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Your Right to Know

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"History says they [Myanmar] took back over 2 lakh Rohingyas who came here in 1992. So, we are hopeful that this time also they will take back them."
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN



"The United States government took these actions unilaterally... I am lifting all of these self-imposed restrictions."
US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO ON LIFTING CURBS ON OFFICIAL AMERICAN CONTACTS WITH TAIWAN



"I believe that ethically everyone should take the vaccine."
POPE FRANCIS URGES EVERYONE TO GET COVID SHOTS



PFIZER'S COVID-19 VACCINE

Govt may go for it despite challenges

Worries remain over lack of facilities needed to store vaccine at -70C, special syringe availability

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government decided to take the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine from COVAX despite challenges of maintaining the cold chain and ensuring the supply of the particular syringes required.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will soon inform COVAX about the decision along with a detailed deployment plan.

Distribution of this vaccine can be complicated because it needs to be stored at very low temperatures of about minus 70 degrees Celsius, far below the normal refrigerator levels.

Many have pointed out that Bangladesh lacks the system required to store the doses.

But DGHS Director General ABM Khurshid Alam said, "We have interest in taking the vaccine and there is no reason to shun this opportunity. We are working to submit a complete plan... on its supply, distribution and storage."



Officials are trying to overcome the challenges, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

An official of the government's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) said officials were evaluating the existing cold chain equipment.

The COVAX programme, led by the World Health Organisation and global alliance GAVI, has offered Bangladesh around four lakh doses of the vaccine developed by US drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech.

COVAX has promised to deliver a total of 2 billion doses of vaccines to at least 172 countries by the end of this year.

Industry insiders said some organisations in Bangladesh have the equipment to store the doses. But not all of them can be made available for this vaccine.

Others pointed out that the 0.3 ml syringe needed to administer the vaccine

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Scores of vessels moored haphazardly along the banks of the Shitalakkhya river. Traders have anchored their ships here without permission and built bamboo walkways extending more than 100 feet into the river to offload bricks, sand and cement to be sold locally. This practice has also contributed to the pollution of the river. The picture was taken from the northern side of Kanchpur bridge in Narayanganj yesterday.

UTTARA FINANCE & INVESTMENTS LTD

BB probe reveals Tk 5,100cr scam

Irregularities done by board, management in loan disbursement and mobilisation of deposits

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

When one applies for a loan from any financial institution, the lender has to make sure that the loan application goes through at least five layers of scrutiny.

But Uttara Finance and Investment Ltd (UFIL), a non-bank financial institution, has not followed any of the procedures in disbursing a huge amount of loans.

For instance, it gave Tk 336 crore loans to Uttara Motors and other concerns of Uttara Group without any credit proposals, breaching the banking rules.

The loans were not shown in the UFIL's annual report and the financial balance sheet to dodge both its stakeholders and Bangladesh Bank, a central bank probe has found.

The BB also detected that the UFIL management created two sections in

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THE ANOMALIES

- Tk 521 cr siphoned off in the name of buying shares
- Tk 1,224 cr embezzled in the form of fake loans
- Tk 725 cr not shown as term deposit in financial statement despite taking from depositors
- Tk 1,998 cr loan given but not included in financial statement
- Tk 381 cr embezzled through call money market
- Tk 236 cr fake term deposits issued in favour of a director
- Uttara Finance MD apologises for the scam

Bangabandhu killer Mosleh Uddin stripped of FF status

51 others get same treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has cancelled the freedom fighter certificate of former army officer Risaldar Mosleh Uddin, a convicted killer of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs issued a gazette notification on January 5 cancelling the certificate of Risaldar Mosleh Uddin, a self-confessed killer of Bangabandhu in August 1975.

Mosleh Uddin is also facing the death penalty for his involvement in the killing of four national leaders at Dhaka Central

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COVID VACCINATION

Registration likely to begin Jan 21

An app developed to help people register for the jobs

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The country's Covid-19 vaccination drive will soon begin, with an app for online registration set to be operational from January 21.

People will have to fill out information through a mobile and web-based app called "Surokkha", developed by the Department of Information and Communication Technology, the Dhaka DC office, and the Directorate General of Health Services.

Health officials said they are planning to vaccinate 25 lakh people in the first phase and for this, people have to register through the Surokkha app.

"We are trying heart and soul to open the app for registration by January 21. Tomorrow [Monday] there will be a press briefing where every details of the app will be disclosed," ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of DGHS, told The Daily

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HOW IT WILL WORK

- 1 People to REGISTER with web portal Surokkha (NID required)
- 2 Surokkha to issue VACCINE CARD (with vaccination date, time)
- 3 TEXT MESSAGES to alert vaccination date, time
- 4 FIRST DOSE administered on specified date, time
- 5 SECOND DOSE administered on specified date, time
- 6 Surokkha to issue VACCINE CERTIFICATE

Homecoming speech had guidelines to run country

PM says about Bangabandhu's address

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh



Hasina yesterday said Bangabandhu's January 10, 1972 speech has all the guidelines required to run an independent state.

"The January 10, 1972 speech of Bangabandhu at the Racecourse Maidan on his return to the country from Pakistani captivity has all the required guidelines to run an independent state. There was no written speech in his (Bangabandhu's) hand.

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Unworthy of a response

Mayor Taposh says about criticism made by his predecessor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said a person of his stature should not reply to comments made by his predecessor Sayeed Khokon.

The mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) was referring to Khokon's comment that Taposh lost the eligibility to remain in office by transferring hundreds of crores of taka from the corporation to a bank he owns.

Taposh said Khokon's comment was of little importance. "If someone says something out of personal grievance, it is improper to reply while holding a responsible post," he said after placing wreaths before a portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the capital's Dhanmondi.

At a human chain in front of the High Court on Saturday, Khokon said

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Athletes from various nations, including Bangladesh, taking part in the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Dhaka Marathon-2021 in the capital's Hatirjheel yesterday. The marathon is part of the celebrations surrounding the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

STABILISING RICE MARKET Experts call for effective policy

Govt should form a commission for agriculture goods pricing, they say

STAR REPORT

An efficient government policy to collect, reserve and import rice is crucial to maintaining a balanced price in the market, said the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh yesterday.

At the virtual dialogue titled "Why price of rice is soaring? Who's gaining, who's losing?" the speakers also emphasised on prioritising marginalised farmers in the policy and increasing accuracy in estimates of food grain production.

The dialogue, moderated by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the platform, also advised the government to form a commission for the pricing of agriculture goods.

Dr M Asaduzzaman, former research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) said, "Marginalised farmers are being neglected in the present marketing system, just like they were in the colonial period. "As the price of rice started soaring, there are many unanswered questions. Why has the government failed to collect the targeted rice; why the delay to start importing and how is the government planning to pressurise hoarders?" he queried.

Shykh Seraj, director and head of news at Channel I, said, "Farmers are not benefiting from the price hike as they sell right after harvest. Many farmers are moving away from paddy to cultivating exotic crops... that may be

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Bangabandhu's homecoming day observed

BSS, Dhaka

The historic Homecoming Day of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed yesterday 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 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 were observed maintaining health guidelines in face of the global pandemic coronavirus.

To commemorate this historic day, the Department of Posts issued commemorative stamps. Besides, the day was also observed in a befitting manner in missions abroad.

On the night of March 25, 1971,

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

The launching event of "Sobar Dhaka" took place in the capital's Krishibid Institute auditorium. Along with filing complaints, the smartphone application also allows users to access national emergency hotline numbers, has a children's feature, and an events section to help citizens keep up with going-ons in the city.

'SOBAR DHAKA' DNCC launches app to ensure citizen services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To make access to citizen services easier, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday introduced an app - "Sobar Dhaka".

"Residents of DNCC will be able to enjoy the civic facilities through the app easily," said Mayor Atiqul Islam at a launch event.

The app was inaugurated at the capital's Krishibid Institute auditorium at a programme to commemorate Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day.

The mayor said the app will help improve the accountability of government services. "As a mayor I, along with councillors, have to be accountable to citizens," he said.

The main objective of the app is to improve the living standard of DNCC residents by ensuring that services are delivered and accurate information is provided.

The app lets residents make complaints to DNCC directly on eight issues - mosquito, road, street lights, garbage, waterlogging, public toilets, drainage and illegal structures.

Users will also be able to advise the city corporation through the app to help build a healthy, moveable and modern city, the mayor said.

The process involves a user posting a comment with a relevant picture. This will in turn reach the relevant authorities of DNCC wards and zones, said Atiqul.

The app will allow residents of DNCC to be able to identify the area of their problems through GPS tracking. It also includes an emergency service where people will get national emergency helpline numbers like 999 and 333. There will be a special feature for children named "Emergency Alert", and emergency numbers of different government agencies.

A section of the app, "Ajker Dhaka", will let citizens get information about the day's events like exhibitions, training and different social programmes.

Rohingya repatriation top priority: foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Myanmar will take back the Rohingya refugees and the issue will be resolved through discussion, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"History shows they [Myanmar] took back over 2 lakh Rohingyas who fled here in 1992. So, we are hopeful that this time also they will take them back. But it is difficult to say when it will happen", he said.

Informing that the government has taken all the necessary steps to send back Rohingyas to Myanmar, Momen said, "We are continuously in discussion with Myanmar. We are doing bilateral negotiations with them as well as have taken multilateral arrangements and talked to the regional powers like India, China and other countries to solve the issue."

The minister was addressing unveiling ceremony of a book named "Rohingya: Nisongo Nipirito Jatigosthi" by Maj (ret) Mohammad Emdadul Islam at Chattogram Press Club.

"All the countries that we have approached acknowledged that it was Myanmar who created the problem and the solution depends on them," said Momen, the chief guest at the event. They all said

repatriation of Rohingyas is the only durable solution.

Mentioning that 132 countries have voted for Bangladesh in a resolution, co-tabled by the OIC and European Union, and adopted by the United Nations recently, the foreign minister said, "Some countries including our neighbour abstained from voting."

But they (the neighbouring country) had earlier told us that they would prefer to be neutral, which would help them negotiate with Myanmar.

"We believe those countries who did not give the 'yes' vote did so for strategic reasons, which is fine. Our main priority is to send back the Rohingyas," he said.

He also informed that Japan is interested in a tri-party arrangement to negotiate with Myanmar.

In the last tri-party meeting in presence of China held on January 20 last year, Myanmar seemed positive as they made some promises, he mentioned.

Informing that the government has so far tried to repatriate Rohingyas twice, but they did not go as Rohingyas do not believe in their government.

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PK HALDER'S Tk 3,500CR SCAM ACC summons four high-ups of People's Leasing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has summoned four high-ups of Peoples Leasing and Financial Services Limited to quiz over misappropriation of Tk 3,500 crore allegedly by Prashanta Kumar Halder, known better as PK Halder.

In separate letters, ACC's Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Proddhan asked Peoples Leasing's chief executive officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) Sami Huda, executive vice president Kazi Ahmed Jamal, chief financial officer Manik Lal Samaddar and head of credit Mahmuda Kaisar to appear before the ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters on January 14.

Sources said while PK Halder was managing director of Reliance Finance, he made some of his relatives and cohorts directors of some other leasing companies and got hold of these companies, People's Leasing being one of them.

"They dragged the company [People's Leasing] down to the street. They not only sold immovable properties of these companies but also shared portfolio of depositors," said an ACC official, preferring to be unnamed.

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WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT OF MD ARMAN IGP seeks stay on HC order for compensation to victim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The inspector general of police (IGP) has filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking stay on the High Court verdict that directed him (IGP) to give Tk 20 lakh as compensation to Md Arman, a technician at a Benarasi Palli in Mirpur, as police personnel have wrongly arrested him and kept him in jail for around five years instead of the original accused in a drug case.

The stay petition was submitted recently to the office concerned of the Appellate Division saying that the HC has ordered the IGP to give Tk 20 lakh to Arman without assessing the damage.

Besides, departmental action has been taken against the police officers who are responsible for wrongly arresting and keeping Arman in jail and therefore, the IGP is not liable for giving any compensation, Deputy Attorney General Amit Das Gupta told The Daily Star citing the IGP's petition.

He said the stay petition was placed before Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Nuruzzaman for hearing yesterday. The apex court judge, however, did

not hold hearing on the petition yesterday, saying that the matter will be heard later on, DAG Amit Das Gupta added.

Meanwhile yesterday, the same court refused to stay the part of the HC directive that asked the IGP and DMP commissioner to withdraw four police officers from duty, who were working under Pallabi Police Station during the incident, from their present workplaces.

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

The Appellate Division judge passed "no order" on the petitions filed by the four police officers seeking stay on the HC verdict on them.

The apex court also asked them to file separate leave-to-appeal petitions with this court against the HC verdict after receiving its full text. Senior lawyer Munsurul Hoque

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KAKRAIL DOUBLE MURDER Verdict on Jan 17

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set January 17 for the judgment over the murders of Shamsun Nahar and her 17-year-old son Sajjadul Karim Shaon in Dhaka's Kakrail in 2017.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka set the date after conclusion of arguments, Assistant Public Prosecutor Mohammad Salauddin Howladar told The Daily Star.

During yesterday's hearing, the three accused - Abdul Karim, Nahar's husband; Sharmin Akter Mukta, his third wife; and Al-Amin Johny, Mukta's brother - were produced before the court.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 17 out of 22 prosecution witnesses including the complainant.

On November 1 of 2017, 46-year-old Shamsun Nahar and her son Shaon, an A-level student, were murdered inside their six-storey building in Kakrail.

Police found Nahar's body in her bedroom on the fourth floor while Shaon's on the staircases of the third floor.

AKHAURA-LAKSHAM RAIL PROJECT Ministry removes project director, three months after PMO directive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The railways ministry has changed the project director of the Akhaura-Laksham Dual Gauge Double Line Project.

Signed by a deputy secretary on Thursday, the ministry released a circular in this regard yesterday.

The move came more than over three months after the Prime Minister's Office directed the railways ministry to remove existing director Ramzan Ali after a corruption case was filed against him. Ramzan Ali denied the allegations.

Shahidul Islam, joint director general (engineering), will now take charge of the important project of Bangladesh Railway (BR), according to the circular.

The circular, however, did not mention any specific reason behind the change, rather said the order would come into action immediately for public interest. It did not mention what would be the new post of Ramzan Ali either.

In August, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed two separate cases against Ramzan Ali and his wife Dilruba Parvin Elora for allegedly amassing around Tk 4.28 crore beyond their known sources of income.

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Protecting reserve forests from de-reservation

LAW DESK

At a time of increasing need to protect reserve forests, a local lawmaker has put forward a proposal to change the status of nearly 600 acres of reserve forests and wildlife sanctuary in Cox's Bazar into khas land for leasing them out to people living there.

Jafar Alam, elected from Chakaria-Pekua (Cox's Bazar-1) constituency, sent a DO (demi official) letter to the Cox's Bazar district administration this month to proceed with the proposal to the secretaries of the land ministry and environment, forest, and climate change ministry.

It is of note that Jafar himself is a member of the parliamentary standing committee, on the environment, forest, and climate change ministry.

The proposal of de-reservation goes against the spirit of the constitutional provisions on environmental protection, environmental laws in place and an array of observations made by the High Court Division on many occasions regarding the protection of reserved forests.

De-reservation of forests has the potential to pave the way for use of forestland for non-forest purposes and make them vulnerable to land grabbing and commercial exploitation.

The lawmaker's proposition has surprisingly coincided with an observation made by the High Court Division. On January 2, the HC directed the government to take necessary steps to protect the reserve forestland for any use other than

forestation.

The court observed that any notified forestland, reserved or otherwise, cannot be allocated or leased out for any purposes that damage the country's forests. The HC bench of Justice Moeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Khandakar Diliruzzaman came up with the verdict following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

With the said observation, the court had declared a lease agreement illegal. Under the agreement, the deputy commissioner of Chattogram issued the lease of 7.1 acres of notified forest area at Uttar Salimpur in Sitakunda to BBC Steel.

It will not be out of place to

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A van full of used polythene cruises through an empty Kakrail road yesterday. The seller is on his way to Kamrangirchar, hoping for some profit on the discarded materials he has collected.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

GRAFT CASE Samrat not produced at court for illness

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday could not take cognisance of charges against expelled Jubo League leader Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat in a case filed for siphoning off around Tk 222 crore, as he was not produced before it due to illness.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka set March 31 for the next hearing after jail authorities informed the court that Samrat was earlier admitted to BSMMU for treatment and he was not in a position to move.

The court also directed jail authorities to produce Samrat before it on March 31.

The case was filed against him for siphoning off the money and channeling it to casinos in Singapore and Malaysia between 2011 and 2018.

On December 7 last year, Anti-Corruption Commission's Deputy Director Jahangir Alam, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet against Samrat, a "kingpin" of illegal casino businesses in Dhaka, to the Senior Special Judge's Court.

'Stop Myanmar military from using FB for gains'

Rohingya advocacy group urges

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Burma Campaign UK, a Rohingya advocacy group, has called for Facebook to stop the Myanmar military from using the social media platform to recruit members and promote its businesses - profits from which help fund genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The call comes after Facebook suspended US President Donald Trump's account, on the ground of inciting violence.

"Donald Trump has been suspended for inciting violence, but the Burmese military commit violence against civilians every day and are free to use Facebook to recruit soldiers to commit that violence," said Mark Farmaner, director of Burma Campaign UK, in a statement released yesterday.

As a result of continuing violence, some 750,000 Rohingyas fled a brutal military crackdown against them and took shelter in Bangladesh in 2017, while nearly 24,000 Rohingyas have been killed, according to the Ontario International Development Agency. During the period, thousands of Rohingyas were tortured, women raped and their homes burned and vandalised.

Mark Farmaner said military-owned companies are allowed to use Facebook to promote products, the profits from which fund the military and help fund violations of international law, including genocide of the Rohingyas.

Facebook has faced severe criticism of its failure to tackle hate speech against Rohingyas and other minorities in Myanmar, and has taken down some military pages, including that of Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the military. Numerous official military Facebook pages still exist, including some with the official Facebook blue tick, Burma Campaign UK said.

History of the Greek community in Dhaka

Glimpses of the Greek community from the Dhaka University gravestones

HELEN ABADZI

The Monument

A small yellow building that looks a little like a Greek temple faces the campus wall near the Teacher-Student Center of Dhaka University. It looks old and was in very bad state until the 1960s, when university authorities renovated it. A mysterious inscription is written on the frieze above the entrance to the building.

Many students and professors over the years have passed by this small building and wondered what the strange letters said. Those who peeped inside the usually locked gates and behind the furniture that is often stashed there, saw several plaques with inscriptions and wondered what they were. This article solves the mystery. It provides translations of the inscriptions and makes some inferences about the people commemorated there and their families.

The Inscriptions and Translations

On the frieze of the front entrance, facing the Nazrul Islam avenue, it is written in capital Greek letters:

"Happy are those whom you chose and took with you."

Without seeing the inscriptions inside, a reader of ancient Greek might think that the happy ones are the students admitted to the university! However, the inscription was carved long before students starting strolling casually by the little building. It refers to the nine gravestones which are embedded in the walls. Four are written in Greek, four in English, and one is in both languages. They belong to Greek families who lived in Dhaka 150-200 years ago.

