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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE2,617
New cases in 24hrs2,69,115
Total cases3,557
Deaths1,54,871
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE748,578
Deaths20,890,805
Total cases

COMPLAINTS AGAINST COPS

Floodgates flung open

Good deeds by police overshadowed by activities of some rogue colleagues

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

“Seven policemen sent to jail”, “Drama by cops’ gone wrong”, “Bamna OC withdrawn from slapping ASI”, “Kotwali OC, 4 cops sued for extortion”, and “Durgapur OC withdrawn over torturing Jubo League leader”, were some of the headlines over the last few days.

Of late, complaints against police over various acts of brutalities and misdeeds have been pouring in.

Intimidation, extortion, detention of people without any valid reason, bribery, and threatening to kill people were the common allegations raised against members of police.

The sudden rise in the number of allegations against the force members overshadowed their feats and somewhat sullied the image the force earned by being on the Covid-19 frontline. Police were on the streets to ensure people’s safety and helped working people during the shutdown.

The killing of a former army officer in police firing reinforced the belief of many that the force is trigger-happy and it has dented people’s trust in the police.

Ex-major Sinha Md Rashed Khan, who served in the Special Security Force (SSF) and took voluntary retirement two years ago, was killed in police firing on the night of July 31 at Shamlapur police check-post. The police gave a different version to the ones given by witnesses.

The killing triggered widespread criticism, leading the authorities to form a high-powered enquiry committee. As an immediate measure, 21 policemen were closed. Later, seven cops were arrested. Of them, four were placed on remand.

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A bus helper wearing a face mask on his wrist looks for commuters to pick up at Poribagh in the capital. People refusing to use any face covering are becoming more common by the day even though there is no scientific data proving that the coronavirus outbreak in the country, especially in Dhaka, has been contained. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Ex-Reliance Finance MD embezzled Tk 3,000cr

Finds ACC; 83 bank accounts frozen

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

While he was the managing director of Reliance Finance Ltd, a non-bank financial institution, Proshanta Kumar Halder made his relatives directors of three other leasing companies to swindle money.

Together, they misappropriated Tk 3,000 crore of depositors, finds the Anti-Corruption Commission in its enquiry.

“The money was transferred to 83 accounts ...,” said an ACC official, preferring to be unnamed, adding that the accounts belong to companies and people that exist only on paper.

The anti-graft body yesterday froze the 83 accounts where Tk 3,000 crore had been transferred.

The three leasing companies in which

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FARMERS BANK SCAM

Charges framed against ex-CJ Sinha, 10 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others in a case filed over misappropriating and laundering about Tk 4 crore from the erstwhile Farmers Bank in 2016.

Among the accused, six are former officials of the bank, later renamed Padma Bank. They are former managing director AKM Shamim, senior executive vice-president and head of Credit Division Gazi Salahuddin, first vice-president of Credit Division Swapan Kumar Roy, first vice-president Shafiuddin Askary, former chairman of the bank’s audit committee Mahbubul Haque Chisty and vice-president Lutful Haque.

The four other accused are Shahjahan of Tangail’s Sreehoripur village, Ranjit Chandra Saha of the district’s Jodunathpur village, and his wife Santri Roy and nephew Niranjana Chandra Saha.

AKM Shamim and Gazi Salahuddin are now on bail while Mahbubul Haque Chisty is behind bars. The eight other accused were shown fugitives in the charge sheet of the case.

Claiming themselves to be innocent,

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DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Where disorder reigns supreme

Planning ministry expresses discontent

REJAUL KARIM BYRON AND MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The planning ministry yesterday expressed disappointment over frequent amendments in projects, one after another missed deadlines, and the directors’ absence at project sites.

Implementation of projects gets delayed because of this, said top officials at a meeting of secretaries from all ministries and divisions.

In many cases, one person is becoming the director for as many as eight or nine projects while officials design the project without properly testing its feasibility.

The officials said the health ministry’s performance in implementing the Annual Development Project for 2019-2020 fiscal as well as the last few years has been the worst.

The planning ministry in a working paper for the meeting said that the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved 18 amended projects worth Tk 51,113 crore under nine ministries in June and July this year.

“On an average the cost of these projects increased by 34.86 percent. In some cases, cost increased by 100 percent,” said the working paper.

Revised ADP implementation was slow in 2019-20 fiscal. All ministries and divisions managed to spend 80.45 per cent of the money allocated in the revised ADP budget of Tk 2,01,198 crore.

Most of the projects are designed small in the beginning, but with time, the project expands and the cost rises. Meanwhile, people get deprived of the services, said the working paper.

Although the Ecne directive asking for proper feasibility tests and technical designs are barely followed. “As a result, the projects need multiple extensions.”

Planning Minister MA Mannan at a virtual press briefing said, “Rules are ignored on some occasions.”

The rules that one person cannot be the director for multiple projects and that the director should not be transferred were often ignored, he said.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at the meeting reminded

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ACTIVE COVID CASES

Bangladesh now eighth in world

Govt to cut number of dedicated hospitals by month’s end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is now on the eighth position of the countries’ list with most active Covid-19 cases as the health directorate reported 2,617 new cases yesterday.

Among all other Asian countries, only neighbouring India is ahead of Bangladesh with 6,58,417 active cases, with USA topping the list with 23,78,426 active cases, according to www.worldometers.info.

As of yesterday, the number of active Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh was 1,09,896.

Against this backdrop, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said some Covid-19 dedicated hospitals will be reverted to non-Covid-19 hospitals at the end of August as the number of Covid-19 patients are decreasing.

“The severity of the Covid-19 outbreak is decreasing. Patients who are not infected with

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SINHA MURDER CASE

Accused to face quizzing Sunday

STAR REPORT

Major (ret) Sinha was the operation officer of Border Guard Bangladesh in Teknaf and played an active role in the anti-narcotics operations.

Lt Col Md Faisal Hasan Khan, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2 in Teknaf, said Sinha served as acting operations officer at Teknaf BGB from October 2017 to January 2018.

“He was a smart and brilliant officer. So, definitely he played important role in the drives against narcotics,” he added.

Despite repeated attempts, no Rab officer could be contacted to comment on whether Sinha’s posting in Teknaf BGB had any links to his murder, which his sister claimed was “a planned and cold-blooded murder” in the case she filed.

Meanwhile, Rab yesterday did not take any of the 10 accused arrested so far in the Major (ret) Sinha murder case in their custody from jail to interrogate them.

Asked, Rab said the reason they postponed the interrogation was that they had stumbled upon some additional information about the Sinha murder on social media. “We have to verify those informations before we go into questioning,” Rab said.

It added that they would interrogate Shipra Debnath and Shahadul Islam Sefat, witnesses to the Sinha killing, on Sunday and that too is when they will bring in the 10 accused on remand.

“We don’t know if Sinha’s recruitment in the BGB was a reason for the murder. We are investigating every possible angle,” a Rab official said.

A Rab team went to Cox’s Bazar jail in several vehicles around 11:00am yesterday, but they returned after around 15 minutes without taking any of the accused with them,

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‘Ill-efforts’ on to put 2 forces face to face

Bangladesh Police Service Association voices concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) has expressed concerns over a vested quarter’s “ill-efforts” to bring two professional forces of the state face to face over the recent killing of Major (ret) Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan in Cox’s Bazar.

In a press statement yesterday, the organisation said a vested group is active to influence and hinder the legal process of the Sinha murder case by using various social media platforms, including Facebook, Youtube, and also some print and electronic media outlets.

“In such a situation, such ill-efforts of bringing the two professional forces face to face is very unfortunate and unexpected,” said the statement.

It appears that tension grew between the police and the Rapid Action Battalion over the

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Shubhadda Khal, which flows to the Buriganga river, has turned into a stream of garbage by the road in Aganagar, Keraniganj of Dhaka. This mindless littering not only affects the overall hygiene in the area but also deprives people of the choice of travelling by boats. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



7 more lives lost in two road crashes

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and three others injured in two road accidents in Lalmonirhat and Pabna yesterday.

In Lalmonirhat, four people, including three of a family, were killed when a bus collided head-on with a car in Raypur RDRS Bazar area on Kurigram-Rangpur highway yesterday morning.

Witnesses said the car heading towards Kurigram collided with the bus leaving Kurigram.

The unidentified driver of the car died on the spot.

There were six others in the car and all of them were rescued in a critical condition. They were taken to Kurigram General Hospital where doctors declared Billal Hossain, 25, dead.

Billal's parents Muzibur Rahman, 55, and Bilkis Begum, 45, died at the hospital later.

Dr Meherul Islam at the hospital

said the condition of one of the injured was critical and he could be moved to Rangpur for better treatment.

Quoting the injured, the doctor said the people in the car were going to Ulipur upazila of Kurigram from Narsingdi.

In Pabna's Sujanagar upazila, three people were killed when a bus hit a three-wheeler on Dhaka-Pabna highway early yesterday. The victims are three-wheeler driver Ilias Hossain, 47, Harun Miah, 24, and Sohel Rana, 16.

Inspector of Madhupur Highway Police Station Ali Reza said the accident happened around 12:30am when the bus heading for Dhaka hit the three-wheeler which was crossing the road in Chinakhora Bazar area.

Ilias died on the spot while the other two died in Pabna Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Police seized the bus but its driver managed to flee.

UK police get new 'hostile state activity' powers at ports

AFP, London

Police in Britain were handed new powers yesterday to stop, search and detain people at ports of entry on suspicion of involvement in "hostile state activity".

The measures, targeting espionage and foreign interference, are part of the response to a 2018 chemical weapons attack on British soil that nearly killed a Russian-born double agent.

Britain blames the incident on two Russian security service officers who allegedly entered the country using false passports and poisoned Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the English city Salisbury.

Moscow has denied any involvement.

"The threat posed to the UK from hostile state activity is growing and ever changing," interior minister Priti Patel said.

"These new powers send a very clear message to those involved in it that this government has zero tolerance for

those acting against British interests.

"But I am clear more must be done and we are developing new legislation to bring our laws up to date and create new ones to stay ahead of the threat."

The measures, contained in counterterrorism and border security legislation passed last year, allows for independent oversight by Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office.

They come as so-called hostile state activity and foreign interference in British politics are increasingly in the spotlight.

A long-awaited report into Russian meddling in Britain released last month criticised the government for failing to look adequately into possible interference.

Diplomatic ties between London and Moscow have been fraught since 2006 when President Vladimir Putin was blamed for the radiation poisoning of former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko in the British capital.

Bangladesh now eighth in world

FROM PAGE 1

Covid-19 have not gotten treatment properly due to coronavirus. We are going to turn many hospitals back to non-Covid-19 hospitals at the end of this month," the health minister said yesterday while addressing a meeting on the progress of projects to build cancer hospitals in eight divisional cities.

Mentioning that around 70 beds in Covid-19 hospitals are lying vacant, the minister said, "It is not yet final how many Covid-19 hospitals will be turned back to non-Covid-19 hospitals."

On March 8, authorities reported the first three cases in the country.

Since then, 2,69,115 people have tested positive for the highly transmissible virus.

Of them, 1,54,871 -- more than 57 percent -- have recovered.

In 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, 44 Covid-19 patients died, taking the death toll to 3,557 -- around 1.32 percent of all confirmed cases.

Of yesterday's deceased, 31 were male and 13 female.

Among the total deceased, just over 79 percent were male and around 21 percent were female. Age-wise, the incidence of death has been highest among those over 60, with that age group accounting for 47 percent of deaths, followed by 28 percent in the 51-60 group.

Of yesterday's deceased, one was

aged between 31 and 40, seven between 41 and 50, 11 between 51 and 60 and 25 were over 60 years.

Nineteen of the deceased were from Dhaka Division, six from Chattogram, seven from Khulna, four from Sylhet, three each from Rajshahi and Barishal, and two from Rangpur Division, according to the Management Information System of the health directorate.

So far, Dhaka division is on top of the list with 1,700 Covid-19 related deaths followed by Chattogram with 825.

Mymensingh has seen the fewest deaths, with 78 patients dying in the division.

Yesterday, a total of 13,162 individuals were tested for the virus.

Of them, 19.88 percent were positive -- the first time the day-on-day positivity rate dipped below 20 percent in more than a month.

The positivity rate was 20.30 percent on Wednesday.

On July 5, the rate was 19.57, and since then till yesterday, the number had been hovering above the 20 percent mark.

Starting from January 21, a total of 13,15,901 samples were tested in 87 RT-PCR laboratories across the country.

Yesterday, Rangamati General Hospital PCR Lab started testing samples for Covid-19 as the 87th lab in the country.

Ex-Reliance Finance MD

FROM PAGE 1

his relatives were made directors are: People's Leasing and Financial Services, International Leasing and Financial Services Ltd, and FAS Finance and Investment Ltd.

Sources said the enquiry was on the final stage and a case would be filed soon against those involved in the corruption.

Also known as PK Halder, Proshanta was also appointed as the managing director of NRB Global Bank in 2015. Before taking over the charge, he had been the MD of Reliance Finance Ltd since 2009.

His misdeeds came to the fore after the ACC launched an enquiry against the casino kingpins last year.

On January 8 this year, the ACC lodged a case against Proshanta for amassing around Tk 274.91 crore beyond known sources of income.

During the enquiry, the graft watchdog found questionable transactions of about Tk 1,636 crore in his personal and interest-involved bank accounts.

The ACC found that Proshanta had transactions of about Tk 240.87 crore in his accounts, Tk 160 crore in his mother's account and Tk 1,235.7 crore in other interest-involved bank accounts.

ACC Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Proshan is now enquiring the suspicious transactions.

Sources said intelligence report regarding the misappropriation of money from the four leasing companies reached the ACC.

According to the report, the money in the name of loans was transferred to 39 business organisations that exist on paper only.

On Wednesday, the graft watchdog asked the authorities concerned of

the leasing companies to submit all documents, including approval, proposal, and disbursement of loan.

Besides, it has asked nine businessmen to appear before it between August 18 and 19 for quizzing.

The nine are: Hal International's directors Swapan Kumar Mistri, Kazi Momrez Mahmud, Pritish Kumar Halder, Amitav Adhikari and its managing director Susmita Saha, RB Enterprise proprietor Ratan Kumar Biswas, Anan Chemical directors Uzsal Kumar Nandi and Anita Kaur, and Reptiles Farm Chairman Shimu Roy.

On October 23 last year, the ACC issued travel ban against Proshanta and 21 others. Later, his travel ban was challenged at the High Court which upheld the ban and the Supreme Court also upheld the HC order on February 26 this year.

Ironically, Proshanta is now in Canada. He has been the director of a Canadian corporation P&L Hal Holding Inc along with his brother Pritish Kumar Halder and wife Susmita Saha since July 3, 2014, according to records in the North American country.

Earlier this year, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Khondker Ibrahim Khaled was made the chairman of International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFSL) to salvage the company.

He assumed the charge on February 5, but resigned on March 3.

After his resignation, he said, "The financial health of ILFSL has been deteriorating since 2016, when Proshanta Kumar Halder bought a huge number of shares to establish control over the company."

