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## MYANMAR COUP

# Suu Kyi held as army takes over

Military reasons polls irregularities, declares state of emergency, pledges power transfer after new polls; Biden leads world's condemnation, orders sanctions review; UNSC to meet today

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's military seized power in a bloodless coup yesterday, detaining democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and imposing a one-year state of emergency -- moves that sparked global outrage and calls for the generals to immediately backtrack.

The army intervention ended a decade of transition from outright military rule in Myanmar, with the generals justifying the power grab by alleging fraud in the November elections that Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party won in a landslide.

US President Joe Biden led the chorus of world condemnation, calling for a quick restoration of democracy and warning that Washington could reimpose sanctions.

"The international community should come together in one voice to press the Burmese military to immediately relinquish the power they have seized," Biden said.

"The United States is taking note of those who stand with the people of Burma in this difficult hour," Suu Kyi and President Win Myint were detained in the capital Naypyidaw before dawn, party



spokesman Myo Nyunt told AFP, just hours before parliament was meant to reconvene for the first time since the elections.

Late yesterday, Myanmar state television announced the removal of 24 of Suu Kyi's ministers, and 11 new appointments.

Former foreign minister Wunna Maung Lwin, who served under ex-general Thein Sein, will return to that role after five years -- taking over a job that Suu Kyi had held while she was de facto national leader.

The military sealed off roads around the capital with armed troops, trucks and armoured personnel carriers. Military helicopters flew across the city.

A putsch had been expected for days, yet when it came it left Myanmar stunned -- with roads to its main international airport blocked and communications cut -- a country once more isolated from a world it only rejoined a decade ago.

"It's extremely upsetting -- I don't want the coup," said a 64-year-old Burmese man in Hlaing township, standing with a crowd outside a grocery stall.

The United Nations Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on the situation for today.

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Soldiers stand guard on a street in Naypyidaw yesterday, after the military detained the country's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the country's president in a coup.

PHOTO: AFP

## Agreement must be followed

It doesn't matter who is in power, FM says on Rohingya repatriation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Rohingya repatriation will not be affected by the military coup in Myanmar, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"The agreement on Rohingya repatriation was signed with the Myanmar state, and it doesn't matter who is in power, the agreement must be followed," he told The Daily Star, hours after Myanmar military took control of the Southeast Asian country following the detention of de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other politicians.

The move follows a landslide win by Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy (NLD) party in November election, which the army claims was marred by fraud.

The military coup raised concerns if Rohingya repatriation process would be hampered with the military in power, as repeated attempts of Rohingya repatriation failed, with the Rohingyas saying that the conditions in Rakhine state were not

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## ROHINGYA REFUGEES

# Is repatriation now up in the air?

PORIMOL PALMA

Rohingya repatriation would now depend on how the international community reacts to yesterday's coup, experts have said.

It has been more than three years since nearly 750,000 Rohingyas, who faced brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state, took shelter in Bangladesh. Despite global pressure, including a genocide case at the International Court of Justice, the Rohingya repatriation did not happen.

The pandemic and Myanmar's elections in November last year led to the delay in the joint meeting between the officials in Dhaka and Naypyidaw. However, early this year a tripartite meeting involving officials from Bangladesh, Myanmar and China was held, and Dhaka expressed optimism of beginning the repatriation in the second half of the year.

Now that the Myanmar military has taken control of the country and detained de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other political leaders of the National League of Democracy (NLD), which had a landslide victory in the November polls, the question is "would it affect the repatriation of the Rohingyas?"

Some experts say the repatriation process may slow down, while others argue that Myanmar military, which led the "genocidal acts" against the Rohingyas, will face more international pressure. They all agree, however, that the Rohingya repatriation would depend on how the global community reacts to the coup.

"I think Rohingya repatriation process will slow down because the military government will be more involved in its administrative and internal issues," said M Humayun Kabir, president at the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute and a former ambassador.

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## Coup baffles analysts

AGENCIES

The coup d'état staged by military in Myanmar that prevented Aung San Suu Kyi's democratically elected party from taking power yesterday baffled many political analysts.

The coup returns the country to full military rule after a short experiment in quasi-democracy that began in 2011, when the military, which had been in power since 1962, implemented parliamentary elections and other reforms.

For the past five years, Suu Kyi and her once-banned National League for Democracy (NLD) party led the country after being elected in 2015 in the freest and fairest vote seen in 25 years. Yesterday morning, the party should have begun its second term in office after winning 83 percent of available seats in the 2020 election.

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While Indian and Bangladesh have addressed major issues including cross-border terrorism and land boundary and maritime disputes in the last few decades, they have enormous opportunities for further cooperation with several areas requiring more attention -- such as water sharing, border killings and Rohingya refugee crisis. Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami speaks at length in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star's Porimol Palma.

# Points of frictions have narrowed

Indian envoy says on Dhaka-Delhi ties over the last 10 to 15 years

TDS: Bangladesh celebrates its Golden Jubilee of Independence, as well as diplomatic relations with India, this year. How do you evaluate Bangladesh's progress and the diplomatic relations between the two countries?



Doraiswami: First and foremost, the Independence of Bangladesh is the story of the Bangladeshis who basically fought the war. We assisted in it, but we must always remember that we supported the desire of the Bangladeshi people to assert their own identity. Secondly, we have a relationship of 50 years.

It was somewhat derailed after the assassination of Bangabandhu. With that direction of the relationship, it did not go as expected.

However, we have moved forward. There is recognition today in both countries and we believe broadly that it is in the fundamental national interests of both the countries to remain closest friends and partners. Our friendly relationship is by far the best thing that we can do to help our own countries grow. This people-centric friendship between the

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■ A STORY BASED ON THE INTERVIEW WILL BE PUBLISHED TOMORROW ON OUR BUSINESS PAGE ■

## DEATH OF A UNIV STUDENT

# Viscera report 'holds the clue'

Forensic experts suspect food poisoning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators were waiting for the viscera report to identify the cause of death of a female university student, whose father has accused five of her fellow students of raping her.

After conducting the autopsy yesterday, Prof AM Selim Reza, head of forensic medicine department at the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, told reporters that they suspect that the 21-year-old woman may have died due to food poisoning.

However, the actual reason can be known after getting the viscera chemical analysis, he added.

When asked, he said they did not primarily have any evidence of force or rape. They have sent the vaginal swab and DNA sample to lab to know whether she was raped.

The woman died at a private hospital on Sunday, a day after her father filed a rape case with Mohammadpur Police Station accusing five of her fellow students.

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## Threatened, MP files GD against Gouripur mayor-elect

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A lawmaker from Mymensingh-3 lodged a general diary on Saturday against the new elected Gouripur Municipality mayor Syed Rafiqul Islam for allegedly threatening him.

Nazim Uddin Ahmed, the lawmaker of Gouripur constituency, filed the GD with Kotwali Police Station as Rafiqul "threatened the local lawmaker and his son with death" over political rivalry.

The municipality election was held that same day and Rafiqul, for the third consecutive time, was elected mayor. He contested as an independent candidate.

In the general diary, Nazim, also a freedom fighter, alleged that around 4:15pm on Saturday, the newly elected mayor called him (lawmaker) over phone and said, "You have ruined my life. I never forgive you. I will see

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Huge logs are stacked in front of a sawmill close to the Marine Drive at Fishery Ghat, Chattogram. They pose risks of accident as they might get dislodged and go on to the busy road. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# 12 die drinking spurious liquor

DB arrests 6 for making counterfeit spirits

STAR REPORT

At least 12 people, including two students of a private university and three staffers of a media organisation, have died from allegedly consuming counterfeit alcohol in Dhaka and Bogura district over the last 48 hours.

Police said they are investigating the incidents. In Dhaka, around 41 employees of the media organisation went to a resort in Gazipur last Friday for an office tour, according to sources.

Some had alcoholic beverages and got sick. They returned to Dhaka for treatment, a team member, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star.

After returning to Dhaka, many were hospitalised for poisoning. While undergoing treatment, two employees died on Sunday and another died yesterday, said the team member, who also received treatment after having the drinks.

Around 10 employees of the organisation are still undergoing treatment at different city hospitals and two are in the ICU, said another staffer.

"We are now providing blood samples to check the source of poisoning," he said.

Sources said they had collected alcohol from the city's Gulistan area.

Abu Aziz, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Kafrul Police Station, told The Daily Star that they received a call about a private organisation employee, who got sick and died in a city hospital while undergoing treatment after returning to Dhaka from an office tour.

"We heard they had liquor and we are suspecting it was tainted. We sent the victim's body to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsy," said the OC.

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**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**443**  
New cases in 24hrs



**535,582**  
Total cases



**8,137**  
Deaths



**480,216**  
Recoveries



**2,242,530**  
Deaths



**103,731,725**  
Total cases

## PM unveils 2 books on Bangabandhu

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday unveiled the covers of two books on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She unveiled the covers of the books titled "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Janak Amar Neta Amar" and "Joy Bangla" at her Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban office, PM's Assistant Press Secretary MM Emrul Kayas told UNB.

The first book is a compilation of Hasina's write-ups about Bangabandhu, his family and the relevant issues, while the second one is a compilation of 1970-1975 interviews and conversations of Bangabandhu.

In the preface of "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Janak Amar Neta Amar", the premier said the book is a rare gift for every Bengali reader in the birth centenary of Bangabandhu.

Former education minister Nurul Islam Nahid edited the book, published by Charulipi Prokashon.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, wrote the preface of the book "Joy Bangla", while Nahid and poet Pias Majid collected and edited its write-ups.

In its preface, the PM said this historic book needs to be read to fully understand the life and philosophy of the Father of the Nation.

## Suu Kyi held as army takes over

FROM PAGE 1

The military declared, via its own television channel, a one-year state of emergency and announced that former general Myint Swe would be acting president for the next year.

It alleged "huge irregularities" in the November polls that the election commission had failed to address.

"As the situation must be resolved according to the law, a state of emergency is declared," the announcement said.

The army later pledged to hold fresh elections after one year.

Suu Kyi had issued a pre-emptive statement ahead of her detention calling on people "not to accept a coup", according to a post on the official Facebook page of her party's chairperson.

The military moved quickly to stifle dissent, severely restricting the internet and mobile phone communications across the country.

In Yangon, the former capital that remains Myanmar's commercial hub, troops seized the city hall just ahead of the announcement, according to an AFP journalist.

Several trucks were seen in Yangon carrying army supporters, with Myanmar flags and blaring nationalist songs, and some NLD members reported that security forces had ordered them to stay at home.

People rushed to grocery stores to stock up on rice, oil and instant noodles. Banks were temporarily closed by the communications freeze, but some were expected to reopen today.

Elsewhere, the chief minister of Karen state and several other regional ministers were also held, party sources told AFP.

Myanmar's November polls were only the second democratic elections the country had seen since it emerged from the 49-year grip of military rule in 2011.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the European Union, Britain and Australia were among others to condemn the coup.

China declined to criticise anyone, instead calling for all sides to "resolve differences".

The NLD won more than 80 per cent of the vote in November -- increasing its support from 2015.

But the military has for weeks complained the polls were riddled with irregularities, and claimed to have uncovered more than 10 million instances of voter fraud.

Myanmar has seen two previous coups since independence from Britain in 1948 -- in 1962 and 1988.

Suu Kyi, 75, is an immensely popular figure in Myanmar for her opposition to the military -- which earned her the Nobel Peace Prize -- having spent the best part of two decades under house arrest during the previous dictatorship.

But her international image was shredded during her time in power as she defended the military-backed crackdown in 2017 against the country's Rohingya community.

About 750,000 Rohingyas were forced to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh during the campaign, which UN investigators said amounted to genocide.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said it was "appalled" by her arrest.

Suu Kyi was only ever de facto leader of Myanmar as the military had inserted a clause in the constitution that barred her from being president. But to circumvent that clause, she assumed leadership of the country via a new role of "state counsellor".

The 2008 constitution also ensured the military would remain a significant force in government by retaining control of the interior, border and defence ministries.

## Viscera report

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Meanwhile, police may seek to exhume the body of an accused in the case -- Arafat, 28 -- who died at City Hospital in Mohammadpur on Saturday, two days after drinking with the same group at a restaurant in Uttara on Thursday.

On that day, another of the group fell sick at the restaurant and left the place immediately. Police said one member of the group had taken alcohol to the restaurant from the airport area. Police are searching for both of them.

According to the case statement, five, including the victim, went to a restaurant in sector-3 of Uttara on Thursday. There, they made her drink alcohol. As she fell sick, they took the girl to one of her friend's house in Mohammadpur. There the prime accused -- Mortuza Raihan Chowdhury, one of the two arrestees -- raped her.

The following day, the victim stayed at the friend's house and when the victim's physical condition deteriorated and she started vomiting, the students took her to the hospital, according to the statement.

The two arrestees -- Raihan, 21, and Nuhah Alam Tafzir, 21, -- were each taken into a five-day remand on Sunday. The arrestees went to the same private university as the victim.

Mohammadpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Latif said the

youth who died at City Hospital was buried on the same day without the police being informed. He said they got the necessary information from the hospital.

The OC said the other two arrestees did not know that their male friend died on Saturday. Police contacted his family and may seek to conduct an autopsy after exhuming his body.

Police checked the CCTV footage of the restaurant in Uttara and Nuhah's house in Mohammadpur. They also scrutinised the mobile phones of the arrestees.

On the basis of preliminary interrogation of the two arrestees, Harun-Ur-Rashid, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division, said initially it seemed that it may have been a case of excessive drinking or something poisonous was present in the liquor. There might also be the possibility of rape under the influence of alcohol.

The actual reason can only be determined after the autopsy report is prepared, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the Tejgaon DC said they are investigating whether the incident of liquor poisoning has any links or similarities to the incident in a Gazipur resort last Friday, where three staffers of a private organisation died due to suspected liquor poisoning.

## Threatened, MP files GD

FROM PAGE 1

you and your son [Tanjir Ahmed Rajib]. There will be blood and you will be responsible."

Police sent the GD to Cognizance Court of No-1 of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court yesterday but no order was passed yet, said Md Faruq Hossain, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Kotwali Police Station.

Syed Rafiqul Islam is one of the accused in sensational murder of Gouripur's Svecchhasebok League secretary Masudur Rahman Shuvra, 28, on October 17 last year.

On October 19, the victim's brother, Abidur Rahman, filed a murder case with Gouripur Police Station against 14 people, including Rafiqul and Riyaduzzaman Riyad, joint convener of Gouripur's BNP and also chairman of Moilakanda Union Parishad.

On the same day, Rafiqul, also president of Gouripur municipality AL, was suspended from his post in the party in connection with the murder of Shuvra.

Contacted, Rafiqul said three union parishad chairmen, including one ex-chairman, were detained from the Gouripur Govt College centre when they went there to snatch ballot boxes.

"Breaking election rules, the lawmaker had been staying in Gouripur and when he and his son attempted to enter Pilot Girls' High School, I informed the administration and police.

"In the afternoon, I phoned him saying he cannot do this and if any untoward incident takes place, he would be responsible. But I did not do anything to prompt the lawmaker to file a GD against me," he said.

About the Shuvra murder case, he said the people with ulterior motives falsely implicated to harass him and destroy his life and political career. As people voted for him for the third time, opposing people are now busy with fresh conspiracies against him, he alleged.

Contacted, MP Nazim said he had no political rivalry with the mayor.



Workers salvage goods from a truck that fell on its side while heading towards the capital near Aminbazar's Salehpur bridge in the early hours of yesterday. Locals said the accident took place when the overloaded vehicle hit a pothole on the highway. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Points of frictions have narrowed

FROM PAGE 1

170 million people of Bangladesh and 1.2 billion people in India is most important. That is the Bangladesh that we will always be friends with.

Lastly, evaluating these 50 years, your achievement in 50 years has been remarkable, particularly in the last decade. Economic development has been tremendous, socio-economic progress has been brilliant. Bangladesh has lifted so much of its population out of abject poverty. These are major achievements. Sometimes, it is hard to see the progress around you. Of course, Bangladesh people will want more. We all want more. It is a normal instinct. I think there are good positives that help cement our relationship. We can do more trade, people to people connectivity -- all of those happen through progress.

TDS: Do you see any fault lines in the relationship between the two countries?

Doraiswami: No, I would not call them fault lines. I think sometimes people overstate the problems. There are issues -- we are neighbours, we share a 4,100km border. It is important to remember that it is not only your largest land border, but also our largest land border. At places, borders go through highly populated areas where people are fundamentally very similar -- sharing the same language, culture, and history.

So, there will always be some amount of friction and issues between any neighbors. The question is if those frictions are growing or not. I think over the last 10 or 15 years actually, the points of frictions have narrowed. They still exist and need to be addressed, but they are not obstacles to the growth of our relationship. So, I would call them points of attention. We need to pay attention to these issues to fix them.

TDS: The Teesta water sharing treaty has been pending for a decade. People are frustrated about it. Can we expect the deal anytime soon?

Doraiswami: Bangladeshi friends need to understand the complexity of our political system. The constitution puts certain power under states' hands. Those who are old can remember the Farakka Barrage Treaty. That required the government to bring West Bengal on board. We need to bring West Bengal and Sikkim on board [for the Teesta deal]. It is difficult for us to do even if the federal government wants. The government can't unilaterally do it -- this is the point we have been repeatedly saying. We understand Bangladesh's concern and we will do our best to address it, but it needs us to address the political discourse in India.

What we can do, however, in the interim is that we can work on some of our other rivers so there is a sense of progress on river water sharing. We have 52 other rivers on which we need to come up with arrangements. If we wait to do it one by one, God knows how long it will take. We can move with as many parallelly as we can. Towards that end, we had a technical-level meeting in early January. Good outcomes came out of that meeting. We now better understand the water data. A secretary-level meeting of the Joint River Commission will happen soon.

TDS: The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty is going to expire in 2026. Bangladesh is seeking a joint initiative, possibly a barrage, to best utilise the water coming to the Padma River. What's the progress on that front?

Doraiswami: Yes, we had discussed that, including the terms of reference on the joint study. So, that is moving forward now. It is important because we understand the priority you attach to the Padma River water. So, we should move forward faster.

TDS: Border killings has for long been a much-discussed issue between the two countries. How can it be brought to zero?

Doraiswami: Nobody wants to see people killed. But, there are some things that are not accurate in the discourse. First of all, it is not happening on one side only. There are Indian citizens who are also being killed on the border. There are BSF [Border Security Force] troops being maimed in the clashes with groups of smugglers. It is happening almost entirely between 10:00pm and 5:00am, which is not

a tourist time. It's all happening on our side of the territory. Not every act of killing has been done by the BSF. There are organised criminal gangs on both sides of the border. People on both sides of the border are involved in illegal activities. Sometimes they are working together and sometimes they are working against each other. Not all the people killed either on the Indian or on the Bangladeshi side are the result of BSF using force. That's sometimes not recognised. The numbers sometimes put out are way excess of what the BSF says. Remember that the border fence, on an average, is 150 yards from the zero line. So, it is not possible for the BSF to cross some 300 yards and kill. Why would they do so? That is not their job, they are not a military force. They are a border security force. So, that means somebody's understanding is wrong.

To eliminate the problem, it is very important that there is far more coordination between the two border security forces. That can include joint patrolling and sharing intelligence. If you can prevent the people from [illegally] crossing the border, there is less of a chance that people get hurt. It is not only the border-guarding forces' job. As governments, we also need to find the ways of telling people not to do these things. People do that not because that is their nature, but because they are desperate... they want economic activity, income. So, we should find ways in investing money in border development, creating border haats, cross-border economic activity, so that people can trade easily with each other, particularly in the Bengal frontier. We can even look into local food processing zones, so that people are habituated to positive economic activity. If we can do that, we can take away the pressure on the border. It is really unfortunate because it is poor people who are being killed.

Finally, ensuring that we understand not all the violence on the border is one-sided. If you look at the last 10 years, the number of Indians who were unfortunately killed on the border are almost the same as the number of Bangladeshis. In 10 years until December 10 last year, a total of 132 Bangladeshis and 95 Indians were killed in BSF firing on the Indian side. During the period, 17 BSF personnel died and 1,110 BSF members were injured in confrontations with smugglers. It is not a good thing. I don't want anyone to be killed. But, the impression that Bangladeshis [alone] are being targeted and shot is not just true.

TDS: When can we see these recommendations implemented?

Doraiswami: We have been pushing for these. Our border security guards and home secretaries meet annually, and our home ministers meet every two years. These processes need to be embedded and instructions needed that these must be done. If we can do this, we can save lives.

TDS: Bangladesh is upset that India has not created enough pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation. How do you respond to this?

Doraiswami: We want to facilitate the solution. It is to ensure that since we are neighbours to both, both countries see our role as positive and that we are able to create the atmosphere that facilitates your own efforts to reach a solution. We are not intermediaries in this. We do understand the sensitivity of the issue for Bangladesh. It also affects us. People need to remember that we fully understand that it has direct and indirect impact on us, not just the inflow but that the impact on Bangladesh also has an impact on us. People need to understand that just because we are not publicly saying anything doesn't mean we haven't invested in finding a solution. There is a different way of doing it. I was dealing with that relationship also. Every one of us meeting the leadership of Myanmar has made the point of safe, speedy and sustainable repatriation of the displaced persons to Myanmar. The only difference is that we are not doing it publicly. It is more helpful to help create the atmosphere for the people to go back to Rakhine. We will never do anything that is not in the interest of Bangladesh and the long-term stay

of one million displaced people is not in Bangladesh's interest. We genuinely want the problem to be solved. We will do what we can do to help find a reasonable solution.

TDS: We know that India is building houses in Rakhine. What else is India doing?

Doraiswami: We are facilitating larger economic development so that we can show the other communities of Rakhine that peace and stability have a positive impact. Our projects that are in Rakhine state are not just houses. There are socio-economic development projects in the three main districts where the problems happened. Those include building small bridges, community centres, and markets so that there is economic incentive for people to come -- not just houses. We have developed a port in Sittwe, which will create economic growth and jobs. We have also worked with Myanmar to create a sense of confidence for bringing people back and solving ethnic problems.

We might not have been able to do any of these if we were publicly vocal. So, somebody will also have to do this part so that there is a larger sense that a solution can be held, that it is reasonable to bring people back -- you have to find a solution. We have also shown up our own federal setup in India so that the peace process of various communities can happen. We think bringing the opportunity of a solution is a positive contribution that we can offer Myanmar.

TDS: Do you also talk about legal issues about the Rohingyas?

Doraiswami: We do discuss these issues. They say that they have a way forward that first of all, people need to go back and then move towards citizenship. We know that there are sensitivities in how they work. What we have been encouraging is that they should move forward. That's the conversation. We don't want to interject ourselves in the negotiation between Myanmar and the displaced people or Bangladesh. Nobody has asked us to do that.

TDS: What would your overall comment on the Bangladesh-India relationship be?

Doraiswami: This is the relationship that has the most material significance to the daily lives of ordinary people of our countries. Getting it right and having an approach that finds solutions rather than faults, we really need to work towards that end. Our region is one of the least connected regions of the world. See the benefits that have come to East Asia, to Southeast Asia from strong connectivity. Forget Europe. Just in our own neighbourhood in Asia, everybody was like us in the 1940s. We are missing the bus. Going ahead is everything for us.

## Agreement must

FROM PAGE 1

conductive for return as there was no guarantee of citizenship, safety, and basic rights.

Bangladesh has been trying in various ways to start the Rohingya repatriation, even by involving China and the international community.

Nearly a million Rohingyas fled a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017. Myanmar also faces genocide case at the International Court of Justice. Despite global pressure, the repatriation did not start and there was expectation that it would start in the second half of this year.

Minister Momen said in the 1980s and '90s, the military was in power [in Myanmar], but the Rohingya repatriation happened in large scale during those times.

"We have been persistent in developing mutually beneficial relations with Myanmar and have been working with Myanmar for the voluntary, safe and sustained repatriation of the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh. We expect these processes to continue ...," said the foreign ministry in a statement.

It said as an immediate and friendly neighbour, Dhaka would like to see peace and stability in Myanmar. "Bangladesh firmly adheres to and promotes democratic ethos. We hope that the democratic process and constitutional arrangements will be upheld in Myanmar," the statement said.

## 12 die drinking

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, the morgue sources said they have kept samples from the victims' bodies to find the reason behind their deaths.

In Mohammadpur, a private university student, whose father filed a rape case on Sunday accusing five other students of the same university, allegedly died from counterfeit alcohol consumption, police claimed.

On Saturday, an accused in the case, Arafat, 28, also died at Mohammadpur's City Hospital, Harun-Ur-Rashid, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division, told The Daily Star.

"We are suspecting both the victim and the accused died from the alcohol they consumed. We are looking into the incidents," he added.

Meanwhile in Bogura, around seven people, including a father and son, died, and five others got admitted to hospital, yesterday after allegedly ingesting toxic liquor on Sunday night, reports our correspondent.

Four of them -- Suman Rabidas, 38, his father Premnath Rabidas, 50, Saju Mia, 55, and Polash Hossain, 35 -- were confirmed at Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

The other three were Alamgir Hosain, 55, Ramjan Ali, 60, Mozahar Ali, 70.

Suman Rabidas's brother Sujan said his brother bought tampered spirit from a Homeo Hall.

Police and witnesses said some people bought tainted alcohol from a homeopathic medicine store in town and drank it after mixing other things into the night before the death for an special occasion at Premnath's house.

"We managed to have done the autopsy of Sumon, Saju and Polash by the evening confirming their deaths from alcohol poisoning. We found Premnath who died at 8.30pm drank liquor with his son," said Md Humayan Kabir, OC of Bogura Sadar police station, adding, "Another victim, Ramjan, died from cardiac arrest in the hospital but we have found that he also used to consume tampered alcohol."

Mozahar Ali had also bought tampered alcohol the night he died.

The OC said they have already started a drive against the Homeo halls that sell rectified spirit to these people. "A case is underway in this regard," he added.

Abdul Wadud, deputy director of Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, said a total of five people are now undergoing treatment in the hospital after having toxic liquor.

Regarding death of other victims, he said they would be able to get clearer information after the autopsies.

In Rajshahi, deaths from tainted alcohol consumption have been a regular occurrence.

On January 1, at least 16 people were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in this regard. Around six of them died after a couple of days.

Investigating the deaths, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, on January 4, arrested four people and busted two dens where spurious liquor was being manufactured in Rajshahi city.

In Dhaka's Bhatara area, during the two hour long drive that began at 10:00pm, a team of the Detective Branch of Police (DB) busted a factory that was making counterfeit liquor. It seized around plastic bottles, several drum spirits, mineral water bottles and sugar syrup.

According to the law enforcers, the counterfeiters used to buy a gallon of spirit from the capital's Mitford area for Tk 10,000.

They then bought mineral water bottles, in which they would mix sugar, colour, and a portion of the spirit. They would pour their mixture in old bottles of alcohol from roadside shops and the "foreign liquor" would then be ready for sale.

Each bottles is being sold out in the market between Tk 7-8,000.

The DB yesterday arrested of six member of a syndicate involved with the process.

Mashhur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DB (Gulshan division), who led the operation, disclosed the details to The Daily Star at midnight.

He said they got information that in last two days, six people including a woman died after having foreign liquor in the city.

"Following the information, we started investigation and first tracked down the delivery person. Then we traced the supplier and then the whole seller

and finally got trace of the factory," he said.

The owner of the factory is Md Nasir, who used to sell foreign alcohol bottles after bringing those out from different warehouse. "We have already arrested Nasir," said the police official.

Md Jahangir, who basically used to sell old foreign liquor's bottles, became the chief chemist of the factory. The DB team also arrested him during the drive.

"We have already filed a case against these two masterminds and their four associates under special power act. Besides, murder cases will be also filed against the arrestees for intentionally selling harmful products," added the deputy commissioner.

Sources said a special instruction was issued from police to different warehouse of the city for not selling liquor to unauthorised persons from December 15 last year.

## KOTALIPARA BOMB PLOT HC to deliver verdict Feb 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict on February 17 on the case filed for attempting to kill Awami League leader and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by planting a 76kg bomb at Kotalipara in 2000.

The HC bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Md Badruzzaman yesterday fixed the date after concluding hearing on the death reference (lower court documents) and appeals of the convicts against the lower court judgement on them.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, Additional Attorney General Sheikh Md Morshed and Deputy Attorney General Dr Md Bashir Ullah appeared for the state while Amulya Kumar Sarker placed arguments as state defence lawyer for the absconding convicts. Lawyers SM Shahjahan, Mohammad Ahsan and Mohammad Nasiruddin stood for the convicts in jail.

During hearing, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin prayed to the HC to uphold the trial court verdict saying that the convicted accused have committed a very serious and unpardonable offence.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Dancers clad in red and white perform in front of Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar with flower garlands in hand to pay respect to the martyrs of the 1952 language movement. Sammilito Natya Parishad held a rally yesterday in Sylhet city, marking the first day of February, a significant month in Bangladesh's history. Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury attended the rally among citizens from all walks of life.

PHOTO: SHEKH NASIR

SUB-INSPECTORS, CONSTABLES

## PHQ to revamp their recruitment process

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Men under the height of 5 feet 6 inches and women under 5 feet 4 inches will not be able to qualify for the post of sub-inspector as some changes in the recruitment criteria for the lower tier of police force is in the offing.

Police Headquarters (PHQ) has already proposed to the home ministry to implement the changes in the existing recruitment regulation of sub-inspector, sergeant and constable posts.

As of now, the minimum height requirement for men applying to the SI post is 5 feet 4 inches and for women it is 5 feet 2 inches.

The recruitment and career planning unit of PHQ proposed the changes following a meeting of the police and home ministry high-ups at the home ministry in mid-2020.

Since SI and sergeants play key roles in case investigations, maintaining law and order, and providing security to VIP and VVIPs, importance should be given on intellect and psychological aspects, alongside educational qualifications in recruitment for the posts, said officials at PHQ.

As per the PHQ proposal, candidates applying to the posts of SI and sergeant will need to have knowledge in Information and Communication Technology.

They will also have to face tougher physical endurance tests and psychological tests compared to the existing ones, said officials at PHQ.

PHQ proposed to reduce the percentage of viva and aptitude test marks for SI posts to 50 from the existing 100 for fairer assessment of candidates.

There will be no change in the marking of viva and aptitude test for sergeant posts, which is now scored on 50 points.

SI and sergeant candidates will have to take stringent endurance tests like sit-ups, push-up and dragging along with the existing ones -- running, long jump, high jump and roping -- to ensure recruitment of fitter candidates.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Lack of press freedom not good for the govt, country

JP lawmaker Anisul Islam Mahmud tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two lawmakers from Jatiya Party and BNP yesterday in parliament criticised the government for "not having rule of law" in the country.

Participating in the thanksgiving motion on the President's speech, Jatiya Party MP Anisul Islam Mahmud said lack of interest in votes among people has been created in the recent times, which is not good for the country's democracy. The government should look into the matter seriously.

The Jatiya Party MP said voter turnout in the election has come down to 24 percent. People's disinterest in vote is not a good sign for democracy.

"Freedom of the press is another pillar of democracy. Failure to ensure freedom of the press is not good for the country or the government," he said.

Anisul said if the rule of law cannot be established in the country, development cannot be sustained.

"Only enactment of law is not enough;

people want to see implementation of laws. Otherwise, injustice will not stop."

Pointing to the sentencing of Bangladeshi lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Papul in jail by Kuwait government on charges of money laundering and human trafficking, the Anisul questioned how the money was laundered from Bangladesh.

"Democracy is the strongest pillar of the spirit of independence. And the biggest pillar of democracy is elections. Today, questions have been raised about the Election Commission," Anisul also said.

"Looting is taking place in the country in the name of development," BNP MP Harunur Rashid exclaimed in his speech at the parliament.

"Money is being laundered. The local government system has been destroyed," he added.

Harun also criticised the opposition Jatiya Party, saying "there is no differences between the ruling party and the opposition has they have become united."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## HC issues status quo on land filling in Chengti Khal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued an order of status quo regarding the land filling of Chengti Khal in Maona area in Gazipur for a month.

In response to a writ petition, the HC also ordered the deputy commissioner of Gazipur and assistant commissioner of land of Sreepur upazila to conduct a survey on the canal and submit the report to this court in 30 days.

Besides, the court issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain in four weeks why their inaction to stop land filling in Chengti Khal should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC also asked the authorities to show causes for why they should not be directed to remove the soil already dumped into the canal in order to restore its original shape.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashrafur Islam and Justice Mohammad Ali came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) challenging the earth filling in Chengti Khal. Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar represented the state during the hearing.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ROAD CRASH COMPENSATION CLAIM

## Make the trustee board functional: Jatri Kalyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity yesterday demanded that the government make the trustee board functional immediately which will deal with compensation related issues after accidents.

The passenger welfare body also demanded to set Tk 20 lakh as compensation for families of the deceased victims of road accidents and Tk 5 lakh for injured.

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of the organisation, placed the demands at a press conference at Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh.

More than two years after the Road Transport Act-2018 was passed in parliament, the government in December last year has appointed a chairman and a secretary for the trustee board that is supposed to deal with compensation-related issues after accidents.

Yet, the board cannot function as it is supposed to since the rules for it have not yet been formulated.

Road accidents victims will have to wait until the rules are formulated and approved by the government before they can get compensation. They can seek compensation but these will not be processed before the board is fully functional.

Under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance-1983, victims or their family members had the opportunity to seek compensation at the Motor Accident Claim Tribunal for death, injuries, and damage to properties.

But the ordinance was repealed after the act came into force in November 2019, narrowing victims' scope for getting compensation. In some cases, victims can now file writ petitions with the High Court to get compensation.

In this situation, the ministry on December 22 last year issued a circular, giving BRTA's chairman and its secretary additional duty of the chairman and secretary of the trustee board with immediate effect.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

ZAKAT FUND EMBEZZLEMENT

## Sayedee seeks stay on trial proceedings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convicted war criminal Delawar Hossain Sayedee has filed a revision petition with the High Court challenging the lower court order that framed charges against him in a case filed for embezzling Tk 1.27 crore from Islamic Foundation's Zakat Fund.

Sayedee, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, submitted the revision petition through lawyer Md Muzahedul Islam Shahin on Sunday seeking stay on the trial proceedings of the case against him.

Citing the petition, lawyer Muzahedul Islam Shahin told The Daily Star yesterday that there is no evidence against Sayedee of transacting and embezzling any money from Islamic Foundation's Zakat fund and there was no mention of his name in the first information report and charge sheet of the case.

Investigation Officer Wazed Ali Gazi has recorded statements from 25 witnesses of the case who did not mention the name of Sayedee, he said, adding that the embezzlement case was filed against him to harass him.

Muzahedul Islam said the HC is yet to fix any date for holding hearing on the petition.

On January 11, a Dhaka court framed charges against Sayedee and five others in the case. Islamic Foundation's finance and accounting director Aiyub Ali Chowdhury filed the case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on May 24, 2010.

Wazed Ali Gazi, an assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, filed the charge sheet on April 30, 2012.

Sayedee, now in Kashimpur jail-1, has been convicted for life until death for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

## Preliminary exam of 43rd BCS on Aug 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Preliminary examination of the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) will be held on August 6, Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) said yesterday.

The test will be held simultaneously in Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Barishal, Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur and Mymensingh centres, said a press release from BPSC.

Information regarding the exam venue, seat plan and other instructions will be available on www.bpsc.gov.bd.

On January 27, BPSC extended the deadline till 6pm on March 31 for applicants, from January 31.

This was announced after University Grants Commission requested BPSC last week to extend the deadline, as many final semester students would not be able to apply for one of the most sought-after recruitment exams as their university exams could not take place during the pandemic.

In a letter, UGC said all educational institutions have been closed since March 18 last year. As such, honour's and master's exams were not held as per schedule.

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 in teaching.



The cold is biting, the fog is blinding, but there's still an everlasting charm to a Bangladeshi winter morning. But maybe this is only for the onlookers' eyes, because it cannot be easy navigating the Turag river on a tiny boat in such circumstances. This photo was taken from Gabtoli portion of the river yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Human haulier operators using megaphones to invite passengers in is a whole new level of noise nuisance in the capital that is already struggling with every kind of urban pollution. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Sheikh Hasina medical univ be to set up in Khulna

Bill passed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill titled "Sheikh Hasina Medical University, Khulna Bill, 2021" was passed in parliament yesterday to set up a medical university in Khulna division, aiming to expand the facilities for medical education, research and healthcare services in the region.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque placed the bill which was passed unanimously through voice vote.

According to the objective of the bill, it is essential to set up a medical university in Khulna division to create postgraduate physicians and medical researchers as well as improve the quality of education at medical colleges in the region.

The proposed law has been formulated keeping similarities with the laws of Rajshahi, Chattogram and Sylhet medical universities.

The president will be the chancellor of the proposed medical university. All government and private medical, dental and nursing colleges and other institutes related to medical education in Khulna division will be affiliated to the university.

In the bill, research, higher education and the standards of healthcare services and expansion of the facilities were given special importance.

The move came as part of the government's plan to set up a medical university in each division of the country.

On January 19, the bill was placed in parliament which was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the health ministry for further scrutiny. On September 21, 2020, the cabinet approved the draft.

Speaking on the bill, several MPs including BNP's Harunur Rashid, Rumin Farhana, Jatiya Party's Rowshan Ara Mannan said the health minister has failed to stop widespread corruption and irregularities in the health sector.

## DHAKA WANDERERS CLUB HC seeks audit report, names of committee members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought for the constitution, audit report and lists of committee members of Dhaka Wanderers Club which was allegedly linked to casino business.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim passed the order during the hearing of six bail petitions filed by Joy Gopal Sarkar, general secretary of the club, in connection with six money laundering cases against him.

The court asked Joy's lawyers to produce the documents before it today for examination.

His lawyer Quamrul Islam told the HC that they have all the relevant documents regarding Dhaka Wanderers Club in hand, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star.

Joy was arrested on July 14 last year in connection with five money laundering cases filed with different police stations in Dhaka on different dates in 2019 and 2020.

He was sued in another case filed with Bangshal Police Station on August 31 last year, Amin added.

## Battery-run rickshaw-pullers go on strike in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Protesting a city corporation decision to limit their numbers in the streets, battery-run rickshaw-pullers of Rajshahi city observed an eight-hour strike yesterday.

Earlier last month, as the increasing number of easy bikes and battery-run auto-rickshaws have started to bear down on the city's traffic, the city corporation in its general meeting decided to limit their operations.

The decision, scheduled to take effect from yesterday, is to divide the rickshaws into two colours -- red and green -- and schedule the green ones to ply by day and red ones to run in the night.

In light of this, hundreds of rickshaw-pullers brought out a procession at 11 in the morning and started demonstrating by sitting-in in front of Rajshahi Nagar Bhaban.

They said they demand the city corporation give them permission to pull their battery-run vehicles all day long.

Protesters also told journalists that



PHOTO: COLLECTED  
Rajshahi city mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton speaks to protesters.

they feel compelled to demonstrate as their livelihoods depend on it. By limiting their operations, the owners and rickshaw-pullers will be unable to earn enough money to pay for rent and food and payoff accrued loans, which will make things difficult for them especially during the ongoing pandemic, they said.

Around 1:30am, Rajshahi

City Corporation mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton came out of his office and talked to them.

He assured them that the decision will be reviewed after city corporation officials sit for a meeting with the rickshaw-pullers' leaders and hear their demands. He also said no decision will be taken to hamper anyone's livelihood in the city.

## Dhirendra Nath new railway DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhirendra Nath Mazumder, the additional director general (infrastructure), of Bangladesh Railway has been appointed as director general of the state-run transport agency.

The railways ministry yesterday issued a circular in this regard. The order will come into action immediately, it said.

Following the order, Dhirendra took the charge yesterday, BR officials said.

He replaces Md Shamsuzzaman as DG.



## NIKO GRAFT CASE AGAINST KHALEDA Charge-framing hearing adjourned till Feb 8

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and nine others in Niko graft case till February 8.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of the Special Judge's Court-9 of Dhaka passed the order after a petition was filed with the court on behalf of Khaleda, seeking an adjournment of the hearing, advocate Zia Uddin, one of her lawyers, told The Daily Star.

