



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXX No. 320 | AGRAHAN 27, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | RABIU SANI 26, 1442 HJRI | 12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



A landfill in DISARRAY

Short-staffed, ill-equipped Aminbazar landfill struggling to manage solid waste

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

With no segregation and recycling facility, Aminbazar landfill has been struggling to manage daily collection of more than 3,000 tonnes of solid waste.

The landfill, located beside the Dhaka-Aricha highway and around 30km off Zero Point in the capital, is also facing severe shortage of manpower and has only one operational waste management vehicle of its own.

The continuous dumping at the landfill has formed a mountain of garbage, which towers approximately 60 feet above the road.

The Daily Star got the insight of the hard-pressed waste management scenario during a recent visit.

Established with Japanese assistance in 2006, the site was planned as a sanitary landfill. A very few things, however, were done according to the design. The leachate collection pond and treatment plant were non-functional till 2018, while the recycling plant still exists only on paper. There is no heavy equipment to give the daily soil covering.

As there is no manpower for waste segregation and recycling, the landfill authorities allow in hundreds of waste pickers, who collect recyclable materials from the dumped garbage.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

KEY POINTS

- Over 3,000 tonnes of solid waste dumped every day
- Landfill running with less than 20pc of required manpower
- No waste segregation and recycling facility
- Waste segregation done manually by waste pickers with no safety gear
- Of 17 heavy equipment, 16 damaged
- Landfill's capacity exhausts this year
- DNCC to acquire another 80 acres to expand it



Aminbazar landfill on the capital's outskirts is struggling to manage waste due to a lack of equipment and manpower. **Bottom left**, waste pickers collect recyclable items without wearing any safety gear, putting their health at risk. **Bottom right**, several non-operational waste management equipment lie idle at the dumping site. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Cold wave may hit the country by end of week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first cold wave of this winter may sweep over the country in the end of this week.

During the time, temperature may come down to 10 degrees Celsius in some districts. Light rainfall could also occur in many places, said an official of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday.

Starting from the northern region, the bone-chilling cold would gradually be felt in other parts of the country, the official said.

Meanwhile, the ongoing foggy weather may continue the next two days. With this, light rainfall may occur in some places, said the official.

In a weather bulletin, the BMD yesterday said, "Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country."

"Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



19th Bangladesh Business Awards ceremony today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 19th edition of Bangladesh Business Awards, an initiative of DHL Express and The Daily Star, will take place today.

The global logistics provider and the country's leading English newspaper have been giving the awards every year since 2000.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi is scheduled to attend the virtual event as chief guest.

Binod Chaudhary, the most successful

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

TRIAL OF ROBBERY CASES

Most offenders go unpunished

Sloppy investigation, lengthy trial key reasons behind low conviction rate

SHARIFUL ISLAM

It was a robbery that caused quite a sensation in Manikganj almost 15 years ago.

A gang of masked robbers stormed the house of one Habibur Rahman in Sidhuhagar of Ghior upazila around 15 minutes past midnight on June 30, 2006. He and some of his family members were watching a World Cup football match at the time.

The robbers shot Habibur, killing him on the spot and wounded four others before making away with Tk 2.31 lakh in cash, gold ornaments, and other valuables from the house.

Moktar Hossain, Habibur's brother, filed a case with Ghior Police Station against 15 to 16 unidentified robbers the next day.

Eleven years later, a Manikganj court acquitted all the charge-sheeted accused in the case.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in its verdict delivered

on April 18, 2017 observed that sloppy investigation and a faulty charge sheet were among the reasons behind acquittals of the accused.

This is not the only incident of such sloppiness in case investigations.

The majority of the offenders go unpunished and move freely largely due to the absence of witnesses or contradictory testimonies given before courts, sloppy investigation, and improper recording of confessional statements, according to legal experts and senior law enforcement officials.

Khurshid Alam Khan, a criminal law expert, said he thinks between 70 to 75 percent of robbery cases see no conviction.

This is backed by a report of the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), which found an alarming 77.33 percent of robbery cases ended up with no conviction between 2016 and 2017.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Pfizer vaccine gets experts' nod in US

Sanofi-GSK vaccine suffers setback

AFP, Washington

The US could soon be the next country to launch an immunization campaign against the novel coronavirus after experts voted to recommend emergency approval for Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine.

The key milestone comes as the world's hardest-hit country logged nearly 6,000 virus deaths in 48 hours with its overall toll approaching 300,000.

President-elect Joe Biden called the FDA experts' decision on Thursday a "bright light in a needlessly dark time", with official approval expected within days.

Inoculation plans are picking up pace around the world, where the virus has killed at least 1.58 million lives since emerging in China last December, according to an AFP tally from official sources.

Infections are spreading fastest in North America and parts of Africa, whereas Europe's second wave has started to stabilise and cases are down in Asia and the Middle East.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BANGLADESH, 10 OTHER ASIAN NATIONS Fast-track vaccine distribution

Urges WHO; ADB launches \$9b Covid vaccine initiative for Asia Pacific

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The World Health Organization yesterday said it wants fast and equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccine in South and Southeast Asian countries, including Bangladesh, where a second wave of the coronavirus outbreak looms large.

"The vaccine manufacturing and regulatory sectors have a critical role to play in equitable and efficient deployment of vaccines," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, regional director of WHO's South-East Asia Region, at a two-day virtual meeting, according to a WHO statement.

In another development, the Asian Development Bank launched its \$9 billion Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility which will offer rapid and equitable support to its developing members in the hope of breaking the chain of virus transmission, saving lives and restoring economies.

The WHO meeting involved vaccine manufacturers and regulators. There are widespread fears that the poor countries will lag behind in terms of accessing the vaccines.

Dr Khetrapal said all countries in the region are now developing and finalising national deployment and vaccination plans, of which regulatory preparedness is a core component.

She emphasised on effective coordination, collaboration and information-sharing at all stages among the stakeholders.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Number of critical virus cases on rise

59pc of ICU beds at Covid hospitals occupied

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of patients with severe Covid-19 infections is apparently on the rise, as record shows that the occupancy rate of ICU beds at the dedicated hospitals has gone up by 14 percentage points from 45 percent in the last two months.

Five months ago, on July 12, the ICU bed occupancy rate was 56.14 percent, which dropped to 45 percent on October 12.

Out of 374 ICU beds, only 210 were occupied on July 12. By October 12, the number of ICU beds occupied increased to 564. The record shows that 254 ICU beds were occupied by Covid-19 patients on the day.

As the winter begins, the number of novel coronavirus cases has shot up and so has the demand for ICU beds.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 335 out of 567 ICU beds at the Covid-19 dedicated hospitals were occupied by patients as of yesterday.

Meanwhile, 19 more people died from coronavirus infections in 24 hours ending 8:00am yesterday, according to a DGHS press release.

The total number of deaths has now reached 6,986, and the death rate stands at 1.43 percent.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



A mother and her baby sleep under the open sky amid the bitter cold in the capital's secretariat area yesterday morning. Arrival of winter adds to the sufferings of disadvantaged people, especially those without home, every year. Most of them do not have enough warm clothing to stay protected during the winter months.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Biden, Harris named Time 'Person of the Year'



Joe Biden

Kamala Harris

AFP, New York

US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were named Time magazine's 2020 "Person of the Year" for their election victory over Donald Trump.

"For changing the American story, for showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the forces of division, for sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world," Time said, explaining its choice.

The Democratic pair were chosen ahead of three other finalists: frontline health care workers and Anthony Fauci, the racial justice movement and President Trump.

Time's magazine cover boasts portraits of Biden, 78, and Harris, 56, with the subtitle "Changing America's story."

"Together, they offered restoration and renewal in a single ticket. And America bought what they were selling," the publication said on Thursday.

Biden beat Trump by 306 electoral college votes to Trump's 232 to end the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,884
New cases in 24hrs



4,87,849
Total cases



6,986
Deaths



4,14,318
Recoveries



1,596,471
Deaths



71,132,776
Total cases

Biden, Harris named

FROM PAGE 1
real estate tycoon-turned-politician's presidency after one term.

Biden received roughly seven million more votes than his Republican adversary, who is yet to concede, claiming widespread fraud of which there is no evidence.

Time praised the Democratic ticket for ousting an incumbent president for the first time in US history.

"Biden and Harris had to revive the party's fading strength with white voters without college degrees; energize its emerging base of diverse, urban young voters; and motivate the hordes of angry suburbanites, particularly college graduates and women, who had fled the Trump-era GOP," it wrote.

Time magazine's award -- handed out annually since 1927 -- honors the person or people who most impacted the news, for better or worse, during the calendar year.

When asked by Time what he would like people to say about him after four years in the White House, Biden replied: "That America was better off and

average Americans are better off the day we left than the day we arrived. That's my objective."

Harris is the first Vice President-elect to be named Person of the Year.

She said in an interview with Time that Biden's administration would have to tackle a host of issues from the White House, including the pandemic, an "economic crisis" and a "long overdue reckoning on racial justice."

"We have to be able to multitask, just like any parent or any human being does," Harris said.

Essential workers on the frontline against the coronavirus pandemic, including doctors, nurses and grocery store employees, had topped a readers' poll of who should be named Person of the Year.

Earlier Thursday, Time named basketball superstar LeBron James Athlete of the Year for his achievements on and off the court.

The 35-year-old Los Angeles Lakers player was honored for battling voter suppression among Black citizens in a year when he won his fourth NBA title.



Wholesalers wait for buyers at a vegetable market in Savar's Genda area. Prices of winter vegetables have dropped following increased supply in the last few days. Yesterday, cauliflower was selling for Tk 8 a piece at the market.

Fast-track vaccine

FROM PAGE 1
"Countries in our Region are among the world's largest vaccine manufacturers, and the vaccines produced here are likely to be administered to billions of people globally. I am certain that together, in solidarity with all people of the Region and world, you will effectively contribute to health and well-being of all," Dr Khetrapal Singh said.

THE ADB INITIATIVE
The announcement of ADB's \$9 billion initiative Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) came yesterday.

"As ADB's developing members prepare to vaccinate their people as soon as possible, they need financing to procure vaccines as well as appropriate plans and knowledge to be able to safely, equitably, and efficiently manage the vaccination process," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa in a statement yesterday.

"APVAX will play a critical role in helping our developing members meet these challenges, overcome the pandemic, and focus on economic recovery."

More than 14.3 million positive cases have been identified in Asia and the Pacific, causing over 200,000 deaths. As the pandemic persists, economic

growth in developing Asia is projected to contract by 0.4% in 2020, the first regional gross domestic product contraction since the early 1960s.

The APVAX provides a comprehensive framework and resource envelope for supporting developing Asia's vaccine access.

"This may include such areas as cold-chain storage and transportation, vehicles, distribution infrastructure, processing facilities, and other physical investments. The component may also be used to develop or expand vaccine manufacturing capacity in developing members."

ADB financing for vaccines will be provided in close coordination with other development partners including the World Bank Group, World Health Organization, COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX), GAVI, and bilateral and multilateral partners.

"Additional access criteria, such as a vaccination needs assessment, a vaccine allocation plan by the developing member, and a mechanism for effective coordination among development partners also help ensure that vaccine support under APVAX can be fairly and effectively implemented."

Pfizer vaccine gets experts' nod

FROM PAGE 1
Britain this week became the first Western country to roll out the Pfizer-BioNTech jab, which Canada, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have also approved.

And while Russia and China have already begun inoculation efforts with domestically produced vaccines, EU countries are eagerly awaiting clearance.

The EU's watchdog said it would deliver decisions on the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in late December and early January respectively, despite the disturbance of a two-week-long cyber attack, which is under investigation.

A new combined approach is also being tested by AstraZeneca, whose Russian branch said it would mix its shot with the Russia-made Sputnik V vaccine in clinical trials.

"Combinations of different COVID-19 vaccines may be an important step in generating wider protection through a stronger immune response and better accessibility," the pharma giant said in its statement.

Yet some vaccine development efforts have suffered setbacks.

France's Sanofi and Britain's GSK

announced that their candidate would not be ready until the end of 2021, after new results showed a low immune response in older adults.

The development of a vaccine by The University of Queensland in Australia was also abandoned Friday after clinical trials produced a false positive HIV result among subjects involved in early-stage testing.

The government will now axe plans to purchase millions of doses of the candidate vaccine and instead increase orders of alternatives from AstraZeneca and Novax, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said.

Once it secures official approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the US hopes to start vaccinating 20 million people this month.

Long-term care facility residents and health workers at the front of the line will be the first to get shots.

Momentum behind the Pfizer jab has been building with New England Journal of Medicine recently publishing results of a clinical trial involving nearly 44,000 people, which confirmed it was 95 percent effective with no serious safety issues.

However, the brief leap towards

A landfill in disarray

FROM PAGE 1
These extremely poor people, many of whom are women and children, come from nearby villages and stay at the landfill from 8:00am to 6:00pm every day.

They segregate reusable plastics, glass and metal objects from knee-to-waist-deep heaps of waste without wearing any gloves, masks or any other type of safety gear, exposing themselves to different kinds of skin and respiratory diseases.

Shah Alam, a waste picker who works there along with his wife and two children, said they often get injured by sharp materials such as glasses and metal objects.

"Most of us are also suffering from skin diseases and breathing problems. But we are poor people and have no other means of income. If we don't collect these, we will have to starve. We rely on Allah for our health," he told The Daily Star at the landfill.

The landfill authorities also cannot give daily soil cover over the garbage due to the shortage of heavy equipment. As a result, unbearable stench emanating from the site can be felt from miles away. **SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER, EQUIPMENT**
Waste generated from areas of the Dhaka North City Corporation are dumped at the Aminbazar landfill, established on 52 acres of wetland and in operation since 2007.

According to DNCC officials, the landfill is running with less than 20 percent of the required staff.

At present, there are only 19 people to manage over 3,000 tonnes of solid waste generated daily. These staffers are a motley collection of helpers, technicians and operators of non-operational equipment.

The three crucial posts of waste management supervisors are vacant. There are no mechanical or civil engineers or waste management professionals at the site.

"We have to continue our operations round the clock with whatever resources we have. I have to engage all the available workers in all kinds of tasks. For instance, technicians often act as waste management inspectors," Shahin Sadat Siddiqui, a sub-assistant engineer who is in charge of supervising the operation, told The Daily Star.

Officials said the landfill got a boost after (late) Anisul Huq became the DNCC mayor in 2015. It was at that time when heavy equipment such as bulldozers, dump trucks, excavators and roller compactors were purchased.

The leachate treatment plant was repaired, which is now discharging refined liquid waste into a nearby river. According to the recent test reports done by Buet authorities, pH, SSW, BOD and COD values of these treated liquid are within the tolerance level.

However, the brief leap towards

progress was very little compared to the need of this massive dumping site.

In the meantime, the consequence of such an acute shortage of manpower can be seen everywhere at the landfill.

According to a High Court injunction, waste can be transported to the landfill only from 10:00pm to 6:00am. But garbage is dumped at the landfill all day long.

Heaps of waste dumped under the nearby Aminbazar bridge and on two sides of the Dhaka-Aricha highway were also found during the visit.

"Due to the shortage of manpower, we cannot station an adequate number of staffers at night. This is why we are permitting daytime dumping," said Shahin.

He, however, refuted an allegation that DNCC trucks dump waste outside the landfill.

Shahin said they allowed local waste pickers in as they lack the manpower to segregate and recycle garbage on their own.

Asked about the waste pickers' safety, he said, "We don't have any budget for that [ensuring the safety gear]. But we welcome any charitable organisations if they want to help."

The landfill is also having chronic equipment shortage.

There are six excavators, eight chain dozers, two wheel dozers and one payload loader at the landfill. Only one payload loader has recently been repaired.

Rest of these valuable equipment are damaged and non-functional despite the fact that most of those were purchased four to five years ago.

These equipment are essential for moving garbage from unloading sites to the landfill site, compacting the garbage and giving soil-covering over the garbage.

Now the authorities are outsourcing from the private sector to run the landfill.

It spent more than Tk 10 crore for outsourcing and maintaining the equipment and an additional Tk 4.75 crore for fuel in the last fiscal year, according to DNCC records.

"Due to the massive amount of collected waste and resource constraints, we have to run these equipment day and night, which severely reduce their longevity," said the landfill in-charge.

Amid the shortage of resources and space constraint, DNCC has decided to acquire further 80 acres of land to expand the site as its capacity will exhaust this year, said SM Shafiqur Rahman, additional chief waste management officer of DNCC.

Besides, the DNCC has recently signed an agreement with China Machinery Engineering Corporation to set up a 42.5MW power plant at the landfill, which will produce electricity by incinerating the waste at high temperature.

"After the establishment of the power

plant, much of the existing problems will be solved as most of the waste will be incinerated at the power plant. It will increase the landfill's longevity," said Shafigur.

NOT A SANITARY LANDFILL
Experts said the Aminbazar dumping site was still far away from being a sanitary landfill and expanding it further under the current conditions would not be a sustainable solution.

"How can you call it a sanitary site when they are dumping all the garbage into a wetland? Construction of such a site in the flood flow zone is a complete violation of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (Bela).