Counterclockwise, the nine gravestones have the following inscriptions in Greek, English, or sometimes in both.

Gravestone 1 (bilingual inscription)

Here lies Sultana, wife of Alexander [son of] Kyriakos Philippou Politou (or Philippou from Istanbul); 1800; January 25 [by the Julian calendar]. Paid the common debt in Dhaka. [Greek language]

Under this stone are deposited the mortal

remains of Mrs. Sultana Alexander, who departed this life on Tuesday the 6th of February 1800; Aged 34 years. [English language]

Erected by his sincere friend, Basil Demetrius, in 1859

Gravestone 5: (Greek, ornate stone centrally located)

Here lies the late Jacob Essai Iakoboglous, from Caesarea; died 1819, June 22 and was 48 years old. The one who sees this stone from above, God, may he forgive him.

Gravestone 6 (English)

Sacred to the memory of Basil Demetrius, Clerk, St. Thomas Church. Born 5th Sept. 1800. He faithfully served as Commissariat Assistant IX [9] Years, Writing Master & Teacher in the Dhaka College X [10] Years, Clerk in St. Thomas Church Dhaka XL [40] Years.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God

Matthew V.8 MDCCCLX [1860]

Gravestone 7 (Greek)

This is the grave of Father Nathaniel; holy and saintly, preaching about Jesus through word and life. Second appeared Thomas priest in the inimitable happy Dhaka. And at the same time, his fatherland was Sifnos [an Aegean island], where he saw the light in 1736. The [date in] which he died was 1810, March 12. Happy is the one who by paying homage respects.

Gravestone 8: (Greek)

The husband-loving woman who has not forgotten her husband's affection has erected this sign as an indication of her everlasting passion to her husband, Constantine [son of] George Mavrodoglou, whose home town was Istanbul and who spent his life as a merchant and was relieved [of his life] on July 24 1806. Dhaka.

Gravestone 9 (English)

Sacred to the memory of John Demetrius Ellias, second son of Demetrius Ellias Esquire, who was killed by a tiger whilst out shooting at Mirzapore 25 miles N.W. of Dhaka on Sunday the 31st of January 1836. Aged 35 years. Three noble brothers lie mouldering here

a life of sports. The most prominent Greeks at the time Dr. Taylor wrote his book were the Ralli brothers, who had a jute factory at Narayanganj.

According to Dr. Taylor, the Greek church was built in 1821. Its name, St. Thomas, (one of the 12 disciples of Jesus who is presumed to have lived in India) refers to a saint commemorated much more by South Indians than by Greeks and may indicate a tribute to Indian Christians. Since the church was built in 1821, most university gravestones predated it. This means that maybe a smaller church existed previously or another church had been used for community events, such as a South Indian, Russian, or Armenian church. The priest attached to the church came from the ancient monastery of Mount Sinai in Egypt. A community center and a cemetery with about two big has of land also existed in Maulvi bazaar, at and around Gullbadan house. The gravestones were dug up in recent years, and

what they were writing, but some plaques (such as that of Iakoboglou) contain errors in letter design that suggest the opposite. Probably these gravestones were made elsewhere, such as Calcutta.

The inscriptions do not permit us to see what language these people spoke. Most were from Asia Minor, Istanbul and Caesarea (now called Kayseri, a city of 600,000 in the central Anatolia of Turkey), and one priest was from Sifnos, an Aegean island. Asia Minor Greeks spoke an archaic dialect, which has become nearly extinct after the removal of Greeks from Asia Minor in about 1927. Persons from Istanbul spoke a dialect that linguistically resembled Urdu, that is it contained many Turkish and Arabic nouns. Greeks from certain parts of Asia Minor had lost Greek altogether and spoke Turkish. In much of the Ottoman empire, teaching of Greek letters was forbidden and was done secretly by priests, who were the keepers of the written language.

indicating a man of some means who came to Dhaka and died middle-aged at 48. Aside from the priests, he is the only person with no relatives or connections mentioned.

Why did Greeks come to Dhaka?

Greeks have always been people of diaspora, and large numbers have lived throughout history outside the traditional Greek lands (which include Asia Minor). In this case, they were perhaps attracted by the relative freedom and human rights they enjoyed under the British in comparison with the Ottomans who conquered the Byzantine empire in 1453. One guesses a tendency to identify and merge with the British or other Europeans.

As mentioned earlier, most persons mentioned in the inscriptions anglicized their last names or used the easier fathers' names as last names. Therefore, we really do not know their exact last names. This makes it difficult to trace subsequent generations in Bangladesh or elsewhere and leaves them unaccounted



The inscription on the Greek monument of Dhaka. It reads: "Happy are those whom you chose and took with you."



The Greek monument in Dhaka before the repair



The Greek monument near the Teacher-Student Center of Dhaka University.

remains of Mrs. Sultana Alexander, who departed this life on Tuesday the 6th of February 1800; Aged 34 years. [English language]

Gravestone 2 (Greek)

Here lies the late Theodosia, wife of Theodore [son of] George Philippou Politou (or Philippou from Istanbul). 1805; April 10. Paid common debt in Dhaka. May her memory be everlasting.

Gravestone 3 (English)

To the memory: Mrs. Magdalene and Sophia Jordan; also, to that of their husband, Mr. Joseph Jordan of Caesarea, Merchant at Narayanganj. The latter departed this life the 10 of February 1819; Aged about 60 years. This monument is erected as a tribute of affection to their memory by their afflicted orphan children.

Gravestone 4 (English; the Urdu poem is in Latin characters, translation by the author)

To the memory of Nicholas Demetrius Ellias, elder son of Demetrius Ellias Esq. Died 5th March 1843; aged 46 years. His desired verse:

Dune_ka jomuza hain

The enjoyments of the world [after I die]

named Nicholas, John and Constantine named as brave Hunters and to kindred dearwife erst to sport did their merry lives confine.

Erected by his cousin and godson, Manuel Ellias Mitchoo.

MURDOCH Greek community in Dhaka

The existence of Greeks and Armenians in Dhaka is known from Dr. James Taylor who wrote in a book called "Topography of Dhaka" and referred to the immigrant communities. Greeks were late-comers to the Bangladesh area, after the Portuguese, Dutch, and Armenians. Alexis Argyris, the founder of the Greek community in Calcutta, died in Dhaka in 1777 and left considerable property, which was divided among his sons who took up their abode in Dhaka and Bakerganj. The Greek community apparently was small. According to Dr. Taylor, there were 40 Armenian and 12 Greek families in 1838. Like the Armenians, the Greeks were chiefly engaged in the inland trade, and there were a few who dealt extensively in salt at Narayanganj. Apparently, some achieved wealth, like the Elias family whose sons could afford to live

a high-rise building was built on the site in 1990, apparently illegally. It is reputed that some more gravestones are still to be found in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery.

The St. Thomas church was demolished in the severe 1897 earthquake. By then the area had become valuable property, and the colonial government took it over to build the Mitford medical school (now Salimullah Medical College). Taking over a church site was unusual and an indication that the Greek community had limited membership or wealth at the end of the 19th century. Interviews with knowledgeable people suggest that land was given elsewhere as compensation, at a site at or near the current fine arts building of the university. In the beginning of the century, Ramna had a garden and a cemetery, so taking the gravestones there may have been seen as appropriate. At about 1905, the British took over the Ramna land to build buildings for the East Bengal and Assam province. After several buildings were built, the province plan was annulled in 1911. The land given to the Greeks, therefore, was at a new city location rising in value as a result of British administrative activities. Reportedly, the Greek community owned other buildings in that area in the 20th century.

The little monument must have been built to house gravestones that were left exposed after the church was demolished. It is a rough imitation of a Greek temple (which the British would associate with Greeks) rather than a miniature byzantine church, which one would expect given the gravestones in it. It is not a family crypt, because most people listed on the stones appear unrelated to each other. One wonders why the gravestones and the bones that must have been underneath them were not interred in the cemetery that continued to exist until recent years. Perhaps those were the earliest burials or the gravestones were removed from the ground even before the church was destroyed. The good condition of the stones suggests that they were not exposed to the elements for long. They may have even been dug up to make room for the church in 1821 and some may have been stored in or around that church. Some examples of old embedded gravestones on walls of buildings do exist, as in the 9th century church of St. Lazarus in Larnaca, Cyprus.

Typical to the style of other foreigner burials (such as the Armenians) two English-language inscriptions say "Sacred to the memory of." The Greek inscriptions are written with Byzantine letters that are ornate and rather difficult to read. The language of the gravestones is ancient (like classical Sanskrit) and similar to the language spoken 2000 years ago. It is likely that only the priests knew how to compose the inscriptions. (The inscription on the frieze, in particular, is part of a hymn known mainly by priests.) There are a few spelling and syntactical mistakes, but the complexity of the sentences shows that the writers were well versed in ancient Greek.

The quality of most letters suggests that there were engraved by persons who knew

Ancient Greek inscriptions, therefore, served as a marker of Greek nationality for persons who could hardly understand them.

The People and Their Stories

What family relationships and stories do these gravestones tell? Below is what can be deduced without further research.

1) Philippou (possibly Philippou Politou). The names mentioned on the gravestones are: (a) Sultana, wife of Alexander, son of Kyriakos Philippou (nickname Alexandris) who was born in 1766 and died in 1800 at 34; (b) Theodosia, wife of Theodore son of George Philippou, who died in 1805. Since the two men do not have a common father's name, they sound like cousins, or perhaps an uncle and nephew. The word Politou may imply either that they were from Istanbul or possibly from Philippoupolis, a city now in Bulgaria.

2) Jordan (from Caesarea). Joseph Jordan was the husband of Magdalene and later Sophia. He was born in 1759 and died in 1819 when he was 60. Children from both wives are mentioned but not named.

