officials played no part in the projects besides partial monitoring. She said the site has been closed since March 26 due to the pandemic and will remain closed to public until further notice. As a result, no revenue has been generated between March to June, with most of the revenue coming between November and March, she added.

New drug for diabetic patients launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Limited yesterday launched a new drug in the country designed to improve blood sugar control in adults with type-2 diabetes.

Trulicity, a once-a-week injectable medication produced by US-based Eli Lilly and Company, will be available in 0.75mg and 1.5mg doses and can be administered at any time of the day, said a press release.

It is a prescription drug that should be taken only on advice from registered physicians who treat diabetic patients. When prescribed, it should be used as an adjunct to diet and exercise, added the release.

It will be available at pharmacies in four-pen package for a month's use at Tk 13,500. However, patients will be able to purchase a single-pen dose for the time being, Shek Sady Khan, medical manager at HPL, told this newspaper by phone. It is first of its kind in Bangladesh, he added.

Type-2 diabetes is a progressive disease and, in Bangladesh, many patients do not meet their treatment goals, said Prof AK Azad Khan, president of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh.

"Trulicity is non-insulin and injectable," he said.

Journo stabbed in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Miscreants stabbed a journalist in front of local press club in Rajshahi's Mohonpur upazila on Thursday evening, reportedly for writing about an unauthorised market.

Shahin Sagar (26), Mohonpur upazila correspondent of daily Rajshahi Sangbad, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with seven stab wounds, said OC Mostak Ahmed of Mohonpur Police Station. Shahin was released from the hospital yesterday afternoon.

Police arrested Kawsar Ali (25), one of the six persons Shahin accused in a case filed with Mohonpur Police Station yesterday, the OC said adding that police also seized a knife used for stabbing Shahin from Kawsar's possession.

This was the second attack on Shahin since publication of his report, the OC said.

On April 23, Rajshahi Sangbad published a report headlined "Mohonpur raate boschhe haat" (Temporary markets in Mohonpur operating at night).

Two days later, the haat's lease-holder Akkas Ali threatened Shahin of dire consequences. Later, local UP member

through its National Legal Aid and Services Organisation (NLASO) and its district legal aid offices across the country.

Masuda Yeasmin, assistant director of NLASO, told The Daily Star on August 3 that anyone can call the toll-free number for legal advice. Replying to a question, she said several people communicate through the helpline every day.

Law Minister Anisul Huq is looking over the activities, and giving necessary directives to the offices concerned, she added.

The government has provided legal aid to 5,21,481 poor people in last six years (since 2014-2015 fiscal till July this year) at its own cost; 1,28,309 legal aid related cases were disposed of through NLASO during the period. Besides, 20,476 people got legal aid from Supreme Court through the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee (SCLAC) during this period, according to sources.

SCLAC has provided legal assistance to 216 underprivileged prisoners, who had been in different jails for over five, seven and 10 years, SCLAC sources said. A total of 78,500 disadvantaged prisoners were given legal support since 2014-2015 fiscal till July this year, a law ministry study report said.

The NLASO has collected Tk 38.25 crore by settling 29,001 cases through alternative dispute resolution system and gave the money to the victims of those cases.

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Step up relief

FROM PAGE 12
The indications available so far have been favourable. The countries who have already recognised Bangladesh have generously responded to the appeal sent by Bangladesh.
PERU ACCORDS RECOGNITION TO BANGLADESH
Peru has recognised Bangladesh. The decision is communicated to Bangladesh Foreign Ministry by the Embassy of Peru in India today. So far, 86 countries have recognised the newly independent Bangladesh.
SOURCES: August 9, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

UP chairman

FROM PAGE 12
sanctioned 8.8 tonnes of wheat for maintenance work on a canal in Majhdigha area.
Union Parishad Member Shahnaz oversaw the work and officially released the wheat meant for the workers.
Nazmul Hussain, assistant director of the ACC in Rajshahi, visited the area on Thursday and filed a case accusing Tofazzal and Shahnaz.
Both of them were arrested and sent to jail later in the day.

China

FROM PAGE 12
with a damaged image and a deficit of trust.
TikTok has come under fire from US lawmakers over national security concerns surrounding data collection and distrust between Washington and Beijing grows. Reuters on Sunday reported that Trump has given Microsoft Corp 45 days to complete the purchase of TikTok's US operations.
"We are shocked by the recent Executive Order, which was issued without any due process," TikTok said in a statement on Friday, adding that it would "pursue all remedies available to us in order to ensure that the rule of law is not discarded."
The ban on US transactions with Tencent, one of the world's biggest internet companies, portends further fracturing of the global internet and severing of long-standing ties between the tech industries in the United States and China.
"This is the rupture in the digital world between the US and China," said James Lewis, a technology expert with Washington-based think-tank Center for Strategic and International Studies.
"Absolutely, China will retaliate." On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expanded a program dubbed "Clean Network" to prevent various Chinese apps and telecoms firms from accessing sensitive information on US citizens and businesses.

Trump's new orders appeared coordinated with Pompeo's announcement, Lewis said.
"We are reviewing the executive order to get a full understanding," a Tencent spokesperson said.
ByteDance declined to comment.
WeChat has been downloaded a relatively small 19 million times in the United States, showed data from Sensor Tower. In China, however, the app is ubiquitous as a medium for services as varied as games and payment. It is also a common platform to communicate with individuals and businesses outside China.
US social media and messaging services such as Facebook Inc's WhatsApp and Messenger are blocked in China, where a "great firewall" prevents citizens from freely accessing the worldwide web, and where online communication is routinely monitored and censored.



A Palestinian demonstrator argues with a member of Israeli forces during a protest against Jewish settlements and Israel's plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, near Ramallah yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Donors carry on altruistic work

FROM PAGE 12
He has been managing blood donors for the group since 2017.
But he was discouraged from donating blood because of his physical disability of congenital hand deformity and weakness in both legs.
Despite that, the 20-year-old donated blood three times so far.
"When I started, I proved that my disability is not an inability to donate blood," he proudly asserted.
In May, Asif donated B positive blood for a four-year-old thalassemia patient in Mymensingh Medical College.
Sajal Ahmed, a regular donor of the Facebook group Amra Roktosandhani, said his family is scared about his safety regarding Covid-19 infection.
Still, the 30-year-old donates blood and has done so more than 25 times.
Two months ago, he was able to save the life of a woman whose baby died inside her womb.
"Even though my mother refused to let me go, I along with a friend started for Mirpur-12 from Khilgaon and donated blood at midnight," he said.

OVERCOMING MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS
At the beginning of the shutdown, donors were facing difficulties in donating blood due to lack of transportation and restrictions of movement, said Md Nazrul Islam on July 25.
He is a call centre agent of Roktodaner Opekkhay Bangladesh, the Facebook wing of the organisation DonateBloodBD.com, which started in 2013.
"The situation is getting normal now. In July, the group was able to manage 1,582 donors for hospitalised patients," he said.
Nazrul himself donated blood and platelets over 80 times in his lifetime.
Meanwhile, Amra Roktosandhani managed 3,692 donors from March to July 20, with a record of getting 62 donors in a single day in July.
Since its inception in 2017, the platform has managed more than 22,000 blood donors.
However, in recent times, they have been receiving more requests for plasma donors.
The group also provides free rides to the donors now, if the patient's family members cannot make transportation arrangements.
"We have our own riders who showed interest in providing free rides to the blood donors in this crisis. If they are unavailable, we provide the fare to donors," said Faisal Bhuiyan, an admin of the group.
"We meet the overall expenses on our own as the president of our organisation takes care of them. Besides, we get a significant amount of financial support from some of our senior brothers who live abroad," Faisal told this correspondent on Tuesday.
These platforms also suggest donors maintain personal safety through

hygiene practices and avoiding unnecessary contact with anyone -- the person accompanying the donors, or the patient's family members.
VOLUNTARY DONATION INCREASING
Even a few years ago, people had to depend on private blood banks to manage blood in an emergency.
Most of these banks relied on individuals who sold blood to earn money and in many cases were drug addicts.
According to organisations in this sector, over time massive campaigns brought about a positive attitude towards blood donation increasing the number of voluntary donors.
Dr Minhazul Islam Hridoy, general secretary of Sandhani, told The Daily Star on July 27 that Bangladesh has a demand for 12 lakh to 13 lakh of bags of blood annually.
Voluntary donors, not related to the patients, provide 25 percent of this demand and the rest come from patients' relatives and friends, voluntarily, he said.
A source in Bangladesh Red Crescent Society gave a similar estimate.
Both organisations have been working in the field of voluntary blood donation for decades.
However, patients and their families say digital platforms like Facebook groups have made it easier to manage ready donors in minutes through public posts.

of the officials and generally bar Americans from doing business with them.
Tensions between the United States and China have been increasing daily. China's foreign ministry said on Friday it firmly opposes executive orders that Trump announced this week to ban US transactions with the Chinese owners of the WeChat and TikTok apps.
Last month, Carrie Lam postponed a Sept 6 election to Hong Kong's legislature by a year because of a rise in coronavirus cases, dealing a blow to the pro-democracy opposition that had hoped to make huge gains.
The United States condemned the action, saying it was the latest example of Beijing undermining democracy in the Chinese-ruled territory.
A source familiar with the matter said US deliberations on the sanctions intensified after the election postponement.

Thousands out of work in flood-hit areas

FROM PAGE 1
In the northern region, those who took shelter on roads, dykes or in flood centres have returned homes after floodwater receded.
But they are dealing with a double blow as their houses were damaged and they have become jobless.
Flood victim Jobed Ali, 55, of Baish Pukur village in Nilphamari's Dimla upazila, took a small goat to Sutibari cattle market for sale to get money for buying food on Thursday.
Like him, many others brought their cattle there for the same purpose.
A similar situation prevails in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.
Saher Ali, 48, a labourer of Char Nayarhat in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, along with family members stayed on an embankment for around a month as his house went under floodwater.
"We returned home last Thursday.
But now I don't have any money to buy food. I don't have any job. I have sold two of my cattle to repair my house. I don't know how I will manage our livelihood," he told The Daily Star.
"We have no job. We have no earnings. So, we are struggling hard to arrange food for us," said another flood victim Nazrul Islam, 55, of Char Bagdora area in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.
In the north-eastern region, thousands of people lost their work due to the coronavirus outbreak in the country. The prolonged flood has intensified the crisis.
Harunur Rashid, a farmer of Chanpur village of Sunamganj's Jamalganj upazila, said, "This year, Boro production was good. We got fair prices of Boro paddy. But this flood has caused me a huge loss, and now I have no savings and no alternative work to do."

Jinnat Ali, a labourer of Paschim Pagla of Dakshin Sunamganj upazila, said his house was damaged by floodwater. He has a seven-member family.
"How could I get money to repair my house or feed them for the coming months as I have no work for months," Sajen Mia, of Fenarbak in Jamalganj upazila, said, "As my house was flooded, I had to stay at a flood centre for weeks and couldn't find any work. I am running my family after borrowing money and I don't know how to repay the loan until next Boro season."
In its latest report, the National Disaster Response Coordination Centre said around 55 lakh people in 165 upazilas of 33 districts fell victim to the flood this year.
[Our correspondents from Narayanganj, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, and Sylhet contributed to this report]

Covid cases in India double

FROM PAGE 12
deaths have been registered worldwide, figures compiled by AFP from official sources showed, driven by surges in Latin America and India.
The United States has recorded the most deaths with almost 160,000, followed by Brazil with nearly 100,000. Globally, 40 percent of all cases have been notched in the two countries.
US DEATH TOLL SOARS
Daily coronavirus deaths in the US surged to a three-month high of 2,060 on Thursday, a tracker by Johns Hopkins University showed.
But other corners of the globe were also marking grim milestones, with Mexico's official toll soaring above 50,000 dead and the continent of Africa hitting one million confirmed cases.
More than half of Africa's infections are in South Africa, which has the fifth highest number of infections in the world, after the US, Brazil, India and Russia.
Nevertheless the African continent remains one of the least affected, according to the official figures, with only Oceania registering fewer Covid-19 cases.
Europe remains the hardest-hit region worldwide with more than 200,000 fatalities since the virus first emerged in China late last year.
As governments across the globe struggle to salvage economies ravaged by months of lockdown, many have been forced to look at new measures to curb outbreaks of Covid-19 since they lifted initial containment orders.
Such is the case in Europe where nations imposed new travel restrictions and containment measures with fears growing over a second wave of infections.
In Australia, the second-largest

city Melbourne entered the country's toughest lockdown yet on Thursday, closing non-essential businesses and requiring hundreds of thousands more people to stay home.
TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS
Germany is the latest to introduce mandatory tests for travelers returning from designated risk zones, starting today, as fears grow over rising case numbers blamed on summer holidays and local outbreaks.
Germany's list of "risk zones" currently includes most non-EU countries, as well as certain provinces in Belgium and Spain.
Neighboring Austria on Thursday announced it would issue a travel warning for mainland Spain, becoming the latest country to do so amid a rise in new coronavirus cases in the follow EU member.
Finland also introduced new controls on arrivals from some EU countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Andorra, putting a stop to tourists arriving from there and imposing a 14-day quarantine on other returnees.
"The situation is extremely delicate," the health ministry's strategic director Liisa-Maria Voipio-Pulkki said, adding that "some sort of second stage has begun."
Britain has reimposed quarantine for travelers from Belgium, Andorra and the Bahamas.
Norway announced Thursday that France would be considered a red zone due to the resurgence of coronavirus cases there, meaning all travellers arriving from France face a mandatory ten-day quarantine.
Switzerland, Monaco and the Czech Republic were also hit with similar restrictions, as well as two Swedish regions, the Norwegian foreign affairs ministry said.

of the officials and generally bar Americans from doing business with them.
Tensions between the United States and China have been increasing daily. China's foreign ministry said on Friday it firmly opposes executive orders that Trump announced this week to ban US transactions with the Chinese owners of the WeChat and TikTok apps.
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US imposes sanctions

FROM PAGE 12
Cheng, the justice secretary, the US Treasury Department said in a statement.
It said Beijing's imposition of draconian national security legislation had undermined Hong Kong's autonomy and allowed mainland security services to operate with impunity, "setting the groundwork for censorship of any individuals or outlets that are deemed unfriendly to China."
"Carrie Lam is the chief executive directly responsible for implementing Beijing's policies of suppression of freedom and democratic processes," it said.
"The United States stands with the people of Hong Kong and we will use our tools and authorities to target those undermining their autonomy," Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.
The sanctions freeze any US asset

the first weekend after Eid as many holidaymakers were returning to the capital.
Now, two ferry terminals out of four are in operation. Eight ferries of 17 are operating on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route.
Shafayet Ahmed, BIWTC manager at Shimulia, said three large and two small ferries were plying the route, and heavy currents in the river were hampering ferry services.
Harif Ahmed, BIWTA assistant engineer at Shimulia, said around 15,000 geo-bags were dumped to prevent the river erosion at Shimulia. At least seven acres out of 29.3 acres of land at Shimulia went under water, he added.

