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People gather as BIWTA officials salvage a microbus which fell into the Padma river while boarding a ferry at Manikganj's Paturia Ghat around 9:00am yesterday. All those in the vehicle were rescued safely. The photo was taken around 1:00pm.

PEOPLE'S LEASING LOANS
HC summons 280 defaulters
PK Halder's lawyer on remand in graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The High Court yesterday summoned 280 loan defaulters of People's Leasing and Financial Services (PLFS) to appear before it on February 23 to give their explanations on defaulting the loans and repayment.
The company bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar came up with the order after going through a list, submitted by the
SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Biden reverses Trump policies on first day

AGENCIES
US President Joe Biden signed 15 executive actions shortly after being sworn on Wednesday, undoing policies put in place by his Republican predecessor, Donald Trump, and making his first moves on the

pandemic, immigration, climate change, US census and regulatory changes.
Signing several actions in front of reporters in the Oval Office on Wednesday afternoon, Biden said there was "no time to waste" in issuing the executive orders,
SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

PM greets Joe Biden

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has congratulated Joe Biden, the 46th president of the US, who took oath of office on Wednesday, especially for his country's return to the
SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Vaccination plan gets a boost

20 lakh doses arrive from India as gift; PM thanks Modi

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The country has got a shot in the arm for its Covid-19 inoculation campaign as 20 lakh doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, a gift from the Indian government, arrived in Dhaka yesterday.

The doses are expected to help Bangladesh roll out its mass vaccination programme on schedule in the first week of next month, said officials concerned.

Bangladesh has purchased three crore doses of the vaccine from Serum Institute of India (SII) for the campaign, and the first shipment of 50 lakh shots is expected on January 25.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thanked her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi yesterday for the gift.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Govt launches vaccine awareness campaign today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government will launch the Covid-19 vaccination awareness campaign from today to prepare the general population ahead of the mass inoculation against the highly transmissible virus.

"We will start an awareness campaign on vaccination from tomorrow [Friday]. We have urged socially prominent persons to come forward to join our efforts to make people aware of vaccination and we hope people will join," Prof Abul Bashir Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director-general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

He however did not go into detail about the socially prominent persons in the campaign.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said he will take the
SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



THREE LAYERS DEPICTING THE INTERNATIONAL QUALITY

- Mixed Bainite Ring
- Ferrite & Pearlite Core for Enhancing DUCTILITY
- Tempered Martensite Ring for STRENGTH

UNIFORM TRANSVERSE RIB HEIGHT ALONG THE REBAR

UNIFORM LONGITUDINAL RIB

UNIFORM DIAMETER

INCLINED HOIST

QUANTUM ELECTRIC ARC FURNACE

GPH QUANTUM WHY WORLD'S BEST?

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE

584

New cases in 24hrs



5,30,271

Total cases



7,966

Deaths



4,75,074

Recoveries



2,087,252

Deaths



97,483,187

Total cases

REMEMBERING Mujibur Rahman Dilu

Noted actor Mujibur Rahman Dilu is known for his performance in popular television drama serials like "Songsoptok" and "Laal Matir Kalo Dhoa". The actor recently passed away due to multiple health complications. His close friend and confidante, famed director Nasiruddin Yousuff, takes a walk down memory lane and relives their journey together.

NASIRUDDIN YOUSUFF

We shared a very intimate and personal bond. I still remember those days when newly-married Mujibur Rahman Dilu came to my Paltan residence with his wife. We used to live in a bungalow beside popular actor Raisul Islam Asad's house. Within just a few days, they became a part of my family.

Also, many do not know but he was an amazing cook, and my mother used to love him wholeheartedly for his humility and simplicity. Glimpses of him rehearsing his roles and the smell of his delicious dishes are still fresh in my memory.

Words fall short when I intend to describe his acting skills. His performance in the play "Ami Gadhla Bolchi", where the artist not only surprised everyone with method acting but also managed to present a beautiful adaptation of the drama, had made him the talk of the town at that time. I had the privilege to enjoy his stage performance multiple times.

His observation and the ability to absorb his character within his being is what has always amazed me. He went on to impress me with his performance when we worked together on many other projects, including the famed BTV drama serial "Laal Matir Kalo Dhoa", originally written by Selim Al Deen.

We were both freedom fighters and



as I was a commander, he honoured and abided by me a lot. His patriotic conscience and love for art have been his driving force throughout his active years. He was never afraid to take up any work and his honestly and undaunted efforts to excel is what makes him unique.

Alongside acting, he served at Hotel Purbani and was also posted in Dubai for a while. However, that did not keep him from pursuing his passion for theatre. He was also the coordinator of the children's organisation Tunituni. We had arranged a big event on the 10th anniversary of this organisation where we had also invited foreign delegates from India. He balanced both sides perfectly and that's what I admire about him.

Dilu's punctuality was unparalleled. His sense of commitment and cultural attributes contributed to making every play or drama a rather memorable one.

The masses still remember him as Maaalu from "Songsoptok" and his flawless performance in the film "Agami" where he shared the screen with legendary actors Pijush Banerjee, Aly Zaker and Rowshan. Dilu believed it is a great privilege for any artist to live through his work. Today, both Aly Zaker and Dilu rest in peace but their legacy lives on. Every time I walk by a stage or start rolling a camera, Dilu will accompany me in my heart.

MISBEHAVIOUR WITH MAGISTRATE

Provide security to presiding officer

HC orders IGP after the officer in Kushtia told court about his feelings of insecurity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the inspector general of police to provide security to the official who witnessed policemen misbehaving with a judicial magistrate during the municipality polls in Kushtia.

Shahjahan Ali, who was the presiding officer at Bheramara Pilot Model High School in Kushtia, told the court yesterday that he and his family members were scared of police.

During the polls on January 16, Senior Judicial Magistrate Mohsin

Hasan was talking to Shahjahan about allegations of voter fraud at the school, when Superintendent of Police SM Tanvir Arafath and several other police officers interrupted the conversation and asked Mohsin him to leave, according to complaints the latter had made.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman issued the directive for the inspector general yesterday after hearing Shahjahan's statement.

Shahjahan, a jubo unnanay officer, SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

'ATTACKS' ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Amnesty Int'l voices concern

Urges govt to release cartoonist Kishore, writer Mushtaq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International yesterday expressed deep concern over the recent arbitrary detention and other forms of harassment of artists who are facing increasing attacks on their right to freedom of expression in Bangladesh.

In a statement, the rights watchdog called on the Bangladesh authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all artists unlawfully detained, drop the charges against them, and guarantee people's right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity, as enshrined in domestic and international laws.

Amnesty called on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore and writer Mushtaq Ahmed since they have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, and drop all charges against film director Annono Mamun, actor Shaheen Mridha, folk singer Rita Dewan, cartoonist Kishore, and writer Mushtaq.

It also called on the authorities to urgently repeal the Digital Security Act 2018 or substantially amend its repressive provisions.

The rights body said the right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity is enshrined both in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Bangladesh is a state party to both instruments.

Bangladesh's constitution also guarantees people's right to freedom of expression (Article 39).

In the 2013 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) before the UN Human Rights Council, Bangladesh accepted several recommendations concerning

the right to freedom of expression.

However, instead of reforming the legal regime in accordance with the commitments made then, Bangladesh has further undermined the space for artistic freedom with the introduction of a more repressive and draconian law in 2018 -- the Digital Security Act, Amnesty said.

"Bangladesh must uphold its obligations under international human rights law and guarantee the space of artistic and creative expression without the fear of retribution," added the rights watchdog.

Last month, a Dhaka court issued an arrest warrant against Rita Dewan, a female folk singer, and her two daughters, in a case filed in February last year under the Digital Security Act.

Rita and her daughters were accused of "hurting religious sentiments".

Rita was performing a Pala Gaan (a variant of local folk music festival where two folk singers engage in an extempore musical battle) in Tangail on February 1, 2020, and was debating with her colleague about the "Living Things Versus the Greatest".

Since the musical show, a total of four cases have been filed against Rita on similar grounds -- one was dismissed by a court, while three others are pending trial.

On 13 January this year, the Dhaka Cyber Tribunal granted Rita bail in one of the cases.

In May last year, Bangladesh police detained cartoonist Kishore and writer Mushtaq from their Dhaka residence under the Digital Security Act accusing them of "spreading rumours and misinformation on Facebook about the coronavirus situation" and "undermining the image of the Father of the Nation", the "national anthem" or "national flag".



Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, left, and Health Minister Zahid Maleque receive a box containing Covid-19 vaccine from Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami, right, at a ceremony at the capital's state guest house Padma. India handed 20 lakh doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine, manufactured by Serum Institute of India, to Bangladesh as a gift at the event.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Vaccination plan gets a boost

FROM PAGE 1

"I'm thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for sending the vaccine as a gift," she said, addressing an event virtually. She also said the procured vaccine would arrive as planned.

The government has prepared a list of groups that would be prioritised during the first phase when 1.5 crore people would be inoculated. The campaign is likely to launch at over 300 centres across the capital.

The government is set to launch today an awareness campaign on vaccination. 'GOODWILL GESTURE' Officials said India gifted Bangladesh 20 lakh doses of the vaccine in a goodwill gesture, which can be seen as another step in further cementing the strong friendship between the two countries.

A chartered plane of Air India carried the vaccine, branded Covishield, from Mumbai Airport to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The plane arrived shortly after 11:00am.

The doses were transported in cold boxes from the airport to a vaccine storage facility in Tejgaon under the supervision of officials from the Directorate General of Health Services and the Directorate General of Drug Administration.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Vikram Doraiswami, formally handed the shipment to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Health Minister Zahid Maleque at a ceremony on the premises of the state guesthouse Padma around 1:30pm.

The world is struggling to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and only a few countries have begun vaccination programmes.

The confirmed Covid-19 death toll in Bangladesh reached 7,966, while the number of detected infections was 5,30,271 as of yesterday.

A video conference for Saarc leaders was organised on March 15 last year at the initiative of the Indian PM. There, Hasina called for collaboration through utilisation of collective capacity, expertise and resources. The Saarc Covid-19 Emergency Fund was set up

soon after that.

Addressing the handover ceremony yesterday, Doraiswami said the tranche of the vaccine was part of India's commitment at the highest level to its Neighbourhood First Policy.

"Together, India and Bangladesh, we will be able to fight the disease most effectively when we cooperate," he said.

Bangladesh received the vaccine shots four days after vaccination was launched in India on Saturday. This is among the fastest deliveries of vaccines that India has planned for anybody primarily because of the importance of ensuring that its friends receive immunity along with the Indians, he noted.

On Wednesday, India delivered the consignments of 1,50,000 doses of Covishield vaccines to Bhutan, 100,000 doses to the Maldives, and one million to Nepal yesterday.

Doraiswami said they hoped Bangladesh could kickstart the vaccination with this tranche of vaccine that would help improve immunity and resistance, and wished a good health of all Bangladeshis.

The foreign minister, the health minister and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahrir Alam expressed gratitude to the Indian PM and Indian people for the gift.

"Today is a historic day," Momen said, adding that India fought a war against Pakistan, helping Bangladesh achieve its independence in 1971, and has now gifted 2 million vaccine doses during the difficult times stemmed from the coronavirus pandemic.

The gift from India is also significant as Bangladesh celebrates Mujib Borsho, marking its 50th anniversary of independence, and 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations, he said.

Momen said Bangladesh was one of the countries which are beginning vaccination early. He claimed that Bangladesh had been number one in South Asia in successfully tackling the pandemic both in health and economy-wise.

Shahrir Alam said the relations

between the two countries would improve further, and this message had been delivered to the people of Bangladesh and India through the gift in this difficult time.

Zahid Maleque said three crore more shots from Serum Institute of India, which is manufacturing the vaccine, would be arriving in Bangladesh in six months under a contract between the SII, Beximco Pharmaceuticals and the Bangladesh government.

He requested India to make sure that the 3 crore doses are delivered smoothly.

"We are supposed to get 50 lakh vaccines on January 25 or 26, but we can let you know the final date only after the flight schedule is confirmed," Maleque said.

He said the government's plan was almost final on starting the vaccination programme.

"We hope in the next six to seven days, we will conduct a trial. Prime Minister Hasina will let us know the date. She will join the inauguration through videoconference," the health minister said.

He called upon all not to do politics over vaccine, and not to spread any rumour on the vaccine import, vaccination and any possible side effects.

"It is a life-saving drug. We would call upon all not to confuse people. Those who go for conspiracy and politics with human life are not good people... we are saving lives, tackling Covid," he said.

The minister said the national committee on Covid-19 vaccine has prepared a rigorous plan, which is expected to be effective.

Bangladesh has a lot of experience in immunisation programme, and has eliminated a number of diseases, including polio and tetanus, through vaccination. Every year, crores of children are vaccinated in the country.

"We hope people are aware of it. They know vaccines might have some light side reactions. AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine is a good one. It has no serious side reactions. If there is, the government will provide all treatment."

PADMA BRIDGE

PM does not want it to be named after her

2 AL MPs proposed it in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday disapproved two lawmakers' proposal to name the under-construction Padma bridge after her for her contributions to the country's development and progress.

She expressed her disapproval by waving her hand and shaking her head while two ruling Awami League MPs placed their proposal before parliament in this regard.

Lawmakers Pankaj Deb Nath and Mohammad Iqbal Hossain placed the proposal while taking part in the discussion on thanksgiving motion on the president's speech in the House.

"I want to propose that Padma bridge should be named after our prime minister who is the symbol of development and initiative," Iqbal said.

"The prime minister is a modest person. She would not want it [naming the bridge after her], but we have some responsibilities and obligations also," the MP said amid thumping of tables by the lawmakers.

Later, Pankaj also placed a similar proposal.

He said the PM made a bold decision to go ahead with the implementation of the bridge project with the country's own funds after donors cancelled their funding.

"She is a modest person, but we are not ungrateful," Pankaj said.

Earlier, on Tuesday, a Supreme Court lawyer filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directive on the government authorities concerned to name Padma bridge as "Sheikh Hasina Bridge" considering her contributions to its construction.

Lawyer Md Kamruzzaman submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC. The petition said most of the people of the country desire that the bridge will be named after the prime minister as she had taken the challenge of building it with the country's own funds.

The HC may hold hearing on the petition next week, the lawyer told The Daily Star.

The last span of the Padma bridge was installed on December 10 last year. The top deck of the two-level steel truss composite bridge will accommodate a four-lane highway for vehicles and the lower deck railway tracks. The bridge is likely to be opened to traffic in the first half of next year.

The bridge, which would connect Dhaka to 21 southern districts, will be a potential catalyst for major economic changes in the lives of over 30 million people living in the region. It will also give a major boost to trade and economic activities.

The Tk 30,193-crore bridge will be one of the major transport corridors linking Bangladesh with India, Nepal and Bhutan. Besides, it will enhance regional trade and collaboration along the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway Network.

Three killed in Bandarban road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Three people were killed and four others critically injured as a jeep, popularly known as Chander Gari, fell into a ditch in Bandarban's Thanchi upazila yesterday.

Officer-in-charge of Thanchi police station Saifuddin Anwar said the vehicle plunged into a ditch around 10:00am after losing control leaving the three people killed on the spot and four others critically injured.

The dead were identified as Md Hossain, 60, of Cox's Bazar's Chakaria area, Payel Bawm, 27, of Baklai area, and Ashraf Ali, 50, of Chattogram's Bazalia area, he said, adding that the vehicle was headed for Thanchi from Baklai.

The injured were taken to Bandarban Sadar hospital, the OC said.

16 more die, 584 test positive for Covid in a day

Bss, Dhaka

Bangladesh recorded 16 coronavirus deaths and 584 fresh cases overnight.

The recovery count rose to 475,074 after another 602 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period, a Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) press release read yesterday.

"Sixteen more Covid-19 patients died in the last 24 hours, increasing the death toll from the pandemic to 7,966," the release read.

It said the tally of infections has surged to 530,271 as 584 new cases were confirmed in those 24 hours.

Among the total infections, 89.59 percent patients have recovered, while 1.50 percent died so far since the first Covid-19 positive cases were reported in the country on March 8.

PM greets Joe Biden

FROM PAGE 1

Paris Climate Agreement.

"You know that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the president of Climate Vulnerable Forum. We thanked Joe Biden especially," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters after the handover ceremony of India's vaccine doses as gift at the State Guest House Padma yesterday, reports UNB.

Momen said he was very happy to see Biden as the US president.

In a statement, the foreign ministry later said Bangladesh has welcomed new US President Joe Biden's important announcement on Wednesday to re-

enter the Paris Climate Agreement.

"Bangladesh also appreciates President Biden's promise to put the United States on a track to net-zero emissions by 2050 and his call to reestablish the US as global climate leader," it said.

On June 1, 2017, the then US president Donald Trump announced that his country would exit the Paris accord and re-enter only on terms that are "fair to the United States".

Bangladesh, as the current president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and the Vulnerable Twenty Group (V20), plays a leading role in climate discourses and focuses on the urgent

need to strengthen climate action and adaptation efforts by enhancing nationally determined contributions, the ministry said.

It said Bangladesh hopes that US's re-joining the global climate accord and re-prioritisation of climate change issues would encourage other leading emitters to reduce global emissions and to make investment in clean energy.

"On re-entering the Paris Agreement, the US government also acknowledged that the Paris Agreement created an unprecedented framework for global action to avoid planetary warming and to build global resilience."

Writ petition filed to reopen edu institutes immediately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday, seeking its directive on the government to reopen all educational institutions, including schools and colleges, immediately, considering the present situation.

Abdul Kaiyum Sarkar, principal of Bhawal Mirzapur Public School and College, submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC, requesting it to order authorities concerned of the government to reopen academic institutions immediately, strictly following health guidelines.

In the petition, he also prayed to the HC to issue a rule asking authorities to explain why the January 15 notification for extending closure of institutions till January 30 should not be declared illegal, petitioner's lawyer Faruque Alamgir Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

He said the HC may hold a hearing on the petition any day next week. Citing the petition, Faruque said educational institutions of the country have remained closed since March last year due to the pandemic situation, hampering study.

The closure was extended 12 times so far, he added.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Block-C of Mirpur-11 almost looked like a warzone yesterday, as hundreds of locals attempted to obstruct DNCC's eviction drive, claiming it would displace people from three Bihari camps. Inset, police showed up to bring the situation under control, and ultimately threw teargas canisters at the locals.