Proshanta appointed relatives to the board of directors and management positions of the non-bank financial institutions to embezzle money, said Khaled.



Three-wheelers going against traffic leave little room for buses on Dhaka-Tangail highway, causing congestion near DEPZ area of Savar yesterday and also putting lives at risk.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Floodgates flung open

FROM PAGE 1

But as people were reeling from the shock of Sinha's killing, some other incidents came to the fore, dealing a further blow to the force.

Yesterday, an SI of Kadomtoli Police Station and eight others were sued for abduction and extortion in a case filed by a shop owner. The shop owner alleged that the cop threatened to frame him in narcotics and arms cases and took Tk 1 lakh and goods from his shop.

On Wednesday, a superintendent of police (SP) of Rajshahi range was sued in an extortion case.

Businessman Golam Mostofa, a relative of a former inspector general of police, filed the case against SP Md Belayet Hossain with a Dhaka court.

Some 15-16 unknown people, introducing themselves as "DB men" and led by Belayet, beat him up and forcibly took him to the capital's DB office, demanding Tk 25 lakh, Mostofa alleged in the case statement.

In another incident, a case was filed against five policemen of Akhaura Police Station in Brahmanbaria yesterday for extorting money by threatening to kill a Bangladeshi expatriate in a "crossfire".

On August 11, five members of the capital's Kotwali Police Station, including its OC, were sued in an extortion case.

Plaintiff, Sohel Miah, a 50-year-old cloth trader and also toll collector at Waizghat in Old Dhaka, alleged that the cops extorted Tk 3.5 lakh from his family by threatening to frame him in a case.

The transfer of four high officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's (DMP's) Mirpur division is another shocking event for the police force. They were transferred following mishandling and detonation of explosives with which some cops were allegedly trying to frame a person. The explosives went off inside Pallabi Police Station on the morning of July 29.

Complaints against law enforcers are nothing new and the police are used to receiving numerous

allegations. A complaint cell, formed in 2017, has received several thousand complaints against cops.

Cases have also been filed against errant policemen.

According to police headquarters data, 235 cases had been filed against 357 members of police across the country in 2019 alone.

Of them, the DMP had the highest 31 cases where 43 cops were accused. Cox's Bazar was second with 13 cases against 35 policemen, followed by Satkhira where 20 policemen were sued in eight cases.

The accused policemen were lower-tier officials.

The allegations included bribery, extortion, infidelity, misconduct and misbehaviour with senior officials, according to the data.

Speaking on the issue, former inspector general of police Nur Mohammad said each and every such incident had a negative impact on the entire force.

The police often have to discharge their duties under pressure, he said, adding, "So, in many cases, they get involved in problems. In my experience, this is a part of the job. It is difficult to get rid of such things due to the work pattern...."

"Where there is power, there will be misuse of power too. You will see it abroad too," he told The Daily Star.

"However, such incidents can be reduced by proper supervision. In absence of strong monitoring, such problems will persist," said Nur, also a ruling party lawmaker.

Replying to a question, he said, "It's true that we couldn't take the police recruitment, posting, promotion processes to an expected level."

He said in some cases, lobbying gets priority in recruitments and promotions.

Asked whether errant policemen getting away with minor punishments, like withdrawals or transfers, was in many cases the reason behind recurrence of such incidents, the ex-IGP said, "There are some weaknesses

in the system. If you want to punish someone, you have to prove it with witnesses. In many cases, witnesses do not show up fearing reprisal."

Absence of a witness protection scheme is also a reason behind it, he added.

Abdul Kader Miah, chairman of the Criminology and Police Science department at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said the police work with people, mostly deviant groups, and naturally they have to deal with them with hard and soft hands.

"But the problems occur when they [police] fail to maintain balance in their work," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

He said the police force was being run by an act which was enacted by British colonial rules intended to "exploit people", and this was a major obstacle to pro-people policing.

Over the last five months, the police have been serving the people while trying to deal with a pandemic and the work might have led some of them to be distressed -- leading some to get involved in such activities, he said.

"There is a lack of professionalism among many policemen due to socio-economic and political reasons. Besides, they lack professional training and have a huge workload," he said.

About solutions to the problems, the associate professor said police high-ups have to set an example by punishing errant policemen so that no member dares to indulge in such crimes.

He said the people-police ratio in Bangladesh was very high, which must be addressed and policemen have to be provided not only physical training but also moral, ethical, and religious training to make them more professional.

This paper called and texted Assistant Inspector General (Media) Md Sohel Rana several times yesterday evening for comments but he did not respond.

REGENT HOSPITAL SCAM

ACC quizzes former DGHS boss for 2nd consecutive day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission quizzed former Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Abul Kalam Azad over the Regent Hospital scam yesterday for the second straight day.

A team led by ACC Director Sheikh Md Fanafillah interrogated Azad for five hours at the ACC's Segunbagicha Headquarters.

Later, Azad read out a statement to the media, saying the anti-graft body interrogated him as part of their investigation into the corruption allegation against Regent Hospital.

"I want to make it clear that if anyone is involved in corruption, they will certainly get punished. I'm ready to cooperate," he said.

"Since the matter is under investigation, it won't be appropriate to say any more at the moment," Azad also said.

ACC's Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya said, "Our officers have gleaned information. But for the sake of proper enquiry, we cannot disclose it at this moment."

On Wednesday, ACC's Director Mir Md Zainul Abedin Shebly quizzed former DGHS DG for allegedly misappropriating a huge sum during the procurement of substandard masks, PPEs and other equipment for the doctors involved in Covid-19 treatment.

Amid severe criticism and scams related to Covid-19 testing, Azad stepped down as the director general of the DGHS on July 21.

Yesterday he told journalists that he had resigned nine months before the end of his tenure as he prioritised self-esteem over everything else.

Prof Azad had been the DGHS chief since September 2016.

The resignation came amid a rift between the health ministry and the health directorate over signing a deal with Regent Hospital, which has been at the centre of the Covid-19 testing scam.

The DGHS signed an MoU with Regent in March, turning it into a dedicated Covid-19 hospital, in a ceremony attended by Health Minister Zahid Maleque and many high officials.

The DGHS was aware that the hospital's licence had expired six years ago.

On July 7, a Rab mobile court raided Regent Hospital's Uttara branch and sealed it off. The court said it found proof that the hospital issued several thousand fake Covid-19 test reports, which prompted the rift.

The branch was sealed off in connection with issuing fake Covid-19 test certificates and collecting money from patients.

Later, the DGHS shut down the hospital's branches in Uttara and Mirpur.

Where disorder

FROM PAGE 1

the secretaries that if the rules and regulations are not honoured properly, there are provisions for punishment.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmad Kaikaus asked all officials to emphasise on spending foreign funds while implementing the projects.

"Large amounts of foreign money are now stuck in the pipeline in the absence of timely spending," he said.

When the planning minister was asked about the procurement of nine expensive vehicles and the leasing of 600 cars for Covid-19 response, he said that the cars were needed by the government officials.

"There should be cars [for a project]. It is an instrument of the project," he said.

He added that cars are rented under projects because many doctors and nurses need to be picked up and dropped off at hospitals and homes during the pandemic. The provision for renting vehicles will be no longer effective once the pandemic is gone.

Charges framed

FROM PAGE 1

Shamim, Salahuddin and Chisty demanded justice yesterday after Judge Shaikh Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge Court-4 of Dhaka read out the charges to them.

Charges were framed against Justice Sinha and seven others in absentia.

The court fixed August 18 to start the trial of the case.

Earlier on January 5, another Dhaka court had accepted the charges and issued arrest warrants against all the fugitive accused.

Following the issuance of the warrants, Shamim and Salahuddin secured bail from the court while Chisty was shown arrested as he was in jail in connection with another case filed in July 2018.

On December 10 last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission pressed charges against the 11 accused in the case.

The ACC in October, 2018 said it found evidence of fraud involving transactions of Tk 4 crore borrowed from the bank with fake documents by two businessmen, Shahjahan and Niranjana. Later, the money was deposited in Justice Sinha's account in another bank.

The graft watchdog had filed the case with its Integrated District Office-1 of Dhaka on July 10 last year.

The accused face a maximum seven year's jail term each if found guilty.

Justice Sinha, now in the US, had resigned as chief justice on November 11, 2017.

Want youths in global fight to achieve climate justice: Momen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said that the government will promote youth-led innovations and solutions to build greater resilience and combating climate emergency.

"We want to see young people in the global fight to achieve climate justice for Bangladesh," the minister said on Wednesday night while addressing as chief guest the launching ceremony of Coastal Youth Action Hub.

The minister said, "We will include young people in our delegation in the Next COP and will take special action under our CVF presidency. Bangladesh Parliament has adopted a first ever motion on planetary emergency to protect future of our next generation."

Nahim Razzaq, lawmaker from Shariatpur-3 and the convener of Climate Parliament Bangladesh, also joined the programme -- organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and YouthNet in partnership with Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament, British Council, BINDU and BEDS -- as special guest.

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With horses trotting by pulling a carriage painted in gold, splashing sewage water on ill-fated commuters and rickshaw-pullers on the roadside, the capital's Bongobazar almost looked like a discount renaissance painting yesterday. These horse carts still carry passengers in Old Dhaka, a tradition many animal rights activists term outdated and cruel.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Migrant workers in a pickle over flying back

Unable to reach workplaces on time due to ticket shortage, limited flights, they may lose jobs, have visas cancelled

JAMIL MAHMUD and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Thousands of expatriate Bangladeshis employed in the Middle East but currently stranded at home for months amid the coronavirus pandemic have been facing difficulties flying to their destinations due to limited access to air tickets.

They said they might face job-related complications and even their visas could expire if they fail to reach workplaces before the vacation ends.

Their families might face economic hardship if they cannot return to workplace on time, they feared.

Six Gulf Cooperation Council countries-- Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain-- are altogether home to about 76.93 percent of the country's more than one crore expatriate workers, according to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

As regular air communications with most Arab countries remained suspended due to the pandemic, expatriate workers were trying for charter flights, which are limited in numbers.

The demand for international airlines tickets reached excessively high in recent time due to suspension of regular passenger flights and arrangement of low number of charter flights, said Monsur Ahmed Kalam, president of Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB).

He said demands for tickets to Middle Eastern countries including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Oman could be about one lakh at present.

"Currently about 30,000 to 40,000 Bangladeshi expatriates have been waiting for tickets of UAE alone," he told this newspaper over phone.

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Ticket scalpers won't be spared, says Railway

Issues circular to enforce laws, asks passengers to buy tickets online

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to check ticket-scalping, Bangladesh Railway is going to strengthen enforcement of relevant laws that include three-month jail term.

Railways ministry yesterday issued a circular in this regard.

The circular says ticket, return ticket and periodic ticket for train journey is not transferable and only the passenger, for whom the ticket would be issued, would be allowed to travel up to the place mentioned in the ticket.

"If any person hand over or sell their ticket, return ticket or periodic ticket to other person would face up to three-month jail or fine or both. Similarly, if anyone use other's ticket, they have to pay fine, which would be the same amount of the actual fare," reads the circular.

"So, Bangladesh Railway is requesting its

passengers to buy tickets through online or mobile app on their own and refrain from journey with the tickets bought by others," it added.

The circular did not mention when the authorities are going to enforce the law strictly or whether all trains would be brought under measures.

Railways Director General Md Shamsuzzaman said for now they are going to enforce their strict measures only in intercity trains.

BR made national identity card mandatory for buying tickets for some intercity trains from March last year to check ticket-scalping.

Currently, railway authorities are selling all its train tickets online to maintain health guideline.

Asked whether anyone can buy ticket for their relative, a railway ministry official

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3,000 extrajudicial killings in the last 10 years: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said around 3,000 people were subjected to extrajudicial killing in the hands of law enforcement agencies across the country --from January 2009 to December 2019.

Apart from this, around 134 people met the same fate between June 2020 and now -- most of them, leaders and activists of the opposition party, Fakhrul said while addressing a virtual press conference.

Over the last 10 years, the number of custodial deaths was around 601, while 7,806 women were raped, 1,934 children were abused and of them 18 were killed, the BNP leader said.

At the same time, over one lakh cases were filed against leaders and activists of BNP across the country, Fakhrul said at the press conference.

"These indicate that the country has been turned into a valley of death and executioners' stage," the BNP leader said.

About ex-army major Sinha Md Rashed Khan killing, Fakhrul said protests have erupted across the country against such violent incidents.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Turning waste into energy

Govt to generate 36MW electricity from solid waste collected from DNCC

HELEMIUL ALAM

The government is going to generate 36-megawatt electricity from solid waste collected from Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) areas.

"A process in this regard is at a final stage. We will be able to get 36 megawatt power using the waste after processing it," State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid told The Daily Star last week.

DNCC is providing land for the project, a Chinese company (Chinese Machinery Engineering Company Limited or CMEC) is the investor while the ministry will purchase the electricity, he said.

Among 17 companies, they have chosen the Chinese company as they found it to be technically and financially viable, said Nasrul. Around 36-megawatt electricity will be generated using around 3,000 tonnes of waste collected from the DNCC areas.

He said they are also initiating another project in Narayanganj, where a company has already been selected through tender. Narayanganj City Corporation is providing

land for the project. At the plant, 5 megawatts of electricity will be generated from waste, the state minister said.

As the volume of waste in Narayanganj is less in comparison to that generated in the capital, the amount of electricity generation will also be less, he added.

"We also have undertaken a similar plan in Dhaka South City Corporation areas. A negotiation in this regard is ongoing," he said. The state minister said they also have a plan to start the process in Gazipur.

Responding to a question on air pollution, Nasrul said along with the selected company they will make sure that less carbon dioxide is emitted during power generation.

On plastic pollution, the state minister said in Germany, for using plastic items a consumer has to give green tax to the city mayor. As a result, people are being discouraged to use plastic items in restaurants or other places, he said. Residents also re-use bags, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Pressure on Dhaka will have to ease up: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Shiekh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday asked all utility service providing organisations to inform all their development projects to DSCC by October 1, to bring all work under coordination.

Addressing a programme at a city hotel, the mayor said if any organisations failed to inform them, they will have to wait one more year to implement it.

The meeting was organised by Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) on identifying the challenges to building a modern city and taking necessary action plan.

Taposh said, "You will be able to implement your project after submitting its plans to the city corporation but you will not be allowed to dig the same road three times."

He said, "Do not come with lobbying to implement your works without submitting your development project schedule."

"No matter who will be the financier -- World Bank, ADB or GoB -- I will not let any project be implemented without coordination," he said.

About the drainage master plan in 2016, the mayor questioned that since the master plan was prepared in 2016 Wasa, but what kind of step has been taken for implementation so far?

Strategic Transport Plan has also been prepared but what kind of measure has been taken so far for its implementations by the BRTA, he asked.

Urging LGRD minister Tajul Islam to do a population plan in Dhaka city, the mayor said if civic facilities can be developed in cities like Gazipur, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj and Narsingdi, the pressure on Dhaka will reduce.

Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh, please do not make it a slum, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

India mulls visas for Bangladeshis

Says envoy Riva Ganguly Das

BSS, Dhaka

India is thinking of opening regular visas for Bangladeshi travellers, the country's ambassador said yesterday.

Talking to reporters after paying a courtesy call on state minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, outgoing envoy Riva Ganguly Das said India is currently issuing emergency medical and business visas for Bangladeshis.

"Now we are trying to resume normal visas. However, it depends on the Covid-19 situation and movement of flights," she added.

Terming Bangladesh-India relations very strong, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury said, "Waterways can be one of the medium to increase connectivity between the two countries. We are moving forward through discussions."

Riva Ganguly Das said they are working very closely with the ministry of shipping.

Terming the trade train a win-win for both countries, she said the trial has already taken place in light of the signing of the Standard Operator Procedure (SOP) for shipping between Bangladesh and India.



While this may appear to be a rather unsettling sight of legs hanging outside the balcony of this market, it is, in fact, some shopkeepers' attempt at creatively displaying their products. These mannequin legs in pants now hang on one of the countless wires crisscrossing through Keraniganj's Aganagar area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Hot, humid days call for some lounging under the trees on the road divider for the dogs at Mirpur's Piberbagh. While they almost appear to be smiling, dogs tend to stick their tongue out as it helps them cool down on summer days.



Cambridge releases 2020 A Level results

CITY DESK

Cambridge International released the results of its June 2020 series on time, to thousands of schools around the world yesterday. Altogether more than 950,000 grades were issued, to almost 4,000 schools in 139 countries, said a press release.

In Bangladesh, this year the most popular Cambridge O Level subjects are Bengali, English language and mathematics syllabus D and the most popular Cambridge International AS & A Level subjects are mathematics, physics and chemistry.

Globally, the most popular Cambridge International AS & A level subjects this year are English (general paper), math and physics.

Mahesh Srivastava, regional director (South Asia) at Cambridge Assessment International Education, said, "2020 has been a transformational year and has had a huge impact on teaching and learning across the world. With school closures, Cambridge learners were not able to take their June exams and therefore we developed a rigorous process for awarding assessed grades."

Christine Özden, chief executive of Cambridge International, said, "In a unique situation Cambridge International had to respond quickly so that our global community of students stayed safe, but could progress with their education."

"We engaged worldwide with other awarding bodies, governments and universities to develop our process for awarding grades. It works across the many different countries in which we work, and is similar to the process used in the UK," she added.

"I hope our students around the world can now move forward with their lives, and come through this experience stronger and more resilient, after what has been a very challenging time for everyone," said Christine Özden.

Pressure on

FROM PAGE 3

Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh, please do not make it a slum, he said.

"We will ensure all civic facilities in Dhaka but thinking [everyone must] stay in Dhaka will have to stop," he said.

DSCC mayor also said they have to ensure low cost habitation facilities outside the rivers surrounding the capital to reduce pressure on the city.

LGRD minister Tajul Islam, who presided over the meeting said the country is like an umbrella where different organisations like city corporations, municipalities, Rajuk are there.

"City corporations want to get canals and drainage systems of the city under their jurisdiction, but I have to hand it in such a way so that city corporations can do their work properly to solve the waterlogging problem," he said.

"We have to see where the strength of the city corporations will have to increase, where they need support. City corporations across the world are doing this work," he said.

Among others, DNCC mayor Atiqul Islam, Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Md Jahangir Alam and Senior Secretary of Local Government Division Helal Uddin Ahmed also addressed the meeting.



Sitting on a footpath beside the Tejgaon-Link Road, Nazma carefully places betel leaves and cigarette packs on a piece of cloth next to a flask full of tea and waits for customers. Rain or shine, the 55-year-old woman stays at this very spot, hoping to make enough money to support her ill husband and children. Things were not like this for her. Once she had a job at a factory, which she lost due to the pandemic. Since then, every day has become a struggle for Nazma, who makes around Tk 150 to Tk 200 per day.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Children tail a DSCC staffer spraying mosquitocides at an alleyway in Uttar Mugda. Submerged in the smoke, the children are at risk of health hazards, but the worker seems to have no regards for this. This photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Abdul Hai Sarker new Dhaka Bank chairman

CITY DESK

Abdul Hai Sarker, chairman, Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust (ESTCDT), the Founding Trust of the Independent University, Bangladesh was recently elected chairman of Dhaka Bank Ltd.

Sarker is the owner of Purbani Group, a leading conglomerate. He is former president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), former vice chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) and a former director of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).



Migrant workers

FROM PAGE 3

The ATAB president said the authorities should immediately take steps to increase flight numbers to mitigate the crisis.

Jane Alam, an expatriate from UAE and resident of Chattogram's Patiya, told The Daily Star yesterday that his vacation will end on August 18 but he learnt that no airliners have available ticket for UAE this month.

"Now, I don't know how I will go back to my workplace within the scheduled time. If I can't, I'll have to undergo a lot of complications. My visa could be cancelled," he said.

Alam said he heard the construction firm he works for might reduce workers due to the pandemic. It might be those who will not join on time, he feared.

Another expatriate Nur Alam of Chattogram's Fatikchhari said he worked at a hotel in UAE for 21 years.

He booked a return ticket when he came home in January. But that flight got cancelled because of the pandemic.

"The airliner is not saying anything about what will be the fate of the ticket," he said, adding, he needed to go back to the UAE before August 20.

Contacted, Tahera Khandaker, deputy general manager (public relations) of Biman, said they are ready to operate more flights to different destinations including the Middle Eastern countries.

"However, the destination countries

have to allow us to operate flights," she said. "We will be able to do so as soon as the embargo is lifted," she added.

Tahera said at present they are operating scheduled flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and London (once a week), and charter flights to different destinations including the Middle Eastern countries.

BIMAN FLIGHTS TO KL RESUME AUG 18
After five months of suspension, Biman is going to resume direct commercial flights on Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur route from August 18.

Biman flights will be operated from Dhaka to Kuala Lumpur on Tuesdays and Fridays, while the rebound flights from Kuala Lumpur to Dhaka will be on Wednesdays and Saturdays, said a release of the national flag carrier yesterday.

The necessary conditions and information regarding air travel on the route are available on Biman website, it added.

Biman stopped its operations in Kuala Lumpur from March 18 due to the Malaysian government's decision to ban air travel with different countries, including Bangladesh, to stop the spread of coronavirus.

Biman official Tahera said they used to operate seven flights a week on the route before the pandemic. However, the number of flights will come down to two as Malaysia allowed so, she added.

Dr Meerjady new additional director general of DGHS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Meerjady Sabrina Flora has been made additional director general (planning and development) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). She will replace Prof Saniya Tahmina, who goes into retirement.

The Health Service Division of the health ministry issued a gazette in this regard yesterday. The notification will be applicable from August 20.

Dr Meerjady is currently the director of Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research. She was appointed as the IEDCR director in 2016.



Ticket scalpers

FROM PAGE 3

said, "They have to use their relative's NID and mobile number to buy ticket and they would be able to buy highest four tickets with an NID and cellphone number."

But, the NID and cellphone holder must travel; otherwise, none would be allowed to board with other three tickets, said the official.

"I know many, especially rural people, will face some problems in buying ticket. The ministry and railway are working to make the process easier but it would take some times," he said.

Bangladesh Railway resumed its operations on a limited scale from May 31 after suspension of service for more than two months to contain spread of Covid-19.

The authorities would resume operations of all intercity trains within August 30 but continued to operate with 50 percent passengers of its capacity.

Md Samsuzzaman said they made NID cards mandatory for some intercity trains last year but now they are going to make it mandatory for all intercity trains.

He said it's not possible to make the system for local and mail service because tickets of those trains are not sold online.

"However, we have already started bidding process to bring those trains under online service..."

Replying to another question that many people without internet service may face problem to buy ticket, he said, "They have to take help from others. The same system is in Europe and other developed countries."

Turning waste

FROM PAGE 3

There, people also sort waste at source, means at home. It does not happen in Bangladesh, he added.

"I have already spoken to DNCC officials in this regard," he said.

Asked, DNCC Chief Waste Management Officer Commodore Saidur Rahman said as their landfill at Amin Bazar has almost been filled up, they are going to set up another one next to it. A DPP for 80 acres of land has already been approved, he added. "We will provide 30 acres of land to the company to use it for 25 years to set up a plant to generate power from waste," he said.

They will provide all the waste generated daily in DNCC areas -- 2,500 to 3,000 tonnes, Saidur said.

The company will then sort the waste at the landfill, he said.

"This will also help us reduce open disposal of waste and keep the city and environment clean," he said.

Flat for Sale at Niketon
Flat with parking for sale at Niketon, Dhaka, 1540sqft. South-facing, silent zone, dead-end road, well maintained. Block-F, Rd # 12. Serious cash buyer only. Fixed price 114 Lacs. 01846228130 D-98

LAND FOR SALE
Rajuk allotted five katha land for sale at prime commercial location in Sonargaon Janapath, Sector 11, Uttara. Genuine buyers are requested to contact. Mobile: 01833376392 D-95

FLAT SALE BARIDHARA
2270 sft (Net) (Diplomatic Zone) 01752561149 01969411834

TO LET
Duplex (Gd+1st Flr) Independent approx. 4500sqft. in Baridhara DOHS. Approviat for office cum Residence. Contact: 01830-066548

Want youths in

FROM PAGE 3

Razzaq said the recent flood has created huge displacement in his constituency.

"We all know about the impact of climate change in Bangladesh and globally, and it is us who needs to take climate action now," Razzaq noted.

He congratulated the young people for committing to lead coastal resilience in Bangladesh and urged to bring behavioural changes to protect our ecosystem.

Ken O'Flaherty, the COP26 regional ambassador for Asia/ Pacific and South Asia, also joined the webinar as a special guest.

He noted, "It is very clear to us that the climate change is the biggest threat to our planet and it will be the young people who will be the most affected group."

"We have to be very careful and practical in our planning and implementation of climate action," said Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed, chairman of PKSE, who led and contributed to a number of policies in Bangladesh on climate change.

"The British Council intends to explore youth voices and choices in the realm of climate change to understand youth attitude and

aspirations, amplify youth voice and support better youth policy making and we will be engaging youth networks in doing the exercise," said Dr Shahnaz Karim, director (inclusive communities), British Council.

Barishal Deputy Commissioner SM Ajjor Rahman; First Secretary to the Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Folkert de Jager; equality and rights activist Sheepa Hafiza; Coordinator of YouthNet for Climate Justice Shakila Islam; and Chief Executive of Bangladesh Model Youth Parliament Sohanur Rahman also joined the webinar.

3,000 extrajudicial

FROM PAGE 3

"We want justice for Sinha. The trials of all extrajudicial killings will be held on the soil of the country... we're hopeful," he said.

Claiming that extrajudicial killing contradicts the spirit of the Liberation War and the constitution, Fakhru said such killing, abduction, enforced disappearance and acts of repression against political opponents and dissenting voices should be considered as "crimes against humanity"

under section 2 (2) (a) of the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973.

"The country is marching towards a dysfunctional state. We want to end this situation," he said.

He said many international organisations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have made many reports against extrajudicial killing but the government is not paying heed to the matter.

Bangladesh-China Power Company (Pvt.) Limited
(A Joint Venture of NWPGL and CMCL)
8, Panthapath, Kawran Bazar, Level 5, UTB Building, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Corrigendum-01

The Enlistment Notice for 'Enlistment for Clearing & Forwarding (C&F) Agent, Stevedoring Service Provider and Draft Surveyor' vide Memo No. BCPC/Procurement/Enlistment-01/2020/07 dated: July 21, 2020 is hereby revised as follows:

Sl No.	Particulars	Provision in the Invitation for Enlistment	Provision in Corrigendum-01
9.	Application Closing Date and Time	August 19, 2020, Time: 3:00pm	August 26, 2020, Time: 3:00pm
11.	Eligibility of Applicant	...They shall have relevant experience of 03 (three) years in providing Stevedoring Service in at least 01 (one) National Port of BangladeshThey shall have relevant experience of 03 (three) years in providing Stevedoring Service and shall be enlisted by Payra Port Authority ...
	Group-02 Stevedoring Service		

All other contents of the Enlistment Notice shall remain unchanged.

Memo No. BCPC/Procurement/Enlistment-01/2020/22
Date: August 13, 2020
GD-1257

Shah Abdul Moula
Project Director (CE), BCPC

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tiger Pass, Chattogram
www.ccc.org.bd

Memo No. ৪৬.১১.১৬০০.০০২.১৪.৭১৬.২০.০১৩১

Dated: ১৩/৮/২০২০

e-Tender Notice-CCC/ADP-716 cr(R)/2020-21

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 24-08-2020 at 12:00.

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
1	DRFD/CCC/W-15/Lot-1.	Development of Dewanhat by Passdighir Par and Dhoniola Para Road at Ward No. 23 (Lot-1)	484047	24-08-20 12:00	24-08-20 14:00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Engr. Rafiqul Islam
Project Director
&
Additional Chief Engineer
Chattogram City Corporation

CCC/PRD-107/2020
GD-1259

INDIA'S BID TO BOOST TIES WITH MALDIVES

Male to get \$500m more for bridge, ferry

AFP, MALE

India yesterday pledged \$500 million to build bridges and causeways in the Maldives, as New Delhi seeks to counter growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean.

The Maldives borrowed billions of dollars from Beijing and hired Chinese firms for infrastructure projects under previous president Abdulla Yameen.

This stoked concerns in India and the West that China was saddling countries in Asia and beyond with unsustainable debts while expanding its sphere of influence.

Under the new Maldives government, India has sought to regain influence in the archipelago nation located on major East-West shipping lanes.

The new investment announced takes India's total pledged outlay to over \$2 billion since President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih came to power, India's foreign ministry said.

Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid said the new money was part of a financial package to build bridges and causeways linking the capital Male to three neighbouring islets. "Once completed, the project will be the single largest infrastructure project in the Maldives," Shahid added.

It was not clear how long the new project would take.

Shahid also said his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in their talks yesterday had pledged \$250 million to meet urgent needs and support efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

"There has been a reset in our relations," an Indian diplomat said after the bilateral talks via video conference.

"In the last one-and-a-half years, President Solih and his government have acted on its 'India First' policy in right earnest. In line with its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, India has worked proactively to deepen its ties with the Maldives."



People hold flowers while lining up along a traffic way during a demonstration against police violence following recent protests to reject the presidential election results in Minsk, Belarus, yesterday. Protesters formed human chains and marched through the streets of Belarus carrying flowers for the second day yesterday in anger at a crackdown by strongman President Alexander Lukashenko that has prompted the European Union to consider new sanctions against Minsk.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wind and solar produced 10% of global electricity in H1 2020

Wind turbines and solar panels produced a record 10% of the world's electricity in the first half of 2020 as coal-power declined, but steeper change is needed to meet targets set under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, a report said yesterday. Generation from wind and solar rose by 14% during the first half of 2020 compared with the same period in 2019 while output from coal plants fell by 8.3%, the report by independent climate think tank Ember said. Overall electricity demand fell by 3% during the six months due to coronavirus lockdowns, the report said. Despite the drop, coal plants still produced 33% of the world's electricity during the period. Europe and the UK saw the largest contributions from wind and solar, at 21% and 33% respectively during the first half of the year, with China at 10% and the United States at 12%, the report said. Ember's report examined data from 48 countries which make up 83% of global electricity production.