Strong currents in Padma

FROM PAGE 12
Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Shimulia, told The Daily Star yesterday.
Disruption to ferry services causes sufferings of people of the 21 southern districts who use the route to enter and leave the capital.
The mighty Padma devoured a portion of the approach road to a ferry terminal at Shimulia on Thursday morning. Later, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) dumped geo-bags in the erosion-prone area that helped reduce the effects of erosion.
Another ferry terminal was damaged before Eid.
People crowded in Kathalbari area to cross the river yesterday,

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Virus hastens newspapers' slide to shaky

FROM PAGE 12
editions, while in the Philippines 10 of the 70 newspapers in the PPI association have shuttered.
"Times are hard. There are no advertisers and no-one is reading us," PPI executive director Ariel Sebellino told AFP.
The archipelago nation's small local newspapers were hardest hit during lockdown as street sales tumbled.
"The industry is under siege and we've all taken bruises," Sebellino said.
Far from affecting only journalists, the disappearance of print papers deals out pain all up the production chain, taking in printers, paper makers and delivery people.
Major British media brands could boast of 6.6 million new online readers in the first quarter in what their industry association said was a new record.
But most have not seen the same bounce in print sales.
The coronavirus has become "the greatest threat to the global news industry since the 2008 economic crash" wrote industry publication Press Gazette -- which itself moved online-only in 2013.

New Guinea has most

FROM PAGE 12
The island has lowland jungles and high altitude grasslands with peaks bigger than Mont Blanc in France and among them they found 13,634 unique plant species.
Botanists have long known that this mega-diverse wilderness area is home to a large number of plant species and this new study proves the long-held theory.
Since the 17th century scientists all over the world have worked to identify and name thousands of plants collected in New Guinea - but they worked independently.
The fact they worked alone meant uncertainty surrounded the exact number of plant species, with conflicting estimates ranging from 9,000 to 25,000.
Rodrigo Cámara-Leret, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Zurich's (UZH) Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, led the new study.
"Compared to other areas like Amazonia, for which plant checklists were recently published, New Guinea remained the 'Last Unknown'," he said.
Under his lead, 99 scientists from 56 institutions and 19 countries prepared the first expert-verified checklist for the 13,634 vascular plant species of New Guinea.
They started by compiling a list of plant names from online catalogues, institutional repositories and datasets curated by taxonomists.
After standardising the scientific names, experts on New Guinea flora checked almost 25,000 species names derived from over 700,000 individual specimens.
For this, they reviewed the list of original names in their plant family of expertise and assessed whether these names were correctly assigned in the online platforms.
Finally, an independent comparison was performed between the list accepted by experts and a list contained in Plants of the World Online for New Guinea.
The resulting checklist contains 13,634 plants - showing that New Guinea has the world's richest island flora, the team explained.
By far the most species-rich family are the orchids and almost a third of the species listed as unique to the island were trees.

বিজ্ঞান নীতি, বিচারে দেশ, বিচারে মিত্র বাংলাদেশ

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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২২ আষাঢ় ১৪২৭
তারিখ: ০৬ আগস্ট ২০২০

নং-১৮.২০.০০০০.০১৮.৯৯.০০৬.২০০০-৩৮০

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| ১ | সংস্থার নাম | জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন। |
| ২ | সেবার বিধ | কমিশনের সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে বিভিন্ন কর্মকর্তার সিস্টেম জমা/সংশোধন। |
| ৩ | ক্রম পদ্ধতি | উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM) |
| ৪ | অন্য বিধ | প্রায় ১২ (২০২০-২১) |
| ৫ | দরপত্র দাখিল বিধি/শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ২৩/০৮/২০২০, রবিবার, দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ৬ | দরপত্র দাখিল সিস্টেমের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ২৪/০৮/২০২০, সোমবার, দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ৭ | দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় | ২৪/০৮/২০২০, সোমবার, দুপুর ১২.০১ ঘটিকা। |
| ৮ | দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলার স্থান | হিসাব শাখা। |
| ৯ | দরপত্র সিডি/সিডি গ্রাফি স্থান | জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন। |
| ১০ | দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য | ১৫০০/- (হাজারতরিশো) |
| ১১ | দরদাতাদের যোগ্যতা | ক) দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানের যাদ্যাদান ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, টিআইএন সনদসহ ২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বৎসরের আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদসহ, খ) টেক্সট সনদসহ, যাক সনদসহ সিটি/কোর্ট থেকে হাতে হাতে। গ) সিলেট গভর্নমেন্টের উক্ত কাজে অধিকার থাকতে হবে। |
| ১২ | দরপত্র জমা/খোলার পরিধি | জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশনের অনুসূচী ২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকার পে-অর্ডার জমা দিতে হবে। |
| ১৩ | সেবা সরবরাহের সময়কাল | কর্তৃপক্ষ গ্রাফি ১০ কর্মদিবস। |
| ১৪ | দরপত্র আবেদনকারী | সিডি, জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন। |
| ১৫ | দরপত্র আবেদনকারীর ঠিকানা | জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন, হোসাইন টাওয়ার (১২তলা), ১১৬, বীর প্রতীক পোলাম দক্ষিণ রোড, নয়াপল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০। |

বিঃদ্র. কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত সরকার/সে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

সিডি
জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন

তারিখ: ১২/০৮

মোহাম্মদপুর প্রিপারেটরি স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ

বাংলা শাখা : ১৫/১ ইকবাল রোড, মোহাম্মদপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, ফোন : ৯১১২৬৬৩
বালক শাখা : ৩/৩ আসাদ এজিডিটি, মোহাম্মদপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, ফোন : ০১৭২৩৭৭৮১৬৩

একাদশ শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি-২০২০

ভর্তির সকল ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি বিধি প্রযোজ্য হবে।

আনুষঙ্গিক অথবা টেকনিক, বিজ্ঞান, নাদ, শিল্প, কলা, স্পোর্টস-এ এসএমএস করে অথবা পেশাদারি ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ডে ভর্তি আবেদন করা যাবে। আবেদনের তারিখ : ০৯/০৮/২০২০ থেকে ২০/০৮/২০২০ পর্যন্ত (১ম পর্যায়)।
ভর্তি : ১০/০৯/২০২০ থেকে ১৫/০৯/২০২০ পর্যন্ত। কলেজ ক্যাম্পাস থেকে মোবাইল এস.এম.এস অথবা অনলাইনে আবেদনের জন্য হেল্প ডেস্ক ব্যবহার করুন।
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| বিজ্ঞান, বাংলা মাধ্যম ও ইংরেজি ভাষা | ৪.৭৫ (বাংলা) ৪.০০ (ইংরেজি) | ৪.৫০ | |
| কলা/শিল্প, বাংলা মাধ্যম ও ইংরেজি ভাষা | ৩.২৫ | ৩.০০ | |
| মানবিক, বাংলা মাধ্যম বা বাংলা শাখা | ২.৫০ | | |

- প্রবেশের পত্রিক : প্রতিদিন ১৯৯০ ও ২০০০ সালে জাতীয় পর্যায়ে প্রথম শিলা প্রতিদান হিসেবে বাছাইকৃত শিক্ষার্থী।
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- ই-মেইল : mpshs18@yahoo.com

সেবা কোর্সের ফোন : ১২০৪
অধ্যক্ষ

World must heal together

Says WHO chief, warns against 'vaccine nationalism'; study shows asymptomatic coronavirus carriers have high viral loads

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization has warned against "vaccine nationalism," saying vaccine-hogging richer countries would not be safe coronavirus havens if poor nations remained exposed.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it would be in wealthier nations' interests to ensure that any vaccines eventually produced to protect against the new coronavirus were shared globally.

"Vaccine nationalism is not good, it will not help us," Tedros told the Aspen Security Forum in the United States, via video-link from the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

"For the world to recover faster, it has to recover together, because it's a globalised world: the economies are intertwined. Part of the world or a few countries cannot be a safe haven and recover."

"The damage from COVID-19 could be less when those countries who... have the funding commit to this."



He said the existence of the deadly respiratory disease anywhere put lives and livelihoods at risk everywhere.

"They are not giving charity to others: they are doing it for themselves, because when the rest of the world recovers and opens up, they also benefit."

The United Nations health agency also said that multiple different types of vaccines would likely be needed to combat COVID-19.

Twenty-six candidate vaccines are in various stages of being tested on humans, with six having reached Phase 3 wider levels of clinical trials.

"Phase 3 doesn't mean nearly there," explained the WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan.

"Phase 3 means this is the first time this vaccine has been put into the general population, into otherwise healthy individuals, to see if the vaccine will protect them against natural infection."

However, "there's no guarantee that any of these six will give us the answer -- and we probably will need more than one vaccine to do this job."

Meanwhile, a new study from South Korea showed that people who are infected with the coronavirus carry similar levels of the pathogen in their nose, throat and lungs whether they have symptoms or not.

The paper, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, is an important biological line of evidence in support of the idea that asymptomatic carriers can spread COVID-19. Until now, experts have relied on inferring asymptomatic spread when people contract the virus without contact with a known carrier.

Pak demands J&K action while ignoring Uighurs

AFP, Islamabad

Even as Pakistan this week drew international attention to the plight of Muslims in Indian Kashmir, Islamabad stayed conspicuously silent about another embattled Muslim community -- China's Uighur population.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has presented himself as a defender of Muslims worldwide and routinely speaks out on the disputed Kashmir region, even comparing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Adolf Hitler and accusing him of overseeing a genocide.

"We will never accept, and neither will the Kashmiris, the illegal Indian actions and oppression of the Kashmiri people," Khan said Wednesday as Pakistan marked the one-year anniversary of India stripping the Muslim-majority region of its semi-autonomous status.

But even amid mounting evidence of a harsh crackdown on the Uighur population in neighbouring China's Xinjiang region, Khan has refused to be drawn into the domestic affairs of Pakistan's long-time ally.

Rights groups estimate more than one million Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking minorities have been rounded up into a network of internment camps, which China has branded "re-education centres".

Both Kashmiris and Uighurs have been subjected to curfews, profiling, and a massive presence of security forces along with moves to allow outsiders to settle in their homelands.

Pakistan and India have clashed over Kashmir since independence from Britain in 1947, with both countries claiming the territory that has sparked two full-blown wars between the foes.

China meanwhile has steadily poured cash into Pakistan, investing more than \$50 billion as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that has upgraded infrastructure, power and transport links connecting Xinjiang to Pakistan's newly refurbished Gwadar port.

China has also offered steadfast diplomatic support to Pakistan during its frequent bouts of unrest with India.

When asked about the Uighurs, Khan has waffled between citing unfamiliarity with the issue and defending Pakistan's vital relationship with China.

"China has helped us when we were at rock bottom. We are really grateful to the Chinese government, so we have decided that any issues we have had with China we will handle privately," Khan said at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January.

Pakistan's silence on the Uighurs is not unique in the Islamic world.

Prince Mohammed bin Salman, heir to the throne of Saudi Arabia, has also defended China, saying he respected Beijing's "anti-terrorism" efforts. Turkey has also toned down criticism on the issue.



Ex-Saudi spy says crown prince wants him dead

A former senior Saudi intelligence official said in a US lawsuit Thursday that the country's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tried to have him assassinated in 2018, just weeks after dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered in Turkey. Saad Aljabri said Prince Mohammed sent a "hit squad" to Canada, where he lives in exile, to kill and dismember him in the same way that Khashoggi was murdered allegedly by the prince's agents in Istanbul in October 2018. Aljabri said that Prince Mohammed wants him dead because he is close to rival prince and former Saudi security chief Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, and because he has intimate knowledge of Prince Mohammed's activities that would sour the close relationship between Washington and Riyadh. Since 2017 when Prince Mohammed was appointed as crown prince, Riyadh tried unsuccessfully to use Interpol to gain custody of him. And he says they sent a team of agents to the United States to track him down.

Brian Hook, US pointman on Iran hard line, quits



The envoy leading President Donald Trump's hardline push on Iran quit on Thursday, months before an election that could reorient US policy. Brian Hook, a stalwart Republican considered one of the most powerful figures at the State Department, decided to return to the private sector, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said. Hook "has achieved historic results countering the Iranian regime," Pompeo said in a statement. Hook will be replaced by Elliott Abrams, an intellectual architect of the 2003 invasion of Iraq who has been leading Trump's unsuccessful campaign to oust Venezuela's leftist president, Nicolas Maduro. Abrams will handle both Iran and Venezuela, Pompeo said.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Demonstrators stand near burning fire during a protest near parliament yesterday, following Tuesday's blast in Beirut's port area, Lebanon. Lebanon's president yesterday said an investigation into the biggest blast in Beirut's history would examine whether it was caused by a bomb or other external interference, as residents tried to rebuild their shattered lives after the explosion.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWSIN brief

Beirut blast toll rises to 154

REUTERS, Beirut

The death toll from the Beirut port explosion has risen to 154, state news agency NNA reported yesterday as authorities detained sixteen staff members at the port amid public anger. Lebanese authorities had announced a probe into Tuesday's explosion, which they said was triggered by a fire igniting 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored in a warehouse at the port.

Loya jirga to decide fate of Taliban talks

AFP, Kabul

Thousands of Afghans began a three-day gathering in Kabul yesterday to decide whether to release about 400 Taliban prisoners, including many involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners, a key obstacle to advance peace talks. "The Taliban said if these 400 are released, then within three days direct talks will start," President Ashraf Ghani said as he opened the loya jirga -- a traditional Afghan meeting of tribal elders.

Thai student protest leaders arrested

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thai authorities arrested a student leader and legal adviser yesterday over anti-government protests, a legal group said. Protesters, led by student groups, are returning to Thailand's streets calling for the ousting of a conservative government led by pro-military politicians. Police arrested Anon Nampa, 35, a human rights lawyer, and student leader Panupong Jadnok, who have both featured prominently in student-led rallies around the country since July 18.

SRI LANKA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION Rajapaksas secure big win

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ruling Rajapaksa brothers secured a two-thirds majority in a parliamentary election that will allow them to rewrite the constitution and increase their power, final results showed yesterday.

The United States, which had been highly critical of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's previous administration, immediately called on the new government to respect human rights and the rule of law.

Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Party won 145 seats in Wednesday's election and can count on at least five allies in the new 225-member legislature, according to Election Commission results.

Officials said Rajapaksa, 74, will be sworn in as premier by his 71-year-old brother Gotabaya, the island nation's president, at a Buddhist temple near the capital tomorrow.

The Rajapakas went into the polls seeking a super majority to carry out a promised roll-

back of constitutional changes, including the scrapping of independent institutions running the judiciary, the public services, the police and elections.

Observers say the siblings -- renowned for their ruthless crushing of Tamil separatists to end a decades-old conflict in 2009 -- can now overturn the reforms made by a previous administration.

Despite the international concerns, the no-holds-barred military campaign made the Rajapaksas hugely popular among the country's Sinhalese-Buddhist majority.

And Sri Lanka's strategic position in the Indian Ocean has made it a target of renewed Indian overtures. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Mahinda to congratulate him even before the final results were announced. Rajapaksa said in a tweet that he looked forward to working closely with Modi.



Lockdown emissions fall will have 'no effect' on climate

AFP, Paris

The unprecedented fall in greenhouse gas emissions from lockdowns during the pandemic will do "nothing" to slow climate change without a lasting switch from fossil fuels, an international team of researchers said yesterday.

Global emissions from the burning of coal, oil and gas could fall up to eight percent in 2020 after governments moved to confine billions of people to their homes in a bid to slow the spread of Covid-19.

But absent a systemic change in how the world powers and feeds itself, experts warned in the study that the emissions saved during lockdown would be essentially meaningless.

Using open source data, the team calculated how levels of 10 different greenhouse gases and air pollutants changed in more than 120 countries between February and June this year.

They found that pollution such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides fell in the period by between 10 and 30 percent.

However, given that the "massive behavioural shifts" during lockdown were only temporary, lower emissions so far this year are unlikely to influence the climate.

Even assuming travel restrictions and social distancing continue to the end of 2021, the team concluded that this would only save 0.01 C of warming by 2030.

"Lockdown showed that we can change and change fast, but it also showed the limits of behaviour change," Piers Forster,

study co-author and director of the Priestley International Centre for Climate at Britain's University of Leeds.

"Without underlying structural change we won't make it," he told AFP.

The 2015 Paris climate deal saw nations commit to limit temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels through sweeping emissions cuts. It also set a safer goal of a 1.5 C cap.



The UN says that in order to keep 1.5 C in play global emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually this decade. That is roughly equivalent to the anticipated emissions fall this year. But to achieve that its caused one of the largest economic slowdowns in history. Forster said it was unlikely to be repeated as countries look to recover.

The study, published in Nature Climate Change, pinned hope on post-lockdown recovery which the authors said showed a unique opportunity for structural change to the global economy.

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ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
সেক্টর-১০, রোড-১৩, বাজী-০৭, উত্তরা, ঢাকা

স্মারক নং-ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো/সাববাহ-পুঃ দরপত্র/ ০২/২০২০-২১/১৮/১২

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা "পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৯" ও "পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮" তদীর সংশোধিত-২০১০ এর বিধি মোতাবেক ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, উত্তরা, ঢাকার ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বছরের (জুলাই/২০২০ হতে জুন/২০২১র পর্যন্ত) প্রকৃত টেন্ডার/সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে নিম্ন প্রকৃতির/ন্যূনতম প্যাকেজ/সর্বশেষ/মুখবন্দ নামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

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|---|--|
| ১. মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ | ১। স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, জন-নিরাপত্তা বিভাগ। |
| ২. সন্মোহক সঙ্স্থের নাম | ২। বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। |
| ৩. পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম, পদবী ও ঠিকানা | ৩। আইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো বাজী-০৭, রোড-১৩, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। |
| ৪. অর্থের উৎস | ৪। স্ট্রিবি। |
| ৫. পুনঃ দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নাম্বার | ৫। ০২/২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর। |
| ৬. পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বানের স্মারক নাম্বার ও তারিখ | ৬। স্মারক নং- ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো (সাববাহ-পুঃ দরপত্র) ০১/২০২০-২১/১৮/১২ তাং- ০৬/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ |
| ৭. পুনঃ দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি | ৭। উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM) |
| ৮. পুনঃ দরপত্র পরিষ্কার প্রকাশের সন্মোহক তারিখ | ৮। ০৬/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ |
| ৯. পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ | ৯। ১৮/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (সরকারি ছুটি ব্যতিত)। |
| ১০. পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ১০। ১৮/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১১. পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল খোলার তারিখ ও সময় | ১১। ১৮/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১২. পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময় | ১২। ২৩/০৮/২০২০খ্রিঃ ১১.০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১৩. পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল খোলার অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা | ১৩। আইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো বাজী-০৭, রোড-১৩, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। |
| পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের স্থান | ১৪। আইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো বাজী-০৭, রোড-১৩, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। |
| পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল গ্রহণকারী অফিস | ১৫। আইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল এর কার্যালয়, ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো বাজী-০৭, রোড-১৩, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। |
| ১৪. পুনঃ দরপত্রপ্রাপ্তকারীর যোগ্যতা | ১৪। (ক) স্ব-স্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ পরিশোধিত টিসিআইন নাম্বার সহ অফিসর সদনপত্র, জাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সদনপত্র, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি ও পুনঃ দরপত্র বাবিলের পূর্ববর্তী ১২ মাসের ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট এবং স্ট্রিবি কার্যের অভিজ্ঞতার সদন থাকতে হবে। (খ) বাংলাদেশের স্বাভাবিক বাসিন্দা হিসেবে নাগরিকত্ব সদনপত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, ০১ (এক) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবি নমুনা স্বাক্ষর সহ দাখিল করতে হবে এবং (গ) পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল উন্মুক্ত অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা আবশ্যিক। |

১৫. মালমালের বিবরণ:

| ক্রম নং | আইটেম | পরিমাণ | সিডিভিসের মূল্য অফেরারমোহা | নিরাপত্তা জামানত | কার্য সম্পাদনের সময়/মোদায় | |
|---------|--|--------|--|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| ১. | মটরবাহকের কাঁচামাল ও খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ | ৪ | চারিদানুযায়ী | ৭০০/- | ৩০,০০০/- | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর |
| ২. | ৮-১২ আসন বিশিষ্ট এসি মাইক্রোবাস (মালিক জাতীয় ডিভিডে সরবরাহ) | ৪ | চারিদানুযায়ী | ৫০০/- | ১০,০০০/- | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর |
| ৩. | মোটর যানবাহন সেসামত কারখানা, প্রতিষ্ঠান/প্যারেজ | ৪ | চারিদানুযায়ী | ৭০০/- | ২০,০০০/- | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর |
| ৪. | বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী সরবরাহ | ৪ | চারিদানুযায়ী | ৫০০/- | ১০,০০০/- | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর |
| ৫. | ঔষধ ও পল্যা চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ | ৪ | চারিদানুযায়ী | ৭০০/- | ৩০,০০০/- | ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থবছর |
| ৬. | কার্য সম্পাদনের সময় | ৪ | কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের তারিখ হতে ০৭ (সাত) দিন/চাহিদা মোতাবেক। | | | |
| ৭. | দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম, পদবী ও ঠিকানা | ৪ | আব্দুল সালাম, পিপিএম, অতিরিক্ত আইজিপি, ইডাঃ পুঃ হেডকো বাজী-০৭, রোড-১৩, সেক্টর-১০, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। | | | |
| ৮. | দরপত্র মালমাল ও সরবরাহ সংক্রান্ত বর্ণনা | ৪ | মালমাল কয়/কোষি জরুরি করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃক সরবরাহ করবে। এ সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলীর বিশদ বিবরণ পুনঃ দরপত্র তফসিল/সলিসে পাওয়া যাবে। | | | |

১৬. বিশেষ শর্তাবলী:

ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন পুনঃ দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
খ) কোন কারণ নশীনে ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন পুনঃ দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
গ) পুনঃ দরপত্রের উন্মুক্ত হতে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।

১৭. পুনঃ দরপত্রের সকল কার্যাবলী পিপিএম/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ এবং অন্তিম সংশোধিত ২০১০ এর বিধি মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে।

শোয়ের আহমদ, পিপিএম
বিলি নং-৬৫৯৫/০১০৩৭
পুলিশ সুপার (অপস এড ইডাঃ)
পেছ/অতিরিক্ত আইজিপি
ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
উত্তরা, ঢাকা

তারিখ: ১২/০৮



Amala Shankar (C) with Sharmila Banerjee (Bottom left) and her other students during her 98th birthday celebration.



Amala Shankar with Sharmila Banerjee and her other students at Uday Shankar India Culture Centre, during a rehearsal in 1972.

Revisiting the legacy of Mohammad Barkatullah

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Most 90's children would fondly remember the character of Baker Bhai from *Kothao Keu Nei* (1992). The man who played an integral role in bringing this legendary character to our TV screens, Mohammad Barkatullah, is no more among us. The producer, who was undergoing treatment at Green Life Medical College and Hospital, breathed his last on August 3, 2020. He had tested positive for COVID-19 after his wife Zeenat tested positive for the virus and was admitted to the hospital due to high fever. He was in ventilation when he unfortunately suffered a stroke.

Known for masterpieces like *Shokal Shondha*, *Dhakay Thaki* and *Nokkhotrer Raat*, Mohammad Barkatullah also served as the General Manager of Bangladesh Television for a while, before his retirement.

Suborna Mustafa, who played Muna in *Kothao Keu Nei* – a role that marks a milestone in her career – recalls her memories with Mohammad Barkatullah. "Bidding goodbyes are always tough, especially when you have so memories worth cherishing," mentions the actor. "I have learnt a lot from a creative genius like him. I have lot of fond memories with him, not only from the sets of *Kothao Keu Nei*, but also from every time that I met him otherwise."

Freedom fighter, renowned actor and former Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor also reminisced his days with Mohammad Barkatullah. "We have spent decades as peers, and thoroughly enjoyed every step of the way. This news is certainly hard for me to accept," he shared. "He was very keen on achieving perfection and his work was always his utmost priority. His contribution to the Bangladeshi television industry is immense and unforgettable."

Noted actor Azizul Hakim worked alongside him in multiple productions. "We worked together in *Nokkhotrer Raat*, among many other projects. He was always fully absorbed in his work, and always looked for improvements," he reminisced. "Losing a close confidante is always disheartening and this loss was no exception."

"I worked with him on many tele-fictions, and each one of his creations has brought me accolades," says Abul Hayat. "I will always remember him as a man with a golden mind, who helped redefine the definition of entertainment in the industry."

Mohammad Barkatullah rests at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur. He has left behind his wife acclaimed dancer Zeenat Barkatullah, and his daughters, Bijori Barkatullah and Kajori Barkatullah – the former being a popular actor and media personality.



Bijori Barkatullah with her father, Mohammad Barkatullah.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

"She was a guiding light"

-Sharmila Banerjee on her guru, Amala Shankar

Renowned dancer Sharmila Banerjee developed a keen interest in the art form from an early age, inspired by her guru, legendary danseuse Amala Shankar. Amala recently passed away at her residence in Kolkata at 101, due to age-related complications. Taking a trip down memory lane, Sharmila Banerjee talks about her journey as a dancer, and the role Amala Shankar played in her life.

ASHLEY SHOPIRSHI SAMADDA

Sharmila Banerjee first came across Amala Shankar when her family visited Kolkata in 1969. Her cousin Bhaswati Ghosh, a student of Uday Shankar India Culture Centre at the time, took her to the academy, where she discovered the magic of dance as a means of communication. "I first met *Mashima* (Amala Shankar) while she was dancing at the academy with instrumental music. It felt like a dream to see the tall and beautiful *opshora*. She was so graceful, and she could tell tales through her body," shares Sharmila Banerjee, the founder of Nritya Nandan, an established dance institution in Bangladesh.

Sharmila Banerjee and her family left Bangladesh and moved to India, during the Liberation War in 1971. "I joined Uday Shankar India Culture Centres a student in India. That is when I bonded with *Mashima*," she smiles. "Her powerful personality astounded me and after attending few of her classes, I decided that I wanted to be a dancer. The Liberation War of 1971 had two gifts in store for me — an independent nation and dance!"

Amala Shankar had a unique teaching technique that focused on creativity. "Alongside dance lessons, the main attraction of *Mashima's* classes was exploring creativity and improvisation. She would ask us to represent nature, or numbers, alphabets and shapes with our body," says Sharmila Banerjee. "Her techniques have stayed with me. Following her ways, I taught a class just recently, asking the students to emphasise on their elbows and make an '8'."

Amala Shankar was always very welcoming to newcomers. "During the Annual Show of 1972, held at Rabindra Sadan, *Mashima* selected dancers from a group of first-year students, but no one dared to take the floor and dance before her. I don't know what came over me then, but I spontaneously jumped and showed a few movements," she says. "I was lauded for my work, and selected to

perform along with the seniors."

Sharmila Banerjee further talked about the ideals and principles she learnt from Amala Shankar. "*Mashima* made no compromises in the execution of the dance," she asserts. "If someone had any problems, she humbly advised them to step aside. She did so not to criticise anyone, but to protect the quality of the performance." As dancers, everyone was equal before Amala Shankar, regardless of their fame or seniority. Their positions in

the choreographies were determined through their performance, not their status of seniority. "*Mashima* encouraged us to improve and to earn our place in the performance. She always prioritised the dance as a whole, and never seconded the concept of individualism," explains Sharmila Banerjee. "On one hand, *Mashima* taught us the true joy that humbleness begets, and on the other hand, she taught us the importance of punctuality, commitment, practice and



Amala Shankar with Sharmila Banerjee and Bhaswar Banerjee during her visit to Chittagong in 1987.

PHOTOS: STAR & COURTESY



Sharmila Banerjee

orderliness."

The dancer last visited her guru in Kolkata, when Amala Shankar turned 99. "She was surprised to see her students. We reminisced our days as teenagers at her dance academy," shares an emotional Sharmila Banerjee. "She wanted to visit Bangladesh one more time. I am glad that my last memory of *Mashima* is that of a strong and beautiful, yet humble and sweet woman, who treated dance like a prayer."

The demise of Amala Shankar is a grave loss for her students and admirers. Sharmila Banerjee reminisces her guru as a majestic artiste, who inspired young dancers to express their inner emotions through the body. "*Mashima* aided my trajectory as a dancer – she was a guiding light to me," she adds.

Sharmila's fellow friend from her early dance school days, Urmimala Sarkar Muni, an associate professor in Jawaharlal Nehru University, is writing a book on Amala Shankar's husband, legendary dancer and choreographer Uday Shankar. She has dedicated a section of the book to Amala Shankar's brilliant methods and journey.

"*Mashima* changed my whole perception about dance. I embraced her ideals, morals and sense of discipline wholeheartedly. Though I was under her guidance and tutelage for a very short time, she holds a special place in my life. I hope to instill the values that I learnt from her in future generations of young dancers," concludes Sharmila Banerjee.

Music Composers' Association of Bangladesh unveiled



Renowned composers and music directors are members of the association led by Sheikh Sadi Khan.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

To combat various professional problems plaguing music composers and directors, Music Composers' Association of Bangladesh officially announced its proceedings on August 4 at a press conference. Renowned composer Sheikh Sadi Khan will act as the convener of the association, whereas Naquib Khan, Anisur Rahman Tonu, Farid Ahmed, Foad Naser Babu, Shawquat Ali Emon, Bappa Mazumder, Partha Mazumder, Partha Barua, S I Tutul and Ripon Khan are the members of the committee. Senior music directors Ali Hossain, Alam Khan and Mohammad Shahenwaz, among other noted musicians, are advisors to the association. "We hope to be inclusive in our efforts, and solve the issues that music directors and composers have to face throughout their careers," said Foad Naser Babu.

"I am overwhelmed by the audience's acceptance"

Solaiman Khoka on 'Aujantrik'

SHARMIN JOYA

Solaiman Khoka has been a writer, producer and actor at Bangladesh Betar since 1972. He has written and produced numerous radio programmes over the years, and acted in several shows as well. He also works on television. Recently, he was lauded for his performance in the Ashfaque Nipun directorial Eid special short film, *Aujantrik*. In a recent conversation with *The Daily Star*, Solaiman Khoka shared how he came across *Aujantrik* and more.

How did you land the lead role in 'Aujantrik'?

It is an interesting story. Ashfaque Nipun noticed me in Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's telefilm *Ayesha* recently, on YouTube. After that, he got in touch with me, and approached me for *Aujantrik*. Initially, I was worried that today's generation will not be able to connect with the lead character, as he is an old man. However, the positive reactions took me by surprise. I am really grateful that the director had complete faith in me. I am overwhelmed by the audience's acceptance.

You are still working at Bangladesh Betar. Tell us about your productions.

I joined Chattogram Betar a year after Liberation War. I also completed my degree that year. I did many programmes for Dhaka Betar as well. *Dorpon* was one of my longest magazine shows



Solaiman Khoka in action in 'Aujantrik'.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

on radio, which I produced for ten years. One of my productions, *Joddha*, featuring Bulbul Ahmed, was dedicated to 25 years of the Liberation War. Another one of my shows, *Amader Satkahon*, completed 100 episodes this February.

You were also active on the theatre stage. How did your journey begin in that field?

I did numerous plays during my school days. After

the Liberation War, I wrote *Rokter Binimoye*, which was staged on January 29, 1972, in Chattogram. It was based on the riots before the war. The show did well, and I received many offers after it. I was an active theatre artiste till 1992. I worked with tropes like Samakal and Oboshor. Later, I got busy with writing and producing for the radio, which I continue to do till date.



A Dubious, Anecdotal Guide to Khichuri

TAREQ ADNAN

I The Fatima Az Zahra Mosque is not as famous as the other mosques in Jeddah; it's not as big nor as boastful as the King Saud Mosque because it's not trying to make the same statement. It's not even the most eye-catching masjid on this side of the Red Sea. That accolade is reserved for the Island Mosque, which is flatteringly lit and comes with a kiddie playground so as to allow the grown-ups more time to contend with their imperiled souls.

No, the Az Zahra mosque is quieter. It's floating on pylons and is a little older, feels a little more deserted than the massive courtyard and the yawning boardwalk that extends from it. Going there meant early mornings and a long drive, trips reserved only for the Friday prayers.

I have precisely two abiding memories of this mosque. I usually took a book with me because well, I was and still am, easily bored when it comes to any exercise in self-improvement. Of course, you could argue that reading is a form of improvement but I've never eaten my cake and had it too.

The first memory consists of walking away in the middle of the prayer with my kid brother, and going out into the courtyard to play. We were young enough that the consequences, an irate father, didn't seem to matter very much. The second time, as a newly minted teenager, I did the same thing. I went out into the courtyard to read my book, a collection of folktales and lore. Not the Book, just a book. The consequences this time didn't matter at all; my father had given up by that point.

Afterwards, we went home to khichuri. The meal was just as ritualistic, as endemic to Fridays, as the prayers themselves. I remember rushing through lunch so I could get back to reading. You see, the book was fascinating. It expanded on the Disney compendium, relaying the tales in their original form. There is an element of vengeance in all stories that become folktales. It appeals to the baser desires in all of us, operating in worlds where making things right has cosmic significance.

These anecdotes are trite and obvious. But, walking away from things is something I've perfected.

II Khichuri requires no real precision. It is at once an expression of technique and one of well-meaning ineptitude. I like to imagine I know what I'm doing whenever I make khichuri, my culinary skills manifest with an instinctual elan. That it never consistently turns out the same is part of the charm.

Measure out two cups of rice and one cup of lentils; the lentils should always be half the amount of rice. Of course, your mother will tell you that you should use a mix of two types of daal for it to be proper khichuri. But you've maintained a lifelong inability to follow instructions and your body resembles a temple, old and crumbling.



As a matter of principle, you only allow yourself to acknowledge your feelings for as long as you are willing to procrastinate on making dinner. When the hunger pangs become unbearable, you are ready to start cooking. Wash the rice and the daal and slice an onion.

III During my pubescent years, my parents took stock of my life, since I was already a middle aged 13-year-old with no direction. And thus, I embarked on a second career as a dogsbody. If there was something that needed doing, it was something that needed to be done by that kid with poor motor control. I failed miserably at every task assigned to me but I must admit, I was a pretty average vaudeville performer.

My mother would watch over me and tell me stories, being careful to stay out of my way as I went about my chores. I learned the family apocrypha, the reason my father was bitter, how my uncle hates my other uncles and why you must never cross a river at night with your hair uncovered.

That last one was a topic of particular interest. She has a fondness for horror and a

natural inclination towards the supernatural. Shoes and sandals were never to be left overturned, a pillow should never be sat on. She would go to great lengths to explain that there were good djinn and bad djinn but only ever focus on the bad ones.

My mother's stories were along the lines of reinforcing traditional caution, a very literate form of cosplay. They were concerned more with keeping yourself safe while living in abject fear of everything one encountered, from the bamboo groves to the open fields. There are always demons and dainis in the trees and you could get lost without ever seeing the forest.

But you cannot stop the future from happening to you.

IV Khichuri begets khichuri, by which I mean that the fear of messing up needn't cripple you. If you put in too much water and it turns to mush, that is still khichuri, a delicacy from a different part of the desh. If you burn it, it's khichuri, just slightly smoky.

Put the pot on and add oil. When it heats up a little, add raw cumin, about a teaspoon. Add a bay leaf, two or three cardamoms and a

cinnamon stick. With the raw spices, add your sliced onions and fry.

When the onions are translucent and start to brown, add turmeric, chili powder and ginger and garlic pastes. When the resulting slurry starts to stop smelling like powdered sneezes, it's time to add the rice and lentils.

The grains need to be mixed and fried in the spice, on medium low heat for about ten minutes and stirred throughout. This is to make the khichuri jhor jhora. When you're done, add six cups of warm water. The ratio of water to the rice and daal should be about double. Crank up the heat to and begin the long boil.

At this point, you'll remember that you forgot to add salt. You will start to question the series of decisions that led you here, alienated from the rest of the world. Add the salt now, you will invariably get it wrong but you can live with your mistakes. You've learned how.

V In Dhaka, on Fridays, I would purposely oversleep. I was old enough by then that waking me up wasn't someone else's responsibility anymore. After my father and

brothers had left for the Friday prayers, I'd drag myself out of bed and start the day.

The Baitun Noor Jameh Masjid is in Uttara, adjacent to the Sector 6 park. For a mosque in Dhaka, it's on the larger side. A three-story box with a minaret that went up much further into the sky, it had arched windows that didn't really look the part. On Fridays and Eid, the faithful would spill out into the road and the park beside it.

The park itself is an oblong cove of trees, dead grass and crisscrossing brick pathways. It always had aunties with their ornas tied down, wearing sneakers that garishly complemented their kameez, walking in leisurely determination. On Fridays, with their domain encroached on by Jumah, they would take their breaks on the benches, on the side furthest away. They'd wait, their ornas untied and covering their heads, proof against bad luck.

I used to use the Friday prayers as an excuse to roam around outside. I knew approximately when the ceremonies ended and would time my return just a few minutes after my father. No one really noticed how I would skip the khichuri and lunch altogether. I'd gotten over fairytales a long time ago.

VI When the water has boiled down a little and you can see the rice peeking through, reduce the heat to low, and put the lid on. You're only about five to ten minutes away from finishing up but this is the most important part. Don't walk away. If you walk away, it'll burn. This I can guarantee you. What you need is rapt contemplation to quell the sense of dread and banish the mean spirits from your shoulders.

When the last of the water has boiled away, turn off the heat. What you'll be left with will be khichuri. It might be mushy, it might be dry, or over or under salted. It could even be burnt at the bottom; but it will be khichuri.

If you cannot swallow the small lies, how will you ever believe in the bigger delusions?

VII You grow up with the stories you are told. The first ones you hear are either sweet folktales or religious screed. And then there are the more personal stories; peopled with relatives and taking place in houses that you've lived in. It's an oral tradition that is uniquely yours and one that settles upon you more closely and more durably than any of the other things you're asked to believe in. A large part of any experience as a person involves fantasies; believing in things that may never come to fruition, abandoned lives. A khichuri is never the same, one Friday to the next.

You spend years growing up hoping that at some point, the turmoil in your head will start to subside. I have some bad news for you.

I am so sorry.

A study into zero-tolerance policies within the existing political structure

YASHAB OSAMA

There is an undercurrent of strife today within our already complex social structures. These discords are appearing on the ideas of a nationalistic morality. The populist Shahed Khan in his essay "On the topic of right and wrong" very convincingly lays out what is right and what is wrong. In these bare minimums of his brand of morality we are to find virtue. A wrong can be right if it is used for something Shahed has arbitrarily decided is good. Capital punishment is also the way forward. Death rates are climbing as capital punishment by crossfires becomes more acceptable.

In this context, the state's failure lies in adopting "zero tolerance" policies for things that should require some tolerance such as corruption, drugs, corruption in the healthcare sector, militancy, corruption



in banking, gambling and corruption in development work.

Asif Azad in his seminal work on The Country's zero-tolerance levels titled "My soon-to-be seminal work on The Country's intolerance level" posited that the curve of our zero-tolerance is S-shaped. It stays flat for a while, begins to rise around election terms, falls very slowly later and then rises soon after as necessitated by changing circumstances.

But Azad's work is more of a political statement than anything else. It presupposes that zero tolerance is an actual indicator of something. That people in The Country actually care. Bare facts indicate otherwise.

Azad's work also warrants the question of whether this new lack of tolerance is retrospective in nature. It seems not to be as the S-shape illustrates.

The Country's zero-tolerance policy has also exposed foundational weaknesses in its political and even apolitical structures. People with the closest proximity to the powers that be are being caught in the dragnets of their own machinations.

This in itself is an act of lunacy. For a true Kleptocracy would never allow for such hindrances in its functioning. By boxing ourselves in zero-tolerance boxes, we are becoming intolerant, which is not the course we wanted.

For the state to reignite the fire of Kleptocracy, we need to be more tolerant, as the world demands. And less vague too. Tolerance is indeed the buzz word of the future and by future, I mean our future, because comparison to other states is our only excuse for failing in most things.

At this juncture, right before we grab that middle-income prize, the idea of morality, and of zero tolerance, must be rubbished immediately. And the narrative must be refocused on the benefits of a Kleptocracy: the new trains, the highways and the electricity.

Happy voters. Look at our shiny new toys.

Bangladesh becomes top Covid-19 tourist destination

SHARMILI TAGORE

Bangladesh has become one of the hottest tourist destinations this year at a time when other countries are scrambling to control the spread of the dreaded Covid-19.

The Southeast Asian country, on the other hand, has seen an opportunity in the crisis. "Our people are resilient. They survive dengue, floods, polio and bad politicians. Our people are also welcoming and they know they can survive this virus," Tourist Minister Akmal said. Akmal, who himself is not a citizen, had actually come to Bangladesh from Australia, a country which has renewed lockdowns. It's why he was made a tourist minister.

"Our beaches are open with proper health measures in place. Have you been to Alfred's this Eid? Jam-packed. But with the proper health measures in place," Akmal said.

When asked what the health measures were, Akmal said he was not aware.

Tourists, however, aren't arriving in the country for its borrowed cultures only, but also because of its stellar health system.

"Ninety-five percent of all the beds in the Covid-dedicated hospitals are free. This obviously means we have tackled the virus," the country's unhealthy minister said. The minister had given himself an A-grade in July

this year for a job well-done.

"Look at the comparison. We only have some two-hundred thousand cases. But it's over eighteen million worldwide. The numbers don't lie," the unhealthy minister said, borrowing a phrase from famous wrestler Scot Steiner.

With so many empty beds, tourists are guaranteed treatment of some sort. "This will be Bangladesh's year. Just you wait and see," the minister said.

When asked why so many of the visitors were Chinese and why they were thronging to see mobile phone network towers in particular, the minister said that was none of any body's business.

"It's not like the Chinese have designs to take over our telecommunications sector," an agitated minister replied.



Flood victims now confront outbreak of diseases

Why is there such a severe shortage of medical supplies and facilities?

HERE seems to be no end in sight for people in the flood-hit northern and northeastern region of the country. Over 55 lakh people in 162 upazilas of 53 districts have been hit hard by the flood this year amidst the Covid-19 pandemic raging through the country, according to the National Disaster Response Coordination Centre (NDRCC). Now that the floodwater is receding in these regions, communities have to confront yet another challenge—a mass breakout of different waterborne diseases.