In the petition, the lawyer said Khaleda is sick and did not come out of her residence due to Covid-19 pandemic. So, the hearing should be adjourned.

Three accused, including Giasuddin Al Mamun, now in jail, were present at the makeshift court of Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday.

## FARMERS BANK SCAM SC stays bail of Rashedul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed for four weeks its High Court verdict that upheld the bail of Rashedul Haque Chisty, son of the former chairman of Farmers Bank audit committee Mahbul Haque Chisty, in a money laundering case involving Tk 159 crore.

The apex court also asked the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to file a leave to appeal petition with this court against the HC verdict in four weeks.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after hearing a petition filed by the ACC seeking stay on the HC judgement.

## 'Read Aloud Day' observed

CITY DESK

"We read Bangla letters, but do we put in as much effort to understand the language and its pronunciations as we do for English?" former VC of Dhaka University Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique asked at a seminar held yesterday.

The programme -- organised by 'Read Aloud Bangladesh' at the National Press Club premises -- marked the World Read Aloud Day-2021 and featured speakers talking about the benefits of reading aloud, said a press release.

During the chief guest's speech, Dr Arefin Siddique also said, "We used to have a tradition of reading aloud back in the days -- one could hear the sound of students reading from every village household. Mosques and madrasahs also had this tradition, and still do to some extent, but we are gradually losing this heritage."

"If one wants to learn pronunciation,

there's no alternative to reading aloud," he asserted, and said everyone involved with education needs to take special care of this, or else proper pronunciation of Bangla could be lost forever, the press document said.

"We never even realised how important reading aloud could be!" said special guest Ilyas Khan, general secretary of National Press Club, adding, "This initiative should not be limited to just a single organisation's effort. I request the government to help spread it further."

The programme, moderated by Read Aloud Bangladesh founder Rupok Singha, also featured Dr Md Omar Faruk -- additional secretary, Technical and Madrasah Education Division, Ministry of Education -- as special guest, the press release said.

Following the seminar, the winners of an online quiz competition for students were announced and their certificates handed over by guests.

## HC to

FROM PAGE 3

The defence prayed to the HC to acquit their clients, saying the trial court delivered the verdict based on confession by Hujji leader Mufti Hannan.

The bomb was recovered at Sheikh Lutfur Rahman Ideal College in Gopalganj on July 21, 2000, where Hasina was supposed to address a rally the next day.

Then sub-inspector Nur Hossain of Kotlipara Police Station filed the case under the Explosive Substances Act.

CID submitted charge sheet against Hannan and 24 others on April 8, 2001, with 83 people as prosecution witnesses.

Gopalganj District and Sessions Judge's Court framed charges against the 25 accused on July 2 the same year.

The Gopalganj court recorded statements of 40 prosecution witnesses, including the case's complainant. The case was then shifted to the Speedy Trial Tribunal for quick disposal.

The tribunal-2 in Dhaka on August 20, 2017 handed down death sentence to 10 leaders and activists of Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Hujji). Besides, one was sentenced to life and three were handed 14 years in prison. Of the accused, 13 are in jail while 11 are on the run.

The court acquitted 10 others, as charges brought against them were not proven.

Hujji leader Mufti Hannan was found guilty but was acquitted as he was executed on April 12, 2017 at Kashimpur High-Security Prison for killing three people and injuring former British commissioner to Bangladesh and a dozen others in Sylhet in 2004.

## PHQ to revamp

FROM PAGE 3

At present, a male SI and sergeant contender has to run 1,600 metres in 7.5 minutes, cross 10 feet in long jump, 3.5 feet height in high jump and climb 12 feet of rope. Women candidates have to run 1,000 metres in 7 minutes, cross 6 feet in long jump, reach 2.5 feet in high jump and climb 8 feet of rope.

As per the new proposal, a male SI and sergeant candidate has to perform 15 push-ups in 40 seconds, 15 sit-ups in 40 seconds and drag 160 pounds up to 30 feet. Female candidates have to perform 10 push-ups in 30 seconds, 10 sit-ups in 30 seconds and drag 120 pounds up to 20 feet.

PHQ proposed that male constable candidates will have to run 200 metres in 28 seconds and females 200 metres in 34 seconds. Presently, male constables run 1,600 metres in 6.5 minutes and women run the same distance in 8.5 minutes to get selected.

Besides, now SI and sergeant candidates have to undergo a computer competency test and they will be able to apply online along with constable contenders.

Such qualifications, along with educational qualifications, are required as SIs are responsible for investigating complex cases, maintaining law and order, arresting criminals and terrorists, and managing traffic, for which they have to take prompt decisions in various situations.

Contacted, Farjana Jesmin, deputy secretary at the home ministry, said it is an internal matter of police which is about to undergo some changes in the recruitment regulations for SI, sergeant and constable.

She declined to elaborate further on the process.

Md Mahfuzul Rahman Al-Mamun, assistant inspector general (recruitment and career planning-1) at PHQ, said, "If the changes are done the recruitment process will be time befitting; accountability and transparency will be ensured and more capable policemen will be recruited."

## Make the

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, following the road ministry's directives, prepared the draft rules of the act and sent them to the ministry in September last year. The ministry is expected to send the draft to the law ministry soon, sources said.

As per the draft, if a person is killed in a road accident, his or her family members will get Tk 5 lakh while an injured person will get Tk 3 lakh.

## Lack of press

FROM PAGE 3

Harun said former and current mayors of Dhaka city corporations have been bringing charges of corruption against each other. But Anti-Corruption Commission is not filing any case against any of them.

Complaining that he was not allowed to speak in parliament, the BNP lawmaker said he has been trying to talk about contemporary issues for the last ten days, but was not given the chance to talk in parliament.

Responding to Harun's remarks, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Choudhury asked Harun to wait till the end of the day's important proceedings.

"But you didn't take the opportunity as you did not want to be present in Parliament till the end of the day's scheduled proceedings," added the Speaker.

Workers Party MP Fazle Hossain Badsha in his speech said the Anti-Corruption Commission has failed to take actions against money laundering due to weakness as an anti-graft body.

## INVITATION FOR TENDER

**Pubali Bank Limited**, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers, who can participate in any or all of the following tenders, but in separate envelope as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned works as per terms & conditions stated below:

1. Civil, Electrical & Networking works at proposed premises of our **Babugonj Branch, Barishal.**
2. Civil, Electrical & Networking works at proposed premises of our **Singair Branch, Manikgonj.**
3. Civil, Electrical & Networking works at present premises of our **North Potenga Branch, Chattogram.**
4. Civil, Electrical & Networking works of our proposed **Panchchar uposhakha under Shibchar Branch, Madaripur.**

Please visit our web site, <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for details. Interested Parties may purchase their Tender document by **09 February, 2021** duly filled up all requirements and submit their offer in the Tender Box by **10 February, 2021** (before 11.00 A.M). Tender will be opened on **10 February, 2021** at 11:30 A.M.

Dilip Kumar Paul  
General Manager

**পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
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Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

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যোগাযোগ: ০১৭০৮-৪২৮২৬০

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Confidence Oil & Shipping Limited  
Awal Center (17th Floor), 34, Kemal Ataturk Avenue,  
Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh

## NGO FORUM FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

For 'Vendor Enlistment for Construction of Central & Regional Offices and Training Centers of NGO Forum'

NGO Forum is planning to construct its Regional Office and Training Centers at different locations in Bangladesh. To ensure quality construction, NGO Forum is exploring experienced vendor for enlistment to carry out the construction of the Regional Offices and Training Centers which will be selected and enlisted based on their financial capability/solvency, technical capability, reputation, workforce and experience on relevant construction work. It is requested to collect the particular "Vendor Enlistment Form" from NGO Forum central office as well as regional offices which needs to be filled up by the interested vendor(s) with proper information and submit along with the required following document addressing to **NGO Forum for Public Health, 4/6 Block - E, Lalmatia, Dhaka - 1207 by 10 February, 2021.**

1. Current Trade License; 2. License from RAJUK/CDA/RDA/KDA etc., LGED/PWD/Education Department (minimum 2 nos.); 3. Updated Income Tax Certificate; 4. VAT/BIN Registration Certificate; 5. Yearly Turnover with Bank Statement for the last 12 months; 6. Company Profile; 7. Relevant Work Completion Certificates (at least 5 in last five years for constructing 5 storied building with basement/semi basement); 8. Minimum 5 crore in each Work Order (at least 3 in last five years); 9. List of Professional Engineer/Expert; 10. List of Machinery/Equipment; 11. List of Manpower; 12. List of Clients

NGO Forum authority reserves the right to define the selection process as per the rules and regulation of its own. The decision of the authority of NGO Forum for Public Health will be treated as final binding and no entity will be entitled to solicit any legal action against it. This circulation is not an assurance of any commitment and will be treated as the integral part of the process.

Authority, NGO Forum

## Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
Phone: 8181658-67, 8181664-9, 8181169 Fax: 8181671,8181678  
e-mail: pksf@pksf-bd.org; Website: www.pksf-bd.org; www.facebook.com/pksf.org

## Request for Expression of Interest (REoI) (Selection of Consulting Firm: National)

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), an apex development and employment generation organisation, invites Expression of Interest from competent consulting firms/institutions for conducting a study titled "Baseline Survey of Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People (PPEPP) Project" under the PPEPP project of PKSF. The project is being jointly funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO; formerly DFID) and the European Union (EU).

Detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and Request for Expression of Interest (REoI) documents can be collected from the office of the undersigned during office hours (10:00 am to 4:30 pm) from Sunday to Thursday. The documents are also available on the PKSF website ([www.pksf-bd.org](http://www.pksf-bd.org)). The REoI must be submitted in a sealed envelope to the office of the undersigned by **2:30 pm on or before 22-02-2021**. Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued only to the short-listed firms/institutions.

PKSF reserves the right to accept or reject any or all expressions of interest without assigning any reasons.

Dr. Md. Jashim Uddin  
Deputy Managing Director

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Upazila Singair, District: Manikganj

Memo No. 46.02.5682.000.99.039.19-81  
Date: 01/02/2021

## Tender Notice No. 04/2020-21 e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

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

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work
541563	INF-2019-20-305682-01	Supplying of Medical Equipment for Upazila Health Complex Community Clinic and Family Welfare Centre due to COVID-19 Pandemic Upazila Singair District Manikganj
541564	INF-2019-20-305682-02	Construction of Fish Shed on Sahrail Bazar Manikganj Hat & Joymondap Bazar Upazila Singair District Manikganj
541565	INF-2019-20-305682-03	Repair of Irta Athalia Parih Nowdha Community Clinic and Charigram Family Welfare Centre Upazila Singair District. Manikganj

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to **17.00 on 24-February-2021**.

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

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GD-216

## Faculty Search

School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Department of Economics and Social Sciences



The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) of Brac University is inviting applications for the positions of **Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor** in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences (ESS).

### Qualifications and Specialization:

- PhD in Economics from an internationally reputed university.
- Applicants should be ready to teach any course in Economics at the Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels, including advanced courses in Microeconomics, Macro-economics, Econometrics, and Quantitative methods.
- Applicants should be active researchers with an interest in international exchanges.

Position	Qualification	Teaching Experience	Publications
Professor in Economics	PhD in Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 years</li> <li>Teaching, research, and service experience as Associate Professor or its equivalent for at least 5 years</li> </ul>	At least 15 publications (7 as Associate Professor), including at least 3 Scopus-indexed publications with a high impact factor in peer-reviewed journals.
Associate Professor in Economics	PhD in Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 years</li> <li>Teaching, research, and service experience as Assistant Professor or its equivalent for at least 5 years</li> </ul>	At least 5 publications (3 as Assistant Professor), including at least 2 Scopus-indexed publications with a high impact factor in peer-reviewed journals.
Assistant Professor in Economics	PhD in Economics	Preference to applicants with teaching experience	Preference to applicants with publications in peer-reviewed journals

### Application Procedure:

Interested candidates meeting these requirements may apply online at [ateconrecruitment@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:ateconrecruitment@bracu.ac.bd) on or before **20 February 2021**.

Candidates are requested to submit:

- a cover letter,
- an updated CV with their list of publications,
- a statement on their teaching and research interests,
- a sample syllabus with teaching evaluation,
- two research papers.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Any attempt to interfere with the selection process will disqualify the candidate.

Brac University  
66 Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh



The majestic mansion of the Pailgaon Chowdhurys, in Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj, has been lying in ruins for decades without a custodian.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Majestic Pailgaon zamindar house to be protected by govt

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

The government is taking steps to protect the centuries-old mansion of the Pailgaon Chowdhurys -- once a notable zamindar family in the region, in present day Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj.

On January 21, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs declared the aesthetic building, which has been in ruins for decades, a 'Protected Archaeological Site' under the 'Antiquities (Amendment) Ordinance, 1976'.

The ministry made the move acting on a proposal of the Department of Archaeology for protecting the decaying heritage site, situated in the village of Pailgaon. A gazette notification in this regard will be published soon.

Dr Md Ataur Rahman, regional director of the archaeology department, said, after successfully bringing the Laurer Garh of Sunamganj under protection of the department, the protection of the Pailgaon zamindar house will be another important achievement towards preserving archaeological heritage sites in the greater Sylhet region.

The Pailgaon zamindar mansion is located on the northern side of the Kalni river, on nearly 5.5 acres of land. Though there were several other structures including a temple

in the compound, the remains of the main building is still standing there.

According to "Shrihatter Itibritto (Uttarangsho)", authored in 1917 by veteran historian Achyut Charan Choudhury, and various other historians, the Chowdhury family has a long history in the region with the earliest known member of the family being Kanailal Dhar.

About 10 to 12 generations later, Umananda Dhar alias Binod Roy became the family's first member who was awarded the title 'Chowdhury' by then Mughal ruler Muhammad Shah.

In his line of succession, several generations later, four brothers -- Durlav Ram, Ramjiban, Hulash Ram and Jogjiban -- expanded the Chowdhury zamindari by leasing four estates in 1786 under the 'Dash Shala Bandobasto'.

Fame and fortune of the zamindari peaked under Jogjiban Chowdhury's grandson Brajanath Chowdhury, who was a lawyer and an honorary magistrate. He had two sons -- Rosomoy and Sukhamoy.

Sukhamoy Chowdhury was a first class magistrate for 40 years since 1886. Many awards and titles -- including the 'Queen Victoria Jubilee Award', in 1897, and the 'Roy Bahadur' title, in 1915 -- were conferred on him during his lifetime.

From 1916 till 1926, he was chairman of Sylhet municipality. In

1919, he established Brajanath High School in Pailgaon and in 1930, he established Rosomoy Memorial High School in Sylhet town.

Rosomoy's son Brajendra Narayan Chowdhury was the last zamindar of the family until 1950, when the 'State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 (East Bengal Act)' dissolved zamindari system.

During the anti-British movement in the subcontinent, Brajendra acted as a leader of the movement to end the British rule. He was president of the Indian Congress Party in Sylhet and between 1936 and 1940, he served as an elected member of the state and central legislative councils.

After the 'partition' in 1947, unlike other zamindars, Brajendra decided to stay in the then East Pakistan. After falling gravely ill, he left for Kolkata in 1962 to be with his family. He died in Kolkata in 1972.

On January 25 last year, Brajendra's grandchildren -- Dr Aparna Basu, Bhaswati Chakraborty, Mitali Chowdhury and Pratap Narayan Chowdhury -- who live in different cities in India, came to Pailgaon Brajanath High School to celebrate founding centenary of the school.

Following their visits to the school and their ancestral home, they urged the government to protect and restore the heritage building that has a history of around three centuries.

## Is repatriation now up in the air?

FROM PAGE 1

There is a chance, however, that the international pressure on Myanmar military government would mount. China, a close ally of Myanmar, also may come under more pressure as it has been supportive of Myanmar in the global arena, he said.

The Western countries, especially the US and European Union, already have sanctions on the army chief and some others for their involvement in the crackdown on the Rohingyas. They control large businesses in Myanmar, and if these businesses are sanctioned, the military government will be really hurt, Humayun told this correspondent yesterday.

Given that the Biden administration's priorities are democracy and human rights, the US is likely to put stronger pressure, he said.

Bangladesh should fully engage with Myanmar for the repatriation.

There is also a possibility of China and Myanmar working together to start the repatriation to ease pressure from the international community, he said.

Dhaka University International Relations Professor Imtiaz Ahmed said the military always had tremendous influence on Myanmar's political system. Even Suu Kyi, who was in office, had little power of her own in the true sense.

He said the western governments, especially the US, European Union,

as well as Japan and India had been saying that Suu Kyi might go deep into the Chinese side if they put pressure on her government, which was moving towards democracy after decades of military ruling.

"Now, with the military taking control, these governments can no more say that. There is a chance that these governments would mount pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation," said Prof Imtiaz, also director at the Centre for Genocide Studies at DU.

However, if the western governments do not do that and continue to keep relations with the Myanmar military, one has to understand that things will not move, he said.

The foreign relations analyst said the repatriation agreement was signed with the Myanmar government and Myanmar must comply. One needs to remember that Rohingya repatriation in the 1980s and 90s happened during the military regimes in Myanmar. So, the issue cannot and should not be affected.

Jahangimagar University International Relations Professor Shahab Enam Khan said from Myanmar's perspective, the international actors have so far been playing "ping-pong" since the Rohingya crisis began in 2017. Myanmar has been portrayed negatively. Now, with the military in power, this game is going to stop.

He thinks this change in power

does not affect the repatriation process much because the Myanmar military was playing its role from behind the scene even during Suu Kyi's previous regime.

"Bangladesh needs to play a balanced diplomacy, with a focus on how to repatriate the Rohingyas," Shahab said.

Charles Santiago, a Malaysian MP and chairperson of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Right, thinks differently.

He says Myanmar army chief led the "Rohingya genocide" in 2017, while there were conflicts in Chin and Kachin states where minorities were facing persecution.

"The military wants to finish their unfinished job," he said. He fears there might be more influx of the ethnic people to South and Southeast Asian countries, while human trafficking could go up under the military regime.

The international community needs to work sincerely to fix the issues.

All the experts said democracy in Myanmar was in deep crisis and that it would not affect the democracies in the region.

Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, senior fellow at the Delhi-based think tank -- Observer Research Foundation -- said the countries around the Bay of Bengal have democratic values.

"There are certainly difficulties in dealing with a military regime," she said.

## Coup baffles analysts

FROM PAGE 1

But behind the scenes, the military has kept a relatively tight grip on Myanmar, thanks to a constitution which guarantees it a quarter of all seats in parliament and control of the country's most powerful ministries.

Which raises the question why did it seize power now - and more to the point, what happens next?

The military yesterday took power alleging widespread fraud in the election. It claimed to have uncovered more than 10 million instances of voter fraud. It had demanded that the United Elections Commission (UEC) of Myanmar which oversees elections, or the government, or outgoing parliamentarians prove at a special session before the new parliament convenes on February 1, that the elections were free and fair. The demand had been rejected.

Tensions grew after General Min Aung Hlaing -- the head of the military and arguably Myanmar's most powerful individual -- gave a speech warning that the country's constitution could be "revoked" if it is not respected.

Despite calls to respect democracy from West and UN, the military staged the coup.

The alliance between Suu Kyi and the Myanmar military was not a match made in heaven.

But the strong Rohingya policy defense by Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and de facto head of civilian government, brought her closer to military.

Their relationship were seen as always uneasy but workable with the ruling NDH anchoring on people's

popularity and the military on stability given that the country is still rife with ethnic insurgencies more than 60 years after its independence.

But in 2020, with raging Covid-19 pandemic, the uneasy relationship cracked as NLD MPs advocated for and tried to pass legislations to amend the 2008 Constitution, a change designed to reduce the Tatmadaw's (Myanmar military) role in Myanmar politics.

It was the military that drafted the 2008 Constitution, and put it to a questionable referendum in April that year. The NLD had boycotted the referendum, as well as the 2010 elections that were held under the Constitution.

The Constitution was the military's "roadmap to democracy", which it had been forced to adopt under increasing pressure from the West, and its own realisation that opening up Myanmar to the outside world was now no longer an option but a dire economic necessity. But the military made sure to safeguard in the Constitution its own role and supremacy in national affairs.

