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"We have sent a letter to the Rajuk, asking it not to approve any plan to construct buildings in the 18 expanded wards of the DNCC."
DNCC MAYOR MD ATIQUUL ISLAM



"A tyrant's era came to an end and today is the final day of his ominous reign. ... He did all he could to destroy the JCPOA (Iran nuclear deal) but could not."
IRAN'S PRESIDENT HASSAN ROUHANI ON TRUMP'S DEPARTURE



"After four long years, Europe has a friend in the White House."
EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESIDENT URSULA VON DER LEYEN WELCOMES BIDEN'S PRESIDENCY

DEMOCRACY has prevailed

Says Biden, calls for unity, vows to end 'uncivil war' in first speech as president; Kamala Harris makes history as first woman and first black VP

AGENCIES

Joe Biden yesterday became the 46th president of the United States with a call to unity, vowing to bridge deep divides and defeat domestic extremism two weeks after a mob attack tried to undo his election victory.

On a frigid but sunny day at the very Capitol building that was assaulted on January 6, Biden swore the oath of office moments after Kamala Harris, who became America's first woman vice president, turning the page on Donald Trump's tumultuous four years.

"Democracy is precious, democracy is fragile and at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed," Biden said before a National Mall that was virtually empty due to the ultra-tight security and a raging Covid-19 pandemic that he vowed to confront immediately.

"We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility and we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes."

"Together we shall write an American story of hope, not fear, of unity, not division, of light, not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healings and goodness."

But Trump, who falsely said that he was cheated out of a second term and egged on his supporters before their rampage at the Capitol, broke 152 years of tradition by refusing to attend his successor's inauguration.

Biden appealed to Trump's supporters, pledging to listen to all sides after four years of deep polarization in which Trump

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th President of the United States as his spouse Jill Biden holds a bible on the West Front of the US Capitol in Washington, US, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

PRIORITY LIST FOR VACCINE Include those aged 50 and above: experts

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Experts have stressed the need for including all aged 50 and above in the priority list for the first phase of Covid-19 vaccination to maximise the effectiveness of the inoculation campaign.

Besides, they have suggested a longer gap between the administration of the first and second shots, arguing that it will make the vaccine more efficient.

The government is set to roll out its coronavirus vaccination programme in the first week of next month. It has purchased 3 crore shots of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, branded Covishield, from Serum Institute of India, and plans to vaccinate 1.5 crore people in the first phase.

The first consignment of 50 lakh doses is expected to arrive next week, and online registration for the campaign starts on January 26.

Ahead of the inoculation campaign, the government has prepared a priority

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

GIFT FROM INDIA 20 lakh vaccine doses arrive today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India's gift of 20 lakh doses of Covishield is likely to arrive in Bangladesh today.

Besides, the first shipment of the doses bought by Bangladesh is scheduled to arrive on January 25, Health Secretary Abdul Mannan told a press conference at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd Managing Director Nazmul Hassan Papon told The Daily Star that details of the flight schedule will be known by today.

Bangladesh purchased three crore doses of Covishield, the coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and drugmaker AstraZeneca and manufactured by Serum Institute of India.

The procurement was done through a tripartite agreement signed between the government, Serum and its local partner Beximco Pharmaceuticals on November 5 last year.

The first shipment will contain 50 lakh doses.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said several other countries, including Russia and China, were interested in sending vaccines to Bangladesh and some private companies were willing to import them.

There will be plenty of vaccine doses in the coming days, he added. Health Secretary Abdul Mannan said the 20-lakh dose gift would reach the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 1:30pm today.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami, and other government officials will be at the airport at the time.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

LABOUR MARKET Govt now looking for alternatives

PM tells JS



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mentioning that the employment situation in different countries, especially in the oil-dependent Middle Eastern states, might not remain the same as before due to the pandemic, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government was working to explore alternative labour markets and send workers there.

"New labour markets are being explored through

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

Project director hardly at the site

Payra port along with many of 66 other projects in Barisal limping

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

In 2019, the government took up a project to construct the first terminal of the Payra Sea Port and its related infrastructure.

The project was supposed to be completed by December 2021, but it has progressed only 8.17 percent till date.

The Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) has found that the project directors spent most of their time in Dhaka instead of project areas.

"They seldom visit the site for inspection," said an IMED report.

Other than the Payra Sea Port, implementation of 66 other annual development projects has stumbled.

The IMED has found several irregularities in the implementation of 67 projects undertaken in Barisal division.

Planning Minister MA Mannan will hold an evaluation meeting with project directors today on the progress of implementation of the 67 projects.

A total of Tk 7,103 crore was allocated for the projects, according to the IMED report.

Of the projects, the progress of implementation of 29 is above 51 percent while the progress of 19 others ranged between 26 percent and 50 percent.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BCL men to get top priority for univ jobs

Says RU VC

ARAFAT RAHAMAN, RU

Rajshahi University Vice-Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan has "assured" Chhatra League men that they would get the "highest priorities" in getting jobs at the university.

Prof Sobhan, while talking to a group of BCL leaders who kept him confined to his residence on the university campus demanding jobs at the university, also said BCL men would "not miss" jobs at the university.

The Daily Star obtained an audio clip of the conversation in which he was assuring the protesting BCL men in the early hours of January 12.

The BCL men confined

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Tigers return in style



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh were hardly tested upon their return to international cricket after more than 10 months as Tamim Iqbal's side registered a comfortable six-wicket win against an inexperienced West Indies side in the first of three ODIs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

There was double delight for Bangladesh fans as the match also marked the return to international cricket of Shakib Al Hasan following a one-year ICC-imposed ban, and Bangladesh's most consistent performer, as has come to be expected,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



SIGHT FOR SORE EYES... Bangladesh's star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan celebrates one of his four wickets during the first ODI against the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. It was Bangladesh's first international match in more than 10 months, and Shakib too was returning in Bangladeshi colours after serving out a one-year ban imposed by the ICC.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

MISBEHAVIOUR WITH MAGISTRATE Kushtia SP tarnished image of judiciary

HC says he committed contempt of court, asks him to appear before it Jan 25 for explanation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the superintendent of police in Kushtia committed serious contempt of court and made a severe attack on the administration of justice.

SM Tanvir Arafath's behaviour with Judicial Magistrate Mohsin Hasan has also tarnished the image of the judiciary as a whole, the court said.

The observations came amid allegations that the SP misbehaved with the judicial magistrate in Bheramara, Kushtia, during the municipality election on January 16.

"The action of the superintendent of police, Kushtia, namely, SM Tanvir Arafath cannot be taken lightly as he has not only committed serious contempt of court, but has also tarnished the image of the judiciary as a whole with his contemptuous remarks, behaviour and attitude," the HC said.

The HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Khizir Hayat also issued a summons order on a suo moto (voluntary) move after a report on the incident was published on amadershomoy.com, according to Deputy Attorney General Taherul Islam.

SP Arafath was asked to appear before the court on January 25 and explain why policemen misbehaved with the judicial magistrate.

The order said, "The behaviour and the attitude of the said superintendent of police to an officer of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BANGLADESH UPDATE



656

New cases in 24hrs



5,29,687

Total cases



7,950

Deaths



4,74,472

Recoveries



2,072,000

Deaths



96,845,758

Total cases

Include those aged 50

FROM PAGE 1

list, in which frontline health and social-care workers, along with different other professionals, have been included. The list also includes people aged 64 and above, and those under 65 with comorbidity.

Officials of Directorate General of Health Services said they prepared the priority list in line with guidelines from the World Health Organisation, a scientific advisory group of experts and taking the current context of the country into consideration.

But experts said people aged between 50 and 63, especially in the Covid-19 red zone districts, should also be vaccinated in the first phase, considering the current Covid-19 situation. They said it would save lives.

DGHS data show more than 80 percent of those who died after contracting the virus in the country were aged over 50, and more than half of the deceased lived in Dhaka, Chattogram, Narayanganj and Gazipur.

Among the 7,950 dead so far, more than 25 percent or 1,994 people were aged between 51 and 60. Of the total 529,687 Covid positive cases, 11 percent belonged to the 51-60 age group, shows the IEDCR website, which contains data of till January 18.

"The existing vaccination plan of the government is good. But maximizing the outcome should be the key. For doing so, the government should include those aged 50 and above in the priority list," Prof Sayedur Rahman Khasru, chairman of pharmacology at the BSMMU, told The Daily Star.

"If we can administer a single dose on those from the most vulnerable age groups in the risky zones, it will protect them, resulting in fewer deaths and infections," he said.

Dr Mushtuq Hussain, a consultant at the IEDCR, said the vaccination plan could be modified considering the availability of vaccines. "The WHO's scientific conference [on Friday] advised the authorities to vaccinate the people with higher risks and in the infection-intensive areas if the number of vaccine doses are limited."

He also said with fewer vaccine shots in hand, the government should be open to inoculating people who came in contact with any positive cases.

"This is called ring vaccination which was applied during the smallpox inoculation campaign," said Mushtuq.

Infectious disease expert Prof Ridwanur Rahman too opined that people aged 50 and above can be included in the priority list. "People

aged 50 and above can be included in the priority list, if there are necessary supplies. If supplies are limited, the people with comorbidity should get priority," he told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque told reporters on Thursday that the government had decided to increase the minimum age limit for the vaccination to 50 in the priority list.

But a DGHS official, preferring not to be named, said the minister actually asked to include people from the 50-63 age group in vaccination campaign, subject to the availability of eight lakh Pfizer vaccines from the Covax.

Bangladesh is supposed to get 6.8 crore vaccine shots from Covax, a global vaccine alliance. But the authorities have said the country's existing cold chain system cannot support the ultra-sub-zero vaccines like Pfizer which are needed to be stored at temperatures below -70 degrees Celsius.

Dr Shamsul Haque Mridha, line director of Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health at the DGHS, said they were still not considering to include people aged between 50 and 63 in the priority list for the first phase.

"They are not included in the first list of 1.5 crore people," he said.

Shamsul, however, said everything would depend on the availability of the vaccines. "We cannot say right now how many doses we will get, apart from those from Serum."

He said a total of 50 lakh people -- drawn from 18 professional and age categories -- would get the first dose of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine in the first month. The second dose would be given eight weeks after the first shot.

Prof Sayedur Rahman, however, recommended increasing the gap to 12 weeks or more from eight weeks. "We will get only 3 crore doses of vaccine in the next six months. If we go for the single-dose policy, we can protect more people. The UK has extended the interval between two doses to 12 weeks. It means they want to give protection to more people -- even if it is for a few months."

Financial Times newspaper of England has reported that extending the interval could give better immunity in case of Oxford vaccines.

Data from the Oxford/AstraZeneca trials also showed that antibody levels were nearly three times higher in participants who had waited 12 weeks between doses, compared with those where the gap had been under 6 weeks.



A woman counting the money she received as allowance for the elderly people in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday. She said she had to wait for four hours in the queue to receive the money.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

20 lakh vaccine doses arrive today

FROM PAGE 1

The secretary said refrigerated trucks of the Expanded Programme on Immunization would carry the vaccine to a storage facility in the capital's Tejgaon.

At first, between 400 and 500 people will be given the shots at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Kurmitola General Hospital, Mugda Medical College Hospital and Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Government Hospital.

"We will observe the recipients for seven days," Mannan said.

Before that, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will virtually inaugurate the vaccination campaign. The date has yet to be fixed, the secretary said.

Some 20-25 health workers or other frontline workers, freedom fighters, and civil society members will be inoculated during the inauguration. Beximco will deliver the purchased

doses to the EPI storage facilities in districts across the country, the secretary said.

The shots will then be taken to certain upazila-level hospitals using EPI vehicles.

Countrywide inoculation will be launched after the inauguration and the seven-day observation.

"A total of 60 lakh people will be vaccinated in the first month and 50 lakh in the second month. In the third month, the 60 lakh people who received the first shot in the first month would get the second shot," the health secretary said.

MINOR SIDE-EFFECTS
Each vaccine recipient will be kept under observation for 10-15 minutes and if they show any adverse effect, they will be treated at the hospital where they were inoculated.

Director General Prof ABM Khurshid Alam of the Directorate

General Health Services said the Oxford vaccine had only minor side-effects like rash, mild pain and fever.

"In case of any vaccination, there is a risk of anaphylactic shock [a serious allergic reaction]. But we have not heard about this effect in the case of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine," he said.

The health secretary said each vaccine recipient would be followed up via the telemedicine number: 16263.

N M Ziaul Alam, senior secretary at the ICT Division, demonstrated the registration process for the vaccination on a mobile app called "Shuroksha".

Asked whether it would be possible to report adverse effects using the app, Ziaul said the option would be included by the end of this month.

He didn't say when the app would be available to the public.

Project directors hardly

FROM PAGE 1

Thirteen projects have seen less than 25 percent progress while there was zero implementation progress in six.

One of the projects is the development of Rajapur-Patharghata highway undertaken by the Roads and Highways Department. The project was undertaken in July 2017 and is supposed to be completed by June this year.

The initial cost was estimated to be Tk 35 crore. Later, it was revised twice and the cost escalated to Tk 114.4 crore.

But only 53.09 percent of the work has been done.

Another project was undertaken to develop and widen highways in Barishal. The project was also revised twice and the cost had escalated to Tk 667.34 crore from Tk 75 crore. The project duration was between January 2018 and June 2021.

The IMED found that roads were widened without removing electricity

poles in some places.

On the other hand, roads were damaged at many places due to excavation of soil from the roadside.

To save Tojumuddin upazila of Bhola from erosion of the Meghna river, a project was undertaken in July 2016 by the Water Development Board. The initial cost was Tk 99 crore but it later increased to Tk 609.38 crore after two revisions.

So far, 91.81 percent work has been done.

The IMED found that low-quality yellow stone chips were used to build blocks to build the embankment.

It has advised that the quality of concrete blocks and geo bags be maintained.

"To make the project successful, it is necessary to ensure dumping of geo bags and blocks in the right quantities at the right places, according to the project plan. Otherwise, there will be no benefit," recommends IMED.

Democracy has prevailed

FROM PAGE 1

belittled minority groups and tried to cast doubts on basic facts.

"I will be a president for all Americans."

But Biden confronted head-on the rise of domestic extremism, as witnessed during Trump's presidency in the Capitol mob, deadly attacks on synagogues and immigrants and a violent march by neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The United States faces "a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront, and we will defeat," Biden said.

"Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we are all created equal and the harsh ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear and demonization have long torn us apart."

At 78, Biden is the oldest president in US history and only the second Roman Catholic president.

Harris, the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants, became the first Black person, first woman and first Asian-American to serve as the nation's number 2.

She and her husband Doug Emhoff -- America's first-ever "second gentleman" -- were escorted to the inauguration by Eugene Goodman, a Black police officer at the Capitol who lured the mostly white mob away from the Senate chambers in a video that went viral.

Central Washington took on the dystopian look of an armed camp, protected by some 25,000 National Guard troops tasked with preventing any repeat. The Supreme Court reported a bomb threat yesterday morning.

With the general public essentially barred from attending due to the pandemic, Biden's audience at the National Mall instead was 200,000 flags planted to represent the absent crowds.

Biden nonetheless brought in star power -- absent four years ago with Trump. Lady Gaga, in a poofy dress that was Valentine red, sang the national anthem and Tom Hanks prepared for a televised evening appearance with the new president.

Jennifer Lopez sang a pop rendition of "This Land is Your Land," often considered the unofficial US national anthem, ending it by exclaiming the words of the pledge of allegiance -- a nation that promises "liberty and justice for all" -- in Spanish.

BIDEN TARGETS TRUMP'S LEGACY
Biden, who was vice president under Barack Obama and first ran for president in 1987, plans to kick off his tenure with a flurry of 17 orders.

Officials said Biden will immediately rejoin the Paris climate accord and stop the US exit from the World Health Organization and set new paths on immigration, the



Kamala Harris is being sworn in as US Vice President.

PHOTO: REUTERS

environment, Covid-19 and the economy.

Biden, who has vowed a major escalation of vaccination against Covid, warned of a "dark winter" still ahead from the pandemic that has claimed more than 400,000 lives in the United States, more than in any other country.

"We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus," Biden said.

"We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation," he said, striking a new tone after Trump's mockery of mask-wearing and business closings meant to halt the virus.

Biden will also end Trump's much-assailed ban on visitors from several majority-Muslim countries and halt construction of the wall that Trump ordered on the US-Mexico border to stem illegal immigration, the aides said.

Many overseas leaders breathed a sigh of relief at the end of Trump's hawkish, go-it-alone presidency, with Biden's team pledging greater cooperation with the rest of the world.

With so many domestic challenges, Biden delved little in his inaugural address into foreign policy, a longtime passion for the former senator, but said: "We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again."

Although Biden has laid out a packed agenda for his first 100 days, the Senate, in which Democrats are set to take control, could be consumed by Trump's upcoming impeachment trial, which will move ahead even though he has left office.

The trial could serve as an early test of Biden's promise to foster a renewed sense of bipartisanship in Washington.

TRUMP VOWS TO BE BACK
Trump left Washington before the inauguration, walking on a red carpet on the White House lawn with his wife Melania to the Marine One presidential helicopter, which flew near the inauguration-ready Capitol

before heading to Andrews Air Force Base on Washington's outskirts.

"This has been an incredible four years," Trump told several hundred cheering supporters in a campaign-style event before flying off for the last time in Air Force One en route to his Florida resort.

"We will be back in some form," vowed Trump, who retains a hold on much of the Republican Party despite being the first president to be impeached twice.

Trump did not address Biden by name but, in a rare hint of graciousness, wished the next administration "great luck and great success."

A spokesman said Trump maintained one tradition by leaving a letter for Biden, although the contents were unknown.

Mike Pence, the outgoing vice president who clashed with Trump in his final days by acknowledging he could not overturn the election, attended the inauguration and was spotted laughing with Harris.

Also taking part were former presidents Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton and their wives -- including Hillary Clinton, for whom Biden's victory was especially sweet four years after her narrow, surprise defeat to Trump.

CONTROVERSIAL PRESIDENTIAL PARDONS
In one of his last acts before departing the White House, Trump pardoned or commuted the sentenced of 73 people including allies.

Among them was Steve Bannon, his influential former aide and promoter of right-wing populism who was charged with defrauding donors asked to contribute to building Trump's promised wall on the border with Mexico.

Trump also at the last minute ended a ban on his administration's officials serving as lobbyists -- an order he had issued with fanfare at the start of his presidency as he vowed to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

Kushtia SP

FROM PAGE 1

judiciary who is performing the judicial functions as per the provisions of law under the guidance of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh amount to serious contempt of court.

"Such behaviour of the said superintendent of police, Kushtia, is a severe attack to the administration of justice and ultimately the entire judiciary."

The bench asked SP Arafath to place his explanation on the allegation of misbehavior done by his subordinates. It also issued a rule asking the SP to show causes as to why contempt of court proceedings should not be launched against him and why he should not be punished for misbehavior.

According to media reports, Judicial Magistrate Mohsin went to the polling centre at Bheramara Pilot Model High School after receiving complaints of voter fraud during the municipality election on January 16.

He was talking to the presiding officer when SP Arafath, ASP Mostafizur Rahman, and several other policemen went there and loudly called the presiding officer aside.

Mohsin then told the policemen that he was a judicial magistrate and requested them to let him speak to the presiding officer first, the reports said.

SP Arafath then called the magistrate impolite and asked him to leave the centre, according to the reports.

Mohsin recently filed a complaint with the Election Commission accusing the SP of misconduct, reports our correspondent in Kushtia.

Copies of the complaint were sent to the Registrar General's Office of the Supreme Court, law and home ministries, and the office of Inspector General of Police.

The complaint said that the SP has done serious misbehavior and uncourteous conduct which was a blatant violation of the Local Government Election Rules, 2010, according to the reports.

BCL men to get

FROM PAGE 1

RU VC, two pro-vice-chancellors and the proctor to the VC's residence on January 11.

They started demonstrations following spreading of news that one administrative official was appointed to the university, defying the government's order that postponed all kinds of appointments to RU until further notice.

On December 10, the government issued the order, after a University Grants Commission probe found that the vice-chancellor and other RU officials relaxed the recruitment rules to appoint the VC's daughter and son-in-law as teachers.

Confined VC Prof Sobhan came to talk to the protesting BCL leaders around 2:00am on January 12.

"You have done enough [protest]. I think people who need to understand got your message," Prof Sobhan said.

"I cannot make everything public, there is a problem if I say everything. But InshAllah I will give the highest priorities on your matter [jobs]. Wait and see," Prof Sobhan was saying during the conversation.

Pointing to BCL activists' opinions that the government cannot halt appointment as RU is autonomous in line with the Rajshahi University-1973 Act, Prof Sobhan said, "We all expect jobs. This is your main demand. You have brought the issue of university act tactfully."

At one point, some of the BCL men shouted asking how long they will have to wait for jobs.

In reply, Prof Sobhan said he had talked to the official concerned at the Prime Minister's Office about the withdrawal of the postponement.

"Wait for two or four days. You can wage a movement after that," he said, adding that "you will not miss jobs".

"This is not right. I have not assured anyone of giving jobs," Prof Sobhan said when this newspaper contacted with him over phone.

"I have asked them to leave the place and stop the movement and it is not possible to give appointment due to the government's postponement. We are working on to find out how this postponement can be withdrawn," he said.

When this correspondent said The Daily Star has an audio clip of his conversation, Prof Sobhan said, "They [BCL activists] were waging a movement. We say many things so that they call off their movement."

About the assurance of jobs, the RU VC said all the protesters were jobseekers. Everybody gives hope to jobseekers. There were some people who were not BCL men, he said.

Elias Hossain, a former BCL leader and a demonstrator, said, "We did not have any such conversations with the VC."

Meanwhile, Dablu Sarkar, general secretary of Rajshahi city Awami League, held a meeting with Prof Sobhan on January 13.

After the meeting, Dablu said the dedicated BCL activists were demanding jobs after completing their studies.

"Besides the VC, we all, Rajshahi mayor and MPs, will work so that the postponement on recruitment is withdrawn ... Once it is done, the door to jobs will be opened for the demonstrators," he added.

Tigers return in style

FROM PAGE 1

played the key role in the comfortable win.

The champion cricketer notched the best figures by a Bangladeshi bowler in ODIs against the West Indies, ending with four for eight from 7.2 overs to help bundle out the visitors for 122 runs in 32.2 overs.

For the West Indies, the bulk of the scoring was done by debutant Kyle Mayers, who struck 40, and Rovman Powell, who hit 28. None of the other batters were able to absorb the pressure exerted by the Bangladeshi bowlers.

After the hosts won the toss and chose to field, there was a 20-minute rain interruption in the fourth over. The sun did not shine the whole day, making conditions difficult for batting.

Apart from Shakib, young debutant right-arm seamer Hasan Mahmud was impressive, picking up three wickets while Mustafizur Rahman bagged two to rattle through the Windies batting lineup.

It was however not as smooth a chase for Bangladesh as they would have hoped. The home side lost four wickets before the experienced duo of Mushfiqur Rahim (19) and Mahmudullah Riyad (9) remained unbeaten to guide the side to the victory in 33.5 overs.

West Indies' debutant left-arm spinner Akeal Hosen removed Liton Das (14) and Nazmul Hossain (1), while skipper Tamim looked solid before he was stumped for 44 off 69 balls off the bowling of his Caribbean counterpart Jason Mohammed.

Hosen went on to scalp his third wicket, that of Shakib for 19, to end up with the his team's best bowling figures of three for 26 from 10 overs -- the best bowling figures by a West Indies left-arm bowler on debut.

NEW DNCC WARDS

13 canals to be revived: Atiqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said they will recover occupied portions of 13 canals from encroachers in 18 extended wards of DNCC.

"We will evict illegal structures through CS, RS and Citi Survey," said the mayor while visiting Sutivola canal and Kodda canal in Bhatara, Satarkul and Badda areas.

He said residents of the areas, who face severe waterlogging just after light rain, will benefit of the widening of the canals.

"I have already asked city corporation workers to clean all drains of the area and asked officials to take necessary steps to widen the drains," he said.

Atiq said they will do 29km of canal recovery work, re-excavate the canals, protect the banks, make cycle lanes, walkways and plant trees under the project.

"A project worth around Tk 4.24 thousand crore to develop the extended areas has already been passed in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Two workers sit on top of a loaded truck bearing the name of Dhaka North City Corporation, with nothing to protect them from accidents, or even bumps on the road. Disregard of safety is not an uncommon sight, but it is particularly disappointing to see it on the part of authorities. Aminbazar area on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PARLIAMENT SESSION

Two MPs demand school reopening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two ruling Awami League lawmakers yesterday demanded that the government take measures to reopen all educational institutions, as the long closure of schools and colleges are hindering students.

Motahar Hossain said students' education life is being greatly hampered due to long shutdown of educational institutions. "Although virtual class are taking place, students of villages and rural areas are not getting benefit of it. Therefore, the government should take immediate measures to reopen the educational institutions as soon as possible," he said.

While participating in the thanksgiving motion on the President's speech, Solaiman Haque Joarddar also made the same demand.

He said the ministry should take a final decision on reopening educational institutions, adding that the institutions should be opened in compliance with health rules.

On a different note, AL MP Anwarul Abedin Khan expressed his displeasure over irregularities in constructing roads in the country, despite spending a huge amount of money.

"It takes Tk 85 lakh to construct one kilometre road. But the roads become damaged within six months of construction," he added.

He also expressed his disappointment as the use of eco-friendly bricks in different government works was not ensured.

Anwarul said a law was passed in Parliament in 2019 on the use of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

CLUSTER ADMISSION TESTS

Four engineering univs at odds over specifics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four public engineering universities who had earlier agreed on a cluster admission test system, are divided on the question of where the exam would be held.

Opinion is also divided on which university the chairman of the admission committee will come from.

The issue surfaced in a virtual meeting between top officials of four universities and the University Grants Commission (UGC) yesterday.

The four universities are Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), Chattogram University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) and Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet).

Vice chancellors from the four leading engineering universities could not reach to a consensus regarding chairmanship of

admission test committee and test centre to hold the cluster admission tests, a UGC statement said.

One of the vice chancellors said Buet authorities reiterated that their representative would always be chairman of the admission committee, and the exams be held at Buet only.

The statement said the authorities of Ruet, Cuet and Kuet proposed to nominate the chairman and test centre gradually following alphabetic order. "But pro-vice chancellor of Buet informed the meeting that they will take final decision to this end within a week after holding an urgent academic committee meeting."

Earlier, all four universities had agreed to join the uniform admission test titled "Central Admission Test".

Vcs of 19 public universities decided that they would hold central admission

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Standing up to the oath of sacrifice

Rab official who lost hand while detonating bomb decides to retire

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It was early morning on September 15, 2019.

Sergeant Md Shahidul Islam went to Abhaynagar Police Station in Jashore with members of the bomb disposal unit of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-6).

Abhaynagar Police Station officials sought support to deactivate Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). Police recovered six IEDs during the investigation of a case.

Wearing a bomb suit and with necessary equipment, Shahidul got ready to respond to the call to deactivate IEDs. But he was facing difficulties touching the IEDs wearing bomb suit gloves, so he switched to regular gloves. At the beginning of the deactivating task, a bomb went off.

Shahidul fainted for a few seconds after being hit by a bomb splinter. When he regained consciousness,



Sergeant Shahidul with his prosthetic arm.

PHOTO: STAR

he saw that the wrist of his left hand was severed. He was taken to Jashore Combined Military Hospital (CMH) with his hand tied with a towel.

On the day, Bangladesh cricket team was playing an international match. Shahidul's first enquiry after being moved to a cabin from the operation room was about

Bangladesh's performance in the match, despite undergoing complicated surgery.

Shahidul recalled how surprised the doctor was after hearing his question about the match.

He said, "Many people are victims of accidents and mutilation. I went to work for the country and

became crippled. I am proud to have been able to work in service of the nation."

"We take an oath of self-sacrifice for the needs of the country during our training," Shahidul said.

"Even though I didn't understand the matter then, but I feel it now," he said.

Shahidul thinks he survived the operation thanks to the bomb suit and iron block.

The good news is, after a long treatment, Shahidul is now somewhat healthy. Under the supervision of Rab, he has been given a prosthetic hand.

It works with a sensor that can reach forward through the veins on the upper arm, according to a Rab official.

Shahidul was recognised for his bravery and received the Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM).

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

RAPE CASE

HC orders former TV producer to surrender to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Aslam Shikder, a former programme producer of private TV channel ATN Bangla, to surrender before the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Tribunal-7 of Dhaka in a case filed for raping a dancer in 2018.

The tribunal has acquitted Aslam of the case on October 20 last year, Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi told The Daily Star.

It will be known when Aslam will have surrendered after the HC's written order is released, he added.

Yesterday, the HC also called for the record of the case from the tribunal and accepted the appeal against the acquittal verdict for hearing.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order after a primary hearing of the appeal filed by the state challenging the verdict acquitting Aslam Shikder.

University student missing in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 23-year-old Bangladeshi youth, also a student at Malaysia's Asia Pacific University (APU), has been missing for a week since he left his home in the capital's Bashundhara Residential area on January 13.

The missing person's name is Sadman Sakif aka Rafi. Sadman's mother filed a general diary (GD) with Vataru Police Station in this regard.

According to the GD, Sadman left the house on the morning of January 13 without telling anyone. Since then he did not return home. The mobile number used by him is switched off.

Sadman's mother Monowara Hossain told reporters that her son returned to Dhaka from Malaysia in September 2019. After that he could not return to Malaysia due to coronavirus situation.

Among three siblings, Sadman is the youngest. He was born and raised in Saudi Arabia. He was admitted to APU in Malaysia three years ago.

Sadman's mother claimed that he does not have a group of friends in Dhaka and does not know the city well.

Vataru Police Officer-in-Charge (OC) Moktaruzzaman said, "Sadman was preparing to return to Malaysia. He asked his father to arrange money for this. But he left home before that. CCTV footage shows Sadman leaving the house with a laptop bag."

Sudip Kumar Chakraborty, deputy commissioner of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dreaming anew with jute

Career training for people with disabilities concludes at CRP

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

On June 15, 2017, a section of a clay wall crashed and fell on 18-year-old Sabina Yeasmin, paralysing her from the waist down. The incident happened just when she was about to sit for her HSC exams, and set her education back by two whole years.

It had devastating consequences for her family. Her father, stricken by poverty, was initially at a loss over what to do. He eventually took her to Savar's Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP). This proved to be move in the right direction for Sabina. To this day, she is getting treated there, albeit in a different capacity these days.

After being a patient for a year-and-a-half, she joined CRP's basketball team. Though still on a wheelchair, the new role brought her a lot of relief -- it is not only a milestone for her path to full recovery, but came with a steady income.

Although somewhat helpful, the meagre amount she made there was not enough to cover all of her costs, which is

why she was still on the lookout for some additional income.

This correspondent met Sabina at a training session organised by the e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB), Spinal Cord Injuries Development Association Bangladesh (SCIDAB), and People with Disabilities Aid Foundation (PDAF). The training programme began on Sunday and concluded yesterday.

The programme was aimed at teaching persons with disabilities how to make jute products such as bags, pots, rugs and blankets and make a living out of it. Alongside Sabina, a total of 30 people took part in it.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sabina said, "The accident put me on a wheelchair and threatened to bring my life to a halt. My father gradually became unable to bear my treatment costs."

"At least some of it was relieved when I joined the basketball team, but I was looking for something more substantial," she continued. "And this is when the opportunity to become jute product maker

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

COUPLE'S DEATH ON ROAD
Bus driver remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed a driver of Ajmeri Glory Paribahan on a one-day remand in a case filed over the death of a couple in the capital's Airport area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after Investigation Officer Imran Hossain, also sub-inspector of Airport Police Station, produced the driver Tasikul Islam before the court with a five-day remand prayer.

The magistrate also denied bail to Tasikul after a petition was filed with the court, seeking bail.

A team of Criminal Investigation Department arrested Tasikul Islam at Mouchak in Gazipur on January 19.

He had long been driving heavy vehicles like bus although he had professional licences for driving light vehicles only, police officials said.

The couple -- Akash Iqbal and his wife Maya Hazarika -- were on their way to work when the bus of Ajmeri Glory Paribahan hit their motorbike on January 18.

The driver attempted to escape driving over them.

Maya's father Manik Miah filed a murder case with Airport Police Station, following the incident.



It's a challenge to navigate the narrow streets of Old Dhaka, whether on foot or on vehicles. There's no defined walking space or footpaths for pedestrians, and shops have taken up space on the side of the road, pushing the pedestrian and hose on vehicles together. Especially during the busy hours of the day, walking through one of the alleys can feel like an obstacle course. This photo was taken on Tuesday from Alauddin Road.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Save the ponds of Sylhet'

Activists demand at human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Environmental activists and locals demanded at a human chain yesterday that the Majumdar Bari Dighi (large pond) and others ponds in Sylhet city be saved from grabbing and destruction.

The human chain was jointly organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) near the pond at Majumdar area in the city.

At the human chain, speakers expressed grave concern over grabbing, filling and polluting city ponds that play vital role for environment of the city.

According to Bela and Sylhet City Corporation, there are only 36 ponds still in the city.

This number was over 60 a decade ago, they said.

Most of the surviving ponds are in peril, including the historic Majumdar Bari Dighi.

According to act-36 of year 2000 on the conservation of natural waterbodies and Bangladesh Environment Conservation Rules 1995, a pond must be protected from being filled up or grabbing, speakers said.

Bapa Sylhet's General Secretary Abdul Karim Kim, Bela Sylhet Regional Coordinator Advocate Shah Shaheda Akhter and Sylhet District Press Club President Al Azad were present at the human chain among others.

In memory of Mrs. Ismat Ara Sadique, MP



Today January 21, 2021, we remember with great sorrow and love, our beloved mother Ismat Ara Sadique, who departed this world a year ago. Her love, respect and dedication for her family, friends, her country, and the Awami League shall be missed dearly. She will be mourned and remembered as the devoted MP of Kesubpur Jashore, and as a respected State Minister of Public Administration. Though she is gone forever, she will always be in our hearts, our thoughts and in our prayers. May Allah grant her Eternal Peace.

On this occasion, we request all her relatives, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to remember her departed soul in their prayers, and should they wish to share any memories, we would be honored to receive them at memoryofismatarasadique@gmail.com.

Tanvir Sadique
Naureen Sadique

Raisuddin Ahmed no more

City Desk

Raisuddin Ahmed, a former director of Biman, and former general secretary and vice president of Bangladesh Cricket Board, passed away yesterday, at the age of 82.

The veteran sports organiser breathed his last at around 9:30am, said a press release.

K-sports family mourned the demise of Raisuddin Ahmed, father of its director Ashfaq Ahmed.

They prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family members.



Two MPs

FROM PAGE 3
environment-friendly bricks. "But what is the point of doing it if it is not implemented even after the law is passed?" he questioned.

He also said no department of local government, public works and education engineering mentions the use of eco-friendly bricks in the tender. That is why eco-friendly bricks are not being used in construction work of government works.

'YOU CAN CROSS THE RIVER ON FOOT'

Former state minister for primary and mass education Motaahar Hossain yesterday in parliament raised the issue of poor flow of water in Teesta River that he said was bringing immense sufferings of people in his constituency.

Saying Teesta has become a source of grief in his area, the ruling Awami League MP from Lalmonirhat-1 said there is no water in the river. "You can cross the river on foot. The water that comes from India is very little. Cultivation of land cannot be done with that water," he said while participating on the thanksgiving motion on the President's speech.

He said the treaty on water sharing of Teesta River is yet to be inked. "People of the region will be benefitted greatly if this agreement is made as soon as possible," he added.

Dreaming

FROM PAGE 3
and entrepreneur was presented to me."

"It's got me all dreamy-eyed," Sabina laughed. "I am really hoping that the training will get me somewhere, that it will help me earn enough money to sustain both myself and my family, as well as cover all my treatment costs."

Tamzid Hossen, founder of PDAF, told The Daily Star, "The training was arranged with the hope that people with disabilities gain some knowledge on the crafting of jute and its business side, so that they don't have to lag behind financially. It's tailor-made to take their circumstances in consideration."

The programme offered sessions on all steps of the trade, from raw material sourcing to crafting, all the way up to lessons on how and where to sell the end product, Tamzid emphasised.

"This is the first time we have organised something like this," he added.

"We'll be arranging more sessions of this sort in the future."

13 canals

FROM PAGE 3
Ecnc meeting, and our first priority is to construct drains beside the roads of the area," said the mayor.

The mayor said their second priority is to level the roads of the area, and local people and political leaders and activists are helping them in this regard.

"We have issued a letter to Rajuk so that they do not give approval of any new plan of

constructing buildings in the 18 extended wards of DNCC, and asked councillors to observe so that no new buildings are constructed," he said.

Among others, DNCC chief executive officer Md Selim Reza, chief waste management officer Commodore M Saidur Rahman, chief health officer Brig Gen Zobiaur Rahman, and chief engineer Brig Gen Amirul Islam were present at the time.



Ismat Ara's 1st death anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of former lawmaker and state minister Ismat Ara Sadique.

Ismat Ara, former Awami League MP from Jashore-6 constituency and former State Minister for Public Administration, expired on this day in 2020.

His son Tanvir Sadique and daughter Naureen Sadique, in a press release, said her love, respect and dedication for her family, friends, country and the party shall be missed dearly.

She will be remembered as a devoted MP of Jashore's Keshobpur and state minister for public administration, they said.

Her siblings requested all her relatives, friends, colleagues and acquaintances to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Four engineering

FROM PAGE 3
tests and there would be three exams under the new system -- one each for science, humanities and business studies students -- based on the curriculum of grades XI and XII.

The new method of university admission has been in discussion since 2010. It is aimed at relieving admission seekers of the hassles of travelling to different universities in various parts of the country just to be able to sit for the tests every admission

season.

On January 23 this year, the UGC announced that universities would hold a uniform admission test in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Seven agricultural universities will form a separate cluster to hold the uniform admission test.

Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Jahangirnagar University and Chattogram University have decided to opt out of the cluster.

China's role as mediator very crucial

FROM PAGE 12
making it a major issue in multilateral forums.

International relations analysts say Bangladesh signed a bilateral deal with Myanmar on repatriation in 2017 on suggestions from China and India, two Asian powers having strong bilateral relations both with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

"The international community has issued a lot of statements, but has not come to mediate on the issue on the ground. Against this backdrop, China is bringing Myanmar and Bangladesh to the negotiation table for talks," said Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of international relations department at Dhaka University.

The process actually began when a ministerial-level tripartite discussion was first held in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September last year. An official-level talk was held in Dhaka in January last year.

Imtiaz said China has a lot of influence on Myanmar and it is expected to bring about a positive result. Failure of the tripartite mechanism would be a discredit to China, he told this newspaper yesterday.

Following Tuesday's hour-and-a-half virtual meeting, led by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui, Myanmar Deputy Minister Hau Do

Suan and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, officials said China is very interested in resolving the crisis bilaterally.

"We have faith in China as it is a powerful country. It is also a matter of credibility for China," Masud said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent visit to Naypyitaw and raising the Rohingya issue also means a lot, he added.

The foreign secretary said Myanmar has shown flexibility during the discussion on Tuesday and spoke in a positive tone after Dhaka's assertion that a lot of development activities and regional connectivity projects were being hampered due to the unresolved Rohingya crisis.

Analysts say Myanmar, facing a genocide case at the International Court of Justice in The Hague for atrocities against Rohingyas, also faces the UN rights body through the Universal Periodic Review this year. These factors might also have led Myanmar to think differently.

The tripartite meeting on Tuesday decided to hold a joint working group meeting next month and then the secretary- and ministerial-level tripartite meetings to sort out unresolved issues on Rohingya repatriation and arrangements before starting the repatriation in the second

quarter of the year.

Munshi Faiz Ahmad, former chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), said a number of countries and organisations have influence on Myanmar, especially India, China, Japan, European Union, Singapore and ASEAN. They all had a chance to help mediate on resolving the Rohingya crisis, but none have done so, except for providing humanitarian assistance.

He said Rohingyas want guarantee of citizenship and safety in Rakhine, and China can be a guarantor. "I would propose that China leads formation of a joint international taskforce, which will monitor the overall repatriation process and creation of conducive environment in Rakhine," said Faiz, also a former ambassador.

With the presence of such an international body, Rohingyas would have confidence in returning to Myanmar, he said. Also, another confidence-building measure for the Rohingyas would be the full rehabilitation of the internally displaced Rohingyas already in Rakhine, he added.

Prof Imtiaz suggested that Myanmar takes up a rigorous programme to interact with the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar for building confidence.

Road crash

FROM PAGE 12
duty doctors of Faridpur Medical College Hospital after he was taken there around 1:30pm, the police official said.

Of the 24 injured, 14 were sent to the hospital whereas rest of them were admitted to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex, he added.

The driver and other staffers of the bus escaped the scene after the accident. Police managed to seize the bus and took it into custody.

Prowling

FROM PAGE 12
The arrestees are Sajal, Musa, Bachchu, Sajib, Munna and Siddique.

Speaking at a press conference at DMP media centre yesterday, the DB official said the arrestees are members of an organised group of robbers, who set out in the middle of the night with a pick-up van to rob unsuspecting people seeking rides.

Whenever anyone boarded the vehicle, they robbed the passengers of cash and other valuables and threw them off the running van, police said.

Their targets are usually low-income traders who head towards wholesale kitchen markets in Dhaka late at night, the DB official added.

The arrestees, during primary interrogation, admitted that they robbed people on the road -- Abdullahpur to Karwan Bazar, Rampura to Jatrabari, and Bhulta Gausia area.

According to detectives, the gang had been robbing people in this manner more than once a week.

Two to three people used to sit in the front seat of the vehicle while the rest used to pose as passengers in the rear, police said quoting the arrestees.

UK Covid

FROM PAGE 12
"If it is found that children are more affected, public health social measures may need to be adapted."

The number of new deaths climbed to a record high of 93,000 over the previous week, it added, with 4.7 million new cases reported over the same period.

Meanwhile, the latest research has revealed that the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech is likely to protect against the new variant.

The encouraging results from an analysis of blood of participants in trials are based on more extensive analysis than those released by the US drugmaker last week.

Stolen

FROM PAGE 12
It is a copy of Leonardo's famous work that in 2017 became the most expensive painting ever sold, fetching \$450 million at a Christie's auction.

Rain adds to their plight

FROM PAGE 12
traveling on a rickshaw around 9:00am in the capital's Bangla Motor area yesterday.

Rickshaw-pullers and day labourers suffered most in yesterday's biting cold. "The cold is so severe that our hands and legs seem to be freezing. But we cannot sit idle. We have to pull rickshaws to earn our livelihoods," said Anwar Hossain, a rickshaw puller in the capital's Bailey Road area.

Meanwhile, northern border districts Kurigram and Lalmonirhat witnessed a sharp fall in temperature due to a cold wind from the Himalayan region sweeping over the region.

"Slight rain has occurred in this morning. It has intensified severity of the cold," said Taher Ali, 50, a farmer at Kulaghat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Jaldhar Chandra Das, 55, a fisherman from the Brahmaputra River basin Jorgach area in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, said, "I went out of the home to net fish in the river this [yesterday] morning. But I had to return home quickly without any delay because it is not possible for me to stay on the river amid such biting cold."

[Our correspondent from Lalmonirhat contributed to this report]

No one held, a month after the murder

FROM PAGE 12
rickshaw by one leg was published in The Daily Star in August 2007. Apex Bangladesh Foundation took note of it and gave him Tk 30,000 in financial help. With the money, Babul started the grocery shop in his village home.

"When we were in Dhaka, a neighbour named Suruj Ali, 35, a chowkidar, and his accomplices grabbed our 3.50-decimal land of our 16-decimal homestead. They were trying to grab the rest. When we returned home in 2007, we protested it, but Suruj and his men did not stop," said Sheuly.

Since 2014, Babul lodged several general diaries with Kotwali Police Station seeking police help as his life was at risk, but police did not take any action, alleged Sheuly.

Babul also informed Khairul Alam Sohagh, former chairman of Khaghdahor union parishad, and its present Chairman Anwar Hossain Nannu of the matter. They did not take any initiative to settle the long-standing dispute, Sheuly further alleged.

Recently, Babul decided to sell his homestead and leave the area to avoid the dispute over the land. It angered Suruj and his men.

Following this, Babul and his younger brother Mobarak Hossain were beaten up allegedly by Suruj and his men on December 25 morning, said Babul's sister Morsheda Akter.

Hearing the news, Babul's daughter Farzana Akter and her husband Anarul Islam, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver, rushed to the spot and attempted to take Babul to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, but Suruj and his men obstructed them, she said.

"There had been an altercation with them and at one stage, we managed to take him to the hospital where he died soon after his admission," said Anarul.

Following day, Babul's wife Sheuly lodged a case with Mymensingh Kotwali Police Station against seven people. Suruj was made the prime accused.

The attackers also ransacked his house, the shop and looted valuables and cash, alleged the victim's family.

"Suruj and his men are threatening us with dire consequences if the case is not withdrawn. But I lodged another case with a Mymensingh court on January 13," said Sheuly.

The victim's family members said to harass them, Suruj's second wife Rekha Akter lodged a "false" case against 12 people, including Babul's eldest son Billal Hossain, a mason, daughter Farzana and her husband Anarul, on January 6.

This correspondent could not contact Suruj for his comments as his phone was found switched off.

Contacted, Khaghdador UP Chairman Anwar said he was aware of the incident. He added that Babul was getting disabled allowance and he withdrew his last instalment in June last year.

Replying to a question, he said action was being taken against Suruj.

Contacted, Faruq Hossain, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station, said drives were on to arrest all the accused.

Poacher held with tiger skin

FROM PAGE 12
point of the bargaining, he decided to sell it for Tk 13 lakh."

Later, forest guards, with the help of Rab-8, carried out a drive in Rayenda Bazar area of Sharankhola and arrested Gaus along with the skin around 7:30pm on Tuesday, he said.

A case was filed against Gaus for killing tigers under the wildlife conservation act.

Yesterday, he was produced before a court, which sent him to jail. The court also ordered the forest department to preserve the skin, said sources at forest department.

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)
BARC Complex, Farmgate
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Vacancy Announcement

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) is inviting application for a Professional Position of "Senior Program Specialist (Priority Setting & Program Development)" from the nationals of the SAARC Member Countries.

The application form, details of appointment notice, qualification and experience, terms and conditions, salaries/allowances, facilities and benefits etc. shall be available in website: <http://www.sac.org.bd>.

All Applications should be reached to Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) not later than 31st March 2021.

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Dr. Md. Baktear Hossain
Director, SAC

GD-144

Request for Proposal (RFP)
Consultant for Drafting Strategic Plan

Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, invites proposal from qualified individuals to prepare a Strategic Plan for the foundation for next ten years (2021-2030) to attain its mission. Prescribed form (with TOR) is available at www.sonargonmuseum.gov.bd and interested consultants need to submit the proposal to director.s.museum@gmail.com on or before 6th of February 2021, 5:00pm. For further query please contact Mr. Rabiul Islam, Deputy Director, Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation at 01712201759.

Dr. Ahmed Ullah
Director
Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation

GD-142

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH
Department of Operations and Maintenance

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Work: Supply & Installation of Classroom Furniture and Fixture at Dr. A. Majeed Khan Building, IUB

- Sealed Bids are hereby invited from the bona-fide Contractors / Firms for Supply & Installation of Classroom Furniture and Fixture at Dr. A. Majeed Khan Building of IUB Campus, Bashundhara, Dhaka. The bidders shall be required to submit a complete offer in two separate envelopes, one for the Technical Offer while the second envelope shall contain the sealed Financial Offer with earnest money.
- The bidders shall apply in their Official Letter heads to Director, O&M, IUB, along with the following documents:
 - Updated Trade License, Income Tax Clearance Certificate, VAT Registration Certificates & Ownership evidence of the Company / Firm.
 - Experience certificate of similar type of work (should be minimum 05 years with minimum Tk. 8,000,000/- (eighty lac) in single tender)
 - Certificate of Average annual Turnover should be at least Tk.2.00 crore.
 - Certificate of similar Experience.
- The bidders shall furnish an earnest money, equivalent to 2.5% of the bid amount, in favour of Independent University, Bangladesh, in the form of Bank Draft / Pay Order from a scheduled Bank of Bangladesh, as part of the Bid Documents.
- Interested bidders are requested to collect the Tender Schedule from the Office of the Director, O&M, IUB, between 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM up to 27th January 2021 on payment of a non-refundable amount of Tk. 1,000/- (Taka one thousand) only in cash.
- A Pre-bid Meeting with the intended bidders will be held on 11:30 AM, 28th January 2021 at the Office of the Director, O&M.
- The Tenders will be received at the Office of the Director, O&M, IUB up to 01:30 PM of 7th February 2021 and the Technical Offers shall be opened at 02:00 PM on the same day & at the same place, in presence of the bidders who wish to attend the Tender Opening.
- The Financial Offers of the technically responsive bidders will be opened separately with due notification to the respective bidders.
- All bidders should mention their contact number & email address clearly in the forwarding letter of the Tender.
- IUB Authority reserves the right to accept only the technically responsive tenders without any consideration of the lowest bid and shall have the right to reject any or all tender without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Director, Department of Operations and Maintenance
Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
Plot-16, Block-B, Aftabuddin Ahmed Road, Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka-1212

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Govt. Ishwardi College
Ishwardi Pabna
www.igc.edu.bd

Memo No. IGC/2021/230 Date: 20-01-2021

e-Tender Notice 01/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of supply	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	539279	Renovation & refurbishing of classroom office room library teachers & students common rooms sanitation and electrical etc.	09-Feb-2021 12:30pm	09-Feb-2021 01:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 08 February, 2021.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor. Dr. Md. Zakirul Hauque
Principal
Ishwardi Govt. College, Pabna

GD-145

Border people suffer for years for want of bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

People from 102 families at Nakharjan border in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila have been crossing the wooden bridge over the Nilkamal river for years as no initiative was taken to build a concrete bridge there.

The border people use the 50-foot-long and six-foot-wide shaky bridge to reach the mainland amid risk of accident, said locals.

There is international boundary line between border pillars 940 and 941 adjacent to the bridge.

Villagers said although Nilkamal is a small river, it is flooded during high tide in the monsoon. But it is completely dried up during the dry season. People of Nakharjan border village, who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, suffer a lot due to the lack of a concrete bridge over the river.

Farmer Anisur Rahman said there was a wooden bridge over the river till 1987. The wooden bridge was no longer built since it collapsed. Later, they had to cross a bamboo-made bridge on the river for many years.

In 2016, the wooden bridge was rebuilt with the help of the chairman and members of the local union parishad and villagers,

but the authorities concerned are yet to take any initiative to build a concrete bridge there despite repeated pleas, said Anisur.

Another local resident Ashraf Haque, 48, said besides them, Indian people who are living outside the barbed wire fence at the border also use the bridge. At least 600 people live there.

When the gate of the barbed wire fence is closed in the evening, these Indian inhabitants use this wooden bridge to come to Bangladesh's market for buying necessities, he said, adding that it is an example of harmony between Bangladesh and India set by the bridge.

'We can't always travel to the mainland of India through the barbed wire fence's gate. All the people of the Bangladeshi border village Nakharjan are known to us. We also use the wooden bridge to come to the market in Bangladesh and buy the necessary things,' said Abdus Samad Khan, a farmer from the Indian border village Seuti Part-2.

Harunur Rashid, chairman of Phulbari Sadar Union Parishad, said concrete bridge over Nilkamal is not being built as the law prohibits construction of any infrastructure at the border.



People at bordering Nakharjan village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila cross the Nilkamal river on the shaky wooden bridge amid risk.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Where people proudly live in mud houses

The affordable and all-weather houses are still popular in a village called Deshigram for their natural cooling effect in summer and warmth in winter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Just as its name implies, Deshigram in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj is truly a traditional village as most of its inhabitants are still carrying on a centuries-old tradition of living in mud houses.

The village has a little over four hundred houses, and majority of those, more or less 350, are made of mud.

In not so distant past, mud houses were a common site in rural Bangladesh, especially in the north. Industrialisation and availability of modern construction materials slowly replaced most mud houses with brick or corrugated tin houses elsewhere in the country. But that did not happen in Deshigram.

The village has a little over four hundred houses, and majority of those, more or less 350, are made of mud.

It is not that the inhabitants of Deshigram cannot afford modern materials to build their houses. But they live in mud houses by choice, and for some practical reasons.

'Mud houses are more comfortable [than houses built with other materials] in both hot and cold temperatures and this prompted me to replace my tin-

wall house with a mud house,' said villager Mozammel Haque, a farmer by profession.

When his old house, on four decimals of land, needed restructuring, he decided to make a weather-proof house by tearing down the old one and building a new mud house with four rooms in it.

'During hot summer days it feels cool inside a mud house and in the winter time it's warm. We may not have air conditioners, but we feel quite comfortable in our mud houses,' Mozammel said with a smile.

Most Deshigram residents said they are happily living in mud houses, as they did not need to spend all their lifetimes for a

comfortable home.

Biraj Uddin, another resident of the village, said a brick building with two rooms costs about Tk 2 to 2.5 lakh while a two-room tin structure costs Tk 1 to 1.5 lakh and a mud house, with the same number of rooms, costs only Tk 60 thousand to 80 thousand.

'A mud house provides affordable living and comfort all year round, but one doesn't need to loan money to build a mud house. It's our pride,' he added.

The mud house is so popular in the area that even 48 out of 50 houses, made of corrugated iron sheets, donated by the government to the destitute, have been converted into mud houses.

Govt now looking for alternatives

FROM PAGE 1

[Bangladesh] embassies in this regard. In the present situation, it is not possible to send labourers temporarily to South East Asian countries, including South Korea and Singapore. However, sending workers to Middle Eastern countries has started at the desired level," she told parliament while replying to a query from Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari.

About alternative labour markets, the PM said 50 Bangladeshi workers obtained Romanian work visas in October last year and another 260 work visas was under process by the Romanian government.

Hasina said 240 skilled workers were sent to Uzbekistan for the first time on November 7 last year. They are working at a project under an engineering company in Qarshi, Uzbekistan.

'Besides, another 648 Bangladeshi workers will be sent to Uzbekistan. Efforts are underway to export manpower to that country in other sectors.'

The leader of the House said there are bright prospects for Bangladesh's labour market in Africa, specially in Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania and Libya.

She said the government has taken various measures to send back the Bangladeshi expatriates

who lost their jobs abroad during the pandemic and could not return to their workplace after getting stuck at home. The government is making it happen through creating new employment opportunities for the expatriates.

In this connection, Hasina said the government was communicating with foreign ministers of different manpower recruiting countries.

'Importance is being given on three issues -- ensuring minimum food and health facilities for the sacked expatriates, sending them home after paying six month's salaries and allowances and other benefits, and requesting the destination countries to set up Covid-19 recovery and respond fund to create employment and small industries in those countries,' she added.

FINANCIAL SETBACK AVOIDED Responding to another query, Hasina said special measures taken by her government in view of the pandemic to protect people's lives and tackle the economic crisis arising from it have helped Bangladesh avoid the global financial setback.

'The government's special measures for tackling the crisis have kept the country's economy normal,' she added.

The PM said Bangladesh would be the 25th largest economy in

the world by 2035 if its present economic evolution continues, according to the Economic League Table of the British economic research organisation, 'Centre for Economics and Business Research'.

Hasina said Bangladesh last year registered a 5.24 percent GDP growth rate. The previous year, the figure was 8.15 percent, which was the highest in the country's history.

She said the government since the beginning of the outbreak handled the situation cautiously and that is why Bangladesh has witnessed more success than many other countries in terms of number of infected people, death rate and economic losses.

Talking about coronavirus vaccine, the PM said the vaccine procurement process was underway and the vaccination would start soon in the country.

FISH PRODUCTION

Responding to a query from Awami League MP Ali Azam, the premier said Bangladesh has attained self-sufficiency in fish production by boosting the production by over 50 percent in the last 11 years due to effective and timely measures taken by her successive governments.

'Bangladesh produced 43.84 lakh tonnes of fish in 2019-20 fiscal year which was 62.31 percent higher than that of fiscal year 2008-

09 [27.01 lakh tonnes].' Hasina said Bangladesh has improved its ranking to the second place in the world in terms of producing fresh water fish as per the report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

Each person in the country now eats 62.25gm of fish daily against the demand of 60gm, she added.

8 more die, 656 infected with Covid in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh saw a daily infection rate of 4.26 percent with 656 new cases reported until early yesterday.

The country recorded a daily infection rate of 5.49 percent on January 18, 4.90 percent on January 14, 8.29 percent on January 10, 7.52 percent on January 4, and 8.18 percent on January 1.

Bangladesh has recorded 529,687 cases so far. And the country's fatality number rose to 7,950 and death rate to 1.50 percent, with eight Covid-19 deaths in those 24 hours, since the first fatality was reported on March 18.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director
Establishment of 100 Technical School and College (TSC) in Upazilla
Directorate of Technical Education
Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
Web: www.techedu.gov.bd

Memo No. 37.03.0000.070.007.203.020.61 Date: 20 January 2021

e-Re-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of goods. Details below in the table.

Sl. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender ID No. (From e-GP Portal)	Tender description	Publication date and time	Opening date and time
1	37.03.0000.070.007.203.020.308 Date: 13.01.2021	537223	Supply and installation of Welding and Fabrication Trade Equipments for 10 Technical School and College at Different Upazillas.	21-Jan-2021 12:00	08-Feb-2021 12:00
2	37.03.0000.070.007.46 Date: 12.01.2021	536976	Supply and Installation of Office Equipments for 25 Technical School and College at Different Upazillas.	21-Jan-2021 12:00	08-Feb-2021 13:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-GP tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to specified date & time mentioned in the e-GP System.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any on all tenders.

Dr. Md. Serajul Islam
Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Email: 100ts.pd@gmail.com

GD-137

Laksam Pourashava

Dist: Cumilla

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

Memo No. Laks/Pou/Engg/2021/65 Date: 18/01/2021

Invitation for Re-Tender (OSTETM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works as mentioned in the following table:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of works	Online (e-GP System) tender publication date & time	Online (e-GP System) tender closing date & time
538500	IUIDP-2/LAKIP-24	1) Part-A: Construction of RCC Road at the North side bank of Dakatia River from College Para Yousuf Master House to Laksam Sreang Road (Ch. 00m-1000.0m), including 01 No. Single Vent Box Culvert (Size 4.0m x 4.0m at Ch. 420.0m) & 100.0m RCC Palisading in Ward No. 6 under Laksam Pourashava, Dist: Cumilla; Part-B: Construction of RCC Road at the North side bank of Dakatia River from College Para Yousuf Master House to Laksam Sreang Road (Ch. 00m-1000.0m), including 01 No. Single Vent Box Culvert (Size 4.0m x 4.0m) at Ch. 420.0m & 100.0m RCC Palisading in Ward No. 6 under Laksam Pourashava, Dist: Cumilla (2) (a) Construction of RCC Road from North side bank of Dakatia River a Near Seru Mia house to Laksam Sreang Road near Anowarul Hoq Shop (Ch. 00-360.0m) (b) Near Mafij Shop to Laksam Sreang Road near Mohammad Ali Shop (Ch. 00-285.0m) (c) To Colony Link Road (Ch. 00-100.0m) (d) Near Kalchand Shop to Laksam Sreang Road near Eshak Mia House (Ch. 00-445.0m), including 100.0m RCC Palisading in Ward No. 6 under Laksam Pourashava Dist: Cumilla.	21-Jan-2021 11:00	10-Feb-2021 14:00

These are an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) also from E-mail: enr.jasim@yahoo.com.

Engr. Jasim Uddin Ahmed
Executive Engineer
Phone: +880-803251195

GD-136

Man to die for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to death in connection with a case for killing his wife in 2013.

The convict, Intiaj Hossain alias Diamond, 37, is son of late SM Azim Uddin of Munshipara area in Thakurgaon municipality.

Thakurgaon District and Session Judge Mamunur Rashid also fined the convict Tk 1 lakh.

Moreover, the court sentenced another accused Asad Hossain, 28, to life term imprisonment for assisting Diamond in the killing and fined him Tk 3 lakh.

According to prosecution, Intiaj strangled his wife Faria Akhter Mumu, 24, at their house on August 1, 2013.

Later, he and his accomplice Asad hanged the body from a beam of his room to stage the murder as suicide.

Tourist dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A young man fell sick while taking bath at Kuakata beach and died yesterday.

The victim, Bablu, was son of late Muslim Miah of Dhopakata village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila, Officer in Charge (OC) of Mohipur Police Station Moniramazzaman said.

Quoting witnesses, police said a group of 55 tourists arrived in Kuakata yesterday morning.

Around 12:00noon, three to four of them, including Bablu, went to the beach to take a bath.

At one stage of bathing, Bablu fell to the ground and went fainted.

Locals rescued Bablu and took him to Kuakata Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead, the OC added.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চশিক্ষা বিভাগ

আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট (আমাই)

১/ক সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা

www.imli.gov.bd

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ/সংস্থা	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চশিক্ষা বিভাগ, ঢাকা
০২.	সংস্থাকারী সত্তার জেলা	ঢাকা
০৩.	কী জন্য আহ্বান	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক ২০২১ প্রদানের নির্মিত স্বর্ণপদক, স্বর্ণধারা ইলেকট্রোনেটের ট্রেড মার্ক রিপ্লিকা, স্বর্ণপদকের বাহুর ও রিপ্লিকার বাহুর সরবরাহ
০৪.	আহ্বানের সূত্র ও তারিখ	৩৭.২৬.০০০০.১২০.০৭.০০১.২১. ১৩ তারিখ: ২০ জানুয়ারি ২০২১
০৫.	সংস্থ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
০৬.	বাজেট এবং সোর্স অব ফান্ড	সরকারের বাজেট খাত (GOB)
০৭.	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক প্রদানের নির্মিত স্বর্ণপদক ও রিপ্লিকা সরবরাহ
০৮.	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	২১.০১.২০২১ তারিখ
০৯.	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০৩.০২.২০২১ অফিস চলাকালীন পর্যন্ত
১০.	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও শেষ সময়	০৪.০২.২০২১ তারিখ দুপুর ০১:০০ মি.
১১.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৪.০২.২০২১ তারিখ দুপুর ০১:৩০ মি.
১২.	দরপত্র দাখিল বিক্রয়কারী	সহকারী পরিচালক (অর্থ), লেভেল-৩, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট
১৩.	(ক) দরপত্র দাখিল গ্রহণকারীর দস্তর	উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ), লেভেল-৩, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট
	(খ) দরপত্র দাখিল খোলার দস্তর	কনসার্নেটর কম, লেভেল-৩, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট
১৪.	দরদাতাদের যোগ্যতা	(ক) দরপত্রের সাথে হালদালাল ট্রেড শাইসেল, ভাট, আয়কর সনদ ও ব্যাংক থেকে আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতার সনদপত্র, জেলা প্রশাসক কর্তৃক ডিগ্রি লাইসেন্স এবং জাতীয় পর্যায়ে কাজ করার সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রমানপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি দাখিল করতে হবে। (খ) দরপত্র অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের ০৫ বছরের কাজের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রকৃত জুয়েলারী ব্যবসায়ী হতে হবে। (গ) ধরনের পদক তৈরীতে অভিজ্ঞ প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অধ্যায়িকর দেয়া হবে। (ঘ) বিস্তারিত টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট অনুযায়ী হতে হবে।
১৫.	মালামাল সংগ্রহ ও কাজের সংশ্লিষ্ট বর্ণনা	ক. রিপ্লিকা ও স্বর্ণপদক নির্ধারিত মান সম্পন্ন হতে হবে এবং উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক টেস্টে অক্ষত থাকতে হবে। খ. আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক প্রদানের নির্মিত স্বর্ণপদক ও রিপ্লিকা সরবরাহ
১৬.	দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য	অম্লহী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নির্ধারিত নম্বর ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা প্রদানপূর্বক প্রতিস্টে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে এবং পরবর্তীতে দরপত্র ক্রয়ের রশিদ টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
১৭.	ক্রমিক বর্ণনা	সরবরাহযোগ্য মালামাল/ কাজের বর্ণনা
	০১.	১৮ ক্যারেট মানের ৩৫ (পঁয়ত্রিশ) গ্রাম সিলভার স্বর্ণ ধারা নির্মিত ডাবল সহিডের স্বর্ণপদক (রিবনসহ) সরবরাহকৃত ডিজাইন অনুযায়ী প্রস্তুত করে সরবরাহ করতে হবে। স্বর্ণপদকের সংখ্যা ০৪ (চারটি) বা তার কম/বেশী হতে পারে।
	০২.	ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত পেন্সিলিংকেশন অনুযায়ী রূপার তৈরি প্রতিটি ০.৩৬ গ্রাম বর্ণের ইলেকট্রোনেটের ট্রেড মার্ক রিপ্লিকার মোট সংখ্যা ৬টি (৩টি জাতীয় ও ৩টি আন্তর্জাতিক পদক) বা তার কম/বেশী হতে পারে।
	০৩.	স্বর্ণপদকের বাহুর ০৪ টি
	০৪.	রিপ্লিকার বাহুর ০৩ টি
১৮.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, পদবি, ঠিকানা ও ফোন/ফ্যাক্স নম্বর	উপপরিচালক (উপসচিব) প্রশাসন ও অর্থ আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট ফোন: ৮-৩৯১৫৯৫
১৯.	দরপত্রের সাথে ০১ (একটি) স্বর্ণ পদকের এবং ০১ (একটি) রিপ্লিকা নমুনা দাখিল করতে হবে। নমুনা ব্যতিত কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবেনা।	
২০.	কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই যে কোনো বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা ব্যতিরেকের অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।	


 সাহেবুরা আকার
 উপপরিচালক (উপসচিব)
 ফোন: ৮৩৯১৫৯৫
 আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট
 ১/ক সেগুনবাগিচা ঢাকা-১০০০

GD- 138

BIDEN'S PRESIDENCY WORLD REACTIONS



"Law, order and democracy, have prevailed over this disgraceful attempt to overturn the election. American democracy has proven its strength and resilience. Let's build a new founding pact for a stronger Europe, for a stronger America and for a better world."

CHARLES MICHEL, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL



"I am greatly relieved that Joe Biden will be inaugurated as president today and move into the White House. I know this feeling is shared by many people in Germany."

GERMAN PRESIDENT FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER



"We look forward to working with President-elect @JoeBiden to further strengthen ties between the #UnitedStates & #Europe, as we face global challenges none of us can tackle alone."

NATO CHIEF JENS STOLTENBERG



"I warmly congratulate Joe Biden on his historic inauguration as 46th President of the United States and look forward to working closely with his new administration as we defeat Covid and build back better from the pandemic."

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON



US President-elect Joe Biden, his wife Jill Biden, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff attend a coronavirus disease memorial event at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, US on Tuesday.

Senate leaders discuss power-sharing deal

REUTERS, Washington

Facing a 50-50 partisan split in the US Senate, the chamber's top Democrat and Republican discussed adopting a power-sharing deal similar to one struck two decades ago in similar circumstances, a Democratic spokesman said on Tuesday.

Democrat Chuck Schumer, set to become majority leader thanks to incoming Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote, told the chamber's top Republican, Mitch McConnell, that he favored adopting a deal along the lines of the 2001 arrangement "without extraneous changes from either side," a Schumer spokesman said.

Recognizing that the vice president could not be a constant presence in the chamber, the 2001 agreement split committee memberships evenly and mandated that both leaders seek to attain an equal balance of the two parties' interests when scheduling and debating legislative and executive business. When one party has clear control of the Senate, it holds committee chairmanships along with a majority of committee seats and dictates the chamber's agenda.

McConnell also sought to keep the Senate's legislative filibuster, according to his office. Some Democrats favor changing the rules so that legislation could pass on a simple majority vote. But McConnell wants to keep the rules requiring a super-majority of 60 votes to overcome a filibuster and advance legislation.



'The president who started no war'

In farewell address, Trump says his 'movement' is 'just beginning'

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump, in a farewell address released on Tuesday, touted his legacy and wished luck to the new administration of President-elect Joe Biden but without acknowledging his successor by name.

"This week, we inaugurate a new administration and pray for its success in keeping America safe and prosperous," the Republican president said in recorded remarks. "We extend our best wishes, and we also want them to have luck - a very important word."

In Tuesday's farewell, without specifically mentioning Twitter's decision to suspend his @realDonaldTrump account, Trump made reference to his complaint that free speech had been muzzled by the company. "Shutting down free and open debate violates our core values and most enduring traditions," Trump said. "America is not a timid nation of tame souls who need to be sheltered and protected from those with whom we disagree."

In the recorded remarks Trump sought to highlight aspects of his presidency in which he took pride. "We did what we came here to do, and so much more," he said. "I took on the tough battles, the hardest fights, the most difficult choices - because that's what you elected me to do."

Trump noted Middle East peace deals his administration brokered and lauded his foreign policy agenda. "We revitalized our alliances and rallied the nations of the world to stand up to China like never before," he said. "I am especially proud to be the first president in decades who has started no new wars."

And the president suggested his movement would go on. "Now, as I prepare to hand power over to a new administration at noon on Wednesday, I want you to know that the movement we started is only just beginning," Trump said.

China remains the focus

Biden's State, Defence, Intel picks lay out president's foreign policy

AGENCIES

President-elect Joe Biden's cabinet nominees promised Tuesday that the United States would stay tough on China but vowed a new era of international cooperation after Donald Trump's divisive "America First" approach.

A day before Biden becomes the 46th president, Antony Blinken, his choice for secretary of state, indicated that the new administration will revive agreements with Iran and Russia but described both countries as threats.

"Not one of the big challenges we face can be met by one country acting alone - even one as powerful as the US," Blinken, a mild-mannered longtime aide to Biden, told his Senate confirmation hearing.

"We can revitalize our core alliances - force multipliers of our influence around the world. Together, we are far better positioned to counter threats posed by Russia, Iran, and North Korea and to stand up for democracy and human rights."

Blinken distanced himself from the outgoing president's needling of allies



and denunciations of multilateralism but said that Trump "was right in taking a tougher approach to China."

Blinken backed the determination Tuesday by the outgoing secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, that China was committing genocide against Uighurs and other mostly Muslim people.

Retired general Lloyd Austin, the nominee to be defense secretary, told his hearing that the rising Asian power "constitutes a significant and long-term security threat to the United States and to our allies and partners."

He also pledged to tackle extremists in the military's own ranks, after some members of the military dressed in civilian clothing took part in the attack on the US Capitol by a pro-Trump mob.

His comments came as 12 members of the National Guard force deployed to protect Biden's inauguration were removed during a sweep of background checks to root out any members with potential links to extremist groups.

Biden's pick for intelligence chief said she would remain apolitical. Avril Haines, a former top CIA official nominated to be director of national intelligence (DNI), also said the US

espionage community would step up its focus on China as a key threat.

She also promised senators she would release a still-classified report into Saudi Arabia's assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a US-resident Saudi journalist.

He faced friendly questioning even from most Republicans, indicating he is likely to win quick confirmation in the Senate.

A deputy secretary of state in Barack Obama's presidency, Blinken promised to return to diplomacy including on Iran but acknowledged it's "destabilizing activities" in the region.

Blinken said that Biden would also move quickly to extend the New START treaty on nuclear reduction, the last remaining arms pact with Russia, which expires on February 5.

In another shift, Blinken said that he would immediately review Pompeo's designation of Yemen's Huthi rebels as a terrorist group.

Blinken said that Saudi Arabia, a close ally of Trump, bore much of the responsibility for what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

US POLICY UNDER BIDEN

Backs Trump's 'tougher approach' on China

US to seek 'longer and stronger' deal with Iran

US to extend New START with Russia

US to keep Jerusalem embassy but will seek Palestinian state

Plans full review of approach to North Korea

To end Saudi support in Yemen war, release Khashoggi report

A lotus, not a Chinese dragon Gujarat changes name of dragon fruit

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

The government in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat has decided to change the name of dragon fruit as it feels the original name is associated with China, drawing derision from the country's opposition yesterday.

India and China are currently locked in a military standoff along their contested Himalayan border, with New Delhi responding to the deaths of 20 of its troops in June by banning Chinese-made apps and curbing imports.

"The Gujarat government has decided... the word dragon fruit is not appropriate, and is associated with China. The fruit's shape is like a lotus, and hence we have given it a new Sanskrit name, kamalam. There is nothing political about it," Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, who is from BJP, told media on Tuesday.

The lotus, or kamal as it is called in Hindi, is the symbol of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The development comes a few months after Modi had praised farmers in a radio programme for cultivating the dragon fruit in the arid region of Kutch in Gujarat.

"After that the farmers had approached me, and suggested changing the name of dragon fruit to kamalam," Vinod Chavda,



the BJP Member of Parliament from Kutch, told Reuters. "I am happy that the state has accepted the proposal."

There are more than 200 farmers in Kutch alone who are growing dragon fruit over 1,500 acres, said Hareesh Thakkar, a farmer from the region.

"The Indian name of the fruit will bring more happiness to us. We feel that the acceptance level of the fruit will also increase if it is looked upon as an Indian fruit," said Thakkar, a farmer.

The fruit is also grown in neighbouring Maharashtra state and in northeastern India. There was no sign that local governments there were planning any name change.

The opposition Congress called the name change a gimmick. "The government has nothing worthwhile to show as achievements, and is trying to divert attention from real issues," Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said.

Israel issues tenders for 2,500 new settler homes

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel has issued tenders for 2,500 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, a watchdog said yesterday, on the eve of Joe Biden's swearing-in as US president.

On Sunday, Israel approved 780 new settler homes in the West Bank ahead of a March poll where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to face a fierce challenge from right-wing and pro-settler candidate Gideon Saar.

Peace Now said the government had now published tenders for a further 2,112 units in the West Bank and 460 in East Jerusalem, the eastern part of the city annexed by Israel but which the Palestinians hope to make the capital of a future state.

It accused the government of a "mad scramble to promote as much settlement activity as possible until the last minutes before the change of the administration in Washington."

"By doing so, Netanyahu is signalling to the incoming president that he has no intention of giving the new chapter in US-Israel relations even one day of grace, nor serious thought to how to plausibly resolve our conflict with the Palestinians," it said in a statement.

All Jewish settlements in the West Bank are regarded as illegal by much of the international community.

But Trump's administration, breaking with decades of US policy, declared in late 2019 that Washington no longer considered settlements as being in breach of international law.

Biden has indicated that his administration will restore Washington's pre-Trump policy of opposing settlement expansion.



People holding placards with the photo of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris celebrate on the day of her inauguration in the village of Thulasendrapuram, where Harris' maternal grandfather was born and grew up, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, India yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
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ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল রিপোর্টিং আইন, ২০১৫ এর ধারা ৪৪ মোতাবেক বাংলাদেশে নিবন্ধিত সকল জনস্বার্থ সংস্থা উহার আর্থিক প্রতিবেদন প্রণয়নে উপরোক্ত মানদণ্ড সমূহের প্রতিপালন এবং অনুসরণ করিবেন।
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চেয়ারম্যান
ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল রিপোর্টিং কাউন্সিল
ই-মেইল: admin@frcbd.org

BOOK REVIEW: LITERARY CRITICISM

The Portrait of the Writer as a Critique

With 'Mrs Dalloway' newly on public domain, Virginia Woolf's literary criticism demand a revisit

JAHANARA TARIQ

The books which are closest to my heart and which evoke a certain sense of otherworldly glee are the ones that are themselves odes to literature, reading, and writing. *Genius and Ink: Virginia Woolf on How to Read* (TLS Books, 2019) is one such book. It is a collection of critical essays and book reviews by Woolf which were published in the UK's *Times Literary Supplement* from 1904 to 1934. Each of the essays is a meditation on an author, a literary genre, or musings on the craft of reading which somehow manage to be witty and romantic, satiric and sentimental, edgy, elusive, existential, and life-affirming all in the same strain.

To someone who is a student of literature and a passionate devotee of the arts, Woolf is nothing short of a literary goddess whose penmanship is lethally captivating in all its shades of versatility. However, we do not get to visualise the tongue dipped in the stream of consciousness that shaped her novels, riddled with quiet desperation and the divergence of different selves, in this book. Instead, much like the brilliant illustration preceding the foreword by Ali Smith and the introduction by Francesca Wade, we see a master of prosaic perfection, acute observation, and unbridled literary passion playing tango with her quill. We get to read Woolf's scathing scrawl about the *Ulysses* being "a memorable catastrophe—immense in daring, terrific in disaster", along with her profound admiration towards Charlotte Bronte, who "has you by the hand and forces you along her road, seeing the things she sees and as she sees them." Of Montaigne she writes, "Perhaps" is one of his favourite expressions: "perhaps" and "I think" and all those words [...] which help one to muffle up opinions which it would be highly impolitic to speak outright." Her reveries about Thomas Hardy's pastoral glories and the spectral qualities of Conrad's prose transfixed me like nothing else.

Woolf entered the world of *TLS* with her reviews of "trashy" guidebooks to Thackeray and Dickens's England, and cemented her role as a 23-year-old critic who would receive a new book to review every week. Her anonymity gave her the freedom to write without hesitation or fear of public disapproval for being a woman, and many of the concepts that Woolf wrote about in these essays crawled into



COLLAGE: SARAH ANJUM BARI

the pages of her novels. For example, in her essay "On Rereading Novels", she writes, "The Novelist can put himself at any point of view [...]. He can appear in person, like Thackeray; or disappear, like Flaubert. He can state the facts like Defoe, or give the thought without the fact like Henry James." In works like *The Waves* (1931) or *To the Lighthouse* (1927), it seems that she gave herself that space and went on to phenomenally update the definition of a novel by playing with points of view and alternating soliloquies.

What is even more intriguing is the relevance of her arguments. In "How It Strikes a Contemporary", Woolf draws out the ever-existing anxieties of a reader oscillating between classics and contemporaries, which are subjected to harsh critics and are devoid of the inherent nostalgia older masterpieces hold. Drawing on Woolf's affinity for her contemporaries, we too have to say that for all our rose-tinted nostalgia for hoop skirts and loquacious passages in vintage editions, we feel a certain connexion with the literature of our times—the anxious attempts at inclusion, the political correctness, and new brand of restlessness which seemingly only the internet can induce—simply because it is inherently who we are. I stick to this statement as I opt to read Nicole Krauss's *History of Love* over Montgomery's fire-headed Anne, on this post-global warming January eve of 2021, whilst

attempting to etch something worthwhile on my broken laptop.

Whichever book, era, or genre she dove deep into, Woolf did it through a holistic lens, biting into her subject fervently and sifting through the identities and conflicts to critique the work within. At times, though, she applies little to no context, so if one isn't familiar with Elizabethan plays or John Evelyn's diary, for instance, this book can seem a little intimidating.

Reading *Genius and Ink*, I couldn't help but wonder what role Woolf would play today as the voice of the critic. Would Arundhati Roy's troubled Anjum remind her of her gender-bending and immortal Orlando? What would her thoughts be on the feminist dystopian TV adaptations of Margaret Atwood? Or what would she make of the less literary, more "drinks over dinner" kind of questions—from a scale of one to ten, how would she rate Sally Potter's rendition of her account of Sackville's biography, speckled with serenades of androgynous angels? How would her face twitch up when reading Rupri Kaur's new poetry collection?

Jahanara Tariq recently completed her undergraduate thesis on Virginia Woolf's Orlando. Her hobbies include snorting caffeine while listening to Vivaldi's "Winter" and praying to the ghost of Tagore on desolate mornings.

BOOK REVIEW: GRAPHIC FICTION

'A Gift for a Ghost': Spain's Great New Graphic Novel

MEHRUL BARI

Borja González is a self-taught illustrator, and you both can and cannot tell while looking at his resplendent new work, *A Gift for a Ghost* (Abram ComicArts, 2020). You can't tell looking at the splendid artwork—so precise and so assured, dense with mood lighting and many a background flourish to admire—and you can tell in the way that only makes sense after learning the fact. The panels, and often the story, eschews the conventions of a graphic novel, if such things can be said to exist. Pages go by without any words. Scenes, just as much, stripped of consequence. The book instead shows a story—two stories, one in 1856 and one in 2016—held together by the phantom, fleeting forces of time.

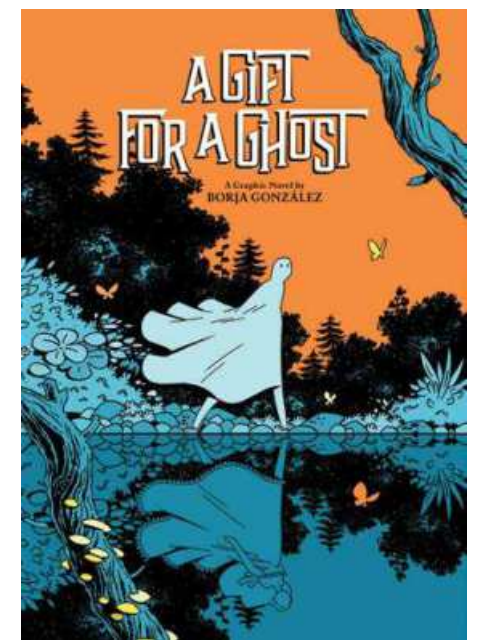
González's illustrations are so endlessly lovely, and his characters so human, that there is a spell of universality cast among its negative spaces. *A Gift for a Ghost*'s 114 pages, limned in the colour palette of its cover, are there for you to gape at; the little worlds each panel leaves behind, a time capsule. One can find traces of *Love and Rockets*, Daniel Clowes, and Charles Burns (the graphic novel was originally called *The Black Holes*), but the work is very much González's.

None of the characters are drawn with faces or fingers, and we never see the ends of their feet. Rather, they dissolve like stick figures into the ground, and the ground itself is often grassed or earthy. The central cast appear as extensions of nature, stretching onto, or growing out of, the forest floors they frequent. The more aristocratic sisters and mother of the 1856 protagonist wear long frocks that hide much of their selves away, and it is they who stick out sore in the confines of the graphic novel. Fundamentally a narrative of ill-fitting, the artwork very simply and very concisely informs us who belongs and who never will.

Not unlike the central Teresa of 1856, we have Laura, Gloria, and Cristina in 2016, a trio punk-band-in-training, who recall the Shaggs more than they do the Clash. We never see them truly interact with others, but it is very clear how poorly they fit in from a look into the posters that adorn their practice space. (It goes without saying that you should immediately read this book if you can't decide which

Invasion of the Body Snatchers is the greatest film ever made.) Even among the misfits, it is Laura who is most alien. Body-conscious and with interests few share, Laura goes out every night in varying personas. "I'm coming from a costume party, okay?" she always informs, pre-emptive, even when no one asks or listens.

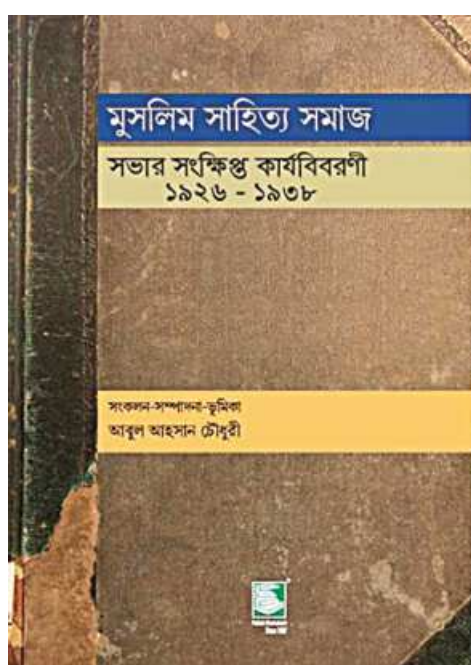
At some point untraceable, the lives of 2016 and 1856 intersect, and the disparate worlds strip away and commonalities emerge. The world we get really is just ours, save for a few twinkles of twilight that hang just below the cloudless skies. Even Magic Lake Ice Cream, the ice cream parlour they frequent by the side of the forest, glimmers under the nightlight, and promises to "never close."



A Gift for a Ghost's art is sheen and linocut-like; dark, foreboding, pretty, exciting. If you've heard of the term "visual poetry," this is what they've been referring to. This book is as poetic, as visual, and as beautiful as it can be, and within the first few pages it will enchant you for minutes, hours, and days.

Mehrul Bari S. Chowdhury is a writer, poet, and artist. His work has appeared in *Cathartic Literary Magazine*, *Six Seasons Review*, and *Twist & Twain*, among others.

THE BOOK REPORT



Muslim Shahittya Shamaj: Dhaka's First Movement for the Freedom of Thought

EMRAN MAHFUZ

As societies and economies started transitioning in the aftermath of the First World War, the Indian subcontinent, too—albeit belatedly—caught up with the wave of socialist thought. A new way to think about religion, in particular, began to emerge. In Bengal, some students and teachers of Dhaka College and the University of Dhaka stepped forward to liberate society from regressive thought and practices.

On January 19, 1926 under the guidance of Dr Muhammad Shahidullah—then professor of Bangla and Culture at the Muslim Hall of the University of Dhaka—the Muslim Shahittya Shamaj took birth as an initiative to promote free thinking.

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BOOK REVIEW: GENDER POLITICS

On Gender Mainstreaming and Governance in South Asia

KRISHNA MENON

Despite much of the conversations and advances across countries since the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), gender mainstreaming still lacks a solid theoretical grounding, primarily because it grew outside academia as a movement under the ambit of feminism, and not as a part of social science. Therefore, gender mainstreaming is seen more as a political commitment and as a development agenda, and its advances remain murky as an academic discipline.

Gender Mainstreaming in Politics, Administration and Development in South Asia (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) edited by Ishtiaq Jamil, Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, Syeda Lasna Kabir, and M Mahfuzul Haque uncovers these issues in South Asian and sub-Saharan politics. With contributions from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives, and Malawi, the strength of this volume lies in its approach, which is to look at gender mainstreaming from a policy and governance perspective.

A notable feature of this book is its ability to span both the national and local. In the chapter on "Gender Budgeting", professor Aminuzzaman offers an exhaustive study of the policies introduced in Bangladesh in 2008, noting the absence of a sound framework of gender analysis and a glaring lacunae in allocation and prioritising of funds. Meanwhile, Mizanur Rahman and Sangita Dhal both engage with the impact of gender mainstreaming at the micro levels, such as emerging leadership in rural Bangladesh and the possibilities and limitations of empowerment through e-governance in the state of Odisha in India.

Elections, which form the bedrock of politics and government formation in South Asia, are a good

entry point into understanding the sociological complexities of a given society. Who votes, who does not, why not, and how do they vote?—as Sanjay Kumar's perceptive analysis demonstrates, these questions reveal the shifts in power and the nature of social transformation underway in India. Professor Ragnhild's paper draws our attention to interventions possible in the funding of election processes. Meanwhile, Professor Kabir examines the proverbial glass ceiling and the glass cliff as experienced by the women in Bangladeshi higher civil service, which has wide manifestations

across this region.

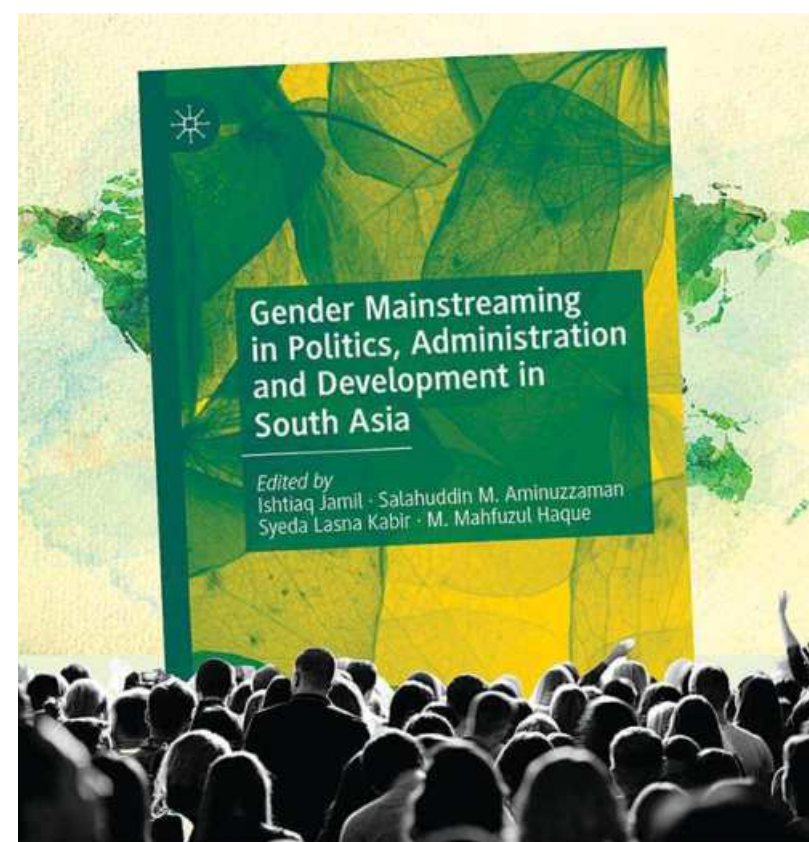
In other chapters, Jinat Hossain and Samrin Shahbaz examine the legal structures that govern property rights in Bangladesh and sexual and reproductive health rights in Pakistan respectively, while Janethri and Kamala Liyanage advocate eloquently for substantive equality for women, exploring gender-based sexual harassment in higher education campuses in Sri Lanka. Mohamed Faizal's paper provides further evidence of the existing work and wage inequalities faced by women in the Maldives. All these discussions emulate trends across the

South Asian region.

A book such as this, urges us to ask what it is that we mainstream when we mainstream gender. There are broadly two answers—one is to think of "gender" as a fixed, descriptive category; this leads to it becoming a stand in term for women. The other way is to think of gender as a complex set of relationships of power which result in specific forms of inclusion/exclusion. We need to think of gender as a verb—as "gendering"—and not as a noun alone. Otherwise, gender mainstreaming simply becomes a professional project, without invoking the emancipatory and egalitarian ethos of feminist politics.

Global prescriptions and international formulations tend to homogenise people's experiences. In the nation states in this region, there is a growing realisation that the responses to feminist demands do not actually tackle questions of structural inequality. The title and focus of this book reminds us of the historical, economic, socio-cultural, and geographical specificities of this region, while admitting to the hierarchies that exist here. Yet feminist knowledge has never been known to exist or emerge on its own, it has always had deep roots in feminist politics. This bond is what will nourish the creation of knowledge both about people and about governmentality. Instead of depending on knowledge created by the structures of power, feminist knowledge needs to speak truths to power.

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COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Schools need to reopen

But health guidelines must be strictly maintained

WE all know how difficult it has been for school-going children to cope with their studies during almost eleven months of staying at home and not going to school. Despite efforts to introduce various ways of remote learning, through online and especially televised classes, the experiment has pretty much failed because of lack of access to the devices needed. Children from underprivileged families especially and those living in the villages have been most-affected as they did not have adequate access to laptops, computers, TV sets or smartphones. An extensive Education Watch Report 2020-2021 released by the Campaign for Popular Education has revealed the extent of the education gap caused and given recommendations on how to address it.

According to the report, about 69.5 percent of the students did not participate in distance learning and 57.9 percent of them said they could not join the classes due to lack of devices. Over 16 percent who were able to access the classes said they found them to be boring and so they skipped them. Unsurprisingly, most of the students (75 percent) and parents (76 percent) surveyed have said that they want schools to reopen quickly as children are becoming restless and losing out on education.

This seems to be a logical and necessary step at this point when we are confronted with almost a year gap in education for most school-going children. But certain precautions have to be taken before any reopening of schools, researchers have warned. Teachers interviewed have also said that they want classes to resume but safety measures have to be implemented, such as cleaning the classrooms, cleaning bathrooms, providing handwashing facilities and enforcing physical distancing in the classrooms. Other recommendations of the study should also be adopted, including mandatory mask wearing, reopening schools in areas where infection and death rates are low, reopening them in phases, less time for examinations and more time for learning, cutting down holidays to increase class time, reopening certain grades first, and doing away with Primary Education Completion Examination and Junior School Certificate tests, while shortening the SSC and HSC syllabus with fewer subjects.

The survey report has given an invaluable assessment of how education has fared during the last eleven months, what measures failed and why, and also what will help to regain the academic loss. The government should take these recommendations seriously, and provide the funds required to implement the safety measures in the schools that will reopen. As another precautionary measure, vaccines may also be given to the teachers of these schools as soon as they are available.

While there are risks associated with reopening schools, the survey has shown that it is crucial to do so as children are being deprived of education every day they miss school. The key is to ensure that all health guidelines are properly facilitated and enforced.

One-third of 62 rivers in Barishal no longer navigable

The authorities must take urgent measures to protect these precious national resources

THE state of rivers in Bangladesh has been a cause for concern for a while now, so much so that in 2019, the High Court declared rivers to be "legal persons", with the National River Conservation Commission being appointed as the legal guardian of all rivers across the country. However, the gargantuan task of protecting our rivers from destruction has proved difficult even in some of the most river-rich regions of Bangladesh, as was made clear in a recent survey from the Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services. According to the survey, around one-third of 62 rivers in Barishal division has lost navigability, causing the suspension of vessel operations in around 460km (out of 1,475km) of 27 waterways.

In a country where not just the ecosystem, but travel, livelihoods and a myriad of economic activities are dependent on rivers, the filling up of rivers due to siltation and river erosion is something that should worry us immensely. According to experts, this will not only affect navigability but will lead to greater water logging, impact wetland ecosystems, and negatively affect irrigation and landing facilities. However, there is a simple solution—experts have recommended 4.2 million cubic metres of capital dredging and 170 million cubic metres of maintenance and conservation dredging in Barishal to deal with the issue.

We hope the authorities will listen to the experts and deal with the issue urgently in order to improve the navigability of Barishal's waterways, especially since so many of the area's residents are dependent on these waterways for travel and transportation. While launch owners have appealed for dredging once a year in order to continue their operations, the authorities must also address the concerns of environmentalists and civil society members and evict the illegal occupants around these waterways. However, in the long run, we must remember that our waterways and rivers are interconnected, and without dealing with the all-encompassing issues of river pollution and river-grabbing across the country, whatever localised steps we take to save our rivers may not be anywhere near enough. We hope the government will take concrete steps to implement the 2019 HC directive and will also arm the National River Conservation Commission with more executive authority to ensure the protection of these precious national resources.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Progress in local vaccine research

Covid-19 vaccine candidate Bangavax, developed by Globe Biotech Ltd. of Bangladesh, has initiated a new era for the country after the company submitted an application to Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) recently seeking permission for first and second phase clinical trials. As a Bangladeshi, I feel really optimistic about this and pray for its success in the human trial. Undoubtedly, such research will inspire other scientists and researchers in our country.

Rakib Uddin Ahmed, Chattogram

A case for improving labour conditions in Southeast Asia

Bangladeshi migrant workers deserve better policy attention



ABDULLAH SHIBLI

IT has been well-known for a long time that Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East and South Asian countries are at the receiving end of all sorts of uncertainties one can think of. Some of them incur a debt burden from the recruitment process, face many hazards and health risks—and more so during the pandemic—and then are the subject of moderate to serious deprivations. International human rights advocates including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have tried from time to time to draw the attention of the host governments and Bangladesh to these violations, but it is not clear whether these have fallen on deaf ears.

A few weeks ago, this newspaper, citing a recent ESCAP study, reported that migrant workers in Southeast Asia "are more likely to be exposed to the virus, lack access to health care and other essential services, be stranded in countries without work or social protection and face rising xenophobia." As if to validate the study, a news item in South China Morning Post earlier this month reported that a Bangladeshi migrant worker, Hasibur Rahman, is suing his ex-employer and dormitory operator in Singapore accusing them of "false imprisonment" after he was locked in his room during the coronavirus outbreak. This news resonated with me since I have been following from time to time accounts of the poor working and living conditions migrant workers are subjected to in the construction industry in Singapore and Malaysia.

In Singapore, as of December 2019, low-skilled migrant workers account for 555,100 of its population of 5.6 million. News of the treatment generally meted out by employers in Singapore is nothing new. In 2014, The Guardian ran a feature under the title "Singapore needs to address its treatment of migrant workers" and warned that "unrest is spreading among Singapore's migrants over working conditions. How can a country of millionaires justify failing to act?"

I don't mean to single out Singapore as the only country that is treating its migrant workforce as second-class citizens. Migrants form the backbone of the labour force in other countries of Southeast Asia including Malaysia and Brunei, drawing workers from Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. They all have witnessed the harsh living conditions and lack of basic amenities in their dorms and "labour camps". As one of the biggest economies in Southeast Asia, Malaysia is an attractive destination for workers from neighbouring countries seeking better

wages and employment. The country is thought to have at least five million migrant workers—including two million who are here illegally—which is more than a third of its workforce. Bangladeshis make up between 300,000 and 500,000 of them. The migrant labourers are mostly in concentrated industries that locals shun as 3-D, i.e. "dirty, dangerous and difficult".

Last year, from Southeast Asia to the Middle East, the Covid-19 pandemic exposed "the unique vulnerabilities of the world's estimated 164 million low-paid migrant workers, who toil at the jobs locals do not want, to save money and get a leg up back home." A new WHO study, published on December 18, 2020 on the International Migrants Day, reveals that the pandemic has had a highly negative impact on the living and working conditions of refugees and migrants. In Singapore, Bangladeshis constituted

gradually eased movement restrictions. CNBC warned last November that "neglect of migrant workers could hurt Malaysia's economic recovery."

Coming back to the story of Hasibur Rahman, a construction worker, who has filed a claim for USD 163,000 in damages, according to documents submitted in court and seen by AFP. Staff at his dormitory had locked Hasibur and up to 20 other workers in their room on April 19, after one of their roommates was thought to have contracted the virus and was transferred to a medical facility. During this time, they were only able to use the toilet by calling a guard to come and escort them. Some of the men were running fevers and the room was hot and poorly ventilated, the documents said.

In Malaysia, authorities arrested Mohamed Rayhan Kabir, a Bangladeshi, in retaliation for his criticism of government policies towards migrants

for the virus to spread."

It was recently reported that Malaysia would allow, until June 2021, undocumented migrants to sign up to work in construction, plantations, agriculture and manufacturing, or they may choose to return to their home countries. This may be a mixed blessing for the migrant workers, according to Irene Xavier, co-founder of Sahabat Wanita Selangor, a local group assisting migrant workers. "It appears they are answering the call from some industries that want migrant workers—it's not crafted with the interest of the workers in mind, that's clear."

Even as migration for construction work provides an income opportunity to improve the standards of living back home for Bangladeshi migrants and their families, the rising costs of migration, high risks of accidents, and flexible hiring practices in the industry have made this venture particularly precarious. Apart from having to pay exorbitant agent fees to access skills training, testing, and job placement services, Bangladeshi migrants face additional challenges at their workplace, such as job insecurity, low wages, weak bargaining power, as well as various occupational hazards in the construction industry.

Social advocates have rightly urged Bangladesh government to engage in diplomacy with host countries to ensure Bangladeshi workers are not being deprived of their rights. With nearly 8 million of its 160 million residents living abroad, Bangladesh has one of the world's largest emigrant populations, ranking only behind India, Mexico, China, Russia, and Syria, according to estimates from the United Nations' Population Division.

On December 18, 2020, the International Migrants' Day, *The Daily Star* showcased a new report from ESCAP circulated in preparation for the first Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) scheduled to take place in March 2021. The report alerts all stakeholders that Covid-19 will continue to have an impact on people and communities on the move in the near future. As vaccines are approved, the report underlines that the inclusion of migrants in vaccination programmes, including migrants in irregular situations, will be critical.

Another way of looking at it: the host governments need to realise that migrant workers are akin to the proverbial "golden goose" and continued mistreatment of these workers will be like killing the goose that lays golden eggs. Improving labour conditions is in the interest of both migrant workers and their host countries.

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This September 2, 2013 photo published in Malaysian newspaper *The Star* shows some undocumented migrant workers being rounded up as part of an operation to flush out unwanted foreigners in Malaysia.

FILE PHOTO

almost half of the migrants infected with Covid-19, and their situation has been compounded by poor living conditions, insufficient legal protection and limited access to healthcare. Overall, migrant workers' infections were three times higher during Covid-19. According to a report in Prothom Alo, more than seventy thousand Bangladeshis were infected in 186 countries by July 2020. By December 27, some 2,330 Bangladeshi migrants had succumbed to Covid-19 in 21 countries.

The Covid-19 crisis led Malaysians to take advantage of the Bangladeshis. Thousands of migrant workers reportedly lost their jobs. ILO said in a report that there were cases of migrant workers being unfairly terminated or not getting paid when Malaysia's nationwide coronavirus lockdown was first imposed in March. It was reported on May 26, 2020 that police rounded up 200 undocumented workers in one week alone in Petaling Jaya, outside Kuala Lumpur, even as officials

in an Al Jazeera documentary. His work permit was cancelled and he was eventually deported. Malaysia does not recognise refugees and there are high levels of distrust of those who come from abroad, often working as low-paid labourers. Some accused migrant workers of spreading the coronavirus and being a burden on government resources. The government's public attacks on Kabir, at a time of rising xenophobia in Malaysia, serve to fan the flames of intolerance, Human Rights Watch said.

Last September, BBC ran a story titled "Covid-19 Singapore: A 'pandemic of inequality' exposed", which focussed on the harsh conditions migrant workers face. "Their right to live in Singapore is tied to their job and their employer must provide accommodation, at a cost. They commute from their dorms in packed vans to building sites where they work and take breaks alongside men from other crowded dorms—perfect conditions

Factory closure and its indirect impacts on local economy



NAWSHAD AHMED

WHEN a reasonably large factory is closed down, either by the government or by a private entrepreneur, the immediate consequence of it that comes to mind is the loss of jobs. The closure of the factory will render a large number of workers unemployed and their families will suffer as a result. Oftentimes, the families of displaced workers go through terrible times and endure long-lasting effects. The direct consequence on the families of workers made redundant by factory closure is more easily understood by us, but the indirect impact of this on the locality in which the factory is located is not so easily perceived by all.

For example, if a sugarcane factory is closed down, it will have a negative consequence on the sugarcane growers in neighbouring areas who will suffer income loss as the demand for their produce falls. The damage to the local community and economy would be compounded as the affected families pull back on spending. Most of the schools, hospitals, businesses, restaurants, public transport and service facilities that were established centring round the factory will also suffer as a consequence.

The government is reportedly contemplating shutting down some loss-making sugar factories in the country. Depending on the size of the factory, it will have a proportionate effect which may be more localised but could also have regional consequences. The total loss of income and the consequent contraction of expenditure of the jobless factory workers and surrounding population might be huge, and are believed to have a depressing effect on the local economy by

indirectly affecting other producers and service providers who depend on each other's income. The closure of one large factory may result in partial or full closure of other businesses and industries in the area, setting off a downward spiral of economic activities resulting in additional unemployment, out-migration and large-scale displacement of population.

A household affected by job loss will continue to spend less than before until

recover from.

Before establishing an industry, a number of standard procedures are generally followed, including conducting a financial viability study and an economic feasibility study, the latter to assess the social costs and benefits of the industry. Therefore, while taking a decision on shutting down an industry, the wider consequences of the closure needs to be considered. The financial

The closure of one large factory may result in partial or full closure of other businesses and industries in the area, setting off a downward spiral of economic activities resulting in additional unemployment, out-migration and large-scale displacement of local population.

the household head can arrange an alternative employment which may not be easy, especially for people of advanced age. They will try to hold on to their savings, if any, and the separation benefits they receive from the government, which may not be a substantial amount for a low-paid worker. The possibility of reemployment is often very limited due to a paucity of alternative local employment opportunities, especially in a contracting economic environment, while getting the same type of work with the industrial skills they possess becomes more difficult. Even if they find a work, the terms and conditions of employment are likely to be poorer than before, and chances of getting full-time work will remain a remote possibility. The chances of getting permanent employment will be meagre and average earnings will be reduced. Almost all the local businesses and industries are affected by the closure of an important factory, introducing a chain effect in the region which is not easy to

loss incurred by the enterprise should not be the sole basis for its closure—its impact on the local economy should also be estimated. In addition, the import substitution benefits of an existing industry should also be taken into account before closing down the industry. The drain on foreign exchange by importing the same item, for example, sugar, in case the sugar industries are closed down, and the effect of increased price of sugar on the public are important factors which should be taken into consideration before shutting down the industries.

It has to be remembered that losses are made not only by public-sector industries but by the private-sector enterprises as well. But both these sectors can recover from losses in various ways including modernisation, public-private partnership, foreign investment, re-pricing of products, use of innovative methods to produce by-products, and aggressive marketing of those. By using

all or some of these, an industry can turn around and start making profit again. Therefore, all efforts should be made like modernisation, use of new technology, rationalisation of human resource needs and capacity building, and stronger management and monitoring to give the public-sector sugar factories a new lease of life.

If these industries are closed down, it will go against the government's policy of enlarging formal employment opportunities in the country. At present, 85 percent of the employed people work in the informal sector who face various problems including irregular salary payments, absence of health and other benefits and no job security. An eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable industry like sugar factories should not be closed down without an all-aspect assessment of their performances.

From the above, it is clear that worklessness associated with closure of factories and the consequent spending cuts by households will resonate through the local economy, negatively impacting on society and business and ultimately affecting the entire geographical area. Due to the precarious labour market situation in Bangladesh, it is often difficult for the displaced workers to get reemployed, although lack of evidence in this area makes it difficult to assess how post-retirement pathways are shaped by the availability of alternative local economic opportunities. To avoid the burden on the government to compensate the workers and for the sake of sustaining the local economy, I think the government should take closure decisions with caution and following assessment of the overall impact of such closures on the local economy, rather than on the basis of only financial loss the public-sector industries are making.

Dr Nawshad Ahmed is an economist and urban planner.

COVER STORY

CREATING NEW STORIES

One of the lively souls of the folk fusion band, Joler Gaan, Rahul Ananda, has a unique view of life. Over the years, he and his band mates created music, not just to entertain but to resonate art and culture in the heart of music lovers. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the versatile artist shared insights to band culture and his perception of what life is about.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored with Rafi Hossain*. Today, we are here with Rahul Ananda. It's great to have you here, Rahul.

Rahul Ananda: I am glad to be here. Thank you for having me. I really appreciate being in touch with one another during these times in such ways. The old world was about staying connected, and this new, strange world is about maintaining as much distance as we get. But, I am hopeful that we will go back to our normal ways once again. Until then, I hope we can all find new ways to be close to each other.

Rafi Hossain: The song you sang for us prompted this question in my mind: do you think, over time, we are getting less and less humane?

Rahul Ananda: I try to have an optimistic outlook. Whenever I perform on stage or get to speak to an audience, I always try to share words of hope and positivity. Sometimes, however, we all are prone to feelings of despair and frustration. At the beginning of this pandemic, I believed that we would come out of this as better people. But, even amidst these times, we see news of violence, rape, discrimination and racism all around us. We treat nature with cruelty, and we are now seeing its effects through natural disasters in Australia, the Amazon and so on. Perhaps, this is God's way of reprimanding us.

Rafi Hossain: 'Joler Gaan' has a unique way of presenting songs. How did you come up with the idea?

Rahul Ananda: Firstly, I am a student of Charukola. I am also a person of theatre. Aside from that, I have always been involved with music because of my family. When I was in my third year in Charukola, I would constantly be stressed and was also under a lot of familial pressure. During that time, a few friends and I began travelling the country when we came across some bauls. I was fascinated by their stories and I felt at peace with them. I gradually connected to other bauls and learnt a lot about our country's culture deeply. During that period, I also began writing, singing, and performing songs at Charukola with a friend of mine. Over time, we would perform the same song several times a day, and began receiving praise. Our songs started gaining popularity in university campuses all over Bangladesh, starting from Charukola and Dhaka University to later at Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University and even Dhaka Medical College and BUET. However, I would constantly have people telling me to choose between theatre, music, and Charukola when I loved doing all. It would make me quite upset. Now, you can see that we have a multimedial approach to our performance where we not only present songs, but have theatrical elements, as well as elements of Charukola in it. We also focus on performance art, which is a big part of postmodern art currently. One of our main goals is to break the wall that exists between the performers and the audience; we want the audience to be a part of the live experience.

Rafi Hossain: Does the performance and design for every show remain the same?



Rahul Ananda: No, we change it every time to adapt to the environment. Our performance in your living room, for instance, would be different from one in The Daily Star's seminar room, which would also widely differ from a show in front of 50,000 people. However, despite the number of people, we try to create an intimate presence with the audience. This idea came out from the concept of jol or water, how it flows and adapts and takes the shape of whichever container it is placed in.

Rafi Hossain: Nowadays, music has become more about likes, views, following, and an online presence. How do you feel about this?

Rahul Ananda: Previously, we would think that band music meant having a guitar, drums, and a bass guitar. Nowadays, we see a greater use of acoustic instruments. Some of the forms of music today are labelled as "synthetic", but we need to acknowledge the different tastes that people have. When I was quite young, I was trying to learn the tabla, dotara, flute and so on. During that time, my uncle gifted me a keyboard which had many features, and could even imitate the sounds of other instruments. I told Priyolal Das, my teacher and mentor, that I didn't need to learn the other instruments anymore because I had the keyboard. He laughed and told me that in the end, it's the real instruments that last. Maybe it was his words which I had yet to understand completely, or my own passion, but I did not quit learning them. Now, when I play the flute, I can see that it is still being received by the audience. It is the acceptance and the importance of such instruments that allow us, Joler Gaan,

to continue to perform successfully. Before the pandemic, we would have around ten to twelve shows every month, often in front of a large audience. I believe that it is very important to acknowledge the importance of band music. It is often regarded as a Western concept, when in reality, it has been deeply embedded in our history. Our predecessors would perform in groups as well, with instruments like the *dhol* instead of a large drum set. Even the guitar, which has many variations nowadays, was originated from folk music. Many people will dismiss band music for being Western, but accept the harmonium, when in fact it has a German origin. Even the tabla is not originally ours. One achievement of *Joler Gaan* that I want to note is that our songs are well received by children as well. Children are the best critiques, and they always speak their mind. It makes me truly happy when I see videos of toddlers trying to sing one of our songs. I love receiving videos of students attempting our songs and even performing them at their institution's cultural programs. Some of them are even using us as an inspiration to create their own music, which makes me beyond happy as that is one of my biggest goals from creating and sharing music. No one should be forbidden from expressing themselves, be it through music, art or whatever medium they prefer.

Rafi Hossain: Tell us more about your instruments.

Rahul Ananda: I actually just finished creating a new one today. Calling it completely new would be a mistake, as once again, it has been inspired by our predecessor's musical instruments which they would make themselves. I named this one *Pagla*, which my son suggested to match the name of my last instrument, *Pagli*. It looks like a guitar, with a hollow inside. It

uses different kinds of wood, all from our country, and the top is covered with real leather. The strings are actually made from plastic. The sound that it makes it quite deep, like a bass. I only finished creating the initial design, but it has yet to be ready for using on stage.

Rafi Hossain: A lot of people in different professions, especially music, have been struggling recently, especially due to this pandemic. But you mentioned that 'Joler Gaan' would perform multiple shows throughout the month previously. What do you have to say about that?

Rahul Ananda: I believe that we should all focus our energy on our own areas of work. During this pandemic, I tried to help different people in my own way. If you look at my Facebook page, you will see that I tried to encourage people to stay at home and take precautions, be it through songs or a simple status. I did not attempt to provide a cure to the virus, or suggest any such ideas. I never try to, for instance, put up statuses critiquing the government and its actions, because I believe there are people much more qualified than I am who deal with such instances and run our country. I always try to know my limits, be it in music, acting, or writing, and I believe the audience and the people around me know it too. To create a field of work, you need to be willing to put in effort, and deal with the difficult times and the dark side of it as well. For example, on many occasions, we have paid for shows ourselves to raise money for someone, we have given back half the money we received, and we have even paid the bill for the musical instruments of our show when someone was struggling with it. It is only possible to work and keep enjoying it if you are willing to go to such lengths.

Rafi Hossain: How do you view life? What do you believe our purpose is?

Rahul Ananda: Everyone, from Lalon Shah and Rabindranath Tagore to us today have asked this question. For me, the answer changes quite frequently with my perception of life. Often, I feel as though life is like a flowing river, with its branches creating new stories. Other times, I want to focus on the present and believe that the future is out of our control. Sometimes, however, the anxiety about the uncertain future also gets to me. Recently, I have been thinking of life as an experience, and that we have all been sent here to be a part of that. All of our lives are designed in a manner that is unique to us; no two people will have the same experience. Moreover, nothing in this life is guaranteed to us. We are all a tiny part of God's nature. But I am meeting new people and learning new things every day. I may not be sure what I am meant to do with it, but I hope to leave something behind that is helpful to the world, even when I am not in it.

Rafi Hossain: Is there anything you want to add?

Rahul Ananda: You asked me about my "fans" but I want to add that I don't have any, I only have people who are fond of my music. Fans, in my opinion, are for stars who are different from just a popular face. Lastly, I also want to say that I hope that our conversation today, be it the questions or our opinions, helps someone reflect on their life and thoughts someday too. I hope that everyone that loves me works on themselves, and that we can hope to have a beautiful future. Thank you, Rafi bhai and The Daily Star, for having me here today. I have immense love and appreciation for you.

Shreya Shomoyeeta

GRAPE VINE



PHOTO: RAKESH RAKIB PHOTOGRAPHY

Busy Bipasha

Bipasha Kabir first came into the showbiz industry through the 2009 edition of *Lux Channel i Superstar*. Since then, she has showcased her acting abilities in the movies *Bhalobashar Rong* and *Gundami*. She also did the item song for many movies. Recently, she finished working on the Bappy Khan directed movie *Soulmate*. Now, she has started shooting for the Apurba Rana directed movie *Give and Take*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

Noble at the Movies

For the first time, Noble gave his voice to a Bangladeshi film. He will be singing on the Iftekhar Shuvo directed film, *Mukhosh*. Abraham Tamim wrote the song, and it was composed and given tune to by Ahmed Humayun. Before this, Noble did a song for the Srijit Mukherji directed film *Vinci Da*. His song on that film was called *Tomar Moner Bhetor Jai*. Aside from this, Noble has a new song set to be released soon. The song, titled *Meherban*, is written by Ahmed Rizvi, and composed and given tune to by Ahmed Humayun.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

NIROB in Rozina's Film

Nirob is set to be in the first film directed by the renowned actor Rozina. Rozina will also be acting in the film, which is called *Fire Dekha*, and will be starring opposite Ilias Kanchan. Nirob said, "This will be the first time I do a film with someone as great as Rozina Madam. This is a big accomplishment for me, and I will be playing her brother in the film." The film, which got a government grant, will start its shooting from the 1st of March at Rajbari.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub



POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



TRUE BEAUTY

True Beauty is a South Korean romantic-comedy and coming-of-age television series. It has been based on the eponymous Line Webtoon by Yaongyi. The series has been directed by Kim Sang-hyeop, produced by Moon Seok-hwan and Oh Kwang-hee, and stars Moon Ga-young, Cha Eun-woo and Hwang In-yeop, among others. It focuses on a girl who suddenly gains popularity after mastering makeup skills and creating a very successful *YouTube* channel. It was released on December 9, 2020.

AK VS AK

AK vs AK is an Indian Hindi-language comedy thriller film on *Netflix*. It has been directed by Vikramaditya Motwane, produced by Deepa De Motwane, and stars Anurag Kashyap and Anil Kapoor in the lead. The film follows an antagonised director looking to seek revenge on a popular actor, as he sets up a real-life movie scenario for the actor to follow, upon kidnapping his daughter. It was initially released on December 24, 2020.



YOUR HONOR

Your Honor is a limited legal drama series which has been based on the Israeli television series, *Kvodo*. It has been developed by Peter Moffat, produced by Debra Lovatelli, alongside others, and stars Bryan Cranston, Hunter Doohan, and Hope Davis, among others. The series follows the story of the son of a reputed judge who becomes a part of a hit-and-run, and the choices they have to make going forward. It was first released on December 6, 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta





Shakib Al Hasan, back after a one-year suspension, was not just brilliant with the ball but also performed the role of the cheerleader of the team as Bangladesh cruised to a six-wicket victory against the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday in the first international match for the Tigers since the start of the pandemic.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shakib doesn't miss a beat on comeback

MAZHAR UDDIN

Displaying emphatic body language that was only matched by performance and a cutthroat personality, Shakib Al Hasan picked up where he left off as he returned to international cricket after serving a one-year ban imposed by the ICC in the first of three ODIs against the West Indies yesterday.

Bangladesh were also making a return to international cricket after over ten months without international assignments due to the pandemic, but all eyes were on the star all-rounder and how he would go about his business.

Any fears were allayed as he walked out as the man-of-the-match on his comeback game.

The champion cricketer looked extremely focused after skipper Tamim Iqbal, who opted to field after winning the toss, handed him the ball in the eleventh over of the first innings.

Shakib nearly picked up the wicket of Andre McCarthy with his second delivery, a beautiful, loopy delivery that shaped into the

I don't count all the domestic games I played. Outside the dressing room people may think about it, but I don't think about it. I should have finished the game tonight, but will work on it and will try to finish next time.

SHAKIB AL HASAN
ON HIS BATTING FORM

right-hander and was somehow negotiated. But given the wealth of experience at his disposal, Shakib immediately realised the situation and toss the ball up at the batsman to create an angle that tends to come into the right-hander and turns away.

After being watchful in the first over, McCarthy lost his cool and went for a slog sweep to another tossed up delivery from Shakib, missing the line completely and getting bowled. Shakib's first wicket on his comeback was also his 150th ODI wicket at home.

It was just the beginning from the vastly experienced left-arm spinner, whose keeping things simple was enough to break the back of the

West Indies batting line-up.

Shakib then dragged visiting skipper Jason Mohammed out of his crease and drifted the ball away to induce a stumping and Nkrumah Bonner became his third victim, falling prey to a typical Shakib leg-before trap on the front foot.

When Shakib returned for his second spell, it took him just two balls to dismiss the last West Indies batsman, Alzarri Joseph, and end with magnificent figures of four for eight from 7.2 overs as the visitors folded for a paltry 122 runs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

West Indies: 122 all out in 32.2 overs (Mayers 40, Powell 28; Shakib 4-18, Mahmud 3-28, Mustafizur 2-20)

Bangladesh: 125 for 4 in 33.5 overs (Tamim 44, Shakib 19; Akeal 3-26, Mohammed 1-19)

Result: Bangladesh won by 6 wickets

Man-of-the-match: Shakib Al Hasan

Speaking of Shakib, there has to be a mention of the record that he eventually made. His figures yesterday were the most economical of all four-wicket hauls by a Bangladeshi in ODIs.

However, despite such a heroic

comeback, Shakib was his usual calm and composed self and said that he only kept things simple and let the ball do the talking.

"As a bowler, I wanted to keep it simple and let the ball and the wicket do the work. Obviously playing after 16-17 months is not easy. But [I'm] happy with the way I performed," Shakib said after the game.

However, after some talks over below-par batting performances in the in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup last month, Shakib again missed out with the willow.

Shakib's response when asked about that was interesting.

"I don't count all the domestic games I played. Outside the dressing room, people may think about it but I don't think about it. I should have finished the game tonight, but I will work on it and try to finish the next time. What we can do is try all the time, but the outcome depends on luck and a player can only give a hundred per cent and leave the rest."

The 33-year-old also spoke about his demotion in the batting order from number three to four, saying that whether he wanted to or not, it was the team's decision and he would contribute accordingly.

Sheikh Russel hold off Rahmatganj

SPORTS REPORTER

A second-half strike from Mohammad Abdullah helped Sheikh Russel edge past a spirited Rahmatganj 1-0 in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A second successive triumph put the former champions on the top of the 13-team table along with holders Bashundhara Kings and Abahani with six points each.

Rahmatganj stick to the one point they snatched from Saif SC in their previous match.

Although Rahmatganj were brave against Saif SC, they were chasing shadows against Sheikh Russel, who did not allow Rahmatganj to build up from the back with a high press.

The first half was delicately poised with either team trying to control the game but neither appeared to have any intent to create chances until Sheikh Russel changed their strategy and began playing long balls to expose the opposition defence.

Forwards Abdullah and Lopes Rodrigues tried their luck from distance but could not beat former national goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton.

But the keeper was helpless against a powerful volley from in the 74th minute from Abdullah, who continued his streak after netting twice against Brothers Union in Sheikh Russel's last outing.

After conceding, Rahmatganj came close to leveling but luck was not with the Old Dhaka outfit as they saw a goal-bound drive from Crist Remi of Ivory Coast cleared from the line by a defender after goalkeeper Ashrafur Islam Rana had been beaten.

Goodbye RAIS BHAI

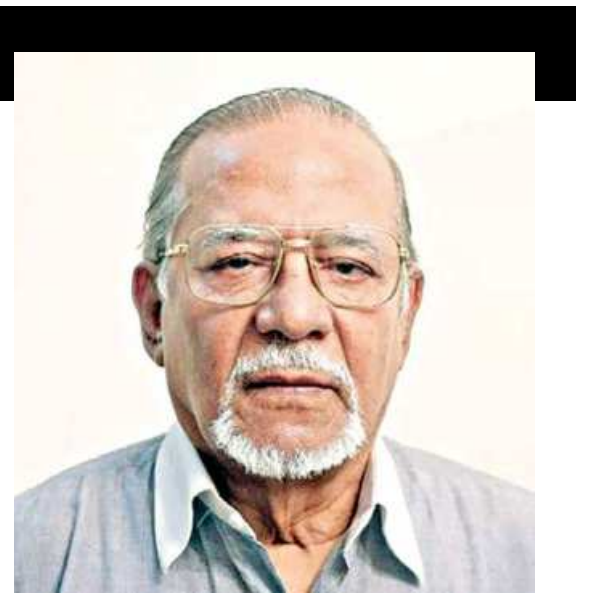
SPORTS REPORTER

Raisuddin Ahmed, a dedicated and selfless organiser in the formative years of the country's cricket, passed away yesterday following prolonged illness. He was 82.

The history of Bangladesh's cricket cannot be written without mentioning the contributions of this giant, who was the general secretary of the erstwhile Bangladesh Cricket Control Board from 1975 to 1981 and served as the vice-president from 1991 to 2001.

A renowned organiser, who was also a former director of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, spent all his life with sports and performed key role in various sports bodies; especially worked tirelessly to keep cricket going when there was no money to run the show.

Cricket back then was not a very popular sport in Bangladesh and it was, at best, a second-tier sport and unlike the present day, there was no money in the game and even a cup of tea had to be bought with one's own money. "Raisuddin Ahmed served Bangladesh cricket at a time when the game was struggling to take off. It is due



RAIS UDDIN AHMED (1938-2021)

to the selfless efforts of people like him that our cricket is where it is today. On behalf of the board, I extend condolences and sympathies to his family and pray for the salvation of his soul," BCB president Nazmul Hassan said in a condolence message.

Raisuddin was the captain of Dhaka University cricket team, represented the university team in the Quaid E Azam trophy in the pre-independence era and served in many important positions in East Pakistan Sports Federation, Pakistan Basketball Federation and PIA cricket and hockey team.

One of the architects of Bangladesh cricket, Raisuddin, who was admitted to a hospital in Dhaka with Covid-19 on December 25, is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter and host of well-wishers.

"Goodbye Rais Bhai, Raisuddin Ahmed. Bangladesh cricket will forever be indebted to you," wrote veteran sports journalist and writer Utpal Shuvro on a Facebook post paying tribute to the deceased.



BLACK LIVES MATTER

The players and coaching staff of both teams along with the match officials take a knee in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement prior to the game yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

India hailed, Aus under fire

AFP, Brisbane

India's cricketers were hailed as 'Immortals' on Wednesday following their record-breaking win in Brisbane, but some former greats called for chastened Australia to make changes.

India thrillingly achieved their 328 target with just 18 balls left on the final day to win the four-Test series 2-1, the highest successful run chase at Australia's "Fortress Gabba", where the hosts had been unbeaten for 32 years.

"It was the day when The Irrepressibles became The Immortals," declared News Corp's veteran cricket writer Robert Craddock.

"The day when Fortress Gabba was stormed by a group of cavalier raiders who kicked down the draw bridge, stole the crown jewels and raced off into the late afternoon sunshine towards hysterical fans who will cherish the memory forever.

"Take it all India. You deserve it." India's refusal to play for a draw, which would have been enough for them to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, was lauded.

"The outcome was a revelation:

Australia pressed for victory because they had to, India because they wanted to, and the result was a fitting climax to one of the most extraordinary series of all time," wrote Gideon Haigh in The Australian newspaper. Most were united in their praise of India, but there was also criticism of Australia.

"I think there'll be a huge fallout from this," said leg-spinning great Shane Warne, commentating on TV, noting that India had been without



their entire frontline bowling attack through injury.

"There's not too many times that you lose to the second or third side," he said. "Tactics will come into question. Bowlers will come into question. People's spots in the team will come into question."

Mitchell Starc, who bowled 16 wicketless overs for 75 on the final day, came in for particular criticism after taking just 11 wickets in the series, with some saying captain Tim Paine had lost faith in the left-arm pacer.

"I know that your impact bowlers are meant to come in and have a little burst, but there just doesn't seem to have been the trust that Mitchell Starc's going to do the job," said former Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist.

Some said that Australia should be thanking India for their skill and courage in coming to play the series at all during a global coronavirus pandemic.

"We mightn't be thanking you in five years when you're still whisking away matches from under our noses, but thanks for now, and take a bow," said the Sydney Morning Herald's Greg Baum.

'Don't feed the mice'

REUTERS, Melbourne



she could not sleep for the rodents scurrying around her room.

The Kazak swapped rooms earlier this week after finding a mouse but said her new room was also infested. She shared a video of a mouse jumping out from behind a closet on social media.

Victoria state police minister Lisa Neville said on Wednesday authorities would take care of pest control but suggested there might be more to the story.

"As I understand there may have been some feeding going on," she told reporters, without revealing the source of her information. "I'd just encourage them to minimise interaction with the mice, we will keep doing pest control

if we need to, but hopefully that pest control work that was done this week will have fixed the problem."

More than 70 players and their entourages are confined to their hotel rooms for 14 days and unable to train for the Feb. 8-21 Australian Open after passengers on three charter flights returned positive tests for the novel coronavirus.

Putintseva said her new room had more mice than the old one.

"It's actually a lot of them! Not even 1 in my room now," she wrote on Twitter. "Different room same story - wanted to go to sleep but nooooope."

She added that reception had told her the hotel was full and that they could not help her. "It's a joke," she said.

On Instagram, Putintseva also complained of not being able to open windows in her room. She held up a sign saying: "We need fresh air to breathe."

A number of players have complained about the conditions, drawing a fierce backlash from Australians.



Royals release Smith

AFP, NEW DELHI

Steve Smith has not been retained by his Indian Premier League side Rajasthan Royals, the team said Wednesday, in a double blow for the Australian after his national squad's Test loss to India.

The Royals have kept their England stars including Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Jofra Archer in their team ahead of this year's auctions next month.

Smith captained the team that finished as wooden spoons in the eight-team league in last year's edition, which was held behind closed doors in the United Arab Emirates due to the coronavirus.

India's Sanju Samson was appointed captain of the side which won the inaugural edition in 2008 under Australian spin legend Shane Warne. "The Rajasthan Royals captaincy is a post for which we are lucky to have had so many greats of the game -- Warne, Dravid, Watson, Rahane, and most recently Steve Smith," said team owner Manoj Badale.

"Steve has been a great player and great leader for the Royals, and we want to thank him for his contribution to the franchise."

Meanwhile Australia's Marcus Stoinis will stay on for his franchise Delhi Capitals along with South African quick Kagiso Rabada. The world's wealthiest cricket tournament is expected to be played at home in late March.



আবাস বাংলাদেশ!

BSRM
building a safer nation



MATARBARI POWER PLANT
Cox's Bazar

PROUD
CONSTRUCTION
PARTNER

SHAH CEMENT

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

China's role as mediator very crucial

Analysts say it is likely to work for a solution after tripartite meet with Bangladesh, Myanmar

PORIMOL PALMA

China's role in Rohingya repatriation is turning out to be a decisive factor in resolving the crisis as the country embarked on the role of a mediator between Bangladesh and Myanmar and is likely to continue it until a solution is found, analysts have said.

The country has taken up the role as the international community's pressure on Myanmar has yielded nothing concrete so far.

A member of the UN Security Council and also a close ally of Myanmar, China is trying to establish its global standing as well as maintain and increase its economic and geopolitical influence on Myanmar, the analysts observed.

On Tuesday, China brokered a tripartite virtual meeting, generating hope in Bangladesh of starting the repatriation by June this year, about four years after the influx of some 750,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh following a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017.

The UN Security Council also could not take any concrete measures to hold Myanmar accountable as China and Russia opposed any such move. Since the beginning of the crisis, China has been seeking a bilateral solution instead of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Labels from plastic soft drink and water bottles being burnt in the capital's Rayerbazar. While the bottles seen in the background are recycled there is little use for the labels and so those are burnt. This creates environment and health risks as the labels contain plastic and some harmful chemicals, which produce noxious fumes when they are burnt. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No one held, a month after the murder of a disabled man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Family members of a man who was killed over land dispute in Mymensingh on December 25 alleged that they were being threatened by the accused.

The victim, Mozammel Hossain Babul, 50, had been running a small grocery shop at his home in Kalyanpur village of Mymensingh Sadar since 2007.

No accused has been arrested yet in this connection.

Talking to this correspondent, Babul's wife Sheuly Akter, 45, who works as a domestic help in the capital, said her husband used to pull rickshaw in Dhaka. In 1995, he had an accident and was admitted to the Pangu Hospital, where his right leg had to be amputated.

The lone bread earner of this family at that time, Babul had to start pulling rickshaw again and a photograph of him pulling

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Prowling at night to rob ride-seekers

6 held in N'ganj after video clip of 2 men being thrown out of vehicle went viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vegetable traders -- Apan Mia and Nazrul Islam -- were waiting near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on the night of December 28 last year for a vehicle to go to Karwan Bazar when a pick-up van stopped in front of them.

They boarded the vehicle. But as the van started moving, those who took in Apan and Nazrul mugged the duo and threw them off the running van, according to police.

Apan died on the road, while Nazrul sustained injuries.

The horrifying incident was captured by a CCTV camera installed near Kawla area. Detectives later arrested six men in Narayanganj's Rupganj area on Tuesday night, said AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A case was filed in this regard with the Airport Police Station after the incident, police said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

UK Covid strain spreads to 60 countries

Says WHO; India exports vaccines to Maldives, Bhutan

AGENCIES

The UK coronavirus strain has spread to at least 60 countries, the World Health Organization reported yesterday, as 1.6 million residents were banned from leaving Beijing after two cases linked to the new strain were found in the Chinese capital.

Covid-19 has claimed more than two million lives globally since it was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan more than a year ago, while the total number of reported cases is edging towards 100 million.

The arrival of mass inoculation drives in the United States, Europe and Asia had brought hope that the end of the epidemic was in sight.

But deep concern over new variants of the deadly pathogen has triggered governments around the world to toughen constraints on restriction-weary populations as officials grapple with how to slow infections until vaccines become widely available.

In its weekly update, the WHO announced the strain first found in the UK was now in 10 more countries than seven days ago.

It said the South African variant -- which similarly is believed to be more transmissible -- has been reported in 23 countries and territories.

The global health body also said schools should only close as a last resort while research is under way into whether the new variants affect children differently.

"The arrival in late 2020 of new more transmissible variants of SARS-CoV-2 requires additional analysis by sex and age to measure how and if the new variants impact children differently," it said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Road crash claims 4 lives in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Four people, including three women, were killed and 24 more injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Bagail in Faridpur's Bhanga upazila yesterday.

The accident happened around 12:00 noon, said police, quoting locals.

The dead are Rashid Mollah, 58, of Chuadanga's Jibonnagar upazila, and Jahanara Begum, 48, of Faridpur's Nagarkanda upazila, said police.

Mohammad Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Highway Police Station, said rest of the two could not be identified immediately.

According to the police official, a Barishal-bound bus of Duranta Paribahan hit a roadside island in the area as its driver lost control of the vehicle.

Three people died on the spot whereas another was declared dead by on-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Stolen 500-year-old Leonardo da Vinci copy found in Italy



AFP, Rome

Italian police have found a 500-year-old copy of Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi in a Naples flat and returned it to a church that had no idea it had been stolen.

Officers said late Monday they had arrested the 36-year-old owner of the apartment on suspicion of receiving stolen goods, after the painting was found in his bedroom cupboard.

Depicting Jesus Christ with his hand raised in a blessing and holding a crystal orb, the painting is part of the Doma Museum collection within the San Domenico Maggiore church complex in Naples.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

REFUGEE CAMP

5 Rohingyas held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) detained five Rohingya men with firearms in their possession from a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The detainees are Mohammad Ismail, 22, Khairul Islam Majhi, 22, Jamal Ahmed, 32, Mohammad Salam, 22, and Mohammad Harun, 32, said SP Tarikul Islam, captain of APBn-16.

On information, a team of APBn conducted a raid at Ukha's Chamarkul 21 Rohingya refugee camp around 1:00am yesterday and detained five Rohingyas men.

A rifle, two rounds of bullet and 19 machetes were recovered from their possession, said the APBn captain.

A case against them was underway, he added.

Poacher held with tiger skin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A team of Rab and forest guards has arrested a poacher and recovered a tiger skin from his possession in Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila.

The arrestee is Gaus Fakir, 45, of Dakkhin Southkhali of the upazila. Previously, he used to earn his living by catching fish in various rivers and canals in the Sundarbans area.

Mohammad Belayet Hossain, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the forest department (East Sundarbans), said, "We had information that Gaus was trying to sell the skin of a tiger. In the guise of a potential buyer, we contacted him and bargained over the price for three to four days ... At one

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A brief spell of rainfall in the morning brought the temperature in the capital down and a thick fog descended, reducing visibility. In this photo taken near the Army Golf course on Airport Road around 1:00pm yesterday, the footbridge just around a hundred yards away is barely visible.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

LOW-INCOME PEOPLE

Rain adds to their plight in biting cold

STAR REPORT

The severity of cold intensified yesterday as some rainfall occurred in many parts of the country, including in the capital.

Meteorologist Hasibur Rahman of Bangladesh Meteorological Department said, "The situation may continue till Thursday and the temperature may rise on Friday."

"Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions and weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country," said a 24-hour BMD weather bulletin released yesterday morning.

"Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during midnight till morning and it may continue at places over the country till noon."

Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may fall slightly over the country, the bulletin added.

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded as 11.3 degree Celsius in Sitakunda, Sylhet.

In Dhaka, cold and gloomy weather prevailed as no sunlight was seen all day yesterday. The situation worsened at noon when city dwellers witnessed some rain.

Officegoers were seen wrapping up warmly in heavy winter clothes yesterday morning.

"I think today is the coldest day in the capital this season," said Javed Hossain, a private jobholder, who was

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 21

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:43	7:15
JAMAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:47	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION