



BANGLADESH ECONOMY 2020

RISING from the rubble

GDP GROWTH IN ASIA 2020	Bangladesh	3.8	India	-10.3	Kuwait	-8.1
	Myanmar	2	Thailand	-7.1	Saudi Arabia	-5.4
	China	1.9	Singapore	-6	Japan	-5.3
	Vietnam	1.6	Sri Lanka	-4.6	Pakistan	-0.4

IN % SOURCE: IMF

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The year 2020 began with a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the horizon. The novel coronavirus was spreading in Europe, the destination of over 60 percent exports from Bangladesh, after wreaking havoc in China, its largest trading partner.

Bangladesh felt the heat of a looming global crisis though the virus had not yet made its way into the country.

The bad news came a couple of months later. On March 8, the authorities confirmed the maiden case of Covid infection in the country. A week later, the first death from the virus was reported.

Soon, the country's economy, one of the

shining stars in Asia, came almost to a halt as the government imposed countrywide lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

The main index of the stock market dropped by 15 percent in less than 10 days in the second half of March.

During the nationwide lockdown, millions lost jobs, poverty rate doubled and many businesses folded up. Income of the vast majority of the population shrank.

Exports hit rock bottom as the importing countries themselves were finding it difficult to keep their economies afloat. The country was staring at an unprecedented three-pronged crisis: health, economic and food.

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A DEHUMANISING YEAR

For a more inclusive world in 2021

MAHFUZ ANAM

Along with the world Bangladesh also struggled to make sense of the all-pervasive disruptions caused by Covid-19. Again, as the rest of the world, we in Bangladesh struggled to rebuild our society, our economy, our education system, our basic services, in fact every aspect of our lives as far as possible. What we failed to do, as the rest of the world, was to hold on to our human values as we heard thousands dying and saw our near and dear ones perish and we could not come to their aid or even express sympathy in person. It was psychologically debilitating. The very fabric of society appeared to tear away, reduced to family-based islands of desperate and isolated microcosms of society surviving, interacting and somehow living out our lives courtesy the internet, the lifeblood of the virtual world.

As the world economy stood shattered and thousands died in countries that we thought had a robust health system, we did not know what was in store for us. Given the density of our population, level of health consciousness, living conditions and nutritional level and development challenges, we feared the worst. We are usually at the receiving end of nature's wrath in the forms of floods, cyclones, etc., but this time around nature appears to have worked in unknown ways to save us from the severest impact of the current pandemic.

It remains a mystery as to what worked for us. Was it our early immunisation programme, our peasants' and farmers' natural immunity, Vitamin D from exposure to the sun, our lifelong struggle with pollution of all sorts, our natural resilience? We are quite unaware of why Covid-19 did not wreak havoc

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DHAKA-SILIGURI Direct bus service on the cards

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The New Year brings good news for Bangladeshi and Indian travellers.

People will soon be able to travel between Siliguri and Dhaka directly by bus as the neighbouring countries have agreed to launch a new Dhaka-Siliguri-Dhaka bus route, officials said.

Officials are now working on protocols and the formal agreement to be signed by the countries.

They hope to start bus services soon after restrictions on vehicles crossing the border are lifted.

The new Dhaka-Siliguri-Dhaka will be the sixth direct bus route between Bangladesh India.

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COVID FOOD AID FOR 50 LAKH PEOPLE

Seven lakh OMS cards found fake

Food minister tells JS standing committee

RASHIDUL HASAN

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder has admitted that seven lakh fake OMS cards were distributed during the Covid-19 lockdown in the country last year.

The minister said this during a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the food ministry on September 24, according to minutes of the meeting.

This newspaper has obtained a copy of the meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by the parliamentary body at its following meeting on Wednesday.

"A total of 50 lakh OMS [open market sale] cards were distributed during the coronavirus situation. Of them, seven lakh have been found to be fake," Sadhan told the meeting.

The minister said an initiative was taken to make smart OMS cards through the government's Information and Communication Technology department to curb various irregularities and corruption.

Talking to reporters on Wednesday, he said they have collected relevant

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Schools won't open now: PM

Textbook distribution starts

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said educational institutions will not reopen before the pandemic is contained.

Inaugurating the distribution of free textbooks for all school students, she also asked everyone to strictly adhere to the health guidelines when they hand out the textbooks.

Instead of celebrating the Textbook Festival on January 1 like the previous years, the government decided to distribute the books among students in phases so that the schools do not get crowded.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board Chairman Professor Narayan Chandra Saha told The Daily Star that the distribution of textbooks would start today.

However, about 30 to 40 percent of

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Fireworks explode over the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge during downsized New Year's Eve celebrations due to an outbreak of the novel coronavirus in Sydney, Australia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MANAGING DHAKA'S 26 CANALS, BOX CULVERTS

Charge goes to two city corporations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital's city corporations yesterday formally took over the management and maintenance responsibilities of 26 canals and 10 kilometres of box culverts from Dhaka Wasa, raising hope that the city's long-standing waterlogging problem would be solved.

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) had been responsible for the 26 canals (84.5km) and the 10 box culverts (around 10km) since 1988. It also looks after 385km of storm water drainage.

The DNCC and DSCC have been managing 2,200km of pipe and surface

drains.

Chief Executive Officer ABM Amin Ullah Nuri of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), his Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) counterpart Md Selim Reza, and Managing Director of Dhaka Wasa Taqsem A Khan signed an MoU on behalf of their organisations at a city hotel yesterday.

LGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam at the ceremony said, "From today the two city corporations will have the responsibilities of solving the waterlogging problem of Dhaka city and they will have to do the work taking help from other agencies and residents of Dhaka city."

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আলেশা মার্কেটস নিমিটেডের আওতাধীন সম্পূর্ণ নতুন একটি ই-কমার্স প্ল্যাটফর্ম আলেশা মার্কেট। ডিজিটাল যুগে প্রবেশ করার কারণে বাংলাদেশে ই-কমার্স বিজ্ঞানের অনেক পথ খুলে গিয়েছে। সেই পথের প্রথম সারির যাত্রী হওয়ার লক্ষ্যে এবং বাংলাদেশের আশাম্বর জনতার অনলাইন কেনাকাটার চাহিদা পূরণে বিভিন্ন ধরনের পণ্য ও সেবা নিয়ে প্রস্তুত আলেশা মার্কেট। বাংলাদেশের ডিজিটাইলেকশনের উর্ধ্বমুখী এক জোয়ারে দেশের ক্যাচমারের চাহিদা পূরণের চেষ্টা করে চলেছে অনেকগুলো বিদেশী ব্র্যান্ড। দেশীয় ব্র্যান্ড হিসাবে আলেশা মার্কেট স্থানীয় ব্যাজারের চাহিদা পূরণ করে বিশ্বব্যাপী বাংলাদেশের প্রতিনিষ্ঠ করার প্রতিজ্ঞা নিয়ে ২০২০ সালের প্রথম দিনে নিজস্বের যাত্রা শুরু করতে পেরে গর্বিত। আলেশা মার্কেট নতুন প্রজন্মের এই যুগে অনলাইন শপিং অভিজ্ঞতাকে বিশ্বমানের পর্যায়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য এমন এক নিজস্ব ডেলিভারি ব্যবস্থা চালু করেছে যার দ্বারা ২৪/৭ সেবা প্রদান সম্ভব। অনলাইন সেবাকে আরও সহজ এবং নির্ভরশীল করতে কিছু দুর্দান্ত প্রযুক্তির সাহায্য নেয়া হয়েছে যা আপনার প্রয়োজনা অনুসারে উপযুক্ত। তাই আপনার সন্তুষ্টি করতে আলেশা আপনার প্রয়োজনার চেয়ে দ্রুত পণ্য পৌঁছে দিতে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। সব ধরনের ক্যাচমারের কথা মাথায় রেখে সকল ক্যাচমারের পণ্য আমরা প্রথমবারের মতো অনলাইন কেনাকাটার বিডিং-এর ব্যবস্থা রেখেছি। সরাসরি গ্রাহকের সাথে কানেক্টেড থাকায় আলেশা মার্কেট আপনার চাহিদাকে প্রাধান্য দিতে সক্ষম। বিজ্ঞানের টু বিজ্ঞানে এবং বিজ্ঞানে টু কনসুমার উভয়ের কথা মাথায় রেখে সফট মার্কেট স্পেস তৈরি করার মাধ্যমে আমরা ডোকো, মেমোরি ও মার্কেটের মাঝে একটি সংযোগ স্থাপনে জোর দিয়েছি। উভয় পক্ষের লাভজনক অবস্থা তৈরি করে আমরা ক্যাচমার ও মার্কেটের মাঝে এক সুসম্পর্ক তৈরি করার প্রয়াস করছি।

ব্যবাসা বলতে আমরা সাধারণত সুখি, টাকার যিনিমধ্যে কোন পণ্য বা সেবা প্রদান করা। আমাদের চা র পা শের যোগ্যেই টাকার লেনদেন হয় সেখানেই ব্যবসা হয়। যেমন আপনি কোন ফুডিয়ারনকে মোকাবেলা করে পণ্য কিনতেন এবং বাণিজ্যের একটি অংশে অংশগ্রহণ করতেন। আবার আপনি হয়তো নিজের তৈরি কোনো কিছু কোথায় গিয়ে বিক্রি

করে টাকা নিয়ে আসতেন সেটাও এক রকম ব্যবসা। এখানে আরেকটি ব্যাপার হচ্ছে আপনি কোথায় গিয়ে লেনদেন করতেন। বর্তমান ডিজিটাইলেকশনের যুগে কেনাকাটার জন্য বিশাল দুরত্ব বা ট্রাফিক জাম পার হয়ে দোকান পর্যন্ত যাওয়ার দরকার হয় না। এবং দোকানি তার পণ্য ঘর পর্যন্ত পৌঁছে দিতে পারে অনায়াসে। ব্যবসায়ীরা ঘরে বসে অন্তর্জালে ব্যবসার জাল বিস্তার করে দিতে পারবে যুব সহজে। আবার ভোক্তা হিসেবে পণ্য কিনতে কোথাও যেতে হচ্ছে না। ঘরে বসে কম্পিউটার বা মোবাইল স্ক্রীন পরা নিজস্বের পছন্দমতো নির্বাচন করতে দরকার একটি সিম্পল ক্লিক। আর পুরোই নির্ভরশীল ভাবে আপনার দরকার সামনে পণ্য আসার অপেক্ষা করুন। অনলাইন ডিজিটাল কেনাকাটার এই দারুণ উদ্ভাবনী ব্যবস্থা ব্যবসায়ী ও ভোক্তা উভয়ের জীবন সহজ করে দিয়েছে অনেকখানি।

কমার্শের যতো রুপই থাকুক না কেন, সকল রুপই ব ত ম া ন ডিজিটাইলেকশনের যুগে কেনাকাটার জন্য বিশাল দুরত্ব বা ট্রাফিক জাম পার হয়ে যে ক ন পর্যন্ত যাওয়ার দরকা

র হ

ক্রেতার কাছে যারা শুধুমাত্র এই সেবার ডিকমতো দিতে র না পারায় আর ব্যবসা করে হয় না। এ ব হ দেওয়ানি

এছাড়াও ই-কমার্শে আরো তিনটি বিষয় রয়েছে; একটি মেটোকে ক্যাচমারজট সুবিধা গিছি। ২৪/৭ দ্রুত ডেলিভারি সুবিধা ছাড়াও এখানে



কানেক্টেড থাকে ডাটাবেজ সিস্টেম; যেটা সর্বনা যাচাই করে পণ্যটি সঠিক রয়েছে কিনা এবং একটি ডিসপ্যাচ সিস্টেম যেটা সরাসরি গ্রাহকের সাথে সং যুক্ত থাকে যাতে

যতক্ষণ না ই-টাকার থেকে আ প ন া র টিকানায় পণ্য পঠিয়ে দেয়া হয়। তাই ভোক্তাদের প্রয়োজনীয়তার কথা মাথায় রেখে দ্রুত পণ্য পৌঁছে দেয়া একটি বিরাট বড় দায়িত্ব। আমাদের দেশে সাধারণ ই-কমার্শ থেকে সাইট পর্যন্ত যাওয়ার পথে অনেক ক্রেতার কাছে যারা শুধুমাত্র এই সেবার ডিকমতো দিতে র না পারায় আর ব্যবসা করে হয় না। এ ব হ দেওয়ানি

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উৎপাদনকারীরা নিয়ে থেকে কোন পণ্য বা সেবা উপস্থাপন করেন। উৎপাদনকারী-রাও এক ধরনের বিক্রয়তা, তারা বড় বড় বিক্রয়তাদের কাছে পণ্য বিক্রি করেন

একটি ডাটা বে জ সিস্টেম এবং একটি ডিসপ্যাচ সিস্টেম। ওয়েব সার্ভার অনলাইন স্টোরাটিকে ম্যানেজ করে এবং টাকা লেনদেন সম্পূর্ণ করার জন্য

আছে বিভিন্ন সুবিধা। মেমোরীপন সুবিধা সহ আকর্ষণীয় ডিসকন্ট এর সুবিধাও পাবে ক্রেতারা। যেকোন ক্রেতার জন্যই একটি উপহার

খুব দ্রুত এখানে মুক্ত হতে যাচ্ছে ডেলিভারি ব্যবস্থা। আলেশা মার্কেট ২০২০ সালের প্রথমদিনে নিজস্বের যাত্রা শুরু করতে পেরে গর্বিত

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**5,13,510**  
New cases in 24hrs



**1,014**  
Total cases



**7,559**  
Deaths



**4,57,459**  
Recoveries



**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**1,819,871**  
Deaths



**83,476,802**  
Total cases

## Reuniting with families after months of ordeal

Two Rohingya men join their loved ones at Bhasan Char after perilous journey to Malaysia ended in disaster

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA from Bhasan Char

Din Mohammad had made up his mind to go to Malaysia in desperate want of a better life.

A Rohingya refugee from the cramped camps of Cox's Bazar, he contacted one of his fellow Rohingyas in Malaysia and made all the arrangements for his journey.

One fine morning in March last year, he left on a perilous overcrowded voyage from Teknaf coast, leaving behind his new-born son.

With 330 others, he approached the Malaysian coast. The Malaysian navy drove their boat away and after sailing on the Bay of Bengal for nearly three months, the Bangladesh Navy rescued them in May.

"There was no food. No water. One had already died. We were dying on the boat. The navy rescued us and

took us to Bhasan Char," Din told this correspondent.

The group has been on Bhasan Char since then and Din had not been able to see his wife and only son.

Finally, on December 29, the family was reunited when his wife and son arrived on Bhasan Char along with the second batch of Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar.

Ayatullah was also on same boat. He too was reunited with his family members on the same day.

He left his mother and one brother in the Cox's Bazar camps when he decided to travel to Malaysia.

His mother, his son Arafat and his brothers also arrived at Bhasan Char with Din Mohammad's wife and son.

"My wife had left me when I failed to enter Malaysia. My mother was alone there with my son and younger brother. Now they have come [to

Bhasan Char] and I am really glad to be with them again," he said.

The two families have been allotted rooms on the island along with other necessities.

Both Ayatullah and Din said if they get a job it would help them repay their debts and lead a better life.

Ayatullah spent 2.80 lakh to go to Malaysia.

But interestingly, none of them can say who the brokers were or to whom exactly they paid the money.

Asked, they said they simply trusted their friends from Myanmar who were living in Malaysia.

A total of 306 Rohingyas were rescued by the Bangladesh Navy on April and May last year and were taken to the island.

In the first phase, a total of 1,642 Rohingyas arrived at Bhasan Char and in 1,804 arrived in the second phase.



A schoolboy takes his set of brand new textbooks from Education Minister Dipu Moni at the launching ceremony of the countrywide textbook distribution programme in the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Center. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the event virtually.

PHOTO: PID

## Rising from the rubble

FROM PAGE 1

To protect the people and the economy, the government rolled out a massive Tk 120,000-crore stimulus package, one of the largest in the world. It capped bank interest rates below single digit to help firms and businesses borrow at a record low rate.

Multilateral banks and bilateral partners poured billions of dollars to cushion Bangladesh.

But the biggest support came from farmers who continue to feed the country and the migrant workers who proved the grim forecasts wrong, sending home a record amount of remittance.

The robust flow of remittance lifted the country's foreign exchange reserves to record highs and put the country on a firm footing.

The reopening of the economy in June was a very bold move and proved to be a judicious one, as the Covid situation did not go out of control.

The food production, remittance, the stimulus package, the reopening, and the uptick in domestic demand and exports put the country on the path of recovery.

"Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladesh was able to escape a contraction in 2020," UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research said early this week.

Bangladesh's GDP growth is forecast to drop to 3.8 percent in 2020, compared to 8.2 percent in the previous year. The government debt as a percentage of

the GDP rose to 39.6 percent in 2020, considered low as per the international standards.

The government had a fiscal deficit of 6.8 percent in 2020, which allowed it to spend a huge amount of money to cushion the economy.

"This will have bolstered the economy in the past months," the think-tank said.

It also mentioned, "While the harm to public health inflicted by the pandemic has been relatively limited, the effect of the outbreak on global demand and international supply chains means that the economic damage has been considerable."

Despite the pandemic, Bangladesh is set to post the third-highest growth in the world and the highest in Asia in 2020, according to the International Monetary Fund.

In terms of growth, only Guyana and South Sudan are ahead of Bangladesh. India's GDP would contract by 10.3 percent and Pakistan's by 0.4 percent.

Of the 190 IMF member countries, only 23 are forecast to post a positive growth in the outgoing year.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said the prime minister had taken effective measures that fuelled domestic demand and helped people survive the crisis.

As a result, Bangladesh has been able to keep up the growth trajectory during the crisis, he noted.

"Other than Bangladesh, you will not

find any country in Asia that has been able to maintain progress in every area of the macro-economy," he told The Daily Star.

Zaid Bakht, a former research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said the impact of the pandemic has not been as adverse as it was thought initially.

"The economy has weathered the impacts of the pandemic and is now on track for a recovery."

People are trying to get back on their feet again and ride out the financial hardship due to job losses. "They are trying to do something to make a living," he noted.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, pointed out that Bangladesh's major indicators such as export, import, balance of payment, credit growth, private sector investment and foreign direct investment were in a fragile state even before the pandemic.

"This is largely because Bangladesh's major trading destinations had already been facing the impacts of coronavirus from January."

In Bangladesh, poverty rose to 30 percent and unemployment to 40 percent, Mustafizur mentioned.

The government's massive stimulus package helped the economy, but it is yet to recover fully, he noted.

"Most of the countries are likely to have negative growth this year."

According to Mustafizur, the country's reliance on the hardest-hit sectors such as export and tourism is relatively low compared to other countries. Domestic demand is the major driving force behind the economy.

Everyone had warned about disasters in health, economy and food sectors. "We needed to worry about health and economy. We did very well in the food sector. It is an area of strength of Bangladesh."

Revenue collection would go up if there were robust economic activities. But it remains low, meaning trade and commerce have not returned to the pre-pandemic level, Mustafizur observed.

The country's export is far away from the pre-Covid level, and the import of capital machinery is still negative.

The regulatory challenges have to be sorted out, and the planned economic zones have to be ready, he added.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the good news is that 2020 is now in the rear-view mirror.

"The bad news is we can't be sure whether the unprecedented distress suffered globally in the year gone by is also a thing of the past."

The economy is recovering, but it is not yet back on track to a faster and sustainable growth with investments still depressed and external demand wavering, he pointed out.

"I hope 2021 will get us back to a

sustainable growth track as the world economy and domestic demand turn around."

Making some suggestions for the days ahead, Monzur Hossain, research director at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said that moving forward, the government should put more focus on creating jobs and bringing more poor people under social safety nets.

"There should be a more proactive and innovative role in extending stimulus packages to SMEs [small and medium enterprises]."

Many vulnerable groups have become even more vulnerable. The government should support them, he noted.

The finance minister is confident that Bangladesh's agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors will achieve more in the next six months than what they did in the last six months.

"Bangladesh will not come under major stress due to the second wave of coronavirus like it did in the first wave."

Asked about further stimulus package, he said, "The prime minister is very flexible about it. She will do whatever necessary."