The results of the 2020 election were being seen by the NLD as a mandate for its plan of constitutional reform, through which it aimed to do away with the military's role in politics and governance. But this was never going to be easy, given the tight constitutional restrictions for amendments.

Political analysts say, even with the huge mandate NLD received in 2020 polls, changing the constitution would have been near impossible as the military controls 25 percent of seats. Changing the charter requires the support of 75 percent of the parliament.

Aye Min Thant, a former journalist and tech educator, suggested there may be another reason for yesterday's action: embarrassment on the part of the military.

"They weren't expecting to lose," she told the BBC from Yangon referring to dismal performance of military backed Union Solidarity and Development Party in the election.

The pandemic and international concerns over the Rohingya being disenfranchised in the November vote may have emboldened the military to act now, Aye Min Thant suggested.

All the same, it still took her by surprise.

Indeed, experts appear unsure of exactly why the military acted now, as there seems little to gain.

"It is worth remembering that the current system is tremendously beneficial for the army: it has complete command autonomy, sizeable international investment in its commercial interests and political cover from civilians for war crimes," Gerard McCarthy, a postdoctoral fellow at the National University of Singapore's Asia Research Institute, told the BBC.

"Seizing power for a year as it has announced will isolate non-Chinese international partners, harm the military's commercial interests and provoke escalating resistance from millions of people who placed Suu Kyi and the NLD in power for in another term of government."

Perhaps, he said, they hope to improve the USDP's standings in future elections, but the risks of such a move "are significant".



Truckers block the Rangpur-Kurigram road, keeping vehicles haphazardly, in Babu Kha area in Rangpur City for nearly three hours yesterday, demanding an end to alleged extortion and harassment by police.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute  
Office of the Principal  
E-mail: dhakampi1985@gmail.com  
Web: www.dmpi.gov.bd

শিক্ষা নিয়ে গড়ব দেশ  
শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ

Ref No. DMPI/GOV/e-GP/2020-21/156

Date: 01/02/2021

### e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited through e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Principal, Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute under the Directorate of Technical Education for the procurement of following package which will be available at e-GP website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) from date and time as follows:

Sl No.	Tender/ Proposal ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender description	Publishing date and time	Tender closing date and time
1	540732	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/147	Supply of Computer Accessories	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
2	541061	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/148	Supply of Raw Materials and Spares	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
3	541066	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/149	Supply of Equipments and other Material for IOT Lab	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
4	541067	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/150	Supply of Office Equipments	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
5	541068	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/151	Supply of Educational and Learning Aids	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
6	541069	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/152	Supply of Furniture	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00
7	541071	DMPI/Gov/e-GP/2020-21/153	Supply of Equipments and other Materials for Production Lab	02-Feb-2021 10:00:00	23-Feb-2021 12:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Shahana Begum  
Principal (In-Charge)  
Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
Phone No. 02-556007169

GD-215



### Pabna University of Science & Technology

Office of the Project Director, PUST, PABNA.

Memo No: PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/41

Date : 02/02/2021

### e-Tender Notice (FY/2020-21)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-Gp (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Following Works of "Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project" PUST, Pabna.

Serial No	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. Number	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
01	540702	158695	PUST/PD/e-GP/OTM/41	Supply Installation and Commissioning of e-Library and ancillary goods & goods related works for the Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, FY 2020-2021.	02 February, 2021 and 10.00	08 March, 2021 and 11.00	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Engineer Lt Colonel G M Azizur Rahman  
afwc,psc (Retd)  
Project Director

GD- 219

Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project.

## Anger simmers as some celebrate

REUTERS

Swaggering supporters of Myanmar's army chief swung through the streets of Yangon, waving national flags from pickup trucks to cheer on his coup against a democratically elected government.

Footage posted on social media showed a crowd of several gathered in the centre of Myanmar's biggest city to celebrate Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seizing power. But the mood elsewhere in the city was laced with fear, anger and frustration.

"I feel angry. I don't want more military rule," said Zizawah, a 32-year-old commercial director who only wanted to give one name because of fear of reprisals.

"The way they act is like a dictatorship. All of us know who we voted for."

Myanmar's army said it had detained elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy (NLD) party had won a landslide in a ballot in November that the military disputed.

"Today is the day that people are happy," one nationalist monk told a crowd of military supporters in a video published on Facebook.

Suu Kyi is hugely popular in Myanmar as the figurehead of decades struggling to end previous juntas despite anger in Western countries over her handling of an exodus of Rohingya refugees fleeing an army crackdown in 2017.

"We had a lawful election. People voted for the one they preferred," said Theinny Oo, a development consultant.

"We have no protection under the law now. We feel insecure and in fear."

Pro-democracy activists gave little credence to an army statement that it would hold a fair election and then step down.



"They took power by force," activist Maung Saungkha told Reuters. "Everyone feels angry and upset... I absolutely don't trust the fact that elections will be held after one year and they will transfer power back."

News of the coup, announced on military-controlled media, broke sporadically because of major disruptions to internet connections for mobile phones that many people rely on for news and keeping in touch.

Queues formed at ATMs, but many stopped working because of the disruptions to the internet while banks announced that they were being forced to close.

Markets were busy as people rushed out to stock up on essentials.

"I went to the market twice this morning. I bought rice and groceries, said one 19-year-old woman in the Yankin district who was afraid to give her name. "I don't know what is happening. I am a bit scared."

There was no sign of any anti-military protests on the streets of Yangon or in the administrative capital Naypyidaw, where parliament had been due to start its first post-election sitting later yesterday.

"Our country was a bird that was just learning to fly. Now the army broke our wings," student activist Si Thu Tun said.



Myanmar protesters residing in Japan hold photos of Aung San Suu Kyi as they rally against Myanmar's military after it seized power from a democratically elected civilian government, at United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Serious blow to democracy'

World condemns Myanmar military coup; China, Asean's response more muted

REUTERS

The United Nations led condemnation of Myanmar's military yesterday after it seized power, calling for the release of elected leaders, including Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the developments were a "serious blow to democratic reforms" and urged all leaders to refrain from violence and respect human rights, a UN spokesman said.

The United States, Britain, Australia and the European Union condemned the military's coup and detentions and its declaration of a state of emergency. The army said it had taken action in response to "election fraud".

China's response, however, was more muted. "We have noted what has happened in Myanmar and are in the process of further understanding the situation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a daily news briefing in Beijing.

"China is a friendly neighbour of Myanmar's. We hope that all sides in Myanmar can appropriately handle their differences under the constitution and legal framework and safeguard political and social stability," he added.

US President Joe Biden has been briefed on

the situation, the White House said.

"The United States opposes any attempt to alter the outcome of recent elections or impede Myanmar's democratic transition, and will take action against those responsible if these steps are not reversed," White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said.

Reflecting similar views of several Western governments, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for the release of Suu Kyi and the others detained by the military.

"We call on Burmese military leaders to release all government officials and civil society leaders and respect the will of the people of Burma as expressed in democratic elections on Nov 8," Blinken said in a statement, using another name for Myanmar.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also condemned the coup. "The vote of the people must be respected and civilian leaders released," he said on Twitter.

Japan said it opposed any reversal of the democratic process in Myanmar.

"We strongly call on the military government to restore democracy as soon as possible," said a Foreign Ministry statement.

That was echoed by the head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, who called

for the "immediate and unconditional release" of all those detained.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne called on the military "to respect the rule of law, to resolve disputes through lawful mechanisms and to release immediately all civilian leaders and others" who had been detained.

Singapore's Foreign Ministry urged all parties to exercise restraint and work towards a positive and peaceful outcome in comments that were echoed by Malaysia and Indonesia.

However, other fellow members of regional grouping, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), took a more hands-off approach.

"It's their internal affair," Thailand's deputy prime minister Prawit Wongsuwan told reporters when asked about the coup in the country's northern neighbour. Cambodia and the Philippines made similar comments.

The detentions came after days of escalating tension between the civilian government and the military after the Nov 8 election, in which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) scored a landslide win.

The army on Monday handed power to military chief Min Aung Hlaing and imposed a state of emergency for one year, according to a statement on a military-owned television station.

### NEWS IN BRIEF



#### Over 5,300 detained in Russia protests

Russian police have detained more than 5,300 people across the country in a massive clampdown on anti-Kremlin protests, as prosecutors backed a request to imprison opposition leader Alexey Navalny. OVD Info, which monitors arrests at opposition protests, said yesterday more than 5,300 people had been detained, including nearly 1,800 people in Moscow and almost 1,200 in Saint Petersburg, Russia's second city. The protests that witnessed a rare lockdown of Moscow centre came ahead of Navalny's court hearing which could see him imprisoned for several years. Meanwhile, a Moscow court ordered the Navalny's wife to pay a fine of 20,000 rubles (\$265) for violating protest regulations after she attended a demonstration in the Russian capital to demand his release on Sunday.

#### Black girl, 9, pepper-sprayed by US police

A nine-year-old girl was handcuffed and pepper-sprayed by police in the US city of Rochester, footage released Sunday showed, sparking new outrage over excesses committed by the country's law enforcement. Deputy Police Chief Andre Anderson said Sunday the girl -- who has not been named -- had been suffering from a serious mental health emergency, reportedly threatening to take her own life and that of her mother. Officers called to the scene on Friday eventually responded by handcuffing her, before trying to force her into a car and pepper-spraying her when she resisted, body cam videos showed.

#### Trump names lawyers for impeachment trial

Former US president Donald Trump announced Sunday he had picked two lawyers to head his defense team days before his historic second impeachment trial, as Republicans braced for a battle over the future of their party. Trump's Senate trial is due to start on February 9, but he had reportedly parted ways with several members of his initial legal team just a day ago. His lead lawyers, David Schoen and Bruce L. Castor, Jr, are "highly respected trial lawyers" with backgrounds in criminal law and defense, according to a statement from Trump.

SOURCE: AFP, NDTV

### REPORTS ON FARMERS' PROTEST

## Indian journalists accused of sedition

REUTERS, New Delhi

Several senior Indian journalists are facing charges of sedition over their reporting and online posts about a protest by farmers last week, sparking criticism of the legal action from media associations.

The cases have been filed with police in at least five states against the journalists including Rajdeep Sardesai, a prominent anchor on the India Today television channel, and Vinod Jose, executive editor of the Caravan magazine.

The cases, filed by residents of the states, allege that the journalists provoked violence during protests by farmers at New Delhi's Red Fort on Jan. 26 through incorrect posts on Twitter and reports that police had killed a protester.

Tens of thousands of farmers have camped out on the outskirts of the capital for more than two months, demanding the withdrawal of new agricultural laws that they say benefit private buyers at the expense of growers.

The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi says reform of the agriculture sector will bring



Farmers burn an effigy of Indian PM Modi during a protest against the government's recent agricultural reforms in Punjab, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

opportunities for farmers.

The protests turned violent on Jan. 26, when farmers broke into the historic Red Fort complex, with one protester killed and hundreds injured.

At the time, a witness told Reuters the protester was killed when the tractor he was driving overturned and crushed him but there was also talk he had been shot. Police, who had fired tear gas on the day, denied shooting him.

"The accused tried to provoke the

protesters for their political and personal gains by spreading false and misleading information online," one complaint filed against Jose in Uttar Pradesh state said, echoing the language of the other filings.

Jose said his journalists on the ground heard from a witness and a relative of the dead man that he had been shot. "This is an attack on free and independent reporting... Government wants only its official version to be published," he said in a statement.

### AUNG SAN SUU KYI

## DEFENDER OF GENOCIDE AXED BY ARMY

After a lifetime struggling against Myanmar's military, 75-year-old Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is back under detention with a junta in power -- although her international image no longer shines.

She swept national elections last November and was preparing to begin another five-year term as the country's de facto leader.

But an early morning army raid and her detention in the capital Naypyidaw has brought her time at the helm to an apparent halt.

Suu Kyi, the daughter of independence hero General Aung San, spent nearly two decades enduring long stretches of house arrest under the former military regime.

Her legacy abroad has been deeply tarnished since she came to power in 2015.

Suu Kyi defended the army's crackdown on Rohingyas and even travelled to The Hague to rebut charges of genocide at the UN's top court.

Suu Kyi spent most of her early years outside of Myanmar, first in India, where her mother was



an ambassador, and later at Oxford University.

Suu Kyi's elevation into a democracy champion happened almost by accident when she returned home in 1988 to nurse her dying mother. Soon afterwards, at least 3,000 people were killed when the military crushed protests against its authoritarian rule.

The bloodshed was the catalyst for Suu Kyi. A charismatic orator, she found herself in a leading role in the burgeoning pro-democracy movement, delivering speeches to huge crowds as she led the NLD to a 1990 election victory.

The generals were not prepared to give up power, ignoring the result and confining to her home in Yangon, where she would live for 16 of the next 20 years.

She was released in 2010. After taking office in 2015, some critics have accused her of behaving in an authoritarian manner and political prisoner advocates say her government has prosecuted and jailed dozens of rights activists. However, she remains widely popular in Myanmar.

### MIN AUNG HLAING

## REBUFFED IN POLLS, HE STAGED COUP

After taking credit for restoring Myanmar's democracy but then watching the military get smashed in elections, the country's top general has seized power just months away from official retirement.

General Min Aung Hlaing is an international pariah who has been condemned for presiding over a brutal crackdown on the country's stateless Rohingya population in 2017.

He has been banned from Facebook for stoking hate speech against the persecuted minority, and UN investigators have called on him and other top army leaders to be prosecuted for genocide.

Since taking charge as military chief in 2011, he has embarked on an ambitious and expensive programme to outfit the army with modern equipment, sourcing new weapons and hardware from China, Russia, Israel and other big arms sellers.

But he has also hinted at his own political ambitions after he turns 65



later this year -- the age he would have been subject to mandatory retirement.

"He had flirted with the idea of running for election himself as a civilian," said Myanmar analyst Herve Lemahieu from Australia's Lowy Institute.

Lemahieu said the general had probably hoped for a path to higher office with the help of a military-backed political party, which was routed in an election last November.

"He's probably calculated now that... there is no electoral means by which he could stay in power," Lemahieu said.

Now that he has taken charge, the general is likely to move quickly and stage a new vote that will "stack the game in his favour," Lemahieu said.

"I think he will try to put the country back on track towards some kind of on-paper election in which the major players including... Aung San Suu Kyi will be barred from running," he added.

### MYANMAR'S FRAGILE DEMOCRACY

The people of Myanmar are no strangers to military rule. Here is a timeline of its troubled history:

**1947:** Aung San, who fought against the Japanese and led the country to independence from Britain, is assassinated. Aung San Suu Kyi, is his only daughter and youngest child.

**1948:** Myanmar achieves formal independence under President U Nu.

**1962:** The military under General Ne Win takes power in a coup. All opposition parties are banned.

**1988:** Pro-democracy protests in August are met with a brutal military crackdown and as many as 5,000 people are killed. In September, Suu Kyi founds the National League for Democracy (NLD).

**1990:** Under international pressure the military calls an election, which the NLD wins by a landslide. The military refuses to recognise the results or hand over power and Suu Kyi is arrested and placed in house arrest.

**1995:** In July, Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest.

**2002:** Suu Kyi released again and allowed to travel around the country.

**2007:** Thousands take to the streets of Yangon in protests led by Buddhist monks, after the military government removes fuel subsidies. Dozens are killed in the subsequent military crackdown.

**2008:** The process of democratisation begins with a controversial constitutional referendum that took place only two days after Cyclone Nargis swept across the Irrawaddy Delta leaving tens of thousands dead.

**2010:** The USDP wins elections that are boycotted by the NLD. Aung San Suu Kyi is freed from house arrest in November.

**2015:** The NLD wins a general election by a landslide and Suu Kyi becomes leader in a specially created role of state counsellor.

**2016-18:** Unrest flares again in Rakhine after Rohingya fighters attack three police border posts, killing nine police officers. A brutal military crackdown in Rakhine drives more than 730,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh.

The United Nations says the campaign of mass killing, rape, and arson was carried out with "genocidal intent", which Myanmar denies. Suu Kyi later defends Myanmar against genocide charges brought at the Hague.

**2019:** Fighting begins in Rakhine between government troops and the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic Rakhine group seeking greater regional autonomy. Suu Kyi urges the army to "crush" the rebels.

**2020:** The NLD claims a resounding victory in parliamentary elections taking more votes than it did in 2015. The USDP demands a rerun of the election and calls for military help to ensure fairness, alleging irregularities.

**2021:** The military imposes a state of emergency and says power has been transferred to military chief Min Aung Hlaing, after Suu Kyi and other senior government officials were arrested in a series of early morning raids.

SOURCE: AGENCIES

## LAW VISION

# The significance of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for Bangladesh

MD. MOSTAFA HOSAIN

In the era of massive development and huge competition to attract investment, states have been striving to ensure better ambience for foreign investors. One of the core issues of concern in this regard is human rights situation in the business sector. The reason is obvious. Many business initiatives, enterprises and projects have caused immense sufferings to people. This happens when the business sector abuses the rights of different stakeholders which are either directly or indirectly

associated with their activities. Bangladesh has been confronting many challenges related to human rights in the business sector. The challenges include unregulated child labour, weak protection against workplace harassment and other forms of discrimination. The Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 which resulted in the death of more than a thousand workers, the Tazreen fire which caused death of hundreds and other similar disasters work as reminders of the need to formulate policies and regulations ensuring basic human rights of workers

and other stakeholders. Ensuring proper human rights compliance in the business sector is crucial to attract foreign investment, particularly from the European Union and North America. This is where the relevance of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights lies.

Responsibility of business operations for addressing human rights abuses had been a matter of debate at the international level. The Transnational Corporations Commission was formed in 1973 to formulate code of conduct on TNCs which could not reach to any fruitful conclusion due to the division among nations. Further steps had been attempted but ended with no solution. The appointment of Harvard Professor John Ruggie in July 2005 as the special representative on the issue of human rights and TNCs made the task possible. He formulated the 'protect, respect and remedy' framework which was highly appreciated by international community. This has subsequently been named as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' (UNGPs). The UNGPs were unanimously approved by the UN Human Rights Council on June 16, 2011. It is an instrument consisting of 31 principles on the issue of human rights concerning business enterprises around the world regardless of the size, sector, structure, location and ownership of business. The GPs are based on three pillars namely 'Protect', 'Respect', and 'Remedy'.

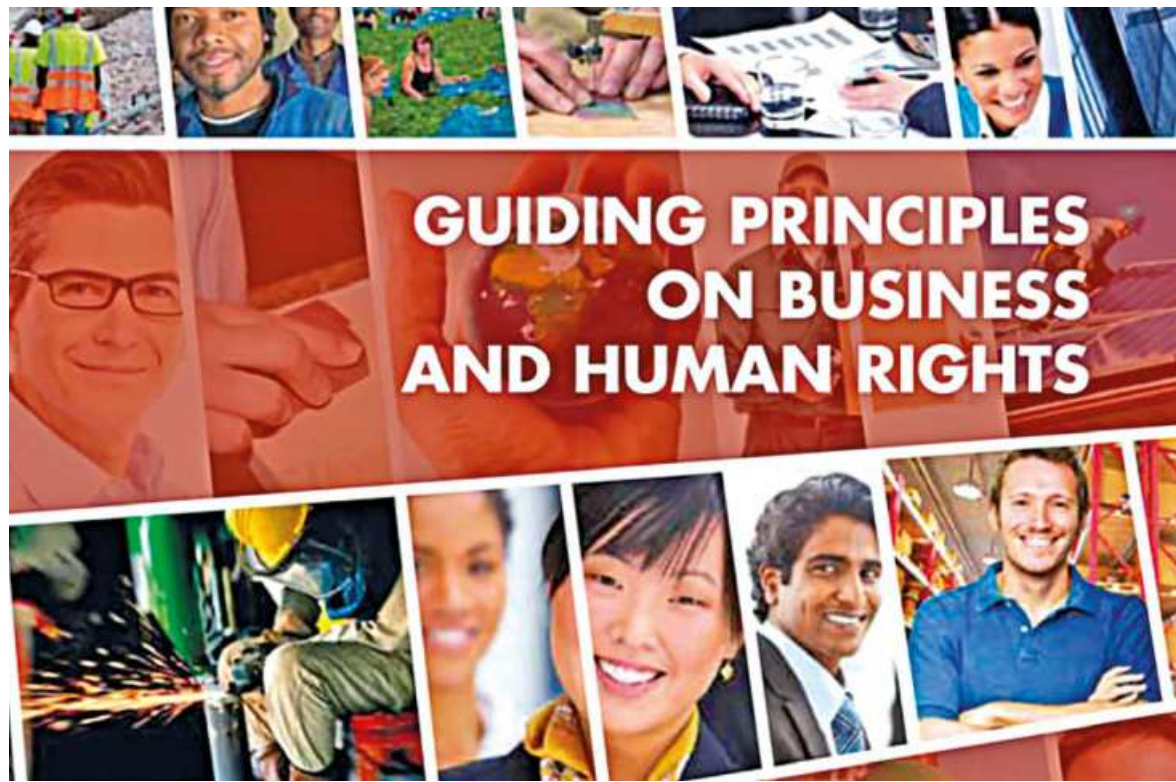
The first pillar bestows upon the duty of the states to protect human rights in business operations. The state

*UN Guiding Principles is a useful tool to ensure human rights implementation in the business sector. It serves as a uniform framework code for developing domestic legal arrangement to curb the challenges. The domestic legal mechanism in Bangladesh, particularly labour laws, need to be revisited to ensure compliance with the guiding principles.*

steps are adopted to address the issue. The third pillar, as the name itself indicates, has been endorsed to safeguard if human rights in business sector is infringed. It includes both the states' responsibility to provide access to remedy through judicial, administrative, and legislative means whereby victims are facilitated to complain, investigation and settlement. Similarly, it refers the businesses' responsibility to prevent and take remedial measures in case of any infringement on the rights of other stakeholders.

UN Guiding Principles is a useful tool to ensure human rights implementation in the business sector. It serves as a uniform framework code for developing domestic legal arrangement to curb the challenges. The domestic legal mechanism in Bangladesh, particularly labour laws, need to be revisited to ensure compliance with the guiding principles. The expansion of labour courts should be the prior implementing agenda in order to curb the challenges exist in the practical and procedural barriers to access judicial recourse. Similarly, the robust involvement of National Human Rights Commission would facilitate in non-judicial remedy mechanisms. To sum it up, the attraction of foreign investment as well as fulfillment of state's obligation under international human rights instruments would be substantially achieved by endorsing the content of the guiding principles.

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is required to pass laws that prevent human rights violations and ensure that these laws are implemented. The second pillar deals with the responsibility of the business sector. It confers a duty on businesses to operate in such a manner that their activities do not infringe the rights of others. It asserts that the government may not always be in the vanguard position to concentrate on protection of human rights in the business sector. Thus, the onus lies upon the corporations to ensure that human rights of the respective workers and relevant others must be taken care of and concrete

## GLOBAL LAW UPDATES

## Addressing the complexities of prosecution in sexual exploitation cases

LAW DESK

A new report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) sheds light on the complexities involved in prosecuting cases of human-trafficking, particularly with regard to trafficking crimes involving sexual exploitation.

The report found that trafficked and sexually exploited woman and girls often find themselves facing prosecution and conviction for those very same offences. The report shows that traffickers often employ these 'victim-defendants' in low-level roles which expose them to law enforcement authorities. These victim-defendants are more likely to be caught and prosecuted under the existing laws in many countries. Victim-defendants are usually assigned to roles such as recruitment of new victims, collecting proceeds, imposing punishments, or posting advertisements for victims' sexual services.

Zoi Sakellidou, a UNODC Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, who coordinated the development of the study, stated, 'We've also seen that the percentage of female perpetrators of trafficking who are at the same time victims of this crime, is steadily high too, especially if compared to female offenders in other crimes. The traffickers not only earned a profit by sexually exploiting the victims, but then made them commit crimes so they could escape liability and prosecution'. These facts and context create complexity in the prosecution of trafficking offence and necessitate that the law enforcement, prosecution and other justice actors are sufficiently aware of the existing mechanisms within the trafficking activities.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Trafficking Protocol), in Article 9(1)(b), directs state parties to 'establish comprehensive policies, programmes and other measures' in order to 'protect victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, from revictimization'.

Bangladesh recently became a signatory to the Trafficking Protocol and had earlier enacted the Prevention and Suppression

of Human Trafficking Act in 2012. The 2012 is largely lauded for its elaborate provisions on victim and witness protection; however, Section 18 of the Act states, 'where any victim of trafficking or any material used for the commission of the offence of trafficking is rescued or recovered from the custody or a place under the direct control of any person and if such person is reasonably doubted to be, or is identified by the victim to be the trafficker, the person may be presumed, unless contrary is proved, to have committed the offence of human trafficking under this Act.' The 2012 Act, understandably so, creates stringent provisions with regard to human trafficking owing to the global acceptance of trafficking offences as a grave and heinous offence. But in light of these recently unveiled complexities, the provision of Section 18 may exacerbate the scope of prosecuting victim-defendants as it creates a legal presumption in favor of trafficking offences.



Furthermore, there is widely prevalent lack of sensitisation among prosecutors, judges and law enforcement actors and minimal efforts have been made in the past to bridge this shortcoming. Recent activities of the UNODC aims to create further awareness among stakeholders ranging from academics to members of the judiciary. In the past, programs such as the Bangladesh Counter Trafficking in Persons Program (BC-TIP) have worked to train stakeholders.

In Bangladesh, prosecution of human trafficking offences remains a pressing concern. Recently, the Government has established seven anti-trafficking tribunals in various districts of the country. While the efforts are appreciable, the Government needs to take effective measures to ensure a holistic, victim-sensitive and rights-based approach to prosecution of human-trafficking.

COMPILED BY LAW DESK (SOURCE:UN.ORG).

## LAW ANALYSIS

## An analysis on the Mental Health Act 2018

MEHADI HASAN

In developing countries like Bangladesh, mental health issues are frequently ignored. In Bangladesh, 3.4-22.9% children and 6.5-31% adults suffer from mental health issues. However, 92.3% of them do not seek medical attention, as per National Mental Health Survey. Mental disorders are viewed by a large group of the population as a result of being possessed by evil spirits rather than as illnesses that can be treated. As a result, most of the victims of mental illnesses either do not get proper medical treatment at all or there is unfortunate delay in getting such treatment. Many suicides occur every year due to mental health issue. In order to protect the rights of mentally ill people. *Manoshik Shashtho Ain*, 2018 (Mental Health Act, 2018) has been passed replacing the 106 years old controversial Lunacy Act, 1912. It aims at taking necessary steps for overall welfare of the mental patients around the country, protecting their rights to property, ensuring caring services and rehabilitation.

Section 23 of the Act imposes strict punishments for medical practitioner, imprisonment for 3 years or fine up to TK 5 lakh or both, for purposefully issuing false certificates of mental health and for carelessness or mismanagement during the treatment of patients. In Bangladesh, there are only 0.49 psychiatrists for per 1,00,000 population. This small workforce has to provide a formal diagnosis and subsequent care in all cases of mental illness.

There is a fear that the strict penal provision against false mental health certificates can create panic among the existing small number of mental health practitioners. Thus, this strict provision of punishment might create a wall to adoptable and practical mental health-care delivery rather than increasing access to the services. Undoubtedly issuing a false mental health certificate is a serious criminal offence and such unethical acts do happen sometimes. In the legal system, a mental illness certificate has many consequences, such as affecting rights regarding inheritance to property, divorce, custody of children, and trials for criminal offences. Thus, reducing punishment against false certificates is not a reasonable solution. Sometimes, the untrue mental illness certificate may not be given by the doctor with mala fide intention but sometimes may be given on the basis of wrong diagnosis. Such unintentional wrong diagnosis maybe due to human mistake or technical default. So, before penalising a doctor accused of giving false mental health certificate, the court should scrutinise whether the certificate was given with mala fide intention or due to unintentional wrong diagnosis.

One of the strong points of the Act is that it provides for separation of children and adolescents from adults in the mental hospitals. However, this provision is largely un-



implemented. Moreover, the mental health sector is underfunded and has small human resources. The service quality is very low in this understaffed governmental hospital.

Furthermore, the Mental Health Act does not provide for the establishment of more area-specific mental hospitals. As a result, most of the practitioners are concentrated in major urban areas like the capital city of Dhaka. The private hospitals provide comparatively better service and environment. But the excessive cost of the private hospitals is beyond the reach of low-income people. As a result, patients face the possibility of maltreatment.

Section 6 of the Act mentions that the patient's right to health, property, dignity, education etc. should be ensured and this shall be done through the enactment of Rules. In the absence of any such Rules, significant concerns such as confidentiality and accountability as well as the fundamental human rights of a mentally disabled person have not been elaborated. Even the WHO- AIMS report on the mental health system in Bangladesh stated there is no human rights review commission in Bangladesh to check the routine violation of people's human rights with mental illness. It would not be wrong to say that persons dealing with mental illness have to face discrimination in every sphere of life, including food, shelter, healthcare and education. Besides, while community support and rehabilitation are mentioned in the Act, strong review process for long periods and communal allowance are absent in the Act.

Especially in rural areas, people do not consider mental health as a real thing. They still believe in superstition. When they see that person with mental illness, they think that person is possessed with evil spirit. Hence, instead of taking the sufferer to the mental hospital, they take the sufferer to the village witchdoctors. The witchdoctors 'treat' the patients inhumanely e.g. by beating or chaining the patient. Unfortunately, the Act does not provide any provision to punish these offenders for this inhuman practice and to stop this practice. The Act should be amended so as to include penal provisions against inhuman practices by witchdoctors.

The Mental Health Act, 2018 needs to be supported by a strong and inclusive mental

health policy, which will make up for the flaws and loopholes of the Mental Health Act, and thereby will strengthen the whole legal regime on mental health. The policy should provide for the following matters:

First, the Government needs to strengthen the existing mental healthcare system and build a strong workforce of mental health care professionals. Specialised hospitals for mental treatment should be established with sufficient psychiatrists in every district immediately. Such hospitals must have adequate medical facilities and human resource.

Second, mental health helplines should be established from where people can easily get emergency mental health assistance and primary information on available mental health services.

Third, Special education service needs to be provided for mentally ill people. This way we can remove the existing discrimination against them.

While considering improvements to the Act, some reference may be made to the Mental Health Act of India. The Indian Mental Health Act puts great emphasis on the human rights of mental health patients, such as right to access mental healthcare, right to community living, right to protection from cruelty, inhumane and degrading treatment, right to equality and non-discrimination, right to information, right to confidentiality. The Indian Act contains restrictions on release of information relating to mental illness, and access to medical records and personal contacts of mental health patients. The said Act also contains provisions regarding legal aid and how to make complaints about any shortcomings in the mental health services.

Aside from legal measures, the Government may carry out campaigns to increase public awareness about mental health. In addition to the rigorous punitive provisions, policies, and initiatives, every conscious individual has moral responsibility to work for removing the social stigma about mental illness, and safeguarding the rights of mental health patients. Together we can make a difference.

THE WRITER IS A STUDENT OF LAW AT NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY.

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR  
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2021, MAGH 19, 1427 BS

## Myanmar's coup shocks the world

### A blow to democracy

**I**n a shocking turn of events, Myanmar's military has seized power on the day the first new parliamentary session was due to be held after the November national election that gave a landslide victory to the National League for Democracy (NLD). That the party's leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other top civilian leaders were taken into custody on Monday is an ominous sign for democracy in Myanmar. Despite our strong opposition to Suu Kyi's denial of atrocities committed against the Rohingya, which forced them to flee to Bangladesh, we cannot but express our disappointment in Myanmar's total disregard for the democratic process of elections and the will of the people.

The Myanmar army's actions have only reinforced their image of arbitrariness and ruthlessness that was evident in their treatment of the Rohingya, which the international community has termed ethnic cleansing and genocide. For Bangladesh, this latest act of seizure of power has created greater uncertainty regarding the Rohingya refugee repatriation process, talks of which were going on between the two countries. The Bangladesh foreign minister, however, has said that talks regarding the repatriation process will continue regardless of who is in power.

The Rohingya, meanwhile, have continuously said that the conditions in Rakhine state were still very precarious with no guarantee of citizenship, safety and basic rights. Now, with this latest arbitrary move, it will be even more difficult to ascertain the conditions.

It is clear that after ruling the country for almost all of the last six decades, the military does not want to let go of its absolute power that it partially shared after it allowed Suu Kyi to be the State Counsellor of Myanmar. Now, after witnessing a landslide victory with an even larger portion of the popular vote than in the 2015 elections, it has decided that it will go back to the old way of total and absolute control by declaring a state of emergency and a take-over of power for 12 months. Tensions were already brewing after the elections, with the head of the military warning that the country's constitution could be revoked, and protests by pro-military supporters against the election results. The military has brought up allegations of voter fraud and other irregularities, which are befuddling considering the extent of their control and power in the country.

Thus, whatever illusions the people of Myanmar had about democratic reforms in the country have been shattered. As most of the world, we too, are concerned by these disturbing developments. As a democratic nation that has suffered much from military dictatorships, we want our neighbouring countries to be governed by representatives who are fairly elected by the people and not ruled by undemocratic forces.

## Study reveals the loopholes in govt's relief distribution system

### Relief must reach those who need it the most

**A** study by CPD, Oxfam and the European Union on the government's relief distribution patterns found that relief for Covid and Amphan-hit people did not reach those who needed it the most. The organisations studied the relief distribution patterns in 13 districts and recently shared their findings about Pirojpur district, which has the highest poverty rate among the districts studied. It was revealed that the upazilas of Pirojpur where the poverty rate is the highest received the least amount of relief and cash incentives. For instance, although most people in the Kalkhali upazila of Pirojpur live below the poverty line, it received only 9.1 percent of relief rice and 5.7 percent of the cash allocated for the district.

We believe the study findings will be very helpful to the government in reaching out to the people who are still in need of cash and relief assistance. The study revealed that the list of the beneficiaries could not be made on time, as there was a lack of proper direction from the government in this regard, and the field level workers also did not get much time to prepare the list. Many of the beneficiaries of the district did not have access to digital financial services, which was another problem in providing them the cash. Furthermore, many of those who left the cities during the lockdown and came back to their village homes did not receive any assistance from the government. Another major problem was that the district coordination team did not have data about the number of beneficiaries in the upazilas, and what the upazila-wise allocation of relief was, according to CPD.

Previously, Transparency International Bangladesh also conducted surveys on government's cash incentives and OMS programmes and found that a large portion of people in need did not receive any assistance because of corruption and irregularities in the system.

Since the loopholes in our relief distribution system have been identified in several studies, the government should now address those with urgency. This includes completing the list of people eligible and reaching the relief to these people while making sure that there are no irregularities in either the list or relief distribution. There has to be a proper system of accountability to find out why the distribution was so inefficient and how much of the cash and other relief have been left undistributed. Needless to say, the government's relief and cash distribution programmes will hardly see any success in future if those who need its assistance the most are left behind.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

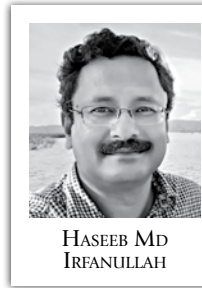
letters@thedailystar.net

### Golden jubilee of Liberation

We are proud of the performance of the Bangladeshi military contingent in the Republic Day parade at New Delhi on January 26, in the year of the golden jubilee of the Liberation of Bangladesh. We request our government to invite Indian regiments, armed forces etc, who actively fought and gave blood for our cause, to participate in the Independence Day parade in Dhaka in 2021.

Dr SN Mamoon, via e-mail

# Can we look at Bhashan Char through a research lens?



HASEEB MD  
IRFANULLAH

**T**HE third batch of Rohingya refugees entered Bhashan Char on January 29 and January 30, 2021. Out of Cox's Bazar's 867,000 refugees, about 6,700 have now been voluntarily

relocated since December 2020 to this island on the Bay of Bengal. While the Government of Bangladesh and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) have different points of views on such a move, there are three reasons why we should start doing research on this island and its incoming inhabitants.

First, as the refugee population of this 53-square kilometre island is slowly approaching the 100,000 target, it gives us an unprecedented opportunity to understand how an artificially constructed society changes over time and its members interact among themselves and with nature. We rarely get such a large population relocating to one place over a short period of time. The last time that happened was in August and September 2017, when hundreds and thousands of the Rohingya population crossed the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Giving them food and shelter was a priority back then, rather than doing research on their lives and new contexts. But things are quite different on Bhashan Char—well-thought out refugee relocation does open up new research windows and allows us to explore how to improve their circumstances.

Second, in Bangladesh, we hardly see multidisciplinary, long-term research to create knowledge on people, society and nature. With the right facilitation and encouragement from the government, Bhashan Char can excite our researchers, and their funders, from relevant fields to do research—from culture to climate, from education to energy, from mental health to mangroves. This will make Bangladesh a global knowledge leader in refugee crisis management.

Third, given the sensitivity around the refugees and access restrictions on Bhashan Char, any research done there should be endorsed by the government. As a first step, this requires researchers and policymakers discussing this issue—a rare scene in Bangladesh. Such conversations will not only guide us to what research should be done on this island, but also how the research outputs can effectively help the government

to make decisions on refugee crisis management. This will create a new avenue of evidence-guided policymaking and practice change in Bangladesh, as envisaged in the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021–2041—a roadmap to become a developed country in the next 20 years.

It may be asked if over the last three and a half years, the Rohingya refugee crisis has generated any interest at all

of Bangladesh. From a strategic point of view, these research advisors should identify broad thematic research areas and develop a "strategic research framework" to guide research in the Rohingya communities staying on the island. Instead of conducting research in single areas, this framework should encourage multidisciplinary research—where researchers from diverse disciplines work together to bring in their disciplinary

*In Bangladesh, like in many developing countries, researchers and policy or decision-makers live in separate silos.*



An aerial view of the buildings intended for accommodating Rohingya refugees at Bhashan Char.

FILE PHOTO: AFP/MUKTA DINWIDDIE MACLAREN ARCHITECTS

among researchers. On March 25, 2020, on the Google Scholar search engine, I found 47 original research articles published since January 1, 2018 on Rohingya refugees staying in Cox's Bazar camps and shared my findings in *The Scholarly Kitchen*.

On January 25, 2021, I made a similar search and found 54 new journal articles on Bangladesh's Rohingya refugees. So despite the Covid-19 pandemic, over the last 10 months, there has been a 115 percent increase in refugee research outputs. Most of these research papers are on the refugees' current conditions, related political and security concerns, and mental, reproductive and Covid-19 related health issues. The increasing number of research papers clearly shows a growing interest of researchers in this refugee crisis. But we need a system that can make these research findings and recommendations impactful by feeding them into decision-making processes.

To capitalise on the research opportunity Bhashan Char is offering, the government now needs to bring together the relevant research minds

knowledge and interdisciplinary research—so that scholars can go a step further and combine their knowledge and methods from different disciplines to conduct research.

For effective use of research outputs and creating impact on the ground, the above research framework should also outline how the research findings could be translated into evidence-based actions, so that concerned government agencies and other stakeholders can take them up and act on them.

From an operational point of view, the government should establish a coordinating body to ensure all proposed research projects are in line with the strategic research framework. Data collected and research outputs communicated by research teams—from public or private institutions, from Bangladesh or abroad—should abide by the rules and regulations of the government. These teams should also maintain high ethical standards and norms of research, keeping in mind the Rohingyas' persecution in their homeland, their statelessness, and possible misuse of

## PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

# Prevent the next food crisis now

MARK LOWCOCK and AXEL VAN TROTSBENBURG

**T**HE toxic cocktail of climate change, conflict, and Covid-19 is making itself felt most intensely in the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries. As a result, a record 235 million people worldwide will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021—an increase of 40 percent from last year.

It can be hard to wrap one's head around such numbers. But behind the statistics are individual human lives. For the most vulnerable people, the pandemic's secondary effects—not the coronavirus itself—will cause the most damage. And the hunger pandemic triggered by Covid-19 threatens to be the biggest killer.

The number of chronically hungry people increased by an estimated 130 million last year, to more than 800 million—about eight times the total number of Covid-19 cases to date.