"Expansion of this landfill will be disastrous for the environment and the locals," she added.

Bela had filed a writ petition with the HC, seeking a rule against the construction of a landfill in the flood flow zone. On February 28, 2010, the court ordered the then Dhaka City Corporation to stop dumping garbage at the landfill.

However, on March 14 that year, the Supreme Court stayed the HC order.

Talking to this newspaper, Buet Prof Tanvir Ahmed, meanwhile, said, "The amount of waste is so huge that a thin layer of occasional soil covering or only one leachate treatment plant can do little to prevent pollution. Therefore, it is little more than an open dumping ground."

Segregation of waste from primary sources can shed the burden of waste at landfills up to 30 percent, he said, adding that expansion of the landfill was never a sustainable solution.

The experts also argued about energy plants as a solution.

"We are hearing about waste-to-energy plants for a very long time. It is extremely expensive and I hardly believe it will be feasible for our country. Besides, burning plastics will produce toxic gases and carcinogenic compounds, which will endanger the public health," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

Prof Tanvir said, "A large part of our waste is of moist nature such as waste that comes from the kitchen and kitchen markets. Production of electricity by burning these will be extremely difficult."

But SM Shafiqur Rahman said, "If you think about our resources and the amount of waste we are handling, we are giving the best possible services. We are in the process of recruiting more manpower and using modern technologies."

"Environmentalists may not agree with us in all terms, but where shall we dump such a massive amount of waste? Apart from criticising us, they should also come up with feasible solutions."



Bhasan Char gets its youngest inhabitant

Rohingya woman gives birth to a boy on the island

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Saidul Bashar, a seven-pound baby boy became the first child to be born in Bhasan Char.

Faced with a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar, the new-born baby's parents fled to Bangladesh seeking shelter in 2017.

On December 4 this year, they were among the first groups of Rohingya refugees to have reached the newly settled island on the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of southern Noakhali.

Both mother and child are doing well after the baby was born yesterday.

The new-born baby is the third son of Md Kasem and Rabeya Khatun.

The elder son, Noor Bashar, was born in Myanmar and the second son, Abul Bashar, in the Kutupalong camp.

"My mother named the boy. I am happy as both the son and the mother are doing well," Kasem told this correspondent over phone.

Commodore AA Mamun Chowdhury, project director of the Ashrayan-3 Project (the official name of the Bhasan Char project), said, "It was really an amazing feeling, in this month of victory, that we could relocate the first batch of forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals [FDMNs] from Cox's Bazar."

He also said, "News of the first baby being born in Bhasan Char is really amazing."

A total of 1,642 Rohingyas were taken to Bhasan Char on December 4 amid concerns expressed by the United Nations and other development partners who demanded an independent assessment of the housing project before any relocation.

Stop building 5-star hotel in Bandarban

Demand villagers in Chimbuk area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Members of the Mro community yesterday demanded that the construction of a five-star hotel and amusement park in the Chimbuk Naitong hills be stopped, saying that the project was destroying the ecological balance and risking indigenous life in the area.

At a press conference in Bandarban's Kapru Para Bazar, the Mro people also demanded immediate cancellation of the project and assurance that the authorities would refrain from setting up tourism or recreation centres on Mro jhum land in Chimbuk area.

In a press release, issued after the press conference, they said around 800 to 1,000 acres of jhum land would be grabbed if the five-star hotel was built in the hills.

They alleged that Kwe Shwe Hla, chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council, leased out 20 acres of their jhum land for the project without any discussions with the locals, which was nothing but betrayal.

The Bandarban Hill District Council is obliged to remain accountable maintaining transparency in this regard, the release said.

A welfare organisation and Sikder Group started the construction work after allegedly grabbing jhum land in Dola and Kapru paras.

Number of critical

FROM PAGE 1
At least 1,884 new infections were recorded during this period, taking the number of people infected to 4,87,849, the release added.

The current positivity rate is 11.54 percent, while the total positivity rate is 16.57 percent.

Some 16,323 samples were tested across the country in those 24 hours.

At least 3,866 Covid-19 patients recovered in the meantime.

The number of recoveries now stands at 4,14,318 and the recovery rate is 84.93 percent.

Of the 19 deceased, 13 were men and six women.

One was aged between 21 and 30, one between 31 and 40, four were aged between 41 and 50, two between 51 and 60, and 11 were above 60 years old, added the release.

Currently, Bangladesh ranks 32nd in the world in terms of the Covid-19 death toll and 26th for total number of cases. **MALDIVIAN AIRLINES FINED**

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport has fined the Maldivian Airlines Tk 2,38,000 for arriving with passengers who have not been tested for coronavirus.

The national flag carrier of Maldives brought 200 passengers to Dhaka on Thursday and almost none of them had proof that they had been tested negative for the virus, Executive Magistrate Ahmed Zamil at the HSA told The Daily Star.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in a circular on December 4 announced that anyone coming to Bangladesh must be tested.

19th Bangladesh Business Awards

FROM PAGE 1
industrialist in Nepal, will deliver a keynote speech at the annual event.

Two individuals and two companies will be awarded in the categories of Outstanding Woman in Business, Business Person of the Year, Best Financial Institution and Enterprise of the Year.

DHL Express and The Daily Star introduced the awards to recognise the achievements and positive contributions of business organisations and individuals who have not only grown but contributed to the economic development of the country.

It is now considered as one of the most prestigious events in business circles.

Some notable awardees include business leaders Samson H Chowdhury of Square Group, Syed Manzur Elahi of Apex Group, Amjad Khan Chowdhury of Pran-RFL Group, M Anis Ud Dowla of ACI, Sufi Mohammad Mizanur Rahman of PHP Family, and Azam J Chowdhury of East Coast Group.

Enterprises such as BSRM, MM Ispahani, Bengal Plastic Industries, Concord, Meghna Group of Industries, Rahimafrooz, Runner Group as well as financial institutions like Eastern Bank, Mutual Trust Bank, Brac Bank, City Bank, IDLC Finance and IPDC Finance were also awarded.

Lifetime achievement awards were also bestowed on those who have



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TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Jerdon's Baza, Chandpore Tea Estate, Habiganj.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

BIRDS of PREY

Birds of prey capture our imagination for many possible reasons. It could be their display of power and agility. It could be their spare, elegant beauty. It could be our ancient memory from hunter-gatherer ancestors. Seeing a bird of prey – also known as a raptor – whether it is sitting or flying or attacking can be an exciting moment.

And there is a wealth of raptors to see in Bangladesh: approximately thirty-five species, not counting owls and vultures (which swells their rank to fifty-ish species.) Some of them arrive for the winter while others live here year-round.

Except for Brahminy and Black Kites (*cheels*), raptors are shy. So where does one find them?

Some are found in open spaces, circling the sky while scanning the fields for prey. Close to Dhaka, I have seen them over the grasslands of Purbachol. The Common Kestrel, a small falcon, can be easily seen there in winter, a reddish bird perched atop electric poles. Larger raptors circle high overhead. While most are *cheels*, I have seen Booted and Steppe Eagles, Japanese Buzzards and Oriental Honey-Buzzards among them, discernible from photographs or with binoculars. The Black-winged Kite breeds in Purbachol. A magnificent black-and-white hunter, it sometimes hovers at one spot while looking for prey.

Going farther from Dhaka, our *haors* and *chars* host several raptors. Harriers fly slow and low over *haor* grass to find their meal. Over the *haor* waters you can see powerful hunters of fish: Pallas's and Grey-headed Fish Eagles and Ospreys. Baikka Beel and the surrounding Hail Haor in Molvi Bazar is a good place to find these raptors, either in the sky or sitting on the ground at the edge of fishponds.

Birders visit *chars* of the Padma river in Rajshahi for waterfowl and shore birds but these places are also rich in raptors. I have seen numerous Peregrine Falcons there, including the rare Shahin subspecies. In the skies above the Padma, eagles and harriers can be seen. While birding there, it is easy to miss a raptor fly past overhead because, sitting on our boat, our eyes are on the water and sand searching for birds.

Our forests hold another set of raptors but they are harder to find. The Shikra, a cousin of the Sparrowhawk, is our common forest raptor. It is present in virtually every forest, but most easily seen in Sundarban. Its smaller relative, Besra, is harder to spot. Perhaps the most intriguing forest raptors are the two bazas, easily recognized by the erect black crests over their head. I have seen Jerdon's Baza in Sylhet's tea gardens and Bandarban. Rare Black Baza, with striking black and white wing patterns, are winter migrants. I have seen them over the skies of Satchori National Park in Habiganj, which also hosts several other forest raptors including the Crested Goshawk.

Any discussion of our raptors would be incomplete without the Crested Serpent Eagle, a large brown bird found at the edge of forests and in villages. It can sit still for hours atop a tree, its powerful eyes scanning up to half a mile, looking for a snake. Its legs are covered in tough skin to protect against snakebites.

Raptors are harder to find than other kinds of birds, but the patience and hard work in finding them is amply rewarded by the excitement they bring.

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Ensure vaccines for migrant workers

Bangladesh urges global community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has urged the global community to ensure availability of affordable vaccines, medicines, and equipment for migrants in vulnerable situations, as the coronavirus pandemic continues to rattle public health and economies across the globe.

"We must integrate the health of migrants and their families in the global discourse of Universal Health Coverage," said newly-elected vice president of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Rabab Fatima.

She said this while addressing as co-chair a high-level virtual event titled "Advancing Migrant's Access to Healthcare in the Time of Covid-19" held on Thursday.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), permanent missions of Portugal, Morocco and the Friends of Migration Group jointly organised the event.

In some countries, undocumented migrants have little access to healthcare. Many migrants have also lost their jobs during the pandemic, or their earnings have dwindled, Ambassador Fatima said.

Highlighting the dire consequences facing millions of migrants due to the pandemic, she said Bangladesh has co-led a joint statement on the impact of Covid-19 on migrants in June 2020, which was eventually supported by 103 member states.

Rabab Fatima also called for incorporating the health needs of migrants in national and local health care policies and plans.

Tactical belts for cops

Police to introduce those for officials to carry essentials

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Bangladesh Police will be introducing tactical belts for officials involved in operational duty and patrols, as part of its efforts to better equip the force and make the policing system more efficient.

Once introduced, police officials will no longer need to carry objects like guns, batons, handcuffs and wireless handsets in their hands, said officials of Police Headquarters (PHQ).

"We have almost completed necessary processes to distribute the tactical belts. We plan to distribute them on December 16," Tawfique Mahbub Chowdhury, deputy inspector general (logistics) of PHQ, told The Daily Star.

Made of nylon and polyester, a belt will have six chambers where a small water bottle, wireless set, POS machine for traffic fines, torch, collapsible baton and handcuffs can be kept. A small thigh belt will be attached with the tactical belt to hold the gun, said officials of PHQ's equipment section.

The officials hinted at some more changes to come in the force. For example, every member, ranking from constable to sub-inspector, who will take part in operations or patrols, will only use pistols instead of large firearms.

The provision of using large firearms by operation forces or patrol teams will be abolished, they said.

The belts will initially be provided to operation and patrol teams of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP). Later, they will be distributed among all other police unit members across the country in phases, said sources.

A high-official of PHQ, requesting anonymity, said they have already prepared around 10,000

belts, out of which, around 7,000 will be given to DMP and 3,000 to CMP.

Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of DMP, said the belts will make the force members more efficient and speed up their working capacity.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed has taken the initiative so officers do not need to carry objects in their hands during time of operation.

HANDS FREE FOR DUTY

Another high-official of PHQ, requesting anonymity, said there will even be a headphone attached to the wireless handset, so they can hear every update, and a mic on their shirt's collar to send messages.

During operations, they will be able to swiftly take their gun out from the thigh holster, and use their left hand to take the handcuffs out from the belt, said the official.

As police officials remain on the street round the clock, they will now be able to carry water bottles using the belts.

Beside officials involved in foot, mobile and police station patrols -- the belts will also be provided to officials involved with traffic control, said PHQ officials.

Police officials in developed countries also use such belts, said another high-official of PHQ.

"We are planning to provide digital sticks to officers involved in traffic duty along with the belt. The sticks will light up, showing the 'stop sign'..." he said.

In future, a body-worn camera system will be integrated with the belts, and high-officials will be able to connect with the operation team directly and see live updates through the cameras, said an official, requesting anonymity.



This young man was spotted zigzagging through the busy road of Banglamotor in his roller skates yesterday. With no helmet, elbow pads or knee pads, roller-skating through the dangerous traffic scene of Dhaka is an extremely risky feat, and it got riskier when he tried to quickly flee our photographer's lens by skating on the wrong side of the road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN ENERGY SECTOR
AFD to provide loan of 100m euros

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The French Development Agency (AFD) will provide a loan of 100 million euros to Bangladesh for reinforcing its role as an active participant in the search for and use of advanced digital solutions in power and energy sector in the country.

This support comes via AFD's concessional sovereign loan and will go towards financing the project titled "Construction and Augmentation of Substation and Installation of the Capacitor Bank in Power System under DPDC".

A credit facility agreement from AFD worth 100 million euros was signed between Fatima Yasmin, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, and Benoit Chassatte, AFD country director for Bangladesh, and French Ambassador to Bangladesh Jean-Marie Schuhs, said French embassy in a statement yesterday.

In addition, a Grant Facility Agreement for a delegated grant from the EU Alternative Investment Fund worth 12 million euros will be signed in the beginning of next year.

AFD's loan aims to equip existing infrastructure with new, innovative and reliable technologies in order to ensure services are prepared for the future.

4 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and seven injured in road accidents in the capital and Panchagarh in last two days.

In Dhaka, two motorcyclists were killed after being hit by a truck at Khilkhet yesterday, reports BSS.

Amir Hossain Riyaj (19), a student of Dhaka Residential College; and Ajmin Khan Lami (26), his relative, were declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said DMCH police.

The victims lived with their families in South Badda. Lami used to work for a motorcycle ride sharing service.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent adds, two people were killed and seven injured in road accidents in Panchagarh on Thursday.

In Tentulia upazila, a truck hit a bicycle near a bazar, killing the bicyclist, Abdul Khalek (65), said Tentulia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Jahirul Islam.

In another incident, Shova Akhter (5), daughter of Sapijul Islam from Darjeepara in Tentulia, died as a microbus hit her while she was crossing a road at Tentulia Bazar.

Meanwhile, a bus and a truck collided at Maidandighi in Boda upazila, injuring seven people including the trucker and his helper, said police.

50km for 50 years

Sylhet youths walk across mass graves in commemoration of '71

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

As the Liberation War marks its 50th year, the number of people who lived through those are being increasingly outnumbered by those born later. In such a time, it is important to establish practices that remind later generations of the spirit of the war.

An initiative by cycling collective Cycle Travelers of Sylhet aims to do just that. For three years, they have been walking across the city's mass graves in commemoration of the war.

What's more, every year, they walk as many kilometres as the corresponding anniversary of the war. For example, when they set out to walk yesterday, they walked 50 kilometres as it's the 50th year from 1971.

Kazi Sahi, coordinator of the walk, said, "We used to travel to many places on our cycles, but in 2018, we decided to start visiting mass graves around December. Though we are cyclists, we decided to walk and dedicate one day to the memory of the Liberation War."

In 2018, their 48 kilometre walk followed the path to mass graves at Khadimnagar and Chiknagol. For 2019, they walked to more mass graves at Sylhet Weather Station, Lalmita and Balaganj upazila's Adityapur.

Starting at 6am from the city's Rikabibazar area, yesterday's walk followed a route that included Liberation War mass graves at Tarapur's Star Tea Garden, Malnichhara Tea Garden,

Tilagarh and Lalmita.

Finally, the walk concluded at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Chowhatta area in the city.

Walking such a long distance is no easy task, but the group is considerate of this limitation and allow anyone to join however they want, and for as long as they want. Along with those who walked, yesterday's event also had several others who didn't complete the walk but only joined for shorter sections, and even some who rode on bicycles to accompany the walkers.

While these walks prove to be a rejuvenating experience, there's one particular thing that cause the walkers grief. "On our visits, we always see that the mass graves are not maintained well enough, and sometimes they don't even have the minimum security required for such historically significant destinations," Kazi Sahi told this correspondent.

The walks have inspired the organisers to embark on similar endeavours. For example, earlier on March 17 this year, Kazi Sahi walked 100 kilometres from Tungipara of Gopalganj to Dhanmondi 32, in commemoration of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Among others, yesterday's was attended by cyclists Nurul Islam, Morshedul Islam, Abdullah Al Muhsin, Toufiqul Islam, Sajib Hridoy Ahmed, Moheb Bin Emdad, Partho Dey, and Tomistra Tithi.



Covering 50km across Sylhet, youths paid tribute to four mass graves around the district yesterday. This photo was taken from Tilagarh, where one such mass grave lies.

Vandalism of Bangabandhu's sculpture protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Artists in Mymensingh organised an art camp, protesting the vandalism of Bangabandhu's sculpture at Mymensingh Town Hall premises yesterday afternoon.

The artistes, under the banner of Bibhagio Charushilpi Parishad, organised the art camp with the slogan "Shilper Chhuay Durhok Ashuvo Andhakar".

President and secretary of the parishad Mohammad Rajon and Goutam Kumar Devnath, and parishad artistes Monjurul Alam Rumi, Joyanta Mondol, Polash Sheikh, Biswajit Apu, Mannan Mirza and Monira Akter took part in the camp.

Artiste Nobonita Chowdhury, poets Suranjit Baroi and Shamim Ashraf, and Nongur Media President Hasnat Zaman Sabuj were also present, among others.

After the camp, the artistes also formed a human chain at the same location.

Addressing the programme, the artistes said religious bigots in the name of religion are threatening to demolish sculptures in the country, including those of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It is a direct threat to the country's independence. The incident took place in December, the month when Bangladesh was liberated in 1971, they said.

The anti-sculpture protestors should be dealt with an iron fist for the sake of the country's independence, a peaceful society and all-out development, they added.

Demanding exemplary punishment of those involved in such heinous crime, they said it is high time for everyone to be united with the spirit of the Liberation War and stand firm to protect the country's values.

14-yr-old house help dies falling from roof

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 14-year-old house help died after falling from the rooftop of a building in Dhaka's Uttara area yesterday morning.

The deceased had been working at a doctor's house in Uttara's Sector 1, said Sub-inspector Mohammad Shafiqul Islam of Airport Police Station.

Around 1am, she tried to flee the five-storey building by climbing down the rooftop. Suddenly, she slipped and fell on the ground. She died on the spot, the SI said.

The police official said they were trying to know the reason behind her attempt to flee.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.



Israeli soldiers stand guard during a Palestinian protest against Jewish settlements in Salfit in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

IUB honours its freedom fighter trustees

CITY DESK

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) honoured six of its freedom fighter trustees at a programme on its Bashundhara campus in Dhaka on Thursday, says a press release.

IUB organised the event as part of celebrating "Mujib Centenary" and Victory Day.

The IUB trustees who were honoured are A Matin Chowdhury, chairman, the Board of Trustees; Didar A Hussain; AK Ashrafuddin Ahmed; Anjan Chowdhury; late Dr M Tajul Hossain; and late MA Mohaiman.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque was present on the occasion as the chief guest.

At the programme, IUB also awarded the winners of an essay competition it organised earlier throughout the country to celebrate the occasions.

IUB Vice-Chancellor (acting) Prof Milan Pagon and Prof Imtiaz A Hussain spoke on the occasion.

AL leader hacked

FROM PAGE 12

the killing. Nasim Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said there had been a long-standing enmity between Mokhlesur and Bokul over control of the area.

A clash broke out in Anonto Bazar area between supporters of the two men yesterday evening. At one stage, Mokhlesur's men attacked Bokul with sharp weapons. They hacked him mercilessly, leaving him critically injured.

Bokul was taken to Pabna General Hospital where he died of his wounds around 7:00pm, the OC added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Abdul Ahad Babu, office secretary of Pabna district AL, said Mokhlesur's men had been collecting extortion money from the drivers of battery-run three-wheelers in Anonto Bazar area for long.

Bokul protested collection of extortion money. Angered by this, Mokhlesur's supporters hacked Bokul to death, he added.

Ahad demanded exemplary punishment for the killers.

The OC said they were investigating the incident.

NGOs, experts content

FROM PAGE 12

opportunities and playgrounds -- facilities that are far better than those in the crowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Apart from the risk of landslides, the government cited issues such as drug peddling, human trafficking, a rising trend of gender-based violence and conflicts between factions of the refugee communities in Cox's Bazar as major reasons for the relocation.

While these and other factors may have prompted the government to opt for the relocation, the fact remains that the relocation of the first batch has happened and the government will eventually transfer about 100,000 to Bhasan Char. The UN and international aid agencies are however yet to be involved in humanitarian assistance. This has given rise to questions about how the lives of Rohingya refugees in Bhasan Char will be funded and managed.

Saiful Islam Chowdhury Kalim, coordinator of the alliance of 22 local NGOs that have been engaged in humanitarian activities in Bhasan Char with their own funds, said the office of the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (RRRC) that supervises the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar is doing the same in Bhasan Char.

"We have stock of food for six months. Now we are assessing the demand and challenges ahead," he told this correspondent. "Initially, the NGOs cooked food for the Rohingyas but now they are provided stoves, gas cylinders and food stuff to cook for themselves [in Bhasan Char]."

Saiful Islam said they too had negative idea about the Bhasan Char project initially, but everything became clear after visiting the site.

"I think international agencies' idea will change if they come here," he said, adding that there is no such infrastructure for refugees anywhere in the world. He said they are searching for international donors, but if they fail, they have contingency plans for mobilising funds locally.

Besides, Rohingyas can eventually be engaged in income-generating activities that can be helpful, he said. Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, director at the Centre for Genocide Studies of the International Relations Department at Dhaka University, said it is unfortunate that the UN has not congratulated Bangladesh for its efforts to improve the lives of Rohingya refugees through relocation.

He said a country has the right to shelter refugees in places that it finds suitable. There will always be some issues wherever they are, but the government has built a planned housing. The facilities at Bhasan Char may not provide all the privileges the

refugees want, but is much better than the present ones in Cox's Bazar.

"Bangladesh is not only a victim of Myanmar's genocidal acts, but also of global and regional geopolitics," Prof Imtiaz said. The international community is not as vocal on Rohingya repatriation as it is on the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh, he added.

"The UN should focus on Myanmar and repatriation, not Bangladesh, on the Rohingya question," he said.

Asked on funds and management of Rohingyas in Bhasan Char, the professor said he expects UN and other aid agencies will get involved in Bhasan Char soon.

Prof Imtiaz said the UN is not against relocation, but there is a communication gap between the government and the UN. "It should be removed immediately for the better."

Meanwhile, a few NGO officials working in the Rohingya camps said the government had become more adamant about the relocation because international aid agencies made "excessive level of criticism" about the Bhasan Char project, even though the government had spent \$350 million from its own fund for the betterment of the refugees. Also, they said the Rohingyas, especially families with young girls unwilling to be engaged in any conflict, had volunteered to go to Bhasan Char.

They also pointed to international aid agencies' high-handedness in management of the Rohingya camps. A statement Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen made to this correspondent recently is reflective of this. He said government officials working in refugee camps are provided "financial incentives" by international aid agencies, whose foreign workers also draw high amount of benefits due to high per diems in Cox's Bazar, which is why they are reluctant to move to Bhasan Char.

While these claims need to be verified, local NGOs have long been saying that international aid agencies' operations in the camps were too expensive -- an issue that needs to be addressed by employing Bangladeshi NGOs at operational levels.

Two UN officials reacted differently when asked whether the UN would be involved in Bhasan Char as the government wants it to be. One said they would not go unless a technical assessment by a UN team is done, while the other said the UN Refugee Agency is obliged to go to Bhasan Char if the government wants as looking after refugees -- wherever they are -- is its mandate.

"We are observing what happens in Bhasan Char... how the community fares," a UN official told this correspondent.

Filmmaker

FROM PAGE 12

told Reuters, citing the director's private secretary.

Latvian media Delfi first reported Kim's death, referring to Vitaly Mansky, a Russian documentary film director who reportedly was working with Kim.

Born in 1960, Kim made his name with a series of violent yet aesthetically challenging features, including The Isle (2000) and Bad Guy (2001) -- the former of which was sanctioned by the British Board of Film Classification for animal cruelty.

Man sets alight

FROM PAGE 12

sent to jail yesterday after he admitted to police that he poured kerosene on Nipa Begum and set her on fire, said the law enforcers.

The victim, Nipa, was admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal with critical injuries, said KM Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Barguna Police Station.

Quoting family members, the OC said Himu, a tailor, recently married another woman without the consent of his first wife Nipa, who then filed a case with the Women and Children Repression Control Tribunal against him.

Himu often tried to force her to drop the charges against him and set her alight after failing to convince her, he added.

EU clinches deal on tougher

FROM PAGE 12

CO2 emissions compared to 1990 -- is not now seen as sufficient to achieve this goal.

At an October summit, the EU leaders postponed the decision on the more ambitious climate target until their next meeting, given the hesitation by the eastern member states.

The new climate goals are backed by big EU powers, including France and Germany, as well as many major businesses keen to access European funding to kickstart a recovery through what Brussels has taken to calling a green new deal.

But environmental activists decried the latest move as not ambitious enough.

"It shows that political convenience takes precedence over climate science, and that most politicians are still afraid to take on big polluters," Greenpeace EU climate policy adviser

Sebastian Mang said.

The climate and the budget succeeded in pushing failing Brexit trade negotiations to the side.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen told leaders that there were "low expectations" of a deal in a short discussion at the end of the summit.

London and Brussels have said they will decide by Sunday whether to press on with talks aimed at reaching an accord or throw in the towel, as negotiators from the two sides met again to seek a way forward.

Amid their packed schedule the EU leaders also agreed to draw up a list of Turkish targets for sanctions in response to Ankara's prospecting for gas in Greek and Cypriot waters.

The move fell short of broader punitive measures urged by Athens and Nicosia, as other EU nations remained hesitant about imposing wider sanctions or an arms embargo on NATO member Ankara.

NHRC needs to play its due

FROM PAGE 12

human rights violations to the government for necessary actions.

"The National Human Rights Commission can play a role of check and balance in this regard. If the government doesn't take any step against an offence, the commission itself will take appropriate legal actions."

The government must take necessary action against any incident of human rights violation if it is conveyed, said Anisul.

Mentioning that the country would have an anti-discrimination law next year, he said the government was

working on formulating the law to prevent discrimination against people and it was now at the final stage.

The minister said the government has given stimulus of \$4.14 billion to different sectors to face the challenges of lives and livelihoods posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government has arranged Covid-19 testing free of cost and will take steps to provide vaccines to the people for free on a priority basis, he added.

UNDP Resident Representative Sudipto Mukherjee, among others, also spoke at the programme, chaired by NHRC Chairman Nasima Begum.

Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Controller of Stores (Eastern Zone)
Bangladesh Railway
CRB, Chattogram

"Don't journey without ticket"

"Don't eat from the unknown person platform or the train journey"

International Sale Tender Notice

No. 2020-21/04 Dated: 08/12/2020

Ministry/Division : Ministry of Railway.

Invitation of tender : Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram.

Nature of tender : Open Tendering Method (OTM).

Date of invitation of tender : 08/12/2020.

Eligibility of tenderer : Iron Dealer.

Document selling place : 1) Deputy Commissioner, Chattogram Office, General Section, Room No. 138, 2) Police Commissioner Office, Chattogram Metropolitan Police, Dampara, Chattogram, 3) Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram, 4) Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram, 5) Controller of Stores (West), Bangladesh Railway, Rajshahi, 6) Asstt. Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Kamapur, Dhaka.

Dropping place : 1) District Commissioner, Chattogram Office, General Section, Room No. 138, 2) Police Commissioner Office, Chattogram Metropolitan Police, Dampara, Chattogram, 3) Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram, 4) Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram, 5) Controller of Stores (West), Bangladesh Railway, Rajshahi, 6) Asstt. Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Kamapur, Dhaka.

Opening place : 1) Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram, 2) Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram, 3) Controller of Stores (West), Bangladesh Railway, Rajshahi, 4) Asstt. Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Kamapur, Dhaka.

Document selling time : 14/12/2020 to 06/01/2021 all working days during office time.

Dropping date & time : 14/12/2020 to 06/01/2021 all working days during office time and 12:00am to 07/01/2021.

Opening date & time : 07/01/2021 at 12:30pm.

Sl. No.	Tender number	Short description of materials	Quantity (approx)	Location of materials	Value of tender document
01	Sale/2020/17	S.M Scrap (Cast Iron), Buffer head, Axle box, Axle guide, Outer socket, Inner socket etc.	55.174 M. Ton	Old Sale Depot, PHT	400.00
02	Sale/2020/18	i) Steel cast scrap wheel centre mounted of M S Axle with or without tyre. Condem wheel & Axle Size: 9"x4.1/2" Plain Bearing = 687 Pairs = 309.150 M. Ton. ii) -Do- Size: 8"x4.1/4" Roller Bearing = 196 Pairs = 98.00 M. Ton.	407.150 M. Ton	TJN Station Yard	750.00
03	Sale/2020/19	i) Steel cast scrap wheel centre mounted of M S Axle with or without tyre. Condem wheel & Axle, Plain Bearing, Size: 9"x4.1/2" = 902 Pairs = 405.900 M. Ton. ii) -Do- Size: 8"x4.1/4" = 589 Pairs = 265.050 M. Ton. iii) -Do- Size: 8"x4.1/4" = 14 Pairs = 7.000 M. Ton. iv) -Do- Size: 9"x4.1/2" = 64 Pairs = 28.800 M. Ton. v) -Do- Size: 8"x4.1/4" = 32 Pairs = 14.400 M. Ton. vi) -Do- = 28 Pairs = 14.000 M. Ton. vii) -Do- = 16 Pairs = 8.000 M. Ton.	743.150 M. Ton	CGPY Yard, SRV Yard & Tranjit Yard	750.00
04	Sale/2020/20	i) Steel cast scrap wheel centre mounted of M S Axle with or without tyre. Condem wheel & Axle, Size: 8"x4.1/4" Roller Bearing = 398 Pairs = 199.00 M. Ton. ii) -Do- Size: 9"x4.1/2" Plain Bearing = 393 Pairs = 176.850 M. Ton.	375.850 M. Ton	AKA Station Yard	750.00
05	Sale/2019/17	S.M Scrap tyre for Loco & Roolling Stock = 2000 Pcs.	110.120 M. Ton	Old Sale Depot, PHT	750.00
06	Sale/2019/18	S.M Scrap Buffer Helical Spring	241.724 M. Ton	Old Sale Depot, PHT	750.00
07	Sale/2019/19	Bearing Spring (7 Plate) = 4262 Nos.	183.266 M. Ton	Old Sale Depot, PHT	750.00
08	Sale/2019/20	i) Steel cast scrap wheel centre mounted of M S Axle with or without tyre. Condem wheel & Axle (With tyre) Size: 9"x4.1/2" = 76 Pairs = 36.480 M. Ton. ii) -Do- without tyre, Size: 9"x4.1/2" = 25 Pairs = 8.000 M. Ton. iii) -Do- with tyre, Size: 8"x4.1/4" = 17 Pairs = 7.820 M. Ton. iv) -Do- with tyre, BC/NSK(B) = 29 Pairs = 13.920 M. Ton. v) -Do- with tyre, Size: 7"x4" = 14 Pairs = 4.480 M. Ton. vi) -Do- with tyre, SKF(C) = 144 Pairs = 61.920 M. Ton. vii) -Do- PHT Type with tyre = 45 Pairs = 22.050 M. Ton. viii) -Do- PHT Type without tyre = 30 Pairs = 10.200 M. Ton.	164.870 M. Ton	Workshop/ PHT	750.00
09	Sale/2019/21	M S Scrap (Steel cast Scrap), Buffer head, Axle Box, Axle Guide, Outer Socket, Inner Socket etc.	99.923 M. Ton	Old Sale Depot, PHT	400.00

Eligibility of tenderers:

- 1.00 (a) Any foreign importer having requisite permission from their respective Govt. to import above scrap steel materials or (b) Bangladesh exporters having export registration for scrap or any materials or (c) Any Govt. Body sector corporation or private party of Bangladesh having melting furnace and re-rolling mills or any tenderer having an authorization letter from registered re-rolling mills.
- 2.00 The tenderer should submit a declaration along with the tender stating to export the scrap materials from Bangladesh/to melt the scrap materials in their **Own/Authorised** furnace within 60 days from the date of taking delivery.
- 3.00 Tender documents can be obtained the postal charges Tk 30/- (thirty) (if required to be dispatched to out station).
- 4.00 Sealed tender should be sent by postal Office of the Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram before the specified date and time.
- 5.00 Tender should be addressed to the Controller of Stores (East), Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram and must reach or be dropped in the tender boxes before 06/01/2021 on office time and at 12.00am on 07/01/2021. The tender will be opened at 12.30pm in presence of tenderers if any.
- 6.00 Due to unavoidable circumstances if the dropping and opening date as mentioned in this Tender Notice falls on a holiday/unexpected abnormal situation day, the tender will be dropped and opened on the immediate normal working day. No further amendment will be issued regarding such alternation of dropping/opening day. Other information will be available in tender schedule.
- 7.00 Tender security which equal to (i) From 0 to 50 lac 15% of the quoted value. (ii) From 50 lac to 1 crore 12% of the quoted value. (iii) Above 1 crore 10% of the quoted value must be submitted in favor of Financial Adviser & Chief Accounts Officer (East), Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram in the shape of Pay Order/Bank Draft issued by any scheduled bank (except National Bank) of Bangladesh. The tender which is not accompanied by Pay Order/Bank Draft for the required amount or is deficient in any manner will be liable to be rejected.
- 8.00 Tender validity 120 (one hundred twenty) days w.e.f. Opening date of tender. By no means shall earnest money deposited against tender be returned within the validity of tender or finalization of tender.
- 9.00 The authority reserves the right to cancel any or all the tenders and take any decision.

S(20)/(222)
GD-1979

Engr. Md. Belal Hossain Sarker
Controller of Stores (East)
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram

দিন্যাসনাল এইচ.আর.ল্যাবরেটরী লিমিটেড
মেইন রোড, মাইলদী কোর্ট, নোয়াখালী

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এজেন্সি সর্বশেষ অবধি ৩০ জনা জনা নামে, ডি.ন্যাসনাল এইচ.আর.ল্যাবরেটরী লিমিটেড এর উপস্থাপিত **National Care Instant Hand Sanitizer (Liq.)** (No.-জিআইএস/এইচআর/এসটি/২০২০/৩০০) ব্যাচ নং-202001। এই পণ্য সরকারী বিশুদ্ধক কর্তৃক মান বহির্ভূত/অমান্য হইয়াছে। সুতরাং জলদ্রব্যের কথা বিবেচনা করে সমস্ত দেশের বাজার হতে উক্ত ব্যাসের উপস্থাপিত সর্বশেষ এলাকার আর প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রতিনিধিত্ব কর্তৃক বাজার হতে সরাসরি করে আমদানিকারক কোম্পানির কাছ থেকে ক্রয় করা হবে এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের উপস্থাপিতের অধীনে একীভূত করে উক্ত প্রকল্পের পরবর্তীতে প্রতিবেদন প্রেরণ করা হবে। বিখ্যাত অতীত জরুরী।

যোগাযোগের
বাসস্থান পরিলক্ষ

Bangladesh always sympathetic

FROM PAGE 12

DM 80 million to Bangladesh. Of this amount, DM 15 million has been allocated for meeting emergency aid requirements of Bangladesh.

INCREASE OUTPUT

Bangabandhu today asks the working class of the country to work with missionary zeal and increase production in the fields, mills and factories. Talking to a group of workers at the Gono Bhaban, Bangabandhu says production must be increased so that the benefits of liberation could be enjoyed by all within the shortest possible time. Unless production is increased the masses could not reap the benefits of liberation, he maintains.

Bangabandhu further says socialism, as envisaged by his government, would usher in an era of peace and prosperity in the country which has long been exploited by foreign forces. He asks the workers to imbibe in themselves the spirit of socialism and work for its establishment. Sources: December 13, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, Ittefaq and The Daily Observer.

LRPS Ref. No.: LRPS- BAN-2020-9163939

Request for Proposal (RFP): Establishing Long Term Arrangement for Technical support for, and development of, localized, culturally sensitive and translate language resources that address translation gaps in the Rohingya emergency response and host community programmes in Cox's Bazar district for the period of 24+12 months.

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"**

The deadline to submit proposal is **Wednesday, 23 December 2020; Time: 14:00 Hrs**
Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.
www.unicef.org.bd

unicef for every child

New whale

FROM PAGE 12

Beaked whale experts working alongside Sea Shepherd's scientific department managed to take photographs and video recordings of the three whales, and also recorded their acoustic signals using an underwater microphone.

Researchers Gustavo Cárdenas Hinojosa, Jay Barlow and Elizabeth Henderson are "highly confident" that the animals are a new whale species, according to the press release. Genetic sampling will be used to confirm whether they are correct.



Sanctions 'disrespect' to Turkey

Says Erdogan as US, EU ready measures

REUTERS, Istanbul

President Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said US sanctions over Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 missiles would be disrespectful to a Nato ally, after sources said Washington was poised to take the step likely to further strain relations.

The report of imminent US sanctions targeting Turkey's defence industry over missiles comes as EU leaders at a summit discussed separate sanctions against Turkish officials over gas exploration in disputed parts of the Mediterranean.

Both developments -- examples of Erdogan's long-strained relations with Western allies -- have caused anxiety among investors. The US moves, earlier than expected and potentially wider in scope, are likely to have the greater immediate impact.

The lira tumbled nearly 2% after Reuters cited sources saying US sanctions are set to be announced as soon as today. The currency later rebounded as investors weighed up the impact.

"For America to get up and confront Turkey with a matter like CAATSA is disrespectful to a very important Nato partner," state-owned Anadolu agency cited Erdogan as saying.

In a later speech to officials from his AK Party, Erdogan took a more conciliatory tone, calling on both US and EU politicians to "break from the influence of anti-Turkey lobbies".

'Fix the future'

Calls grow for action ahead of today's Paris climate accord anniversary

AGENCIES

When the Paris Agreement on climate change was finalized after two weeks of fraught negotiations and years of past failures, diplomats hugged and shed tears of joy. They had haggled over verb tenses, cut deals, and in the end, brought 196 countries into the accord.

Five years later, governments are lagging far behind in implementing the deal, struck on Dec 12, 2015. Annual greenhouse gas emissions hit a new high last year. And climate change impacts are intensifying, from the thawing Arctic to raging wildfires in Australia and the US West.

The Paris Agreement aims to hold

Emissions fell record 7pc in 2020: study

Pacific nations urge world to 'get serious'

the rise in average global temperatures to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, and preferably 1.5C -- a threshold beyond which climate impacts are projected to sharply intensify.

Temperatures have already risen by more than 1C since pre-industrial times,



and scientists say that the world's fossil fuel-dependent economies will have to undergo wholesale transformation to bring those goals within reach.

As delegates prepare for a one-day online UN climate summit today, negotiators point to signs of progress: rapid advances in renewable energy, growing appetite for greener investments, and pledges on emissions by the European Union and China. US President-elect Joe Biden has vowed to rejoin the accord.

At the summit on Saturday, diplomats will be watching for signs that countries are preparing to ramp up climate efforts ahead of a major round of UN climate talks in Glasgow due to take place in November 2021.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign for the Paris deal is the number of countries that have begun to pledge to slash carbon emissions to net zero -- meaning they will release only as much as they remove from the air -- by 2050.

Britain and the European Union

adopted the target last year, and China -- the largest emitter -- surprised many in September by announcing a goal of net-zero by 2060. Subsequent pledges by Japan and South Korea mean more than 50% of global emissions are now under net-zero targets, UN officials say.

Pacific island nations on the frontline of climate change yesterday demanded the world "get serious" about saving the planet ahead of today's anniversary.

Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama told a virtual summit of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) that progress had stalled since the Paris climate agreement was signed.

The call came ahead of rare good news: Carbon emissions fell a record seven percent in 2020 as countries imposed lockdowns and restrictions on movement during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The fall of an estimated 2.4 billion tonnes is considerably larger than previous annual record declines, such as 0.9 billion tonnes at the end of World War II or 0.5 billion tonnes in 2009 at the height of the financial crisis, the Global Carbon Project said yesterday in its annual assessment. Emissions reductions were most pronounced in the United States (down 12 percent) and the European Union (down 11 percent).

'Don't play with fire'

Governor tells Mamata over attack on BJP chief in Bengal

NDTV ONLINE

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, condemning Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's comments after an attack on BJP chief JP Nadda's convoy, asked her to withdraw them and warned her against "playing with fire".

Dhankhar this morning submitted a report to the central government on the "deteriorating" law and order situation in Bengal, after which the state's police chief and Chief Secretary have been summoned on Monday. "Yesterday, the leader of a national political party was blatantly attacked. And state actors were involved. Violators worked with the protection and immunity of the administration and the police. This is like a death-knell to democracy. I have written so in my feedback," he told reporters.

"Madam, please don't play with fire," he added. Nadda's convoy was attacked with bricks, stones and sticks near Kolkata on Thursday afternoon. Some leaders were injured and cars were damaged in the incident.

"I asked them to prepare a detailed report and report to me. They came without any report, without any inputs. It is shameful. They are bureaucrats. They have a moral duty. I was shocked, and I was shamed. It was an extremely painful moment for Constitutional duty," Dhankhar said.

Chances of Brexit deal low

EU chief tells bloc as time ticks down to Sunday deadline

REUTERS, Brussels/London

Britain is now more likely to leave the European Union's orbit on Dec 31 without a trade deal than with an agreement, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the bloc's 27 national leaders yesterday, an EU official said.

The United Kingdom quit the EU in January but remains an informal member until Dec. 31 when it will finally leave the bloc's orbit after 48 years. Both sides say they want a trade deal but negotiations are deadlocked.

After British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday there was "a strong possibility" a deal would not be clinched, von der Leyen said the probability of a no-deal had risen. "The probability of a no deal is higher than of a deal," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity about the message von der Leyen gave leaders at an EU summit in Brussels.

Johnson and von der Leyen have given negotiators until Sunday evening to break the impasse over fishing rights and allowing Britain to

be punished if in the future it diverged from the bloc's rules.

"Situation is difficult. Main obstacles remain," the EU official said of von der Leyen's message. "To be seen by Sunday whether a deal is possible."

A no-trade deal Brexit would damage the economies of northern Europe, send shockwaves through financial markets, snarl borders and sow chaos through the delicate supply chains which stretch across Europe and beyond.

Negotiators seeking a new arrangement on nearly \$1 trillion in annual trade are stuck on how much fish EU boats can take from British waters and how far the EU can tie Britain into its rules in the future.

While some EU diplomats have cast Johnson's rhetoric as theatrics intended to wrench out a deal and please his domestic Brexit supporters, British officials say London cannot accept the EU's demands and caution that a no-deal is on the cards.

Von der Leyen, speaking in Brussels, said it would be clear on Sunday whether the conditions for a deal had been reached. EU diplomats say the best case-scenario would be that talks continue past Sunday.



NEWS IN BRIEF

US flies two B-52s over

Gulf in message for Iran

The United States deployed two B-52 long-range bombers over the Gulf on Thursday in a show of force directed at Iran as Washington moves to cut its ground-level military presence in the region. The two bombers took off at short notice from Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana for the non-stop, 36-hour mission to cross Europe and then the Arabian Peninsula to the Gulf, looping near Qatar while keeping a "safe distance" from Iran's coastline, US defense officials said. The flight was coordinated with US allies, and aircraft from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar flew with the bombers as they traversed the airspace, according to a US defense official.

Hariri killing: Hezbollah man gets five life terms in prison

The UN-backed Lebanon Tribunal yesterday sentenced a Hezbollah member convicted of conspiring to kill former Lebanese prime minister Rafik al-Hariri in a 2005 bombing to five terms of life imprisonment. Salim Jamil Ayyash was found guilty in August of homicide and committing a terrorist act over the deaths of Hariri and 21 others in the attack on Beirut's waterfront. The trial was conducted in absentia and Ayyash remains at large. Three alleged accomplices were acquitted due to insufficient evidence. Hariri's assassination plunged Lebanon into what was then its worst crisis since its 1975-90 civil war, setting the stage for years of confrontation between rival political forces.

Hong Kong media mogul charged under security law



Hong Kong media tycoon and Beijing critic Jimmy Lai was charged under a new national security law yesterday, accused of colluding with foreign forces, the latest pro-democracy figure targeted under the legislation. Lai, 73, is the most high-profile figure charged under the sweeping law, which has targeted the city's pro-democracy movement but brought a semblance of calm to the finance hub after months of often-violent protests. The city's new national security unit charged him "with one count of collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security", police said in a statement. National security offences carry a maximum sentence of life in prison. Lai is the owner of Hong Kong's best-selling Apple Daily, a popular tabloid that is unashamedly pro-democracy and fiercely critical of authorities.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Hondurans take part in a new caravan of migrants, set to head to the United States, in Cofradia, Honduras on Thursday. Central American authorities began trying to break up the caravan of hundreds of Hondurans who set off for the United States to escape the impact of back-to-back hurricanes, testing efforts to stem immigration from the battered region.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Manmade mass now outweighs life on Earth

AFP, Paris

For the first time in history manmade materials now likely outweigh all life on Earth, scientists said in research detailing the "crossover point" at which humanity's footprint is heavier than that of the natural world.

The weight of roads, buildings and other constructed or manufactured materials is doubling roughly every 20 years, and authors of the research said it currently weighed 1.1 teratonnes (1.1 trillion tonnes).

As mankind has ramped up its insatiable consumption of natural resources, the weight of living biomass -- trees, plants and animals -- has halved since the agricultural revolution to stand at just 1 teratonne currently, the study found.

Estimating changes in global biomass

and manmade mass since 1990, the research showed that the mass of human-produced objects stood at just three percent of the weight of biomass at the start of the 20th century.

But since the post-World War II global production boom, manufacturing has surged to the extent that humans now produce the equivalent of the weight of every person on Earth every week on average.

2020 likely marked the moment when manmade mass tipped higher than biomass, according to the study published in Nature.

Drawing on a host of industrial and ecological data, the study estimated human production accounts for roughly 30 gigatonnes annually.

At the current growth rate, manmade material is likely to weigh as much as three teratonnes by 2040.

'Bogus false claims'

States assail Texas bid to overturn US election at SC; Biden taps Susan Rice for domestic policy role

REUTERS, Washington

Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin on Thursday urged the US Supreme Court to reject a lawsuit filed by Texas and backed by President Donald Trump seeking to undo President-elect Joe Biden's election victory, saying the case has no factual or legal grounds and offers "bogus" claims.

"What Texas is doing in this proceeding is to ask this court to reconsider a mass of baseless claims about problems with the election that have already been considered, and rejected, by this court and other courts," Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania's Democratic attorney general, wrote in a filing to the nine justices.

Texas filed the long-shot suit against the four election battleground states on Tuesday directly with the Supreme Court. It asked that the voting results in those states be thrown out because of their changes in voting procedures that allowed expanded mail-in voting during the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump's campaign and his allies already have been spurned in numerous lawsuits in state and federal courts challenging the election results. Legal experts have said the Texas lawsuit has little chance of succeeding and have questioned whether Texas has the legal standing to challenge election procedures in other states.



Biden, a Democrat, defeated Trump in the four states in the Nov. 3 election. The Republican president won them in the 2016 election.

The Texas lawsuit, Shapiro wrote, was adding to a "cacophony of bogus false claims" about the election.

Trump filed a motion with the court on Wednesday asking the justices to let him intervene and become a plaintiff in the suit filed by Ken Paxton, the Republican attorney general of Texas and an ally of the president.

The Texas lawsuit does not make specific fraud allegations. Instead, Texas said changes to voting procedures removed protections against fraud and were unlawful when the reforms were made by officials in the four states or courts without the approval of the states' legislatures.

Meanwhile, US President-elect Biden announced several administration picks Thursday, including Obama-era officials such as former national security advisor Susan Rice as White House Domestic Policy Council director and ex-chief of staff Denis McDonough as veterans affairs secretary.

Rice, who is Black, had been a contender for secretary of state. But she was expected to face intense opposition from Republicans in the Senate confirmation process over her role in the Benghazi crisis of 2012, and that prestigious cabinet position went to close Biden advisor Antony Blinken.

Most offenders go unpunished

FROM PAGE 1

The incident in Ghior is a perfect case in point.

The complainant mentioned the number of robbers in the case statement around 15 to 16. But the investigation officer (IO) submitted a charge sheet against 31 people, which the court found to be unbelievable.

The court said such a large number of people would not go to commit a robbery in a neighbourhood.

Then came the flaw in the confessional statements made by three of the accused under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). The statements were not produced before court as per the provision of the Evidence Act by the prosecution.

The judge remarked that none of the three accused gave confessional statements involving themselves and those were not supported by any other witnesses' depositions. So, with such statements, no one could be proved guilty.

Though the prosecution named 19 witnesses in the charge sheet, they could produce only 11 during the trial.

None of the witnesses named any of the accused in their depositions. There was also no claim or proof that the suspects were accused or convicted in any other robbery cases, the court said.

LOW CONVICTION RATE

The PBI report, published by the specialised police unit in September

last year, paints a grim picture of the reasons behind the low conviction rate in robbery cases.

PBI prepared the report after talking to judges and analysing 247 judgments delivered in as many robbery cases by 46 courts in district and metropolitan areas in 2016 and 2017.

It found that of the total 1,932 charge-sheet accused, only 11.75 percent were convicted.

Witnesses' absence in court, faulty and contradictory testimony by witnesses, failure of complainants and witnesses to identify the accused and recognise the arms used for committing offences -- all led to acquittals of the accused in 65 percent of the robbery cases that saw no convictions, according to the report.

The report also noted that the number of years it took to complete the investigation and trial in many cases led to acquittals as complainants and witnesses lost interest in giving depositions or gave faulty depositions due to the long delay.

An example is a street robbery case filed with Siddhirganj Police Station in October 1998.

While delivering the judgment in the case in August 2017, a Narayanganj court observed, "The overall review shows that the case had been going on for more than 20 years. During the period, none of the witnesses did turn up despite taking all procedures as per law."

The court further said, "Trial proceedings of any case cannot run for an endless period."

Eventually the accused in the case were acquitted.

In a judgment in a house robbery case filed with Arahazur police in Narayanganj in 1998, a court observed that the complainant and the victims of the robbery did not give depositions.

"So, the accused have the right to get acquitted as their involvement in the crime was not proved."

The PBI report, a copy of which was obtained by this newspaper, also found that 28.8 percent of cases led to acquittals due to faulty investigation.

In the cases studied, police took an average of one year and five months to complete their investigation -- with the highest being 11 years to complete a probe in a case while the lowest being 33 days.

Courts took an average of 10 years and 11 months to complete trials of the cases -- with the lowest time taken to complete a trial being seven months and the highest 27 years and nine months, the study revealed.

Khurshid Alam, who is also an ACC lawyer, said the prosecution has to take the responsibility. "The public prosecutors cannot avoid their responsibility as they often fail to prove the cases."

He said, "While the conviction rate is in the ACC cases is 77 percent, the prosecution cannot not fail to the robbery cases as they fail to seize

evidence, recover looted goods and properly arrange test identification parades."

The PBI study also found flaws in seizure lists, test identification parades (TIP) and case statements, not scrutinising PCPR (previous conviction and previous record) of the accused, not arranging TIP of accused following due procedures, and not recording confessional statements of the accused under section 164 of the CrPC properly, among other reasons of the low conviction rate.

Taking to The Daily Star recently, PBI Chief and Deputy Inspector General Banaj Kumar Majumder said they used the research reports and findings during the training of sub-inspectors and inspectors who join PBI so that such mistakes are not repeated in investigations.

In its recommendations, the report suggested setting up of speedy trial tribunals in every district to dispose of cases quickly.

It asked the police to be more serious in producing witnesses before the court and ensure food and conveyance allowance for witnesses.

The report also suggested arranging training of investigators and trimonthly inter departmental meetings or workshops among investigators, investigation supervisors, magistrates and doctors.

[Our Manikganj correspondent Zahangir Alam Biswas contributed to this report]



The smoking woman is not the hot woman you're expecting

E. GAZA

Ed's note: Smoking is injurious to your health and the health of others around you.

Upstanding citizens have recently been standing up to right the wrongs of a civil society about to go rogue. Wow, that was hard to put together. Just like it must have been to watch a woman light up a cigarette in public on Rajshahi's Circuit House Road last week.

All she wanted was a puff to help coat over her worries and insecurities with a soothing layer of tar and nicotine. The woman was sitting with a friend, who was a male by the way, on the side of the road when public figure Barrack Oh-Mama felt this was just so wrong. He politely shouted at her to snuff out her momentary lapse of judgement and walk away.

"Men can smoke. Women can't smoke. They can only be smokin', if you know what I mean," said Mr. Oh-Mama. Smoking causes about 90% (or 9 out of 10) of all lung cancer deaths. More women die from lung cancer each year than from breast cancer (fact from www.cdc.gov) or

from cleaning households. While many condemned his rebuke, others formed a crowd thinking his caring and altruistic nature towards women should really be the discussion.

"Smoking is bad. And she was a woman. Two wrongs don't make a right," said a bystander who prefers to be Anonymouse. No, not a typo. They are part of a large group of social welfare activists that call themselves the 'Liberated Manly Men Front Against Moral Decay', or 'Anonymouse' for short.

A woman doing what a man does is a dangerous thing apparently. According to the members of Anonymouse, women shouldn't smoke in public or secretly in toilets. Young girls will see them and be prompted to do the same.

"Imagine the chaos if more women start doing what men do," said a very worried man. "Today they sit in the open and smoke. They even drive scooters but not to deliver sandwiches. They might even want to run a country someday. What will happen then?"



'Only female smokers cause environmental pollution', man finds in a very private research

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Ed's note: Smoking is injurious to your health and the health of others around you.

Smoke from cigarettes causes both health and environmental problems. But a recent research by a Bangladeshi legend has found something new. Man, from Rajshahi, after decades of research, has found that it isn't smoke from cigarettes that causes environmental pollution, rather only smokes from the cigarette of women cause environmental pollution!

The philanthropic researcher didn't confine himself to his house after a world-saving research work. He came out from his house and was looking for female smokers to deliver the result of his research. He raises his voice as soon as he finds a girl smoking.

The man starts to deliver his valuable speech with a packet of cigarettes in his pocket and a cigarette in his hand. While bringing his good tidings to some female smokers, one dared asked him why he was smoking in spite of knowing all the consequences of it. He said, "My dear lady, male smokers don't cause environmental pollution. Only female smokers cause environmental pollution. I found it during one of my very personal research works. So, it doesn't matter whether I, a representative of male, smoke or not as it's not detrimental to environment. So stop smoking and save the world from being destroyed by environmental pollution." After hearing this reply, all the male smokers around started to clap, admiring their new triumph over the fairer sex.

TRAVEL DIARY

Saint Martin's man arrested for fraudulent use of the word 'resort' and other adventures

OSAMA RAHMAN

Saint Martin is supposed to be the next big tourist destination for Bangladeshis. Fact is, Saint Martin has been the 'next big thing' since it was first discovered. The second fact is Saint Martin will always be the Mario Ballotelli of the tourism world: the potential is there, but it can never be realised.

It seems no one with any grasp of the island's commercial potential has stepped forward to do something. The one reason for this can be the stupid journey by what is supposedly a launch. It's a two-and-a-half hour journey, interrupted every ten minutes by a very confused captain, who berates everyone for standing on the right side of the vessel. "I am warning you again, the boat will capsize if we don't balance it out, please go to the left side," he will say, and then everyone will just move to the left side. The captain will then ask everyone to move to the right and this will go on.

The launch, without anyone following any of the health measures, is the first thing that dampens your mood about the adventure. That and the seagulls, which

have a constant need to be fed.

If you survive the journey and reach the Island, the second thing to hit you will be the massive underdevelopment. Rustic and quaint would be the words you would use to describe the island if you were a patronizing jerk. The true word is backward.

The island is so backward, you almost feel like you will run into your great grandfather at any moment. Cars? There aren't even proper roads. Want a brand name fried chicken? Not a single joint in the entire island. Want to explore the cuisine? It's a bunch of gram flour soaked coconuts and whatever fish they can catch.

If you have a dignified palate, the island's food is not for you.

But wait, the beaches you say? They are pretty, sure. Blue water, white sands, lots of shells -- which the islanders will warn you against collecting to ruin your mood further -- and other beach things. But a beach swimming pool? Doesn't exist. You want a beach activity that doesn't involve coconuts? Doesn't exist either. Want to eat the freshest, right off the sea BBQ'd crabs

and flying fish? You can do that, but all the island has are fish and crabs anyway.

The beaches still have trees, like no one has thought of clearing those up for DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. You will be walking on the beach and boom, trees. What are trees even doing on the beach anyway? Can someone get five-star hotels to clear this mess up, please?

Saint Martin's has the potential to be one of those Thailand islands. It can also be the Maldives of Bangladesh. Except it won't because no one has any interest in developing the island and getting rid of its useless, pristine beauty.

Finally, every local with a room calls it a resort. One tiny room. One tiny bathroom. No centralised electricity. Yet, it's apparently a resort because they give you shampoo and soap. No ATMs either, by the way, so if you are a refined cashless man, then in the island they will call you poor. If modernity is what you want Saint Martin's is not for you. Also, no kids to save either, so no chance of taking pictures with skinny local kids. In other words, much ado about nothing.



PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SATURDAY DECEMBER 12, 2020, AGRAHAYAN 27, 1427 BS

Padma Bridge is a gateway to our economic aspirations

Foresight and sincerity will make them real

It is indeed a historic moment to witness the realisation of a dream—the completion of the Padma Bridge—that seemed quite impossible when the World Bank, followed by other donors, pulled out their funding alleging corruption, allegations that were later proven untrue. But thanks to the quick and bold decision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to build the bridge using the country's own resources, we now have a bridge that connects Dhaka to 21 southern districts bringing in immense economic opportunities that may change the lives of over 30 million people in the region. Credit goes to our PM for remaining steadfast in her vision that, despite the astronomical costs increased by delays caused by engineering challenges and environmental onslaughts, has now come true. The Padma Bridge, apart from adding to our national pride, also has given us reason to be optimistic of our economic future.

The TK 30,193 crore bridge will, for example, connect multi-lane expressways and railway lines with Dhaka from Monga port and Payra, the largest deep sea port. It will link Bangladesh with India, Nepal and Bhutan and catalyse regional trade along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Network. It will not only benefit the Southwest region but there will also be economic spillovers all over the country as new jobs are created because of better connectivity between both sides of the Padma River. Studies have predicted an increase in national GDP growth rate by 1.2 percent, and this despite the huge additional costs the project has incurred due to delays and implementation problems.

The benefits for the south-western region are predicted to be enormous as lack of connectivity has left it as one of the least developed parts of the country, with most of the people living below the poverty line. In Khulna and Barishal districts, there are more people below the poverty line compared to other districts. Farmers especially suffer because there is a lack of access to markets, soil has been adversely affected by salinity, and because of lack of fresh water in the dry seasons. More importantly, the people have remained isolated from the rest of the country. With the bridge, travel time from Dhaka to Khulna will be four hours instead of about 13.

As an economist has pointed out, the bridge provides an economic corridor and we must make full use of its potential. This means attracting investments by building economic zones. The private sector has to be incentivised to encourage foreign direct investment. Clearly, the bridge is going to bring an unprecedented boost in economic activities including in farming, trade, labour movement, growth of small and medium industries, tourism, export-oriented manufacturing and so on. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industrial parks can generate many job opportunities for the local population. For this, there must be skills training programmes to train the local people. There must be more and better education opportunities for the young people in these regions. Backward and forward linkage industries have to be established along with marketing channels to service the production hubs.

The Padma Bridge promises to give a huge boost to our economy and change the lives of the most deprived sections of the population. It has the potential to accelerate our development dreams. But to make this happen, we must work hard to create an enabling environment for these aspirations to come true. The nation must be united in their efforts to take on these tasks with sincerity, efficiency, honesty and innovation.

HC clears way for recovery of grabbed Buriganga land

Govt must follow up with quick action and increased oversight

We commend a ruling by High Court removing the hurdles for the government to carry out eviction drives on an illegally grabbed land along the Buriganga River. According to a report published in this paper, the court cleared the way for the government to recover the land in Keraniganj from the possession of three companies of Maisha Group owned by a ruling party lawmaker, rejecting a writ petition filed collectively by the three companies.

Earlier, a probe by the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) revealed that in 2010, the said lawmaker of Dhaka-14, Aslamul Haque, had filled up more than 54 acres from the Buriganga river and wetland to construct a power plant and a private economic zone in the vicinity of Basila, Keraniganj, in a clear violation of the Water Act. How could a lawmaker abuse his power to conduct such illegal activities? We have often witnessed how ordinary citizens have had to lose their land to grabbers connected with politicians and public officials, and now a lawmaker representing the state has been found to be directly involved. It's a pity that politically connected groups have been continuously grabbing our rivers and waterbodies despite several directives given by the HC. Rivers and such waterbodies belong to the people and no one should be allowed to tamper with them for their petty gains. Now that the HC has ruled, the land grabbed and filled up by Maisha Group must be recovered immediately and all the clearance certificates previously provided to the accused must be terminated.

We also congratulate the NRCC for its leading role in unearthing the illegal practice. This is but one case of river grabbing, however, and there are plenty of cases to take note of around the country. While the government's eviction drives have been successful in some cases, the challenges that lie ahead are enormous. Also, often it is seen that evicted land has been grabbed again by taking advantage of lack of oversight, monitoring and follow-up actions by the agencies concerned. The government must remain careful that nothing of this sort happens in case of the Keraniganj incident and other cases pursued by the agencies. The illegal river grabbers must be held accountable for their crimes, which have a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people as well as the environment.



HASEEB MD IRFANULLAH

social media, no late-night talk shows. But there was excitement, concern, and confusion that invaded the parliament, the streets and the media. After all, it was the first-ever long-term water-sharing treaty signed between the two South Asian neighbours.

Politically, it was a great achievement for the then Awami League government to sign this long-awaited deal within the first 175 days of assuming power, 21 years after losing it to the assassination of the Father of the Nation.

Having 54 rivers coming from India and three from Myanmar, handling of transboundary rivers like the Ganges has always been a sensitive political agenda for Bangladesh. But transnational water sharing soon went beyond being a mere partisan agenda defining the country's major political fronts. It became an environmental issue as well. Reduced water flowing from the upstream via the Ganges impacted the Sundarbans mangrove, shared between Bangladesh and India, changing this unique ecosystem badly.

Since the Ganges Treaty was signed, we have come to know that due to climate change, rains are now falling quite oddly on South Asian soil causing unusual flooding. Our seas are continuously rising, our coastal areas are being hit by surges and storms more frequently and strongly, and our coast is much saltier than it used to be three decades ago. So, whatever we do or do not with the rivers flowing from Bhutan, India, Nepal, and China has a significant impact on the survival of the 170 million people of Bangladesh. But the harshest fact is, despite so much concern and discussion over transboundary water sharing, not a single bilateral treaty has been signed between Bangladesh and India over the last quarter of a century.

Following numerous talks, an interim deal to share the water of Teesta River has been gathered dust since 2011. In India, the largest democracy in the world, the state governments' say on the transnational water sharing issue is more crucial than the central government's intentions. That leaves Bangladesh at the mercy of how Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim play their parts to share the rivers, like the Ganges and the Teesta, within India before they cross the border into Bangladesh.

Being on the receiving end, Bangladesh continues to be positive towards the transboundary waters, demonstrating its

WENTY-FOUR years ago, when the prime ministers of Bangladesh and India signed the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty on December 12, 1996, it was quite a different world to mark such a milestone. No

willingness not just by issuing occasional optimistic statements but also through actions. In October 2019, for example, it signed an MoU with India to supply drinking water to a township of 7,000 people in the Tripura state.

However, despite the painful sluggishness at the state level on this issue, there have been some interesting developments and interventions in the non-political, non-governmental arenas involving these two countries since 2010.

For example, the Dutch, who first visited the Bengal delta about 400 years ago, have shown genuine interest in the waters and coasts of Bangladesh over the last five decades—be it through coastal protection, long-term development initiatives like the Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP), and most recently, supporting a century-spanning planning process called “Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100”.

In 2010, the Embassy of the Kingdom

scholars, and experts from both countries. The E4L did create a momentum of enthusiasm over transboundary water governance or “hydrodiplomacy” in both countries at different tiers and in different sectors, especially when conversations between the national governments were slow.

Despite an unprecedentedly generous investment in soft activities, like networking and knowledge creation around regional water governance, it was rather difficult to see the tangible milestones this initiative eventually achieved. The Dutch embassy was not seen to support any follow-up activities beyond the E4L. This may indicate that the Dutch might have expected rather concrete outcomes from this well-invested regional water governance venture.

It was not an end on the IUCN side, however. IUCN in Asia capitalised its global experience, drawn from

Salween River basin in Myanmar with funding from the government of Sweden. Oxfam, given its people-oriented rights-based vision, has defined this project in its own way.

The TROSA has been essentially focusing on local, small river basin level interventions involving two countries, promoting stronger youth and women engagement in water governance, rather than region-wide, high-level policy influencing actions. Aligning with the TROSA, IUCN Asia is currently focusing more on institutionalising a vibrant regional Civil Society Organisation (CSO) platform engaged in regional water governance—a realistic, focused initiative, but far from the all-encompassing dreams that the E4L showed.

Over the last few years, these non-governmental initiatives have gained another dimension as international research organisations are often seen to focus their regional initiatives not on countries but on deltas, given the huge populations these harbour and the vulnerability they face under climate change.

Led by the Newcastle University, UK, the Living Deltas Hub project has brought together more than 30 organisations to gather knowledge on three Asian deltas—the Red River, the Mekong, and the GBM. The CGIAR's global Two Degree Initiative (2DI) for a climate-smart food system also focused on three mega deltas—the Mekong, the Irrawaddy, and the GBM—to understand the Asian context. These initiatives are creating space to take the conversation around shared waters at an apolitical, non-governmental level. The interests in delta are growing fast. The first virtual Goheshona Global Conference, to be held on January 18-24, 2021, is expected to have discussions on delta as one of the mega themes throughout the week. Bangladesh is, and will always be, a core part of such conversations in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin.

But we really cannot talk about Bangladesh's water without talking about its transnational rivers. The civil society organisations of this region lack conveying power when it comes to regional water governance. Initiatives by international organisations with convening authority often fail to be impactful due to their inherent donor dependency. Regional research initiatives may help us understand what a delta means, show us connectivity among ecosystems beyond political boundaries, and also offer us a shared vision for collaborative environmental governance. But these conversations and knowledge mean nothing unless our governments talk.

December 12, 2026 seems to be far way, when the Ganges Treaty expires. But is it really that far?

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File photo of Teesta River.

PHOTO: ANIMESH PRAKASH

of the Netherlands took a notable step. It supported a five-year project to bring together non-governmental actors, both individuals and organisations, from Bangladesh and India to create a space to talk about the shared river ecosystems and the peoples, and to help improve the management of these ecosystems between the neighbours. This project was called “Ecosystems for Life” (E4L), implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The E4L took a soft approach and implemented softer activities. It organised numerous meetings, workshops, and sessions with all possible stakeholders discussing a wide range of issues in Dhaka, New Delhi, Bangkok, and other cities of the host countries. It supported individual and joint studies by academics, enabled NGOs to take field actions, and organised media campaigns. Studies on the biology and management of *hilsa* fish were particularly notable due to their direct policy implications and transfer of experience from Bangladesh to India. The project benefited immensely from the advice of reputed ex-diplomats, notable

programmes like the Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE), and tried to put together smaller transboundary water diplomacy activities involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, and Nepal. Since 2015, it has been trying to follow the same approach it tried in the E4L partnering with The Hague Institute for Global Justice and Asia Foundation, for example. Government officials from both countries did continue attending meetings and workshops, frankly expressing their opinions on issues on the table. These were indeed important incremental changes while dealing with sensitive issues like hydrodiplomacy. But focusing on individual events, rather than comprehensive ones, failed to regain the momentum of the E4L lost in December 2014.

One of the on-going regional water governance programmes that has been supportive to IUCN's E4L legacy is Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA). Since 2017, Oxfam has been implementing this project in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, and the

The inescapable greed grid of the health sector



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

serial and receiving payments. He took a snap of the prescription with his tab. Only then did it occur to me that a medical representative had just taken note of a document that was supposed to be private. The man was assigned either to monitor the prescription pattern of the doctor or to make sure his company's medicines were being suggested by the doctor concerned. This was wrong on several counts—a medical representative should not intrude into the privacy of a patient; it was unethical and unprofessional for the diagnostic centres or hospitals to allow an outsider to stay so near to the chamber of a doctor; and, there is possibly a direct correspondence between the perks these representatives offer to the doctors and the treatments that follow.

I guess I was so happy thinking I could see the doctor protecting the appointment serial from being bypassed or hijacked, by the late-comers who would tip the attendant, that I did not let the trivial intrusion issue bother me at that time. I just asked him, “So did she prescribe your company's medicine or what?” The guy was mum.

You hear about all sorts of unholy alliances between a doctor and a pharmaceutical company's agent. Many of these doctors receive various gifts ranging from as little as prescription pads and pens to home appliances or even fully-paid foreign trips for conferences or holiday packages for their entire family. Then there are the pathological tests that you do not need but are prescribed nonetheless as the by-products of these alliances. I once took

a relative with complaints of heart burns to a gastrointestinal doctor, and the first thing the moody doctor did was to ask us to consult the front desk for an endoscopy. “Don't come to me without doing this test first,” she said.

The most common complaint that you hear is: many doctors do not study proper case history before seeing a patient; they just prescribe a series of tests from which they can deduce the problem. News on the grapevine is that some doctors receive hefty commissions from these prescribed

check-ups, medical boards, constant change of medicines, excess supply of medicinal paraphernalia, personal items and food, diet consultants, lab tests, surgeries, therapies, referrals and so on. They will do everything within their power to prolong the stay of the patients. There are instances where the news of the death of a patient is delayed to increase the bill for life support in the ICU. Then, of course, there are news of hospital bugs in the concealed ventilation system that send every patient of a hospital to their

The system milks our vulnerabilities. When we or our closed ones are ill, we do everything to ease the suffering. Monetary or ethical concerns become secondary. And this is when the professional servicemen take advantage of our emotional vulnerabilities.

tests. Hence, they don't have time to listen; they act like automatons. I will not be surprised if some of these doctors only see a thousand taka note in place of the patient's face, just like in *The Gold Rush* a hungry miner saw a chicken in Charlie Chaplin and tried to eat him up. The life of the doctors is so mechanical that you cannot but feel pity for them. Some of the surgeons I have come across start their day right after the Fajr prayer. They will operate 4-5 patients in a private clinic before heading for their government/regular job and then, in the evening, they will split their time between various chambers to see another 40-50 patients in 4-5 hours. They are so overworked and overpriced because there is a serious dearth of good doctors in the country.

Some of these good doctors are being picked up by the corporate system. While working for a luxury hospital, these doctors are under the obligation to earn at least four times (I am guessing) their monthly salary which I hear is more than a million a month. So they keep on subjecting their patients to needless and elaborate treatment procedures: routine

ICUs with bronchitis. These hospitals are so powerful that even if you die from their negligence or accidental fire, they will dowse the news in ways that will point at the illness not only of the individual but also of the society at large.

These ironies are normal for our health system; and unfortunately, our complacency as consumers adds to the situational irony. The corporatisation of the health service is making profiteering their only business agenda under the guise of service. This is the sector that has the potential to save billions of dollars going abroad in the name of medical tourism. When some of these health franchises opened, we were excited by the thought of having world-class service in the vicinity. But soon the international plaster wears away, the mask of nobility and charity falls down, and cutting-edge technology is cut down. We find ourselves helplessly caught in the ugly grid of greed.

Even when you pay a handsome amount, you are not sure whether you have received the right treatment, whether the test reports are doctored or not. I know of a case where the local diagnostic centres

(yes, more than one) gave a PSA score of a patient citing that he has prostate cancer; the same patient goes to India and finds out that results are normal. Somehow you cannot trust the system. You end up asking for second and third opinions—confusing yourself in the process and crowding the system even further. In the absence of a proper health system, you rely on bothering your friends and relatives for an over-the-phone consultation. And if you are not that lucky, you end up buying drugs recommended by the salesman at the pharmacy or looking it up on the net.

I was reading in Friday's Bangladesh Pratidin about the tele-conferencing introduced during the pandemic by some of our local hospitals. Someone registered with an apex hospital paying Tk 500 for such a promised service, and then the patient was charged Tk 1,000 for a subsequent call, and Tk 1,500 for the next. An inpatient was charged for the PPE the doctor was wearing; but the doctor was on a round and he was going to every patient wearing the same PPE. How many times was the same PPE charged? You do the math.

The system milks our vulnerabilities. When we or our closed ones are ill, we do everything in our bid to ease the suffering. Monetary or ethical concerns become secondary. And this is when the professional servicemen take advantage of our emotional vulnerabilities.

I will end on a lighter note. I once took my daughter to see a dermatologist in a reputed diagnostic centre in Gulshan. He was an elderly man, and apparently my daughter reminded him of his own in the UK. He started chatting. Despite repeated knocks at the door by the attendant reminding him of other patients, he went on reminiscing about his days in London where my daughter also grew up. He went on and on before writing a skin ointment for my daughter's acne, and hurling a parting request: “do you mind paying for two patients? I need to tell them I saw you too to justify the time!”

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CELEBRATING 140TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAULANA BHASHANI

Maulana Bhashani and The Islam Question

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

IN public discourse, there are two images of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani: "Green Maulana" and "Red Maulana". The first tries to portray him as an Islamic cleric or *pir*, and overlooks his lifelong struggle against communalism, authoritarianism and exploitation of the poor masses. The second depicts him as a communist, and ignores the spiritual aspect of Maulana's political ideology. An in-depth analysis of his idea of Islam and its reflection in his political activities can help us understand the true essence of his life and work as well as why he is ever more relevant in the fight against the unholy alliance of authoritarianism and communalism.

Maulana Bhashani's politics was inspired by religion but it never descended into communalism. He had the belief that Islam was the most just religion and, therefore, he found his spiritual fulfilment in the establishment of a just society.

A cursory glance at Bhashani's politico-religious life will illustrate two distinctive traits of his idea of Islam: universalism and liberation of the oppressed.

In his article on the policy of "Rabubiyat" written in the twilight of his life, Bhashani explained his ideology as the undivided equality of all people irrespective of their caste, nationality and religion. Since all human beings are equal before the creator, Allah, the purpose of Islam

is to establish a society without discrimination and exploitation, reiterated the Maulana. This spirit of universalism helped him overcome narrow identity politics and embrace common humanity.

Bhashani received religious education at the Deoband Madrasa. His association with progressive Islamic thinkers like "Shaikhul Hind" Mahmud al-Hasan inspired him to join the fight against British imperialism. He actively participated in both the nationalist movement led by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and the Khilafat Movement.

Bhashani joined Muslim League in 1930. But he was never a conventional Muslim League politician who invariably toes the party line. He became the president of Assam Muslim League in its Barpeta Session in 1944. At the very meeting, he exhorted the League's General Secretary Muhammad Sadullah, who was also the prime minister of Assam at that time, not to act as a "post box" for the British authorities.

Another story is worth sharing in this regard. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad used to preside over the Eid prayers at Kolkata Eidgah. During the 1940s when the Pakistan demand was garnering wide support from the Muslims of India, particularly from the Muslims in Bengal, Maulana Azad was removed from this honorary duty as he was against the idea of Pakistan and an active member of Congress. Maulana Bhashani was at that time a leading



This undated photo shows Maulana Bhashani holding a portrait of Lenin. SOURCE: SPUTNIKIMAGES.COM

figure of Assam Muslim League. At a public meeting, he criticised this decision with his characteristic sarcasm that Muhammad Ali Jinnah should be appointed as the new Imam.

Bhashani devoted himself to the

Pakistan movement. He led the successful campaign during the 1947 Sylhet Referendum through which Sylhet became a part of Pakistan. But soon after the establishment of Pakistan, Bhashani along with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and

others formed Awami Muslim League to protest corruption and discrimination by the Muslim League government. Four years later, he proposed to drop the word "Muslim" from the party's official name to make it a platform for people from all religious backgrounds, and thus the Awami Muslim League became Awami League.

In his effort to empower the oppressed, Bhashani always laid emphasis on organising them and making them politically conscious. He was widely respected as *pir*. He had many *muridans* (disciples). Bhashani used his religious appeal to organise them politically. When accepting someone as a *murid*, Bhashani would insist that he took an oath that he would work as a member of the peasant or labour organisation that he led.

Maulana Bhashani identified private property as the source of exploitation. To him, it is contradictory to the spirit of Islam as, according to the religion, Allah holds ownership over all properties and a human is only a custodian. This is clearly different from the position commonly held by Muslim clerics who believe in Allah's ownership but don't strive for abolition of private property. This brings him closer to the communist ideology that also calls for abolition of private ownership.

All through his political career, Bhashani kept up his two-pronged fight against authoritarianism and

communalism. He exposed how authoritarian forces often use religion to create a false identity tension between different religious groups and perpetuate their rule. He was also a staunch critic of those communal forces that, in the name of religion, create divisions among people and thereby serve undemocratic forces.

In today's Bangladesh, when a large number of people are reeling under extreme socio-economic pressure caused by the pandemic, we see the rise of a false debate on the difference between sculpture and idolatry. This is not the problem but the symptom of a bigger problem characteristic of a society founded on extreme inequality, injustice and intolerance. Bhashani rightly identified this problem and proposed solutions to it through a revolutionary interpretation of Islam.

Bhashani had a dream of establishing an Islamic university that would be open to all irrespective of their religious identity. He wanted the institution to be an epitome of Islamic education where universalism and the libertarian spirit of Islam would be taught. He believed this kind of education would attract people from all over the world and establish the glory of Islam as a harbinger of peace and prosperity. Will the dream of Bhashani remain unfulfilled?

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'We are the 95%': Bhashani and the Kagmari Festival

LAYLI UDDIN

IN 2011, people reclaimed the streets, parks and public spaces in major financial districts across the world as part of the Occupy Movement. "We are the 99%" was the popular slogan of the movement, coined by the anarchist anthropologist David Graeber and others. The movement occupied space, amplified marginalised voices, and reimagined a new world, necessitated after the 2007-8 global financial disaster had rendered visible the damage inflicted by the wealthy few on the rest of the world. This was, of course, not the first time that the demand for the world to be reimagined in different ways had been made. This article revisits a moment in South Asia when something similar happened.

On the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Maulana Bhashani, I wanted to re-examine the 1957 Kagmari Sammelon—the event that signalled the break-up of the Awami League and the birth of the National Awami Party (NAP)—and argue for its uniqueness as a political event in postcolonial South Asia. The Kagmari Sammelon was the festival of the "95%".

In early 1957, Awami League held the reins of power at the Centre and in the Province, the only time this would happen in the pre-71 history of Pakistan. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Ataur Rahman Khan was the Chief Minister in East Pakistan. However, this power had come at a cost, a U-turn, in fact, on the party's position on autonomy, complete withdrawal from bilateral and multilateral security agreements, and a free and independent policy. On the other hand, Maulana Bhashani's commitment to anti-imperialist and Third World solidarity politics had strengthened. The people, he argued, could not be the "masters" of their destiny if they were also the "talpi-bahok" (porters) of

imperial powers. Bhashani planned an event that would overpower and undermine Suhrawardy's onward march in defence of security pacts and bolster his demands for love and friendship in the newly decolonised Afro-Asia bloc.

So he called out to the "95%"—"poor cultivators, labourers, blacksmiths, potters, etc." and "all those with whose money the country runs"—to attend the Awami League Council Convention in Kagmari in February 1957. These were not the typical attendees of a convention, but Bhashani did not intend for the Kagmari Sammelon to be a typical run-of-the-mill political gathering. It was a uniquely disruptive political event, invariably described as a *mela* (festival), *sanskritik sammelon* (cultural gathering) and "Afro-Asian cultural convention". The Kagmari Sammelon disturbed the traditional arrangement of power and politics, democratised spaces, and population, and opened up new ways of sensing, relating and inhabiting the world. Over the course of six days, conversations on Cold War in the Third World, military pacts, and anti-imperial and decolonial futures—usually confined to parliament chambers, university halls, debating clubs and mansions of Dhaka—migrated to the rural *maidan* (public space) of Kagmari, foregrounding the participation of those excluded from the formal spheres of politics. It was in these unlikely settings that the demand for radical anti-imperial friendships and solidarity with the Third World triumphed over the case for more arms spending and military pacts. The subaltern was not the parochial subject, nor the elite the international elite actor as traditionally imagined.

How was this done? Kagmari was the enacted vision of a world turned upside down, dramatising the power and equality of those who had come to be ignored by those in power. Those who organised and attended the event described how

the *ojparagaon* (backward village) transformed into an *osthaya rajdhani* (temporary capital) over this period. This was not just a remark on the thousands of people that descended onto the small village, including the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of East Pakistan, politicians, international guests and foreign diplomats, but a reference also to the infrastructural and aesthetic makeover that the village underwent. The sights, sounds and smells normally associated with the small towns or villages in East Bengal were not to be found over the duration of the festival. Instead, what the residents and attendees encountered were road networks leading to a

The Kagmari Sammelon disturbed the traditional arrangement of power and politics, democratised spaces and population, and opened up new ways of sensing, relating and inhabiting the world.

well-lit village connected to the electricity grid, constant supply of clean water, latrines which produced no strong and strange odours, huge furnace ovens used to cook food fit for foreign guests, and medical arrangements on standby. The estate of the former Maharajah of Santosh, unused and abandoned since the Partition, recovered some of its old lustre and glory in its new role as the actual site of the Sammelon. This is important because the rural village, which during the colonial

era had captivated the anti-colonial nationalist imagination, lost much of its political importance in the postcolonial period. The dominance of the urban over the rural was apparent in East Pakistan by the mid-1950s. In September 1956, as villagers poured out of boats and ferries onto the riverbanks of Dhaka to take part in a hunger march, the police fired shots at them. The city was where people now came to articulate basic socio-economic and political claims and be seen by the modern state.

The changing infrastructure and aesthetics in Kagmari—the village that turned capital—presented a vision of the power and possibilities contained within rural spaces and constituencies, a role otherwise denied to them. Kagmari was a rebuke to those in the power, who thought politics could only happen in modern spaces. Bhashani, through Kagmari, had shown that peasants, and other marginalised constituencies, were as modern, progressive and capable of political thought as their urban and elite counterparts. The Sammelon was a manifestation of Jacques Ranciere's "principle of axiomatic equality—the equality of anyone with anyone", a space of radical equality.

However, Kagmari was not just about the re-ordering of spatial and temporal configurations of power, but also the articulation of alternative left subjectivities, communities and futures. Bhashani turned Kagmari into a pedagogical space, where rural aesthetics and culture revealed worlds that were radically egalitarian, anti-capitalist and creatively combined vernacular and global ideas and practices of Islam and socialism. Central to the pedagogy was the idea that if people were to see that it was possible to inhabit the world differently, they would want to change it. However, it was not in an abstract way that the world was to be experienced but through local, concrete and visible forms, through

things that can be touched, seen, smelt and heard. Bhashani used gates, music and dance to persuade and educate his constituencies.

The gates were one of the most striking sights of Kagmari Sammelon, memorable enough to merit a mention in Sunil Gangopadhyay's epic Partition novel "Purbo Paschim", where one of the main characters attending the event remarks on the "beautifully made gateways". The gates, numbering 50 and possibly more, were more likely the work of Quamrul Hassan, the *patua* artist and founding member of Dacca Art School in 1948. They had the names of political, religious and cultural figures—including Mao, Gandhi, Haji Shariatullah, Tagore, Stalin and the Prophet—emblazoned on them. There was no serious attempt to organise these gates in order of importance or any other identifiable category. Although it has not been possible to retrieve stories that were told or imagined by subaltern constituencies as they passed through these gates, but as suggested by other historians working on marginal histories, speculation becomes a necessary historical task. It is possible that the arches, a structural feature in Mughal imperial architecture, paradoxically played a similar as well as a radically different function in Kagmari. Historically, they have denoted the king's rule and power and the connection between different spaces. But at Kagmari, the gates were designed to place emphasis on connection between those lifeworlds rather than what divided them, with peasants and labourers being shown that they were part of a wider and richer moral and cultural universe.

Central to the Kagmari narrative is how important subaltern joy was in the thinking and fighting for decolonial politics and futures. Mikhail Bakhtin in his work on Rabelais describes carnival laughter and its "indissoluble and essential relation to freedom". Descriptions of Kagmari demonstrate the

carnavalesque nature of the gathering, with people "milling around scores of shops and stalls", people "cheering and watching the fun", ferris wheels, stick fighting, and the singing and dancing. Joy was integral to the experience and intellection of solidarity and internationalism at Kagmari. The physical feeling of collective joy and togetherness generated by the laughter, chattering and hustle-and-bustle offered a physical embodied sense of diverse popular gatherings and the power that a demotic left future could bring to the people.

As Kagmari wound down, the repeated shouting of "long live global solidarity" by peasants, workers and others resonated across the village, signalling a dramatic defeat for Suhrawardy, an outcome he himself later conceded. The Prime Minister of Pakistan was unable to convince the assembled crowd of peasants, workers and other groups of a future at war. Bhashani had turned the villages of East Bengal into a site of defeat of narrow understandings of nationalism or Islam. He had shown how the "95%" were integral to the reimagining of futures based on radical egalitarianism, Afro-Asian love, and vernacular socialism.

Some of the most important progressive political moments of recent years have come from occupied space: Shaheen Bagh, Tahrir, the Indignados movement. These and other creative protests have reworked and combined existing cultural forms for progressive ends. With Kagmari we see a unique South Asian example to draw energy and inspiration to renew efforts for rebuilding our world for the many and not the few, a demand more urgent than ever.

Layli Uddin is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at King's College London. She is currently working on her book on the making and unmaking of East Pakistan, examining the role of Maulana Bhashani and peasant and worker mobilisation. This article is an abridged excerpt from her chapter in the forthcoming book "Forms of the Left: Left-Wing Aesthetics and Postcolonial South Asia".

QUOTABLE Quote

CESAR CHAVEZ
(1927-1993)
Latino American civil rights activist.

You are never strong enough that you don't need help.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Rush swiftly back and forth
- 7 School member
- 11 Portugal's place
- 12 Regarding
- 13 Braque, e.g.
- 14 Very bright
- 15 Toss out
- 16 Public outburst
- 17 Secluded spot
- 18 Be agreeable
- 19 Promotable man
- 21 Granola bit
- 22 Ballet dance
- 25 Hightail it
- 26 Physics amount

DOWN

- 1 Cut into cubes
- 2 Nigeria's capital
- 3 Defy authority
- 4 Arm muscle
- 5 Shopping aid
- 6 Put away
- 7 Ornate

27 Response to a joke

29 Muscle quality

33 Deserve

34 Farrel or Firth

35 Seethe

36 Became close

37 In the past

38 For each

39 Vast expanses

40 Brought up

8 Words after "peekaboo"

9 Early chopper

10 Truthful

16 Smooths, in a way

18 Worry

20 Let on

22 Headline spot

23 Atlas section

24 Latvia neighbor

25 Passes the bar?

28 Floor squares

30 More mature

31 Flower girl, often

32 Over

34 Make do

36 Butter unit

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

P	A	T	T	I	P	U	T	T	S
A	S	H	E	N	E	T	H	A	N
M	I	E	N	S	R	E	E	V	E
P	A	L	U	F	O	B	E	E	
E	G	O	L	I	T	O	R	R	
R	O	O	K	I	E	E	O	N	S
S	O	O	T	I	N	F	O	L	K
A	R	F	W	O	K	F	O	R	
V	A	L	I	M	P	L	A	M	
A	T	O	L	L	A	L	I	T	O
N	O	V	E	L	R	E	F	E	R
T	R	E	E	S	K	N	E	E	S

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

I CAN'T GO ON THE HIKE TODAY, I HAVE A HEADACHE, MY FEET HURT, IT'S TOO HOT, IT'S TOO COLD I'M TOO TIRED, I HAVE BLISTERS, CORNS, BONE SPURS...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BEETLE?

THROWING EXCUSES AT YOU HOPING ONE WILL STICK

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

I'M TRYING TO SET A RECORD FOR DISTANCE LEARNING.

LET'S GO.

Siam Ahmed has high hopes for 'Bishwo Shundori'

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Popular actor Siam Ahmed is spending busy days on the sets of "Damal". His film "Bishwo Shundori" released yesterday, and the actor is looking forward to multiple releases in the upcoming months. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the dashing star talks about his upcoming ventures and more.

Your film "Bishwo Shundori" released yesterday. How is the response?

"Bishwo Shundori" is a family film. However, I was worried that the audience might not prefer to visit cinema halls during the pandemic, but many have turned up and appreciated it. Even though the audience's reaction is not within our control, I wholeheartedly wish that the audience continues to laud the film in theatres.

Can you tell us a bit about the movie's plot?

This film narrates a story about love and patriotism. The whole crew has worked very hard for this film to turn

out the way it has. The story is amazing, and I hope all my fans enjoy my performance.

Do you think releasing such a high-budget film during this pandemic involves was risky?

Of course it's risky! We should all be proud of our producer for taking such a big risk. We all also have to promote the film for his efforts to succeed. Otherwise, others may feel discouraged to release such productions – which might even make the entertainment industry dormant again.

Are you content with your performance in "Bishwo Shundori"?

Honestly, the audience who should answer this question. Any criticism from the audience will only make me a better actor.

What else are you currently busy with?

I am currently shooting for "Damal" in Saidpur. It is very cold out here and I am enjoying this experience a lot. I want to keep entertaining my fans and wish to keep delivering memorable performances on screen.



A still from 'Rupsha Nodir Baankey'.

"A film should have a positive impact on the society"

-Khairul Alam Sabuj

SHARMIN JOYA

Although noted actor Khairul Alam Sabuj started out his career on the stage, his popularity primarily grew through television.

Besides being an actor, he is a director, screenwriter, writer, translator and singer.

He was honoured with the Bangla Academy Award 2020 for his contribution in literary translation.

He is quite selective about his roles in films.

Most recently, Sabuj played the role of the protagonist in celebrated director Tanvir Mokammel's "Rupsha Nodir Baankey". The film was released yesterday.

"I am immensely confident about this project, as I believe that besides being entertaining, a film should have a positive impact on the society," shares Sabuj. "This film conveys a social message, and portrays stories of people who are important in our region." The actor previously collaborated with Tanvir Mokammel on "Nodir Naam Modhumoti" (1996). The protagonist of "Rupsha



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nodir Baankey", Manab Ratan Mukhopadhyay, resembles a leftist leader, who dedicated his life to social causes. Interestingly, Tousef Sadman Turjo, Zahid Hossain Shovon and Sabuj play the role of the protagonist at different stages of his life.

"Manab Ratan represents one of those leaders who brought about great changes through his sacrifices and struggles," Sabuj shares. "We have heard of and even seen

people like him in our lives. Such people are often forgotten, but we need to know about them."

He further explains that the story of the film is timeless. "In a society, there are two types of people— those who accept everything and remain silent, and those who think about the greater good and raise their voices against societal problems," explains the artist. "This film beautifully illustrates that as people, we must

think about our approaches."

Sabuj adds that Tanvir Mokammel is an expert at making period films. "I have known Tanvir for a long time. He was my junior at the Department of English, University of Dhaka," he mentions. "I believe 'Rupsha Nodir Baankey' is his best work till date."

The film was the last project of renowned cinematographer Mahfuzur Rahman Khan. "He was one of the most passionate people that I had ever come across," says an emotional Sabuj. "It was an amazing experience working with him. He was a progressive artist, who truly loved his work. It is unfortunate that he left us before the release of the film."

Sabuj has also been busy with writing television screenplays. "I am planning to remake my old television projects, which today's audience are not familiar with," he shares. One of those projects, "Atmoja", already aired on Bangladesh Television this January. "I acted in and directed the original. Ahsan Habib Nasim played my role in the remake," concludes Sabuj.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Bishworang's colourful Victory Day with renowned artists

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

Renowned artists Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Farida Zaman, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Rokeya Sultana and Mohammad Eunus have made outstanding contributions to the art scene of Bangladesh. This year, popular fashion house Bishworang has collaborated with them for their *Bijoy Dibosh* (Victory Day) collection. The vibrant and bright colours of Bishworang's designs bring out the festive aspect of the occasion, as we celebrate our *Bijoy Dibosh* on December 16.

"These artists are my teachers. They represent our country to the world, through their work," shares Biplob Saha, the owner of Bishworang and a former student of the Faculty of Fine Art (FFA), University of Dhaka (DU). "This was my way of paying my respect to my teachers and also to my beloved country."

The versatility, splendour and creativity of these artists inspire generations of art enthusiasts.

"We wanted to participate in this project, as Biplob is a very dear student of ours and the brand that he has built over the years represents the traditions and heritage of Bangladesh," says Mohammad Eunus. "As we approach 50 years of our independence, I have been reflecting on the colours of our flag and its symbol. In these troubling times, we must keep the true essence of our liberation alive in our hearts."

Mohammad Eunus has been depicting abstract, semi-abstract and pure-abstract works for over four decades. The painter has many national and international awards to his credit, including the Grand Award in Japan and an honourable mention award in Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh.

The pandemic has allowed Mohammad Eunus to spend more time at home with his



(From left) Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Farida Zaman, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Rokeya Sultana and Mohammad Eunus.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BISHWORANG

art. "I've been painting, and participating in online exhibitions throughout the year," he adds.

Ekushey Padak-winning artist Farida Zaman's series, "Sufia", captures the intrinsic characteristics of rural women. She is an honorary professor at the Department of Drawing and Painting, FFA, DU.

Rokeya Sultana's series, "Madonna", represents the everyday woman. For her outstanding contributions to different forms of art, she has received many awards and accolades worldwide. She is a professor at the Department of Printmaking, FFA, DU.

Kanak Chanpa Chakma has won national and international awards, and is renowned for her paintings depicting the lives of Bangladeshi ethnic minorities, focusing on the lives of women.

These three artists have encouraged generations of women through their explorations of womanhood on their canvases.

"*Bijoy Dibosh* is a joyous occasion, and each year, our country celebrates the vibrant spirit of the day through grand events," expresses Kanak Chanpa Chakma. "But this

year, we will have to celebrate on a limited scale, as the dangers of the coronavirus continues to worry us all."

Jamal Uddin Ahmed is a professor at the Department of Drawing and Painting, FFA, DU. He is known for his artwork series on pigeons, horses, boats, gypsies, flood victims, fishermen, marine life and the mystic troubadours of Bangladesh. He received the Ekushey Padak in 2019, for his contribution to fine arts.

"We will spend this year's *Bijoy Dibosh* at home and the festivities will continue online," says Jamal Uddin Ahmed. He further adds that modelling for the special collection of Bishworang was an amazing experience.

Keeping the essence of *Bijoy Dibosh* in mind, Biplob Saha reflects on the importance of culture and heritage in inspiring future generations. "As a fashion house, it is our responsibility to represent our flag and our country through our designs," he shares. "We aim to inspire the next generations to appreciate the spirit of our Liberation War and independence."

"To jump higher, you have to pause for a bit" – Shuvo

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Khan Moidul Islam Shuvo, also known as Drockstar Shuvo by many fans, has been consistently delivering hit songs for the last two decades. The renowned vocalist, who is known for songs like "Nitol Paye", is still hustling on amidst the pandemic. We talk to the frontman for Fuad and Friends and Shuvo Jatra about his current projects, future plans and more.

How have you coped up with the pandemic?

Even though it hasn't been easy, I have tried my best to stay busy during the ongoing Covid-19 phase. I have released acoustic arrangements of 3 new songs and 2 old songs from my YouTube channel, for which I have played all the instruments myself. I like to think of these 5 songs as a digital 'album'.

However, I did not have access to my best gears during the recording – it was done without my midi keyboard and a basic Indian Givson guitar. Even though I thought that my midi keyboard broke, I had actually forgotten to plug it in correctly during the recording sessions!

Is it difficult for you to manage a full-time job and music simultaneously?

Not at all, to be honest. I love working at Asiatic. Even after a tiring workday, when I hit the first note in a practice session, all the fatigue vanishes from my body! You can say that I love what I do and do what I love!

You are well-known for the consistency of your voice. Do you have any special secrets

to spare with upcoming vocalists?

The key is to constantly keep singing. You'll notice that if you don't sing for a month, your voice will take a significantly long time to reach its optimal state. Warm ups are also very important, as hitting high notes without warming up your voice can hinder or permanently damage it. There are many warm up lessons on YouTube that anyone can access, I would strongly recommend following one of your choosing.

The music industry has to adapt to the lack of shows. How do you see the industry going forward?

I will say that even though I miss doing shows, alternative methods of interaction and earning are coming up – which is essential for the survival of the industry.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

There are apps in development, including one from my own workplace, that will ease the process of streaming online shows. All in all, I am hopeful for the future.

What is your ultimate destination as a musician?

I just want to keep on singing; there is not ultimate "goal" for me. I don't want to compete with others, I just do what is best for me. There will be times that I will be super-active in the industry and others when I'm barely visible – and that's okay. To jump higher, you have to pause for a bit – this is something that I believe.

Last playoff spot up for grabs Day dismisses 'usual fake news'

SPORTS REPORTER

The last day of the group stage in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup is set to be the decider of the fourth and final spot for the playoffs as table-toppers Gazi Group Chattogram take on Minister Rajshahi in the day game while Beximco Dhaka face Fortune Barishal in the later fixture today.

Chattogram and Dhaka have already secured a place in the top four but it will be a do or die encounter for Rajshahi and Barishal as both teams are bottom of the table with four points in seven games.

Chattogram, with six wins in seven matches, have already secured the top spot. But Dhaka, who have eight points from seven games, will look to beat Barishal to seal the second qualifier spot.

Gemcon Khulna, who finished playing all of their eight group games, are second with eight points but a win for Dhaka today will take them to third place for the eliminator spot.

For Najmul Hossain's Rajshahi, the equation is simple -- a win against Chattogram will take them to the top four spot courtesy of a superior net run-rate than Barishal.

Even if Rajshahi win, Barishal would still have a chance to make the playoffs. The Tamim Iqbal-led side would then require to win by a huge margin to better their net run-rate than Rajshahi.

But if both Rajshahi and Barishal lose then the team with a better net run-rate will qualify for the top four.

With so many ifs and buts, for Rajshahi, according to their pace



Rajshahi all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin would want to contribute in their last group-stage game of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup against Chattogram today for the remaining playoff spot. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, it will be important for his side to correct the small mistakes which have caused them to lose a few close encounters.

Saifuddin, who missed out on the first five matches after suffering an ankle injury, said they had been making silly mistakes in the latter part of the innings.

"I have been following all the matches and I think everyone in our team chipped in. However, we made silly mistakes which is why we lost a few close games. We made

If we don't repeat our mistakes, I think it's possible for us to win the last game and qualify for the top four.

MOHAMMAD SAIFUDDIN
RAJSHAHI ALL-ROUNDER

mistakes especially from the 18th to 20th overs. I also bowled badly in one game so if we don't repeat our mistakes, I think it's possible for us to win the last game and qualify for the top four," Saifuddin told the media yesterday.

The pacers have been performing well in the recent past. And according to Saifuddin, it is important for the seamers to ball the right lengths regardless of the condition which has been the reason behind the pacers' success so far.

SPORTS REPORTER



As the national team committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) prepares a comprehensive plan for the national football team ahead of next March's Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Dhaka, whispers that British coach Jamie Day would be terminated spread through the football fraternity on Thursday night.

Having quoted one of the BFF vice presidents, one television channel reported that Jamie was going to be terminated following Bangladesh's 0-5 drubbing in Qatar.

However, national team committee chairman and BFF vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed ruled out any such move, saying they were satisfied with Day, whose contract was extended until 2022.

"It is just a rumour. I request everyone not to pay attention to it. Everyone was surprised by such a rumour when we are planning the future of the national team. I don't know how it spread," Nabil said. "I am satisfied with Day's performances because Qatar got four months' time before facing Bangladesh. They played domestic matches as well as international friendlies against strong opponents. But Bangladesh played on the back of only six weeks of preparation. Bangladesh, under Day, played better against Qatar in the home match and I am hopeful that the boys will perform well in next three World Cup Qualifying matches on the back of good preparation."

When contacted, Day termed it "usual fake news". "Usual fake news. I spoke to the BFF this (Thursday) morning to discuss their plans for 2021, so I would be very surprised if they sacked me," said Day, who has taken ill in England after recovering from Covid-19

in Bangladesh ahead of the Qatar tie.

The BFF is going to start the new season from December 22 through the Federation Cup before starting the Bangladesh Premier League in January. They are also mulling whether to have a one-month preparation camp in February ahead of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which was proposed to be held from March 1 in Dhaka.

"The footballers will fully be engaged from December 22, with Day watching league matches in January to help him select players. The BFF president plans to start the national camp for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup from the first week of February," Nabil added. "The final fixture of the World Cup Qualifiers have not been disclosed yet but we can assume it will be held in March and June and we have a good possibility to secure points from all three home matches."

However, Nabil said the execution of the BFF plans will depend on approval from clubs, who are not obligated to release their players a month ahead.

League champions Bashundhara Kings did not release their players within the BFF deadline for the two international friendlies against Nepal last month. BFF also agreed to play the Qatar tie beyond the FIFA window after clubs agreed to release their players for a six-week training camp.

Kazi Salahuddin said earlier that he wants one month of national training ahead of each of World Cup Qualifying match. But Day has only asked for 10 days to prepare his charges before matches or tournaments in the past. Comfortable with that, Day said: "I don't believe it will be possible to have 30 days because clubs don't need to release the players until five days before fixture. And if you look around the world, most training camps are 10 days long."



Nicholls ton spurs NZ fightback

REUTERS, Wellington



Henry Nicholls battled to his sixth Test century and provided the backbone for a New Zealand middle order fightback as his side reached 294-6 at the end of a torrid first day of the second Test against West Indies in Wellington on Friday.

The 29-year-old left-hander was on 117 with Kyle Jamieson on one at stumps at the Basin Reserve.

Nicholls had not passed 50 in 13 Test innings since scoring 107 against Bangladesh at the same ground in March 2019 and rode his luck on a pitch that offered the West Indies bowlers' assistance all day.

He was dropped three times, twice at first slip, and took several deliveries on the body from the visitors' pace attack but shared in a 70-run partnership with Will Young (43), 55 runs with BJ Watling (30) and 83 with Daryl Mitchell (42).

West Indies captain Jason Holder had won the toss and asked New Zealand captain Tom Latham, who was standing in for Kane Williamson, to bat on a heavily-grassed wicket that had been under covers all week.

Shannon Gabriel provided a horror opening for the tourists, who need a victory to level the two-match series, by bowling too wide on a full length and conceded 21



runs in his first two overs.

Gabriel shortened his length slightly after those first 12 deliveries and got the ball to move and jump off a length to create numerous false shots.

He also hit all of the batsmen several times and captured the wickets of Tom Blundell (14), Young and Ross Taylor (nine) to finish with figures of 3-57 from 18 overs.

Debutant Chemar Holder also proved a handful for New Zealand's batsmen and finished the day with 2-65.



SOCIEDAD LEAVE IT LATE

Real Sociedad striker Willan Jose embraces his jubilant coaching staff and teammates following his 90th-minute equaliser against Napoli in their Europa League fixture in Naples on Thursday. The result saw both sides progress to the last 32 of the competition at the expense of AZ Alkmaar, who failed to qualify following a shock 2-1 defeat away to Rijeka.

PHOTO: REUTERS

LEGEND OF PAOLO ROSSI: Permanent yet fleeting

ATIQUÉ ANAM



"Paolo Rossi was the one who beat Zico's Brazil, Maradona's Argentina, Boniek's Poland and in the final, the Germany of Rummenigge," the Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy's top sports newspaper, wrote in its online column on Thursday following the Tuscan legend's death at the age of 64.

Not a bit of exaggeration in those words. During the two weeks of June-July of '82, Rossi had ripped to shreds the formbook, his own and that of the teams involved, and single-handedly carried a struggling Italy side to their first world title in modern times. And he did it with an outrageous sequence of six goals in the final three matches, ushering in enormous joy to a nation which was beset with political and social unrest over the previous decade.

The tournament in 1982 was also part of the early days of World Cup matches being telecast live around the globe, and 25-year-old Rossi, with his matinee-idol looks and jet-black hair in that classic blue Azzurri kit, gliding away in celebration after each of those six goals, had caught the imagination of an entire generation and made them fall in love with the beauty of football.

None of those goals were extraordinary. A downward header from inside six yards, a tap-in from close range or side-footing past the goalie from inside the box, but that was the eternal Paolo Rossi -- the predator of the box, the one for losing his marker at will and being present at the right place at the right time. What was extraordinary, though, was how those goals transformed a struggling team into the world's best and how they turned Rossi from an outcast to the darling of a nation, and under what circumstances!

It was a case of "personal redemption" for the Juventus forward.

Having missed the 1980 European Championship due to a ban from football on allegation of involvement in a betting scandal, Rossi, once the world's highest-paid player, saw his three-year ban commuted to two years, just in time for him to be considered for the touring party.

He hadn't scored for Italy in

almost 15 hours of action and had only played three games in three years, yet coach Enzo Bearzot, who was the coach in Argentina '78 too when Rossi scored three goals and made four assists, ignored the media's hullabaloo for dropping him.

The winger-turned-centre-forward looked lethargic in the three pool matches as Italy limped through the first group stage. He was even called an "ectoplasm of himself", and a "ghost aimlessly wandering over the field", but Bearzot kept his faith. The faith was to be repaid in the grandest of ways, starting with the "execution of Brazil".



Paolo Rossi leaves the Brazil players in his wake during that famous 3-2 win for Italy in Barcelona during the 1982 World Cup. PHOTO: COLLECTED

That Brazil team played with careless abandon, and why not, when they had the likes of Zico, Socrates and Alemão in their ranks. The team's coach Tele Santana was a proponent of Jogo Bonito, but in his vision of beautiful football he had clearly lost sight of the danger lurking in the shape of Rossi.

That "ghost aimlessly wandering" suddenly sprang to life at the Estadi de Sarrià in Barcelona and executed one of the greatest Brazil sides of all time in one of the greatest ever matches in the history of the World Cup.

Two more goals against Poland in the semifinals and the opening goal against West Germany in the final washed the pain and stigma from injuries and the betting scandal, which had dogged Rossi for years.

Those performances earned

Rossi the Ballon d'Or award that year and he still remains the only player to win the World Cup, finish the top-scorer and be voted best player in the tournament, and in the world, all at the same time.

That was the pinnacle of a brief-yet-eventful career which had all the ingredients of a thrilling and loveable blockbuster movie, but Rossi the person, the elegant, languid and humane footballer, never tried to use his fame to live in the limelight.

He faded away from the collective memory as one of the more technically gifted players, the ones more pleasing to have occupied that place. Rossi was

comfortable in his zone though, albeit with a bit of nostalgia hanging over from those two weeks in Spain.

Years later Rossi recalled the tournament and the final against Germany as a dream, a dream that ended too soon.

"When the game ended, I recall two clear and distinct feelings. On one hand I felt fulfilled. I said to myself, 'you've made it'. On the other hand, I was disappointed that all of this just ended," Rossi said in an interview with FIFA. "It makes you think about what happiness is or perhaps what it isn't. Happiness is a fraction of it. And then it's gone."

Like happiness, Rossi is gone too, perhaps sooner than he should have been, but the moments he gave to the world of football will never be forgotten.



Griezmann's Uighurs stance

AFP, Paris

Barcelona's World Cup-winning footballer Antoine Griezmann said Thursday he was ending a commercial deal with Huawei over reports the Chinese telecoms giant was involved in the surveillance of Uighur Muslims.

Frenchman Griezmann said on Instagram that following "strong suspicions that Huawei has contributed to the development of a 'Uighurs alert' through the use of facial recognition software, I am immediately ending my partnership with the company."

He called on Huawei to "not just deny these accusations but to take concrete action as quickly as possible to condemn this mass repression... and to use its influence to contribute to the respect of human rights".

US-based surveillance research firm IPVM said in a report Tuesday that Huawei had been involved in testing facial recognition software in China that could send alerts to police when it recognised Uighur minorities' faces. Huawei denied the claims.

Human Rights Watch says Uighurs in Xinjiang are being arrested after being reported by software which identifies suspicious behaviour.

China has come under intense international criticism over its policies in Xinjiang, where rights groups say as many as one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities have been held in internment camps.

Introducing
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ROHINGYAS IN BHASAN CHAR

NGOs, experts content with arrangements

Say Int'l agencies likely to change views in favour of relocation if they visit the island

PORIMOL PALMA

The government move to relocate 1,642 Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char has invited some negative international scrutiny, but local NGOs and experts have said international aid agencies might change their minds if they visited the island.

Global rights groups claimed that many of those who were relocated to the housing project in the island under Noakhali's Hatiya upazila were coerced to do so. The UN, meanwhile, said it lacked information on the relocation and was not involved in the exercise.

The government negated the criticisms, saying the concerns about the Rohingya refugees' safety and the Bhasan Char project's sustainability were well addressed.

It argued that cyclone Amphan could do the project no harm as the structures have been sufficiently elevated and embankments have been built for flood protection. There are cyclone shelters, schools, hospitals,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



This view from the capital's Shoari Ghat shows the extent of pollution in the Buriganga. In the monsoon months, the river swells and the rampant pollution is less visible, but in the winter, the water level drops, and sewage and garbage can be spotted all over. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Filmmaker Kim Ki-duk dies from Covid-19

REUTERS, Vilnius/Seoul

South Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-duk, a controversial figure both for his work and in his personal life, died in Latvia from coronavirus complications yesterday, a Latvian film official said.

Kim, who had won awards at the Venice, Cannes and Berlin film festivals, had been staying in the Latvian capital Riga, in a private capacity after travelling to neighbouring Estonia for work, according to Dita Rietuma, director of Latvia's state National Film Centre.

Kim, 59, died at a hospital in Riga, Rietuma said. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

NHRC needs to play its due role

Law minister says about preventing incidents of human rights violation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq has said the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has to play an adequate role in preventing human rights violations in the country.

"The government has identified domestic abuse and sexual harassment as very heinous crimes. Such crimes cannot be prevented only by formulating laws and enhancing punishments. People have to raise their voice and the National Human Rights Commission has to play an adequate role in this regard. Then the violation of human rights will of course be prevented," he said.

The minister was addressing a discussion, organised virtually by the NHRC on the occasion of Human Rights Day 2020, on Thursday evening.

Anisul said the government would not compromise on any incident of human rights violation even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government has taken necessary steps to stop crimes, including domestic abuse and sexual harassment, he added.

The minister said the NHRC is responsible for conveying the incidents of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangladesh always sympathetic to Arab cause: Bangabandhu



Shamsuddoza Sajen

DECEMBER 12, 1972

CAIRO DELEGATION CALLS ON PM

The visiting four-member Egyptian trade delegation today calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the secretariat. The delegation conveys goodwill to the prime minister on behalf of the people and the government of Egypt. Bangabandhu reciprocates and says the people of Bangladesh have always been sympathetic to the Arab cause. He narrates how during the war on the Suez issue Bangladeshi people lent spontaneous support to Egypt. The prime minister hopes both the countries would come closer not only in trade but also in other spheres of cooperation. The delegation chief Abdul Maguid Hasni presents a frame of Quranic inscription to the prime minister.

BONN OFFERS DM 80M CAPITAL AID

West German Government will provide capital aid amounting to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



AL leader hacked to death in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A local Awami League leader was hacked to death by his rivals in Pabna's Anonto Bazar area yesterday evening over protesting collection of extortion money.

The victim is Bokul Sheikh, 45, member of Dogasi Union Parishad and also the joint secretary of ward-7 AL.

AL leaders claimed that supporters of local influential Mokhesur Rahman killed Bokul over protesting collection of extortion money from drivers of three-wheelers.

Police, however, said a dispute over control of Anonto Bazar area led to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

New whale species discovered in Mexico



CNN ONLINE

Scientists working off the western coast of Mexico said they have found a previously unknown species of whale.

Three beaked whales were spotted last month by a team of scientists working with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society near the San Benito Islands, some 300 miles from the US border, according to a press release published Tuesday.

The team had set out to try to find out what kind of whales were making an unidentified acoustic signal previously recorded in the area.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

FAMILY DISPUTE Man sets alight wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A 30-year-old woman suffered serious burn injuries after her husband set her on fire in Croke area of Barguna town Thursday evening, said police.

The husband, Himu, was

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 12

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
 AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00
 JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A patient giving her sample for Covid-19 test at the Mugda Medical College and Hospital in the capital yesterday. Testing remained suspended at the hospital for the past few days because its RT-PCR machine, which tests around 180-200 samples daily, was out of order. Sample collection resumed yesterday after the machine was repaired.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

EU clinches deal on tougher 2030 climate goal

Leaders agree to cut emissions by 55pc after night-long wrangles

AFP, Brussels

EU leaders yesterday agreed an ambitious target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions after unlocking the bloc's landmark budget and coronavirus recovery fund at a marathon summit.

The 27 member states struck a deal on a binding target to slash emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 following an entire night of intense

wrangling in Brussels.

The fight was over how the cost of the effort should be shared across the countries: highly dependent on coal, Poland -- allied with several Eastern European countries -- fears serious economic consequences and demanded details on the aid it would receive.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted an appeal for action after the target was agreed, insisting:

"Let's do everything to succeed. Now. All together. Because there is no plan B!"

As part of its commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU has pledged to become climate-neutral by 2050, the date when it would offset or capture more greenhouse gas than it emits.

However, the current interim target for 2030 -- a 40 percent reduction in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

আমরা স্বাধীন হব সকলে কর দেব

আয়করের প্রবৃদ্ধি দেশ ও দশের সমৃদ্ধি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়

কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকা

২য় ১২-তলা সরকারি অফিস ভবন (৪র্থ তলা), সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা

কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকার সম্মানিত করদাতাগণের অগ্রিম আয়করের ২য় কিস্তি প্রদানের অনুরোধ

কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকার অধিক্ষেত্রাধীন সম্মানিত করদাতাগণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরের (২০২১-২০২২ কর বৎসরের জন্য প্রযোজ্য) ০৪ (চার) কিস্তিতে প্রদেয় অগ্রিম আয়করের ২য় কিস্তি প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ১৫ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০। আয়কর অধ্যাদেশ, ১৯৮৪ এর ধারা ৬৪ [Advance payment of tax] অনুযায়ী যে সকল করদাতার সর্বশেষ নিরূপিত আয় ০৬ (ছয়) লক্ষ টাকার বেশি তাহাদের জন্য অগ্রিম আয়কর প্রদানের বিধান প্রযোজ্য হইবে। এই প্রেক্ষিতে কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকার সম্মানিত করদাতাগণকে ২য় কিস্তির অগ্রিম আয়কর ১৫ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০ তারিখের মধ্যে পরিশোধের জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হইল।

করদাতা বিধি অনুসারে অগ্রিম কর যথাসময়ে প্রদান না করিলে ধারা ৬৯ [Failure to pay installments of advanced tax] অনুসারে খেলাপী করদাতা [Assessee in default] হিসাবে গণ্য করিবার এবং ধারা ৭৩ [Interest payable by the assessee of advance tax] অনুসারে সরল সুদ আরোপ করিবার বিধান রহিয়াছে। এছাড়া নিখরতি তারিখের মধ্যে অগ্রিম কর পরিশোধ করা না হইলে আয়কর অধ্যাদেশ, ১৯৮৪ এর ধারা ১২৫ [Failure to pay advanced tax] অনুসারে প্রদেয় করের সমপরিমাণ অংক জরিমানা আরোপ করিবার বিধান রহিয়াছে।

প্রদেয় অগ্রিম কর, সম্মানিত করদাতা তাহার সংশ্লিষ্ট সার্কেলের উপ কর কমিশনার এর অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার/ক্রসড্ চেক/চালানের মাধ্যমে কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকার নিম্ন বর্ণিত হিসাব কোডে পরিশোধ করিবেনঃ

কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকার আয়কর জমার হিসাব কোড নিম্নরূপঃ

কোম্পানী করদাতার জন্যঃ ১-১১৪১-০০৩০-০১০১

ব্যক্তি শ্রেণীর করদাতার জন্যঃ ১-১১৪১-০০৩০-০১১১

অধিকতর তথ্য ও অনুসন্ধানের জন্য যোগাযোগঃ

১। অতিরিক্ত কর কমিশনার, পরিদর্শী রেঞ্জ-১ ফোনঃ ০২-৯৫৮৫০৭২	৪। যুগ্ম কর কমিশনার, পরিদর্শী রেঞ্জ-৪ ফোনঃ ০২-৯৫৫০৫৩৬
২। অতিরিক্ত কর কমিশনার, পরিদর্শী রেঞ্জ-২ ফোনঃ ০২-৯৫৫১৭০৭	৫। উপ কর কমিশনার (সদর দপ্তর- প্রশাসন) ফোনঃ ০২-৮৩২২০৪০
৩। যুগ্ম কর কমিশনার, পরিদর্শী রেঞ্জ-৩ ফোনঃ ০২-৯৫৫৯০৪৭	৬। উপ কর কমিশনার (সদর দপ্তর-টেকনিক্যাল)

কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকা আশা করে যে, সম্মানিত করদাতাগণ নিখরতি তারিখে বা তাহার পূর্বে প্রদেয় অগ্রিম আয়কর পরিশোধপূর্বক নাগরিক দায়িত্ব পালনে সচেষ্ট হইবেন।

জাতীয় রাজস্ব আয়কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকা আপনার সহযোগিতা প্রত্যাশা করে।

(মোঃ হারুন অর রশীদ)
কর কমিশনার
কর অঞ্চল-৭, ঢাকা
ফোনঃ ৫৮৩-১০৬০৩