"We have adopted an expansionary policy and we are pursuing it to achieve our objectives. I don't think that we will get stuck anywhere."

Referring to the second wave of virus infections, Zaid Bakht said some risk factors surfaced again because of it. "We

have to wait to see how the second wave plays out."

The government should keep supporting the economy like it has been doing since the pandemic hit the country in March, he suggested.

"We have to roll out vaccines to boost the morale of the people. A mass immunisation programme will help the economy rebound quickly," added Bakht.

Echoing his opinion, Zahid Hussain said, "Getting a critical mass of the population vaccinated in 2021 will be the key to taming the virus locally."

Optimism is in the air with the arrival of Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines that promise a high degree of efficacy in debilitating the virus.

"Rejuvenating structural reforms, ensuring policy support to efficient enterprises faced with existential threat due to the pandemic, and strengthening the social protection system will be key to accelerating recovery while leaving no one behind," he noted.

## Correction

In the story titled "Vulnerability exposed", published by this newspaper on its front page on Thursday, it was mistakenly mentioned that the global death toll from Covid-19 was 18 million, which should have been 1.8 million. We regret the error.

## A dehumanising year

FROM PAGE 1

upon us, and remain happily ignorant. Most other countries would have, by now, conducted a plethora of research as to why, and would have known by now what worked for us and built on that natural immunity to save us from its more lethal mutated variety, which we are now hearing about.

The question of the moment is with what learning we are entering the new year.

First and the foremost is building a robust health sector. Public health infrastructure needs a massive refurbishment in terms of operational efficiency with affordable and reliable health services for our people. Judging purely on the basis of infrastructure, we are in a position to extend effective healthcare for a majority of our people. There are 13,500 community health clinics at the union level, 421 health complexes at the upazila level, 64 full-fledged hospitals at the district level, tertiary level major hospitals at every divisional headquarters including 35 specialised hospitals spread all over the country. Added to this there are 5,321 private hospitals and clinics and 9,529 diagnostic centres, 106 medical colleges (36 public and 70 private). For a population of 170 million, this facility may not be adequate but for a country like ours, this national health service

capacity makes for a formidable base to build on.

What we desperately lack is service delivery, whose focus is people and not simply machines and buildings. We know of successive governments' efforts to keep our doctors at the location of their work, an effort that has not succeeded. However, during the pandemic, we saw a totally different level of commitment and awareness from our frontline healthcare workers. We need to build on it.

If we are to tackle this pandemic effectively in 2021 and prepare for the ones that have been predicted by the director general of WHO, we must shift our focus purely from infrastructure building to providing service. This requires a massive transformation of how we operate, how we think, how we manage, how we budget, how we spend and how we value our health service doctors, nurses, specialists and the technical staff.

There have been several instances of corruption and waste in handling the current health crisis. Government is rightly preparing for mass vaccination for which it will dole out huge amounts of money. Given our past experiences, we cannot rule out the possibility of corruption, waste, misuse and mismanagement. We must take preventive measures now.

Our second learning deals with the education sector. The pandemic has truly exacerbated the already existing digital divide. Clearly, those who had, could handle and could get accustomed to the new technology got some learning done during this period compared to those who could not – meaning the poor, who got totally left out of the learning loop and for them 2020 was, for all practical purposes, a lost year.

While the digital divide became more acute, it is in e-learning where the solution lies. We believe that the existing school, college and university level education, which is based on classroom-based face-to-face learning, needs an overhaul. In the future, a large number of students gathering every day for the full duration of their session may not be feasible and not even advisable. As some educationists are suggesting, we should form a "blended" approach, which is a mixture of the existing class-based education with a high degree of digitisation.

This will require massive investment, retraining of our teachers – a highly difficult and so far mostly unsuccessful undertaking – equipping our schools, colleges and universities to make the best use of this technology and finally preparing the necessary educational material, the software, for a proper

education of our students.

The prospect of digital education is enormous. Think of how the latest educational materials – both nationally and internationally produced – can be made available to the lowest level of our schools at the same time as it becomes available to the best of them. Also think of all the educational aids that can be made available to our poor and differently-abled children. All our schools can have the same level of education if we can do it properly. But for that our teachers need to be retrained – no easy task.

An important change that we need in our higher education is putting the necessary emphasis on research. Our universities, now numbering hundred or more, public and private combined, spend very little money on research. Here the government has to come forward and start funding innovation and creation of new knowledge, which can only be done through research by both students and the faculty. We simply cannot overemphasise the need for original thinking.

The third takeaway is that we will have to hugely strengthen our IT infrastructure for the economy, education, health, transportation and, most importantly, good governance. Our internet has to be high speed, cheap and uninterrupted. IT is no longer a

technology, an industry or a growth sector; it is our new way of life. Smart devices will have to be affordable and widely available. The policy framework will have to encourage local production of most of these items, which we are capable of. Our start-ups are already making impressive headways in ways that give us tremendous confidence in their abilities to break new ground in this highly competitive and exciting area.

In this field we must invest in artificial intelligence (AI) and biotechnology and their interface. The future revolution will be a mixture of these two disciplines. We must start seriously looking to them right away.

My final takeaway would be that we take a more comprehensive, multi-sectoral and effective action-oriented plan on climate change. A new 10-year climate change strategy is in the offing. As planning goes, this one will also be striking the right notes and highlighting the appropriate priorities but while implementing, we may repeat the same miserable records as in the past. While we rightly blame the big polluters of the world for the current miserable state of affairs, we fall terribly short in doing things that we need to for our own survival. Polluting, encroaching and dumping chemical waste into our

rivers is perhaps the biggest and most dramatic example of the gap between our words about saving nature and deeds of destroying it.

The new year and the new decade that we enter today confronts us with totally unknown challenges. It is almost like teaching us how to live our lives and build our societies all over again. More fundamentally it is teaching us to rebuild human relationships and how we are to interact – something that we have been doing for thousands of years but will have to do differently now.

In this "new normal" what new things are we learning to do? It is the same politics, the same blame game, the same "all mistakes are done by others", the same "we know everything", the same "othering", the same custodial deaths, the disappearances, the same arbitrary arrests, the same gagging of the press and the same self-certification galore. Can such habits both of the mind and functioning of our system serve us in the New Year that is desperately crying out for new thinking, new attitudes, new values in facing the new reality?

Wishing all our patrons, advertisers and, most importantly, readers for staying with us and supporting us in every way possible. Hoping that the New Year will bring greater happiness and success, both in personal and professional life. A very happy 2021.

“পূবালী ব্যাংকে সফল করুন নিরাপদে থাকুন”

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## Direct bus service on the cards

FROM PAGE 1

"We recently received proposals from India in this regard and are now scrutinising all necessary aspects," said Sultana Yasmin, a deputy secretary of Road Transport and Highway Division.

The division called for a meeting on January 13 to discuss all relevant issues, she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Representatives of the National Board of Revenue, and the ministries of foreign affairs, home, and commerce, Roads and Highways Department, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) are expected to join. The development came a year after the trial run of direct bus services on the Dhaka-Gangtok and Dhaka-Darjeeling routes via Siliguri, was conducted, aiming to boost cross-border passenger services.

The trial run – conducted after the countries' agreement in principle to launch direct bus services – found that direct bus service between Dhaka-Gangtok and Dhaka-Darjeeling would not be pleasant due to the narrow roads from Siliguri, a member of the trial team said.

"So both countries decided to launch the Dhaka-Siliguri direct bus service. Travellers would be able to go to Darjeeling and Gangtok using smaller vehicles from there," he said.

Currently, travellers have to change buses at the border to go to West Bengal's Siliguri.

BRTC spokesperson Amjad Hossain said, "Both countries agreed to open the route and work on signing of an agreement... is now going on. We are hopeful of starting bus operations within two weeks after connectivity between the countries is restored."

Bus services between Bangladesh and India were suspended in March due to the pandemic.

Amjad, also general manager (accounts) at BRTC, said Shyamoli NR Travels operates buses on all five routes and it might be allowed to operate buses on the new route as well.

Shyamoli Managing Director Suvener Ghosh Rakesh said his company is ready to operate buses when the authorities allow it to do that.

The Distance between Dhaka and Darjeeling via Siliguri is around 450km whereas distance between Dhaka and Gangtok via Siliguri is around 500km.

# Out of a difficult 2020, two Dhaka mayors look ahead to brighter days

The two mayors of Dhaka south and north city corporations -- Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and Atiqul Islam-- took office in May 2020 with pledges to bring qualitative changes in the lives of city dwellers. Both, however, found themselves constrained with coordination crises among different utility service providers. Amid the pandemic, the two mayors have made some significant changes in city life. In conversations with Helemul Alam and Mathews Chiran respectively, the two mayors reflected on some of their achievements, constraints and future plans.

The Daily Star (DS): 2020 was a difficult year for everyone. As a mayor, what was your biggest challenge and obstacle this year?

**Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh:** The biggest challenge was that I had to take office during the coronavirus pandemic. Besides, dengue was also a challenge as June was the season of this mosquito-borne disease. So we had to be very careful and vigilant to eradicate mosquitoes and destroy its sources. We had to change the management system and had to initiate a new action plan. Due to our necessary efforts following the action plan, no person died of dengue this season in the DSCC area. We could keep the casualty level at a very minimum stage.

DS: What was the biggest success for you this year?

**Taposh:** I would say we have been able to make the Dhaka South City Corporation less corrupt. It feels good when I get feedback/response from people that they are getting services from the city corporation without facing any corruption. I received a phone call from a Bangladeshi living in the US. They have expressed their satisfaction that they obtained services from the DSCC without paying anything extra. They were very happy and overwhelmed. This is our biggest success as we were able to bring down corruption at the city corporation and ensured transparency, which was one of our election manifestos.

DS: At the end of 2020, what is the one thing you wish you would do differently, and why?

**Taposh:** I want civil works to be done in due time. We want to bring all the service providing agencies under one umbrella so that they can do their work in a coordinated way. That way, residents will get to avail services smoothly and fast. And, there will be no overlapping of works and no lapses; works will be done diligently and within the timeframe.

DS: We're sure you have many plans for 2021. Which one of them are you most excited of and why?

**Taposh:** We have many plans. Of those, we are not most excited but very concerned about how we can eradicate waterlogging from the city. Since we have been successful in recovering all the canals from Wasa, it could be a mammoth task for us to properly look after those. This could be a crucial work for us to ensure that city people will not face waterlogging. It is a huge task. We are preparing our action plan on both short and long term basis. In short term programmes, we will remove all the wastes from the canals and lakes so that water can be removed easily. We will also clean up the box culverts, which had not been cleaned for a long time. Hopefully we will be able to prepare our action plans and we are hopeful that we will be able to provide better services than before. Under the plan, we will prepare a master plan to eradicate the waterlogging problem from Dhaka completely.

DS: What can citizens expect from the mayor's office in the next year?

**Taposh:** Less corruption and good governance, more online and digital applications -- so that citizens can get services smoothly and without any sort of harassment. Bus route rationalisation (bringing all public buses under a fixed number of companies and bringing public transports under discipline) is also an important task, which will be visible in 2021.



Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh

The Daily Star (DS): You have undertaken multiple development projects like installing buttons for pedestrian crossing, and constructing U-loops and foot-bridges, but urban planners and transport experts have criticised some of the initiatives. Can you comment on how successful your endeavours have been?

**Atiqul Islam:** Comments, both positive and negative, about such work is expected. I welcome both the praise and criticism, as they help us learn.

Regarding the button system, all developing countries have it. This is a pilot project, and we have not installed buttons here and there. We focused on educational institutions, so the new generation can get familiar with the system. If the system works well for people, we will continue the project, but if they do not want it or abide by it, we will not.

About U-loops, they have already been proven to be successful. Earlier, it took 40-50 minutes to go from Abdullahpur to Tongi, but now, it takes 4-5 minutes. The U-loops were constructed after consulting with experts, and this was late DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq's plan. But during construction, there were obstructions due to the elevated expressway. But the problems were resolved, and we now have four U-loops left to construct out of 10. Once we open all of them, people will enjoy the benefits.

As for foot-bridges, students demanded them after Abrar died in a tragic road accident. The incident occurred only nine days after I assumed office. I think we need to move to the underpass system instead of foot-bridges for the city's beautification. Unfortunately, that requires more space, and we all know that Dhaka is an unplanned city. Yet, if there is space, we will construct underpasses.

Also, I would like to inform everyone that we are going to install 16 foot-bridges with escalators, so everyone, especially people with disability, can use them.

DS: When will residents of new wards start seeing development under the mega project?

**Atiqul:** Ecneec has approved the Tk 4,200 crore plan to develop new wards, which were neglected for years. Most of the money will be used for land requisition. The narrow roads will be widened and will consist of four lanes. Also, the money will be used for managing canals. Covid-19 has slowed us down, but we will soon start working. We do not want future generations to suffer due to such issues.

DS: What were your biggest successes and failures this year?

**Atiqul:** Among the successes, I would say that during the pandemic, all of us (DNCC officials) worked in the field; we had little time to spend at home. In March, April, May and June, many lost their jobs, but we have been able to help them.

I personally have been able to help 76,000 families under the platform "Sobai Mile Sobar Dhaka". During the dengue outbreak, our DNCC officials worked hard and were able to overcome the crisis together, which we consider as our success.

An issue that worries me is whenever we try to evict illegal occupants, like hawkers on footpaths, from the streets, it becomes occupied again. We still cannot do anything about it.

However, we were able to remove and fine building developers,



Atiqul Islam



The branches that were once home to hundreds of birds are now on the ground, and the large tree stands with half of its canopy missing in front of RMCH emergency unit.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## RMCH TREE BRANCHES CHOPPED TO SHOO BIRDS Director admits mistake, says no more destruction

MOSTAFA SHABUI, BOGURA

The authorities of Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital recently cut off the branches of some trees that were home to a huge number of different species of birds. Amid protests from local environmental activists and conservationists, the director of RMCH admitted to the mistake and said he will refrain from such acts of environmental destruction in the future.

This reporter during a visit to RMCH

earlier this year found thousands of birds at the premises, with Asian openbill storks, cormorants and night herons making nests on the trees in the RMCH compound and adjacent areas including Rajshahi Central Jail, Technical Training Centre (TTC) and Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Science (INMAS) - Rajshahi.

According to local birders, the birds have been nesting at RMCH premises for the past 4-5 years.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## MONGLA PORT Tk 754cr deal signed for dredging

UNB, BAGERHAT

Mongla Port Authority on Wednesday signed a deal with a Chinese company to dredge the inner bar of Mongla Port channel to allow the anchoring of container ships with 10-metre draught.

Rear Admiral M Shahjahan, chairman of the Mongla Port Authority, and Yang Zhijun, representative of the contractor Jianshu Haihong Construction Engineering Company and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation signed the agreement.

The Tk 754.08 crore project will begin in January 2021 and end in July 2022.

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, who joined the programme online,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT OF ARMAN Give him Tk 20 lakh as compensation

High Court directs police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the inspector general of police to give Tk 20 lakh as compensation to Md Arman, a technician at a Benarasi Palli in Mirpur, in 30 days as police personnel have wrongly arrested him and kept him in jail for around five years instead of the original accused in a drug case.

Declaring the arrest and detention of Arman illegal and contradictory to his fundamental and human rights, the court also asked the authorities concerned of the government to immediately release him from Dhaka central jail.

Delivering verdict on a writ petition, the HC ordered the IGP and DMP commissioner to withdraw four police officers, who were discharging duties under Pallabi Police Station during the incident, from their present workplaces.

The four police officers are then OC Dadan Fakir, now inspector under DMP; then SI Md Nazrul Islam, now court inspector under DMP; SI Md Sirajul Islam Khan, now inspector at the Sports and Culture department under Police Headquarters, and Md Russell, now SI of Mirpur Model Police station, court sources said.

The IGP and DMP commissioner have been asked to submit separate reports to the HC by February 14, 2021.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

PHILIPS

We congratulate DNCC on taking a major step towards making Dhaka a smart city and are honoured to be part of this initiative



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## Journo detained, sued under DSA for 'writing against cop'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police picked up a journalist after barging into his home on Wednesday in Dinajpur's Ghoraghat on allegations of writing against a police officer on social media.

The arrestee is Iftekhar Ahmed Khan Babu (37), working for the newspaper Delta Times.

According to locals, a team from Ghoraghat Police Station raided Babu's residence around 10:30pm. Babu was home and went live on Facebook soon after police arrived. The Daily Star received the nine-minute video clip.

He repeatedly asked the police to show a warrant, but officers told him to come out of his home, and Babu refused to do so.

Later, police personnel started trying to break the house's window grille and door, and some officers pointed their guns at Babu, as he said during the Facebook live.

During the broadcast, Babu said police came to arrest him just for writing about the

wrongdoings of Ghoraghat Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Azim Uddin.

On December 21, the OC went to the upazila's Osmanpur Bazar and took hardware materials worth Tk 4,300 from a shop on credit. Babu was present there.

Shafiqul Islam, the shop's owner, said the OC told him that payment will be made later, but he did not receive it as of yesterday. Babu wrote about the incident on his Facebook page recently.

Shafiqul filed a general diary (GD) with Ghoraghat Police Station on Tuesday regarding the Facebook post. However, he refused to respond when asked whether he was pressured to file the GD.

Contacted, OC Azim Uddin, denying all allegations, said Babu was deliberately writing against him.

He said two cases were filed against Babu, one under Digital Security Act by the station's Sub-inspector Khurshid Alam, and another for theft.

## '5-yr-old was killed for protesting molestation'

Man held over murder of girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A five-year-old, who was found dead in a pond on Tuesday morning in Rangpur, was killed by her neighbour after she protested sexual abuse on her, said police.

Law enforcers arrested the perpetrator, Jahrul Haq (45), of Borobari Sarkarpura, from Keranipara area in the town on Wednesday, said ABM Zakir Hossain, superintendent of police of PBI in Rangpur at a briefing yesterday. Jahrul gave his professional statement before a court yesterday.

The SP said the girl, Mysha Akter, daughter of Monwar Hossain, was playing near her home on Monday noon. Jahrul took her to his home and molested her. Protesting the incident, she went out of the home, returned with a stick and started hitting him, said the SP.

Jahrul then pushed her hard. Her head hit against piles of bamboo kept in the room, killing her on the spot. He then put her body in a bag, dumped it in the pond at night and went into hiding.

Later, locals saw a body floating in the pond and informed police. Her body bore torture marks on neck and ear. A murder case was filed.

## Eastern Univ Bot Md Ismail Zabihullah new chair

CITY DESK

Retired government secretary Md Ismail Zabihullah has been selected as chairperson of the Foundation and Board of Trustees (BoT) of Eastern University.

He was appointed to the post at an annual general meeting on Tuesday, said a press release.

Foundation members Md Azizul Islam, Engr Kh Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and Liaquat Hossain Moghul were selected as vice-chairpersons. Mohammed Ali Azzam was selected as treasurer of the Foundation of Eastern University.

## Tk 754cr

FROM PAGE 3

said, "The dredging of the outer bar area of Mongla Port channel has been completed with around Tk 700 crore and it is expected to serve ships with 10-metre draught soon."

Ships have started sailing to and from the newly dredged channel on Mongla Port's outer bar.

"The completion of the dredging of the inner bar area of Mongla Port channel will shorten the turnaround time of ships arriving at the port while cutting the cost of transporting goods," Khalid Mahmud said.

The number of ships arriving at Mongla Port will jump, playing a major part in the economic development of the southwest part of the country.

Mongla Port lies on the bank of the River Pashur. Due to the navigability problems of the Pashur channel, ships would first unload the containers at Chattogram Port, and then would come to Mongla Port after reducing the draught size.

This increased the cost and time of cargo transportation to and from the Mongla Port.

So, traders were reluctant to use the port for import and export of containerised goods.

The completion of the new project is expected to achieve the desired depth of channels which would vastly increase the navigability of the port.

## Seven lakh OMS cards found fake

FROM PAGE 1

Information (about fake cards) recorded on Excel sheets from all areas of the country. "Steps have been taken to make smart cards so that irregularities which took place during the Covid-19 situation do not recur."

Sadhan said a smart OMS card would contain all information, including the cardholder's photo. As a result, it would not be possible for anyone to issue multiple cards using one person's name or information, he added.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 in the country in March last year, the government enforced a nationwide lockdown from March 26 to May 31.

The government at that time had asked the people to stay indoors unless absolutely necessary. The low-income people and daily wage earners were the worst hit by the shutdown and many of them became unemployed.

Amid such a situation, the government increased the number of ration cards from five million to 10 million to provide rice to more people for Tk 10 a kg under a special OMS programme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 25 last year announced that the price of OMS rice was fixed at Tk 10 a kg instead of Tk 30 a kg.

Accordingly, the food ministry started selling rice for Tk 10 a kg under the special OMS programme. Each OMS cardholder could buy five kg of rice a week. The rice was sold from 10:00am to 3:00pm every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

But the programme was suspended in April citing that there was a risk of spread

of the virus as people were not following health guidelines while standing in queues.

Later, the food ministry asked the district deputy commissioners to prepare a list of underprivileged and low-income people who do not have cards of food friendly programme. Those newly enlisted people would be given rice for Tk 10 a kg under the special OMS programme.

During the sale of OMS rice, media outlets ran reports about embezzlement of huge quantity of rice in different parts of the country. A section of government officials and public representatives were involved in embezzling rice, the reports said.

Amid criticism from different quarters over the corruption, more than 100 public representatives of upazila, union and zilla parishads were suspended and several others were arrested in cases in this regard.

The parliamentary standing committee during its meeting on September 24 discussed various alleged irregularities in OMS dealership.

The food minister, however, in the meeting said his ministry has no jurisdiction over granting or canceling OMS dealership.

Sadhan said irregularities often take place when an individual retains OMS dealership for a long time.

A new OMS dealer can be appointed if the incumbent dealer is found involved in irregularities through an investigation, he added.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach the food minister over the phone yesterday for comments.

## Schools won't open

FROM PAGE 1

The 24.1 crore copies of secondary school textbooks has yet to reach a number of upazilas as of yesterday, NCTB officials said.

Education Minister Dipu Moni on Tuesday said the books had not reached certain places because of a paper crisis caused by the coronavirus restrictions.

Government is expected to hand out textbooks among 4,16,55,336 primary and secondary students.

"If the situation improves by this time [January 15], we will reopen the educational institutions," Sheikh Hasina said as she inaugurated the textbook distribution from the Gono Bhaban.

"No one knows when the world will be free from the coronavirus," she added.

The Education Ministry and the Primary and Mass Education Ministry organised the programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital in the presence of about 300 primary and secondary students.

Educational institutions have been closed since March 17. The PM said the situation was unfortunate, but the decision was made to keep the children and parents safe.

TV and online education can keep the students in touch with their lessons. "These will continue..." she added.

Students suffered the most due to the pandemic as the closure put mental pressure on them.

She urged parents to spend more time with their children and make sure they take part in physical activities.

Hasina said education is the most important thing for developing a country. "We want to free the country from poverty. It is impossible to make a country poverty-free without education."

She said for that reason the government has given special attention to education, and since 2010, the government is providing free textbooks among students.

She congratulated everyone engaged in the textbook printing and distributing process amid the pandemic.

The NCTB chairman told The Daily Star that 100 percent of the primary text books have already been printed.

But about 80 percent of the secondary textbooks have so far been printed.

"The work of printing textbooks and reaching it to the upazila levels is progressing fast," he said.

## Charge goes to two city corporations

FROM PAGE 1

He said they had held a meeting on the issue last month and formed a technical committee.

With the committee's recommendations and the prime minister's approval, Wasa handed over the canals and drainage system along with the necessary manpower, equipment, and technical documents.

Tazul said many water bodies in Dhaka city had been encroached upon and occupied, even by the government. The city corporations with the help of public representatives would take steps to recover them.

"We have to rescue the water bodies from the encroachers in phases," he said.

Tazul said they were preparing projects to build walkways along the canals and water bodies and to facilitate water transport.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said they would start cleaning up of three canals - Jirani, Manda, Syampur - and two box culverts in Panthapath and Segunbagicha from tomorrow.

"We will continue the clean-up work until March and we will do the same for other canals like Kalunagar and old Buriganga channel and Dholaikhal box culvert by June," he said.

Taposh said they would not wait for the government funds and would do the work with their own money.

"We will set up boundary pillars, remove all encroachers and protect the recovered land."

"We will also take steps so that the canals are not refilled with garbage again," he said.

Taposh said they would take measures to

connect all the canals and if they succeed, Dhaka would be as beautiful as Venice.

"We just need to keep the canals clean, increase connectivity, and do the maintenance work properly," he said.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said there were over 100 canals in Dhaka city and most of them have already disappeared. He said the city would not have any waterlogging if all the canals were there.

He said, "According to experts, 25 percent open space and 12 percent water bodies are needed in a city. We have a lot less than the required."

The mayor said they have to arrange a water transport system and create more water retention areas.

"We have to demarcate all the canals through city survey, evict all encroachers from the canals and increase water carrying capacity of the canals through excavation."

Requesting the LGRD minister to take necessary steps, Atiqul proposed building elevated roads on the eastern end of Dhaka instead of flood protection embankment that had been done on the western end.

Joint Secretary Iqbal Habib of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon said even though the two city corporations have taken responsibility of the canals, they did not become their custodians with full authority. The deputy commissioner's office remains as their custodians.

He, however, said the city corporations do have the power to conduct eviction drives.

As mayors and councillors are public representatives, they would be able to recover the water bodies ensuring public support, which would be effective, he said.

**Happy New year 2021**  
Wishing peace,  
happiness and Prosperity of our Nation.



প্রতিষ্ঠাতাঃ অধ্যক্ষ ডায় যোগেশ চন্দ্র ঘোষ, এম. এ. আয়ুর্বেদ শাস্ত্রী, এফ. সি. এস (লন্ডন), এম. সি. এস (আমেরিকা)।

আয়ুর্বেদ জগতের প্রথিক

সাধনা ঔষধালয়ের ঐতিহ্যময় ইতিহাস প্রতিষ্ঠাতা অধ্যক্ষ ডায় যোগেশ চন্দ্র ঘোষ, এম. এ. আয়ুর্বেদ শাস্ত্রী এফ. সি. এস (লন্ডন), এম. সি. এস (আমেরিকা)-র জীবনব্যাপী কর্মসাধনার ক্রমবিকাশের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িত। জগন্নাথ কলেজের রসায়ন শাস্ত্রের অধ্যাপক ও আচার্য্য প্রফুল্ল চন্দ্র রায়ের মেধাবী ছাত্র শ্রী ঘোষ ১৯১৪ খৃষ্টাব্দে ঢাকার একটি আয়ুর্বেদীয় প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে প্রাচীন শাস্ত্রের নির্দেশ পুংখানুপুংখরূপে প্রতিফলিত করে আয়ুর্বেদীয় ঔষধ পত্র তৈরীর কাজ আরম্ভ করেন। সেই কর্ম প্রচেষ্টার বীজ আজ এক বিশাল মহীরাহে পরিণত হয়েছে। সাধনা ঔষধালয় ১০৭ বৎসর ধরে দেশে অগণিত শাখার মাধ্যমে জনগণের সেবায় নিবেদিত। আয়ুর্বেদ শাস্ত্রে প্রত্যেক অসুখের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট ঔষধের বর্ণনা আমাদের প্রাচীন সংহিতায় পাওয়া যায়। এই সব ঔষধ সেবনে কোনরূপ বিরূপ প্রতিক্রিয়া হয় না। আপনার রোগের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ দিয়ে আমাদের চিঠি লিখুন। আশা করি আমরা আপনার কষ্ট লাঘব এবং নিরাময়ে সাহায্য করতে পারবো।

সাধনা ঔষধালয় লিঃ ঢাকা  
৭১, বীন নাথ সেন রোড গেভারিয়া, ঢাকা।  
১৯১৪-২০২১

## Give him

FROM PAGE 3

The HC also ordered PBI to conduct an inquiry into the incident and submit a probe report by April 11, said DAG Nawroz MR Chowdhury.

The HC bench of Justices Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Mohi Uddin Shamim came up with the verdict following a petition filed by Law and Life Foundation.

The HC observed that the incident is unexpected and a collective failure of the police department. Police must be more cautious in discharging duties so innocent people are not victimised, the judges said.

Petitioner's lawyer Humayun Kabir Pallab said police arrested Arman in a drug case in January 2016 instead of the original accused one Shahabuddin Bihari.

Both their fathers' names are Md Yeasin.

## Out of

FROM PAGE 3

which would illegally cover footpaths with cement, rods and bricks. We auctioned off the materials left by them. I think this is one of our successes as well. This initiative will continue, and I will not allow any sort of illegal encroachment.

DS: What is the one thing you wish you could have done differently this year and why?

Atiqul: I took charge of DNCC for the new term on May 13. Meanwhile, we had to go through a pandemic, which is still here. I wanted to open at least six parks this year, but we were able to open only one.

Now, I will give my best and execute my responsibilities properly during my term as mayor. Therefore, I seek assistance and support from the city's people. This city belongs to all. On the eve of 2021, I would like to call upon all citizens to love and care for our city and country like our own homes.

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**IN REMEMBRANCE**  
You touched so many lives and were loved by everyone who knew you. May Allah Almighty bring us together in the hereafter and grant you Jannat ul Firdaus. We humbly request all well-wishers of Brig Gen **SANWAR HUDA**, psc (retd.) (1947-2020), to pray wholeheartedly for him.  
**The Huda Family**

## Director

FROM PAGE 3

Mizanur Rahman, founder of Save the Nature and Life, Rajshahi, said, "On December 28, the hospital authority cut down 80 percent of the branches of a large rain tree, located near the emergency unit of the hospital. Besides the authority also cut down branches of around 100 small Debdaru trees where many small and native birds would nest."

On the next day, activists under the banner of Mizanur's environmental organisation formed a human chain at the hospital gate, protesting the authorities' destruction of nature and habitat. During their demonstration, an altercation occurred with members of Ansar deployed at the hospital.

After the human chain, I along with two university professors and a forest department officer met with the hospital director. We urged him to stop cutting tree branches, to which he replied that trees don't match the hospital and he has visited many hospitals in the country where he didn't see any big tree," alleged Mizanur.

Contacted, Md Rahat Hossain, wildlife and biodiversity conservation officer at Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division of Rajshahi said, "When I heard the news I talked to the director over phone and later met him

alongside two RU professors. The director claimed he did it to save patients and staff from birds' droppings. Later he promised that he will not cut branches of any trees and will not further disturb the birds."

Md Rahat Hossain said, according to the constitution and the Wildlife (preservation and security) Act-2012, destructing habitat of wildlife or birds is an offence. "The hospital authority cut down the branches while the Asian openbill stork resides there. If they continue this we will take legal action against the hospital authority," added Rahat.

When contacted, Brigadier General Shameem Yazdani, director of RMCH told The Daily Star, "My intention was not to disturb the birds. There's a big tree in front of the emergency unit. When I heard the birds' droppings were causing disturbance to patients, I told our staff to cut some of the branches adjacent to the paths near the unit."

"I wanted to cut off more branches of a tree near the public toilets but there was protest from journalists, activists and conservationists when we cut down the branches earlier. So I decided to not do this again," said Brig Gen Yazdani.

"If someone had informed me before cutting the branches then I wouldn't have done it," he added.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges  
Bangladesh Bridge Authority  
Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka-1212  
[www.bba.gov.bd](http://www.bba.gov.bd)

Memo No. 50.01.0000.407.33.003.20-624 Date: 31-12-2020

**Corrigendum Notice (1st)**

It is hereby notified to all concern that the Invitation for Tender (IFT) of Tender Package No. WD1[Engaging Operator for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of the Bangabandhu Bridge and Associated works for 5 (five) years invited vide this office memo 50.01.0000.407.33.003.20-601 date: 16 November 2020. As per the IFT, Pre-tender-meeting was held on 20 December 2020. Against this backdrop, some amendments of Tender Documents have been made through Addendum-1.

Serial Number as per published IFT	Descriptions	Date & Time	
		As per published IFT	As per this Corrigendum Notice
17	Tender last selling date	10/01/2021, office hour	02/02/2021, office hour
18	Tender closing date	11/01/2021 12.00 Noon	03/02/2021 12.00 Noon
19	Tender opening date	11/01/2021 3.30pm	03/02/2021 3.30pm

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum is an integral part of IFT which was published vide 50.01.0000.407.33.003.20-601 date: 16 November 2020.

**Quazi Muhammad Ferdous**  
Chief Engineer  
Ph: 02-55040313  
E-mail: [chiefengineer@bba.gov.bd](mailto:chiefengineer@bba.gov.bd)

GD-02

# Poachers on the prowl in Lawachhara National Park

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Poaching of wildlife is alarmingly on the rise in Lawachhara National Park under Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila.

Locals and wildlife activists fear that with different types of traps being found in large numbers in the forest in recent times, rare animal species that are found only in Lawachhara might face extinction soon.

The Lawachhara National Park, on only 1,250 hectares of land, is one of the last patches of the country's tropical forests where nearly 460 species of flora and fauna thrive, according to data from Department of Forest.

Ecology and wildlife in a protected area including national parks is protected under Article 23 (3) of the 'Bangladesh Wild Life (Preservation) Order 1973', which states: "Firing any

gun or doing any other act, which may disturb any wild animal or doing any act, which may interfere with the breeding places of any wild animal, is prohibited."

Ignoring the law, poachers are active in the forest and setting up net or wire traps on bamboo sticks after the sun goes down, locals told this correspondent.

Deer or other wild animals, foraging for food or prey in the forest, easily get caught in the traps at night. Poachers usually enter Lawachhara through unprotected Radhanagar, Doluchhara and Jerin areas and they are mostly after deer meat (venison), horns and hides. Some of them also catch rabbits, said the locals.

In localities around the forest, venison is high in demand and is sold openly for about Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500 each kilogram, said a local who



A wire trap set up with the support of bamboo sticks in Lawachhara National Park under Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Ignoring the law, poachers are active in the forest and setting up net or wire traps on bamboo sticks after the sun goes down, and deer or other wild animals, foraging for food or prey in the forest, easily get caught in the traps at night.

requested anonymity.

Different syndicates of poachers help each other out in selling a rare animal such as barking deer, he also said.

Shamsul Haque, joint convener of 'Lawachhara Bon O Jiboboichitro

Rokkha Andolan', said he found 20 to 25 wire traps set up in Daluchhara area of the forest where barking deer roam for Bahera and Haritaki fruits.

He also said he had heard howling of a barking deer on the night of December

28. The next morning, after he went in the forest, he found deer footprints and signs of struggle near a trap.

Abdul Karim Kim, Sylhet Chapter member secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan (BAPA), said a section of locals with the connivance of forest department employees are involved in the poaching of protected wild animals.

Contacted, Divisional Forest Officer Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division in Sylhet said it is quite a challenging task to patrol the park 24 hours a day with the present patrol crew of only 10.

While they intend to take necessary measures to protect wildlife in the national park, they feel that the higher authorities should urgently empower the Division with a workforce that would be adequate, well-trained and well-equipped, he added.

Lawachhara is a natural breeding ground for many wildlife species and like many of them had gone extinct already, more species will face the same fate unless the poaching of wild animals there is stopped immediately, said Dr Narayan Saha, professor of Forestry and Environmental Science at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

## Woman killed in broad daylight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A woman was stabbed to death in broad daylight by one of her relatives allegedly over a trivial matter in Joypurhat town yesterday.

The deceased, Masuma Begum, 40, was wife of Seyed Ali of Khonjanpur area under Joypurhat municipality.

Meanwhile, locals caught Rabikul Hasan, 30, son of Abu Sufian of the area, from the spot and handed him over to the police.

Police said Rabikul borrowed Tk 2000 from his aunt Masuma a month ago and was delaying to return the money.

An altercation occurred between them over the issue around 11:00am yesterday, and at one stage, Rabikul stabbed Masuma indiscriminately with a sharp weapon. Injured Masuma died on her way to Joypurhat Modern Hospital the same noon.

## Chapainawabganj growers eye bumper mustard yield

Around 16,720 hectares of land in 5 upazilas have been brought under the cultivation this year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Farmers and agriculture officials in Chapainawabganj are expecting a bumper yield of mustard in the current season due to favourable weather.

Easy cultivation process and lower production cost compared to other Robi crops is also a reason behind popularity of mustard cultivation among the farmers in the district.

October to mid-November is the suitable time for mustard cultivation and it takes 80 to 85 days to get the yield, said, AKM Monjure Mowla, additional deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Chapainawabganj.

The farmers in the district have cultivated mustard on 16,720 hectares of land against the DAE's target of 15,500 hectares of land.

Of the mustard fields, 5,090 hectares are in Sadar upazila, 3,700



A mustard field in Poolpara village in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

hectares in Shibganj upazila, 2,165 hectares in Gomostapur upazila, 755 hectares in Bholahat upazila and 5,010 hectares in Nachole upazila.

Most of the lands are covered with varieties developed by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI), including BARI Sharisha-9, BARI Sharisha-11, BARI Sharisha-13, BARI Sharisha-16 and BARI Sharisha-17.

A few local varieties have also been

cultivated, said Mowla.

Depending on soil condition, the cultivation of mustard requires only one or two times irrigation while about Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,000 is needed to cultivate the crop on one bigha.

On an average six maunds of mustard is produced on a bigha of land, the official said.

The DAE authorities are trying to persuade the farmers to cultivate high yielding varieties of mustard invented by BARI between the gaps of Aman and Boro to earn profit.

Farmers in Sadar upazila said they are hopeful to get bumper production of mustard. Harvest will begin in next month.

Yousuf Ali of Kansina village in Sadar upazila said, "I have cultivated eight bighas of land, spending Tk over 14,000. I expect to get at least 48 maunds from the land. I will sell each maund for Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,000."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Department of Environment  
Ecosystem-based Approaches to Adaptation (EbA) in the Drought-Prone Barind Tract and Haor "Wetland" Area Project (EbA Project)  
Poribesh Bhaban Old Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room: 304  
E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
www.doe.gov.bd

### Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) for Selection of short term Individual Consultant (National)

1.	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2.	Agency	:	Department of Environment (DoE)
3.	Client (Procuring Entity) Name	:	Dr. Md. Sohrab Ali, Project Director, EbA project
4.	Client (Procuring Entity) Code	:	
5.	Client (Procuring Entity) District	:	Dhaka
6.	Expression of Interest for selection of	:	Short term Individual Consultant (National) Full Project Period but split into different phases
7.	EoI Ref No	:	22.02.0000.111.14.012.20-18
8.	Date	:	30 December 2020

#### Funding Information

9.	Source of Funds	:	LDCF of Global Environment Facility (GEF)
10.	Development Partners	:	GEF-UNEP

#### Particular Information

11.	Project Code	:	009869
12.	Project Name	:	Ecosystem-based Approaches to Adaptation (EbA) in the Drought-Prone Barind Tract and Haor "Wetland" Area Project (EbA Project)
13.	EoI Closing Date and Time	:	18 January 2021, 02:30 pm

#### Information for Applicants:

Package No.	Name of Position	Number of Position	Duration Man Days (md)	Educational Qualifications and ToR*
SD-5	National Adaptation Expert	1 (one)	79 md	At least an advanced post-graduate degree, preferably PhD in Climate Change Adaptation or related disciplines such as Environmental Vulnerability and Management/Natural Resources Management/Ecosystem-based Adaptation/Agriculture/Forestry/Land and Water Resources Management.

#### Procuring Entity (Client) Details

14.	Name of Official Inviting EoI	:	Dr. Md. Sohrab Ali	
15.	Designation of Official Inviting EoI	:	Project Director, EbA Project	
16.	Address of Official Inviting EoI	:	Department of Environment Poribesh Bhaban Old Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room: 304 E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207	
17.	Contact details of Official Inviting EoI	:	Phone: 8181269, Email: sohrab@doe.gov.bd	
18.	Place of submission of EoI	:	Project Director's office, EbA project (Director's office of DoE Dhaka Laboratory) Poribesh Bhaban Old Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room: 304 E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207	
19.	The Client (Procuring Entity) reserves the right to accept or reject all EoIs.			

The Department of Environment is implementing EbA Project to increase capacity of government and local communities living in the Barind Tract and the Haor wetland area and to reduce the negative effects of climate change using Ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation.

Project Director of the EbA Project now invites eligible applicants to express their interest in providing the services. Applicants are advised to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services in completed Curriculum Vitae (CV) and proven documents with a cover letter. Detail Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) including Format of CV and \*Terms of References (ToR) including scope of works, responsibilities, educational qualifications and experiences are available in the DoE website (www.doe.gov.bd). Copy of ToR and Format of CV may also be obtained from the office mentioned above.

One original and two copies of EoI must be submitted in the Project Director's office on or before 18 January 2021, 02:30 pm Bangladesh Time in sealed envelope and be clearly marked the position for Expression of Interest. Applicants can send the EoI through Email also at sohrab@doe.gov.bd.

Persons who are in service should submit EoI through proper channel, otherwise EoI will be rejected.

GD-05



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Department of Environment  
Ecosystem-based Approaches to Adaptation (EbA) in the Drought-Prone Barind Tract and Haor "Wetland" Area Project (EbA Project)  
Poribesh Bhaban Old Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room: 304  
E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh  
www.doe.gov.bd

### Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) for Selection of short term Individual Consultant (International)

1.	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2.	Agency	:	Department of Environment (DoE)
3.	Client (Procuring Entity) Name	:	Dr. Md. Sohrab Ali, Project Director, EbA project
4.	Client (Procuring Entity) Code	:	
5.	Client (Procuring Entity) District	:	Dhaka
6.	Expression of Interest for selection of	:	Short term Individual Consultant (International) Full Project Period but split into different phases
7.	EoI Ref No	:	22.02.0000.111.14.012.20-19
8.	Date	:	30 December 2020

#### Funding Information

9.	Source of Funds	:	LDCF of Global Environment Facility (GEF)
10.	Development Partners	:	GEF-UNEP

#### Particular Information

11.	Project Code	:	009869
12.	Project Name	:	Ecosystem-based Approaches to Adaptation (EbA) in the Drought-Prone Barind Tract and Haor "Wetland" Area Project (EbA Project)
13.	EoI Closing Date and Time	:	25 January 2021, 02:30 pm Bangladesh Time

#### Information for Applicants:

Package No.	Name of Position	Number of Position	Duration Man Days (md)	Educational Qualifications and ToR*
SD-6	International Technical Advisor	1 (one)	150 md	At least an advanced post-graduate degree, preferably a PhD in Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental Vulnerability, Conservation of Land Resources and Land Use Planning or related disciplines such as Natural Resources Management/Agriculture/Forestry/Soil and Water Resources Management.
	International EbA Expert	1 (one)	70 md	At least an advanced post-graduate degree, preferably PhD in Climate Change Adaptation or related disciplines such as Environmental Vulnerability and Management/Natural Resources Management/Ecosystem-based Adaptation/Agriculture/Forestry/Soil and Water Resources Management.

#### Procuring Entity (Client) Details

14.	Name of Official Inviting EoI	:	Dr. Md. Sohrab Ali	
15.	Designation of Official Inviting EoI	:	Project Director, EbA Project	
16.	Address of Official Inviting EoI	:	Department of Environment Poribesh Bhaban Old Building, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room: 304 E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh	
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19.	The Client (Procuring Entity) reserves the right to accept or reject all EoIs.			

The Department of Environment is implementing EbA Project to increase capacity of government and local communities living in the Barind Tract and the Haor wetland area and to reduce the negative effects of climate change using Ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation.

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One original and two copies of EoI must be submitted in the Project Director's office on or before 25 January 2021, 02:30 pm Bangladesh Time in sealed envelope and be clearly marked the position for Expression of Interest. Applicants can send the EoI through Email also at sohrab@doe.gov.bd.

Persons who are in service should submit EoI through proper channel, otherwise EoI will be rejected.

GD-04

# CORONAVIRUS AID TO AMERICANS Trump's bid stalls in US Senate

REUTERS, Washington

US Senate leader Mitch McConnell dealt a likely death blow on Wednesday to President Donald Trump's bid to boost coronavirus aid to Americans, declining to schedule a swift Senate vote on a bill to raise relief checks to \$2,000 from \$600.

McConnell said on the Senate floor that a bill passed by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, which sought to meet fellow Republican Trump's demands for bigger checks, "has no realistic path to quickly pass the Senate."

McConnell, who controls the Senate's agenda and opposes the increase in aid, had introduced a competing bill combining the \$2,000 checks with provisions unacceptable to Democrats, who could block it.

With a new Congress set to be sworn in on Sunday, the action appears all but certain to kill the effort to increase the amount of the \$600 checks Congress has already approved.

Trump had ramped up pressure on fellow Republicans to back the bigger checks for struggling Americans in a series of tweets over recent days. "\$2000 ASAP!" Trump wrote on Twitter early on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the president attacked Republican leaders as "pathetic" and accused the party of having a "death wish" if it did not back raising the stimulus payments or scrap legal protections for social media companies.



A girl wearing a mask and "2021" head band looks on at a shopping mall as The New Year countdown celebrations and crowded events were banned amid the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Syria war killed 6,800 in 2020

The Syrian conflict claimed at least 6,800 people in 2020, the lowest annual death toll since it began nearly a decade ago, a war monitor said yesterday. According to figures compiled by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, more than 10,000 people were killed in the conflict in 2019. The deadliest year was 2014, when more than 76,000 people died, according to the UK-based organisation, which has an extensive network of sources on the ground. The overall tally since the start of the conflict has crept up to 387,000, including 117,000 civilians. On Wednesday, fighters from the Islamic State jihadist group ambushed soldiers in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, killing 37 of them.

### 26 held after Pak Hindu temple destroyed

At least two dozen people, including several Muslim clerics, were detained yesterday after a mob attacked and set fire to a Hindu temple in northwest Pakistan, police said. Around 1,500 Muslims on Wednesday descended on the temple -- which was destroyed in similar circumstances in 1997 -- after staging a protest against renovations at an adjoining building owned by Hindus. The temple is located in a remote village in Karak district, some 160 kilometres (100 miles) southeast of Peshawar. Police were looking for a further 50 people identified from videos of the attack.

### Assam bans madrasas

An Indian state ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party on Wednesday passed a law abolishing all Islamic schools, saying they provided sub-standard education. Opposition politicians criticised the move and said it reflected the government's anti-Muslim attitude in the Hindu-majority country. More than 700 of the schools, known as madrasas, in northeastern Assam will be shut by April, the state's education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told the local assembly. The government would convert them to regular schools as education provided in the madrasas could not prepare anyone for "the temporal world and its earthly concerns", Sarma said.

### British PM Johnson's father applying for French citizenship



The father of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday said he was in the process of applying for a French passport to maintain his ties with the European Union after Brexit. Stanley Johnson, a former member of the European Parliament who voted Remain in Britain's 2016 referendum, told RTL radio he wanted to become a French citizen because of strong family links to France. "I will always be a European, that's for sure. One cannot tell the British people: you are not Europeans. Having a tie with the European Union is important," said the 80-year-old Johnson. The United Kingdom officially leaves the EU's orbit on Thursday night, after an often strained 48-year liaison with the European project.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

# US sees record daily deaths

## China okays Sinopharm's vaccine; Tokyo sees record cases

AGENCIES

The US logged its highest ever daily death toll from the coronavirus as the world prepares to turn the page on a grim year defined by the pandemic, with much of the globe united in one hope for 2021: that a slew of new vaccines will stamp out Covid-19.

New Year's Eve marks one year since the World Health Organization first mentioned a mysterious pneumonia in China later identified as Covid-19, which went on in 2020 to kill more than 1.79 million people and devastate the global economy in unprecedented ways.

In the world's worst-hit country, the US, the numbers keep climbing: On Wednesday more than 3,900 people died of Covid-19, a new record, bringing the toll since the pandemic began to more than 19.7 million infections and 341,000 lives lost.

And experts believe the worst is yet to come, as US healthcare workers brace for a surge in cases after major holiday gatherings.

China yesterday approved its first Covid-19

vaccine for general public use, a shot developed by an affiliate of state-backed pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm.

No detailed efficacy data of the vaccine has been publicly released but its developer, Beijing Biological Products Institute, a unit of Sinopharm subsidiary China National Biotec Group (CNBG), said on Wednesday its vaccine was 79.34% effective in preventing people from developing the disease based on interim data.

Pakistan yesterday announced a 1.2 million dose purchase deal with Sinopharm.

China also confirmed its first case of a new coronavirus variant that was recently detected in Britain, health officials said. Even as vaccinations ramp up in Europe and North America, global infections have surged to more than 82 million.

New infections in Japan's capital hit a record high of 1,337 yesterday, Tokyo's Metropolitan Government said. Nationwide, new cases surpassed 4,000 for the first time, local media said.



# Trump aims to fabricate 'pretext for war': Iran FM

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif yesterday accused outgoing US President Donald Trump of aiming to fabricate a "pretext for war" as tensions mount between the two countries.

His remarks come ahead of the first anniversary of the US killing of top Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani in a drone strike in Baghdad on January 3.

US aircraft carrier USS Nimitz has been patrolling Gulf waters since late November and two American B-52 bombers recently overflew the region.

"Instead of fighting (the novel coronavirus) in US, @realDonaldTrump & cohorts waste billions to fly B52s & send armadas to OILR region," Zarif wrote on Twitter. "Intelligence from Iraq indicate plot to FABRICATE pretext for war," he added.

Trump ordered a drone strike on January 3 this year to kill Soleimani near Baghdad's international airport. Days later, Iran launched a volley of missiles at Iraqi bases housing US and other coalition troops, with Trump refraining from any further military response.

Trump said last week said he would hold "Iran responsible" for any fatal attack on Americans in Iraq after accusing Tehran of being behind a rocket strike on the US embassy in Baghdad on December 20.

Zarif at the time warned the US president against any "adventurism" before leaving the White House on January 20, and said "putting your own citizens at risk abroad won't divert attention from catastrophic failures at home".

# Indian forces kill three J&K 'militants'

REUTERS, SRINAGAR

Indian security forces said they killed three militants in Kashmir's main city, Srinagar, on Wednesday after a gun battle, but families of the dead men said they were innocent.

India has been fighting an armed insurgency in the disputed Himalayan region for decades and killed more than 200 militants this year, according to official data.

It is, however, rare for families to immediately contest victims' allegiance to insurgent groups. Police in Kashmir this month filed charges against an army officer and a civilian for allegedly killing three labourers and planting weapons to pass them off as militants.

Bashir Ahmad Ganai, grandfather of 25-year-old Aijaz Ahmad Ganai, who was killed in the protracted firefight in Srinagar, told reporters his grandson was not a militant.

"He was a student. Why did they kill him?" he said at a protest by family members outside a police office.

# China holds sway in Nepal as communist factions spark crisis

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Alarmed that a political crisis in Nepal could endanger China's strategic interests and Belt and Road projects, a Chinese Communist Party emissary has held days of talks to try to stop the Himalayan country's ruling communist party from tearing itself apart.

The crisis erupted on Dec. 20 when Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, decided he could no longer work with rival factions within his Nepal Communist Party (NCP), which was formed in 2018 to unite the Marxist-Leninist and main Maoist parties following their success in elections in late 2017.

With two years of his term to run, Oli dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections in a move that foreign diplomats say caught China by surprise and plunged the impoverished nation of 30 million people into uncertainty.

Seven ministers quit Oli's government, and anger over the descent into political infighting at a time when the economy is reeling from the coronavirus sparked protests at which effigies of the prime minister were burnt.

Within days, Beijing dispatched to Kathmandu Guo Yezhou, a vice-minister in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) International Liaison Department, which manages relationships with foreign political parties of all hues, both in power and opposition.

Oli has recommended an election be held in two phases in April and May, but what happens next could be in the lap of

the Supreme Court, as his opponents have challenged the dissolution of parliament as unconstitutional. A hearing will resume in January.

Guo has held separate meetings with Oli, and rivals in the communist party to get their sides of the story, as well as leaders of the main opposition party and other politicians.



Still, some foreign diplomats in Kathmandu viewed Guo's mission as a brazen demonstration of China's growing influence over Nepal's internal affairs.

"Why would a country rush a delegation to a neighbouring nation amid a pandemic? It's rather obvious they control the internal politics of Nepal as they want to expand investments in near future," a senior Western diplomat said.

An Asian diplomat struck a similar note. "They have been buying land and investing in large-scale infrastructure projects by keeping a tight control on the ruling party and the opposition," said the Asian diplomat.

"A lot is at stake for Beijing," he said.

# Peacekeeping mission in Darfur ends

AFP, Nyaala

The United Nations-African Union mission in Darfur is set to end 13 years of peacekeeping in the vast Sudanese region yesterday, even as recent violent clashes leave residents fearful of new conflict.

Fighting erupted in Darfur in 2003, when ethnic minority rebels rose up against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, which responded by recruiting and arming notorious Arab-dominated militia known as the Janjaweed.

A total of 300,000 people were killed and 2.5 million displaced, according to the United Nations.

"The joint United Nations-African

Union mission in the Darfur region of Sudan (UNAMID) will officially end operations on Thursday, when the Government of Sudan will take over responsibility for the protection of civilians in the area," the mission said in a statement on Wednesday.

The bitter conflict has largely subsided in recent years and longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir -- wanted by the International Criminal Court for genocide and other alleged crimes in the western region -- was deposed last year.

But the country's transitional government is fragile, and ethnic and tribal clashes still periodically flare in Darfur, including clashes last week that left at least 15 people dead and

dozens wounded. Darfur, many of whom remain in teeming camps years after they fled their homes, have held protests in recent weeks against the mission's imminent departure.

"The lives of Darfuri people are at stake, and the United Nations should reconsider its decision," Mohamed Abdelrahman told AFP on Wednesday at Kalma camp in Nyaala, the capital of South Darfur.

The UN said that the phased withdrawal of the mission's approximately 8,000 armed and civilian personnel will begin in January and be completed inside six months.

## গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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স্মারক নং-উপঃস্বাস্থ্যকমঃ/বি/২০২০-২৮৯৪

### উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়/স্বাস্থ্য সেবা বিভাগ।		
০২	সংগ্রাহক/স্বত্বাধিকারীর নাম	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃপঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী।		
০৩	অর্থায়নের উৎস	রাজস্ব/জিওবি/বোকা/অতিরিক্ত/বিশেষ বরাদ্দ।		
০৪	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের স্মারক ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং-উপজেলাঃ স্বাস্থ্যকমঃ/বিঃ/নোয়া/২০২০/২৮৯৪/৩০ তারিখঃ ৩০/১২/২০২০ইং		
০৫	দরপত্রের নাম/কাজের বিবরণ	২০২০-২০২১ইং অর্থবছরে উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃপঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী এর এম.এস.আর সামগ্রী সরবরাহের দরপত্র (গ্রুপ নং- "ক" ঊষধপত্র, "খ" সার্জিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি, "গ" লিনেন সামগ্রী, "ঘ" গজ, ব্যাভেজ, কটন, "ঙ" কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট এবং "চ" আসবাবপত্র ও ক্রিচেন সামগ্রী।		
০৬	সংগ্রাহক স্বত্বাধিকারীর জেলা	নোয়াখালী।		
০৭	ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া	পিপিআর ২০০৬, ২০০৮ ও (সংশোধিত ২০১৯) মোতাবেক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।		
০৮	দরপত্রদাতাদের যোগ্যতা	যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন সকল এম.এস.আর সরবরাহকারী/বাজারজাতকারী/আমদানীকারক/উৎপাদনকারী/এজেন্ট/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান।		
০৯	দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	প্রতিটি সিডিউলের মূল্য চালানের মাধ্যমে কোড নং-১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৬৮১ এ বাংলাদেশ/সোনালী ব্যাংক, টোমুহনী শাখায় জমাদানপূর্বক উপজেলা হিসাবরক্ষণ অফিস, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী কর্তৃক চালানের সি.টি.আর সহ মূলকপি অত্র কার্যালয়ের ক্যাশিয়ারের নিকট জমা দিয়ে দরপত্র সংগ্রহ করিতে হইবে।		
১০	দরপত্র জামানত/বায়নার	গ্রুপের নাম	সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানতের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর পরিমাণ
		"ক" ঊষধপত্র	১০০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা	৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
		"খ" সার্জিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি ও মেসারামত	৭৫০ (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা	৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
		"গ" লিনেন সামগ্রী	৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা	২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
		"ঘ" গজ, ব্যাভেজ, কটন	৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা	২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
		"ঙ" কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট	৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা	১৫,০০০/- (পনের হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
"চ" আসবাবপত্র ও ক্রিচেন সামগ্রী	৫০০ (পাঁচশত) টাকা	১৫,০০০/- (পনের হাজার টাকা মাত্র)		
১১	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়, দর প্রস্তাব গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী। (দরপত্র পুস্তিকা/সিডিউল, অত্র কার্যালয়ের ক্যাশিয়ারের নিকট হতে সংগ্রহ করিতে হইবে।)		
১২	দরপত্র সংগ্রহের স্থান	১। উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী ২। সিভিল সার্জন অফিস, নোয়াখালী ৩। উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসস্বত্বের কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী।		
১৩	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ দিন ও সময়	২৪/০১/২০২১ত্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (০৮-০২-৩০ মিনিট)।		
১৪	দরপত্র তফসিল দাখিলের স্থান	উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পঃ পঃ কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, বেগমগঞ্জ, নোয়াখালী।		
১৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০১/২০২১ত্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১৬	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৫/০১/২০২১ত্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।		

জিডি-০১

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ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

## Ways to achieve your resolutions in 2021

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

On January 1, everyone seems to have an idea about what their new year will look like, from healthier habits to learning new skills. But we have all made resolutions that we have broken. Once that “new year” feeling is gone, and you slip back into your old routine, it is harder to stay committed to your goals. Welcoming the new year may feel a bit different this year, given the challenges of 2020. Nonetheless, here is a list of ways to actually achieve your new year’s resolutions.

### KEEP THEM REALISTIC

It is crucial to understand how much and which goals you can actually achieve. Coming up with practical resolutions is the first step towards accomplishing them. Refer to your previous habits and draft a list that you can easily follow on a daily basis. Resolutions are sup-

posed to be fun, so don’t overwhelm yourself.

### WRITE THEM DOWN

Before you start, write down your resolutions somewhere easily accessible, preferably a diary. Use bright colours when you write them down. You can categorise them into your long-term and short-term goals. Plan things ahead of time and execute it over the next twelve months.

### KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS

For this, you can break down a resolution into monthly attainable goals. At the end of the first three months, check how far you’ve arrived. This would also act as a source of motivation. Instead of hurrying up, go slow and steady, ticking off things as you continue. Monthly planners are a good way to maintain records and there are several apps and websites that can help you keep track.

### GIVE YOURSELF REMINDERS

Most of us tend to forget our plans and aspirations by the middle of the year. Reminders are an effective way of pushing yourself towards your goals. When you keep track of your progress, set up flexible deadlines and try to accomplish them. Apps like Microsoft To Do and nTask are helpful in this regard. This would ensure that you do not neglect your resolutions.

### REWARD YOURSELF

Once you start accomplishing your goals, make it a point to reward yourself. For example, if you have accomplished your reading goals, treat yourself to a good book adaptation or binge watch a show. Rewards will keep you motivated throughout the year.

*The author likes to read her way through life, and you will always find her scribbling and planning. To send recommendations and help, write to her at mislammonamee@gmail.com.*



OISHIK'S KARTOON AND STUFF 29/12/2020



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Submit your answer in the form of an essay to participate in the “What Liberation means to me?” competition, which is organized by Youth Opportunities in collaboration with the High Commission of India, Dhaka. The competition gives you a platform to share your vision and idea of “Liberation” with the whole nation.