Chemical signal for locust swarming identified

Scientists have identified a chemical compound released by locusts that causes them to swarm, opening the door to possible new ways to prevent these insects from devouring crops vital to human sustenance as they have for millennia. Researchers said on Wednesday they identified the pheromone - a chemical produced by an animal that affects the behavior of others of its own species - in the world's most widespread locust species, the migratory locust, or *Locusta migratoria*. Called 4-vinylanisole (4VA), it is primarily released from the hind legs and is detected by the antennae of other locusts and sensed by odorant receptors, the researchers said. Swarms can include billions of locusts and span hundreds of square miles (km) as the insects voraciously consume crops, imperiling food security. Migratory locusts inhabit Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, attacking pastures and critical crops such as wheat, rice, corn, millet, barley, oats, sugarcane and sorghum.

Kenya elephant numbers more than double in 3 decades



Kenya's elephant numbers more than doubled between 1989 and 2018, thanks to increased anti-poaching efforts, the tourism minister said on Wednesday. Kenya had just 16,000 elephants in 1989, and this rose to more than 34,000 in 2018, Minister Najib Balala said. The number of elephants poached so far this year stood at seven, down from 34 in all of 2019, and 80 in 2018. In 2016, President Uhuru Kenyatta set fire to thousands of elephant tusks and rhino horns, destroying a stockpile that would have been worth a fortune to smugglers and sending a message that trade in the animal parts must be stopped.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'It's all on the line'

Biden, Harris vow to 'rebuild' post-Trump America

AGENCIES

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris launched their joint White House bid Wednesday, with the newly-minted vice presidential nominee saying Americans are "crying out for leadership" to overcome the triple crisis of a pandemic, racial injustice and a ravaged economy.

Making their first appearance as running mates, before a small crowd of reporters and staffers at a Delaware high school closed to the public due to coronavirus concerns, the Democratic duo vowed to end Donald Trump's presidency and, in Biden's words, "rebuild this country."

"Everything we care about," said Harris. "It's all on the line."

A formidable 55-year-old US senator from California and a daughter of immigrants, Harris has already made history as the first woman of color tapped for a major party presidential ticket.

Describing a country at the crossroads, she left little doubt of her determination to go on the attack, saying Trump "just isn't up for the job" and has left the nation "in tatters."

"America is crying out for leadership, yet we have a president who cares more about himself than

the people who elected him," she said.

Despite the awkwardly intimate setting, a far cry from the typical campaign rollout featuring an audience of thousands, Harris appeared telegenic and confident in her first speech as vice presidential nominee -- for which she and Biden both arrived wearing facemasks.

"The case against Donald Trump and Mike Pence is open and shut,"



said the former California attorney general as she assailed the president's "failures of leadership" on containing the deadly pandemic and an economy hobbled by measures to fight the contagion.

The daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants to the United States sought to tap into the nationwide upheaval over police violence and racial disparities.

"We're experiencing a moral reckoning with racism and systemic injustice that has brought a new coalition of conscience to the streets of our country demanding change," she said.

For Biden -- who leads Trump in most national polls and in swing states despite conducting the campaign mostly from his Wilmington, Delaware home -- his VP reveal marks a crucial moment as he aims to build a broad coalition of voters to defeat Trump.

She is the first Indian American to be a presidential running mate, personifying the diversity seen as key to building enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket -- and black lawmakers and activists were largely thrilled with the pick.

Nearly nine out of 10 Democrats approve of Kamala Harris as their party's vice presidential nominee, and she is more popular than Biden among women, young voters and some Republicans, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Wednesday.

The Aug 11-12 public opinion survey also found that 60% of Americans, including 87% of Democrats and 37% of Republicans, considered the selection of Harris to be a "major milestone" for the United States.

XI'S 'OPERATION EMPTY PLATE'

China tells diners to order less, cut food waste

AFP, Beijing

Chinese diners are being told to order less food as part of a campaign by President Xi Jinping to tackle waste and embrace thrift.

"Operation empty plate" aims to overturn the ingrained cultural habit of ordering extra food for group meals.

Xi was quoted in state media this week as saying food waste is "shocking and distressing," adding it was "necessary to maintain crisis awareness regarding food security".

"This year's impact of the coronavirus pandemic has further sounded the alarm for us."

Regional catering groups responded to Xi's call by embracing a so-called "N-1 policy" -- urging groups of customers to order one dish fewer than the number of diners at a table.

The campaign also suggests restaurants serve smaller or half-portion for lone diners.

A 2018 report by the Chinese Academy of Sciences claimed the average restaurant diner wasted 93 grams (3 ounces) of food every meal, contributing to the 18 million tons of food large cities throw away every year.

Public concerns over food security have increased in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which initially saw panic-buying and shortages in locked-down cities.

Worries have been compounded by severe floods that have devastated vast swathes of farmland in the Yangtze river delta -- where around half of China's agricultural production takes place -- disrupting harvests and leading to a rise in food prices.

State media and online platforms have also begun to wage war on food waste. Popular livestreaming platforms Douyin and Kuaishou said they would shut down accounts of people who gorge themselves on excessive levels of food, sometimes until they vomit -- a viral video practice known as "mukbang".

Israel, UAE agree to normalise ties

The Jewish state agrees to 'stop further annexation' of Palestinian land

REUTERS, Washington

Israel and the United Arab Emirates reached a historic deal that will lead to a full normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two Middle Eastern nations in an agreement that US President Donald Trump helped broker.

Under the agreement, Israel has agreed to suspend applying sovereignty to areas of the West Bank that it has been discussing annexing, senior White House officials told Reuters.

The deal was the product of lengthy discussions between Israel, the UAE and the United States that accelerated recently, White House officials said.

The agreement was sealed in a phone call yesterday between Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed.

"HUGE breakthrough today! Historic Peace Agreement between our two GREAT friends, Israel and the United Arab Emirates," Trump wrote on Twitter.

He said similar deals are being discussed with



other countries in the region. A signing ceremony including delegations from Israel and the United Arab Emirates will be held at the White House in the coming weeks, Trump added.

The US officials described the agreement, to be known as the Abraham Accords, as the first of its kind since Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994. It also gives Trump a foreign policy success as he seeks re-election on Nov 3.

Netanyahu, in his first comment on the deal,

said on Twitter it is "a historic day for the state of Israel." Abu Dhabi's crown prince said on Twitter that an agreement had been reached and that it would halt further Israeli annexation of Palestinian territories.

Delegations from Israel and the United Arab Emirates will meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements regarding investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications and other issues, the statement said. The two countries are expected soon to exchange ambassadors and embassies.

The statement said that as "a result of this diplomatic breakthrough and at the request of President Trump with the support of the United Arab Emirates, Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty" over areas of the West Bank that were envisioned in the US peace plan unveiled by Trump in January.

The agreement envisions giving Muslims greater access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem by allowing them to fly from Abu Dhabi to Tel Aviv, White House officials said.

DIPLOMATIC STRAINS OVER KASHMIR

Pak army chief to visit Saudi in quest to smooth ties

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's army chief will visit Saudi Arabia this weekend, officials said, seeking to calm diplomatic strains over Kashmir as financial support for Islamabad hangs in the balance.

The two countries are traditionally close and Saudi Arabia in 2018 gave Pakistan a \$3 billion loan and \$3.2 billion oil credit facility to help its balance of payments crisis.

But Riyadh is irked by criticism from Pakistan that Saudi Arabia has been lukewarm on the Kashmir territorial dispute, two senior military officials told Reuters, motivating General Qamar Javed Bajwa's planned fence-building visit on Sunday.

Pakistan has long pressed the Saudi-led Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to convene a high-level meeting to highlight alleged Indian violations in the part it controls. But the OIC has only held low-level meetings so far.

"If you cannot convene it, then I'll be compelled to ask Prime Minister Imran Khan to call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are ready to stand with us



on the issue of Kashmir and support the oppressed Kashmiris," Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told local media last week.

Qureshi's remarks have revived Riyadh's anger, one of the Pakistani military officials and a government advisor said.

Saudia Arabia had already made Pakistan pay back \$1 billion two weeks ago, forcing it to borrow from another close ally China, and Riyadh is yet to respond to Pakistan's request to extend the oil credit facility. Saudi Arabia is also asking for another \$1 billion back, Pakistani officials said. Pakistanis account for more than a quarter of the 10 million expatriates working in Saudi Arabia.

BALLOON FIRE BOMB ATTACKS

Israel pounds Gaza, halts fuel supply

AFP, Gaza City

Israel attacked targets of Islamist group Hamas in Gaza and halted fuel supplies to the enclave yesterday in the latest retaliation against fire bombs suspended from balloons that have been released from the Palestinian territory.

Israeli warplanes and tanks struck overnight in the fourth military attack over the past week, causing no reported casualties but leaving one unexploded missile inside a UN-run school's compound in Gaza's Shati refugee camp.

Adnan Abu Hasna, spokesman for UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinians, also told AFP the missile had come down in one of its schools, where children had just returned Sunday after a five-month suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest round of hostilities has seen firebombs attached to bunches of balloons floating into Israel, setting agricultural fields and scrubland ablaze. Sometimes kites are used in the makeshift attacks. Israeli fire services in the south of the country reported 60 fires caused by balloons on Tuesday, and 24 on Wednesday, without recording any casualties.

In response, Israel has closed its cargo crossing with Gaza and also reduced the territory's permitted coastal fishing zone.

Hamas yesterday condemned Israel's attacks on Gaza and its sanctions as "dangerous and aggressive behaviour". Hamas and Israel have fought three wars since 2008.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1
WTO Cell, Ministry of Commerce
Level-12 (West Side), Probashi Kollayn Bhaban
71-72, Eskaton Garden Road, Dhaka-1000

**Request for Expression of Interest
(Individual Consultant)**

Memo No. 26.00.0000.000.14.001.18-245 Dated: 13/08/2020

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received an USD 8.0 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) – a member of the World Bank Group – for financing the cost of the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1: MoC Component, being implemented by the WTO Cell under the Ministry of Commerce and intends to apply part of the proceeds for procuring the Individual Consultancy Services of following position for its Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

BRCP-1 MOC now invites eligible Consultants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services. Details of the qualification requirements and responsibilities are available in TOR:

Position and No.	Education	Experiences	Major responsibilities
Project Manager (01)	Post Graduate degree from any recognized university; Candidates having higher degrees will get preference.	A minimum 15 (fifteen) years of progressively responsible experience at national and international levels in advisory and managerial positions. Experience with World Bank or ADB funded project will be given preference.	Establish and maintain close working relationship with the PD, World Bank and other stakeholders of the projects, maintain a functional linkage with the concerned Agencies to facilitate and enhance application of available resources towards project goals.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18 of the World Bank Group's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, Procurement in Investment Project Financing, Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services July 2016 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank Group's policy on conflict of interest. A consultant will be selected in accordance with procedures for recruiting Individual Consultants set out in the Procurement Regulations. A copy of the terms of reference (TOR) and necessary forms of the assignment may be obtained from the address below during 09:00 to 17:00 hours or downloaded from the Ministry of Commerce website at: www.mincom.gov.bd and www.brpc-1.gov.bd. EOI shall be submitted on or before 02/09/2020 at 12:00 noon in sealed envelope delivered to the undersigned. Necessary documents in support of educational qualifications and experience and skills shall have to be attached with application. Candidates who are working in the government/semi-government organization, requested to apply through proper channel/as per rules.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Md. Mijanur Rahman
Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Email: pdbrpc1moc@gmail.com

GD-1256

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY SPECIAL



Students took to the streets to protest traffic incidents that killed a boy and a girl, and injured nine others in Dhaka, in 2018.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED & PIYAS BISWAS

Road Safety Movement 2018: Was it worthwhile?

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Two years ago, a speeding bus lost control and killed two teenagers and injured nine others in Dhaka. As a result, thousands of school students protested on the streets, demanding safer roads. University students soon joined the protests, and the police cracked down on the demonstrators.

According to a January 2019 report in *The Daily Star*, around 7,221 people died in road accidents, while 1,5446 people were injured in 2018. More recently, mountaineer Reshma Nahar Ratna, who was riding a bicycle, was killed when a microbus hit her on Lake Road, adjacent to Chandrima Uddyan. As such tragic accidents continue to increase across the country, the students are left to wonder – were their efforts during the road safety movement worthwhile?

When the movement began, slogans, videos and photos went viral on social media, with the hashtags, #RoadSafetyMovement and #WeWantJustice. “Technology helped us to spread the word, and made things easier on the grounds. We notified people about any updates or changes through social media and live videos on Facebook kept people engaged with the protests,” shared Anika Haque Annanya, an active participant of the movement and a student of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College. People across the nation expressed solidarity with the



protestors, on social media.

During the protests, students as young as 13, unaffiliated with any political agenda, stopped vehicles to check for license and registration and turned back vehicles travelling on the wrong side of the road to avoid traffic, a common practice in the country. They even kept an emergency lane for ambulances.

The government consented to the demands of the protestors, approving the draft of the Road Transport Act 2018, that

proposed a maximum punishment of five years’ imprisonment for causing deaths by reckless driving. The police implemented a nationwide Traffic Week that began on August 5, 2018, holding drivers fully accountable for traffic violations.

“Since the protests, the roads have been improved, the number of foot over bridges have increased and most importantly, public awareness has spiked,” said Sarzil Hasib, a student of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology.

However, different transport owners and workers protested several sections of the Road Transport Act, after it came into effect on November 1, 2019 – without enacting the rules. Their protests forced the government to relax several sections of the act till June this year.

“I don’t know the extent to which the demands have been actually put into action, but the movement served as a beacon of hope. It suggested that our generation will always stand against injustices, and that we care about good policies and public services,” added Tiasha Idrak, a student of University of Dhaka. Even though this unprecedented movement led to necessary conversations and some changes, the accomplishments of those changes is yet to be fully realised.

Several educational institutions also planned to conduct interactive classes, on-school activities and regular workshops on the importance of road safety. However, nothing really changed after the movement lost its momentum.

The increasing number of road accidents and the irregularities in the system have challenged the confidence of the protestors. Two years after the movement, the youths are still hoping that every resident of Bangladesh feels safe on the roads while travelling and that the authorities take cautious steps regarding road safety.



(1) Showing respect to her profession, Ratna placed the official flag of Primary Education on top of Stok Kangri and Kang Yatse Peak 2. (2) Ratna placed the Bangladeshi flag on top of Stok Kangri. (3) Ratna completed the Kolkata Trail Run. (4) Ratna on top of Lenana Peak, Mount Kenya.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Limitless dreams, heart full of courage In remembrance of Reshma Nahar Ratna

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

On a fateful Friday morning, Reshma Nahar Ratna was cycling on Lake Road, next to Chandrima Uddyan, when a speeding microbus recklessly hit her and ran away, shattering her dream of conquering the mountains of the world, in a matter of moments.

