



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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## ILLEGAL MODHUMOTI MODEL TOWN Still active in disguise

No steps taken by developers or Rajuk to restore Savar wetland, flouting SC order

HELEMUL ALAM

The Modhumoti Model Town developers continue operations while the government authorities turn a blind eye -- both failing to comply with the highest court's verdict on retaining the flood flow zone in Savar where the housing project was built illegally.

The project, first declared illegal by the High Court in 2005, remains active in the area apparently under a new name, "Nandonik Housing", as seen during a recent visit by The Daily Star.

Not only this, plot owners are still attempting to change the status of the project area despite the Supreme Court declaring it illegal and rejecting earlier review petitions.

The housing and public works ministry recently sent a letter to Rajuk, asking it to take necessary steps to incorporate the project as an urban area or withdraw it from the sub flood flow zone in the Detailed Area Plan (DAP).

The noncompliance with the order to retain the flood flow zone and the recent letter of the ministry, following an application by the plot owners, are brazen violations of the apex court judgment, said experts.

The full bench of the Supreme Court on April 25, 2019 quashed five review petitions while upholding its earlier verdict that had directed the authorities concerned to restore the wetland on which Modhumoti Model Town illegally developed its housing project.

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### TIMELINE

**AUG 2004**  
Bela files petition with HC against Modhumoti Model Town project

**JULY 2005**  
HC declares the project "illegal", "unauthorised";

**AUG 2012**  
SC upholds HC verdict

**JULY 2013**  
The Appellate Division releases full verdict; project developers given 6 months to restore wetland, dismantle all construction

MORE ON PAGE 2



Students, teachers, and friends of the girl who died after being raped, hold a candlelight vigil and demonstrate demanding justice on Dhanmondi-27 yesterday evening. The protesters demanded institutional changes to ensure that respect for women are taught in schools.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



The Modhumoti Model Town Project, termed illegal by the High Court, has now taken up the name Nandonik Housing and continues to occupy flood flow zones in Savar. The photo of the new signboard was taken recently.

PHOTO: HELEMUL ALAM

The European Union is moving from a development partner of Bangladesh to trade partner as Bangladesh is graduating to a developing country by 2024. After 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, how does the EU look at its relationship with the country? Rensje Teerink, EU Ambassador to Bangladesh, shared her thoughts in a recent interview with The Daily Star.

## Focus on issues that'll help you get GSP Plus

EU ambassador says in interview with Star

PORIMOL PALMA and REFAJET ULLAH MIRDHA



Rensje Teerink

TDS: How do you assess Bangladesh's progress?

Teerink: Bangladesh has been a very trusted partner of the EU since its birth in 1971. In the first decade, the relationship was characterised by development assistance. We worked with NGOs like Brac, Proshika and GSS that were filling in the gaps where the government had some challenges. Our main development funds were directed through these NGOs. I must say that our relations has now enormously moved to trade.

TDS: How has that relationship changed?

Teerink: EBA (Everything But Arms) has been the game changer. That has enabled Bangladesh to step in and focus on RMG exports to the EU. It is admirable how Bangladesh used the opportunity. It really lifted the RMG and textile to become the second largest producer in the world. Out of 47 countries under EBA, Bangladesh is the biggest beneficiary. Some 60 percent of the benefits were actually reaped by Bangladesh. It is really the one country that stands out. The vision and the strong determination that the government is showing as it moves towards graduation from Least Developing Country (LDC).

TDS: Businesses have been affected due

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RELATED STORY ON B1

## STUDENT RAPE, MURDER Police looking for a missing security guard

CCTV footage, mobile, call lists under scrutiny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are looking for a security guard of the building where the 17-year-old girl was raped before her death on Thursday.

Abul Hasan, assistant commissioner (New Market Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "We are looking for him. He helped the accused carry the victim out of the house. He may know something."

Abdul Motalib, another security guard of the building in the capital's Kalabagan, said the man police were looking for was Dulal, aged about 45.

"He was on duty that day. He used to live here. His belongings are here," Motalib said, adding that Dulal had not been answering his phone.

A medical officer and a ward-boy of Anwer Khan Medical College Hospital,

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## Explore alternative sources of vaccine

Experts say country should find all possible ways to meet future need of Covid-19 vaccines, take part in trials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should explore more sources of Covid-19 vaccines, instead of relying only on the ones currently being considered, and take part in vaccine trials immediately to meet future needs, experts say.

They also said the country's overall vaccination efforts may turn futile if people did not accept the vaccines "positively".

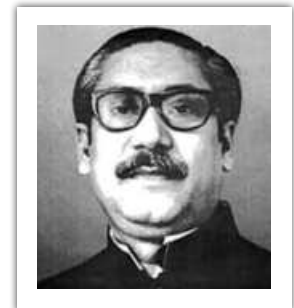
The experts made the comment while speaking at a discussion at the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) conference room in the capital yesterday. Bangladesh Health Reporters Forum (BHRF) organised the event as part of a series of dialogues on Covid-19.

Bangladesh has already made an advance payment of Tk 509 crore for three crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine from Serum Institute India (SII). The government has also announced that it will procure 68 million shots of vaccine under a global arrangement called COVAX.

"We do not know how long these vaccines will give us immunity. If the novel coronavirus regularly mutates -- like the influenza virus -- we may need regular vaccination. In this case, we should think of sustainable sources," Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of BSMMU's pharmacology department, said at the discussion yesterday.

About vaccine selection, he said, "Safety, efficacy and standard are the three basic parameters to select any vaccine. The dose is another issue. If we can select a single-dose vaccine, it would be better for our country."

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## Bangabandhu's homecoming day today

BSS, Dhaka

The historic Homecoming Day of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be observed today across the country in a befitting manner.

Bangabandhu, the undisputed leader of the nation and supreme commander of the country's Liberation War, returned to the sacred soil of independent Bangladesh via London and New

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

## Khokon questions Taposh's eligibility

Claims his successor transferred DSCC funds to his pvt bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation Sayeed Khokon yesterday claimed incumbent Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh to be ineligible to continue the mayoral post.

Khokon said this while addressing a human chain in front of the High Court premises in the capital, demanding rehabilitation of those affected by a DSCC demolition drive last year.

Khokon alleged that Taposh transferred hundreds of crores of taka from DSCC's coffers to Modhumoti Bank, which is owned by the incumbent mayor.

Taposh received and was still receiving crores as profit from the money after it was invested to different individuals and organisations, Khokon alleged.

On the other hand, because of monetary shortage, poor

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## 31<sup>st</sup> Death Anniversary

DEATH: 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1990

We deeply mourn the death of our beloved mother Late "Masuda Begum" wife of Late Mr. Abul Khair, founder of Abul Khair Group (Abul Co.). Today with due respect, we remember her works, ideals and memories and pray to Almighty for His divine blessings.

We request all our relatives and well-wishers to pray for her eternal peace.

BELOVED SONS & DAUGHTERS

## WE MOURN



Veteran Industrialist and social worker, our honorable Director Engr. Reazat Ali Bachchu has expired on 25 December 2020 at the age of 74 (inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiun). We all pray to Almighty Allah for granting him Jannat.

Directors and All Employees of



### NOTICE

We have brought out a four-page colour supplement on THE DAILY STAR-DHL BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2019 with our regular business pages today. Please look out for your copy.

SINGER HAPPY NEW OFFER. This New Year, replace your used electronics with brand new SINGER products! Amazing discounts on different products!



**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**692**  
New cases in 24hrs



**5,21,382**  
Total cases



**7,756**  
Deaths



**4,66,064**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**



**1,928,761**  
Deaths



**89,767,357**  
Total cases

## 25 hurt as workers, cops clash in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

At least 25 people were injured in separate clashes between workers and police in Kushtia and Narayanganj yesterday.

Of them, five Bidi workers sustained bullet injuries as police opened fire on them at Hossainabad in Kushtia's Daulatpur upazila.

According to witnesses, around 30 to 40 workers of Akij Bidi Factory reached their workplace around half an hour late.

The guards of the factory resisted them from entering their workplace. At one point, it triggered chaos.

On information, police rushed there around 10:00am and started charging batons on the workers.

In response, workers also hurled brickbats targeting police.

As the situation went out of control, police opened fire on the workers, leaving five of them injured, the witnesses added.

Workers' leader Nayon Islam and Daulatpur Upazila Parishad Chairman Ezaz Ahmed Mamun confirmed.

Contacted, Zahurul Alam, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, admitted that five workers sustained bullet injuries.

"The situation is now under control," he said.

Meanwhile in Narayanganj, at least 20 readymade garment workers were injured in a clash with police in Shiddhirganj upazila.

The clash took place when the workers were staging demonstration demanding their due wages in front of the main gate of Adamzi EPZ around 1:00pm.

Police and witnesses said workers of Kwun Tong Apparels Ltd started demonstration at around 8:00am demanding due wages.

Later, around 1:00pm, the workers took position on Shimrail-Adamzi-Narayanganj road and halted vehicular movement.

On information, police rushed to the spot and tried to drive away the workers. It triggered clash between the two groups.

Police charged batons and lobbed tear shells to disperse the workers.

At least 20 workers were injured in the incident, claimed workers.

Contacted, Moshitur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Siddhirganj Police Station, said the demonstration caused long tailback on road.

"That is why, police drove them away. Now the situation was under control," he added.

Our Kushtia and Narayanganj correspondents contributed to this report.



A rickshaw-van is loaded with rusty corrugated iron sheets in such a way that its puller is not even peddling the vehicle to the destination yesterday. The photo was taken on Dhaka-Chattogram highway near Jatrabari where plying of such non-motorised vehicles is illegal.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 22 more die, 692 get Covid-19

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh witnessed 22 more deaths and 692 new cases of Covid-19 in past 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The infection tally stood at 521,382 with the new cases.

So far, a total of 7,756 people have lost their lives and 466,064 recovered from the disease since the first death was reported in the country on March 18.

The country saw a daily infection rate of 5.36 percent with 89.39 percent recovery and 1.49 deaths.

Until now, 3,344,399 tests, including 12,524 new ones, have been carried out.

The overall infection rate stood at 15.59 percent and 89.39 percent have recovered so far, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

The country's infection number reached the 500,000-mark on December 20. The first cases were reported on March 8. The death toll exceeded 7,000 on December 12.

## Still active in disguise

FROM PAGE 1

The SC had ordered the project owner Metro Makers and Developers Limited to complete the restoration of the wetland in six months, dismantling all the construction of the 550-acre project. The land is identified as floodplain in the 1997 Dhaka City Master Plan.

The apex court also ordered the project owners to refund all plot buyers double the amount, including the registration fees.

Besides, the SC directed Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) to reclaim the wetland in case the project owners failed to complete the restoration within the six-month period.

"But more than a year after the SC verdict, the project is still there and no structure or building was demolished or removed from the place, even no earth has been removed from the project area so far," Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), told The Daily Star recently.

Bela filed a writ petition with the High Court in August 2004 challenging the legality of the project, saying it was developed violating the Environment Conservation Act, Town Improvement Act, and Rajuk rules.

**NEW NAME, NEW GUISE**  
During a recent visit to the project area near Aminbazar, The Daily Star found nothing changed other than the previous large signboard of Modhumoti Model



Town missing from the entrance of the housing project.

Rather, there was only a small notice board which mentions the project's name as "Nandonik Housing".

There was also a noticeably large signboard at the centre of the housing area with the following messages -- the project was "built without obstructing flood flow", there are "two lakh trees, a beautiful wide lake" and that it is the "dream of 1.5 lakh people of 3,000 families".

Inside the housing area, many plots were demarcated by walls. Some plots had signs with the owner's names on them, still mentioning Modhumoti Model Town as the title of the housing project.

Abdullah Sheikh, a staffer at the project office, said they have been using the name "Nandonik Housing" instead of Modhumoti Model Town for the last one year.

He said the housing project comprises 6,000 plots of 4,000 owners. And the plot owners are now overseeing the project and some are selling their plots to third parties.

According to the project office, 20 duplex houses, eight resorts, around 300 one-storey buildings, and 150 tin-shed houses have already been constructed there.

Contacted, AF Kallol, president of the plot owners' association, said he would give a comment regarding the court order and the recent application to the public works ministry later on.

But afterward, he did not pick up this correspondent's phone calls.

The Daily Star also repeatedly attempted to contact officials of Metro Makers and Developers Limited, but their phones were found switched off. On a visit two weeks ago, this correspondent found the company's headquarters in the city's Green Road area under lock and key.

**NON-COMPLIANCE WITH SC VERDICT**

Rajuk Chairman Sayeed Noor Alam told The Daily Star recently that they have formed a committee to take necessary steps after the Supreme Court verdict on the matter.

He said they have held a meeting around five to six months ago and asked all departments concerned to take necessary steps to follow the SC order. He, however, did not specify what steps they have taken so far in line with the SC verdict.

Planning section-3 of the housing and public works ministry, in a letter to Rajuk dated October 18, 2020, asked the latter

to take necessary steps to incorporate the project as an urban area or withdraw it from the sub flood flow zone in the DAP.

The letter was issued following an application by plot owners of Modhumoti Model Town on September 17 last year.

"We have asked [Rajuk] in the letter to take action as per the rules. [But] if the Supreme Court has given this directive, it will not get approval," said an official of the planning section at the ministry, when asked about the plot owners' application.

The official, preferring to remain anonymous, said they were not informed about the court verdict. "Besides, the applicants also hid that information in the letter addressed to us."

Regarding the matter, Rajuk Chairman Sayeed Noor Alam said, "Their application will not be acceptable as there is a restriction from the court."

Regarding these developments, Bela's Rizwana Hasan said, "When a project is announced illegal twice by a highest court of the country and when the review petition of plots owners is rejected by the Supreme Court, then there is no scope of its inclusion as an urban area in the DAP."

She said following the SC verdict, there is no scope for the plot owners to submit any application like this and for the government authorities to entertain it.

"If the authorities concerned consider its application, then it means the

executive division will interfere with the jurisdiction of the court and it would be a classic case of contempt of court," she said.

It is very important to restore the wetland to establish rule of law, she added.

**LONG LEGAL BATTLE**

In its petition filed with the High Court in 2004, Bela mentioned that if the project continued, the character of the area would be destroyed and the environment would be polluted.

The HC on July 27, 2005, declared the project unauthorised, illegal, and against public interest. It also said the interest of the buyers must be protected.

The Supreme Court upheld the HC verdict on August 7, 2012 and declared Modhumoti Model Town illegal. The apex court directed the authorities concerned to keep the area as a free flood flow zone.

On July 11, 2013, the Appellate Division released the full text of its 159-page verdict directing Metro Makers and Developers Limited to restore within six months the wetland in Bilamalia and Baliarpur mouzas of Savar where it had developed the project.

The apex court came up with the verdict to keep the area as a free flood flow zone and protect the capital from waterlogging.

In September 2013, Metro Makers and Developers Limited and plot purchasers moved five separate petitions with the Supreme Court seeking review of its judgment.

The full bench of the SC dismissed all five review petitions and upheld its earlier verdict on April 25, 2019.

## Focus on issues that'll help you get GSP Plus

FROM PAGE 1

to the pandemic. Are you taking any new strategy?

**Teerink:** We need to be proud of Bangladesh that it has been able to provide stimulus packages and find ways to continue businesses and help the people during the pandemic. This is where we want to step in and provide support. In the first wave, Germany and we came up with assistance of €130 million for social protection scheme. That will go as payments to the workers of the RMG, leather and footwear industries. The payment is not one off. The first disbursement of our frontloading money would actually be a pilot. The ultimate goal is to help Bangladesh become a country that has a social security system. That will also be important for the country to achieve the SDGs and eventually become a developed country by 2041.

**TDS:** What are the challenges that Bangladesh faces at this juncture of time?

**Teerink:** Bangladesh needs to be vigilant and ensure its economic situation remains stable during the pandemic. For example, we have seen some glitches in the global supply chain where Bangladesh has suffered along with many other countries. There, we have looked at the whole question of mandatory due diligence. Hopefully, the EU will pass a new law on it. That will shield the RMG companies from the situation where buyers have not lived up to the promises of honouring orders or paying for orders that have already been produced. We need to work on that, and in 2021 we hope to have a sustainability compact in Bangladesh.

Another challenge that Bangladesh faces is the need for diversifying its export basket. So far, the export has been mostly reliant on RMG. The government has already begun working on it. We would also support

Bangladesh in many ways, including by encouraging our companies to step up investments. However, we think Bangladesh still needs to do some homework for doing business with ease. We are already engaged with the government and are trying to make it more pragmatic. Our private sector companies are working to single out the main obstacles that prevent EU companies from making bigger investments. I think the business climate would be better in the coming days. Ultimately, it will help Bangladesh a lot.

**TDS:** How would EU act as Bangladesh transitions from LDC to a developing country?

**Teerink:** We have been working on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework for seven years. That is going to be 1.8 trillion Euro package. Euro 800 billion is basically for the Covid response in Europe. More than one trillion Euros will be for development cooperation and other aspects. That means we can start working over seven years and Bangladesh will remain an important partner country. We will be working in the next few months on the allocation for Bangladesh. Humanitarian assistance will always be there if there is a humanitarian crisis. As of now, we see trade to be important. We are also in the process of adapting GSP Plus. We don't know at this stage what it would look like but we hope Bangladesh would be ready to be eligible for the GSP Plus scheme.

**TDS:** What are the criteria that can make Bangladesh eligible for GSP Plus?

**Teerink:** Bangladesh needs to respect the human rights and ILO conventions. The GSP Plus has more of these conventions than the EBA. It requires improvement of not only human rights and labour rights, but also environmental rights. That's

prompted other players like China and India to set similar goals. We are now focusing on going away from coal to renewable energy like wind solar. Researches are underway for an experimental reactor in France. Greening the houses, improving energy efficiency and imposing carbon tax on countries that produce without stringent environmental criteria will be the means of future to protect the environment. In Bangladesh, we will focus on decent work and green energy.

About cooperation with Bangladesh... I think the government is very interested about the Delta Plan. It is promising. It is not only about water management but also on tackling climate change. We can work with other donors, international financial institution or private sectors on implementing the plan.

**TDS:** How do you assess Bangladesh's performance in addressing climate change impacts?

**Teerink:** I think climate change is very high on Bangladesh's agenda. What is missing in the conversation is environmental protection... preserving the rivers. The encroachment of rivers cannot just continue unabated because it is endangering the water bodies. Also ensuring food security and keeping the Bay of Bengal safe is important. Blue economy is largely untapped in Bangladesh but it has to be sustainable blue economy. Another thing worth mentioning is the protection of the Sundarbans that saves the country from cyclones. Transport of coals through the Sundarbans' very fragile ecosystem also endangers the forest. If the unique ecosystem, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, is lost, I think you will never get it back. Bangladesh should do everything that it can to protect the forest. If we could help, we would be very happy to do so.

**TDS:** How is the EU cooperating with Bangladesh on climate change?

**Teerink:** The EU is working on the European Green Deal. This is the new flagship motto that encompasses the measures in meeting the Paris Agreement and mitigating climate change. The goals are reducing 55 percent carbon emission by 2030 and making the EU carbon neutral by 2050. The EU's actions have also

## Khokon questions

FROM PAGE 1

employees of the DSCC were not being paid their due salaries for months, he further said.

Also, the city corporation's different development projects were halted because of budget shortage, alleged Khokon.

He said that, by committing such acts, Taposh has lost eligibility as mayor under the city corporation law.

This newspaper yesterday tried to reach Mayor Taposh for his comments over phone but could not.

Contacted, DSCC Public Relations Officer Md Abu Naser said they will not make immediate comments.

The media will later be informed about the DSCC's formal position regarding the matter, said Naser, also spokesperson of the city corporation.

About former mayor Khokon's allegation of non-payment of salaries to DSCC employees, sources at the city corporation said such allegation are false.


Addressing the human chain, Khokon also alleged that after becoming DSCC mayor, Taposh had been "talking big" against corruption.

He said such stories "do not suit coming from Taposh", claiming the incumbent mayor needs to free himself from corruption first to make his administration graft-free.

Khokon also termed the DSCC demolition drive "illegal".

He sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's intervention to ensure rehabilitation of the affected people.


On December 8 last year, the DSCC demolished several hundred illegal shops at Phulbaria Supermarket-2 in Gulistan, which were built violating the main design of the supermarket. Traders and shop owners protested the DSCC move back then.



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# Vehicle registration sees sharp decline

### Experts blame Covid-19 induced economic slowdown

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The number of registered vehicles across the country -- including the capital -- witnessed a sharp decline last year, mainly due to economic slowdown induced by Covid-19.

While vehicles registered all over the country declined last year for the first time since 2013, Dhaka saw the trend for second consecutive year, shows data of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Dhaka witnessed 34 percent decline last year compared to 2019, with the rate for the entire country being 24.07 percent, it shows.

The registration of trucks saw the highest fall -- 43.26 percent, followed by bus (32.68 percent), private cars (26.08 percent) and motorcycles (22.52 percent).

The government imposed a nationwide shutdown from March 26 last year, to control spread of Covid-19.

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

Although the situation has been improving, full recovery of the economy is still far away, experts said.

A total of 3.78 lakh vehicles were registered across the country last year, while the number was 4.97 lakh in 2019, according to BRTA's data.

Of the vehicles, 1.18 lakh were registered with offices in Dhaka last year. The number was 1.58 lakh in 2019.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Former Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Khokon addresses a human chain in front of the High Court premises in the capital, demanding rehabilitation of people who were affected by a recent DSCC demolition drive. The immediate past mayor had strong words of criticism for his successor at the event, calling him 'ineligible' to hold the post.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# A leading figure in promoting ethical journalism

### Say speakers at memorial of veteran editor Muniruzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acting editor of the Daily Sangbad Khandaker Muniruzzaman will remain an inspiration for the next generation for his devotion to living a life upholding progressive ideology, values, secular politics, democracy and freedom of speech.

This ever smiling, always warm and unrelentingly optimistic man was a firm believer of an exploitation-free society and democracy.

His lifelong involvement with progressive ideals, upholding of the values of the Liberation War and his unrelenting commitment to secular politics and cultural values made him a leading figure in promoting ethical journalism in the profession and democratic values in the society.

This was how his friends, colleagues, and fellow editors of newspapers remembered him while attending a virtual memorial meeting yesterday.

A dedicated and honest journalist, Muniruzzaman always called a spade a spade, they said.

Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) organised the event, recalling the contribution of one of its founding members.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# 'Tortured and left to die in a jungle'

### A trafficked Bangladeshi youth's 27-day ordeal in India, Sri Lanka

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Like many, Ahsan Habib from Brahmanbaria dreamt of a better future abroad.

While working as a marketing officer at a private tour and travel company in Dhaka, the 30-year-old youth named Mamunur Rashid Mamun, hailing from the same district.

He promised Ahsan that he would send him to Malta, a Southern European island. Their contract was Tk 12 lakh and Mamun would arrange a job at a hotel in Malta.

What happened to Ahsan was horrific.

He was first taken to India on a travel visa last year. There, he along with 25 other Bangladeshis were kept in a room and tortured for money. After extorting the money, they were boarded on a trawler to Sri Lanka where the fortune seekers were left in a jungle.

The story came out after Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police on Wednesday arrested four Bangladeshi members of an international human trafficking ring from the capital's Uttara and Dakshinkhan areas.

At a press briefing on Thursday, CID Additional Deputy Inspector General (Additional DIG) Sheikh Omar Faruque said the racket is active in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

"The group used to 'recruit' people to Malta, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Egypt, the Maldives and Cambodia for jobs. At first, they were taken to India through land ports with 'fake' travel visas."

"The group then collected money from the victims' family members. If anyone refused to pay, he would be detained and tortured. After collecting the money, Indian brokers would take them to Sri Lanka. There, they were left in a jungle," said the police official.

During the raid, 28 passports, 19 seals of different embassies, banks and agencies and 10 fake visas of Cambodia were recovered from the arrestees.

They are: Habibur Rahman (51), Mamunur Rashid Mamun (41), Jamal Hossain (40) and Nahidul Islam Palash.

"They are members of an international human trafficking racket," the police official added.

Talking to The Daily Star, the victim, Ahsan, said he arranged Tk 8 lakh by selling his land and gave it to Mamun and four to five other accomplices, including Habibur and Jamal, at their Uttara office on May 5,

2019.

After 10 days, Ahsan got a call from Mamun, saying that his visa had been issued. When he came to the office, Habibur gave him the passport with an Indian visa.

He told Ahsan that his Malta visa would be issued from Hyderabad, India.

Ahsan boarded a bus to Benapole, escorted by a broker named Ali. From there, another broker took him to Kolkata where he stayed for a night and met another Indian broker, who took him to Hyderabad by train. There, he met 19 more Bangladeshis, kept in a room. The traffickers took away their passports.

"We were locked there. They wanted Tk 4 lakh from me. As I refused, they tortured me. I called my father back home for money. He gave the money to Mamun's brother Sumon," said Ahsan, adding that the traffickers did the same to others.

From there, they were taken to Sri Lanka by a trawler and left in a jungle. Ahsan found six more Bangladeshis there, trapped like him.

Luckily, Ahsan was able to escape and eventually met a Sri Lankan man who helped him call his father.

His father sent him Tk 33,000 for a plane ticket. With the help of the administration, Ahsan could get back to Bangladesh, after 27 days in captivity.

But his ordeal was yet to be over.

After coming back to Bangladesh in June last year, he found out that his father had passed away.

Resolute, he then went looking for the traffickers but found their office closed. There, he met another victim -- Al Amin. "Al Amin told me that Habibur took Tk 27.03 lakh from six people, promising to send them to Europe and Egypt."

After a week of search, they finally got the location of Habibur and Mamun. When they went there to get their money, the two threatened them with dire consequences.

Ahsan then made a complaint to the CID. A case was also filed with Uttara East Police Station under human trafficking act in this connection.

The CID official said these so-called recruiting agencies don't have any registration. They take money from people, change their location frequently and go into hiding.

He said they would communicate with their Indian counterpart soon to take action against the international racket.

UNB, Dhaka

# Freedom ends when someone spreads lies that hurts others: Joy

Prime Minister's ICT Adviser Sajeeb Joy yesterday said everyone has the right to freedom of speech, but that freedom ends when someone spreads falsehoods that end up hurting others.

"No one has the right to hurt others," he said, noting that Twitter and other social media in the US have banned US President Donald Trump along with several other people and organisations that spread falsehoods that led to violence.

Joy said this is the limit of freedom of speech in the United States. He also said he wants the US Embassy in Dhaka, as well as other western embassies to take note of this. "We do not want to see hypocritical statements from you in the future regarding freedom of speech in Bangladesh anymore," read a post he shared on his verified Facebook page.

For all of those who complain about Bangladesh Digital Security Act, in the US, the government lets private companies dictate, he said. "In Bangladesh we believe that it should not be up to private companies, but up to the courts to decide," Joy mentioned.

CAPITOL RIOTS

# US envoy thanks Bangladeshis for their support

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Days after US President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol in protest of Joe Biden's election as new president -- through what they claim to be "electoral fraud" -- US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller issued a statement for Bangladeshis.

"Democracy is tested. But through the work of committed citizens, we get back up, always striving to live up to the principles we cherish," he said yesterday.

Earl R Miller said despite the reprehensible events which unfolded in Washington, D.C. the United States Congress completed its constitutional duty and affirmed the lawful election of Joe Biden as President-elect and Kamala Harris as Vice President-elect. They will be sworn into office on January 20, 2021, he added.

The riots occurred as the Congress was in a session to certify Joe Biden as president after the presidential elections of November 3.

World leaders condemned the storming,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# 626 children raped last year: MJF report

### 2020 saw 60pc increase in child marriage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the closure of educational institutions and absence of public gatherings amid the pandemic, 626 children were reportedly raped between January and December last year, revealed Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at an online press conference yesterday.

The number of child marriages also increased by some 60 percent during this period, it said.

During the period under review, 145 children died as a result of rape, attempted rape, murder, abduction, disappearance and torture. Eight girls were tortured while working as housemaids while three of them died.

In addition, 192 children were killed in various incidents, out of which, 156 were killed in road accidents and 165 children were drowned. A total of 29 children went missing and were abducted.

The data was found after analysing related news of five national Bangla dailies -- Prothom Alo, Jugantar, Samakal, Ittefaq, Kaler Kantha -- and three national English dailies -- The Daily Star, New Age and Dhaka Tribune.

According to MJF's review of the deteriorating child rights situation, it was found that children in Bangladesh are not safe at home, as most rapes are perpetrated by acquaintances within the family and their neighbours.

There have been incidents of rape during the collection of pandemic-related relief.

Besides, at least 145 children faced murder attempt in 2020 and according to news reports, the reasons included family disputes, complications over property, rejection of romantic proposals, protesting injustice, rape and many more.

On the other hand, 34 children died by suicide, and the reasons were failing

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# Workplace accidents took 729 lives in 2020

### Says BILS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 732 workers died in events such as accidents, torture and labour unrest last year, according to a new study of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

The highest number of deaths, 348, were in the transport sector, and the second highest, 84, in the construction sector. BILS deputy director Yousuf Al Mamun, shared the findings in an event at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The BILS data said some 433 workers, 387 men and 46 women, were injured in 2020. The highest number of injuries, 68, were in the fisheries sector.

The survey, made from newspaper reports and articles, said 596 workers were victims of different incidents of torture last year. Among the tortured, 316 died, 229 were injured, eight went missing, 24 died by suicide, 14 were rescued from kidnappers; five others' cases were not mentioned.

Last year, some 593 incidents of labour unrest took place in different sectors, with the highest, 264, occurring in the garment sector, and the second highest, 49, in the jute sector.

Amirul Haque Amin, BILS vice chairperson, demanded risk allowance for garment workers who were working amid the pandemic, as their income was affected from Covid-19's fallout. Some 25-30 percent income of garment workers was affected, as overtime payment declined due to the fallout.

Shirin Akhter, lawmaker and BILS vice president, said although Bangladesh made impressive economic growth in the last decade, workers' rights remained poor.

# 6,686 people died in road crashes in 2020: Jatri Kalyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 6,686 people were killed and 8,600 were injured in 4,891 road accidents across the country in 2020, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

Meanwhile, 318 people were killed and 79 were injured in 323 rail-related accidents last year, the organisation revealed at a programme in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

In the waterways, 313 were killed, 342 injured and 371 went missing during the same period, it added.

The organisation prepared the report after compiling data from news outlets. Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of the passenger welfare platform, revealed the numbers.

However, the number of road crashes and casualties were less compared to the previous year, he said.

In 2019, at least 7,855 people were killed in 5,516 road crashes across the country. But the organisation said the coronavirus pandemic had a major role to play in improving the numbers.

"Due to the pandemic, there was restriction on the operation of public

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# Listed criminal Nuru held in Noakhali

### He set up drug, arms smuggling network on govt land in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After many attempts, police in a drive yesterday arrested listed criminal and land grabber Nur Alam Nuru, who stands accused in at least 30 cases, from Noakhali.

"He was arrested from Companiganj through mobile tracking technology," said Faruque-ul-Haque, deputy commissioner (west) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, while addressing a press briefing at his office. During the drive police also arrested one of his accomplices.

Nuru is also convicted in an arms case, in which the court sentenced him to 17 years in prison, the official added.

"After his arrest, police conducted a raid at Nachia Ghona hill area, the den of Nuru, and recovered two firearms, sharp weapons and 400 yaba pills," he added.

DC Faruque said, "Nuru was raised in Akbar Shah area and worked as a 4th class employee in Foy's Lake area. He started living in the foot of the hill and later got involved in cutting hill and smuggling logs."

Eventually, he started drug peddling and started to grab portions of the hill, where he set up his group. He soon developed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad in the port city held a human chain and rally in front of the JM Sen Bhaban yesterday morning, protesting a recent 'conspiracy to demolish' the historic structure.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

# ANTI-BRITISH REVOLUTIONARY'S HOUSE Demonstrators give govt till Jan 18 to take steps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday set an ultimatum for the government, till January 18, to take steps to preserve the house of anti-British revolutionary Jatindra Mohan Sengupta in Chattogram.

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the organisation, set the ultimatum at a human chain in front of the house in port city's Rahamatganj. He warned of starting a hunger strike unto death there, if the demand is not fulfilled within the period.

The parishad organised human chains, demonstrations and rallies in different districts and upazilas yesterday. Leaders of different political and sociocultural organisations attended the programmes.

Centrally, a rally was held in front of the National Museum at the capital's Shahbagh. Acting president of the organisation Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik presided over the rally. Among others, journalists Basudev Dhar, Monindra Kumar Nath, Advocate Shyamal Kumar Roy and Kishore Ranjan Mandal were present there.

They demanded establishment of a museum of independence and Liberation War in the house to commemorate the anti-British heroes.

In Chattogram's human chain, Awami League Chattogram city unit president Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury and general secretary AJM Nasir Uddin attended and expressed their solidarity.

"Vested property cannot be bought or sold," said Nasir, also former mayor of Chattogram City Corporation.

He said, "Chattogram District Administration is the custodian of the property, which was vested since 1970." He urged the administration to take immediate steps to preserve the house.



# Explore alternative sources of vaccine

FROM PAGE 1

He said six Covid-19 vaccines were already in the market while another 14 were in the pipeline.

He mentioned that several of these vaccines would be safer, effective and viable for countries like Bangladesh in the coming days.

He recommended increasing the chances of getting vaccines from other potential sources. "Political, diplomatic, and economic drives increase the probability of getting vaccines ... This discussion is not under my jurisdiction. But from the scientific point of view, we can increase our potentiality to get

vaccines either by inventing locally or taking part in researches along with others ... Currently, Bangladesh is now among the 10 best countries worthy of conducting trials. We should make the best use of it."

In his presentation, Prof Sayedur, also member of the Ethics Committee of the Bangladesh Medical Research Council, lauded the government's National Vaccine Deployment Plan. "... But the success of the vaccination programme depends on the acceptability of vaccines. If the vaccination programme is not based on science and social context, it will

fail. Here, transparency is the key ...

"It is important that people don't think that there is any disparity in vaccination," he said.

Echoing the view, public health expert Abu Zamil Faisal said, "If we take part in phase-III vaccine trials, getting vaccines will be easier in future. The private sector can be encouraged in this regard."

"If a portion of the population do not want to take the vaccines, then what will be done? We should think of it now," he said.

Connecting to the event via online, Prof Meerjady Sabrina

Flora, additional director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), spoke about their preparation for vaccinating people upon availability of the shots.

"We have made the priority list considering different issues ... The making of an app for the registration was at the final stage. We've already provided necessary training to our manpower and procurement of logistics was underway," she said.

Commenting on Prof Flora's remarks, Prof Rashid-E-Mahbub, former president of the BMA, said, "We don't know when the app will

be ready. We also don't know whether people will be able to access the app."

Coming down heavily on the government's deal with Beximco Pharmaceutical Ltd on vaccine procurement, he said, "It is not clear who is bringing the vaccines -- Beximco or the government? The government said the vaccine will be free of cost. But for whom, please clarify."

Joining the event online, former health minister AFM Ruhul Haque also spoke in favour of exploring other sources of vaccines and more collaboration to implement the vaccine deployment plan.

Prof Syed Abdul Hamid of Dhaka University's health economics said, "The country has the financial capacity to procure vaccines. But it is important to think of whether people will take the vaccines or not."

Presided over by BHRF President Toufiq Maruf, BMA President Prof Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Swachip president MA Aziz also spoke at the event, among others.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Zahid Maleque at another event yesterday said many countries were eager to give vaccines to Bangladesh. "We have kept our doors open for all," he said.

# Police looking for a missing security guard

FROM PAGE 1

where the girl was taken at first, said the accused and another young man brought the girl in a car.

Doctors said she died before they reached the hospital.

The girl's father filed a case with Kalabagan Police Station, accusing 18-year-old Fardin Iftekhar Dihan who recently passed A levels.

Meanwhile, grieving family members of the girl yesterday asked why three friends of the accused were released by police.

At his village home in Kushtia, the father told reporters that Kalabagan police didn't name the three friends as accused in the case, saying that the case would be "weak" if they did.

Abul Hasan said police released them because they didn't find any involvement of the trio. "We investigate all possible things linked to an incident. We have found evidence at the crime scene."

He added that officers might examine whether the accused took any drugs that day, he added.

Police have collected CCTV footage from all possible sources and are examining the mobile phones of the accused.

Sohel Mahmud, head of forensic department at Dhaka Medical College, told reporters that doctors found evidence of rape and injury marks on the girl's body. He added that the girl

died due to hemorrhagic shock and excessive bleeding.

A Dhaka court recorded Dihan's confessional statement on Friday and sent him to jail.

After her death, Kalabagan police requested the DMC forensic department to find out the age of the victim and mentioned in the inquest report that she was 19.

Her mother alleged that when she objected and showed police her daughter's passport, the policemen got angry and left the body at the morgue for hours.

Contacted, police said the hospital document mentioned her age as 19.

Mohammed Aseer Intisar Saarim,

emergency medical officer at Anwer Khan hospital, said, "She was brought dead. I asked the accused what happened to her. He said she was his girlfriend... he insisted that I write her age as 19... I said she looked younger. But he objected. Later, the victim's mother came and said she was 17."

The girl was laid to rest at a graveyard in Gopalpur, Kushtia, following a namaz-e-janaza attended by thousands of people.

Locals formed a human chain on both sides of the road in Kamalapur Bazar demanding justice.

Grieving friends of the girl lit candles in her memory on Dhanmondi-27 and demanded changes in education.

"We want everyone directly or indirectly linked with the rape to be investigated," said Neha Zaman, a friend of the girl.

Besides demanding justice, the students and parents also demanded sex education and institutional interventions to teach boys about respect and gender.

"Sex education is a taboo in our school. The teachers feel awkward," said Neha.

Her friends Rudmila and Afrin said the educational institutes have not been their allies while some teachers were victim-blaming by questioning why the girl went to the boy's apartment.

Mumtahina Ritu, a parent with two children in the school, said, "Sex education in schools is needed in this day and age. Secrecy is of no use, because our children learn about sex from other sources. Guardians need to talk to their children about sex."

Boys and girls also need to be taught about abuse at the schools, she added.

Sharmin Iffa, whose son was a close friend of the girl, stated that parents needed to be more involved in their children's lives. "The girl used to come to my house as well, because she was friends with my son. It was up to me to make sure that they were all safe."

## Parvej Akon passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Parvej Akon Biplob, a well-known politician in Barishal, died of cardiac arrest early yesterday, aged 50.

He was president of Barishal city unit of Jubo Dal, youth wing of BNP. Former vice president (VP) of Government Barishal College, Parvej had long been involved in "Khelagar".

His namaz-e-janaza was held on Manik Mia School premises on Sadar Road in Barishal at 2pm. He was later buried in his family graveyard at "Akon Villa" on the city's Kawnia Main Road.

During the ongoing pandemic, Parvej provided oxygen cylinders, relief materials, masks and sanitizers to the people in need.

BNP district and city units, Barishal Bar Association, Khelaghor, Barishal Reporters Unity and many other organisations have expressed condolences over his death.

## A leading

FROM PAGE 3

Muniruzzaman died on November 24 last year at the age of 71, while undergoing treatment at his Shantinagar home in the capital after he tested positive for Covid-19.

"Muniruzzaman was an honest and devoted journalist, and a person of great wisdom. Had he been alive, the newspaper industry, as well as the media, might have gotten even stronger," said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud.

He remembered contributions of Muniruzzaman, a freedom fighter, in the process of formation of the nation and state.

The minister also urged the parishad to take steps to keep Muniruzzaman's memory alive.

Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiuur Rahman, who initiated Muniruzzaman into left-leaning politics during his student life, said Muniruzzaman was a "brave activist" of student and trade union movements as well as in national politics.

He said Muniruzzaman was always involved in movements for establishing an exploitation-free society and democracy. "Losing such a person is a great loss for all of us," he said.

The Daily Sangbad Editor Altamash Kabir said Muniruzzaman made a significant

contribution to the society. He was a brave and non-communal editor and an out-and-out gentleman. "His passing away is an irreparable loss," he said.

Founding member of the parishad Reazuddin Ahmed termed Muniruzzaman a devoted and honest person.

"He tried to take journalism ahead with his integrity and honesty. During and after the formation of Sampadak Parishad, we took his help in preparing drafts of various critical and tough subjects," he said.

His childhood friend Mujahidul Islam Selim, now president of Communist Party of Bangladesh, recalled his contributions to the country's Liberation War and how he performed vital duties during the war.

"Muniruzzaman was a poet; he always inspired his friends... He always remained at the frontline of movements," Selim said.

Liberation War Museum Trustee and Publisher Mofidul Hoque, another childhood friend of Muniruzzaman, said he was a responsible journalist and editor.

He expressed his gratitude towards Sampadak Parishad for arranging such a memorial meeting.

Muniruzzaman's wife Rukia Khatoon said her husband was a versatile man. "The Daily Sangbad was his life. He always upheld the values of our Liberation War," she said.

"He was an advocate of freedom of speech and always thought about the betterment of journalism. He was also upset about the passage of the Digital Security Act," she said.

She sought write-ups on Muniruzzaman, as the family is planning to publish a memorial book on the veteran journalist in March.

Sampadak Parishad Secretary General and Bangladesh Protidin Editor Naem Nizam said, "Muniruzzaman was a positive thinker. He was always there to extend help and encouragement."

The parishad's President and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said they will think of steps to keep the memory of the predecessor editors alive.

"Muniruzzaman never thought about himself; rather he always thought about an exploitation-free, democratic and non-communal society," he added.

At the onset of the meeting, organisers held a minute's silence and aired a brief photo documentary on the life of the celebrated

journalist.

The Daily Samakal Acting Editor Mustafiz Shafi; Editor and Publisher of Bonik Barta Dewan Hanif Mahmud and Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan, also spoke at the event.

They said Muniruzzaman was a genial, approachable and compassionate person. He was a skilled editor.

The Daily Ittefaq Editor Tasmima Hossain and New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, among others, also participated in the meeting.

Born on March 12, 1948 in Dhaka, Muniruzzaman started leftist activism in his student life and took part in the movement opposing Ayub Khan and other Pakistani rulers. He started his career in journalism in 1970 as a reporter of Weekly Ekota, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Bangladesh.

He was one of the founding members of Trade Union Centre and later became CPB Dhaka committee's general secretary.

He was in-charge of the editorial department of the Daily Sangbad for many years and was the acting editor of the newspaper since January 2010.

Muniruzzaman was also famous for his well-written columns and political analyses.

## Vehicle registration

FROM PAGE 3

Truck registration saw the highest decline. Some 3,900 trucks were registered across the country while it was 5,293 in previous year.

A total of 3.11 lakh motorcycle were registered across the country last year while the number was four lakhs in 2019.

Ibrahim Khalil, assistant director of BRTA, said registration process of vehicles remained halted completely for more than two months during the shutdown, and later they resumed the operation gradually.

Owners of private cars have to pay more than previous years as advance income tax, he said. Besides, people's overall economic condition deteriorated due to the pandemic, he added.

"All these reasons are to blame for the decline of the vehicle registration," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Noted economist Ahsan H Mansur said there was a declining trend of registration of private cars and microbuses in the country for last few years.

New and reconditioned cars and microbuses getting registered with BRTA continued to drop across the country for the third consecutive year.

Ahsan, also the executive director of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said high import tax and maintenance cost, lack of parking facilities and growing popularity of ridesharing services are reasons behind the drop in car and microbus registration.

Transport experts, however, see the trend as a ray of hope for reducing the capital's traffic congestion. They blame cars for taking up road space while carrying fewer people than larger vehicles.

## 626 children

FROM PAGE 3

exams, anger, problems in relationship, harassment, rape or attempted rape, and cyber blackmailing.

MJF analysis of news reports consisted of 330 positive news in 12 categories and 1,361 negative news items in 28 categories.

The press conference titled "Bangladesh Child Situation 2020" was moderated by MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam. She said according to MJF analysis, children are not safe in their own homes.

Shaheen Anam called upon all government agencies engaged in child protection to be more responsible and work together for protection of children's rights.

Muhibuzzaman, joint secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs,

was a special guest at the conference. He said the crisis in child safety is worrying. He suggested addressing the existing problems through social mobilisation.

Member of the Caucus on Child Rights of the Bangladesh Parliament, Aroma Dutta MP, -- the chief guest -- highlighted the need for a separate ministry or department of child affairs to work closely for the protection of children's rights.

Dutta called upon all to work together for policy formulation, performance and intensive supervision of work.

Fatema Yusuf, MJF governing board member; Rafeza Shaheen, coordinator, Child Protection Division, MJF; various MJF partners, among others, spoke at the event.

## Listed

FROM PAGE 3

ties with local influential people including politicians.

Police are also looking for Nuru's accomplices and those who sheltered him, said the official.

DC Faruque said eight cases against Nuru are currently under investigation.

Asked about the "mysterious disappearance" of the court's conviction warrant, he said police are looking into it.

## US envoy

FROM PAGE 3

which is being seen as the blackest day for democracy in US history. In the follow up, US lawmakers are demanding impeachment of the Republican President, while some cabinet members and officials of the Trump administration have resigned in protest of the violence.

"Those who committed violent, criminal acts of terror against our democracy are being arrested and will be held accountable in accordance with the rule of law," the Ambassador said.

Miller thanked those citizens of Bangladesh who have sent messages of support during this difficult time.

"Thank you for your friendship and partnership and our shared commitment to democracy," he said.

"Together we respect to charting a path toward justice, lawfulness and respect for each other and the nation we love," he said.

## 6,686 people

FROM PAGE 3

transport for more than two months in 2020. If we take this into consideration we can see the situation has not really improved," he said.

In the absence of heavier public transport, small vehicles like battery-run easy-bikes dominated the highways, resulting in relatively more accidents, he added.

However, the numbers reported by Jatri Kalyan Samity is significantly higher than a report by Nirapad Sarak Chai, the pioneering road safety campaign in Bangladesh.

According to Nirapad Sarak Chai, at least 3,800 people were killed and 4,954 were injured in 3,232 road crashes.

Samity's report blamed reckless driving, risky overtaking, fault in road design, unfit vehicles, passengers and pedestrians' ignorance, use of mobile phones or headphone while driving vehicles, drunk driving, occupied footpaths and poor enforcement of law for the road crashes.

According to the report, road crash victims include 1,392 pedestrians, 1,390 drivers, 375 students, 355 transport workers, 92 teachers, 418 children, 15 army and 52 police personnel.

A total of 6,736 vehicles were involved in the crashes. Of them, 13.12 percent were buses, 28.39 percent trucks and covered vans, and 24.80 percent were motorcycles.

In the report, the platform provided several recommendations to prevent road accidents.

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**Invitation for Re-Tenders**  
**Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka**

1	Procuring entity name	Program to Support Safety Retrofits and Environmental Upgrades in the Bangladeshi Ready-Made Garments (RMG) Sector Project (SREUP), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
2	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.		
3	Invitation for	Procurement of IT Equipment for SREUP, SMESPD, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.		
4	Invitation Ref. No.	SMESPD/(SREUP)/714/08/2021-01		
5	Date	10/01/2021		
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>				
6	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.		
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>				
7	Budget and source of fund	SREUP.		
8	Development partners (if applicable)	EU, AFD, KfW and GIZ.		
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>				
9	Project/program code (if applicable)	2230322		
10	Project/program name (if applicable)	Program to Support Safety Retrofits and Environmental Upgrades in the Bangladeshi Ready-Made Garments (RMG) Sector Project (SREUP).		
<b>Date</b>				
11	Tender publication date	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	
12	Tender closing date and time	19/01/2021	03:00pm	
13	Tender opening date and time	19/01/2021	03:15pm	
<b>Address</b>				
14	Name and address of the office(s)	<b>Address</b>		
	-Receiving tender document	Hard Copy Document, SREUP, SME & Special Programmes Department, 21st Floor, 2nd Annex Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
	-Opening tender document	SREUP, SME & Special Programmes Department, 21st Floor, 2nd Annex Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>				
15	Brief eligibility of tenderer	Tenderers having 3 years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least two (2) contracts of similar nature successfully completed within the last three (3) years.		
16	Brief description of goods of works	Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Seven (07) Laptops, Five (5) Desktop Computers, Two (2) Laser Printers, One (1) Legal page scanner with ADF facility, One (01) Multimedia projector, One (01) Photocopier, One (01) Shredder and applicable Consumables & Accessories for SREUP PMU, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
17	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Completion time in weeks/month from the date of contract signing
	01	(a) Laptop (b) Desktop Computer (c) Laser Jet Printer (d) Legal Size Scanner (e) Multimedia Projector (f) Photocopier (g) Shredder (h) Consumables & Accessories	SREUP PMU	30,000/- 8 weeks
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>				
18	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abdul Mannan.		
19	Designation of official inviting tender	General Manager & Project Director (SREUP).		
20	Address of official inviting tender	SREUP PMU, SME & Special Programmes Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
21	Contact details of official inviting tender	TEL: 9530715	E-mail: abdul.mannan@bb.org.bd	
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.			
DCP: 48/2021-70 Date: 07/01/2021				
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Sd/- <b>Md. Abdul Mannan</b> General Manager & Project Director (SREUP) Phone: 9530715, E-mail: abdul.mannan@bb.org.bd				
GD-52				





A school of colourful tilapia, commercially produced at a fish farm, in Sundarghona-Kanthaltala village of Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO:  
COLLECTED

## Bagerhat farmer dreams big with colourful fish farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Fish farmer Hafizur Rahman of Bagerhat Sadar upazila has found success in producing colourful tilapia and Ruposhi Rui at his fish farm.

High demand in the area has produced sales of around 50 thousand pieces of the two fish varieties over the last couple of years.

Hafizur's 17-year-old fish farm 'Naim Fish Farm' -- situated on two acres of land in Sundarghona-Kanthaltala village -- has earned a good reputation among fish farmers in nearby districts -- including Bagerhat, Pirojpur and Khulna -- for producing quality larvae of popular fish species such as Koi, Shing, Magur, Gulisha, Pabda and Vietnamese pangas.

Gaining confidence from his experience at the farm, Hafizur collected larvae of colourful tilapia and Ruposhi Rui from fisheries department at Mymensingh

Agricultural University two years back. Within a year, he succeeded in rearing the two fish at his farm.

The two colourful fish can be profitable for a fish farm as they sell well in all stages and sizes. People buy the smaller ones for displaying them in aquariums or fish tanks, while the larger ones for consumption, Hafizur said.

Both the fish grow as much as one kilogram every year and not only they look more attractive than the regular varieties, they taste better too, he also said.

The colourful tilapia even spawns in the pond and the offspring grow well naturally in the pond.

On the other hand, Ruposhi Rui, with its origin in Australia and a bright golden outer coat, grows well with other fish in the same pond. Its demand as aquarium fish indoors or decorative fish in large fish tanks outdoors is high and each kg of it sells for

between Tk 300 and Tk 500, Hafizur also said.

He hopes to increase production of the colourful tilapia and Ruposhi Rui by next year when he will be able to sell each small fry of colourful tilapia for Tk 3 and Ruposhi Rui for Tk 10.

If supply of quality fish feed is ensured in the area and financial support provided to farmers, there is a good prospect in earning revenues from overseas through export of the two fish varieties after meeting local demands, Hafizur added.

Contacted, Ferdous Ansari, senior upazila fisheries officer in Bagerhat Sadar, said while they mostly concentrate on providing assistance to conventional fish farmers, they were also trying to develop a market system where unconventional fish farms would be able to eliminate intermediaries and sell their fish to end customers.

## Where radio still a culture

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Radio has played an active role during the Liberation War. Bangladesh Betar was the only means that time to transmit a message. But nowadays a few people are seen listening to radio in the arena of technology. Most of those who still listen to the radio are pre-independence generations.

Many people still have to keep radio as traditional culture. They have formed a radio listeners' club named Malibari Radio Listeners' Club at their village Malibari in Panchagram union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. The club has 50 members.

The club has been formed by the elders in this village. Each of the club members has a radio at home. When they get time, they come to the club with radio to hang-out.

Panir Uddin, 75, president of Malibari Radio Listeners' Club, said he set up the first radio listeners' club in the village after independence. Its activities remained halted for some years.

Again in 2008, he formed the Radio Listeners' Club and registered it with Rangpur Radio Station, he said, adding that their club is doing well at present.

He also added that the members of Malibari Radio Listeners' Club feel comfortable listening to agricultural and health related programmes. They also love to listen to Rangpur region's interesting folk songs-- Bhawaiya.

Their culture is intertwined with radio, said Panir.

Mantosh Chandra Roy, 66, general secretary of the club, said there is no radio listeners' club anywhere in Lalmonirhat. It is only in their village. Each of the members of the club has a radio at home.

"Usually radio is not available in the market and there is no radio makers like before. So, we have to face trouble while buying new radio or repair it," he said, adding that "All the members of our radio listeners' club are over 60 years of age."

Freedom fighter Maqbool Hossain, 69, a member of the club, said "Radio played an important role in the country's great Liberation War. It was the preferred means of communication for our forces at that period."

Asma Begum, 63, a member of the club, said women are also members of the club. They come here and listen to the radio. Women also listen to agricultural programmes to help their families.



A member of Malibari Radio Listeners' Club in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila was listening to radio.

PHOTO:  
STAR

## Maintain peace

FROM PAGE 12

the political opponents to give up violence and maintain peace and order for smooth functioning of democracy in the country. Speakers at the meeting call upon the people not to be misled by the forces of disruption who are out to foil the hard-earned independence. The meeting is organised by the Dhaka City Unit of Bangladesh Awami League as part of the resistance day programme organised across the country.

**PM'S DONATION TO CULTURAL ORGANISATION**

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today donates Tk 5,000 each to Nawabganj Art Council and Rajshahi Lalitkala Academy. Bangabandhu watches a gambhira performance, a traditional song with dance popular in the part of Rajshahi.

**ONE LAKH TONNES OF WHEAT COMING THIS MONTH**

The UN World Food Programme has purchased 100,000 tonnes of wheat worth \$11.8 million on behalf of Bangladesh. The money, which covered shipping, is paid by the Bangladesh government. The wheat will be shipped at the end of this month.

Source: January 11, 1973 issues of *Dainik Bangla*, *The Bangladesh Observer* and *Ittefaq*.

## Six children beat

FROM PAGE 12

police said. They said they have detained six children in connection with the incident in Kamrangirchar's Barishal Colony area on the city outskirts.

Mostafa Anwar, inspector (Investigation) of Kamrangirchar Police Station, said the six children were going to a shop to get help for repairing the sound system of a birthday party for the 12-year-old's niece.

One of them accidentally had his leg hit by the victim which led to the killing, he said.

Sifat's uncle Abdur Rahman said Sifat was abandoned by his parents when he was a child. His mother moved elsewhere and his father remarried. He used to live with his grandfather in Kamrangirchar.

## 2 dancers, a singer

FROM PAGE 12

raped the 14-year-old girl multiple times. Noyon tried to rape the other girl but failed. Both the girls managed to escape from the house and later told their parents what happened, said the statement.

After the case was filed yesterday, police arrested the three accused from different places of Bogura Sadar upazila, said SI Sohel Rana of the sadar police station, who is the investigation officer of the case.

He said the Niha was arrested on charge of assisting in the crime.

Police later produced them before the Bogura court, which sent them to jail.

The court also recorded the victim's statement.

They underwent medical tests at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical Hospital in the district, said Humayan Kabir, officer-in-charge of the police station, adding that they were waiting for the test results.

## Stop cutting

FROM PAGE 12

some remain with no supply of the vaccine," he added.

He asked countries and manufacturers to stop making bilateral deals and called on those who have ordered excess doses to immediately hand them over to the Covax vaccine-sharing facility.

While Tedros did not name countries, the European Union said it reached a deal with Pfizer and BioNTech for 300 million additional doses of their Covid-19 vaccine in a move that would give the EU nearly half of the firms' global output for 2021.

## Indonesian 737 crashes into sea

FROM PAGE 12

2018, killing all 189 people aboard the Lion Air flight. Older 737 models are widely flown and do not have the system implicated in the MAX safety crisis.

A Boeing spokeswoman said, "We are aware of media reports from Jakarta, and are closely monitoring the situation. We are working to gather more information."

Reliable tracking service Flightradar24 said the Boeing jet took off at 2:36pm local time (07:36 GMT) and climbed to reach 10,900 feet within four minutes. It then began a steep descent and stopped transmitting data 21 seconds later.

A transport ministry spokeswoman said air traffic control at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport had asked the pilot why the plane was heading northwest instead of on its expected flight path just seconds before it disappeared.

There were no immediate clues on what may have caused the sudden descent and safety experts stress most air accidents are caused by a cocktail of factors that can take months to establish.

**DISTRAUGHT RELATIVES**

Indonesian television channels showed pictures of suspected wreckage.

"We found some cables, a piece of jeans, and pieces of metal on the water," Zulkifli, a security official, told CNNIndonesia.com.

Distraught relatives waited at Pontianak, around 740 km (460 miles) from Jakarta.

Yaman Zai, a father of three children who were aboard the plane with their mother, said that he was at the airport in Pontianak waiting for them, when he heard the news.

"I will never meet her again," he said, holding up a photo of his oldest daughter.

Indonesia's KNKT safety agency was expected to launch an immediate investigation. The US National Safety Transportation Board will automatically be part of the probe, since the plane was designed and built in the United States.

Founded in 2003, Jakarta-based Sriwijaya Air group flies largely within Indonesia. The airline has a solid safety record until now, with no onboard casualties in four incidents recorded on the Aviation Safety Network database.

**INDONESIA'S PATCHY SAFETY RECORD**

The Boeing 737 is the world's most-sold family of aircraft and has undergone several makeovers since it entered service in 1968.

## I'm being called insane for criticising

FROM PAGE 12

political circles with some of his recent remarks, is also contesting the municipality polls, slated for January 16, with an AL ticket.

"A lawmaker from Gopalganj has termed me insane. He is a former minister. But he was not made a minister this time because he was involved in different irregularities," said Mirza.

"Besides, another leader from Kushtia said I do not act responsibly. But what have you been doing while criminals vandalised the statue in Kushtia?"

Mirza also claimed that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was "helpless" because "there is an international conspiracy to kill her. Besides, fundamentalists and communalists are hatching conspiracies inside the country. Sheikh Hasina alone is resisting the conspiracies."

Flatterers and corrupt people are misguiding Hasina round the clock, he claimed.

Mirza then said some people brought illegal firearms to his municipality to cause violence during the election.

"A consignment of arms has arrived in Kabirhat of Noakhali from Chatogram. I have informed the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Noakhali. But they did not pay any heed to it ... If there is violence during the polls, the DC

and SP will have to take the responsibilities."

He then urged voters to resist voting irregularities.

"You will cast your vote. If anyone tries to stop you from going to the voting centre, break his leg. I will take the responsibilities."

Unveiling his election manifesto on December 31 last year, he brought allegations against some local lawmakers and AL leaders of corruption, tender manipulation, and recruitment scams.

He claimed that the district AL committee was formed, excluding the party's devoted and tested leaders.

"With regret, I want to say some sycophants often claim that the BNP's bastions in Noakhali and Laxmipur have been destroyed because of certain leaders.

"Have the BNP's bastions really been destroyed? If elections were held in a fair manner, our MPs, except for the ones in three or four constituencies in greater Noakhali, would not have found ways to flee. That's the truth," he had said.

Mirza's remarks have put the AL top brass in an awkward position. Cashing in on the situation, BNP leaders said Mirza's remarks proved that the government has been deceiving people, using the Election Commission.

## Bangabandhu's homecoming

FROM PAGE 1

Delhi on January 10 in 1972, after 290 days of confinement in Pakistan jail.

The Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu this year came with an extra significance as it coincided with Father of the Nation's birth centenary celebrations, just three months ahead of the golden jubilee of the country's independence.

All programmes marking the day this year will be observed maintaining health guidelines in face of the global pandemic coronavirus.

On the night of March 25, 1971, Pakistan army arrested Bangabandhu from his Dhanmondi residence and sent him to a West Pakistani jail the following day.

Bangabandhu was subjected to inhuman torture in the Pakistan jail where he had been counting moments for the execution of his death sentence that was pronounced in a farcical trial.

"I was a prisoner in the condemned cell awaiting hanging. From the day I went into jail, I didn't know whether I was to live or not. I was mentally ready to die. But I knew Bangladesh would be liberated," Bangabandhu spoke emotionally about his ordeal in Pakistani prison at a news conference in London.

On the Pakistani army's slaughter of Bengalis, Mujib declared, "If Hitler could have been alive today, he would be ashamed."

Earlier on March 26 in 1971, Bangabandhu

proclaimed independence of Bangladesh and urged people from all walks of life to participate wholeheartedly in the nation's War of Liberation.

Immediately after the proclamation of independence, Bangabandhu was arrested by Pakistani military junta and then flown to West Pakistan to keep him in prison there.

Though the final victory in the nine-month-long Liberation War was achieved defeating Pakistani occupation forces on December 16 in 1971, the nation's expectations were fulfilled and the people got the real taste of victory with the homecoming of Bangabandhu on January 10, 1972.

On reaching the capital's Tejgaon airport in the afternoon on January 10, Bangabandhu was greeted by tens of thousands of jubilant people who had been eagerly waiting to see their beloved leader since the final victory on December 16 in 1971.

From airport, Bangabandhu was moved to the Racecourse Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) where he addressed a spontaneous reception accorded to him by the cheerful countrymen believed to be one million.

He recalled with respect the contribution of all during the war and urged the people to rebuild the war-ravaged country.

Bangabandhu took oath of office as the country's prime minister on January 12, 1972.

## Trump 'silenced'

FROM PAGE 12

the 75 million "great patriots" who voted for him: "We will not be SILENCED!" Trump said he was considering building his own social media platform.

Twitter quickly deleted those posts and soon after suspended the Trump campaign account.

In a blog post, Twitter explained that the suspension was based on factors such as evidence that plans for future armed protests were proliferating on and off the platform, "including a proposed secondary attack on the US Capitol and state capitol buildings on January 17, 2021."

## City carved from snow

FROM PAGE 12

January since 1985.

The festival going ahead as planned had been hailed as a mark of China's success in

containing and controlling the coronavirus. Many restrictions have been lifted throughout the country, with residents able to travel freely within China's borders.

# Sunshine Park

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### ভাড়ার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশনের ৮৩-৮৮ মহাখালী ডিএফও ভবনের ৩য় ও ৪র্থ তলা প্রতি তলায় ৬৩৮৪ (ছয় হাজার তিনশত চুরাশি) বর্গফুট (প্রায়) ফ্লোর স্পেস ভাড়া প্রদান করা হবে। অত্রই সরকারি/আধাসরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত/বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে ভাড়া গ্রহণ প্রত্যাখ্যান করা যাচ্ছে। চেয়ারম্যান, বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন, পর্যটন ভবন, প্লট নং-ই-৫/সি/১, পশ্চিম আগারগাঁও, শেরে বাংলা নগর প্রশাসনিক এলাকা, ঢাকা - ১২০৭ বরাবরে ই-মেইল: [chairman@parjatan.gov.bd](mailto:chairman@parjatan.gov.bd) অথবা সরাসরি আগামী ৩১/০১/২০২১ তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদন জেরণ করা যাবে।

কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আবেদন/প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

(মোঃ জাকির হোসেন সিকদার)  
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GD- 50



# US logs record virus caseload

India to start inoculation on Jan 16

AGENCIES

India yesterday said it will start vaccinating 1.3 billion people from January 16 as the United States logged a record new daily virus caseload and millions in Asia woke up to new lockdowns.

Almost 1.9 million people have now died from the virus, with new variants sending cases soaring and prompting the re-introduction of curbs on movement even as some countries begin mass inoculation campaigns.

Almost 290,000 new cases were reported in the US within 24 hours Friday according to Johns Hopkins University, a day after the world's worst-hit country recorded a daily record of nearly 4,000 deaths.

India yesterday said it will prioritize about 30 million healthcare and frontline workers for vaccination. India hopes to inoculate 300 million of its 1.35 billion people free of charge in the first six to eight months of this year.

After healthcare and frontline workers, the vaccines will be given to "those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population groups with co-morbidities, numbering around 2.7 million," the statement said.

With the highest number of infections in the world after the United States, India is developing two indigenous Covid-19 vaccines. On Saturday it reported 18,222 new coronavirus cases, taking the total to 10.43 million.

India's drug regulator has approved two coronavirus vaccines for emergency use, Covishield, developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University and Covaxin by local company Bharat Biotech and a state-run institute.

Yesterday, the streets of the Australian city of Brisbane were quiet as its more than two million residents were ordered back into lockdown after authorities detected a single infection of a new strain from Britain, which is thought to be more infectious.

In China, where the original coronavirus first emerged in late 2019, authorities also tightened restrictions on two cities near Beijing to stamp out a growing cluster.

The new week-long stay at home orders affecting about 18 million people in Shijiazhuang and Xingtai. Shijiazhuang, capital of Hebei province which surrounds Beijing, suspended service on the city's subway, then extended the ban to all public transport, including taxis.

China also yesterday said that preparations were still ongoing for a WHO mission to Wuhan to investigate the origins of Covid-19, following a rare rebuke from the UN body over a delay to the long-planned trip.

In Japan, Osaka and its surrounding prefectures asked Tokyo to expand a state of emergency to the western cities in an effort to contain the latest outbreak, while Tokyo's new daily infections keep above 2,000 cases yesterday.



US sees 290,000 infections in 24-hours  
Millions in lockdowns in Asia  
China says WHO Wuhan visit preparations ongoing



A man takes pictures while walking his dog amid a heavy snowfall in Madrid, yesterday. Snowstorms across much of Spain left three people dead and caused chaos across much of the country, trapping motorists and closing the capital's air and rail links, with more falls to come Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Hospital fire kills 10 babies in India

AFP, Bombay

Ten babies were killed in a maternity unit in the Indian state of Maharashtra early yesterday when fire tore through a major hospital, a doctor said.

Staff rescued seven of the newborn infants at the Bhandara district hospital but were beaten back before they could get to the 10 others, Pramod Khandate, a senior doctor, told AFP.

All of those who died were aged between a few days and three months, according to reports.