DEADLINE: January 10, 2021 | Competitions



### Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships 2021 – Second Cycle

Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships give talented students from anywhere in the Commonwealth the opportunity to gain a Master’s degree while developing new skills, experiencing life in another country, and building their global networks. Scholarships are for students committed to creating change in their communities and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The scholarships are named in honour of Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth and ACU Patron, and are fully funded and supported by numerous Commonwealth governments.

DEADLINE: January 18, 2021 | Scholarships

### Green Institute Sustainability Internship 2021 (Grant of \$1000)

The Green Institute Internship is a 6-month innovative virtual program for garnering knowledge, skills and experience in the field of sustainability. The program aims to nurture college students and fresh graduates (not more than two years), thereby bridging the gap between education and career development. It does this by offering on-the-job-training and experience for effective employee development.

DEADLINE: January 19, 2021 | Internships

# How BTS is changing the world, one song at a time

SARA KABIR

In 2013, a group of seven boys, all from different backgrounds, who left behind their friends and family to follow their dream of becoming K-pop artists, were about to debut. But soon afterwards, their hopes were crushed as the bad press from the media, internal strife and lack of proper finance forced them to almost disband multiple times. But they kept on fighting for their dream, even if that meant living in one cramped dorm room and having to beg people to come to their concerts. These boys had very humble beginnings – one of the members, Yoongi, recently had a surgery to repair a torn shoulder labrum. The tear was related to an injury that occurred in 2012, when the performer was hit by a car during one of his delivery-boy shifts.

Flash forward to years later, that same group of boys from South Korea, Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS), are now one of the biggest boy bands in the world. Among other outstanding achievements, they have multiple No. 1 albums in the US Billboard Hot 100, 15 Guinness World Records and over 300 awards. BTS are the youngest recipients of South Korea’s Order of Cultural Merit award and the first ever K-pop act to receive a Grammy nomination. They are changing the world and the face of K-pop forever, paving the way for others.

For years, BTS struggled to get their music heard. They were not an overnight success, like some people might believe. But because of their struggles and despite of it, they became worldwide superstars and South Korea’s pride and joy. BTS refuse to be confined within the boundaries of the “K-pop” industry, instead often experimenting with different, versatile styles and musical genres like Hip-Hop, Jazz, EDM, R&B, Latin pop, Ballad, Country and Rock among others. Each of the seven members embody various roles and positions in the group, such as dancer, vocalist, leader, rapper, producer, choreographer, and more.

BTS’s music transcends language, time and cultural barriers; their raw and relatable lyrics resonates with people, going through different stages of life. The healing power of their music does not discriminate. The majority of their self-written and self-produced songs discuss socio-political issues found in contemporary society such as mental health, toxic-masculinity, women’s empowerment, self-love, capitalism, burn-out and the struggles of growing up among other things. Most of their topics are still taboo in the culturally-conservative Asia and are often brushed away as non-existent.

The Korean music industry is known for their “manufactured” and “engineered” sound, where the artists themselves have no say in what they are singing about,



PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM THE BTS OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE

### BTS’ official music video photo sketch for ‘Dynamite’.

but instead, have their music written and produced by a group of professionals fit for the industry standards. BTS breaks all those preconceived rules by having a voice in their own music. They have started a new trend for Korean singers to explore more complex and impactful themes.

These motifs are often seen in both their studio albums and individual mixtapes. In their latest album “BE”, which was released on November 20, 2020, BTS shared their experiences and hopes during the pandemic, as they embrace “Be”-ing in this new reality. The relatable lyrics and catchy beats in titles like “Fly to my Room”, “Dis-ease”, “Stay” and “Telepathy” are contrasted with the raw, emotional ballads like “Blue & Grey” and “Life Goes On”.

This album also features their first ever completely English language song, “Dynamite”. It consoles anyone struggling with their mental health during these times and is a beacon of hope for listeners that everything will be okay and life goes on. To me, this album feels like a warm hug from a loved one on a cold winter morning.

BTS’s fans, known as ARMY (short for Adorable Representative MC for Youth) are a group of passionate and creative individuals, from all walks of life, who stand by BTS and each other through thick and thin. Shehrin Tabassum Odri, a digital marketer and an ARMY since 2018, shared her story of how much of an impact BTS has had in her life. “When I was at my loneliest, having hit rock bottom and losing the will to live, BTS was there for me. It was the day they released their ‘Life Goes On’ music video,” she says. “The song was like a wakeup call. It made me realise how many future oppor-

tunities and loved ones I will be losing if I give up now and that I’m not the only one feeling this miserable and lost, the members of BTS have gone through this phase too. If they have found a way to stay hopeful for the future to change and better times to come, maybe I should hold on a bit longer too. BTS gave me the hope to keep living.”

“In conservative countries like ours, masculinity is associated with tall, bearded men with deep voices,” mentions Sumaiya Islam, a Nuclear Science and Engineering student. “In a society where men struggle to be vulnerable and be seen as ‘manly’ enough, BTS breaks the gender norms by wearing makeup, jewellery, gender-neutral clothes, and long, colourful hair. They have completely changed my viewpoint on Asian men.” Sumaiya has been an ARMY since 2018.

Atanu Roy Chowdhury shared that the band makes him feel “seen”. “Mental health is affecting our lives, but people don’t want to talk about it. BTS is using the universal language of music to tell the world how important mental health is,” he says. “One of my closest friends died by suicide in 2012, and there are times when it still breaks my heart thinking that I will never see her or talk to her again. Songs from BTS albums help to ease the pain. Having my favourite musicians talk about such issues makes me feel more connected to them.”

By breaking down age-old, ignorant ideas like “men don’t cry” and “only girls can wear makeup”, openly talking about their struggles and sharing their emotions, BTS are showing the world that gender does not have to confine anyone and there should be no one standard of being. Group

members Min Yoongi (Suga), Kim Nam-joon (RM) and recently, Kim Taehyung (V) and Kim Seokjin (Jin), are known for being open about their struggles with anxiety, depression and burn-out. “I have been called ‘girly’ because I like cooking, cleanliness and keeping my hair long. Even the way I walk has been criticised. Terms like ‘girly’ and ‘gay’ are so easily used as insults, when they should not be,” adds Atanu. “Toxic masculinity is so ingrained in us, and it affects people of all ages. BTS is fighting a difficult fight, and kudos to them for that!” Seeing someone like BTS’ Jungkook be named “Sexiest International Man Alive 2020”, in a sphere usually dominated by white men, can do wonders for brown, Asian men worldwide, giving them an ideal person they can actually relate to. Another ARMY, Niaz Ahmed, shared that messages from the band to “Love Yourself” (a trilogy of their albums in 2018) resonated with him. “Their music was eye-opening, and helped me to start thinking that being happy with who I am is very important,” he says.

Subyeta Sarwar mentioned how being a part of the BTS fandom in Bangladesh has helped her connect with other ARMYs easily, creating deep bonds and long-lasting friendships. Going to different events such as the BD Korean Festival, hosted by BD K-Family, has helped her socialise and meet fellow ARMYs. Since there is a lack of K-pop concerts in Bangladesh, these events are the closest fans can get to experiencing them.

For fans who have been with BTS for a couple of years like myself, it feels like we are growing up with them, experiencing the highs and lows of their lives and career alongside them, not as a distant fan, but as a close friend. There is a popular saying in the fandom, “If you are not a fan of BTS now, it’s because you’re not at a point where you need them yet. Just wait, they’ll find you and come to you when you need to be healed, never too early or too late.”

In the pop-dominated culture we live in, BTS have successfully utilised their music platform to spread the message of social equality and justice, which the youth often face. By speaking up about these issues, BTS are not only breaking the preconceived societal stereotypes and creating awareness, they are also urging their fans to do the same. To quote the group’s leader, Kim Namjoon (RM), from his UNICEF speech at the United Nations in 2018, “No matter who you are, where you’re from, your skin colour, gender identity: speak yourself.”

*The author studies English Literature in North South University. She is often found raving about her favourite books, songs and movies. Find her at @scarletfangirl on Instagram.*

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 1, 2021, POUISH 17, 1427 BS

## As we enter 2021...

Let us face the challenges ahead with greater resolve and unity

ONE year ago, when we stepped into an exciting new decade, few would have guessed what the year 2020 would ultimately look like. It was a difficult year for people all across the world—a year of great uncertainties, and a year of great many losses. Nevertheless, as we bid farewell to 2020 and begin the new year, we cannot help but feel optimistic that one of the most difficult years in recent memory is now behind us—and that what lies ahead is a better and brighter future.

The reality, however, is a bit more complex. The Covid-19 pandemic, which dominated the headlines and life across the planet in general last year, continues to pose significant threats. Its impact has been so severe that people everywhere now talk about a “new normal”, in acknowledgment of the fact that normalcy in life itself has been knocked off its axis. The economic impact of Covid and the ensuing lockdowns have ruined many lives and livelihoods, forcing the world backwards and pulling people further into the poverty trap. It has exposed serious failings in our healthcare and education sectors, and made us pay a hefty price for the lack of adequate social safety net measures. Thus, the future can only be brighter if we take these lessons in stride and choose to do differently in the times ahead.

What the pandemic has also demonstrated is how interdependent nations across the world and their peoples have become, and what the cost of being cut off economically, socially, and physically from each other is truly like—and that it is not pleasant. Herein lies a great lesson for all nations, their leaders and people: the world cannot move forward when some of its inhabitants, no matter who they are, are left behind.

But there are some positives that we can take into the new year also. Nations around the world and companies are trying desperately to come up with a vaccine that can end the threat of Covid-19 once and for all. Producing a safe and effective vaccine for all should be the top priority of 2021. And here, as well as in the distribution of any vaccine that is ultimately most effective, we must have cooperation between nations and international bodies. Otherwise, as 2020 taught us, the world will not recover from the setbacks that it suffered during the last 12 months.

During certain periods last year when the crisis was at its peak, we unfortunately witnessed a series of events which showed how free speech and the free press had become intolerable for governments—including our own—and those occupying the seats of power. The justification that was given every time was that such actions were necessary to stop the dissemination of rumours and misinformation. However, as history has repeatedly shown, the answer to “bad speech” is “good speech”, not censorship—because the truth is always the best antidote to lies. We hope that in the coming year, our government, in particular, will allow greater space for peoples’ expression to flourish and uphold this most basic human right, as well as all the others, that it is constitutionally obligated to protect.

As a newspaper devoted to the truth, *The Daily Star* commits to continue to work for public interest, for social justice, for the young people of this country, for development, for the environment, for better democratic practices and for freedom of expression. We thank all of you who have stood by us all these years. A very Happy New Year to our readers and patrons!

## There should be no anomalies in Covid-19 vaccination

Health ministry should comply with parliamentary standing committee directives

AFTER being severely criticised by the media and all concerned for showing complete indifference to the health emergency caused by the pandemic, the parliamentary standing committee on health ministry has finally held a meeting. This is certainly a positive development given that the committee remained invisible and ineffective for the last nine months. It gave some important directives in the meeting—it directed the health ministry to ensure that no irregularities and corruption take place centring Covid-19 tests and treatment, and asked the ministry to coordinate with the civil aviation ministry and take measures to temporarily suspend air communication with the UK following the outbreak of a new strain of Covid-19 there. Most importantly, it gave specific directives about vaccine management.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the country’s health sector has been going through a severe crisis. Its incapacity to conduct adequate numbers of Covid-19 tests and treat patients has been highlighted in the media time and again. Corruption of some of the private healthcare facilities in conducting fake tests and providing false Covid-19 certificates made news headlines as well and earned a bad reputation for the country. There were also corruption and scandals regarding facemasks. Sadly, the parliamentary standing committee had nothing to say about all these, as it remained mostly invisible.

Now that the government has signed an agreement with the Serum Institute of India and Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited to buy three crore doses of the Oxford vaccine, different quarters have raised concerns over possible mismanagement and irregularities about the vaccination process. The committee’s directives that the coronavirus vaccination programme should be under full control of the health ministry and that the vaccines should be given at government hospitals and upazila health complexes are commendable. While we appreciate these directives, we think the committee’s work should not be limited to giving advice only; rather, it should develop a mechanism to oversee the entire vaccination process. It should monitor the health ministry’s initiatives to preserve the Covid-19 vaccines and ensure that the doctors and nurses are properly trained to administer the vaccine in the right way, and at the proper temperature.

# Are we looking at a hug-less world?

How social trends and behaviour may be affected in a post-Covid era

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

I have to confess, one of the most frustrating things I have had to face during The Year of Covid-19 is having to restrain myself from hugging people. Being a tactile person, I find it easier to hug someone to show them warmth, trust and affection. True, there are many who find such exuberance intrusive and unnecessary—there will always be a misfired hug to a nephew or son/daughter of a dear friend who has never seen you in their life until that moment when they are pounced upon by a strange woman, resulting in a mortifying stalemate between the hugger and the almost-hugged. For the latter, “social distancing” couldn’t come sooner enough. Apart from these silent anti-hug activists, it is really a big problem for the rest of us. Not to hug your parents, your children, your grandparents, your grandchild or your best friend when you see them after months of separation is really very strange and distancing. How do you show empathy to someone who has lost their loved one without giving them a reassuring hug or holding their hand in commiseration of their pain?

In fact, it is hard to predict how our behaviour in the post-Covid era will be impacted by this relentlessly punishing year and whether this will have any consequence on our relationships both present and future.

Wearing a mask will become a part of the new normal, that’s for sure. Though bank robbers may go through an existential crisis, the mask is now a fashion statement, colourful and innovatively designed, providing a whole range of looks from gothic to Ninja-

sexiness to Middle Eastern royalty. Social media has been abuzz with photos of the most expensive masks in the world made of gold and diamonds—perhaps they don’t know that the virus is very fond of metal and will stick to it like crazy glue. There are masks that match certain outfits like the Jamdani print mask, or the Gamchha mask for that ethnic fusion look, or the patriotic mask with the national flag. Even political statements are made through these face coverings. While all this is very nice, don’t forget:

Will they be able to see expressions of admiration or disgust with half the face covered? They say, eyes speak better than mouths (OK maybe I made that up; you get the gist though).

But as the platitude of eternal hopefulness says: where there’s a will, there’s a way. Young women have told me that it is possible to know if someone is attractive even if they wear a mask. Really? Yes, they insist: the physique, eyes, clothes, the way they carry themselves—you can just tell. Well, kudos to these

“elbow bump” that could become quite fashionable, though there may be a spike in the number of tennis elbow cases.

What about entertainment? Now that we are all used to binge-watching all kinds of shows on Netflix, will we ever go back to going to the cinemas or even watching the zillions of channels on TV that can make even an angel psychotic with their incessant commercial breaks every two minutes. The Covid year has also exponentially increased the number of Facebook, Tiktok or Instagram “influencers”, although some of them seem to be more “under the influence” with their over-the-top makeup, exaggerated expressions, and incessant talking in affected accents while rendering cringe-worthy monologues of inanity that incredulously get thousands of followers. These self-made celebrities will, no doubt, thrive along with their loyal fans.

There will definitely be a proliferation of gourmet chefs with all the cooking lessons from YouTube that many bankers, journalists, university students, etc. have mastered during lockdowns. This may have made them rather insufferable companions at restaurants because of their newly acquired culinary expertise which has turned them into fanatical food critics.

There is also the fear that even when Covid goes away, there will still be those endless Zoom meetings with the infuriating interruptions in internet connections that can freeze your face in a less than flattering expression. Plus, people have become too used to putting a semi-ironed shirt or kameez over their sleeping pajamas or shorts, and may consider getting properly dressed a tedious ordeal. Face-to-face conversations may dwindle into prolonged silences with people longing for the screens that allowed them to switch off the video mode to take a nap or play with the cat and pretend to be part of the conversation.

Scientists have predicted that this may not be the last pandemic we will have to endure thanks to the perverse tendency of many humans to refuse to learn from past mistakes, such as continuing to crave exotic meat and cutting down whatever little greenery we have left. Vaccines are on the way but it will be wise to hold on to our sanitisers, masks and, of course, all those smart phones and laptops that have been our lifelines and most-valued companions during 2020.

Which means, hug emojis may continue to be the most used displays of affection.

Aasha Mehreen Amin is Senior Deputy Editor, Editorial and Opinion, *The Daily Star*.



SOURCE: ATLAS OF THE FUTURE

Social media has been abuzz with photos of the most expensive masks in the world made of gold and diamonds—perhaps they don’t know that the virus is very fond of metal and will stick to it like crazy glue.

masks also mask facial expressions, making it hard to gauge whether a person is smiling or scowling.

So how will romance work out in the future? Even before Covid-19, there was often online love to give us practice—dating apps with dubious names like Hinge, Tinder, or Bumble, and matchmaking websites to find the suitable boy or girl. But at some point, the boy must meet the girl to live happily (or unhappily) ever after, right? Now, will the two parties demand a Covid negative test result or proof of vaccination even before their first coffee shop date? Will they retain the habit of masking up and sanitising before they hold hands?

optimists who will have sharp radars for such favourable encounters even in the most challenging of circumstances. Flirting too is possible, they insist, through eye contact, eyebrow raising, and for women, the age-old flipping of hair from side to side always works (in small doses, of course, otherwise it’s just plain annoying).

What about the good old “let’s shake on it” tradition? Will heads of state when, by accident, their counterpart extends a hand for a friendly shake to clinch a deal that may be as crucial as the end of nuclear proliferation or a ceasefire in a war-torn country? The handshake could very well be replaced by the

## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# Who’s Afraid of MMT?



JAMES K. GALBRAITH

As anyone who has ever been responsible for legislative oversight of central bankers knows, they do not like to have their authority challenged. Most of all, they will defend their mystique—that magical aura that hovers over their words, shrouding a slushy mix of banality and baloney in a mist of power and jargon.

As a result, tormenting central bankers is great fun. John Maynard Keynes famously tormented Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England (BOE) from 1920 to 1944. Wright Patman and Henry Reuss, two US congressmen who chaired the House Banking Committee in the 1970s, did the same to Federal Reserve Chair Arthur Burns. I know that Reuss enjoyed it; I assisted him at the time.

In our day, the voices of Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) perturb the sleep not only of present central bankers, but even of those retired from the role. They prowl the corridors like Lady Macbeth, shouting “Out damn spot!”

Two fresh cases are Raghuram G. Rajan, a former governor of the Reserve Bank of India, and Mervyn King, a former governor of the BOE. In recently published commentaries, each combines bluster and condescension (in roughly equal measure) in a statement of trite truths with which one can, for the most part, hardly disagree.

But Rajan and King each confront MMT only in the abstract. Neither cites or quotes from a single source, and neither names a single person associated with MMT.

For example, King begins, “If you can’t explain something, try an abbreviation. The latest in economics is MMT—Modern Monetary Theory or, in other words, a magic money tree.” Does King mention that there are whole books explaining MMT, including *The Deficit Myth*, a current bestseller by a fully credentialed economics professor, Stephanie Kelton?

He does not. Nor does Rajan mention books by Pavlina R. Tcherneva of Bard College or L. Randall Wray of the Levy Institute, to mention just three prominent exponents of the MMT school.

The inconvenient fact that two leading advocates of MMT are women will perhaps have caught the reader’s notice. Especially given the record of modern mainstream economics with respect to its female practitioners, it would be too generous to attribute the omission

claims that such an approach has already been tried, “from Roman emperors through Henry VIII and the Weimar Republic to present-day Zimbabwe and Venezuela.” That does sound pretty bad.

But those with long enough memories may recall the turbulent spring of the year 2020, when in the face of the Covid-19 collapse, the United States disbursed USD 2.2 trillion in fresh money to the public to enable people to spend more, thereby raising output and employment. The US

synonyms. The word “modern” in MMT is deployed in the precise sense used by Keynes in his 1930 *Treatise on Money*, in which he describes the nation-state’s prerogative to define what money is for those subject to its laws: “This right is claimed by all modern states, and has been so claimed for some four thousand years at least.” It is a bit sad—even shocking—that King, one of my contemporaries at King’s College, Cambridge, has so thoroughly forgotten his Keynes.

What, then, is MMT? Contrary to the claims of King and Rajan, it is not a policy slogan. Rather, it is a body of theory in Keynes’s monetary tradition, which includes such eminent thinkers as the American economist Hyman Minsky and Wynne Godley of the UK Treasury and the University of Cambridge. MMT describes how “modern” governments and central banks actually work, and how changes in their balance sheets are mirrored by changes in the balance sheets of the public—an application of double-entry bookkeeping to economic thought. Thus, as Kelton writes in the plainest English, the deficit of the government is the surplus of the private sector, and vice versa.