Countries affected by conflict and climate change are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Empty stomachs can stunt whole generations.

Moreover, the spectre of multiple famines looms just as government budgets are being stretched by efforts to protect populations and economies from the pandemic. International solidarity to help prevent such disasters may look like a hard sell just now. But preventing famine and food insecurity is a smart investment for everyone.

Still, we must ensure that we are getting the most from every dollar we spend. That is why the United Nations and the World Bank are increasingly investing in an anticipatory approach to humanitarian need. It has become ever clearer that acting early to address humanitarian needs ahead of a crisis is more effective, dignified and cost-efficient than waiting until disaster has struck. Such a strategy also protects hard-won development gains.

For example, in Bangladesh last year, the United Nations and the Red Cross/Red Crescent provided vulnerable people with cash so that they could get themselves and their livestock out of harm's way before devastating floods hit. This effort cost half as much as picking up the pieces afterward would have done, and it helped more people.

We are applying a similar anticipatory approach to the growing hunger

pandemic, by taking action before food emergencies turn into full-blown famines. This involves addressing long-term drivers of food insecurity—including vulnerability to extreme weather and pests, low incomes, fragile value chains and conflict—in order to prevent new crises down the road.

In line with this goal, the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's fund for the poorest

with seeds and fertiliser to safeguard future harvests, and supported small irrigation works that increase long-term resilience. The IDA has also extended its Crisis Response Window to include USD 500 million in financing dedicated to responding during the early stages of slow-onset food-security crises and disease outbreaks.

Likewise, in June 2020, the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund

most vulnerable countries, the crisis will have deep and long-lasting after-effects—on incomes, health, nutrition, education and whole economies.

Swift action can make the hangover less painful. We need to focus today on monitoring risks and the factors that compound them, and emphasise effective early action and long-term investment to avoid much larger costs in the future.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

countries) committed USD 5.3 billion for food security in the six months between April and October 2020. This sum comprised a mix of short-term Covid-19 responses and investments to address the longer-term causes of food insecurity.

In Bangladesh, the World Bank redirected resources from an existing project to provide, among other things, cash transfers to 620,000 vulnerable small-scale dairy and poultry-farming households. In Haiti, where remittances were expected to decrease as a result of the pandemic, the IDA provided farmers

provided financing to help avert a food crisis in Somalia. Acting ahead of the triple threat of locusts, floods and Covid-19 reduced the risk of disease outbreaks. By upgrading boreholes early, the UN averted disputes related to water sources, kept livestock healthier, improved household finances, boosted mental health and prevented large-scale population displacement.

The development of effective Covid-19 vaccines means that the world may soon start to see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. But for many of the

Acting now on the danger signals is the smart, moral and cost-effective strategy. By working together to save and transform lives, we can free the world's most vulnerable people from crippling hunger and insecurity and build the foundations of a better future for all.

Mark Lowcock is the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Axel van Trotsenburg is Managing Director of Operations at the World Bank.  
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www.project-syndicate.org  
(Exclusive to The Daily Star)

# 1.5 to stay alive

*It is not yet too late to meet global climate goals*

ARIF HUSSEIN

IT is easy to be fashionably pessimistic about climate change. Many people say they think it is already too late to avoid catastrophe, let alone to meet the relatively ambitious goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement. If it's too late to avoid the apocalypse, why even bother trying?

But that is not what the science says. The latest papers published by climate scientists on the matter show clearly that the world can still meet the Paris goal of a rise in global temperatures of 1.5 degrees Celsius that vulnerable developing countries like Bangladesh have said is essential for their survival.

Our lifeline, ironically enough, has been Covid-19. The data show that emissions globally fell by seven percent between 2019 and 2020 due to the pandemic. If sustained, this rate of emissions drop is sufficient for the world to achieve net-zero emissions globally by the year 2040, as required for a 50:50 chance of staying below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

That is not to say that we should be looking to maintain lockdowns and economic depression for another two decades. What it means is that post-Covid economic recovery efforts need to be strongly focused on ensuring a rapid transition to zero-carbon technologies.

In a paper published in the journal "Communications Earth and Environment", the scientists mainly focused on updating the remaining carbon budget estimates for the 1.5 degree Celsius Paris goal, updating previous estimates that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change had issued back in 2018. They estimate a remaining carbon budget of 440 billion tonnes of CO2 for an even 50:50 chance of staying below 1.5 degrees, although for a two-thirds chance of this outcome, the budget would be as little as 230 billion tonnes. In fact, there is a one in six chance that the budget for 1.5C has already been exceeded, meaning the world would miss the crucial Paris goal even if all emissions stopped overnight.

And there is more bad news—according to the lead author Professor Damon Matthews of Concordia University, Canada, at current emissions rates, there are only 11 years and nine months remaining on the "climate clock" before all of the budget for a 1.5



PHOTO: COLLECTED

degrees outcome is used up. This is partly a matter of perspective. The glass is more than half full, and not yet half empty, although time is rapidly running out. We can still focus on the future and achieve a result that protects our precious planet and safeguards the interests of the most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.

In fact, it is notable that Bangladesh has assumed leadership in the climate change arena with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's chairmanship role of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), a coalition of 48 of the most vulnerable developing countries.

Determined not to face the future simply as victims, many of these countries are beginning work on Climate Prosperity Plans, which lay out the investment frameworks needed to achieve rapid economic growth and middle-income status, at the same time

as reducing CO2 emissions to zero.

Bangladesh's plan—named the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan in honour of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—is already well advanced, and initial conclusions are expected to be set out in a couple of months. With Bangladesh graduating from LDC status and being one of the most important emerging markets, the multi-billion dollar investment opportunities will make clear how the climate agenda is a roadmap to growth and prosperity.

But Bangladesh and even all the CVF nations together, cannot solve the climate problem alone. The big emitters, in particular China, Europe, the United States and Japan, have at long last presented zero carbon dates and targets. South Africa, South Korea and Canada have also recently announced net zero targets. In total, 127 countries

responsible for around 63 percent of emissions are considering or have adopted net zero targets, according to the Climate Action Tracker.

As Professor Matthews says: "The momentum is shifting in the right direction, but it is still not happening fast enough". According to the Climate Action Tracker, even the most optimistic current targets still lead to a global warming outcome that exceeds two degrees.

The CVF reports that only 40 percent of countries responded to the key UN climate goal to update their Paris Agreement pledges by the deadline of midnight on 31 December, 2020.

As the Bangladesh minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Md Shahab Uddin, said: "Boldest efforts are needed from all nations to keep within reach the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement on which our survival truly depends. After the "midnight hour", despite some progress, we remain under extreme threat as more countries than not failed to deliver in time on the promises made at Paris five years ago."

Bangladesh, along with the Maldives and many other CVF nations, were among the group who updated their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. It is clear that the most vulnerable countries are assuming the mantle of leadership—now, the big emitters also need to step up and seize the opportunity to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Arif Hussein is the CEO and Executive Director of Farming Future Bangladesh and a Visiting Fellow and Visiting Scientist at Cornell University, USA.

*It is clear that the most vulnerable countries are assuming the mantle of leadership—now, the big emitters also need to step up and seize the opportunity to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.*

# We need to change how we 'see' sexual violence



THE stories seem endless. A couple is ambushed in front of a college by multiple perpetrators, who rape the wife while confining the husband. A 14-

year old child bride dies from excessive bleeding from the genitals, 34 days after her marriage. An O-level student is raped by her friend, eventually bleeding to death from her injuries in much the same way. And these are only the most serially reported on stories. We see new cases of sexual violence in the media almost every day.

In 2018, 732 rape cases were reported in the country, according to Ain o Salish Kendra. This almost doubled to 1,413 in 2019. Now with almost 1,000 cases reported in 2020, Bangladesh is seeing more than four rape cases per day on average. These numbers are thought to be just the tip of the iceberg. According to rights organisations, many more cases of sexual violence remain unreported out of fear, and also due to a lack of trust in the justice system.

This lack of faith is not unfounded when you look at the appallingly low conviction rates for rape in Bangladesh, estimated to be around one to three percent. In a 2013 UN multi-country survey of Bangladeshi men who admitted to committing rape, 88 percent of rural respondents and 95 percent of urban respondents said they had faced no legal consequences. Arrests and conviction can often be conditional on the amount of press interest the case generates.

How does the media choose which rape cases to report? A few days before the case of the O-level student,

our understanding of the extent of violence against women, especially poor and marginalised women, and the reasons behind it. While it is unrealistic to expect media to be covering every reported rape case, the severity of the crime, the location and proximity of the case are some aspects that can play an important role in deciding the amount of coverage it will receive. Perhaps more importantly, class, religion and locale are biases that are so ingrained that they often go unnoticed.

More sexual violence reports seem to make the news lately, but much

of the coverage is still focused on the rape survivor as the main subject, and not the attacks and the context that enabled them. News stories also often use language that avoids placing responsibility on perpetrators while seeming to imply the victim's consent, whereas the list of questions asked of rape survivors often shifts the blame onto them for bringing on the violence by something they did, said or wore.

intercourse and somehow the whole incident had gone awry, which led to her bleeding to death. The fact that the perpetrator had confessed to the crime became an insignificant factor; the focus was fully on the victim and whether she gave consent. How does someone bleed to death from consensual sex?

Let me make this really clear—going out on a date with a man is not providing consent to being raped or molested. By laughing loudly, smoking, staying out late—women are not consenting to assaults against themselves. They are within all their rights to experience public and private spaces without violence.

At the same time, misleading stereotypes—such as the image of the rapist as a monster—endure. Rape survivors are represented as weak and vulnerable, reflected in the popular "head-in-hands, crying" representational images used in most of these reports. This then shifts conversations to how to "protect" women and not how to stop rapists. Shifting those perceptions could be a big step in the struggle to stop sexual violence.

The image of the rapist as a monster also shifts attention away from the fact that, worldwide, people are more likely to be sexually abused by a person known to them. This is especially true in the case of children and adolescents, who are more likely to be abused by a boyfriend, family member, relative, family friend, neighbour or an adult in a relationship of trust or authority, according to the UNICEF report to end Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, 2020. Women are also more likely to be raped by a partner, although in Bangladesh, marital rape is still not a crime under the law.

The overwhelming media narrative of assaults by strangers in public spaces creates a belief in society that the two

options available to women are that they can either be secure by staying at home or risk assault when they go out in public spaces. However, the UNICEF report reveals the fakeness of the "only safe at home" argument, which can effectively make home the most dangerous place for many women. When we tell women not to go out in public spaces but instead to stay at home safe, we are misreading all the data on reported crimes against women and choosing to be wilfully ignorant. Home, family and friends are no guarantee of safety for women—only the rule of law and effective justice systems are.

The study on child sexual abuse identified three approaches to the prevention of sexual violence—changing social norms, attitudes and behaviour; altering the environmental and situational context that provide opportunities for abuse; and reducing the risks and vulnerabilities of children, adolescents and women to victimisation through programmes for social and economic empowerment.

We need to focus on all three in Bangladesh, but in the case of how we view survivors of sexual violence, social marketing and media campaigns designed to promote awareness and understanding about sexual abuse and exploitation can be an effective response. Such campaigns have been part of international, regional and national strategies for primary prevention promoted by governmental bodies. A 2010 WHO study showed that the most successful media interventions are those that begin by understanding the behaviour of their audience and engaging its members in developing the intervention. The Bangladeshi media can definitely play a part in bringing about this change.

Nasirra Ahsan is a private sector development consultant with the World Bank.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

As Indian journalist Sameera Khan aptly wrote, "Survivors... are attacked twice. The first time is when they are assaulted, the second is afterwards when we as a family, community, law enforcement end up bruising them further by our judgmental words, advice and reactions."

But even those who die after the assault are not spared. Take, for example, the O-level student rape. After the initial reports came out, many started to argue that because the couple may have been in a relationship, the girl had willingly agreed to have

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY**  
(1821-1881)  
Russian novelist, philosopher, essayist and short story writer.

*Nothing in this world is harder than speaking the truth, nothing easier than flattery.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Obtains
- 5 Cavalry weapon
- 10 Accepted truth
- 12 Dancer Castle
- 13 Sunday reading
- 14 Buoyant tunes
- 15 Flamenco cheer
- 16 Merchant of music
- 18 Take-home
- 20 Rink make-up
- 21 Good pair
- 23 Homer's neighbor
- 24 Take cover
- 26 Wading bird
- 28 Brood watcher
- 29 Japanese sport
- 31 Treasury Dept.

**DOWN**

- 1 West African nation
- 2 Banish
- 3 Himalayan land
- 4 Costa del -
- 5 Riverbed make-up
- 6 Diva's piece
- 7 Peach cocktail
- 8 Tempts
- 9 Plant anew
- 11 Threats
- 17 Ensign's answer
- 19 Spot to jot
- 22 Alike
- 24 Katniss Everdeen, e.g.
- 25 Establish
- 27 Autonomous program
- 28 Gave clues
- 30 First numero
- 33 Make baskets
- 34 Ticked off
- 35 Lock
- 37 Rep on the street
- 38 Crew members
- 42 Impress greatly

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**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

S	A	F	A	R	I	S	L	E	W
I	C	E	M	E	N	L	O	V	E
T	E	N	A	N	T	L	O	W	E
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**BEETLE BAILEY** BY MORT WALKER

**BABY BLUES** BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

# Dhaka dist gets 4 lakh shots

FROM PAGE 12 Narayanjan city, The Daily Star found in an investigation.

As of yesterday, Dhaka division saw the highest 4,532 Covid-19 deaths (more than 56 percent) out of 8,137 casualties across the country, followed by 1,494 (more than 18 percent) in Chattogram.

Similarly, highest 1,50,629 people tested positive for Covid-19 in Dhaka city, while the number was 6,179 in Dhaka district, according to the IEDCR website information updated until December 15, 2020.

In the same period, 6,694 positive cases were found in Gazipur, says the IEDCR.

According to the Narayanjan civil surgeon office, 155 people died from Covid-19 in the district and 8,763 tested positive as of yesterday.

**TRAINING YET TO BE FINISHED** Meanwhile, training of healthcare workers and volunteers at upazila and city corporation level has not been completed yet.

Many civil surgeon offices are yet to start the training programme, according to reports sent by our district correspondents.

Officials said they would be able to train all vaccinators and volunteers a day before the vaccine inoculation begins on February 7.

Experts, however, said the training should have been finished by this time.

"Obviously, this delay in training will create complexities. Because it will be challenging to manage vaccine waste and other minor issues, not just administering the injection," Prof Sayedur Rahman, of pharmacology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A few districts where the training for vaccinators and volunteers were in progress as of yesterday were Moulvibazar, Pirojpur, Gaibandha, Bogura, and Rangamati, report our correspondents there.

Health officials of Chapainawabganj have completed the training, while the

training was yet to kick off in Pabna, report our district correspondents.

Asked, Dr Shamsul Haque Mridha, member secretary of the national vaccination committee at the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The training will be completed by February 6 and there will be no problem."

Meanwhile, all healthcare workers across the country have to stay at their workplaces until February 10 for Covid-19 vaccination and none will be granted any leave during the period, Prof ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said yesterday.

He was briefing journalists at the health directorate after a virtual meeting with all civil surgeons, upazila health officers and directors of medical colleges.

Vaccination will remain off on government holidays, the DG said.

**SLOW IN REGISTRATION** As of 5:00pm yesterday, 30,000 people have registered online for vaccination, according to the Management Information System unit at the DGHS.

Experts said the registration was progressing at a slow pace while officials said otherwise.

"Many of the frontline workers have assumed that their registrations have been done as they submitted their names and NID numbers to their organisation heads. But all of them have to register online individually," Toufiq Hassan Shawon, medical officer at the MIS, told this paper yesterday.

He, however, could not say how many frontline workers have been included in the priority list so far.

**DELAY IN APP APPROVAL** Meanwhile, Google has not yet authorised the "Surokha" mobile app, through which people can register online for the mass vaccination campaign.

"Google has replied that they would take up to seven days whereas it normally takes three days. Due to the Covid-19 emergency, Google is taking more time than usual," said Dr Toufiq.

# High fares on top

FROM PAGE 12 Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam, who is the co-chair of the committee, said there will be 34 bus stops on the route and buses will not be allowed to stop outside the specific places.

However, there are doubts as to whether the pilot programme can start on time.

**30 PERCENT HIKE** Asked why the committee proposed increasing the rate, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad said transport company owners present at Sunday's meeting argued that the bus fare had not been hiked since 2013, even though the prices of many essentials have risen multiple times.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said another committee in 2019 proposed increasing the rate to Tk 2.21 per km.

"We just called for implementing that proposal," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Contacted, Mozammel hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, said the increased fare would be a further burden on the passengers.

Although the government has fixed Tk 1.7 per km in Dhaka, many bus operators charge more from commuters in absence of proper monitoring.

"People will have to bear the additional burden. It might put the passengers and transport workers at loggerheads," he added.

Besides, it will give bus operators on other routes an opportunity to increase fares, he added.

**DOUBTS OVER TIMELY LAUNCH** Enayet, also a member of the bus route rationalisation committee, said he didn't think the project could be launched on April 1 on a pilot basis.

Transport owners were supposed to get a loan of Tk 3 lakh to refurbish each of the buses, but they have yet to get the loan.

"It will take two to three months to refurbish the buses after receiving the loans," he said, adding that the guidelines to operate the buses under one company have not been finalised.

# WB to help upgrade rural

FROM PAGE 12 aims to upgrade the existing 110km two-lane Bhomra-Satkhira-Navaron and Jashore-Jhenaidah roads, said a press release of the World Bank.

In the current phase, the project will help upgrade the 48km two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah road to a modern four-lane highway, it said.

Besides, the project will also help revitalise about 600km connecting rural roads, develop existing rural markets or build new ones. It will also set up fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service, the WB press release added.

The project will be implemented by the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) and Local Government Division (LGD), said ERD.

The project was approved by the World Bank Board on June 23 last year and the government's Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Encec) on November 24. The closing date of this project is December 31, 2026.

Yesterday, ERD Secretary Fatima Yasmin and the World Bank's Dhaka office Country Director Mercy Miyang Tembon signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides.

In the signing ceremony that was held at the ERD office, Fatima Yasmin said, "Improvement in the logistics

and transport in the western districts will further help accelerate economic growth and development for the entire country."

Addressing the function, Mercy Miyang Tembon said, "With better connectivity and logistics, farmers will be able to reach new and existing markets faster while spending less. It will also lower the loss from spoilage of perishable goods." The World Bank press release cited the comments of the two officials.

Earlier in 2012, the World Bank withdrew its \$1.2 billion loan for the construction of Padma Bridge over allegations of corruption conspiracies. The government refutes the allegations and is building the bridge without support from the WB.

# 10 more die

FROM PAGE 12 cases pushed up the national tally to 535,582. The current overall detection rate is 14.62 percent.

Until yesterday morning, 480,216 patients (89.66 percent of the total reported cases) have recovered.

So far, 3,664,197 samples have been tested, including 12,556 during the same 24-hour period.

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

# People sleep less

FROM PAGE 12 Nights leading up to the full moon resulted in less sleep and going to sleep later, the experts found, while nights leading to the new moon led to longer sleeps and earlier turn-ins.

The experts say evenings leading up to the full moon have more natural moonlight available after dusk, acting as something of a surrogate for sunlight – but this can be disturbed by our access to electricity.

"We see a clear lunar modulation of sleep, with sleep decreasing and a later onset of sleep in the days preceding a full moon," said study author Horacio de la Iglesia at the University of Washington.

"Although the effect is more robust in communities without access to electricity, the effect is present in communities with electricity, including undergraduates at the University of Washington."

The findings may also explain why access to electricity causes pronounced changes to our sleep patterns.

"In general, artificial light disrupts our innate circadian clocks in specific ways – it makes us go to sleep later in the evening, it makes us sleep less," said de la Iglesia.

"Those are the same patterns we observed here with the phases of the moon."

The research has been published in Science Advances.

# Time to team up, tackle Long

FROM PAGE 12 further understanding of what is causing it, so we can better prevent, manage and treat it," said Diaz, 48, a US respiratory physician and intensive care doctor.

