

CHINA 'DESTABILISING' PACIFIC

Says US Defense Secretary Mark Esper as military tensions boil between the world's two largest economies

SEE PAGE 5

The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

MUHARRAM 9, 1442 HJRI

14 PAGES PLUS SPADEA ON DARAZ PRICE : Tk12.00



WATERLOGGING IN DHAKA

Collective failure made it perennial

Experts say only city corporations taking over drainage management won't solve it



HELEMI ALAM

The desire expressed by the two Dhaka city mayors to take over the responsibility of drainage management from Dhaka Wasa in a bid to end the capital's perennial waterlogging problem has widely been regarded as a popular idea.

But experts said just changing the custodian without addressing the core issues that have failed Wasa -- such as the absence of total authority of one particular body and lack of coordination with six other organisations -- might also fail the two city corporations.

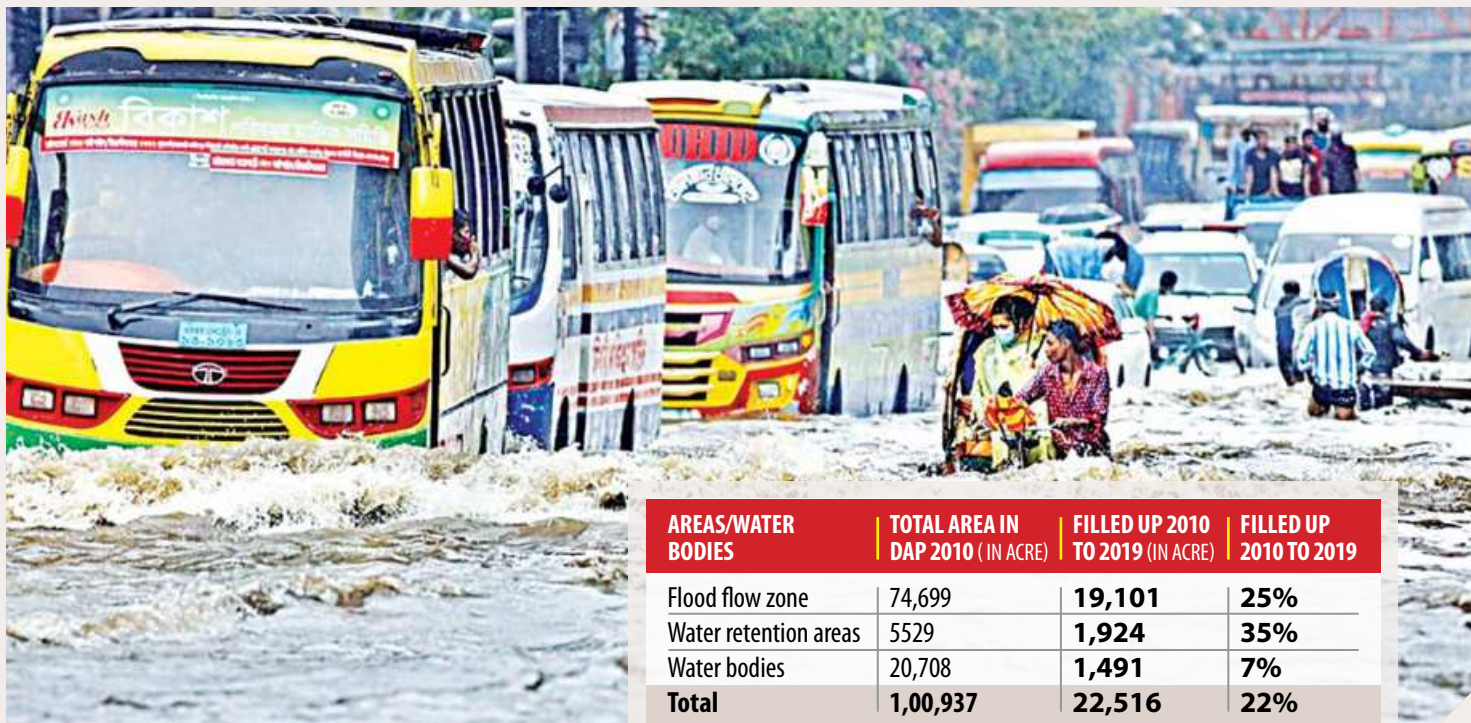
The idea of handing over the drainage management to city corporations came to

light last month when the two mayors -- Dhaka South's Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and Dhaka North's Atiqul Islam -- said they wished to take over the job.

They also criticised the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) for their failure to solve the long-standing problem.

The two mayors blamed Wasa for failing to properly clean the canals, drains and box culverts under its jurisdiction, causing waterlogging in the city last month due to heavy rain. They also slammed BWDB for failing to pump out storm water in time after rain.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



AREAS/WATER BODIES	TOTAL AREA IN DAP 2010 (IN ACRE)	FILLED UP 2010 TO 2019 (IN ACRE)	FILLED UP 2010 TO 2019 (%)
Flood flow zone	74,699	19,101	25%
Water retention areas	5529	1,924	35%
Water bodies	20,708	1,491	7%
Total	1,00,937	22,516	22%

"Several organisations are tasked with managing drainage in the city. That said, there is a culture of lack of coordination, unhealthy competition, and shifting blame, which compounds the waterlogging problem."

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL BANGLADESH (TIB)

"Although it is the duty of Wasa and the water development board to solve waterlogging, both the organisations have totally failed. Give us the duty to solve the problem through long-term planning."

DSCC MAYOR FAZLE NOOR TAPOSH

"We have requested the ministry to hand us over the charge of Wasa regarding drainage system along with all manpower and equipment; otherwise, it will not be possible for us to play our role properly."

DNCC MAYOR ATIQUUL ISLAM



Covid danger far from over

Experts warn, suggest proper intervention to check further transmission

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

There is no chance the coronavirus outbreak will come to an end without proper measures to curb its transmission, leading experts said.

The transmission might become even more dangerous because people do not abide by the virus restrictions, they warned.

Besides, the actual level of transmission remains unknown until a countrywide survey is done.

"Those who are dying with Covid-19 symptoms are not counted in the [government] list. I have talked to different hospitals across the country. The number of patients with breathing problems have increased compared with the number 10 days earlier," Dr M Iqbal Arslan, president of Swadhinata Chikitsash Parishad told The Daily Star.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque drew flak from experts two weeks ago after saying, "Whether the vaccine comes or not, coronavirus will leave the country."

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases surpassed the three-lakh mark on August 26.

The death toll had also crossed the 4000-mark the same day, and on an average around 40 patients have been dying every day over the last month.

On Wednesday, acting director general of the DGHS Prof ABM Khurshid Alam told journalists at an event that the transmission was on the rise near the country's borders.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Weekly count shows drop in Covid cases

47 die, 2,211 test positive in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the number of tests has increased in the last three weeks, the weekly total number of cases has dropped in the country, data shows.

Last week, a total of 16,434 new Covid-19 cases were confirmed out of 90,934 tests.

In the second week of August, 18,479 cases were confirmed out of 90,934 tests while 19,379 cases were reported in the third week when 91,692 tests were conducted.

The weekly death toll, however, was on the rise in August.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) data, 313 people died of Covid-19 last week.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

COVID-19 VACCINE PRODUCTION

Beximco Pharma ties up with Indian firm

To invest in venture with Serum Institute of India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beximco Pharmaceuticals, one of the leading drugmakers of the country, announced yesterday it will invest with the Serum Institute of India (SII) to ensure Bangladesh receives Covid-19 vaccine on a priority basis, once approved by the regulator.

The announcement came more than a week after Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's visit to Dhaka and a day after the Bangladesh government announced approval of the stage three trial of a vaccine of Chinese company -- Sinovac Research and Development Co Ltd.

During Shringla's visit, Dhaka had sought to collaborate with Indian vaccine developers for trial in Bangladesh. The secretary did not speak of any collaboration for the trial, but said Bangladesh would be a priority country in terms of getting

Covid-19 vaccines once developed and approved.

In a press statement, Beximco Pharmaceuticals said it will make a financial contribution to advance the development of the vaccine, which will be adjusted based on the vaccine price under the terms of the planned arrangement.

The number of doses to be provided to Bangladesh on a priority basis and Beximco Pharmaceuticals investment amount will depend on regulatory approvals, SII's production capacity and earlier commitments to other countries, it said.

The SII, the world's largest vaccine producer, has partnered with AstraZeneca of UK, the Gates Foundation and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) to produce more than a billion doses of vaccine for global supply.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Rahat Khan no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran journalist and litterateur Rahat Khan passed away at his Eskaton residence in the city last night. He was 79.

He breathed his last at 8:30pm, family sources said.

He had been suffering from diabetes and various old-age complications.

Aparna Khan, wife of Rahat Khan, wrote a brief status on her Facebook page around 9:00pm, "Rahat Khan no more".

He was admitted to intensive care unit of Birdem General Hospital on July 20. He had fallen down while descending from his bed the previous day and was injured. Quoting his family sources, newspapers

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,211

New cases in 24hrs



3,06,794

Total cases



4,174

Deaths



1,96,836

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



838,585

Deaths



24,797,359

Total cases

SINHA MURDER

OC Pradeep, 2 other cops placed on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Cox's Bazar court yesterday placed suspended Teknaf OC Pradeep Kumar Das and two other police officers on a three-day remand each in a case filed over the killing of Major (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan.

The other two are former inspector and in-charge of Baharchhara Police Investigation Centre Liaquat Ali and former sub-inspector of Teknaf Police Station Nandadulal Rakhsit.

Judge Tamanna Farah of Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-4 in Cox's Bazar passed the order after the accused were produced before her court upon completion of their four-day remand.

The court also rejected bail petitions filed by the accused, defence lawyer Ahsanul Haque Sena told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Van driver Zia does not know what the future holds for him in the capital. He used to make up to Tk 1,000 a day before the novel coronavirus hit the country in March. But his income has now gone down to as low as Tk 300 a day and he cannot run his family of two with a room rent of Tk 3,000 a month any more. He, along with his wife, heads for Keraniganj on way to Faridpur from where they came to this city around six years ago. The photo was taken in the city's Mugda area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Ailing Abe quits as Japan PM

Leadership race begins to replace the country's longest-serving PM

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday announced he will resign, ending his record-breaking tenure in a bombshell development that kicks off a leadership race in the world's third-largest economy.

Abe said he is suffering a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis that forced him to cut short a first term in office, and that he no longer felt able to continue as prime minister.

"Now that I am not able to fulfil the mandate from the people with confidence, I have decided that I should no longer occupy the position of the prime minister," he said.

While speculation about Abe's political future has grown in recent weeks, after two hospital visits for unspecified health checks, the resignation nonetheless came as a surprise.

Even as recently as yesterday morning, the government spokesman had appeared to dismiss concerns about Abe's health and suggested he would stay on.

But Abe made clear that would not be possible, apologising for once again cutting short his tenure.

"I would like to sincerely apologise to the people of Japan for leaving my post with one year left in my term of office, and amid the coronavirus woes," he said, bowing deeply.

Abe said he would "firmly execute my duty to the end", and until the next prime minister is appointed, possibly through a leadership election involving ruling party lawmakers and members.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

DELHI 2020 RELIGIOUS RIOTS

Amnesty accuses cops of rights abuses

AGENCIES

Police in Delhi were “complicit and an active participant” in the February violence in which 53 people, mostly Muslims, were killed, according to an investigation by Amnesty International India.

“The Delhi police personnel were complicit and an active participant in the violence that took place in Delhi in February 2020, yet in the last six months not a single investigation has been opened into the human rights violations committed by the Delhi police,” the rights group said in a statement yesterday.

Amnesty said it spoke to riot survivors, witnesses, human rights activists and retired police officers and analysed several user-generated videos for the investigation that reveals a “disturbing pattern of grave human rights violations committed by the Delhi police during the riots”.

The rights group called on the Indian government to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged human rights violations committed by the police in what was the worst religious violence seen by the capital in decades.

“The Delhi police reports to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and it is shocking that there has been no attempt by the MHA to hold the Delhi police accountable till now,” Avinash Kumar, executive director of Amnesty International India, said in a statement.

Deadly violence broke out in February after weeks-long peaceful sit-in protests by Muslims in northeast Delhi against a controversial new citizenship law were targeted by Hindu nationalist mobs. More than 500 people were also injured, according to the government.

The police were accused of either supporting the mobs or looking the other way as the capital burned.

Other violations included excessive force on protesters,

torture in custody and dismantling of protest sites, the Amnesty investigation revealed. The police and the government have denied the accusations.

“This ongoing state-sponsored impunity sends the message that the law enforcement officials can commit grave human rights violations and evade accountability. That they are a law unto themselves,” Kumar, the Amnesty International India head, said.

The Delhi Police has yet to respond to Amnesty’s request for a comment on the investigation.

The investigation corroborates numerous media reports of police bias against Muslims.

The UK-based rights group launched the investigative briefing into the riots, documenting the timeline of the alleged police brutality and analysing the role of political leaders who made hateful speeches in the build-up to the violence.

Mostly Muslims and less than a dozen Hindus were killed between February 23-29, with many of the dead said to have died of bullet wounds.

In addition to street battles, there was also immense destruction of public and private property, with homes, shops and mosques set ablaze.

“Delhi has witnessed two major communal violence incidents across a period of four decades - the 2020 riots and the 1984 Sikh massacre,” Amnesty said. “A common link between both the incidents is the human rights violations committed by the Delhi police.”

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was passed last December, sparking nationwide peaceful protests largely led by Muslims.

The law eases the path for non-Muslims from neighbouring Muslim-majority nations to gain citizenship. The UN has termed the law “fundamentally discriminatory”.

Rahat Khan no more

FROM PAGE 1

reported that on July 29, doctors from Birdem suggested that he be kept under home care. He was bedridden since.

Last night, his body was kept at the mortuary of Birdem General Hospital. His namaz-e-janaja is scheduled to be held at 11:00am today on the National Press Club premises. He will then be buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectual Graveyard.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of Rahat Khan. In a condolence message, the prime minister prayed for eternal peace of his departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Born on December 19, 1940, in Kishoreganj, Rahat Khan wrote his first story as a student of class three. He completed a degree in economics and philosophy at Ananda Mohan College. He did his MA from the Department of Bangla Language and Literature at Dhaka University in 1961. For the next eight years, he

taught Bangla at various colleges, including Jagannath College in Dhaka.

In 1969, Rahat Khan joined Bangla daily Ittefaq as assistant editor. He spent over four decades at the newspaper, eventually becoming its editor. In 1972, he published his first collection of short stories, Onischito Lokaloy (Uncertain Human Habitation).

The following year, he received the Bangla Academy Literary Award for his short stories.

He produced further volumes: Ontohin Jatra (The Eternal Journey), Bhalo Monder Taka (Money for Good and Evil), and in 1983, Apel Songbad (News of the Apple). In the early 1980s, he published his debut novel, Omol Dholel Chakri (Milk-White Service). He continued writing novels into the 1990s.

After leaving Ittefaq, he was the advisory editor of Dainik Bartoman. He also served as the chairman of the board of directors of the national news agency, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

Beximco Pharma ties

FROM PAGE 1

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is an adenovirus vector-based vaccine, currently undergoing large-scale phase-III trials in Brazil, India, and the US and UK.

The UK trials are well underway and have shown very encouraging results and are expected to receive approval by the end of this year, reports Economic Times of India.

“Beximco will be the exclusive supplier of the vaccine in Bangladesh and will facilitate the needs of the government of Bangladesh by offering the opportunity for it to reserve the desired quantities for priority supply at prices to be agreed between the government and the SII,” the statement said.

Beximco will secure additional quantities of the vaccine to be distributed to the private pay market in Bangladesh, it said.

“The complexity of the market and production means that any financial implications of this arrangement are difficult to forecast at the current time so the company will provide the market with any further meaningful updates in due course,” Adar C. Poonawalla, chief executive officer of SII, and Shayan F Rahman, principal of Beximco Pharmaceuticals, said in the joint statement.

They said they are excited to bring together two of the leading pharmaceutical companies of Bangladesh and India with the scale and capabilities to bring a hugely

promising treatment to the people who need it the most.

“Between us, we can go a long way towards helping to mitigate the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.”

The development comes when many countries of the world are racing for the most essential vaccine amid the pandemic that has caused deaths of 836,364 out of 24,663,197 infections as of yesterday.

The death toll in Bangladesh as of yesterday was 4,174 and the total number of infection 306,794, shows government data.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the Bangladesh Pharmacological Society, said the best option for Bangladesh is to go for a joint venture with the vaccine developer and produce it in the country.

“In that case, Bangladeshi drug manufacturing companies will develop their capacity and the prices of the vaccines will be more competitive,” he told The Daily Star.

Under an contract between icddr,b and Sinovac, the Chinese company would provide 110,000 free vaccine doses to Bangladesh if the Phase-III trial of the vaccine is proven safe. Besides, the company has committed to transferring the technology of the vaccine production in a bulk amount to a “qualified” Bangladeshi producer at a discounted price “to meet the need of the larger population of Bangladesh”, said icddr,b officials.



Artists paint pictures of pet animals on a wall on Dhanmondi Road-10 in the capital yesterday as part of an awareness campaign by People for Animal Welfare Foundation. The organisation launched the two-day campaign to save stray animals amid a move by Dhaka South City Corporation to leave 30,000 stray dogs outside the limits of the capital. Story on page 3

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Collective failure made it perennial

FROM PAGE 1

Of the total drainage lines in the capital, 385km is under Dhaka Wasa. This key utility service provider is also responsible for the maintenance of 26 canals with a total length of 74km and box culverts of 10km.

However, experts said it would be unfair to blame Wasa alone.

They said it was a collective failure -- of two city corporations that manages some 2,500km surface drains in the city, the deputy commissioner's office that owns canals and many water bodies, and the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) which owns city lakes including Hatirjheel and which is the custodian of many flood flow zones and retention areas.

Besides, Bashundhara Residential Area authorities and Cantonment Board are two entities who enjoy autonomy in water management of their respective areas.

“Several organisations are tasked with managing drainage in the city. That said, there is a culture of lack of coordination, unhealthy competition, and shifting blame, which compounds the waterlogging problem,” read a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) statement on July 26.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the city corporations cannot avoid responsibility for the failure in drainage mismanagement and waste disposal by placing all the blame on Wasa.

He also questioned whether the 2,500km of drains under the jurisdiction of the city corporations are waste-free or operational.

Since it has been a shared responsibility and that has not worked to solve waterlogging in the capital, some experts think one organisation with full authority could be a possible solution.

WHAT THE MAYORS SAY

Talking to this correspondent on Wednesday, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam said they have requested the ministry concerned to hand them over the charge of Wasa regarding drainage system along with all manpower and equipment; otherwise, it will not be possible for them to play their role properly.

He said they want to get the jurisdiction over not only the canals but also the banks of the canals from the deputy commissioner's office so they can make plans to build walkways and plant trees to protect them from encroachment.

About flood flow zones, many of which have already been encroached upon or filled up, the mayor said coordination with Rajuk is extremely necessary in this regard.

As Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh is

now abroad, The Daily Star could not reach him for comment.

However, during a coordination meeting held at the LGRD ministry on July 22, he blamed Dhaka Wasa and BWDB for the city's waterlogging.

While visiting some canals and pumping stations after the meeting, the mayor said the two entities -- mainly responsible for curbing waterlogging in the city -- did not carry out their duties properly.

“Although it is the duty of Wasa and the water development board to solve waterlogging, both the organisations have totally failed. Give us the duty to solve the problem through long-term planning.”

City dwellers have been suffering for years because Wasa and BWDB have not been discharging their duties properly, he added.

In another programme organised by the LGRD ministry on August 13, Taposh expressed his resentment for the Detailed Area Plan not being implemented by Rajuk.

Asked about transferring the charge of drainage management, LGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam on August 16 said things are at an evaluation stage. And the whole process involves some legal issues and capacity building of the city corporations.

“It will take time and also the capacity of the city corporations will also have to be increased. Wasa has the manpower, technology and logistics. If we suddenly hand it [the responsibility of drainage management] over to the city corporations, both organisations might suffer,” he added.

A DECADE OF FAILURE

Under-fire Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan, who in his 11-year-long tenure has failed to provide safe drinking water to over one crore city dwellers and solve waterlogging, told The Daily Star in a recent interview that waterlogging during monsoon cannot be solved with only an artificial drainage system.

And in this context, Prof Adil Mohammad Khan said conservation of water bodies like rivers and canals, wetlands, water retention areas, and flood flow zones are all vital for drainage of storm water as well as for sustainable ecological balance, heat absorption and biodiversity.

The flood flow zones and lakes are under Rajuk. But over the last one decade, those zones have been greatly reduced due to encroachment, he added.

According to a 2019 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), individuals, businesses, real-estate developers, organisations, and even government agencies have gobbled up 1,072 acres (57 percent) of the 1,879-acre flood flow zones in Dhaka metropolitan areas in this decade.

Ailing Abe quits as Japan PM

FROM PAGE 1

The resignation shocked the markets, with Tokyo stocks plunging more than two percent towards the end of afternoon trade when reports of Abe's decision first emerged.

“It was a big surprise”, said Shinichi Nishikawa, a professor of political science at Meiji University in Tokyo.

“His resignation comes at a time when Japan is facing tough issues, including measures against the coronavirus,” Nishikawa told AFP.”

Abe had been expected to stay in office until the end of his term as LDP leader in September 2021, and the jockeying for position to succeed him was still in its early stages.

Still, some potential successors have already emerged, among them Finance Minister Taro Aso, chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga, former defence minister Shigeru Ishiba and LDP policy chief Fumio Kishida.

Kishida is rumoured to be Abe's personal choice, while Aso commands one of the strongest blocs within the ruling party.

Most of the potential successors are seen as unlikely to break significantly with Abe's policies.

Abe declined to be drawn on who he would like to see take the top job, saying he had “no intention” of influencing the election, and that those often floated as candidates were

all “highly capable”.

Experts said the election process was likely to happen in the coming weeks, with a new parliamentary session possible by October.

Abe's decision to step down will be bitterly familiar for the man who was forced to leave office just one year after becoming the country's youngest-ever prime minister.

He has since become Japan's longest-serving premier, forever associated with the economic policy that bears his name: Abenomics.

He said his legacy would be for others to decide but pointed to his efforts to bring Barack Obama to Hiroshima, making him the first sitting US president to visit the site of the atomic bomb attack, as among his proudest achievements.

Among his greatest disappointments, he said, was his inability to bring home Japanese people kidnapped by North Korea decades ago.

Tributes poured in from leaders around the world, with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi praising Abe's “wise leadership” for strengthening ties and wishing him a speedy recovery, while the Kremlin hailed Abe's “invaluable contribution” to relations.

Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson tweeted he had “achieved great things”.

UN rights office says Blake shooting was ‘excessive’

REUTERS, Geneva

The UN human rights office yesterday said that the images of the shooting of Black man Jacob Blake in Wisconsin appeared to show that the police officer had used “excessive” force that was likely discriminatory in nature.

Sunday's shooting, captured on video, showed Blake was shot in the back by a white police officer as three of his young children watched. The footage has gone viral and set off angry protests.

“From the images available that we've seen at this point, the police appear to have used force against Jacob Blake that would seem to be excessive,” Rupert Colville said at a virtual briefing in Geneva, saying the use of force did not appear to comply with international standards.

Covid danger

FROM PAGE 1

At the same event, Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, additional director general of the DGHS, said, “Although there are limitations in measuring the situation-based cases in hospital settings, an analysis of symptomatic and asymptomatic cases indicate that transmission rates have fallen in some areas while increased in many.”

“If measures like social distancing and the use of masks are not ensured, it will not be long before transmission increases,” she added.

Prof Iqbal said “misleading remarks” from the government will only worsen the situation.

“We heard similar comments in March when the pandemic had not yet turned serious... Now such comments may turn the situation more complex,” said the biochemistry professor who is also a member of the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19.

“We took the wrong track at the outset. And such comments are proof that we are still not on the right track.”

The leader of the pro-Awami League association of physicians also observed that respiratory infections in patients are more severe nowadays.

“Patients are needing more oxygen support now than they did 10 days ago. The number of patients requiring ICU support is also increasing.

“Those who are saying Covid-19 transmission has reduced or is under control are not saying things based on data.”

Renowned virologist Prof Nazrul Islam, also a member of the NTAC, said there is no evidence suggesting that the outbreak has been contained.

“The positivity rate has been falling over the last few days. However, it cannot be said right now that the transmission has reduced. We have to observe one more week... If the transmission rate continues to go down for two consecutive weeks, we might say the transmission will stay that way [in the future],” he told The Daily Star.

Prof Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), also thinks there is no basis for the minister's statement.

“A smaller percentage of people are testing positive these days. But we are not testing en masse,” he said.

The situation could be assessed if antigen or antibody based rapid tests were done in the communities.

“There is no scientific basis behind claims that the transmission has reduced,” he said, adding, “If we want to understand the level of transmission, we have to survey the people en masse.”

He warned of bitter outcomes if the government chose to reopen everything and health rules are flouted.

“And I don't see any sign of people obeying the rules,” he added.

Weekly count

FROM PAGE 1

The death toll was 258 in the second week of August and it rose to 270 in the third week.

Yesterday, 47 people died of Covid-19 in the country, according to a press release issued by the DGHS.

Among the deceased, 32 were male and 15 were female, while four were aged between 21-30 years old, one between 31-40, five between 41-50, 11 between 51-60, and 26 were above 60 years old.

The total number of deaths has now stood at 4,174 and the death rate stands at 1.36 percent comparing to the total number of patients.

A total of 2,211 new infections were recorded in the 24-hours from Thursday morning, taking the total number of people infected to 3,06,794.

The current positivity rate is 16.09 percent, while the total positivity rate stands at 20.26 percent.

Bangladesh is currently 15th in the list of worst-affected countries in the world in terms of the number of coronavirus cases.

The position is one step ahead of Pakistan and one step behind Saudi Arabia, according to worldometer.info.

A total of 13,741 samples were tested across the country in the last 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 1,96,836 and the recovery rate at 64.16 percent.

Five hundred and sixty-nine people were put under isolation in the last 24 hours, the release added.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Hazy road to growing up.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Earliest Memories

Benvenuto Cellini from the Italian Renaissance was an artist and a sculptor, but he is remembered for his autobiography. In it he relates the following story. When he was five, he and his father witnessed a rare scene on a winter's night: a small lizard, called a salamander, had entered their room's fireplace and was glowing in the dark. Watching this, his father suddenly boxed him in the ear. The shocked boy howled in pain.

His father then hugged him, explaining that now the boy would remember this rare and unusual sight all his life.

Childhood memories are often like that: we only remember things because something shocking or startling happened. My earliest childhood memories are no exception. Neither profound nor important, they were strange or shocking in some way.

Take the calf that remains vivid after all these years.

We lived in a sprawling home including a barn for the cows, chickens and ducks. One day in the barn, a cow gave birth to a pretty calf. Like any five-year-old, I was delighted.

But some days later, much to my dismay, the calf died. It was quickly taken away. Surprisingly, it returned the next day. It had been stuffed. Why? I learned that the cow would stop giving milk if she discovered her baby was dead. So I watched every morning as the stuffed calf was brought in front of her mother where it stood with splayed legs while its mother was milked. After milking it was hidden away.

Not a profound event, but I can still see the stuffed calf in my mind's eye and wonder how its mother was fooled.

My next memory is about being naive at six and getting into trouble.

We had a Pye record changer and hundreds of 78 RPM records, each containing one song. You stacked up a dozen records on the spindle and the changer played them in a row. This was a source of great joy for me.

An older, distant cousin came to visit for a few days. I showed him the record changer and he was hooked. One day, after breakfast, he selected twelve records for playing. Engaged in conversation with me, he placed them on a chair. Then he inadvertently sat on the chair. All twelve broke with a horrible cracking sound. After overcoming the shock he talked me into hiding the accident. However, my parents found out soon enough, and as his accomplice I got into trouble.

My third memory – at five – is about taking an initiative and facing the consequences.

We had a kerosene powered refrigerator. It broke in the middle of summer. The repairman came and worked all day. I watched with great interest, very impressed by his ability. But in the heat, he dehydrated and fell sick. My grandmother gave him salt water to drink. This worked like magic – he was fully revived and energized.

Not comprehending the dehydration part, I thought that a large glass of salt water could also fill me with energy. So I made one and gulped it down. Within a few minutes I was sick with diarrhoea. My family was amused by my misadventure, but I suffered.

In childhood, just like now, every day brings many events. Most recede with time, but some stand out. For me, these events stay like milepost markers on the hazy road to growing up.

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

Ctg zoo sees baby boom

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

With no visitors interfering, the animals of Chattogram zoo have spent a blissful summer this year, thanks to the pandemic. At least 50 offspring of different animals were born at the zoo in the past two months, which includes tiger cubs, deer fawns, and peacocks.

The zoo authorities said the birth rate has increased due to chaos-free tranquil environment for a long period due to the closure of the zoo.

On the other hand, the zoo also got a renovation with infrastructural development and tree plantation during the pandemic period.

One tiger cub, four deer fawns, four peacocks, ten parakeets, two monkeys, seven Indonesian chickens, and twenty doves of

various species were born at the zoo.

The authorities are also waiting to welcome more baby animals -- zebra, horse, deer and cuckoo -- soon.

While visiting the zoo on Wednesday, the newborn offspring were seen busy playing with their parents. There are very few visitors at the zoo since its reopening amid the pandemic on Sunday.

Abul Hossain of Muradpur area visited with his two daughters. He told The Daily Star, "I came here before the pandemic but I did not see such a beautiful environment. Now almost every cage is full of animals and birds."

Zoo physician and deputy curator Dr Md Shahadat Hossain said, "The habit of animals has

changed during the lockdown. In absence of visitors, these animals found a favourable environment for breeding."

He said before the pandemic, 2,000 people visited the zoo on average per day but now there are around 500 visitors a day. If the situation is normal, the number of visitors will increase, he added.

Tisha Bhattachariya, founder of Society of Rise for Paws & Claws, said, "The zoo should limit the number of visitors it allows as several animals are still in the process of delivery or carrying their babies. A crowded environment may cause problems for them."

"Those animals are accustomed to breeding in the forest in their favorable environment. At this time, they like to avoid people or noise.

The zoo authorities should keep these animals in separate places during birth period," she added.

Contacted, the zoo's member secretary and Hathazari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Ruhul Amin said, "These animals have become accustomed to seeing visitors at the zoo. Even then, it is being ensured that no visitors disturb them during birth period."

He said they are increasing the budget to fulfil the additional demand of food for newborn members of the zoo.

Chattogram zoo, set up on February 28, 1989, is located in six acres of hilly terrain in the city's Foy's Lake area. The zoo now hosts 620 animals and birds of 66 species.



Chattogram zoo saw the arrival of nearly 50 baby animals in the past two months. The royalest of these arrivals was of the tiger cub Corona (seen napping). The chirping of baby birds can be heard throughout the zoo, and baby fawns are starting to resemble the adults.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

This city is theirs too

Murals on Dhaka street rally for stray dogs' habitation

FAHMIM FERDOUS

If one can even remember a time before the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the most familiar scenes on the streets of Dhaka were people gathered around tea stalls – snacking, smoking and chatting with friends, colleagues or even total strangers. And almost inevitably around every such gathering would be a friendly canine face or two, waiting eagerly for a kind soul to throw a piece of cookie or cake.

Stray dogs have inhabited Dhaka perhaps for as long as the city has existed, living in harmony with the urban ecosystem and adapting to it. While a cruel practice of culling was once commonplace, animal

rights activists in 2014 succeeded in getting a High Court rule banning dog culling in the country.

However, media reports in the last two weeks about Dhaka South City Corporation's (DSCC) plans to relocate all stray dogs within its area to outside the city has worried animal lovers.

Yesterday morning at Satmasjid Road, a group of aggrieved animal lovers joined hands to protest the decision, not with banners and slogans but with brushes and buckets of paint.

People for Animal Welfare (PAW) Foundation organised the event, to depict the struggle of the furry four-legged friends in this city in murals on a wall. Renowned

painters Abul Barq Alvi and Kanak Chanpa Chakma inaugurated the event by putting the first brushstrokes on the wall, between Dhanmondi's roads 9/A and 10/A.

A few dozen people were in attendance, some ready to paint the murals, some handling the logistics, while some others came just to support.

Shamim, a BGB personnel currently enjoying leave, was spotted appreciating the artwork. "I came here from Biswa Road to support the initiative, and plan to be here all day today and tomorrow," he told this newspaper.

"Back in my hometown Patuakhali, I have been looking after street dogs and rescuing

injured ones since my teenage years. I think it is an unjust decision by authorities to move so many dogs outside the city, because they could all starve to death if they are sent to a new area."

Talking to The Daily Star, eminent artist Abul Barq Alvi said, "If us humans don't look after these animals, they will not be able to survive."

"I often see on my commutes homeless children who live on footpaths caring for and feeding street animals from whatever little they have, and it fills my heart with joy. Love for other beings also make us better humans," he further added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Unprecedented waterlogging cripples life in Barishal city

Kirtankhola overflows during high tide; road condition gets worse

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Barishal has been experiencing unprecedented waterlogging for over a week due to tidal surge from the river Kirtankhola, causing immense suffering to city-dwellers.

Most of the city areas go under water during the high tide while the low-lying areas remain waterlogged always, said the residents.

The Kirtankhola has been flowing above danger level, said Md Masum, assistant engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board, Barishal. On August 20, its water went up to 52cm crossing the level, he added.

"We have not recorded such a measurement for the last 20 years," said the official.

About 1 lakh slum dwellers living near the river and at least 50,000 people in the low-lying areas are the worst affected. Many are struggling to make ends meet, said locals.

Manabendra Batabeyal from College Raw area said he never saw such a situation in his 80 years of life. During the high tide, his area now goes three to four feet under water, he said.

Nasim, a pickup driver from the city's Kalijira, told The Daily Star, "At present, we have to move from one place to another by boat."

Anowar Hossain, a grocer at Palashpur, said valuable items worth around Tk 50,000 of his shop were badly damaged.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that the low-lying areas like Amanatganj, Palashpur, Stadium, Sadar Road, and Port Road went almost four feet under water. Around 12 people living in those areas said they have never witnessed such waterlogging.

They blamed the authorities' failure for the situation.

Md Aktaruzzaman, a teacher of Government BM College, said as many as 22 canals are flowing through the city. The water from the tidal surge cannot recede towards the waterbodies as most of them remain not cared for. He said those were either grabbed or filled with solid waste.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A truck passes through a waterlogged road in Amanatganj after water from the river Kirtankhola flowing over the danger level inundates Barishal city during high tide. The situation continues to make the city's already dilapidated roads worse for over a week. Inset, a big pothole on Kawnia road from where bitumen totally disappeared.

PHOTO: TITU DAS



Couple found dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered bodies of a couple from a house in Dhaka's Nakhalpara area yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Asmat Ali (45), and Farzana Begum (33).

Police recovered the bodies around 10:30am, said Kamal Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Tejgaon Police Station.

The man's body was hanging from a ceiling fan while his wife's was lying on the floor. She had head injuries, the inspector said.

CID was collecting evidence from the spot at the time of filing this report.

Girl hurt by stray bullet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A schoolgirl was injured by a stray bullet in Mistripara area of Khulna yesterday.

Lamia (15), a student of Iqbalnagar Government Girls School, was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. Doctors said she is out of danger.

Police said Yusuf Ali Sardar, a contractor and resident of Mistripara, got the contract to renovate works on Babukhan Road. He was being pressurised by some youths to forfeit the work. When they went in front of his house around 11am, he fired two shots with a licensed weapon. One of the bullets hit Lamia, who lives nearby, in her right leg.

Contacted, Yusuf did not want to talk about it.

Ashrafur Alam, officer-in-charge of Khulna Sadar police station, said they are looking into the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

There's virtually no space in Arshad's tiny house that's not taken up by one or the other of the family's 30 curious cats.

Who knew loving cats could be this hard?

Family comes under pressure from neighbours

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

In Arshad Hasan's 100 square feet apartment at Mirpur section-11's Bihari camp, there's barely enough room for his family of four.

Yet, the family houses two-and-a-half dozen cats within that space, earning a reputation as something of a kitten sanctuary. What started with only two cats some four years ago, has now ballooned into around 30.

"Anytime we come across a stray cat that's ill or too weak to survive, we bring it home and nurture it to full health," said Rahila Anzum Khushbu, Arshad's daughter. "Our neighbours also call for our help any time they see a struggling stray."

It's hard to walk inside the apartment without risking stepping over one of the cats. When this correspondent went to visit the family recently, he saw Arshad cooped up on a table laid out for boutique work, with cats everywhere around him.

There were a few on the table, a few under the chair, some more under the table, and a couple others on top of Arshad's body. Right beside the table, a few more were eating rice and fish from a bowl, while a couple more were resting around a brick enclosure set up at the

corner of the flat as a restroom for them.

At another corner, a bunch of prescription bottles could be seen. Asked, Arshad said, "We keep medicines to help with the primary treatment of the cats. We also keep antibiotics. When needed, we take them to a veterinary hospital."

Arshad said the family visits Gulistan's Fulbaria Veterinary Hospital at least once or twice a month.

"We have to spend around Tk 300 daily to take care of our cats. We need at least two-kg rice and one-and-a-half kg fish to feed them six times every day," Khushboo said.

Finishing her honours back in 2017, she said she couldn't pursue a master's degree due to financial troubles. Asked why they spend so much for the cats, she simply said they are bonded with the animals with love and can't stop taking care of them.

The family doesn't exactly keep the cats forever though. If anyone expresses interest to care for a cat, they cross-check their personal info before letting them take the one they desire.

However, "There are neighbours around the area who see the cats as nothing but a nuisance. Among them are two women who regularly harass our family. They

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Who knew

FROM PAGE 3
shout at us and even threatened to beat us up,” Khushboo informed.
When this correspondent spoke to some neighbours, they said the cats do not disturb the neighbourhood’s peace at all.
“Sometimes they will come out and roam around, but they go back home as soon as their owners call for them,” said one neighbour.
However, not all have the same sentiment. Some are demanding that the family either let the cats go or leave the area.
A few months back, their water supply was cut off. The family took this to the leaders of the Bihari camp, but to no avail. They simply did not care enough to intervene.
Khushboo said they then complained to the local police station at Pallabi and filed a GD. They also sought help from police, but were instead advised to take this up with the local leaders.
Contacted, community leader Sadakat Khan Fakku said, “We have heard of the incident and we are trying to make sure that the family is safe.”
This correspondent also tried to contact Shahana, one of the persons named in the GD, but she said she will speak later and avoided talking.
The situation only got worse with the coronavirus pandemic. As news began to spread that the virus can be spread by pets, another set of locals started pressurising the family to release the cats.
The situation took a turn for the worst when two of the cats were beaten to death. All of this prompted some neighbours to release their pets, some of which found their way to Arshad’s home.
Despite the pressure, the family held on.
“We do this out of our love for cats, and we intend to keep taking care of them in spite of any obstacle thrown at us,” Khushboo said.

Ustad Sunil Dhar no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M’singh
Ustad Sunil Kumar Dhar, one of the most prominent classical music maestros of the country died of a heart attack at a city hospital Thursday. He was 87.
He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters, a host of followers, admirers and relatives to mourn him.
Sunil Dhar had been suffering from different old-age complications including heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure for long. He was admitted at a city hospital on Thursday morning, where he died around 9pm.
He was cremated at Balashpur Cremation Ground in Mymensingh city, said family sources.
Born in Muktagacha in 1933, he received tutelage of the legendary Ustad Allauddin Khan.
He also took lessons from Jagadananda Barua on Dhrupad and Dhamar.



This city

FROM PAGE 3
Underneath the tarpaulin shed on the wall where the murals were being drawn, Richi and Neeti – two architecture students at a private university – sat waiting for the drawing to be completed, so they could start the paintjob.
“I have been an animal lover since childhood. When the lockdown began in Dhaka, me and some other animal lovers divided Bashundhara Residential Area – where I live – into zones and fed all the dogs there because they did not have food. When I saw that PAW Foundation was looking for volunteers for the event, I knew I had to join. I also brought my friend along to paint,” Richi told The Daily Star.
“According to clause 7 of the Animal Welfare Act 2019, killing or removal of any animal without an owner is illegal,” Rakibul Haq Emil, founder of PAW Foundation, told this newspaper.
“The [DSCC] mayor is currently not in the country. When he comes back, animal rights advocates and other authorities will sit with him to come up with an alternative to this decision, but we thought we could raise some awareness about the importance of street dogs through this event,” he added.
The event will come to a close today, with a ceremony scheduled at 4pm.

Two killed in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M’singh
Two people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Mymensingh yesterday morning. The accidents took place in Bhaluka and Muktagachha upazilas.
In Bhaluka, factory worker Helal Khan (35) was killed after being crushed by a truck on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Baghra area.
He died on the spot, said Md Taimur Ali,

inspector of Bhoraduba Highway Police.
In Muktagachha, a TV mechanic was killed and two others were injured on Mymensingh-Jamalpur road in Satrashia.
The accident took place after a motorbike collided head-on with a private car. Deceased Ranjit Mitra (50) was travelling on the bike along with Mahmudul Hasan (35) and Tanvir Hasan (15). All of them were injured critically, said Biplob Kumar Biswas, officer-in-charge of Muktagachha Police Station.



Police seized the car after the accident at Muktagachha, but its driver managed to flee the scene.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Unprecedented

FROM PAGE 3
Besides, the city’s drainage system is poor, he added.
Barishal city was once blessed with numerous ponds that could contain additional water, said Suvangker Chakrabary, secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Barishal unit. Most of them do not exist now due to a lack of maintenance and encroachment, he said.
Talking to this newspaper, Tariqul Haque, former chief engineer of Barishal City Corporation, suggested re-excitation of those water bodies including the canals to improve drainage system.
Contacted, BCC Executive Engineer Md Anisuzzaman said adequate fund is needed to improve the overall situation.
“Last year, we sent a proposal of a development project costing Tk 2,615 crore to the LGRD ministry to restore all 43 canals and their beautification, but the authorities did not approve it,” he said.
“Now, we will try to clean those water bodies with our own fund so that the city’s waterlogging problem is resolved to some extent,” said the BCC official.
CONDITION OF CITY STREETS WORSENS
Waterlogging has rendered most city roads unusable, as bitumen has broken down from the surface of the roads, causing numerous potholes. The situation is easily noticeable whenever the waters clear to make the roads visible.
Kawnia Road, Amanatganj Road, Taltoli Road, Bandh Road, Lakutia Road and Port Road were found in dilapidated condition.
According to BCC authorities, the city has 593km roads in 30 wards; of them, only 267km is bitumen-surfaced and the rest is brick-surfaced.
Executive Engineer Anisuzzaman

admitted that only 30-40km roads are now in good condition, which include Sadar Road, Hospital Road, Swa Road and Bazar Road.
According to locals, Taltali Road, Rupatoli Road, BSCIC Road and Lakutia Road are bearing the brunt of the situation.
Khijir Ali, an auto-rickshaw driver from Palashpur, said he has to avoid many roads and eventually can’t earn enough money. “In the last one week, my income has halved from the usual Tk 500,” he said.
Echoing him, rickshaw-puller Kanchan Mia from the city’s Amanatganj said passengers are mostly reluctant to commute on the damaged roads.
Martuza Abedin, councillor of ward-2, said the city roads got damaged previously and the tidal water made the condition worse.
Dilip Roy (60) from Bhatikhana area said he is unwilling to go outside amid the situation.
Ganesh Dutta, a vegetable trader from Bazar Road area, said the waste floating with the water has made the streets dirty and muddy.
Shah Sajeda, convener of Sachetan Nagorik Committee, said if the BCC had taken care of the roads since their construction, city dwellers would not have to suffer this way.
Executive Engineer Anisuzzaman said the LGRD ministry sent back another proposal of a Tk 1,100 crore road development project at the beginning of this year. “Although we corrected it and reduced cost to Tk 683 crore, it is yet to be approved,” he said.
BCC Chief Engineer Nurul Islam said, “We will start repairing some roads, after the rainy weather ends.” This year’s incessant rain halted the work for a long time, he added.

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2020-9160992

Request for Proposal (RFP): To provide professional Cleaning Services for UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office (BCO) under Long-Term Agreement (LTA).

UNICEF-Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong record and credibility of providing the above required service. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to “supplybangladesh@unicef.org”

Pre-bid Meeting date: **Please see the schedule mentioned in the RFP.**

The deadline to submit proposal is **Sunday, 20 September 2020; Time: 11:00 Hrs.**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of solicitation process.

www.unicef.org.bd

unicef

for every child

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers, who can participate in any or both of the following tenders, but in separate envelope as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below:

1. **Civil, Electrical & Networking works** at proposed premises of our **Bhairab Bazar Branch, Kishoregonj.**

2. **Civil, Electrical & Networking works** at present premises of our **Shahbagh Avenue Branch, Dhaka.**

Please visit our web site, <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details. Interested Parties may purchase the Tender document by **08 September, 2020** duly filled up all requirements and submit their offer by **09 September, 2020** within **11.00 AM.**

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED

Dilip Kumar Paul
General Manager

Establishment Division
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

Rasel Bhuiyan’s death anniv

CITY DESK

Today is the 20th death anniversary of Rasel Bhuiyan, an industrialist and founder of Russel Park, says a press release.
He was a member of governing bodies of Murapara Degree College, Murapara Pilot High School and Sahitunnesa Pilot Girls High School.
His family requests his friends, relatives and well-wishers to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

TO LET

GULSHAN 2 RD. 79 NEXT ITALIAN NEAR OTHER EMBASSIES. 2600SFT. 4-BED, 4-BATH, LARGE DRAWING/DINING. UPTODATE AMENITIES. CONTACT # **01713171369** D-97

BUILDING & LAND SALE
(Suitable for Factory/ Hospital/University)

Two Building (each 6 Storied@ 90,000sqft) total 1,80,000sqft, Land **5.50 bigha** with Electricity /Gas/Water Facility. Both Building Accord Approved with Full Compliance. Presently Garments Factory running at Dhaka Road, Vogra before Gazipur Chowrasta.
Contact: **01711-525563**, email-**1960skt@gmail.com**

Sale

Complete flats at a corner plot. 1860sft single unit. 3 bed, 4 bath (Servant bed). 1st floor has extra 100sft roof garden area. Furnished Kitchen with German gadgets. For sale only 1st floor, 4th floor, 6th floor, Bashundhara Residential Area, Block-B, Dhaka. **01945222333** D-103

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
Rajbari
www.lged.gov.bd

Reference: 46.02.4200.000.99.055.20-2498 Dated: 27-08-2020

e-Tender Notice-05/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender ID	Procurement method	Tender/proposal document last selling/ downloading date and time	Last date and time for tender/proposal security submission
1	CRMIDP/ RJBR/W- 335/256	Construction of Two 02-storied Rural Market Building With 04-storied Foundation in BUGDULE BAZAR under Pangsha Upazila Dist. Rajbari	485783	OSTETM	28-Sep-2020 17:00	29-Sep-2020 12:30

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 from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank’s branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

SD/-

Bimal Kumar Das
Executive Engineer
LGED, Rajbari
Phone: 0641-65425
xen.rajbari@lged.gov.bd

GD-1354

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Netrokona

Memo No. EE/EED/NZ/7016/2020-2021/32 Date: 27/08/2020

e-Tender Notice No. 32/2020-2021 (Limited Tendering Method)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works under EED Netrokona as mentioned below:

SL. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tendering method	Tender ID	Last date and time of selling documents	Tender closing date/time	Tender opening date/time
01	WD-02	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Rabeyea Ali Mohila Degree College Under Purbabdhola Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485519	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
02	WD-03	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Paboi High School Under Purbabdhola Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485518	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
03	WD-04	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Shandikona High School Under Kendua Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485516	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
04	WD-05	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Harulia High School Under Barhatta Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485515	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
05	WD-06	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Chorpara High School Under Sadar Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485514	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
06	WD-07	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Agar Anirban Skikka Niketon Under Durgapur Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485513	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
07	WD-08	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Janata High School Under Kolmakanda Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485512	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
08	WD-09	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Najirpur Polly Jagoran High School Under Kolmakanda Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	485511	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00
09	WD-24	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation Including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Shikhabid Abdur Rahman Buiyan Smrity High School Under Kendua Upazila Netrokona District.	LTM	487542	13/09/2020 17:00	14/09/2020 11:00	14/09/2020 11:00

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank’s branches up to **17:00 on 13/09/2020.**

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

S. M. Shafin Hasan
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department, Netrokona
Email: ee_net@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-1355

TURMOIL IN CONGRESS IN INDIA

Loyalists promoted, dissenters snubbed

NDTV ONLINE

Days after saying she had no ill-will against 23 Congress veterans who wrote her a letter that lurching the party into turmoil, Sonia Gandhi has taken the first steps to keep the so-called dissidents in check.

Jairam Ramesh, a senior leader who was not in the dissenting group, has been appointed chief whip of the Congress.

Gandhi has also formed a committee in the Rajya Sabha with Congress party's treasurer and her political advisor Ahmed Patel and another loyalist KC Venugopal to deal with issues that may come up in the Rajya Sabha.

This new committee will effectively sideline and keep under check the Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad and Deputy Leader Anand Sharma, sources said. Both the leaders had played a critical role in writing the letter and were instrumental in ensuring not many Rajya Sabha leaders come out in support of Sonia Gandhi.

To show this is not being done exclusively to sideline the dissenters, Sonia Gandhi has appointed a similar committee in the Lok Sabha, with Gaurav Gogoi as the Deputy Leader and Ravneet Singh Bittu as a whip. Both leaders are believed to be close supporters of the Gandhi family.



Sonia Gandhi has also ensured other letter-writers like Manish Tewari and Shashi Tharoor in the Lok Sabha are ignored, sources said. Both Tiwari and Tharoor are excellent orators and have lost out because of being signatories, they added.

With this decision, the days of leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma appear to be numbered as the leaders of the Congress party in the Rajya Sabha but top aides say Sonia Gandhi will wait for the monsoon season to end before ordering a change.

At a stormy meeting on Monday, the group of Congress veterans had found themselves targeted for sending the letter calling for sweeping reforms, fair internal elections and a "full-time, visible leadership" that they sent to Sonia Gandhi, who took over as interim chief after her son Rahul Gandhi's resignation last year.

But after sharp attacks, accusations and sparring, the meeting ended on a conciliatory note with Sonia Gandhi saying all was forgiven. The party endorsed the Gandhi leadership. Sonia Gandhi would continue as interim Congress chief until an All India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting to be called in six months, the party said. The Congress also decided to set up a committee to examine the grievances in the letter.



US President Donald Trump grabs one of his grandchildren as he, US first lady Melania Trump and their extended family watch Trump campaign fireworks explode behind the Washington Monument from the South Lawn of the White House after his acceptance speech as the 2020 Republican presidential nominee during the final event of the Republican National Convention in Washington on Thursday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WHO vaccine plan in chaos as govts go it alone

REUTERS, Geneva

The World Health Organization will next week receive a raft of pledges of support for its plan for Covid-19 vaccines for all.

But the agency has already had to scale back its ambition.

The United States, Japan, Britain and the European Union have struck their own deals to secure millions of Covid-19 vaccine doses for their citizens, ignoring the UN body's warnings that "vaccine nationalism" will squeeze supplies.

If other countries that can afford it pursue a similar approach, the WHO's strategy for fighting the coronavirus pandemic globally and equitably risks coming undone, experts warn.

"If that were to happen, it's fairly clear that there would be insufficient volumes of vaccine available for any other countries, particularly in the first six to nine months," said Alex Harris, head of global policy at the Wellcome Trust health charity.

Countries wishing to be part of the WHO initiative, dubbed COVAX, must submit expressions of interest by Monday.

More than 170 countries, including Canada, Norway, South Korea and Britain, have submitted non-binding expressions of interest to participate in the scheme, which the WHO has touted as the only global initiative to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide to rich and poor countries alike.

It has signed up nine COVID-19 vaccine candidates and set out plans to obtain and deliver 2 billion doses by the end of 2021 across countries that sign up.

But it has struggled to get wealthier countries on board in full beyond pledges of funding and warm words about donating surplus vaccines.

China 'destabilising' Pacific

Says pentagon chief a day after vowing not to 'cede an inch'; Beijing says US risking soldiers' lives as military tensions boil

AGENCIES

US Defense Secretary Mark Esper yesterday accused China of "destabilising" the Pacific region on a whistle-stop trip to the tiny island nation of Palau as military tensions grow between the world's two largest economies.

The visit, which lasted barely three hours, comes as Washington attempts to counter Beijing's efforts to gain influence in the sparsely populated but strategically important Pacific island nations.

Esper said the United States and Palau shared values of freedom "where all countries respect the rules and norms for peace and prosperity of all nations".

"This is especially important today, as we continue work alongside our allies and partners to protect that international system that is under threat from China and its ongoing destabilising activities in the region,"



he said.

War of words raged between the superpowers on Thursday when Esper vowed not to "cede an inch" in the Pacific and China replied by warning Washington that it was risking soldiers' lives.

Both are at loggerheads over issues from technology and human rights to Chinese military activities in the disputed South China Sea, with each accusing the other of deliberately provocative behavior.

In the latest US move against China ahead of November's presidential election, Washington on Wednesday

blacklisted 24 Chinese companies and targeted individuals over construction and military actions in the busy South China Sea waterway.

On Thursday, a US Navy warship carried out a routine operation near the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, something frequently criticized by Beijing as threatening its sovereignty.

Esper said the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wanted Beijing to project power globally via its military.

"We're not going to cede this region, an inch of ground if you will, to another country, any other country."

In Beijing, China's Defense Ministry shot back at "certain US politicians" it said were damaging Sino-US military ties in the run-up to the November election for their own selfish gain, even seeking to create military clashes.

"This kind of behavior puts the lives of frontline officers and soldiers on both sides at risk," it said.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

LATEST UPDATES

MORE THAN 832,000 DEAD

The pandemic has killed at least 832,336 people worldwide since surfacing in China late last year, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT yesterday. More than 24.5 million cases have been registered.

The United States has recorded the highest number of deaths with 180,857, followed by Brazil with 118,649, Mexico with 62,594, India with 61,529 and Britain with 41,477 fatalities.

TRUMP PLEDGES TO 'CRUSH' VIRUS

US President Donald Trump pledges to "crush" the coronavirus pandemic with a vaccine by the end of the year, as he accepts the Republican nomination for a second term. He speaks as the United States, the world's worst-hit country, passes the milestone of 180,000 coronavirus deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University's real-time tracker.

PANDEMIC TO WORSEN: MERKEL

German Chancellor Angela Merkel says coping with the coronavirus will become more challenging in the coming autumn and winter months, in her annual summer press conference. Germany has fared relatively well in its battle to contain the virus so far but like many other European countries has seen a new surge in cases in recent weeks.

PARIS WAKES UP TO MASKS

Outdoor mask-wearing becomes compulsory in Paris and near suburbs at 08:00 am yesterday as the government moves to stay a trend of mounting coronavirus infections. Non-compliance is punishable with a fine 135 euros (\$160). However, authorities make a last-minute about-turn, exempting cyclists and joggers from the otherwise blanket outdoors obligation.

CHINA ARRESTS 5,800 FOR CORONAVIRUS CRIMES

Around 5,800 people suspected of killing health workers, selling defective medical equipment and lying about their travel history have been arrested in China for epidemic-related crimes since January, the state prosecutor's office says. One case involves a shopper who beat another customer to death for not wearing a mask in a supermarket, while another includes a person who deliberately mowed down medical workers with a car.

PROTEST AGAINST EXAMS IN INDIA

Hundreds of masked protesters demonstrated in major Indian cities yesterday against a government plan to hold exams for millions of students during the coronavirus pandemic, as the daily tally of infections hit a record. The health ministry reported 77,266 infections, taking the nation's tally to 3.3 million, with a toll of 61,529 deaths. India, with the most infections in Asia, has posted the highest single-day increase worldwide every day since Aug. 7. More than 2.4 million students are set to take tests next week for admission to medical and engineering schools, which the federal government has declined to defer, despite growing pressure from students and opposition parties.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP



This aerial view shows damage to a neighborhood by Hurricane Laura outside of Lake Charles, Louisiana, on Thursday. At least six people were killed by the hurricane in Louisiana, but the governor said Thursday that the most powerful storm to make landfall in the US state in living memory did not cause the "catastrophic" damage that had been feared.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza flare-up shows no let-up

AFP, Gaza City

Israeli tanks and warplanes bombed Hamas positions in Gaza yesterday and the Islamists retaliated with rockets as a three-week-old flare-up showed no let-up despite international mediation efforts.

Warning sirens sounded before dawn in Israeli communities near the border as the pre-dawn air strikes and shelling prompted Hamas to launch a salvo of six rockets in retaliation.

The Palestinian Islamist group, which has controlled Gaza since 2007, said the rockets were a "direct response to the escalation by the Israeli occupier".

Israel launched a new wave of strikes in reprisal, targeting "additional Hamas military targets" in Gaza, including a "weapons manufacturing site", the military said.

Israel has bombed Gaza almost daily since August 6, in response to the airborne incendiary devices and, less frequently, rockets launched across the border.

In response, Israel has been to tighten a blockade on Gaza. It has banned Gaza fishermen from going to sea and closed its goods crossing with the territory, prompting the closure of Gaza's sole power plant for want of fuel.

Floods kill 23 in Karachi

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's flooded financial capital of Karachi was plunged into chaos yesterday with power cuts, streets under water and cellphone outages caused by heavy rain as authorities said at least 23 people had been killed in downpours the previous day.

Record torrential rainfall flooded major city streets and damaged homes and other buildings on Thursday, with more rain expected.

The provincial government declared a public holiday to avoid residents having to commute on Friday with Chundrigar Road, home to the central bank, stock exchange and head offices of several banks, flooded.

The Chief Minister of Sindh province, Murad Ali Shah, ordered schools be used to accommodate displaced families, whose homes had been damaged or were unreachable.

WHO to review alert rules after criticism

Says Covid contacts should be tested, regardless of symptoms

AGENCIES

The WHO said Thursday it was setting up a committee to consider changing the rules on declaring an international health emergency, following criticism of its Covid-19 pandemic response.

The World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) over the new coronavirus on January 30 -- at which time the respiratory disease had infected fewer than 100 people outside China, and claimed no lives beyond its borders.

But under the current International Health Regulations (IHR) governing preparedness and response for health emergencies, there are no lower, intermediate levels of alarm beneath a full PHEIC, either on a global or regional scale.

The WHO has faced accusations -- notably from Washington -- of mishandling the pandemic, and waiting too long to sound the alarm, reports AFP.

WHO experts had met on January 22 and 23, but at that point did not conclude that the outbreak merited the high state of alert of a full PHEIC.

WHO chief Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference on Thursday that the Covid-19 pandemic had been an "acid test" for countries as well as for the IHR. Now the WHO will set up a review committee into the global regulations to see whether any changes should be made, Tedros said.

The world health body reiterated its advice on Thursday that resources permitting, people exposed to coronavirus should be tested even if they do not show immediate symptoms of infection, reports Reuters.

The comments come after the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said this week that people exposed to Covid-19 but not symptomatic may not need to be tested, surprising doctors and politicians and prompting accusations the guidance was politically motivated.

Maria Van Kerkhove, a WHO epidemiologist, said the UN agency recommended suspected cases and their contacts be tested, if possible, but the focus should be on people displaying signs of infection.

Request for Quotation [RFQ] for Software [Oracle and VMware]

Business Finance for the Poor in Bangladesh [BFP-B] is planning to procure Software [Oracle and VMware] for its Program. Reputed and eligible company/ firm are requested to submit sealed quotation on 20th September, 2020 by 10:00 -11:50 AM at the following address:

House # 17, level-5, Road # 42, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212. If any urgent query, professional suppliers can communicate to Mhasnat@nathaninc.com For detail specifications please visit the following link after 31st August, 2020: <https://www.bfp-b.org/join-us>

THE TRUE CONDOMINIUM

SIZE: 1460-3455 SFT.

