



The Daily Star



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 334 | Poush 11, 1427 BS | www.thedailystar.net | Your Right to Know | JAMADUL AWAL 10, 1442 HJIRI | 12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

HARMFUL yet no hurry

Steps to ensure food safety get hamstrung as mandatory test to check import of adulterated pesticide not enforced even in a year

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

Almost a year after harmful heavy metals like cadmium, chromium and lead were found in dozens of pesticides, the government is yet to enforce mandatory tests to prevent imports of the adulterated chemicals, widely used in the country's vast agriculture sector.

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) mandated tests at two designated government laboratories before the release of imported pesticides from ports since February 1 this year. But this date was extended several times following requests from importers.

"They [importers] requested us to suspend the embargo considering the adverse effect on agricultural production," Md Abdul Quayyum Sarkar, chairman of the BFSA, told The Daily Star recently.

He said the importers also urged further research to measure the harmful effects

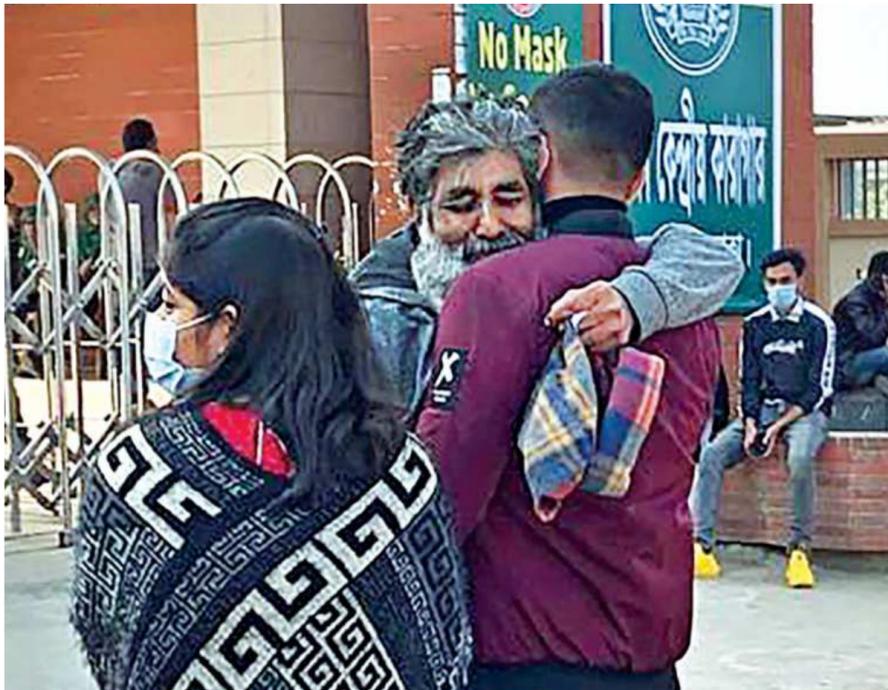
of heavy metals in pesticides, adding that the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) is the relevant authority in this regard.

The BFSA, on December 8 last year, first requested DAE to ensure every consignment of imported pesticides be released from the port customs based on tests at either the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Centre (BAEC) or the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), starting from February 1 this year.

Besides, the BFSA also requested the DAE to penalise companies which marketed contaminated pesticides.

"In tests, there was a high level of heavy metals in these pesticides. Heavy metals are severely polluting the food chain... Most of the pesticides used in the country are imported. There is an obligation to import pesticides free from heavy metals under the Pesticides Act," reads the BFSA letter to the DAE.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol embracing his son Monorom Polok after being released from Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday morning. Kajol was arrested on May 4 after having gone missing for 53 days. On December 17, he secured bail in two of the three cases filed against him under the Digital Security Act. He had gotten bail from the other case earlier.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



TIMELINE

MARCH 9: Magura lawmaker files Digital Security Act case against Kajol.

MARCH 10: Kajol goes missing. CCTV footage reveals two unidentified individuals tampered with his bike.

MARCH 10-11: Two more DSA cases filed against Kajol by two Jubo Mahila League activists.

MAY 3: BGB "finds" the photojournalist wandering near the Indian border in the middle of night.

MAY 4: Kajol charged with trespassing and illegal entry; he secures bail but police arrest him under Section 54 of CrPc.

SEE PAGE 2

ZERO BORDER KILLINGS A promise tangled up in barbed wire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In talks between India's Border Security Force and Border Guard Bangladesh, the BSF chief yet again promised that there would be no killings on the borders.

The five-day director general-level talks will officially end today.

On Tuesday, the first day of the conference, BSF men shot dead Bangladeshi citizen Khairul Islam, 40, along the border in Mymensingh.

At least 48 Bangladeshi citizens have been killed along the Indo-Bangla border this year, according to Rights Body Ain o Salish Kendra.

At least 15 people were killed in 2018 while the number rose to 43 last year, it said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Kajol home after 290 long, bleak days

ZYMA ISLAM

"The day feels unreal," said Monorom Polok after his father, photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol, was released from the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Kajol walked out of the jail in Keraniganj at 11:15am, as a free man, at last.

He was all cleared to be released on December 17, when the High Court granted him bail in two remaining cases filed against him under the Digital Security Act.

Since then, his family had been eagerly waiting to see the execution of the bail and Kajol freed.

Many had expected that the event of

Kajol's release would take place amid fanfare, with huge media presence.

But it happened suddenly and quietly. A blurry photo shot from a distance, with the subject obstructed by bystanders, is all that exists from the moment for which activists and journalists had been waiting so long.

In the photo, Kajol is seen clutching his son in a hug, his eyes closed, his shaggy and unshaven face apparently overwhelmed with the emotion of the moment.

"We got to know late yesterday [Friday] that the bail order was sent to the jail. Father called this morning and we immediately rushed to pick him up," said Polok.

"There was no time to prepare anything

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

TEST SUMMARY OF BANGLADESH ATOMIC ENERGY CENTRE

➤ Total number of pesticide (by brand name) 63; all had different level of cadmium, chromium or lead, or all three

➤ The highest level of lead in one pesticide -- 12.7mg/kg

➤ 47 had lead at different levels; more than half contained lead between 0.24 and 2mg/kg; eight contained lead more than 2mg/kg

➤ One pesticide contained chromium 15.74mg/kg, another 7.19 mg/kg

➤ Testing method F-AAS (Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrometry).



"Pesticides themselves are harmful. Heavy metals -- even in small amounts -- have an accumulation effect."

PROF DR QUAZI FORHAD QUADIR, BAU.

"Future policy must be adaptive to the international standards. Otherwise, we will not be able to import pesticides and this, in the long run, will affect our food production."

M SAYEDUZZAMAN, CHAIRMAN, BCPC.

"They [importers] requested us to suspend the embargo considering the adverse effect on agricultural production."

MD ABDUL QUAYIUM SARKAR, CHAIRMAN, BFSA.



An amputee driving an overloaded battery-run rickshaw in the capital's Kakrail yesterday. Many in his circumstance resort to begging to make ends meet, but this man, without his left leg, has chosen to overcome his disadvantage and toil for his living. While his is an admirable pursuit, driving a battery-operated rickshaw at high speeds, as he was seen doing yesterday when he was zooming towards Motijheel, exposes him to danger of accidents and further debilitating injuries.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Karnaphuli

NOW OPEN @ Sector 7, Uttara

Navana Oval, Sonargaon Janapath Road, Uttara, Dhaka, Ph : +880177765080

2 cops arrested for mugging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A sub-inspector and a constable of Sitakunda Model Police Station were arrested on charges of robbing a driver of Tk 2.8 lakh on Thursday night.

SI Saiful Alam and constable Md Saiful Islam were suspended and a two-member probe committee was formed to investigate the charges after Abu Jafar, the driver, filed a case against them and three police informants on Thursday.

Police said Jafar, 45, went to Sitakunda from Gazipur with the money to buy a pickup on December 20.

But he failed to buy the vehicle and was waiting at the bus station in Sitakunda in the evening for a bus to Gazipur when three police informants confronted him, saying that he was a yaba peddler, according to the case statement.

A little later, the two accused policemen appeared on the scene and introduced themselves as detectives. They then picked up Jafar, saying he had yaba pills in his rectum, police and locals told reporters.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ত্বক সুষ্ক করার শক্তি **Vaseline**

দেশের একমাত্র **100% PURE** পেট্রোলিয়াম জেলি

ADCOM 2020

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,163
New cases in 24hrs



507,265
Total cases



7,398
Deaths



448,803
Recoveries



1,752,197
Deaths



79,894,218
Total cases

Russian role in C Africa grows ahead of weekend vote

AFP, Libreville

Russia's growing role in the volatile Central African Republic was in the spotlight this week, after Moscow dispatched military instructors following a rebel threat to disrupt Sunday's elections.

Moscow has led a diplomatic and financial offensive in the deeply troubled nation since 2018 in return for concessions given to its companies to exploit the country's mineral wealth, especially gold and diamonds.

Russia has sent arms and is an open supporter of incumbent President Faustin Archange Touadera who is on course to win a second term in the legislative and presidential elections.

Touadera's government recently signed a military cooperation agreement with Russia, while Moscow opened a military office in the country last year and sent four generals to oversee it.

The mining concessions have been farmed out to companies associated with Yevgeny Prigozhin, who is very close to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Prigozhin is suspected to be the main financier of the private Russian security firm Wagner, whose men have been deployed across the country, according to experts, diplomats and non-governmental organisations.

At least 175 "military instructors" have been sent since 2018 to train the country's soldiers and ensure Touadera's safety.

But a week ago, when three main rebel groups threatened to march on the capital Bangui in what the government said was a coup attempt, Russia sent giant Antonov carriers packed with at least 300 military instructors to help the regular forces. Moscow initially denied this but

later admitted to dispatching the troops.

The Russian foreign ministry said it was "seriously concerned that the events of recent days have led to a sharp degradation of the security situation" in the CAR.

The actions of the three rebel groups had been "well coordinated and fed from the outside" and aimed at "disrupting the electoral process," it said.

Several witnesses and NGOs have reported that the "instructors" were at the front fighting rebels.

In the middle of October, armoured vehicles draped in the Russian and CAR flags patrolled the streets of Bangui.

The Russian instructors have been housed in Berengo, about 60 kilometres (40 miles) from the capital of the former French colony.

"The Central African Republic is not of great interest to Russia," said Roland Marchal, a CAR expert at Paris's prestigious Sciences Po.

"But this allows them to needle the French," with whom they are at odds, especially in Syria and Ukraine, he said.

A civil war erupted in March 2013 in CAR when mostly Muslim rebels in a coalition called Seleka stormed the capital and removed Francois Bozize, a Christian and former general who had seized power a decade earlier.

France sent in some 2,000 soldiers under a UN mandate. In 2014, the UN sent its own mission, MINUSCA, and in 2016 elections were held, won by Touadera, a technocrat educated in France.

France has since redeployed its troops to fight jihadists in the Sahel region.



Workers unloading free government textbooks for the 2021 academic year from a truck at the Jibon Singh Union Model High School in Barishal's Bakerganj upazila. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Harmful yet no hurry

FROM PAGE 1

However, following concerns noted by the Bangladesh Crop Protection Association (BCPA) and importers, the BFSA extended the deadline for mandatory testing of imported pesticides to July 1 this year before a further extension of a year.

M Sayeduzzaman, chairman of BCPA, a body of business enterprises involved in import, formulation and marketing of plant protection chemicals, said while the association agrees there should be a standard permissible limit of pesticides, the state of pesticides in the country cannot be determined until there is one.

"We have asked the ministry to allow continuing imports until the adoption of a permissible limit for heavy metals in pesticides," he added.

Claiming the level of heavy metals found in pesticides to be "ignorable", he said, "We mainly import pesticides from other countries. Future policy must be adaptive to the international standards. Otherwise, we will not be able to import pesticides and this, in the long run, will affect our food production."

BFSA Chairman Quaiyum said, "We do not want something entering the country harming the environment -- the agriculture department does not want that too. But we also do not want agricultural production to be hampered. There must be a balance between both."

"We are yet to get any update from them [the DAE]," he added.

NOMINAL TESTING OF PESTICIDES
The DAE -- the apex pesticide regulatory body -- held its last meeting on the matter in February and formed an advisory committee to prepare a guideline on the permissible limit of heavy metals in pesticides.

But the committee is yet to submit its report, according to DAE officials, and since then, there has been no progress till date.

Responding to a query on whether the nine months were not enough to prepare the guideline, the BFSA chairman said, "This is an issue related to them, you better ask the agricultural ministry or the department [DAE]."

The maximum allowable limit for heavy metals in fertilisers used in the country is defined by the Fertiliser (Management) Regulation, 2007.

For heavy metals in pesticides, there is no maximum allowable limit -- either nationally or globally.

However, according to clause 15.2 of the Bangladesh Pesticides Act, 2018, if any pesticide is found to be adulterated or incorrectly or misleadingly tagged, the government may control and ban further import of that pesticide into the country.

But the import of pesticides currently takes place without having to undergo testing anywhere as long as the importers are registered with the DAE.

The country's annual usage of pesticides is nearly 38,000 tonnes -- the majority of which, around 90 percent, is imported from China -- according to the DAE. There are 5,500 registered pesticide products in the country.

Over 300 companies registered with the DAE usually import crop

protection chemicals from China, the USA, Germany, Australia, India, Indonesia, and Singapore in bulk; they then repackage them in smaller units in their facilities before marketing them at the farmers' level.

The companies, however, need to have their formulations approved by the DAE before marketing the pesticides.

The DAE only conducts minimal testing such as the efficiency of the pesticide in killing pests and weeds and examining its toxicity on fish.

Asked if the presence of heavy metals in pesticides is adulteration, Dr Md Joydul Abedin, member-secretary of the DAE advisory committee, said, "If there was any set limit, we could say it is adulteration."

Aminur Islam, additional deputy director of pesticide quality at the DAE, however, disputed this.

"The chemical composition of pesticides is submitted at the time of application for registration. There is no chance of containing any pollutant beyond that. They [applicants] mention a hundred percent composition."

To reach a conclusion about the limit, he said, will need a controlled condition study.

Asked about the timeline for preparing a guideline on the permissible limit of heavy metals in pesticides, Joydul Abedin on Wednesday said, "The advisory committee is yet to hold a meeting. They will sit in January-February to discuss the guideline."

TEST FINDINGS
The presence of heavy metals in the food chain has raised concern countrywide over the last few years.

In that context, the BFSA tested samples of 63 pesticides and 4 fertilisers available in the market at the BAEC laboratory between November 2019 and January this year. BAEC has been an internationally accredited lab since 2015.

At least 55 of these were also tested at a private lab. Both labs followed the standard F-AAS (Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrometry) testing method.

The test results, a copy of which The Daily Star obtained, showed 63 out of the 67 tested pesticides and fertilisers contained significant levels of cadmium, chromium or lead, or all three.

The level of heavy metals in some pesticide samples was alarming.

For instance, BAEC's investigators found the highest level of lead, 12.70mg per kg, in an anti-fungal pesticide powder.

Of the 47 samples in which lead was found, less than one third (14) contained lead below the detection limit of 0.02mg/kg while more than half contained lead ranging from 0.24-2mg/kg. Eight were found to contain more than 2mg lead per kg.

Chronic exposure to lead at relatively low levels can result in damage to the kidneys and liver, and to the reproductive, cardiovascular, immune, hematopoietic, nervous, and gastrointestinal systems, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Furthermore, short-term exposure to high amounts of lead can cause

gastrointestinal distress, anaemia, encephalopathy, and death.

Reduced cognitive and intellectual development in children is the most critical effect of low-level lead exposure.

FAO recommends farmers avoid using compounds that contain lead or may be contaminated with lead in agricultural areas.

BAEC's test also found that a commonly used liquid pesticide contained 15.74mg chromium per kg.

In another liquid pesticide, the BAEC test found around 7.19mg chromium, less than 0.06mg cadmium, and around 6.49mg lead per kg.

While the test results from the private lab varied from BAEC's ones, both labs suggested the majority of the pesticides contained these heavy metals.

BAEC also separately tested four commonly used fertilisers for only the level of cadmium.

Of these, a fertiliser known as TSP was found to contain 13.96mg cadmium per kg -- more than the maximum allowable limit of 10ppm (1ppm is equivalent to 1mg/kg) mentioned in the Fertiliser (Management) Regulation, 2007.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY
Experts said no heavy metals should be present in pesticides, adding that its contamination of the food chain through pesticides is a serious threat and long-term exposure may lead to public health risks.

Although there is no maximum allowable limit for heavy metals in pesticides, a number of experts The Daily Star talked with said the presence of heavy metals, even minimal amounts, in pesticides is harmful.

"Heavy metals are not elements of pesticides; therefore, these should not be in pesticides. If there is, the source of contamination should be checked," Prof Dr Quazi Forhad Quadir of Bangladesh Agricultural University, told The Daily Star.

"Pesticides themselves are harmful. Heavy metals -- even in small amounts -- have an accumulation effect," he added.

Imrul Hasan, country lead of USDA/USAID funded Food Safety Capacity Development for Bangladesh project, told The Daily Star, "If pesticides contain heavy metals, these will enter the food chain -- whether in small or big amounts."

Another expert said some companies might be using heavy metals as residue in substandard and cheap imported pesticides to earn more profits.

Abdul Kaium, assistant professor of agricultural chemistry at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, said, "The quality of pesticides depends on the price of its active raw materials, or ready products are imported. In our laboratory analysis, we found many pesticides have 50 percent fewer active ingredients than the description on the packets. Instead, these contain more impurities like heavy metals."

"There are major loopholes in surveillance -- from importing to marketing. This, ultimately, is harming the food chain."

EU warns Turkey over journalist jail sentence

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday warned Turkey that a heavy jail sentence imposed on journalist Can Dundar harmed both human rights in the country and Ankara's relations with Brussels.

A Turkish court on Wednesday sentenced the exiled former editor-in-chief of the respected Cumhuriyet daily to more than 27 years in jail on espionage and terror charges.

Can Dundar fled to Germany in 2016 after a failed coup the Turkish government blames on US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen.