She said British and other studies suggested potentially one in 10 cases may have prolonged symptoms one month after infection, but there was no picture yet of how long those conditions might persist.

The elderly and those with underlying conditions are most at risk of serious disease from Covid-19.

But the profile of Long Covid patients does not match. It affects people with varying degrees of severity of disease and "seems to potentially also include younger people", including children, said Diaz.

While the pandemic response priority remains preventing people from catching the virus and falling ill, treating coronavirus cases "must also now include care after the acute illness... until you get back to full health", Diaz said.

**CRACKING THE CODE** Diaz said fatigue seemed to be the most common symptom, with others including post-exertional malaise, cognitive dysfunction or brain fog, shortness of breath, heart palpitations and neurological problems.

"How these are all related -- that's what we don't understand. Why would one person get this, and the other person get that?" asked Diaz, saying researchers needed to crack the underlying mechanisms of the disease that were causing these persistent symptoms.

"Is it something due to the virus? Due to the immune response? If we had a better idea, we could start to target some interventions to reduce symptoms."

Diaz said a "tremendous amount" of research was underway, largely classic observational studies following discharged patients.

She said the patient-led research had driven scientists to do further studies, and "collaboratively we should get to an answer quicker".

**EXTRA VACCINES**

In a message to the potential millions still suffering long after they are officially considered recovered, Diaz said: "Stay hopeful".

"People may have prolonged

symptoms, but we do know people are recovering. It may take a long time, but they are still recovering to previous health. We're with you."

Meanwhile, European Union efforts to secure Covid-19 vaccines received a much-needed boost after AstraZeneca promised to increase deliveries, while US Republicans were set to meet President Joe Biden to try and build bipartisan support for a huge national relief plan.

British-Swedish firm AstraZeneca will increase shipments of its vaccine to the EU by 30 percent, said European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen Sunday, as the bloc struggles to get its mass inoculation programme up and running.

AstraZeneca had had previously said it could deliver only a quarter of the doses originally promised to Brussels for the first quarter of the year, sparking outrage and accusations it was giving preferential treatment to Britain.

In the US, ten Republican senators were set to meet Biden yesterday to present an alternative to his \$1.3 trillion relief plan, arguing that a scaled-down approach could garner the bipartisan support he has said he seeks.

Senator Susan Collins, a moderate Republican from Maine, said that she had joined the group to present their own \$600 billion package to help steer the world's worst-hit country out of historic health and economic crises.

The virus is known to have infected more than 102 million people so far -- with over 2.2 million deaths -- and countries are scrambling to vaccinate their populations and lift economy-crippling restrictions.

Kazakhstan began its campaign yesterday, with top health officials receiving Russia's Sputnik V vaccine in front of reporters.

Deputy health minister Erlan Kiyasov said he didn't "feel any sort of discomfort" after receiving a shot.

Also getting vaccinated in front of the cameras was the leader of the Maldives, as the tropical archipelago began its own rollout using doses donated from India.

South Africa yesterday took delivery of its first shipment of coronavirus vaccines, a move paving the way to the first phase of inoculation in Africa's worst-hit country.

# Teen gang-raped

FROM PAGE 12 lured her to a nearby litchi orchard on Saturday night.

When the girl, aged around 17 and belonging to an ethnic minority community, went to the location, Labu and his accomplices Ashraf and Omar restrained and raped her. The rapists fled when the girl lost consciousness.

Unable to contact her, the victim's family members started searching for her and found her unconscious and bleeding around 3:00am on Sunday morning. She was rushed to hospital.

Meanwhile, the accused threatened the family with dire consequences if they disclosed the incident, according to the FIR.

On Sunday night, the victim's father filed the case and police arrested the three accused later that night.

According to data available from Bangladesh Peace Observatory's website, at least 23 sexual assault incidents have taken place in Dinajpur in 2020.

One victim has died. Five incidents each took place in Dinajpur Sadar and Nawabganj upazila in the district.

# Gold robbed

FROM PAGE 12 thief [s]," he added.

Officer-in-charge of Ujirpur Police Station Ziaul Ahasan said they visited the spot and were investigating the matter. "We are analysing the CCTV footage. Hopefully, the case will be cracked soon."

# Britain's 'Captain Tom' lockdown

# hero hospitalised

# with Covid-19

AFP, London

Captain Tom Moore, 100, who won British hearts with a Covid-19 fund raising drive, was hospitalised on Sunday with the virus, his family said.

Moore raised millions of pounds for charity by walking around his garden and then became the oldest man to top the UK music charts with a cover of "You'll Never Walk Alone".


"Over the last few weeks he was being treated for pneumonia and last week tested positive for Covid-19," Moore's daughter Hannah Ingram-Moore said on Twitter.

"He was at home with us until today when he needed additional help with his breathing," she explained, adding that "he is being treated in a ward although he is not in ICU", or an intensive care unit.

Moore was admitted to hospital in Bedford, central England.

The BBC quoted a spokesman for the family as saying that he had not yet been vaccinated for the virus owing to his pneumonia.

Moore, who served in India during World War II, raised £33 million (37 million euros, \$45 million) for staff of the state-run National Health Service (NHS) battling the coronavirus outbreak.



## বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

### ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

#### প্রধান কার্যালয়

#### ঢাকা।

তারিখঃ ১৬ মার্চ, ১৪২৭  
৩১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২১

### নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যসভার ৫টি ব্যাংকে ১৪৩৯টি শূন্য পদ প্রতিযোগিতামূলক একক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে পূরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের নিম্নে Online এ দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে :

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২.	পদসংখ্যা	মোট - ১৪৩৯টি (ক) সোনালী ব্যাংক লিঃ - ৮৪৬টি (খ) জনতা ব্যাংক লিঃ - ১০৫টি (গ) অগ্রণী ব্যাংক লিঃ - ৪০০টি (ঘ) রূপালী ব্যাংক লিঃ - ৮৫টি (ঙ) বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিঃ - ০৩টি																
৩.	বেতন স্কেল	জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫ এর টাকা ১৬,০০০-৩৮,৬৪০/- স্কেল এবং তৎসহ নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধা।																
৪.	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	(ক) স্বীকৃত কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে যে কোন বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি বা ৪ (চার) বছরের স্নাতক/স্নাতক (সম্মান) ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে। (খ) মাস্টার্স ডিগ্রি পাঠ্যক্রম/সমমান এবং তদুপরি পর্যায়ের পরীক্ষাসমূহে ন্যূনতম ০১(এক)টিতে প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি থাকতে হবে। (গ) কোন পরীক্ষার্থী ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। (ঘ) প্রাপ্তি পদ্ধতিতে প্রকাশিত ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০০৯ ও ০২/০৩/২০১০ তারিখের অনুমান নং শিম/শাঃ১১/৫-২(অংশ)/৫৮২ এবং শিম/শাঃ১১/১৯-১/২০০৭/১৭৪ অনুযায়ী বর্তমান প্রচলিত ডিগ্রি বা স্নাতকোত্তর, সিজিপিএ এর বিপরীতে পূর্বের ১ম ও ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি নিম্নরূপে নির্ধারিত হবে :- (১) এম.এস.সি বা সমমান এবং এইচ.এস.সি বা সমমান পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে- <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin: 5px 0;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">ডিগ্রি/এম.এস.সি বা সমমান</td> <td style="width: 50%;">প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ডিগ্রি/এম.এস.সি বা সমমান</td> <td>দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ</td> </tr> </table> (২) অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সিজিপিএ এর ক্ষেত্রে- <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin: 5px 0;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">অর্জিত সিজিপিএ</td> <td style="width: 33%;">সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>৪.০০ পর্যায়ে স্কেলে</td> <td>৫.০০ পর্যায়ে স্কেলে</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩.০০ বা তদুপরি</td> <td>৩.৭৫ বা তদুপরি</td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২.২৫ বা তদুপরি কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম</td> <td>২.৮১৩ বা তদুপরি কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম</td> <td>দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি</td> </tr> </table>	ডিগ্রি/এম.এস.সি বা সমমান	প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি	ডিগ্রি/এম.এস.সি বা সমমান	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ	অর্জিত সিজিপিএ	সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ		৪.০০ পর্যায়ে স্কেলে	৫.০০ পর্যায়ে স্কেলে		৩.০০ বা তদুপরি	৩.৭৫ বা তদুপরি	প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি	২.২৫ বা তদুপরি কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম	২.৮১৩ বা তদুপরি কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি
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অর্জিত সিজিপিএ	সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ																	
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১. **বয়স (০১/০৩/২০২০ তারিখে) :** ক) মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান এবং প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থী ব্যতীত সর্বপ্রথম নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৩০ বছর।  
খ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান এবং প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর।
২. **আবেদনপত্র পূরণ, ফি প্রদান ও Tracking Page সফরের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় :** ২২/০২/২০২১ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫৯ টা।
৩. **আবেদন ফি এর পরিমাণ:** পরীক্ষার ফি অফেরতযোগ্য টা. ২০০/- (টাকা দুইশত মাত্র) যা ডাচ বাংলা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর Payment Gateway 'রকেট' (Instant/Prepaid পদ্ধতিতে আবেদনকারীর নিজের অথবা এজেন্ট এ্যাকাউন্ট) এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করতে হবে।
৪. **আবেদন পদ্ধতি:**
  - ক. **Online Application Form:** শুধুমাত্র বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) -এর Online Application Form পূরণের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। Online এ আবেদন দাখিলের সময় ফরম পূরণ করার নিয়ম ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী ওয়েবসাইটেই পাওয়া যাবে।
  - খ. **প্রার্থীর বিবরণ:** প্রার্থীর নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম এসএসসি অথবা সমমানের সনদে যেভাবে দেখা আছে Online আবেদনে ঠিক সেভাবে লিখতে হবে।
  - গ. **প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা:** প্রার্থীর ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জাতীয়তা সনদে উল্লিখিত স্থায়ী ঠিকানা প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা হিসেবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। বিবাহিত মহিলা প্রার্থীরা তাদের স্বামীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানাকে নিজের স্থায়ী ঠিকানা হিসেবে ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন। অনলাইন আবেদনে উল্লিখিত প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে কোনভাবেই পরিবর্তনযোগ্য নয়।
  - ঘ. **ছবি (Photo):** নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 600x600 pixel এর কম বা বেশি নয় এবং file size 100 KB এর বেশি নয় এরূপ মানের অনন্যকৃত তিন মাস পুরনো প্রার্থীর রঙিন ছবি (সাদা ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড সর্বাঙ্গ) scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। ছবি তোলায় সময় মুখ ও কানের উপর আবরণ রাখা যাবে না। সাদাকালো ছবি এবং Informal ছবি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
  - ঙ. **স্বাক্ষর (Signature):** নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 300x80 pixel এর কম বা বেশি নয় এবং file size 60 KB এর বেশি নয় এরূপ মানের প্রার্থীর নিজের স্বাক্ষর scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। আপলোডকৃত প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর অবশ্যই সাদা কাগজের উপর কোনো কালিতে প্রদত্ত হতে হবে।
  - চ. **অর্জিত ডিগ্রির ফলাফলের তারিখ:** Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত সর্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) এর বিদেশি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ডিগ্রি প্রাপ্ত হলে দেশীয় সর্টিফিকেট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুর কমিশন/শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সর্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রি ও ফলাফলের (শ্রেণি/ বিভাগ/ডিগ্রি/এম.এস.সি) উল্লেখসহ) তথ্য মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় চেকিং বোর্ডে অংশগ্রহণ উপস্থাপন করতে হবে। অন্যান্য মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
  - ছ. **প্রতিষ্ঠান পছন্দের তালিকা:** Online আবেদনে প্রার্থীপক্ষে নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত প্রকল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিবেচনায় নিয়ে প্রতিষ্ঠান পছন্দের তালিকা নির্বাচন করতে হবে। চূড়ান্তভাবে মনোনীত প্রার্থীপক্ষে তাদের অর্জিত সনদের মাধ্যমে Online আবেদনে উল্লিখিত পছন্দের তালিকা অনুসারে শূন্য পদ থাকা সাপেক্ষে সর্টিফিকেট প্রতিষ্ঠানে পদায়ন করা হবে। Online আবেদন দাখিলের পর আবেদনকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠানের পছন্দের তালিকা কোনো অবস্থাতেই পরিবর্তনযোগ্য নয়।
  - জ. **CV ID No. গ্রহণ:** বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মাধ্যমে ইতিপূর্বে আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের বিদ্যমান CV ID No. এবং Password ব্যবহার করে Online Application Form পূরণ করতে হবে। নতুন আবেদনকারীরা ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) এর মাধ্যমে Online Application Form এর প্রয়োজনীয় ঘরগুলো পূরণ করলে একটি CV ID No. এবং Password প্রাপ্ত হবেন। প্রাপ্ত CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনের(-) পূর্বের অংশ] আবেদন ফি প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হবে।
  - ঝ. **Job ID No. :** বর্ণিত পদের Job ID No. 10117 আবেদন ফি প্রদানের সময় নির্ধারিত স্থানে ব্যবহার করতে হবে।
  - ট. **আবেদন ফি প্রদান পদ্ধতি:** আবেদন ফি জমা দেয়ার পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত জানতে <https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd/onlineapp/rocketprepay.pdf> ওয়েবসাইটে ডিউটি করতে হবে। Instant এবং Prepaid উভয় পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী নিজের অথবা এজেন্ট একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে ফি প্রদান করতে পারবেন। Instant পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী তার রকেট একাউন্ট ব্যবহার করে সরাসরি ফি প্রদান করে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। Prepaid পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী এজেন্ট অথবা নিজের একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। প্রার্থীরা নির্ধারিত Job ID No এবং তাদের CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনের(-) পূর্বের অংশ] এর বিপরীতে আবেদন ফি প্রদান করবেন। আবেদন ফি প্রদান করলে প্রার্থী জমা কৃত ফি এর বিপরীতে একটি Txxn ID নম্বর পাবেন।
  - ঠ. **Tracking Page সফর :** ফি প্রদানের পর বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে Txxn ID নম্বরটি বসালে ফি প্রদানের verification সাপেক্ষে তাঁকে একটি Tracking ID No. প্রদান করা হবে। Tracking ID No. প্রাপ্ত হলেই প্রার্থীর আবেদন যথাযথভাবে সম্পন্ন হয়েছে বলে বিবেচিত হবে। Tracking ID No. সংশ্লিষ্ট Tracking Page টি ভবিষ্যতে ব্যবহারের জন্য প্রিন্ট করে যথাযথভাবে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। কোনো অবস্থাতেই Tracking Page এর Duplicate Copy সরবরাহ করা হবে না।

**বিশেষ দ্রষ্টব্য:** শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে খেঁচি সময় নিয়ে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও নির্ধারিত ফি প্রদানকরত Tracking Page টি হার্ডকপি আকারে সংরক্ষণ করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

৫. **Online Application Form** এ প্রার্থীর নাম, স্থায়ী জেলা, জন্ম তারিখ, ছবি, স্বাক্ষরসহ অন্যান্য তথ্য অত্যন্ত সতর্কতার সাথে নির্ভুলভাবে নিজে পূরণ করতে হবে। **Online Application Form** এ প্রদত্ত সার্বিক তথ্য, ছবি, স্বাক্ষর ইত্যাদি verification সাপেক্ষে প্রার্থীকর্তৃক যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের নির্বাচন করা হবে।
৬. প্রার্থীকর্তৃক যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশপত্র ও নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষার তারিখ সক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি যথাসময়ে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে ও জাতীয় সৈনিক পত্রিকা প্রকাশ করা হবে।
৭. প্রার্থীদেরকে নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষা এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে।
৮. প্রার্থীদেরকে Online আবেদনের সময় কোনো কাগজপত্র প্রেরণ করতে হবে না। লিখিত পরীক্ষার উত্তর প্রার্থীপক্ষে অনলাইন আবেদনে প্রদত্ত প্রতিটি তথ্যের স্বপক্ষে যথাযথ সনদ/প্রত্যয়নপত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। **Online Application Form** এ প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত তথ্যের সঠিকতা যাচাই করতে কোনো substantive জট দ্বারা পড়লে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ থাকবে না। তাছাড়া, মৌখিক পরীক্ষা শেষে প্যালেল প্রকৃতিকালে কোনো প্রকার জট পরিলক্ষিত হলেও প্রার্থীকে প্যালেসক্রান্ত করা হবে না।
৯. চাকুরীর প্রার্থীদের তাদের নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত পূর্বানুমোদনক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন উক্ত অনুমোদনের কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
১০. নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো সক্রান্ত সরকারি সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা ও অন্যান্য বিধি-বিধান যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।
১১. সর্টিফিকেট ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ প্রার্থীদের নিয়োগ প্রদান করা বা না করার ক্ষেত্রে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।
১২. মেধাভালিকা শুধু এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত ২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক ১৪৩৯টি শূন্যপদে জন্য প্রযোজ্য হবে। সর্টিফিকেট ব্যাংকসমূহে ৩১/২/২০১৯ তারিখের পরে অন্য হওয়া পদের জন্য এ মেধাভালিকা হতে প্রার্থী নির্বাচন করা হবে না।

ডিসিপি: ৪৮/২০২১-৩৪৪  
তারিখ: ০১/০২/২০২১

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হওয়ার শিকার হলে কিবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকবে ১৪২৬৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

(আর্থিক হোসেন খান)  
মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও সদস্য সচিব  
ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি

GD-221

# Sand, stone lifters beat up

FROM PAGE 12 a video clip where he is seen tied to a tree at a local bazar. He is also seen requesting them to free him.

Babul Akter, assistant

**T SPORTS**

Bangladesh Premier League  
Saif Sports vs Sheikh Jamal DC  
Live from 4:00 pm

**T SPORTS & SONY SIX**

Abu Dhabi T10 League  
Qalandars vs Maratha Arabians  
Live from 6:00 pm

Delhi Bulls vs Pune Devils

Live from 8:15 pm  
Northern Warriors vs Deccan Gladiators  
Live from 10:30 pm

**T SPORTS & STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**

English Premier League  
Wolves vs Arsenal  
Live from 12:00 am (Wednesday)

Manchester United vs Southampton

Live from 2:15 am (Wednesday)  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
English Premier League  
Sheffield United vs West Brom  
Live from 12:00 am (Wednesday)  
Newcastle United vs Crystal Palace  
Live from 2:15 am (Wednesday)

## Rewarding Test specialists for a rewarding Test team

NABID YEASIN from Chattogram

The name James Anderson is almost synonymous to Test cricket. His iconic yet smooth bowling action while donned in the all-white of England is what cricket lovers and enthusiasts immediately picture when they hear or read Anderson's name.

And similar, if not the same, relevance to Test cricket is created in the minds of regular cricket followers at the name of India's Cheteshwar Pujara. The 33-year-old's gritty 211-ball 56 on the final day of the Brisbane Test, helping India gun down mighty Australia and hand them their first Test defeat at the Gabba fortress since 1988, has only magnified his reputation as an Indian Test specialist.

Bangladesh, too, have players solely considered for Tests, but the truth is that the likes of Mominul Haque, Ebadot Hossain and Abu Jayed still have a long way to go before being truly hailed as Test specialists. One reason behind that is the low number of Tests played year-round by Bangladesh and hence the players do not get the exposure needed to flourish to their fullest abilities in the format.

Another reason behind Bangladesh players' lack of success in Tests was pointed out by Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, someone who has worked for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) in many capacities.

"Unfortunately the four-day or longer-version matches that are held in our country are not competitive cricket. There are many loopholes in it," said Fahim.

"Players do not face many challenges in domestic games and hence they are not familiar with the pressure of performing at the international stage. You won't see our players taking a chance to win the game by declaring suddenly and trying to bowl out the opposition quickly," explained Fahim.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Then again, it needs a lot of sacrifices for a player to truly establish himself as a Test specialist and achieve milestones in the toughest format of the game. Anderson became the first seamer to have scalped 600 Test wickets, joining the elite club that previously featured three spinners -- Muttiah Muralitharan (800 in 133 matches), Shane Warne (708 in 145) and Anil Kumble (619 in 132).