Born in Chattogram to Sheikh Afzal Hossain and Rabeya Begum, Reshma Nahar Ratna grew up in Narail. The youngest of three brothers and four sisters, she was a nature enthusiast since childhood.

Brought up in a conservative family, Ratna always believed that people are meant to cross their own limits through their dreams. Her indomitable desire to see the world from a young age, shaped her into an avid traveller. An educator by profession and a mountaineer by passion, Ratna had a profound love for life.

She was an assistant teacher at Ayub Ali Government Primary School. An active member of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, Ratna also loved singing and recitation. She took

guitar lessons at Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts.

Her journey as a mountaineer started in January 2016, when she conquered Keokradong, one of the highest peaks of Bangladesh, as a member of Bangladesh Mountaineering and Trekking Club (BMTK). Praised for her enthusiasm, she was selected for a basic training programme for 28 days at Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in Uttarakhand, India. Although she was unable to complete the course due to an injury, she returned in full swing in 2019 for higher and advanced training at the institute.

Ratna conquered Lenana peak on Mount Kenya on May 30, 2018. On August 24 in 2019, she conquered Stok Kangri, the highest mountain in the Stok Range of the Ladakh region, North India. Later, on August 30, she climbed Kang Yatse Peak 2 in Ladakh. Ratna successfully placed the flag of Bangladesh on the peaks, along with the official flag of Primary Education, as a show of respect towards her profession.

“Amidst various obstacles, we reach



Reshma Nahar Ratna

the mountain top to fly our country’s flag. The love for our country, for our flag, takes us to the top,” Ratna told international broadcaster Voice of America (VOA) in an interview in March 2020.

A passionate runner and athlete, Ratna also participated in different marathons. She finished the 25-kilometre Kolkata Marathon in December 2019 and the 21-kilometre Kolkata Trail Run in January 2020. She had recently started a live show on Facebook, titled *Porbot Premier Goppo*, where she featured several Bengali-

speaking female mountaineers.

An active participant of the Road Safety Movement two years ago, Ratna herself tragically lost her life on the street. Thousands of ‘Ratnas’ lose their lives every year in road accidents in Bangladesh. In a recent human chain arranged in Shahbagh, seeking justice for Ratna’s killer, protestors demanded the proper enforcement of the Road Safety Act 2018, separate lanes for cyclists and severe punishments for reckless driving, among other safety concerns.

Ratna dreamt of summiting Mount Everest one day. “As women, we must overcome all the obstacles in our way with courage. We must never back down from our dreams,” Ratna further said in the interview with VOA. Her spirit and bravery to break the shackles of patriarchy will continue to inspire young women of our country.

Ratna’s dreams might have come to an end, but all of us can keep her spirit alive, by choosing to remember her not as a girl who lost her life in a road accident, but as a bold mountaineer with limitless dreams and a heart full of courage.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY AUGUST 14, 2020, SRABAN 30, 1427 BS

When corruption eats the infrastructure development

Whatever happened to zero tolerance for graft?

A new study made public by Transparency International, Bangladesh has once again revealed just how dire the state of corruption is in the country and how incredibly widespread. The corruption exposed this time concerned important rural infrastructure development projects.

According to the study, block allocation of hundreds of crores of taka made to lawmakers for implementing the projects returned poor benefits because of political influence, nepotism, extortion and the lack of a specific legal framework and monitoring. And the quality of work in about two-thirds of the schemes to build rural roads, construct bridges and culverts under IRIDP was substandard. Yet, that is where most of the money was focused as this way it is easier to divert and siphon funds out of these projects, the report concluded.

Remarkably, researchers could not find any existence of 26 schemes, although final bills for those were withdrawn. And according to estimates, financial corruption among various stakeholders during different stages of tender, withdrawal of final bill and security deposit amounted to a staggering Tk 27.20-41.73 crore.

All this, along with the massive corruption that has been revealed in the recent past, makes a mockery of the ruling party's so-called policy of having zero-tolerance against corruption. Just imagine the amount of development that could have been achieved with all the taxpayer's money that has been wasted simply under one development scheme, and all the people that this could have benefitted. Yet, for decades this continued without any repercussion for those involved, as they mainly belonged to the ruling party or were somehow affiliated with it.

While ordinary people were generally restricted from participating in these projects, lawmakers whose primary role is to hold the government accountable could not resist but involve themselves in the very projects they were meant to be overseeing. And corruption in those projects was predictably high—which is what happens when the fox is allowed to guard the henhouse.

There needs to be some serious reckoning for this. The authorities, who have sat on their hands while all this was going on, need to come out of their slumber and hold those responsible for such extensive irregularities to account. Moreover, the TIB study gives numerous recommendations on how to mitigate mismanagement and corruption going forward which the authorities should urgently adopt.

Remove inflammable, hazardous goods from Chattogram port immediately

Safe management essential to avert a deadly accident

WE are extremely worried to learn that various types of imported hazardous cargo, including chemical and other inflammable goods, have been kept at the Chattogram port for years, posing serious risks of fires and other deadly accidents. According to the Chattogram Port Authority, these chemical and hazardous goods, imported between 1992 and 2019, are lying around at the designated sheds of the port as those were not delivered or claimed by any importer. What is also worrying is that the containers in which these goods were brought could not be traced. Although the goods should have been auctioned off or destroyed by the customs authorities long ago, no significant steps have been taken over the years to remove them. What this means is that the country's main seaport is at risk of a deadly explosion. Reportedly, a fire broke out at shed no. 3 of the port on July 15 during which there was a small explosion.

According to our report, the P-shed of the port where the hazardous goods are kept lacks modern management for storing such goods for a long time. The current system through which these goods are delivered or auctioned off has serious limitations. In many cases, goods are not delivered or claimed by the importers within the stipulated time. And when it comes to auctioning off the unclaimed goods, a shortage of manpower and failure to provide the correct documents stand in the way of the customs authorities. In the absence of proper management, the port is used as a warehouse of storing such hazardous products.

These problems need to be solved immediately if we do not want to experience any deadly explosion like that in Beirut, Lebanon, last week. Negligence or delay on the part of the port authorities and the customs department in removing or auctioning off the goods are unacceptable.

It is good to learn that the Chattogram Port Authority has formed a committee to assess the current condition of hazardous cargoes in the port. We hope that it will perform its duty properly—make a list of chemical and hazardous goods stored at the P-shed, determine the period of storage, make a list of goods that need to be auctioned off or destroyed immediately, look at the safety and security arrangements at the P-shed and recommend necessary measures, etc. The committee should also look into the laws and regulations of handling such goods and suggest any possible changes to make them effective. Of course, any assessment or recommendation will only be useful if it is put into practice by the relevant authorities.



As an education ministry press release has confirmed yet again, no decision has been taken on Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC), Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Primary Education Completion (PEC) examinations. Thankfully, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams for 2020 have already been held, but the prolonged school closures and irregular and unequal access to online and TV education have raised concerns regarding the preparations of students planning to sit for SSC exams next year.

While there were rumours that the JSC and PEC exams—scheduled to be held in November 2020—might be cancelled, there have been no confirmations yet. According to a report in this daily, the primary and mass education ministry and the education ministry have sent proposals to the Prime Minister's Office discussing exam cancellations and alternative methods of assessment, but “everything will depend on when schools open”. However, the “alternative methods” put forward by the ministries are still very much the same as standardised tests; suggestions include holding regular exams at some point but on a reduced syllabus, or 50-mark multiple choice question exams—a favourite method of assessment in our education system that ends up rewarding students who memorise answers and encourages “either/or” thinking.

Commentators have now started to discuss the worst case scenario—if schools cannot open, exams will not be held at all. But would that be such a bad thing? There are an estimated 3 million PEC examinees, and another 2.5 million students are expected to take the JSC exams. That makes five million children who are experiencing times of unprecedented stress and anxiety, probably the worst that they have ever experienced in their short lives. They will have to deal with the added anxiety of getting through their syllabus and sitting for competitive exams by the end of the year. Could we not come up with less stressful methods of assessment during these difficult times?

For the nearly one million HSC students in Bangladesh, the situation is far more frustrating—their exams were scheduled to be held on April 1 but were postponed in late March when the “general holiday” to stop the spread of coronavirus was announced. Since then, there have been no clear directives for them, except a vague promise that exams would be held when things calmed down. This uncertainty is hanging over the heads of students and their families, who may already be struggling to keep their children in school—a July report by Save the Children warned that almost 10 million children

across the world may never return to school after the pandemic, and that children in Bangladesh are at moderate or high risk of dropout (which may cause child marriage numbers to rise as well).

Imagine being an adolescent facing the very real mental pressure of planning for a “good future” and a stable life within limited resources and unlimited expectations. Now, can you imagine going through that while someone you love is suffering from coronavirus, or while your family is struggling to make ends meet?

Even in ordinary times, the pressure of performing well in competitive exams can have negative impacts on mental health, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. British schools have documented how children as young as six told guardians and educators about feeling exam stress and experiencing anxiety. Every year in Bangladesh, we hear sensationalised stories of students

break out of the traditional methods of education? Why not use predictive grades, encourage students to read and write essays, create individual work projects, and maybe even get students to document their unique experiences of learning during a pandemic, and assess them on that?

Ideally, competitive exams that reward students who memorise from their books should be replaced by more holistic assessments that encourage them to think critically, adapt to specific situations, and engage in problem-solving. The theory of multiple intelligence, put forward by US development psychologist Howard Garner in his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, is considered by many to be a guiding principle in modern teaching methods. Garner theorised that people do not just have intellectual capacity but many kinds of intelligences, including musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual, verbal-

properly entered public discourse on education—it took a global pandemic for the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to even consider cancelling yearly exams for class I, II and III, whereas we have been using standardised tests to assess five to seven year olds since 1972.

However, our inability to consider experimenting with alternative forms of assessment that focus on individual capabilities of students in more personalised classrooms—even during an emergency—doesn't just reflect our top-down, traditional model of education; this inflexible attitude also reveals the culture of discipline and demand for “obedience” that has become the defining feature of our relationships between different generations. While we encourage our children to go to school and aim high, we actively discourage them to think for themselves by trapping them within standardised tests and failing to



STAR FILE PHOTO

committing suicide after not doing well in SSC or HSC exams, and for a time, we discuss the mental strain of intensely competitive examinations on our young people. Despite that, there is very little research and no official data that focuses on the well-being of students (which can be affected by multiple challenges ranging from economic to emotional)—a telling sign of how little importance we put on the mental health of children in Bangladesh.

Countries across the world had scrapped high-pressure, test-based exams for children under 12 long before the pandemic, and in the wake of coronavirus, many exams for older children have been cancelled and replaced with predictive grades based on class performance. So why, after about five months of missed or irregular attendance in classes, are we only just now considering the question of cancelling exams in Bangladesh, especially for younger children? Why not just cancel them and use this time as an opportunity to come up with alternative methods of assessment that encourage students to

linguistic and logical-mathematical, which are often overlooked in our exam-based education system.

Educators have also stressed the importance of measuring the emotional intelligence and personality traits of children. In a *Medium* article, futurist Raya Bidshahri focused on “21st century skills... critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and imagination, agility and adaptability, collaboration across networks and leading by influence.” Critics of standardised tests have pointed out how they fail to measure the progress a child makes during school, or the effort she or he puts into their work.

In Bangladesh, these changes can't happen overnight, especially when the education sector is persistently underfunded and undervalued. Despite the pandemic and its related risks for students, the 2020-21 budget did not receive an increased allocation for education, which is currently at only 2.10 percent of GDP. Nevertheless, we should be worried that discussions on these changes have not

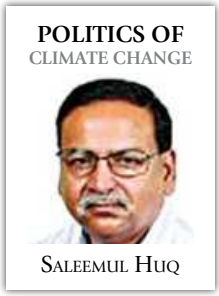
implement assessments that would ignite their minds and help them to think critically.

In the same breath, teachers tell students to memorise answers instead of asking questions; parents tell children to follow their commands and focus on studies instead of asking questions; bosses tell employees to do as they're told; and the government tells citizens how to behave. These scenarios are all different sides of the same coin—one that is entrenched in hierarchal and traditional norms of behaviour. They are also the reason why we have time and again discussed the future of our students without actually consulting them. If we are to come up with any real solutions on how to assess examinees during the pandemic, the first step we need to take is to stop acting like they're invisible, and ask them for their opinions. We may be surprised by what we end up learning from them.

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Shuprova Tasneem is a member of the editorial team at *The Daily Star*. Her Twitter handle is @shuprovatasneem.

Four lessons from Covid-19 pandemic for tackling climate change



THE global Covid-19 pandemic is now just over half a year old and arguably still in its early stages. However, there are already a few key lessons that are emerging when evaluating the responses of different countries to this public health emergency, which are relevant for tackling the much longer-term and much bigger emergency of climate change.

The first lesson is that global problems cannot be kept out by national boundaries even if leaders wish to do so. Whether it is the virus or climate change impacts, they will hit every country in every continent regardless of how rich or poor it is. The corollary to this lesson is, the wealth of a country is a very poor indicator of how successfully it can tackle the problem, as it is evident from the Covid-19 situation in the world's wealthiest country right now.

The second lesson is that the actions of leaders of countries, as well as provinces within countries and even individual cities, made a great deal of difference on the number of excess deaths due to the coronavirus. Those leaders who listened to the experts and took early action—combined with providing sensible and science-led advice to their citizens and enabling (rather than forcing) them to adopt good hygiene, face masks and social distancing—were the ones who managed to keep their respective death rates lower than others. This lesson is useful when it comes to tackling the climate change impacts in the coming years. Our leaders at all levels must listen to the climate scientists and base their actions on the best

available science going forward.

This is not to say that scientists can make extremely accurate predictions of what will happen, but rather that the scientific process is one of learning from actions and practices and adopting policies in light of what we are able to learn.

Let me illustrate this point with a comparison between weather forecasts and scenarios of future climate change. The former is based on meteorological data about the atmosphere from satellites

purpose of the model is to identify what can be done now so that the worst case scenarios can be avoided.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the global scientific body that assesses the outputs from various climate change models around the world and provides the best advice for global leaders on how to avoid the worst case scenarios. It is extremely important that the leaders of each and every country understand that advice and



PHOTO: REUTERS

and other observations, and the short-term predictions over hours and a few days can be very accurate. However, for longer periods running into months, forecasts become more probabilistic than predictive. In the same manner, climate change models which run to the end of the century or even middle of the century are not predictive but rather indicative of what might happen if no action is taken to prevent the worst case scenarios. Hence the

act upon it going forward.

A third set of important lessons emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic relate to the economic consequences of the public health and lockdown measures and also the economic recovery policies and investments that countries are now putting into place. The greatest opportunity here is for the countries to take a good look at what they were doing wrong in the past and how to do better in the future.

This is most relevant when it comes to evaluating our overdependence on fossil fuels like coal, petroleum and even natural gas to meet almost all our energy needs (from industrial to domestic and transport and agriculture). Here, we are seeing a possibility of shifting our future investment in a new direction that is both cleaner and greener, with a greater focus on investing in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Unfortunately, the power of the fossil fuel industries and the politicians who they support is working towards returning us to the bad, old ways rather than trying to move us forward to a better, greener and cleaner world.

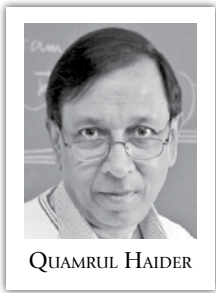
The last lesson is the synergies and win-win nature of tackling both the climate change emergency and the public health emergency related to air pollution—caused from combustion of fossil fuels which makes cities like Dhaka and Delhi extremely polluted and has conclusively been shown to affect human health and also the death rates of the population. Hence, we can certainly improve the health of our citizens and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by undertaking an immediate programme to reduce dependence on petroleum for transport and other industrial uses. This new direction is being taken in some countries which we should learn from.

Even though we are still in the early phases of the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate change emergency is going to get worse in the medium term and only improve in the longer term if the world's leaders take appropriate decisions in time, it is already abundantly clear that taking early decisions based on best available science will save millions of lives in the years to come.

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Saleemul Huq is Director at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Independent University Bangladesh.

Using rocks in farmlands to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere



QUAMRUL HAIDER

WE should not be fooled into believing that global warming will cease to be a problem in the coming years if we reduce emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Even zero emission followed by switching to “green” sources of energy is not going to alleviate the detrimental effects of global warming substantially. That is because carbon dioxide that we have dumped into the air since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution is going to remain in the climate system and impact the well-being of all forms of terrestrial life for what can be thousands of years.

So, what should be done to avoid a catastrophic global warming? The answer is simple: at the least, remove some carbon dioxide from the atmosphere before the climate breaches the threshold of runaway greenhouse effect due to positive feedback loops of the greenhouse gases.

We have an expanding portfolio of actions available to us for removing and sequestering carbon dioxide. One such action, albeit shockingly simple and low-tech, is to do what nature has been doing since time immemorial—sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere using rocks, particularly the types created by volcanic activity. These rocks react with the heat-trapping carbon dioxide to form stable carbonate minerals which are eventually washed away to be locked into the soil or in the ocean beds. This weathering process, called “mineral carbonation,” is one of the mechanisms our planet

uses to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere across geological time scales.

Indeed, scientists recently discovered that Peridotite, a silicate containing rock pushed up from Earth’s upper mantle long ago in what is now the country of Oman, is removing roughly 100,000 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. That is enough to soak up carbon dioxide emissions from burning more than ten million gallons of gasoline.

The process of mineral carbonation is extremely slow—far too slow to offset global warming from human activities. However, the rocks will work their magic most efficiently in the shortest possible time if they are crushed into a fine powder. Known as “enhanced rock weathering” (ERW), the powdered rock increases the surface area available for chemical reactions and thereby speed up the removal of carbon dioxide from the air.

According to a research paper published in July 2020 in the journal Nature, crushed silicate-rich volcanic rocks, such as Olivine and Basalt, have the potential to draw down billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide from the air. Consequently, among a handful of negative-emission technologies, ERW is gaining traction, although the approach is still in its infancy.

Scientists believe that for good measure, we can use the technique of ERW in the agriculture industry. By spreading crushed rocks all over the farmland, the roots of crops and fungus in the soil will hasten the chemical and physical breakdown of the rocks, while carbon dioxide will be pulled from the air into the soil as part of the weathering process.

The concept of enhanced rock weathering is not new, though. It basically replaces crushed limestone

that farmers in many countries use to improve crop yields with volcanic rocks rich in silicate and magnesium. Researchers are now taking the concept out of the labs and testing ERW in real farmlands to see how it fits—practically and economically—in the wider portfolio of options for slowing down the steady rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They are conducting an experiment on a farmland in California



Crushed basalt is applied to an arable field in Norfolk, East Anglia, England as part of a research programme of the Leverhulme Centre for Climate Change Mitigation.

PHOTO: DIMITAR EPHIOV/THE GUARDIAN

in association with farmers, ranchers, government, the mining industry and Native American tribes.

The benefits of ERW are not just limited to the climate. In addition to capturing carbon dioxide, the weathered rocks will release valuable nutrients such as phosphorus and potassium into the soil, which will boost production of healthy crops. The rocks, preferably Basalt, will provide plants with silica as well, which will

help them build stronger cells to better fend off pests. As a matter of fact, one compelling outcome of the research in California is that in controlled-environment studies involving Basalt and Wollastonite, a calcium silicate mineral, corn yield increased by nearly 12 percent.

Application of enhanced rock weathering technique in farming will create a protocol for farmers to make

achieved by using existing stockpiles of Basalt—one of the most common rocks on Earth—and other silicate rock dust left over as byproducts from the mining industry. This would remove the need to grind the rocks into fine particles, which is energy intensive. Furthermore, calcium-rich silicate byproducts of iron and steel manufacturing plants, along with waste cement from construction and demolition industries, can also be processed and used for ERW. This “green recycling” of waste rocks will help in improving the sustainability of these industries alongside achieving their carbon neutrality goals.

It should be noted that enhanced rock weathering is not a cheap, easy fix for mitigating global warming. It comes with a price tag—mainly from mining, crushing and transporting rocks to farms, as well as emissions of greenhouse gases from these activities. The cost will of course be highly dependent on where the rocks are mined, and where and how they are crushed and spread. If machines used for ERW are powered by renewable energy, then scientists believe that the net amount of carbon dioxide removed from the air will be on the positive side.

Mineral carbonation in general and enhanced rock weathering in particular is not the last word to fight climate change. Nevertheless, it is an essential adjunct to other ways of ameliorating the brutal repercussions of anthropogenic climate change. If successfully applied, this natural process will ensure that some carbon dioxide will be permanently sucked out of the atmosphere. But the big challenge to implement this is the political will of our leaders who are beholden to powerful vested quarters.

Quamrul Haider is a Professor of Physics at Fordham University, New York.

How sectarianism precipitated the 1947 partition

MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

IN many quarters, the blame for the partition of India in August 1947 is still squarely placed on Muslims and the so-called two-nation theory of the Muslim League. But it’s worthwhile to recall the competing sectarianism of the two major communities of the subcontinent that actually hastened its division along communal lines.

A thorough reading of the political history of the subcontinent would reveal that in the second half of the nineteenth century, political extremism in India drew its inspiration from a cultural and intellectual movement that developed simultaneously with and parallel to the moderate politics of the Indian National Congress. This extremism contained an attempt to define the Indian nation primarily in terms of Hindu religious symbols, myths and history.

Religion was never totally detached from Indian politics, nor was it exclusively confined to the private space. What was often referred to as “revivalism” in pre-partition India was actually marked by a conceptualisation of a glorious Hindu past, believed to have been degenerated under Muslim rule and threatened by the colonial British. This revivalism, besides being obscurantist, had a strong political overtone.

The Hindu revivalism was centred on the supposed supremacy of Hindu civilisation over Islamic and Western ones, and saw attempts to exalt and rationalise Hindu institutions and practices. Many high-caste Hindu leaders attempted to construct a nationalist ideology premised on the notion of a golden Hindu past. Such attempts inspired many, while alienating many others at the same time. Apparently, Indian nationalism came to be associated with the defence of Hindu religion, and Bengali and Marathi literatures started to see Indian nationalism through Hindu imageries.

Such developments alienated Muslims from this stream of nationalism, and a new consciousness was developing among them as well. They too sought to advance their interests in opposition to those of the Hindus, and colonial policies further encouraged the Hindu-Muslim schism. As the Arya Samaj started the cow protection movement, this conflict of interests began to acquire a mass dimension. Large-scale communal disturbances rocked northern India from the 1870s. The eighteenth-century concept of Hindustan, being equally shared by Hindus and Muslims, was gradually receding in the face of an emerging communal exclusivism in the nineteenth century, paving the way for a violent contest for territory in the twentieth century. The political project of imagining an Indian nation had to confront, from the very beginning, the difficult issues of diversity and difference.

The social composition of the Indian National Congress, quite clearly, resulted in social orthodoxy. Between 1892 and 1909, nearly 90 percent of the delegates attending Congress sessions were Hindus and only 6.5 percent were Muslims, and among the Hindus nearly 40 percent were Brahmans and the rest were upper-caste Hindus. The crucial issue of Muslim mobilisation did not arise yet although prominent Muslim leaders did not like the Congress demand for elected councils. Additionally, its silence during the cow-killing disturbances of 1893 raised misgivings. Congress felt that by speaking against it, it might lose the support of the Hindu constituencies. Muslim participation in Congress started to decline in large measure and yet there was no endeavour to bring the Muslims back into its fold.

cow protection movement put an unmistakable Hindu stamp on the nationalist agitation. Consequently, Muslims were alienated from Congress politics.

The alienated Muslims “began to see themselves in the colonial image of being unified, cohesive, and segregated from the Hindus”. They started to construct a Muslim community identity that was later enlarged into Muslim nationhood. The Muslims began to see their identity informed by their common religion and an invented shared past. The aggressive Arya Samaj movement contributed to counter-mobilisation by the Muslims in urban Punjab. Among the Bengal Muslims, a distinct Muslim identity had been developing at a mass level from the early nineteenth century through various Islamic reform movements.

there was widespread fear among the Bengali Muslims that the government might annul the partition to the disadvantage of the Muslims. Thus in the Dacca Educational Conference, on December 30, 1906, a new party was launched—the All-India Muslim League. Amongst others, its professed goals were to safeguard the political rights and interests of the Muslims.

It is relevant to note that the Bengali Muslims were always more politicised and the Bengal situation of 1906 had acted as a catalyst in bringing into existence the new Muslim party. Subsequently, the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 provided for reserved seats for the Muslims in imperial and provincial legislatures in larger numbers and in keeping with their political importance. The granting of separate electorate for the Muslims

eliminated. Leaders of Hindu Mahasabha decided to operate as a separate pressure group within the Congress, trying constantly to marginalise the secularists and destroy any possibility of an understanding with the Muslims. Nationalism based on the idea of an implicit racial domination of the Hindus was not renounced explicitly by Congress leadership. Consequently, Muslims became suspicious about the real intent of Congress politics.

In view of the electoral debacle of the Muslim League in 1937, Pandit Nehru launched his Muslim Mass Contact campaign to bring ordinary Muslims into the Congress fold. This endeavour, however, failed as the Hindu Mahasabhis sabotaged it from within. The class approach in Congress policies, and its emphasis on individual citizenship, failed to satisfy the community-centric concerns of the Muslims. Muslims missed out from the patronage distribution system created by the new constitutional arrangement of 1935.

On the other hand, Muhammad Ali Jinnah launched a Mass Contact campaign and pressed the Ulama into service. The passage of the Shariat Application Act in 1937 provided a symbolic ideological basis for Muslim solidarity on a national level. By December 1939, the Muslim League membership had risen to more than three million. The notion of Muslim nationhood germinated at this time in the political context of estrangement and distrust.

The need for political self-determination of Hindus and Muslims was discussed at this time. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 signalled the transformation of the Indian Muslims from a “minority” into a “nation”. It also stated that no future constitutional arrangement for India could be negotiated without their participation and consent any longer. The central plank in Mr Jinnah’s politics henceforth was to be a demand for parity between the Hindus and Muslims in any such arrangement.

The conceptualisation of a Muslim nation was not the making of Mr Jinnah alone or a select group of articulate intellectuals. This was legitimised by thousands of ordinary Muslims who joined the processions, participated in the hartals and organised demonstrations in major parts of India between 1938 and 1940. The Muslim alienation was born of provocations from the militant Hindu nationalists, as well as constant sneering by an intransigent secularist leadership of the Congress. It is an irony that for Muslims, who in 1921 saw no conflict between their Indianness and Muslim identity, recognition of a separate Muslim nationhood became a non-negotiable minimum demand in the 1940s.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP.



Muslim refugees sit on the roof of a railway coach near New Delhi trying to flee India in 1947.

PHOTO: AP

The use of orthodox Hindu religious symbols for political mobilisation took a more militant form in north India through the Arya Samaj and the cow protection movement. This movement gradually became an issue of communal rivalry. For Muslims, cow slaughter, apart from the economic reason, had a political meaning: it meant a symbolic assertion of freedom from Hindu supremacy. For many, the cow question was merely a war cry to arouse the lethargic Hindus and it was used as a symbol for community mobilisation.

There was an increasing need for such mobilisations along communal lines, as constitutional questions were now being discussed and new competitive institutions were being created. In such an environment, there was a need for both the communities to mobilise along communal lines in order to register their collective presence in the new public space. The

Muslims of Bengal became conscious of the political implications of their numerical superiority and were keen to forge social mobilisation. The easiest way to forge such mobilisation was through focusing on the common faith, and the Mullahs through the local Anjumans carried the message to the countryside. The masses were brought into the larger political conflict. Quite naturally, extremist politics and Hindu revivalism, by reinforcing social fault lines, facilitated Muslim mobilisation. The Swadeshi anti-Bengal partition agitation appeared in Muslim consciousness as an anti-Muslim campaign.

Under such circumstances, Muslim leaders felt the urgent need for a political organisation for the Muslims that could provide them with an independent political platform. At this time, the Congress-led agitation against the Partition of Bengal had gained an unexpected momentum. As a result,

provided an official legitimacy to their religious minority status and the separate political identity of the Indian Muslims with the Muslim League representing them. The Khilafat movement itself contributed to the strengthening of Muslim identity in Punjab and Bengal. This Muslim mobilisation generated a sense of insecurity among the Hindus, however. Inevitably, this led to a series of communal disturbances between the Hindus and Muslims in 1920s in different parts of India.

Although Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru emphasised a secularist view of the Indian nation, a binary opposition was visualised between nationalism and communalism. As a result, whoever talked about community were dubbed as anti-nationalist or communalist. The scope for accommodation of community identity within a composite nationhood was thus

Iraq seeks Arab help to push Turkish troops out

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq has urged its Arab allies to help persuade Turkey to withdraw its troops from Iraqi territory, where they have been raiding Kurdish militant positions, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

Its comments come two days after a Turkish drone strike killed two high-ranking Iraqi officers in the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, amid heightened tensions between Ankara and Baghdad.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) said yesterday that one of its commanders had also been killed in the strike, saying the drone had targeted a meeting between its fighters and Iraqi border guards.

On Wednesday the Iraqi foreign ministry, for the third time, summoned Turkey's envoy to Baghdad to protest against the strike, which it denounced as a "flagrant aggression" and a violation of its sovereignty.

Yesterday, Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said he had contacted his Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi and Kuwaiti counterparts as well as the Arab League to seek their diplomatic support in confronting Ankara.