2 cops arrested

FROM PAGE 1

The policemen did an X-ray of Jafar and found nothing, but they took away Tk 2.8 lakh from his possession and boarded him on a bus to Dhaka.

They also threatened him not to tell anyone about what had happened.

SM Rashidul Haque, superintendent of police in Chattogram, told The Daily Star that police were trying to recover the money and looking for the three other accused.

"The probe committee was asked to submit its findings in seven work days," he added.

Kajol home after

FROM PAGE 1

special at home either because we got to know very suddenly that he's being released," said Polok. And so the day they had been longing for, for over 290 days, was spent with simple homely comforts.

"My father is reeling from what he went through," Polok said, adding that the photojournalist's health deteriorated while in jail. He also said his father endured temporary paralysis in his arm.

"Baba is taking rest today, but will talk soon," he added.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman granted Kajol bail on December 17 following two separate bail petitions filed by him in two DSA cases lodged with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations.

The HC bench passed the order after Kajol's lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua told the court that the investigations into the two cases were illegal as the probes had to be concluded within 75 days of filing of the cases.

The cases were filed on March 9 and March 11. He was not even "shown arrested" in the DSA cases until June 23, long after the deadline for concluding the probe was over.

The photojournalist had already secured HC bail in another case filed under the DSA act.

He was arrested under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) on May 4, after a prolonged disappearance of 53 days.

For a single Facebook post, Kajol was denied bail a total of 13 times, according to Article 19, a human rights organisation.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday about Kajol's release, Saad Hammadi, Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner, said, "It's a relief to know that Kajol has been freed, after two months of disappearance and seven months in detention for his posts on Facebook. We hope that the authorities will drop the cases against Kajol, and release all those who have been detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression in line with Bangladesh's commitments under the international human rights law."

FROM PAGE 1

TIMELINE

MAY 18:

Jashore District Chief Judicial Magistrate Court denies him bail.

JUNE 14:

3 separate virtual courts in Dhaka does not hold bail hearings as police did not officially arrest Kajol in the DSA cases.

JUNE 24:

Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol of Virtual Court-4 denies Kajol bail.

JUNE 28:

Metropolitan Magistrate Debdash Chandra Adhikary denies the photojournalist bail, places him on two-day remand.

JULY 29:

Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah of Virtual Court-6 denies Kajol bail.

AUGUST 24, SEPT 9 AND SEPT 14:
Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court denies Kajol bail thrice.

OCTOBER 19:

High Court questions why Kajol should not be granted bail.

NOVEMBER 24:

HC grants Kajol bail in one case and ordered investigation officer and Cyber Tribunal to submit reports.

DECEMBER 17:

HC grants Kajol bail in the remaining two cases, clearing the way for him to be released from jail.

YESTERDAY:

Kajol finally walks out of Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Israel arrests Palestinian over settler murder

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel on Thursday arrested a Palestinian man in connection with the murder of a Jewish settler in the occupied West Bank, in a case that raised tensions in the area.

Esther Horgan, a 52-year-old mother of six and a French-Israeli dual national, was found dead Monday in a forest near the Tal Menashe settlement in the north of the Palestinian territory.

Relatives said she had gone out jogging on Sunday and never returned. A statement from Israel's domestic security agency, the Shin Bet, said: "a suspect in the murder of the late Esther Horgan... has been detained," following a coordinated effort involving the agency, the army and police.

It described the detained man as "a Palestinian suspect from the Jenin area," who it said was being

interrogated by Shin Bet agents.

Israel's army said in a statement later Thursday that its soldiers in the same area had "apprehended additional suspects involved in the murder for further questioning".

"A number of suspects have been arrested for assisting and facilitating the murder of Esther Horgan" following the joint operation over the past two days, an army official was quoted as saying.

Defence Minister Benny Gantz said Israel had "used every means at the disposal of the Israeli security forces to swiftly find and take into custody a suspect in the shocking murder of Esther Horgan".

Earlier this week, the army had reinforced its presence in the West Bank in response to surging tensions partly linked to Horgan's murder.

A promise tangled up

FROM PAGE 1

Just two months ago, at the 50th DG-level conference, BSF DG Rakesh Asthana promised to bring down the border killings to zero.

According to ASK, around 33 Bangladeshis were killed in the first eight months of the year.

At the latest 51st conference, both sides agreed to conduct joint patrols at night in key areas in order to prevent border killings, reads a joint statement issued yesterday.

During the conference, BGB Director General Maj Gen Md Shafeenul Islam expressed "grave concern" over the killings and beating up of unarmed Bangladeshi nationals by BSF men as well as Indian civilians near the borders.

"The people of Bangladesh always appreciate the existing excellent relationship between the two border guarding forces and expect that BGB and BSF will take necessary measures to bring down the deaths to zero," the BGB chief said, according to the joint statement.

Maj Gen Shafeenul further urged his counterpart to uphold human rights and make efforts to apprehend the criminals and bring them to book instead of killing them.

The BSF chief then assured that deaths on the border will be reduced significantly in near future, reads the statement.

Both sides also agreed to take precautionary measures along the border by increasing coordinated patrols, intensifying public awareness programmes, undertaking appropriate socio-economic development programmes in vulnerable areas and sharing real time information.

BGB chief Maj Gen Shafeenul led the 11-member Bangladeshi delegation in the 51st DG-level conference in Guwahati in Indian state of Assam. BSF DG Rakesh led a 12-member delegation.

The BGB chief also expressed concern that Indian nationals and BSF personnel were often trespassing into Bangladesh, violating the existing norms or rules.

He sought BSF's cooperation in upholding the friendly relationship of both the border guarding forces.

The joint statement read that both sides agreed to continue to sensitise the border populace to refrain from illegal crossing or violations and at the same time assured maintenance of the sanctity of the border by the members of both forces.

The BGB chief also voiced his concern that armed miscreants of regional parties of Chattogram Hill Tracts had camps in the Indian state of Mizoram and requested BSF to destroy those camps.

The BSF chief assured that, if found, appropriate actions will be taken against those camps.

The BGB chief also expressed concerns over trafficking of drugs, fire arms, contraband items, cattle and gold across the border.

The BSF officials said drug trafficking and drug addiction on both sides is a real danger that needs to be tackled effectively.

Both sides agreed not to undertake any development work within 150 yards of the international border without prior information. They also agreed to hold the next DG level conference in Dhaka, preferably by the 2nd week of April 2021.

Afghan women's rights activist shot dead

AFP, Kabul

Gunmen on a motorbike shot dead a women's rights activist and her brother north of Afghanistan's capital Thursday, officials said, as a wave of assassinations ravages the violence-wracked country.

Fresha Kohistani, aged 29, was the second activist to be killed in two days after a prominent pro-democracy advocate was gunned down in Kabul on Wednesday.

Their murders follow a similar pattern seen in recent weeks, in which prominent Afghans have died in targeted killings in broad daylight, several of them in the capital.

"Unknown gunmen on a motorbike assassinated Fresha Kohistani in Kohistan district of Kapisa province," interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian told reporters.

Kapisa provincial governor Abdul Latif Murad told AFP that the shooting had taken place near Kohistani's home and that her brother was also killed in the attack.

No group has claimed the attack so far.

Kohistani, who had campaigned for veteran leader Abdullah Abdullah during last year's presidential election, had enjoyed a relatively large following on social media, and regularly organized

civil society events in Kabul calling for women's rights.

Abdullah said Kohistani was killed in a "terrorist attack".

In a Facebook post, he described Kohistani as a "brave and fearless" activist who was at the forefront of civil and social life in Afghanistan.

"The continuation of such assassinations is unacceptable," said Abdullah, who leads the country's overall peace process.

Days before her death, Kohistani, who is survived by her husband and one child, wrote on Facebook that she had asked for protection from the authorities after receiving threats.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

WEAVERS

Weaver birds are nature's engineers. They build intricate nests from vegetable material such as grass, leaves and palm fronds. Most weaver birds are found in Africa with a few in South Asia and Australia. They belong to the Ploceidae family of birds which has over 120 species.

In Bangladesh we have three species of weaver birds: Baya Weavers, Black-breasted Weavers and Streaked Weavers. Of these, Baya Weavers are easiest to find. If you wander around the countryside in monsoon you can spot their nests hanging from Coconut or *Shupari* trees. Black-breasted Weavers are somewhat more difficult to find. It helps if you know where to look for them – for example, from other birders. Streaked Weavers are the rarest of our weaver birds and incredibly difficult to find. All three are about the size of a House Sparrow.

Starting in late spring, male Baya Weavers start building their nests which hang from high supports such as palm fronds. They use their sharp beaks to strip long threads from the fronds and tall grass and weave them together into a nest. Using their saliva as glue, they make distinctive, elongated nests 1-3 feet tall with openings either below or on the side. The male works hard to make the nicest possible nest and uses it to entice a suitable female to mate with. It also works very fast, sometimes finishing a nest in one or two days. The end result is functional and tidy.

Black-breasted weaver nests are also nicely constructed. They build them close to the ground, usually in the middle of tall grass. Being within easy reach of many predators, they choose well-hidden spots, so these nests are not readily visible like the nests of Baya Weavers.

Not all weaver nests are neat



Baya (left) and Black-breasted Weavers, Keraniganj.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

and tidy. In southern Madagascar I saw nests of Sakalava Weavers. They were huge, sometimes spreading over several trees. A dozen birds were working on the nest simultaneously. These weaver birds look similar to our Baya Weavers with the males sporting a yellow crest. Another weaver I saw in Madagascar was the Nelicourvi Weaver, which is more solitary. I saw its nests hanging from branches overhanging a canal in the forest. They were round, a little smaller than a football, and made from vegetation threads that were coarser than the threads used by Baya Weavers.

Sociable Weavers are found in southern Africa. They are well-known for their large nests, which they build as much as

ten meters high and which can contain hundreds of individual nest chambers – just like a large apartment building. These nests are a far cry from the Baya Weaver's nest and look more like a large pile of hay. Sometimes large snakes raid these nests for eggs or chicks.

For me, the best part about weaver birds is watching them build a nest. All around us, nature performs many miracles that we miss, either because they happen too fast, or too slow, or we don't understand them. Watching weavers at work, I find, is an easy and satisfying way to appreciate nature's wonders.

.....
www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs
or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

Snake venom worth Tk 75cr seized in Dhaka

Six arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion seized snake venom worth Tk 75 crore and arrested six persons from Dakshinkhan area in the capital on Thursday afternoon.

The arrestees were identified as Masud Rana (24), Sofir Uddin Sanu (50), Tamjidul Islam Monir (34), Alamgir Hossain (26), Firoza Begum (57) and Asma Begum (42).

The six, supposedly members of an international snake venom smuggling racket, were arrested while they were gathering in Gulbar Munsiri Sarani area around 3:30pm, said Abdullah Al Mamun, assistant director (media) of Rab-2.

After searching a bag one of them was carrying officials found the snake venom kept in glass jars.

The value of the venom is worth around Tk 75 crore, added the assistant director.

During primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted that they used to collect the venom from different areas to supply to a specific ring, the officials said. Filing of a case is underway in this regard, they added.

According to different law enforcement agencies, the smugglers were using Bangladesh as a route to smuggle the venom into Indonesia and Malaysia and some other countries.

On November 25, Criminal Investigation Department of police seized snake venom worth Tk 9 crore and arrested two smugglers from Gazipur.

Snake venom is used in Asian traditional medicine.

'Once drivers, they now hijack buses to conduct robbery'

7 members of robber gang held

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They were drivers by profession and used to work in public transport.

But in the last 10 years, they were arrested and sent to prison for petty crimes such as theft and domestic violence.

And it was in the prison they got acquainted, formed a group and started conducting robbery in the capital and nearby districts.

Police's detective branch (DB) yesterday claimed to have arrested seven members of this robber gang.

The arrestees were identified as Md Fakrul Kabir Shanto, ringleader of the group, and his associates -- Md Rafiq, Md Riaz, Md Rasel, Md Shahjamal, Harun Or Rashid and Md Humayun Kabir, according to law enforcers.

Police arrested the seven from Gabtoli, Mohammadpur and Mirpur areas of Dhaka and Savar during a special drive on Wednesday, Anich Uddin Bahadur, additional deputy commissioner of DB police, who led the drive, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Police also recovered 10 cellphones, Tk 6,000, three knives, three machetes and two walkie-talkies from their possession, said the official.

The additional deputy commissioner said these robbers sometimes posed as law enforcement officials for looting valuables from people, and the walkie-talkies were used to deceive them.

Ringleader Shanto is wanted in at least 15 cases including arms and robbery, filed with different police stations including Dhaka, Gazipur, Pabna and Mymensingh, said ADC Shahadat Hossain of DB (Tejgaon division) police.

According to police, arrestee Rafiq is wanted in three similar cases, filed with Ashulia and Sirajganj police stations while Riaz is wanted in couple of cases filed with Ashulia Police Station, added ADC Shahadat Hossain.

For conducting a robbery, they mainly targeted day-night buses, which started journey from different districts and reached

the capital past midnight, according to detectives.

Once a bus dropped off passengers, the gang took control of the vehicle by confining the staff members and then conducted robbery with the bus till the morning.

They mostly took passengers inside the bus and looted their valuables at gun point, said detectives.

The gang's latest target was a bus of AK Travels.

According to the first information report filed by bus supervisor Abu Hurayra with Adabor Police Station, the vehicle, starting its journey from Sathkira with passengers, reached Dhaka around 1am on December 19.

They dropped off all passengers and parked the bus in Shyamoli area to have food at an eatery.

When they returned to the bus around 2:30am, some 10 to 15 people entered the vehicle and took their money and phones at knifepoint, read the first information report.

The robbers then tied and blindfolded the bus supervisor, driver Abdur Rashid and helper Saiful Islam, and kept them at the back of the vehicle.

One of the robbers drove the bus and another posing as the supervisor took in passengers to loot valuables from them, according to the FIR.

Around dawn, the robbers left the bus abandoned, keeping passengers and staffers tied inside.

One of the passengers managed to untie his hands and free the others.

There were around 15 passengers blindfolded inside the vehicle, including a uniformed police officer.

Robbers also took away his walkie-talkie set.

While investigating the case, detectives managed to arrest the seven but some six to eight are still on the run, said ADC Anich Uddin.

"We are conducting drives to arrest the absconding members of the gang," he added.

MURDER OF 11-YEAR-OLD IN MIRPUR Prime accused held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime accused in the murder of 11-year-old Shamnun Islam, in Dhaka's Mirpur area a week ago, was arrested early yesterday.

A team of detectives arrested Mahfuzur Rahman Roni (38) from Chandpur-Laxmipur bordering area around 4:30am, said Manas Kumar Podder, deputy commissioner (DB Mirpur division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Shamnun, a fourth grader at a local school, went missing on December 17 while he was playing near his house in Mirpur-6 area.

That very night, his mother Rokhsana Begum got a call from an unknown person who demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom for his release. Rokhsana gave Tk 60,000 to the miscreants through a mobile money transfer company in several phases but the kidnapers killed the boy.

Police found him dead at a 14-storey building in Mirpur-10 on December 19, two days after he was kidnapped.

Rokhsana filed a murder case accusing five persons for abduction and murder of Shamnun with Mirpur Model Police Station.

Police earlier arrested four accused from different areas of the capital in connection with the abduction and murder.

The arrestees are -- Nur Alam Proloy, Yusuf Newaz, Khairul Islam and Mahfuzur Rahman.

BAR COUNCIL Written test of 5 centres cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bar Council on Thursday decided to cancel the written test of the advocateship candidates, held at five centres on December 19, as some of them went berserk at those centres, preventing others from taking the test and burning their answer scripts.

The centres are: Mohammadpur Mohila College, Mohammadpur Kendriya College, BCSIR School, Govt Mohammadpur Model School and Dhaka Mohanagar Mohila College.

The council decided to uphold the written test for the candidates held at four other centres on the same day.



Street lamps are being installed from the port city's Alkoron Mor all the way to the City Gate. To facilitate this, holes have been dug by breaking down road dividers across the route. However, the dangerously scattered debris and protruding rods are posing a threat to public safety. This photo was taken on Thursday from Alkoron Mor.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A comforting day for canines

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The stray dogs at Chattogram's Sadarghat area had a different kind of day yesterday.

Dewormed, vaccinated, fed, and even dressed up, it almost felt like their pampering had no end.

All thanks to a few kind-hearted individuals. The initiative was spearheaded by Dr Ferdoushe Akter Dipti, a thana livestock officer at Doublemooring.

"Every day on my way to work, I see the dogs, distressed and neglected. Even in the coldest mornings, they're out wandering around for food, trembling from the cold. On top of this, some people attack them for nothing," she told this correspondent.

Dr Ferdoushe intervened out of empathy.

"Initially, the plan was to just vaccinate them, so that locals aren't afraid of them."

Informed of the plans, her office -- the Thana Livestock Office at Doublemooring -- agreed to provide logistical support. Still, it was near impossible for Dr Ferdoushe alone to go to the area with the vaccines, gather the

dogs and inject them, especially since dogs are not too comfortable around strangers.

This is where Pranider Jonyo Ahar (Prahari), a local animal welfare organisation, stepped in.

"I decided to contact Prahari for their familiarity with stray dogs of the area," Dr Ferdoushe said.

Afterwards, the team finalised the plan. In addition to vaccinating around 20 stray dogs, they also put collars or binders on them.

Following this, the dogs were dewormed, fed with a special lunch prepared by Dr Ferdoushe, and dressed up to help fend off the biting cold.

"I feel for animals because they cannot raise their voice to press home their rights, unlike human beings," Dr Ferdoushe said.

Driven by her love for animals from childhood, Dr Ferdoushe pursued veterinary medicine at Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. She began working as a livestock officer after passing the 33rd BCS examination in 2014.



After some initial moments of suspicion, the dogs cosied up, realising that the volunteers were there to look out for them.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Keep dorms open during exams

Demand RU students

ARAFAT RAHAMAN, RU

Students of Rajshahi University (RU) have urged authorities to reopen dormitories, ensuring health guidelines, during the honours and master's final examinations, which are scheduled to start from January 2.

The clamour for reopening dorms has been growing amid students, in the wake of the authority's decision to hold exams without reopening residential halls, citing the pandemic.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, students termed the university's decision illogical. They said a majority of students -- particularly those from far-flung areas of the country -- cannot afford to pay rent for off-campus accommodation. It will be an extra burden for their families during the pandemic.

Suborno, a student of 2015-16 session, said, "We can't rent a house or mess for just one month, as landlords demand security deposit. So, most of us must stay at a friend's or relative's place, which can be risky during the pandemic."

Some students, however, opposed the demand, saying students need to prioritise their necessities. They should sit for the exams by any means to avoid session jam and start their career.

Leaders of student organisations also demanded halls be reopened on a limited scale.

Mehedee Hasan Mishu, organising secretary of BCL, RU unit, said the decision to keep halls closed is against students' interests.

Mohabbat Hossain Milon, general secretary of Chhatra Federation, said authorities may open halls only for examinees by ensuring health precautions.

Prof Lutfor Rahman, student advisor (additional duty) at RU, said, "We were instructed by UGC to take exams, while keeping halls closed. If we open them during exams, students from different areas of the country will come to campus and stay together, which may cause an outbreak."

Stand by cold-hit people

Quader urges AL leaders, activists

BS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday called upon the party leaders and workers to stand by cold-hit people.

People of lower-income group have been suffering immensely as a cold wave is sweeping over in different parts of the country including the northern region.

"It is Awami League's heritage to stay beside distressed people in every disaster and crisis period," Quader told a press conference at his official residence on parliament premises in Dhaka.

Turning to municipality polls, Quader

urged the party men across the country to work in unison as per the decision of AL Local Government Nomination Board led by Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The party chief is very strict on maintaining organisational discipline, he said, adding that those who have already violated party decisions will not be given nomination in future.

The AL general secretary said everyone will have to remain alert to this end and "you will have to work together following the directives of the party president."

Quader also greeted members of the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

স্কলার্স স্কুল অ্যান্ড কলেজ
(ইংরেজি মাধ্যমে দেশীয় শিক্ষা)
[সুধু ইংলিশ ভাষানে পাঠদানকারী বাংলাদেশের প্রথম শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান]
www.scholars.edu.bd, info@scholars.edu.bd

২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষে PG - IX শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি চলাছে

English Medium এর ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরও ভর্তির সুযোগ

ছাত্রীদের জন্য আলাদা ক্যাম্পাস

সফলতার ২০ বছর!

যোগাযোগ:
বাড়ি নং-৭১, সড়ক নং ৭/এ, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৯
০২-৫৫০০০৩৪৫, ০১৭৮৭৩৩৩৯৯, ০১৭১৪০৫৭৫৬৬
০১৭১৪৪৬৬৩৩, ০১৭১৮৪১৬৯০৪, ০১৮৭৪০০০৬৬৬
অফিস সময়: সপ্তাহের বাতিঘর প্রতিদিন সকল ৮টা থেকে বিকাল ৫টা পর্যন্ত

রিজিষ্টার্ড জেনারেল মোঃ আব্দুল হান্নান (অবঃ)
অধ্যক্ষ, স্কলার্স স্কুল অ্যান্ড কলেজ
সাবেক অধ্যক্ষ, ঢাকা প্রেসিডেন্সিয়াল মেডিকেল কলেজ



Residents make their way on a boat along a flooded street caused by heavy rain in Bandung, Indonesia yesterday.

Columnist Bakhtiar Uddin no more

STAR REPORT

Bakhtiar Uddin Chowdhury, a freedom fighter and political analyst, passed away early yesterday. He was 72 years old.



He breathed his last at BIRDEM hospital in Dhaka at 2:15am, said a press release.

Bakhtiar Uddin had been suffering from diabetes and kidney diseases. He was admitted to the hospital on Thursday night as his condition suddenly deteriorated.

He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter, and grandchildren.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Nangalmora in Hathazari, Chattogram after a namaz-e-janaza. Bakhtiar Uddin was born on August 17, 1948 in Hathazari.

During student life, he got involved in Chhtra League politics. Later, he engaged in national politics, did business, and then started writing.

For the past two decades, he had been a regular contributor to various national dailies and online portals where he wrote about political and international affairs.

Keep the nat'l icon intact

FROM PAGE 12

"It is a part of Dhaka's history. The extension of railway is needed but the authorities should try to do the work keeping that intact," said Taimur Islam.

In the last 100 years, Dhaka has grown up as a new modern city and Kamalapur is part of that history, he added.

MAKING OF KAMALAPUR RAILWAY STATION

Dhaka became the provincial capital of East Pakistan after the end of colonial rule in 1947. Fulbaria was the central railway station in Dhaka at the time.

But as the city was growing as an important commercial centre and expanding with the growth of its population, city planners in 1948 suggested shifting the station to the less populated Kamalapur.

It, however, took a decade for the then provincial East Pakistan government to start executing the plan in 1958. A new railway line from Tejgaon to Khilgaon, and then to Kamalapur was constructed.

On July 27, 1968, Kamalapur was unveiled, which also marked the last journey of a train from Fulbaria, with the otherwise vast paddy fields being turned into one of the most beautiful and modern railway stations in Asia.

Officially known as Dhaka Railway Station, it is now the central rail station of Bangladesh.

AN ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

The parabolic umbrella structure at Kamalapur is considered one of the modern architectural ideas of the '60s. Daniel Dunham and Robert Boughey were the designers of this gem.

The station's parabolic umbrella roof over the terminal was unusual for its time but the shape was quite fitting for a tropical country like Bangladesh, where rain is a dominant phenomenon.

Along with Louis Kahn's parliament building, Constantino Doxiadis' TSC, and Richard Vrooman's Architecture Building at Buet, the pioneering structure of the railway station symbolised a "golden age" of architecture in Bangladesh during the 1960s, according to Adnan Zillur Morshed.

The concrete roof structure provides a rhythmic visual effect, unifying the spaces below it. The parabolic roofline recalls other contemporary masterpieces, such as Danish architect Jorn Utzon's Sydney Opera House, the architectural historian mentioned in his book "DAC/Dhaka in 25 Buildings".

"Just as Utzon's Opera House shaped the skyline of the Sydney harbour, Kamalapur Railway Station's repetitive arches created a new skyline in this low-rise area of the city," wrote Adnan, also executive director of the Centre for Inclusive Architecture and Urbanism at Brac University.

20 more die

FROM PAGE 12

The 500,000-mark on December 20. The first death was reported on March 18 and the death toll exceeded 7,000 on December 12.

So far, 3,149,348 tests have been carried out, including 13,510 new ones. And the overall infection rate stood at 16.11 percent.

Bangladesh is seeing 2,978.54 infections, 2,635.26 recoveries, and 43.44 deaths per million.

Covid-sniffing

FROM PAGE 12

Passengers at an airport health checkpoint wipe their necks and wrists with gauze pads that are then put in glass containers and sent to the dogs to see if they detect Covid-19.

Sniffer dogs are best-known for finding drugs and explosives but have also previously been trained to detect malaria, cancer and Parkinson's disease.

Dogs trained to detect the coronavirus have already begun sniffing passenger samples at airports in the United Arab Emirates and Finland.

A study recently found dogs can identify infected individuals with 85% to 100% accuracy and rule out infection with 92% to 99% accuracy.

Chile's Carabinero police trained the dogs and Inspector General Esteban Diaz said dogs have more than 3 million olfactory receptors, more than 50 times those of humans, so were uniquely placed to help fight the coronavirus.

Infections in Chile are far down from a peak in June but have begun rising again with about 2,000 new cases on average reported each day, according to a Reuters tally.

Chile has a total of 589,189 confirmed cases and 16,217 deaths from the disease.

Modi offers

FROM PAGE 12

them at the mercy of big corporates.

In a speech beamed live to millions of farmers across the country, Modi sought to allay their misgivings, insisting the laws, passed in September, would give them the freedom to sell their produce "anywhere and to anyone they like".

"Lies are being spread that the local mandis (markets) will shut down, the minimum support price will be stopped... don't be misguided by those having political motives," Modi said.

"I am saying this with humility that we are ready to discuss every issue of the farmers, even with those (political parties) who are against us, for the sake of our farmers."

Modi also released \$2.5 billion to 90 million farmers under a financial scheme that his party launched last year.

Under the direct cash transfer scheme, small farmers get 6,000 rupees (\$82) in four instalments in a year.

Modi also interacted with seven farmers from different states via a video conference in which they praised the government's various farm schemes.

Agriculture employs about 70 percent of India's 1.3 billion people and accounts for 15 percent of its \$2.7 trillion economy.

But in recent decades farm incomes have stagnated, and experts say the sector badly needs investment and modernisation.

Farmer unions have demanded a total repeal of the laws and warned of a bigger agitation if their demands are not met.

Several rounds of talks between ministers and farmer leaders have failed to produce a breakthrough so far.

Russia opens criminal probe into Navalny ally over 'threat'

AFP, Moscow

Russian authorities yesterday opened a criminal probe into an ally of opposition leader Alexei Navalny after raiding her flat, alleging she threatened a man Navalny claimed took part in his poisoning.

Don't squander sacrifices

FROM PAGE 12

"Despite so much loss, we have built so much hope. Vaccines are offering the world a way out of this tragedy. But it will take time for the whole world to be vaccinated."

According to the WHO's overview of different candidate vaccines, 61 have entered human trials, 16 of which have reached final-stage mass testing.

A further 172 candidate vaccines are being developed in laboratories with a view to eventual human testing.

Tedros said: "We must continue taking comfort in the fact that by caring for others, through acts of solidarity and safety, we can share the greatest gift of all: the gift of life."

SHARE VACCINES
Pope Francis said in his Christmas message that fraternity was a watchword for these unusually troubled times exacerbated by the pandemic.

"At this moment in history, marked by the ecological crisis and grave economic and social imbalances only worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, it is all the more important

for us to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters," he said in his "Urbi et Orbi" message.

He said this call for solidarity was especially aimed at "people who are the most fragile, the sick and all who at this period find themselves without work or in grave difficulty due to the economic consequences of the pandemic and to women who have been subjected to domestic violence during these months of confinement."

The pontiff also called for nations to share Covid-19 vaccines, saying walls of nationalism could not be built to stop a pandemic that knows no borders.

Christmas festivities began yesterday, with hundreds of millions across the world under coronavirus restrictions celebrating a pared-down version of a holiday typically marked by travel and large gatherings.

The battle to halt the pandemic is far from over despite the launching of mass vaccine campaigns that offer the promise of an eventual return to normalcy.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman cannot hold back his tears while laying the foundation of Mashiur Rahman Memorial in Jessore on December 26, 1972.

'Don't bargain with stranded

FROM PAGE 12

whether it's the council next door, or the countries next door, it works better if we work together. So that's the way I see it," he said.

In London the news of the deal was also met with relief.

"It would've been a disaster if there would've been no deal, so very pleased that there is," Shane O'Neill said.

O'Neill added he would have preferred for Britain to remain in the European Union but that ultimately "now the debate is over and we need to move on".

Student Harry Vincent said it was a "relief" to have a deal but questioned whether it would have been better to remain in the EU.

He said the compromises that had been necessary to strike a deal "sort of made me wonder whether it was worth it to begin with it all".

In the Scottish capital of Edinburgh, which voted overwhelmingly to remain in the European Union,

elections, which will be the first in free Bangladesh, the prime minister says that people have confidence in him. "I will quit the post of prime ministership if my people want me to do so," declares Bangabandhu.

The prime minister returns to Dhaka today evening after a two-day tour of Jessore and Faridpur districts.

SOURCES: December 27, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Britons in two minds about

FROM PAGE 12

Sharmila Hutchinson, a bank employee, said she hadn't supported Brexit and was "guttured to not be part of Europe anymore".

"It does make me nervous to think how I'm going to visit the European cities and friends," the 35-year-old said.

Henry Gray, a charity worker, said Brexit had brought him to think Scotland should become an independent country.

"I think we could be led better from Scotland. It would be nice to feel we would be part of the EU still," he said.

His comment was echoed on Thursday by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

"Before the spin starts, it's worth remembering that Brexit is happening against Scotland's will. And there is no deal that will ever make up for what Brexit takes away from us. It's time to chart our own future as an independent, European nation," she said.

Turkey wants 'better ties' with

FROM PAGE 12

impossible for us to accept Israel's Palestine policies. Their merciless acts there are unacceptable," Erdogan told reporters after Friday prayers in Istanbul.

"If there were no issues at the top level (in Israel), our ties could have been very different," he said, adding that the two countries continued to share intelligence. "We would have liked to bring our ties to a better point."

Israel's Foreign Ministry declined to comment on Erdogan's statement. Turkey and Israel expelled each other's ambassadors in 2018 after Israeli forces killed dozens of Palestinians in clashes on the Gaza border.

In August this year, Israel accused Turkey of giving passports to a dozen Hamas members in Istanbul, describing the move as "a very unfriendly step".

Hamas seized Gaza from forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, and the group has fought three wars with Israel since then. Turkey says Hamas is a legitimate political movement that won power through democratic elections.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Urban Building Safety Project (UBSP)
Project Implementation Unit
Public Works Department, Purta Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka
Phone: 9588699, Fax: 88-02-9588700
Memo No. 25.36.0000.600.03.010.16.409 Date: 23-12-2020

Invitation for Tender

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Housing & Public Works (MoHPW)
2	Agency	Public Works Department (PWD)
3	Procuring entity name	Executive Engineer (Procurement), Urban Building Safety Project.
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present.
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Non-Consulting Services.
7	Invitation Ref No.	25-36.0000.600.03.010.16.409
8	Date	23-12-2020

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement method	OTM.
---	--------------------	------

FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and source of funds	GOB.
11	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A.

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Project/program code (if applicable)	224029400
13	Project name (if applicable)	Urban Building Safety Project.
14	Tender Package No.	OTM-01/2020-21
15	Tender package name	১৬৯৯ বাবাবয়ন ইউনিট, মসজিদপুলের ভবন সুবহা প্রকল্প, গণপূর্ত অফিসের এ আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে মাসিক মজুরী ভিত্তিতে ৪ জন গাড়িচালক ও ১ জন অফিস সহায়ক সরবরাহকরণ কাজ।
16	Tender publication date	23-12-2020
17	Tender last selling date	12-01-2021
18	Tender closing date and time	13-01-2021 12:00pm
19	Tender opening date and time	13-01-2021 03:00pm
20	Name & address of the office(s)	Address - Selling tender document (principal) Urban Building Safety Project, Purta Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. - Selling tender document (others) i) Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, 1st 12-storied Govt. Office Building, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. ii) Police Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, 36, Shahid Captain Mansur Ali Sarani, Ramna, Dhaka. iii) Executive Engineer, Dhaka PWD Division-1/2/3/4, City PWD Division, Dhaka. iv) Sub-Divisional Engineer, Dhaka PWD Sub-Division-5, Dhaka.

No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents

- Receiving tender document	Office of the Project Director, Urban Building Safety Project, Purta Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka.
- Receiving tender document (others)	i) Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, 1st 12-storied Govt. Office Building, Segunbagicha, Dhaka. ii) Office of the Police Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, 36, Shahid Captain Mansur Ali Sarani, Ramna, Dhaka.
- Opening tender document	Office of the Project Director, Urban Building Safety Project, Purta Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

21 Eligibility of tenderer
This Invitation for Tender is open to all eligible tenderers as mentioned below:
a) The minimum number of years of general experience of the tenderer in contracting industries in public sector as prime contractor/sub-contractor/management contractor shall be five (5) years.
b) The minimum specific experience as a prime contractor in providing non-consultant service of at least ONE contract of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed over a period of three (3) years each with a value of at least of Tk 11,00,000.00 (eleven lakh) shall be required. Contract for providing service will be treated as similar nature.
c) The required average annual turnover of the tenderer shall be at least of the amount of Tk 7,00,000.00 (seven lakh) only over the last five years.
d) The tenderer must possess: (i) Up-to-date valid trade licence, (ii) Up-to-date income tax clearance certificate, (iii) Valid VAT registration certificate.
e) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) (as per Form PSN-5) of the tenderer shall be Tk 3,50,000.00 (three lakh and fifty thousand). The supporting bank documents submitted must be issued in between publication date and submission date of this tender.
f) All other required qualifications, terms & conditions of the tenderer are shown in the Tender Data Sheet (TDS) & special terms & condition of tender documents. Necessary supporting documents are to be submitted as per requirement of ITT Clauses & Technical specification with the tender.

22 Brief description of services
Supplying of 4 (four) Drivers and 1 (one) Office Helper in Outsourcing basis.

23 Price of tender document (Tk)
Tk 1,000/- (one thousand) only (non-refundable).

Package No.	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in weeks/months
OTM-01/2020-21	১৬৯৯ বাবাবয়ন ইউনিট, মসজিদপুলের ভবন সুবহা প্রকল্প, গণপূর্ত অফিসের এ আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে মাসিক মজুরী ভিত্তিতে ৪ জন গাড়িচালক ও ১ জন অফিস সহায়ক সরবরাহকরণ কাজ।	Dhaka	50,000.00 (fifty thousand)	12 months

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

24	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Anisuzzaman Ibne Omar.
25	Designation of official inviting tender	Executive Engineer (Procurement).
26	Address of official inviting tender	Urban Building Safety Project.
27	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 47120683 Fax: 9588700 Email: ee_ubsp@pwd.gov.bd
28	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

Md. Anisuzzaman Ibne Omar
Executive Engineer (Procurement)
Urban Building Safety Project (UBSP)
Public Works Department, Purta Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka

TO LET
GULSHAN 2 RD. 79X NEST
ITALIAN NEAR OTHER
EMBASSIES, 2600 SFT 4 BED
4 BATH, LARGE DRAWING /
DINING UPTODATE AMENITIES.
Contact # 01713171369

Notice
It is general information for all concerned, that the product by Pharmik Laboratories Ltd. (Pharmik Hand Care' (MA No. 179-116-071) Batch No.010720 declared sub-standard by the National Control Laboratory, Mohakhali, Dhaka. For the sake of general mass the representatives of the company will be withdrawn from the whole area very soon as would request you all to return the same treated the matter as urgent.-Authority.

Department of International Relations
Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342
Admission Notice (Spring Semester) 2021
for
Masters in International Relations (EMIR) Programme

- An applicant must have a Bachelor's degree in any discipline, with at least 2nd division/class or CGPA 2.5 at every level.

Application Process:
Application can be done either online or offline. Online application process can be completed by visiting at emir.iiitju.edu.bd or offline application form can be collected and submitted to the office of the Department of International Relations (working day from 8:30am to 4:00pm).

Important Deadlines:

Availability of Application Form	: 25 December to 29 January 2021.
Online Viva Voce	: 30 January 2021; Saturday; 10:00am to 2:00pm.
Class Starts	: 5 February 2021; Friday.
Application fee	: 1000/- Taka (online/offline), for complete payment procedure please visit our website emir.iiitju.edu.bd .

For more information:
Phone: 0171186057, 01710771770 (from 8:30am to 04:00pm)

Dr. Md. Khalid Quddus
Coordinator, EMIR, JU

POST-BREXIT TRADE PACT

WHAT WE KNOW

The European Union and Britain on Thursday agreed a post-Brexit trade deal after almost ten months of tortuous negotiations to govern ties when the UK exits the single market. Here is what we know so far about the 2,000-page accord -- still yet to be published -- that covers areas from fishing to future competition after December 31.

TARIFFS: The deal means there will be no tariffs or quotas on goods produced in the UK and EU moving between the two sides. London has hailed the lack of tariffs as a major positive of the deal -- but it simply helps maintain part of the benefits Britain already enjoyed as a member of the bloc.

FISHING: The two sides reached a hard fought compromise that will see EU boats gradually relinquish 25 percent of their current quotas during a five-and-a-half year transition period. After that there will be annual negotiations on the amount of fish EU vessels can take from British waters -- and if Brussels isn't happy it can impose economic measures against the UK.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD: The UK had fought hard to avoid having a system put in place that could see Brussels able to force it to follow its rules on such issues as environmental or labour regulations and state aid. But the UK government admitted the deal allowed for either side to impose "countermeasures if they believe they are being damaged" subject to arbitration.

CUSTOMS: Britain will leave the EU's customs union along with the single market at the end of the year, meaning that businesses face new red tape for imports and exports across the Channel.

SECURITY: London said the deal will see the two continue to share DNA, fingerprint and passenger details and see them cooperate through the EU's Europol. Brussels says "security cooperation can be suspended in case of violations by the UK of its commitment for continued adherence to the European Convention of Human Rights".

'BIG CHANGES': Citizens of the UK and EU will no longer enjoy free movement to live and work between the two. "The free movement of persons, goods, services and capital between the UK and the EU will end," Brussels said.



A child plays with a lit sparkler whilst celebrating Christmas Eve at an improvised shelter, set up under an overpass by people who lost their homes due to the floods caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Global Christmas celebrations took place yesterday amid the coronavirus pandemic, with millions of people limiting festivities in a bid to spread further contagion. Many are spending their Christmas grieving, after the health crisis claimed the lives of 1.7 million people so far this year.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkey says China's Sinovac Covid vaccine 91pc effective

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey will receive its first shipment of China's Sinovac coronavirus vaccine within days as preliminary domestic tests showed it was 91pc effective, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said.

Ankara in the next few days will also sign a deal with Pfizer/BioNTech for 4.5 million doses, with the option to buy 30 million more from the US pharmaceutical giant and its German partner, Koca said.

Turkey will initially receive three million doses of Sinovac and have the option for 50 million more as it begins inoculations next month, starting with healthcare workers and the most vulnerable.

The preliminary tests on 7,371 volunteers in Turkey showed that the Chinese vaccine was 91.25 per cent effective, although phase three tests were still not complete.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump admin pushing \$500m arms sale to Riyadh: report

Donald Trump's administration plans to authorise the sale of nearly \$500m in weapons to Saudi Arabia before the United States president leaves the White House, US media outlets have reported, a move that one expert slammed as "a moral outrage". Citing two unnamed sources familiar with the issue, Bloomberg reported that the State Department notified Congress on Tuesday that it was moving ahead to issue a licence for the sale of precision-guided, air-to-ground munitions to Riyadh, estimated to be worth \$478m. US weapons manufacturer Raytheon Technologies Corp will be able to sell the weapons directly to the Saudis when it receives the licence, Bloomberg said. The agreement also includes a \$97m internal security communications system, the newspaper said.

Police killing of unarmed Black man ignites fresh US outrage

The fatal shooting of an unarmed Black man by police in Columbus, Ohio -- the US city's second such killing this month -- sparked a fresh wave of protests on Thursday against racial injustice and police brutality in the country. Andre Maurice Hill, 47, was in the garage of a house on Monday night when he was shot several times by a police officer who had been called to the scene for a minor incident. Seconds before the gunfire, bodycam footage shows Hill walking towards the policeman holding a cell phone in his left hand, while his other hand cannot be seen. Columbus police chief Thomas Quinlan announced Thursday that he was moving to fire the officer, Adam Coy, on allegations of "critical misconduct".

Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch sold for \$22 million



Michael Jackson's famed Neverland Ranch in California has finally sold, more than 10 years after the death of the pop star who abandoned the property following his trial on charges of molesting a young boy there. Billionaire investor Ron Burkle, a former family friend of Jackson, recently bought the sprawling 2,700 acre estate, his spokesman said on Thursday. The Wall Street Journal said the estate, which was renamed Sycamore Valley Ranch several years ago, sold for \$22 million according to public records. In 2015, the asking price was \$100 million and in 2017 it was re-listed for \$67 million. Jackson bought the property in Los Olivos, about 193 km north of Los Angeles, in 1988 for \$19.5 million. After financial troubles, in 2008 he handed over the title to Colony Capital LLC, which held a loan on the property.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Mass vaccination starts in Latin America

US imposes travel curbs on UK over new Covid-19 variant

AFP, Montevideo

Three Latin American countries launched mass immunization programs on Thursday as fears grew in Europe over a variant coronavirus strain that is believed to be far more contagious than the original version.

Frontline medical staff in Mexico and Chile were among the first to receive their vaccines while Costa Rica began its own immunization program, with President Carlos Alvarado hailing what "may be the beginning of the end of this pandemic."

Mexico televised the start of its mass immunization program after it received its first 3,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine from Belgium. Mexico has registered more than 120,000 Covid-19 deaths -- the world's fourth highest toll after the United States, Brazil and India.

In Chile, 46-year-old nursing assistant Zulema Riquelme was the first person shown receiving the jab in the presence of President Sebastian Pinera.

"I'm very excited and nervous," she said, hours after the first 10,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine arrived by plane.

Argentina, meanwhile, received the first 300,000



doses of Russia's controversial Sputnik V vaccine on Thursday on a special flight from Moscow. The country is the first in Latin America to approve the Russian vaccine.

The new strain of the virus that surfaced in Britain and has been detected in small numbers elsewhere, appeared for the first time in Germany after a woman flew in from London.

Although it appears to spread more easily, experts say there is no evidence it is more lethal or resistant to vaccines.

US authorities on Thursday announced that passengers arriving on flights from the United Kingdom will need to test negative for coronavirus before departure, the latest restriction imposed due to a new Covid-19 variant. The new rule takes effect Monday and requires a negative test within 72 hours of departure.

Meanwhile, another new variant of the new coronavirus seems to have emerged in Nigeria, the head of Africa's disease control body has said, cautioning more investigation was needed.

Singapore on Thursday also confirmed its first case of the new coronavirus variant. The case is linked to a passenger who travelled from UK.

Iran warns Trump against 'adventurism'

AFP, Tehran

Iran has warned the US president against any "adventurism" before leaving the White House, after Donald Trump said he would hold "Iran responsible" for any fatal attack on Americans in Iraq.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's comments came after Trump accused Iran of being behind a rocket attack Sunday on the US embassy in the Iraqi capital, that caused material damage but no deaths.

The exchange also comes as tensions mount ahead of the first anniversary of the killing of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in a US drone strike in Baghdad.

Trump "uses a worthless photo to recklessly accuse Iran", Zarif said on Twitter, referring to an image Trump had posted after the embassy attack of three rockets he said had come from Iran.

"Trump will bear full responsibility for any adventurism on his way out," Zarif added.

Trump ordered a drone strike on January 3 this year to kill powerful Iranian general Soleimani while he was in Baghdad. Days later, Iran launched a volley of missiles at Iraqi bases housing US and other coalition troops. Trump refrained from any further military response.

But the US leader, now in his final weeks in office, is sticking to his "maximum pressure" approach toward the Iranian regime.

"Now we hear chatter of additional attacks against Americans in Iraq," Trump tweeted Wednesday, before warning, "if one American is killed, I will hold Iran responsible. Think it over".



Protesters get detained in front of the supreme court as they take part in a protest after the parliament was dissolved and general elections were announced to be held in April and May, more than a year ahead of schedule, in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Park Provence At Khilbari adjacent to Baridhara Block-J
Redefining Comfort & Style

Park Provence a luxury highrise has more to it than just its cosmopolitan looks. Being built to truly international standards and located adjacent to Baridhara J Block, it is designed to be one of the finest residential developments in Dhaka. Park Provence consists of modern 3 bedroom apartments with high-end amenities encompassing a **Swimming Pool, Community Hall, Gymnasium, Rooftop Garden, Walkway, Children Play Area etc.**

Call 16687

Or Mobile: 01713 331201, 01713 367486
01713 048556

Asset DEVELOPMENTS
Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd
91 Gulshan Avenue



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Archaeology
Office of the Regional Director
Chattogram & Sylhet Division, Kotbari, Cumilla-3503
www.archaeology.comilla.gov.bd

Date: 24-12-2020

Memo No. 43.23.1900.136.17.002.21/718

Invitation for Tender

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Cultural Affairs.			
2.	Agency	Department of Archaeology.			
3.	Procuring entity	Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503.			
4.	Procuring entity code	134.			
5.	Procuring entity district	Cumilla.			
6.	Invitation for	Procurement of Works & Supply of Goods.			
7.	Invitation Ref. No.	43.23.1900.136.17.002.21/			
8.	Date	24-12-2020			
9.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).			
10.	Budget and source of funds	GOB.			
11.	Project program code (applicable)	3258108			
12.	Project program name (applicable)	Boundary wall construction work of Dalal Bazar Laxminarayan Zamindar House under Sadar upazila of Laxmipur district 2020-21.			
13.	Tender package No.	01/2020-2021			
14.	Tender package date	24-12-2020			
15.	Tender publication date	26-12-2020			
16.	Tender last selling date	10-01-2021 up to office hours.			
17.	Tender submission date and time	11-01-2021 at 12.30pm (Tender will be received directly (in hand) or by post or by courier in any working day before the stated time).			
18.	Tender opening date and time	11-01-2021 at 2.30pm.			
19.	Name & address of the offices	Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503.			
a)	Selling & receiving tender document	(a) Office of the Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Shalban Bihar, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503. (b) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Cumilla.			
b)	Opening tender document (principal)	(a) Office of the Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Shalban Bihar, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503.			
20.	Eligibility of tenderer	Experience in Construction Works in a single contract as per TDS.			
21.	Lot	Location			
	Identification of supply of goods & works	Price of tender document in (Tk)			
		Tender security amount in (Tk)			
		Completion time in days			
1.	লক্ষীপুর জেলার সদর উপজেলায় দালাল বাজার লক্ষী-নারায়ণ জমিদারবাড়ির সীমানা প্রাচীর নির্মাণ কাজ ২০২০-২০২১ খ্রিঃ।	Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503.	1500/-	1,30,000/-	90 days
22.	Name and designation of official invitation tender: Dr. Md. Ataur Rahman, Regional Director.				
23.	Address of official inviting tender: Regional Director, Department of Archaeology, Cumilla University Road, Koatbari, Cumilla-3503.				
24.	Special instructions:				
	1. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				
	2. At the time of purchase of tender the tenderers must show all the original relevant documents including papers in support of eligibility.				
	3. All procurement activities must be maintained by The Public Procurement Regulations-2008.				
	4. In under any unavoidable circumstances tender document selling, receiving and opening are disturbed, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.				

(Signature)
Regional Director
Phone No. 081-76211

GD-2069

Team India to focus only on the format they are good at: cheating

FAKE SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

After a drubbing by a far superior cricketing team, Team India has decided to go back to their roots and focus their strategies on what won them that match in the movie Lagaan: absolute disdain for the rules.

Closer to home, Bangladeshi fans have also urged their big brother's team to do other cricketing nations the way they have done Bangladesh for so long.

"India should stick to playing cricket the way they know: change the replays to show what you want, intimidate opponents and umpires and rewrite the rules where you see fit," a former Bangladesh captain said while talking to this correspondent.

A Team India insider, however, blamed the Test match format of the game for their embarrassing defeat. "No one can play for five days straight anymore. We are more used to the T20 format, with glitz, glamour and hard hitters. Over the years, we have forgotten how to play proper seamers and perhaps it really is time to go back to our roots. Focus on spinners. And

focus on sheer luck.

"We are still the number 1 team in the world. The thing is, the test format is outdated. Even more important, it still reeks of the colonial and imperial history of the game and this has become harder to digest over the years," he said.

When asked what he was talking about, the insider mentioned how people would politely clap for fours and sixes, how there are still tea breaks and the 'sportsmanship' conduct was defined using white lenses only.

"I can't help but think of Maradona's hand of god goal and what a big deal it was made out to be. How the focus has always been on cheating South Americans, like English boys don't dive. The same kind of bias exists in the Test games as well," he said.

While this did sound like excuses, the insider said to watch out for the next series. "We plan on investing heavily in our game as we cannot invest in non-stop advertisements about our victory, since we didn't really win."



Ban declared on tearing, damaging or vandalising political posters

KASHEB HUSSAIN

The government has decided to ban citizens from tearing, damaging or vandalising any of the millions of political posters plastered all over the city.

"We have noticed that people have begun to partially tear off pieces of posters our party members put up on the boundary walls of homes and offices around the city. We are very sensitive about this and have adopted a zero-tolerance policy for such acts of vandalism," Sadek Boka, the chief of the ruling party, said in a statement today.

"We feel really hurt when people do this. Plus, if you damage our posters, we are slighted. Our egos are bruised and people will begin to think we are weak, and that our achievements mean nothing at all," he added.

Those violating the ban will of course be given a death sentence. The sentence will not be valid if the culprits die in a crossfire.

"Sometimes when stopping these poster terrorists, they tend to retaliate. They try to run away. So of course, we have to fire at them, since we aren't fit enough to chase after them. We also have terrible aim, so it's not like this qualifies as police brutality. Also, is it really brutality if you

are a terrorist?" Chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Rajesh Kibria said.

When asked if using the already depleted police forces to guard posters of all things was logical, the chief said they had to keep the force members busy. "It takes a lot of money to get a proper police posting. If we don't keep them busy, they will try to sell drugs or extort people as they do. We must take steps to address these things. Plus, posters are important," he said.

"Damage to a poster can be the death of a politician's career. Imagine seeing the picture of your leader with the face torn off. Not only is it insulting, but it is a direct assault on the image of the state. And people must do all they can to uphold the image of the state, since we are doing nothing to do so," Ahsin Hasan, former gangster turned ward commissioner, said. When asked if a peaceful resolution could be found, a number of ministers disagreed. "Listen we are hanging on to our posts by threads. The slightest show of weakness for us, like having torn posters, tells the people that we aren't as strong as we pretend to be. So no, we cannot go for peaceful solutions when the iron fist works so well," a minister said under the condition of anonymity.

TSC stands for Thirteen-Storey Complex, not Teacher-Student Centre anymore

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

You might have heard the news that Teacher-Student Centre, popularly known as TSC, is going to entirely be replaced by a multi-storey building. This popular meeting place of students and teachers is going to get a new look and it is all part of the new development plan!

Now, you may wonder whether this new development plan would change its present name as a big complex will replace it. Mixed reactions, including anger, have been seen from students as they fear that they might lose the place forever. But, don't worry! TSC will remain TSC, no matter what happens

inside or outside of TSC.

As the building will look like a shopping mall or a residential place, it cannot be called Teacher-Student Centre, but the TSC name and its legacy will remain.

How? Because of the wise authority and their development plans which are always humanitarian. To retain the legacy of the area, the authority had been wondering how they could change the look of the place, without changing its name. And that is when they struck gold.

They thought that if they could

make a thirteen-storey building here, they wouldn't have to change its name. Because, calling it Thirteen-Storey [spelling error, but can't be changed now without spending another 100 crore taka] Complex will help to keep its name TSC.

Wait! They have a future plan too. As a part of further development, they can extend the thirteen to thirty! That means TSC will remain TSC whether it has thirteen or thirty storeys. Let the students and teachers meet somewhere else. There are huge development programs to accomplish.





Behind the scene of 'Taqdeer'.



Still from 'Taqdeer'.



Director Syed Ahmed Shawki with co-creator Saleh Sobhan Auneem.

TAQDEER – A STELLAR WEB ORIGINAL

SHARMIN JOYA

"Taqdeer", the fourth Hoichoi original from Bangladesh, released on December 18, 2020. It is gaining immense appreciation and rave reviews from different corners of the world, besides Bangladesh and India. In a recent chat with *The Daily Star*, the creators Syed Ahmed Shawki and Saleh Sobhan Auneem spoke about the success of the show.

"Taqdeer" features Chanchal Chowdhury in the lead role, along with Sanjida Preeti, Manoj Pramanik, Partha Barua and Sohel Mondal Rana among others. The eight-episode series has stirred intrigue, and is being showered with praise all over social media.

In "Taqdeer", Chanchal Chowdhury plays a man who gets entangled in a murder scandal, when he finds a mysterious corpse in his freezer van.

While conceiving the idea for the show, director Shawki and co-creator Auneem crafted original characters who represented Bangladesh. Some reviews from India said that "Taqdeer" is one of the best shows of Hoichoi till date. "I carefully read all the reviews and comments," says Shawki. "I am overwhelmed and humbled by the fact that people loved our show so much."

Shawki also said that people are liking Chanchal Chowdhury's work, which is expected, but Sohel Mondal



Stills from 'Taqdeer'.

Rana wins the hearts of the viewers with a breakthrough performance.

The director added that Manoj Pramanik is brilliant on the show. "Chanchal Bhai fit the lead character's role perfectly. Rana's character is very loving and people can easily get emotionally attached to him. Manoj's character has shades of grey, and he is not easy to like," he says. "I welcome constructive criticism and look forward to those who can point out the flaws. It will help us to improve upon our future projects."



On the other hand, Auneem had a different view about reviews. "I absolutely try to avoid reviews and comments," he says, "rather, I try to discuss and take suggestions from colleagues and friends."

Shawki asserted that OTT platforms must offer variety to the audiences. "I am actually reading the reviews to observe the kinds of stories that people are looking for," he says. "We often hear that audiences look for specific genres such as dark comedies or thrillers on OTT platforms. However, I think these platforms should be full of options,

so that people get to choose what they want to watch, according to their mood."

He also mentioned that people in Bangladesh are mainly saying that they are proud of "Taqdeer", whereas Indian reviews are drawing comparisons between the show and India's own web originals. In many cases, "Taqdeer" has earned higher scores, in comparison to Indian projects. Even certain dialogues from the show are a hit among the viewers.

The co-creators Shawki and Auneem are grateful to Hoichoi for supporting them and giving them full creative freedom.

"We didn't expect such widely positive responses," shares Shawki.

Auneem further adds, "Frankly, without Hoichoi's support and their belief in us, we would not have come this far."

"Taqdeer", a Film Noir and Film Syndicate Production is jointly written by Neyamutullah Masum and Syed Ahmed Shawki. Film Syndicate is owned by Tanim Noor and Krishnendu Chattopadhyay.

Film Noir will start working on their new project soon. "We are planning to collaborate with other creators, and produce our next projects, as we believe collaborations will make us stronger and more refined," concludes Auneem.

Catching up with Amzad Hossain

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

In more than two decades in the music industry, multi-instrumentalist and music director Amzad Hossain has continuously adapted and evolved with the changing times. The Daily Star catches up with the Meghdol and Fuad and Friends drummer to talk about his musical philosophy, current projects and more.

The latest renditions of songs uploaded through your studio page are mind-blowing. What other projects are you working on now?

I wanted to feature artists that I shared my journey with throughout the years, as well as upcoming talents, through my studio page "Taal Kachari". I am grateful for the response that I have received, and many more surprises are coming from the page! Besides stage shows and other commercial studio work, I have done the theme song for OPPO O Fan Festival, and a UNDP project raising awareness against violence against women.

How are you keeping yourself motivated during these tough times?

To be honest, I feel like being alive is a blessing during this pandemic! Even though it is more difficult to record music with artistes during limitations in movement, we have eventually adapted working remotely. I am also listening to a lot of music and watching movies, whenever I get the time.

You started your musical career as a drummer. What prompted you to learn the art of music production?

I started tinkering with a software called "Cakewalk" in 2001, out of curiosity. However, I then became busy with session work. I only started producing seriously in 2010, when I did 7 songs for Shuvo bhai's album, "Onek Kichu". You can say that after drums, I learned everything else situationally.

How do you think our music industry can improve in the post-covid days?

The pandemic has really been harsh on musicians and live performers. However, the biggest problem with our music industry is that it is not specialised at all. For a musical production in, say Bollywood, a different person would be assigned to playing instruments, mixing and mastering a song. More often than not, we have to do most of these things ourselves here. The culture of industrial involvement needs to be instilled in our industry for it to become more professional.

Who are your favourite artistes to collaborate with?

That is a difficult question indeed! I would especially mention Shuvo bhai, with whom I have shared the stage for 17 years.

I really enjoy working with Shawon Gaanwala, Elita Karim, Priyanka Gope, Palbasha Siddiqui, and Johan Alamgir. Artistes like Tashfee, Antora and Sameera are also very talented, and have a good future ahead of them.

What is your ultimate musical goal?

It might sound farfetched, but I dream of collaborating with David Gilmour one day!

Do you have any message for the readers?

I will just say that not a single person can survive without music, so be sure to continue supporting good music and your favourite artistes.



PHOTO: SHEKHI MEHEDI MORSHED

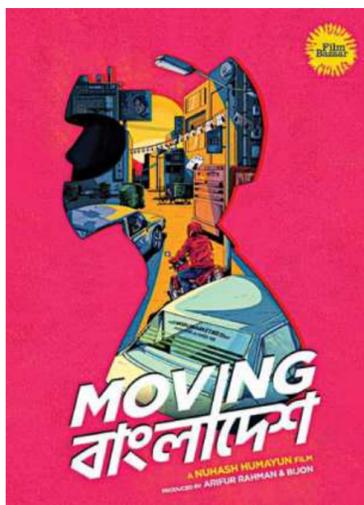
Nuhash Humayun on his first feature film

SHARMIN JOYA

Nuhash Humayun is one of the most promising young filmmakers in the country, proving his pedigree with many web projects, short films, TVCs and music videos. He is also one of the directors of Bangladesh's first anthology film "Iti Tomari Dhaka", which was recently selected for an Oscar nomination in the International category.

Nuhash has recently announced his first feature film "Moving Bangladesh", produced by Arifur Rahman and Bijon Imtiaz. Besides direction, the story of the film is also written by Nuhash. In a recent conversation with *The Daily Star*, he shared insights and more details about the film.

"Moving Bangladesh" is said to be based on the true story of a young university student in Dhaka, who is tired of being stuck in traffic, and life itself. Demanding change, he and his friends struggle to create a motorcycle-based ridesharing



service that may change the way we travel in Bangladesh, forever. In fact, it may even change himself. This was the beginning of something special - the creation of the ridesharing service we know now as Pathao.

"Pathao today is a 100 million dollar plus company, changing the lives of people in Bangladesh and beyond," says Nuhash. "Our film is about the early days, the failures, the



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NUHASH HUMAYUN

roadblocks. It's the kind of inspirational story about Bangladesh that I always wanted to see on the big screen."

"I have known Nuhash since he was a kid," says Arif, one of the producers of the film. "It was probably in 2003 that I interviewed him as a journalist. Since then, I have seen his extraordinary talent, and he also shared with me that he likes making creative stories." Arif also said that it is their sixth project in Film Bazaar. "We have a good rapport with Nuhash. He pitched two stories to us. Between the two, the plot of "Moving Bangladesh" seemed more relevant and different to us. We hope to start the shoot from next year," he adds.

"Moving Bangladesh" has been selected for the new edition of NFDC Goa Film Bazaar Co Production Market. It is the only Bangladeshi film represented this year. Even in the film's writing and development stage, the project has gained international attention, being selected for the Open Doors Consultancy of Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland in their second phase (two other projects from Bangladesh were previously selected).

As part of the consultancy, Nuhash is assigned script supervisor Nicos Panayotopoulos for a year-long mentorship. "It was also selected for Los Angeles based Film Independent's Global Media Makers workshop in May 2020, where it caught the eyes of Hollywood producers Jim Young and Tatiana Kelly," he shares.

"I was at the world premiere of "Iti Tomari Dhaka" in 2018 watching our anthology film with a global audience - I was completely

overwhelmed. I've been wondering since then, what's the story I want to tell for my own feature - then I realised the answer was right in front of me, on an app in my phone and everywhere in my city. Too many stories from Bangladesh are about poverty or oppression; but I want to tell an inspirational one," asserts Nuhash.

Nuhash also informs that Pathao will not have any financial stake or creative control over the film as it is an independent project. "The founders have been very cooperative and also aware this is a work of fiction, although based on facts," says Nuhash. "At the end of the day, this is a Nuhash Humayun film, not a documentary on a start-up. It's a human drama about the struggles of our generation."

Nuhash explained why it is his first debut feature, since he had previously worked in "Iti Tomari Dhaka". "Iti Tomari Dhaka" is an anthology film, with multiple directors making shorts. This is why I consider "Moving Bangladesh" to be my first full length feature."

Although the director previously got many filmmaking offers, he was waiting for the right time and plot to begin with. "I wanted to take the time to develop the story for my first full length feature," shares Nuhash. "I met Bijon in Busan by complete chance and we started talking about movies. Bijon and Arif have since signed on as my producers. It's very cool to find producers who help you achieve your vision. Throughout the lockdown, we've been having virtual meetings, conducting research, discovering the soul of the film."

The cast and shoot date of the film is yet to be announced.

Your Dream Home Awaits!

OUR ALL PROJECTS

- ▶ @ **BARIDHARA**
ASSURANCE MARZUQ
- ▶ @ **UTTARA**
BANANI KUNJA
BADHON
MYSTIC RENU MAHAL
CORNER MEADOWS
- ▶ @ **AGARGAON**
ABEDIN'S DREAM
- ▶ @ **DHANMONDI R/A**
LA MANDARIN
SALVIA (100% READY)
- ▶ @ **IQBAL ROAD**
ASSURANCE BAROKOT
- ▶ @ **MOHAKHALI**
MS CENTER
(READY OFFICE SPACE)
- ▶ @ **LALMATIA**
MUTTALIB VILLA
- ▶ @ **NORTH BADDA**
KHALIL GARDEN
(100% READY)
- ▶ @ **NIKUNJA**
ASIAN TOWER
(OFFICE SPACE)
- ▶ @ **BANANI**
MEHERUNNESSA VILLA
- ▶ @ **ASHKONA**
SHARNALI
(100% READY)
- ▶ @ **BANGSHAL**
AZHAR MARKET
(100% READY COMMERCIAL SHOP)
- ▶ @ **BASHUNDHARA**
ASSURANCE SUNFLOWER
- ▶ @ **MOHAMMADPUR**
SULTAN'S LEGACY
(100% READY)

*** More Upcoming Projects are Under Design.

☎ 09-606-222-444

MEMBER REHAB

ISO 9001:2008

CORPORATE OFFICE

ASSURANCE Tower, 65/B, Kemal Ataturk

Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213

Our Assurance on Quality (on Price on Service)

Prime location in Dhaka city. Prime location in Dhaka city.

ASSURANCE DEVELOPMENTS WE CARE...

Assurance Developments Ltd. is one of the top Real Estate Developer in the country.

ASSU/MKT/2012/26

Changing status of forestland will be disastrous

Lawmakers must honour PM's directives

At a time when it is imperative to protect whatever is left of our forests, something that has been emphasised by the Prime Minister herself, it is puzzling to see certain lawmakers acting in a way that is contrary to this.

According to a report in this daily, a local lawmaker has formally proposed to change the status of nearly 600 acres of reserve forest and wildlife sanctuary in Cox's Bazar into khas land for leasing it out to the people living there. What is most surprising is that the lawmaker is also a member of the parliamentary standing committee on the environment, forest and climate change ministry. Why would he make a proposal that would have a negative impact on the reserved forest?

According to the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950, forestland cannot be leased out and in 2018, a land ministry circular asked the district deputy commissioners not to lease out any protected forest. According to the villagers, they have been living in the area peacefully with no problems with the forest department. So why is there a need to formally change its status? As a Forest Department official has hinted—there is no guarantee that after changing the status of the forestland the original villagers will be evicted and the land used for other purposes. Let us not forget the numerous instances of disputed forestland being classified as khas land either by mistake or intentionally which has facilitated land grabbing or lead to the land being leased out to local influential quarters for commercial purposes.

It seems that while the Forest Department is against the changing of the status, the land office is in favour of it.

Since the government has made it clear that reserved forestland must be protected and the fact that those people living in the area have not faced any problems, there is little logic in de-reserving the forest which will obviously degrade it further.

We are alarmed at these actions that are clearly against our environmental laws and the objectives of the government to preserve our precious forests. This paper has also reported how another lawmaker from Cumilla-6 constituency has allegedly threatened an official of the Department of Environment (DoE) with dire consequences after she inspected a hill-cutting project by Roads and Highways (RHD) and prepared a damage-assessment report. An 11,400 cubic feet of hill was being flattened to expand the existing road under the RHD project. Wasn't it the DoE official's job to inspect such activity and make her assessment of the environmental damage? The government must make it clear to all public officials, especially lawmakers who have immense power in their constituencies, that they must all work in unison to prevent the destruction of the forestlands, especially the reserved ones. Those who take actions contrary to this mandate must be held accountable.

Meeting nutritional needs of the ultra-poor 'Pushti Bari' concept can be implemented across the country

It is heartening that women in char areas of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila are learning to ensure balanced nutrition for their families by growing fruits and vegetables around their houses for their own consumption. Reportedly, women from around 11 thousand families with limited resources are involved in this kind of farming. Their houses, built mostly on four to six decimals of land, are being turned into miniature agricultural farms called "Pushti Bari". The project is funded by the European Union and two non-government organisations are training the char residents on how to make the best use of their available land.

Residents of char areas generally live in extreme poverty because of adverse environmental conditions and a lack of work opportunities. Flood and river erosion often wash away their houses and belongings. These poverty-stricken people need special assistance from the government and non-government organisations to be able to live with some form of dignity. They need to be trained with some basic life skills so they can earn a living, have three meals a day and send their children to school. Projects like "Pushti Bari" could be the first step in helping these people move in the right direction.

While previously people of Chilmari chars could not ensure proper nutrition for their families because of high prices of foods and vegetables at the markets, the situation has now changed. After taking the necessary training, people, mostly women, are now utilising every inch of their unused land around the house and growing vegetables and fruits there. After meeting the nutritional needs of the family, many are also selling the excess produce. The example set in the remote chars of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila is very encouraging and should be emulated in other poverty-stricken areas of the country.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Understanding the new strain

WHO announced the new variant of the coronavirus as a normal part of a pandemic's evolution. WHO officials even put a positive light on the discovery of the new strain that prompted a slew of alarmed countries to impose travel restrictions on Britain and South Africa as the world was able to track the virus in real time.

Bangladesh is yet to take a decision. Bangladesh will decide on suspending flights to the UK after understanding the situation over the new spread. We need to look after our personal safety and remain vigilant to tackle the changing colours of the pandemic.

Iftekhar Ahmed Sakib, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, Dhaka

World Rankings and Indexes: Like Ducks to Water



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

EVER since a London based agency Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) partnered with Times Higher Education to measure "academic excellence" against a host of quality indicators at the beginning of the millennium, universities all over the world have been attracted to the idea like ducks to water. Each year these agencies publish the world rankings; seeing the business potential, these two bodies have gone separate ways and kept introducing new categories of university rankings. It has not stopped universities from benchmarking one against the other though.

Universities that feature prominently in the ranking order brandish, and quite deservedly so, their badges of glory, while those in the lower order narrow the focus to highlight the region, area or subject in which they have fared better. For instance, a Bangladeshi university with NGO links tells us how it has performed in the "no poverty" category of sustainable development ranking among the South Asian countries, while keeping relatively mum on other aspects. The main parameters in which a university is judged include teaching and research, academic and employability reputation, student mobility and internationalisation, and faculty student portfolio. Most local universities struggle to excel in these given categories. Therefore, the universities who do not appear on the ranking radar follow

Just when we were gloating over the fact that we had surpassed the GDP of our big neighbour, UNDP released the Global Knowledge Index (GKI). According to which, Bangladesh is in 112th position out of 138 countries of the world.

Abraham Lincoln's maxim: "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt."

However, living in an era of tweets and Trumpism, it's hard to keep silent and hide our inadequacies. Even when someone is silent, others will make sure that the scanty performance is exposed and discussed. There has been a huge uproar following the constant slide of country's oldest university down the ranking order prepared by the QS. The University of Dhaka has slid down from the 600 bracket in 2012 to the 800-1000 bracket this year in the QS World University Ranking. Among the Asian Universities, Dhaka University ranks 134.

has grabbed the largest share of Tk 8,485 crore allocated for 46 public universities. A total of Tk 66 crore of its budget has been earmarked for research. With such allocations given to the university, as taxpayers, we have every right to question how this university is performing compared to other world universities and how they are contributing to the knowledge economy. The university, by definition, is the centre of all knowledge-intensive activities that must prepare the human capital to contribute to national growth with the production of knowledge and technical innovation. It is a university that should set the qualitative standard for the other universities.

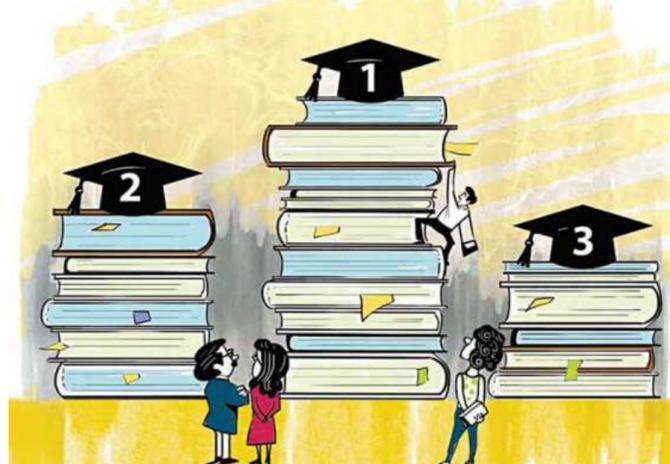
particularly when it involves academic and industry-oriented research. Our poor performance in this sector drags us through the mud.

Just when we were gloating over the fact that we had surpassed the GDP of our big neighbour, UNDP released the Global Knowledge Index (GKI). According to which, Bangladesh is in 112th position out of 138 countries of the world. This is less flattering than all the development indexes in which we are presumably doing better. In total, Bangladesh scored 35.9 in the GKI, a summary list that measures the knowledge performance of countries at the level of seven areas (the scores received by Bangladesh are given in parenthesis): pre-university education (43.9), technical and vocational education and training (49), higher education (24.1), research, development and innovation (16.4), information and communications technology (43.1), economy (31.5) and the general enabling environment (46.4). Only some failed countries of Africa and central Asia are in the same league as us.

The heat map prepared by the UNDP locates Bangladesh in the red zone in higher education and research. This is alarming for a country whose economy relies on cheap labour that it employs in its garment sector or it exports overseas for its remittance. Vietnam, which is a competitor in the textile sector, has moved up in the GKI. And the African country Ethiopia is being targeted by the fashion industry as the new source of cheap labour for garments. Unless we shape up, we are in the danger of further degradation.

There is no way we can see the university ranking and GKI in isolation. The purpose of a university is directly linked to the development of a country. Development today is not measured by the bricks and mortars used in the elevated expressways or bridges. We are entering a knowledge economy where the role of the university is that of a knowledge-producing and disseminating entity. A twenty-first-century university has a new mandate of a developmental function. Countries such as Israel, Singapore, Costa Rica, Finland, or Switzerland can show that knowledge production can provide greater economic security and standards for all in a self-serving way to ensure a healthier and more prosperous nation. Will we take it like ducks to water? Or will we reject it like goats?

Shamsad Mortuza is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of ULAB.



The heat map prepared by the UNDP locates Bangladesh in the red zone in higher education and research.

In terms of employability, the university is ranked in the 500 bracket. Its Economics department is among the world's top 350-400 subject wise category. The last piece of information is an encouraging sign as it goes on to show that there is something right about an individual programme, which can be emulated by others.

Then again, when we look at the incentives received by the university, compared to some self-funded self-motivated private universities, who have outperformed the University of Dhaka, there are reasons to be upset. This year Dhaka University received Tk 830.06 crore from the government's exchequer. It

With more than 40 students vying for each seat, Dhaka University has the luxury of not compromising its quality. Born in 1921, the university has a huge network of alumni who are successfully placed all over the world. Most of the country's policymakers are linked with the university. The academic and employers' reputations of the university, which constitutes 50 percent of the marks for QS ranking, are somewhat guaranteed. The other 50 percent marks for the ranking include research and citations, internationalisation, and faculty quality and quantity. This is where the underbelly of our higher education gets exposed,

The 'Wonder Drug' takes a quantum leap!

CM HASAN and PAULINE FRANCISCA GOMES

"THE next four to six months could be the worst of the epidemic", Bill Gates said during an interview recently. With Gates' prediction and second waves hitting several countries more severely than before, we have, indeed, come to a challenging forefront. Amidst all the uncertainties, the relentless efforts of researchers and doctors have yet again shone a ray of hope.

Ivermectin, a drug that has been highly acclaimed in the past few months for treatment of Covid-19 has once again come under the lime-light, but this time as a tool of prevention of the novel virus. A research on the preventive effect of Ivermectin on the SARS-COV-2 was published in the *European Journal of Medical and Health Sciences* on December 15, 2020, conducted by a research team in Bangladesh Medical College and Shomman Foundation under the guidance of chief investigator Dr Tarek Alam, professor and Head of Medicine Department in Bangladesh Medical College, and co-investigator Dr Rubaiul Murshed, Chairperson of Shomman.

A total of 118 healthcare workers actively engaged in taking care of Covid-19 patients were purposively selected and among them 58 subjects were given 12mg once monthly dose of Ivermectin for 4 months and the rest 60 subjects did not receive the drug. At the end of the study period, 44 out of 60 (73.3 percent) who did not receive a monthly dose of Ivermectin contracted Covid-19, whereas only 4 out of 58 (6.9 percent) who received the drug tested positive for the disease.

Earlier in July 2020, the research team led by Dr Alam and Dr Murshed had published a case series, combining Ivermectin and Doxycycline to treat Covid-19 patients with a higher rate of success, a major feat in combating the virus. This time, by resorting to the preventive function of the drug, the team has yet again reached another milestone. Although conducted in a small scale, this study has ignited hope in winning the battle against the SARS-COV-2 while waiting for vaccines to make their way into every household. The team has named the drug "People's Medicine" for its cost effectiveness and wide availability within the reach of all. However, the necessity of using masks and maintaining

social distance still overpower all preventive protocols that have been recommended till date.

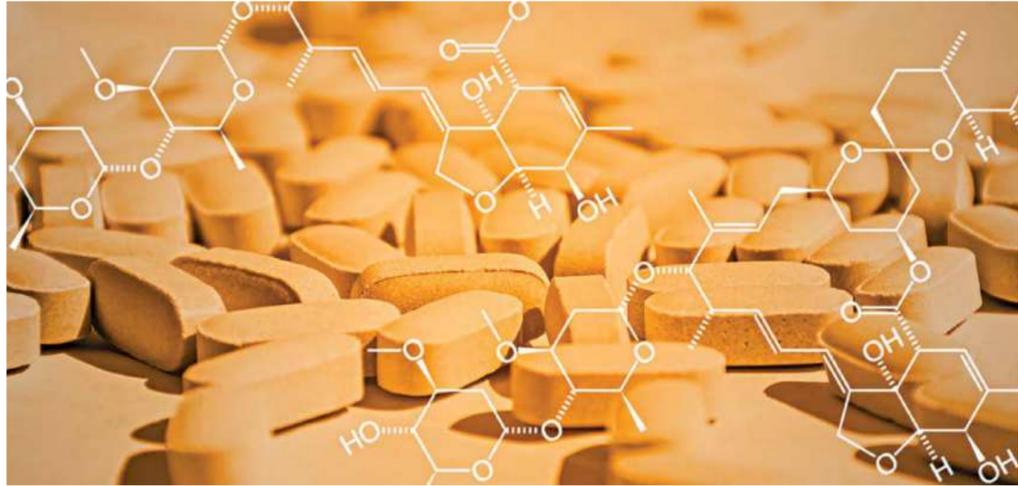
Study on Ivermectin as pre-exposure prophylaxis of Covid-19 has also been acknowledged across the globe by many doctors and researchers. Recently, Dr Pierre Kory, a well-known pulmonologist in USA and the President of Frontline Covid-19 Critical Care (FLCCC) Alliance emphasised on the preventive effect of the drug on his recent review article where he compiled all data of Ivermectin prophylaxis studies, being conducted across the world. In Dr

Internationally acclaimed trials have shown positive cure rates of Covid-19 with Ivermectin in the past few months and now with its preventive capabilities, the drug has taken over the podium yet again. Based on the mountains of data on Ivermectin, many hospitals have already included the "wonder drug" in their treatment protocol to fight this disease.

In USA research published in *Chest* (Chest is peer-reviewed medical Journal published by American College of chest physicians) on October 12, 2020 by Juliana Cepelowicz Rajter, MD et al

itself. Bangladesh being the pioneer of recognising the treatment and preventive potential of Ivermectin against Covid-19 is, in fact, a success for the entire nation and its government.

Lastly, it must be remembered that the bigger portion of management of Covid-19 involves hand washing, social distancing (at least 2 m/6 feet with non-household as well as household members since recently published studies indicate that household transmission of coronavirus among family members may be responsible for the majority of infections) and using masks (N95 or at



Ivermectin, a drug that has been highly acclaimed in the past few months for treatment of Covid-19 has once again come under the lime-light

Kory's manuscript, along with many studies from Argentina, India, France and Egypt, Dr Alam's research on the preventive effect of Ivermectin gained acknowledgement as a commendable achievement from Bangladesh. Also, Dr Thomas Borody, renowned Australian Gastroenterologist and discoverer of the triple therapy for peptic ulcer, addressed the anti-viral effect of Ivermectin on Covid-19 in his study.

Recently, news from India stated that over 20,000 kalpawis who are likely to camp on the Magh Mela will receive prophylactic dose of Ivermectin along with the frontline workers assigned duties on the Mela campus.

shows label use of Ivermectin in 173 patients at 4 hospitals in Florida (when compared with 107 patients who were not treated with Ivermectin having similar level of disease severity) was associated with lower mortality rate (39 percent among Ivermectin treated patients versus 81 percent who were not treated with Ivermectin) during treatment of Covid-19, especially in patients with severe pulmonary involvement.

Being a Bangladeshi and having been trained in the medical field in this country, it is an honour to be part of such a historic achievement. A medical finding of such vehement importance by a third world country is a victory on

least other type of masks). As significant portion of coronavirus transmission occurs through eye exposure, eye shields can be a very important part of protection from coronavirus infection. To conclude, we must all be vigilant towards the virus and avail all forms of protection to fight through this pandemic together because as Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most adaptable to change."

Dr CM Hasan is Interventional Cardiologist and Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine and Cardiology, Mount Sinai Hospital, New York. Dr Pauline Francisca Gomes is Research Fellow, Shomman Foundation, Dhaka.

Six payment trends to watch out for in 2021

Soumya Basu

THIS year has been like no other for digital payments. Even as economies came to a standstill, consumers pivoted to online shopping and businesses turned to remote delivery and digital acceptance. The pandemic-fueled adoption of all things digital and uncovered distinct possibilities in consumer and business behaviour. Consumers formed brand new habits—using digital technology for work, working from home, and ordering online. Here are six trends that could shape digital payments in Bangladesh in 2021.

Mainstream emergence of integrated commerce

In early 2020, digital took centre-stage as many offline and neighbourhood stores closed and some pivoted to remote delivery. As the economy opened slowly, businesses started implementing new methods like buying online. With 96 million internet subscribers, a cohort of first-time e-commerce shoppers emerged as shoppers started depending on stores that have an online presence.

2021 will see further evolution in this behaviour, especially with e-commerce in Bangladesh expected to touch USD 3 billion by 2023. Integrated commerce will not remain a fad but become commonplace with new-age distribution channels and market aggregators inserting themselves into the value chain. To provide seamless shopping experiences, businesses will become nimble by focusing on app-centred buyers and a multi-channel strategy for consumers shopping online, in-app and in stores. Omni-channel commerce will come of age in 2021.

Rise of pay later

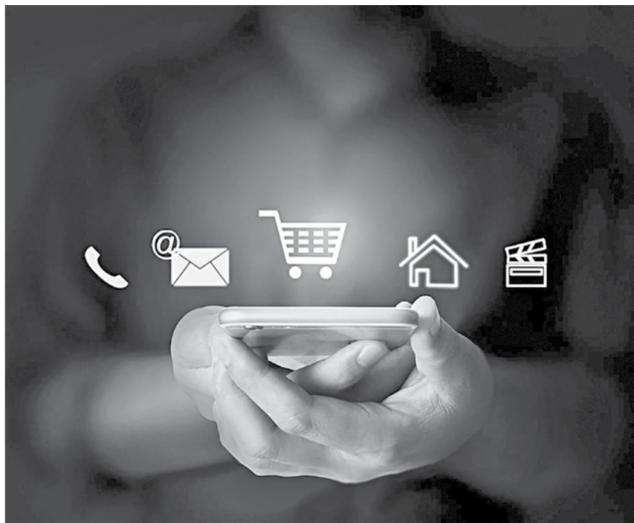
Since the lockdown restrictions came into place, there has been a 50 percent

month-on-month growth in credit cards transactions in Bangladesh—indicating the vast opportunity in consumer credit. The acceleration to digital-first experiences changed consumer expectations on how and when they pay. With personal and discretionary expenditures plummeting, affordability has become a central theme, leading to businesses and consumers welcoming Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) options, injecting speed, flexibility and convenience in paying. The coming year will witness the explosion of mass affordability solutions triggered by BNPL options offered by merchants, manufacturers, marketplaces and, of course, Banks and Fintechs.

Contactless future

This year, in more ways than one, was about “contactless”. People used contactless cards and QR code payments due to safety concerns, leading to an uptick in contactless payments in high footfall segments like grocery.

In early 2020, digital took centre-stage as many offline and neighbourhood stores closed and some pivoted to remote delivery. As the economy opened slowly, businesses started implementing new methods like buying online.



The pandemic-fueled adoption of all things digital and uncovered distinct possibilities in consumer and business behaviour.

Besides the safety, speed and convenience of contactless cards, the central bank's decision to increase contactless payment limits to Tk 5,000 is opportune, as it expands the category of purchases which can be made by tap and pay mode, likely to be quick service restaurants, dining, fuel, supermarkets and pharmacies, and brand new categories like Transit and Tolls could go contactless. And as people get familiar with scanning QR codes, consumers will pay in multiple ways without making contact at merchant locations.

MSMEs to embrace digitisation In 2020 MSMEs increasingly adopted digitisation as the year drastically

altered the way businesses operate—source materials, pay employees or accept customer payments. In 2021, small business owners will continue to look for ways to stay connected to consumers and leverage digital marketplaces. This will help gain exposure to new segments, secure new leads, provide 24/7 access to products and create experiences for digital-first customers. Increased digital MSME footprint will open the gates to MSME credit going mainstream in 2021.

The mobile phone as an Acceptance Device

This year, many “offline” merchants especially in unorganised retail embraced digitisation and will reap

its benefits over the coming years. Further aided by smartphone ubiquity, contactless payments—both QR and NFC led—is set to become the default payment experience at point of sale in 2021.

The advent of “Tap to Phone” will enable small businesses to enter the digital economy with an app on their existing smartphones, so merchants can accept contactless payments without investing in an acceptance terminal. 2021 is expected to see accelerated usage of contactless payments and Tap to Phone could be the catalyst. Expect a flurry of Fintech and Payment Facilitators entering the arena riding off this, in 2021.

No compromise on security

World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2020 pegs cyber-attacks to garner data/money amongst the top risks that businesses are likely to face in coming years. As businesses and consumers adopt digital payments, fraudsters too are getting smarter, putting payment security back in the spotlight. It will be crucial to consider checkout experiences and fraud activities, particularly with Card Not Present transactions, from the lens of payment security. Given the shift to online-first offerings, investments in cybersecurity and authentication will take precedence, especially for small businesses that are not as equipped to handle fraud as big firms. Redoubling business commitment to security will catalyse innovation in payment security. For our nascent digital payments journey to mature in 2021, a continued focus on Risk and Cybersecurity to protect consumers and keep fraudsters at bay is an area all of us in the payments industry have to be vigilant about.

Soumya Basu is Senior Director, Business Development, South Asia, Visa.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
কর অঞ্চল-সিলেট।

শুভেচ্ছা ৬২, হাটজিং এস্টেট, আম্বরখানা, সিলেট।
www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd

নথি নং-প্র-৩/ক/অ-সিলেট/২০২০-২০২১/৭৪২

তারিখ : ২৪/১২/২০২০ খ্রি:

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ, অধিশাখা-২(কর) এর নথি নং- ০৮.০০.০০০০.০৩৭.১১.০২৯.১৭.৯৭, তারিখ: ২৬/০২/২০২০ ইং অনুযায়ী প্রাপ্ত ছাড়পত্রের ভিত্তিতে কর অঞ্চল-সিলেট এর শূন্য পদে বিধি মোতাবেক জনবল নিয়োগের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত পদসমূহে সিলেট বিভাগের প্রকৃত ন্যায়িকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্র. নং	পদের নাম এবং জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী গ্রেড ও বেতন স্কেল	শূন্য পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (মূলতম)	সিলেট সিভিল ডিভিশনের (সিলেট বিভাগ) যে সকল জেলার বাসিন্দা/ন্যায়িকগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন
১।	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর গ্রেড-১১ (১২,৫০০-৩০,২৩০/-)	০১(এক) টি	(ক) যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি (বিজ্ঞান বিভাগের প্রার্থীদের আধিকার দেয়া হবে)। (খ) কম্পিউটার অ্যাপ্লিকেশন পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	(ক) ০১ নং জমিকে বর্ণিত পদে সিলেট ও মৌলভীবাজার জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দারা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
২।	সিটি লিপিকার কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর গ্রেড-১৩ (১১,০০০-২৬,৫৯০/-)	০৩(তিন) টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট (এইচ.এস.সি.) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) বাংলা ও ইংরেজি শর্ট হাতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন গতি যথাক্রমে ৫০ ও ৮০ শব্দ এবং কম্পিউটার টাইপিং গতি প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন যথাক্রমে ২৫ ও ৩০ শব্দ হতে হবে। (গ) কম্পিউটার বেসিক ট্রেনিং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণ (স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে কম্পিউটার চালনা সম্পর্কিত কোর্স) (ঘ) Word Processing সহ Email, Fax ইত্যাদি পরিচালনায় দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।	(খ) ০২ থেকে ০৭ নং জমিকে বর্ণিত পদে সিলেট, হবিগঞ্জ, মৌলভীবাজার, সুনামগঞ্জ জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দারা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৩।	উচ্চমান সহকারী গ্রেড-১৪ (১০,২০০-২৪,৬৮০/-)	১১(এগার) টি	(ক) যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি। (খ) কম্পিউটার বেসিক ট্রেনিং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণ (স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে কম্পিউটার চালনা সম্পর্কিত কোর্স) (গ) Word Processing সহ Email, Fax ইত্যাদি পরিচালনায় দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।	(গ) ০৮ নং জমিকে বর্ণিত পদে সিলেট, মৌলভীবাজার ও সুনামগঞ্জ জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দারা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৪।	সিটি-মুদ্রাক্ষরিক কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর গ্রেড-১৪ (১০,২০০-২৪,৬৮০/-)	০৮(আট) টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট (এইচ.এস.সি.) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) বাংলা ও ইংরেজি শর্ট হাতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন গতি যথাক্রমে ৪৫ ও ৭০ শব্দ এবং কম্পিউটার টাইপিং গতি প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন যথাক্রমে ২৫ ও ৩০ শব্দ হতে হবে। (গ) কম্পিউটার বেসিক ট্রেনিং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণ (স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে কম্পিউটার চালনা সম্পর্কিত কোর্স)	(ঘ) ০৯ নং জমিকে বর্ণিত পদে সিলেট ও হবিগঞ্জ জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দারা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৫।	গাড়ী চালক গ্রেড-১৬ (৯,৩০০-২২,৪৯০/-)	০৪(চার) টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে জুনিয়র স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) হালকা ও ভারী যানবাহন চালনার বৈধ ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্সধারী। (গ) বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের আধিকার দেয়া হবে।	(ক) প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র; (খ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি; এবং (গ) অনলাইনে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের কপি (Applicant's Copy)।
৬।	অফিস সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক গ্রেড-১৬ (৯,৩০০-২২,৪৯০/-)	১১(এগার) টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট (এইচ.এস.সি.) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) Word Processing/Data Entry/typing ইত্যাদি ক্ষেত্রে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন গতি বাকেনা বাংলা ও ইংরেজি যথাক্রমে ২০ ও ২০ শব্দ হতে হবে।	(ঘ) ০৯ নং জমিকে বর্ণিত পদে সিলেট ও হবিগঞ্জ জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দারা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৭।	নোটিশ সার্ভার গ্রেড-২০ (৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-)	১৫(পনের) টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	
৮।	অফিস সহায়ক গ্রেড-২০ (৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-)	১৪(চৌদ্দ) টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	
৯।	নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী গ্রেড-২০ (৮,২৫০-২০,০১০/-)	০৪(চার) টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) সুশাস্ত্রের অধিকারী।	

- অন্যান্য শর্তাবলি :-
- ২৫.০৩.২০২০ ইং তারিখে সাধারণ প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যা এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ১৮-৩২ বছর। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোন প্রকার এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
 - সরকারি, আধা সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
 - সরকারী নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী কোটা সংরক্ষণ করা হবে। সরকারি কোটা বিধে যেকোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করবেন নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া সেভাবে সম্পন্ন হবে।
 - লিখিত/মৌখিক/ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোনো প্রকার টি.এ/ডি.এ. প্রদান করা হবে না।
 - এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি আংশিক বা সম্পূর্ণ সংশোধন/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
 - বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রতিকা ছাড়াও কর অঞ্চল-সিলেট www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।
 - উপরে উল্লেখ করা হয়নি কিন্তু প্রয়োজ্যতা রয়েছে এমন ক্ষেত্রে জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক জারিকৃত বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে।
 - নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যেকোনো বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
 - সার্টিফিকেট, জন্মতারিখ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, জন্মস্থান সংক্রান্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাইয়ে প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোনো তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা ভুল প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত

১০. অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী ও শর্তাবলি :
ক. পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি নিম্নোক্ত প্রদত্ত <http://syltax.teletalk.com.bd> এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন:
(i) আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন ফি জমা দান করার তারিখ ও সময় ২৯/১২/২০২০ ইং, সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা।
(ii) আবেদনপত্র জমা দানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় ২৮/০১/২০২১ ইং, বিকাল ০৫.০০ ঘটিকা। উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ আবেদনপত্র দাখিল এর সময় থেকে ৭২(বাহারের) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে SMS এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
(খ) আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার বাস্তব (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) ও রঙিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন।
(গ) আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু আবেদন করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।
(ঘ) প্রার্থী পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্টেড কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনের সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।
(ঙ) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান: অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতো ছবি ও বাস্তব Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কপিউটারে ছবি সহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং বাস্তবরূপে একটি Applicant's copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's copy প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's copy তে একটি User ID নম্বর দেয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন teletalk Pre-paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২(দুই) টি SMS করে আবেদন ফি বাবদ ১-৬ নং জমিকের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকা; টেলিটকের সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ১২/- টাকা সহ মোট ১১২/- টাকা এবং ৭-৯ নং জমিকের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) টাকা; টেলিটকের সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ০৮/- টাকা সহ মোট ৫৮/- টাকা অর্থাৎ ৭২(বাহারের) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে, " আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গৃহীত হবে না।"

আবেদন গ্রহণের সময়সীমা শেষ হওয়ার পর প্রার্থী লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড করতে পারবেন। একই প্রবেশপত্র দিয়ে লিখিত এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।
উল্লেখ্য যে, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় এবং কেন্দ্রের নাম প্রবেশপত্রে উল্লেখ থাকবে।
প্রথম SMS: SYLTAX<space> User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: SYLTAX ABCDEF
Reply : Applicant's Name, Tk-112/56 will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678, To pay fee type SYLTAX<space>Yes<space>PIN and send to 16222 নম্বরে।
দ্বিতীয় SMS: SYLTAX<space> Yes<space>PIN and send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: SYLTAX Yes 12345678
Reply : Congratulations Applicant's Name. Paymen: Completed Successfully for SYLTAX (for post Name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (xxxxxxx)।

(চ) প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থীর বিষয়টি <http://syltax.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (কেবলমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিক অনুসরণ করা বাধ্যস্বরূপ।
(ছ) SMS এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময়ে এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।
(জ) কেবল টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।
(i) User ID জানা থাকলে SYLTAX<space>Help<space>User<space>User ID & Send to 16222.
Example: SYLTAX Help User ABCDEF.
(ii) Pin Number জানা থাকলে SYLTAX<space>Help<space>PIN<space>PIN Number & Send to 16222.
Example: SYLTAX Help PIN 12345678.

(ঝ) Online-এ আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে টেলিটক নম্বর থেকে ১২১ নম্বরে অথবা vas.query@teletalk.com.bd বা syltax.recruitment@gmail.com ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে।
(Mail এর subject-এ Organization Name: SYLTAX Post Name: *****, Applicant's User ID ও Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।)

উপ-কর কমিশনার
সদর দপ্তর (প্রশাসন), কর অঞ্চল-সিলেট

সদস্য সচিব, বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি
কর অঞ্চল-সিলেট।
GD-2062



FICTION

REGENERATION

SANJEEDA HOSSAIN

One Day Last Week

I had an awful dream. I dreamt that I had lost my way. I couldn't get to my university hostel. From Petaling Jaya to Pantai Hill Park, KL Central and Mid Valley, changing one bus after the other, no one knew where my hostel was.

I was carrying a huge piece of luggage; its handle and wheels, broken. A Chinese boy came forward and carried it to the next bus stop.

And instead of finding another bus, I got into his car. He drove me through a dark forest full of mosquitoes.

I kept thinking about the dream the whole day. Around 7 o'clock in the evening, Ismat, a

I was having shortness of breath. My heart was thumping fast. My whole world was reeling.

I remembered, last night, I asked my brother to call me back as soon as he would manage a little free time during his preparation for his final exams. He said that he would definitely give me a call before going to bed.

I waited, maybe for three hours before going to sleep.

In the morning, I ate six slices of bread with three slices of cheese, a mug of hot tea and an orange; drank 3 litres of water; cleaned my room and had a long shower.

In the afternoon, I went to the hostel office to file a complaint. They expressed their genuine concern and gave me a mosquito repellent to spray in my room.

"Stay alert, cover the bare parts of your body and be careful from six to eight during the morning and the evening. That is the time when they bite," the superintendent said in a mellow voice.

"But I have already been bitten by a mosquito," I cried.

She gave me a helpless, blank look and left her office.

I decided to go downstairs to the hostel café. I ordered tom yam soup and nasi goreng. I ate and watched the boys and girls playing handball.

I also watched monkeys arriving at the hostel, gripping the edges of the roofs with their legs and tails.

They generally start these expeditions every afternoon at five, arriving at the hostel compound mostly in large groups consisting of twelve to fifteen monkeys: babies hanging from their mothers' necks, young adults and white bearded old grandfather monkeys—they come to forage. They never lose contact with each other and always stay close. Before it starts getting dark, together they leave.

Do husbands and wives in monkey communities have to live apart because they are studying in different places?

I sent my husband a message that I had been bitten by a mosquito. He replied that even if it is dengue, no one gets killed by dengue these days. People from developing nations like ours are quite immune to such fevers.

I wanted to speak to him. I called and he declined my call. He was doing his assignments and would soon be out to join a concert of one of Brisbane's most celebrated rock bands: The Ramjet. He promised to call me 30 minutes later. I came up and went to the toilet. I saw my face

in the mirror. I had rashes all over my skin. My lips were swollen and red.

I went to bed and had a troubled sleep. When I woke up, it was two hours since my husband sent me that message with his promise.

The Day before Yesterday

It was 12 o'clock at noon. The sun blazed outside my window. I should be going to the clinic.

Mother called and I informed her that I had a fever. "Please pray for me, maa. I am terribly unwell".

"Oh my baby, you will be alright," she tried to calm me.

I could not remember what else she said, and I did not know for how long I lay down in bed.

When my roommate Nabila returned, she drove me to a clinic at Bangsar. A South Indian doctor examined me. I told her about the mosquito bite and she sent me for a blood test.

The report said that I had dengue fever and my platelet count was less than 150,000. She suggested that I get admitted at my university hospital the next morning. I wouldn't be able to bear the cost here.

I felt a strange indifference towards life and I asked Nabila to take me back to my room.

I noticed how she drives: smooth and elegant. I asked who taught her driving. She replied that it was her mother who insisted that her daughter should learn to drive.

We finally arrived in the room by 10 at night. As soon as I entered, I checked my phone. No one had called.

Yesterday

I arrived at the hospital at 8 o'clock in the morning. I waited and the doctor arrived at 9. I bled like water. After three hours of tortuous waiting, finally the blood report arrived. The platelet count this time dropped to a perilous 45000.

A nurse arrived at the counter and asked me to leave the hospital. I showed her the report from the clinic and the South Indian doctor's reference. She seemed indifferent and just asked me to eat and drink well.

I started walking under the blazing sun. I had left my umbrella in my room. I had pain around my eyes. I was angry.

I wanted to eat.

As soon as I reached a nearby café, I started loading my plate with everything I could: chicken, rice and eggplant curry, chicken liver cooked with onions, bitter gourds and bean sprouts, curry puffs, boiled potatoes with some unknown scaly,

smelly fish, and I ordered carrot juice with milk and ice.

I had an immense urge to listen to the voice of my husband. I gave him a call. He said that he was sleeping. Was that something very important? I said, "No, nothing of much importance."

I took the bus to my hostel and somehow reached my room.

When Nabila found me, I was bleeding profusely. She screamed and called the girls from the nearby rooms.

I was rushed to the hospital.

I could only inform my father that I had gone into shock and my platelet count dropped to a drastic 30,000.

The doctors and nurses at the hospital were screaming at the top of their lungs, trying to figure out who it was that sent me back instead of having me admitted in the morning.

My platelet count dropped to 20,000. I knew I was about to die. When Ismat came to see me, I asked her to check my phone, "Did anyone call?" "No, dear," she replied.

Last Night before Daybreak

It was midnight and everyone had left for home.

According to my religion, if I am about to enter the eternal world, I have to leave all the ephemeral earthly matters behind. Far away from my homeland, family, known and familiar surroundings, was I ready to leave everything behind at any given moment?

With large, round drops of tears rolling down my cheeks, I started to pray, as if I was having a hearty conversation with God.

I continued to speak with God for the rest of the night and, I knew, He was listening.

Today

In the morning, the doctor comes to announce of my astounding recovery. He informs me that my platelet count is rising. It has risen straight to 150,000. If I want to, I can leave the hospital tomorrow.

He also informs me that my bill is 3,000 RM. Where will I get so much money from?

He reassures me that since I have suffered due to their negligence I won't have to pay anything.

Nabila arrives. I request her to take me to the window. I ask her to hand me my phone. I see twelve missed calls.

I throw my phone into the deep, dark, green water of the lake beneath the window.

I can feel life jingling inside my veins. Again.

Sanjeeda Hossain teaches at the Department of English, University of Dhaka.



classmate from Sudan, prepared rice and tuna with carrots and spinach. After sharing the dinner I helped her with the dishes.

When I started washing the spoons and plates in the washing area beside the flower garden, a black and white mosquito circled around me and bit me on my shoulder.

I rushed to Ismat's room. She shrieked in terror— three dots forming a triangle: she held a mirror so that I could see.

She immediately gave me some antibiotic soap to clean that area and asked me to drink a lot of water.

Three Days Back

I rushed to the wash basin as soon as I felt blood dripping from my mouth.



POETRY

THE WIND'S ONLY RECOURSE

UNTARA SHAKIRA

The wind afire
Like a wild mare's ire,
Breathless in its heat
Which nothing can defeat,
Flying through windows
Banging through doors;
Ripping at branches
Threatening to tilt arches.

Smashing, growling and howling with full force
Only to know death as its only recourse.

Untara Shakira is a Literature Major and bibliophile. She also loves her cats and her coffee.



Girl, Woman, Other: A Review

REVIEWED BY SAHID KAMRUL

Bernardine Evaristo. ISBN: 978-0-241-364901, Hamish Hamilton, 2019

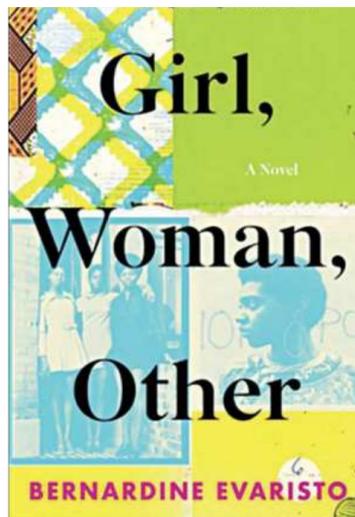
Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo is a beautiful rendition of the intertwining lives of people in modern Britain. Twelve people, most of whom are women, each dedicated a chapter, are seen in the best and worst moments of their lives. From Amma Bonsu, "Queen of the Dykes" to Penelope, a semi-feminist schoolteacher, from Winsome with her sexual obsessions about her son-in-law to Megan/Morgan who finds themselves by "travelling into the batshit-crazy end of the Transgender verse" published at the beginning of May 2019 and Atwood's co-winner of last year's Booker Prize, Evaristo's latest novel has been described as a polyphony of female voices, mostly black, coming together to retell the experiences of a black modern Britain. Polyphony is certainly the correct term for a novel that casts twelve main characters, each telling their story, each with their own take on sexuality and gender, each of a different shade of "black," spanning from the nineteen year old Londoner Yazz to the ninety-four Hattie, who has lived all of her days in a rural mansion in the northern English countryside.

Evaristo has very cleverly sketched characters that are relatable and complex, with stories that will break your heart and make you smile. She has tackled issues faced by most women in their day to day lives, regardless of color and societal position. As the interconnected stories of the twelve main female characters unfold, the reader will be quick to judge that the there

is no one black Britain emerging between these pages, and intentionally so – *Girl, Woman, Other* is not so much about femininity and blackness as it is an episodic deconstruction of whatever preconceived perception we might have held of these.

The first woman we meet is Amma, a "sixty-something dyke" who has been a feminist activist in the eighties when she ran the Bush Women Theatre Company together with her dearest friend Dominique (also a lesbian, but "uber-cool," as Amma defines her, and an intersectional feminist). After a lifetime of attempts to get her artistic struggles the attention they deserved, Amma's most recent play – a lesbian take on an eighteen century royal England – *The Last Amazon of Dahomey* about to open at the National theatre, is sold out, and expected to be attended by over a thousand spectators.

Among these we will find some of the main characters: Yazz (Amma's extraordinarily self-confident and explosive daughter, always surrounded by her squad of "unfuckwithables" friends), Dominique (who flew back from America for the occasion), Shirley (one of Amma's closest friends, a feminist, but, according to Dominique, a homophobe), Carole (who ends up at the play's opening because her husband Lennox has to attend it, but had also been Shirley's high-school pupil) and Morgan (previously Megan, now the renowned influencer/trans-worrier, non-binary,



pansexual going by the pronoun "they", whom Yazz has met at a University conference).

With a full black female cast and performed in a "fan-shaped auditorium, modelled on the Greek amphitheaters that ensured every-one in the audience had an uninterrupted view of the

action," Amma's play seems to act as a frame to Evaristo's polyphony of voices and emulate the novel's structure and mode in a parallel montage. This is particularly apparent when one considers the writer's choice to close the novel with an Epilogue, which not only adds a thematic sophistication at the novel's end but concurrently places it in the tradition of Greek tragedies as well.

Girl, Woman, Other is written in the style of a prose poem which Evaristo has termed "fusion fiction." Apparently uttered in the voice of a third person and defiant of the traditional usage of punctuations, the text reads like a collection of monologues, where the line break may simply replace a common full stop and signify a shift in the perspective of a narrator:

"The fluid way in which I shaped, lineated and punctuated the prose on the page enabled me to oscillate between the past and the present inside their heads, outside their heads, and eventually from one character's story into another character's story."

Evaristo manages the prose well and unceremoniously, moving nimbly through different registers. Her narration is to the point, experimental enough to feel new but always careful to make itself accessible to all readers. The unconventionality of the prose is eye catching and surprisingly easy to read. The idea behind the book, of the intermingled lifelines of women, however, is not as original as those of other prominent black women

authors like Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison who have already explored it before. However, the execution of the trope, the narrative style, and the profound connection between the characters are brilliant. Not only complex concepts like identity, sexuality and race have been traversed, but also other equally problematic issues as in politics, empathy, and pretensions have been duly observed and successfully communicated.

Standing between poetry and prose, between fiction and drama, *Girl, Woman, Other* seems to argue that everything we think we can pin down to definite categories and phrases – traditional literary forms, gender, sexuality, blackness, religion, even feminism – lay haphazardly on a spectrum. In a time that requires that we learn to make well-informed judgments, it is unsurprising and refreshing that *Girl, Woman, Other* was awarded the Booker Prize, making Evaristo the first black woman writer ever to win it. Leaving prize selections and winning speculations on the other side, I agree that Evaristo's novel is not undeserving of its attention and attainments: like Yazz says of her mother's play, Evaristo's novel goes "down like a lead balloon" – beautifully crafted and heartfelt, although some may find the material a little hard to digest.

Sahid Kamrul is a Research Fellow at Freie University Berlin, Germany.

TEN 1 & SONY SIX
Australia vs India
Second Test (Day 2)
Live from 5:30 am
(Sunday)
PTV SPORTS
New Zealand vs Pakistan
First Test (Day 2)
Live from 4:00 am
(Sunday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
Premier League
Leicester City vs
Manchester United
Live from 6:30 pm
Aston Villa vs Crystal
Palace
Live from 9:00 pm
Arsenal vs Chelsea
Live from 11:30 pm

Manchester City vs
Newcastle United
Live from 2:00 am
(Sunday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Premier League
Fulham vs Southampton
Live from 9:00 pm
Sheffield United vs Everton
Live from 2:00 am (Sunday)



While the rest of Europe went into holiday to celebrate Christmas and New Year, English football braced for an action-packed week. Cristiano Ronaldo of Juventus took his family to Dubai while Barcelona's Lionel Messi went to Rosario with his family. English clubs had no scope for such luxury as they were back in training for the weekend's Premier League fixtures. Defending champions and league leaders Liverpool, who take on West Bromwich Albion on Sunday, paused training for a moment with the cameras clicking for the Christmas caps thrown into the air.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Isolated and ignored: The plight of local coaches

MAZHAR UDDIN



Coaching in any sport is a prestigious profession and the remuneration on offer is also at a standard that encourages others to take up this noble profession as a career.

There are understandable discrepancies depending on the country and sport, with an international football coach or a football club manager at a top level earning a lot more compared to cricket coaches around the world.

But there is also a huge difference when

[for this tournament]. I work at Gazi Group. I am very ashamed of the coaches' remuneration. I have always wanted coaches to come to Bangladesh and more players to think of a career in coaching.

I always hoped they would be able to live with a good status. It seems to me that I will never tell anyone to take up coaching as a profession for such fees," Salahuddin said on December 17 after conducting a practice session with Chattogram ahead of their clash with Gemcon Khulna in the final.

There are a total of 15 High Performance senior coaches under the BCB's game development programme. These coaches



Mohammad Salahuddin



Sarwar Imran

the handful of international coaches are compared to local coaches who hunt talents from the grassroots level.

Bangladesh cricket has come a long way since getting Test status two decades ago, but the local coaches are unfortunately yet to get exposure and trust from the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Local coaches have faced setbacks for their inability to adapt to the latest coaching methods and it is a matter of fact that there are very few coaches in Bangladesh who can match international standards. But a lack of encouragement from the BCB is a big reason many do not opt for the profession.

Recently, Mohammad Salahuddin, a top grade coach and mentor to national team stalwarts such as Shakib Al Hasan, said that he would discourage prospects from taking up coaching as a profession due to the meagre pay scales.

The experienced coach lamented the remuneration on offer at the Bangabandhu T20 Cup, where four Grade A players were paid Tk 15 lakh each. The lowest grade players received Tk 4 lakh each, but head coaches were paid less than half that. Assistant coaches earned around Tk 1-1.5 lakh while trainers and other coaching staff received significantly less.

"I am not taking any fees right now

receive a monthly salary starting at Tk 80,000. A total of twelve divisional coaches, who are also part of the BCB's HP set-up, receive monthly salaries between Tk 50,000 to 70,000. 63 district coaches receive a monthly salary between Tk 15,000 to 25,000.

Among those BCB-contracted coaches, very few get the opportunity to work during the Bangladesh Premier League or the Dhaka Premier League and miss out on earnings of 2-8 lakhs per season.

One of the biggest concerns that local coaches have is a lack of job security as the BCB only employs coaches on a contractual basis. They do not have a set retirement policy for long-serving coaches and although they receive a 25 per cent bonus in the festive season, those who work in close liaison with officials are the ones who are rewarded through increments.

The situation is worse for coaches who are not under BCB contracts, as they rely mainly on their coaching academies and stints in the domestic leagues, both of which have been greatly affected during the pandemic.

After feeling isolated and ignored at times compared to others related to the game, perhaps what coaches would probably urge above all from the BCB is proper respect.

SA seek to change fortunes against SL

AFP, Centurion



South Africa and Sri Lanka will end a lengthy Covid-induced break from Test cricket when the first of two world championship Test matches starts at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Saturday.

Neither side has played a red-ball international since January, when South Africa finished 3-1 losers in a home series against England while Sri Lanka were winning a two-match series 1-0 in Zimbabwe.

Sri Lanka can call on most of the players who shocked the Proteas by winning both Tests on their previous tour of South Africa two seasons ago.

On paper, South Africa are weaker than they were in that previous series with their entire fast bowling attack of Dale Steyn, Kagiso Rabada, Vernon Philander and Duanne Olivier missing through retirement, injury or, in the case of Olivier, the lure of the British pound.

The Sri Lanka series also marked the end of the distinguished Test career of batsman Hashim Amla.

There has been a change of captaincy, with Faf du Plessis having resigned, although he remains as a player.

Wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock, South

Africa's leading Test batsman last season, has accepted what amounts to a caretaker role for the 2020/21 season only.

De Kock's appointment has echoes of that of Dimuth Karunaratne, the Sri Lankan opening batsman, who was announced as a "stand-in" captain for the 2018/19 tour but did such a good job of instilling a positive attitude in his players that he has remained at the helm.

Conditions, though, will be significantly different, with the matches being played on the fast, bouncy pitches of Centurion and Johannesburg instead of the slower, coastal surfaces in Durban and Port Elizabeth where Sri Lanka prevailed last time.

Despite having a completely different fast bowling attack, South Africa's bowlers will present a tough challenge to the visiting batsmen.

Anrich Nortje is one of the fastest bowlers in the world, while Lungi Ngidi has returned to form after a series of injuries.

Glenon Stuurman could win a first cap as a like-for-like replacement for the naggingly accurate Philander.

Key for Sri Lanka will be the expected return of Kusal Perera. The left-hander played a career-defining innings when he made 153 not out in the first Test in Durban on the previous tour, turning what seemed likely to be a South African win into a thrilling one-wicket victory for the tourist.



A Bangladesh Navy player scores against Bangladesh Army during the final of the Bangabandhu Victory Day Basketball Tournament at the Dhanmondi Gymnasium yesterday. Navy won the match 77-40 to take the title of the six-team tournament which got underway on December 20.

PHOTO: BBF



JOHN EDRICH (1937-2020)

John Edrich dies at 83

REUTERS

Former England batsman John Edrich, who made more than 100 first-class centuries, has died at the age of 83, the ECB said on Friday.

Edrich scored more than 5,000 runs for England during 77 Tests, including 12 centuries. The former Surrey captain notched 103 hundreds and more than 39,000 runs in first-class cricket.

"With John's passing, we've lost a prolific and fearless batsman - one of the select few who have scored more than 5,000 runs for England," ECB chief executive officer Tom Harrison said in a statement.

"His duels with some of the world's best fast bowlers were legendary, and it's a testament to his ability that his 310 not out against New Zealand in 1965 remains the fifth highest Test score by an English batsman."

"He will be sadly missed, and our thoughts are with his family and friends."



Chattogram Abahani's Brazilian forward Nixon Gulyherme Brizalora peels away in celebration of his decisive goal against Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Nixon knocks out Rahmatganj

SPORTS REPORTER



Last edition's finalists Rahmatganj were eliminated from the group stages of the Walton Federation Cup following a 1-0 defeat against Chattogram Abahani in their second Group C fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Old Dhaka outfit, who were only bettered by Bashundhara Kings in the last edition, posted a much better performance against the port city side compared to their 3-0 defeat against the defending champions on the opening day, yet could not avoid being eliminated.

The goal came in the 36th minute of the match courtesy of a fine placing shot

from Chattogram Abahani's Brazilian forward Nixon Gulyherme Brizalora on a cross from Sohel Rana.

Rahmatganj were bolstered by the joining of three foreign players prior to this match, but one of those - Tajikistan's Dilshod Vasiev - wasted the easiest opportunity to score for the Old Dhaka outfit in the first half. Chattogram Abahani, too, squandered chances to increase their lead, including one from their captain Charles Didier, but in the end that one goal from the Brazilian proved to be enough for them.

The win took Chattogram Abahani through to the quarterfinals along with Bashundhara Kings and the two qualified teams will meet in the group's last game on Monday to decide the group winners.

Mbappe thanks Tuchel

REUTERS

Paris St Germain forward Kylian Mbappe paid tribute to Thomas Tuchel after multiple media reports said the German coach had been sacked by the Ligue 1 club.

French sports daily L'Equipe and German newspaper Bild said the 47-year-old, who helped PSG reach the Champions League final in August which they lost to Bayern Munich, was dismissed after Wednesday's 4-0 win over Racing Strasbourg.

"It is sadly the law of football. Nobody will forget your time here. You wrote a wonderful part of the club's history and I say to you: 'thank you, coach,'" Mbappe said in an Instagram post on Thursday that was accompanied by a picture of him with Tuchel.

PSG are third in Ligue 1, one point behind league leaders Olympique Lyonnais and Lille, and are through to the last 16 of the Champions League, where they face Barcelona.

The club has not confirmed Tuchel's departure. L'Equipe reported that Argentine Mauricio Pochettino is set to be named Tuchel's successor. Pochettino, who played for PSG in the early 2000s, has been out of a job since being dismissed by Tottenham in November 2019.

বৈজ্ঞানিক ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
শতভাগ রাষ্ট্র মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক
দিলকুশা শাখা, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা।
অর্থস্বয়ং আদালত আইন ২০০৩ এর ৩৩(এ) ধারার সনদপত্র মূলে অর্জিত
সম্পত্তি বিক্রয়ের নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্ব সার্বভৌমের অব্যক্তির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, শাখার স্বত্বাধীনে (১) কোম্পানি নোজ অস্ট্রেলিয়া প্রাইভেট লিমিটেডের আর্থিক ঋণের অর্থাৎ (২) শ্রীমান মজিবুল ইসলাম সন্ন্যাসী, বিজয় নগর, পল্টন, ঢাকা, (২) শাহজাদে হোসাইন গাজী, পিতা-মহেব আলম আউল পাহাড়ী, স্বত্বাধিকারী-কোম্পানি নোজ অস্ট্রেলিয়া প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, বিজয় নগর, পল্টন, ঢাকা এবং (৩) বাবুল আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩) নামের গাজী, স্বত্বাধিকারী-কোম্পানি নোজ অস্ট্রেলিয়া প্রাইভেট লিমিটেড, বিজয় নগর, পল্টন, ঢাকা এবং (৪) মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (১৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (২৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৩৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৪৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৫৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৬৯) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭০) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭১) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭২) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৩) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৪) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৫) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৬) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৭) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢাকা (৭৮) নামের মাসুদ আলম হাট্টাইল, আবুলক্বাসেম, মোহাম্মদপুর, ডাল-১২০৭ এবং গ্রাম-শাহিন্দার, ডাকনং-বাঘা, থানা-সোহরা, কোম্পানি-ঢ



Keep the nat'l icon intact

Architects, urbanists call upon authorities to backtrack on plan to shift Kamalapur station plaza

HELEMUL ALAM

The plan to dismantle the iconic parabolic umbrella roof and plaza of Kamalapur Railway Station to make way for a multimodal hub and an extended metro rail line has stirred up an outcry among experts who say it will be like destroying part of the history of Dhaka.

They have demanded the authorities build the multimodal hub and carry out any expansion keeping the unique structure intact in its current position.

The Bangladesh Railway and Dhaka metro rail authorities agreed to a new plan last month, which requires shifting of the station plaza to make space for the extended MRT-6 line up to Kamalapur from Motijheel.

Besides, as part of the plan to make Kamalapur a multimodal hub, the existing plaza needs to be demolished to make space for other facilities, Railways Minister Nurul Islam told The Daily Star last month.

The minister, however, said they would build a replica of the parabolic umbrella roof after dismantling the present one as

part of their plan for a "true transport hub".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will make the final decision in this regard as the existing plaza, an iconic structure, has to be demolished to implement the new plan, he added.

Architect Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said the architecture of Kamalapur is acclaimed internationally and it symbolises Dhaka.

"If you draw a picture of Dhaka, Kamalapur will invariably come to your mind. People keep that iconic image as postcards. You can also find it as decorative paintings behind rickshaws," said Iqbal Habib earlier this week.

"The decision to move it is like destroying one of our very few symbolic architectures in Dhaka city."

The government should implement any expansion without touching the original structure of the station to preserve the history and heritage, he added.

Taimur Islam, founder of Urban Study Group (USG), said the structure may be over 50-year-old but its architectural value is undiminished.



The Kamalapur Railway Station with its iconic parabolic umbrella roof. The authorities plan to dismantle the structure to make way for a multimodal hub and an extended metro rail line. Many experts, however, oppose the plan, saying tearing apart the 50-year-old structure would be like destroying part of the history of Dhaka.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Modi offers fresh talks amid protest by farmers

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday offered to hold fresh talks to end a stalemate over new agricultural reforms, in his latest push to win over farmers protesting for almost a month against the move.

Tens of thousands of farmers have been camping out near several entry points to New Delhi since November 26 against three new laws they say will lead to dismantling of regulated markets.

They also fear the government would stop buying wheat and rice at guaranteed prices, leaving

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Don't bargain with stranded Bangalees' fate'

December 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S SPEECH AT RAJENDRA COLLEGE, FARIDPUR

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman once again asks Pakistan President ZA Bhutto to stop bargaining with the fate of four lakh Bangalees stranded in Pakistan. "Despite Bhutto's shouting, Pakistani war criminals will be tried on the soil of Bangladesh if I am alive," the prime minister says.

Addressing a huge public meeting today at Faridpur Rajendra College ground the prime minister asks the people to be self-reliant and work hard to build a happy and prosperous

society. He adds that a self-respecting nation cannot afford to depend longer on charity and relief from foreign countries.

The prime minister mentions the food deficit of seven and a half crore maunds, which has been met mostly by imports from India, Soviet Union, the United States, Canada and other friendly countries. He urges farmers to boost production of food grains to avoid recurrence of such a colossal food deficit.

Bangabandhu reiterates his government's determination to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Turkey wants 'better ties' with Israel

Says Erdogan

REUTERS, Ankara

Turkey would like better ties with Israel but Israeli policy towards the Palestinians remains "unacceptable", President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday.

Turkey and Israel, once allies, have had a bitter falling out in recent years. Ankara has repeatedly condemned Israel's occupation in the West Bank and its treatment of Palestinians. It has also criticised recent US-brokered rapprochements between Israel and four Muslim countries.

"The Palestine policy is our red line. It is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Covid-sniffing dogs deployed at Santiago airport



REUTERS, Santiago

The task of sniffing out passengers infected with Covid-19 at Chile's Santiago international airport is going to the dogs.

A team of Golden Retrievers and Labradors sit when they smell the virus and get a treat. The canines sport green "biodecor" jackets with a red cross.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Ctg cop dies from Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 45-year-old constable of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) died with coronavirus yesterday.

The policeman -- Jahurul Islam, of Laxmipur district -- was serving the Special Branch (SB).

He was undergoing treatment at ICU of Chattogram General Hospital before he breathed his last around 6:05am, Abdul Warish, deputy commissioner of CMP's Special Branch, said.

He was tested positive for Covid-19 on December 6, added the DC.

He joined to Bangladesh Police in 1996.

His body has been sent to his village after Namaz-e-janaza, the DC said.

With him, a total six CMP personnel have died with Covid-19 so far.



A father placing a festive cap on the youngest member of his family during Christmas celebrations at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in the capital yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

20 more die from Covid

1,136 test positive in a day

UNB, Dhaka

The Covid-19 fatalities in Bangladesh rose to 7,398 with 20 more deaths recorded in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday amid apprehensions that winter could complicate the coronavirus situation.

The health authorities reported 1,163 new cases during the same period, taking the country's caseload to 507,265 as the detection of new strains of coronavirus in the United Kingdom and South Africa sparks worries.

Meanwhile, the death rate stood at 1.46 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

So far, 448,803 patients -- 88.87 percent -- have recovered, including 2,113 in those 24 hours.

Bangladesh reported its first cases on March 8. The infection number reached

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 26

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-25 12-45 3-45 5-24 7-00
JAMAAT 6-00 1-15 4-00 5-27 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Don't squander sacrifices

Says WHO chief as people celebrate Christmas under pandemic's shadow

AGENCIES

The sacrifices made to protect people during the coronavirus pandemic must not be squandered over the festive period, the World Health Organization's chief said in a Christmas message.

Millions were making "heart-wrenching sacrifices" by staying away from loved ones on Christmas Day, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a video clip posted to Twitter late Thursday, while others will have a missing face at the family table.

He said vaccines, now beginning

to be deployed in countries around the world, were starting to offer a way out of the crisis that has engulfed the planet this year.

"As 2020 draws to an end, a pandemic of historic proportions is preventing many of us from celebrating in the ways we would like," Tedros said.

"Instead, hundreds of millions of people are today making great, heart-wrenching sacrifices by staying apart to stay safe.

"But in doing so, they are giving the most precious gifts: the gifts of life and health."

The coronavirus has killed at least 1.74 million people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, while almost 79.5 million cases have been registered, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

"All around the world, throughout this most trying of years, we have seen over and over again the sacrifices of so many people to protect and preserve life," said Tedros.

"We must not squander their sacrifices, nor those made by so many families who, this holiday season, will sit at family tables missing a familiar face."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Britons in two minds about Brexit trade deal

AFP, Boston

After months of fraught negotiations between the European Union and the UK, Britons welcomed Thursday's "Christmas present" Brexit deal with relief and some scepticism.

David Ashby, a 62-year-old from the town of Boston on the east coast of England, called it "a nice Christmas present for the country", saying it was good "just to get it all finished and tied up and done with".

"I think it's dragged on for too long now," he added.

Andy Finch, who also lives in the Lincolnshire market town which voted by a higher margin than anywhere else in the UK to leave the EU, sounded a pessimistic note.

"I don't think it was a good idea in the first place. I still don't think it's a good idea. But that's where we are. And, well, we'll just have to see," Finch said.

Paul Skinner, leader of Boston Borough Council, also questioned the thinking behind leaving the European Union.

"At the end of the day, what we do need to be doing is working with our partners,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

URGENT: Attention all Canadians in Bangladesh,

Due to the **COVID-19** pandemic we are strongly urging all Canadian Citizens to immediately register as a Canadian abroad (ROCA) at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration> to enable you to receive important safety updates from the Government of Canada.

Please share this important information with other Canadian citizens in your area and encourage them to register with ROCA at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>

Global Affairs Canada

URGENT : Attention à tous les Canadiens au Bangladesh,

En raison de la pandémie **COVID-19**, nous encourageons fortement tous les citoyens canadiens à s'inscrire immédiatement comme Canadien à l'étranger (ROCA) à <https://voyage.gc.ca/voyager/inscription> pour vous permettre de recevoir d'importantes mises à jour importantes en matière de sécurité de la part du gouvernement du Canada.

Veuillez partager cette information importante avec d'autres citoyens canadiens de votre région et les encourager à s'inscrire auprès de ROCA à <https://voyage.gc.ca/voyager/inscription>

Affaires mondiales Canada