3) Ellias (correct spelling should be Elias). The father, Demetrius, had at least three sons and one nephew: a) Nicholas, the eldest (born in 1797), who died at 43 in 1846; b) John, the second (born in 1801), who was killed by a tiger at 35 in 1836; c) Constantine, with no dates mentioned. The nephew was Manuel Ellias Mitchoo, godson and cousin of the three sons (dedicator).

The focal point of the three brothers' gravestone ("three brothers lie mouldering here..") is John Elias, who was killed by a tiger in 1836. However, the plaque includes Nicholas and Constantine, who appear to have died earlier. Manuel, John's godson, financed the plaque for his godfather's tragic death and seems to have reburied previously exhumed bones for the two other brothers.

4) Basil Demetrius. He was born in 1799 and died at 61 in 1860. The stone mentions no family.

Basil Demetrius was educated but apparently not rich. He was a commissariat assistant for nine years before he became an English teacher at Dhaka College for 10 years. If the engraving dates are correct, he was also a clerk at the St. Thomas church for 40 years.

5) Nathaniel and Thomas were two priests. Nathaniel seems like the assumed name of a celibate priest, and the fact that last names are not mentioned reinforces the impression that they were priest-monks. (Orthodox Christian priests may be married or single.) Perhaps Thomas was the priest from the Mount Sinai monastery mentioned in Dr. Taylor's book, and the Dhaka church may have been named at his honor.

6) Constantine Mavrodoglou had a wife (unnamed) but was not local; he was a merchant from Istanbul, who may not have had other relatives in the area. The affectionate dedication and lack of mention of children suggest that perhaps they had not been married for very long.

7) Jacob Essai Iakoboglou has the most ornamented, centrally located gravestone,

for in history. What happened to the second generation of Greeks? Did they mainly merge with the locals and other foreigners or did they leave? There certainly was intermarriage with other foreigner communities, such as the Armenians and the British. Some until recently knew of Greek ancestors, such as the Lucas family (whose name may have also been a father's name turned to a family name). At any rate, the community did not live to see the independence of Bangladesh.

Greece became independent in 1827 and eventually became a homeland for Asia Minor Greeks who were expelled from Turkey around 1927. Political disturbances in the last 50 years encouraged even long-time resident families to migrate, leaving behind them property which local keepers later expropriated. Five Armenian families were still left in 1994, but no Greek family now lives in Bangladesh.

Faced with names and data of people who lived two hundred years ago, one wonders how those people viewed their past and present. Greece had not yet regained its independence; the mainland and Asia Minor had been under the Ottoman empire since 1453, and the Greek population lived with memories of the Byzantine past. (The two-headed eagle, the emblem of the Byzantine empire, appears on the central J.E. gravestone.) The 1757 British occupation of Bengal had only taken place 50 years before most of the Greeks died. In their lifetimes they must have watched the British consolidate their domination over Bengal, which still had a figurehead Nawab. What did they know about Bengali literature and culture? One expects that at least the second generation (such as the Elias family) spoke Bangla, but the only Indic linguistic reference is in Urdu. Greeks occasionally became literary figures in countries where they lived, but at the end of the 18th century Bengali literature was heavily Sanskritized and mainly comprehensible to people with Brahmanical education, which Greeks clearly did not seek. Most of the gravestone people lived and died before Rabindranath Tagore and Vidyasagar made Bangla accessible to the more common people, comprehensible, and interesting.

The stories of these people are fading fast, though documents may still be found in Calcutta, Dhaka, or Greece regarding their acts. If more were known, their lives would be better understood. Perhaps someday a doctoral student will research the archives and write a dissertation on the Greek community. But whether or not any more is ever known, the university has in its grounds an interesting memorial of people who came, learned, and apparently found Dhaka a good place to live.

Helen Abadzi is a Greek psychologist. This is an abridged version of the article titled "Glimpses of the Greek Community from the Dhaka University Gravestones" which was published in www.elinpa.org on December 31, 2005.

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FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

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Bangladesh should explore more potential sources of vaccines

Work for a sustainable vaccine deployment policy

QUITE a few suggestions have been made by the health experts about sourcing and managing the Covid-19 vaccines in a recent discussion on the issue. They have suggested that the government should explore more potential sources of Covid-19 vaccines apart from the ones that are being currently considered. It has also been suggested that Bangladesh should participate in vaccine trials which will broaden our scope to get more vaccines for future needs.

Although the government has made arrangements to bring three crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines from Serum Institute India (SII) and also announced that it will procure 68 million shots of vaccine under a global arrangement called COVAX, these are not enough for our population. And we still do not know how long these vaccines will give us immunity against the virus. Therefore, we need to procure more vaccines as soon as possible, and from sustainable sources.

Reportedly, six Covid-19 vaccines are already in the market and another 14 are in the pipeline. So, the government should decide which of the vaccines will be good for Bangladesh and make political and diplomatic efforts to buy them after consulting with health experts. And while selecting a particular vaccine, three basic parameters should be considered—safety, efficacy and standard of the vaccines. Needless to say, preference should be given to single-dose vaccines because it will reduce the government's vaccination cost.

Unfortunately, there is still confusion among people as to who will get priority in getting vaccinated and whether the majority of people will get the vaccines they need. In order to remove any such confusion, the government must make their vaccine deployment plan public and work with transparency. Moreover, campaigns should be held for raising awareness among people about the need for getting vaccinated against Covid-19. The government should make all-out efforts to make the vaccination process a success.

Housing project's defiant incursions into Savar wetland

Authorities must comply with SC directives instead of abetting violators

WE'RE shocked by the defiant and seemingly coordinated manner in which all parties involved with the Modhumoti Model Town have been flouting a Supreme Court verdict to dismantle the 550-acre housing project. According to an investigative report by *The Daily Star*, the developers continue operations despite a ban in August 2012 by the highest court that upheld a July 2005 directive by the High Court declaring the project "illegal" and "unauthorised". The project sits on land belonging to wetlands in Bilamalia and Baliarpur mouzas of Savar that serve as flood-control reservoirs vital to the capital's water management. In its full verdict released in 2013, the Appellate Division directed Metro Makers & Developers Ltd., the project owner, to restore the wetland within six months. Far from complying with the order, the project continues to operate to date, under a new name, while the higher authorities including Rajuk and the housing ministry continue to entertain them.

The ministry recently took it a step further by sending a letter to Rajuk asking it to take steps to include the project land as an "urban area" in the Detailed Area Plan (DAP), following an application by the plot owners. This, we must say, constitutes executive overreach in a clear disregard for the Supreme Court verdict, one that, if carried through by Rajuk, would set a bad precedent for how to approach future court orders and also have grave consequences for the wetlands and those who depend on them. Wetlands and such water bodies play an important role in our life by holding deluge, and when we lose a wetland from our landscape, we lose this very important service. Protecting wetlands is also critical for biodiversity. Alarming, disappearing wetlands are increasingly being viewed as collateral damage in our mindless upward movement to development. The land in question is identified as floodplain in the 1997 Dhaka City Master Plan, and it is crucial that it remains so regardless of any attempt to change its status by the government and real estate companies.

We understand the importance of protecting the interests of the ordinary plot buyers. In fact, in its verdict, the apex court had ordered the project owners to double-refund all plot buyers including their registration fees. They didn't. The court also asked Rajuk to reclaim the wetlands in case the owners failed to complete the restoration within the six-month period—a task it abjectly failed to do. No structure or building has been reportedly demolished or removed from the project site since the verdict. This is not just unacceptable; it's a mockery of the state of law and order in our country. The authorities including all relevant departments of the government as well as the project owners must immediately comply with the order and settle the issue once and for all. Any breach of the court order or dereliction to that effect must not be tolerated at all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Democracy must be cherished

The interpretation of democracy by Abraham Lincoln, that it is a government of the people, by the people, for the people, was terribly mistreated during the recent storming of the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump. What the world witnessed that day was an attack on democracy.

We hope that the people of America and the world will stand up for democracy and strive hard to live up to its principles.

Biplob Biswas, Dhaka

Counting planetary pressures for sustainable human development



FAHMIDA KHATUN

MACRO MIRROR
HUMAN civilisation has progressed steadily over the years. Several countries have advanced immensely. Not only have they progressed in terms of economic growth, but they improved their human development indicators too. However, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has destroyed the global economy at an unprecedented scale. As recovery measures from this devastating pandemic are being implemented by countries, suggestions have been made to design these in a manner that combine economic, social and environmental aspects together.

The pandemic broke out at a time when the world was already suffering from the negative impact of climate change, which is the outcome of the economic activities of humanity. Such activities have created wealth only for the few. Thus, inequality increased as the global economy progressed. Such pattern of economic growth is neither environmentally, nor socially sustainable. The long-term objective of making development sustainable has been sacrificed for the short-term objective of growth at any cost. Human fixation on growth has therefore been largely

understanding of human progress. It has looked into the impact of individual on the climate.

When launched in 1990, the HDI itself was an advancement from the conventional measure for economic growth that looks at only the gross domestic product (GDP). This index included indicators of well-being such as life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. Over time, the concept has been

in the PHDI ranking. Each of these countries dropped by over 70 positions—Luxemburg by as high as 131 places. On the other hand, Costa Rica, Belarus and Panama see their ranks increase in the PHDI.

In cases of the "high human development", "medium human development" and "low human development" countries, the drop in the ranking is much less. Hence, in the "high human development" category, only

cannot afford to save themselves from the impact of carbon emissions while the rich can pay for cleaner air. Therefore, the vulnerability of the poor is much more than the wealthy.

Till today, no country could achieve higher HDI without affecting the climate. HDI and high resource use have gone hand in hand. Therefore, having a high HDI is not good enough for a country. Rather, the trend is such that when HDI improves, PHDI decreases. This



Development should be pursued in a way that ensures the wellbeing of both people and the planet.