Hussein said he pleaded for "major Arab efforts to avoid dangerous developments" and for "a united position to force Turkey to pull out its troops who have infiltrated into Iraq", the ministry said.

France yesterday slammed its Nato ally over the strike.

"France deplores this serious development," the foreign ministry said in a statement, adding that "all light must be shed" on what happened.

"France is deeply attached to full respect for Iraqi sovereignty," it added.

Turkey in mid-June launched a cross-border operation against the PKK, blacklisted as a terrorist group by Ankara and its Western allies.

The PKK has waged an insurgency against Ankara since 1984 and has long used the rugged terrain of northern Iraq as a rear base to wage attacks on Turkey.

US to ease water rules after Trump's shower moan

AFP, Washington

The US government is looking at easing regulations on shower fittings following complaints from President Donald Trump who has regularly railed against water conservation rules in his quest for "perfect hair."

On Wednesday the Department of Energy (DOE) said it was proposing to amend the definition of a showerhead to allow multiple showerheads on a single fitting, which would get around water conservation measures brought in under president George H.W. Bush.

The 1992 rules established a maximum water use of 2.5 gallons per minute for showers but the amendment means that will apply to each showerhead rather than a single shower fitting.

The announcement comes after Trump complained about the lack of water pressure in showers.

"Showerheads -- you take a shower, the water doesn't come out," he said in July at the White House announcing a rollback in regulations.

"You want to wash your hands, the water doesn't come out. So what do you do? You just stand there longer or you take a shower longer? Because my hair -- I don't know about you, but it has to be perfect. Perfect."

SI of DMP sued

FROM PAGE 12

in Wari police station in the capital.

After a hearing, the magistrate took cognisance of the case, recorded the statement of the complainant and instructed the concerned deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of police to investigate the matter and submit a report.

The case documents said, "On October 30 last year, SI Nazmul and the others accused abducted the complainant [Imran] in the capital's Shyampur Eco Park area and forcibly took the keys to his [Imran's] shop, and threatened to frame him in a drug case and an arms case. Later, the accused unlocked the complainant's shop and took away Tk 1 lakh and other essential goods."

The Daily Star failed to reach the SI for comments till the of this filing the report.

3 boys killed

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pronounced them dead.

Legal steps in this connection were underway, ASP Touhidul said.

No one was arrested till filing of this report around 9:00pm.



UK Border Force officials escort migrants intercepted while travelling in RIBs from France to Dover, at the Marina in Dover, southeast England yesterday. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Monday said illegal migrant crossings of the Channel, which have hit record numbers, were "very bad and stupid and dangerous" on the eve of talks in Paris.

PHOTO: AFP

In US, 'Cancel Rent' movement gains ground

AFP, Los Angeles

Without a job and terrified of being left homeless during the coronavirus pandemic, Manuel Acero had no other option but to enlist in the US Army.

His distraught wife Ady Carrillo stayed behind in the studio apartment they rented in Los Angeles, but the 48-year-old isn't just awaiting his return home -- she's taking action.

Carrillo has joined the "Cancel Rent" movement, which is gathering steam with protests across the United States as Americans hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic pile up debts.

Activists want landlords to suspend rent obligations for those in the most dire straits, having lost their jobs in the economic chaos sparked by the virus crisis.

Like the 31-year-old Acero, who is now at boot camp, many have been forced to resort to extreme measures.

"It's been three months since we were able to make rent -- the only

choice my husband had left was to join the army," Carrillo told AFP, bursting into tears.

"I'm scared they'll send him away from me" on an overseas deployment, she said. "If he dies, I die with him."

With tens of millions of Americans out of work because of the pandemic, federal, state and local authorities temporarily suspended evictions on tenants who cannot make rent.

But many worry about what happens when those concessions run out.

Over the past week, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has resumed evictions ordered before March when the lockdowns began, local media have reported.

In the city's Chinatown neighborhood on Monday, a small group of protesters including Carrillo rallied and marched on City Hall, demanding answers.

"Cancel rent!" "Housing is a human right!" community organizer

Annie Shaw yelled into a megaphone.

"We demand strong measures like canceling rents," Shaw said. "Canceling rent will protect the community."

Los Angeles has the sixth-highest rents in the country, according to a ranking by the real estate site Zumper, trailing behind cities like San Francisco and New York.

"It's been so hard for me to make rent during the pandemic," said Rosa Hernandez, who also attended Monday's rally.

"I am an independent cleaner, and used to make \$700 a week. Now I make only \$100 to \$200 a week. If there is food on the table, there is no extra money for rent."

Demonstrations and "rent strikes" by the "Cancel Rent" movement have been staged in various cities across the country since the start of the virus epidemic, which has so far left more than 164,000 Americans dead.

"We are not going to pay," said

Lydia Nicholson, an organizer of the LA Tenants Union.

"I don't think it's going to be pretty at all for anyone if they make us do something that we just obviously can't do."

Los Angeles prosecutors have said large-scale rent forgiveness is out of the question, and would cost the city more than \$1 billion in compensation to landlords, according to a memo seen by the Los Angeles Times.

Mayor Eric Garcetti's office did not respond to an AFP request for comment for this story.

For their part, landlords say freezing rents would not only affect the upkeep of their properties but would also impact the payment of taxes, which are key to the city budget, as well as mortgages.

Suspending rent payments is "just shifting the debt up the food chain," said Jay Martin, director of a group that represents owners of rent-controlled properties in New York.

Buses, trains disinfected as N Korea ramps up virus measures

AFP, Seoul

Temperature checks, hand sanitisers, and face masks are being enforced across Pyongyang's public transport system as North Korea intensifies its fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

North Korea -- whose crumbling health system would struggle to cope with a major outbreak -- has long insisted it has not had cases of the disease.

But it raised its state of emergency to the maximum level in July, saying it had discovered what it called the country's first suspected virus case -- a former defector returning from the South.

Pyongyang had yet to confirm whether he tested positive, but such a source might be more diplomatically convenient for the North than if the virus arrived from China -- its key ally -- where it first emerged.

Pictures Wednesday showed

passengers -- all with face coverings -- lining up for hand sanitiser before boarding buses in Pyongyang.

At the capital's railway station, visitors in face masks had their temperature checked before being allowed to enter the building.

Inside the waiting area, officials busily sprayed disinfectants as a preventive measure.

"We are stepping up propaganda activities as required by the maximum emergency system," said Jon Gyong

Hui, a chief doctor at the railway station.

"We are especially putting more efforts than ever into disinfecting customers' hands and taking their body temperature."

The nuclear-armed North closed its borders in late January as the virus spread in neighbouring China.

It imposed tough restrictions that put thousands of people into isolation, but analysts say the country is unlikely to have avoided the contagion.

Police move to centralise their drug purchase

FROM PAGE 12

directly from renowned companies, we will be able to save money and ensure quality of medicine," Hasanul Haider, director of Central Police Hospital at Rajarbagh, told this newspaper recently.

Hasanul was involved in the decision-making of centralising medicine procurement.

In a letter issued on July 14, Sharif Mustafizur Rahman, assistant inspector general (in charge of health services) at the PHQ, requested heads of different units to send demands of medicine up to December 31 to the PHQ by July 20.

The unit heads were requested

to submit only generic names of medicine, not any brand or trade names with the demand letter.

Officials at the PHQ said a high-powered committee will be formed to procure the medicines and a pharmacist will be appointed to ensure quality.

At present, different units purchase drugs from different vendors who may supply substandard medicines and even adulterated ones, they said.

The units often cannot check the quality and there is a lack of transparency and accountability.

This newspaper got a picture of irregularities in procurement after

talking to several officials to the rank of sub-inspector and inspector in three districts.

Three officials in one of the districts alleged sometimes they were supplied medicines of non-reputed brands. At other times, they paid for the medicine out of their own pockets.

In another district, two policemen said during the tenure of the previous SP, they used to get medicines of non-reputed brands.

However, things have changed now as the present SP is an officer with a good image, they said.

Meanwhile, the new decision frustrates many unit chiefs.

A number of SPs said the police high-ups are centralising the purchase whereas decentralisation is expected in a democratic country.

"If irregularities are the reasons, then the authority can remove the dishonest SPs or unit chiefs instead of stopping the long-standing practice," an SP told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

"For those of us who are honest, such a decision is disgraceful."

Some of them argued that involvement of a handful of people in the drug procurement process will increase the risk of irregularities if any of the officials turns out to be dishonest.

Modi's top cabinet colleagues were stricken with Covid-19, including interior minister Amit Shah.

BIG DROP IN AUSTRALIA

Australia's virus-hit Victoria state reported a major drop in new cases yesterday, but officials warned against complacency amid a "worrying" spread of the disease in regional areas outside Melbourne.

Just 278 new cases and eight deaths were detected in Victoria -- a low not seen in weeks -- while a smaller outbreak in neighbouring New South Wales produced 12 additional cases and one death.

Boy arrested for raping 4-yr-old in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 13-year-old boy in Jaluapara area of Kishoreganj town on Wednesday afternoon.

The victim, daughter of a local tailor, was admitted to Kishoreganj General Hospital where she is currently undergoing treatment, police said.

Quoting the girl's family members and neighbours, Abu Bakar Siddiq, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, said the girl was playing with some other children in front of her house in the afternoon.

At one point, the boy allegedly lured the girl with chocolates and took her to an abandoned brickfield nearby and raped her, he said.

When the girl started scrambling, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her, said the OC. But the boy, a labourer at a local brickfield, managed to flee the scene.

The girl was immediately taken to Kishoreganj General Hospital. On information, police visited the hospital at night.

The victim's father lodged a case with the police station at night. Police arrested the boy from the locality hours after the case was.

After interrogation, he was produced before a Netrakona court yesterday.

The court sent him to Gazipur juvenile correction centre.

Jubo League

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Imran Mahmud Tuhin, inspector of Bogura DB police, said they were arrested around 5:00 pm on Wednesday.

Earlier on Wednesday morning, a victim named Amanat Ullah Tareque, 33, of Bogura, filed a fraud case against Shakil.

The victim told The Daily Star, "Since September last year we had paid Tk 14.35 lakh to Shakil for getting a huge loan after seeing an online advertisement of Shakil's 'International Loan Service' page.

"Later, in October and December that year, Shakil sent us two cheque copies worth Tk 4.50 crore of Pubali bank. Later in doubt, we have sent the cheque copy to different bank experts and they told us that the cheques were fake."

Ali Asraf Bhuiyan, superintendent of Bogura police, said they seized fake cheques worth Tk 1201.72 core, fake appointment letters of Bangladesh Army and different government jobs, three computers, three printers, fake ID cards of different print and electronic media, 60 sim cards of different mobile operators, and two terabytes of fake edited documents."

Shakil and his gang members were using 12 Facebook accounts in different names, 35 Facebook pages, 22 online news portals, seven bank accounts in the purposes of cheating various young business entrepreneurs and individuals.

They have been doing this for at least seven years, said police.

Dwarf planet

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the presence of the compound hydrohalite -- a material common in sea ice but which until now had never been observed from Earth.

Maria Cristina De Sanctis, from Rome's Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica said hydrohalite was a clear sign Ceres' used to have sea water.

"We can now say that Ceres is a sort of ocean world, as are some of Saturn's and Jupiter's moons," she told AFP.

The team said the salt deposits looked like they had built up within the last two million years -- the blink of an eye in space time.

This suggests that the brine may still be ascending from the planet's interior, something De Sanctis said could have profound implications in future studies.

"The material found on Ceres is extremely important in terms of astrobiology," she said.

"We know that these minerals are all essential for the emergence of life."

Writing in an accompanying comment article, Julie Castillo-Rogez, from the California Institute of Technology's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said the discovery of hydrohalite was a "smoking gun" for ongoing water activity.

"That material is unstable on Ceres' surface, and hence must have been emplaced very recently," she said.

In a separate paper, US-based researchers analysed images of the Occator crater and found that its mounds and hills may have formed when water ejected by the impact of a meteor froze on the surface.

The authors said their findings showed that such water freezing processes "extend beyond Earth and Mars, and have been active on Ceres in the geologically recent past".

Work hard

FROM PAGE 12

revive and sign fresh contracts for the projects for which they had committed finance during the Pakistan days. Some of the projects have already been revived for implementation with financing from the original donor countries.

SOURCES: August 15, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.



(CLOCKWISE FROM L) PSG defender Marquinhos celebrates a 90th-minute equaliser against Atalanta in their Champions League quarterfinal, but greater scenes unfolded in the 94th minute when Choupo-Moting tapped home the winner. Neymar gave his man of the match award to the Cameroonian, while Atalanta were left holding their heads in disbelief. PHOTO: TWITTER/REUTERS

'It's a crazy game'

AGENCIES



"When I came on, I thought to myself, 'We can't lose, we can't go home like that.' I was confident in myself, confident in the team and then the rest is the history of Paris. It was a crazy game, a tough game and opponents," said Cameroon international Choupo-Moting.

Three minutes of perseverance from PSG transformed this game, and may have transformed the club in the Champions League. They are into the semifinals for the first time since 1995 after a remarkable late turnaround to beat Atalanta 2-1 on Wednesday night. Thomas Tuchel's men were able to turn the tide in a dramatic three-minute spell, with Marquinhos scoring a 90th-minute equaliser before substitute Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting netted the winner three minutes later.

Tuchel suffered a strange injury during

a PSG training session but the manager went from despair to delight.

"We lost other years and this year, we saw the game, we dominated, we had the opportunities but we had to believe in it. Football is about motivation, faith. If you saw the match, you saw that they were aggressive. [We had to make] sure that Neymar was free to do whatever he wanted," said Marquinhos.

"We had a good match, we absolutely deserved to win and we completely controlled the half. Physically too, which is a big surprise because I was scared in the final 20 minutes. They are normally incredibly strong at the end of matches but we played with more and more confidence, we rediscovered the right rhythm, the players who came on were exceptional and turned the match in our favour. I am absolutely satisfied with this performance, for me it is a deserved victory. The goals

came late but it is also testament to the quality and mentality of this team. They are together," Tuchel said adding that he was confident his side would find a winner against Atalanta on Wednesday as soon as they grabbed their late equaliser.

"At this moment, it's quite painful. Tomorrow, I will be proud of our team and club but at this moment I feel disappointment," said Atalanta midfielder Marten de Roon after the match.

"It leaves us with a very bad taste to have conceded that late winner when the match was about to finish," Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini said. "That's what is really hurting us because until then we thought when we were controlling."

"Nobody will ever get it out of my head that I want to go to the final," said Neymar. "We're a formidable squad, a family, with the attitude that it's impossible to knock us out."

Starc hopes for 160kph mark

REUTERS, Melbourne

Mitchell Starc remains wary of injuries from bowling too fast but the Australia hopes to push the 160 kmph mark in the coming home summer after adding five kg to his frame during a long off-season.

Starc broke down early in the next match at Adelaide Oval, the inaugural day-night test match, with a stress fracture. He also strained a pectoral muscle last year after cranking up the pace against Sri Lanka in Canberra.