DNCC drive met with resistance at Mirpur-11

Locals say 3 Bihari camps facing eviction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials of Dhaka North City Corporation faced obstruction from locals while conducting an eviction drive in Mirpur section 11, block-C yesterday.

A chase and counter-chase took place when locals pelted brick chips targeting the DNCC officials and police.

Around 10:30am, a team of DNCC started the drive at Nannu Market area, but the drive was halted in the face of resistance from locals. Some brickbats were thrown from surrounding houses as well.

On information, additional police members rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said Officer-in-Charge of Pallabi Police Station Kazi Wazed Ali. Police used five rounds of teargas shells.

The eviction drive resumed after a 20-minute break, Wazed Ali said.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam also visited the spot around 11:15am and stayed there for a while. He said the drives will continue.

He said around 150 structures were demolished in the drive which continued till 6pm and they will resume it on Friday (today).

Md Sadaqat Khan Fakkur, acting president of Mirpur-11 New Society Market, on the other hand said three Bihari camps were demolished during the drive.

He said they did not get any notice before the drive and the drive was conducted violating a Chamber Judge Court order.

Around 300 houses would be demolished in the drive, he said. Atiqul said DNCC will construct a two-kilometre long, 60-70 feet wide road from Mirpur 11 to Kalshi via Bounia. There will be a huge improvement in connectivity for locals after completion of the road, he added.

The DNCC mayor said a project of Tk 29 crore has already been undertaken and the work will begin after completing the eviction drive.

He said it will be a parallel road to Kalshi, which will improve connectivity with the airport. Atiqul added that late mayor Annisul Huq

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Future of news media 'digital-first': speakers

MRDI report looks at country's media viability

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the Covid-19 pandemic having severe impact on the media industry at large in Bangladesh, the future will be "digital-first", experts of the field said at a programme yesterday.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) organised the virtual discussion to launch a report, titled, "Leadership or Stagnation: The Future of Media Viability in Bangladesh". It was conducted by MRDI in conjunction with Fojo Media Institute of Sweden. The report was authored by Ross Settles, adjunct professor at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre of Hong Kong University; and Tanim Ahmed, adjunct faculty at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

"I do not think any [print] media can go back to their January 2020 circulation figures," said Matiur Rahman, editor of leading Bangla daily Prothom Alo, commenting on the impact of the pandemic on the media industry.

"A media should be run by its own money, not money from the government, not money from the corporate, otherwise no media will survive," said Matiur Rahman.

On the electronic media front, "There is a huge difference between the operational demand of television channels and the actual money available," said Syed Gousul Alam Shaon, managing partner and country head of advertising agency Grey Bangladesh.

"Channels are underselling themselves. As a result they do not have the money to run an organisation the way it should be run. Media as a business took a backseat to media as a political tool," he added.

"Most of the so-called corporatised media are the major victims of this pandemic, and this is because of the lack of investigative reporting, and lack of content diversification. All channels and newspapers have the same type of coverage," said Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Editor-in-chief of TV Today.

Rejoanul Haq Raja, head of news at Maasranga TV, said, "Free to air channels are not viable, and owners are thinking of getting out of this model. Cable operators are taking all the money. Channel owners are now interested in a paid subscription model. All operators have to form a digital network that will be payment-based."

"There should be strict rules and policies

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Three-hour transport chaos to file a case!

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Supporters of a ward-level ruling party leader in Barishal on Wednesday night blocked a highway, shut down bus and launch services for over three hours.

Their demand -- police have to accept a case against the chairperson of a shoe company in the city's BSCIC area.

They withdrew the blockade after a case was filed by the AL leader against Mizanur Rahman, chairman of Fortune Shoes Limited.

So why did the said leader -- Sohag Hawlader, the organising secretary of Awami League (Ward-1) -- do so? Retribution.

According to locals and eyewitnesses, Mizanur stopped Sohag from harassing female workers of the company on Wednesday morning. Locals said Sohag has allegedly been involved in harassing workers and extortion for a long time.

Around 10:30am on the day, Sohag was caught by Mizanur while he was "bothering" some female workers of the factory, they said.

Mizanur told The Daily Star yesterday that he tried to stop Sohag. Later, factory officials and informed police and Rapid Action Battalion about the incident, he said.

Once the law enforcers arrived, they handed Sohag to them, claimed Mizanur.

"Around 10 to 12 days back, Sohag was found doing the same," he said, adding that at least 50 female workers of the factory did not come to work for a long time out of fear as Sohag is an influential person.

Sohag, however, while talking to this newspaper, claimed that he went to the factory to ask for his payment, which remained unpaid after delivery of cement some days

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Govt planning diplomatic zone at Purbachal: Momen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning to build a new diplomatic zone in Dhaka's Purbachal area due to a shortage of land in Gulshan and Baridhara diplomatic zones, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"Necessary coordination with the authorities, including Rajuk and the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, is under process in this regard," Momen informed the parliament.

He said this in reply to queries from a lawmaker. His answer was tabled at the onset of the day's sitting.

Currently, 10 foreign embassies have applied to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for plots to set up their missions. In particular, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Oman, Kuwait, Myanmar and Afghanistan have requested for plots since opening their diplomatic missions in Bangladesh.

Moreover, there are indications that those among the 50 foreign missions in Dhaka that are not using the allocated or purchased plots may also be interested in getting land, said Momen.

Several embassies and high commissions have demanded for land in Baridhara

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MINI BYTES



Why the overnight popularity of BiP in Bangladesh?

BY SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

WhatsApp is being criticised globally for its security issues and forced to delay the enforcement of its newest privacy policy. This resulted in a rise of non-mainstream apps like Signal, Telegram and Line to rise up. Among these, BiP seems to have caught on with Bangladeshi netizens.

Launched in 2013, BiP is an instant messaging platform developed by Turkey's largest telecom operator Turkcell. The majority of shares are owned by the Turkish government through a sovereign wealth fund. Right when WhatsApp dropped the news of their new privacy policies, like many governments, Turkey shared their discontent openly. On January 10, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's media office announced that it will switch to local app BiP to brief journalists from now on tipping the scale in favour of BiP's market share.

Upon inspecting the news media of the last several months, news appearance of Turkey was prominently visible. As Turkey has religious, political and historical ties with Bangladesh, news about Turkey might have worked as an echo chamber which might be the reason why Bangladeshis were drawn to BiP, according to Umme Salma Tarin, Assistant Professor of Department of International Relations, Bangladesh University of Professionals. "Religion plays a strong role in the sentiment of Bangladeshis. Starting from the membership in OIC back in 1970s to Turkish first lady's visit to Rohingya camps a few years back, Turkey has been able to portray a positive

image in the minds of our people," she said. She also added, "Turkish TV shows and celebrities are quite popular in Bangladesh now. These all indicate growing affinity towards Turkish products and BiP's newfound popularity is probably reflects that very sentiment."

Many Facebook groups that discuss Islamic topics were seen promoting the app terming it an app 'for Muslim ummah'. Many of the posts displayed Bangladesh and Turkey flags with Erdogan in the background. Some YouTubers were seen promoting the app in their video. Industry experts think that these are nothing but a content makers way of generating content that is in demand and has the future scope of monetisation.

Special Correspondent of Channel I and President of Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB), FaridurRahamanPantho pointed out it the rise of BiP has a direct relation with the digitisation of Waz and Milad (Islamic religious congregation). "We can see live telecast or recorded streams of Waz and Miladnowadays. Often these are under scrutiny as the content of these congregation are sensitive in nature. Followers of these might think BiP as a way out."

Tech experts are accepting the popularity of BiP positively though. "Over dependency on one app is never a good thing", said CEO of BDJobs and former BASIS President FahimMashroor. "It's a good thing that we are seeing people opting for multiple messaging app. Every app will try to enforce their policies so it is best not to be reliant on just one", he added.

CHATTOGRAM CITY CORPORATION POLLS

Over 100 BNP activists accused in three cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Over 100 leaders and activists of BNP have been made accused in three cases over violence centring the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) elections.

The cases were filed with Bakalia, Kotwali and Akbarshah police stations, said police sources.

"The city unit of BCL committee's executive member Mosharuful Haque Pavel filed a case accusing 35 BNP men in connection with a clash between Awami League and BNP activists," said Nezam Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, yesterday.

"Police arrested four FIR accused

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Rebels beware: AL

Party mulls disciplinary action against rogue candidates

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Awami League may take disciplinary actions against party's "rebel candidates" before the Chattogram City Corporation elections.

The party high command may take a decision within a day or two in this regard as the councillor candidates who are contesting in the CCC polls defying party decision did not step down despite repeated warning from central leaders.

The election will be held on January 27.

AL joint general secretary Mahubul-Alam Hanif, while talking to journalists in the port city on Wednesday, said disciplinary actions will be taken against the "rebel" candidates in a day or two.

On the very day in Dhaka, AL general secretary Obaidul Quader also told journalists that the party is going to take tough action against the rebel candidates in CCC.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Many individuals from different platforms yesterday gathered at port city's Cheragi intersection and held a candle-light programme to demand punishment for the killers of Lakingme Chakma. The 14-year-old was abducted, converted and married off to one of her abductors, and eventually murdered in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar last year.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

NOISE POLLUTION DoE launches Tk 48cr project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Environment yesterday launched a Tk 47.98 crore project to control noise pollution, which will be implemented in the next three years.

The inaugural workshop of the project was held at the department's office in the capital's Agargaon area.

A total of 2,000 mobile courts or joint operations will be conducted across the country to implement the Noise Pollution (Control) Rules, 2006 under the project, said project director Md Humayn Kabir at the workshop.

A round-the-clock online monitoring of noise levels will be set up and displayed on the roadside of an area under experimental activities, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

DAG Debashish Bhattacharyya resigns

Deputy Attorney General Debashish Bhattacharyya has resigned from his office. "I have tendered resignation on personal reasons. I submitted the resignation letter to the attorney general's office on Wednesday for forwarding it to the president," he told The Daily Star yesterday. He refused to specify the reason behind his resignation, saying, "You are not entitled to know."

On October 11 last year, Murad Reza and Momtaz Uddin Fakir resigned from the offices of additional attorney general. At present, the attorney general, one additional attorney general, 65 deputy attorney generals and 151 assistant attorney generals move cases on behalf of the state.

Three-hour

FROM PAGE 3

back. "But the factory workers led by its chairman beat me up and threatened to kill me...", he claimed.

After Wednesday morning's incident, supporters of Sohag shut down launch and bus services in the city from 8pm to 11pm in retaliation.

The sudden shutdown created sufferings for hundreds stuck at the launch ghat and Nathullahab bus stand. They withdrew the blockade after 11pm once a case was filed against Mizan for harassing Sohag, claimed locals.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, a launch owner, said some Sramik League leaders asked them not to ply vessels.

Contacted, Azizul Karim, officer-in-charge of Kawnia Police Station, said they did not receive any complaint against Sohag yet.

"A case has been filed against Mizan," he said, adding they are looking into it.

Meanwhile, OC Lokman Hossain (operation) of the police station said Mizan detained Sohag at his factory on Wednesday morning and informed police.

Lokman refused to elaborate as to why Sohag was detained.

Many also alleged that some female workers went to police but law enforcers did not accept any complaint. Police, however, refuted the allegation.

Meanwhile, small traders and workers of BSCIC

said a tense situation has been prevailing in the area over infrastructure development works worth around Tk 54 crore.

The Barisal City Corporation has recently stopped dredging activities there after some industrialists were allegedly attacked by miscreants over extortion and tender manipulation.

Mayor Semiabat Sadiq Abdullah and BSCIC deputy general manager and Fortune Shoes Limited are engaged in conflict over this issue, according to sources.

Mentionable, Mizanur Rahman was the immediate past president of BSCIC Shilpa Malik Samity in Barishal.

Around three months ago, the Fortune Shoes authorities filed a case with Kawnia Police Station, alleging assault on several workers and workers.

After the case was filed, people who were made accused in the case, often beat and harassed factory workers, they alleged.

They also alleged that Sohag and his accomplices were behind such activities. Asked, Sohag denied the allegations.

Meanwhile, Mayor Semiabat in a programme at Barisal Circuit House yesterday said even though his party man was beaten by the Fortune Shoes authorities, police were not filing a case.

"After that, they blocked the river port and highway and then, police accepted the case," he said.

Stolen motorbike found in AL leader's house

Police arrest his driver for hijacking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police have arrested driver of a local Awami League leader with a stolen motorcycle in Ashulia of Savar.

The arrestee -- Shahin -- kept the bike at AL leader Mosharaf Hossen Musha's house at Yearpur in Ashulia from where police recovered it on January 17, Kazi Newaz, sub-inspector of Tongi West Police Station, told journalists yesterday.

The SI told The Daily Star that the motorcycle was stolen at weapon point between 2am and 3pm from Bakrail area in Tongi of Gazipur on January 16.

Later, police started investigation and traced the vehicle after the motorcyclist filed a case with the police station that night, said the police officer.

Shahin was directly involved in the stealing, said SI Newaz, adding that he disclosed the names of other people involved in it. "We are trying to arrest them."

Contacted, Mosharaf Hossen Musha, a member of Ashulia Thana unit of AL and former president of Yearpur Union Jubo League, said, "I did not know who kept the motorcycle at my house. As police informed me about it, I watched my CCTV footage and came to know that my driver kept the vehicle."

"When I asked about it, my driver replied that a brother from his village gave him the motorcycle to keep for several days," said Musha, adding that later he handed him over to police.

Musha said Shahin has been working as his driver for nearly one year.

Rafique Uddin passes away

CITY DESK

Alhaj Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan, former president of Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (Narayanganj district) and son of late Gul Baksh Bhuiyan, has passed away on Monday. He was 67.

He was a past district governor of Lions Club International, and chairperson of Bangladesh Lions Foundation and Sahitun Nesa Eye Hospital.

He was also managing director of Gawsia Jute Mills Ltd, and director of Gawsia Cotton Spinning Mills Ltd and Ahmed Silk Mills Ltd.

He left behind his wife, three daughters, two sons-in-law and one grandchild.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Rugganj.

Rebels

FROM PAGE 3

In the 41 general wards of CCC, a total of 14 pro-AL councillor candidates who won in the last CCC polls failed to get party support this time. Of them, 12 filed nominations to vie for polls.

Of the 12 candidates, Tarek Solaiman Selim, a councillor candidate for ward-31 (Alkaran), died on January 18 and the returning officer has cancelled all the polling activities for the seat there. So, elections are going to be held for 40 councillor seats in CCC general wards along with 14 reserved seats for women and the mayoral post.

Contacted, AL Chattogram city unit general secretary AJM Nasir Uddin said, "There is no scope for defying party decision if anyone wants to stay in the party."

Nasir, also member secretary of AL committee for CCC polls management and former mayor, said, "We have clearly mentioned the names of those the party will support in this election. Others have been asked to step down and we have given them time to do so. If they do not comply, disciplinary action will be taken against them."

Meanwhile, the pro-AL councillor candidates, who decided to vie for polls defying party decision,

argued that they should not be termed "rebel" as the election for the councillor seat is non partisan.

While talking to The Daily Star they also said they were contesting in the polls to meet the people's expectations.

Abul Fazal Kabir Ahmed Manik, a councillor candidate for ward-14 (Lalkhanbazar), said, "I've been elected councillor several times and worked for the ward's development. That's why locals want me to run."

Asked why he defied the party decision, Manik said he did not defy party decision as councillor race is non partisan and there is no scope for any party to nominate a candidate.

Echoing the same, Saber Ahmed, a councillor candidate for ward-32 (Saraipara), said, "This local government polls will not impact the government that much so the party should be liberal and give us an opportunity to prove our popularity among voters."

Asked, whether BNP backed candidates would utilise this intra-party rivalry, Saber said voters will elect the candidate for councillor seats not the party.

"I won as councillor in previous polls where pro-AL and BNP candidates vied," he said.

House help held over torturing elderly employer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help who tortured an elderly woman and fled with cash and valuables on Monday from her employer's house in the capital was arrested yesterday.

A team from DMP's Shahjahanpur Police Station along with local police arrested Rekha Akter from Ranisankail upazila in Thakurgaon, SI Rezaul Karim of Shahjahanpur Police Station, who led the drive, told The Daily Star.

Police also arrested her husband, Md Ershad, from the city's Basabo area in this connection, he added.

DoE launches

FROM PAGE 3

Humayun, who was also additional director general of the department, said noise levels will be surveyed in 64 districts and databases will be set up.

There will be programmes on TV, radio and other media to raise awareness about noise pollution, and 95,200 people from different backgrounds will receive training to tackle the issue, he added.

Humayun further said 128 billboards, 60 signboards, 7 lakh leaflets, 7 lakh stickers, 1,000 folders and 1,000 training manuals will be printed and distributed to create awareness.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin was present as chief guest at the workshop. He said noise pollution will come down to a tolerable level with concerted efforts of all.

Former Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof Pran Gopal Dutta appealed to the government to include the harmful effects of noise pollution in the curriculum of fifth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades.

Ziaul Hasan, Secretary to the ministry, and Mahmud Hasan, additional secretary (environment), were present as special guests.

DNCC drive

FROM PAGE 3

had also widened many roads in Pallabi area, and people are getting benefited by those.

Additional chief engineer Md Sharif Uddin said work was underway to widen roads and footpaths under a government project and their work is a part of it.

He said people were running shops by encroaching land on both sides of the road, which resulted in narrowing vehicular movement.

Sharif said they talked with the illegal shops' and structures' owners many times and asked them to evict but they did not pay heed.

DNCC has been conducting drives against illegal structures constructed occupying roads, footpaths or canals since Atiul took charge as mayor.

The mayor said they will continue their drive to recover all canals in DNCC areas as well as to widen roads and construct footpaths.

Future of

FROM PAGE 3

about ownership. Ownership should not be kept only by the company or by few people only," said Shahidul Haque, chairman, Department of communication and journalism, University of Chittagong.

All speakers stressed on the need to be digital first.

There is an "odd idea" that digital media means less operational costs, Gousul stated, adding that this is absolutely wrong.

"We all know we need to expand digitally, and in the new business landscape we need to learn how to protect our content from aggregators and how to monetise our content," said Syed Ashfaqul Haque, executive editor of The Daily Star.