In most of the regions, flood victims were forced to drink floodwater without purification, which has led to diarrhoea, dysentery, vomiting, headache and other waterborne diseases among its populations. They are also suffering from various skin diseases, which is being compounded by waterlogging in many of these areas as entire communities have no choice but to wade through and live amidst dirty and stagnant water in their homes and compounds. According to reports from our correspondent in different districts, there is a severe shortage of medical facilities and supplies to address the increasing number of patients.

The authorities claim that they have formed medical teams to help communities, but it is apparent from the testimonies of flood victims that such help is woefully inadequate. Have districts been left to tackle this emerging health crisis in an *ad hoc* manner, or is there a comprehensive plan on how to provide support to flood-hit regions? We urge the different ministries to coordinate with each other, as well as with non-government initiatives, to provide systematic assistance on an urgent basis, allocating the necessary resources to each district and upazila. The people in the regions have suffered enough and are still facing great uncertainty—it is the responsibility of the state to ensure their well-being and rehabilitation to the best of its ability.

Decisions on exams must be realistic

Students must not suffer more than they already have

WITH over four months of schools being closed, the looming uncertainty regarding public exams is weighing down on students and their families. The authorities are still yet to make a final decision when these exams can be held. The challenge in front of the authorities is whether to cut short syllabuses and reduce exam schedules or lengthen the academic year. Any decision will have long term implications on the future of these students, and therefore, have to be made based on a well thought out strategy.

More than one million students are expected to take this year's HSC and its equivalent exams, while around three million are supposed to take the PEC and two million, the JSC exams. Another two million are scheduled to take the SSC and equivalent exams.

It is disappointing that the education board has not been able to formulate a definitive plan regarding such important exams. The statement that it was planning to hold the HSC and equivalent exams 15 days after a return to normalcy is far too vague and not very reassuring for students or their guardians. The board has said it is thinking of holding the HSC within a month, instead of the usual one and half months, while keeping the syllabus the same. Are they taking into account the problems that the students will face, through no fault of their own, in being adequately prepared for these exams after such a long gap in classes? Many students also rely heavily on extra tutoring, which they could not avail due to the Covid-19 situation. How will they fare if exams are suddenly announced?

In addition to all this, the education board must also be sensitive to the mental stress these children are going through and try to alleviate their anxieties regarding the board exams. It is important for the education ministry and its bodies to take the advice of education experts who have been voicing their concerns and offering recommendations regarding how to address the education gap created by the crisis. The Bangladesh Examination Development Unit has sent a set of proposals to the Dhaka education board, which includes cutting the syllabus and holding exams on 50 marks with MCQ questions if schools do not reopen by October.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to tell when schools can be re-opened or exams can be organised as there continues to be a high rate of Covid-19 infections, especially in the cities.

While there is little the education authorities can do about the unpredictability of the virus, what they can do is be ready with a reasonable, practical plan regarding public examinations. We hope the education board will take decisions regarding these exams keeping in mind the mental stress students have gone through during this period, and the stress they are still experiencing, as their future hangs in the balance. Innovative approaches with expert advice are required to face the challenges of the lapse in education. Exams have to be designed and held with the realities of the consequences of the pandemic in mind.

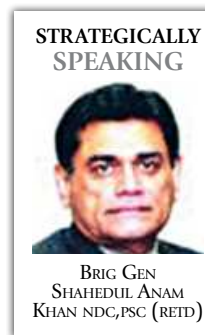
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Pitfalls of online education

Direct education has temporarily paused due to Covid-19, and has been replaced by online classes, to attend which, students must have the right technology. In a country where underprivileged families can hardly afford food for their children, where will they get such expensive devices? The government must ensure that these families have the necessary access required. However, we must also guard against children from all backgrounds getting addicted to their devices. This can become a huge health hazard, if measures are not taken to overcome these obstacles and give our children a proper environment for a bright future.

Tinnee, by email



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN NDC, PSC (RETD)

IT is not often that one hears the putative lone superpower ruefully ventilating its frustrations in public. That is exactly the impression that one gets from the statement of the US Foreign Secretary, echoing Nixon's apprehensions

and urging the world to stand up to the "Frankenstein," referring to China, or more exactly, to the Chinese Communist Party. By comparing China with the sapient monster created by the young scientist, he would have the world believe that China has broken free of the fetters of those that helped it grow to the level that it has now reached, and has gained the clout to turn against its "progenitors" by dictating its own terms and ordering the course of the future world order, a situation that some refer to as the post-Covid world order. Pompeo's frustration is understandable, and the outburst and the kind of language not heard of in recent times, reflect US despondency. He does not mince words when he accuses China of biting "the international hands that were feeding it."

In Pompeo's outburst is an indirect acknowledgement that China's enlarged economic and geopolitical footprint is posing a threat to the US, a country which, since the end of the Cold War, has faced little challenge to its position.

It also reflects the psychological state of a power that has been completely battered at home by a most destructive virus that has affected the greater part of humanity, and with which it is still grappling. Pundits had predicted that the virus would, at the end of the day, affect all, big and small, equally. What was important was to watch which among these countries would emerge less battered. It seems that the Pompeo "Frankenstein" has emerged the better of the two.

But to the main point regarding China's aspirations to achieve the status of a leading world power; China, the US thinks, is posing as a pretender, claiming the sceptre and the orb of global power.

It is true that China's rise is owed to a large extent to the US and their mutual relationship since the seventies, and also because for the last two decades particularly, China has been the most attractive and largest destination of foreign direct investment (FDI). For example, from a mere five billion dollars FDI in the early nineties, China became the largest recipient of FDI nearing the end of the decade, accounting for 38 percent of total FDI i.e. about 38 billion dollars.

The fact is China has become the world's largest economy on a purchasing

power parity basis (achieved in 2014), and a huge foreign exchange reserve. This has been helped by a sustained 10 percent average annual GDP growth through 2018. China was described by the World Bank as "the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history." The US happens to be China's biggest export market and the third largest importer of US goods, which runs up a huge trade deficit with China every year. China, too, helps fund the US federal debt, it being the largest foreign holder of US Treasury securities.

its effort to wean China away from its current state system, partnered with it on the pious hope that China would adapt western values and integrate fully with the international economic order. That was highly optimistic, as apparent from its more assertive postures in regional and bilateral issues in recent times, and the spread in the ambit of China's economic and political influence; the opportunities of it further expanding its influence, experts aver, have been opened up by the Covid-19 pandemic.

to the East, and it will continue despite Covid-19. Clearly, the US is unwilling to accept any challenge to its authority as the sole global power dictating world order as suits its own "enlightened" self interest. The quicker the US realises that China's rise is a reality and its claim to the top position is inevitable, and adapt to the changed realities, the better it is. It will be well for the US to also realise that the days of its right to tell the rest of the world what is best for them, and what to do, are over.

Although China has a long way to go to catch up with the US as an economic



PHOTO: AFP

However, since 1979, when its economy was opened up under Deng Xiaoping, with the slogan of "capitalism with Chinese characteristics", the economic modernisation has been influenced more by Chinese characteristics than the precepts of capitalism. However, at the individual level, the common Chinese believe that the shortest way to capitalism is through communism, and I make so bold as to also suggest that the Chinese leadership also believe in it without admitting as much.

And that is what had come as a dampener to the West, which had hoped that helping China to modernise would push China to join their bandwagon. But the West's expectations about China not falling in line with it were gross miscalculations. Martin Jacques, in his famous book *When China Rules The World*, where he makes some bold predictions which many policymakers in the US find "disturbing", exposes two misperceptions of the West about China. The West, in

And China did not collapse either, belying another western miscalculation which assumed that, in spite of the economic growth, China like the Soviet Union would implode from within unless China's economic modernisation was accompanied by political transformation fashioned on the western model. But instead, China's military modernisation has run in tandem with its economic modernisation. That is the inevitable consequence of gaining economic strength which manifests in both expressed and demonstrated aspirations and more aggressive policy and actions not only regionally, but also well beyond its borders and to other continents. That is what has prompted Pompeo to also express US' fear of China's military becoming "stronger and more menacing" and call for an "alliance of democracies."

Obviously, the US has either not seen the writing on the wall or is not willing to acknowledge it. There has been a shifting of the balance of power from the West

powerhouse, the momentum China had gained in the geopolitical realm to claim its position in global diplomacy through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) strategy, may be somewhat blunted by the economic impact of Covid-19. But that will not detract it from pursuing its aim of becoming an important stakeholder in international diplomacy. What the world wants to see is whether China plays its role with responsibility. But, as Singaporean academic and former diplomat Kishore Mahbubani had suggested, how China behaves as world number one would very much depend on how the US behaves as world number one. That was in 2014, and since then, it would not be wrong to suggest, China's geo-economic policies and actions have been cast in the policies and actions adopted by the US. That is another reality that the US and the West must absorb.

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

Savers in action, investors in expectation



MOHAMMAD KAZI MAMUN

SOME days ago, I met a businessman who was contemplating making some fixed deposits. Every time he heard what the existing interest rate was, he became perplexed. He explained in a subdued voice that he helps his village orphanage with the fund and could not compromise with the rate of profit.

It is apparent that the savers of Bangladesh prefer a high rate of interest and they plan to do many things with the profit from their savings. NGOs or cooperatives eye a higher return on their regulatory savings. People today long for a high return on even their insurance schemes, which promise to cover medical expenses during illness.

Banks of Bangladesh have been living under a much-awaited pegged interest rate regime for around four months. Though only the lending rate has been fixed (at nine percent) by the regulator, the deposit rate quite understandably witnessed a sharp decline as a consequence. The best rate of deposit quoted by most banks now hovers at around six percent. As such, if you peep through a bank nowadays, you can't miss the long queue of gloomy savers. The news media is also abuzz with the tales of savers' woes regarding the discovery that after inflation, nothing is left for the savers.

We save so we have something to fall back on during a rainy day. We can easily save in the personal vault of our houses. Still, we choose a bank where we opt for security and insulation from inflation. However, if we think to maximise the return from our savings and hope to achieve many things other than protection during a period of hardship, we convert ourselves into investors. In that case, we must also agree to spend our time and energy while bearing a calculated risk.

However, what are our savers doing? They are savers in action and investors in expectation. You will find this genre of savers everywhere in our country. They look for a safe haven for their fund, staying away from risk while desiring the maximum return.

A real example from my personal

experience might be worth sharing here. A man took a loan at 13 percent to renovate his house. Unfortunately, the borrower was not doing the job for which the loan was taken and it was discovered that the man deposited the borrowed money into a so-called golden goose company which promised a return at 20 percent. However, the fraud company vanished shortly, and the ever-growing debt forced the man to sell the house.

The double benefit or triple benefit scheme is the mostly admired product for savers of rural areas. Foreign remittance rains on these schemes. When banks fail to match the demand matrix for the quickest double or triple benefit, the migrant families move to the newly grown cooperatives or multi-level marketing (MLM) companies only to lose money in the end.

In the book *Financially Stupid People Are Everywhere* written by Jason Kelly, we

Banerjee found that people build their houses part by part over many years while the houses remain unfinished without providing any return. Poor people were also found buying fertilisers in advance for use in the crop season. These were the saving behaviours on the part of those people who knew that the money would otherwise be spent.

However, this learning of savings won't act upon the ever burgeoning "lazy and opportunistic investors". The government needed to recede from their decision from slashing the rate of Post Office Savings to almost half from existing rates last February. In 2017, our savings-GDP ratio was 31 percent against an investment-GDP ratio of 29 percent. This created a savings glut, which increases the country's future debt burden.

In fact, a group of new investors have been created in the name of savers who flock to the lure of savings certificates and



PHOTO: COLLECTED

find that the first rule of finance is that one needs to consume only 80 percent of their disposable income (i.e., income less taxes). Many people of the developed world save according to this rule. They remain glad as long as their savings fight inflation. The significant rise of deposits in the US to 7.5 percent in 2008 from 2.5 percent in the pre-crisis period, despite zero or negative rate returns, was not a surprise, since people wanted to cushion themselves against the uncertainty. And here reveals the true nature of savings.

In a study, Nobel prize winner Abhijit

earn a huge amount of money without any effort. The stimulus packages of Covid-19 is likely to go to the lazy hands of these investors. Our government has also issued a set of reform policies for revitalising the capital market. Still, our savers don't crowd there to invest. The risk-free rate of 9 to 11 percent on savings certificates is preferred to the risky capital market rate of 11 percent or more.

The "savers in action but investors in expectation" syndrome is failing the single digit interest rate therapy of the government. Due to the profit

Banks of Bangladesh have been living under a much-awaited pegged interest rate regime for around four months. Though only the lending rate has been fixed (at nine percent) by the regulator, the deposit rate quite understandably witnessed a sharp decline as a consequence.

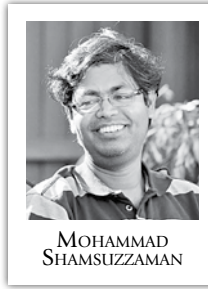
maximisation orientation of the savers, many banks are still providing seven percent or more on fixed deposits. These banks might save themselves from the present storm, but might sink soon along with its savers.

In 2017, the exchequer received Tk 500 billion from the sale of savings certificates, exceeding the target of Tk 200 billion. If this trend of curtailing the bank's pie continues, the very objective of the functioning of banks ceases to exist. If the government rather makes the bank the centre of the savings, financial normalcy will resume through the most productive use of money. The government might consider helping the poor or distressed class by direct transfers, closing the chapter of savings certificates altogether.

Savers look best around savings account of banks, while investors around capital market. Savers' safety can be best protected by banks while the adventurous spirit of investors is best utilised in the capital market. Needless to say, we need both savers and investors for our country. However, taking both forms in one figure, i.e., being a saver in action but an investor in expectation, sounds like a monster threatening to swallow the rather young but fertile financial periphery of our country.

Mohammad Kazi Mamun is an AVP and head of branch at Bank Asia Limited.

So, you want to kill the university?



WHEN the lockdown was imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic in March, I shifted to online teaching at a university here in Dhaka. Having taught online for several months, I almost love it now! I confess that my preparation in online teaching was inadequate. I struggled. I defaulted to the assumption that teaching is a face-to-face activity. Shifting teaching away from a university is akin to severing the soul from the body. It's a symbolic death, the death of a university. If, however, universities are indeed in an existential crisis, the pandemic might not be the cause. It might instead be the final straw. Way before the pandemic, universities were losing steam in the pecking order of essential human infrastructures.

As the pandemic exposes, education is no longer the priority of the governments around the globe. The economy is. When the governments worldwide started to re-open following the lockdown, bars and factories as well as courts and sports stirred back into operation. When, however, it comes to education, they are full of waffles about re-opening, as it ranges from fall this year to spring next year to until a vaccine arrives.

How about if an effective vaccine never arrives? We still don't have a vaccine for HIV. In our prostrate surrender to the Covid-19 pandemic and to a possible vaccine lies the absurdity of our time. When the governments around the globe decide that allowing adults to drink is more important than educating their children, they are already perverse. Likewise, when the governments see schools, not garment factories, as a potential health threat, they are uneducated to the point of criminality. Under such circumstances, a university is a perfunctory entity. Who cares about whether a university is on-site or online? Well, students do! Professor Lisa Feldman Barrett in her essay "College Courses Online Are Disappointing: Here's How to Fix it" in the *New York Times* cites a recent survey that claims that 75 percent of students in the US find online educational experiences disappointing. I assume that students in Bangladesh would react alike about

online teaching. And yet the shift to online is lauded by some sceptics of the current university system as a transition already overdue. They claim that the current university system is elitist because it provides for those who come from comfortable economic and intellectual backgrounds. And because the current university system has been stable for centuries, it is dated. This dated system is not aligned to the frequencies of a world that renews its techniques and technologies, as well as its missions and ambitions, every nano second. We live in a whole new world that values education differently. This new world considers a university a service centre, where teachers are instructors and students are clients. Mentoring is replaced with training; enlightenment is replaced with skill acquisition. In this dispensation, an ideal education leads to immediate employment. The current university system falls short on that front. For example, a 2014 Gallup survey found that only 11 percent of business leaders believed that university graduates had the skills their workplaces needed. If 79 percent of business leaders find college graduates ineligible for employment, education must bear the brunt of public criticism. So, the clamour for a new version of education gains momentum.

And the vocal advocates of this version of education are almost always the technocrats. They want education redefined, and the current university system replaced. Elon Musk, the founder and CEO of SpaceX, for example, in a 2008 interview defined learning as follows—"You're basically downloading data and algorithms into your brain." In the same interview, Musk further suggested that education would be better if it were more like a computer game.

If Musk sounds insightful here, he was surpassed by another technology honcho, Marc Prensky. Back in 2001, Prensky published a two-part essay, "Digital Immigrant, Digital Natives," in which he claims that today's students are no longer the people our education system was designed to teach. Today's students, the digital natives, are so deeply immersed in technology that their learning styles, strategies and even brain structures, are different. Teachers, the digital immigrants, must be adequately technology literate to teach the digital natives. Prensky reduces the disciplinary diversity in education

to two terms: "legacy content" (reading, writing, and logical thinking) and "future context" (science and technology). He suggested that regardless of the content, teaching it effectively presupposes inventing a computer game as the primary means of teaching. So, what is the version of education in general they propose, downloading and displaying?

Yes, apparently! If you would like to throw a spanner into this version of education because it reduces education to information

for some of their most highly skilled positions, as Professor Michael D Smith claims in his essay in *The Atlantic*, "Are Universities Going the Ways of CDs and Cable TV"?

What, however, convinces Professor Smith of the inevitable correlation between employment and education? Blaming unemployment on education is akin to blaming the Internet for causing the Covid-19 pandemic. There's no cause-and-effect relation here. Education doesn't cause unemployment. Economics and politics do. When we scapegoat

universities. Universities are not mere concrete edifices. These are intellectual monuments built over centuries. So resourceful and rigorous is the university system these days that it can guide any of its recruits to the limit of her potential. We no longer wait for the random arrival of geniuses like Claudius Ptolemy, Panini and Ibn Khaldun. Thanks to the university system, we depend on a steady supply of talents like Stephen Hawking, Noam Chomsky and Amartya Sen. Dismantling the university system is intellectually suicidal for our civilisation. Universities must continue to exist for the most part exactly as they are now. Even blending online with on-site is a consequential concession.

So, how do we address the mismatch between pristine education and post-modern technology? Education and technology have never been bed-fellows. They often conflict. Technology emerges and evolves much faster than education. While education develops bit by bit, technology arrives and frequently disappears instantly. For example, around 2005 I first started using floppy and shifted from flash-drive to hard-drive to Google drive. I found all these technologies utterly unreliable, and when I shifted from one mode to another, I had to deal with new forms of digital disruption. Exasperated, I sometimes wonder why Einstein's relativity theories, formulated around 1905, don't spawn frequent alternative versions, whereas Steve Jobs's iPhone, which emerged in 2007, already has at least 20 different versions. Can something that can change and fade away so fast be the foundation of education?

If you answer in the negative, you might apprehend that what dictatorship does to democracy, technology attempts to do to education—it strips education of collective voice and vision. It essentialises some individuals and institutions. These individuals are technocrats, not intellectuals; and these institutions are IT farms, not universities. That's a steady development, which portends the death of genuine universities. Should we allow the technically proficient to use the pandemic as an excuse to kill our universities? No! What we're left with because of the pandemic is an ersatz university. The sooner it disappears, the better.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

management and visuals, hold on. It's already been a decade since some of the universities around the globe leaned enthusiastically in that direction. The rise of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) is a revolution in education given that they're already widespread, popular and useful. MOOCs have flipped the definition and dissemination of education, for they're not time- and space-bound. They, instead, bring about a whenever, whatever, and wherever version of education. MOOCs are course- and skill-specific, unlike a university-sponsored education, which is programme and specialisation specific. And why do we need a degree from a prestigious university when employers such as Google, Apple, IBM and Ernst & Young have stopped requiring traditional university degrees, even

education for economic and political failures, we don't recognise what education is and does. Education is an ethical, intellectual and humane capital that prepares us for a richer and fuller life to draw on and contribute to the legacy of knowledge, peace and prosperity. Ideally, education envisions and accomplishes these functions independent of employment. However, because education empowers us to transform society at large, it presupposes civic engagement. Employment is but one form of civic engagement with economic implications. An educated person is critical to any economy. It will engage and sustain her, with or without employment. The connection between employment and education is incidental.

Unemployment, therefore, doesn't justify the slow-motion disintegration of the

PROJECT SYNDICATE

A Covid-19 bridge over troubled water?

It seems likely that the Covid-19 crisis will increase demand for cleaner, safer water and more reliable and effective wastewater treatment everywhere. But success is far from guaranteed, not least because the pandemic also seems to be strengthening another trend: declining trust in public institutions.

CECILIA TORTAJADA and ASIT K BISWAS

THE Covid-19 pandemic is likely to transform our behaviours, attitudes and policies in many areas. For the sake of overcoming the public health crisis and enabling economic recovery, one must hope that water and wastewater management will be among them.

Delivering clean water and ensuring proper wastewater management has been a global concern since the late 1970s. Significant progress towards this objective was made during the 1980s, which the United Nations declared the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. But the ultimate goal—to ensure that every human on the planet had access to clean water and sanitation by 1990—was not achieved.

The world tried again in 2000, with the less ambitious Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the share of the population without sustainable access to clean water and sanitation by 2015. This time, the UN declared victory, but included anyone with access to water at all—clean or not.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN's members in 2015, were supposed to pick up where the MDGs left off. Again, the target is clean water and proper sanitation for all. The deadline this time is 2030. But, as in the past, the barriers to success are formidable.

When the SDGs were introduced, the UN estimated that 785 million people worldwide lacked access to "even a basic drinking water service." The true number is probably far larger. According to UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), some 2.2 billion people do not have safely managed drinking



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN / STAR

Bangladesh is no stranger to worries about water supply. In May 2019, residents of Jurain took to the streets to protest against unsafe water being supplied by Wasa.

water services, and 4.2 billion do not have safely managed sanitation services.

Contaminated water and poor sanitation are linked to transmission of diseases—such as cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid and polio—that affect hundreds of millions of people every year. Making matters worse, nearly 25 percent of healthcare facilities worldwide lack even basic water services.

This is not a developing economy problem. In the United States, for example, two million people do not have access to piped water. Moreover, the water that people do receive often does not qualify as clean or safe: the high profile cases of Flint, Michigan and Walkerton, Canada—where people are suffering long-term health problems, and even premature death,

owing to contaminated water—make that abundantly clear.

Not surprisingly, such incidents have eroded trust in water utilities. Today, at least 3.5 billion people worldwide—in both developed and developing countries—lack confidence in the quality of the water they receive. In South Asia, with over 1.7 billion people, there is not a single town or city where people trust their water utilities. Those who can, often rely on bottled water or point-of-use water treatment systems.

The Covid-19 crisis could be a turning point. Yes, universal access to clean water and sanitation has been on the world's radar since the late 1970s. But the current pandemic has made it a universal interest. While frequent

hand washing is widely regarded as one of the most effective ways to prevent the transmission of Covid-19, the UNICEF/WHO estimate implies that three billion people worldwide lack the facilities to do so. And with the pandemic underscoring the link between clean water and public health, the bar for what qualifies as "clean" has been raised.

The Covid-19 crisis is also changing how people think about wastewater—a resource that has been grossly undervalued in the past. As some cities have recognised, properly treated wastewater can be channelled toward human, industrial, agricultural and environmental uses. Wastewater is also a valuable source of energy, but very few utilities worldwide use it that way.

Overall, developed country cities have a much better record when it comes to collecting and treating wastewater. But even they are not realising its full potential. As the WHO has noted, analysis of wastewater's composition can provide reliable information on pathogens and chemicals at the population level. In 1989, Israel introduced wastewater surveillance to measure the spread of poliovirus strains that could cause poliomyelitis.

Now, wastewater analysis is emerging as an important way to assess community spread of Covid-19. Contaminated, untreated wastewater itself does not appear to pose a transmission risk. But it offers a means of gauging infection rates in communities, and a possible early warning system for new outbreaks.

In the Netherlands, traces of the Covid-19 coronavirus were detected in untreated wastewater six days before the first case was reported. Traces were detected in untreated wastewater in the Swiss city of Lugano when only one case had been confirmed, and in

Zurich after only six infections. Wastewater surveillance showed that community transmission in Valencia, Spain began earlier than previously believed.

Australia, which has also detected the virus in untreated wastewater, now plans to carry out routine testing to anticipate outbreaks. Tokyo has already begun to take weekly samples from untreated and treated sewage. Samples from 15 sewage treatment plants will be frozen and stored until methods for extracting and analysing the virus are established. In Singapore, the National Environment Agency has initiated a pilot surveillance programme to screen wastewater samples. Crucially, such approaches can work only in places with effective wastewater collection and management.

It seems likely that the Covid-19 crisis will increase demand for cleaner, safer water and more reliable and effective wastewater treatment everywhere. This could accelerate progress toward the SDG on water and wastewater. But success is far from guaranteed, not least because the pandemic also seems to be strengthening another trend: declining trust in public institutions. Changing this will require water utilities all over the world to improve their management and communication practices significantly.

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ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



AUGUST 8, 1974
Resignation of US President Nixon

Faced with the near-certain prospect of impeachment for his role in the Watergate scandal, US President Richard M Nixon announced his resignation on this day in 1974 and was succeeded by Gerald Ford the following day.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Havana native
- 6 Blubbers
- 11 Love, to Luigi
- 12 Paintball cry
- 13 Fancy feather
- 14 Book part
- 15 Corn unit
- 16 Bedroom sight
- 18 Massage
- 19 Attack command
- 20 Mo. neighbor
- 21 Word on an octagon
- 23 Mink's cousin
- 25 Negative link
- 27 Utter
- 28 Colorful flower
- 30 Tears
- 33 Drama division

- 34 Visibility lessener
- 36 Use pews
- 37 Stole seller
- 39 Summer sign
- 40 Clarifying words
- 41 Arkansas' Plateau
- 43 "Superman" star
- 44 Shilling change
- 45 Door sign
- 46 Finished

DOWN

- 1 Frolics
- 2 German vowel
- 3 French Quarter site
- 4 Ulna's place
- 5 Calls for
- 6 Cuts in two
- 7 Guitar boosters
- 8 Site of a Cleveland park
- 9 Straight
- 10 Exacting
- 17 2016 Olympics host
- 22 Cook's need
- 24 Road goop
- 26 Oil company
- 28 Shrewdness
- 29 Eurasian deer
- 31 Use an awl
- 32 Excited
- 33 Burning
- 35 Search blindly
- 38 Gushing review
- 42 Meditative school



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

C R O C W A G O N
R O D E C A N I N E
A M E N R I G G E D
B E S T C A S E
M A Y A N S D O E
E X A L T M A I Z E
A L P B O N N E T
T E S T B A N S
O N F I L E E S A U
R E A C T S R E P S
B O N E S S E E K

BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



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

POETRY

Politicking with Pain

AKA. BHINNO

I can't sleep anymore
Piano. Storms. White noise
Nothing works.

I can't fly stars in the skies
Or drag the dark to my bed
Instead I fold my defeat,
Roll it under my bed
While the nocturnal hyenas
Wait to pull my lashes out, one by one

Yet...
their COVID conversations
About the unusual length of their beards continue
Simultaneously covering their car seats, fans, ceilings, yawns and stretches

Yet...
Their rhetorics remain
Painfully poised
Arduously Aligned
With discourses dabbling
On winning the next power lottery.

They taunt, tease and turn
Every strategy to own Forever
Living on...
To dictate, roost, and roll
In garlands of indignities...

While...
My crushed bones appeal
Against my demolition in the junkyard of pain
Remotely negotiating a return to life



While...
I
fly kites
Only to return to a ditch
Etched with a tombstone
Of Torture Tales

While...
I
remain buried alive
wrapped in layers of white
With unexplained, defeated
Ink blotches
Of my womanly surrender...

Go ahead.
Pull the plug.
I don't need my breath anymore.

FICTION

For a Pinch of Life

ABDULLAH RAYHAN

A damp siren screamed at the rushing wind. Black and thick smoky clouds slowly clotted in a grey sky, as if preparing for some kind of a ritual. The siren blared again. The tilting waves splashed against the faded yellow ferry that was once sunny yellow. Rusty parts of the ferry's body were exposed to the mighty waves of the Karnaphuli River.

When was the last time he talked to his father? Selim tried to remember. It was more than ten hours ago. His father was not picking up the phone. Terrible thoughts flitted through his mind. Maybe his father could not pick up the phone because he was sobbing beside his recently deceased wife. The lack of insulin failed to hold on to a life that had been struggling to escape for a long time.

Selim knew he should not allow such thoughts cross his mind. Maybe his father was running from one pharmacy to the next. But what his naïve father was doing was a wasted effort. Selim would not have crossed hundreds of miles to go the city if there was insulin near their village.

Selim had a really hard time. It was like an invisible hand choking his throat and with each passing hour, the grip was getting stronger.

A melancholic journey it was for Selim. Melancholic not for the toil but for the miserable start of an important journey. He took his seat on the second to last row of a rickety bus. And right after ten minutes through their journey, a woman who sat beside Selim threw up, and that too, right on his lap.

How could one scream at someone who was sick? Selim could not. Then he had to use all the water he was carrying to remove the traces of vomit from his only good shirt.

He could not get rid of the stench though. He also could not drink water throughout the whole journey.

The bus took Selim to the only train station in the division. He had reached the station only a minute before the train left. Somehow, he managed to squeeze his one foot inside the train but could not buy a ticket. When TT came to check tickets, he tried to hide in the toilet. But the ticket checkers are used to this kind of tricks. They pulled Selim out of the toilet and threatened to throw him out of the moving train if he didn't pay the fine.



The amount in Selim's pocket continued to dwindle.

He had to walk a quite a bit till he reached the area where the pharmacies were supposed to be. Maybe he was misguided, or maybe didn't understand where they were located.

After following the instructions some other pedestrians, he arrived at a fish market where yet there was no pharmacy.

Then he saw the man. He was perhaps in his mid-fifties. His well-parted silver hair glowed with an aura of wisdom. In a melodiously pious voice he asked Selim if he needed any help.

Selim felt somewhat relieved. He told him of his problem. The man promised to help him.

The man walked with Selim.

Selim walked beside the man.

Selim found himself in a narrow lane of the city.

A dark lane with a broken lamppost that huddled to the ground. A dog slept on the sidewalk and a small pocket knife was held against Selim's throat.

Selim was forced to give away the money he had with him.

But then out of desperation he requested the man to give him some of his own money so that he could buy his mother's insulin and return home.

The man proved to be kind. He allowed Selim to have the amount he needed and kept the rest.

Selim found a pharmacy after walking for a few minutes. He bought the insulin, and then rushed off to the station, but the train had already left.

The man at the ticket counter suggested that he take the ferry. He went to the ferry station by bus. He had to keep standing the whole way. It cost him the amount he had saved for his meal.

He felt dizzy. Dark shadows filtered his consciousness. His eyes were dry even though he wanted to howl like a madman.

Once again, he pulled out his phone. The first drop of a heavy rain fell on the cracked screen. He saw his phone was about to go out. He might be able to make only one phone call.

He wanted to know how his mother was doing. He wanted her to know that he was coming home with the insulin. He wanted to assure his mother that she would be all right and that she would recover really soon. She would once again be able to breathe normally.

But his father did not pick up the phone. Maybe he was still going from one pharmacy to another in search of the medicine. That man really did love his wife.

Selim ran amid the rain and thunder and gushes of wind. He fell and stumbled in the slippery mud but protected the insulin though by now he was quite certain the insulin would not be needed anymore.

As he neared the house, he noticed the people.

A lot of people were there. Men-women, boys and girls of different ages. Most of the elders were crying. Including Selim's mother.

His father was dead.

He was near the town in search of medicine when a truck hit him as he was about to cross the road. He did not notice the speeding truck because he was looking at his phone. His son had called.

Abdullah Rayhan is a student of the Department of English, Jahangirnagar University.

Diary of Pandemic Days

MOHAMMAD SHAMSUZZAMAN

It's already been several months since we've been hurled into the vortex of the coronavirus. The virus lives among us, silent and invisible. We continue to slip further into the uncertainty of the pandemic. Locked down, our life shrinks and flips. Our sweet homes no longer feel sweet. They feel like asylums. The difference between Fridays and Sundays as well as the difference between days and nights blurs. We are isolated both from friends and foes. The deadly virus wants to re-define our life in every conceivable way. We worry about our jobs, our health and our security. We wonder whether a peaceful, graceful, and fulfilling life will be possible. While I witness tragedies unfolding around me, I feel affected and afflicted. I seem to have developed a pandemic personality, which borders on being a disorder. To gain some control over this seemingly uncontrollable situation, I started three months ago to write to discover hope and healing. These posts below are not factual details of events but reflections provoked by the pandemic.

March 23, 2020
I grew up in Dhaka loving it with an absolute passion. But the Dhaka that I grew up in and the Dhaka it has become—and is becoming—is quite different. It looks abandoned and spooky. Life here is reduced to mere breathing. Where has my city of charming chaos gone? I love its toxic pollution, its impulsive honking, its choking traffic, and its maddening crowds. Dhaka has lost the essential vices I used to love it for. I no longer can stand it. But I can't leave it, either. Bigger off, you stupid virus!

As elsewhere in the world, we're faced with an existential threat here in Dhaka because of the coronavirus. Life is severely compromised. Schools are closed; flights are cancelled; movements are restricted; isolation and quarantine have started to define our civic discourse; victims and death counts are on the rise. Everyone looks panicked and perplexed. Worse seems looming. Everyone believes the prophets who predict perdition. I'm hoping against hope that the situation improves here and everywhere. Hugs to you all. I'm still me, and my tag line remains, "Life's beautiful."

March 24, 2020
We're advised to stay home because of the coronavirus, and I do. My voyeuristic impulse, however, dragged me down to the streets this morning around 9:00 A.M. I sighed. Dhaka is changed beyond recognition. It is one of the busiest cities in the world, and the Bashundhara Residential Area, where we live, is even busier. This small place has several big schools, hospitals, banks, and corporate offices. Life unfolds here early in the morning every day, and until mid-night people are always

on the streets and on their toes. The place never sleeps. But today I find it desolate. The atmosphere is eerie. The virus threatens miseries, and we don't know how long those miseries will continue. All I know is that we need to be ourselves again—humane, social, and free—sooner rather than later. The horror is already consuming, but it seems to be the beginning of a long horror story ahead. Wherever you are and whoever you are, always believe that life is beautiful. Hugs!
March 31, 2020
We still have to love our neighbors from afar. We no longer can hug them. We can't shake hands with them, either. Proximity is deadly. Our social relationship is no longer defined by trust. Our neighbors are no longer the neighbors we used to



know and mingle with. They have become potential virus transmitters. We must not meet and greet them. This is a powerful background for a horror movie. And the remainder of the movie may be even more horrifying. We're living a horror movie-life here and everywhere around the globe. Race, religion, and geographical boundaries have already dissolved in panic and uncertainty. We're crying and dying. We have not stopped worrying about our neighbors. We're getting diminished by every death anywhere in the world. But our empathy expands. If someone calls the coronavirus an empathy virus, is he crazy?

April 02, 2020
Rain usually ruins my mood. Today, it didn't. It rained here today. Gustly wind blew. Hail fell. All these quirks of nature turned a musty, murky day into a calming night. It feels blissful. My apprehension is replaced with optimism. My instinct tells me that the rain washed away the virus; that the wind blew it away; and that the hail buried it. Perhaps now we can live, laugh, and love as usual. Life beckons us. Brace up. This pandemic is a love test. Stand out and stand by. We'll overcome. This is a tough time, but tough times don't stay. Tough people do. We have done it in the past. We'll do it this time around,

too. Hugs!
April 05, 2020
We're locked down, but our minds aren't. They roam around. They tell us that the usual hum of public life is missing. The rituals of our life are reversed. We don't pound the pavement as we used to do. We don't get on and off public transports with abandon. We don't hop on and off planes for far-off destinations. We no longer anticipate lunch or dinner with friends at restaurants. The virus has cloistered people indoors around the world. Eerie silence prevails. That spews fear and uncertainty. We apprehend more deaths, more crumpled economies, and more agonies. The future doesn't entice us. The past beckons us. We become nostalgic. And in the first week of April, we're nostalgic about the last

week of March, when life was not so different and difficult in some parts of the world. Nostalgia surprisingly has become an effective emotional weapon to fight against this pandemic. Soak in it a little. Life was beautiful, and life will be beautiful again.

April 10, 2020
The light of the day still lingers here in Dhaka as the night descends. No one rushes to reach home—everyone is already home. We're on the third week of the closure. Amid new cases and clusters of the coronavirus, our government extends the closure till the 25th of April. The prognosis is that the situation will turn worse before it turns better. We can't quite fathom that reality. The virus already has fractured our fortune. Our optimism has started to ebb. We're becoming emotionally vulnerable, physically clumsy, and rationally wacky. We desperately want to renew our regular routines and rituals of life. We need what humans want: movement, communication, and interaction. Alas!

Hang in there, my fellow fighters. We've weathered viruses, bacteria, and beasts (human as well as animal) in the past. We'll come away from this crisis more compassionate, more united, and stronger. Stay home. Stay hopeful.
May 13, 2020

The night is about to descend here in Dhaka. This lag between a day and a night, however, seems a little confusing. It's not night yet, but it is. It rained here, and it's still raining. The sun is covered with heavy clouds. It's already dark around and is becoming darker. It feels like a twilight around, but no one seems to romanticize it. The virus still whips through us. We continue to slip further into panic and uncertainty. Surprisingly, the air around feels so soothing. Breathe it. Forget about the pandemic. And remember that just six weeks back, our life was delightfully different. That life still beckons us. Wait! Stay home. Stay safe.

May 19, 2020
If you feel lonely and abandoned, please remember that you're not alone. If anxiety and apprehension overcome you, there's nothing pathological about you. All of us are acting and reacting almost alike around the globe. For about two months, we've not been able to do what we were used to doing. We're living like zombies. The rituals of our life flipped. The priorities of our life shifted. Our public engagements almost nixed. We're herded into a big, empty bubble of virus. And we continue to wallow in woes. The virus continues to infect and kill. We mourn. Our confidence plunges. Our optimism dwindles. Helpless as we are, some of us may have developed pandemic personality disorder. Relax, please. Our collective intelligence and optimism are too formidable for the virus to sap. We'll live again, soon. Stay hopeful.

Code
Given my space-constraints, I only cherry-picked some the entries that I posted on Facebook since the last week of March, when our government imposed countrywide closure. The virus is still wild and unforgiving across the country. Infections and death tolls surge. Nonetheless, our government decides to lift the closure following the 30th of May. Countries around the globe are also easing or lifting lockdown. That's understandable. The WHO warns that the virus is not going to go some time soon, or we might have to live with it permanently as we do with the HIV virus. The corona virus has pitted the economy against safety. And after two months of closure, we've discovered that economy is safety. If we stay home and don't work, we'll die. If we go out and work, the virus might kill us. Humans are mortal, anyway. Did we need a pandemic to remind us something so bland and basic?

Mohammad Shamsuzzaman is an Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages, North South University, Bangladesh.

SONY SIX
England v Pakistan
First Test, Day 4
Live from 4:00pm

TEN 1
UEFA Champions League

Bayern Munich v Chelsea
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

TEN 2
UEFA Champions League
Barcelona v Napoli
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)

BCB risks falling behind in the new normal

MAZHAR UDDIN

The news that 11 footballers, a majority of whom were asymptomatic, tested positive for coronavirus ahead of the national team's camp could serve as a big lesson to the Bangladesh Cricket Board, who are thinking of the resumption of cricket in the coming days.

Interestingly, results from testing done by the footballers at various hospitals before joining the camp differed to what the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) found after testing the players again.

Despite showing no symptoms, 11 of 24 footballers tested positive for the virus and the results of the tests were inaccurate, which is very much a reflection of the scenario in the country.

From cricket's point of view, the BCB is still playing the waiting game when it comes to resuming group training, but perhaps the board should at least take the initiative to test cricketers who have begun individual training sessions.

National cricketers, including the likes of Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad, started training last month after the BCB provided access to their facilities across the country. With the Eid break ending yesterday, more cricketers were expected to join individual sessions.

A total of 28 cricketers will resume from today training across different venues, according to the BCB's training schedule. But questions remain about whether the board will take the initiative to test these cricketers with the situation of the footballers in mind.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the board is still discouraging cricketers



from individual training sessions. He said that not having any series in the near future led the board to decide not to take any initiatives to resume group training yet.

"The board has been discouraging cricketers from individual training from the beginning. What the footballers faced is obviously a big challenge for us as well, which is why we are yet to resume group training. This is alarming and, keeping the situation in mind, I don't see any reason to hurry," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star.

"However, as cricketers desired individual training, we provided them with facilities. But we also ensured social distancing and other safety measures and we instructed groundsmen and staff to have tests done. After the postponement of the Asia Cup and the ICC World T20, there are no scheduled series for us, which is why we didn't

resume group training. We will start testing players once we begin group training."

It is a matter of fact that what the BCB is yet to contend with the challenges that the BFF is currently facing but, with the resumption of cricket in mind, the BCB should take some initiatives if they want to prepare cricketers and, more importantly, face reality.

During their efforts to return to cricket, the Pakistan Cricket Board faced such a challenge as many cricketers returned positive tests ahead of their tour of England. That case was similar to what the BFF is facing, but the PCB managed to face the challenge and move forward.

Football leagues around the world also faced difficulties in adapting to the new normal. A total of 20 positive cases have emerged in England's Premier League since football restarted.

BCB officials expressed high hopes over the Tigers' upcoming tour of Sri Lanka from September but is the BCB preparing themselves and their players for that?

England created a bio-secure environment during their home series against the West Indies but despite that, visiting coach Phil Simmons made a mistake and attended a funeral ahead of the series which nearly cost him his job. He then had to isolate himself. England pacer Jofra Archer was fined and was even forced out of the second Test against the West Indies after the cricketer breached bio-security protocols.

It will be important for the BCB to prepare such an environment and help players and also the coaching staff to adapt to it, something the likes of Archer and Simmons struggled to do despite preparing heavily for the new normal.

Masood 'has proved himself in England'

AFP, Manchester



Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq said Shan Masood had "proved himself in England" after the opener's superb hundred helped leave the tourists well-placed in the first Test at Old Trafford on Thursday.

Masood's Test-best 156 was the cornerstone of Pakistan's first-innings 326 all out, with England slumping to 12-3 in reply. The hosts ended the second day on 92-4 -- a deficit of 264 runs -- with star all-rounder Ben Stokes out for a duck and England captain Joe Root falling for 14.

Masood batted for nearly eight hours in difficult conditions and in the process joined Misbah and team batting coach Younis Khan as one of just six Pakistan batsmen to have scored a hundred in three consecutive Test innings.

This century following Masood's 135 against Sri Lanka in Karachi in December and 100 against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi in February.

Yet the 30-year-old left-hander averaged a meagre 17.75 during Pakistan's 2016 tour of England.

Masood stood firm in Manchester even though he was twice reprieved by Jos

Buttler on 45, the wicketkeeper dropping a catch and missing a stumping off spinner Dom Bess.

"It was an excellent performance by him, especially against a seam attack of (Stuart) Broad, (James) Anderson, (Chris) Woakes and (Jofra) Archer, and against an off-spinner (Bess) that was bowling well on a pitch where there was turn," said Misbah of the English-educated Masood's fourth hundred in 21 Tests.

"It was good application and his hard work has paid off."

"Now he has proved himself here in England, so I'm really pleased, especially as it's not (just) a hundred, (but) a big hundred."

"Still, we would have been in trouble if he only scored a hundred. But hundred-and-fifty plus, and through the innings, that was really special."

A good day for Pakistan got even better with Stokes clean bowled for nought by Mohammad Abbas during a slump that had the hosts three down inside six overs.

Abbas also removed opener Dom Sibley on his way to close figures of 2-24, with towering left-arm quick Shaheen Afridi making the initial breakthrough with just the fourth ball of the innings when Rory Burns was plumb lbw.



Pacer Mohammad Abbas took two early wickets on Thursday evening as Pakistan consolidated the stronghold provided by Shan Masood's century in the first Test against England at Old Trafford.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Sevilla, Leverkusen cruise into quarters

REUTERS



Five-times winners Sevilla made light work of AS Roma when first half goals from Sergio Reguilon and Youssef En-Nesyri gave them a 2-0 win over AS Roma and sent them into the Europa League quarter-finals on Thursday.

Sevilla's win, in a tie reduced to a single match played in Duisberg, Germany, after the first leg was called off at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, earned them a meeting with Wolverhampton Wanderers on Tuesday.

Former Spain coach Julen Lopetegui's side went ahead when Reguilon flew past Bruno Perez and scored with an angled shot which squeezed between goalkeeper Pau Lopez's legs. Roma appeared to be coming back into the match when Sevilla struck again. The La Liga side broke up a Roma attack, Lucas Ocampos was set free down the right and pulled the ball back for En-Nesyri to turn into an empty net shortly before halftime.

The last eight will be played in four German cities as part of the mini-tournament, with the final on Aug. 21 in Cologne.

QUARTERFINAL LINE-UP

(all games 1900 GMT)

MONDAY, AUGUST 10

At Dusseldorf

Inter Milan (ITA) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER)

At Cologne

Manchester United (ENG) v Copenhagen (DEN)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

At Duisburg

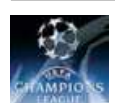
Wolverhampton (ENG) v Sevilla (ESP)

At Gelsenkirchen

Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) v Basel (SUI)

Barca's chance to save troubled season

AFP, Madrid



If Barcelona have been weighed down by the burden of expectation in recent years in the Champions League, they should feel freer than ever ahead of Saturday's last 16, second leg against Napoli.

Few expect an easy passage into the quarterfinals and if they get there, even fewer expect them to survive against Bayern Munich, the tournament's most convincing team so far, who will surely finish the job against Chelsea in their last-16 tie.

With the advantage of an away goal from the 1-1 draw in Italy in February, Barca would usually feel confident against a side that just finished seventh in Serie A, and at the Camp Nou, where they have suffered only one defeat in 58 Champions League games.

But after a miserable end to La Liga, that flipped a two-point lead over Real Madrid into a five-point deficit, Barcelona resume their European tilt as outsiders, behind Bayern, Juventus, perhaps Atletico Madrid given their favourable draw, and certainly the winner of Real Madrid and Manchester City.

"The fans are running out of patience because we're not giving them anything," said Lionel Messi as Barca's title chase unravelled. "If we want to fight for the Champions League, a lot has to change because like this, we will lose to Napoli as well."

The hope might be Barcelona can turn pessimism to their advantage, if the result is a team free of tension, able to view the

Champions League as a fresh start after a failed campaign in Spain.

When they capitulated against Roma and Liverpool, Barca's players talked about crumbling under pressure, a weakness that has been exposed all too many times since.

"They were strong and from a psychological point of view they fed off our fragility," said then-coach Ernesto Valverde after the Liverpool loss. "They came at us and we failed to react," said Sergio Busquets of Roma.



Lionel Messi and his Barcelona teammates will be desperate to dribble past Napoli in tonight's fixture of the Champions League, which remains their only chance of a silverware this season.

PHOTO: FC BARCELONA

get humiliated by Bayern.

There are caveats to the chaos too. Despite only seven wins from 11 games after the restart, Barca were impressive in spells and most effective against bolder opponents, the like of which they are more likely to meet in Europe.

"You can't tell me it's all been a disaster, it hasn't," said a defiant Setien last month.

They also have Messi, who comes in on the back of three weeks rest, and alongside him, Luis Suarez and Antoine Griezmann, an attacking trio that should be the envy of every team left in the competition.

Marc-Andre ter Stegen is one of the world's outstanding goalkeepers. Ansu Fati and Riqui Puig are hugely exciting young talents. Without fans, Barcelona's mental fragility could be less exposed, their technical quality more decisive.

And yet still the sense is of a team relying on the intangibles: Moments of individual genius, momentum in a knock-out tournament, liberation from the burdens of expectation.

"We have to be more consistent, more reliable," said Setien last month. "If we manage to have a game like the one we played against Villarreal, where everything went well, it will undoubtedly give us a chance to win the Champions League."

In this format, with only four one-off matches to win, there is perhaps no better year to be clinging to the hope of the unpredictable. But for a club like Barcelona, it feels a little desperate, a final shot in the dark at the end of a long and turbulent year. There should be something more.

England's September tour of India postponed

AFP, Manchester



England's upcoming white-ball tour to India has been postponed due to disruption caused by coronavirus, cricket chiefs announced on Friday.

A programme of three ODI and three T20I games, originally due to start in late September, would have been ideal preparation for the T20 World Cup in Australia later in the year.

But that tournament has now been put on hold and India is struggling to contain the outbreak of COVID-19.

Officials from England and India are in talks over dates for an all-formats England tour to India from late January to late March and India's Test tour to England due later in 2021.

England are currently scheduled to play five Tests in India from January to March next year.

"International cricket between India and England is a highlight of the cricketing calendar and we look forward to working with the BCCI to firm up the schedules for these eagerly anticipated tours as soon as possible," said England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tom Harrison.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said: "I

am pleased with the way BCCI and ECB have managed the situation. The rescheduled tour is also being redesigned in a way to accommodate both red and white-ball formats."

If health conditions do not improve, the fixtures could be staged in the United Arab Emirates, which will stage the lucrative Twenty20 Indian Premier League from September.

The only major international cricket being staged anywhere in the world at present is in England, who are hosting Pakistan in a three-Test series.

It follows a Test series against West Indies and a one-day series against Ireland.

'Bale did not want to play'

AFP, Madrid

Zinedine Zidane has said Gareth Bale told him he did not want to play for Real Madrid against Manchester City in the Champions League last 16 on Friday.

Bale was left out of the squad and has not travelled to Manchester, where Madrid were aiming to overturn a 2-1 deficit from the first leg in February. Sources close to Bale claim he told Zidane he did not want to travel, after finding out he was not included in the squad, but was ready to play.

"There is a relationship of respect between player and coach," Zidane said in a press conference on Thursday. "He preferred not to play, nothing more, and the rest is between me and him."

Zidane said it was a personal decision but would not be drawn on details, insisting "there are things that have to stay in the changing room". Asked about his future, Zidane said: "Bale is a Real Madrid player, nothing has changed and I respect him like everyone else."



Sevilla's Youssef En-Nesyri (L) celebrates his opener against AS Roma during their Europa League fixture at the MSV Arena in Duisburg on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

BLOOD HEROES IN PANDEMIC

Donors carry on altruistic work

Facebook groups proved big help
NILIMA JAHAN

One night in May, around 11:00pm, Milon Hossain got a call from a Facebook-based blood donation group. He was asked to donate his O positive blood for a woman, who fell unconscious from bleeding at Pabna Sadar Hospital. Milon immediately started for the hospital, 35 kilometres away from his village in Pabna, on his motorbike. "After the donation, when I returned home, it was around 1:00am," he recounted. The 30-year-old motor mechanic and his brother had taken an oath two years ago to donate blood for saving the lives of critical patients. They took the vow when Roktadaner Opekkhay Bangladesh, the same group that called Milon in May, helped save his sister-in-law's life with 10 bags of blood in 2018. "Although many fear to donate blood nowadays, I believe if we keep conscious, maintain hygiene and proper distance, there is nothing to be worried about," said Milon. Like him, hundreds of volunteers of social media-based blood donation groups have continued their altruistic work during this pandemic, risking coronavirus infection. Asif Ahmed, a diploma engineering student of Brahmaputra Polytechnic Institute of Mymensingh, is another daring volunteer of Roktadaner Opekkhay Bangladesh.



A young boy is fast asleep on a table containing vital coronavirus prevention products like face masks and hand sanitizers at the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Such items are in high demand amid the ongoing pandemic, but a slow Friday left the boy with little to do but to get some shut-eye.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

US imposes sanctions on Hong Kong leader Lam

REUTERS, Washington
The United States yesterday imposed sanctions on Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the territory's current and former police chiefs and eight other officials for their role in curtailing political freedoms in the territory. The sanctions were imposed under an executive order US President Donald Trump signed last month to punish China for its moves against dissent in Hong Kong and are the latest action by his administration against Beijing in the run-up to his November re-election bid. As well as Lam, the sanctions target Hong Kong Police commissioner Chris Tang and his predecessor Stephen Lo; John Lee Kachiu, Hong Kong's secretary of security, and Teresa



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

US BAN ON TIKTOK, WECHAT

China vows to protect interest

REUTERS, Beijing
China's foreign ministry firmly opposes executive orders announced by US President Donald Trump banning US transactions with the Chinese owners of messaging app WeChat and video-sharing app TikTok, Beijing said yesterday. Beijing will defend the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese businesses and the United States would have to bear the consequences of its actions, ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters during a daily briefing, without giving details. "The US is using national security as an excuse and using state power to oppress non-American businesses. That's just a hegemonic practice. China is firmly opposed to that," he said. The US executive orders, which will be effective in 45 days, come after the Trump administration announced its efforts to purge "untrusted" Chinese apps from US digital networks and called WeChat, controlled by Tencent Holdings Ltd, and ByteDance's TikTok "significant threats." Wang said that the United States was sacrificing the interests of users and companies and engaging in political manipulation and oppression, adding that it "will only lose its moral high ground".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Step up relief work

August 8, 1972
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN
BANGABANDHU'S DIRECTIVE
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has expressed his deep sympathy for the flood-affected people of Bangladesh and instructed the government to undertake relief work on an emergency basis. In a message to the acting Prime Minister Syed Nazrul Islam from his sick bed in London Clinic, Bangabandhu said all resources should be mobilised for the relief of the suffering people. He added that money should not be a problem and asked the cabinet ministers to visit the affected areas and remain there for relief work. He further directed that all means of communication, including planes, should be commissioned in the task of relief operation on priority basis. UN MEMBERSHIP SOUGHT
Bangladesh formally forwards her application for the UN membership in a cable to the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim today. Bangladesh has so far been recognised by 86 members of UN. The date for moving the application was approved by the cabinet yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has given his concurrence. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad has requested the UN Secretary General to place the application before the Security Council. The Security Council is meeting this month while the General Assembly session will begin next month. The foreign minister has also sent appeals to all members of the UN seeking their support for Bangladesh's membership in the UN.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Virus hastens newspapers' slide to shaky digital future

AFP, Paris
The coronavirus crisis has weighed heavily on print newspapers already battling for survival around the world, with the number of copies sold tumbling while less profitable digital readerships surge. Simply delivering printed papers to the shops -- or having customers come in to buy them -- has become a challenge, worsening a years-long decline in sales and advertising revenue. "Consumption of printed newspapers has fallen as lockdowns undermine physical distribution, almost certainly accelerating the shift to an all-digital future," the Reuters Institute's 2020 annual report said. Major dailies in Brazil and Mexico have already switched to online-only or dropped some days.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

New Guinea has most diverse island plant life on earth



MAIL ONLINE
New Guinea has the most diverse island plant life in the world, according to researchers, who found it has 20 percent more flora than Madagascar or Borneo. Experts from the University of Zurich examined 700,000 plant specimens from the southwestern Pacific island as part of a study into its ecosystem diversity. Two-thirds of the species of plants found on New Guinea by the research team are only found in that region - an area almost 20 times the size of Switzerland.

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SHIMULIA-KATHALBARI

Strong currents in Padma halt ferry services at night-time

STAR REPORT
The authorities have been forced to suspend operations of ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route at night for the last one month due to strong currents in the Padma. Ferry services are running only during daytime to avoid any accidents, Shafiqul Islam, assistant general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 8
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-47 8-15
JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

KABIKHA SCHEME

UP chairman lands in jail over plunder of wheat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore
A union parishad chairman and a member landed in jail on Thursday following allegations of stealing large amounts of wheat from the government's food for work programme in Natore. Chhatani Union Parishad Chairman Tofazzal Hossain Sarkar and Member Shahnaz Parveen in the sadar upazila were accused in a case filed by the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC). Police on Wednesday found 100 sacks of wheat belonging to the programme at the house of Tofazzal's relative Qurban Ali, said Liton Kumar Saha, superintendent of police in Natore. Qurban told police that the chairman asked him to store the wheat at his house, officials said. The government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A man inspects a bunch of bananas on the sidewalk of Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday. A nonprofit organisation under the agriculture ministry collects safe vegetables and fruits directly from farmers to sell online. The fresh produce is also directly sold at Manik Mia avenue.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Covid cases in India double in three weeks

Hit 2m-mark; US sees 2,060 deaths in 24 hrs as global cases top 19m

AGENCIES
India's official coronavirus case tally hit two million yesterday, doubling in three weeks as the pandemic sweeps into smaller cities and rural areas, with experts warning the real toll could be much higher. A record daily jump of more than 60,000 fresh infections was recorded, according to health ministry data, making the South Asian giant only the third country to surpass the two million milestone after the United States and Brazil. The rate of spread in the world's second-most populous country also appears to be increasing. India logged its first one million infections by July 17 and crossed the 1.5 million mark just 12 days after that. Official figures show the country has now recorded 2.03 million infections and 41,585 deaths. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government imposed one of the world's strictest lockdowns in late March. But with Asia's third-largest economy reeling from the impact -- tens of millions of migrant workers lost their jobs almost overnight -- the restrictions have been steadily eased. Previously the main hotspots have been the teeming megacities of New Delhi and Mumbai, home to some of the world's biggest slums. But now smaller cities and rural areas -- where 70 percent of Indians live -- have begun to see case numbers rising sharply. At least 19,127,000 coronavirus cases and 715,000

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