RUPAYAN LAKE CASTLE

@ BASHUNDHARA R/A

40% DOWN PAYMENT

REST 60% 36EMI FROM THE DATE OF HANDOVER

HOME LOAN

MEMBER REHAB

Head Office: Rupayan Centre, 72, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212

The Team at Your Service: 09610016504

RUPAYAN Housing Estate Ltd

“Hard work and honesty pave the way towards success” — Aupee Karim

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Aupee Karim is the personification of excellence in whatever she pursues. The star started out as a model, before making her way into television. She further proved her versatility with her impeccable performance in Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's film, *Bachelor*. Among other things, she has made a name for herself in the field of theatre, actively working with Nagorik Natya Sampradaya. Her recent telefilm, *Victim*, earned positive reviews from audiences and critics alike. In a recent video interview with *The Daily Star*, titled *A & E Talk with Elita*, the actor shared her experience of working on the project.

After *Victim* took television fans by storm, everyone had one question to ask – who was the actual 'victim' in it? According to Aupee, no one can be singled out as the victim. “The creators have tried to address the turmoil that different individuals, including one's family members go through, when they face such a fate,” said the actor in the video interview.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Although she always manages to put in seamless, natural and true-to-life performances in her projects, she prefers to give most of the credit to the directors. “I try and follow everything that they tell me,” says Aupee. “While shooting for *Victim* with Ashfaq Nipun, for instance, I followed all his guidelines and briefings. I believe that hard work and honesty pave the way towards success.”

Among the recent Eid specials, Aupee especially liked Ashfaq Nipun's *Eti Maa*, because of Rumana Rashid Ishita's phenomenal performance in it. Even though television has brought her a lot of success throughout the years, Karim says that theatre, where her roots lie, brings her a lot of peace and contentment, and she plans to continue honing her presence on the stage.

The actor will be seen in Indranil Roy Chowdhury's film, *Mayar Jonjal (Debris of Desire)*. “We started filming in 2019, and the shooting is complete. The film was appreciated at many festivals, including the Shanghai Film Festival,” says Aupee. The film has been cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification, and is waiting for a clearance from Bangladesh Film Censor Board and a theatrical release here.



Kanak Chanpa Chakma's artwork on pollution.



The artist is an avid animal lover.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

“Both pets and stray animals deserve to co-exist with human beings”

– Kanak Chanpa Chakma

ZAHANGIR ALIOM

Born in Rangamati, renowned artist Kanak Chanpa Chakma grew up among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Her husband Khalid Mahmood Mithu was a renowned artist and a National Film Award winning director of Bangladesh. Arjo and Shiropa, their son and daughter, are acclaimed for their documentary films, music and photography.

Kanak is compassionate towards animals. The artist regularly feeds, treats, rescues, neuters and takes care of her pets and stray animals. She has several cats and dogs. In a recent conversation with *The Daily Star*, she shared her valuable suggestions for the well-being of stray animals in Dhaka and more.

“The city corporation has regular programmes on neutering stray dogs. The dogs are vaccinated as well. If we

mobilised the programmes and covered the entire city, then the dog population can be managed,” said Kanak. “Dogs are immensely faithful creatures. Cats kill rats and other insects, which destroy harvests and households. They keep up the ecological balance. Both pets and stray animals deserve to co-exist with human beings. We cannot take the risk of rehabilitating them elsewhere.”

As the artist is confined to her home at this time, she worked on a number of paintings, themed around raising awareness on health issues in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

In her view, we, as a race, have failed to pay heed to the needs of our planet. “We have induced this pandemic. Now, we must atone for our transgressions,” she asserted. “Our materialistic desires have led to wars and bloodshed. It is time for us to think deeply about how we act and to love the nature, with all its beings and creations.” One of her recent



Kanak Chanpa Chakma with her pet cat

paintings portrays a pallid moon hiding in a polluted sky, with its brightly lit face hardly visible. The polluted air in the painting covers the surroundings.

Kanak's paintings carry a melancholy aesthetic with great depth. They tell stories of the past and a simple, but fading, way of life. The artist loves to depict female figures with different natural settings and ambiances. Her works invariably feature indigenous people and their daily lives.

She is keenly inspired by the vivid colours of indigenous attires, the hills, forests, the 'Jum' cultivation, waterfalls, dance and music. The semi-realistic and the abstract mingle in her works. The figures in her paintings are expressive and communicative.

Her works also capture the serene moods associated with Buddhism and its various spiritual aspects. Apart from her exotic and beautiful ethnic subjects, Kanak is influenced by impressionists.

রংধনু এখন নেক্সাস

রংধনু টিভির পরিবর্তিত নাম ‘নেক্সাস টেলিভিশন’। কোম্পানির নতুন নাম ‘নেক্সাস টেলিভিশন এন্ড মিডিয়া নেটওয়ার্ক লিমিটেড’।

তথ্য-বিনোদনের নানা আয়োজন নিয়ে পরীক্ষামূলক সম্প্রচারে থাকা ‘নেক্সাস টেলিভিশন’ চূড়ান্ত সম্প্রচারে আসছে শিগগিরই

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

প্রডিউসার (এক্সিকিউটিভ/সিনিয়র/ অ্যাসোসিয়েট/অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট)
প্রোডাকশন অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট
প্রোথাম এক্সিকিউটিভ
ডিজিটাল প্র্যাটফর্ম এক্সিকিউটিভ
গ্রাফিক্স ডিজাইনার
ভিডিও এডিটর
ক্যামেরা পারসন
ভিশন মিক্সার অপারেটর
অডিও এডিটর
মেকাপ আর্টিস্ট
সেট অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট

ব্রডকাস্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার
লাইট অপারেটর
স্টুডিও অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট
ইলেকট্রিক্যাল টেকনিশিয়ান
ট্রান্সপোর্ট সুপারভাইজার

এক্সিকিউটিভ:
এমসিআর/ইনজেন্স্ট/ফ্যাসিলিটিজ/আইটি/
আর্কাইভ/টেকনিক্যাল স্টোর/শিডিউল/
অ্যাকাউন্টস/হিউম্যান রিসোর্স/
অ্যাডমিন/ফ্রন্ট ডেস্ক

হেড অব মার্কেটিং এন্ড সেলস্
এক্সিকিউটিভ
(মার্কেটিং এন্ড সেলস্)
এক্সিকিউটিভ
(চ্যানেল ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন)

শিক্ষানবিশ:
প্রডিউসার/ক্যামেরা পারসন
ভিডিও এডিটর

৩ মাসের প্রশিক্ষণ শেষে যোগ্যতা
বিবেচনায় স্থায়ী নিয়োগ।
প্রশিক্ষণকালে ভাতা
দেয়া হবে।

ন্যূনতম স্নাতক; কিছু পদে শিখিলযোগ্য। অভিজ্ঞতা মূল্যায়ন করা হবে। জীবনবৃত্তান্ত পাঠিয়ে আবেদন করুন আগামী ১০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২০ তারিখের মধ্যে। ইমেইলের সাবজেক্ট ঘরে অবশ্যই পদের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে। ইমেইল: jobs@nexusbd.tv



NEXUS
television

নেক্সাস টেলিভিশন এন্ড মিডিয়া নেটওয়ার্ক লিমিটেড
(এস. আলম গ্রুপের একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)



All the equipment bought for the 210 crore taka underground tunnel project to help cattle safely cross the road. The tents saved much taxpayer money by being under-budget while still having Wi-Fi.

Tk 6cr govt project to buy free Instagram filters for employee training on better selfies

E. GAZA
Last week Anila Torun, junior project supervisor of the Gabtoli Subterranean Tunnel for Cattle Rehabilitation, took a selfie with a cow. This is all fine because people like Ms Torun, inside Gabtoli bus stand, always take pictures with cows and trucks as an excuse to not show up to work. It's easy to say they got run over or casually mutilated

by a runaway bull/truck. Gabtoli is known for being the place with the second highest cow-related human casualties after India. While Ms Torun's selfie was perfectly framed to show her new dental surgery from Thailand, it also showed part of the Tk 210 crore project to build the tunnel. This revolutionary tunnel is designed to make it easier for cattle to cross the road by going under the road. The road is a very dangerous 20-foot wide portion where police stop trucks to exchange friendly little

notes asking how the fam is doing at home. Many cattle have been psychologically injured while crossing this road. Showing the project was a no-no, or rather a 'Nyet' because it is being funded by Russian donors who process 'uplifting energising spirits', whatever that is. Why the nyet, then? Abu Share Ryuz, Head Data Consultant for the cattle crossing project, shared with us that he doesn't really know because no one shares with him. "I'm just a guy who makes

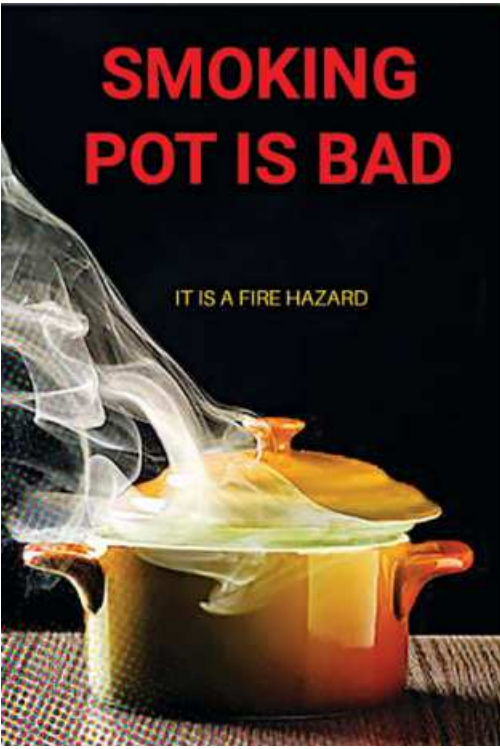
infographics." Ms Torun gave a press briefing later to apologise for her indiscriminate selfie-taking. The real reason is to avoid the 'evil eye' from neighbouring nations. "We have even put small black dots on the foreheads of all the cattle there," she added. To combat this poor photography, another project was undertaken costing Tk 6 crore to buy Instagram filters for a training project on how to take aesthetic selfies that improve

the image of the country. Only iPhones can be used for these filters, so they ordered 27 brand new Toyota Land Cruiser V8 SUVs for the project personnel at a cost of 4.6 crores each. They avoided the heated leather seats as a show of respect to the cattle. Some say the ban on photography of special projects is that photos show no work is being done, yet donor money is all gone. But we know that is a blatant pile of buffalo... well, you know.

Addicts rejoice as narcotics' prices stabilise after Covid-22 supply crunch

Grass sellers condemn jailing of fellows implicated for selling pills

SS ASHWAGANDHA
Drug addicts in the capital smoked a sigh of relief as prices of their favourite narcotics began to fall, thanks to some stabilisation in the supply chain which was disrupted following the outbreak of Covid-22. "First of all, I only smoke dry leaves. I am not even a drug addict," said an addict when asked about the prices. "Look, grass is not really a drug. It's more of a mood stabiliser," he added when prodded some more to speak on the prices. With not much progress in conversation with members of addicts anonymous, this correspondent decided to try and reach famous drug lord and now owner of a bus to make his deliveries, Buslam, to learn a little of their pandemic woes. "They killed a lot of us during this lockdown. Can you please write about that instead of our prices, which are low by the way?" Buslam, visibly fuming said. "My beef isn't with the grass, but more with the pill. That is concerning. This is just for relaxation. Why isn't the crackdown targeting more of that?" he added. Buslam's comment on deaths is valid. The numbers show that 35 people had been killed so far in "shootouts" till July 26. Not just that, many are languishing in jail over false cases



Professional Smoker E Gaza pointed out that a lot more needs to be done than just killing drug dealers. "This eulogising of killing drug dealers needs to stop. This war against drug is wrong. Just look at our prison system. It's about punishment and not rehabilitation. That needs to change. This baying for blood is symptomatic of a bigger problem in our society," he said while smoking. The more E Gaza consumed, the more complex his thoughts became. "We need to look way back into our history. We, as a people, have always been subjugated. If it wasn't the Aryans, it was the Mughals, the Brits...it was always somebody and maybe that's something that has become inherent in us. We want to conquer drugs, instead of taxing it," he said. At the mention of tax, an official from the international board of revenue appeared on the scene and proceeded to institute a tax on drugs. "It's like black money at the end of the day. And that's kind of what the country runs on. Please don't ask any questions about black money," he said before disappearing. As for the supply situation, which was the original point of the article, it's pretty stable, sources say.



Virus loses all power inside buses

WANDERBUST CORRESPONDENT
The Chapasthan health ministry has caused a minor sensation by announcing that the highly transmissible virus Covid-22 loses all viability inside public buses. "Our scientists have found that there is something inside public buses that overpowers the Covid-22 virus. This is very fortunate as people can now go to their jobs and get the economy running again," said health minister Mahid Zalek. When asked what jobs, Zalek seemed not to listen. "Anyway, this proves what I have been saying all along - Covid-22 will go away on its own. Drumpf has been saying the same thing, and he must know something as leader of the free world." The transport minister, who was sitting beside the health minister during the press conference, had his own take on the matter, which was also attended en masse by members of the bus owners' collective. "It has been seen that the tickets passengers buy for the buses work as kind of a vaccine," Transport Minister

Omaigo Bader said. "In fact, we noticed with wonder that the higher the ticket price, the greater the effect. That is why we are no longer reducing the prices of tickets to the pre-pandemic rates." There were some snickers from the collective around this time, but whether it was coincidental is anyone's guess. This announcement also had the effect of pedestrians rushing to get inside buses, especially those already infected with Covid-22. "Scientists at the ministry also think that the tickets work as a cure," a bus owners' collective member told this correspondent under condition of anonymity. There were several attempts to contact the health experts and scientists at the ministry, but none could be reached. The health secretary said that they had all taken the bus. An independent scientist, meanwhile, told this correspondent that Covid-22 was overpowered by the body odour that is common inside public buses. In other news, soap manufacturers have written to the government asking for a stimulus package.



Cancellations of JSC-JDC exams

Finally, some respite for students

AFTER almost five months of postponement of classes and uncertainty regarding the schedule of school examinations, this year's Junior School Certificate (JSC), Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) and their equivalent exams have finally been cancelled. Moreover, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has suggested that students might be promoted without having to sit for class final tests. We welcome this move, which would certainly bring some respite to anxious students worried about finishing their syllabuses and performing well in the highly competitive exams, with schools closed for the better part of the year due to the pandemic.

Exams are nerve-wracking even during non-Covid times. The pandemic has exposed our students to further mental and emotional vulnerabilities, as they are stuck at home for long periods of time with no interaction with their peers, worrying about an uncertain future. Compelling them to sit for exams for which they were unprepared for would have been cruel, to say the least, and we appreciate that officials have now been asked to devise alternative evaluation methods for promotions for all grades. We believe this is an opportune moment for the education sector to come up with methods of assessments that don't rely on rote memorisation but rather promote critical thinking among students, and enable them to engage analytically with knowledge gained from their textbooks, and indeed, the outside world. The latter ought to be a prerequisite of education, whether or not there is a pandemic.

The education ministry and primary and mass education ministry have extended the closure of educational institutions until October 3, following recommendations by the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19. This, too, is a necessary move to ensure the safety of students and their families and to keep the transmission of Covid-19 in check. However, this prolonged closure will further negatively impact students who lack access to digital devices, TVs and radios and hence cannot reap the benefits of alternative programmes introduced by the government since the onset of Covid-19. The ministries must address this digital divide urgently or risk mass dropouts, particularly as poor families, struggling to tide over the pandemic, put their children to work or marry their daughters off. As a result of the cancellation of the PECE, it was also announced that the government will not provide any scholarship to over one lakh students of primary schools and madrasas across the country that are offered on the basis of these results. We feel this decision could also push students from disadvantaged backgrounds out of education, and we urge the government to come up with alternative methods to assess the needs of students and grant scholarships to the most deprived candidates.

Moreover, the fate of HSC students still hang in the balance, and they risk losing a year if the Covid situation does not improve in the near future. If the situation prolongs for much longer, the ministry can consider opting for predictive grades based on previous class exams. At any rate, it should explore all possibilities while engaging with experts as well as students on how to best mitigate the problem.

Making masks with garment scraps to ensure livelihoods

Rural women lead the way

THE global economic slowdown that resulted from the pandemic has affected multiple industries and led to mass unemployment at home and abroad. It is encouraging to learn that during such difficult times, rural women are making biodegradable, reusable Ella masks from garment scraps—a product of ELLA (Eco-friendly low-cost liquid absorbent) Pad, an award-winning social enterprise known for reusing high-quality textile scraps from export-oriented garment factories to produce sanitary napkins for RMG workers at affordable prices. Ella masks are standardised according to World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

In order to provide financial independence, the enterprise connects rural women with different institutional buyers and UN agencies who purchase their masks. With the opportunity to earn Tk 400 per day without any additional hassle, hundreds of women from seven districts—Dhaka, Gazipur, Jamalpur, Kustia, Magura, Narayanganj and Rajbari—got involved with the project. Many are even earning more than they did previously, and are able to make significant contributions to their household incomes.

At a time when unemployment poses a grave threat, it is promising to see how the organisation is trying to ensure the health and well-being of marginalised women to alleviate their sufferings. Overtime, when the demand for masks ease, ELLA Pad aspires to diversify into home textile items so that the women can continue making a living. We hope such initiatives get all the support they need in carrying out their activities so that they can be replicated across the nation and empower women in impoverished communities.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Biodegradable PPE

A recent report in this daily highlighted the invention of biodegradable PPE by Dr Mubarak Ahmad Khan, who also invented the famous Sonali Bag using jute polymer. We are well-aware of the perils associated with plastic waste being discarded improperly, which tends to help spread the virus further. However, Dr Khan's PPE, which is made with cellulose extracted from jute and chitosan, a natural fibrous material made from the exoskeleton of crabs, lobsters and shrimps, dissolves in soapy water within three minutes and disintegrates in plain water within seven days. In this moment of crisis, his innovative invention has the potential to make a positive impact at home and abroad. The government should support Dr Khan in every possible manner.

Sanjida Alam, Narayanganj

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN NDC, PSC (RETD)

BANGLADESH has inherited many legacies by virtue of its long history as a constituent of a larger geographical entity, of which it was a part till not very long ago. Some of them make us proud, some we would rather shun. But one common trait of most people of South Asia is the propensity to hide behind abhorrent legacies of the past to hide our failings as well as our incapacity or unwillingness to change the status quo, and instead blame the past regimes for one's shortcomings. We have the most recent example of "legacy" being cited as the reason why we are witnessing instances of crossfire.

The issue of crossfire killings has come into national focus more acutely after the preplanned murder of Major Sinha. But extrajudicial deaths are not recent phenomena. We have been witnessing this practice for a long time. But when some of our leaders resort to blame games and citing the past as an excuse, what they expose is a selective memory (or selective amnesia if you like), basking in the self-serving feeling of satisfaction that it is the predecessor and not them, who is the villain of the piece.

We prefer to blame this legacy because that perhaps suits our purpose no matter how blatantly obvious those practices may be in the present. We still blame the "bloody Brits" for many ills but do nothing to change the rules, practices or traditions we have inherited. Every regime, irrespective of the party in power,

But when some of our leaders resort to blame games and citing the past as an excuse, what they expose is a selective memory (or selective amnesia if you like), basking in the self-serving feeling of satisfaction that it is the predecessor and not them, who is the villain of the piece.



KOICHI HAMADA

Millions are without health care. Some families are suffering from food insecurity for the first time. While the well-to-do can manage by using their savings, those who live from paycheck to paycheck, or hand to mouth, are suffering unfathomable hardships.