For media organisations to survive and thrive it must adopt new practices, said Prof Jude William Genilo, dean of Media Studies and Journalism department of ULAB. "This does not only mean moving towards digital platforms. New journalism skills need to be taught to students."

Zafar Sobhan, editor of Dhaka Tribune, spoke about the need to gather solid statistics about the media industry in order to find a way out of the pickle that the pandemic has left the industry in.

Speakers also cautioned against the impact of the government on free media.

"Friendly media -- that is media friendly

with the government-- is thickening and free media is thinning out. The unions, journalist organisations are aligned to the power, not to free media. This is why readers are gradually turning away from the media," said Ashfaqul Haque.

"The government party is obstructing journalists from speaking the truth, and journalists are self-censoring. The government can also affect advertisements," said Faruq Faisal, regional director for Bangladesh and South Asia at international rights organisation Article 19.

The report said Bangladesh may be one of the most heavily served media markets in the world, adding that TV audiences can choose from over 30 domestic channels, including eight news-only ones, apart from dozens of international providers. Print media presents an even more crowded market with more than 700 publications registered with the government. However, both TV and print industry is heavily concentrated in Dhaka, it found.

The report also said all but the largest publishers in the country operate with little to no profit margin, often fully dependent on circulation revenue and government advertising.

The full report can be accessed at https://www.mrdibd.org/publications/Media_Viability_Study.pdf

Govt planning

FROM PAGE 3

diplomatic zone to move all their offices there. But the shortage of land in the area is an important factor in this regard, the minister said. The current diplomatic zones -- Gulshan and Baridhara -- do not have enough land to meet the demand.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh missions across the world do not have any legal desk to provide legal aid to expatriate workers, Momen said while answering queries of another MP.

The Bangladesh missions, however, provide all types of legal assistance to migrant Bangladeshis in case of any unexpected problem, he added.

He said the government provides fund to the missions abroad in cases where they need to help Bangladeshi nationals in jail or facing other problems.

Giving example, Momen said recently the foreign ministry has provided legal help to Bangladeshis detained in Kolkata and Assam in India.

Over 100

FROM PAGE 3

persons in this connection," he said.

On Wednesday night, a clash broke out between AL and BNP activists after AL men were allegedly attacked by BNP supporters in front of Nasiman Bhaban, also the BNP office, in Kazir Dewri area.

During the incident, crude bombs were blasted and a vehicle was vandalised.

Meanwhile, OC Ruhul Amin of Bakalia Police Station said a case was lodged following a clash between AL and BNP men in Balirhat area of Bakalia during an election campaign of AL mayor candidate.

"One Imam Hossain Sagor filed the case accusing 24 BNP and its associate wing's leaders and activists. Police have arrested four persons in this connection," he added.

Besides, a staff member of Paharati Degree College filed a case accusing 81 BNP activists over attacking staffers of the college during the training session of EVM machine, said OC Jahir Hossain of Akbarshah Police Station.

"In the case statement, it was mentioned that the BNP men tried to enter the college forcibly. Failing to get in, they vandalised the window panes," he said.

brac

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SYLHET CITY CORPORATION

Nagar Bhaban, Sylhet www.scc.gov.bd

Tender Notice-10/2020-21 (Electrical)

Memo No. 46.07.0000.021.99.933.20.875 Date: 21.01.2021

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives.		
2. Agency	Sylhet City Corporation.		
Tender ID No.	Type of method	Publishing & opening date of tender submission	
537866	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537865	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537864	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537863	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537862	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
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537861	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537860	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
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537859	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537844	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
537677	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
506677	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
506676	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00
	NCT, OTM	20-Jan-2021 10:00:00	14-Feb-2021 15:00:00

4 Name, designation & address of PE Md. Ruhul Alam Executive Engineer (Electrical), Sylhet City Corporation, 0821-727151

5 This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.e-gprocure.gov.bd

6 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.

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

Md. Ruhul Alam Executive Engineer (Electrical) Sylhet City Corporation GD-146

SME FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Industries

Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation (SME Foundation)

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Request for Expression of Interest (Eoi)

SMEF intends to prepare an 'Enterprise Resource Planning Software Adoption among SMEs Trade Bodies'.

The Foundation is inviting Expression of Interest (Eoi) from national reputed and experienced firms. The firm should have at least 03 years of experience in software development. The Eoi must be submitted to SME Foundation on or before 04 February, 2021 by 02:00 p.m. Detailed information are available on SMEF website (www.smef.gov.bd)

Managing Director

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রুটের নাম	গাড়ির আকার	গাড়ির সংখ্যা	মডেল	দরপত্র জামানত
মতিঝিল-গোড়ান আলী আহমেদ হাই স্কুল	৩০ আসনের মিনিবাস	০১	২০১৩ সাল বা তৎপরবর্তী	৳২০,০০০/-

আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bb.org.bd) ই-টেন্ডারিং অপশনে Bidders হিসাবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্নকরতঃ নিজ ক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশপূর্বক আলোচ্য দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। উপরে বর্ণিত দরপত্র জামানত (Tender Security) 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক, কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা' এর অনুকূলে যেকোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকের ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার ০৭/০২/২০২১ তারিখ বেলা ২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১ (৭ম তলা, ২য় সংলগ্না ভবন) এ দাখিল করতে হবে এবং একই তারিখ বেলা ২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অনলাইনে (www.etender.bb.org.bd) দরপত্র জমা দেয়া যাবে। একই তারিখ বেলা ২:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারীগণ অথবা তাদের প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্রসমূহ খোলা হবে।

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা যেকোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬৬৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২১-২৩২
তারিখঃ ২১/০১/২০২১
জিডি-১৫৩

মোঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ
মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফোনঃ ৯৫৩০১৪৮

From zero to a hundred million dollar dairy farm

SHYKH SERAJ

The onset of winter on a November morning in 2020 was quite noticeable in Chattogram's Mirsharai. It was foggy all around and the community of Joranganj was still sleeping. Only one or two people were seen. I was waiting for Rakibul Islam Tutul, the head of Nahar Agro Limited, at his place. It is one of the modern technology equipped dairy farms in Bangladesh. Tutul, aged between 40 to 45 years, arrived from Chattogram and the young agricultural entrepreneur, who looks much younger than his actual age, stepped towards me with great confidence.

Effective and efficient use of information technology in global agricultural production is already underway at this stage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Information technology is playing a pivotal role in reducing farm labourer cost and bringing the production system into a mathematical calculation. Significant progress has been made in the field of animal resources as well. Great accomplishments have come in managing the activities of this sector by connecting computer, mobile and laptop with the internet. In the last few years, I have written several articles on the use of Internet of Things (IoT) in dairy farms and animal resources. In 2016, I witnessed the multifaceted use of information technology in the research farms of the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands. Then in 2016, you may remember a Hridoye Mati O Manush documentary on the use of smart technology at a dairy farm in Chungnam in Seoul, South Korea. No individual is running the farm and a farmer named Kim controls the entire farm from a small control room. And I first saw the use of IoT in dairy farms in Bangladesh at Masco Dairy Limited in Narayanganj's Kanchan area. Later, I saw the successful use of digitalization in an organization called, Shurjomukhi Pranishaba. I also saw the use of IoT at Dutch Dairy in Louhajong of Munshiganj. Nahar Dairy in Mirsharai has set an example of successful use of IoT at a large scale in Bangladesh.

Development work of local breed of cattle is going on in a huge area at Tutul's research farm in Joranganj. Tutul is trying to come up with a breed that gives more milk by crossbreeding

Canadian Holstein breeds with local breeds, Red Chittagong and Munshiganj.

"I get 70 to 80 litres of milk from Holstein cows and a maximum of 3 litres from local Red Chittagong breed," said Tutul.

Holstein cows do not adapt to the climate of our country, Tutul said adding that he is looking to get at least 25 litres of milk per day from the new breed he's trying to develop. Under the huge shed, there are 100 Red Chittagong Cattle and 100 Munshiganj breeds. The process has already taken five years in the 10-year plan. In the meantime, success has begun to come. From the Red Chittagong breeds, 57 new breeds of crossbred calves have been born. But the purpose of my visit was to see his IoT-based farm and it took half an hour drive to reach his Nahar Daily Farm in Naloko of Mirsharai from the research farm.

Tutul was fond of farming since his childhood. He started rearing 300 chicken back in 1986 when he was a school boy. His mother used to help him a lot. All his farming initiatives start with the name Nahar, his mother's name. Later

Rows and rows of cows of different breeds are seen there. Tutul said the farm has 1,200 cows. Of those, 700 are dairy cows. All cows have activation belts around their necks, with microchips inside. These microchips are sending all the physical and environmental information of the cow to the computer, mobile or laptop. The entire farm is a great example as modern technology is being used in every step of its operation. From food to rearing and examining the health status everything is well observed with the ultimate use of digitalization and smart technologies. Tutul's farm has everything from temperature control to milking by mechanical means. When the cows are ready for milking, the cows go automatically to the milking parlour in rows. Tutul said he gets an average of 6,000 litres of milk every day. Apart from milk marketing, his farm also has arrangements for making various dairy products. This is the exact thing I witnessed at the De Marke Dairy Farm in the Netherlands.

Everything in Tutul's farm is being done automatically. The issue of cleanliness is done in the same manner and it is round-the-clock



Rakibul Islam Tutul talks at his Nahar Dairy Farm in Naloko of Chattogram's Mirsharai.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

on, he bought two cows and that was the start of Nahar Dairy.

"All my life I thought there is nothing to lose in life. If I can manage the cost for those 300 chicken and roll the farm with those chicken, it would be enough," said Tutul.

"So, I never feared for a single second in my farming career," he added.

If you want to become an entrepreneur, you have to take risks. Those who stands on the brink of profit and loss are succeed by taking the right decision. The same has happened in the case of Tutul. In the course of 35 years, he has developed a wide range of agricultural activities. Now 4,000 workers are employed at his various agro-based farms and factories. Financial success is also wonderful. Annual turnover is more than Tk 1,000 crore (USD 117.7 million).

Tutul has created an aesthetic field on 35 acres of land surrounded by hills in Naloko like the modern dairy farm in the developed world.

cleanliness. Organic manure is being made from the cow dung. Only 60 workers are working at this farm.

"If we did not rely on modern technology, it would not have been possible to manage the huge amount of work, which requires at least 200 people," said the farm in-charge Dr Selim Reza.

They are ensuring 100 percent care of their cows and calves. About 500 to 600 calves are born every year and it is another source of his profit.

Tutul is applying all the latest technologies at his dairy farm. In each step of work, he thinks of his responsibility towards his motherland and cares for the people who work there with honesty. Tutul believes he is getting all his desired success because of his principles. I believe many new entrepreneurs will build their modern dairy farm following Tutul's footsteps which will not only help them, but boost up the economy of Bangladesh.



Many people from different parts of the country visit the sunflower field of BADC at Domrakandi in Faridpur for its scenic beauty.

PHOTO: STAR

BADC sunflower fields attract visitors

A total of four acres of Faridpur BADC land have been brought under the sunflower cultivation this year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Hundreds of people from different districts visit a farm of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) at Domrakandi in Faridpur Sadar everyday to enjoy the scenic beauty of sunflowers in bloom at the farm. Sunflowers are grown at the farm to produce seeds.

According to the BADC office, a total of four acres of land of BADC have been brought under the sunflower cultivation this year. Bari-3 sunflower seed have been cultivated there in the first week of November. The stem of the flower can grow up to three metres tall, with a flower head that can be 12 cm wide.

Mizanur Rahman Khan, gardener of the sunflower field, said a good number of visitors from Rajbari, Gopalganj, Magura, Khulna and Dhaka visit the sunflower fields every day. They visit around the field and took picture with the sunflowers.

On the other hand, around 300 parrots come to this field every morning to eat the seed of the sunflowers.

So, four people like him work here every day to protect the flowers, he added.

During a visit to the field of BADC on Monday noon, this correspondent found

that around 50 people including women and children came to visit the sunflower fields. They are visiting around the field and taking pictures with the flowers.

Shemul Roy, a masters student of Government Rajendra College in Faridpur, who came to see the field, said "I came to know from one of my friends about the sunflower field. So, I come to visit the field. I am really surprised to see the scenic beauty of the flower field."

Apurba Kunda, who came from Takerhat of Madaripur to see the sunflower field, said the sunflower field is looking like a yellow carpet. He never sees a good number of sunflowers in a place like it.

Mimi Akter, a resident of Komorpur area under Sadar upazila in Faridpur, said, "I have heard from many of my know people about the sunflower field. So I came here. It is really a beautiful place to visit."

Md Rashed Khan, sub-assistant director of Faridpur BADC, said "Four acres of land have been brought under sunflower cultivation this year. We are expecting 400-500 kg seeds from one acre of land. The farmers of this area are being interested to cultivate sunflower seeds as sunflower oil is very healthy and profitable."

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



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২১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২১

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়ের সেতু বিভাগের রাজস্বভুক্ত পদে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে জাতীয় বেতনভেদ-২০১৫ অনুযায়ী জনবল নিয়োগের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতনভেদ (জাতীয় বেতনভেদ, ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদসংখ্যা	বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষণাত্মক যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
০১.	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর বেতনভেদ: টাকা ১১,০০০ - ২৬৪৯০ (গ্রেড-১৩)	০৫ (পাঁচ)টি	অনূর্ধ্ব-৩০	(ক) কোনো শীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার টাইপিং-এ সর্বনিম্ন পন্ডি প্রতিনিধিত্বে ইংরেজী ৩০ এবং বাংলায় ২৫ শর্শ।
০২.	ক্যান সারকার বেতনভেদ: টাকা ৮৮০০ - ২১৩২০ (গ্রেড-১৮)	০১ (এক)টি	অনূর্ধ্ব-৩০	কোন অনুমোদিত শিক্ষা বোর্ড হইতে কমপক্ষে ২য় বিভাগে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট (এস.এস.সি.) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।
০৩.	অফিস সহায়ক বেতনভেদ: টাকা ৮২৫০ - ২০০১০ (গ্রেড-২০)	০২ (দুই)টি	অনূর্ধ্ব-৩০	মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট (এস.এস.সি.) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।

আবেদনের শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলী:

০১. ০১/০১/২০২১ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর হতে হবে। সুক্টিমোদা/শহীদ সুক্টিমোদার পুর-কন্যা এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩২ বছর। তবে সুক্টিমোদা/শহীদ সুক্টিমোদার পুর-কন্যার পুর-কন্যাদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো প্রকার এফিডেভিট গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
০২. সরকারি, আধাসরকারি ও স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীসকলকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
০৩. নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের প্রচলিত বিধিবিধান প্রসিদ্ধান্তিত হবে।
০৪. ২ ও ৩ নং ক্রমিকের বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষার উপস্থিতিতে মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ১ নং ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণদের ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং ব্যবহারিক উত্তীর্ণদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ দেওয়া হবে।
০৫. আবেদনকারী সেতু বিভাগের ওয়েবসাইট www.bridgesdivision.gov.bd তে প্রবেশ করে **e-Recruitment menu** অথবা <https://eservice.bba.gov.bd/recruitment/> এর মাধ্যমে ২৫/০১/২০২১ তারিখ সন্ধ্যা ১০.০০ টা থেকে পুন: হয়ে ১৪/০২/২০২১ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ টা পর্যন্ত আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
০৬. আবেদনপত্র প্রার্থীকে তার রস্কিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ × প্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) এবং স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ × প্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে আপলোড করতে হবে। ছবি ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ ৫০ kb-এর মধ্যে হতে হবে।
০৭. নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পর প্রার্থী ছবি ও স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Auto Generated Registration Card পাবেন। সফলভাবে আবেদন করার পর আবেদনকারী মোবাইলে এসএমএস ও ইমেইলে (যদি দেয়া হয়ে থাকে) একটি User ID ও Password প্রেরণ করা হবে। উক্ত রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ডে ফি পরিশোধের নির্দেশনা দেয়া থাকবে। রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ডটি প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে।
০৮. প্রার্থীকে সফলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করার ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে বিকাশের (bKash) মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ (অফেজরতযোগ্য) ক্রমিক ১ বর্ণিত পদের জন্য ১০০.০০ টাকা এবং অন্যান্য ফি বাবদ ১০.০০ টাকার (একশত দশ) টাকা এবং ক্রমিক ২ ও ৩ পদের জন্য ৫০ টাকা এবং অন্যান্য ফি বাবদ ১০ টাকা সর্বমোট ৬০ (ষাট টাকা) পরিশোধ করতে হবে। আবেদন করার ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে ফি পরিশোধে ব্যর্থ হলে আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
০৯. User ID ও Password দিয়ে প্রার্থী নিজস্ব তথ্য উত্তর ওয়েবসাইটে লিঙ্ক হতে পুনঃদ্রাৱণ করতে পারবেন।
১০. বিকাশের মাধ্যমে টাকা জমাানের প্রক্রিয়া:
১ম ধাপ: আবেদনের ওয়েবসাইটের **e-Recruitment menu**-এর ক্লিক করে লগইন অপশন 'Applicant Login' অথবা <https://eservice.bba.gov.bd/recruitment/index.php/userpanel/login> বাটনে ক্লিক করুন;
২য় ধাপ: User ID ও Password প্রদান করে Applicant Dashboard-এ প্রবেশ করুন;
৩য় ধাপ: 'Payment Information/Download Admit Card' সেলেক্ট ক্লিক করুন;
৪র্থ ধাপ: 'Pay With bKash' লিংক-এ ক্লিক করার পর একটি পপআপ উইন্ডো আসবে। পপআপ উইন্ডো এর 'Your bKash Account number' টেক্সটবক্সে যে বিকাশ এ্যাকাউন্ট থেকে ফি পরিশোধ করা হবে সেটি প্রদান করুন;
৫ম ধাপ: বিকাশ এ্যাকাউন্ট প্রদান করার পর 'CONFIRM' বাটনে এ ক্লিক করুন;
৬ষ্ঠ ধাপ: বিকাশ থেকে একটি গোপন 'Verification Code' প্রদানকৃত বিকাশ এ্যাকাউন্টের নম্বরে এসএমএস প্রেরণ করা হবে। 'Verification Code'টি প্রদান করে 'CONFIRM' বাটনে এ ক্লিক করুন;
৭ম ধাপ: বিকাশ এ্যাকাউন্টের PIN নম্বরটি প্রদান করে 'CONFIRM' এ বাটনে ক্লিক করুন;
৮ম ধাপ: সফলভাবে ফি পরিশোধ হয়ে গেলে 'Transaction Successful Your Payment has been successfully completed...' মেসেজ দেখাবে এবং আবেদনকারী প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড ও প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন।
১১. সেতু বিভাগের Website এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল (Mobile) সেনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে শেখা যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) পরীক্ষার তারিখ, স্থান ও সময় জানিয়ে দেয়া হবে।
১২. প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই:
ক. প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রকৃত কোনো তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা ভুল প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসমুপায় অবলম্বন করলে, সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং জরি বিধুকে যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল প্রকার সনদের মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে এবং সনদসমূহের ফটোকপি জমা দিতে হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যে কোনো প্রার্থীর আবেদন বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
খ. জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকত্ব প্রমাণের সনদ হিসাবে সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি করপোরেশনের প্রকৃত সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে।
গ. যদি কোনো প্রার্থী বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক না হন কিংবা বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক নন এমন কোনো ব্যক্তিকে নিয়ে করেন বা করার জন্য প্রস্তুতিবদ্ধ হন কিংবা কোনো বৈধসম্মতি আলোচ্য কর্তৃক নৈতিক স্বল্পজনিত অভিযোগে দণ্ডিত হন কিংবা কোনো সরকার বা স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠান বা স্থানীয় কর্তৃপক্ষের চাকরি হতে বরখাস্ত হয়ে থাকেন এবং উক্তরূপ বরখাস্তের পর দুই বছর অভিজ্ঞতা না হয়ে থাকে, তবে তিনি আবেদন করার জন্য যোগ্য বিবেচিত হবেন না।
১৩. লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোনো প্রকার টিউ/ডি/এ প্রদান করা হবে না।
১৪. কর্তৃপক্ষ পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি/বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।
১৫. নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা ও নিয়মিত সন্তোষ যে কোনো বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে; এবং
১৬. বিজ্ঞপ্তি সেতু বিভাগের www.bridgesdivision.gov.bd-এ পাওয়া যাবে। এই নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি সম্পর্কিত কোনো সংশোধন, সংযোজন (যদি থাকে) সেতু বিভাগ এর নিজস্ব ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।

(এইস. এম রশিদ হায়দার)
উপসচিব (প্রশাসন), সেতু বিভাগ
ও
সদস্য সচিব, নিয়োগ কমিটি

Architect Mohammed Rezwan, who designed and constructed the 'floating schools' for the flood-hit areas along the Chalanbeel in 2002, gets international recognition called 'Climate Rebel' for his innovative role in fighting against the disaster. Penguin Random House of UK published a book on 41 climate heroes, who played a vital role over the last couple of centuries, recently.

PHOTO: STAR

বাংলাদেশ ইনসিওরেন্স একাডেমি
৫৩, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২
www.bia.gov.bd

**বীমা বিষয়ক এবিআইএ পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েট ডিপ্লোমা
মে এবং অক্টোবর-২০২০ পর্বের পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত**

দেশে বীমা শিল্পের প্রসার, দক্ষ জনশক্তি সৃষ্টি এবং এ পেশায় নিয়োজিত জনবলকে যুগের চাহিদা মোতাবেক পেশাগত জ্ঞানে সমৃদ্ধ করে গড়ে তুলতে বীমা বিষয়ক "পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েট ডিপ্লোমা" অর্থাৎ এসোসিয়েটশীপ অব বাংলাদেশ ইনসিওরেন্স একাডেমি (এবিআইএ) অতীত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে আসছে। বিশ্বব্যাপী Covid-19 এর কারণে অন্যান্য শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের ন্যায় একাডেমির ডিপ্লোমা পরীক্ষা কার্যক্রম বন্ধ রাখা হয়েছিল। বর্তমানে সার্বিক বিবেচনায় কর্তৃপক্ষ স্বাস্থ্য বিধি অনুসরণপূর্বক ডিপ্লোমা পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করার বিগত বছরের অর্থাৎ মে এবং অক্টোবর-২০২০ পর্বের পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে আহ্বান জানানো যাচ্ছে। ডিপ্লোমা পরীক্ষার ফি ও সময়সূচি সংক্রান্ত তথ্যবলী নিম্নরূপঃ

বিষয়	সময়সীমা	ফি
পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান এবং প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ	১৯-১-২০২১ থেকে ১১-২-২০২১ তারিখ পর্যন্ত	প্রতি বিষয়- ৫০০/- টাকা
পরীক্ষা	২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২১ হতে শুরু	পরীক্ষার সময়সূচি ওয়েবসাইটের মাধ্যমে পাওয়া যাবে।

* ডিপ্লোমা পরীক্ষার আবেদন ফর্ম, নিয়মাবলী একাডেমির ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bia.gov.bd) পাওয়া যাবে।
* পরীক্ষার ফি, মোবারশীপ ফি Dutch Bangla Mobile Bank (A/C No. 1973) এ জমা দিতে হবে।
* অতিরিক্ত জ্ঞান যোগ্যতাঃ ন্যূনতম স্নাতক ডিগ্রী।
➤ বিস্তারিত জানার জন্য একাডেমির ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bia.gov.bd) এ ভিজিট করা যেতে পারে।
➤ মোবাইলঃ ০১৭১১-৯৬৩১৫৫, ০১৯৩৭-৬৯২১৯৩, ০১৭১৬-৩৪০৩৪৪

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
এস. এম ইব্রাহিম হোসাইন, ACII
পরিচালক (অঃ দাঃ)
বাংলাদেশ ইনসিওরেন্স একাডেমি

জিডি-১৪৯



Fireworks are seen above the White House at the end of the Inauguration day for US President Joe Biden in Washington, DC, on Wednesday; Biden and first lady Jill Biden watch fireworks from the White House; and the 46th US president signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

US Senate control shifts to Democrats

AFP, Washington

Two Georgia Democrats were sworn in Wednesday as the newest members of the US Senate, handing their party control of the upper chamber just hours after President Joe Biden took office.

With Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock -- who ousted two Republicans in a pair of January 5 run-offs -- being formally seated, the body now stands deadlocked at 50-50.

That means Democrats control the chamber because new Vice President Kamala Harris acts as the tie-breaking vote.

Harris, herself a former senator from California, presided over the session just hours after becoming vice president, and swore in the two Georgia men and her own replacement, Alex Padilla.

By flipping the Senate and holding the House of Representatives in last November's election, Democrats now control all levels of power in Washington in a period of heightened political partisanship following the four-year presidency of Donald Trump.

That provides Biden an avenue to push through some of his key legislative priorities on climate change, immigration, and a \$1.9 trillion relief package to help American families and businesses devastated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Senate control should mean Biden will have an easier time getting his cabinet members and judge picks confirmed. But passing aggressive legislation is likely to be a far more difficult proposition.

Among the Democratic Senate's first orders of business: the impeachment trial of Trump, who is no longer president but could face a lifetime ban on serving in public office if he is convicted.

US IN TRANSITION

Biden's nominee for intel chief gets Senate approval

The US Senate voted Wednesday to confirm former CIA official Avril Haines as director of national intelligence, making her the first member of newly-inaugurated President Joe Biden's cabinet to gain approval. Senate Democrats and Republicans gave strong support to Haines, voting 84-10 to make her the first woman ever to lead the 18 entities of the US intelligence community. Biden and the Senate are moving quickly to get key members of his government in place, with votes expected in the coming days on the secretaries of defense, state and the Treasury. Haines, 51, is a veteran of the intelligence world, having served as deputy CIA director and deputy national security advisor in the previous Obama-Biden administration.

Biden says Trump wrote him 'very generous letter'

President Joe Biden said Wednesday that outgoing president Donald Trump had left him a "very generous" letter in the Oval Office, in keeping with tradition. "The president wrote a very generous letter," Biden told reporters at the White House. "Because it's private, I will not talk about it until I talk to him," he said. It was unclear until Wednesday whether Trump would maintain the tradition of outgoing presidents leaving notes for their successors, after he opted to skip Biden's inauguration and never formally congratulated him on his election win.

Greta wishes 'old man' Trump a 'wonderful future'

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg on Wednesday renewed a feud with Donald Trump, saying the outgoing US president "seems like a very happy old man looking forward to a bright and wonderful future". The teenager was reversing a barb that Trump -- who frequently disputes the science behind climate change -- had aimed at her in 2019 when he wrote on Twitter that "she seems like a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future". The tweet was a sarcastic response to a fiery speech given by Thunberg at the United Nations where she told world leaders: "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. How dare you?" In response, Thunberg later modified her Twitter biography, referring to herself as "a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future".

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

China wants reset in US ties

Slaps sanctions on Pompeo, Trump officials; Taiwan official's presence in Biden's inauguration angers Beijing

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday congratulated US President Joe Biden on his inauguration and called for a reset in relations between Beijing and Washington after a corrosive period of diplomacy under Donald Trump.

Beijing also welcomed news that the US would rejoin the World Health Organization and the Paris climate accord, as Biden tried to immediately pivot his office back to a key role in global leadership.

The ever-antagonistic Trump harangued China over trade, rights, the origins of the Covid-19 virus, tech and defence supremacy, prompting angry near-daily jousts between both countries' diplomats.

The new US president is expected to remain tough on the superpower rival but soften after Trump's divisive "America First" approach.

"With cooperation from both sides, the better angels in China-US



relations will beat the evil forces," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a press briefing.

She said Biden had used the word "unity" several times in his inauguration speech, and that it was "precisely what is needed currently in US-China relations".

Beijing laid into "clown-like" Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in the final hours of his tenure, before sanctioning him and more than two dozen advisors and ex-officials in the former president's administration.

The officials and their family members will be prohibited from

entering mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, the foreign ministry said.

There were still signs of tension on the horizon, however, as it emerged that a representative of the self-ruled island of Taiwan was formally invited to the US inauguration for the first time since 1979.

Hua yesterday warned that China wanted the US to "cautiously and appropriately handle Taiwan issues to prevent harm to US-China relations."

The Biden administration is expected to keep the pressure on China over trade and human rights. Treasury secretary Janet Yellen vowed Tuesday to "take on China's abusive, unfair and illegal practices" in trade, while new Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said he stands by his predecessor's declaration that China was committing genocide against Uighurs and other mostly Muslim people in Xinjiang.

He also said he principally agrees with Trump's policy on China.

Delicate dance

Handing off the US 'nuclear football'

AFP, Washington

When an outgoing president hands the keys to the White House to the incoming one, another discrete handover takes place: the systems and codes for the US leader to launch a nuclear strike.

On Wednesday Donald Trump's huffy refusal to attend successor Joe Biden's inauguration created an unprecedented challenge.

Trump travelled to Florida three hours before Biden was sworn in and, as he was still president, he took with him the nuclear "football," the bag containing the procedures and equipment for a launch.

He also would have had in his pocket the "biscuit" -- a card of authentication codes for embarking on a nuclear launch that only the president can use.

Biden, though, needed the launch codes and communications at his side from the moment he became president and commander in chief, at noon in Washington.

So for the first time in a transfer of presidential power, there was a second active "football" -- actually a hefty black leather briefcase always carried by the president's military aide -- for the occasion.

At noon, just as he took the oath of office, Biden had a military officer standing nearby with the duplicate nuclear briefcase, and he received his own biscuit. Trump's meanwhile expired, like an outdated credit card.

While it was a new test of maintaining unbroken presidential control over conducting nuclear war, it wasn't actually too difficult.

There are always three footballs around: one with the president, another with the vice president in case he has to assume power, and third backup.

In the final days of Trump's administration, and especially after the January 6 attack on the Congress by supporters of Trump, some concern was expressed about him retaining the power to order a nuclear attack.

Rich nations 'exaggerate' climate finance: study

AFP, Paris

Rich countries have over-reported finance to help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change by \$20 billion over the last decade, leaving at-risk communities drastically underfunded, a new analysis showed yesterday.

Under the 2015 Paris climate deal, countries are required to boost funding to hard-hit governments, evenly split between cash to mitigate global warming and to help them adapt to future climate impacts.

Developed countries promised to provide \$50 billion in annual finance for adaptation by 2020. But official OECD figures show that in 2018 donors committed just \$16.8 billion.

The true figure, according to an analysis by green group CARE International, is in fact far lower: just \$9.7 billion.

CARE and its partner organisations in Africa and southeast Asia assessed 112 climate adaptation projects funded by 25 donor nations equivalent to 13 percent of total global adaptation finance between 2013-2017.

They found that the funding for adaption in these projects had been over reported by 42 percent. Applying that figure to remaining projects, CARE said that adaptation finance had been over-reported by \$20 billion during the same period.

It said several countries and donors had overblown their adaptation grants by including finance for construction projects such as housing and roads not related to the climate at all.

The United Nations last week said countries were falling short of their Paris pledges by failing to fund vulnerable nations' climate fight.

It said the true cost of adaptation -- reducing the fallout among communities and increasing their capacity to deal with climate-related disasters such as floods and drought -- was currently around \$70 billion annually. But that figure could swell as high as \$300 billion a year by the end of the decade, it said.



A supporter of former US president Donald Trump holds a placard while he was returning from Washington after President Joe Biden's inauguration, in West Palm Beach, Florida, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Twin suicide bombing in Baghdad kill 32, hurt 110

AFP, Baghdad

A rare twin suicide bombing killed 32 people and wounded 110 at a crowded market in central Baghdad yesterday, Iraq's health ministry said, the city's deadliest attack in three years.

The first attacker drew a crowd at the bustling market in the capital's Tayaran Square by claiming to feel sick, then detonated his explosives belt, the interior ministry said. As more people then flocked to the scene to help the victims, a second suicide bomber set off his explosives.

The open-air market, where second-hand clothes are sold at stalls, had been teeming with people.

An AFP photographer at the scene said security forces had cordoned off the area, where blood-soaked clothes were strewn across the muddy streets and paramedics were rushing to take away the casualties.

The health ministry said those who lost their lives had died on the scene of the

attack, and that most of the wounded had been treated and released from hospital.

The attack was the bloodiest in Baghdad since January 2018, when a suicide bomber killed 30 people in the same square.

The attack was not immediately claimed but suicide bombings have been used by jihadist groups, most recently the Islamic State group.

They were commonplace in Baghdad during the sectarian bloodletting that followed the US-led invasion of 2003 and later on as the IS swept across much of Iraq and also targeted the capital. But with the group's territorial defeat in late 2017, suicide bombings in the city became rare.

President Barham Saleh led political figures in condemning yesterday's attack, saying the government would "stand firmly against these rogue attempts to destabilise our country".

Pope Francis, who hopes to visit Iraq in March, deplored the "senseless act of brutality".

Shipwreck off Libya leaves 43 dead: UN

AFP, Geneva

At least 43 migrants perished in the first major shipwreck off the Libyan coast this year, the United Nations said Wednesday, adding that 10 people were rescued.

The UN agencies for refugees and for migration said they were "deeply saddened" by the tragedy. The shipwreck, they said, happened Tuesday after a boat that set off from the city of Zawya capsized just a few hours after departure when its engine stopped in poor sea conditions.

Survivors, who were mainly from the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Ghana and Gambia, said those who perished were all men from West African countries, the UN agencies added.

The shipwreck was the first of 2021 off Libya, but comes after hundreds of people lost their lives last year trying to cross the central Mediterranean to Europe -- making it the most deadly migration route in the world.

In their statement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UNHCR said they feared that "due to the limited ability to monitor routes", the actual number of deaths last year "could be much higher".

"This loss of life highlights once more the need for re-activation of state-led search and rescue operations, a gap NGO and commercial vessels are trying to fill despite their limited resources," they said.

The agencies also reiterated their call on the international community to urgently shift its approach to the situation in the Mediterranean.

MISTREATMENT OF COVID-INFECTED MOTHER

Mongolian PM resigns

AFP, Ulaanbaatar

Mongolia's prime minister resigned yesterday following protests and public outrage over the treatment of a coronavirus patient and her newborn baby.

Landlocked Mongolia reported just a handful of Covid-19 cases last year after imposing strict border controls, but in November its first domestic transmissions caused a new wave of lockdowns and restrictions.

Anger mounted this week after TV footage showed a woman who appeared to have recently given birth being moved to an infectious disease centre wearing only hospital pyjamas and plastic slippers, despite temperatures dipping to minus 25 degrees Celsius.

After protests outside government buildings on Wednesday, the Mongolian politician apologised on behalf of the government and said he would stand down immediately.

"Unfortunately, we made mistake during relocating that mother," admitted Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa yesterday. "It was heartbreaking to see how she was treated."

"As a prime minister, I must take the responsibility."

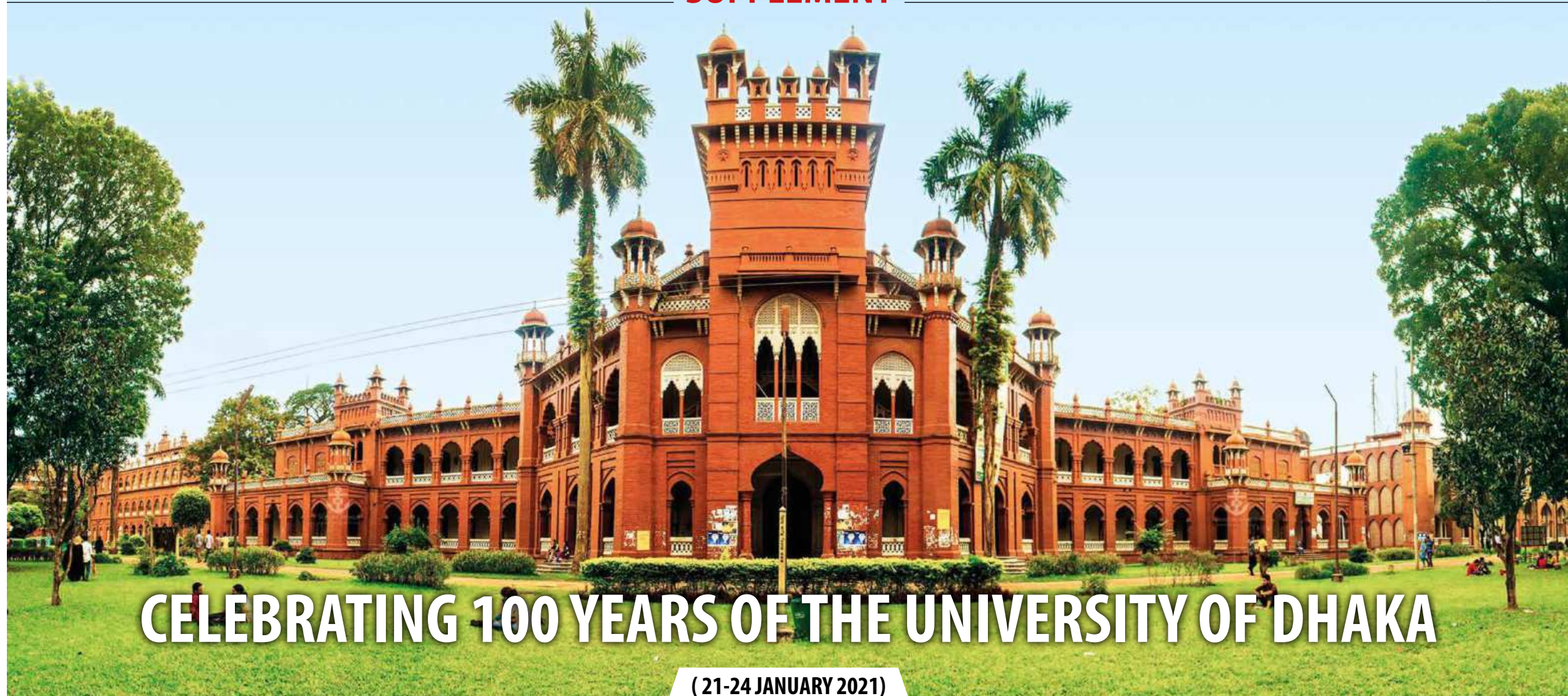
The video of the woman in an ambulance clutching her baby prompted fierce criticism, particularly as Mongolian tradition dictates new mothers should avoid the cold weather and cold food for the first month after birth.

On Wednesday around 5,000 mostly young protesters gathered in a square opposite government buildings in the capital Ulaanbaatar, some carrying wrapped up bundles to represent babies.

The vice prime minister -- also head of the national emergency commission handling the pandemic -- had already resigned on Wednesday evening, followed by the minister of health. The head of the hospital and disease centre in the middle of the row also resigned.

Political instability has been a constant problem for the young Central Asian democracy, which passed its first constitution in 1992 after decades of Communist rule.

As the prime minister stands down, President Battulga Khaltmaa remains in place as head of state.



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

(21-24 JANUARY 2021)

Curzon Hall, University of Dhaka.

PHOTO: MOSTAK AHMED

A note from the convener

The year 2021 is significant for both Bangladesh and the University of Dhaka as both the entities will turn 50 and 100 respectively. The fates of these two entities are intertwined in many respects. Even before the existence of independent Bangladesh, University of Dhaka started its journey in 1921 and has contributed to the knowledge and faculties of this land. The University of Dhaka also played a historic role in the freedom struggle for an independent Bangladesh. The students of this university laid down their lives to establish the right of mother language for the entire Bengali nation in 1952. It was again the students of this university who raised for the first time the flag of independent Bangladesh on 2 March 1971, nearly a month before the declaration of independent Bangladesh and the war of independence in 1971. The teachers, students, and staff of this university had been brutally killed, tortured and humiliated during the nine-month war of independence by the Pakistani army and its local collaborators in 1971. The sacrifice, however, has not gone in vain, and the University of Dhaka is proud of it.

The illustrious graduates of the University of Dhaka since its foundation have contributed to knowledge and skill both at home and abroad. The alumni have practically abolished the traditional North-South knowledge divide and created a bridge between the two with their significant contribution to both academic and non-academic excellence. The International Conference on Celebrating 100 years of the University of Dhaka is an opportunity for the University to bring back these graduates to their alma mater so that they could recall their memorable years and contribute to the development of the oldest university of Bangladesh.

The original plan of the International Conference was to invite the noted alumni to the campus to celebrate the occasion. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, forced us to reorganize the event and have the conference on the online platform. The conference is now divided into six thematic webinars, where the alumni, both national and international, will share their ideas, goals and dreams for the development and prosperity of Dhaka University and Bangladesh. More than 100 papers will be presented at the International Conference. A volume on each of the six themes will be published at the end of the conference.

Finally, University of Dhaka takes pride in having its esteemed alumnus, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Honourable Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as Chief Guest to inaugurate the International Conference. Let us celebrate this historic moment and mark the centenary celebration of our beloved alma mater.

Imtiaz Ahmed
Professor of International Relations
University of Dhaka

A vision for Dhaka University in the 21st century

REHMAN SOBHAN

Dhaka University was born out of a struggle by the people of eastern Bengal for asserting their regional identity. It reached its apotheosis through its vanguard role in the struggle for Bangladesh's nationhood. It was my privilege as a teacher in Dhaka University from 1957 to 1971 to be a part of this struggle.

From its inception Dhaka University, once termed the Oxford of the East, has aspired to attain scholastic distinction. But it has never departed from its inspirational role as an institution with a political conscience. It served as



Members of the Nathan Commission which was formed on May 27, 1912 by the Government of Bengal to prepare a complete scheme for the establishment of a university in Dhaka.

an incubator for a generation of political leaders and activists who engaged in the protracted democratic struggle from 1947 to 1971 against a Pakistani ruling elite determined to subordinate the national identity of the Bengalis, deny them their political rights and deprive them of their just share of economic resources. A good example of such activism was provided by our Prime Minister herself, who joined with other students to participate in a sit-down in front of the TSC to challenge the fundamentalist politics of Chhatra Shibir and Jamaat during the democratic struggle in 1969.

Those of us from Dhaka University who were more directly involved in this struggle, found inspiration from the leadership of Bangabandhu in this struggle where his six-point proclamation for self-rule for Bangladesh served as the Magna Carta for our struggle for nationhood, eventually realised through a bloody war of national liberation. During these years Dhaka

University rarely departed from its commitments to scholastic standards where advancement remained merit based.

It was expected that in an independent Bangladesh Dhaka University would realise its full promise as a centre of learning which would give birth to a new generation of leaders and scholars who would serve to build the new nation so it could realise this vision of its founding father and give substance to the spirit of the liberation war. In spite of considerable investment of resources this expectation remains some distance from being realized.

Our public educational system which has been exposed to spectacular expansion remains the refuge of the less privileged sections of the population. The challenge before our policymakers who aspire to lead us through the 21st century towards attaining developed country status is not just to expand but to elevate the quality of learning in our public institutions to the

highest levels. In responding to such a herculean challenge, we should begin with the regeneration of Dhaka University to not only rediscover its foundational mission but where it could aspire to resurrect its long-forgotten image as the Oxford of the East.

This would require massive investment of resources so that the rebuilding of Dhaka University would be put at the same level for resources as the construction of the Padma bridge. However, in recreating a world class university financial resources may turn out to be a secondary problem to the challenge of quality governance, which needs to elevate both educational standards and administration to global levels. At the same time the student population must be emancipated from the tyranny of violence and partisan dominance which have vitiated the residential character of the campus and made learning into a challenge rather than an opportunity.

Such challenges both for the development and governance of Dhaka University should not be beyond the capability of a strong and committed leadership. What such a task will need is creativity, determination and a recognition of the need to prioritise quality education over the course of the 21st century. Enabling Dhaka University to realise its full potential as an institution of global standards should be visualized as a vital landmark in our progression towards developed country status and the construction of a more just society

The writer is an eminent economist and a former faculty member of the University of Dhaka (1957-1977).



Rabindranath Tagore visiting the University of Dhaka during 1926. On the right Professor R C Majumder, famous Indian historian and DU teacher.

A brief history of the University of Dhaka

PROFESSOR DR AK AZAD CHOWDHURY

The University of Dhaka opened its doors on July 1, 1921, with Mr P. J. Hartog as its first Vice-Chancellor. Mr Hartog was the Academic Registrar of London University before being appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka. The university, with unitary teaching and residential character, started its journey with three Faculties: Arts, Science and Law and with 12 departments. The first convocation of the university was organised in 1923. At the convocation, Chancellor of the University Lord Lytton mentioned that the university served as compensation to the Muslims of East Bengal for the annulment of the partition of Bengal. He further added, "This University is Dacca's greatest possession, and it will do more than anything else to increase and spread the fame of Dhaka beyond the limits of Bengal or even of India itself." Though the university has a political origin, it was never intended to serve the interest of a particular community. In the early years of its history, more than 80 percent of its students and teachers were Hindus.

Within a few years of its establishment, the university became the intellectual centre of Bengal. In 1926, the great poet Rabindranath Tagore was accorded a grand reception at the university. The following year, rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was also given a grand reception. In 1936, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was invited to the university. He and Tagore were awarded D. Lit (Honoris Causa) by the university in 1936. The rebel poet was awarded D. Lit (Honoris Causa) in 1974.



Bangabandhu signing the lifetime membership form of Ducusu at Dhaka University on May 6, 1972.

The number of students at the university at the start of its journey was 877. This number gradually increased. Despite many hurdles, Dhaka University produced 55,306 graduates from 1921 to 1973. These graduates were manning teaching posts at schools and colleges. Many of them were also appointed at government jobs. It is noteworthy that 135 research scholars obtained D.Sc., PhD degrees by then.

The middle class that the university produced acted as a catalyst for social and political change. The freedom of intellect movement was started in this university in 1926. The progressive movement, nationalist movement and movement against the British rule had found places in the university as well. The university played a pioneering role in many other movements; to cite a few examples: Pakistan movement, language movement, the movement against disparity, the movement against communal riots in 1964 and 1966, the six-point movement, '69 mass upsurge, non-cooperation movement of 1971, and the liberation war of Bangladesh.

In 1947, there were five Faculties and

17 teaching departments in the university. At present, the university consists of 13 Faculties, 83 Departments, 12 Institutes, 20 residential halls, three hostels and more than 56 Research Centres. The number of students and teachers has risen to about 37,018 and 1,992, respectively. Presently, the university enrolls more than 5,800 students, on a merit basis, in the first year Honours Programmes in different disciplines. It runs four-year Bachelor and one-year Masters Programmes and also trains a large number of researchers in various fields. More than 1,262 PhD and 1,217 M.Phil. researchers have obtained their degrees from this university. It was identified by "Asia Week" as one of the top 100 universities in Asia for three consecutive years (1998-2000 AD). The university has rendered a valuable service to the higher education of Bangladesh. It is time now that more attention is given to the quality of education and research rather than the quantity. In the sixties, the university was not that big, and the number of departments was fewer, with a limited number of students. Teacher-student contact and interactions were praiseworthy. Quality research works in Science, Arts and Social Science were in progress. Now, in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the global focus is on world-class universities. With a little extra effort on the part of the teachers, researchers, students and, of course, with the help of the government, the University of Dhaka can graduate to a world-class university.

The writer is Professor Emeritus, Clinical Pharmacy & Pharmacology, University of Dhaka and former Chairman of UGC.

My Dreams for Dhaka University's Second Century

PROFESSOR AMIT CHAKMA

As it celebrates its first century, Dhaka University can be justifiably proud of its many glorious achievements. It has provided the intellect behind the birth of a new nation, Bangladesh, and educated political and business leaders, poets, playwrights, lawyers, scientists and teachers alike, to serve the country. As it looks forward to its next century, I dream of a Dhaka University that will continue to play even more of a significant role in becoming an intellectual powerhouse that will provide the intellect to transform Bangladeshi society into a learned society, and to help its economic renaissance as an innovative and knowledge-driven economic powerhouse. To achieve this dream, the university needs to reflect on its future, reinvent itself, and adjust to the everchanging external environment.

In its first century, Dhaka University rose to the occasion and became a true beacon of light in its early days through its pursuit of academic excellence. It then rose again responding to the emerging needs of the nation by giving birth to the language movement eventually culminating in the liberation of the country.

Bangladesh is now at a crossroads. On the positive side of the ledger, economic gains made by the nation since independence is very impressive. Much progress has been made on many fronts. On the negative side of the same ledger, there has been a significant decline in morality and civic sense. An indignant nation that rose to protest the loss of a handful of precious lives of martyrs Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and Shafiq, at the eve of the language movement, now witnesses frequent killings without much indignation. While idealism was once the moral currency of Dhaka University students and

graduates, today illegally got fortune has replaced it to an alarming level. Justice Badaruddin Ahmed Siddiky, a distinguished graduate of Dhaka University, then Chief Justice of East Pakistan, had the moral fortitude in refusing to swear in Tikka Khan as Governor. One wonders why we do not see such acts of bravery from DU graduates anymore?

The nation needs Dhaka University to rise to the occasion once more. It needs to educate our future leaders who would put idealism before monetary benefits, who would not tolerate corruption and root them out forcefully, would establish the rule of law and put the nation back towards its onward journey. The country also needs innovators, discoverers, business leaders and social entrepreneurs like the late Sir Fazle Hasan Abed. In short, Dhaka University needs to become the conscience of Bangladesh and educate "enlightened" citizens and leaders.

To do all the above, it needs to pursue academic excellence. It needs to boost its faculty ranks with eminent scholars. It can find inspiration from its proud history as the "Oxford of the East" with academic giants like Satyen Bose. Oxford University has 900 plus years behind its glorious past. Dhaka University has just begun. With high aspirations and noble ideals of serving the nation, it can rise high by providing the nation with intellectual direction and leadership in its next decade. The future of Bangladesh is in your hands, Dhaka University. Bring enlightenment to the nation by spreading the "light of knowledge" as you have done in the past century. This is my dream for my Alma Mater, Dhaka University, for its next century.

The writer is the Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Western Australia

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 22, 2021, MAGH 8, 1427 BS

India's gift of 20 lakh vaccine doses

Govt should diligently prepare for its inoculation campaign

THE first consignment of Covishield vaccine from India arrived in Bangladesh on Thursday. India gifted Bangladesh 20 lakh doses of the Oxford University and AstraZeneca developed vaccine, and we would like to thank the Indian government for such display of graciousness. The next shipment of doses bought by Bangladesh is scheduled to arrive on January 25 and will contain 50 lakh doses.

According to the health authorities, at first 400 to 500 people will be given the shots at different hospitals during an initial observation phase. The recipients of the vaccines will be observed for seven days before the government fully rolls out its vaccination campaign. Once the countrywide inoculation begins, a total of 60 lakh people will be vaccinated in the first month and 50 lakh more in the second month. In the third month, the 60 lakh people who received the first shot in the first month would get their second shot. We hope all of this will go smoothly.

However, we must remind the government of the importance of strict monitoring and proper management when it comes to preserving and distributing the vaccines. Those who most require it, such as frontline health workers and the elderly, should receive it first and there must not be any two ways about it. The government must ensure that there is no pilferage and that no vaccines end up in the black market but that every citizen that needs the vaccine gets it through the government system.

There is also the question of safety when it comes to vaccines that have been developed so quickly in the face of a deadly pandemic. The government must monitor those who receive the vaccine particularly in the initial phase, and ensure that there is a support system for them in case of any allergic or other reaction. As we have mentioned in this column previously, the government's vaccination programme is a massive one which naturally involves complex and large-scale logistical matters. In order for it to be a success, the government must remain vigilant at all times and pre-plan every step of the way.

Biden's inauguration a win for democracy

But uniting a deeply polarised US is likely to be his greatest challenge

A MIDST speculations of unrest created by Trump supporters and worries of domestic terrorism, Joe Biden was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on January 20, 2021 in what, in the end, turned out to be a smooth transition of power in the latest presidential elections in the country. In his inaugural speech, President Biden spoke of how democracy had prevailed and made an impassioned call for unity in a deeply divided society, asking all Americans to stand up against extreme and intolerant beliefs and choose to build bridges instead—not only between different communities, but between groups with opposing beliefs as well.

For proponents of liberal democracy and rational thought, not just in the US but across the world, it was a relief to see the end of Donald Trump's controversial term and the right-wing and prejudiced rhetoric that regularly came out of the White House during this period, as well as the continued and dangerous denial of science and reason in the name of "free speech." Many have already spoken of how the Biden presidency heralds the beginning of a new era of liberal democracy that will be more representative of ordinary Americans. While that remains to be seen, the fact that the new US vice-president is, for the first time, a woman and a person of colour, is a symbol of hope for women and minorities all over the world (although it also begs the question: why did we have to wait till 2021 to see such "radical" change in the US?). The new president's immediate actions, which involved removing Trump's infamous Muslim ban and bringing the US back into the Paris Climate Agreement, as well as his strong denunciation of white supremacy during his inaugural speech, all point towards US democracy taking a more hopeful, inclusive and liberal turn.

The fact that we witnessed a peaceful democratic transition, despite Trump's best efforts to delegitimise election results, is also a clear marker of the functional democracy that exists in the US—an example that we should all take heed of. However, the deep-rooted polarisation of US society and the rise of domestic extremism, including anti-immigration and anti-minority sentiments, cannot be ignored. A Pandora's box of racist hatred and intolerance has been opened in the US, and Biden will have to keep his pledges to his minority voters (which include a large Bangladeshi diaspora) and ensure that their rights are protected under his watch. While there is reason to be hopeful, there is also much reason to be cautious, and President Biden's ability to reunite this deeply divided nation will ultimately be the litmus test of his presidency.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

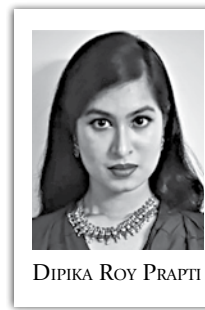
letters@thedailystar.net

Beware of bird flu

An outbreak of the avian influenza known as bird flu is reportedly spreading across multiple districts in neighbouring India. Fortunately, our ministry of fisheries and livestock directed the authorities concerned to take precautionary measures to prevent the spread of bird flu in the country. The ministry also directed them to conduct daily drives to detect it, taking maximum caution in the border districts and intensive supervision on public-private farms.

The authorities should follow up on the overall issue regularly. Should anything happen, we must remain alert so that we can respond to any crisis effectively. Public awareness, especially in the rural regions, is a must. As poultry is part of our everyday lives, we all must remain careful.

Amin Dewan, Dhaka



DIPIKA ROY PRAPTI

picture of the uncertain life of fishermen. Rivers and fish have always been an inseparable part of our existence. A Bengali is nothing if not one enamoured with fish and rice, as the old adage goes. The plight of the fishermen, however, has diminished with the change of time. We are now on the verge of producing smart fishermen in a country undergoing a rapid digital transformation, where it's hard to find someone who neither uses nor is within the reach of a smart mobile phone. It is undeniable that the last two decades have seen a radical shift in this nation's technology industry and how it connects with other industries and even ordinary people. There are more than 161 million mobile phone subscribers in Bangladesh, of whom around 92 million reportedly have access to internet.

The countrywide optical backbone network and connectivity coverage are helping Bangladesh move forward faster. We also have Bangabandhu Satellite-1,

As for digital marketing of fisheries, use of various social media sites such as Facebook has already become popular. The use of mobile apps has attracted the attention of many as well.

Aquaculture 4.0 and the Bangladesh perspective

which is strong enough to reach even adverse, otherwise unavailable and distant corners. Mobile internet, wireless broadband, and fixed broadband are the three forms of internet access empowering approximately 92 million people, 94 percent of whom reportedly rely on mobile networks. And since 2018, Bangladesh has introduced the 5th-generation experimental transmission following the 4th generation, the advantages of which may not take long

upward movement of the fisheries sector in Bangladesh, aided, among other things, by the deft use of information technology.

With the help of technology, field-level scientific and social problems related to fishponds such as lack of oxygen, increase in ammonia, oversupply of food, theft of fish, poisoning of water, etc. can be solved, sitting at home, simply by using real-time and need-based information. Technology can be a real boon to fish

related to fish farming through the use of Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, machine learning, etc. A digital pathway can modernise and diversify aquaculture production and bring in sizeable profits for all stakeholders.

Among the direct consequences of using technology in fish farming are: increasing fish production, reducing production costs, increasing exports, maintaining fish quality, controlling overfishing in wildlife, and saving endangered species. The entry of related technology can help create new jobs in the market on the one hand, and open the door to new areas of research on the other. But timely planning and decision making are essential in areas such as fish production, conservation of mother Hilsa, raising awareness, etc. Research by home-grown scientists are already advancing the fisheries sector by an average of 5.26 percent per annum (Fisheries Statistics 2016-17). As a result, the Department of Fisheries under the administrative control of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock expects to increase the fish production target from 4.2 to 4.5 million metric tons in 2020-21.

According to Statista 2020, more than 21 billion IoT-connected devices are going to be included in the world by 2025. This will benefit every sector that relies on technology. To keep pace with the transformation, the inclusion of technology in various fields and sectors began in the country since 2009, and we are now on the threshold of reaching the Digital Bangladesh goals. The Covid-19 epidemic has made it clear, once again, how difficult it is to move forward in this day and age without proper use of digital technology.

To advance the fisheries sector in Bangladesh, we need to prepare for what can be called the 4th Fisheries Revolution (or Aquaculture 4.0) in line with the 4th Industrial Revolution. Some existing gaps such as lack of seamless network coverage and proper technological knowledge can be bridged if everyone works with the same spirit from their own position. This would be feasible if experts from various fields such as information technologists, fishermen, ecologists, policymakers and above all the marginal fish farmers work in collaboration.

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Bangladesh is the third leading inland fisheries producer in the world, behind China and India.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

to reach everyone. Once they do, anyone in Bangladesh, sitting anywhere in the country, can easily hope to compete shoulder-to-shoulder with their rivals in the developed world.

The concept of smart agriculture may already be familiar to many thanks to "e-Village", a project of the Centre for Research and Information (CRI). This is the first smart-agriculture innovator in Bangladesh developed by indigenous scientists, where farmers can instantly know the state of their field, sitting at home. Equally, the concept of smart fishing is fast gaining ground, too.

There was a time when people would be surprised by the talk of fish farming or aquaculture in ponds. Today, Bangladesh is the third leading inland fisheries producer in the world, behind only China and India, according to a report of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This is indicative of the steady

cultivators and fishpond operators. It can also eliminate the need for waiting for so long to find out a solution through laboratory testing of water samples and so on.

As for digital marketing of fisheries, use of various social media sites such as Facebook has already become popular. The use of mobile apps has attracted the attention of many as well. Several government and private mobile apps such as Chingri, BD Fishpedia, Rupali, Fish Bangla, Bangla Fishing Baits, etc. are helping the fish farmers. Besides, some foreign companies, such as XpertSea, which is a Canada-based company, are reportedly going to start experimental technology testing on shrimp farms in Bangladesh soon. The most promising thing in this aspect is that not only foreign firms and researchers, but indigenous researchers are also making progress to solve different concerns

PROJECT SYNDICATE

How to tackle vulnerable countries' triple crisis

World leaders must step up by investing more, investing early, and investing locally

MANISH BAPNA and MUHAMMAD MUSA

THE year 2020 changed everything. The world now faces interconnected health, economic, and climate crises that have no historical parallel. These converging threats affect everyone, but are especially devastating for vulnerable developing countries.

The tragedy is that these countries receive relatively little direct public support to build resilience to climate change, and development assistance is being cut rather than expanded. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres noted at the recent UN Climate Ambition Summit, developed countries are not on track to meet their commitment to provide USD 100 billion per year to support developing countries' climate efforts.

The international community must now show solidarity and help vulnerable countries withstand the multiple threats they face. Doing so is in everyone's interest, because the effects of climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, and economic shocks know no borders.

In 2020 alone, more than 50 million people were affected by climate-driven disasters while also facing the pandemic and economic crisis. From typhoons and cyclones battering Southeast Asian cities to severe droughts devastating African farmers, the consequences were severe. By the end of 2021, the pandemic could drive an additional 150 million people globally into extreme poverty.

Research by the Global Commission on Adaptation shows that every dollar invested in resilience generates up to USD 10 in net economic benefits. Such spending can give vulnerable countries an urgent economic boost during the Covid-19 crisis and improve people's livelihoods.

Many of these states, from Bangladesh to Fiji, are already building resilience to climate threats—but they need more international support to meet the full scale of the challenge. World leaders must, therefore, step up by investing more, investing early, and investing locally.

Although policymakers have so far

mobilised USD 13 trillion for economic recovery, only a very small share of this amount has been spent by low-income developing countries. These economies have been able to allocate just 2 percent of their GDP to Covid-19 response and recovery measures, while wealthier economies have spent 8.8 percent of GDP on average.

Meanwhile, the cost of helping developing countries adapt to climate change will reach an estimated USD 140-300 billion per year by 2030—a fraction of what has been spent on global Covid-19 recovery efforts.



Bangladesh has seen firsthand the benefits of early action to build resilience to climate change.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

This is not the time for rich countries to be stingy. History has shown that when crises hit, governments can provide more resources without fuelling inflation. After the 2008 financial crisis, for example, countries that intentionally ran large budget deficits, such as the United States and China, fared better than those that cut spending. Many studies confirm this positive economic effect.

Moreover, the sooner the international community acts, the better off we will

be. As the Covid-19 pandemic has made crystal clear, it's better and less expensive to invest in preparation today than to wait for the next crisis to erupt. Investments in resilience can mitigate future losses from storms, floods, and droughts, while also creating economic opportunities and boosting social welfare.

For example, making infrastructure more climate-resilient can increase the upfront costs of a project by about 3 percent, but returns four times as much. Likewise, investing in early-warning systems can save countless lives and assets. Spending USD 800 million on

magnitude, hit Bangladesh in May 2020, the death toll was in the dozens.

Finally, when implementing these investments, governments must ensure that funding gets to the local level. Local communities are on the front lines of both the Covid-19 and climate crises, but rarely have a voice in the interventions that most affect them. Direct funding to local and national actors accounted for just 2.1 percent of total international humanitarian assistance in 2019.

Like other resilience measures, investing in local communities delivers multiple benefits beyond just addressing climate risks. In Kenya, a government programme aimed at empowering local governments and communities to strengthen climate resilience has given households greater access to water, higher incomes, and improved food security.

Many solutions exist to get funding to the local level. In 2019, BRAC established the Climate Bridge Fund in Bangladesh to help local nonprofits in communities affected by climate change gain greater access to funding. The programme helps realise locally led climate resilience projects—like upgrading infrastructure in city slums to withstand storms and floods—that might otherwise be overlooked in favour of higher-profile initiatives.

The world can emerge stronger from the interconnected health, economic, and climate crises, but success will require bold, urgent, and far-sighted action. The upcoming Climate Adaptation Summit and November's COP26 climate conference in Glasgow will serve as important checkpoints for the international community. But we cannot wait until then to advance adaptation measures. World leaders must act today to ensure a durable, equitable recovery that supports the most vulnerable populations.

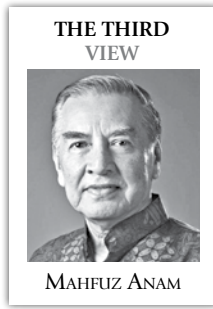
Manish Bapna is Executive Vice President and Managing Director of the World Resources Institute. Muhammad Musa, Executive Director of BRAC International, is a member of the Global Commission on Adaptation.

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(Exclusive to The Daily Star)

Democracy's mistake, democracy corrects

Institutions were the key



THE THIRD VIEW

MAHFUZ ANAM

AMERICANS exercised their democratic right and elected Donald Trump as president in 2016. Four years later, they exercised the same right again

and corrected what had turned out to be a disastrous mistake. In the interim, they suffered for their mistake but did not disrupt the system. They waited for four years and then used democracy to "right" the wrong.

There are three important lessons here.

One, the American people did not lose faith in democracy and in the electoral system.

Two, the self-correction that they eventually brought about could only have happened because of the institutions of democracy that they had built, namely the judiciary, the legislature, the administrative system and the media.

The third lesson, and most important, is that democracy can err and people's verdict can be fallible. Due to populism, ultra-nationalism, religion-based campaigns or even predominance of prejudice and hatred, people may end up electing charlatans for whom democracy is only a weapon to climb to power, not a system to practise once having gained it. The only guarantee of self-correction in such cases is to build and empower the aforementioned institutions of democracy that can withstand any onslaught on freedom, rule of law and personal and collective rights.

Imagine the comfort we can derive from the knowledge that for every arbitrary measure of a government, we can always count on the courts to stand up for justice; that however difficult the situation, a public representative will always uphold the rights of the people; that regardless of the pressure of the powers that be, public bodies will function only by abiding by established norms and practices; and that whatsoever insurmountable the obstacle may seem, the media will always uphold facts and the right to free speech.

Through one judgement after another, the US judiciary negated the disastrous impact of "democracy's mistake" as shown by many of Trump's decisions. Most importantly, it protected the "people's will" as expressed through the November 2020 elections. Sixty-one courts, spread all over the country, each with their own political preferences, threw out the petitions of Trump supporters due to lack of evidence that widespread fraud had occurred in

voting. Just imagine what would have happened to a smooth transfer of power if only one of the courts upheld any one of the myriad of petitions for hearing. The courts were not only decisive and unambiguous but also extremely prompt to ensure the election process was not hampered or delayed.

The role of the two Houses was a real demonstration of the judiciousness of separation of power in the political system of the US. Through repeated hearings and the impeachment process—though the Senate and the House had opposite goals—executive arbitrariness was greatly curbed. Trump always knew that he couldn't get away with everything he did. His second impeachment, unprecedented for a president in US history, stands as a damning indictment of Trump's rule even if ultimately he is not convicted by the Senate. A conviction cannot be totally ruled out, however, because of the grievous nature of his involvement in the mob attack on the Capitol and the widespread indignation that it generated among the legislatures of both sides.

Because of the strength of the administrative system, even after getting elected and with the enormous executive power in his command, Trump could not stop the appointment of a special prosecutor and the subsequent carrying out of an independent investigation on his actions with regard to Ukraine. All these actions were carried out by the Justice Department which is an integral part of the executive branch of the government that comes under the president. So strong is the norm and the weight of precedence—as exemplified by the independent probe against Richard Nixon in the Watergate scandal—that Trump could not influence, let alone stop, the Mueller investigation although it was completely directed against him.

The media played a seminal role in convincing the American public about the dangers the US democracy faced under Trump. This is again an example of how institutions of democracy helped the American voters to make up their mind. It is not that the US media spoke in unison—CNN and Fox News were like night and day—but it was in their great diversity that the US voters found ways of making up their mind. Imagine the state of US democracy without the free press. Trump was challenged in every step of the way and his lies revealed within minutes on every occasion. Though he called journalists all sorts of names and termed their investigative stories as nothing but fake, yet in the end, it is the free media that came out on top, and with it, the "people's will" and the American democracy.

The whole world waited with bated breath to see Trump go. Every minute's delay seemed too long and too dangerous. Whether he will do

something to jeopardise the Biden inauguration—perhaps through a domestic incident, or a foreign adventure—was a question probably in everyone's mind. It was almost to the minute that Americans and those of us around the world were counting to see the Trump era end. I never thought that I would ever say this of a departing American President but I am doing so—good riddance to bad rubbish.

Seldom, if ever, did a departing president leave such a wreck of an administration as Trump did, which will require so much damage control on the part of his successor. As promised, President Joe Biden, within hours of his inauguration, signed 17 executive orders discarding some of the most controversial of Trump's decisions and

freedom, most of them tried to emulate the very same values in their own freedom struggles and later incorporated them while framing their respective constitutions. (Our own declaration of independence and constitution were greatly inspired by the American example). It was as if he was determined to wipe clean the core attraction of the United States—the world's greatest, shiniest and most effective melting pot, its most successful and living celebration of diversity.

Regrettably, to the 70 million-plus people who voted for Trump, he appears to have succeeded, at least to an extent.

As we happily leave behind the Trump era, we need to ask what happened to a country of freedom and diversity, rule of law, individual rights and decency

power. According to her, "The white power movement in America wants a revolution. Its soldiers are not lone wolves but highly organised cadres motivated by a coherent and deeply troubling worldview made of white supremacy, virulent anti-communism and apocalyptic faith." On how it all began, the author says, "Returning to America ripped apart by a war (in Vietnam) they felt they were not allowed to win, a small group of war veterans and active-duty military personnel and their civilian personnel concluded that waging war on their own country was justified. They united people from a variety of militant groups, including Klansmen, neo-Nazis, skinheads, radical tax protesters and white separatists to form a new movement of loosely affiliated independent cells to avoid detection. The white power movement operated with discipline and clarity undertaking assassinations, armed robbery, counterfeiting and weapons trafficking."

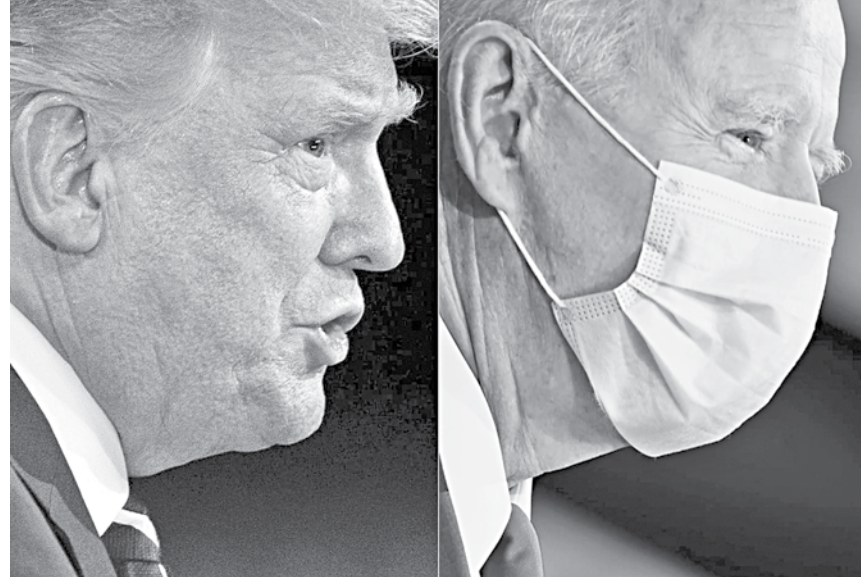
A most worrying prognosis for the US and the rest of the democratic world.

As for how this tragic drama of US politics will play out is an open question. Biden-Harris victory does not really seem to signal its end. People thought that the election of the first Black president, Barack Obama, signalled the coming-of-age of American liberalism and that it was the final nail in the racist coffin. The reality turned out to be the very opposite. It triggered a severe backlash from white supremacists that brought Trump to power. It is an open question whether Biden's election victory will energise the liberals to work harder to truly win their country for democracy, or they will become complacent and be caught unprepared, as had happened when Trump sailed through, when the hydra-headed monster raises its head again. The fact that 70 million or more people voted for Trump should always serve to remind us of the enormity of the task ahead for the American people.

As for us, aspiring to build democracy in our societies, the lesson from the US experience is that just exercising our right to vote is not sufficient for democracy to prevail. We also need to establish and empower institutions of democracy like the parliament, judiciary, statutory bodies, oversight institutions, civil society and the media to nurture and help grow democracy and protect it in times of need, as the US institutions did through every attempt by Trump to subvert it.

As for now, and for us in the rest of the world, after four years of "Make America Great Again", we would be happy if Biden and Harris just "Make America Normal Again".

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Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star.



'Seldom, if ever, did a departing president leave such a wreck of an administration as Trump did, which will require so much damage control on the part of his successor.'

PHOTO COLLAGE: AFP

launched a massive and urgent Covid-19 response programme, including steps to return to the Paris Climate Accord, cancel the travel restrictions on some Muslim countries, return to WHO, etc.

Trump took us to a US that we did not know of and never thought existed, and which Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will have to extricate their country from and restore to being a world leader that they want to be.

The man who came to the Oval Office promising to "Make America Great Again" has left that office in shambles, bringing the greatest shame to the US by disavowing the fundamental values of the US Declaration of Independence and its constitution, which served to gamer pride for Americans over the centuries. Given Trump's disdain for history, he probably had no idea that after the Second World War, when Europe was rebuilding itself and when most of the colonies were gaining their

that we thought we knew. The US has now revealed its horrendously ugly underbelly of white supremacist ideology that incorporates racism, violence, prejudice, myopia and ignorance. Their disdain for facts and science as well as hatred for people of other races and cultures have shocked the world, and more so the majority of Americans, who are now wondering when and how their country got derailed from their founding principles.

Trump couldn't have just fallen from the sky. It is now being discovered that the politics he represents has been simmering under the veneer of American liberalism for a long time, and that the roots of white power movement are strong and widespread and will likely survive Trump's departure from office.

In her book "Bring the War Home", published in July 2019, Kathleen Belew, a historian at the University of Chicago, tries to explain the rise of white

THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE PROJECT

Is BCS creating a mismatch and imbalance in the job sector?

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

IQRAMUL GAFUR and SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

IT is 8.30 in the morning. Suman, a fourth-year student of one of the well-reputed universities of Bangladesh, walks towards the central library of his university. A wave of students is approaching the library at the same time. It may be a heartening sight for many, unaware of the reason behind the crowd. They are likely to assume that it's natural for university students to congregate daily at the library—an important place on campus where learning is shared, strengthened and enhanced.

But the reason for the congregation is not a class project, or to learn from the latest journal articles, or to conduct research. They are gathering there to prepare for what is now one of the most lucrative jobs that many students crave: Bangladesh Civil Service.

The scenario inside the library is bewildering: MP3, Oracle, Assurance, and Confidence publications' books and materials are strewn everywhere, occupying every imaginable space and study table of the library. These books and materials are specially designed for government job aspirants to help them prepare for the BCS examination. Some use the partition board of their table to stick a world map. Floor space is also scant. All the while, a layer of dust gathers on the classic books, reference materials, and research journals on the library shelves as they remain untouched even out of curiosity.

This scenario plays out not just in Suman's university; most universities in Bangladesh, including the technology-focused ones, are also overwhelmed by the BCS fad. Dr Muhammed Sadique,



File photo of students queuing in front of the central library of Dhaka University, waiting to get in.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

former chairman of Bangladesh Public Service Commission, said in an interview that reformation in salary structure has attracted many graduates to compete for a government job. Even many engineering students from BUET as well as medical students, with their extraordinary training and opportunities, who can usually get a job just after graduation with nearly twice the salary (or more) of a BCS cadre, are also preparing to sit for the BCS examination in large numbers. This is indeed a trend.

Social status, prestige, power, economic benefit, and a stable job are becoming critical issues for many graduates. Moreover, the current socio-economic and political trends seem to provide signals for most students to lean towards government jobs. According to some, salary is not

the only reason behind the trend; the perks of the job fashioned by one's imagination, network, and skilled craft are also driving many to seek the lucrative BCS job. In less than six years, the number of applicants has doubled—from 244,000 applicants in 35th BCS to 475,000 applicants in 41st BCS (with the exception of 39th which was "special")—and surpassed all previous records. The curve continues to reflect a rising trend.

No one can underestimate the importance of recruiting skilled civil servants for the proper functioning of a state. Their skills in administration, due process, fairness and justice can be a boon for the citizenry. But is a biology, medical or engineering student, vying for an administrative position, placed in the appropriate technical position (agriculture, health services,

or infrastructure development)? Are they contributing in the areas in which they may have developed core skills? Or are they going to the police, income tax, or some other government service that is misaligned with their basic area of training, never again to be used? If the investments made in training our human resources in certain sectors are diverted to sectors in which they must be retrained, the initial training becomes useless and the investment loss can be colossal.

The current trend may in fact be placing the private sector on a precarious edge. According to a report by the Transparency International Bangladesh, every year USD 3.1 billion are being officially drained from Bangladesh's foreign exchange coffers by expatriate employees simply because the industry is unable to recruit locally. The real drain is likely more serious than what the TIB report portrays. Lack of skilled people required to work in the private sector has paved the way for foreign workers to come in and command lucrative salaries, despite there being millions of local unemployed graduates.

A survey by the Academic Experience Project on students' satisfaction provides additional insights by focusing on whether a university degree relates to future careers: more students than one can imagine believe that university education and job prospects are simply not related. And with students now aiming straight for the BCS, will it be possible for the universities—their faculties and curriculums—to satisfy them with subject-specific knowledge? Let alone research, a big chunk of students does not even focus on their

area of academic studies. They just want a certificate attesting their completion of a four-year graduation degree to compete for the BCS.

The desire for government jobs, which are limited in numbers, may have also made many graduates jobless. With the age limit to apply and obtain a government job being thirty, many keep trying multiple times while avoiding seeking a job in their majors. And if they fail to manage a government position within the age limit, there is a high likelihood that they will remain jobless for a considerable period of time. The private sector, it is generally understood, recruits fresh graduates within one year of their graduation.

The mismatch between a student's area of study and the jobs they are seeking cries out for a need to coordinate academic studies with employers across the board, including the government. The time is ripe for a serious reconsideration to rethink ways of encouraging students to pursue careers in their respective academic fields. This is not only for academia to tackle and address—it's about government policy regarding job creation in a variety of fields and the involvement of the private sector in partnership with academia to build appropriate supply chain linkages which will assure remunerative and meaningful jobs for the large pool of graduating students. The trend to obtain government jobs, driven by its incentives, must also be re-evaluated.

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HC summons

FROM PAGE 1
non-banking financial institution, of the loan defaulters.

Speaking to The Daily Star, PLFS's lawyer Mejbahur Rahman said the process of liquidation of the company was underway.

In this situation, the HC's company bench had sought the list of the loan defaulters and accordingly, the list was submitted to the bench.

The 280 individuals took loans amounting Tk 1,655 crore. The loan amounts ranged from Tk 5 lakh to over Tk 200 crore, said Mejbahur.

After examining the list, the HC bench yesterday issued show cause notices on the 280 loan defaulters and summoned them to appear before it on February 23, he added.

Meanwhile, another HC bench yesterday sought details, including names, addresses and status of the Bangladesh Bank officials who were in charge of overseeing financial institutions and money laundering issues from 2008 to 2020.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim passed the order after holding hearing on a suo moto (voluntary) rule issued in this regard.

The court also asked the central bank governor and other officials concerned to inquire if the then officials were responsible for the bankruptcy of the country's certain financial institutions and to submit reports to it on February 15.

The bench rejected a petition, filed by Md Asaduzzaman Khan, provisional liquidator of the PLFS and also the deputy general manager of the central bank, to become a party in the case.

Lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the Anti-Corruption Commission, while Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state and lawyer Khan Mohammad Shameem Aziz appeared for the central bank.

Issuing the suo moto rule, the HC bench on November 19 last year wanted to know from the respondents what steps were taken to bring home Proshanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, from abroad in connection with a money laundering case.

LAWYER, DAUGHTER PLACED ON REMAND

In another development, the Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka yesterday placed a lawyer and his daughter on three-day remand each in a graft case filed against PK Halder, also former NRB Global Bank managing director.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh placed Sukumar Mridha and his daughter Anindita Mridha on remand a few hours after they were arrested.

ACC Deputy Director Salah Uddin, also the investigation officer of the case, quizzed the duo for about three hours.

According to ACC sources, the two helped Halder amass illegal wealth.

On January 8 last year, the graft watchdog had filed the case against Halder over possessing about Tk 275 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Talking to journalists yesterday, Sukumar claimed that he was not involved in any misappropriation. "He [PK Halder] is only my client," he said.

UGC

FROM PAGE 12
UGC Acting Secretary Ferdous Zaman sent the letter to the PSC today, said press release of the grants commission.

In the letter, the UGC said that all education institutions have been closed since March 18, 2020, following a government announcement of nationwide closure due to Covid-19. As such, Honour's and Master's degrees exams were not conducted as per schedule.

On December 13 last year, a meeting was held between the UGC chairman and vice chancellors of public universities and a decision was taken to hold all exams of Honour's and Master's degrees.

In that meeting, the university VCs urged the UGC to take steps for extending the deadline of the 43rd BCS applications, the press release said.

Through the general 43rd BCS, 1,814 officials will be recruited, including 300 in public administration, 100 in police, 25 in foreign services, and 843 teachers.

Currently, the application process for the 43rd BCS, which began from 10:00am on December 31, is scheduled to go on till 6:00am on January 30.

100pc ballots

FROM PAGE 12
An official, requesting anonymity, said an old voters' list might have been used at the centre, creating the opportunity for fraudulence.

The district administration and election officials said they were investigating the allegations.

AL nominee Enamul Haque said these were isolated cases, and those making the allegations had bad intentions.



Smoke rises from fire at Serum Institute of India in Pune, India yesterday. At least five people were killed in the fire, said Pune district collector Rajesh Deshmukh. The company insisted that the production of vaccines to counter the coronavirus pandemic was not affected.

PHOTO: REUTERS

5 killed in fire at India's Serum

FROM PAGE 12
emerged in China in late 2019, according to a tally compiled by AFP yesterday based on official figures. The US has suffered the highest death toll with 406,162 fatalities, followed by Brazil with 212,831 and India 152,869.

Serum Institute -- founded in 1966 -- is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, producing 1.5 billion doses a year even before the coronavirus pandemic hit.

It makes vaccines against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, hepatitis B, measles, mumps and rubella, which are exported to more than 170 countries.

The company has spent nearly a billion dollars in recent years enlarging and improving the giant Pune campus.

In January, Indian regulators approved two vaccines -- Covishield, produced by the Serum Institute, and Covaxin, made by Indian firm Bharat Biotech.

India began one of the world's biggest vaccine rollouts on Saturday, aiming to vaccinate 300 million people by July with both Covishield and Covaxin.

Many other countries are also

relying on the Serum Institute to supply them with the vaccine. The country plans to offer 20 million doses to its South Asian neighbours, with Latin America, Africa and Central Asia next in line.

Serum Institute also plans to supply 200 million doses to Covax, a World Health Organization-backed effort to procure and distribute inoculations to poor countries.

In Europe, leaders, facing threats of new coronavirus variants, were mulling for imposing travel restrictions on internal borders to stop the spread.

The chiefs will hold a summit -- by videolink to protect themselves from infection -- to address "the seriousness of the situation with the new variants," an EU official said.

Virus mutations spreading from Britain, South Africa and Brazil have alarmed EU authorities because of their increased infectivity, prompting bans or restrictions on travellers from those countries.

Now calls are increasing to shut the intra-EU borders to slow their spread, but German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday said that such a step would be "the last resort".

Biden reverses Trump policies on first day

FROM PAGE 1
memorandums and directives.

"Some of the executive actions I'm going to be signing today are going to help change the course of the Covid crisis, we're going to combat climate change in a way that we haven't done so far and advance racial equity and support other underserved communities" said Biden. "These are just all starting points"

Aides said the actions the Democratic president signed included a mask mandate on federal property and for federal employees, an order to establish a new White House office coordinating the response to the coronavirus, and halting the process of withdrawing from the World Health Organization.

Biden signed a document to begin the process of re-entering the Paris climate accord and issued a sweeping order tackling climate change, including revoking the presidential permit granted to the contentious Keystone XL oil pipeline.

Among a raft of orders addressing immigration, Biden revoked Trump's emergency declaration that helped fund the construction of a border wall and ended a travel ban on some majority-Muslim countries.

The Day One plans were just the start of a flurry of executive actions Biden would take soon after entering office, said his press secretary, Jen Psaki.

"In the coming days and weeks, we will be announcing additional executive actions that confront these challenges and deliver on the president-elect's promises to the American people," Psaki said.

Further actions would include revoking the ban on military service by transgender Americans, and reversing

a policy that blocks US funding for programs overseas linked to abortion, reports Reuters.

On the economic front, Biden asked the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to extend a moratorium on evictions until the end of March, and the Department of Education to suspend student loan payments until the end of September.

\$1.9 TRILLION VIRUS PLAN
Biden launched a \$1.9 trillion plan to tackle the pandemic at home and dispatched his top expert Anthony Fauci to Switzerland.

"Under trying circumstances, this organisation has rallied the scientific and research and development community to accelerate vaccines, therapies and diagnostics," Fauci told a WHO meeting in Geneva, confirming that the US would continue to pay its dues to the organisation.

Biden was a fierce critic of Trump's approach to tackling the virus in the US, which with more than 400,000 deaths is the world's worst-hit nation.

The new president is seeking to vaccinate 100 million people in the next 100 days, increase the use of masks and testing, expand the public health workforce and offer more emergency relief to those struggling with the restrictions.

"For almost a year now, Americans could not look to the federal government for any strategy," said Jeff Zients, coordinator of the new Covid-19 task force. "As president Biden steps into office today, that all changes."

New White House vaccines coordinator Bechara Chouair restated the administration's intention to bring online thousands of federal vaccination centers as well as the mobilization of thousands more

workers to help. **'MUSLIM BAN'**
Biden rescinded the so-called "Muslim ban", an executive order Trump signed in 2017 that banned travellers from seven Muslim-majority nations from entering the US.

The ban was changed several times amid legal challenges and ultimately upheld by the US Supreme Court in 2018, reports Al Jazeera Online.

"The president put an end to the Muslim ban -- a policy rooted in religious animus and xenophobia," Biden's White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said during a Wednesday evening briefing.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations welcomed the decision as "an important first step toward undoing the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant policies of the previous administration".

"It is an important fulfilment of a campaign pledge to the Muslim community and its allies," the group's executive director, Nihad Awad, said in a statement.

PARIS AGREEMENT
Biden also signed an executive order to join the Paris Agreement. The move to rejoin the international treaty on climate change is expected to take effect 30 days after it is deposited with the UN, Biden's team said on Wednesday.

In November, the US became the first country in the world to withdraw from the treaty -- a move that fuelled tensions between Washington and its allies in Europe and drew a widespread rebuke from environmental and human rights groups.

Climate-change leaders and campaigners worldwide welcomed Biden's move to rejoin the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Put more emphasis on research

FROM PAGE 12
The university has always played key roles in establishing democracy in the country, she said.

Expressing her hope that the country will overcome the pandemic, she thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving 20 lakh vaccine doses as a gift to Bangladesh.

The PM hoped that shipment of the vaccine that Bangladesh had procured would arrive by January 25-26.

Education Minister Dipu Moni addressed the opening ceremony as a special guest and economist Rehman Sobhan presented the keynote speech.

Prof Rehman Sobhan said Dhaka

University acted like an incubator for generations of political leaders before and after 1947.

It was expected that in an independent Bangladesh, the university would be a centre for learning and give birth to a new generation of leaders and scholars, he said.

"These expectations remain in some distance," he added.

In a recent global ranking of universities, Dhaka University was not among the top 1,000, he said, adding that among the universities in Asia, Dhaka University ranked the 134th.

But 10 universities in China were

named among the top 100 of the world, he said.

Dipu Moni urged the university authorities to improve its standard of education following the international trends.

"We have yet to reach the international level in education and research," she said.

"The institution... played a significant role in the country's history, education, democracy, and culture. It had a role in every important achievement of Bangladesh," the education minister added.

"We have been successful as an economy and now we want to improve

our higher education."

Dhaka University was established on July 1, 1921 with 12 departments, three faculties, 60 teachers, 877 students, three dorms and about 600 acres of land.

Its students and teachers sacrificed their lives in the 1952 language movement, 1969 mass upsurge, 1971 Liberation War, and 1990 anti-autocracy movement.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Akhtaruzzaman presided over the programme. Pro-VCs ASM Maksud Kamal and Mohammad Samad and convener of the event organising committee Prof Imtiaz Ahmed spoke.

Provide security to presiding officer

FROM PAGE 2
attended the virtual proceeding and said he and his family members had been in fear since Wednesday afternoon, when he was called in to Daulatdia Police Station and forced to sign some papers, Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan told The Daily Star.

Shajahan prayed to the HC to save him and his family members, the lawyer added.

Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi told The Daily Star that the HC bench ordered the IGP to take the steps needed to provide security to Shajahan and his family members until January 25 when another HC bench is scheduled to

hear a contempt of court rule against the superintendent of police, Tanvir Arafath.

According to media reports, Mohsin went to the polling centre at Bheramara Pilot Model High School after receiving complaints of voter fraud and was talking to presiding officer Shajahan 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, the reports said.

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

Mohsin later filed a complaint with the Election Commission, Registrar General's Office of the Supreme Court, law and home ministries, and the office of Inspector General of Police, accusing the SP of serious misconduct, reports our correspondent in Kushtia.

The SP's conduct during the polls was a blatant violation of the Local Government Election Rules, 2010, the complaint said.

The HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Khazir Hayat on Wednesday issued a contempt of court rule against SP Arafath.

The bench also directed him to appear at the court in person on January 25 and place his explanation of the event.

The bench observed that the SP had not only committed serious contempt of court but also tarnished the image of the judiciary as a whole.

"The action of the superintendent of police... cannot be taken lightly," the HC said in a suo moto order. "The behaviour and the attitude... of the police to an officer of the 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."

Preparations on to reopen schools on a limited scale

FROM PAGE 12
reopening schools and the pandemic situation.

The country's educational institutions remain shut since March 17 due to the pandemic. The closure has been extended till January 30.

Speaking at a press conference on December 29, Dipu Moni said they are planning to bring the class-10

and class-12 students back to schools and colleges. The students will take next year's SSC and HSC exams.

Classes for SSC candidates will be held from February to April and for HSC students from February to May.

She said the government was planning to hold the SSC exams in June and the HSC exams in July or

August, given that the pandemic situation doesn't deteriorate. Usually, the SSC exams start on February 1 and the HSC on April 1 every year.

The exams will be held on reduced syllabuses.

A top National Curriculum and Textbook Board official yesterday said they have completed the work on reducing the syllabuses and

submitted those to the education ministry.

"We cannot tell what percentage of the syllabus has been reduced. We have cut the syllabus keeping in mind the issue of ensuring minimum basic competence of students for continuation of education in their next classes," NCTB Chairman Prof Narayan Chandra Saha said.

Pre-historic

FROM PAGE 12
professor in European Prehistory, told AFP the research was based on a new methodology he had developed "that is more attuned to how people would weigh items in the Bronze Age."

He and his co-author Catalin Popa studied more than 5,000 objects from over 100 ancient hoards.

Rather than measuring the items by weighing scales alone, they statistically compared their weight using a psychology principle known as the "Weber fraction."

This quantifies the concept that if objects are similar enough in mass, people weighing them by hand can't tell the difference.

They found that around 70 percent of rings, which averaged around 195 grams, were similar enough in weight to have been indistinguishable by hand.

These pieces aren't the world's oldest money by a long way -- people in Mesopotamia developed coins some 5,000 years ago -- but Kuijpers said the methodology devised could have wider uses for investigating objects of the ancient world.

As to how much each individual object might be worth in today's money and what items they might have been used to buy -- cattle, weapons, etc -- it's impossible to know for certain.

But "it's a material that they really think that they valued a lot, that much is clear," said Kuijpers.

BCL leader

FROM PAGE 12
A couple, who also rented the house and lives there, caught Himel red-handed when he was keeping a camera in their room early Wednesday for taking footage of the couple's private moments.

Later, the house owner and other tenants checked his mobile phone and found several videos of the house owner's daughter bathing.

Police arrested Himel from the house on Wednesday night.

Sheikh Rizaul Haque Dipu, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station, told The Daily Star that Himel admitted the offence during interrogation. Later, he was sent to jail through a court after the victim lodged a case against him under the Digital Security Act, he added.

Meanwhile, Mirzapur upazila unit BCL President Saddam Hossain and General Secretary Saiful Islam in a press release yesterday said Himel was suspended.

A recommendation was made to the central BCL to expel him from the organisation, the release said.

Death toll in Madrid building blast rises to four

AFP, Madrid

The toll from a powerful explosion caused by a gas leak that gutted a building in a residential part of Madrid rose to four yesterday after a priest died from his injuries.

The 36-year-old, who was ordained a priest last June, was one of the 11 people who were injured during Wednesday's blast in the La Latina district.

He died in hospital in the early hours of yesterday, the Madrid archdiocese said in a statement.

The building belonging to the Church of the Virgin de la Paloma and San Pedro el Real located next-door, was completely destroyed in the blast.

Two men who were walking in the street and a repairman who was fixing the building's boiler on the fifth floor when the blast occurred also died.

Officials had originally reported that an 85-year-old woman had died but they later said the victim was a man.

A man who was initially reported as missing was later confirmed to be the repairman who died in the blast, a father of four, government representative Jose Manuel Franco told radio Cadena Ser.



Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal plays one of his trademark shots during practice yesterday ahead of today's second ODI against the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. A win would see the Tigers seal the series. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shakib's batting position connected to NZ tour?

MAZHAR UDDIN



The change in Shakib Al Hasan's batting position from number three to four has generated much discussion even before the start of the three-match ODI series against the West Indies. The change was made despite the cricketer putting in an all-time great performance in the 2019 World Cup while batting at three. The star all-rounder scored 606 runs, including five fifties and two centuries, at an outstanding average of 86.57 in the flagship event and in many eyes, Shakib was the player of the tournament for his extraordinary performance. But after completing his one-year international cricket ban imposed by the ICC and leading into his international comeback in the series against the West Indies, skipper Tamim Iqbal and the team management said they wanted young Nazmul Hossain Shanto to move up to

ODIs and three T20Is. With the possibility of Shakib missing the tour in mind, the team management wanted Nazmul to gain experience at number three during the ongoing West Indies series. Although a player of Shakib's calibre can bat at any position at any given time, the Tigers' think tank will give the highest priority to their best performer if he is willing to bat at his preferred position in the coming days. At the same time, it is also a huge opportunity for someone like Nazmul to grab this opportunity and perform at the new position, much like Shubman Gill and Mayank Agarwal did in the absence of India's regular players during their stellar series win down under. "We all know how well he [Shakib] batted at number three during the World Cup. He is happy to bat at number four and I even told him that whenever he wanted to bat at number three again, we can talk and he was perfectly okay with it," Tamim told the media ahead of the three-



Positivity in the air

SPORTS REPORTER



Barring a brief halt caused by a sudden outpour at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Wednesday in the first of their three ODIs against the West Indies, everything went well for Bangladesh on their return to international cricket after a Covid-19-induced 10-month break. The pre-series focus had been on long-term planning and proper execution and, in that regard, the Tigers made a perfect start while also grabbing 10 points with a convincing six-wicket victory in their first match of the ODI Super

League, the qualification pathway for the 2023 World Cup. Premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan marked his return to Bangladesh colours following a year-long ban imposed by the ICC in 2019 for failing to report corrupt approaches by returning astounding figures of four wickets for eight runs from 7.2 overs and scooping the player-of-the-match award. Tamim Iqbal's attacking captaincy and him getting runs while leading the troops lent bright hopes of a secure leadership for the future in the post-Mashrafe Bin Mortaza era. Meanwhile, young pacer Hasan Mahmud's fiery three-for on debut and Mustafizur Rahman finding his rhythm while

a number of other promising pacers wait in the pipeline for a go hints towards a compact future pace attack. On the back of all these positives, the Tigers would like to -- and should -- seal the three-match series with another win in the second ODI today. The Tigers did not let their guard down even after bundling the West Indies for 122 -- their second-lowest total against Bangladesh in ODIs -- in the first game and similar focus needs to be on display today. What the Tigers perhaps need to do is try not to capitulate in their own setup of a spinning track and find better ways to negotiate the visiting spinners, especially Akeal

Hosein, who took three of the four wickets that Bangladesh lost while chasing a meagre total in the first game. Bangladesh came into the series with some major tweaks in their approach, one of which was to play Soumya Sarkar at number seven. The first match did not require Bangladesh to look too far down their batting order and how Soumya adapts to that role is yet to be seen. It will be interesting to see how the left-hander, who usually opens the innings and is known for his sweet timing of the new ball, goes about his business lower down the order, where the prime requirement is to make quick runs through power-hitting.

number three. According to Tamim, as Shakib was coming back after a long gap, he needed some breathing space to adjust. Tigers' head coach Russell Domingo said on the other hand that they wanted to develop some young batters and the subcontinent is the best place to give them exposure at the top. There may however be a more straightforward reason. Sources with knowledge of developments said there is a good chance that Shakib will not go on the tour of New Zealand to be with his family during the birth of his third child. Bangladesh are scheduled to depart for New Zealand in late February to play three

match ODI series. Nazmul came in at number three in the first ODI but the youngster failed to utilise the opportunity and was dismissed for just one run. Shakib on the other hand spent some time in the middle and scored 19 runs batting at number four before being dismissed during the chase of the paltry 123-run target. "Look, the team management made a decision and as a player, I have to respect that. It is not important whether I agree or not. I always try to play for my team and my team's achievements are bigger than my personal milestones and it doesn't make a huge difference," Shakib said after the first ODI on Thursday.



'GOAL MACHINE' RONALDO 760 UP

Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo poses with Italian Super Cup and man-of-the-match trophies on Wednesday. Breaking records has become routine for Ronaldo throughout his extraordinary career. He was hailed as the most prolific professional goalscorer in history after notching his 760th senior goal to help Andrea Pirlo win his first trophy as a coach five months after taking over at his former club as Juventus beat Napoli 2-0 in the final. The title of greatest goalscorer is much contested, and global governing body FIFA does not keep an official record, but several media outlets reported that Ronaldo's strike had taken him past Austro-Czech Josef Bican to the top of the list. Bican, as well as Brazilian strikers Pele and Romario, scored in excess of 1,000 goals during their careers but those statistics include strikes in amateur, unofficial and friendly matches. Ronaldo's career tally includes goals for four top-flight clubs and Portugal with his closest active rival being Argentine Lionel Messi, who last month scored a single club record 644th goal for Barcelona. The 35-year-old Ronaldo, who is the leading goalscorer for his country with 102 goals, has scored 85 goals for Juventus.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'POGBA IS ONE OF THE BEST WHEN IN FORM'

Manchester United's Paul Pogba celebrates his stunning second-half strike with Bruno Fernandes during a 2-1 victory against Fulham on Wednesday. "The efficiency he is playing with is amazing. One of the best when he is in this form," said former defender Rio Ferdinand.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Foreigners power contenders

SPORTS REPORTER



Foreign forwards dominated the show in the Bangladesh Premier League as all three title contenders edged past their respective rivals yesterday. Saif SC survived an initial scare against hosts Mohammedan in notching a 2-1 win, their first win coming in their second match at the Shaheed Dharendra Stadium in Cumilla. At the Bangabandhu National Stadium, a first-half strike from Nixon Guytherme steered Chattogram Abahani to a 1-0 win over Arambagh while three-time league champions Sheikh Jamal defeated Muktiyoddha Sangsad 2-0 courtesy of strikes from the Gambian duo Omar Jobe and Solomon King. Of the seven goals struck across three matches yesterday, five foreigners scored between the day's first and last strikes from local players. With two successive wins, Sheikh Jamal joined leaders Bashundhara Kingss, Abahani and Sheikh Russel on six points each, while Saif SC are in the second position with four points. MOHAMMEDAN VS SAIF SC After stumbling against lightweights Rahmatganj in the opening match, Federation Cup runners-up Saif SC were hungry to prove a point



Saif Sporting Club's Arifur Rahman celebrates scoring his team's opening goal during a 2-1 victory over hosts Mohammedan Sporting Club in a Bangladesh Premier League match at the Shaheed Dharendra Stadium in Cumilla yesterday. PHOTO: BFF

but faced a tough challenge from Mohammedan, who lost to Saif on penalties in the Federation Cup quarterfinals. On the back of a morale-boosting 3-0 win over Arambagh, the hosts got off to a fine start against Saif SC and came close twice to taking the lead. Midfielder Habibur Rahman Shohag was denied by the woodwork before striker Aminur Rahman Sajib wasted a chance

inside the box in the 40th minute. After surviving those close calls, Saif hit back and scored two goals within four minutes. Winger Arifur Rahman darted into the box and placed into the far post in the 44th minute before Nigeria's John Okoli doubled the margin with a solo effort two minutes into added time of the first-half. Mohammedan pulled one back in the 61st minute as Japan's Uryu

Nagata nodded home a Shohag free-kick, but they could not find a second. CTG ABAHANI VS ARAMBAGH After losing 1-2 to Sheikh Jamal in their first match, Chattogram Abahani got their bearings right and secured a hard-fought 1-0 win over Arambagh. Ctg Abahani were deprived of a lead in the 26th minute when a flick from Rakib Hossain came off the crossbar before Brazil's Nixon Guytherme nicely controlled a Chinedu Mathew cross inside the box and drove home in the 30th minute. Ctg also came close to widening the lead twice but Arambagh goalkeeper Abul Kashem Milon and defender Rasel Munshi thwarted good efforts from Charles Didier and Mathew in the second half. MUKTIJODDHA VS SHEIKH JAMAL Sheikh Jamal carried their momentum into the second match and took a 38-minute lead when Omar Jobe brilliantly tapped home from between two players. In the 60th minute, Solomon King raced into the attacking third from midfield and fired home from outside the box. Muktiyoddha, who initially faced trouble in forming their due to financial constraints, pulled one goal back through Mehedi Hasan in stoppage time of the second half.

Root wants improvement to wrap up series

REUTERS, GALLE



England captain Joe Root has warned his players not to get ahead of themselves and to continue improving as they seek to wrap up the series against Sri Lanka in the second and final Test at Galle International Stadium on Friday. England won the first match at the same venue by seven wickets in a dominant performance to record a fourth successive away victory for the first time in 64 years. They have not won five tests in a row on the road since 1913. Another victory on a famously difficult ground for visiting teams



would be a feather in the cap and a big boost ahead of England's four-test series in India that follows directly after. "Sri Lanka are a proud team and have a great record at this ground so we have to play smart cricket again. We can't be happy with what we have achieved on this trip so far, we need

to get better," Root told reporters on Thursday. "We can't get ahead of ourselves and think we're something we're not. This will not be an easy game, we will have to play some good stuff for five days if we want to keep taking steps forward as a team." Root confirmed that spinning all-rounder Moeen Ali will not be available for selection after his release from COVID-19 quarantine, which will likely mean another run-out for Dom Bess and Jack Leach, who each picked up five-wicket hauls in the first test. "The two spinners had success, but both have great attitudes where they want to get better and improve their performances."

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Put more emphasis on research

PM tells DU authorities at int'l confce marking its 100 years of excellence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the Dhaka University authorities to put more emphasis on research and build skilled human resources for the country. Dhaka University can play a pioneering role in building skilled human resources to keep pace with the world, she said.



"I urge the teachers and researchers to do more research on how Bangladesh can march forward. No achievement is possible without research," she said, addressing an international conference titled "Celebrating the 100 Years of the University of Dhaka: Reflections from the Alumni -- International and National".

The event is being arranged at the university's Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban with the theme "Achieving Sustainable Goals and Building a University Suitable for Fourth Industrial Revolution and Creating Skilled Human Resources".

Education was ruined at the university during the military regime, the PM said. "We hope the university will regain its lost glory. It will be the centre of learning and research. And it will illuminate the whole country."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) knocked down illegal structures at Muslim Bagh in Old Dhaka's Lalbagh yesterday. The grabbers constructed the structures after encroaching on the bank of the Buriganga river. The BIWTA is conducting the drive in Muslim Bagh area for the last several days.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BUSINESS

Beximco to buy majority stake in Sanofi Bangladesh

Beximco Pharmaceuticals is set to acquire 54.6 per cent stake in Sanofi Bangladesh for about Tk 400 crore as it looks to expand its product base and diversify into new areas. With this, the French pharmaceuticals giant will exit from Bangladesh ending its presence that spans six decades.

STORY ON B1

KUSHTIA MUNICIPALITY POLLS 100pc ballots cast at one polling centre

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Officials in Kushtia are investigating allegations that votes were cast in the Mirpur municipality election using the names of people who had died and those who had been out of the country.

On papers, all the 1,415 constituents had voted at their polling centre in Naopara Government Primary School on January 16. Many have pointed out that such unrealistic voter turnout was evidence of rampant voter fraud.

The Awami League mayor nominee got 1,024 votes, BNP nominee 176, an independent got 171, and 44 ballots were discarded because of user errors, officials said.

Of the nine other centres, 80 percent or more votes were cast at seven and 79 percent at two.

AL nominee Enamul Haque won with 10,420 votes while independent Arifur Rahman got 2,547, and BNP nominee Rahmat Ali got 1,736.

Arifur and Rahmat have demanded cancellation of the election on the day of the polls.

At a press conference, Arifur said votes were cast in Naopara using the names of Ator Ali Sheikh, 62, Rabia Khatun, 78, and Nur Islam Pramanik, 50 -- all of whom died in recent months.

He then mentioned some people who live abroad, but had their votes cast in Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

5 killed in fire at India's Serum

Vaccine production unaffected

AGENCIES

Five people died as a fire tore through a building in the world's biggest vaccine manufacturing hub in India yesterday, but the company insisted the production of drugs to counter the coronavirus pandemic would continue.

Rescue workers discovered five bodies in the under-construction building after the blaze at the Serum Institute of India was brought under control, media reports said, with officials in the western city of Pune confirming the toll.

A second, smaller blaze broke out in the same building late yesterday, local media reports said.

"Five people have died," city mayor Murlidhar Mohol told reporters.

TV channels showed thick clouds of grey smoke billowing from the sprawling site, which is responsible for producing millions of doses of the Covishield coronavirus vaccine, developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University.

"It is not going to affect production of the Covid-19 vaccine," a Serum Institute source told AFP, adding the blaze was at a new facility being built on the 100-acre (40-hectare) campus.

"We are deeply saddened and offer our deepest condolences to the family members of the departed," the firm's CEO Adar Poonawalla tweeted, without offering further details.

Cyrus Poonawalla, Adar's father and founder of the institute, said in a statement that the families of each of the five victims -- who were reported to be contract labourers -- would be given 2.5 million rupees (\$34,200) in compensation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi added he was "anguished by the loss of lives".

Both police and the company said the cause of the blaze was not immediately known.

The complex where the fire broke out is a few minutes' drive from the facility where coronavirus vaccines are produced, reports said.

Up to nine buildings are under construction at the complex to enhance Serum's manufacturing capability, NDTV reported. The fire is believed to have started because of an electrical fault, it added.

Globally, at least 2,075,698 people have died of the virus since it first

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Preparations on to reopen schools on a limited scale

Say officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has opened a discussion on resumption of the classes at schools on a limited scale from next month.

It is considering to take this year's Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate examinees to classrooms first, said a top official who attended a virtual meeting of high officials of the education and primary and mass education ministries yesterday.

"Implementation of these plans depends on approval from government high ups, the pandemic situation and directives of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19," said the official.

Education Minister Dipu Moni, Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossen and top officials of the two ministries joined the meeting in the evening to discuss the plan on

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Pre-historic Europeans used bronze objects as currency: study



AFP, Washington

Central Europeans of the Bronze Age used bronze rings, ribbons and axe blades that were roughly standardised in their shape and weight as an early form of "euros," according to a new study.

The paper by researchers at Leiden University in the Netherlands appeared in the journal PLOS ONE on Wednesday.

Money is a defining aspect of modern life, and standardisation of currency is one of its key features.

But since ancient people lacked precise forms of measurement, archaeologists had disagreed about whether bronze items discovered in "hoards" in modern day Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and other places were really currency, or just metal blocks for melting into other products.

These objects date back to around 4,000 years ago, when Central Europeans lived in farming societies characterised by the use of bronze tools, weapons, armor, building materials and more.

Lead author Maikel Kuijpers, an assistant

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

BCS APPLICATIONS UGC for extending deadline to Mar 31

Sends letter to PSC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission yesterday requested the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) to extend the deadline for the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service exam applications till March 31.

The UGC made the request as many final semester students will not be able to apply for one of the most sought-after recruitment exams since their final exams were not completed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 22
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:15 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A yellow-footed green pigeon is sitting on a tree branch at Kushumbagh in Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan. The bird feeds on fruit. The photo was taken recently.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NASIR UDDIN

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT BCL leader lands in jail over mobile phone video

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A union-level leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League in Tangail's Mirzapur was sent to jail yesterday on charges of recording videos of a woman bathing on his mobile phone.

Police arrested Himel Shikder, 23, general secretary of Fotepur union unit BCL, from a rented house in Mirzapur upazila town on Wednesday night after the victim filed a case against him under the Digital Security Act.

He was produced before a Tangail court yesterday.

Police and locals said Himel, of Thalpara village, rented the house in the town's Unionpara area several months ago.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Obituary


Arife Islam Sr. passed away due to respiratory issues this Thursday.

A successful businessman in Chittagong, Arife was a *Mukti Bahani* who remained a true patriot. Joy Bangla!

He is survived by his wife Zeenat Islam, two sons Amar and Samar Islam, two daughter-in-laws Tania and Rada, two grandchildren and three siblings.

MAY ALLAH GRANT HIM ETERNAL REST

The Islam Family
Lubna Choudhury, Founder Principal BIT (sister)
Dure Liaquat Ali Khan (sister)
Bunty Islam (brother)



25/11/1952 - 21/01/2021