

Cold in North takes toll

FROM PAGE 12
victims of the cold. Many of them have become unemployed.

Manirul Islam, 44, a rickshaw puller at Shaheed Shahjahan Colony slum area in Lalmonirhat town, said, "We cannot pull rickshaw due to cold. Furthermore, the number of passengers has reduced as well. So, we have been without any work for the last few days."

Nur Islam, 48, a farmer of Sardob village in Kurigram sadar upazila, said, "The cold is so severe that we cannot work on croplands. We have to stay inside our homes. There has been no sunlight for days."

"We don't have sufficient warm clothes, we try to keep us warm by setting straw on fire," said Rasheda Bewa, 55, a farm labourer at same village.

Lipton Chandra Saha, 55, a resident of Lalmonirhat town, said he was involved with export and import trading that had been halted due to the cold weather.

In Thakurgaon and Panchagrah, it has become very difficult for people to stay outside their homes due to cold wind coming from the Himalaya.

"It is very hard to work in cropland

amid such severe cold. But we have to do it as we don't have any alternative income source," said Tedi Barman, 45, a farm labourer of Farabari village in Thakurgaon sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, a bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department yesterday said, "Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country from midnight to morning."

"Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country," said the bulletin that was released at 9:00am yesterday with a 24-hour validity.

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded at Moulvibazar's Sreemangal with 8.3 degree Celsius, said a Met report.

Meanwhile, ferry services on the country's two major ferry routes were suspended for hours due to thick fog, troubling both passengers and transport operators.

The two ferry routes -- Shimulia-Banglabazar and Paturia-Dauladia -- are considered as the gateways of the country's 21 northern districts.

(Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon and Manikganj contributed to the report.)



Israeli soldiers gather by the body of a Palestinian man who was shot dead reportedly while attempting a knife attack at the Gital Avisar Junction, west of the Jewish settlement of Ariel and south of Nablus in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Indian farmers

FROM PAGE 12
services in some parts of the capital to be blocked, according to mobile carrier Vodafone Idea, in an attempt to prevent further unrest.

Tens of thousands of bearded and turbaned farmers, many bundled against the winter cold, began the day in a convoy of tractors festooned with Indian and union flags along the city's fringes.

But hundreds of protesters soon broke away from pre-approved routes, heading for the city centre where the government was holding an annual Republic Day parade of troops and military hardware yesterday morning.

"Modi will hear us now, he will have to hear us now," said Sukhdev Singh, 55, a farmer from the northern state of Punjab, who was among hundreds of protesters, some on horseback, who broke away from one of the three protest routes.

From the city's north they headed towards the government buildings in the centre. They commandeered cranes and used ropes to tear down roadblocks, forcing constables in riot gear to give way, Reuters witnesses said.

Biden First

FROM PAGE 12
South Lawn," LaRosa told CNN in a statement Monday.

The Biden's dogs, both German shepherds, follow the pawprints of presidential pets that included Barack Obama's Bo, a black Portuguese water dog and George W. Bush's Scottish terrier, Barney.

Trump, a famously finicky germophobe, broke with that convention -- as he did with many presidential traditions -- and never had a pet in his White House.

"How would I look walking a dog on the White House lawn," Trump asked, with a grimace, in a video included in a Biden campaign ad.

515 new cases

FROM PAGE 12
The daily detection rate fell to 3.58 percent while the current overall rate is 14.87 percent.

Until yesterday morning, 477,426 patients -- 89.59 percent -- have recovered.

So far, 3,584,788 samples have been tested, including 14,696 in those 24 hours.

Bangladesh reported its first coronavirus cases on March 8 and the first death on March 18.

Covid widens disparity in education

FROM PAGE 12
simulations that aim to capture the impacts that school closures in Bangladesh might have on the learning levels, enrolment and future earnings of children and students using a methodological tool developed by the Education Global Practice of the World Bank.

With the first Covid-19 cases detected in the country on March 8 last year, the government on March 17 closed educational institutions; the shutdown was extended in several phases till January 30.

The World Bank paper said nearly 38 million learners in Bangladesh have been affected by the largest disruption of education systems in history caused by the pandemic.

Private schools were quick to adopt online learning methods, offering lectures delivered via videoconferencing apps like Zoom and social media platforms like Facebook. Most students in urban areas have access to the internet.

However, a lack of infrastructure and uneven access to internet and devices such as a desktop computer, laptop, or smartphone for students in poor urban areas are vital obstacles to virtual learning.

To address the disruption, the government started broadcasting live and recorded lectures through Sangsad TV for secondary and primary students, and directed all schools, colleges and universities to hold online classes. The school authorities are working to continue imparting lessons remotely.

Now, the government is working to reopen educational institutions soon and instructed all schools and colleges to complete their reopening preparations by February 4.

MORE CHILDREN TO FALL INTO 'LEARNING POVERTY'

The World Bank paper noted that prolonged school closures threaten to erase education development gains achieved in recent decades, especially for girls and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"An estimated 35,200 additional children are expected to drop out from primary and secondary education."

It said the closures will result in a loss of between 0.5 and 0.9 years of learning-adjusted schooling for an average Bangladeshi student.

"We find that overall loss in learning for every child enrolled in school even in the most optimistic scenario is expected to be substantial and the economic implications of the learning losses are huge," read the paper.

Pre-pandemic estimates based on

the World Bank's Human Capital Index 2020 show that a Bangladeshi child who starts school at age four can expect to complete on average 10.2 years of school by age 18, said the global lender.

Factoring in for quality, the Learning Adjusted School Years (LAYS) is reduced to an average of 6 years of schooling, it added.

LAYS is a metric of education that tracks both schooling completion and schooling quality. It has been used to rank the development of countries, especially as it relates to human capital.

The paper said the school closures are likely to push more children into "learning poverty".

Citing one of the WB's reports, the paper said pre-pandemic estimates show that 57 percent of Bangladeshi children could not read and understand a simple text by the end of primary school in 2017.

And the school closures will increase the share of children who do not attain the minimum reading proficiency at the end of primary school (Grade 5) by 18 percentage points to 76 percent, considering all children are affected equally by the closures, it said.

This results from a shock to the distribution of learning outcomes with a reduction of 0.7 years of quality adjusted learning (8.4 months out of a 10-month school year), the paper added.

IMPLICATIONS OF LEARNING LOSS

The WB paper said the pandemic is poised to translate into a substantial economic cost in the long run.

Quantifying the loss of learning in terms of labour market returns, an average Bangladeshi student will face a reduction between an optimistic and pessimistic range of \$198 and \$335 in yearly earnings once s/he enters the labour market, which represents between 4 percent and 6.8 percent of annual income, it said.

This is higher than the SAR average which ranges between \$116 to \$319 losses per student per year. Aggregated for all students in Bangladesh and projected 10 years into the future (when all graduates have entered the labour market), this would cost the Bangladesh economy between \$67 billion and \$114 billion in GDP at Net Present Value, the paper stated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The working paper recommended making all four platforms functional through content development and delivery to reach as many students.

It however said digital content-based remote learning may not be a feasible option for children from the

poorest families who generally do not have access to television, radio and internet.

"In these cases, other methods may be employed, including use of physical learning packages delivered to students' homes, mobile-based lessons or face-to-face classes maintaining social distance and protocols, for small groups."

To make remote learning effective, more engagement between teachers and students, either in person maintaining physical distance, or virtually is also necessary, it suggested.

The paper underscored the need for identifying learning loss through formative assessment on literacy and numeracy competencies.

"It will be critical to train teachers on formative and summative assessments and remedial education to help students catch up on learning losses once schools reopen."

It said schools reopening must ensure that the critical safety and health facilities and protocols are in place, and that school and local education administration's capacity to monitor and manage schools safely are enhanced.

The World Bank also said effective partnerships between government, non-government, private sector and civil society engaged in education service delivery is important now more than ever.

WHO issues new

FROM PAGE 12
AstraZeneca, which developed its shot with Oxford University, told the EU on Friday it could not meet agreed supply targets up to the end of March.

Europe urged pharmaceutical companies yesterday to stand by their word in supplying vaccines.

"Europe invested billions to help develop the world's first Covid-19 vaccines. To create a truly global common good," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said at a virtual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

"And now, the companies must deliver. They must honour their obligations."

EU member states could take AstraZeneca to court for breach of supply contracts if it did not honour its delivery schedule, Latvian Foreign Affairs Minister Edgars Rinkivics said.

"The possibility should be evaluated, and it should be coordinated among the EU countries," the minister told Reuters, via his spokesman.

Three hurt

FROM PAGE 12
led by a magistrate, went to the land on Monday and evicted the grabbers. Law enforcers and labourers spent the whole day on knocking down the illegal structures.

At night, the grabbers returned to the land and constructed fresh structures overnight. The grabbers did this after driving away two nightguards, said Monwar.

As Afzal and his family members found structures on the land yesterday, he informed police of the matter.

A team from Birganj Police Station went to the spot. As they reached there, some 30 grabbers attacked the police personnel with sticks, Monwar added.

On information, additional police personnel went there and sent the injured to Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

Masud Hossain, 30, a man associated with Afzal, was also hurt in the attack.

Anwar Hossain, superintendent of Dinajpur police, said many police personnel had been deployed in the area and the situation was under control.

Police detained four people in connection with the attack, he said.

Tension was prevailing in the area over the incident.

A third of govt-owned buses

FROM PAGE 12
documents of government vehicles, including BRIC buses, because many of them don't have updated documents," said an executive magistrate, who had carried out BRTA's mobile courts for several years.

According to the recent report of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC), the organisation has now 1,450 out of 1,835 buses and 570 out of 588 trucks in service.

But shortages of skilled mechanics, inadequate maintenance, poor decisions made by the authorities and corruption by a section of BRTC staffers are to blame "for the early demise of the buses", said officials concerned.

The road transport and bridges ministry last month asked the BRTA to check services of its buses and take action against irregularities, said Muhammad Abdur Razzak, deputy director (enforcement) of BRTA.

Following the directives, BRTA's mobile courts in the first two weeks of this month fined 56 buses and cautioned many others buses for having relatively less faults, he told

this correspondent yesterday.

The drive will continue, he added.


Meanwhile, the BRTA chairman informed the monthly coordination meeting of the Road Transport and Highways Division on January 14 of the special drive.

Nazrul Islam, secretary of the division, who presided over the meeting, asked the BRTC authorities to give depot managers necessary directives to warn bus drivers, contractors and helpers so that they follow regulations.


Contacted, Amjad Hossain, BRTC's spokesperson, said they already conveyed the message to the depot managers and actions were already taken against some drivers and staffers.

"Action would be taken against officials if they were found responsible for the mismanagement," Amjad, also general manager (accounts) of BRTC, told this paper yesterday.

Replying to a question, he said they already updated documents of most of the buses and would do the rest soon.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director, PIU
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
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শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) for Individual Urban Design Specialist-National (DCNUP/S-12A)

Memo No. 46.207.014.09.10.2021/281 Date: 25/01/2021

The People's Republic of Bangladesh intends to apply for a credit in the amount of about US\$ 100.50 million from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP) to be implemented by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments for the provision of consultancy service for the project by hiring of an Individual Urban Design Specialist.

2. Scope of Task/Service:
The Urban Design Specialist shall assist the Project Director (PD) by providing technical expertise in urban planning and design; identify and prioritize sub-project preparation, carry out technical appraisal of sub-project proposals; conduct construction supervision; and site visit and provide inputs to prepare terms of reference for DCNUP supported studies as required. The consultant shall also provide project management and coordination support to PD, DCNUP as required. The activities include, but not limited to:

- Assist PD in project planning and sub-project prioritization based on the readiness assessment.
- Assist PD in orienting/guiding Design, Supervision and Management (DSM) consultant in project requirements and implementation arrangements.
- Assist the PD in managing DSM consultants, and reviewing work based on the application of best practices of urban planning and design, adherence to design standards for sub-projects design and construction. The standards and compliance guidelines include but not limited to: (i) Land-use planning; (ii) Bangladesh national building codes; (iii) Fire safety standards, (iv) Universal accessibility; (v) Green building guidelines including efficient use of energy, water and other resources; (vi) Citizen engagement in planning and design; (vii) Gender inclusive design.
- Ensure all sub-project designs adhere to all engineering standards and compliance guidelines, and all necessary approvals are obtained from relevant agencies.
- In coordination with other PIU experts and PD, provide input to citizen engagement strategy and participate in participatory planning and design of DCNUP sub-projects.
- Promote a culture of innovation and creative thinking in design and construction practice that is sensitive to people and environment, including the consideration of how to integrate new or alternative design and public consultation approaches.
- Provide technical support to DSM, as and when necessary, and act as focal person in communicating and coordinating among teams to inform design decisions during design development process.
- Conduct necessary due diligence and technical appraisals of the sub-project proposals and ensure relevant clearance documents are obtained and the design complies with all minimum design standards.
- Provide input to the appraisal report and assist and supervise quality preparation of construction drawings and bid documents.
- Conduct periodic site visits and spot checks during implementation to monitor progress and submit monitoring report.
- Assist PD in maintaining timeliness of preparation and implementation of the designs of each sub-project.
- Assist PD in preparing periodic project reports, presentation and other project related activity as required.
- Upon reviewing technical aspect of a completed sub-projects, provide input to sub-project completion report.

3. Qualification and experience:

- Education: S/he will have at least Bachelor Degree in Architecture/Urban Design or equivalent from a recognized university by Bangladesh Government. S/he will have skills with higher-level computer skills in Windows operating system. CAD and professional design software for 2D and 3D projects.
- Experience: S/he must have at least 10 (ten) years of relevant experience of which at least 4 (four) years' experience of working on urban development projects and in public space design. Candidates must be able to work under limited supervision and experience of working in multi-disciplinary team environment. Prior experience of working with local government agencies and in donor-funded projects will be of advantage. Familiarity and comfort working with participatory approaches to design is highly desirable. Knowledge on green/energy-efficient design is also desirable.
- Professional affiliations: Candidates should be registered in professional bodies and should submit membership certificate (from recognized professional bodies).

4. The Project Director now invites eligible applicants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Applicants are invited to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (**complete CV with expected remuneration**).

5. Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) will be available upon request from the address provided below either through email or in person.

6. The consultants will be selected using the selection of Individual Consultant in accordance with the current World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016 updated in November 2018.

7. The services will be commenced immediately after selection at DSCC, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Consultant's contract duration will be of 38 (thirty-eight) months with possible extension of service subject to satisfactory performance to be evaluated yearly.

8. Expressions of interest shall be submitted by 18/02/2021 during office hours on weekdays either in sealed envelope sent to Project Director, and be clearly marked "Expressions of Interest for Urban Design Specialist".

9. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all REOIs.

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DSCC/PRD/89/20-21
GD-173



SS POWER I
CAREER OPPORTUNITY

We are looking for a Project Director to spearhead an under-construction Power Generation Company in Bangladesh.

Company Profile:
SS Power I Ltd. a joint venture company between S. Alam Group of Bangladesh and Chinese companies, SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Co., Limited and HTG Development Group Co., is one of the largest investments ever in the power sector of Bangladesh which is currently executing the 2 x 660 MW Coal fired Super Critical Thermal Power Plant at Banskhali near Chattogram, Bangladesh.

Purpose of the Job:
Display leadership role to take forward project execution activities with meeting all prerequisites so set forth with due focus to achieving COD within the given timeline. The position demands to exert expertise and strategic influence while managing various stakeholders at home and abroad. The incumbent should be well conversant to the law of land also international law relevant to this kind of large powerplant project with expertise to understand various contracts so entered and guide the company to fulfill its contractual obligations.

Major Responsibilities:
Review, implementation and monitoring of balance 'Detail Engineering' activities pending to Construction and Commissioning for Power Plant and Jetty/aiming to achieving COD as per the agreed roadmap. Assist and manage EPC technical and commercial team in implementation of project deliveries within the given time frame also support them in invoicing, payments and Milestones certification while ensuring quality, quantity and safety of the works so completed.

Discipline:
Bachelor's in mechanical engineering from a reputed University / Institution.

Age:
In between 45-55 yrs.

Experience & other requirements:
Should have completed at least one coal fired supercritical thermal power project of unit size 660 MW as Project Director having extensive construction experience and should be in a position to guide the site team on all aspects of construction, commissioning and transition to Operation and Maintenance group which has already been awarded.

Wants immediate recruitment as various construction activities are already underway in full swing. The candidate should be willing to relocate to Bangladesh and the place of posting shall be Dhaka and Project Site as per requirements. The selected candidate should be willing to continue for a period of at least two years if selected till successful completion of COD and hand over of all plant activities to the Operation & Maintenance group. Preference will be given to European Nationals.

Salary & Benefits:
SS Power I Ltd. offers attractive salary for the deserving candidates with attractive market-based benefits.

Application Deadline:
To apply, please submit your resume (in MS Word format) through e-mail to sanaullah@sspowerbd.com with a copy to e-mail admin@sspowerbd.com latest by 5th February 2021. We regret that only successfully shortlisted applicants will be contacted.