MMT shares Keynes’s view that a proper goal of economic policy in a sovereign and developed country is to achieve full employment, buttressed by a guarantee of jobs to all who may need them. This is a goal that I helped write into law in the US under the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978, along with balanced growth and reasonable price stability. With occasional successes in practice, this policy objective, known as the “dual mandate,” has been the law of the land in the US ever since.

In short, as an example of good economics made popular, accessible, and democratic, MMT represents what central bankers have always feared—as well they might.

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A proper goal of economic policy in a sovereign and developed country is to achieve full employment, buttressed by a guarantee of jobs to all who may need them.

ILLUSTRATION: BENEDETTO CRISTOFANI

of names to a misplaced chivalry. One rather suspects that King and Rajan know very well who Kelton and Tcherneva are. Both are forceful and formidable foes, of exactly the type that central bankers tend to fear.

King and Rajan characterise MMT as an argument about the low cost of “printing money.” In King’s description, the thinking is that money created by the central bank can “be given to the public... to enable people to spend more, so raising output and employment.” He then

economy did not have a great year in 2020; but it did not experience runaway inflation. It did not become Zimbabwe, Venezuela, or the Weimar Republic. Is it possible that King did not notice this? Rajan, to his credit, does not push quite so hard on the Zimbabwe string.

King and Rajan both complain that MMT is not new, and this is a sure “tell” that neither has done his homework. MMT advocates do not claim novelty. Unlike their critics, they understand that “modern” and “new” are not precise

# With vaccines on the way, 2021 promises a return to normal life

ABDUL MATIN

NEVER in history had the world as a whole looked forward to a new year like we did in 2020. So far, welcoming a new year had been a routine exercise. People exchanged greetings, sent gifts to their loved ones, and held parties to welcome a new year knowing well that it would not be much different from the previous one. But not this time. People all over the world are sincerely hoping that this year will be significantly different from 2020 and will usher in a new era to turn their fates for better ones. This is all due to the havoc caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many offices allowed their employees to work online from home. People in urban areas also started to buy essential items online from retailers. Some educational institutions offered courses online. These practices generated a new way of conducting business.

Worldwide, the virus has infected 83 million people and killed 1.8 million so far. Surprisingly, the highest number of cases and deaths was recorded in the United States, with 20 million infected and over 335,000 killed, followed by India with 10 million infected and over 148,000 killed. In Bangladesh, over 512,000 people were infected and over 7,500 killed. It is sad to lose so many lives in one year due to a single cause. Words are not enough to console those who lost their loved ones. In Bangladesh, we lost many important and some iconic personalities in the fields of education, literature, medicine, culture, industry, business, etc. These losses are irreparable.

In addition to the loss of lives, what affected us most are the disruptions to normal life and their impact on economy. Either due to lockdown or safety reasons, people were confined to their homes. Educational institutions were closed. Markets shrank. Many offices and small businesses were closed. In the process, a significant portion of the workforce lost their jobs. People in the low-income group suffered the most. They depended heavily on charities by the government and non-



'People all over the world are pinning their hopes on the vaccines and planning to start a new life in 2021.'

PHOTO: AFP

governmental organisations for their survival. The government, like many foreign governments, announced several stimulus packages to help the industries and small businesses so that they could carry on with their operations.

Many offices allowed their employees to work online from home. People in urban areas also started to buy essential items online from retailers. Some educational institutions offered courses online. These practices generated a new way of conducting business.

Initially, very little was known about Covid-19, except that it was highly contagious. There was no vaccine and till now, there is no cure for the disease. Doctors treated patients depending on the symptoms. With experience, the treatment procedure has improved significantly over the year and, consequently, the death rate of infected people has also decreased. Even then, a

second wave of the pandemic is causing huge devastations in many countries, particularly in Europe and America.

Pandemics came and went through the ages but human ingenuity never surrendered. It prevailed. Scientists around the world did not give up. With unprecedented haste, several vaccines have been developed and some countries have already started administering the vaccines. This has shown a ray of hope at the end of the tunnel. All countries around the world are now in competition with each other to get the vaccines. As expected, the rich countries are in an advantageous position as they had the resources to order the vaccines even before their approval. So they are getting the vaccines before the less developed and less resourceful countries. Bangladesh is hoping to get vaccine doses by the end of January or early February, according

to government sources.

By early 2021, several new vaccines may also appear in the market. Hopefully, their arrival will ease the availability of vaccines globally. Until a cure for the disease is discovered, the vaccines will play a vital role in controlling the pandemic. People all over the world are, therefore, pinning their hopes on the vaccines and planning to start a new life in 2021.

Students who have not attended school for months are dreaming of going back to their classroom again. Life became miserable for them all these months as they were not able to meet, gossip and play with their friends. Owners of small enterprises are thinking of starting their business again. Industrialists are planning to expand production. Working people who lost their jobs are hopeful of getting back their old jobs or starting new ones. Fresh

unemployed graduates are preparing to apply for new jobs. The government is planning to quickly implement the ongoing projects which got delayed due to the pandemic, and start new projects in order to accelerate the economic development of the country.

Social activities came to a standstill during the pandemic. Relatives were not able to meet each other. Many senior citizens have not seen their children or grandchildren for months. They are planning to meet each other again. Friends are hoping to meet again over cups of tea or coffee at their favourite hangouts. Social events like weddings, get-togethers and picnics are also being planned for 2021. Foreign trips are being booked to meet friends and relatives living abroad or for simple vacation purposes. Hotels and tourism businesses are hoping to start their activities again. Nearly empty airports, sea beaches, holiday resorts and restaurants will soon hum with tourists and guests. Shopping malls will be full of shoppers. Young boys and girls will spend time at tea shops like they did before the pandemic.

One may only wonder whether all these dreams will come true or not! In all probability, a near normalcy is expected to return by the middle of 2021 or soon thereafter if the vaccination programme proceeds as planned. Vaccination of an entire population is not an easy task, however. The process will take some time to succeed as it has to proceed in phases. In the meantime, people must be patient and continue to abide by the health safety rules regarding wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands regularly. If we can do this, better days will not be far away. Let us be optimistic and believe our aspirations for a normal life in 2021 will come true.

Dr Abdul Matin is a retired nuclear engineer and a former Professor of Dr. Rashid Chair at BUET.

## THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE PROJECT

# Times have changed. Teachers should, too.

The Academic Experience Project is a faculty-student collaborative work aimed to glean insights about the experiences of tertiary-level students. Each Friday, The Daily Star publishes an op-ed highlighting its findings. This is the ninth article of the series.

SYED RAFI MORSHED and SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

"IT is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge"

- Albert Einstein

ALBERT Einstein's observation above, made decades ago, radiates an essence that holds the same significance for our faculty today, if not more. It is not arguable that teachers play a major role in creating a strong human resource base for a nation's future. And now this role is about to evolve further in a new world of distance learning influenced by Covid-19.

There is a growing belief that "human quality" in Bangladesh has been steadily deteriorating over the years. Employers use every opportunity to make this point, holding the education sector largely responsible for this lamentable situation. Arguments supporting this contention are as follows: There are about 57 public and around 105 private universities in Bangladesh. But whenever a global ranking scorecard of universities is published, we often start checking from the bottom of the list. For some ranking systems, not even a single university makes it into the list. The defence offered by the authority against this is that the rankings are biased and not credible.

It is no secret that faculty development gets very little attention in the higher education institutions of our country. Unlike the top-ranked universities overseas, there is no pressure to learn new pedagogies or produce original research work in our universities. Embarrassing news about plagiarised work of some faculty members pop up every now and then. Teaching also gets a bad rap if you ask a student to assess their teachers. Here are two examples of what some students think:

"Laughably poor standards of pedagogy. The focus of the institution is neither on its students nor on research," one said.

According to another: "I've noticed [that] my friends who've studied abroad had learnt more, been able to grow and flourish more in their respective foreign universities... It's not about cold theory from textbooks to test students; it's about truly helping students grow as people and open their eyes to be able to deal with the

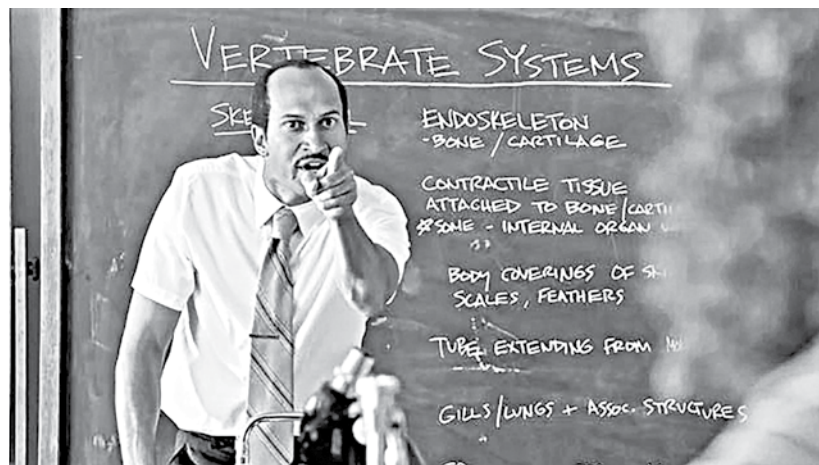
real world. It's about [our] learning the necessary skills to thrive in the 21st century."

But things are about to change in the Covid-19 era. Traditional face-to-face classroom learning is being substituted by online learning. In either setting, student satisfaction is a key measure of the efficiency and effectiveness of education. Because academic programmes are heavily influenced by the faculty, it will not be wrong to assume that they are the single most important entity that affects the satisfaction of students, as well as the quality of education.

Until the pandemic, teachers could get away from being their best in a traditional classroom setting. Many teachers treated students like products or customers where student

change in the virtual setting.

Think of an online class scenario: A faculty member is delivering poor-quality lectures every day which the students are finding very difficult to understand. Students may record these lectures to watch them again later for better understanding. Or the lectures may be recorded for the students who could not attend the lectures. Somehow these lectures get uploaded to a social media platform open to many. What performance will everyone see? What would this mean for the reputation of the teacher(s) involved and the institution they represent? Shouldn't this matter be taken seriously by the administration and other relevant entities such as the policymakers? We feel there must be serious



Representational image.

PHOTO: COLLECTED


satisfaction mattered little. Very few faculty members acknowledged students as co-creators of knowledge. Since there is no pressure to produce original work and create new knowledge, after becoming a faculty member, many of them become lethargic and apathetic. And the fact that being a graduate with good grades is the only criteria to get hired as a faculty member does not help either.

Many courses get little to no design effort for relevance or efficacy. The situation seems to be worse in the public universities where accountability is minimal. Some opine that the teachers run a "dictatorship" in their classes. They can offer classes whenever they want and can get away with poorly prepared lectures from which students do not really learn anything. But this mindset ought to

consequences!


Can a teacher really afford to be of subpar quality in this setting? Even a veteran teacher, who had thought he/she didn't need to develop and would continue to use the marker-whiteboard because "slides are too complicated" to handle, will have to step up and adjust to this new mode of learning.

In these digital times, a teacher is not only delivering a lecture to a specific classroom. Everything is open in a virtual world and the whole world can be watching. In this new context, faculty members ought to feel pressured to improve the quality of their delivery and deal with other pedagogical issues of distance learning. Academic programmes will also have to be designed in a way that the students can be properly evaluated in online platforms.



**পল্লী উন্নয়ন একাডেমী (আরডিএ), বগুড়া**  
পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় বিভাগ  
স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়

**Rural Development Academy (RDA), Bogura**  
Rural Development & Cooperative Division  
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives



সুজন কমান্ডার

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তারিখ: ১৫ পৌষ, ১৪২৭  
৩০ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০

### নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

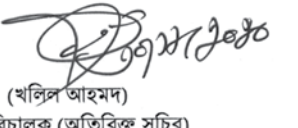
পল্লী উন্নয়ন একাডেমী (আরডিএ), বগুড়া'র নিম্নে বর্ণিত শূন্য পদসমূহ পূরণের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতনস্কেল (আর্থিক বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১।	সহকারী পরিচালক টাকা ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- (গ্রেড- ৯)	০৮(আট)টি	কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে যে কোন বিষয়ে প্রথম শ্রেণি/সমমানের সিজিপিএসহ স্নাতকোত্তর বা সমমানের ডিগ্রী অথবা দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি/সমমানের সিজিপিএ'তে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রীসহ দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি/সমমানের সিজিপিএ'তে স্নাতকোত্তর বা সমমানের ডিগ্রী। কৃষি/উদ্যানতত্ত্ব, সিভিল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ফার্ম মেশিনারিজ, প্রাণিসম্পদ/ পশুপালন, মাংস্য বিজ্ঞান, ডেভেলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজ, পরিসংখ্যান ও ফুড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে ডিগ্রিধারীকে অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হবে।
২।	ফটোগ্রাফার টাকা ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড- ১৪)	০১ (এক)টি	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
৩।	প্রাধার টাকা ১০২০০-২৪৬৮০/- (গ্রেড- ১৪)	০১ (এক)টি	(ক) অষ্টম শ্রেণি বা জুনিয়র স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; (খ) কোন স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট বা প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে ট্রেড কোর্স উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (গ) প্রাস্থি কাজে ২ (দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
৪।	পাড়ীচালক টাকা ৯৩০০-২২৪৯০/- (গ্রেড- ১৬)	০১ (এক)টি	(ক) অষ্টম শ্রেণি বা জুনিয়র স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; এবং (খ) বৈধ ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স এর অধিকারী হতে হবে। অভিজ্ঞ প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

প্রার্থীকে জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়ের প্রশাসন-১ শাখার ২৯ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৪ তারিখে স্মারক নং-০৫.১১০.০০০০.০০.০০.০৮৯.১৪-০১ পরিপত্রে উল্লিখিত চাকরির আবেদনের মডেল ফরম অনুযায়ী মহাপরিচালক, পল্লী উন্নয়ন একাডেমী, বগুড়া বরাবরে আবেদন করতে হবে যা আরডিএ'র ওয়েবসাইট [www.rda.gov.bd](http://www.rda.gov.bd) এ পাওয়া যাবে। আবেদন আগামী ৩১/০১/২০২১ খ্রি: তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে ঐর কার্যালয়ে পৌঁছাতে হবে।

**শর্তাবলী:**

(ক) আবেদনকারীকে মহাপরিচালক, পল্লী উন্নয়ন একাডেমী, বগুড়া'র অনুকূলে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ১নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা এবং ২নং থেকে ৪নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার পৌন্ডাল অর্ডার (অফেরৎযোগ্য) সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।  
(খ) খামের উপর পদের নাম অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে। স্বাক্ষর বিহীন, অসম্পূর্ণ ও নির্ধারিত তারিখের পর প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।  
(গ) আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ০৩ (তিন) কপি সত্যায়িত ছবি (পার্শ্ব ছবি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না) সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে কোন সনদপত্র সংযোগের প্রয়োজন নেই। তবে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল সনদ পত্রের এক সেট সত্যায়িত ফটোকপিসহ মূল কপি সঙ্গে আনতে হবে।  
(ঘ) আবেদনকারীর বয়স ২৫ মার্চ, ২০২০ তারিখে ন্যূনতম ১৮ (আঠার) বছর এবং সর্বোচ্চ ৩০ (ত্রিশ) বছর হতে হবে। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩২ (বত্রিশ) বছর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য।  
(ঙ) ২নং থেকে ৪নং ক্রমিকের পদের প্রার্থী নির্বাচনকালে সরকারের প্রচলিত কোটা পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করা হবে।  
(চ) প্রার্থী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান/নাতিনাতনী হলে প্রার্থীকে তার পিতা/মাতা/দাদা-দাদি/নানা-নানীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা প্রমাণের জন্য মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সনদপত্রের অনুলিপি, গেজেটের সংশ্লিষ্টাংশের ফটোকপি ও মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সাথে সম্পর্ক উল্লেখপূর্বক ইউপি চেয়ারম্যান কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রত্যয়নপত্র/উপযুক্ত সনদসহ পিতা/মাতার জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের কপি প্রথম শ্রেণির সরকারি কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় দাখিল করতে হবে।  
(ছ) সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীর প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিজ নিজ প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনাপত্তি সনদের মূল কপি অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে।  
(জ) লিখিত/মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রার্থীদেরকে কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।  
(ঝ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন আবেদন বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন।  
(ঞ) এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল/প্রত্যাহারের অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।  
(ট) নিয়োগের বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। কোন প্রকার আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

  
 (খলিফ আহমদ)  
 মহাপরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত সচিব)  
 পল্লী উন্নয়ন একাডেমী, বগুড়া

GD- 06

### JS watchdog

FROM PAGE 12  
investigate irregularities in toll collection.

The other member of the committee is Jatiya Party MP Abu Hossain Babla of Dhaka-7.

The committee was asked to hand its report to the standing committee in three months.

Enamul told The Daily Star that the standing committee had earlier asked the transport ministry to submit a report to it about the allegations.

"The ministry submitted its report. But the standing committee didn't accept it, due to loopholes in the investigation," added Enamul.

That's why the parliamentary committee yesterday formed a sub-committee to thoroughly investigate the matter, he said.

Another two-member sub-committee was formed to look into the allegations that the road transport and bridges department awarded multiple tenders to the same company.

Shaikh Salahuddin of Khulna-2 is the convener and Salim Uddin Tarafdar of Naogaon-3 is the member of this sub-committee which was asked to hand in its report in next two months.

The third sub-committee headed by Rejwan Ahammad Taufiq of Kishoreganj-4 was asked to investigate alleged irregularities in giving lease and management of different resorts, parks, tourist attractions, lands and other properties near the Bangabandhu Bridge.

Abu Zahir of Habiganj-3 is the member of this sub-committee which was asked to submit its report in two months.

36, an English teacher at Saifur's coaching centre.

The three gave confessional statements before a Dhaka court recently.

Based on Shanto's statements, the CID conducted drives in Rajshahi on December 30 and arrested Manik and two of his accomplices -- Shafiqul Islam, 30, and Ripon Kumar, 26.

So far, the racket has been found involved in allowing people to cheat in six admission and bank recruitment tests -- twice in combined job exams of seven banks and twice in DU "A" unit entry tests in 2017 and 2018 and once in Bangladesh Bank job tests, said investigators.

Recently, Shafiqul, for Manik, collected Tk 12-14 lakh from each of eight people for bank jobs, said an investigator.

The official said the racket managed the whole process in three ways -- getting students interested, getting people who would provide answers to the questions, and exam centre management.

"For each centre, they used to allocate Tk 2 lakh to manage some unscrupulous people, including teachers, to overlook their activities so that they can operate their activities smoothly," the official added.

After collecting interested applicants, they created a WhatsApp group.

Some 10-15 minutes before the exams began, the racket used to get the question paper. Instantly, an applicant or a teacher sent the question paper to the WhatsApp group.

The people involved in providing answers to the questions then took charge.

"Within 15 minutes, the whole questions had answers," said a CID official.

The CID said the racket made a hefty amount doing this for several years.

Manik was placed on a three-day remand, while Shafiqul and Ripon were granted a one-day remand yesterday.

After further probe, a money laundering case will also be filed against them, said the CID.

28 more die

FROM PAGE 12  
positive.

Bangladesh is seeing 3015.21 infections, 2,686.09 recoveries and 44.38 deaths per million, the DGHS said.

The government has been warning of a second wave of Covid-19 in winter and urging people to properly follow health safety measures. It has adopted a "no mask, no service" policy.

On Monday, the government announced that the country would get Covid-19 vaccines for some 45 million people by May-June next year.

"We'll get 30 million doses for 15 million people at the end of January or early February next year. Sixty million more doses for 30 million people will arrive by May-June," Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told the media.

### UN condemns Iran's 'appalling' execution of young offenders

AFP, GENEVA

The UN yesterday voiced outrage at the execution of a man in Iran who was only 16 when he committed his alleged crime, marking the fourth juvenile offender put to death in the country this year.

The UN human rights office said that Mohammad Hassan Rezaiee was executed early yesterday.

It did not provide further details about Rezaiee or the crime he was convicted of, allegedly committed when he was 16.

But according to Amnesty International, he was arrested in 2007 in connection with the fatal stabbing of a man in a brawl and had spent more than 12 years on death row.

"The execution of child offenders is categorically prohibited under international law and Iran is violating the obligation to abide by this prohibition," UN rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said in a statement.

### China confirms Uighur doctor jailed for 'terrorism'

AFP, BEIJING

A Uighur Muslim doctor has been jailed on terrorism charges, Beijing confirmed yesterday, a day after her family told US politicians she had been sentenced to 20 years.

Gulshan Abbas vanished into detention two years ago, but her relatives told a US congressional committee Wednesday that the 58-year-old had been sentenced to 20 years in prison because of activism on behalf of Uighurs.

Rights groups say an estimated one million Uighurs and other Turkic minorities languish in detention camps in China's northwestern Xinjiang region in prison-like conditions.

China insists they are "vocational training centres", but activists say inmates face torture and forced labour.

"Gulshan Abbas has been sentenced according to the law by Chinese judicial organs for taking part in organised terrorism, aiding terrorist activities and seriously disrupting social order," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters.



People from the Hindu community hold signs and banners to condemn the attack on a century-old Hindu temple in northwestern Pakistan, during a protest outside Supreme Court building in Karachi, Pakistan yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

### Banker turns racketeer

FROM PAGE 12  
involved in the racket.

"We are trying to arrest the others involved in this racket," Kamrul Ahsan, additional DIG of CID Cyber Police, told a press briefing at its headquarters in the capital's Malibagh yesterday.

The CID officials, who raided the Keshorhat duplex on December 30, were stunned to see Manik's assets. The house is fitted with pricey tiles and marbles. Large screen TV was in the living room. Tempered glass was fitted on the ceiling.

They said the duplex was worth Tk 4-5 crore.

The law enforcement agency found a vault with a good amount of gold ornaments. Besides, they found four diaries where Manik wrote down the money he took from applicants to help them get into universities or banks.

So far, the CID has got cheques worth Tk 3.39 crore. The amount may increase, the officials said.

Apart from the duplex, Manik also owns a mango orchard.

Owning such huge assets is not normal for a person coming from a middle-class family, the officials opined.

One of his two siblings is a doctor and the other one runs a grocery shop.

The grocery shop -- M/S Reba Traders -- maintains an account with Agrani Bank Ltd. Some transactions through the account are dubious, said a CID official, adding that they are looking into the transactions.

**THE RACKET**

The CID was investigating a case filed by SM Kamrul Ahsan, chief security officer of Dhaka University, with Tejgaon Police Station after a student, Naful Islam Tahsin, was found cheating in the DU "Ka" unit admission tests in 2018 at Tejgaon Government Science College. Naful was arrested at that time.

Following the case, the CID arrested Rakibul Hasan Shanto, 25, a former DU student and Janata Bank official, Hasan Mahmud, 22, who allegedly provided answers to the questions, and his cousin Rasheduzzaman Sajib,

### 2020 worse than past

FROM PAGE 12  
has increased. At least 129 cases were filed under DSA in 2020 accusing 268 people, it added.

**HEALTH SITUATION**

The report said public suffering was a regular scenario in the beginning of the pandemic with denial of treatment by various public and private hospitals, Covid-19 test report forgery and artificial crisis of various life-saving equipment including oxygen.

It observed that the shortcomings of Bangladesh's preparedness became apparent after the first detection of Covid-19 cases in March.

**KILLING IN 'SHOOTOUT'**

At least 188 people were killed in so-called shootouts or crossfires, the report said. The number of shootouts, however, decreased drastically after July 31 when Teknaf police shot a retired Army Major Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan in the name of shootout.

**DEATH IN CUSTODY**

At least 11 people were killed in law enforcers' custody after their arrest. Besides, five others were tortured to death by the law enforcers before their arrest.

**ABDUCTION AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE**

Six people were victims of enforced disappearance or abduction in 2020. Of them, four were later shown arrested by law enforcers while two others are still missing.

For example, journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol went missing after he came out of his Hatirpool office on March 10, a day after a ruling party lawmaker filed a case against him and 31 others under Digital Security Act.

Fifty-three days after his disappearance, Kajol was found in Benapole but was subsequently arrested and sent to jail.

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS SITUATION**

As many as 201 women were sexually assaulted last year and 14 of them died by suicide. At least 14 persons including 11 males were killed while protesting the incidents.

Besides, 554 women faced domestic violence and of them 367 were killed while 90 others died by suicide while 423 faced domestic violence in 2019.

**ABUSE AND KILLING OF CHILDREN**

A total of 589 children were killed while 1,018 children were among rape victims and 279 others were sexually assaulted. The number of children killed in 2019 was 488.

**BORDER KILLINGS**

At least 49 Bangladeshi citizens have been killed along the India-Bangladesh border by Indian Border Security Force in 2020.

The rights body said at least 15 people were killed in 2018 while the number rose to 43 in 2019.

At the programme, ASK Executive Director Golam Monowar Kamal presented a 10-point recommendation including stern action against those involved in corruption in health sector.

The Ask reiterated its demand to form independent inquiry committee for impartial investigation into extra judicial killings, deaths in custody, incidents of enforced disappearance.

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

The freedom of expression has curtailed and repression increased during the pandemic, Ask said in its report.

The number of cases under the Digital Security Act for harassment and subsequent arrest has been increased. At least 129 cases were filed under DSA in 2020 where 268 people were made accused, it added.

### Japan to launch

FROM PAGE 12  
would be ready to launch into space by the year 2023.

At present, space satellites are typically made up of aluminium and its alloys -- as the metal is relatively cheap as well as being lightweight and durable.

Aluminium-based components have the benefit of being able to withstand both extremes of temperature and bombardment by space radiation.

### Faridpur AL

FROM PAGE 12  
Faridpur. Eleven others accused, including Sajjad, were earlier arrested from different places on different dates.

Of them, 10, including Sajjad and Jafar, are now in jail, while two are on out bail. Sajjad and five others have already given their confessional statements before the magistrates.

SM Miraj Al Mahmud, a CID inspector, lodged the case against Sajjad and Jafar under the money laundering act with Kafur Police Station on June 26.

According to the case statement, the two amassed huge amounts of wealth after they won contracts, through manipulation, from various government departments in the district, including LGED, BRTA and the roads and highways division, since 2010.

They were also allegedly involved in drug smuggling and land grabbing.

Meanwhile, they became owners of around 23 buses, several trucks and cars.

### Judicial

FROM PAGE 12  
loss of our two boys and caused injury to some. My heartfelt sympathies go out to the bereaved families and to the injured persons.

A judicial inquiry has already been ordered to ascertain the causes which resulted in this tragedy. The government and the people -- and all political and other organisations-- have a common interest to ensure that such an incident does not recur so that everyone can enjoy the fruits of a peaceful democratic society in Bangladesh."

**WALDHEIM CALLS FOR WORLD HELP TO BANGLADESH**

A worldwide billion-dollar relief effort saved Bangladesh from stagnation in 1972 but the outlook is even more threatening in the new year, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim says today. He asks world nations to put up grain or money to make up 2.5 million tonnes of the 6.7-million-tonne shortage of wheat and rice facing Bangladesh in the new year.

Source: January 2, 1973 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Bangladesh Observer and Ittefaq.

### World begins

FROM PAGE 12  
Plans to allow crowds were scrapped amid a cluster of around 150 new infections that have seen travel to and from Sydney severely restricted.

"I think everybody is looking towards 2021 as a fresh beginning and a fresh start," Karen Roberts, among the lucky few who were allowed past checkpoints around the area, told AFP at a bar nestled under the Sydney Opera House.

In Tokyo, residents faced the prospect a state of emergency being imposed after a daily record 1,300 new coronavirus infections were recorded in the last 24 hours.

Italy -- where shocking images of makeshift morgues and exhausted medics awoke the world to the severity of the crisis -- is on a nationwide lockdown until January 7 and a 10:00 pm curfew is in place.


From France to Latvia to Brazil, police and -- in some cases -- military personnel were being deployed to make sure night-time curfews or bans on large gatherings are enforced.

In hard-hit London, 74-year-old American singer-songwriter Patti Smith rang in the New Year with a tribute to National Health Service workers who have died from Covid-19, projected on the screen at Piccadilly Circus and streamed on YouTube.

**SOCIAL GATHERING**

Thousands were expected to attend a fireworks and a laser show in Dubai at the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, despite a slew of new cases.

All those attending the event -- whether at a public place, hotel or restaurant -- were required to wear masks and register with QR codes.




## বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

প্রধান কার্যালয়

ঢাকা



বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-১৯৫/২০২০

তারিখঃ ১৫ পৌষ, ১৪২৭

৩০ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২০

### নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

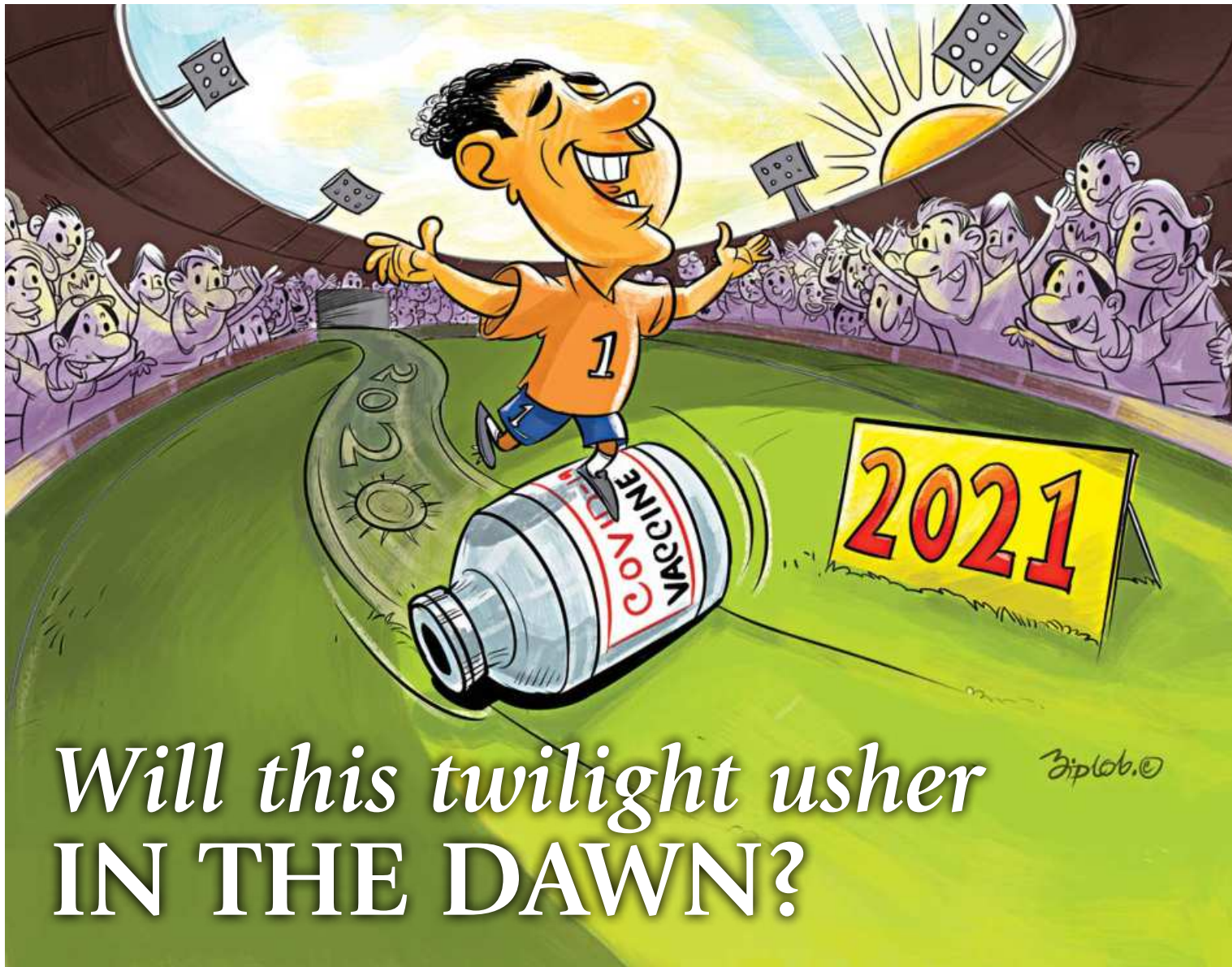
ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যত্ব বিভিন্ন ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে সমন্বিতভাবে নিম্নবর্ণিত সংখ্যক শূন্য পদসমূহ প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে পূরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে Online এ দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রমিক	শিরোনাম	বিবরণ												
১.	পদের নাম	*সহকারী প্রোগ্রামার (২০১৯ সাল জিজি)।												
২.	পদ সংখ্যা	৭৬টি (সোনালী ব্যাংক লিঃ (১৭টি), জনতা ব্যাংক লিঃ (১৫টি), রূপালী ব্যাংক লিঃ (২৯টি), বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন (০৮টি), প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংক (৫টি) ও পল্লী সঞ্চয় ব্যাংক (০২টি)।												
৩.	বেতন স্কেল	জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫ এর টাকা ২২০০০-২৩১০০-২৪২৬০ ... -৪৮১২০-৫০৫৩০-৫৩০৬০ স্কেল এবং ততসহ নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধা।												
৪.	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	(ক) স্বীকৃত কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কম্পিউটার বিজ্ঞান/কম্পিউটার বিজ্ঞান ও প্রকৌশল/ইনফরমেশন টেকনোলজি/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/সফটওয়্যার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স ও সফটওয়্যার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স ও টেলিকমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী অথবা চার বছর মেসাদী স্নাতক/স্নাতক (সম্মান) ডিগ্রী থাকতে হবে। (খ) মাসিক ক্রম সার্টিফিকেট/সমমান এবং তদূর্ধ্ব পর্যায়ের পরীক্ষাসমূহে ন্যূনতম ০২ (দুই)টিতে প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণী থাকতে হবে। (প্রোভিড পদ্ধতির ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারী নীতিমালা প্রযোজ্য হবে।) (গ) কোন পর্যায়েই ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণী গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। (ঘ) স্বীকৃত/নির্ধারিত কোনো প্রফেশনাল কম্পিউটার সোসাইটির সদস্য/সহযোগী সদস্য হতে হবে। (ঙ) প্রোভিড পদ্ধতিতে প্রকাশিত ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০০৯ ও ০২/০৩/২০১০ তারিখের প্রজ্ঞান নং শিম/শাঃ১১/৫-১(অংশ)/৫৮২ এবং শিম/শাঃ১১/১৯-১/২০০৭/১৭৪ অনুযায়ী বর্তমান প্রচলিত জিপিএ বা স্কোরমার্ক, সিজিপিএ এর বিপরীতে পূর্বের ২য় ও ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণী নিম্নরূপে নির্ধারিত হইবেঃ (১) এসএসসি বা সমমান এবং এইচএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে- জিপিএ ৩.০০ বা তদূর্ধ্ব প্রথম বিভাগ জিপিএ ২.০০ থেকে ৩.০০ এর কম দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ (২) অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সিজিপিএ এর ক্ষেত্রে- <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">অর্জিত সিজিপিএ</th> <th>সমতুল্য শ্রেণী/বিভাগ</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">৪.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে</td> <td style="text-align: center;">৫.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">৩.০০ বা তদূর্ধ্ব</td> <td style="text-align: center;">৩.৭৫ বা তদূর্ধ্ব</td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণী</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">২.২৫ বা তদূর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম</td> <td style="text-align: center;">২.৮১৩ বা তদূর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম</td> <td>দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণী</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	অর্জিত সিজিপিএ		সমতুল্য শ্রেণী/বিভাগ	৪.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে	৫.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে		৩.০০ বা তদূর্ধ্ব	৩.৭৫ বা তদূর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণী	২.২৫ বা তদূর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম	২.৮১৩ বা তদূর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণী
অর্জিত সিজিপিএ		সমতুল্য শ্রেণী/বিভাগ												
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৫.	বয়স (০১/০৩/২০২০ তারিখে)	ক) মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান এবং প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থী বাতীত সকল প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৩০ বছর। খ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান এবং প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর।												
৬.	আবেদনপত্র পূরণ, ফি প্রদান ও Tracking Page সফরের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০১/২০২১ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫৯টা।												
৭.	আবেদন ফি এর পরিমাণ	পরীক্ষার ফি অফেরতযোগ্য টা. ২০০/- (টাকা দুইশত মাত্র) যা ডাচ বাংলা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর Payment Gateway 'রকেট' এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করতে হবে।												
৮.	আবেদন পদ্ধতি													
ক.	<b>Online Application Form:</b>	উদ্ভূত বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইট ( <a href="https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd">https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd</a> ) -এর Online Application Form পূরণের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। Online এ আবেদন দাখিলের সময় ফরম পূরণ করার নিয়ম ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী ওয়েবসাইটেই পাওয়া যাবে।												
খ.	<b>প্রার্থীর বিবরণ:</b>	প্রার্থীর নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম এসএসসি অথবা সমমানের সনদে যেকোবে লেখা আছে Online আবেদনে টিক সোজাবে লিখতে হবে।												
গ.	<b>প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা:</b>	প্রার্থীর ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জাতীয়তা সনদে উল্লিখিত স্থায়ী ঠিকানা প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা হিসেবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অনলাইন আবেদনে উল্লিখিত স্থায়ী ঠিকানা বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে কোনভাবেই পরিবর্তনযোগ্য নয়। তবে অবিবাহিত মহিলা প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন দাখিলের পরে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ হলে যথাযথ প্রমাণ সাপেক্ষে স্বামীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানার অনুলিপি নিজেস্ব স্থায়ী ঠিকানা পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন।												
ঘ.	<b>ছবি (Photo):</b>	নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 600x600 pixel এর কম বা বেশী নয় এবং file size 100 KB এর বেশী নয় এরূপ মাপের অনধিক তিন মাস পূর্বে তোলা প্রার্থীর রঙিন ছবি (সাদা ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড সফলিত) scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। ছবি তোলার সময় মুখ ও কানের উপর আবরণ রাখা যাবে না। সাদা/গোলা ছবি এবং Informal ছবি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।												
ঙ.	<b>স্বাক্ষর (Signature):</b>	নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 300x80 pixel এর কম বা বেশী নয় এবং file size 60 KB এর বেশী নয় এরূপ মাপের প্রার্থীর নিজের স্বাক্ষর scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। আপলোডকৃত প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর অবশ্যই সাদা কাগজের উপর কোনো কালিতে প্রদত্ত হতে হবে।												
চ.	<b>অর্জিত ডিগ্রীর ফলাফলের তারিখ:</b>	Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত সংশ্লিষ্ট ডিগ্রীর ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।												
ছ.	<b>বিদেশী ডিগ্রীধারী প্রার্থী:</b>	প্রার্থী 'O' Level ও 'A' Level পাস হলে দেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) এবং বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ডিগ্রী প্রাপ্ত হলে দেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন/শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) অস্বীকার্য ডিগ্রী ও ফলাফলের (শ্রেণী/বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ উল্লেখসহ) তথ্য মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় চেকিং বোর্ডে অবশ্যই উপস্থাপন করতে হবে। অন্যথায় মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।												
জ.	<b>প্রতিষ্ঠান পছন্দের ক্রম:</b>	Online আবেদনে প্রার্থীগণকে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত প্রত্যেক প্রতিষ্ঠানকে বিবেচনায় নিয়ে প্রতিষ্ঠান পছন্দের ক্রম নির্ধারণ করতে হবে। চূড়ান্তভাবে মনোনীত প্রার্থীগণকে তাদের অর্জিত মেধাক্রম এবং Online আবেদনে উল্লিখিত পছন্দের ক্রম অনুসারে শূন্য পদ থাকা সাপেক্ষে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানে পদায়ন করা হবে। অনলাইন আবেদন দাখিলের পর আবেদনকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান পছন্দের ক্রম কোনো অবস্থাতেই পরিবর্তনযোগ্য নয়।												
ঝ.	<b>CV ID No. এবং Password:</b>	বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মাধ্যমে ইতিপূর্বে আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের বিদ্যমান CV ID No. এবং Password ব্যবহার করে Online Application Form পূরণ করতে হবে। নতুন আবেদনকারীগণ ওয়েবসাইটে ( <a href="https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd">https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd</a> ) এর মাধ্যমে Online Application Form এর প্রয়োজনীয় ঘরগুলো পূরণ করলে একটি CV ID No. এবং Password প্রাপ্ত হবেন। প্রাপ্ত CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনের(-) পূর্বের অংশ] আবেদন ফি প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হবে।												
ঞ.	<b>Job ID No.:</b>	বর্ণিত পদের Job ID No. 10111 আবেদন ফি প্রদানের সময় নির্ধারিত স্থানে ব্যবহার করতে হবে।												
ট.	<b>আবেদন ফি প্রদান পদ্ধতি:</b>	আবেদন ফি জমা দেয়ার পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত জানতে <a href="https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd/onlineapp/rocketprepay.pdf">https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd/onlineapp/rocketprepay.pdf</a> ওয়েবসাইটে জিজিট করতে হবে। Instant এবং Prepaid উভয় পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী নিজেস্ব কর্তৃক একটি একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে ফি প্রদান করতে পারবেন। Instant পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী তার রকেট একাউন্ট ব্যবহার করে সরাসরি ফি প্রদান করে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। Prepaid পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী একাউন্ট অথবা নিজের একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। প্রার্থীগণ নির্ধারিত Job ID No. এবং তাদের CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনের(-) পূর্বের অংশ] এর বিপরীতে আবেদন ফি প্রদান করবেন। আবেদন ফি প্রদান করলে প্রার্থী জমা কৃত ফি এর বিপরীতে একটি Txn ID নম্বর পাবেন।												
ঠ.	<b>Tracking Page সফর:</b>	ফি প্রদানের পর বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে Txn ID নম্বরটি বসালে ফি প্রদানের verification সাপেক্ষে তথ্যক একটি Tracking ID No. প্রদান করা হবে। Tracking ID No. প্রাপ্ত হলেই প্রার্থীর আবেদন ফি গ্রহণযোগ্য সম্পন্ন হয়েছে বলে বিবেচিত হবে। Tracking ID No. সংশ্লিষ্ট Tracking Page টি ভবিষ্যতে ব্যবহারের জন্য প্রিন্ট করে যথাযথভাবে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। কোনো অবস্থাতেই Tracking Page এর Duplicate Copy সরবরাহ করা হবে না।												
ড.	<b>বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্য:</b>	শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও নির্ধারিত ফি প্রদানকৃত Tracking Page টি হার্ডকপি আকারে সংরক্ষণ করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।												
৯.	<b>Online Application Form</b>	এ প্রার্থীর নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী জেলা, জন্ম তারিখ, ছবি, স্বাক্ষরসহ অন্যান্য তথ্য অত্যন্ত সতর্কতার সাথে নিখুঁতভাবে নিজে পূরণ করতে হবে। <b>Online Application Form</b> এ প্রদত্ত সার্বিক তথ্য, ছবি, স্বাক্ষর ইত্যাদি verification সাপেক্ষে প্রার্থীকে প্রমাণ করতে হবে।												
১০.	<b>প্রাথমিকভাবে যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশপত্র ও নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষার তারিখ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি:</b>	যথাযথভাবে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে ও 'দৈনিক জাতীয় পত্রিকা'য় প্রকাশ করা হবে।												
১১.	<b>প্রার্থীদেরকে নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষা এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে।</b>													
১২.	<b>প্রার্থীদেরকে Online আবেদনের সময় কোনো কাগজপত্র প্রেরণ করতে হবে না।</b>	লিখিত পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীগণকে অনলাইন আবেদনে প্রদত্ত প্রতিটি তথ্যের স্বপক্ষে যথাযথ সনদ/প্রত্যয়নপত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। <b>Online Application Form</b> এ প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত তথ্যের সঠিকতা যাচাই করতে কোনো substantive জট ধরা পড়লে মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ থাকবে না। তাছাড়া, মৌখিক পরীক্ষা শেষে প্যানেল প্রস্তুতিকালে কোনো প্রকার জট পরিলক্ষিত হলেও প্রার্থীকে প্যানেলসূচক করা হবে না।												
১৩.	<b>চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীগণ:</b>	তাদের নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের পূর্বানুমোদনক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন উক্ত অনুমোদনের কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।												
১৪.	<b>নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে:</b>	কোটা সংক্রান্ত সরকারি সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা ও অন্যান্য বিধি-বিধান যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।												
১৫.	<b>সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ:</b>	প্রার্থীদের নিয়োগ প্রদান করা বা না করার ক্ষেত্রে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।												

**ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।**

**আরিফ হোসেন খান**  
মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও সদস্য সচিব  
ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি

পত্র নং-ডিসিপিএ ৪৮/২০২০-৪০২৩  
তাঃ-৩১-১২-২০  
জিডি-০৭



## Will this twilight usher IN THE DAWN?

NABID YEASIN

Both dusk and dawn exhibit exactly the same illumination. But, at opposite ends of the horizon, one beckons darkness and fear while the other greets sunshine and hope.

And the world, still reeling from the attack of the novel coronavirus, is once again experiencing the time of twilight, just like the time when the pandemic started and left everyone stunned. But there lies a major difference between that time and now.

While the time the virus broke out was dusk and the world

knew it was going to plunge into darkness, now it seems to be heading towards a new dawn with the hope of procuring vaccines in the coming year and returning to being normal.

Sports, much like other activities, had come to a halt in March last year. While athletes were reduced to training at home with no purpose, sporting bodies were left helpless and scratching heads over ways to resume.

But the time of helplessness passed as sports returned, much to the relief of the sports lovers and enthusiasts. From starting behind closed doors to allowing

socially distanced spectators in the gallery, from players testing positive and being left unpicked to recovering and scoring goals or centuries and achieving other milestones -- things took turns for the better gradually through the collective efforts of the players, their governing bodies, spectators and all the other stakeholders of sports.

And the efforts from all quarters need to be there in the coming months too. Health safety and protocols need to be prioritised and enforced as only that would lend confidence in continuing sports by overcoming the hurdles.

There will be bumps in the road -- like recording a season-high 18 positive tests in its latest round of testing across the Premier League clubs last week followed by the postponement of a league match between Fulham and Tottenham, the third top-flight game to be delayed by the virus. But just as the Premier League authority mentioned they had "no plans" to pause the season as they had confidence in its protocols, the hope on the first day of 2021 will be that sports will keep on rolling forward while maintaining the health guidelines with a renewed future in sight.

## Jam-packed 2021 awaits

SPORTS REPORTER

After spending seven unprecedented months idly at home due to the Covid-19-induced break, athletes shook off concerns regarding the pandemic and came out of confinement a couple of months ago with hopes of year-long engagements in 2021 at both the domestic and national level.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak in early March, different national sports federations were forced to shutter their activities. Domestic competitions were suspended and participation in international meets abroad was halted in line with efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

However, national athletes from different disciplines stayed engaged with their physical activities even in confined environments.

The scenario has changed a lot now and most of the national sports federations resumed their activities before daring to stage small-scale domestic competitions with stringent health guidelines in November and December.

Staging tournaments on a smaller scale has apparently shown federations a new way to come up with more domestic and international engagements, with cricket, football, hockey, archery and some indoor disciplines leading the way.

Apart from cricket's busy 2021 schedule, football is poised to hold a lot of domestic and international competitions, with the Bangladesh Football Federation already started the season's curtain-raising Federation Cup after the national team played three international fixtures: two FIFA friendlies against Nepal in November and a World Cup Qualifier against Qatar in December.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh Football Federation declared a calendar for domestic and international events, with BFF president Kazi Salahuddin hoping for a good times in the New Year following a dismal 2020.

The BFF will not only host regular domestic events, but also introduce fresh tournaments while the senior national team will be busy playing hosts to the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, SAFF Championship, three World Cup Qualifiers. Other opportunities await during FIFA windows. Other than that, both junior men's and women's teams also have some international tournaments.

Hockey has also been in action recently, hosting two tournaments -- President's Cup in November and Victory Day Hockey in December. The federation is also in the process of staging the Premier Hockey League, which has not been held in the past two years.

Hockey will also have a busy time at home as the senior team is scheduled to play the rescheduled AHF Men's Asian Champions Trophy for the first time alongside five of Asia's top sides in Dhaka from March 11. The tournament had earlier been suspended due to the pandemic.

INT'L & DOMESTIC EVENTS	TIME
Bangladesh Games	February
Bangabandhu Gold Cup	March
World Cup Qualifiers	March/July
SAFF Championship	September
Tokyo Olympics	July
Asian Champions Trophy hockey	March
Junior Asia Cup hockey	July
Asian Archery Championships	November

The national U-21 team will also be vying to secure a spot in the Junior World Cup when they begin their Junior Asia Cup hockey campaign in Dhaka from July 1. The 10-team tournament was deferred twice due to the pandemic.

More importantly, disciplines such as archery, shooting, weightlifting, karate and boxing are likely to get opportunities to take part in the Tokyo Olympics in July as they have already applied for 'wildcard entries'. With the Tokyo Olympics in sight, some athletes are planning to participate in international tournaments to hone their skills.

While Ruman Sana qualified for Tokyo Olympics directly, other archers have already resumed training and are planning to participate in two international tournaments before July's Olympics. Bangladesh will then host the Asian Archery Championships in November. The shooting federation is also mulling whether to send shooters to international tournaments.

Finally, some 31 federations have been asked to take preparations for February's Bangladesh Games as the Bangladesh Olympic Association continues chalking out how to stage the Games on a smaller scale due to the pandemic.

## 'It feels surreal'

AGENCIES



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has surged ahead of Steve Smith and Virat Kohli to seize the top spot for batsmen in the MRF Tyres ICC Men's Test Player Rankings after his player of the match effort in the first Test against Pakistan in Tauranga.

Williamson had briefly occupied the top spot towards the end of 2015 but either Smith or Kohli have been number one since then. This year too, Smith was at the top for 313 days and Kohli for 51, before Williamson surged ahead of his two contemporaries from the ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2008.

Williamson was characteristically humble when speaking of the double honour, passing on credit to the players he has both followed and led in his time with the team.

"It feels surreal to be on there. However, I believe that it's a bit of a team reward to be honest ... it wouldn't mean much without the contributions and the efforts from all the other players that you play alongside for such a long period of time that give you the motivation and drive to want to try and move the teams forward that you're involved in," Williamson told the New Zealand Herald.

"There's also so many people along the way that have gone into trying to help me as a player and as a person and I want to thank all of them."

On overtaking the likes of Kohli and Smith, - which comes the same week he was named by the ICC to its test "Team of the Decade", Williamson was once again coy, suggesting his new ranking was loaded with some luck.

"For me to sneak up, perhaps, in some way is very surprising and humbling but at the same time I think there's other rankings somewhere that quite clearly state the successes of these other two. Year in and year out those two players, in all formats, are moving the game forward."

Williamson, who returned from paternity leave this month, hit a match-winning century in the opening test against Pakistan to help New Zealand win by 101

runs at Mount Maunganui on Wednesday.

Since making his debut for New Zealand in November 2010, Williamson has amassed one of the finest test records of any Black Cap; scoring 23 centuries at an average of 52.90 in 82 matches - 34 of those as captain.

Smith is in the middle of a rare slump in form and dropped behind Kohli after registering four single-digit scores at the halfway stage of the ongoing four-Test series against India.

Kohli, who topscored for India in their eight-wicket thrashing by Australia in the series opener in Adelaide, has returned home for the birth of his first child.

However, Black Caps fans will be well aware of the cold, hard facts behind Williamson's rise to the top and will no doubt be backing him as he attempts to lead New Zealand to the top of the team rankings next week; where a second win over Pakistan will take them there for the first time. Australia's Pat Cummins remains the top-ranked test bowler, while compatriot Mitchell Starc jumped two places to enter the top five.



## Darlow denies Liverpool

REUTERS

Newcastle United manager Steve Bruce heaped praise on goalkeeper Karl Darlow after his string of fine saves helped earn a 0-0 draw against champions Liverpool in the Premier League on Wednesday.

Klopp's team lead the table going into the New Year with 33 points from 16 games, three points ahead of second-placed Manchester United who have a match in hand.

Darlow denied Mohamed Salah in the first half, turning the Egyptian's shot around the post, before beating away Roberto Firmino's goal-bound header. The 30-year-



old made another excellent save in the 88th minute to keep out Firmino's header.

Darlow has impressed after being brought into the side in place of the injured Martin Dubravka, keeping three clean sheets in the Premier League this season.

"He's had to wait patiently for his chance and certainly with the way he's trained every day -- and Dubravka's now fit -- we needed our second goalkeeper to stay fit and step up," Bruce told reporters.

"We've had to call on him a bit too much at times but there's no denying he's been terrific all season. He's done fantastically well and, at the moment, the jersey's his because of the saves he's made." Bruce said he would look to bring in reinforcements in the January window.



Atletico Madrid players throw Diego Simeone in the air after a Luis Suarez header gave them a 1-0 home win over Getafe on Wednesday in their coach's 500th game in charge. A third consecutive league victory took Atletico to 35 points after 14 games, two ahead of second-placed Real Madrid, who drew 1-1 at Elche and have now played 16 matches.

PHOTO: TWITTER

## 'Age doesn't matter'

AGENCIES

Portugal and Juventus ace forward Cristiano Ronaldo hinted that he wants to play for Portugal at the 2022 World Cup as he dismissed the importance of age to his success.

Ronaldo said in an interview with the BBC that he has no plans to retire by saying he hopes to play on for "many, many years" despite preparing to turn 36 in February. "It doesn't matter the age. What is important is the mind," he said.

"It doesn't matter if Cristiano Ronaldo is good, you don't know tomorrow what is going to happen. I live in the present, in the moment. The moment is good, I feel happy."

### TEST PERFORMANCE IN 2020

Player	Played	Innings	Runs	Average	100	50	Highest
Kane Williamson (NZ)	4	6	498	83.00	2	1	251
Virat Kohli (IND)	3	6	116	19.33	0	1	74
Steve Smith (AUS)	3	5	73	18.25	0	1	63

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## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# 2020 worse than past two years

1,627 women raped or gang-raped amid pandemic, says ASK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rape and violence against women were more frequent in 2020 than in the previous years, rights body Ain O Salish Kendra said yesterday.

It mentioned that incidents of gang rape, murder after rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence have occurred too often.

At least 1,627 women were raped or gang raped across the country, of whom 53 were killed after rape and 14 died by suicide. The number of rape victims was 1,413 in 2019 and 732 in 2018, ASK mentioned in its annual report.

The report based on media reports, was released at a virtual programme yesterday.

ASK said the actual number of rape victims would be much higher as many women do not report abuse.

### FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The freedom of expression has been curtailed and repression increased during the pandemic, ASK said in its report.

The number of cases filed under the Digital Security Act

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



A little girl collecting fallen Sheuli flowers in Hatirjheel lake area in the capital next to some barbed wires. There are some Sheuli trees along with others beside the lake. Many city dwellers go there to enjoy the beauty of the lake.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

## Judicial inquiry ordered over police firing on students

January 1, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



### VIETNAM DAY CLASH

Two students are killed and seven others are injured when the police on duty open fire upon a procession of students organised by DUCSU and Bangladesh Chhatra Union in observance of Vietnam Day today.

The incident takes place in front of the American Centre at noon. The students killed in the police firing are Motiul Islam, 21, a final-year BA student in Philosophy, Dhaka University and Mirza Quadirul Islam, a second-year HSC student of Dhaka College.

A hartal is called from 5:00am to 2:00pm on January 2, 1973 in protest of the incident.

### BANGABANDHU DEEPLY GRIEVED

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issues the following statement today in response to the incident of police firing in front of the American Centre: "I am deeply grieved by the unfortunate incident today which resulted in the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Tk 2,000Cr LAUNDERING

## Faridpur AL leader lands in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Faridpur town Awami League's organising secretary Jafar Iqbal Harun Mondal was yesterday shown arrested in a Tk 2,000 crore money laundering case.

Jafar is also a cousin of Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat, the principal accused in the case and also former general secretary of Faridpur town AL.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Masud-Ur-Rahman passed the order after Uttam Kumar Biswas, assistant superintendent of police of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the investigation officer of the case, produced him before court with a prayer to show him arrested in the case.

Jafar was arrested on December 24 from

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Japan to launch first wooden satellite by 2023



MAIL ONLINE

Wooden satellites that burn up completely on atmospheric re-entry — without releasing harmful aluminium-rich particles — are being developed in Japan.

The major component in today's satellites is aluminium — which, when broken down by the force of re-entry, releases long-lived aerosols that damage the ozone layer.

Researchers from Kyoto University have joined forces with Sumitomo Forestry to explore the potential for wood to be used in the extreme environment of space.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## 28 more die from Covid

1,014 infected in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Covid-19 fatalities in Bangladesh surged to 7,559 with 28 more deaths recorded in 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The mortality rate stood at 1.47 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

Besides, 1,014 new cases pushed the caseload to 513,510.

So far, 457,459 patients — 89.08 percent, with 1,389 new ones, have recovered.

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

Until now, 3,227,598 tests have been carried out, including 13,204 new ones. So far, 15.91 percent of the tests turned out to be

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Banker turns racketeer

Made crores of taka by leaking question papers of tests for university admission, bank jobs: CID

MUNTAKIM SAAD

He drives a Nissan X-Trail and lives in a duplex with foreign fittings in Keshorhat village of Rajshahi's Mohanpur, where such luxuries raise quite a few eyebrows.

Senior Officer Manik Kumar Pramanik of Agrani Bank Ltd in Rajshahi made crores of taka at the age of 38 not from his service, but from under the table deals.

He was one of the masterminds behind a racket involved in leaking question papers of different university admission and bank

recruitment tests, according to the Criminal Investigation Department.

His misdeeds came to light after the CID recently arrested six people, including Manik, following an investigation into a Dhaka University admission test question leak.

A case was filed regarding the leak with Tejgaon Police Station in 2018.

The investigators said not only Manik, but also two-three high officials, working at important government agencies, were also

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



## PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 1

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:30 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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A scaly-breasted munia sitting on a tree branch to get warm in the sunlight at Curzon Hall on Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## World begins ushering in locked-down New Year

AFP, Sydney

The world yesterday began ushering in the New Year, with pandemic controls muting celebrations for billions of people eager to bid farewell to a virus-ridden 2020.

After a grinding year that has seen at least 1.8 million people die from Covid-19, fresh waves of infection have sparked renewed lockdowns and forced would-be revellers to extend their 2020 tradition of watching events from the sofa.

The eagerly awaited first seconds of 2021 fell on the Pacific nations of Kiribati and Samoa from 1000 GMT, with the uninhabited Howland and Baker Islands the last to tip over into the New Year, 26 hours later.

New Zealand, which has won plaudits for its handling of the coronavirus, followed an hour later with large crowds gathered in Auckland to watch a fireworks display.

Although still isolated by international border closures, months of zero recorded cases in the community has let life in New Zealand return to relative normality.

In Australia's largest city, Sydney, fireworks lit up the glittering harbour with a dazzling display at 1300 GMT, but few spectators watched in person.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## TOLL FOR BRIDGES JS watchdog forms three probe bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a rare instance, a parliamentary committee yesterday formed three sub-committees to look into issues, including the allegations of irregularities and corruption in the collection of tolls at bridges across the country.

The parliamentary standing committee on Road Transport and Bridges Ministry made the decision at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Awami League MP Enamul Haque of Rajshahi-4 as the convener of the two-member sub-committee that will

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1