The pandemic also poses an almost impossible problem for traditional economic thinking. Most economists believe that the price mechanism will

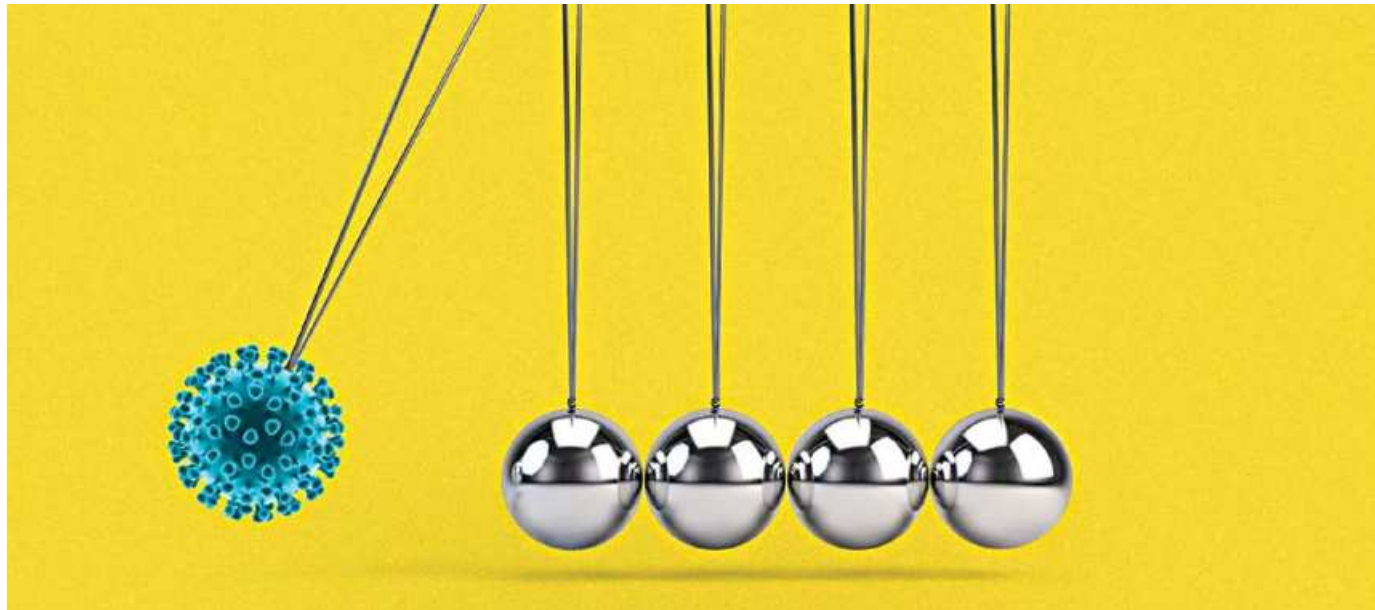


PHOTO: COLLECTED

allocate resources efficiently, if not equitably, and that competition will maximise national income. But this assumes, crucially, that the activities of individuals or firms do not directly affect those of other agents, except through price signals in the market that indicate the scarcity of a product.

Economists refer to these effects as "externalities," and divide them into external economies and diseconomies, depending on whether they are positive or negative. Such externalities prevent

EDITORIAL

The 'legacy' of crossfire

has blamed its predecessor for all the wrong policies and for all the evils that were happening in the country. However, not only were those policies not done away with—they were generally made even more stringent by adding more draconian features. In recent times, the floor of the parliament was used to root for crossfire as a way to resolve law and order issues. The number of deaths since the start of the anti-narcotics drive suggests that as an expedient, crossfire may have come to be accepted as a tactical norm.

policies have been steadfastly continued with. Operation Clean Heart may have been a well-intentioned undertaking—to arrest the rising incidence of crime and lawlessness and recover illegal weapons, but at the end of the day, at least 58 people were dead, allegedly killed by the security forces, and about 10,000 arrested. The Act of 2003 to indemnify the killings was declared illegal by the High Court. In similar vein, the Rakkhi Bahini was given indemnity in 1974. As we have stated before, one hears critical and discordant notes only when a ruling

follow the tactics of the gun and narcotics runners; doing that degrades them to the level of injustice of these elements. But even more than that, resorting to such extrajudicial means, where the police become the judge, jury and executioner, denigrates the legal system and the court, and as Albert Camus has said, it mutilates justice. Such police actions also betray a lack of confidence in the judicial system. And if it becomes a common trick of police trade, it often becomes a weapon of extortion and fear wielded by some errant police officials.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The latest example of the blame-the-past inclination is a minister's frank admission that crossfire deaths are illegal—being a lawyer, he couldn't say otherwise—but he quickly added that it is a legacy the Awami League has inherited. He also, somewhat ruefully, acknowledged that bad legacies take a long time to purge. Indeed, legacies, particularly bad ones, are like the second layer of human skin, the dermis, which is impossible to peel off. But one would have thought that a decade was long enough a time to get rid of a practice for which the country has had to face severe internal and international criticisms.

The most unfortunate aspect of governance in Bangladesh is that although there have been changes in government from time to time, the bad

party cadre has the misfortune of falling victim, as was the case of Arzu Mian, a Bangladesh Chhatra League leader, who was allegedly killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in August 2015. And it was an AL MP who reportedly claimed that "Arzu was murdered" and said, "the government could not function depending on Rab, which was formed during the BNP-Jamaat-e-Islami coalition government."

The country today is caught between crossfire and self-defence. Although one does not have any issue with the security forces resorting to genuine self-defence, the narrative of self-defence has been so overused that it no longer accords legality to the killings; the official statements following such deaths are too repetitive to satisfy one's credulity. The law enforcing agencies can ill afford to

No society can endure a situation where law keepers break the law. While the government is justified in undertaking drives to arrest a deteriorating law and order problem, it cannot justify the extrajudicial actions resorted to by the police. One wonders if trade in yaba and other narcotics have reduced in the two years of the drive, despite the nearly 400 dead.

Extrajudicial methods have both national and international repercussions, apart from the deleterious effect on the rule of law. And the lawmakers, instead of blaming the baggage of the past, should do away with those instead. Is there the political will to do so?

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

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Epidemics, economics, and externalities

resources from being allocated efficiently.

Consider the decision whether or not to wear a face mask. In the absence of a pandemic, the demand for and supply of masks reflect the benefit and cost of producing them. Mask wearers will be protected from harmful substances in the air, but will incur costs: inconvenience, some discomfort, a possible loss of physical attractiveness, and of course the price of the mask. The market will equate the benefit and the cost, and scarce resources will be used in adequate amounts.

But this is not the case when externalities exist, as with Covid-19. Today, wearing a mask will deliver many benefits beyond those to the individual mask wearer. If the wearer is infected, the mask will prevent transmission of the coronavirus to friends, and further to friends of friends.

Here, the market fails, because the benefit of wearing a mask is far higher than what a single individual would

has so far been one of the most successful in the United States in terms of infection and mortality rates. By contrast, governors of other, mostly southern, states refused to listen to scientists and health experts, and thus did not mandate mask wearing or enforce shelter-in-place orders and social distancing guidelines.

Similar externalities, or technological diseconomies, exist with respect to the environment. If a firm freely disposes of a large amount of sewage or air pollutants, then it is not paying the cost of the harm that its discharges or emissions will cause. The company is thus producing the substances in far greater quantities than a comparison of social cost and social benefit would deem adequate.

Yet, US President Donald Trump's neglect and dismantling of environmental regulations encourages such behaviour, because it enables many firms to avoid the cost of external diseconomies and impose additional hazards on society. Environmental deregulation assumes

Mask wearers will be protected from harmful substances in the air, but will incur costs: inconvenience, some discomfort, a possible loss of physical attractiveness, and of course the price of the mask. The market will equate the benefit and the cost, and scarce resources will be used in adequate amounts.

concern and respect as those in their wealthy, rarefied circles.

But we can turn for inspiration to Guido Calabresi, the US Circuit Court Judge and Professor Emeritus at Yale Law School who, along with the late Nobel laureate economist Ronald Coase, laid the foundations of the interdisciplinary "law and economics" approach. Calabresi highlighted the importance of social justice and the serious impact of sudden income fluctuations on people involved in accidents—very similar to what many are experiencing during the current pandemic.

In his book *The Future of Law and Economics*, Calabresi explores a new approach that incorporates externalities into consumption. In particular, he argues that a legal system which reflects people's compassion toward one another may help to create a more equitable society.

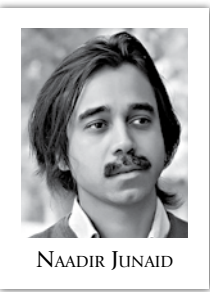
Calabresi's idea is especially welcome and enlightening at a time when too many leaders are neglecting the struggles and pain of their fellow citizens. Perhaps close study of Calabresi's argument and propagation of his ideas among policymakers would contribute to fostering a much-needed sense of social solidarity in a world where the self-absorption of some is a threat to all.

Koichi Hamada is Professor Emeritus at Yale University and a special adviser to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2020.
www.project-syndicate.org
(Exclusive to The Daily Star)

Destroyed, but not defeated

The freedom fighters who fought till the end in August 1971



Ahmed Chowdhury (Azad) in Dhaka city. They were the members of a guerrilla unit of Mukti Bahini.

Rumi's parents and Azad's mother witnessed the extremely distressing scenes of the capture of their sons. Blood poured out of Azad's nose and mouth as the Pakistani soldiers beat him up mercilessly in front of his mother. Eminent musician Altaf Mahmud was also captured by the Pakistani army at the dawn of August 30. Before his family members, the Pakistani soldiers hit him hard with rifle butts. The blow broke one of his front teeth. Sharp strokes of the bayonet caused a cut on his forehead and the skin started hanging over his eyebrows. Rumi and Azad never returned to their mothers; neither did Bodi and Jewel. Altaf Mahmud's wife and daughter never saw him again.

From June 1971, Bengali guerrillas started conducting operations in the heart of Dhaka city. As they were locals of Dhaka, they knew the city very well. Most of them were students and trained in Sector 2, which was under the command of the then Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Mosharraf. Their operations had multiple aims—to let the world know that the situation in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka, was far from stable, to unnerv and demoralise the Pakistani army, and to instill hope and courage in the Bengali population eager to see the independence of Bangladesh. Habibul Alam, Kazi Kamaluddin, Qamrul Huq (Shawpon), Ali Ahmed Ziauddin, Mofazzal Hosen Chowdhury (Maya), Golam Dastagir Gazi, AFMA Harris, Fateh Ali Chowdhury, Masud Sadique (Chullu), Pulu, Mukhtar and some other guerrillas took part in several daring operations in Dhaka from

June 9 to August 29, 1971.

Bodi showed extraordinary courage in some important guerrilla actions. On August 19, some guerrillas used two boats for a reconnaissance of Siddhirganj power station in Narayanganj. One of these boats bumped into a Pakistani army patrol boat. When the guerrillas were challenged by the Pakistani soldiers, Bodi quickly fired his Sten gun on the soldiers, emptying the whole magazine. Because of this rapid burst of fire by Bodi, the Pakistani soldiers could not retaliate much and with the exception of Jewel, the freedom fighters remained unhurt. On August 29, Bodi was the first to be arrested by the Pakistani army from a friend's house around 11 am. It is likely that Bodi was arrested after a tip-off. Otherwise, the Pakistani army had no other way of knowing he was a freedom fighter and that he would be in that specific house at that time.

Bodi was tortured brutally by the Pakistani army into giving them information about the other guerrillas, their arms and ammunition, and their hideouts. After the gruesome torture, Bodi disclosed the names of Chullu and Samad. Both of them were soon arrested. From Samad, the army figured out the association of Altaf Mahmud with the guerrillas. Altaf Mahmud, a much-loved musician who achieved enormous fame after composing the tune of the iconic song *Amar Bhai er Rokte Rangano Ekushey February*, was very supportive of the guerrillas. Taking huge risks, he kept two steel trunks filled with arms and ammunition to be used by the freedom fighters in his house in Rajarbagh.

The trunks were buried under a lemon tree in the backyard. The Pakistani army made Altaf Mahmud dig out those trunks. Weapons and explosives were also hidden in an underground storage in the kitchen of the house of Habibul Alam in Dilu Road. Breaking the concrete slabs of the kitchen floor, the army collected those arms and ammunitions too. On August 29, Kazi Kamal and Shawpon narrowly escaped being captured during the army raids. Kazi and Jewel were in Azad's house in Moghbazar on that night. Three fingers of Jewel's left hand were still bandaged as they were badly injured

ten days ago during the guerrillas' exchange of fire with the Pakistani army near Siddhirganj power station. Seeing the bandage on Jewel's hand, a Pakistani military officer twisted his injured fingers forcefully. Jewel screamed in terrible pain. Kazi instantly jumped on the army officer and snatched the officer's sub-machine gun. Then, he opened fire on the stunned Pakistani soldiers and ran away from the place.

Shawpon managed to hide himself

He just departed silently. On that morning, guerrillas Zia and Fateh also went to that house to inform Rumi of the danger. But it was too late.

Rumi joined the Liberation War in the middle of June. He was one of the specially trained guerrillas of Sector 2. During the operation in Dhanmondi on August 25, when the car carrying guerrillas was chased by Pakistani military vehicles, using his Sten gun butt, Rumi smashed the back windshield

of a large amount of arms and ammunition, the guerrillas did not get demoralised. Soon, new guerrilla groups from Sector 2, equipped with better arms and ammunition, entered Dhaka and from October 1971, guerrilla operations started to rock the capital again. In Sector 2, the then Major ATM Hyder put in a great deal of effort into training the young civilians to become skillful guerrillas. Major Hyder was a former officer of the Special Services Group (SSG), the elite commando unit of the Pakistan army. His specialised knowledge about commando-type guerrilla warfare and the dedication and determination of the young men contributed to the creation of daring guerrilla units.

Quoting Mao Tse Tung, Khaled Mosharraf once said to the young men aspiring to become freedom fighters that no government wants an alive guerrilla. Humayun Ahmed's important novel *Aguner Parashmoni* is based on the guerrilla activity in Dhaka in 1971. The novel ends with saying that as the dawn is breaking, the fireflies are not seen anymore. The fireflies are not needed. These sentences symbolically suggest the lack of interest among many people in independent Bangladesh in remembering the invaluable contributions of the freedom fighters in 1971. Do the majority members of the new generation even know the names of the young guerrillas of our Liberation War? Are they able to recognise one of those valiant guerrillas if their photographs are shown to them?

Failure to distinguish between real heroes and pseudo-heroes only serves to create an intellectual vacuum and historical ignorance in society. Rumi, Bodi, Jewel, Azad, Altaf Mahmud and many other freedom fighters were killed in 1971, but they were far from defeated. Although they did not live to see freedom, the glory of their courage and sacrifice will last forever. Let those fearless freedom fighters stand as examples to all of us. Let their courage and love for the motherland inspire the people of this country.

Dr Naadir Junaid is Professor at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka.



The guerrillas of Crack Platoon (Sector 2), Dhaka, Bangladesh (1971).

COURTESY: BANGLADESH OLD PHOTO ARCHIVE

inside the haystack near a cowshed when the Pakistani army surrounded his house in Malibagh. The soldiers searched the place thoroughly, but Shawpon was very lucky that maybe after seeing the cows, they did not go near the haystack. Jahanara Imam wrote in *Ekattorer Dinguli* that early in the morning of August 30, Shawpon came to their house in Elephant Road. When Jahanara Imam informed him of the Pakistani army's raids and asked him to go to a safe place immediately, Shawpon was so distraught that he could not even tell Rumi's mother that their house had also been raided last night.

of the car of his own accord and opened fire on the military vehicle. Bullets fired by Rumi did not miss the driver and the jeep crashed into a lamp post. In 1971, Rumi was only 20 and a freshman in university. Because of the treachery of one or more local collaborators of the Pakistani army, these freedom fighters and talented individuals, who were deeply committed to liberating their motherland, were captured by the occupying Pakistani forces at the end of August 1971.

Although the guerrilla activity in Dhaka city suffered a major setback because of the capture of some skilled guerrillas and the loss

The meltdown of the US Republican Party

Storied party morphs into personality cult



“OWNING the libs and pissing off the media. That's what we believe in now. There's really not much more to it,” said long-time senior congressional Republican aide Brendan Buck on what the Republican Party stood for today, while in conversation with *Politico* reporter Tim Alberta.

US President Donald Trump has left no doubt of his complete control of the Republican Party at its mind-boggling, norm-busting convention. The tacky presence of Trump is unprecedented in any Western democracy. He spoke every day in the four-day convention. Trump and his family also formed half of the slate of 12 key featured speakers—Trump, his wife Melania, sons Donald Trump Jr and Eric, and daughters Ivanka and Tiffany—also unprecedented in any Western democracy. Except the president, the rest of them have zero record of running for or holding public office.

What a steep climbdown for a party that once prided itself for being the party of ideas! In Republican conventions over the past decades, cultural conservatives, libertarians, evangelicals and other groups jostled for real estate in the party's presidential campaign manifesto. This time around, the Republican Party has dispensed with any pretence of policy at all.

The Republican National Committee adopted the following resolution—“Whereas, The RNC enthusiastically supports President Trump and continues to reject the policy positions of the Obama-Biden Administration, as well as those espoused by the Democratic National Committee today; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Republican Party has and will continue to enthusiastically support the President's America-first agenda; Resolved, That the 2020 Republican National Convention will adjourn without adopting a new platform until the Republican National Convention in 2024.”

Come again? How are voters going to figure what the party stands for? This looks less like the re-election of a leader in a Western democracy than the near-total support in yesteryear's cult-like autocracies, like Iraq's Saddam Hussein or North Korea's

cult-like embrace of Trump, the convention provided a platform to some speakers who seem nuttier than a fruitcake. The Associated Press reports that “anti-abortion activist Abby Johnson, one of the speakers... advocated for ‘household voting’ in which each household is given a single vote, and said that, if differences arise, women should defer to their husbands.” Good luck on winning suburban women's vote with that. Johnson has also said she would be fine with police profiling her adopted biracial son when he's

basic sex education.”

Some of the invited guests are no less bizarre. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican congressional nominee from Georgia, was an invitee to the White House to attend Trump's acceptance speech. She supports the cockamamie QAnon conspiracy theory, which centres around an anonymous high government official called Q, who shares information about an anti-Trump “deep state” tied to satanism and child sex trafficking.

“She has also made a series of racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic comments,” according to AP. Trump describes her as a “future Republican Star.” God help Republicans, and God help us.

An unsurprising and inevitable fallout of the Trump cult has been the spread of one his worst attributes—his shameless mendacity. Take the lies about the Democratic National Convention spread by the right-wing echo chamber. Now, twisting the truth to near-breaking point to make your side look good is a hallowed quadrennial American political exercise. What's remarkable here is how often they are making statements that are demonstrably false.

Take the canard that the Democratic National Convention had dropped “One nation, under God,” from the pledge of allegiance. The claim was initially shared on Facebook by former US Republican senatorial candidate Peggy Hubbard, getting 1,000 likes. Trump joined in merrily. In a total of 30 council events, the reference to God was indeed removed—in just two events. On the national stage, “One nation under God” was mentioned on all four days.

Right-wing radio titan Rush Limbaugh also made the outrageous claim that Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden's widely admired acceptance speech was faked. Although nearly three dozen journalists, a small camera crew, several Secret

Service agents and many campaign staffers witnessed Biden's acceptance speech in the Chase Center in Wilmington, Delaware, Limbaugh claimed the whole thing was a fraud concocted by stitched-together edited clips. This despite Biden delivering the speech in front of reporters from ABC, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and CNN, among others.

The important point, however, is that Trump is not the cause, but a florid manifestation of the long-term rot in the Republican Party. A decades-long veteran of the right-leaning think tank American Enterprise Institute, political analyst Norm Ornstein, along with centre-left Brookings Institution analyst Thomas Mann, wrote a scathing critique of the Republican Party in 2012, long before Trump was on the political horizon: “It is ideologically extreme, scornful of compromise; unmoved by conventional understanding of facts, evidence and science; and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition.”

Writing recently in *The Atlantic* magazine, Ornstein pines for a resurrected Republican Party that is “very conservative, but not radical. It would believe in limited government, but a government run by professionals, respecting data and science... It would believe in genuine fiscal discipline. It would try to apply free-market approaches to solving difficult problems, such as climate change. It would... insist that those in office adhere to high ethical standards.” Then he delivered the *coup de grace*: “Sadly, even if Donald Trump is defeated in November, there is no sign that such a party will return anytime soon. But restoring the Republican Party to its traditional values is absolutely essential to preserve the core of our system of governance.”

Ashfaque Swapan is a contributing editor for *Siliconer*, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.



President Donald Trump delivers his acceptance speech for the Republican Party nomination from the South Lawn of the White House.

PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kim Il-Sung. This mindless, mass kowtowing brings to mind a North Korean children's book I read many years ago where I was assured that when Kim Il-Sung visited a farm, overjoyed hens laid bigger eggs.

This year's Republican electoral efforts abound in absurdities. Along with the

older because “statistically, my brown son is more likely to commit a violent offence over my white sons.” Another speaker, elementary school teacher Rebecca Friedrichs, argued that “public schools groom kids for sexual predators like Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell, his longtime companion... by teaching them

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

AUGUST 29, 2005
New Orleans hit by Hurricane Katrina

On this day in 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the US Gulf Coast and devastated the area, especially New Orleans, which experienced catastrophic flooding after its levees were breached the following day.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Piece of data

5 Grant

11 Massage target

12 Run out

13 Magnetic metal

14 Made headway

15 Workout unit

16 Treaty

17 Garden item

19 Pigeon call

22 Halloween option

24 Composer

26 Gangsters' guns

27 Take a nap

28 Borders

30 Stares stupidly

31 Energy

32 Chubby

DOWN

1 Uncloody

2 Lot unit

3 Diced

4 Hamilton's bill

5 Kicked off

6 Track bet

7 Rotisserie part

8 Badge metal

9 Vein yield

10 Tie the knot

34 Put together

35 Building wing

38 Backwater town

41 Notion

42 Get even for

43 Campus part

44 Removed

45 Unceremoniously

46 Nimble

16 Light touch

18 Ultimate

19 Arose

20 Move like molasses

21 Washington's bills

22 Snare

23 Spa wear

25 Eden name

29 Dishwashing aid

30 Colt creation

33 Was fond of

34 Worthless stuff

36 Tragic king

37 Lord's wife

38 Fork over

39 Eggs, in Latin

40 Bear abode

41 Mensa entry numbers

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8-19

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

6/17

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

6/17

POETRY

The Door

AEMAN T RASUL

She knocks on the door,
The door-bell is broken; a
sculpture of unknown figure
hangs on the wall,
The door is solid, but not
made of Mahogany wood.

An uninviting dusty doormat
with crushed leaves at the
entrance,

She notices next door
neighbor opens the door when
the postman delivers mail.

The door is filled with spider-
webs,
The ants are creeping on the
wall,
A cat mews somewhere,
probably looking for food,
Butterflies flutter around the
unattended flower pots,
A shadow or the light moves
under the door, she is certain.

She knocks again,
The sound of foot-steps is
coming from inside the house,
Window shutter opens and
closes, no face is visible;
The children are playing at
the backyard and elders are
jogging,
Fear of pandemic, unwanted
guest is not welcome.
No one opens the Door.

*Aeman T Rasul has completed
a creative writing workshop
at Virginia Commonwealth
University (VCU). Her articles
has been published in the Daily
Star's Lifestyle in the past. She
writes from Virginia, USA.*



Take My Breath Away

TANYA KARIM

They say that life is not measured
by the number of breaths we take
But by the moments
that take our breath away.

Yet we presuppose
our breathing as rudimentary
Inhaling and exhaling,
an act deemed so ordinary.

To breathe is to live,
to live is to love
Experiencing true love
Surely a divine gift from above.

At the sight and mention
of the beloved
The lover does deeply breathe
Adorning the heart in a wreath.

Promising to never part till death
Starting the day with the beloved's
name
Nights ending inhaling their breath.

A smile of joy and a sigh of sorrow
Respiration taken for granted
As if there were no tomorrow.

Love is but a thief
that steals your breath and soul
Is love then, the oxygen of the soul?
Which keeps the spirit alive
To respire is to roll.

Then what becomes
of this precious life
For what is all this strife ?

Exhilarating adventures,
natural wonders destinations unseen
extracts bemused gasps
breathtaking sights and memories
of places we had been.

The single Divine breath
which our Creator did blow



upon a lump of clay
and lo man was created
the one that we all know.

The single breath
that determines the fine line
between life and the state of death.

Man's ingratitude
And denial of the favors of his Lord
The taking for granted
Of the life giving breath
The air most wanted.

Irked by this candour
Its time to be tested
By the supreme Commander
The very organs that supply life
sustaining air
Upon which existence rests, life seems
unfair.

Our breaths are now numbered
Divine intervention of invisible
soldiers
Instil fear of invasion in our slumber.

Put to the test in the form of a round
prickly ball

That travel from the nose to the lungs
No vaccines yet to stall.
Oblivious of race,
color creed and societal rungs.

A rogue virus is what they call
Over 2 million dead attacked by the
thorny ball.

Weighing less than a gram
Its now the time to give a damn.

Its not a pretty picture to see one gasp
For that single breath which we let
lapse.

Salvation in patience and repentance
Salivating tongues moist with prayer
In the hope that the Lord will desist to
scare.

And once again shower
His Divine love and care.
A promise to stop needless death
And return to us our lowly breath.

*Tanya Karim is an architect in Dhaka
and has also works in Bhutan and Middle
East.*

A Book, a Bookstore, a City and the Aftermath

RAANA HAIDER

During the long lockdown in early 2020, I took stock of my shelvedunread books. A mint-green hardback covered book-spine caught my eye;A *Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Almost always, I know the provenance of my books. Who? Where? When? Whom? Was it bought or gifted? Full-price or bargain-buy? On this book I drew a blank. In 2019, my sister had handed it over saying it belonged to me. It must have emerged from some carton of books that had travelled the globe with the family; got lost, then found by me during the 2020 pandemic.

On 29th May 2020, I opened the book and read the following inscription:

To Raana Ahmad
Pappa
Paris 17.5.'57
A clear blue and white sticker states:
W.H. Smith & Son
English & French Books
248 Rue de Rivoli PARIS

I do not recall ever having read this book. Sixty-three years after being gifted this book by my father on my birthday on 17th May, I started reading *Little Princess* in May 2020. In hand was not a treasure found in the attic but its equivalent. Enhanced by the patina of age, I was reuniting with a precious item of immense personal value and considerable historical context.

W.H. Smith & Son, "the largest English bookshop in Paris" in the "City of Light" opened its doors on the elegant Rue de Rivoli in 1903. It was a regular source of children's books for us living in Paris in the mid-1950s. Birthdays and good report card results merited books as gifts in those days. Purchases were sugared by a climb to the upstairs English Tearoom which offered a full traditional tea service: egg and cucumber finger sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and marmalade; also fruit and chocolate cakes. Those childhood taste-bud memories remain fixed in one's mind and tongue. Over following decades, WH Smith ("Son" dropped out) continued being a lure for a "peeping person" to browse books and more often than not a visit upstairs.

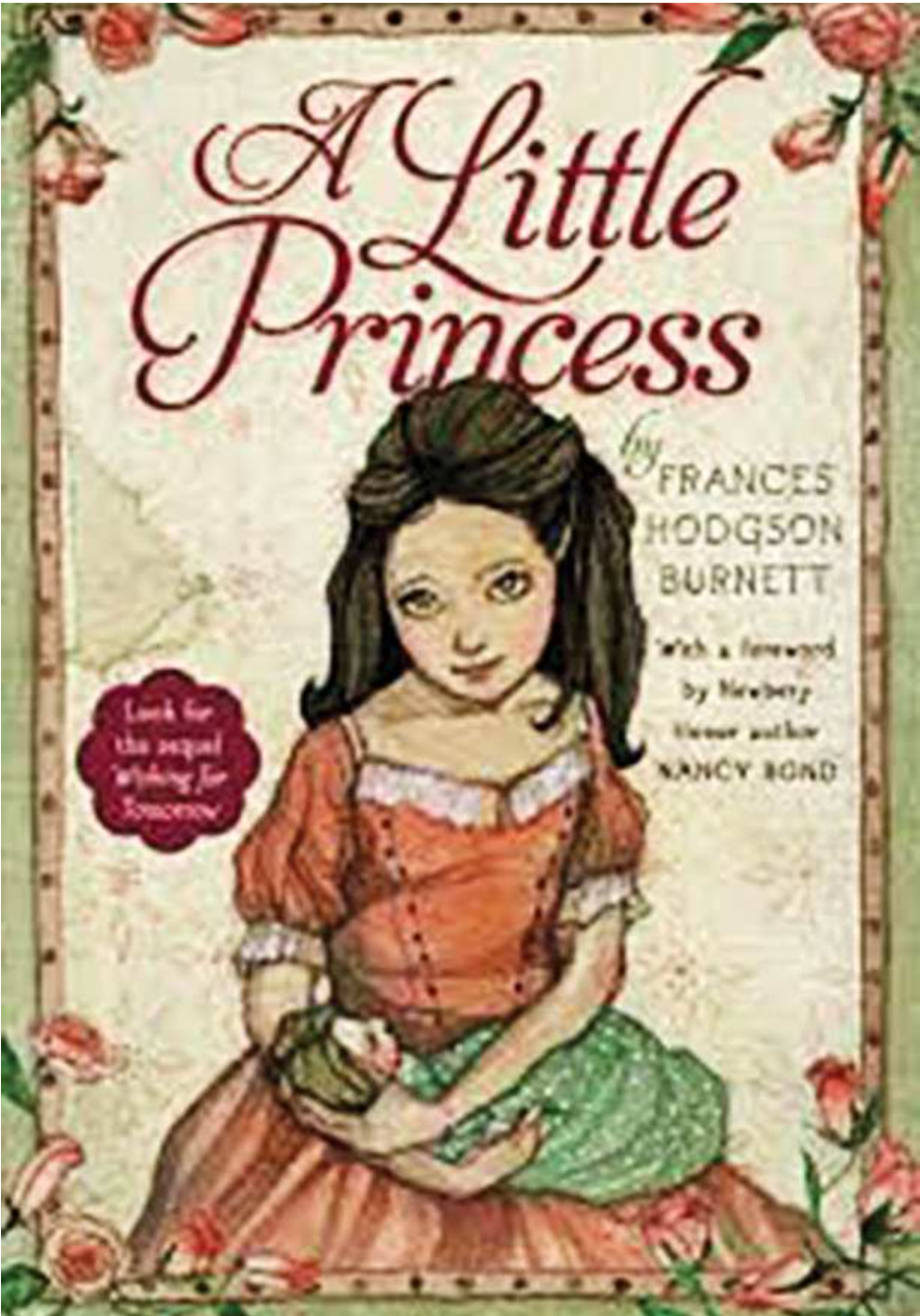
Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* is my current re-read for its heartfelt passages of devotion to Paris; including the unforgettable lines Hadley, Hemingway's wife marks: "There are so many sorts of hunger...Memory is hunger." My copy was bought on 12.09.97 notes the WHSmith sticker.I was once again living in Paris in the late 1990s. Mentioning to the salesperson my childhood association with this historical store brimming with beckoning books, I was presented with a "Carte de Fidelite" granting me 5% discount on purchases. My cup of wistful nostalgia was complete. I was told that many global customers return with such stories, now accompanied by their children and grandchildren. I had my daughter in tow.Only I was told that the English Tearoom had shut down sometime in the 1980s. Disappointment set in. The tea treat was part of the past and

much anticipated present; a rediscovery through random stimulations in the present. To my utter delight, while researching this write-up, I took note that in 2016 the British Tearoom on the first floor had reopened, sponsored by Twinnings of London. My "bucket list" in post-pandemic travel includes literary retail therapy downstairs and then culinary indulgence upstairs; while taking in the food with a view over the Tuileries gardens, the front facing landscape of the Louvre Museum.

Following reading *A Little Princess* and its personal Parisian association, I read *My Life in France* (1961) by Julia Child, the autobiography by the American celebrity chef whose books and television presentations on French cuisine became trademarks of her culinary expertise. I had bought this book few years back at W.H. Smith on Rue de Rivoli. With considerable amusement, I read of Julia's exasperation: "I've had it! I'm going to learn to speak this language, come hell or high water!...I signed up for a class at Berlitz...Paul, (husband and fluent in French) made up sentences to help my pronunciation: for the rolling French "r" s and extended "u" s, he had me repeat the phrase "Le serrurier sur la Rue de Rivoli" ("the locksmith on the Rue de Rivoli") over and over." Julia Child evolved into the consummate Francophile. An American cinema adaptation *Julia and Jules* was made in 2009 with Meryl Streep cast as the ebullient and efficient Julia Child.

Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924) was a British-born novelist and playwright who moved to United States as a teenager. She gained lasting success writing for children: *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1885), *A Little Princess* (1905) and *Secret Garden* (1911). Although she had never been to India, the last two novels have Indian links and characters in the narrative. Once I Googled the author, I was taken aback to learn that *A Little Princess* was first adapted to screen as a silent film in 1917. The Hollywood child sweetheart Shirley Temple played Sarah Crewe in the 1939 "talkie" cinematic version of *A Little Princess*. In the 1970s, it was screened by the BBC as a mini-series; as well as a British-American production in the 1980s. The 1990s saw an American adaptation, a Filipino production as well as a Russian book-to-screen adaptation of this ever-green children's book. *A Little Princess* endured sufficient appeal for a Japanese drama television series in 2009. To my utter amazement, it is available on YouTube from 5th March 2020. Her literary classics have been on offer for over a century - from silent film screening to YouTube.

Sara Crewe "Little Missus," a seven-year old English girl accompanied by her doting father arrives in London at "Miss Minchin, Select Seminary for Young Ladies." "Big Missus" had died in British India at Sara's birth. The duo had sailed from Bombay to this place.Since the climate of India was very bad for children, and as soon as possible they were sent away from it - generally to England and to school...She was



to have a pretty bedroom and sitting room of her own; she was to have a pony and a carriage, and a maid to take the place of the ayah who had been her nurse in India." Miss Minchin sensing financial credentials in the Crewes' dress and demeanour; upfront pampers but underneath resents Sara. "Sara had always been an annoying puzzle to her, because severity never made her cry or look frightened. making no complaint or outward sign of rebellion."An introspective child, she becomes "Mama" to lonely motherless four year old Lottie. Sara befriends Ermengarde St. John, "... she took

fancy to fat, slow, little Miss St. John." Sara's otherfriend Becky is the over-worked scullery maid, a fourteen-year old girl "but so stunted in growth." Sara's closest friend and confidante is her doll Emily. Mature and resilient beyond her tender years, Sara seeks to maintain composure to combat lonely turmoil, rigid regulations and hostile surroundings.Escapism is her inner narrative in adversity; retreating to a make-believe world; leaving this world to live in another sphere where in her father's eyes she remains "A Little Princess."

The turning point in Sara's life comes when

her father goes bankrupt in a diamond mine scam in India and dies of "jungle fever." She is now eleven years old. Her new status is revealed to her by Miss Minchin: "I tell you that you are quite alone in the world...unless I choose to keep you here out of charity." A bare, cold attic becomes Sara's room. No longer a student, she is now a servant. When Sara becomes "One of the Populace" as the chapter is titled; despite her physical and emotional upheaval, a survival mentality prods her: "Her way of doing it was to "pretend" and "suppose" with all the strength that was left in her... And once or twice she thought it almost made her more cold and hungry instead of less so."

An attic window opening introduces her to her neighbour, an Indian turbaned "lascar" Ram Das who lives in the attic room "The Other Side of the Wall." He is appalled at the child's misery."The Magic" is instigated by Das and his English Saheb. Warm bedding, food, firewood and flowers appear in her room. Lo and behold, the narrative takes an even happier turn when Ram's employer is none other than her father's dear English friend from India who had also invested in the diamond mine. Only, there was no bankruptcy and Mr. Carrisford had been on the search for Sara who is the inheritor of a large fortune. Her imaginary role of "A Little Princess" becomes reality. "Once upon a time" could easily have been prefixed at the start of the story. And true to any fairy tale; Sara lives "happily ever after" as "A Little Princess." Any eight-year old would have been happy with its reading.

A unique literary experience has been measured some six decades later. The association between the book and its reader is enduring and textured; meaningfully layered with insight into human qualities, foibles and frailties. In these insecure times, do we not fall into moments of angst and despair? In the most unpromising of situations, there still lies the unexpectedness of the power of kindness, the offering of warmth and wisdom. In times of turmoil, internal and external; does not reading of choice offer a causeway to reflection, a hopeful window of escape? Here is a short read but replete with reflective thoughts and lasting takeaways. In the words of Zadie Smith, "Happiness is not an absolute value. It is a state of comparison."

Was *A Little Princess* a popular children's book recommended by the sales staff at W.H. Smith & Son? Was the Indian element influential in its selection? Did my father see it on display in the shop window? A bibliophile, had he read an article about the book and thought it would be an appropriate gift? Or did the book title simply appeal to him? I will never know. Pappa passed away in 1986.

Raana Haider is the author of Parisian Portraits, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2000. Tara-India Research Press, New Delhi published a re-titled Paris, A Homage in 2007.

FUTURE OF G2P IN BANGLADESH: THE CASE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

The Daily Star in association with Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh organised an online discussion titled “Future of G2P in Bangladesh: The case of social protection system” on August 06, 2020. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



Dr Ahsan H Mansur, Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)

Many social protection programmes which are operating under different ministries need to be consolidated; otherwise, there will be multiplication of the same process. Thus, reaching the deserving beneficiaries will not be possible. We must ensure that we select the beneficiaries who deserve to be supported by the programmes the most.

Currently the Bangladesh government runs more than 150 social protection programmes under more than 20 ministries/divisions that creates inefficiency and mis-targeting. Global experience suggests that a single authority is generally most desirable in administering the social protection (SP) system because the database involves issues of quality control, maintenance, classification, across geographic regions and social groups, updating through addition of new beneficiaries and deletion of ineligible ones, after reviewing new applications for support and other information. A dedicated data bank (may be under a separate Division within the main ministry) with data specialists is required to maintain and upgrade the massive databases. NID operations should be moved to the central database and made accessible to all relevant government agencies or eligible institutions. Equal access for all service providers on a competitive basis is a doctrine that should always be protected to ensure quality and enhance efficiency.

Government agencies engaged in commercial operations must operate on equal terms with private sector operators. This principle of even playing field is sometimes violated, giving exceptional privileges to some companies and consequently putting other companies in the same market at a disadvantage. There should also be no discrimination based on the ownership of companies by foreign and domestic entities.



Md Azizul Alam, Additional Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance

Since 2019, all major cash transfer programmes have been brought under G2P programmes. 70 percent of the social protection budget are under the cash transfer programmes.

The government has declared a few cash transfer programmes under the purview of 20 stimulus packages, and the resource allocation for the overall stimulus, mostly through the banking channel, is almost four percent of GDP. A big portion of this budget is also allocated to enhance and expand social protection programmes. One such programme is designed to give 2,500 taka per month to 50 lakh unemployed people. 38 lakh of these beneficiaries have already been provided with the stimulus through Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). Bangladesh Bank's Bangladesh Electronic Funds Transfer Network (BEFTN) infrastructure was used to execute this programme. The current daily EFT capacity of BEFTN is about ten lakh, which may be doubled if run on two shifts. Monthly, we may need about three to four million EFTs.

In the previous fiscal year, one crore EFTs were made to beneficiaries under G2P operations. 46 lakh beneficiaries have been brought under the G2P programme. There are two types of programmes for the three major social welfare programmes, which include the distribution of allowances to the elderly, widows, and the disabled. One is for existing beneficiaries, and the other is for those who are newly enrolled.

G2P is an MIS-integrated electronic payment system; every department has its own MIS. When their MIS is formed, the databases that are created are interchangeable and can inter-cross. Therefore, the data from the 2,500 COVID-19 allowances that were to be provided to five million families was cross-checked with the data from other databases for pension, national savings deposit, old-age allowance, and widow allowance. At the back end, the G2P system provides electronic facilities that allow for integration with different national databases and help rectify and update the selection process.



Debdulal Roy, Executive Director (Programming), Bangladesh Bank

After National Payment Switch Bangladesh (NPSB) and MFS become intertwined, users will have access to financing through NPSB, even without EFT. NPSB, with the current setup, can make 220 transactions per second. If the capacity of the EFT-based system is insufficient, Bangladesh Bank can adjust this with the NPSB-based system to process the transactions faster.

If all customers could access their finances whenever necessary and at convenient places, a cashless payment method could be introduced. A uniform QR code can be provided so that anyone can access it to make a transaction. However, this method needs proper promotion. Moreover, if the transaction process requires a fee, the fee needs to be reduced so that the method can be utilised by younger people (students) and people living below the poverty line or in rural areas. The government is trying to introduce an interoperable digital transaction platform under the initiative of the ICT Ministry, which can allow the social safety net funds to be readily accessible to the general population.