The cause of the fire is not known yet.

## US 'our biggest enemy'

Says N Korea leader Kim ahead of Biden inauguration

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for more advanced nuclear weapons and said the United States is "our biggest enemy," state media said yesterday, presenting a stark challenge to President-elect Joe Biden just days before he takes office.

Washington's hostile policies would not change regardless of who occupies the White House but dropping those policies would be key to North Korea-US relations, Kim said, according to state news agency KCNA.

"Our foreign political activities should be focused and redirected on subduing the US, our biggest enemy and main obstacle to our innovated development," Kim said during nine hours of remarks over several days at a rare party congress in Pyongyang.

"No matter who is in power in the US, the true nature of the US and its fundamental policies towards North Korea never change," Kim said, vowing to expand ties with "anti-imperialist, independent forces."

North Korea would not "misuse" its nuclear weapons, Kim said but the country is expanding its nuclear arsenal, including "preemptive" and "retaliatory" strike capabilities and warheads of varying sizes.

Kim called for developing equipment including hypersonic weapons, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), spy satellites, and drones.

North Korea is preparing for the test and production of various new weapons, including a "multi-warhead rocket" and "supersonic gliding flight warheads for new type ballistic rockets," while research on a nuclear submarine is nearly complete, he said.

There was no immediate comment from the US State Department. A spokesman for the Biden campaign declined to comment.

Biden, who was vice president under President Barack Obama, called Kim a "thug" during the election campaign. In 2019 North Korea called Biden a "rabid dog" that needed to be "beaten to death with a stick."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### India detains Chinese soldier at flashpoint border

Indian forces have detained a Chinese soldier on the disputed Himalayan frontier of Ladakh where the world's two most populous countries fought a deadly battle last year, the military said yesterday. It is the second detention on the high altitude border since the pitched battles in June in which 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed. The Indian army said in a statement that the People's Liberation Army soldier was "apprehended" on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control in the early hours of Friday and taken into custody. The People's Liberation Army Daily, which is run by China's military, said the soldier went missing in "the darkness and complicated terrain" and insisted India was informed.

### Qatar-Saudi border reopens

Qatar and Saudi Arabia reopened their land border yesterday, Qatar sources told AFP, as they restore ties following a landmark deal to end a three and a half year rift. Saudi shut its side of Qatar's only land border in June 2017 as part of a package of sanctions it said was a response to Doha's backing for radical Islamist groups and closeness to Iran. Qatar always denied the charges. Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt which also imposed an embargo on travel and trade, agreed to lift the restrictions at a Gulf Cooperation Council summit in the kingdom on Tuesday.

### Pakistan protesters end blockade over deaths of miners



Thousands of mourners gathered in Pakistan yesterday for the burial of 10 miners who were killed in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group after calling off their six-day protest. Shia Hazara protesters numbering up to 3,000 had blocked a road on the outskirts of Quetta demanding personal assurances by Prime Minister Imran Khan. On late Friday they reached an agreement with the provincial government of Balochistan after receiving assurance of better protection of their community, compensations for the victims and arrests of culprits. The 10 miners from the minority community were kidnapped by gunmen from a remote colliery on Sunday before being taken to nearby hills where most were shot dead, while some were beheaded.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

## TRUMP'S IMPEACHMENT

### How it could play out

US Congressional Democrats plan to introduce misconduct charges on Monday that could lead to a second impeachment of President Donald Trump. The following is a primer on what a second impeachment proceeding of Trump could look like.

#### How it works?

A misconception about impeachment is that it refers to the removal of a president from office. In fact, impeachment refers only to the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of Congress, bringing charges that a president engaged in a "high crime or misdemeanor" - similar to an indictment in a criminal case. If a simple majority of the House's 435 members approves bringing charges, known as "articles of impeachment," the process moves to the Senate, the upper chamber, which has a trial. The Constitution requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate to convict and remove a president.

#### 2024 bid at risk?

Yes. Two historical precedents, both involving federal judges, make clear that only a simple majority of the Senate is needed to disqualify Trump from holding future office. Legal experts said this lower standard means Democrats, who will take control of the Senate later in January, have a realistic chance of barring Trump from running for president in 2024.

#### Impeachment after January 20?

No court has yet definitively ruled on the matter, but many scholars believe the impeachment proceeding would not be rendered moot by Trump leaving office, since disqualification from future office would remain a potential penalty.

#### How quickly it can be done?

Impeachment experts said that, in theory, it could be done very quickly, within days even, because both chambers have wide latitude to set the rules as they see it. But the current rules, which could be revisited, would make it difficult to complete the process in less than a week.

SOURCE: REUTERS

## US president has sole power to launch a nuclear strike

AFP, Washington

Concerns over US President Donald Trump's mental state have drawn focus on his power to unleash a nuclear attack.

Two days after Trump supporters, under his encouragement, stormed the US Capitol and shut down Congress, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she had contacted the Pentagon's top general, Mark Milley, to understand how to prevent "an unhinged president" from using the secret nuclear launch codes to order a nuclear strike.

As Milley presumably told her, the US constitution gives the president the sole power to launch a nuclear weapon. Congress cannot interfere, and the leaders of the Pentagon, the generals and civilians, are bound to transmit his order, whether they agree with it or not.

Everywhere he travels, the president is accompanied by an aide carrying the "nuclear football", a bag containing instructions, attack plans and codes for initiating a nuclear strike that only the president can use.

Given the need to consider the justification, what equipment to use and what targets are chosen, such a decision would normally be done in consultation with defense chiefs.

But once the president decides - whether

after much deliberation or in a fit of anger -- "neither the military nor Congress can overrule these orders," said a December report on nuclear command and control from the Congressional Research Service.

The only restriction on the US leader in this case is the legality of the strike. The laws of war would allow a military official to refuse to execute an order to do something illegal.

If the president decides, he would make use of a card of codes unique to himself, called the "biscuit", to certify his identification as the commander-in-chief empowered to order a launch.

The launch order would then be transmitted to the US Strategic Command, where an officer would confirm it came from the president and execution would take place. It could be as little as two minutes from order to the launch of a ground-based nuclear-tipped missile, or 15 minutes from a submarine.

There are no exceptions in the system of nuclear command and control for a scenario in which the president is seen to be mentally unstable and ignores the advice of his generals.

The power of US president on nuclear launch issue is absolute and it will be hard to refuse an order of the commander-in-chief for any official.



## AFTERMATH OF CAPITOL RIOT Majority of Americans want Trump removed

REUTERS

Fifty-seven percent of Americans want Republican President Donald Trump to be immediately removed from office after he encouraged a protest this week that escalated into a deadly riot inside the US Capitol, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll.

Most of them were Democrats, however, with Republicans apparently much more supportive of Trump serving out the final days of his term, which ends on Jan 20.

The national public opinion survey, conducted Thursday and Friday, also showed that seven out of 10 of those who voted for Trump in November opposed the action of the hardcore supporters.

Nearly 70% of Americans surveyed also said they disapprove of Trump's actions in the run-up to Wednesday's assault. At a rally earlier in the day, Trump had exhorted thousands of his followers to march to the Capitol.

Just two in ten Republicans wanted Trump to leave office before his term ends.

Some 30% said the president should be removed using provisions in the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution. Another 14% said Congress should impeach and remove Trump from office, and 13% said Trump should simply resign. A small minority of the American public - 12% - said they supported the actions of those people who took part in the riot. Seventy-nine percent of adults, including two-thirds of Republicans and Trump voters, described the participants as either "criminals" or "fools." Nine percent saw them as "concerned citizens" and 5% called them "patriots."

## Justice dept charges 15

AFP, Washington

The US Justice Department announced Friday that it has charged 15 people involved in the assault on Congress, including one man accused of possessing bombs.

Washington US attorney's office said they did not expect to charge anyone with "incitement" or "insurrection" in Wednesday's violence.

The department unveiled the cases against 13 people, including Richard Barnett, who invaded the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Most of the 13 were charged with illegal entry into restricted buildings of Congress, and violent or disorderly conduct. More charges and arrests were expected.

Around 40 people were arrested and charged by local Washington police, mostly for curfew violations, weapons offenses and unlawful entry.

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- Self Directed with Sound Judgment & physically fit.

**Position : General Manager**  
**Qualification : B.Sc. in Engineering in Mechanical/Electrical from BUET, RUET, CUET, KUET or its equivalent.**

**Experience:**

- Min. 10 - 15 years experience in **MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing)** for hospitals and medical facilities. If the experience has 15 - 20 years then added as advantage.
- 5 years post graduate experience in design and site supervision of hospitals / medical care facilities.
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- To review plans and specifications according to the plan.
- To manage the work of subordinate staff, contact *architects* & Engineers.
- To prepare plans, details, specified and cost estimated of plumbing, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and general piping system, PA system, HVAC system, Fire Safety & Security System, Interior works & designs.
- To provide technical advice to staff designer, supervisor, inspector and contracting service provider, regarding installation and maintenance of MEP System.
- To analyze mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing engineering problems and formulate solutions in the MEP systems.
- Ensuring that the installations are compliant with the specifications and meet the quality standards for the project.

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# Air pollution major contributor to pregnancy loss in South Asia

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Poor air quality is associated with a considerable proportion of pregnancy loss in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, according to a modelling study published in The Lancet Planetary Health journal.

Previous studies have suggested a link between air pollution and pregnancy loss in other regions, but this is the first study to quantify the burden in south Asia, which is the most populous region in the world and has the highest rate of pregnancy loss. Therefore, understanding the risk factors for pregnancy loss in south Asia is crucial to improving maternal health regionally and globally.

Lead author on the study, Dr Tao Xue, Peking University, China, says, "South Asia has the highest burden of pregnancy loss globally and is one of the most PM2.5 polluted regions in the world. Our findings suggest that poor air quality could be responsible for a considerable burden of pregnancy loss in the region, providing further justification for urgent action to tackle dangerous levels of pollution."

To carry out their analysis, the authors combined data



from household surveys on health from 1998-2016 (from women who reported at least one pregnancy loss and one or more livebirths) and estimated exposure to PM2.5 during pregnancy through combining satellite with atmospheric modelling outputs. They created a model to examine how exposure to PM2.5 increased women's risk of pregnancy loss, calculating risk for each 10 µg/m³ increase in PM2.5 after adjusting for maternal age, temperature and humidity, seasonal variation, and long-term

trends in pregnancy loss.

Using this association, they calculated the number of pregnancy losses that may have been caused by PM2.5 in the whole region for the period 2000-16 and looked at how many pregnancy losses might have been prevented under India's and World Health Organization's (WHO) air quality standard (40 µg/m³ and 10 µg/m³, respectively).

In the study, they included 34,197 women who had lost a pregnancy, including 27,480 miscarriages and 6,717 stillbirths,

which were compared to livebirth controls. Of the pregnancy loss cases, 77% were from India, 12% from Pakistan, and 11% from Bangladesh.

Gestational exposure to PM2.5 was associated with an increased likelihood of pregnancy loss, and this remained significant after adjusting for other factors. Each increase in 10 µg/m³ was estimated to increase a mother's risk of pregnancy loss by 3%.

The increase in risk was greater for mothers from rural areas or those who became pregnant at an older age, compared to younger

mothers from urban areas.

From 2000 to 2016, 349,681 pregnancy losses per year were associated with ambient exposure to air pollution exceeding India's air quality standard—accounting for 7% of the total annual pregnancy loss burden in this region. For air pollution above WHO air quality guideline, exposure may have contributed to 29% of pregnancy losses.

Although WHO's guidelines aims for a safer level of air pollution, the authors note that India's standard is a more realistic target level, given the high average levels of air pollution in the region and the need to balance practical governance and public health.

The authors note several limitations of their study. In the surveys, they were not able to distinguish between natural pregnancy loss and abortions and there was under-reporting of pregnancy losses because of stigma or ignoring very early pregnancy losses. They also note that the survey data is subject to recall bias, therefore, recommending the causality of the association should be further examined in longitudinal studies.

## BREATHING



### Can you learn to breathe better?

It is an involuntary action, but you can still get better at breathing. When you breathe at a balanced tempo, you maintain healthy levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood.

**Breathe through your nose:** Tiny hairs and mucus, otherwise known as snot, inside your nose help catch and filter out dust that could irritate your lungs. Your nasal passages also warm and moisten the air you breathe in before it gets to your lungs.

**Deep breathing exercises:** The simple practice of focused breathing can help you lower stress. Just a few minutes of deep, steady inhaling and exhaling trains your vagus nerve, which manages functions like your heart rate.

**Switch sides:** Use your thumb to close one nostril while you breathe through the other, then switch. Close the other nostril with your index finger and breathe again. In between each cycle, briefly squeeze both sides shut. Do this for 5 minutes. This exercise, along with deep breathing, may have healthy effects on blood pressure and heart rate.

**Improve indoor air quality:** An air purifier in your home can help clean particles from your surroundings to help you breathe better. These small appliances, also called HEPA air filters, are especially helpful if you have asthma. Airborne dust and allergens can worsen your symptoms. But anyone who lives in a big city with pollution may benefit from an air purifier too.

**Drink water:** Stay hydrated to breathe better too. Drinking plenty of water or other fluids throughout the day keeps the mucus membranes that line the insides of your lungs healthy. If the lining is moist and thin, you will breathe easier.

**Breathe easier through your mask:** Wearing a face covering may make breathing feel like it takes more effort. While you are masked, do not slump. Good posture makes breathing easier. Take off your mask when you are alone. If you feel anxious in your mask, pause and take a few deep mouth breaths to calm down.

Source: WebMD

## HEALTH bulletin



### COVID-19 likely lingered longer than reported in Wuhan

Researchers reporting in *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* have tested more than 60,000 healthy individuals in China for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies and concluded that thousands of Wuhan residents were infected with asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 after the infection was believed to be under control in China.

Rapid antibody tests are used to diagnose present and past infections with the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19; positive IgG antibodies suggests a previous infection while IgM antibodies mean a current or recent infection. Detection of both types of antibodies can give a better understanding of the number of asymptomatic infections in a population over time. In Wuhan, the number of COVID-19 cases peaked in February 2020 and the city was initially declared to be free of disease in late April, although small clusters of cases appeared in later months.

Xue-jie Yu of Wuhan University, China, and colleagues studied the prevalence of IgG and IgM antibodies in blood samples collected between March 6 and May 3, 2020, from 63,107 individuals in China. All people tested were healthy and were undergoing screening before returning to work.

Consistent with a large number of cases having occurred in Wuhan, the percentage of people with positive SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, about 1.68%, was significantly higher than in other regions of China, where antibody positivity averaged 0.38%. Moreover, according to the IgM positive rate of 0.46% in Wuhan, the researchers estimated that thousands of people in Wuhan were infected asymptotically between March and May 2020, when there were no clinically reported cases of COVID-19.

## Innovation in healthcare is must to progress the health of the country

Star Health recently interviewed Mr. Farrukh Alam, Country Director of Medtronic Bangladesh, a global healthcare solutions company. He shares his insights into the healthcare sector of Bangladesh in this interview. Here is a glimpse of the interview for the readers of Star Health.

**Star Health:** How do you consider the healthcare sector in Bangladesh?

**Farrukh Alam:** Since the liberation war, considerable changes took place within the healthcare sector of Bangladesh. The nation's initiatives regarding increasing the number of vaccinations, safe and drinkable water, and improving sanitation solutions have been praiseworthy. Bangladesh became exemplary for the world for its successful campaigns of vaccination for infants. Numerous reports have shown that number of deaths from the transmitted disease has fallen dramatically across the country. Both private and public organizations are tirelessly working towards improving the quality of the healthcare sector of Bangladesh.

**Star Health:** Do you think the growth and transformation in the healthcare sector in Bangladesh are sufficient?

**Farrukh Alam:** Bangladesh's healthcare sector is evolving; however, certain challenges need to be tackled before transcending into a new medical facility era. There is an imbalance in the distribution of healthcare workers such as, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are an estimated 3 physicians and 1 nurse per 10,000 population. This creates a challenge for doctors as they cannot allocate enough time for each patient, leading people to travel abroad for treatment. The issue is



Farrukh Alam, Country Director of Medtronic Bangladesh

also creating a loss for the economy. On top of it, most specialised health workers provide services in urban areas, whereas most Bangladesh residents reside in rural places. Thus, to provide better treatment to everyone, it has become mandatory to tackle all these issues.

**Star Health:** How the private, especially the multinational companies can help to develop the healthcare sector in Bangladesh?

**Farrukh Alam:** The private sector plays a vital role in delivering health services across Bangladesh. While the public sector contributes to the development of the health infrastructure, leading hospitals and clinics across the nations are owned by the private sectors. Both multinational and private companies have the power and financial stability to bring innovative technology to provide global standard treatments. On top of it, international companies can also develop research labs, and with the help of emerging technologies, they will be able to explore new opportunities and take preventive measures.