It was the 38-year-old's sacrifice and choice of solely focusing on Test cricket that helped him achieve the feat. The last time Anderson played an ODI was back in 2015 and his last T20I was back in 2009. Unlike most of the modern players, Anderson did not involve himself in franchise cricket as he chose to keep doing the hard yards with the red ball.

The modern-day cricket set-up is such that it lures players more towards the shorter and formats

which bring more financial solvency along with greater fame and exposure. And not many players like Anderson can stick to their determination of making a name in the longest format as getting picked for the money-spinning T20 leagues like Indian Premier League (IPL) is now considered by many as one of the highest points in a cricketer's life.

The players' urge for featuring in T20 leagues and being considered as a good T20 player is understandable considering the financial aspect. But this urge may even make the very few players in the modern era who nurture the hope of establishing themselves in the longest format sway away from their ultimate goal.

"Those countries [England, Australia, India] have made ways for their [Test] cricketers to earn enough. And before talking about

a player's commitment and him putting sole focus in Test cricket, what the board needs to do is to ensure their financial security. Otherwise, the players designated for Test cricket will try to do better in shorter formats so that they can earn more money by playing in tournaments. There is nothing wrong with that but sometimes it happens so that players may need to compromise on their role as a Test cricketer," remarked Fahim on ways to help players focus and flourish in Tests. While the likes of Mominul, Ebadot and Jayed -- the ones that are usually considered for Tests in Bangladesh -- may have to make sacrifices similar to the ones made by Anderson, it also remains the board's responsibility to create an atmosphere around these players that would help them grow as Test specialists and leave lasting impacts in the format.

## 'Can't pick out-and-out pace attack on an unfriendly pitch'

As Bangladesh return to Test cricket after almost a year with the first of two Tests against the West Indies from tomorrow, head coach Russell Domingo yesterday spoke about various topics before the series. The following are the excerpts of the press conference:



**ON PRESSURE OF PLAYING TESTS AT HOME:** The players understand the expectations and pressure and the coaches also understand. For sure, we want to do well in Test matches as it is the format [where] we really feel there's a big improvement required. We have got some good young pacers coming through the system. Our performances in Test cricket over the past few years haven't been that good and this is something we are really trying to rectify. It's the start of a process for us in Test cricket and the results are very important, we know that, but we also want to make sure that we play in a way that can take Bangladesh cricket forward in the next couple of years.

**ON SHAKIB AL HASAN'S RETURN TO TESTS:** Obviously, Shakib is an important player both in batting and bowling; he is a world-class all-rounder and very difficult to replace in any format. Preparation for him hasn't been easy after picking up a groin niggle in the last ODI. He has gone through the rehab and still is not quite hundred percent. He's got another day or so and we are pretty confident that he will be ready for the first Test. He is working really hard as he bowled in the nets and he hit a few balls... not feeling that much discomfort.

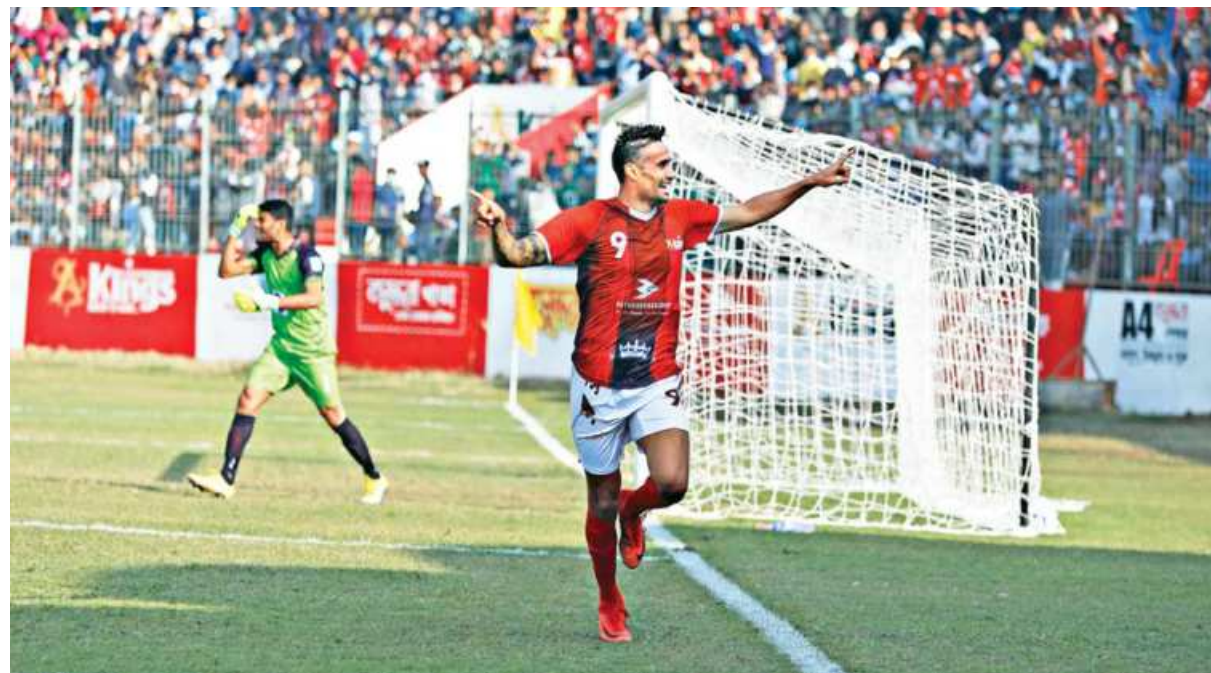
**ON THE PROBABLE BATTING ORDER:** The batting order still needs some discussion. I have got an idea of who is going to bat at numbers three, four, five,

and six but obviously, I need to have a final discussion with the selectors. The opening spot -- to go with Tamim to open the innings -- we have a few options like Saif Hasan who played the last Test. Shadman Islam was the man in the position before he broke his fingers. We have some options and we need to discuss with the selectors.

**ON BALANCE BETWEEN PACE AND SPIN:** It's a really tough one. We have some really exciting young fast bowlers coming through. But looking at the wicket in Chattogram and the way we have practised in the last few days, pace bowlers don't seem to be too much of a threat. You also can't be stupid and pick an out-and-out pace attack playing on wickets that don't offer them anything. Also, very difficult for the bowlers to make debuts on this type of pitch. I will have to discuss with the selectors to make sure how we keep the right balance between pace and spin.

**ON MOMINUL'S CAPTAINCY:** I am expecting the senior players to be of paramount importance

to assisting Mominul to develop his captaincy. We have got some players who have been playing for over 10-12 years like Tamim [Iqbal], Mushfiqur [Rahim] and Shakib and their support to the captain is important in providing options, guidance when things are tough. It's still early days for him and he is trying to develop his style of captaincy. He is very focused and that for me is the main ingredient for a good leader and if he keeps focus and tries to improve the team, he's got a chance.



Bashundhara Kings' Argentine forward Raul Oscar Becerra celebrates his first goal during his side's 4-1 victory over Mohammedan Sporting Club in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Becerra brace drives Kings

SPORTS REPORTER

Holder Bashundhara Kings continued their brilliant run in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 4-1 thrashing of Mohammedan while title contenders Abahani dropped points again with a 1-1 draw against their Chattogram namesake yesterday.

Argentine marksman Raul Becerra, who went through a drought in the league following his five goals in Kings' Federation Cup success, scored a brace to help the defending champions to their fifth victory in five matches at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

Brazilian duo of Robson Da Silva and Jonathan Fernandes also got on the scoresheet as Kings consolidated their lead with 15 points, four ahead of third-placed Abahani while Mohammedan slipped to eighth position with five points from as many matches.

Mohammedan had put on a fighting display against archrivals Abahani in a 2-2 draw at this venue in their previous match, but the Black and Whites simply failed to match

the quality of Bashundhara Kings, who took only eight minutes to take the lead.

Becerra played a nice one-two with Fernandes before heading the ball home from inside the box but Mohammedan staged a short-yet-strong comeback to level the margin in the 22nd minute when Abiola Nurat slotted home a feeble clearance from Kings goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico.

Mohammedan's Malian striker Souleymane Diabate rattled the crossbar with a free-kick in the 44th minute before Kings restored their lead with in a superb move right in the next minute. Robinho ran down the left side to enter the box before chipping the ball cleverly with his left foot over advancing Mohammedan goalkeeper Ahsan Habib Bipu.

Kings emerged from the break in a more destructive mood and added two more goals, with Fernandes widening the margin in the 50th minute before Becerra wrapping up the victory with his second goal from the spot in the 80th minute.

**Abahani drop more points**  
Six-time champions Abahani surrendered their lead again as they were held to a 1-1 draw by Chittagong

Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Francisco Rodrigues gave Abahani the lead from a spot-kick in the 31st minute but Chittagong Abahani's Nixon Guyllherme scored the equaliser, this one too from the spot, in the stoppage time of the first half.

Abahani coach Mario Lemos sent unfit Brazilian midfielder Raphael Augusto in an effort to restoring their lead in the second half, but to no avail. Instead the Sky Blues were lucky to leave the field with a point after goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel saved a spot-kick -- the third one awarded in the match by referee Mizanur Rahman -- three minutes before the final whistle.

**Sheikh Russel ride on own goal**  
A second-half stoppage-time own goal from Shoeb Mia helped Sheikh Russel edge Muktiyoddha Sangsad 1-0 at the BNS later in the day.

With the clock ticking down, Obi Moneke ran down the left to release a powerful low cross for Bakhtiyar Duishobekov but the Kyrgyz defender's marker Shoeb put the ball into his own net, helping Sheikh Russel to the second position in the league with 13 points.

## Messi proves worth with terrific free-kick

AFP, Madrid



Lionel Messi underlined his worth to Barcelona by scoring a sensational free-kick on Sunday but Atletico Madrid are in charge of La Liga after beating Cadiz to stand 10 points clear at the top of the table.

Messi's stunning effort in a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao had been matched by the Argentinian's friend and former team-mate Luis Suarez, who earlier curled in a superb free-kick of his own in Atletico's 4-2 victory over Cadiz.

Atletico end the weekend even further ahead after Real Madrid's defeat by Levante on Saturday, which means Zinedine Zidane's side are now level with Barca on points, both of them struggling to keep pace in the title race.

Barca's win at least maintains their

momentum while Messi's 650th club goal may have carried extra satisfaction for the Argentinian, who had the details of his contract published in the Spanish newspaper El Mundo on Saturday night.

El Mundo claimed the deal signed by Messi in 2017 shows he could earn up to 555 million euros over its four years, describing it as "the colossal contract that ruined Barcelona". "Someone has done it with bad intentions to cause problems," said Ronald Koeman. "You have to respect a player who has given so much to Spanish football and to this club. I didn't have any doubts that it wouldn't affect him on the pitch."

Few can argue with Messi's contribution in that regard, with the 33-year-old showing against Bilbao why the club have gone to such lengths to keep him.



Lionel Messi (L) scores his 650th goal for Barcelona from a sublime free-kick during his side's 2-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao in a La Liga home match on Sunday, avenging a defeat by the Basque side in the Spanish Super Cup final. PHOTO: TWITTER



## 'Feels good to be back here'

REUTERS

Serena Williams showed no signs of rust as she began her season with a comfortable 6-1 6-4 win over Daria Gavrilova in Melbourne on Monday to reach the Yarra Valley Classic round of 16.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion, who is warming up for the Australian Open, was at her dominant best after a slow start.

Former world number one Williams has not played since withdrawing from last year's French open second round in September with an Achilles injury. "It feels good to be back here," the 39-year-old Williams, who is chasing a record-equalling 24th major, said. "I felt I was definitely composed and in a zone and trying to do the things I've been working on."

## 'I just keep practising in training'

AGENCIES



Mohamed Salah felt very satisfied after Liverpool's 3-1 victory over West Ham United on Sunday. Salah became the first Liverpool player to score at least 20 goals in four straight seasons since club great Ian Rush after the Egyptian netted twice in Sunday's win.

Salah's double took his tally for the season to 21 in all competitions and manager Jurgen Klopp said the forward had an incredible appetite for goals.

Salah cut in to curl home with his left foot in the 57th minute for his first league goal since December 19, ending a run of six Premier League games without a goal. "I just keep practising in training for my right foot and left foot," the Egyptian reflected. "But it was a good ball from Shaq. I have to give him credit as well for the lovely ball from him. I just kept the first touch and the second was the finish."





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GHATARCHAR-KANCHPUR BUS ROUTE

# High fares on top of monopoly

Govt body decides to recommend ministry concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government-formed committee has proposed fixing a bus fare of Tk 2.2 per kilometre on the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route, where a single company will operate all the buses on a pilot basis from April 1.

The proposed fare is almost 30 percent higher than the current fares in Dhaka city.

The committee led by Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), made the decision at a meeting at the BRTA headquarters on Sunday.

"We will submit our proposal to the ministry [of Road Transport and Bridges], which will finalise the fare," Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Bus Route Rationalisation Committee designated to bring all bus services under a few companies aims to bring discipline on city roads. It decided to begin with the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route.

After the previous meeting of the committee on January 19, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said the city corporation directed the BRTA to update within five days the information on the public buses operating on the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route.

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The top soil of croplands are being cut and taken away in Sylhet's Companyganj upazila. Locally influential people collect the soil in exchange of a minimal amount from farmers. The soil is then sold to brick kilns at a much higher price. This process destroys alluvium of the fields, eventually affecting the farmers and the economy. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

# Sand, stone lifters beat up journo on duty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sand lifters beat up a journalist and tied him to a tree when he went to collect information on a story of sand and stone lifting by destroying the banks of the Jadukata in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila yesterday.

Kamal Hossain is the upazila correspondent of Bangla Daily Sangbad and organising secretary of the upazila press club. He was undergoing treatment at Tahirpur Upazila Health Complex.

Quoting him, local journalist Abir Hasan Manik said Kamal went to collect information to prepare a report on the illegal sand and stone lifting in Ghagotia village around 1:30pm.

Locals said Mahmudul Islam, Deen Islam and Rois Uddin of Ghagotia village started beating up the journalist first and then others joined.

The Daily Star obtained

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COVID VACCINATION

# Dhaka dist gets 4 lakh shots

Training of healthcare workers, volunteers yet to be done

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The government has allocated four lakh shots of Covid-19 vaccine for Dhaka district, Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, additional director general of the health directorate, said yesterday.

Meanwhile, vaccines were yet to be allocated for Narayanganj and Gazipur districts.

The four lakh shots of Covid-19 vaccine are from the 20 lakh doses that were recently gifted by the Indian government.

Except Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur, the government sent 50 lakh vaccine jabs, purchased from Serum Institute of India, to 61 districts by Sunday for the mass inoculation campaign against Covid-19.

As per the government's plan, 60 lakh people will be inoculated in the first month of vaccination beginning on February 7.

Since the first detection of Covid-19 cases in the country on March 8 last year, Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur became the hotspots of Covid-19 cases.

Two of the first three patients were from

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# WB to help upgrade rural communication

Teams up with govt to deliver benefits of Padma bridge

STAR REPORT

The World Bank has agreed to finance rural communication development so that people can effectively avail the benefits of the Padma Bridge, although it had earlier withdrawn its loan for the bridge construction over allegations of graft.

The government and the WB jointly initiated a multi-phased \$1.4 billion 10-year programme to upgrade road communications and other infrastructures in the country's western and southwestern regions.

"The Padma Bridge is going to open a new horizon of economic potential for Bangladesh. In this context, a programme has been adopted by the Government of Bangladesh and the World Bank for the period of 2020-2030 to upgrade rural communication to facilitate and ensure overall socio-economic development," said a press release of the government's Economic Relations Division (ERD).

"Under the programme, a 260-kilometer national highway from Hatikumul, Sirajganj to Bhomra land port will be upgraded from two lanes to four lanes with a service lane by the RHD [the Road and Highways Department]," said the press release yesterday.

Besides, the upgrading of logistics infrastructure of selected markets, growth centres, connected road networks for agriculture value chains and associated amenities will be done by the Government Engineering Department," the press release added.

As part of implementation of the programme, the government yesterday signed a \$500 million financing agreement to implement a project titled "Western Economic Corridor and Regional Enhancement Program (WeCARE) Phase-I: Rural Connectivity, Market and Logistic Infrastructure Improvement Project (RCMLIIP)."

The project, the first of a multi-phased \$1.4 billion 10-year programme,

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# Teen gang-raped, 3 accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court yesterday sent three men, accused of gang-raping a 10th-grader in a case filed by her father, to jail in the district's Ghoraghat upazila.

All three were arrested on Sunday night after the victim's father filed a rape case with the Ghoraghat Police Station the same day.

The arrestees are Labu Mia, 28, a night guard, Ashraful Islam, 35, and Omar Faruk, 21, a mason.

Police sent all the accused to Dinajpur District Jail through a local court yesterday, said Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of the station.

According to family members and the first information report (FIR) filed with Ghoraghat Police Station, Labu had gotten hold of the girl's phone number and, pretending to be someone she knew,

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# People sleep less on nights before a full moon: study



MAIL ONLINE

On nights leading up to a full moon, people go to bed later and sleep for shorter periods of time, a new study reveals.

US researchers observed the same variations in both the time of sleep onset and the duration of sleep among indigenous people living in rural settings and college students in urban settings.

Sleep cycles generally oscillated during the 29.5-day lunar cycle, during which time the moon gradually goes from being effectively invisible (a new moon), to a full bright, gleaming sphere (full moon), and back again.

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# 10 more die, 443 get the virus

UNB, Dhaka

Ten more people died of novel coronavirus and 443 new cases were reported in Bangladesh in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With the latest fatalities, the death toll from the virus reached 8,137. The mortality rate stood at 1.52 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said in a handout.

It said the Covid-19 infection rate in the country is now 3.55 percent.

Meanwhile, the new

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## PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 2

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5:30	12:45	4:15	5:52
JAMAAT	6:05	1:15	4:30	5:56
				7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Gold robbed from temple in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Gold ornaments, weighing around 30 grams, have been stolen from the idol of goddess Kali at Sri Sri Ugra Tara temple and Shaktipith in Shikarpur village of Barishal's Ujirpur upazila.

Debashish Das, vice-chairman of the temple committee, said the priest of the temple, one of the oldest in Barishal division, opened its gate yesterday morning and found that the ornaments, including the crown of the goddess, were missing. He informed the committee and the police about the matter immediately.

Asked, he said, "No door of the temple was broken. Also, there is a CCTV camera. But someone tried to disconnect it."

Debashish said the priest had locked the temple gate that night before returning to his home situated nearby.

"We demand the quick recovery of those ornaments and arrest of the

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Ignoring health risks, a woman is melting plastic waste using an electric machine in the capital's Kamrangir Char area. At least a hundred factories in the area purchase waste plastic bottles from rag pickers, and melt and turn those into new plastic products. Meanwhile, the workers are not provided with any safety gear. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Time to team up, tackle Long Covid

Says WHO expert; EU secures extra vaccines after row

AGENCIES

It is time to start solving the mystery of Long Covid, an aspect of the pandemic blighting millions of lives, the World Health Organization's leader on post-Covid conditions told AFP.

Little is known about why some people, after coming through the acute phase of Covid-19, struggle to recover and suffer ongoing symptoms including tiredness, brain fog, cardiac and neurological disorders.

At this stage of the pandemic, the world is fixated on vaccine roll-out and new, more contagious variants of the coronavirus.

However, Long Covid deserves similar urgent attention, said Janet Diaz, the clinical care lead in the WHO's emergencies programme, ahead of a push for a globally-unified approach to the problem.

"We still don't fully understand what Long Covid is," Diaz told AFP in an interview outside the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

"There's quite a bit to learn, but I am confident that the scientific community is really rallying around."

Tellingly, Long Covid does not yet have a proper name. The WHO currently calls it post-Covid condition, while other terms in circulation include post-acute Covid syndrome and Covid long haulers.

The WHO is hosting a first global seminar on Long Covid on February 9. It will bring scientists, experts and clinicians together to define the condition, give it a formal name and harmonise study methods.

"It's a condition that needs further description, further understanding of how many are affected and

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