The national household database should be organised with the help of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) to provide access to uniform data to all relevant agencies. Linking NBR's taxation or bank account information with the data can also help find the right beneficiaries and the amount of fund needed for a beneficiary.



Dr Shahadat Khan, Founder and CEO, SureCash

The two most important things to consider are the beneficiary selection and the payment process. G2P payments are digital now and a payment platform is already available. All we need now is a reliable beneficiary database. But data collection, data management, and data processing are quite different from the payment of benefits. If we look at the architecture of G2P, the disbursements will be made by the relevant ministries and we understand data collection is a weak point for our country.

We usually think that financial service operators will do the work of data collection but G2P architecture says otherwise. There is a lot of work to be done in terms of data collection, data filtering, and data management by the government and local government officials who will be selecting the beneficiaries. There is also scope for collaboration here. After this comes beneficiary selection and then after collecting enough information, the MFIs open the beneficiaries' e-KYC accounts. The disbursement process that follows is a bit easier compared to the beneficiary selection and updating processes.

Through collective efforts along with ministries and other stakeholders, the responsible agency can check if there is duplication of beneficiaries or double dipping of benefits by recipients.



Kamal Quadir, CEO, bKash

A lot of work is being done for G2P payment. The current crisis would have been exceedingly difficult to tackle without the support of e-KYC. Even a few months back, MFIs could not open accounts digitally and the proactive policy support from the central bank in this matter is highly appreciated. MFIs need to focus more on the NID issue. Even after many years since the introduction of NIDs and the pandemic which struck Bangladesh, there are a lot of debates about whether enough people have NIDs. According to the Secretary of Finance, 110 million people have their NIDs, which is a large number. Therefore, we must make maximum usage of this infrastructure.

Sometimes the customers face inconveniences when the government agencies inform them about using certain services without considering their choices and convenience. Thus, we need to look into this issue.

Lastly, it is important to share the practitioners' experience whenever policy decisions are being made. Although our resources are increasing, most of the time we do not know where to find the proper resources. This is why we come up with solutions that make things more complicated.



Abedur Rahman Sikder, Deputy Managing Director (DMD), Dutch Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL)

We need to consider two parts of G2P. The first is the selection of the right beneficiaries which is quite challenging. The payment solution providers are usually not directly involved with this part. Our involvement comes during the payment process and when opening accounts where we must ensure the KYC procedure. After the selection of beneficiaries, the responsibility of making e-KYC falls on the payment solution providers. This payment can be through MFS, through the large agent banking network in our country, or through banks.

The costs must be considered as well. Through mobile banking, this cost can be a bit more sometimes and that is why for G2P, the authorities should look into other channels such as agent banking or bank accounts.

We hope that within the next financial year, all payments associated with various social security programmes will be made digitally. The stakeholders should equally promote agent banking accounts and bank accounts along with MFS since there are cost variations among these channels. This will provide the beneficiaries to choose from suitable options.



Md Shafayet Alam, Executive Director, Nagad

There are mainly three challenges to G2P. Firstly, the organisations providing allowances must want to adopt it. Next, they must have the ability to implement it. And, lastly, these organisations must be able to provide complete transparency throughout the whole process. As an MFS provider, Nagad works with the distribution channels. It is our job is to ensure that the remitted amount reaches the customer safely and they can use it conveniently. But the beneficiary selection process is not the job of MFIs. This is the responsibility of the allowance providing government organisations. The ultimate goal of the MFS providers is to get closer to a situation where the need for physical

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Beneficiary Selection

- Improve issues related to data collection, data filtering and data management from the very beginning
- Utilise technology along with other sources of information to determine the eligible beneficiaries accurately – that is, who should be brought under social safety net programmes and who should be excluded
- A national household database should be established with the help of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and other government and local government institutions. All SP transfer providers should have real time access to the same national data bank as well.

B. Social Protection System

- Bringing all social security programmes under a single network and administration should be the ultimate objective
- Although MOF is taking a lead role at the development stage, once the system starts operating, all issues related to G2P should rest with one ministry or agency within the Ministry of Social Welfare
- Provide clear information on the costs incurred in money transfers

C. DFS (Digitise Financial System)

- Promote agent banking and traditional bank accounts alongside MFS so that the beneficiaries can choose the channels that are convenient for them
- Ensure equal access to all MFS operators on a competitive basis
- Provide loan assistance to small entrepreneurs through MFS; utilise e-KYC here
- Emphasise on making cash withdrawals from banks and other service providers easier, especially for the aged, widowed, and disabled people, while strengthening proper safeguards

money will be eliminated.

MFS accounts can be integrated with ATMs and bank accounts very easily, within two to three months as the MFS operators are technically sound. However, challenges to this approach include: whether the concerned ministries are interested to implement it; the need for all stakeholders to work at the same pace, as this will help eliminate the risk of misunderstandings; and eliminating the perception that MFS operators take high service charge mostly for their own gains.

The efforts required and the stages and players involved in providing instant services to customers are huge. The MFS operators must pay retailers, distributors and other associates as well as pay fees to BTRC for these transactions.



Muhammad Solaiman Shukhon, Head-Market Development, Nagad

It is possible to conduct daily transactions by maintaining social distancing through MFS, especially if the service providers are dispersed. This will also help reduce the crowding that is still happening at banks. However, data authenticity is an issue because there can be cases where a person may not possess a mobile phone and/or NID and request the local representative to conduct transactions on his/her behalf. In such a scenario, manual intervention can play a part. No matter how much technology we bring in forward linkage, someone is selecting the ultimate beneficiaries and during that selection, we face the problems associated with the lack of honesty and authenticity. To resolve this, the local representatives can be brought under a disbursement channel. The agents who recruit these local representatives can be incentivised to provide authentic data and prevent malpractices. This may encourage local representatives or those involved in data collection at core levels to give authentic data, due to the commercial benefits involved.

Besides, technologies such as blockchain can be used to prevent trust manipulation since data is usually dispersed and therefore maintaining the authenticity will require such strong implementations.



Mohammad Ismail, Additional Secretary (Budget, Program and Assessment) and Additional Secretary (Institution and Disability), Social Welfare Ministry

There are some root level problems due to which our success rate is low in G2P expansion despite our efforts. Firstly, we are unable to motivate the union (local level) social workers who implement projects at the field level. Secondly, according to our estimates, around 10 to 15 percent of the people do not have mobile phones. The mentally disabled people who meet the age requirement, still rely on their guardians. We have created a categorical database of 19 lakh such people whom we give Suborno card, through which they obtain 450 taka per month.

The cards for widows, aged people, etc., that exist at the field level are misused. Cases arise where the actual beneficiaries do not get their money whereas the money is withdrawn by people whom the authorities are unable to trace.

There are very few banks which provide allowances every three months. Most banks tend to keep the money for a year and

especially women, in both urban and rural areas, and farmers and other people in such occupations, through MFS. We can utilise e-KYC for providing these services as well. The effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of all these services, including data preparation and selection, must be ensured from the beginning. BBS can help in this regard. Inclusive lists can be prepared by involving the local administration and the local NGOs. The overall efficiency will increase if we can bring everyone under MFS.



Khondoker Shakhawat Ali, Founder, Knowledge Alliance and Emeritus Fellow, Unnayan Shamannay

The main objective here is proper utilisation of public money while implementing the social safety net programme. There are both social and technical aspects of such objectives. We need to create a balance between these two to ensure transparency and accountability, otherwise government's initiatives will not reach the right people, no matter how much money we spend on these programmes. Our objective of alleviating poverty will eventually fail.

There are mainly three stakeholders here: designers and supervisors—they are the government bodies and the regulators; implementers—service providing organisations such as banks and MFIs; and the beneficiaries—whose interest should receive the highest priority.

Improvement of the social protection system is a governmental prerogative, whereas money transfer concerns are determined by the market dynamics of service quality. Governance and compliance issues are important in maintaining the balance of the two. We understand that platforms such as Rocket are a single bank-owned service, bKash is a subsidiary of a bank, SureCash is a technology provider for banks that offers the service, and Nagad is a service offered by Bangladesh Post Office. This gives us four different models in the MFS sector. However, all must work under the common MFS regulation under the purview of Bangladesh Bank to ensure compliance and governance; otherwise the interest of the beneficiaries will be grossly compromised.



Dr M. A. Razzaque, Research Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)

In the case of social security, despite having goodwill, we face the problem of selection error. We plan to support 50 lakh families during the COVID-19 crisis, but what is the basis of targeting specifically 50 lakh families? This programme of reaching 50 lakh families will only exist temporarily for one year and hence, will not be part of the social security structure. All the attention and manpower that will go behind this programme will give us no lasting benefits in the future.



Dr Bazlul Haque Khondker, Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI)

The most important ministry working in the field of social security is the Ministry of Social Welfare. Many issues and challenges, particularly a problem with motivation, exist within this ministry because the personnel probably feel that G2P poses a threat to their jobs.

Even though a database of 19 lakh persons have already been created, a total of 92 lakh beneficiaries need to be covered, so a further 73 lakh persons should be added to the database for the expansion of the G2P. This will be difficult to accomplish in one to two years. Therefore, mitigating the challenges within the Ministry of Social Welfare is crucial. The government has stated that by 2025, all elderly eligible citizens will be given an old-age pension, which will effectively approach a universal pension system for all Bangladeshi citizens. This means that the ministry's work will increase drastically and managing the increased workload will be a significant challenge.

Clear information is required on the exact costs incurred in money transfers for the SP system which is now valued at 2.9 percent of GDP. Besides, letting customers choose which operator works best for them will create competition which, in turn, will give them more benefits.

Draft constitution

FROM PAGE 14
Dr Hossain declares that the government would constitute a tribunal to try the war criminals soon. “The tribunal will be framed under our own law and it will be our own tribunal,” he adds. The minister further informs that the government has made a number of amendments to the collaborators order.
ELECTORAL ROLLS ORDER PROMULGATED
The president today promulgates an order called The Bangladesh Electoral Rolls Order, 1972 which comes into force at once throughout Bangladesh. The Order says that persons attaining the age of 18 will be eligible to cast their vote for the purpose of election of representatives of people to elective bodies on the basis of adult franchise.
SOURCES: August 30, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Two college

FROM PAGE 14
Station, said the dead were identified as Shuvo Shaha, 22, student of Stamford College, Dhaka, and Akash Shah, 20, student of Pabna Polytechnic Institute.
The bodies were recovered and sent to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy yesterday noon.
Quoting the victims’ family members, the OC also said that the duo went to attend a birthday party on Thursday night at Akash’s place and ate different food items there.
At one stage, they fall sick and their family members took them to Khwaza Eunus Ali Medical College Hospital in Sirajganj’s Enayetpur but they died on the way to the hospital.
An unnatural death case was filed in connection with the incident.

Flood deals

FROM PAGE 14
ruined 5,500 shrimp farms in the district. The farmers have counted losses of Tk 12 crore, according to the fisheries officers.
Shrimp farmer Kamrul of Rampal said, “My three brothers and I lost over Tk 2 crore during Amphan. Then we started farming again with borrowed money. But now our shrimp worth about TK 1.5 crores have been washed away.”
In Sirajganj, the continuous flood in the last three months damaged fish resources in one of the biggest fish producing areas in Chalanbeel.
Over 155 tonnes of local fish have been washed away in the flood water in the last few months.
In Manikganj, 3,511 fish farmers were affected as their fish and fish fry got washed away in the flood waters.
Fisheries officer Saiful Islam of Manikganj said, “Many farmers are coming to us asking for the incentives announced for farmers hit by the pandemic.
[Our correspondents in Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Manikganj and Pabna contributed to this report]

Putin says Russian police force ready to help Belarus leader

REUTERS, Moscow/Minsk

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday the Kremlin has set up a reserve police force to support Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko but it would not be used unless the unrest there got out of control, Interfax news agency reported.
Putin said Russia saw no need for now to use Russian forces in Belarus over the political crisis that followed a disputed Aug. 9 presidential election. Moscow felt the situation was normalising, the RIA news agency reported.
The former Soviet republic was plunged into turmoil following the election, which the opposition says was rigged to ensure that Lukashenko’s 26-year rule was extended further.
Security forces have beaten protesters in the street and arrested thousands in a bid to stamp out mass demonstrations and strikes. Lukashenko denies electoral fraud.
“We have of course certain obligations towards Belarus, and the question Lukashenko raised was whether we would provide the necessary help,” Putin said.
“I told him Russia would fulfil all its obligations. Alexander Grigorovich (Lukashenko) asked me to create a reserve police force and I have done that. But we agreed this would not be used unless the situation got out of control.”
Maria Kolesnikova on Thursday was the latest opposition figure to be questioned by state investigators in a criminal case against a Coordination Council formed last week with the stated aim of negotiating a peaceful transfer of power.

251 lives

FROM PAGE 14
was inundated, 61 percent in 1988, 42 percent in 2007 and 2017, and 38 percent in 2004, Prof Saiful mentioned.
This year, over 50 lakh people of 150 upazilas in 31 districts have been affected by the flood, according to the latest report of National Disaster Response Coordination Centre.



Peaceful protesters march through downtown in solidarity with Jacob Blake in Portland, Oregon, US on Thursday night. Protests continued across the country for the fifth night following the police shooting of Blake in Wisconsin.

PHOTO: AFP

Australia PM ‘open’ to repatriating NZ mosque gunman

AFP, Sydney

Canberra is open to the idea of New Zealand sending the Australian-born gunman behind the Christchurch mosque massacre back home to serve his life sentence, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said yesterday.
White supremacist Brenton Tarrant was sentenced to life without parole on Thursday for the attacks on two mosques last year that killed 51 Muslim worshippers.
Soon after the punishment was handed down, New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters said Tarrant, 29, should be transferred to the Australian prison system.
“The Islamic community and all of New Zealand has already suffered enough without having to pay astronomical prison costs to keep him

safe in our prison system,” Peters said.
Australia’s Morrison said he had received no request to transfer Tarrant but he was prepared to talk about the prospect with his New Zealand counterpart Jacinda Ardern.
“Whether he is held in Australia or New Zealand, look we’re open to that discussion,” he told Seven News television.
“That obviously has a lot of implications, these sorts of decisions. The prime minister of New Zealand and I will talk about those issues.”
He said the wishes of survivors and bereaved family members would be paramount in any decision on Tarrant’s future.
“Most of all we are concerned about what the views of the families would be for those affected and we want to do the right thing by them,” he said.

Tarrant, a former gym instructor from the rural New South Wales town of Grafton, moved to New Zealand in 2017 and immediately started planning an attack on the country’s Muslim community.
Government documents show it is costing around NZ\$4,900 (US\$3,240) per day to keep Tarrant behind bars, compared to NZ\$302 for a regular prisoner.
The documents say he is “likely to have needs and present risk at a level of severity beyond any” managed in New Zealand before.
Tarrant has already caused issues for prison authorities, when a letter he wrote from jail was posted on the extremist website 4Chan in August last year.
In it, Tarrant praised British fascist Oswald Mosley and warned “there is a

great conflict on the horizon”.
The Corrections Department apologised and promised it would not happen again.
Lawyers at Tarrant’s sentencing this week revealed that in a pre-sentencing interview in April he said he had renounced his racist views and felt remorse for the attacks.
But judge Cameron Mander on Thursday rejected the gesture as “uncorroborated, self-serving and a relatively recent phenomenon”, before imposing life without parole, an unprecedented sentence in New Zealand.
Tarrant is likely to be kept in isolation for his own safety at New Zealand’s only maximum-security prison in Auckland, where 80 percent of inmates are Maori or Pacific islanders.

Scientists develop injectable robots

FROM PAGE 14
By shooting laser light into these solar cells, researchers were able to trigger the legs to move, causing the robot to walk around.
The study’s co-author Marc Miskin, of the University of Pennsylvania, told AFP that a key innovation of the research was that the legs -- its actuators -- could be controlled using silicon electronics.
“Fifty years of shrinking down electronics has led to some remarkably tiny technologies: you can build sensors, computers, memory, all in very small spaces,” he said. “But, if

you want a robot, you need actuators, parts that move.”
The researchers acknowledged that their creations are currently slower than other microbots that “swim”, less easy to control than those guided by magnets, and do not sense their environment.
The robots are prototypes that demonstrate the possibility of integrating electronics with the parts that help the device move around, Miskin said, adding they expect the technology to develop quickly.
“The next step is to build sophisticated circuitry: can we build

robots that sense their environment and respond? How about tiny programmable machines? Can we make them able to run without human intervention?”
Miskin said he envisions biomedical uses for the robots, or applications in materials science, such as repairing materials at the microscale.
“But this is a very new idea and we’re still trying to figure out what’s possible,” he added.
Researchers said that they were able to produce the components for the robots in parallel, meaning they could make more than one million

of them in each four-inch wafer of silicon.
The legs were made from nanometre-thick platinum that bends when stimulated by laser light, creating the walking motion.
Their average speed was about one body length per minute, the study said, adding this was “comparable to crawling biological microorganisms”.
The robots can survive highly acidic environments and temperature variations of more than 200 degrees Kelvin (-73 degrees Celsius), the study said.

Investigators looking for MP Shahid’s brother

FROM PAGE 14
Md Golam Mostafa, accountant of the recruiting agency, was arrested on August 20 in a case filed by several trafficking victims with Motijheel Police Station on July 7.
Mostafa on August 24 gave confessional statement to Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Masud Ur Rahman under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, CID Deputy Inspector General Imtiaz Ahmed said, “We have found important information and got names of some persons involved in trafficking people into Kuwait. We are now analysing the information and

verifying those people’s involvement.”
Imtiaz, however, refused to disclose the identities of the suspects.
Requesting anonymity, a top CID official said they were looking for Kazi Badrul’s whereabouts.
“As Kazi Badrul’s name has already surfaced in a confessional statement, we will bring trafficking charges against him,” he added.
According to court sources, Mostafa in the confessional statement said he used to send people to Kuwait through Job Bank International as per directives of Kazi Badrul. These people were later received by Kazi Papul’s agency Marafie Kuwaitia in Kuwait.
Mostafa said he had joined the

recruiting agency as an accountant in 2012. He said brokers used to persuade people to give money to them to have a better job abroad with good salary. But their dream for a better future would be shattered as soon as they would not get those jobs.
Mostafa claimed that one Taiyeb used to frequent the recruiting agency to oversee the trafficking process, but he never met any fortune seekers.
The accountant further said he used to complete the ticketing and visa procedures of sending people to Kuwait through a recruiting agency named “Best Travel” in the capital’s Fakirapool area. One Monir of the agency used to complete the other

processes, according to court sources.
Besides depositing the collected money into the bank accounts of Kazi Papul and Kazi Badrul, Mostafa used to hand them cash amounts.
Mostafa said Kazi Badrul went into hiding after the Kuwaiti law enforcers and the government conducted drives at his brother’s agency in Kuwait.
Mentioning that he was unaware of the human trafficking activities, Mostafa apologised for what he did for the recruiting agency, said court sources citing his confessional statement.
This newspaper could not reach Kazi Badrul for comments as his phone was found switched off.

3G, 4G mobile

FROM PAGE 14
The taskforce on Wednesday sent a letter to the posts and telecommunications ministry to this effect, officials said.
The decision to lift the restrictions comes amidst repeated calls from UN agencies, local, national and international NGOs, and humanitarian aid workers. They have been saying that the restrictions hinder the desperately needed services and access to information in the world’s largest refugee settlement.
The BTRC in September last year directed all telecommunication operators to shut down 3G and 4G services and to block all services, except voice calls, in the Rohingya camp areas of Ukhiya and Teknaf.
Officials said the decision was made to stop the refugees from using WhatsApp, Viber, and WeChat.
It was said that the Rohingyas used the apps to contact people in Myanmar. The apps were also used for committing crimes in the country, officials said.
A technical committee of the telecom regulatory commission also found that Rohingyas of Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas of Cox’s Bazar were using around three lakh mobile connections of local carriers.
The operators were then asked not to sell SIMs to the Rohingyas.
On Monday, Foreign Secretary Masud bin Momen in a webinar disclosed the government’s decision on lifting the restrictions.