**Star Health:** Is there any innovation by Medtronic which will be introduced in Bangladesh?

**Farrukh Alam:** Medtronic Bangladesh has been bringing innovative technology to the nation and providing global standard treatment and diagnosis. It has brought high-quality biventricular pacemakers to treat heart disease patients by sending electrical signals to the heart's ventricles using the Cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) method. We have been providing numerous therapies and exploring ways to bring more innovative technologies for treatments and diagnosis.

**Star Health:** What are the major initiatives from Medtronic in the future to develop the healthcare sector in Bangladesh?

**Farrukh Alam:** For the last 6 decades, our mission has stayed the same – to alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life for people around the world. But today's healthcare challenges require a new approach – we call it 'Further, Together.' 'Further' because we will continue to put more effort to bring meaningful innovation at the therapy, procedural, and system levels while devising robust solutions with proven clinical and economic value.

'Together' because we will create new and stronger partnerships to help our stakeholders achieve their goal of expanding global access and delivering more seamless, integrated care across the healthcare continuum.

We are committed to bringing the most innovative technologies to all the markets we operate, including Bangladesh.

**Star Health:** Thank you for your time.

**Farrukh Alam:** Thank you.



PHOTO: COURTESY

### Specialised kidney dialysis center inaugurated in the capital

The Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital, in collaboration with the JMI group, has inaugurated a new state-of-the-art kidney dialysis center equipped with 36 kidney dialysis units recently at the capital, says a press release.

Prof Dr Md. Habibe Millat, MP, the vice-chairman of the Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital said, "Through this initiative, we will be able to provide advanced medical services to kidney patients."

[f](#) [t](#) /StarHealthBD



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### Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Care

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## Shame the rape and the rapist, not the victim

Victim blaming encourages rape culture

THE rape and death of an O'level student by an 18-year-old has been yet another shocking example of how entrenched rape culture has become in our society. The head of the forensic department at Dhaka Medical College has confirmed that the student was raped and died of haemorrhagic shock and excessive bleeding due to severe injuries to the private parts. These details of the brutality with which the victim was assaulted is heart wrenching and leaves us outraged and shocked. But what is also disturbing is the misogynistic comments made in social media after this horrendous crime became known.

Instead of showing empathy for the victim and outrage that such a crime has occurred, instead of outright condemnation of the rapist we see distasteful, even abusive comments by people. Aspersions on the victim's character and even on her parents expressed in the most crude and unsavoury terms point out to the tendency of victim blaming that actually encourages sexual violence and is very much part of the rape culture. According to Ain o Salish Kendra, at least 1,627 women were raped and gang-raped across the country in 2020. Of them, 53 were killed after rape and 14 died by suicide.

As human rights activists have pointed out, it is the crime that must be condemned and shamed, not the victim. Whether the rapist was the victim's boyfriend, what she wore and her sexual history or lifestyle in no way justifies rape which must be considered a heinous crime that must be stopped. Sex without consent is rape. In the current case, the grievousness of her injury and that she died after excessive bleeding is enough proof that this was a violent rape. We are chillingly reminded of the 14-year-old child bride who died of excessive genital bleeding after her husband continued to force her to have sex despite her injuries and pleas. Rape has to be considered a crime that demands punishment of the rapist regardless of the relationship between the rapist and the victim.

We have just started the new year and already cases of rapes are piling up—and this excludes the ones that will never be reported. News reports come out only when the victim dies or when a case has been filed. This is not just because of the legal system but also society's perceptions—both tilt in favour of the rapist and against the victim or survivor. Does that make sense at a time when women's participation in development is being celebrated and encouraged? The government, the courts, educational institutions and society must all work together to protect our girls and teach our boys the meaning of consent and respect for women and girls. The culture of victim blaming must be eradicated.

## A syndicate issuing fake NIDs busted

EC must have strong monitoring mechanism to stop fraudulent activities

A recent police investigation has found that a syndicate of brokers and Election Commission (EC) officials have been forging national ID cards for years for people who would use them for fraudulent activities, such as getting bank loans and grabbing or selling other people's land. Apparently, this has been happening due to the absence of proper monitoring by the EC and loopholes in the system. The DB officials have evidence that different people are in the process of collecting around Tk 14 crore as bank loans from different private banks using these fake NID cards which were sold to them for Tk 1.2 lakh to Tk 1.5 lakh.

Reportedly, the forgery took place in two ways. In the first kind of forgery, the syndicate kept the names and photos of the card-holders the same, while changing the rest of the information that was in the card. And in the second, the photos of the card-holders were changed, while the other information was the same. The syndicate has already faked around Tk 1.5 lakh NIDs in these ways.

While we appreciate the police for busting the syndicate involved in such a dangerous crime, we would urge them to identify each and every person involved with the process—not only the EC officials but also the brokers working with the banks. And all of those who took bank loans or grabbed land using these fake NIDs should also be identified and punished according to our law. Bangladesh Bank should help the police by providing them the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) report so they can identify the people who have forged their documents to get loans.

It is good to know that the EC has already sacked some 42 employees of the NID wing for their involvement in the forgery. But that is not enough. Those involved should be given exemplary punishment, which will also serve as a warning to others. They should also develop a strict monitoring mechanism so that such fraudulent activities can never take place.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Good news on the vaccine front

On October 5, Globe Biotech, a Bangladeshi company announced that its first vaccine candidate had passed the pre-clinical trial on mice. And on October 17, Bancovid, along with two other vaccine candidates developed by the Globe Biotech Ltd, were included in the draft landscape of the World Health Organization (WHO).

It is rather reassuring that the local company got the licence to produce the coronavirus vaccine for human trial on December 28. Given the global demand for vaccines against Covid-19, it is a rather reassuring that we are not lagging behind in our attempts to produce a vaccine against the disease.

Samiya Rahman, Dhaka

# Brexit, the EU-UK agreement, and the economic impact



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

SOME politicians promise an El Dorado if you vote them into power. Others tell stories, some true and some not so, to get the voters to believe them. In modern times, we've seen how charismatic leaders

cast their spell on the electorate and lead them to an unknown world as did the Pied Piper of Hamelin. One can relate to these fables by looking at the recent history of the United Kingdom.

On January 30, 2020, the UK left the EU after 45 years, having been influenced by the leaders of the "Leave" movement, including the current British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Previously, on June 23, 2016, the voters in the UK decided in a referendum to leave the EU. Those who wanted to leave believed that the benefits of belonging to the unified monetary body no longer outweighed the costs of free movement of immigration. The vote was 17.4 million in favour of leaving versus 15.1 million who voted to remain. After UK officially left EU on January 31, 2020, both sides agreed to keep many things the same until December 31, 2020, to allow enough time to agree to the terms of the post-Brexit rules to define how the parties would live, work, and trade together.

Since the Referendum, known commonly as the "Brexit" vote, there has been much speculation on the shape of trade and economic cooperation between EU and UK in the post-Brexit era. Negotiations had been going on since March 29, 2017, and the final treaty, known as EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), agreed upon on December 24, went into effect on 11 PM GMT on December 31. The House of Commons overwhelmingly endorsed the post-Brexit pact by 521 votes to 73, including the overwhelming majority of the Labour Party.

From the 1200-page treaty we can glean the outline of a future of the European landscape. As with any trade pact, there is something for each of the parties, and it is too early to determine who the ultimate winner is. For the British public, rather the 52 percent who voted for it, the main benefit they foresee is jobs, freedom from the rule-makers in Brussels, and ability to get away from the "newcomers". When Britain joined in 1974, it was a small group and the British were comfortable hobnobbing with their fellow Europeans. After the Eastern European countries joined the

bloc, public sentiments shifted. There was much debate whether UK would gain financially after leaving, but there was an expectation that it would do better if it was free from Brussels.

The TCA will enable UK to have, as before, zero-tariff and zero-quota access to the European single market. We have already seen reintroduction of border controls and an end to free movement of labour and capital between the UK and EU member states. Brexit would hurt

for goods and health, and safety checks. The "vast amounts of new paperwork, administration, checks" and certifications will cost businesses time and money. But the PM was upbeat. "There is some bureaucracy and we're trying to remove it," Johnson said when asked about the red tape. "We have a massive opportunity to expand our horizons, and to think globally, and to think big," he said.

Officials expect thousands of trucks bound for EU countries to stack up in the

remained in EU. Regardless of the relatively favourable trade agreement in place, the GDP is still expected to grow more slowly over the coming decade as a result of Brexit.

On the positive side, the Tory government is hoping to use the levers of taxes and subsidies to boost trade with the rest of the world, draw more foreign investment, and promote economic sectors that have lagged. "Leaving the European Union is an opportunity for the UK to use taxes and subsidies to encourage companies to step up spending," Johnson said. He plans to use the UK's new autonomy to boost science and "level up" the struggling economies of the deprived parts of the country.

In addition to regulatory change, "you can use tax systems and subsidies to drive investment," he said in an interview with BBC television on January 2. The PM has to tread very carefully since the question of state aid proved to be a sensitive issue during the Brexit trade negotiations. Under the terms of the deal, either side can impose tariffs on the other if it is clear that any country is aiding its own businesses at the expense of the others'.

UK is expected to work to boost trade and foreign FDI. The EU is Britain's biggest trading partner, accounting for 47 percent of its trade in 2019. However, it had a trade deficit of 79 billion pounds (USD 104.86 billion) with the EU, a surplus of 18 billion in services outweighed by a deficit of 97 billion pounds in goods. The government expects that Brexit will be a boon for the exporters. It has been in negotiations with the USA, New Zealand, and many others to promote trade. The UK could make better deals with the US, Japan, and other countries, said Professor Ellen McGrattan of the University of Minnesota. "If they did that, they could gain overall from Brexit."

The main investment partners of the United Kingdom (in terms of FDI stocks) were the United States, the British offshore islands (Channel Islands and Isle of Man), the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, Japan and Germany. UK expects to increase FDI from the US, Japan, and Switzerland. "We've taken back control of our laws and our destiny," Johnson said last week. "For the first time since 1973, we will be an independent coastal nation with full control of our own waters." It needs to be seen if all this talk from the PM means much for the coffers of Her Majesty the Queen or her subjects, or the outcome will be as disastrous as those for the people of Hamelin.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and currently works in information technology. He is also Senior Research Fellow, International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-tank in Boston, USA.



On January 30, 2020, the UK left the EU after 45 years, having been influenced by the leaders of the "Leave" movement, including the current British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Britain's younger workers. Germany is projected to have a labour shortage of 3 million skilled workers by 2030. Those jobs will no longer be as readily available to UK's workers after Brexit. The massive British financial services sector will still have access to the EU market, but it will no longer be unfettered. Many UK firms will need to open affiliates in the EU to continue doing business there.

Other aspects of the relationship, including foreign policy, defence, and development still remain to be negotiated.

With TCA both parties have agreed to some identical rules for now to define how the parties would live, work, and trade together. But they don't have to be identical in the future, and if there is a dispute, each side can resort to using tariffs. And British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has openly talked about using taxes and subsidies to encourage companies to step up spending, as well as to draw foreign direct investment (FDI).

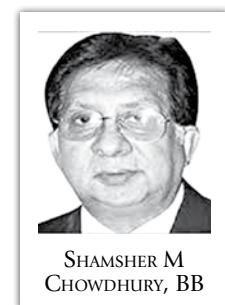
The first and immediate impact of TCA will be some tailbacks at ports where trucks enter from EU and more red tape: customs processes, certificates

southern English county of Kent, with delays of up to two days. Many of the officials are hopeful of a smooth start to the new era but are braced for possible delays with government estimates suggesting that more than half of smaller businesses have not yet prepared for the end of the free movement of goods and services. Some businesses, particularly in the manufacturing food business, will be hurt by the non-tariff barriers.

Many economists expect that more paperwork and barriers to trade will hurt economic growth just as the coronavirus pandemic damaged output. This slowdown will be felt in the first quarter of 2021, and linger throughout the year. However, the public probably will not notice much difference nor blame it on Brexit because the UK economy contracted by 20.4 percent in the second quarter of 2020, compared to the previous three months, as coronavirus-induced lockdowns hammered activity.

Economists at the American research group at Citi estimate the disruption will reduce UK's gross domestic product in 2021 by about 2 percent, compared with what it would have been if it had

## Democracy Debased in the District of Columbia



SHAMSHER M CHOWDHURY, BB

TO write off the acts of anarchy and insurrection that was being played out live inside the Houses of the United States Congress on January 6, as that of a few deranged, rabid, racist individual

Americans would be a disastrous mistake. It was in effect, the reflection of the toxic mindset of a growing number of Americans who see Donald Trump as the torch bearer of their version of America and what it should look like. These anarchists, all waiving Donald Trump flags, are part of the seventy-four million Americans who voted for him on November 3, believing firmly in his bellicose narrative that "their" country is being stolen away from them and it must be regained at any cost.

The acts of terrorism happened shortly after Donald Trump himself addressed this very crowd not far away from the US Capitol, openly instigating them to march to the Capitol to force, or at least, intimidate the lawmakers who had assembled there to certify the results of the Presidential elections held more than two months back, an outdated and redundant step in itself, to overturn its result. In other words, repudiate the will of the people. In the process, four people lost their lives. It was, in the end, an abortive bloody coup. But then Trump was not alone in this. The likes of Senator Ted Cruz and Senator Hawley, along with a whole lot of Republican Members of the House of Representatives were openly and unabashedly complicit in this criminal act, as were members of Trump's own family. And then there was the caricature of an attorney, Rudy Giuliani, who actually called on the anarchists to launch a "trial by combat". While the violence was on in full swing, Trump publicly expressed his love for the anarchists, calling them "patriotic and beautiful people and very special".

If such acts are not considered acts of treason and their perpetrators do not face legal actions, one wonders what does? In this particular instance, Donald Trump stands as the number one accused and the prime instigator of actions that verged on sedition.

I do not feel it necessary to recast here the graphic acts of anarchy; the whole world witnessed with horror all of that first hand. What perhaps would be more relevant here is to take stock and try to

Trump is not allowed to govern for the remaining days of his term. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has formally called on Vice President Mike Pence for invocation of the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution, which will enable the Cabinet to declare the president unfit to govern. She has also kept open the option of impeachment, although that may be too far-fetched. However, legal actions against the perpetrators of this anarchic act need not be hindered by



Trump supporters clash with police outside the US Capitol Rotunda.

PHOTO: AFP

assess and analyse the deeper reasons behind all this and what it can mean looking into the future of America's body politic. Donald Trump maintained after the Joint Session of the US Congress reaffirmed Joe Biden as the next President of the United States and Kamala Harris as his Vice President, that although he did not accept the result, there will be an orderly transition of power but warned that "it's only the beginning of our fight to 'Make America Great Again'". He reiterated this very line at a recorded more sober message in a more formal setting subsequently, implying that he does not intend to leave the turf anytime soon.

There are already talks on Constitutional ways to ensure that

any statute of limitations; Trump and his cohorts can still face legal actions after January 20.

The weakness of the American Constitution when it comes to true accountability is that it is applied more in its letter, and much less so in its spirit, and the absence of accepting moral and ethical responsibility when things go wrong. In developed democracies, heads of government had left office for far less. In the 1960s, British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan resigned after the Profumo scandal broke out although he had no role in it himself but took moral responsibility. In 1974 Willy Brandt of Germany, one of the greatest political leaders of our time, had the integrity

to resign as the chancellor on ethical and moral grounds at the height of his popularity after allegations of there being an East German spy in his office. In 2016 British Prime Minister David Cameron stepped down from office after taking responsibility for the outcome of the Brexit referendum, even when the Conservative Party under his leadership had won a thumping majority in the House of Commons just a year back. The list goes on. None of them needed any written Constitutional article to act with courage and integrity even when not pressed to do so.

It can be said with certainty that Donald Trump feels no such compunctions because it is himself who had instigated this insurrection, one that President-Elect Joe Biden rightly described as an "assault on democracy". Trump's belated condemnation of the violence sounds hollow when seen in the broader context.

Donald Trump also does not seem to care what his act of insurrection has done to America's image and its standing on the global stage. It stands seriously damaged and the stain may remain for long. Not surprising that world leaders, including close allies of the United States, have rushed to strongly condemn the traumatic events.

The big question that remains unanswered is how deep will be the impact of Donald Trump's toxic and sharply divisive political narrative, that took on a violent shape on Wednesday, on America's polity. Can the Republican Party take a hard look at the dangers of a continuity of Trumpism as their political platform from here on? Will there be a serious post-mortem of the results of the Senate elections in the State of Georgia as a case in point of the harm that Donald Trump has done to the party and its politics? Only time will tell. To quote Edmund Burke ad nauseam, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

Shamsher M Chowdhury, BB is a former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and Ambassador to the United States.



BANGABANDHU'S HOMECOMING DAY

# The momentous return of the Father of the Nation



**STRAIGHT LINE**  
**MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA**

ANUARY 10, 1972, shall remain a historic milestone in the annals of Bangladesh's political history because on this day the towering patriarch, fondly called Bangabandhu (Friend of Bengal) by ever grateful Bangalis, came home to his people after suffering nine months of illegal incarceration in Pakistani prison. It was indeed a painful journey from all-enveloping darkness to bright light and freedom. The homecoming of Bangabandhu assumed special significance because the military victory on December 16, 1971, happened when the progenitor and emancipator of our liberation struggle was away in hostile distant land in unknown conditions. Thus, when the supreme leader came home as a freeman in an emotion-charged situation, the joy of the people knew no bounds.

Bangabandhu's homecoming was significantly different from that of Ayatollah Khomeini's return from France to Iran in 1979 or even the release of Nelson Mandela from 25 years of captivity in South Africa because his return meant the commencement of an epoch-making march of a new nation, which suffered one of history's worst genocide. A fledgling nation, badly bruised both physically and psychologically by nine months of unprecedented savagery of a rogue military junta, needed a commanding and caring stewardship. Fortunately, Bangladesh enjoyed providential blessings in having Bangabandhu in the tumultuous immediate aftermath of liberation, to provide the urgently required stability that in turn ensured Bangladesh's international recognition as a sovereign entity. It is worth recalling that Bangabandhu

never wilted for a moment during his captivity in Pakistani prison and did not compromise his stance even when approached by the then president of Pakistan for retaining some links with that country. We also need to know that on his historic journey to Bangladesh via London and New Delhi he displayed statesmanlike acumen and farsightedness.

On January 8, 1972, at a news conference in London, Bangabandhu said that an independent Bengali nation was now "an unchallengeable reality" and appealed to all countries to recognise the new government and provide aid so that "millions of my people may not die". Prime Minister Edward Heath who was out in the country, quickly returned to 10 Downing Street to meet Bangabandhu. They talked for an hour and Heath promised Britain would do all she could to help in the economic emergency.

In the following press conference, Bangabandhu said: "Gentlemen of the press, today, I am free to share the unbounded joy of freedom with my fellow countrymen. We have earned our freedom in an epic liberation



Reaching Bangladesh on January 10, 1972, Bangabandhu once again delivered a memorable speech at the same Race Course Maidan where he gave the clarion call for emancipation and independence on March 7, 1971.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

struggle. The ultimate achievement of the struggle is the creation of the independent, sovereign peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, of which my people have declared me president while I was a prisoner in a condemned cell awaiting the execution of a sentence of hanging."

Before reaching home Bangabandhu made a brief stopover in New Delhi where he was welcomed as the president of Bangladesh. Seventy five million jubilant Bangalis watched their head of state inspect an honour guard before setting off for the historic Race Course Maidan, the same venue where echoes of his March 7, 1971 clarion call to liberty was still being heard. The nation needs to know that during this brief stay in New Delhi, Bangabandhu succeeded in obtaining Indian premier's assurance about the expeditious withdrawal of Indian troops from the soil

of Bangladesh. By all accounts, this was an extraordinary feat of statesmanship.

Reaching Bangladesh on January 10, 1972, Bangabandhu once again delivered a memorable speech at the same Race Course Maidan where he gave the clarion call for emancipation and independence on March 7, 1971. While the March 7 speech was heralded as the declaration of the struggle for emancipation and independence, the January 10 speech drew up guidelines for the new nation, on how to realise the spirit of those struggles with courage and patriotism.

Bangabandhu said that his life's desire has been fulfilled as the people of Bengal have been liberated and Bengal would remain free. In an emotion charged voice he said: "I did not know I was sentenced to death by hanging. A grave was dug for me beside my cell. I prepared myself. I said I am a Bangali,

I am a Man, I am a Muslim—who dies once, not twice. I said, if death comes to me I will die laughing. I will not die dishonouring my Bengali nation, I will not beg your pardon. And will shout while dying, Joy Bangla, Free Bangla, Bengal is my nation, Bangla is my language, the land of Bangla is my abode."

One can see the extraordinarily unbounded love and deep commitment of the Poet of Politics, as Bangabandhu was portrayed by the western media, to his people. Quite explicit in the speech was Bangabandhu's firm realisation of his ethnic and religious identity. His humane self and vision was brilliantly manifest when speaking about the Urdu-speaking non-Bangali population stranded in Bangladesh, he said firmly, "I am saying to my brothers, do not mistreat them. We are humans, we love humans."

Bangabandhu also said, "my brothers, you know, we have a lot of work to do. I want all my people to begin work on the construction of the roads where broken. I want you all to go back to the field and cultivate paddy." He concluded by saying that, "We will remain independent if Allah wills. The struggle shall continue as long as a single living soul exists in Bangladesh."

The magnificence of Bangabandhu's persona continues to evoke enviable admiration from many despite the ill-conceived efforts of a mischievous quarter to downplay and erase him from public memory. History, however, has conferred such an immortal honour on Bangabandhu that long after his sad demise he exerts an authority over the nation which is unparalleled and majestic in its solitary history. He confronted life with a tight-lipped courage and his unquenchable spirit was to set sail beyond the sunset. The walls were crumbling and an obstinate military junta collapsed while Bangabandhu stood like a heroic figure at the gates of dawn challenging the new day.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP of Bangladesh.

*While the March 7 speech was heralded as the declaration of the struggle for emancipation and independence, the January 10 speech drew up guidelines for the new nation, on how to realise the spirit of those struggles with courage and patriotism.*

## 'A tumultuous and triumphal homecoming'



**BLOWN' IN THE WIND**  
**SHAMSAD MORTUZA**

ON January 17, 1972, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. The cover illustration used a yellow diagonal label that cuts across the magazine's iconic red title "TIME" to write: "Bangladesh: From Jail to Power".

The image of a bold Sheikh Mujib donning a black prince coat with a splash of white collar peeking out of it complements his salt and pepper grey hair and moustache. His brown skin against the blue canvas makes the subtle Sheikh Mujibur Rahman synonymous to Bangladesh under the new azure sky. For nine months, the country was incarcerated just like he was in a jail in Lyallpur, Pakistan. Mujib returned from jail on January 10 not only to assume power but also to make his people feel powerful in an independent country. The illustration depicts worries in the brown eyes of the charismatic figure that capture the tenor of the cover story.

"The rape of the country continued right up until the Pakistani army surrendered a month ago. In the last days of the war, West-Pakistani owned businesses—which included nearly every commercial enterprise of the country—remitted virtually all their funds to the West. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) left exactly Rs 117 (USD 16) in its account at the port city of Chittagong. The army also destroyed banknotes and coins, so that many areas now suffer from a severe shortage of ready cash. Private cars were picked up off the streets or confiscated from auto dealers and shipped to the West Pakistan before the ports were closed" (*Time*, January 17, 1972). The worries that are written on Bangabandhu's face then are no surprise.

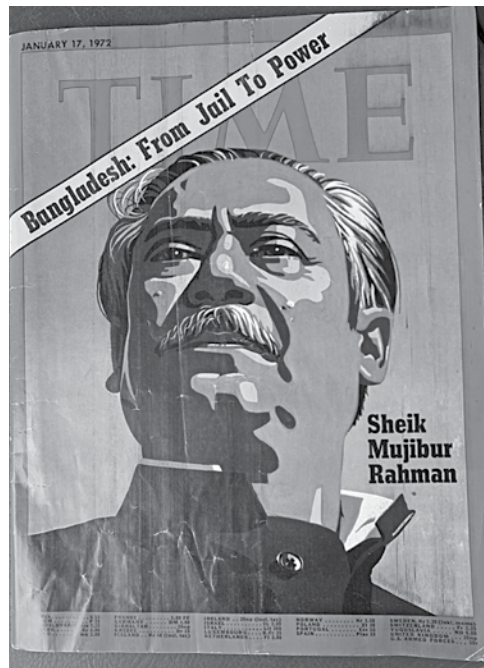
Only days before the story was published, Bangabandhu was allowed to leave Pakistan

for London on a special cargo flight of the PIA. As the flight took off, the newly appointed Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who came to see him off at Islamabad Airport, told his entourage, "the bird has flown" (*SA Karim Sheikh Mujib: Triumph and Tragedy*, pg. 254). Why they didn't kill the bird while it was in the cage is an issue often used by the opposition to muddy the waters!

According to the *Time* story, Bhutto didn't have any choice but to set Mujib free. "A Mujib imprisoned, Bhutto evidently decided, was of no real benefit to Pakistan; a Mujib dead and martyred would only have deepened the East Bengali's hatred of their former countrymen. But a Mujib allowed to return to his rejoicing people might perhaps be used to coax Bangladesh into forming some sort of loose association with Pakistan" (pg. 6).

Bhutto held two meetings with the imprisoned Bangabandhu to "coax" him into maintaining future bonds. The first foreign secretary of Bangladesh SA Karim gives some insights into the days preceding Bangabandhu's return. Bhutto tried to befriend Bangabandhu by posing himself as a saviour figure who allowed him to be released from Mianwali jail—a place where he himself was imprisoned by the Ayub regime—and brought to the Sihala Rest House in Rawalpindi on December 26, 1971. Bhutto even quoted his predecessor General Yahya, who had to hand over power to him after the inglorious surrender of the Pakistan army, saying, "Mr Bhutto, I've made the greatest blunder (of my life) of not killing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Now kindly allow me, before handing over power, to kill Sheikh Mujibur Rahman giving ante-date, back-date hanging and then hand over power" (pg. 251). Bangabandhu's "personal experience" of Bhutto allowed him to treat his counterpart's statements "with a certain amount of circumspections" (*Karim* pg. 252).

Bangabandhu at that point of time had no knowledge of Bhutto's meeting with



The cover of *Time* Magazine's January 17, 1972 issue.

the Nixon administration that envisioned "a stabilising role [of Mujib] in emerging Bangladesh" (pg. 250). The released documents of the US government show that Bhutto told the US Secretary of State and President Nixon that he did not see Mujib's influence lasting in Bangladesh for more than three months. A clever Bhutto hid the international pressure by orchestrating public opinion before freeing Mujib. He addressed a rally of his 100,000 supporters in Karachi, asking, "Do you want Mujib freed?" The crowd roared a resounding yes, and the President acted like Pontius Pilate while deciding the fate of Jesus to say, "You have relieved me of a great burden."

Bangabandhu's return to Dhaka on January 10, in the words of Srinath Raghavan,

is both tumultuous and triumphal (1971: *A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*). The day after India formally got engaged in the war, a military tribunal in Pakistan sentenced Sheikh Mujib to death. He was flown from Lyallpur jail to Mianwali jail in a helicopter, and was kept in a specially vacated accommodation in the female ward. The other Pakistani inmates stirred a raucous riot shouting they did not want to share their prison with "a traitor". From his cell he could hear the digging of a grave. The Pakistani officer denied the thought by saying that a trench was being dug in the event of aerial bombardments. Once the war was lost, Pakistan had to return Mujib—but they tried to hide the fact of their loss.

The Pakistanis decided to send Mujib to Dhaka through Tehran to avoid Indian air space. Later they decided to send him to London in an unscheduled flight at 5:20 in the morning on January 8, 1972. Mujib called up the acting head of the unofficial Bangladesh mission Rezaul Karim from the VIP lounge. The envoy could not believe his ears when he heard the voice that woke him up: "Rezaul Karim, this is Sheikh Mujib." It

was from Rezaul Karim, he heard from the first time Bangladesh had won independence. Mujib wanted to stay in a small hotel in Russel Square, but the expatriate students sponsored for his stay in Claridge's as it was a better fit for a head of state.

In his 26-hour stay in London, Mujib suddenly became a leader of a potential Commonwealth country. The British PM Edward Heath returned from his weekend visit to Chequers to meet him at 10 Downing Street. A Royal Air Force jet was allocated to him for his return to Dhaka. The plane made a brief fuel stop in Cyprus before coming to New Delhi. At the Palam Airport, Indian President VV Giri and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to receive him.

A natural spokesman, Mujib addressed the crowd who came to see him, saying, "I decided to stop over in this historic capital of your great country, on my way to Bangladesh, for this is the least I could do to pay a personal tribute to the best friends of my people... I am at last going back to *Sonar Bangla*, the land of my dreams after a period of nine months. In these nine months my people have traversed centuries. When I was taken away from my people, they wept; when I was held in captivity, they fought; and now when I am back to them, they are victorious" (*The Voice of Freedom*, Bangla Academy, pg. 219).

Bangabandhu's diplomatic acumen is reflected in his polite refusal to take an Indian plane from New Delhi. He declined the suggestion by saying that it would be graceless for the RAF Comet to return to London without finishing its mission to return Mujib to Dhaka. On landing at Old Dhaka Airport, Bangabandhu received a tumultuous welcome. Instead of going to his residence, Bangabandhu went to the Race Course in an open Dodge truck, where he addressed a spontaneous gathering of thousands of people. Here in the race course, he told the Pakistanis, once and for all, "You have your independence. Let us have our independence."

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

*Mujib returned from jail on January 10 not only to assume power but also to make his people feel powerful in an independent country. The illustration depicts worries in the brown eyes of the charismatic figure that capture the tenor of the cover story.*

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**  
 (1908-1986)  
 French writer and feminist.

*Life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and in surpassing itself; if all it does is maintain itself, then living is only not dying.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Finish off
- 6 Sink feature
- 11 Stood
- 12 Before dawn
- 13 Stopwatch
- button
- 14 Early Mexican
- 15 Item of little value
- 17 Morse bit
- 19 Chiding sound
- 20 Mrs., in Marseilles
- 23 Banishes
- 25 Get better
- 26 Traditional New Year's Eve site
- 28 Lofty poems
- 29 Not private
- 30 Ballot markings

**DOWN**

- 1 Spoil
- 2 Vein contents
- 3 When races start
- 4 Manual reader
- 5 Some dresses
- 6 Traded
- 7 Tear down
- 8 Gallery fill
- 9 - de France
- 10 Where the IRT runs
- 16 Hard-to-please sort
- 17 Addict's program
- 18 Rust, for one
- 20 Grace periods?
- 21 Opera's Callas
- 22 Put in office
- 24 "Misér-ables"
- 25 Wheel part
- 27 Showed fear
- 31 New Year's games
- 33 Foray
- 34 Baja boy
- 35 Spring month
- 36 Director DuVernay
- 37 Road sight
- 39 Vert for you
- 40 Call for help

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

S	A	V	E	S	T	R	I	M
A	M	I	G	A	S	E	I	N
V	E	N	O	M	N	E	S	T
O	R	E	S	L	O	N	E	R
R	I	G	S	E	W	E	R	O
S	C	A	L	P	E	L	S	
A	R	E	A	I	A	G	O	
T	O	N	I	C	A	L	P	E
I	R	O	B	O	T	S	A	G
A	D	I	E	U	S	I	T	A
R	E	S	T	S	A	N	I	M
A	R	E	S	D	E	N	I	S

**BEETLE BAILEY** BY MORT WALKER

WHAT'S THAT CLOUD OVER THERE?  
 PROBABLY BEETLE AND SARGE

A FIGHT?!

IT'S MORE ARM-WAVING AND FOOT-STOMPING THAN PUNCHING AND KICKING

**BABY BLUES** BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ZOE WANTS TO HAVE A SLEEP-OVER.  
 HOW MANY GIRLS?  
 NOT SURE YET.

WE'RE WAITING FOR THE LAB RESULTS.







**T SPORTS**

Federation Cup Final  
Bashundhara Kings vs Saif Sporting  
Live from 4:00 pm  
**TEN 1 & SONY SIX**  
Australia vs India  
Third Test (Day 5)  
Live from 5:30 am (Monday)

**TEN 2 Serie A**

AS Roma vs Inter Milan  
Live from 5:30 pm  
FA Cup Third Round  
Manchester City vs Birmingham  
Live from 7:30 pm  
Marine vs Tottenham Hotspur  
Live from 11:00 pm  
Newport vs Brighton

Live from 1:45 am (Monday)

**TEN 1**

FA Cup Third Round  
Chelsea vs Morecambe  
Live from 7:30 pm  
Serie A  
Juventus vs Sassuolo  
Live from 1:45 am (Monday)

**FACEBOOK La Liga**

Levante vs Eiber  
Live from 7:00 pm  
Cadiz vs Alaves  
Live from 9:15 pm  
Elche vs Getafe  
Live from 11:30 pm  
Valladolid vs Valencia  
Live from 2:00 am (Monday)

## Can Toyota beat Ferrari?

Paul Put's Saif take on Bruzon's Kings in final today

ATIQUÉ ANAM



It should be a battle between the experience and riches of Bashundhara Kings against the youthful exuberance of Saif Sporting Club in the final of the Walton Federation Cup as the country's football begins to see shift of power.

Both finalists are fairly new in professional football – just over four years old and are regarded as the forerunners of football professionalism, yet the return



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

### Saif AWOL at press meet

SPORTS REPORTER

The pre-final press conference of the Walton Federation Cup at the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday set an unprecedented stance of unprofessionalism as one of the finalists -- Saif Sporting Club -- were represented by their general secretary and an assistant manager instead of head coach and captain.

While the coach and captain of the other finalist team -- Bashundhara Kings -- were present right on time, even waiting half an hour for the arrival of BFF officials and sponsors, the coach and players of Saif SC were busy preparing for the final.

The Saif SC officials present there claimed that they could

not change their practice schedule, which was set prior to the notice of the press conference, as their rented ground had to split sessions for two teams of the club.

However, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag claimed that they had informed the club about the press conference schedule in written and had commitment from the club that at least a key player will be made available for the event.

He also said that the matter will be investigated by the disciplinary committee for a decision regarding the breach of standard protocol.

Saif coach Paul Put, when contacted later, apologised to media for not being able to be present at the event.



of football, and anything but a victory today, even against an impressive Saif, would be a disappointment.

Bruzon, however, was cautious in his assessment of the opposition as he urged his team to show no complacency.

"We have strong belief in ourselves. But if we consider ourselves as favourites, we begin to lose. We have to be humble.

We are playing against a team who play positive football," Bruzon said at the pre-final press meet at the BFF House.

Whatever it is dubbed -- Toyota v Ferrari or young v experienced -- the final of the season's curtain-raising tournament -- scheduled to kick off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 4:00pm today -- promises to be a blockbuster affair.



West Indies batsman Kraigg Brathwaite gives the thumbs up before the team's journey from Barbados for three ODIs and two Tests in Bangladesh. PHOTO: TWITTER

## Windies set to land today

SPORTS REPORTER



International cricket is set to finally resume in Bangladesh after the outbreak of Covid-19, with a 38-member West Indies team scheduled to reach Dhaka on

Sunday morning for a month-long tour. However, the visitors are coming with an inexperienced squad after top cricketers such as Jason Holder, Kieron Pollard and Darren Bravo pulled out citing COVID-19-related concerns or personal fears.

The West Indies side will arrive in Dhaka with Covid-19 negative reports and will undergo their first of many coronavirus tests on the first day of their three-day isolation in the hotel.

After completing the three-day isolation and before being allowed in the nets at the Academy Ground of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on the fourth day, the visitors will have to clear another Covid-19 test. The samples will be collected on the third day of quarantine. During those four days, the West Indies side can practise only among themselves.

After undergoing three tests in seven days since their arrival, the Bangladesh Cricket Board will provide net bowlers and the visitors will be able to interact with others. The West Indies team is also scheduled to play a one-day warm-up game at BKSP Ground 3 on January 18.

The Caribbean side will reach Bangladesh on the back of a Covid-19 scare after fast bowling all-rounder Romario Shepherd had tested positive. He was replaced by Keon Harding in the one-day squad.

The first phase of Covid-19 testing among Bangladesh players, and officials returned negative results.

Meanwhile a 24-member Bangladesh ODI squad will have their first practice session today and later check into the hotel and remain in the bio-secure bubble throughout the series.

Bangladesh cricketers will take part in two intra-squad warm-up matches on January 14 and January 16 at BKSP following which the final ODI squad is likely to be announced on January 17.

Bangladesh have not played international cricket since March last year. However, the board did arrange competitive domestic events. In October last year, the board arranged the BCB President's Cup -- a three-team fifty over competition -- which was followed by a five-team Bangabandhu T20 Cup in November-December.

The first two matches of the ODI series will be played on January 20 and 22 in Dhaka while the third ODI will be played at Chattogram's Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium on January 25.

The first Test will begin on February 3 at the ZACS while the second and final Test of the series will be played in Dhaka from February 11.

Saif SC are a strong opponent. They have been playing together for 3-4 years and they have good strikers. But if we can capitalise on their weaknesses, we can do well.

TOPU BARMAN  
BASHUNDHARA KINGS CAPTAIN

Bashundhara Kings are a much bigger team than ours. So we will try to play the way we have so far. Everyone wants to be champions and so do we.

RIYADUL HASAN RAFI  
SAIF SC CAPTAIN

to investments have been widely diverging for the two sides.

Bashundhara Kings have reaped rich rewards for investing heavily on star players, bagging a Championship League, a Premier League, a Federation Cup and an Independence Cup title in the last three years while Saif SC, who took a more development-based approach, are still trying to find their feet at the highest level after finishing runners-up in their debut season in the Championship League.

That Saif made it to the final of the Federation Cup this time took many people by surprise, including their Belgian coach Paul Put.

"Nobody was expecting what we have been showing. We have

already made history and if we win, we will be making more history," the journeyman coach told media at the team hotel yesterday afternoon.

The 64-year-old coach has an enviable CV and it will be further enriched if his side can upset the defending champions today in the battle of 'Toyota' versus 'Ferrari' according to him.

His side has already achieved more than his seven predecessors did by being in the final. They won all their group stage matches before getting the better off Mohammedan in a marathon tiebreak in quarterfinals. And then a 3-0 win over Chattogram Abahani sealed their final berth.

Saif may have a developing squad with a handful of national

team players, but they too have a decent assortment of Nigerian recruits including the tournament's top-scorer Kenneth Ikechukwu. And in spite of their predominantly counter-attacking based approach, Paul Put's charges have racked up the highest number of goals in the tournament so far.

Bashundhara Kings have had a similar journey to that of Saif into the final, with the extra-time win against record 11-time champions Abahani proving to be a real test of the champions' character.

Kings have been through a bit of a rebuilding of their own following the departures of Daniel Colindres and Hernan Barcos over the last year, but their new acquisitions -- Raul Becerra, Jonathan Fernandes, Robson Robinho and Khaled Shafiei -- have proved to be able replacements.

With a host of national team players retained from the previous season, Oscar Bruzon's Kings are not only the best team in the country, but also one of the best of the region. The Spaniard is relentless in his pursuit of titles with an aggressive brand

## BPL at 4 venues from Jan 13

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has stuck to its decision of starting the Bangladesh Premier League from January 13, with only two days' gap following the completion of the Walton Federation Cup.

The decision was approved at an emergency meeting of the professional league management committee at the BFF House yesterday, where four venues were finalised for the league.

The venues are: Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, Shaheed Dhirendranath Stadium in Cumilla, Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Stadium in Gazipur and Birshreshtha Flight Lt. Matur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj.

The last two are new additions to the roster as BFF chose venues close to the capital, in light of the pandemic. Seven out of the 13 teams of the BPL chose BNS as their home venue.



### WINNING DEBUT FOR JAMAL

Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuiyan (R) celebrates with Faisal Ali (C) and Raphael Odoyin following Faisal's 58th-minute goal for Kolkata Mohammedan Sporting Club against Sudeva Delhi FC in the opening match of the Hero I-League at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday. Jamal was subbed off in the 87th minute following a decent performance in his debut appearance for the Kolkata Black and Whites.

PHOTO: AIFF



Women's International Master Rani Hamid makes a mock move against Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, during the opening ceremony of Mujib Birth Centenary Invitational FIDE Rating Chess Tournament at the National Sports Council auditorium yesterday. A total of 44 players including one Grand Master, three International Masters and one Women's International Master are taking part in the nine-round Swiss-League system competition.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Five Abahani players test positive

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani players Rubel Mia, Faisal Ahmed Shitol, Mohammad Ridoy, Dipok Roy and Al Amin Hassan Anaf tested positive for Covid-19 yesterday.

Abahani's assistant coach Zakaria Babu and one staff also tested positive for coronavirus, informed manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

"All of them are asymptomatic and have been isolated. Zakaria is currently staying at home," said Rupu. Abahani crashed out of the Federation Cup last Thursday following a 3-1 defeat at the hands of the defending champions Bashundhara Kings in a high-intensity semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Abahani began practice yesterday for the Bangladesh Premier League, scheduled to start from January 13.

## Injuries add to India's woes

AGENCIES



Australia took charge with lead of 197 in Sydney at the close of play on the third day of the third Test against India on Saturday. And India were left to count the cost of an injury to Ravindra Jadeja after the left-arm spinner was unable to take the field in Australia's second innings after suffering a blow to his bowling hand while batting.

In yet another major injury blow to India on their tour of Australia, all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja later has been diagnosed with a dislocated thumb and possible fracture after he took a blow to his thumb.

The 32-year-old was hit on his left thumb as he looked to defend a rising delivery from Australia quick Mitchell Starc.

Rishabh Pant, who did not take the field during Australia's second innings, after he was hit on his elbow by a well-directed bouncer from Pat Cummins, has avoided any major concern and was fine.

Jadeja was India's best bowler in the first innings and his four wickets for 62 helped the side restrict Australia to 338.

At one point during the afternoon session, India had four substitute fielders on the ground as Pant, Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravichandran

Ashwin were all off the field.

Between 1980 and 2017, substitute fielders were not permitted to keep wickets in the case of an injury, but the rule was changed and came into effect a little over three years ago.

Like all substitute fielders, Saha cannot bat in Pant's place and only substitutes for a concussed player, a

control the situation to prevent abuse," the Marylebone Cricket Club, the game's law-makers, said at the time of the rule change.

"A substitute still cannot bowl, bat or act as captain."

Coincidentally, India were the first Test team to benefit from the new rule in 2018 when Dinesh Karthik donned




rule that was introduced in 2019, are able to bat, bowl or act as captain in place of the replaced player.

"It was felt that, if the original wicketkeeper was genuinely injured, then a substitute should be allowed to take over, but that the umpires should

the gloves in place of an injured Parthiv Patel during a Test against South Africa in Johannesburg.

More recently, West Indian Joshua Da Silva took the gloves from Shane Dowrich in a Test against England after Dowrich was injured.



# Indonesian 737 crashes into sea

Fate of 62 on board remains unknown

REUTERS, Jakarta

A Sriwijaya Air plane crashed into the sea yesterday minutes after taking off from Indonesia's capital Jakarta on a domestic flight with 62 people on board, and their fate was not known.

The Boeing 737-500, en route to Pontianak in West Kalimantan, disappeared from radar screens after taking off just after 2:30 pm (0730 GMT) - 30 minutes after the scheduled time because of heavy rain.

Indonesian Transport Minister Budi Karya told a news conference that 62 people had been aboard flight SJ182, including 12 crew. The detik.com website quoted him as saying the plane crashed near Laki Island, some 20km (12 miles) from the airport.

Rescue agency Basarnas said in a statement it would send a team to the Thousand Islands area to help in the search for victims "after the crash of Sriwijaya Air SJ182".

All those on board were Indonesian, Indonesia's transport safety committee said.

Indonesia's Navy had pinpointed the site of the missing aircraft and ships had been sent there, a Navy official said. Authorities did not say whether they believed there were survivors.

Indonesian airline Sriwijaya Air's chief executive, Jefferson Irwin Jauwena, told a news conference that the plane had been in good condition before the flight.

The nearly 27-year-old Boeing 737-500 was much older than Boeing's problem-plagued 737 MAX model, one of which crashed off Jakarta in late

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



Police using a water cannon on garment workers demanding arrears in front of the main gate of Siddhirganj Adamzi EPZ in Narayanganj. Inset, workers fleeing the scene amid police action.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Stop cutting the vaccines queue

WHO tells rich countries

REUTERS, Geneva

The head of the World Health Organization said there is a "clear problem" that low- and middle-income countries are not yet receiving supplies of Covid-19 vaccines and urged countries to stop striking bilateral deals with manufacturers.

"Rich countries have the majority of the supply," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in strongly-worded comments on vaccine nationalism at a Geneva news briefing on Friday.

"No country is exceptional and should cut the queue and vaccinate all their population while

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

# Six children beat, stab teen to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six boys, all 13 or below, were going to a shop in Kamrangirchar Friday evening when one of them had his leg accidentally hit by 14-year-old Sifat coming from the opposite direction.

The boy stumbled.

This trivial matter led to an altercation during which Sifat was beaten up.

Whilst Sifat was being beaten up, one of the boys, who is just 12, asked a 10-year-old to fetch his knife.

Sifat was stabbed to death, police said.

Sifat, who worked at a local shoe factory, was stabbed in his thigh around 6:00pm and had been lying on the ground for some time.

A rickshaw-van puller found him and took him to Mitford Hospital from where he was moved to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He died around 10:00pm,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Maintain peace and order at any cost

January 10, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### FOOD PRODUCTION MUST GO UP

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman tells a high-level conference today in Natore that all ways and means must be devised so that Bangladesh can become self-sufficient in food as soon as possible. The latest position regarding the supply of agricultural inputs and food and law and order situation are discussed at the conference presided over by the prime minister.

It is decided that necessary orders will be issued to all concerned to coordinate the movement of grains on a top-priority basis. Bangabandhu declares that a meeting will be held in Dhaka at the highest level in a day or two to consider the problems experienced by local officials regarding timely supply of agricultural inputs at the doorsteps of farmers.

#### AL'S RESISTANCE DAY PROGRAMME

A mammoth public meeting held today at the Paltan Maidan urges

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



# 'I'm being called insane for criticising AL corrupt'

Claims Quader Mirza

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's younger brother Abdul Quader Mirza yesterday said Awami League men were calling him insane because he spoke against corruption and misdeeds by many leaders of the party.

The municipality mayor of Basurhat, Noakhali, went on a rant at a campaign rally on the premises of Compañiganj Upazila Parishad.

Mirza, who has stirred up a debate in the country's

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

# City carved from snow, ice in China



CNN ONLINE

The 37th annual Harbin Snow and Ice Festival is continuing on as planned, although with modifications due to new outbreaks of coronavirus nearby.

The winter festival, which is a huge event in the northeastern Chinese city of Harbin in Heilongjiang province, has drawn travelers from around China and the world every December and

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

# 2 dancers, a singer land in jail over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Two local dancers and a singer in Bogura landed in jail yesterday in a case filed over the alleged rape of a 14-year-old girl and attempted rape of another aged 13.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Nishkriti Hakidar passed the order in the afternoon hours after the father of the 14-year-old girl filed the case with the Bogura Sadar Police station, said Court Inspector Ashok Kumar Singh.

The accused are Raju Ahmed, 27, of Gaibandha Sadar upazila, Noyon Mia Shah, 30, of Bogura Sadar upazila, and Nisa Khatun Niha, 19, of Bogura town. They are performers of local dance groups.

According to the case statement, dancers Raju and Noyon knew the victims through Niha, a singer. On Friday night around 9:00pm, the two men asked the girls to come to Niha's home in Dattabari area of Bogura town.

After dinner, Raju

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



#### PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 10

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Workers of Dhaka North City Corporation cleaning Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Adabor area yesterday. The responsibility to maintain the canal was recently shifted to the corporation from the Dhaka Water Supply And Sewerage Authority.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

# Trump 'silenced'

Twitter permanently suspends his account as impeachment drive escalates

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump, already facing mounting calls to step down or risk impeachment, suffered further ignominy Friday when Twitter permanently suspended his account, saying the US leader is too dangerous to use the platform.

After a "close review" of tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account, "we have permanently suspended the account due to the risk of further incitement of violence," Twitter said.

The move comes three days after Trump exhorted thousands of supporters to march on the Capitol as Congress met to certify his defeat to Democrat Joe Biden.

The resulting chaos, viewed with shock

around the world, left a police officer and four others dead in its wake.

Trump's frequent use of Twitter was a key part of his campaign as he overhauled the Republican Party and beat Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the presidency in 2016. Since then he has used it to fire up his political base, attacking those who opposed him.

It could also prove an insurmountable hurdle should the brash Republican choose to mount a political comeback in 2024, as he has hinted he could do on multiple occasions.

Trump later used the official @POTUS government to lash out at Twitter, addressing

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণ জয়ন্তী ও বঙ্গবন্ধুর জন্মশতবার্ষিকী

ঐতিহাসিক ১০ জানুয়ারি

জাতির পিতা

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান-এর

স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন দিবস

তোমার পথে হাটছে দেশ

এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে বাংলাদেশ...



বাঙ্গালি জাতির মুক্তি সংগ্রামের ইতিহাসে ১৯৭২ সালের ১০ই জানুয়ারি এক ঐতিহাসিক দিন সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙ্গালি জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান পাকিস্তানের কারাগার থেকে মুক্তি পেয়ে এই দিন স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন করেন।

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