"It would be nice but at the same time the two occasions I've been up around that mark I've snapped my foot," he said. "Hopefully that's not the case but when everything is going well, that rhythm is happening and conditions suit, then I can get that speed gun up."

"Perhaps that extra time in the gym and extra time off I might be able to push the limits again."

Starc's next assignment is expected to be a white-ball tour of England slated for September.



Clash of the Titans

AGENCIES



The only surviving former winners of European club football's greatest prize -- with five titles each -- meet in a heavyweight Champions League quarterfinal behind closed doors at the Estadio da Luz tonight.

Barcelona beat Bayern when the sides last met in the semifinals in 2015, but a repeat of the outcome, when the teams clashed in the 2013 semis somehow seems more likely.

Then Bayern ran riot, winning 7-0 on aggregate. They come to Lisbon fresh off a German league and cup double and having won their last 18 games in a row.

The two teams have, of course,

LIONEL MESSI V ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI (OVERALL, 2019-20 SEASON)

43	Matches Played	44
31	Goals	53
25	Assists	8
3	Hat-tricks	2
120	Minutes/Goal	73

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

7	Matches Played	7
3	Goals	13
3	Assists	4
4	Player of the Match	4
190	Minutes/Goal	47
13	Shots on Target	25

dominated European football in the last decade. Since 2006, only twice has a semifinal line-up not featured either. Five out of the ten finals in the last decade have had either of the two sides.

The contest is also tipped as the battle between Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski.

In Lewandowski Bayern have Europe's most fearsome striker -- he has scored 53 this season, including 13 in the Champions League, more than anyone else. Messi's tally of 31 goals too is not bad.

Quique Setien's team lost out to Real Madrid in La Liga so the sense remains that Messi must perform if Barcelona are to defeat Bayern.

No more replays in FA Cup

REUTERS, London

The FA Cup will not have replays for the 2020-21 season to help ease fixture congestion caused by the COVID-19 crisis, England's Football Association (FA) said on Thursday.

Next season's competition is scheduled to begin on Sept. 1 - only a month after the 2020 final - with the showpiece match at Wembley set to take place on May 15, 2021.

"In order to assist in easing pressure on the football schedule, there will be no replays for the 2020-21 season," the FA said in a statement.

The FA added that the prize fund would return to 2017-18 levels because of the financial impact of the novel coronavirus outbreak after two seasons of record payment levels.

Arsenal beat London rivals Chelsea in the 2020 final on Aug. 1 for a record-extending 14th triumph in the competition

Focus shifts to domestic football

ANISUR RAHMAN



Football in the country was set to emerge from the four-and-a-half-month coronavirus-induced slumber last week as national players joined the training camp for the Joint Qualifiers for World Cup and Asian Cup, but FIFA and AFC's decision on Wednesday to postpone the October-November window has plunged the sport into uncertainty once more.

Making matters worse is the absence of concrete plans for domestic competitions.

The pandemic had forced the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to cancel the top-flight Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) just after the completion of the sixth round in mid-March and since then, the national footballers had been training at home under the virtual supervision of the coaching staff to maintain their fitness ahead of the Qualifiers. But without any international or domestic engagements -- except Bashundhara Kings' AFC Cup campaign -- in the offing, footballers are now in a quandary about how to maintain fitness.

"We had really been focused on the World Cup Qualifiers because we had a two-month training at home and were ready to have a two-month national training camp in Gazipur. We had hopes of doing well in the Qualifiers



because of that, but everything seems to have been in vain after the postponement of the World Cup Qualifiers," said national defender Tapu Barman.

"We don't know when the World Cup Qualifiers will take place in 2021 and don't know how well we can perform then, because the players may face fitness issues by that time as there is no domestic activity in the near future," said Tapu, who thought fitness, focus and overall conditioning will be better if players play domestic competitions ahead of the resumption of World Cup Qualifiers in 2021.

BFF President Kazi Salahuddin is thinking of starting the new season soon by making the clubs understand the importance of getting football back on the turf. A few clubs, however, are against the start of a new season due to the financial crisis created due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The people don't understand that the loss of one football season will impact four seasons. Football was not played for one or two seasons during [the tenure of former BFF president] SA Sultan and it had a five-year impact on the country's football. If football is not played in one season, the senior players will grow older and junior players may leave football for another profession," Salahuddin told The Daily Star.

"So far two to four clubs don't want to play but most clubs do. Of course, there is the logic of their [clubs'] financial constraints and there is also the logic of the players being disadvantaged financially. That's why I have asked the professional league committee to have meetings with the clubs and players within eight to 10 days."

"I will be present at both meetings through which I want to reach a decision, so that everyone is benefited because both clubs and players are ours," said the BFF boss, adding that their target was to start the domestic season in November-December.

With the BFF polls on the cards in October, it remains to be seen whether BFF officials can bring all clubs under one umbrella to impress upon them the importance of playing in the new season. Salahuddin also saw no reason not to start a new season as everything else in Bangladesh is going on full swing.

"The youth and sports ministry has also asked to start sports activities because it has resumed all over the world with the European League going on in different countries. The fact is that everything is now open in the country and I am even facing traffic jams on way to the BFF House," said Salahuddin.

'It feels good that cricket is going to resume'

"Obviously it feels good to know that cricket is going to resume. It used to make me sad seeing England play although it was also a good feeling to see international cricket. Yesterday we learned that our tour [to Sri Lanka] is confirmed and it really feels good to know that. I think the team will have good practice going there a month prior to the series. Although it seems a long time, we need to do it due to safety reasons. We will just have to consider it team work," Opener Soumya Sarkar said yesterday after completing practice in Mirpur as it was confirmed on Wednesday that the Bangladesh national team will return to competitive cricket through their tour of Sri Lanka, slated to begin with a Test series from October 24.

Ali looking to make lax England pay

REUTERS, Southampton

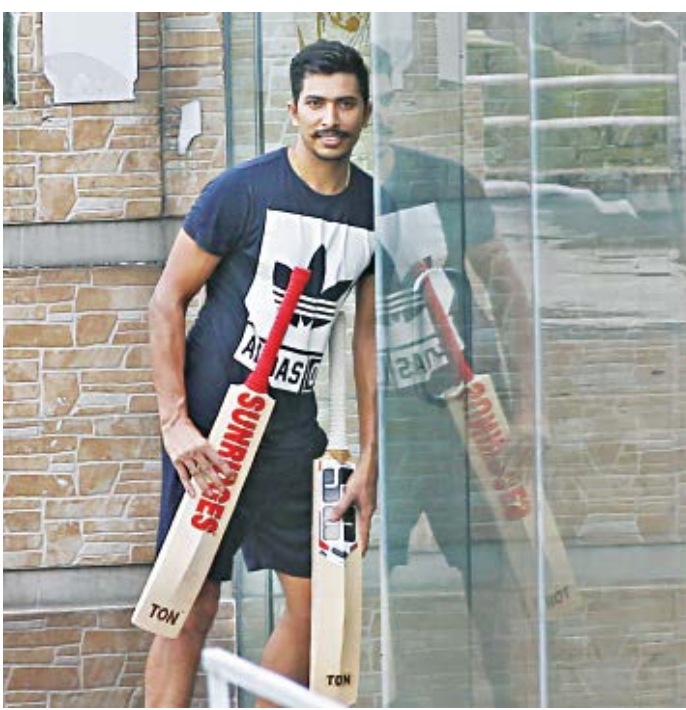
Pakistan opener Abid Ali will hope to profit from the lives gifted to him by a sloppy England side after steering the tourists to 85 for two after 36 overs on the opening day of the second Test on Thursday.

Abid and captain Azhar Ali were looking to build a big first innings score after winning the toss and electing to bat in hot and muggy conditions.

England should have had more wickets, twice dropping Abid at second slip with spills that should have been easily grabbed.



Despite all the recent discussions surrounding his place in the team, England pacer James Anderson picked up two wickets to reduce Pakistan to 85 for two after 36 overs on the opening day of the second Test at Southampton yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS





Police move to centralise their drug purchase

Allegations of irregularities by units prompted the decision

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Medicine procurement for police personnel and their family members under different units outside Dhaka is being centralised to stop irregularities in the process.

Until now, heads of around 80 units, including academies and training centres outside Dhaka, and district superintendents of police (SPs) have been procuring medicines for their respective units.

Medicines for different police establishments in the capital are purchased by the Central Police Hospital.

For the units outside Dhaka, a fund of around Tk 80 crore is earmarked annually to buy medicines.

But as allegations of irregularities in procurement surfaced against some SPs and other unit heads in recent times, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) decided to buy medicines centrally.

However, around 25 to 30 percent of the medicine procurement fund will be given to the units as an emergency allocation for buying drugs not supplied by the PHQ.

The decision follows Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed's announcement of zero tolerance against corruption and drug abuse by members of the police force.

Officials at the headquarters believe the move will help stop irregularities in the procurement process and ensure medicine quality.

"Since the medicine will be purchased centrally, SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



It is hard to believe that this is the yard of a compound of dwellings and a tiles factory at Bhakurta Mugarakanda in Savar on the outskirts of the capital. Children are bathing in the yard that has been under floodwater for around a month. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

3 boys killed in clash at a correctional facility

STAR REPORT

Three teenage boys yesterday died after sustaining critical injuries in a clash at a juvenile correctional facility in Jashore.

The dead are Parvez Hasan Rabbi, 18, of Daulatpur in Khulna; Rasel alias Sujon, 18, of Sherpur in Bogura; and Naeem Hossain, 17, of Shibganj in Bogura.

The incident took place at Pooler Haat Juvenile Correctional Centre under Kotwali Police Station in the district when two groups of youths locked in a clash around 2:00pm yesterday, said Touhidul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Jashore.

During the clash, Rabbi and Sujon of one Pavel Group and Naeem of one Robiul Group sustained critical injuries, the ASP said.

They were rushed to Jashore 250-bed General Hospital where doctors SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Global virus toll tops 750,000

India registers worst single-day rise in cases

AGENCIES

The number of deaths around the world linked to the coronavirus topped 750,000 yesterday as many countries toughened curbs and expanded their quarantine lists following an alarming surge in infections.

A total of 750,371 deaths have been recorded, out of 20,651,113 cases across the globe, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources.

Almost half of the deaths reported worldwide were in the four worst hit countries: the United States (166,118), Brazil (104,201), Mexico (54,666) and India (47,033).

In total, the number of people killed by the virus has doubled since June 2, while 100,000 people have died in the last 17 days alone.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 18,600 deaths have occurred in the past week, ahead of Canada and the United States at over 8,000, Asia at 7,800, Africa with nearly 2,700 and Europe with almost 2,600.

Italy imposed mandatory testing for all travellers arriving from Croatia, Greece, Malta and Spain, and bans all visitors from Colombia, in a bid to rein in new infections.

Health authorities worry in particular that Italians returning from vacations abroad may be bringing home the virus and passing it on when people are crowding outdoors, on beaches, at festivals or parties during the summer.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Work hard to rebuild the country

August 14, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU SHIFTS TO HOTEL

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman leaves the London Clinic in the morning today and shifts to Hotel Claridges for a "change of environment" on the recommendation of his physicians. After a weeklong stay at the hotel, Bangabandhu is expected to spend about 10 days in Switzerland for convalescence. Meanwhile, the prime minister is looking after important files and having rounds of meetings with the Bangladesh high commissioner, foreign secretary and other Bangladesh officials. He is also receiving a limited number of visitors every day.

Bangabandhu has sent a message to his countrymen and asked them to work hard to rebuild the country. He says the people should consider the problem of the country as their own and do their best for peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

BANGABANDHU GREET'S INDIRA

Bangabandhu recalls India's "invaluable support" to Bangladesh's struggle for freedom. Bangabandhu, in a message to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the occasion of India's 25th independence anniversary, expresses warmest felicitations and best wishes for happiness, peace and prosperity of the people of India.

CABINET REVIEWS SUPPLY POSITION OF FOOD

The Cabinet today reviews the supply position of food and other essential commodities in the country. Meeting under the chairmanship of Acting Prime Minister Syed Nazrul Islam, the Cabinet decides to increase the supply of food grains and other commodities to the flood-affected people of the country to lessen their hardships.

REVIVE AID COMMITMENTS

Bangladesh government has asked the aid-giving countries to SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



FRAUD CASE

Jubo League leader, two aides placed on remand

Tk 1,200cr fake cheques seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday placed a Jubo League leader and his two cohorts on a five-day remand on charges of fraud.

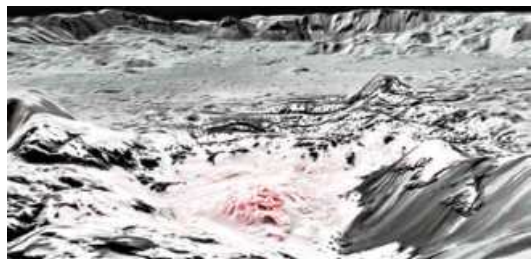
The Detective Branch of Bogura police arrested the trio on Wednesday and seized fake cheques worth over Tk 1,200 crore from the spot.

The arrestees are Rabbi Shakil alias DJ Shakil, 32, son of Kazi Golam Mostafa, president of Tarash upazila Krishok League unit in Sirajganj; Humayan Kabir, 28, son of Abdul Malek of Kusumdi village in the upazila; and Harun Rashid, 26, son of Saidur Rahman of Garikhetra village in Manda upazila of Naogaon.

Shakil is the vice president of Tarash upazila Jubo League unit, Harun is an IT expert, and Shakil is an office assistant by profession, said police.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Dwarf planet Ceres an ocean world



AFP, Paris

The dwarf planet Ceres -- long believed to be a barren space rock -- is an ocean world with reservoirs of sea water beneath its surface, according to new research.

Ceres is the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter and has its own gravity, enabling the Nasa Dawn spacecraft to capture high-resolution images of its surface.

Now a team of scientists from the United States and Europe have analysed images relayed from the orbiter, captured around 35 kilometres (22 miles) from the asteroid.

They focused on the 20-million-year-old Occator crater and determined that there is an "extensive reservoir" of brine beneath its surface.

Several studies published Monday in the journals Nature Astronomy, Nature Geoscience and Nature Communications also shed further light on the dwarf planet, which was discovered by Italian polymath Giuseppe Piazzi in 1801.

Using infrared imaging, one team discovered SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

SI of DMP sued for abduction, extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A sub-inspector of the capital's Kadamtoli police station, Nazmul Huda, and eight others, were sued in an abduction and extortion case yesterday.

Md Imran Hossain, owner of MST Enterprise in Kadamtoli area in the capital, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sheikh Mohammad Jakir Hossain told The Daily Star.

The eight others accused are Uzzal Hossain, Sanaul Haque, Tariqul, Alam, Jubayer, Shamim, Sajib and Rabiul.

SI Nazmul is now posted SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 14

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-30 4-45 6-41 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-44 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Two Asian openbills, popularly known as Shamuk Khol, resting on a tree branch at Bihar Bazar in Bogura's Shibganj. Locals say a huge number of the birds make nests on large trees and live there.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