Neo-JMB

FROM PAGE 14
Islam told The Daily Star yesterday. The CTC team claimed to have recovered a cell phone, five “Jihadi” books and a bank deposit receipt book from the arrestee’s possession.
Completing Dakhil exams from Saydia Dakhil Madrasa in the city’s Basabo area in 2017, Sibbir was employed as imam at different mosques. But in reality, he was engaged in militant activities, claimed CTC officials.
The officials also claimed he was involved with “Neo-JMB” since its birth and used to work as an organiser of the militant outfit’s media wing.
He had a very close relation with “Neo-JMB” chief Maynul Islam alias Musa, who is believed to have been killed in a drive on a militant hideout in Sylhet in 2017.
After Musa’s death, Sibbir slowed down but he became active again in 2018. He used internet to maintain communications with operatives of different militant outfits abroad, claimed the officials.
A case was filed against Sibbir with Sabujbagh Police Station, said a CTC official.
DC Saiful said they already gleaned some information from the arrestee and were trying to verify those. “We’re also trying to arrest his cohorts,” he said.

Goldman pays Malaysia \$2.5b as part of 1MDB deal

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Goldman Sachs has paid Malaysia \$2.5 billion as part of a settlement over the US investment bank’s role in the multi-billion-dollar 1MDB scandal, officials said yesterday.
The agreement, which has a total value of \$3.9 billion, was announced last month after lengthy negotiations.
Billions of dollars were looted from sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad in a fraud that involved former prime minister Najib Razak and his cronies.
The cash plundered from state coffers bankrolled a global spending spree, and was used to buy everything from artwork, to real estate and a superyacht.
Goldman’s role came under scrutiny over bond issues totalling \$6.5 billion it helped arrange for the investment vehicle, with Malaysia claiming large amounts were misappropriated during the process.
The settlement comprises a payment of \$2.5 billion to Malaysia and a guarantee that at least \$1.4 billion in assets acquired with misappropriated funds would be recovered.
A spokesman for Malaysia’s finance ministry confirmed the cash part of the settlement “has been paid by Goldman Sachs and received via an escrow account” on Thursday.

Bloomberg News reported the funds will be used to repay outstanding debts of 1MDB, citing a person familiar with the matter.
Najib was voted out of office in 2018 in large part due to public anger over the scandal.
The government that took over charged Goldman and a string of former and current employees over the fraud, as well as demanding hefty compensation.
Under the agreement, Malaysia will end all criminal proceedings against the bank.
Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said last month that, combined with 1MDB-linked funds already returned to Malaysia by the United States, the country will receive a total of \$4.5 billion.



Argentina's Newell's Old Boys supporters wave flares on the streets of Rosario on Thursday, pleading Lionel Messi to join the club where he had started off as an eight-year-old. (Inset) That wish, though, looks like a farfetched one as the wantaway Barcelona forward looks primed for a reunion with his former boss Pep Guardiola in Manchester City.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Not about the relationship, but the bond

STAR SPORT DESK

As Newell's Old Boys fans paraded in a push to convince Lionel Messi to return to his boyhood club, it summed up two things. The first that every club in the world, regardless of practicality, wants Lionel Messi in their team. That much we already knew. The second, the reiteration of the 'bombshell', was that after 20 years, Messi is leaving.

That statement should not be shocking in modern football, where footballers switch teams on a regular basis. But there is no other like Messi, nor is there a story quite like his and Barcelona's.

Messi came to the Nou Camp after penning a deal on a paper napkin with only his father and an agent present at tennis club. He moved at the age of 13, and 20 years later, the summary of his career is simple: 20 seasons, 34 trophies, 634 goals, almost every record and uncountable moments of magic.

Not just captain and figurehead,

he is the best player Barcelona have ever had. Arguably the best player any club have ever had.

All that is a fraction of what Barcelona means to Messi, but it does not even come close to what Messi means to Catalonia. There were protests, demonstrations, chants, tears and anger, all just steps away from the Barcelona offices.

Unfortunately, it is nothing new. The Blaugrana have a sad history of mistreating legends, most famously Johan Cruyff, who perhaps understood the phrase "mes que un club (more than a club)", better than anyone in the board over the past two decades and instilled in Barcelona a style that had permeated every success the club had in the years since.

He was stripped of the title of honorary president by then-president Sandro Rosell in 2010, which sparked a bitter, public feud.

This seems to be heading the same way, with current president

Josep Maria Bartomeu reportedly willing to resign only after an admission from Messi that he wants Bartomeu out. But there is no way the club are willing to let Messi go, and definitely not for free.

This case might be destined for the courtroom and, even with that looming in the background, the move away is gaining momentum fast. Manchester City are still the runaway favourites, with some reports stating that Pep Guardiola has spoken to Messi and that the club's representatives are setting up a meeting with his father.

A buyout clause of 700 million euros, which Barcelona are standing firm on, perhaps until a court ruling on the 'free exit clause' in Messi's contract, and an annual salary in excess of 100 million euros are set to serve as deterrents for most clubs, even if the clause is upheld.

"The numbers are absolutely not for us, so we don't even have to start thinking about it! It is clear, there

is no chance," was the simple reply from Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp when asked if the Premier League champions had considered a move.

"It would be interesting to see [Messi at Manchester City]. Messi never played in another league than Spain. Football is different here, so I actually would like to see it. But I'm not sure if I will."

When Messi next takes to the field, if it is for a different team, there will be electricity in the air, an unprecedented bolt of excitement.

But he leaves behind his club, his childhood and, after years of politics, maybe even his innocence. He leaves on the back of an 8-2 mauling against Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Most of all, he leaves without having said goodbye on the pitch, walking off the field for the last time in a Barcelona jersey in an empty arena -- symbolic of a journey that should have never ended like this.

AFC Cup likely to be cancelled

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh champions Bashundhara Kings' journey in their debut AFC Cup campaign might be over after just a single match as the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) might be forced to cancel the competition due to the aggravation of Covid-19 in host countries.

Bashundhara Kings took pole position in Group E with a 5-1 thrashing of TC Sports of Maldives in their opening fixture on March 11, but the Bangladesh giants' campaign was stalled immediately as coronavirus spread throughout the continent, forcing the continental body to reschedule the remaining group matches of the competition at centralised venues in September and October.

The Group E matches were rescheduled from October 23 in Maldives with two Maldivian sides along with and Chennai City of India and Bashundhara Kings the four teams. Vietnam, Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan were the other four confirmed centralised venues, but no member nation has yet shown interest to be hosts for the four remaining groups.

With this issue in mind and the rising number of coronavirus cases in some of the host nations, the AFC is planning to cancel this edition altogether. The continental body has already cancelled its draw ceremony and it is believed that a decision of cancellation of the competition will come within a

week following analysis by the AFC bodies on the basis of recommendations by the competitions committee.

A Bangladesh Football Federation official, on condition of anonymity, said that cancellation is on the cards.

"There hasn't been any decision made yet as the internal bodies of AFC are analysing the situation. The coronavirus situation in host countries is a concern for the AFC. There are also the matters of air-travel and quarantine period in those countries. Hence it looks likely that the competition may not go ahead," said the official.

Mentionable here is the fact that AFC has already postponed the remaining rounds of the 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup joint qualifiers, which were originally scheduled for June this year and later deferred to October-November window, to 2021.

However, Bashundhara Kings are not taking their foot off the gas as yet as they are eyeing the domestic circuit and a probable friendly match with a foreign team. The team has already started its camp after completing Covid-19 tests of players and officials.

"We haven't been informed anything regarding cancellation officially, but we know there are issues with hosting of a few groups," Bashundhara Kings chairman Imrul Hasan told The Daily Star yesterday. "AFC Cup was our priority, but we have the domestic season to look forward to and we might play a friendly match with a foreign team too."



CR7 'wants to conquer the world'

AFP, Milan

Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo said Thursday that his "spirit and ambition were as high as ever" as he strives to "break records and conquer the world" next season.

The Portuguese forward won his second 'Scudetto' with Juventus, but despite his double against Lyon the Italian giants exited the Champions League to the French club in the last 16.

Ronaldo matched a Serie A mark when he scored in 11 consecutive games, equalling the record of Gabriel Batistuta and Fabio Quagliarella. In total he scored 37 goals, a record for a Juventus player in a single campaign.

"As I'm getting ready for my third season as a 'Bianconero', my spirit and ambition are as high as ever," the 35-year-old wrote on Instagram. "Goals. Victories. Commitment. Dedication. Professionalism."

"With all my strength and with the precious help from my teammates and all of the Juventus staff, we work once again to conquer Italy, Europe and the World! Breaking records."

"Overcoming obstacles," continued Ronaldo of his ambitions for next season which starts on September 19. "Winning titles and achieving personal goals. To do more and better once and again."

"To reach higher and to succeed in all challenges that may come our way."

"We are Juventus! We are the Champions! We are back and stronger than ever! We are counting on you! All together! Fino Alla Fine!"

SHORT CORNER

Djokovic sends 'love and support' for Del Potro

Injury-plagued Juan Martin del Potro on Wednesday underwent a third surgery on the right knee he broke at the 2018 Shanghai Masters and found immediate sympathy from world number one Novak Djokovic.

The 31-year-old has now had seven major operations in a career which promised so much when he swept to his first and only Grand Slam title at the 2009 US Open.

Djokovic, whose 20-match



Ibra staying at Milan

Zlatan Ibrahimovic will remain at AC Milan next season having reached agreement on a new deal reportedly worth 7 million euros without bonuses, according to multiple reports in Italy on Friday.

Ibrahimovic, who turns 39 in October, on Friday posted a photo of himself on social media wearing an AC Milan jersey, and his arms wide: "As I said, I'm just warming up".

The Swedish forward also posted a photo showing him lying relaxing with the caption "The quiet before the storm".

Gazzetta Dello Sport reported that Ibrahimovic was expected back in Milan ahead of the new season on August 29, the same day he first joined the club back in 2010.

Ibrahimovic rejoined Milan in January on a six-month contract after leaving Los Angeles Galaxy, on a deal worth 3.5 million euros (\$3.9 million) with the option for an additional season.

The former Manchester United, Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona player had a big impact, scoring 11 goals in 20 games.

"I think that we can all see that

Ibra has played an important part in our season and our growth," AC Milan CEO Ivan Gazidis said this week.

"We are doing everything we can to see that this can continue." -- AFP

O'Brien's six smashes own car window

Ireland's Kevin O'Brien is no stranger to big-hitting exploits but he had cause to regret his batting prowess on Thursday when he smashed his own car window with a trademark six.

O'Brien, who scored the fastest century in World Cup history in 2011 to help Ireland chase down a mammoth 327 to secure a famous win over England in Bangalore, made 82 off 37 balls for Leinster Lightning in the Inter-Provincial Twenty20 Trophy.

He hit eight sixes, one of which sailed into the parking lot next to the Pembroke Cricket Club in Dublin to shatter his car's rear window.

After the match, the 36-year-old all-rounder drove the car straight to the garage to get the window replaced. "Don't worry @KevinOBrien113 we'll get it fixed up as good as new," the dealership said on Twitter.

-- REUTERS

Chelsea sign Thiago Silva

AFP, London

Frank Lampard's Chelsea makeover gathered pace on Friday with the free transfer signing of former Paris Saint Germain captain Thiago Silva.

Silva, 35, has agreed an initial one-year contract with the Premier League club, who have the option of extending the deal by a further season.

"I am so happy to be joining Chelsea. I am delighted to be a part of Frank Lampard's exciting squad for next season and I'm here to challenge for honours," Silva told Chelsea's website.

"See you soon Chelsea fans, I look forward to playing at Stamford Bridge very soon."

A VERY NICE VIEW

A rider of the Astana Pro team takes a selfie while cycling around the Apollo statue in Nice on Thursday, the eve of the 107th Tour de France. Symbolised by the mask covering Apollo's face, this year's Tour, already postponed once, begins with the looming danger from the coronavirus pandemic.

PHOTO: REUTERS





www.bsrm.com

4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BSRM XTREME

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

BSRM
building a safer nation



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

RECORD HOLDER

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM



SHAH CEMENT

Flood deals a heavy blow to fish farmers

The sector incurred Tk 479.85cr loss in last few months, says govt report

STAR REPORT

The fisheries sector has suffered a loss of about Tk 479.85 crore due to heavy rains and floods, according to a report by the fisheries department.

Ponds, lakes and fish farms on around 17,000 hectares of land have been inundated in 208 upazilas of 36 districts, said the report released recently.

Nearly 6,000 tonnes of fish fry were washed away, directly affecting around 72,000 farmers.

During the recent new moon and depression in the Bay of Bengal, swollen rivers in Patuakhali washed away around 1,000 tonnes of fish from 7,280 ponds and other water bodies.

Between August 19 and 22, the rivers flowed about 68 cm over the safety mark in some places of the district.

The fishing industry and fish farmers were also hit by cyclone Amapan on May 20 when fish worth Tk 24.57 crore got washed away.

Al Mamun, 48, a fish farmer at Char Jamuna village of Rangabali upazila, said his fish farm on five acres of land have been inundated and ruined about 15 days ago.

He added that he was just trying to recover from the losses caused by Amapan.

Shrimp farmers in Bagerhat said they have suffered more in recent weeks than during cyclone Amapan.

In the last few days, incessant rains and tidal waters have

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



Cancer patient Nazrul Islam standing in front of the gates of Mugda General Hospital in the capital yesterday morning. A resident of Chandpur's Faridganj upazila, Nazrul came to the capital on August 26 for treatment at the National Institute for Cancer Research and Hospital, but the oncology department told him to be tested for Covid-19 first. Yesterday, he queued in front of Mugda General Hospital since 6:00am, before the hospital management gave him the first ticket of the day on humanitarian grounds at 9:00am.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

TRAFFICKING TO KUWAIT Investigators looking for MP Shahid's brother

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They used to contact people from across the country through brokers and charge each of them Tk 5 lakh to Tk 7 lakh for sending them to Kuwait.

They sent the fortune seekers to the Gulf country through the travel agency of Kazi Mohammad Badrul Alam alias Liton Chowdhury, younger brother of Lakshmipur-2 lawmaker Kazi Md Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul.

The collected money, gathered through sending people to Kuwait, was later deposited into different bank accounts of the two siblings.

The Criminal Investigation Department, now probing human trafficking charges against the lawmaker, has claimed to have gleaned the information from a staff of Job Bank International, a recruiting agency owned by Kazi Badrul.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2

251 lives lost in floods in last 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 251 people died in 33 flood-hit districts in the last two months, said a report by the National Health Crisis Management Unit of the health directorate.

Majority 210 of the dead were drowned, according to the report which has compiled these deaths between June 30 and August 27.

Among others, 13 died from lightning strikes, 25 from snake bites, one for diarrhea, and two others of wound.

According to the report, a total of 57,301 people fell sick in different disease including diarrhea, skin disease, inflammation of the eye, tracheal inflammation.

Of them, the highest 57,301 suffered from diarrhea.

As of the end of July, around 37 percent of the country's total area has been flooded, according to Prof AKM Saiful Islam of Buet's Institute of Water and Flood Management.

People of low-lying areas were the worst affected victims of this natural disaster. Many of them were waterlogged for over a month.

In 1998, around 68 percent of the country

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Draft constitution almost ready

August 29, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S HEALTH CONDITION SATISFACTORY Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's health condition is satisfactory, says a health bulletin issued by Bangabandhu's personal physician Dr Nurul Islam today.

Bangabandhu has a long discussion with the Bangladesh Ambassador to France, Abdul Fatteh today.

The Swiss Ambassador to the UN headquarters in Geneva called on the Bangladesh prime minister yesterday.

Bangabandhu was yesterday shown a letter from Islamabad which gave a graphic account of the plight of Bangalee officials in Pakistan. The letter was written by a senior Bangalee official to his brother who is now a resident of Geneva. The writer of the letter says that life as a Bangalee in Pakistan is a veritable hell. He has not been paid any salary or maintenance allowance since January last.

EXPERTS EXAMINING CONSTITUTION TEXT Dr Kamal Hossain, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, tells a press conference in Dhaka today that the draft constitution is almost ready. He does not, however, commit himself to any specific date for making the draft constitution public. The minister further informs that the Constitution Drafting Committee has approved the substance of the draft constitution and it is now under careful scrutiny of the technical draftsmen and scholars of the Bangla language.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



ROHINGYA CAMPS 3G, 4G mobile services resume after a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

3G and 4G mobile services in Rohingya camp areas of Cox's Bazar resumed yesterday after the government suspended the services around a year ago.

"As per the instructions of BTRC, we have restored 3G and 4G connectivity in Teknaf and Ukhiya in the morning," Shahed Alam, chief corporate officer at Robi Axiata Ltd, told The Daily Star.

Sources in the telecom companies said they got the instructions from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) at 10:00am yesterday.

The decision to lift the restrictions, imposed around a year ago, was made on Sunday at the meeting of a national taskforce chaired by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

Scientists develop injectable robots



AFP, London

Scientists have created an army of microscopic four-legged robots too small to see with the naked eye that walk when stimulated by a laser and could be injected into the body through hypodermic needles, a study said Wednesday.

Microscopic robotics are seen as having an array of potential uses, particularly in medicine, and US researchers said the new robots offer "the potential to explore biological environments".

One of the main challenges in the development of these cell-sized robots has been combining control circuitry and moving parts in such a small structure.

The robots described in the journal Nature are less than 0.1 millimetre wide -- around the width of a human hair -- and have four legs that are powered by on-board solar cells.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2

Two college students die after 'taking toxic liquor'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two college boys died from poisoning at Bonogram Shahapara in Santhia upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

According to locals, the duo died due to drinking poisonous alcohol. Police, however, said the reason behind the deaths could not be told before receiving autopsy reports.

Nasirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Aitaikula Police

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:30 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00
JAMAAT 5:05 1:15 5:00 6:36 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Neo-JMB fundraiser' arrested in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He was trying to increase the strength of "Neo-JMB" and carry out subversive activities after collecting funds from different foreign nationals.

For this purpose, he contacted members of IS-inspired militant outfits in the Philippines, Indonesia, United Kingdom, France, and Afghanistan using different online platforms. He also has records of financial transactions with some foreign nationals returning from Syria.

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit yesterday claimed they learned this information following the arrest of militant suspect Sibbir Ahmed, 22. CTTC officials said he was running his activities staying in the capital's Sabujbagh area.

A counterterrorism team arrested him from the area around 5:00pm on Thursday. CTTC Deputy Commissioner Saiful

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6



A group of children bathing in the Bangshi river watch two of their playmates in mid-jump off a tree branch. The seasonal rains have caused the river to swell and reach near these children's houses on the Dhamrai bank. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Biden threat to 'American Dream'

Says Trump as he accepts GOP nomination for second term

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump tore into his election challenger Joe Biden as a threat to the "American Dream" in a bruising speech on Thursday night accepting the Republican nomination for a second term against a backdrop of racial tensions and the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

The former celebrity real estate developer spoke at a grandiose event staged at the White House -- the first time a president has ever held a party convention at the executive mansion -- and followed up with a vast fireworks display on the National Mall.

In his 70-minute address, Trump went after "weak" Biden as hard as he could, attacking him by name dozens of times in an attempt to define the veteran centrist former vice president, who leads in polls ahead of the November 3 election, as a radical leftist.

"No one will be safe in Biden's America," he said. "This election will decide whether we save the American Dream," Trump said, rejecting Biden's main campaign slogan about saving America's soul.

"He's the destroyer of America's jobs and given the chance, he'll be the destroyer of American greatness."

The relentless verbal assault contrasted with Biden's

SEE PAGE 12 COL 2





beta.thedailystar.net



Experience our unique
**BILINGUAL
WEBSITE**

DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRESS

Be our partner in innovation.
Let's make it perfect with your feedback

feedback@thedailystar.net

Current site www.thedailystar.net continues to exist till
beta site development is complete



- **Read the news your way**
- **Find things faster at your trusted digital destination**
- **Browse through news at almost zero data cost**
- **Read, watch or listen to the news with our rich multimedia options**

SCAN THE
QR CODE



TO USE QR CODE ON YOUR
SMARTPHONE, INSTALL FREE QR
READER SOFTWARE FROM GOOGLE
PLAYSTORE OR APPLE STORE. TURN ON
THE SOFTWARE AND HOLD THE PHONE
CAMERA OVER THE QR CODE TO GET
THE VIDEO LINK.

Stay with *Star* in a world
of misinformation
and clutter

**HOME OF
CREDIBLE NEWS**