PHOTO: UNDP

The top 1 percent wealthiest individuals in 2019 are responsible for more than 20 percent of the global carbon emissions as they consume more and emit more through their investments.

destructive.

The Human Development Report (HDR) 2020 of the United Nations looks into these aspects closely. The world has entered the "age of humans"—the Anthropocene which is a new geologic epoch. Hence, human development from now on should be accomplished in a way that takes nature into consideration. The 30th anniversary edition of the HDR titled, "The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene", highlights the issue of balancing between people and planet. It highlights two types of vulnerabilities—planetary vulnerability and people's vulnerability. By doing so, the report has broadened the

expanded to capture a comprehensive measure of human development. Hence, estimates such as inequality-adjusted HDI, the Multidimensional Poverty Index, the Gender Inequality Index and the Gender Development Index have evolved.

Now the HDI has included two new indicators such as carbon dioxide emissions per capita and its material footprint per capita of a country. Material footprint is the amount of raw materials extracted from the environment to meet the demand of people and to achieve economic growth. This latest index, which is called the Planetary pressures-adjusted HDI (PHDI), reveals the current development patterns of countries. It also suggests that development should be pursued in a way that ensures the wellbeing of both people and the planet.

Indeed, PHDI is an eye opener to our traditional thought on progress which gives the wrong signal on our actual standing. When countries are assessed in the context of PHDI, their HDI rankings change dramatically. Countries which have been achieving development by burning fossil fuels and through material footprints, fall behind in PHDI rankings compared to their HDI rankings. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that PHDI rankings of almost half of the 66 countries in the "very high human development" category decline compared to their HDI rankings. Luxemburg, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait experience highest drops

about 17 percent of the countries saw a decline in their rankings. Sri Lanka's ranking went up by 34 places. Bangladesh, which is in the "medium human development" category, saw its rank rise by 9 positions. Bangladesh secured 133rd position in the HDI out of 189 countries and territories. Its HDI value was 0.632 and PHDI value was 0.625 in 2019. In the "medium human development" category, among the 37 countries, only Lao PDR lost two places. The increase in PHDI rankings of countries implies that these countries emit smaller amount of carbons and have low material footprint.

Besides introducing the PHDI, the report also brings out the inequality issue in the share of emissions by various sections of people in the society. The richer the individuals are, the higher their emissions. The top 1 percent wealthiest individuals in 2019 are responsible for more than 20 percent of the global carbon emissions as they consume more and emit more through their investments. Their emission is 100 times more than the poorest 50 percent. These poorest 50 percent emit just 9 percent of global emissions.

In addition to national share of emissions by various countries, the individual level comparison is very important for policymaking. The poor use energy for basic services such as cooking and transportation. The rich emit not only through their lifestyles but through the investments they make. The poor

will have to be changed so that both improve simultaneously. Shutting down the economy is not the answer. Because investments have to be made and jobs should be created.

Besides, even if emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) is stopped now the average temperature may not decline significantly because of the past emission pattern. The experience during Covid-19 has shown that despite economic shut downs the reduction of carbon emission was not enough to meet the global targets. A recent research in the UK shows that global GHG emissions dropped by 7 percent in 2020 compared to 2019 due to the pandemic. However, according to the UN Environment Programme, global GHG emissions should be reduced by 7.6 percent every year from 2020 till 2030 in order to bring down the temperature by 1.5 degrees Celsius—a goal set under the Paris Climate Agreement.

Therefore, in order to achieve higher PHDI and HDI, countries must adopt appropriate policies. Reduction of subsidies on fossil fuels, implementation of polluters pay principle, incentives for green infrastructure and renewable energy, and huge investment on human resources are some of the requirements for us to move forward.

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Views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the organisation she works for.

Distant climate actions are dooming global apparel industry



MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

WE are hearing a lot of businesses and brands make pledges about the climate at present. Along with pledges to cut climate emissions, there is talk of cutting water use, chemical use, and addressing a range of other supply chain issues. The overall goal is to improve sustainability.

But are we doing enough? We've been talking about the climate issue for many years. We are all aware of the risks that the earth is facing and we keep being told that "business as usual" is no longer an option.

In the meantime, businesses set distant, often vaguely worded, targets. Sometimes these targets are two to three years away, but in many cases, businesses are setting targets for 2030, 2035, 2040, and beyond. This is way, way too late. We lost the luxury of setting these far-off targets a long time ago. High-level climate talk is one thing, but more than anything, we now need meaningful, concrete actions on the ground. Not in the future, but now.

"Climate change will impact the way we will do business moving forwards," we hear people say at high level meetings. Well, climate change is already impacting business in the global textile industry, and on quite a significant scale if one begins to connect the dots.

In Australia, the cotton production in 2019-2020 was almost a quarter of the size it was two years ago, due to the impacts of drought and reduced water allocations. Australia might only account for about 4 percent of the global market for cotton but, nonetheless, in an average year, the country produces enough cotton

to clothe 500 million people around the world. Australia is no stranger to drought conditions, but last year has been dreadfully difficult for sheep farmers, even by historical standards. Many local observers believe climate impacts are at play.

There is more. Back in June last year, it was announced that India's cotton imports are likely to rise by 80 percent this crop year due to a short supply of quality material for textile mills. Data

US, many cotton growers have been hit by hurricanes for three years running. Has there ever been a time where the impact of climate on business has been so clear and obvious? It is hard to think of one. This comes back to the point made earlier about this no longer being an issue which we can be discussing in a future tense. Climate impact is happening right here, right now.

What's more, with the above we have only looked at examples where extreme

impact—around 5.5 kg CO2 according to some studies.

We know the impact that cotton products have, with their huge use of water use right through the supply chain, during cotton growing, processing and the transformation of cotton into garments. The message, then, is that not only are climate impacts here, but textile supply chains continue to make them worse—and at an accelerating rate as clothing output increases in line with population expansion and the growth of the middle classes.

Climate impacts are happening and textile supply chains are making them worse. So, long-distant target setting, even medium-distant targets, are becoming irrelevant. We need answers, and we need them to be implemented, not in 10 years' time but today.

The technology and know-how is ready and waiting, so our whole industry, our complete value chain, should be using it. Technology is available that allows us to dramatically reduce the amount of water used in textile processing. There is CO2 dyeing technology which uses no water at all. It has been around for years.

Why is it not being used? There are safer textile chemicals which have less or no impact on the environment, yet parts of the industry still go with the cheapest available from un-reputable suppliers, which are often harmful. Why? Recycled polyester is vastly available. Why is virgin polyester still used in such abundance? I could name many more examples, but hopefully readers get the point.

Each and every one of us in the value chain should be looking within and recognising that, where climate is concerned, if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.

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compiled by Cotton Association of India (CAI), forecasts raw cotton import at 2.7 million bales for the season, compared to 1.5 million the previous year. The CAI said the major reason for a forecast rise in imports was drought in the major growing states of Maharashtra, Telangana, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, while the quality of late picked crop was poor due to the lack of moisture in the field.

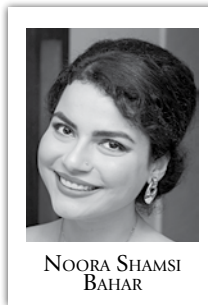
This really is a global issue. In the

climate conditions have potentially impacted textile supply chains.

What about the other way round? What about how textile supply chains impact climate? We all know there are major issues to address here. We know polyester, the most commonly used fibre in textiles, has seen a doubling in production since 2000. We also know a polyester shirt produced from virgin polyester has a significant carbon

Schools must teach more than academic syllabus

A schoolgirl's rape and murder highlights the inadequacies of conventional education



NOORA SHAMSI BAHAR

THE recent rape and consequent death of a school-going, 17-year-old girl fills one with rage and helplessness. Initially there were

conflicting reports in the media and it was uncertain if she was raped by one or multiple boys—her alleged boyfriend, Iftekhar Fardin Dihan (who has confessed to the crime) and three of his friends who were later released by police. The head of the forensic department at Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she was taken has confirmed that the student was raped and died of haemorrhagic shock and excessive bleeding due to injuries to the private parts. The accused, according to reports, has passed his A levels recently.

What does this tell us about the education that such boys from relatively privileged backgrounds receive? Is there something missing in it that has caused this young man to commit such a horrible crime? The education system, in my opinion, is a failure. What is the point of educating our sons in the sciences, mathematics, social studies,

languages, and arts if they cannot develop a conscience and if they cannot develop a sense of empathy?

My thoughts are inspired by the following words of Abdu'l-Baha, son of Baha'u'llah (founder of the Baha'i Faith): "Training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well-behaved—even though he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts. The reason for this is that the child who conducts himself well, even though he be ignorant, is of benefit to others, while an ill-natured, ill-behaved child is corrupted and harmful to others, even though he be learned. If, however, the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light" (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, pg. 135).

Some may argue that schools are supposed to teach academic subjects while morals are supposed to be taught at home. Well, of course. However, let us take the following points into consideration: i) Children spend about one-third of their time at school. ii) Some children are raised by maids/nannies because both their parents are career-driven or need to work for being able to bring food to the table. iii) Some children come from broken families and



may be raised by a single working parent who may not have the time or the energy for the proper upbringing of a child.

Doesn't it make sense then, to have moral education classes at school, even if it is for a small part of each day? I am not referring to religious studies here. Secular moral education is for all, irrespective of which religion one belongs to. And such moral education classes should include carefully planned lessons on how to develop empathy, which is what rapists are devoid of. While discussing the subject with my partner, I was

asked: How do you teach a child to be empathetic? I did not and do not have a solid answer to that. But maybe the educator could share stories with them, ask them to do artwork, teach them songs, do a little skit with them, play a cooperative game with them, get involved in a community service project together—all on the subject of empathy?

The course materials of such classes should be developed and taught by highly trained educators (not the religious clergy) and this should not be seen as just another job that pays,

but rather, as a job that helps to build upright characters, a job that helps teach humans to be just that—humans and a job that helps instil compassion, kindness, honesty, trustworthiness, love, tolerance, justice and other such noble characteristics.

I am not implying that moral education classes will completely obliterate the existence of rapists. Another simultaneous plan of action would be to introduce special courses at every school, in every hamlet, village, town, and city across the nation that will teach children the difference between "the right touch" and "the wrong touch", how to say no to the latter, the concept of consent, etc.

Rapists will thrive and will continue to rape even if convicted rapists are hanged. After all, don't we have new cases of murder every day, despite the capital punishment for murderers? Capital punishment will never be a permanent solution even if it may provide justice to some victims. Legal loopholes and influence, moreover, may allow rapists to go scot free. The rapist mentality will remain in the minds of potential rapists unless children are nurtured to be like strong, upright trees, and not crooked ones.

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Impeach Trump or Invoke the 25th Amendment?

BAHZAD JOARDER

INSPIRED by Mussolini's march to Rome, on November 9, 1923, Hitler and his SA goons attempted the "Munich Putsch"—what Hitler thought would be a triumphant march to seize power from the Weimer Republic reeling from economic crisis. The attempt was foiled, and Hitler was prosecuted for "high treason", yet, given a lenient sentence of five years imprisonment. He spent his time in prison writing the "Mein Kampf" and setting out his political beliefs. What will remain one of history's great unknowns is, what if he was given a harsher sentence or prevented from ever holding public office?

The clamour to remove President Trump is increasing after his incitement led to unprecedented "insurrectionist" scenes at the Capitol aimed to upend a democratic transfer of power. This has received bi-partisan condemnation, with several members of the cabinet resigning and senior figures of the GOP, complicit in the president's peddling of misinformation, belatedly, distancing themselves. The administration is in its death throes, with Trump, finally, changing his rhetoric from "you are special" and "we love you" to a straightforward condemnation after a day. The election winners have been certified and on January 20, Trump will leave the White House. Yet, the danger he presents remains.

Democratic leaders have called on Vice President Pence to invoke section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the US Constitution. This will only work, if the VP and majority of the cabinet declares in writing that the president is unable to discharge his powers and duties, thus removing him from office temporarily, with the vice president assuming the role of acting president. Trump may declare himself "able", in which case the VP must issue another declaration of incapacity within four days (he remains acting president for four days and if a declaration is not issued, Trump resumes presidential role). If a second declaration is issued, then the matter goes to Congress and both houses have 21 days to make a decision. Since Trump's presidency is

numbered, the clock will run out. Thus far, there is no appetite to do so, despite the clear evidence of Trump's unhinged behaviour, fomenting his base and a detachment from reality that he lost the election.

Failing the invocation of the 25th Amendment, Democrats have threatened impeachment—a second time. This is the right course of action. Impeachment does not only entail removal from office but can also disqualify Trump from holding future public office. Article 1 Section 3 clause 7 of the US constitution allows the Senate to impose a penalty preventing

judgment and one which has been decided by simple majority rules in the Humphreys trial and again in 1913, in the trial of federal judge Robert Archibald for enriching himself. The Senate used the Humphreys trial as a precedent in the trial of Judge Ritter for attempted embezzlement, filing false income tax returns amongst other allegations of impropriety in 1936 and found guilty of "bringing the judiciary into disrepute". The Senate held that a simple majority requirement would be sufficient for disqualification from holding future office but decided not to impose the penalty.

Vice President-elect Harris holding the tiebreaker vote. However, it would be a fallacy to think that he is defeated. He has fractured and debased Lincoln's party to a point where Republicans are afraid of his base and their electoral chances, keeping silent and adopting a policy of appeasement. Just days before the Capitol riots, Trump has asked elected Republican Secretary of State of Georgia to "find" him 11,780 votes. He has incited a violent riot against the most important tenet of a democracy—that of a peaceful transfer of power. This is a "high crime". If federal judges can be disqualified upon conviction and in Humphrey's case, for inciting revolt, then why not a US president?

There are different theories amongst scholars if a president can be impeached when he leaves office. Congress should not wait. It has a duty to protect the Republic from insurrection, even one directed from the White House. Trump should be held accountable and rightly impeached and if convicted on a two-third majority, should be disqualified on a simple majority from ever holding office. Invoking the 25th Amendment will remove him temporarily, leaving open the possibility of a return.

An errant Trump action in the last days of his presidency has global implications. Since the killing of Qassem Suleimani and Abu Muhandis by drone strike, an Iraqi court has issued an arrest warrant for Trump. Iran has already asked Interpol to issue a 'red notice' for US officials including Trump. Recently, Trump sought military options against Iran and had to be dissuaded from ordering a full attack but he may already have allowed covert forms of actions. The assassination of Mohsen Fakhrazadeh-Mahabadi, Iran's leading nuclear scientist is unlikely to have taken place without US knowledge. Iran blames Israel for the assassination. The timing of the assassination is eerily similar to the events of 2009. In the last days of the Bush presidency, Israel requested air strikes against Iranian nuclear installations—a request which was refused. The incoming Biden administration is inclined to re-join the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action—a move that is being anticipated and thwarted by Trump loyalists. Netanyahu,

already indicted on corruption charges, is facing the fourth national elections in two years in March. It is a volatile situation in the region even without considering the wars in Yemen and Syria. Daniel Ellsberg, the former military analyst who leaked the Pentagon Papers showing US lies in the Vietnam war, fears Trump may provoke a war with Iran. House Speaker Pelosi spoke to chairman of joint chief of staff to ensure that Trump cannot launch a nuclear strike in the dying days of his presidency. In an unprecedented move, all living former US defence secretaries have written an op-ed to not involve the military in election dispute. Those who served in the upper echelons of the power structure fear the erratic behaviour of a desperate Trump which may have severe geo-political consequences.

Trump loyalists will not fade away. His rhetoric and dog whistle racism has unleashed the basest instincts in the form of xenophobia. Mainstream social media ban on Trump will incubate those sentiments in another eco-system that he promises to create. Already, droves of his followers have moved to sites like Parler, which has been asked to moderate its content or risk censure. Trump's war chest has been replenished in the aftermath of his election defeat, by peddling lies of election fraud and seeking donations for legal fights which were funnelled to his PACs. Post presidency, he is equally dangerous, plotting his return.

Hitler's 5-year imprisonment was a hiatus used to nurture and weaponize xenophobic and anti-Semitic sentiments in the body politic. While the Munich march failed in 1923, by 1933 the Nazis were in power, having won electoral mandate. 70 million Americans voted for Trump. More than 70 percent Republicans believe Trump's lies that the elections were fraudulent. Democracy will wither without citizen trust. If he is not impeached for his crimes and disqualified from ever holding office, he may well return with vengeance. Can the USA afford to take this chance? Can the world?

Bahzad Joarder is an Associate Tutor at the University of Warwick.



Supporters of US President Donald Trump march through the streets of the city as they make their way to the Capitol Building in Washington, on January 6, 2021.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump from ever holding public office. Conviction in the Senate requires a two-third majority but there are precedents of impeachment of federal judges where disqualification from holding future office has only required a simple majority.

West Hughes Humphreys, a federal judge impeached in 1862, for supporting the secession of the southern states was convicted and removed from his post by the senate. One of the articles of impeachment against Humphreys was "inciting revolt and rebellion". Unlike conviction, disqualification is a discretionary

No US president ever had to face the ignominy of disqualification being imposed upon them as a penalty. But Trump is no ordinary president. He spoke of "American carnage" on his inauguration and during the tenure of his office have repeatedly eschewed customary norms expected of the office he holds. He is a narcissistic demagogue, a proven liar who would much rather lay waste to democratic practices than accept his failure. In the four years of his presidency, he has lost his re-election, the Congress and following the Georgia run off the Senate is now evenly divided with

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

January 11, 1935
Amelia Earhart's Hawaii-to-California flight

On this day in 1935, Amelia Earhart, one of the world's most celebrated aviators, made the first successful solo flight from Hawaii to California, a distance longer than that from the United States to Europe.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Bring close to boiling
- 6 Irritate
- 11 Track horse
- 12 To - (perfectly)
- 13 Sports setting
- 14 Iron output
- 15 Pigeon sound
- 16 Guest's bed
- 18 Hydrocarbon suffix
- 19 Pole worker
- 20 Arles article
- 21 Greek consonants
- 22 Irish brew
- 24 Kid
- 25 Helping
- 27 Pesky insect
- 29 "Yes indeedy!"

DOWN

- 1 Keyboard bar
- 2 King of music
- 3 It might be half of 21 in blackjack
- 4 Cariou of "Blue Bloods"
- 5 Blood count?
- 6 Edit menu choice
- 7 "Addams Family" cousin
- 8 It might be half of 21 in blackjack
- 9 Oberon orbits it
- 10 Tangle
- 17 Golfer's cleek
- 23 Wee worker
- 24 Steady run
- 26 Remade
- 27 Like Parmesan
- 28 1998 Winter Games site
- 30 Hot dish holder
- 31 Solar system model
- 33 Merchandise
- 39 "My word!"
- 41 Seine water

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11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44

1-1

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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| M | O | P | U | P | D | R | A | I | N | |
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| R | E | S | E | T | A | Z | T | E | C | |
| T | R | I | F | L | E | | | | | |
| D | O | T | T | T | U | T | M | M | E | |
| E | X | I | L | E | S | H | E | A | L | |
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BEETLE BAILEY

I THINK MILITARY SPENDING HAS FINALLY REACHED CAMP SWAMPY!

A CHECK?! OPEN IT UP!!

\$ 5 ?!

WELL, I DO NEED A NEW COFFEE MUG

BABY BLUES

HOW'S THE SLEEPER GOING?

WE'RE TELLING SCARY STORIES.

MINE IS ABOUT FASHION NIGHTMARES.

THAT'S... INTERESTING.

COULD YOU JOIN ME FOR A MOMENT?



(Clockwise) Bashundhara Kings players and officials celebrate with the Walton Federation Cup trophy following their 1-0 win against Saif SC in an entertaining final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Coach Oscar Bruzon was lifted in the air by the players following the win, which came courtesy of a solitary goal from Argentine striker Raul Becerra.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'I felt confident about who would be champions'

SPORTS REPORTER



As the replacement for countryman Herman Barcos, who sensationally bagged four goals in his Bashundhara Kings debut AFC Cup match, Argentine striker Raul Oscar Becerra initially failed to convince for the defending Federation Cup champions. But, with all said and done, the 33-year-old hogged the spotlight after scoring the decisive goal in a 1-0 win in the final against Saif SC yesterday. He also finished as the tournament's joint-top scorer alongside Saif SC's Nigerian striker Kenneth Ngwoke, with the latter adjudged the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Becerra scored five goals in as many matches as Bashundhara Kings retained the Federation Cup and the Argentine expressed happiness that he was able to contribute.

"I worked for goals. I worked hard for the team after joining as the coach decided whether I would stay in the eleven. Whatever the team needed, I gave it to the team. My colleagues helped me score because I came here to help Bashundhara. I also became the highest scorer in America, but it was my first experience in the sub-continent and I am happy to have scored the highest number of goals in the tournament," Becerra, his body draped in an Argentine flag, told The Daily Star after the match.

"We were confident of winning the title because we have been a champion team. It is a strong side with many national players and the experience of playing in finals before," Becerra said. "The message from

our coach was to play, enjoy the final and win it."

However, Becerra opined that their semifinal against Abahani was tougher than yesterday's tie against Saif SC.

"I think the semifinal was very tough because there were big players, Brazilian players. The long ball was difficult to defend and it took extra time to win the match but today I felt confident about who would be champions," said Becerra, whose focus now turns to the Bangladesh Premier League and Independence Cup.

Bashundhara Kings captain Tapu Barman was also excited to have claimed the title after coming into action following the lengthy layoff due to Covid-19.

"We performed well from the beginning of the tournament and our confidence grew match-by-match on the back of four months of pre-season preparations. We were also excited to play football after a long gap due to the coronavirus. That's why every player was very serious and active to show themselves on the ground," national defender Tapu said.

Tapu's Saif SC counterpart, Riyadul Hasan Rafi, was disappointed by the result but wanted to look forward to performing well in the coming days and drawing inspiration from this Federation Cup performance.

"It was bad luck that we could not avail the opportunities while the opponents cashed in on one chance to win the match. I think we could have taken the match away from Bashundhara Kings had Fahim availed a one-on-one chance in the first half," Rafi said. "But becoming runners-up is also big achievement for Saif SC and we will try to play better in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League and Independence Cup."

Kings win 2nd title on the trot

ANISUR RAHMAN



The Toyota accelerated at top speed but fell short of the Ferrari in the final of the Walton Federation Cup final yesterday as Bashundhara Kings beat Saif Sporting Club 1-0 at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday to lift the season's curtain-raising tournament.

Argentinian striker Raul Oscar Becerra separated the sides with a 52nd-minute strike that delivered back-to-back Federation Cup titles for Bashundhara. Saif SC, meanwhile, were denied the chance to write their name in history alongside Muktijoddha Sangsad and Sheikh Russel as the teams to win the tournament on their maiden appearance in the final since its introduction in 1980. Saif SC, the 13th team to play the Federation Cup final, had no such luck.

Before the final, Belgian coach Paul Joseph Put compared his Saif SC side and Bashundhara Kings to a Toyota and a Ferrari respectively.

But although the latter eventually emerged as the superior force, Bashundhara faced a tough challenge from Saif SC, who delivered a brilliant performance in the second half and got within touching distance of the defending champions.

Buoyed by the vibrant presence of their supporters in the gallery, the final got off to a decent start with both sides attacking with intent. It did not appear that Saif SC were playing in their maiden final, that too against the star-studded Kings, who also lost their maiden Federation Cup final on debut but have not lost any of their three finals (2x Federation Cup, 1x Independence Cup) since.

Left-back Bishwanath Gosh and Becerra came close to giving Bashundhara Kings the lead within the first 20 minutes but opposing goalkeeper Pappu Hossain and defender Riyadul Islam Rafi kept Saif SC in the hunt by thwarting both efforts. National goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico was also solid under the Bashundhara sticks and made a brilliant save to tip over a dipping shot from Rahmat Mia in

the 19th minute before again denying him in stoppage time of the first half.

After resumption, Saif began to exert tremendous pressure as they sought to break the deadlock, with right-back Rahmat watching another dipping shot from 30 yards brilliantly tipped over by Zico three minutes into the second half before Bashundhara took the lead against the run of play in the 52nd minute.

Breaking on the counter, Brazil's Robson Da Silva played a long ball behind the Saif SC backline and Becerra controlled nicely before driving the ball to the far post from the right-hand side to give Bashundhara an expected lead.

Becerra came close to doubling the lead but Saif SC but the ball was stunningly snatched from his feet by the Pappu before Saif SC's Nigerian striker Kenneth Ngwoke sent shivers down Bashundhara's spine by mustering three driving efforts which either went narrowly wide or were forced out for corners by Zico, who ensured that Kings would have yet another occasion to cheer.



Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim, the two stalwarts of the Bangladesh cricket team, were in jovial mood during the first day of training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the West Indies series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A subdued yet auspicious return

MAZHAR UDDIN



The scenes at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday were unusual because there were no supporters such as Shoab Ali Bukhari, better known as "Tiger Shoab" for his body paint, screaming their support during the national team's practice session.

The stands were empty and the home of cricket was quiet due to the obvious reason of maintaining health protocols set by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), but the intensity among the cricketers was high and for good reason.

After over 10 months, the Tigers are all set to return to international cricket with the upcoming home series against the West Indies. The first practice session of the preliminary squad for both the ODI and Test squads took place under head coach Russell Domingo yesterday.

The Tigers' coaching staff - including head coach Domingo, fielding coach Ryan Cook and interim spin bowling coach Sohel Islam - were busy conducting the training sessions of cricketers divided into several groups.

"Obviously, we are all excited as we joined the national camp after a long time and we had a good practice session," Nazmul Hossain Shanto told the media after the training session in Mirpur yesterday. "Although we were together during the Bangabandhu T20 Cup, it's a different feeling to share the national dressing room together."

"We will be playing international cricket after over ten months and we are discussing areas to work on during the

training sessions. Hopefully we will be able to do well in the upcoming series." Domingo was seen observing his charges in the outer nets and gave some batting tips to Shakib Al Hasan, who will be making a comeback to international cricket after completing a one-year ban from international cricket in October last year.

A festive mood prevailed among the cricketers who were finally returning to their natural state and looking forward to getting into the groove since last playing international cricket in March 2020.

However, Bangladesh's pace bowling coach Ottis Gibson and the newly appointed batting consultant Jon Lewis were quarantining at the hotel following their arrival to the country on Saturday. Both coaches are awaiting clearance from the health ministry to join the camp as they are UK passport holders, who have to go on a mandatory 14-day quarantine protocol set by the government.

The BCB however had already requested the authorities to relax the quarantine protocols for the national coaching staff and the visiting West Indies side, who also had a stopover in the UK before arriving in Dhaka yesterday.

The West Indies side reached Bangladesh yesterday morning and went straight to the team hotel where they will be isolated in their room for the next three days.

The 24-member Bangladesh preliminary squad had also checked into the hotel after the training session and they will be kept inside a bio-secure bubble during the series. The members of the Test squad, who are staying at the Academy complex, are also expected to check in to the hotel soon.

'Sad to see it happen in Australia'

AGENCIES



India were battling to avoid defeat against Australia after losing two wickets before the close of play Sunday in a third Test marred by allegations of racist abuse from the Sydney crowd.

Cricket Australia apologised to the India team on Sunday and launched a probe into allegations visiting players were subjected to racial abuse by part of the crowd.

The Indian team lodged an official complaint after play on Saturday after bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj complained of hearing racist slurs while fielding near the boundary rope. On Sunday, Siraj approached the umpire pointing towards the stands and the action was paused as police ejected six fans from the ground.

CA launched a parallel investigation with New South Wales Police, promising to take the "strongest measures" against anyone found guilty of vilification.

Australia coach Justin Langer joined the condemnation. "It's upsetting and it's disappointing," he said. "It's one of my greatest pet hates in life that people think they can come

to a sporting event and abuse or say whatever they like. I hated it as a player and I hate it as a coach. It's really sad to see it happen in Australia."

The International Cricket Council said the Indian team had informed match referee David Boon of the alleged racial abuse on Saturday and the governing body was "incredibly disappointed" with the incidents at the SCG.

Under the ICC's anti-discrimination policy,



it falls to CA to investigate the incident and submit a report to the Dubai-headquartered body within two weeks.

"We will provide Cricket Australia and the relevant authorities with our full support in any ensuing investigation as we will not tolerate any

racism in our sport," ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said in a statement.

India's Ravichandran Ashwin said the team had been insulted by Sydney spectators in the past but the racial abuse had crossed a line during the ongoing match, which is being played in front of a reduced crowd of less than 10,000.

"It is definitely not acceptable in this day and age. This must definitely be dealt with iron-fist and we must make sure it doesn't happen again," the bowler said.

India's regular captain Virat Kohli was fined half of his match fee in 2012 for responding to barracking from the SCG crowd by gesturing at them with his middle finger.

Kohli, who returned home after playing in the first test to attend the birth of his first child, said racial abuse was completely unacceptable.

"Having gone through many incidents of really pathetic things said on the boundary lines, this is the absolute peak of rowdy behaviour," Kohli said on Twitter. "It's sad to see this happen on the field."

"The incident needs to be looked at with absolute urgency and seriousness and strict action against the offenders should set things straight for once."

'We're not puppets'



REUTERS, PAMPLONA



Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said his side's match Osasuna should have been postponed due to the snowy conditions after the La Liga champions could only draw 0-0 on Saturday with the second-from-bottom side.

The snowstorm that blitzed northern Spain and the Spanish capital forced Real to make the journey to Pamplona a day earlier than originally planned, while they were made to wait on the icy runway at Barajas airport for over four hours.

Zidane's side struggled on the icy pitch as snow continued to fall throughout the game. They failed to have a shot on target in the first half.

"That was not a football match, it should have been called off," an angry Zidane told reporters. Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois joined coach Zidane in criticising organisers La Liga for not postponing his side's game at Osasuna.

"We do what we are asked. We knew that if we didn't come here we could lose the points but all you need to do is take a look and the roads."

"We also have families and we're not puppets who have to play all the time," Courtois said.

Erling Braut Haaland scored twice to give Borussia Dortmund a valuable 3-1 win away to RB Leipzig on Saturday.



PHOTO: TWITTER



Lionel Messi (R) was on target twice and so was Antoine Griezmann as Barcelona thrashed Granada 4-0 in a La Liga fixture at Los Cármenes Stadium on Saturday.

PHOTO: TWITTER



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SHAH CEMENT

Level crossings to be 'safer'

Ministries decide speed bumps ahead of them; overpasses or underpasses under future road projects

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Amid growing concerns over the casualties at unauthorised and unmanned railway level crossings, the authorities yesterday decided to take several measures to ensure safety.

The steps include constructing speed breakers on each side of level crossings, reducing the number of illegal level crossings and erecting overpasses or underpasses in future projects, officials said.

The decisions were made in an inter-ministerial meeting over the issue at Rail Bhaban yesterday.

Representatives of LGRD, road transport and bridges, railways ministries and Bangladesh Railway (BR) were present at the meeting with Railways Ministry Secretary Salim Reza in the chair.

The meeting was held at a time when around 70 percent authorised level crossings do not have dedicated manpower. Besides, there are 1,149 unauthorised level crossings which have no gateman.

UNMANNED, ILLEGAL LEVEL CROSSINGS

Out of 1,412 authorised level crossings, 964 are unmanned, according to the latest document of BR.

At least nine government bodies were involved in constructing unauthorised level crossings, with the Local Government Engineering Department having constructed the highest 516 level crossings, the document shows.

Between 2008 and 2018, 263 people were killed in 297 rail-related accidents between, it said. But the actual number would be much higher.

At least 158 people were killed and 39 others injured in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



A motorcycle being pulled out of a manhole on KDA Avenue in Khulna city after a biker fell into it yesterday. The accident happened as the authorities concerned removed the cover for work in sewerage lines on both sides of the road.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

'Some AL men brought in arms for use against me'

Quader Mirza claims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's younger brother Abdul Quader Mirza yesterday claimed that some AL leaders from Feni and Noakhali had sent arms to be used against him.

Mirza, the incumbent mayor of Basurhat municipality in Noakhali, said his brother is not supporting him. He also said the local Awami League or administrations are not by his side and everyone left him as he was telling the truth about them.

Only local people are supporting him, he said.

"You will need us to win in the national election. You will have to be careful to win in future. It is not very easy. You will have to collect information on those who walk with you," Mirza said, addressing his elder brother while speaking at an electoral rally at ward 9 of Basurhat municipality.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Invisible power protecting rapist

Claims mother of murder, rape victim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mother of the 17-year-old girl who was raped before her death said an invisible power was trying to protect the man accused of raping her.

"Considering everything, it seems to us that they have been getting special privileges since the beginning," the grieving mother told The Daily Star.

Even though the body of the O-level student was sent to a morgue Thursday evening, the autopsy was not done until the next day, she said.

Besides, police mentioned in the inquest report that she was 19 although when she was 17.

Fardin Iftekhar Dihan, the accused, was taken to a court and then to jail within a short time, she added.

"When we wanted to know what the boy said in his confession, the police told us that they would let us know. But they had not done that in the last two days."

The family wanted to accuse three other men besides Dihan, because when Dihan called the girl, he said there would be four of them at his flat, the mother said, adding that she saw the four of them at the hospital.

But police recommended that the three

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

INDONESIA PLANE CRASH

Black boxes located

No hope for survivors as rescuers find body parts, debris in sea

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesian authorities yesterday located the black boxes of the Sriwijaya Air jet that crashed into the sea soon after taking off from the capital Jakarta, as human body parts and pieces of the plane were retrieved.

The Boeing 737-500 with 62 passengers and crew was headed on a domestic flight to Pontianak in West Kalimantan on Saturday before it disappeared from radar screens four minutes after take-off.

Indonesia National Transport Safety Committee (KNKT) chief Soerjanto Tjahjono said the locations of Flight SJ 182's two black boxes had been identified.

"Hopefully, we can retrieve them soon," said military chief Hadi Tjahjanto, without giving an estimated timeframe.

Search will continue into the night, a search and rescue official said, but efforts will be limited to sonar scans by boats.

There were no clues yet as to what caused the crash, the first major aircrash in Indonesia since 189 passengers and crew were killed in 2018 when a Lion Air Boeing 737 Max in 2018 also plunged into the Java Sea soon after take-off from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.

Even before the latest crash, more people had died in air crashes in Indonesia than in any other country over the past decade, according to Aviation Safety Network's database.

Pieces of wreckage were brought to Jakarta port by rescuers, including the plane's altimeter radar, emergency chute and a piece that was suspected to have come off of the bottom part of the plane's tail, KNKT official Nurcahyo Utomo said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Man killed in 'gunfight' between Rohingyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A man was killed and 10 others were injured in a "gunfight" between two groups of Rohingyas at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The dead Noor Hakim, 27, was a resident of Chakmarkul Rohingya Camp no. 21 in Teknaf upazila.

Commanding Officer of Armed Police Battalion (APBn)-16 Torikul Islam said the "gunfight" took place between two groups of Rohingyas over establishing supremacy in Chakmarkul area around 3:00am.

The criminals fled when APBn members rushed to the spot, the commanding officer said.

Later, the law enforcers recovered the bullet-hit body of Hakim and sent it to the morgue of Cox's

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Shifting sands reveal lost Oman village



AFP, Wadi Al-Murr

Encroaching sands have left little evidence that the Omani village of Wadi al-Murr ever existed, but former inhabitants and curious visitors are coming to rediscover the hamlet engulfed by the desert.

Salem al-Arimi, originally from the area, looked out nostalgically over the expanse.

According to local elders, "all the houses in the village were invaded by the sand that assailed them 30 years ago, forcing the inhabitants to leave their homes," he said.

Building tops and sections of stone wall emerge here and there, bearing witness to those who once lived here.

Deserts are expanding all over the world, pushed on by climate change, and affected populations have few weapons to fight back.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Covid deaths, infections jump after dip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 deaths and new cases have increased in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday after a dip in the previous three days.

Yesterday, a total of 25 people died due to Covid-19, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In the previous day (Saturday), 22 Covid-19 patients died.

With the latest count, the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 rose to 7,781. This was around 1.49 percent of all confirmed cases in the country.

At least 1,072 people tested positive for the viral infection in those 24 hours yesterday. The number of newly infected was 692 the day before.

On Friday, 785 people tested positive, according to the DGHS data.

With this, the total

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

New Covid cases in China double

German deaths top 40,000

AGENCIES

The daily number of new coronavirus cases has doubled in China, prompting tougher movement restrictions and, in the capital, passengers must scan a health code before boarding a cab or ride-hailing car, officials said yesterday.

Mainland China reported 69 cases on Saturday, compared with 33 reported a day earlier, the country's national health authority said.

The new rule on cab journeys follows the discovery on Saturday

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



WINDIES' ARRIVAL SIGNALS CRICKET'S RETURN... Players of the West Indies cricket team boarding a bus at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after arriving in the country yesterday morning. Bangladesh will play the West Indies in three ODIs and two Tests, which will mark the return of international cricket in the country after more than 10 months' absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

PHOTO: BCB

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT BID GOP support uncertain

More Capitol rioters in viral posts arrested; senator urges social media providers to keep data

AGENCIES

Democratic-led efforts to impeach US President Donald Trump for a historic second time gained momentum over the weekend, although it looked far from certain whether enough Republicans would back the move with just days left in his term.

Democratic members of the House of Representatives will introduce articles of impeachment today after Trump encouraged his supporters to storm the US Capitol on Wednesday, Representative Ted Lieu said on Twitter.

The California Democrat, who helped draft the charges, said the articles had drawn 190 co-sponsors by Saturday night. As of Saturday afternoon, no Republicans had signed on, Lieu's spokeswoman said.

"We have videos of the speech where (Trump) incites the mob. We have videos of the mob violently attacking the Capitol. This isn't a close call," Lieu tweeted Saturday night.

Trump initially praised his supporters at the Capitol but later condemned their violence in a video. The decision to call for calm came at the urging of senior aides, some arguing he could face removal from office or legal liability, sources told Reuters.

Impeachment by the Democratic-led House, equivalent to an indictment, would trigger an unprecedented second trial in the Republican-controlled Senate, which cleared

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 11

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION