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Your Right to Know

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"This war has to end. And to underscore our commitment, we're ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arm sales."
US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN



"I absolutely wouldn't be playing if I didn't think that."
AMERICAN TENNIS LEGEND SERENA WILLIAMS, WHEN ASKED IF SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS STILL THE BEST IN THE WORLD.



"We need to join up to speed up vaccinations. Otherwise competing pharmaceutical companies (must) join efforts to drastically increase production capacity... that's what we need."
WHO EUROPE DIRECTOR HANS KLUGE

COMPENSATION FOR RAPE VICTIMS

Crippled law cares little

Despite periodic calls for legal reforms, it remains hard to get

NILIMA JAHAN

Compensation for rape victims and their family members remains elusive in the existing criminal justice system, with a clear mandate absent in the relevant law, say legal experts.

On the other hand, a law drawn up to address compensation for victims of violent crimes, including rape, has been in the draft stages for 14 years.

Legal experts said the current system has left rape victims and their families to fend for themselves during long, difficult trial proceedings, deprived of state support they desperately need.

Take the widely reported case of the five-year-old girl abducted and raped by the father of one of her friends while she was playing near her home in Dinajpur in October 2016.

The rapist left her unconscious, in critical condition with genital injuries, stab wounds, bite marks, and cigarette burns, according to media reports and the family.

More than four years on, trial proceedings are still ongoing. But the young victim and

her family have been left to bear the burden of their personal circumstances alone while the state takes no responsibility -- other than only assigning a prosecutor to represent them before the court.

According to her mother, the incident changed their lives drastically.

Though the child underwent yearlong treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital's One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), even today, she is yet to talk or walk properly. She also lost bladder control, which is why the now nine-year-old can no longer attend school regularly.

"She needs to change her pants every five to 10 minutes. When she goes to school, I put some clean clothes inside her pants to absorb the urine, as our financial condition is not good enough to buy diapers every day," her mother told The Daily Star.

"After another operation, her bladder problem might be solved. But she has been psychologically affected since then, as she has become very stubborn and always screams when she doesn't get her own way. The doctors suggested allowing her to do

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Railway and fire service staffers conduct rescue work while locals collect diesel oil that spilled from oil tank wagons of a train in Sylhet's Fenchuganj upazila yesterday, hours after the Sylhet-bound train from Chattogram derailed there. Train services on Sylhet-Dhaka and Sylhet-Chattogram routes were suspended following the accident. Inset, a man fills a container with oil. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



KASHIMPUR CENTRAL JAIL Govt sacks jail super, jailer

They allowed an inmate to spend time with a woman at prison officer's room

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry sacked a senior jail superintendent and a jailer of Kashimpur Central Jail-1 for letting an inmate spend time with a woman inside a prison officer's room.

Superintendent Ratna Roy and jailer Nur Mohammad Mridha were sacked after leaked security camera footage showed a woman meeting inmate Tushar Ahmed, general manager of Hallmark Group, on January 6.

The Ministry of Home Affairs also asked the inspector general (IG) of prisons to take action against others involved.

Md Shahiduzzaman, secretary at the ministry's security services division, told The Daily Star yesterday that an order was sent to the department of prisons regarding the matter on Thursday.

The ministry can directly act against a jail superintendent and a jailer, but it is the inspector general (IG) of prisons, who has the authority to decide about the others, said the secretary.

Shahiduzzaman said the ministry asked to take action against the officials, but could not provide any numbers.

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MASS VACCINATION FROM TOMORROW Campaign hardly reaches villages

Union digital centres waiting for people to come for registration

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The mass inoculation against Covid-19 begins tomorrow, but the government's campaign to raise awareness on the vaccination has hardly reached rural areas.

As a result, the number of people going to the digital centres at the unions to register online for the inoculation appears to be very low.

The Daily Star found this after talking to over a dozen such centres, picked randomly. Not a single person went to those centres till yesterday.

The government had instructed around 6,686 digital centres at unions across the country to help people with the registration. The instruction was given keeping in mind that many in the rural area might not have the technical know-how regarding the online registration.

Take the example of one centre in Baldhara union of Manikganj. Md Sabuj Raihan, an entrepreneur from the centre, said no one went there to take help for the registration. "We're waiting for people to come."

Similar is the case with another digital centre in Rajabari union of Gazipur. Shaymal Chandra Das, an entrepreneur there, said people were yet to show up for the registration. "Our centre is ready. We are waiting to assist people," he added.

Asked why they did not initiate any awareness campaign ahead of the mass inoculation, public representatives at the rural level in different districts said they were yet to receive any instruction in this regard from the higher authorities.

Md Jahangir Alam, chairman of Mawna Union Parishad in Gazipur, is one of them.

Echoing Alam's statement, Selina Begum, a women ward councillor in Telihati union of Gazipur's Sreepur, said she herself was not much aware of the mass campaign.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

RAPE OF UNIV STUDENT One accused confesses to raping her

Gives statement to a Dhaka court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the accused in the case over rape of a private university student yesterday confessed to a Dhaka court that he had raped the victim at her friend's house in the city's Mohammadpur area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Satyabrata Sikder recorded the confessional statement of accused Mortuza Raihan Chowdhury after Investigation Officer Sajedul Haque, also a sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, produced him before the court, said court sources.

The magistrate later sent Mortuza, 21, to jail.

The victim died while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in the city on Sunday, a day after her father filed the rape case with Mohammadpur Police Station accusing five of her

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

COUP IN MYANMAR Protests grow amid arrests

UNSC final statement fails to condemn putsch; Biden demands military 'relinquish power'

AGENCIES

Several hundred teachers and students protested at a Myanmar university yesterday as the military widened a dragnet against officials ousted in a coup that has drawn global condemnation and the threat of new sanctions.

The rally took place after the arrest Win Htein, a key aide to de facto leader Aung Sang Suu Kyi, who has not been seen in public since being detained along with president Win Myint early Monday.

A representative of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy yesterday said she was being held at her residence in Naypyidaw, the country's capital, and was "in good health".

Monday's putsch ended the country's 10-year dalliance with democracy that followed decades of oppressive junta rule, and sparked outrage and calls by US President Joe Biden for the generals to relinquish power.

On Friday, around 200 teachers and students at Yangon's Dagon University staged a rally where they displayed a three-finger salute borrowed from Thailand's democracy movements, and sang a popular revolution song.

"We have to resist this dictatorship," lecturer Win Win Maw told AFP. "If all civil servants participate in this movement, it's not easy to operate this government system."

Students chanted "Long live Mother Suu" and carried red flags, the colour of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Tigers on top despite late stutter

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Despite taking a big lead in the first innings, Bangladesh are still in some discomfort after West Indies managed to dismiss their top three batsman at the end of the first day of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

After striking his maiden Test ton the previous day, Mehedi Hasan Miraz was instrumental with his off-spin and bagged four wickets to help bundle out West Indies for 259. Bangladesh in their second innings will resume the fourth day on 47 for three.

The Tigers are now leading by 218 runs with skipper Mominul Haque batting on 31 off fifty balls with the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim not out on 10.

The hosts will likely be looking to bat till tea today and post a big target. It will be a tough ask for the Windies batsmen to negotiate the home

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

18th Death Anniversary



Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)
Death: 6th February, 2003

This day in 2003, we lost our beloved & honorable Director Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu). We mourn his pre-mature death. With our distressed heart, we pray to Almighty Allah for his eternal peace. May Allah bless him. Ameen.

All Employees

ABUL KHAIR GROUP

In 2003, on this very day, you left us at the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent. Your pre-matured departure has made us and many of your relations overwhelmed with grief. It is straining that you are not in this mundane world with us. But we are feeling your existence by remembering the tender-aged days of your life.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul and request all friends, relatives, well-wishers to pray for him from the core of heart.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Bereaved members of the family

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

BITTERNS

The first word that comes to mind when I think of bitterns is "shy." Although I have seen all three species of bitterns found in Bangladesh, it has never been easy. They hide inside foliage, camouflage exceedingly well and fly away quickly when I approached.

Bitterns belong to the heron family Ardeidae. Around the world there are fifteen species of bitterns divided into two genera. The genus *Botaurus* contains larger bitterns such as the American Bittern made immortal by John James Audobon's painting. The genus *Ixobrychus* contains the smaller bitterns. (A third genus, *Ziberychus*, has only the Zigzag Heron.)

Bitterns inhabit marshy areas, wetlands and edges of water bodies. They nest in reeds and aqueous plants and eat frogs, insects, reptiles and fish.

The bitterns of Bangladesh - Cinnamon Bittern, Yellow Bittern and Black Bittern - live here year-round. They share our wetlands with many other herons, egrets, storks and waders. All three belong to the genus *Ixobrychus*.

I saw the Cinnamon Bittern years ago while driving from Sylhet to Kanaighat. The fields on both sides of the road were drenched with the green that comes in monsoon. From the car, I saw a flash of rusty red colour on a bush and stopped for a closer look.

As I took some photographs of the smallest bird about the size of a *Kani Boga*, it stared back at me fearlessly. It remains the only fearless bittern I have encountered. Over time I have seen many more Cinnamon Bitterns, but they were quick flashes. Usually they stay hidden in rice paddies. If I am walking by and inadvertently come too close, they take off swiftly.

The Yellow Bittern is about the same size as its reddish cousin. I



Black Bittern, Hail Haor, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

have seen it numerous times in Purbachol usually near ponds. It flies past quickly but on two occasions I saw it perched high on a bamboo. Its yellow and brown pattern blended with yellow bamboo leaves, affording it a near-perfect camouflage.

Watching it while it was perched I noticed a distinct behaviour of this bird. While relaxed, its neck was fully retracted. But when alerted, its head shot up atop a very long neck, like a periscope.

The real challenge of bitterns, for me, has been the Black Bittern. I saw it in a fishpond in Hail Haor. I was looking for a small bird that had flown into a jumble of aqueous shrubs at water's edge when suddenly a large dark bird flew out from there. I was able to

take some quick photographs and later confirmed it to be a Black Bittern.

That remains my only Black Bittern sighting. Another time, when I was sure I had found it, further examination of the photograph revealed that it was a sub-adult Little Heron that looked quite close to a Black Bittern.

In my overseas birding trips I have never seen a bittern. That makes sense, because birding during these trips is often rushed, and to see the skulky bitterns one needs supreme good luck or lots of time.

www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

ALCOHOL POISONING

DB arrests one over 3 deaths

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police yesterday arrested a man in connection with the death of three staffers of a media organisation, who died due to alcohol poisoning following their trip to a resort in Gazipur.

Police's Gazipur Detective Branch (DB) arrested Zahid Mridha (42), from the capital's Nikunja area yesterday on charges of supplying liquor to the office retreat, said AKM Zahirul Islam, superintendent of police (Crime) at a press briefing at Gazipur's SP office.

On January 31 and February 1, three staffers of a media organisation died after several were hospitalised from allegedly consuming adulterated alcohol.

ILLEGAL BRICK KILNS IN CTG

SC clears way to shut them down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has upheld until its further order a High Court directive that asked the government to shut down all illegal brick kilns, having no valid license, in Chattogram.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Nuruzzaman on Thursday refused to stay the HC order.

The apex court's chamber judge, however, sent the appeal -- filed by 18 owners of total 23 brick kilns challenging the HC order -- to its full bench and set August 29 for hearing on it.

Following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC on December 14 last year directed authorities concerned to shut down illegal brick kilns in Chattogram in a week, in order to save the environment.

The HC also asked authorities to find out those involved in damaging farmland

and hills, burning woods and polluting environment by running illegal brick kilns, and to submit a list of their names and addresses to this court.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain why its inaction to shut down the illegal brick kilns should not be declared illegal.

Eighteen owners of 23 brick kilns in Chattogram recently filed an appeal with the Appellate Division challenging the HC directives and seeking stay on the directives.

During hearing of the appeal, Mahmuda Begum, a lawyer for the brick kiln owners, told the SC hundreds of people work in their kilns. If these are shut down, the workers will become unemployed.

Writ petitioner's lawyer Manzil Murshid opposed the appeal, saying no brick kiln without license can run according to the Brick Preparation and Field Setup [Control] Act), 2013.



Being put on a wheelchair didn't become an obstacle for Chattogram's Md Shukkur. Instead, it was fashioned as a mobile shopfront for Tk 18,000, which Shukkur now uses to ferry snacks across the city. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO PRABIR DAS

Dhaka observing Myanmar army's approach cautiously

Foreign Minister says on Rohingya repatriation

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abndul Momen said that Bangladesh is cautiously gauging Myanmar army's intentions about the remaining Rohingya population at Rakhine province, as reports suggest the Myanmar military is taking a reconciliation approach.

"It's welcoming," he said in an exclusive interview with BSS as reports coming from other side of the border said regional military commanders yesterday visited the Rohingya community for the third consecutive day.

Momen said Dhaka decided to "approach directly" the new Myanmar government to resume talks over repatriation, with China's mediation under a tripartite negotiation.

The recent coup in Myanmar forced the postponement of a tripartite working group meeting on February 4 and Dhaka could not communicate with Naypyidaw.

According to the information a regional army commander in Rakhine pledged that the military would solve all problems of the Rohingya crisis step by step and hold Aung Sun Suu Kyi's NLD government responsible.

It was also reported that Myanmar military officials in Rakhine indicated that existing

restrictions on Rohingya movements would be eased shortly. Officials in Dhaka said the information gathered through diplomatic and other channels substantiated the reports.

The foreign minister said Myanmar's new military regime was exposed to international criticism, a situation which could prompt them to repatriate Rohingyas from Bangladesh to lighten pressure particularly from the western world.

But, he said, it was "too early to comment" whether the Myanmar military's positive gesture was truly indicative of a softened attitude towards the Rohingyas.

Momen recalled two previous times when Rohingyas were forced to flee their homes in the 70s and 90s. Many were repatriated in 1978 and 1992, when Myanmar was under military rule. "The last two repatriations took place when military was in state power in Myanmar. [So] I am optimistic," he said.

He expected the existing bilateral agreements regarding Rohingya repatriation would remain valid since the instruments were signed between two governments.

Bangladesh has provided the neighbours biometric data of 8,30,000 Rohingyas while Myanmar have verified only 42,000 of them.

LAW DESK

Recently, at least 25 people were injured in separate clashes between workers and police in Kushtia and Narayanganj. Of them, five Bidi (hand-rolled cigarette) workers sustained bullet injuries, as police opened fire on them. The clash took place when the workers were demonstrating demanding their due wages.

This incident is part of a pattern. Internationally, Bangladesh has, over a period, been called out for handling protests and lawful strikes with mass dismissals, and excessive and unjustified use of force.

Bangladesh has undertaken international obligations to ensure safety and protection of workers. However, more often, its responses to protests, demonstrations and strikes run counter to such pledges.

In 2019, Human Rights Watch (HRW) interviewed eight individuals who witnessed actions like police violence in connection with workers' demonstrations and dismissed workers. They reviewed lists of fired workers and dismissal notices and

found out how Bangladesh routinely resorts to mass dismissals and violence to curb protests.

HRW deputy Asia director had earlier said, "It's grotesque to imagine police raiding homes and indiscriminately shooting rubber bullets, but that is exactly what Bangladesh authorities have resorted to."

While the right to strike is not absolute in international law, and may be subject to certain restrictions, the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association "made it clear that [the right to strike] is a right, which workers, and their organisations (trade unions, federations and confederations) are entitled to enjoy."

The committee further noted that any restriction on the right to strike "should not be excessive", and that the "legitimate exercise of the right to strike should not entail prejudicial penalties of any sort, which would imply acts of anti-union discrimination".

Any penalty handed down for participating in an illegal strike should be proportionate to the offence, according to international human

rights standards. In a 2019 newspaper article, HRW thoroughly discussed the measures Bangladesh regularly adopts against protests and demonstrations and underscored their inconsistency with the human rights standards.

HRW considers dismissal for exercising the right to strike a disproportionate disciplinary sanction, more so, because the ILO considers sanctions for participating in strikes acceptable only when national law itself is consistent with international standards on freedom of association.

The ILO committee responsible for interpreting the application of the international labour standards, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, has stated that "sanctions for strike action, including dismissals, should be possible only where strike prohibitions are in conformity with the principles of freedom of association".

The committee has repeatedly held Bangladesh Labour Act in violation of ILO conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Three killed as truck hits auto-rickshaw in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three people were killed and five injured after a truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Chattogram city's Rahattarpur area on Thursday night.

Ahid Mia (30), Abdul Mannan (40) and Sahid Maji (55) succumbed to their injuries an hour after they were admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, said Md Hamid, assistant sub-inspector of CMCH police outpost.

Md Lokman, brother-in-law of Mannan, told The Daily Star the three worked as labourers at Chaktai Shutki Palli. They were returning from work.

"On information, we rushed to the spot and took them to CMCH," he said.

Ruhul Sabuj, officer-in-charge of Bakalia Police Station, said the injured were undergoing treatment at the hospital.



Even in the age of contemporary digital graphic design, Mohammad Javed and his hand-made tin designs -- a vocation stretching three generations -- keep thriving in Puran Dhaka. This photo was taken from Nazimuddin Road recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

It ensured Kishore, Mushtaq cannot speak truth to power

Say protesters demanding their immediate release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A collective of students, teachers, and general public convened at Shahbagh yesterday to mark nine months since the incarceration of writer Mushtaq Ahmed and cartoonist Ahmed Kishore, both of whom had been imprisoned under the Digital Security Act.

They had been arrested last year for creating political cartoons commenting on the pandemic, and for sharing those on social media. The speakers demanded their immediate release.

"The country is going through a crisis because of Digital Security Act. This Act was formed to make sure that people like Kishore and Mushtaq do not speak truth to power," said Bangladesh Chhatra Federation's central committee president, Golam Mustafa.

"This is not for the safety of the general public, but for the safety of the government, so that the government can retain their power. This government does not take the opinion of the general public," said Mustafa.

"As a cartoonist, Kishore wrote about corruption. You cannot silence our voices by arresting people under the DSA. Words will flow, the pen will go on," he added.

Criminals are being let loose while innocent people rot in prison, speakers said.

Bail is a legal right that all citizens have, as long as they will not obstruct the investigation process after getting bail. The state party has routinely insisted that Kishore and Mushtaq do not deserve bail, said the speakers.

To obstruct bail, the state party has continued to defame characters of Kishore and Mushtaq in court, they added.

Last year on May 6, Mushtaq and Kishore were charged with "knowingly posting rumours against the Father of the Nation, the Liberation War and the coronavirus pandemic to negatively affect the nation's image and to create confusion among the public through social media and to cause the law and order situation to deteriorate."

Bangladesh Chhatra Odhakar Songrokkhon Parishad's DU unit president Binyamin Mollah said, "We need to question who it is that is clamping down on the editors of the biggest media organisations."

"When this act was passed, the general public had protested it. People speaking against the government are being arrested now," said Parbatya Chattagram Pahari Chhatra Parishad's member Amal Tripura.

Imtiaz Ahmed Kajol from Kishoreganj said, "I was locked up in Kishoreganj jail for 10 months. My only crime was speaking up. The local politicians prosecuted me."

Hungary turns down

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FROM PAGE 12
shots of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine as a token of gratitude for the 500 burn and restorative plastic surgeries performed pro bono by Hungarian doctors of the Action For Defenceless People Foundation, as well as the successful separation of Siamese twins, Rabeya and Rokaiya, in Bangladesh.

"We thanked them for the offer, but will not accept it," Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade wrote to pro-government Magyar Nemzet without explaining why Hungary wouldn't accept the offer.

Contacted, Shahriar Alam yesterday texted to The Daily Star: "I don't want to comment further on this matter".

No harm if same official

FROM PAGE 12

On December 8 last year, the bench had delivered the short judgement rejecting a writ petition filed challenging the legality of an amended rule that allows the ACC to appoint an officer to conduct both the inquiry and investigation of a corruption case.

The writ petition was filed by former chairman of Ekushey Television (ETV) Abdus Salam, an accused in some corruption cases.

In the full text of the verdict, the HC observed that the question raised by the writ petition about unfairness of the trial as the same ACC official is informant and investigation officer of a case filed against him does not have any merit.

"It is to be noted that a case initiated on allegation of any scheduled offence of corruption chiefly rests upon documentary evidence on initial appraisal of which FIR [first information report] is lodged to set the law on motion and accordingly the task of investigation goes on and eventually report recommending prosecution is submitted.

"In such case, even if the informant and the investigation officer is the same person or official of the Commission, there can be no space of recommending concocted arraignment, going beyond the documentary evidence collected.

"Thus, it may be justifiably deduced that mere fact that the informant and the investigating officer is the same official of the Commission does not readily taint the fairness of trial started on the basis of such investigation report and also there lies no room to apprehend that trial of the case shall be prejudiced," read the verdict.

The HC judges in the full text of the

'America is back'

FROM PAGE 12

"Investing in our diplomacy isn't something we do just because it's the right thing to do for the world," he said. "We do it in order to live in peace, security and prosperity. We do it because it's in our own naked self-interest."

"America is back. Diplomacy is back," Biden told a socially distanced auditorium of diplomats.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris traveled together to the State Department in a symbol of a renewed focus on diplomacy.

The venue choice for his first big diplomatic address was an important symbol of the value he places in career diplomats, who Trump largely saw as opponents.

"American alliances are our greatest asset. And leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder to shoulder with our allies and key partners once again," Biden said.

Biden in his early days has attempted to repair what he has called the damage to America's standing around the world, rolling back Trump policies. He is working to

revive the Iran deal, and renewed US membership in the Paris accord and the World Health Organization.

Biden said the United States would end all support including connected arms sales for ally Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, which he said "has created a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe."

He appointed a US special envoy for Yemen, veteran diplomat Timothy Lenderking, who Biden said would support UN efforts to reach a ceasefire and revive peace talks between the government and Huthi rebels who control much of the country, including the capital Sanaa.

"This war has to end," Biden said. But he also renewed US support for defending Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and its territorial integrity and its people.

Saudi Arabia reacted to Biden's speech by reasserting its commitment to a political solution in Yemen, according to state media. Riyadh also welcomed Biden's commitment to cooperate with the kingdom to defend its sovereignty, the official Saudi Press Agency added.

The ACC filed the case with Ramna Model Police Station on March 13, 2017 against Salam on charges of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 32.20 crore.

ACC Deputy Director Md Shamsul Alam conducted both the inquiry and investigation of the corruption case against Salam.

Speaking to The Daily Star, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said the ACC rule is valid and the commission can appoint an officer to conduct both the inquiry and investigation of a corruption case following the HC verdict and there is no legal bar for the commission to proceed with the corruption cases against Abdus Salam.

Salam had filed the writ petition with the HC in September last year challenging the legality of an amended rule of the Anti-Corruption Commission Rules, 2007 that allows the graft watch to appoint an officer to conduct both the inquiry and investigation of a corruption case.

In the same petition, Salam prayed to the HC to scrap the proceedings of the corruption case filed against him by the ACC.

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Pierre Claquin passes away

STAR REPORT

A long-time friend of Bangladesh Dr Pierre Claquin, a French citizen, who worked for small pox and poliovirus eradication in Bangladesh, died in Paris on February 4, aged 74.

He had been suffering from diabetes and kidney disease, said a press release.

Dr Pierre Claquin, a medical epidemiologist, public health specialist, and teacher, worked in many countries of Africa, and South and Central Asia including Bangladesh. He spent much of his professional career in Bangladesh working for primary health care, maternal-child health and expanded programme on immunization projects.

He first came to Bangladesh in 1972 to work as a medical officer when the country remained badly damaged by the Liberation War and the health care delivery system was literally non-existent. He was based in the remote upazila of Shariakandi, Bogura.

Afterwards, between 1975 and 2018, he had worked for several public health projects in Bangladesh supporting the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

He was also an internationally renowned photographer who loved to portray the life of marginalised people and their livelihoods. He had several photo exhibitions in Bangladesh that included "Borrowed faces", "The Eastern Gallery of the Berlin Wall", "1972-2002: The changing faces of Shariakandi", "Surviving Dreams: the struggling circus of Bangladesh".

Pierre Claquin was fluent in Bangla. He left behind a host of relatives, friends, and colleagues in Bangladesh including renowned filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel, photographer Anwar Hossain and Nasir Ali Mamun.

Serajul Hoque Khan no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Serajul Hoque Khan, a former Bangladesh Bank official, passed away yesterday. He was 74.

Serajul father of Mahbubur Rahman Khan, staff correspondent of The Daily Star,

He left behind his wife, five sons, grandsons, granddaughters, relatives and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

Serajul Hoque had been suffering from brain cancer for last couple of months. He breathed his last around 4:30am at his residence in the capital's Mir Hazaribagh.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Mir Hazaribagh after Juma prayers. He was buried in a graveyard at his Kewatkhali village in Sreenagar, Munshiganj following the second janaza after Asr prayers.

A doa mahfil and food distribution among orphans will be held at his village mosque after Juma prayers on February 12.

His family members requested all to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Portrait of Pierre Claquin, a French citizen who worked for small pox and poliovirus eradication in Bangladesh.

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Malaysia cops probing

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Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur regarding the latest incident.

According to the FMT report, the video was filmed by a taxi driver speaking in Tamil about policemen demanding bribes from a Bangladeshi passenger on his way to Bangladesh after months of unemployment.

The taxi driver claims police personnel stopped the vehicle at a roadblock and the passenger showed them his documents, which were in order, said the report.

The officer, however, said the passenger had to pay a fine of 1,000 Malaysian ringgits as he was crossing the Kuala Lumpur-Selangor border. The driver himself was let off. However, he claims the passenger was taken a distance away and extorted out of 100 Malaysian ringgits, the report mentioned.

In a Facebook post, Selangor police said they were investigating the matter and thanked whoever had brought it to light, according to the FMT report.

"We are taking this issue very seriously," they said. "We will not compromise on any form of

wrongdoing, fellow officer or not."

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme, said the Bangladeshi man had all the valid documents, including a Covid-19 negative certificate, to return to the country.

Even after showing the documents, police were asking for bribes. This was because the police knew the man was a Bangladeshi, and nothing happens when a Bangladeshi is exploited, Shariful alleged.

"During several visits, I've found Bangladeshis being harassed in the country. Bribery and extortion are regular phenomena. I've also heard that when a Bangladeshi's work permit expires, they are forced to give bribes when stopped by police. Police also have a negative attitude towards Bangladeshis," he added.

He also alleged that Bangladeshis were often isolated and interrogated at the Kuala Lumpur airport and mistreated at detention centres.

This correspondent yesterday called Labour Welfare Counsellor Zahirul Islam of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur multiple times for comment but could not reach him.

Al Jazeera report

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commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and General Secretary Mohammad Zaidul Alam, superintendent of police in Narayanganj, strongly condemned the report.

It said the Al Jazeera report quoted a person who claimed that the home minister, the inspector general of police (IGP) and the DMP commissioner appointed an OC through bribery. "We are not sure whether that person made such a statement at all or the statement was created through cut, copy and paste," said the association.

The association leaders said they initially found out through investigation that the person has been living abroad for a long time. Due to his long stay abroad, he has no clear idea about the current generation of policemen and the work system of the law enforcers. He also has no involvement with the current generation of police officers in Bangladesh. His remarks about the police in the interview appear to be based on imagination, they added.

The association leaders also said the person spoke about the transfer of an OC to DMP's Airport Police Station. The jurisdiction of the police station is not as wide as that of other police stations and it is the smallest among 50 police stations' under the DMP.

The number of people living in the Airport Police Station area is less than those under other police stations in the capital. Besides, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport is located within

the jurisdiction of the Airport Police Station. The scope of work of the airport police is very limited in the airport and the adjoining protected areas where different other forces and agencies are engaged in maintaining security and law and order.

Terming the home minister as an honest, gentle and ideal political person, the rejoinder said according to the administrative procedure, he is not involved in the appointment of any OC in the police station.

Such a statement about a respected person who is acceptable to all is undesirable. The rejoinder also termed IGP Benazir Ahmed as a police officer with a 'clean image' and said he, as the chief of police, is not involved in any way in the transfer/posting of OC to the police station.

It further said the current police commissioner of DMP is well known as an efficient officer who took different initiatives to ensure that the service seekers who come to the police station get proper legal services and are not harassed in any way.

In that case, the issue of accepting bribes for transfer/posting of an OC is nothing but "nonsense", the rejoinder said.

This proves that the person, quoted in the Al Jazeera, has no idea about the internal affairs of Bangladesh Police. Such statements are imaginary and fabricated, it added.

The rejoinder also said at a time when the Bangladesh Police is being built to suit the needs of a developed Bangladesh in 2041, the spreading of such "malicious reports" by a vested quarter is highly undesirable.

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan's first death anniversary today

STAR REPORT

Today is the first death anniversary of Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, a weekly columnist for The Daily Star for many years, and the publisher and editor of now defunct weekly magazine, First News.

He also served for a long time with Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) and was stationed in Dhaka and Dubai. A passionate writer, he left his banking career and SCB in 2010 to publish the country's first and only news magazine, "First News".

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, the inimitable weekly author of "Cross Talk" in The Daily Star, started writing his column in 2000.

He also wrote several books -- including "Grameen Bank and Muhammad Yunus", "In Search of a Nation", and "Tales from the Heart", published by Mowla Brothers. "A Good Man in the Woods and other essays", "Crosstalk Essays", and "The Parallax View", were published by The University Press Limited.

All are requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Allegations

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personnel is pursuant to specific requirements from the UN that are reflected in agreements with Bangladesh for each peacekeeping operation that they contribute to," the spokesperson for the UN secretary-general said.

"The UN has not identified in any of these agreements a requirement for the capability provided by the operation of electronic equipment in the nature described by Al Jazeera in its documentary, and such equipment has not been deployed with Bangladeshi contingents in UN peacekeeping operations," he added.

"We have required in one peacekeeping operation, in line with the relevant UN intelligence peacekeeping policy, the capability to intercept certain types of communications as a measure to enhance the security of UN personnel in situations where security conditions warrant its use. This capability is employed strictly in accordance with UN Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy and under the operational authority of the Force Commander," Dujarric said.

Government of The people's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Technical Education
F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
Phone- 02-9111023, e-mail: advocddo@gmail.com

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education, Technical and Madrasah Education Division	
2	Agency	Directorate of Technical Education	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Vocational)	
4	Invitation for	Supply Manpower Through outsourcing in 35 Technical School and College (TSC) at Different Upzilla.	
5	Invitation Ref No	57.03.0000.027.07.11.21-778	
6	Date	03.02.2021	
KEY INFORMATION			
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
8	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB	
9	Tender Package No.	DTE/VOC/OUTSOURCING/2020 2021/01	
10	Tender Package Name	Supply of Manpower Through outsourcing in 35 Technical School and College at Different Upzilla.	
	Date		
11	Tender Publication Date	08.02.2021	
12	Last Selling of Tender Document Date (must be the date prior to the day of Tender Closing Date)	Date	Time: 17:00
	Date	Time	
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	02.03.2021	12:00 PM
14	Tender Opening Date and Time (within one hour of Tender Closing)	02.03.2021	12:30 PM
15	Pre Tender meeting Date and Time	22.02.2021	2.30 pm
16	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address	
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education Accounts Section, 3 rd Floor, Room No.: 311, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
	- Selling Tender Document (Others)	1. Secretary, Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 2. Principal, Technical Teachers Training College, Teigaon, Dhaka-1208	
	- Receiving Tender Document	Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education Accounts Section, 3 rd Floor, Room No.: 311, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
	- Opening Tender Document	Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education Accounts Section, 3 rd Floor, Room No.: 311, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
17	Eligibility of Tenderer	As per TDS	
18	Brief Description of Services	Supply Of Manpower (Electrician cum pump operator Category 1, Security Guard Category 5, Cleaner Category 5) Through outsourcing in 35 Technical School and College (TSC) at Different Upzilla.	
19	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	2000.00 (Taka Two Thousand Only)	
20	Pckge No	Identification of Package	Location
	01	DTE/VOC/OUTSOURCING/2020_2021/01	Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education
			Tender Security Amount (Tk)
			850000/- (Taka Eight Lac Fifty Thousand only)
			Completion Time in Weeks / Months
			Within 10(Ten) Days after signing contract
21	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings		
22	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		

Dr. Mohd. Abdus Salam
Director (Vocational)
Directorate of Technical Education
Phone: 02-9111023
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World's first flying race car unveiled

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FROM PAGE 12
first race - with the goal of having 10 identical vehicles ready this year.

The craft is being developed and manufactured by a team drawn from leading names in aerospace, automotive and motorsport technology including: McLaren, Babcock Aviation, Boeing, Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls-Royce and Brabham.

ব্র্যান্ড নিউ ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
নর্থ গুলশানের অভিজাত এলাকায় ব্র্যান্ড নিউ ৪৭৯৬ বর্গফুটের একটি অত্যাধুনিক ফ্ল্যাট (তিতাস গ্যাস সংযোগ) ২টি পার্কিং সহ বিক্রয় হবে।
যোগাযোগ: ০১৯৪৯ ১১১ ৯৯৯

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Oil-carrying

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FROM PAGE 2
yesterday while two other trains on the way to Sylhet from Dhaka and Chattogram had been waiting in Kulaura and Sreemangal for the lines to be fixed, he added.

This has been the fourth derailment of oil tankers in Sylhet division in the last five months.

The other incidents happened in Kulaura on September 15, in Sreemangal on November 7, and in Madhabpur on December 6.

A five-member probe-body, headed by Railway's Divisional Transport Officer Khairul Islam, was formed to investigate the cause of yesterday's derailment.

On June 24, 2019, four people got killed and several others injured when a passenger train fell off the tracks.

Sabuktagin, chief engineer (eastern) of Bangladesh Railway, said, "Sylhet division is hilly, which makes it difficult to control the speed. The train that derailed was going 48km per hour, which is well over the limit of 30km."

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Russia ties at 'low point' Says EU top diplomat in Moscow

AFP, Moscow

The European Union's top diplomat yesterday said that the bloc's ties with Russia had reached a new low following the jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, but still raised hopes for cooperation.

In Moscow for talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell repeated European calls for Navalny's release and an investigation into his poisoning last year.

"Our relationship is indeed in a difficult moment," Borrell told Lavrov, adding that EU-Russia ties are "under severe strain and the Navalny case is a low point."

Hours after his comment, Moscow said it was expelling diplomats from Poland, Germany and Sweden for participating in unsanctioned demonstrations last month in support of 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner Navalny.



University teachers hold up three-finger salutes and signs with red ribbons calling for civil disobedience during a protest against the military coup at Dagon University in Yangon, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'UNCONSTITUTIONAL' IMPEACHMENT TRIAL Trump refuses to testify

US House punishes lawmaker in QAnon storm, Republicans cry foul

AFP, Washington

Former president Donald Trump refused Thursday to testify in his looming impeachment trial after being called by House prosecutors to give evidence, branding the process "unconstitutional."

Trump's lawyers ridiculed the request in a letter by lead House prosecutor Jamie Raskin to answer questions over the January 6 attack on the US Capitol as a "public relations stunt."

The refusal came five days before the trial of the former US leader on one charge of "incitement to insurrection" opens in the US Senate.

The Democratic House prosecutors, or impeachment managers, say the Republican leader was "singularly responsible" for the Capitol attack, which left five dead.

Trump's team argued in a filing Tuesday that whatever he said in the days and hours before the attack to encourage supporters to reject Biden's election win amounted to constitutionally protected free speech.



PHOTO: AFP

bipartisan opprobrium for a series of disturbing comments and support of social media posts advocating the assassination of Democratic lawmakers, was stripped of her two assignments on the House education and budget committees.

The punishment was meted out in a modestly bipartisan vote of 230 to 199 which occurred hours after Greene took to the House floor to renounce the conspiracy movement and expressed regret for spreading misinformation.

But Republicans blasted the action against one of their own as shattering congressional precedent, with members of leadership warning of potential political payback should they regain power.

"This vote today sets a dangerous precedent for this institution that Democrats may regret when Republicans regain the majority," said number three Republican Liz Cheney.



Pro-government activists gather yesterday near the portrait of Nepal's Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli during a mass gathering in his support, after the dissolution of parliament, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Getting a shot at a new life

FROM PAGE 12 On a recent visit to the project in Sirajganj, this correspondent talked with the community members and the officials related to the project.

The houses have been built on 66 decimals of land in Sirajganj and as part of the project, the beneficiaries have been trained to rear domestic animals and to become beauticians. They are now rearing cows, goats and ducks. They have also planted vegetables like brinjal and beans on spare land adjacent to their houses.

support and are neglected by society. Officials related to the project said this will give them hope and provide a better life.

Highlighting the government's achievement, Sirajganj Deputy Commissioner Farook Ahmed said, "To bring the transgender community into the mainstream, the government recognised them as third gender in 2013, issuing a gazette on January 26 [of that year]. Also, to educate the community the government arranged stipends in four layers [for primary education a transgender receives Tk 700 per month, Tk 800 for secondary, Tk 1,000 for higher secondary and Tk 1,200 for higher education]."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Al-Qaeda's leader in Yemen under arrest: UN report

The leader of al-Qaeda's Yemeni affiliate has been under arrest for several months, according to a United Nations report released on Thursday, in what will be seen as a huge breakthrough in the fight against the global jihadist threat.

China takes aim at BBC after UK revokes CTGN's licence

The BBC came under renewed fire from Chinese officials yesterday in a diplomatic dispute a day after Britain's media regulator revoked the TV licence of Chinese state media outlet CGTN.

Egypt frees Jazeera journo after 4 years jail: security

Egypt has released Al Jazeera journalist Mahmoud Hussein after more than four years in detention on accusations of publishing false news, a security source said yesterday.

Work together to end vaccine shortage

Urges WHO; J&J seeks US vaccine approval

AGENCIES

World Health Organization Europe's chief appealed for European nations and Big Pharma to unite in the struggle to accelerate coronavirus inoculations, as Johnson & Johnson applied for emergency authorisation of its single-shot vaccine in the United States.

Pressure is growing not only on wealthy nations to speed up their stuttering rollouts, but also for a more equitable allocation of precious vaccine supplies to poorer countries, in a push to end a pandemic that has claimed close to 2.3 million lives.

Supply shortages and diplomatic bickering have marred the vaccine rollouts in Europe, where just 2.5 percent of the population has received a first dose, with the production capacity at pharmaceutical plants a source of tension between the firms and EU bosses.

The virus is known to have infected more than 104 million people globally, and experts have warned that vaccines will only help control its spread and end unpopular and economically painful restrictions if the whole world is covered.

Cluge reiterated the WHO's call for rich countries to help poorer parts of the world, urging them to donate spare doses. "We know that in the EU, Canada, UK, US, they all ordered and made deals for four to nine times more doses than they need," he said.

Meanwhile, Pfizer Inc yesterday said it had withdrawn an application for emergency-use authorisation of its Covid-19 vaccine in India, after failing to meet the drug regulator's demand for a local safety and immunogenicity study.

Advertisement for Asset Developments featuring the text 'Owners of Land Plots Are Invited To Discuss Their Proposals' and contact information for Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, etc.

Table with 2 columns: S.No. and Details. It lists various government notices and reports from the Pirojpur government office, including dates and subject matters.

Remembering USTAD SANJIB DEY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Legendary classical maestro Ustad Sanjib Dey passed away on January 28, 2021, due to a cardiac arrest. He was 68 years old at the time of passing. His last rites were held in his home town of Mymensingh.

The artiste, after suffering from a heart attack at his Nayatola house, had passed away before he was taken to the Anwer Khan Modern Medical College Hospital in the capital.

Sanjib Dey is considered to be one of the most successful music gurus in the country, coming from an illustrious musical bloodline. His grandfather, Ustad Pyare Mohan Dey and his father Ustad Mithun Dey were both classical music gurus of renown. He served as a teacher of classical music at the capital's Chhayanaut from 1974 to 1991, after which he started teaching at home.

"After our father passed away, he [Sanjib] was the one who supported our entire family financially," said Asit Dey, renowned classical guru and Sanjib Dey's brother. "We tend to celebrate successful artistes, but forget the people who enabled their success in the same way. However, his contributions will never be forgotten. He lived his life to the fullest, and we are grateful for that."

"I had thought of him all day today, and wanted to call him," wrote famous musician Bappa Mazumder on Facebook, on the day of his guru's passing. "When I saw Emon Saha's post, I was stumped. I cannot accept this at all!"

Talented artiste Priyanka Gope fondly remembers Sanjib Dey, who was her uncle-in-law. "Ever since I came to the family, he adored me a lot," she says. "Beyond his legacy, he was a wonderful



PHOTO: COLLECTED

and positive person. I never once saw him speak ill of anything or anyone. Even though I did not directly take lessons from him, I learned a lot from conversations with him. The way that he appreciated and encouraged everyone was something that many do not do. I will miss him a lot."

"Our conversations regarding musical culture will always be on my mind. Stay well on the other side, beloved Guru ji", wrote S D Rubel on social media.

In a timespan of five decades, Sanjib tutored many successful music artists in the country, including eminent musicians Shakila Zafar, Bappa Mazumder, Alam Ara Minu, Aankhi Alamgir, Badshah Bulbul, eminent musical personality S D Rubel, among many others.

Sanjib Dey survived by his wife Aditi Dey and children – Nishit Dey and Tripama Dey. Nishit is a renowned sitar player.

SHARMIN JOYA

Social media plays an important role in our lives today, providing us with a forum to share our opinions, experiences and observations. However, it comes with its pros and cons.

Sometimes, sarcastic comments made on social media platforms may hurt people's sentiments. In extreme circumstances, this can lead to blackmailing, personal attacks, hate speeches, and even the spread of fake information.

Cyberbullying, the use of cell phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten or intimidate someone, is a common problem for many today, especially public figures. More often than not, cyber crimes are committed using fake online identities. As the use of mobile and online communications has grown so rapidly, laws to address cyberbullying and cybercrime has increased.

In recent years, a good number of Bangladeshi web projects have bravely dealt with the subject of cyberbullying. Two such web originals are Sanjay Somadder's "Troll" and Kajal Arefin Ome's "Viral Girl". Both of them were released on Cinematic. To some extent, Hoichoi's "Taqdeer", directed by Syed Ahmed Shawki, also highlighted how rumours spread through social media can be disastrous for one's life.

"Troll" starring Apurba, Shatabdi Wadud and Tasnia Farin among others, is about a serial killer, who loses his sanity after his sister attempts suicide, when a photoshopped video of her goes viral online. She chooses to end her life because of the shaming and

bullying she faces.

On the other hand, Tasnia Farin's character is a rising star, who falls into the trap of a blackmailer, and faces mental trauma, as she fears losing her fame overnight. The story of "Troll" sheds light on how female users of social media are harassed online in different ways.

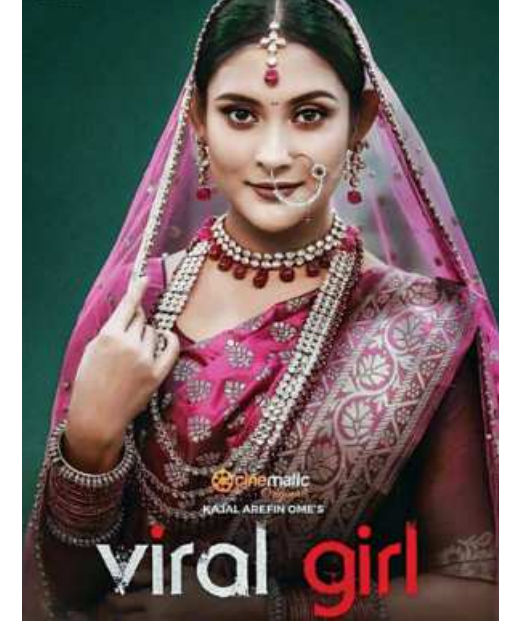
Mehazabien Chowdhury, Manoj Pramanik and Shahed Ali among others star in "Viral Girl", a web show that highlights the consequences a person faces, when their online content goes viral for something unprecedented.

It provides a snapshot of how events are

portrayed on social media, and how people tamper with real information and give false statements, without even knowing the facts.

Shows like "Troll" and "Viral Girl" are being lauded by audiences and critics alike. It is commendable that they are raising awareness about a crucial topic, and encouraging the masses to protest against cyberbullying in their own ways.

At the same time, leading stars like Mehazabien and Apurba should be appreciated for choosing such scripts, as these stories instill hope for positive changes in the digital sphere.



Official posters of the web originals

THE SHOW GOES ON 'Kanjoosh' returns to the stage amid pandemic

Throughout most of last year, the realities of physical restrictions on performances, audience attendance, staff movements and theatre closures posed significant challenges to artistes staging a work in any conventional sense. Concerts, large-scale blockbusters and full theatrical productions were some of the earliest to be shut down by the pandemic worldwide, and may well be among the last to return to form.

SHARABA IQBAL

Nonetheless, braving challenges, towards the end of 2020, theatre artistes in Bangladesh slowly resumed work.

After being closed for several months due to the coronavirus crisis, the Bangladesh Mahila Samity (BMS) reopened in August last year with "Lal Jomin", presented by the Shunyan Repertory Theatre. They had a limited audience, and ensured all social distancing and safety measures.

BMS staged Loko Natyadal's "Kanjoosh", one of Bangladesh's most popular theatrical productions, at their auditorium yesterday. It is based on the famous comedy "The Miser" by French playwright Moliere.

"Kanjoosh" has been staged over 700 times in the country. This production, presented by Loko Natyadal (Banani), is adapted by Tariq Anam Khan and directed by Kamrun Nur Chowdhury, featuring Abdullah Al Harun, Eugene Gomez, Samsad Begum, and Anwar Kaiser among others.



The poster for "Kanjoosh".

"We didn't make any compromises on or changes to the script of the play because of the pandemic," shares director Kamrun Nur Chowdhury. "All members of the cast and crew were tested for Covid-19, before

they began working on the project. They were all in good health. We only focused on the work at hand, and maintained social distancing guidelines as much as possible during rehearsals. We were all excited to

be working again."

The quickening pace of many performance venues reopening in recent weeks has underlined the importance of providing opportunity, backing and space for creators in these critical times.



From a previous production of the play.

COURTESY: LOKO NATYADAL

Bob Marley's 75th birth anniversary today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Robert Nesta Marley, worldwide known as Bob Marley, was born on February 6, 1945 at St Ann, Jamaica. Today marks the legend's 75th birth anniversary.

Considered as one of the most influential and talented musicians of the world, Bob Marley was one of the first Jamaican and African-descent musicians to achieve unparalleled popularity and fame worldwide.

He was the first to introduce reggae music to the world at large. His songs, comprised with messages of love, faith and unity won the hearts of millions of people across the world. In the time of booming greed and commercialism in the music industry, Bob Marley resorted to send out positive messages of love and strength.

At a time, when many societies were widely racist towards blacks and the concept of equality was far from equal,



PHOTO: REUTERS

Marley spoke out against oppression and injustice through his music. Many people fighting the oppression at the time would turn to his music as an escape, a way to visualise a different way.

A pioneer of reggae, his musical career was an amalgam of fusing elements as reggae, ska, and rock steady, as well as his unique vocal and songwriting style.

He was heavily influenced by popular artists of Jamaica, since childhood. With an emerging Jamaican music scene and a string of collaborations, Marley started his music career at the age of sixteen. He used music as an escape from the harsh realities of his neighborhood. His first recorded single, "Judge Not" was released in 1961.

One of the most important messages Bob Marley sends through his music is the commonalities of the human race and focused on the strength of unity and solidarity across borders. Some of Marley's many songs about prejudice and discrimination are "One Love," "War," "Buffalo Soldier," "Slave Driver," and "Redemption Song" among others.

Bob Marley was honored with a place into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994 and in December of 1999, his album, "Exodus" was named as the 'Album of the century' by Time Magazine. His most popular hit, 'One Love' was named as the designated 'Song of the Millennium' by the BBC.

One of the most charismatic and challenging performers of the 20th century, Marley is regarded as a cultural icon who deeply influenced the people in his community and eventually throughout the globe. Bob Marley was a rebel and his rebel nature had a clearly defined purpose which transcended through generations and his idealism is still relevant in the present world.

The legendary artiste died at the age of 36 from the deadliest skin cancer, Melanoma. Even after 40 years, Marley's legacy is still vibrant.



Meet the disorganised crime family

OSAMA RAHMAN

A disorganised crime family – The Dark Side – has suddenly come in the crosshairs of a multimillion-dollar propaganda machine, also known as News. Although no one is supposed to talk about it, so as to avoid feeding the propaganda, how innocent Third World country citizens are targeted by more prosperous nations merited some discussion.

All over social media, citizens whispered of the making of the campaign, which began with a mockumentary. The boldest among men, who have no fear in their heart and only the desire to be outspoken, even dared to share the mockumentary.

Some demanded that local journalists follow their international counterparts, as if the former had not been indulging in small-scale propaganda all this time.

In the carefully planned smear campaign, which took around two years to develop, people disguising themselves as investigative journalists, followed around members of the disorganised crime family around the globe. Their plan was to learn what the family was up to. Turns out, they were up to no good.

Meet the disorganised family. At the head was a man simply known as Sultan. We say was because Sultan, as people bad at crimes, is dead. He was replaced by James. James was supposed to be a proficient identity thief. Except, James would always sign using his real name even when he was forging documents. His fake documents were also really fake. In fact, his fake passport was emblazoned with the words "Fake Passport". As expected, James was soon caught and had to flee the country, leaving the family business to his younger brother Stalin.

How good was Stalin? Not good at all. Stalin was so bad at his criminal enterprise that he soon found himself in jail. He spent nearly a decade in the hospital jail, after falling sick very early on in his term. Spending his time repenting, Stalin's newfound love for the lord and all that is good was soon

recognised and he was pardoned for all the murders and extortion. He was the Lil Wayne, before there was a Lil Wayne.

Stalin then packed his bags and left the country to meet with James, who was now in a Western country, where most of our criminals are sheltered. The Western Country, hungry for the vaccines which they knew we would one day have, allowed James to stay under a false identity. The two teamed up and began

to scheme more disorganised dreams. For it all to work this time around though, they had an ace up their sleeve: their final brother. The final boss.

Meet Ansari. Ansari was such a bad criminal that he turned to law enforcement instead and became a police officer. Not just a police officer though, Ansari rose high, becoming the greatest traffic sergeant this country had ever seen. Ansari would always stop

CNG-run autorickshaws while letting unlicensed four-wheelers with tinted windows speed by. He would also frisk and search those on rickshaws. If he ever saw a young man with a young girl after 11:00pm, then he knew his day was made.

With someone in the in now helping them out, the disorganised crime family began to plan an empire. That is until they fell unwitting victims to News' sting



operation. News actually wore hidden microphones and cameras to get on record members of the crime family talking about how criminal they really are. "We are the dark side," one of the brothers boasted for some reason, proud to have been able to flee the country they are supposedly running.

But as disorganised crime families do, the brothers could not keep their mouths shut and ended up implicating all of the current governing politicians, dropping more names than rapper The Game.

In fact, many think Stalin has a future in the rap game as he tells everyone what his business is. "I will feed everyone to the dogs because the rulers have said I can do anything I want," he quipped like a child.

Caught up in the sting operation, the release of the mockumentary sent government high-ups in panic. The PR plan was simple: attack the weakest arguments and completely ignore everything else.

"These are all fabricated," a minister, who happened to attend a party thrown by the criminals, video of which was uploaded on Youtube, said. When pointed out he was in the video dancing very badly, the minister said his moves were right and the occasion called for the Desi-Uncle dance. He then spent a few more minutes talking about the Desi-Uncle dance. Classic evasive technique.

The Headquarters of the Police also released a statement on the mockumentary. "This is a smear campaign. It is all lies. Everything is doctored," the statement simply said. Meanwhile, supporters of the country, whose patriotic sentiments were hurt by foreign journalists doing their job without the threat of an oppressive digital security act, changed their profile pictures to show support for the corruption. "Foreigners are always meddling in our affairs. So what if we are a mafia state? At least we don't indulge in slave trade. We don't, right?" one commentator said.



Messi suspects 'Pasher Basar Aunty' leaked his salary to media

MAHUB ALAM MUNNA

Messi is furious as his incredible salary information was leaked by someone 'unknown'.

Messi is a staunch believer in the idea that people shouldn't ask a girl her age and a boy his salary. In spite of these questions being forbidden, still they have taken the role of frequently asked questions (FAQs) all over the world. We know, as a footballer, Messi earns a lot. But that doesn't mean it should be leaked.

The recent leak about Messi's incredible salary has left everyone spellbound. Messi has been fuming since. However, the spy still remains unidentified despite intelligence units, like FBI, MOSAD, RAW and so many forces, searching for the culprit.

Even a Satireday investigation, where we searched "Who Leaked Messi's Salary" on Google, refused to yield a result.

When a furious Messi was asked whether he suspected anyone, the footballer claimed to know exactly who did it. "I know who leaked such a confidential information. It is none other than my 'Pasher Basar Aunty'. I cannot take legal action just because I don't have any evidence. But I am sure, it's her."

Asked how he was so sure, Messi went on to vent. "I know her since my childhood. Whenever something would

happen in our house, she would be the first to know. Once I failed an exam and came back home with a heavy heart. Suddenly, my father started to beat me before me even telling him about my failure. Later, I heard that it was my 'Pasher Basar Aunty' who gave the news to my father. Since then, every confidential news seems to be known by someone who is none other than my 'Pasher Basar Aunty'. Would you not suspect her too?"

Well, Messi seems to have the ground to point the finger at his 'Pasher Basar Aunty'. Even the unknown philosophers Socrates and Pinto predicted about the activities of a 'Pasher Basar Aunty' in their ancient books. They said, "Pasher Basar aunty is faster than light. They can transfer news to the farthest corner of the universe, which is 47 billion light years away from Earth, without using any modern technology. They can know the unknown, see the unseen, predict the unpredictable incidents."

The revelation of Messi's salary also dispelled another belief. We used to think that people didn't want to share their salary information, because most people earn less. But, Messi has changed our thinking completely. Being furious even after earning £138 million in a year is truly eccentric. Big deal, we all knew he earned a lot, so what exactly?

Noakhali welcomes Aung San Suu Kyi in Bhasanchar

She doesn't eat and immediately leave and we love her, a resident says

MAHUB ALAM MUNNA

How Suu Kyi lost her power, or whether she has or not, is not the concern at the moment for us, the most hospitable people in the history of the universe.

All the country cares about at the moment is providing shelter. If anyone has lost their home and is not already a citizen or hasn't been "stranded" here for years, then we have a home waiting for you.

Our main concern has always been to provide shelter to those who have no other place to go.

So, in this vein, Aung San Suu Kyi is on

our list to be the latest person to get 'shelter-service'.

While searching for a suitable shelter for this 'peace-loving' lady, genius struck our champions of humanity. "Why fear when Noakhali is here?"

Minister of Humanity Tabrez Alam told media persons, "Let her come here. If we could provide shelter to her fellow countrymen, would it be a burden if we add another 'homeless'?" he added.

Later, people from Noakhali also agreed that they would welcome Suu Kyi, a homeless and powerless woman. Spokesman of Noakhali said in an official statement, "

We are ready to welcome Suji. Just like Rohingyas, Suji deserves our help. We have an unused home in Bhasanchar. I think Suji would live here happily," the spokesperson said after which he ate a biscuit and left immediately.

While asked about what privileges Suu Kyi would enjoy here, the spokesman said, "We will make a road for her straight to the colony of Rohingyas. She will be able to go there, chat with them and enjoy her time. The Rohingyas always talk about her, so they must love her." Funds are even being raised to buy a cow and a goat for Suu Kyi.



HC's practical directives to address terrible air quality

Whose problem is it anyway?

Poor air quality has been a perennial problem for Dhaka, with unabated pollution from many quarters. While there was significant improvement during the various lockdowns last year when there was no traffic and other polluters had suspended their activities, everything has gone back to square one with the reopening of the economy. The dry season that winter brings has multiplied the problem, causing serious health problems, especially for vulnerable groups. Respiratory and other diseases are largely attributed to this deterioration in air quality. In this bleak scenario, we welcome the High Court's stern directives to three authorities to ensure spraying of water on city streets on a regular basis.

Specifically, the HC has given its directives to the Fire Service and Civil Defence to use its vehicles to spray water, especially in busy entrances to the capital; to Wasa to ensure sufficient water supply to Dhaka city corporations for spraying the streets, and to Dhaka north and south city corporations to spray water on the streets along with the small trees so that they can survive.

What's more, the HC has ordered the authorities concerned to submit separate reports regarding compliance with these directives in 30 days. According to the Air Quality Index, the average AQI in Dhaka was 117.4 in October and 194 in November last year, while an AQI value up to 50 is considered acceptable. This shows just how bad the air we breathe has become.

We cannot help but ask why it is that the High Court must intervene and give directives for something that should have been a matter of grave concern for the authorities. Spraying on streets to reduce the dust generated, especially during the dry season, should have been started a long time ago as a part of routine maintenance. It seems keeping the air quality at a breathable level is no one's problem and hence the High Court must step in to give directions to the specific authorities concerned.

And it is not just about spraying water on the streets that the HC has intervened. Last year in January, another HC bench had ordered the government to reduce air pollution in and around the capital, and asked the Department of Environment to shut illegal brick kilns in five districts, including Dhaka. It had also asked the authorities to seize those vehicles emitting black smoke beyond the permissible limit in Dhaka city. It has banned unfit vehicles from plying the roads. Have these directives been followed through? Unfortunately, as reports have shown, there are still many unfit vehicles on the road emitting toxic fumes and brick kilns in areas where there is a high density of people.

We sincerely hope that all the directives of the HC that are geared towards protecting people's fundamental right to life, which has been severely compromised by the high levels of air pollution, will be taken seriously and complied with. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that all the authorities concerned follow through with these measures.

Remove the illegal structures built on canal

The lives and livelihoods of thousands of villagers depend on it

ON Bharani khal in Dhankhali union under Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali, illegal structures are being built that are preventing the normal flow of water in the canal. There are about 10 villages that depend on the canal's water. About 5,000 farmers of these villages cultivate several thousand acres of agricultural land through this single canal. Unless the authorities act immediately, the farmers will suffer severe water shortage and the villages could potentially face food scarcities as a result.

According to a report published in this newspaper on Thursday, at least 70 structures have been built on occupied land and a list of 70 occupants has been submitted to the upazila land office to evict the structures. However, the occupiers are so influential that the land office has failed to take any action against them. Locals have said that besides construction of these illegal structures, people have been setting up nets in the canals in the name of fishing, which is further obstructing the flow of water, making life difficult for farmers and villagers who use the water from the canal for other household chores. But despite these complications, locals are fearful of protesting against the influential land grabbers, while the local land office is not taking any effective action even after being informed of the matter.

Farmers have already been facing severe water-logging in the rainy season due to the obstruction of the canal's water. And the Kalapara Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) said that immediate action will be taken after the matter is investigated. But then, why is it taking so long for the issue to be resolved? And where were the authorities when, not one, but 70 illegal structures were being built on the canal?

The lives and livelihoods of farmers and villagers from 10 villages are at stake here. Therefore, we must urge the authorities to stop wasting any more time and remove the occupiers immediately. Those responsible for the illegal occupancies must also be punished in order to deter any such acts in future.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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High prices on highways

There are many restaurants around our highways which charge exorbitant prices for simple food items. They seem to operate without following any rules and regulations, since they know that commuters on long journeys are bound to eat in these restaurants. Such unethical practices by unscrupulous businessmen must stop. The authorities should check the food prices in highway restaurants and take steps against greedy businessmen.

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Learning, unlearning and relearning



BLOWN' IN THE WIND
SHAMSAD MORTUZA

GROWING up in the 80s, one of the silliest things we used to do was to play loud music in our cassette decks. Two-in-ones revolutionised our teenage years; the loud noise became synonymous with our existential crises. I often wonder what we were trying to say, screaming, Samantha Fox's "Touch me," Madonna's "Papa don't preach!," Baltimore's "Tarzan Boy," or Pink Floyd's "We don't need no education." Now, my YouTube list often takes me back to those silly days and makes me realise how tolerant and flexible our parents were. Imagine the hormonal rush of all teens of an entire area engaged in a beatbox competition from their cribs covered with posters of Michael Jackson, Phoebe Cates, Rambo and Led Zeppelin, and filling the air with rebel songs without any apparent cause! We were like free range organic chickens compared to the kids today, who are being processed to be lords in their own farms.

Back then, we would form clubs and libraries; we would steal flowers from our neighbour's gardens to join the morning rallies on Ekushey; prepare wall-magazines on Victory Day or Independence Day; go on a moon sighting spree before Eid Day; or throw paint on our targets on April Fool's Day. We were exposed to a wide array of cultural bytes. Through this process, we acquired the ability to engage in divergent thinking, and while doing so, the life skills of creativity, curiosity and flexibility were inculcated in us. They became a part of our essential selves, and only today they are being touted as essentials.

Creativity is a buzzword, which is being promoted as a 21st century skill that we must first unlearn and relearn. If you ask me, the issue of relearning and unlearning underlies a major flaw in our education system. Somewhere down the road, our formal schooling system has messed up our creativity big time. Looking back, I know why we were playing those songs so loud. They were voicing our inner rages, concerns and desires. We did not want to be "another brick in the wall". We did not want to be preached to. We wanted to be back with nature like a jungle boy or be touched to know that we were alive. But with the advent of airpods, our Generation Z is simply listening to themselves. There is no real network, except for virtual ones. Their creativity is more individualistic than collaborative as they are constantly being pressured to carve their own niches, find their own jobs through start-ups, and become their own bosses. It's about time, we reinvent creativity in our education system to address the issue of creativity of

our next generation. We can take our cue from one of the pioneers in this field.

Undoubtedly, one major exponent of creativity in education in our part of the world is Rabindranath Tagore, the founder of Shantiniketan. He was among the first to point out the negative effects of formal schooling. For him, the traditional teaching in India was mechanical and responsible for killing the passion, creativity and individualism of a student.

In contrast, the rich and artistic experience that he had in his Jorasanko household gave him the subconscious learning that shaped his artistic attitudes towards life. In his essay *My Reminiscences*, Tagore wrote, "Most members of my family had some gift—some were artists, some poets, some musicians—and the whole atmosphere of our home was

water to compare it to the way his mind was connected with the world. The lesson became a life lesson that underscored the use of imagination for making sense of the world.

With the onrush of visual information—Netflix, YouTube, Instagram—our children are being supplied with infographics. They do not have to use their imagination even when they fall in love for the first time. They will never know how it feels to wait for the letter of a pen-friend in an age of instant messenger services. Their needs have changed, so have their creativity. Then again, it would be wrong to say that our children are not creative enough. Their creativity is of a different scale. A simple browse through the urban dictionary tells us how creative our



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

permeated with the spirit of creation." This creative atmosphere was developed by the patriarch Debendranath Tagore himself. When Tagore was 12, his father took him to the Himalayas during which the child Tagore realised, "The chains of the rigorous regime which had bound me snapped for good when I set out from home." One simple step out of the familiar taught him to use imagination to deal with the unfamiliar. He learnt to look at nature as well as to look into the lives of the people around him. This sojourn was instrumental for Tagore's relearning process.

Tagore recalled how his imagination flourished when he first encountered the lilting rhyme *jol porey, pata norey* in Vidyasagar's primer *Borno Porichoy*. He felt that the sound pattern touched him beyond the purpose of the spelling lesson. He visualised the way the leaf was touched and moved by the drop of

younger generation has been in codifying its emotions. Who would have thought of cryptic expressions such as "lol", "ty", "rofl" or "btw" otherwise?

As educators, the challenge for us then is to understand what moves a child. Our job is to do what Vidyasagar has done earlier for Tagore: create a platform or an interface that will open the creativity of a child. The children need to be given the right text and context that will excite their imagination. They need to be given right educational materials that will encourage them to make sense of the world. Expecting them to merely memorise information that can be processed through the machine will never appeal to them. For instance, nobody needs to memorise the times table anymore, but everybody needs the computational skills to understand the sequential growth during an act of multiplication.

Recent studies show that creativity

The children need to be given the right text and context that will excite their imagination. They need to be given right educational materials that will encourage them to make sense of the world.

can be taught and cultured. A genius is not born, a genius can be made. For that we need to create the right atmosphere. Debendranath Tagore is a case in point. Only someone who is willing to learn what moves a child can move the system. Let us unlearn and relearn before we teach what to learn. At the same time, let us allow our students some freedom to realise what they want to learn before we hit the undo button to delete what they have been learning all this while.

Often, we mix up the issues of learning with teaching. Teaching cannot happen without learners. But in the school of life, learning can happen without teachers. As educators, our job is to make learning rewarding and exciting so that they continue to learn even when the teaching sessions are over. At a policy level, we need to keep the final outcomes in mind. As teachers, we need to instill passion in them, encourage them to get interested in problem solving. We need to expose them to various tools. Excite them about what they learn and how they learn.

Let's see, for instance, how Facebook works and remains attractive to our young generation. For instance, we don't ask our children to go to Facebook and spend some time there. Still they are drawn to it. It is probably because Facebook presents itself as an interface that offers a seeming freedom over the creation and curation of the content. We need a similar creative model that will make learning flexible, imaginative and innovative.

In our current emphasis on preparing the next generation for the knowledge economy as well as for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we often perceive a pedagogical model that thinks of changing the lifestyles while giving them the right skillsets to become leaders. I think it's also important to allow them to find their own vocations, career paths and life-interests. For that, they need to be exposed to various models of innovations and creativity, like we were in the 80s.

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Man and Machine

Jumpstart with AI: What should be our first step?



THIS column is about humans and the interactions that this intelligent mammal have with machines. Humans have been using tools since the dawn of civilisation. However, the industrial revolution of the 18th century accelerated the replacement of muscle with machines. At the dawn of the 21st century, we are foreseeing the replacement of the mind with machines. Similar to the disruption that the invention of the steam engine brought in the 19th century, recent information technology inventions are disrupting our societies. One of these, Artificial Intelligence (AI), is set to change our relationship with the machines for good. Some of us are anticipating a clash of civilisations—our own with the mechanised new.

Unfortunately, technology is in its nascent form—hence, confusions loom over our mental horizon. Some portend the loss of jobs and even believe in the "take-over" of an algorithmic super intelligence, while others cheer the hope of technology-enabled more peaceful societies. Let us not brand them as futuristic thoughts. The rise of social media, use of image and video surveillance, amassing private data for malicious use, influencing people's lives with "misinformation" and "disinformation" are now part of the everyday newsfeed. With technology at a nascent stage, while usage picked up, the need to explore how these technologies interact with our personal, social and political lives is of paramount need. In this column, we want to explore this relationship and how this may change our lives—not in the future but now. This column is about how the new disruptive technologies are shaping the way we act, react and regulate our personal, social and political lives.

In 1950, Allan Turing in his ground-

breaking essay asked a simple question "can machines think?" If a machine can think it can behave intelligently, and perhaps one day surpass the intelligence of the human creators as well. This idea of "superintelligence" has been a potential source of inspiration for a plethora of science fiction writing. It engrossed and frightened many fiction writers so much that Issac Asimov in his 1950 science fiction *I, Robot* put forward "three laws of Robotics". These laws were meant to help design robots that despite having "superintelligence" will never cross the line to harm humans. On the scientific side, Turing proposed a simple way to find the answer to his original question—he

human intelligence but because they can carry out tasks that would otherwise require human intelligence, time and effort to an unsustainable extent. AI systems are scalable and designed to take decisions from a vast amount of data. These AI algorithms are gradually replacing and complementing traditional algorithms that had computationally solved many of our problems.

Scalability and the capability to harness insights from data have made AI an essential and complementary tool for policymakers and service providers aiming to achieve social good. Various AI tools are being used for crisis response, economic empowerment, alleviating

human interaction in an algorithm can be potential sources of bias that can be a reason for AI failure. A massive amount of data are fed into the machine to recognise certain patterns. Unstructured data from the web, social media, mobile devices, sensors and IoT devices make data absorption, linking, sorting and manipulation difficult. Hence, if data are not carefully curated then the dataset may be fraught with incomplete or missing information or may be inaccurate or biased. This may cause an inadvertent revelation of sensitive data. Even after the removal of personal data from one dataset, another dataset may have it that the AI system may reveal.

The drivers of AI-risks can manifest in the forms of the individual (such as accidents and privacy violations), societal (such as manipulation of the political system), and organisational (such as discrimination against race) risks. Over the years, we have seen several cases of AI failures that resulted in the loss of lives, compromise of national or organisational security, damage of reputation, regulatory backlash, criminal investigations and diminished public trust. Bangladesh needs to start thinking about how we will embrace the AI surge.

In 1972, the office of technology assessment (OTA) was established in the US to provide congressional members with objective and authoritative analysis of complex scientific and technical issues. However, a Republican-controlled senate dismantled it in 1995, calling it an "unnecessary agency". The idea survived in Europe in the form of the European parliament technology assessment (EPTA). With the science-unfriendly policies adopted by the US in the Trump era, many are feeling the necessity of reinstating the agency. Perhaps we should be thinking of establishing an office of technology policy to aid the parliament and the chief executive's office to understand the policy challenges that AI and other new disruptive technologies are bringing forth.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

proposed an "imitation game". Popularly termed as "Turing test"—a human interrogator is tasked with distinguishing between a human and a machine.

There is an international competition called the Loebner Prize that annually awards prizes to computer programmes that are most "human-like". To date, there has not been a winner that has truly passed the test. We are far from designing "artificial superintelligence". In reality, we may need decades to achieve the capacity to manifest the capability to build "general AI" that refers to human-like AI. What we now have can generally be termed as "narrow AI"—systems that are intelligent not because they imitate

educational challenges, mitigating environmental challenges, ensuring equality and inclusion, alleviating health, reducing hunger, information verification and validation, infrastructure management, public and social sector management, and even security and justice.

AI is an umbrella word that shelters different types of algorithms. These algorithms and processes have multiple issues where scientists need to be careful about. One such thing is overfitting. Sometimes, the algorithms designed fit the training dataset so well that in the real world, they fail to give the right solution. Apart from these, data, algorithms, and

Indigenous displacement and our complicity



MYAT MOE KHAING

If you were forced out from your ancestral land today, where would you go? How long could you walk in your torn sandals? Where would you sleep as developers transformed the space shared by your siblings into a luxury suite for travellers willing to spend Tk 18,000 per night? How would you console your hungry children? What do you tell your old mother traumatised from generational conflicts?

The construction of a five star hotel and tourist spot in Bandarban by Sikder group will wipe out six villages of the Mro Indigenous community. The project will acquire about 405 hectares of land, levelling down hills, clearing forests and disrupting natural water sources.

The Mro people have no answer to these questions. Neither do the evictors intend to answer them.

The United Nations defines Indigenous peoples as inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. There are at least 45 different Indigenous groups recognised by the government as ethnic minorities in Bangladesh. The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), an area of approximately 5,089 square miles in south-eastern Bangladesh, is home to 11.

Historically the CHT existed as an independent territory without a formalised political system. In 1860, the British annexed the region as an administrative district of Bengal. The colonisers had to decide whether they wanted to control the region by placing British administrators, or do it indirectly through local representatives. The latter was the cheaper option. The British chose three chiefs who sat on the major

tribes—the Maung Raja in the north-west, Chakma Raja in the central and northern Hill Tracts, and Bohmong Raja in the south.

When plain land traders were increasingly moving to the hills, the colonisers predicted the locals would fall into debt, consequently harming colonial taxation prospects. Hence, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900 was devised to separate the hills from the plains and prevent its transition to a market economy. This move meant the complex land laws, tax systems and court procedures were not applicable in this region. For example, the Income Tax Act of 1922 applied to all persons in the Chittagong Hill Tracts except the Indigenous population. Recognising their special ethnic status, the principal legal instrument referred to “indigenous hillman” and “indigenous tribesman” interchangeably.

The idea underlying hill agriculture entails rights in land, but not the kind in a western system or the Mughal rule. When Indigenous Peoples wanted to cultivate a land, they informed the village *Karbari*. After accumulation of information, they approached the *Mauza* headmen who assigned the land. They owned their lands orally, which was socially accredited, and transferred to them by verbal commitment, informing the Raja and paying annual tax. This implied title documents weren’t a thing.

Indigenous comes from the Latin word *indigena*, which means “sprung from the land”. The term reinforces land acknowledgements of Indigenous peoples. Their collective rights to territories and resources are embedded in the International Labour Organization’s Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No 169 and 107. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) that allows Indigenous peoples to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or territories.

Yet the very lack of documentation and a national legal framework

recognising their Indigenous status is misused to evict Indigenous people from their lands worldwide. The construction of Kaptai dam, the only hydropower source of present day Bangladesh, in 1960 by the government of East Pakistan submerged 54,000 acres of arable land. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs reports 100,000 people lost their principal economic base. Only 20,000 acres of inferior

land was allocated under the re-settlement scheme. The government didn’t allocate land to 8,000 swidden cultivators/jumma families as their customary rights to their jum lands were not recognised.

The government of Pakistan amended the Regulation several times against the will of the locals to facilitate transmigration of non-Indigenous people from the plains into the CHT. It further abrogated the “Excluded Area Status” of the CHT in 1963. Section 51 of the said Regulation, which put a restriction on the outsider Bengali Muslim migration, was repealed in 1965. Between 1980 and 1985, another transmigration programme in the CHT was facilitated. The settlers were mostly landless families from the plain districts, some of whom were homeless due to river erosion. The Bengali population

grew from 11.6 percent of the regional population in 1974 to 48.5 percent in 1991.

Settlers have been grabbing Indigenous land, cutting the communities off from resources vital to survival and pushing them towards violence and extinction as people. When the affected try to assert their rights, they suffer abuse owing to political and economic marginalisation.

concrete resorts offering tourists an escapade from their busy city lives. To many outsiders, such invasions make sense because the CHT is being “developed”, the “backdated” *paharis* are finally coming in touch with “civilisation”. The very categorisation justifies intervention through development policies. Is it really development if you are constructing an amusement park?

The UN defines Indigenous development as the growth of an Indigenous community in their originality. The groups hold their own diverse perspectives of development based on traditional values. When we address poverty, it is to be done in a holistic manner, one that goes beyond income. Many development interventions regard poverty as an economic issue, but for Indigenous communities, poverty is about their land, spirituality, and dignity. When these are affected, they regard themselves poor.

Development modules see them as subjects, without any role in decision making and monitoring of development programmes. Why are Indigenous communities recognised as a vulnerable group, not a distinct group? Are they really vulnerable or is it the exclusionary agenda making them vulnerable?

Practices such as hunting, fishing and farming, are inseparable from their food security. Denial of traditional practices is leading to a crisis of identity. It’s like taking away their soul. The land is the source of their spirituality and belief systems. The Mro people revere the forest. Losing their land means a loss of identity.

At the core, Indigenous People’s struggles is that of land rights. Without rights over the territories, Indigenous People’s distinct cultures and the determination of their own development are being eroded. From being the earliest inhabitants to being displaced from their own lands, their story remains ignored. Are we ready to acknowledge it?

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The Mro community held protests against the proposed hotel construction at the Kapru Bazar area in Bandarban on November 8, 2020. PHOTO: COLLECTED

quality land was allocated under the re-settlement scheme. The government didn’t allocate land to 8,000 swidden cultivators/jumma families as their customary rights to their jum lands were not recognised.

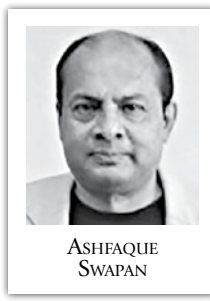
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Tourist development has forced communities to leave their traditional lands. Today, Mro people fear the hotel construction will damage sacred sites, forests, water resources and biodiversity in the area. Tourists, on the other hand, are devoid of this reality. They crave the sound of waterfalls, to explore caves and ride the *Chander Gari*—components that make up today’s quintessential Bangladeshi “adventure”. Green hills under a clear blue sky remain the epitome of wanderlust for female travellers recently overcoming the shackles of patriarchy.

Surprisingly, these experiences don’t seem to awaken any curiosity on how the communities have lived with nature across generations. Rarely does anyone notice Indigenous peoples’ attitudes towards outsiders in their evicted lands, the poverty sharply contrasting the

A traveler’s adventures in Covid testing

Atlanta and Dhaka present contrasts, and a surprise



ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

DURING a recent round-trip from Atlanta, US to Dhaka, Bangladesh, I had wildly contrasting experiences in the two cities as I tried to get

clouding the horizon everywhere remind me of a scene out of *The Blade Runner*, a dystopian futuristic sci-fi movie set in a massive, decaying megalopolis where high-tech glitz and public squalor live cheek-by-jowl in a city that’s falling apart.

Given how different the two cities are, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that the Covid-19 testing experience was also quite different. In one city I experienced a publicly-run, reasonably priced, hi-tech operation where the

seamless Covid-19 testing experience was in Dhaka, and the nightmarish experience was in Atlanta.

A few days before leaving Atlanta for Dhaka in early January, my airline notified me that Bangladesh and Turkey required a negative Covid-19 PCR test result prior to boarding the flight.

The tough part was that I could not test earlier than 72 hours prior to my departure. I called around and searched

result. I was a nervous wreck. I managed to board my flight just in time, but saw the airline refuse to allow two passengers to board because they could not present a test result.

My experience in Dhaka was quite different. I learned that there were several reputable establishments offering reliable, timely results. What surprised me was that one of the best was the one run by the government health ministry in association with Bangladesh Army.

I discovered a well-organised, tech-savvy streamlined system at the huge facility in Mohakhali. Competent employees screened attendees swiftly and expertly. My cell number was used as a reference. My application information was carefully double-checked with my passport. Lines were long, but moved at a steady pace. Finally, a health worker, fully protected, took my nasal swab. I got a receipt, and was told I would get a report in 48 hours.

After that, all I had to do was to check the website. In order to protect my privacy, I had to get a one-time password on my cell phone every time I accessed the website. In due time, I had access to a downloadable, official negative Covid-19 PCR test report. My report was cross-checked at a separate airport health kiosk to verify its authenticity.

What I liked most about the Covid-19 testing in Bangladesh is that it is public service at its best—you didn’t have to be a big shot or have connections to access this. This is a critical service open to any member of the general public who was

traveling abroad. The broad lessons are clear. The obsessive celebration of markets by free-market ayatollahs obscures the fact that some critical tasks may be best performed in the public domain. And yes, I do think Atlanta can learn a lesson or two from Dhaka here. Bangladesh was wracked by scandals over fake Covid testing. It’s come a long way since then, and full credit to the government for addressing and resolving the issue (although things seem to have improved somewhat in Atlanta after my return—Covid-19 PCR tests with guaranteed results are offered for USD 140 at some places now).

In fact, the whole coronavirus pandemic is an abject lesson on how vital public health services—and public trust in them—are. The US is second to none in scientific talent or wealth, yet the horrendous, continuous toll taken by Covid-19 breaks my heart. The new federal administration, thank goodness, realises the vital importance of public policy and initiative.

In Bangladesh, while I cheer the smart government initiative for Covid-19 testing, I am aware that this is far more an exception than the rule. Still, it’s a positive, heartening development, and it is my hope that the enormous public goodwill generated by a well-run government programme will be an impetus to replicate such excellence in other spheres of government.

Ashfaque Swapan, an Atlanta-based writer and editor, is contributing editor for *Siliconer*, an online South Asian publication.



PHOTO: FILE/AMRAN HOSSAIN

testing and reporting were seamless, while in the other city it was a nightmare. Clinics could not guarantee results in time, leaving travellers to sweat it out in suspense as they waited at the departure lounge, desperately hoping they would get a negative test result notification by email in time.

the Internet in vain. No clinic could guarantee a test result within 72 hours. One clinic suggested I come in early in the morning and leave a sample and hope for the best!

I had no choice. I went ahead and did just that. Sure enough, I ended up at the airport departure lounge without a test

QUOTABLE Quote

ADLAI STEVENSON II
(February 5, 1900 – July 14, 1965)
American lawyer, politician, and diplomat

Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Ten-armed swimmer
- 6 Comb parts
- 11 Pound part
- 12 Dome-shaped home
- 13 Tiramisu ingredients
- 15 Mine yield
- 16 Bank acct. addition
- 17 Fitting
- 18 Orchestra section
- 20 Maiden name label
- 21 Honey maker
- 22 Seed holders
- 23 Really stoked
- 26 Long sandwiches
- 27 Blowgun ammo
- 28 Grass coating
- 29 Singer Yoko
- 30 Zeppelin
- 34 PBS documentary series
- 35 Arrest
- 36 Count start
- 37 Nimble dancer
- 40 Canvas holder
- 41 Fashionably dated
- 42 Eat away
- 43 Exams

DOWN

- 1 Recital highlights
- 2 Milk buy
- 3 Beneath
- 4 Quite cold
- 5 Clearly set out
- 6 Colors
- 7 Mayo ingredient
- 8 Mrs. Roosevelt
- 9 Sub weapon
- 10 Party thrower
- 14 “Picnic” playwright
- 19 “Yeah sure!”
- 22 Chapel seating
- 23 Birth parent seeker
- 24 Famed rechorse
- 25 Condition
- 26 President Hoover
- 28 Watch part
- 30 Low joint
- 31 Owl cries
- 32 Like argon
- 33 Mexican money
- 38 Homer’s neighbor
- 39 Golf bag item

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YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

S	T	A	G	S	S	L	U	R	
L	A	D	E	N		L	A	N	E
A	L	A	M	O		A	B	A	T
B	O	G		O	W	N			
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BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



FICTION

Death is not Funny, Nor is Hamlet a Coward

MARZIA RAHMAN

I got a visitor today. My mother. It was a bright morning, one of those days when you get a feeling that something good will happen. And then mother came. And mother looked perturbed. And I realised it will be like any other day with nothing but madness all around.

She looked around the room a couple of times; I followed her gaze. There was nothing much to see here—a bed in the centre, a side table, a small window and a chair where she sat and couldn't find a word to say to

doesn't my little brother, Asif who is no longer little come to see me? Does bougainvillea still bloom on the rooftop of the house? Do they have a cat now? A parrot?

She said that she wouldn't be able to stay long. She asked how long they would keep me here.

I said I don't know. I asked her about home.

She shifted in her seat. She wanted to go. I wanted her to stay, but I didn't press her. I asked her to bring Asif next time.

a strong urge to return home. Told mother so.

She looked worried and struggled to find words. At last, she said, "We didn't tell anyone about your divorce. There are people back home who think you are still married." She suddenly started coughing. I offered her water, she declined.

She cleared her voice and continued very slowly and softly, "Your father wants to keep it that way...well, anyway, what good will it do to let people know? Divorce, suicide attempt, living-in-relation..." she shuddered. "What will people say? What kind of a daughter have we raised?" she sounded sad, hopeless.

The corners of my eyes itched with tears. I didn't want her to see that. There was a big fig tree by the window; a parrot perched there, pecking at a branch. I watched the bird and tried to think of something happy, something colourful. The wide courtyard of my parent's house flashed before my eyes, where I played hopscotch and chased a playful cat. I shook my head.

Before leaving, she put her hand on my head and muttered something, a wish or maybe a prayer. I pushed her hand away.

I usually pretend to take the medicines I am given here. But when the nurse is not around, I throw them away. Today, I took them all. The blue one makes me drowsy. It feels good to float between wakefulness and sleep; my mind fills with the noise of a thousand thoughts. Past and present mingle—I am a six-year-old girl standing before a dead lizard, wondering isn't death a funny thing?—I am a young woman, holding a book. What's the title? I squint my eyes to read it. It's Hamlet. I never liked the character—a cowardly man riddled with silly choices. But maybe I have been wrong all along. Death is not funny. It's a serious business. Like resurrection. Neither is Hamlet a coward! He is just a trapped man, waiting for a second chance.

Marzia Rahman is a fiction writer and translator.



her daughter. I thought I should say something to cheer her up. To lighten up the mood. Should I tell her how we spend our time here? How we do things on a whim and can easily get away! Only because we are not ourselves—we are deluded, insane, suicidal and it happily frees us from all social norms.

I wanted to ask her about something very important, but I couldn't remember it at the moment. It comes to me later. Why did she come alone? Is Baba still upset? Why

She hesitated for a second and then said, "Your father doesn't know I am here." She fiddled with the edge of her sari and stared at the white bed sheet. I looked at it too. I wondered why clinics and hospitals put white sheets; they should spread bright, colourful ones. The white sheet reminded me of burial. Suddenly, I recalled that as a little girl, I buried a tin box in the backyard of our house. I suddenly felt a strong urge to dig up that box and see what stuff I put in there! What childish frivolities! I felt



POETRY

TIME

RUSAFA HUSSAIN

Does Time have the time
To ever stop by the Clock?
Take a little break?
Drink a cup of tea?
Come Time, come relax with me.

How funny you are, Time!
How clever, how true!
They say "Third time's a charm"
But you don't need the third opportunity
You are enough of a charmer already.

Rusafa Hussain is a student of English Literature at BRAC University.



CAUTION

MD. MEHEDI HASSAN

Love is ok
till it becomes like
the curiosity of country-lads
when they go to airports
just to see
how aeroplanes fly

but putting on spotless garments
when you sit on your knees:
love is the water of Buriganga—
you drink, you die.

Md Mehedi Hasan occasionally contributes to The Daily Star Literature page; he is a lecturer of English at North Western University, Khulna.



A Public Obscenity?

SAIKAT MAJUMDAR

What does it mean to read a book in a public place these days?

It may seem counterintuitive, but the culture of reading, especially reading in public, has its own history of shame. In J.M. Coetzee's quasi-fictional text, "The Novel in Africa," Emmanuel Egudu, the unreliable native informant of Black African culture, accuses Europeans of shutting themselves in their cocoons with their books in every public place imaginable. In Africa, he says, we are not like that; we are too communal, too warm, too sensuous a culture to cut ourselves off from our fellow human beings to bury our noses in books.

In Coetzee's fellow South African Zoë Wicomb's short story, "Behind the Bougainvillea," the light-skinned mixed-race protagonist passes as white to get access to the indoor waiting room of the doctor's office while a crowd of black and coloured patients wait outside in the sun. To while away the time she opens a book but quickly decides against what she feels is the pretentious gesture of reading. She cannot bear this to add to her already-heavy guilt of racial passing.

Across the world, reading a book is the loaded gesture of the educated bourgeoisie, its ticket to progress and its mark of shame.

In Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, the weirdest dystopian fantasy shoots through a character. What if the time comes when sex and conversation trade places in human society? What if it becomes the normal thing to ask for – and offer – sex on the very first meeting, including accidental ones, while conversation becomes a dark and forbidden pleasure?

Quickly, the character sees a chilling future: people having sex in coffee shops and train stations with nobody batting an eyelid, while at the same time seeking out the darkest and most clandestine of locations to talk about

the weather: dark stairwells, abandoned warehouses, deserted streets. Kissing of the most passionate kind is done in open air, while people can dare to shake hands only under the table where adulterers used to play footsie in the past. Sex is easy but conversation has the weight of courtship.

The scariest thing about dystopias is that they have a root in the real. We're always halfway into a dystopia (The good news is that the same works for utopias too). I'm serious, therefore, when I say that a prime contender for the forbidden act today is reading a book in public.

Readers of the Literature page of *The Daily Star* will understand. You are already part of this forbidden public. You remember the time when it was common to see people reading real books in public places: airports, flights, trains, doctor's offices – again, real books, not the glossy excuses for magazines they stock there. You don't have to be ancient to remember this; quite enough if you have active memory that stretches fifteen or at most twenty years. Look around now – in trains and

Look around now – in trains and planes and metros and public places of every ilk. Nobody's reading a book. Not that we've travelled much during these pandemic times. We still remember.

planes and metros and public places of every ilk. Nobody's reading a book. Not that we've travelled much during these pandemic times. We still remember.

It hit me one day while waiting in an airport. It was a moment of shame, of getting



caught in an illicit act in public. Because the illicit changes shape across time and space. There are places in America now where smoking in public will draw more toxic glances than carrying a gun.

We now live on the other end of the time when reading a book was a ticket to rebellion. Stories of young unmarried women in 19th century Bengal swiftly hiding books under their pillows so that nobody could catch them reading novels now make up harmless jokes. That rebel modernity is now a fossil.

I cannot escape the aura of fossil activism because I, too, come from the other end. I got my first iPhone in 2008, given to me by my then employer, Stanford University. For the

next eight years, living on Palo Alto's University Avenue, a few blocks away from Facebook's original office and Silicon Valley's most prized Apple Store, I updated my iPhone every year, to find that I was programmed to check my email and social media at every traffic light for which I had to press on the brake for 60 seconds. I gave up using a smartphone when I relocated to India in 2016. Have never been happier in my life. Still, there is a price to pay: the sensory (never mind the virtual) exclusion from the public community of smartphones. They are both in sync with the times and truly enmeshed in a community while one feels like an ancient outlier, never more when pulling out a (often hardcover) book in public.

Benedict Anderson described print culture as the creator of the imagined community. By reading the same newspaper, strangers throughout the land, who would never meet one another, formed a national community. Online communities aside, the physical reality of a roomful of people glued to their smartphones also creates a sensory community. There, the one reading a book might as well scream: "Keep your distance. I'm not one of you." Not a pleasant feeling.

I pull out my book while waiting to pick up my children at their school. My exclusion from the community of WhatsApping parents is cemented by the odd and obsolete gesture of standing in a corner and reading a book under the midday sun. In airport lounges, my hardcover book, usually with the dustjacket off, wears a crusty library body and looks Palaeolithic next to the seemingly magnetic tablets of the tweens, decadent beside the blue-toothed iPhones of conference-calling corporate citizens.

Of the many ways reading a book is like prayer, this one is perhaps the most important: they both have the appearance of isolation when they are both actually about communication. Like the faithful, the reader thrives best in a physical community. Hence temples, churches and mosques, where we pray together. Hence public reading rooms of libraries, where we can read together. Once upon a time our public spaces used to be reading spaces, where we communicated silently with strangers through our shared love of words printed on paper. Those of us who still read in public are now left in the cold. The act is obsolete enough to become radical again.

Saikat Majumdar's books include the novels *The Firebird* and *The Scent of God*.



Everything Mehedi Hasan Miraz is touching is turning into gold, it seems, at the moment. After his maiden Test century on Thursday, the all-rounder took four wickets as Bangladesh skittled West Indies for 259 runs in the first innings of the first Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Spinners leave it late

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Although Bangladesh still have the upper hand on the West Indies after the third day of the first Test with a 217-run lead, the hosts will be keen to post a big target on the fourth day.

Despite left-arm spinner Taijul Islam dismissing Nkrumah Bonner with the very first ball of the day, things did not go the way the Bangladesh team management would have hoped since.

Bangladesh were unable to create pressure, especially the three spinners in the form of Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Nayeem Hasan and Taijul Islam bowled short and wide.

Skipper Kraigg Brathwaite and debutant Kyle Mayers utilised the opportunity as the West Indies struck 18 fours and a six in the first session, with the pitch in

Chattogram remaining on the slower side with a hint of turn.

Skipper Mominul Haque pushed the fielders with the intention of stemming the flow of runs, but there were also some attacking moments.

"Obviously we can say this is a spinning track. But since the positive start to the day, we, the spinners, were unable to bowl consistently in good areas. I think the first session went bad for the spinners and if we could bowl in the right areas, the results would have been better," Taijul told the media at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

"But still, we have a lot of time and it's part of cricket. Maybe it's because of becoming acclimated since we are making a comeback in Tests after a long gap."

Apart from the bowling, Bangladesh were also unable to grab opportunities in the field.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh: First innings 430 all out in 150.2 overs (Mehedi 103, Shakib 68; Warrican 4-133)
West Indies: First innings 259 all out in 96.1 overs (Brathwaite 76, Blackwood 68; Mehedi 4-58, Mustafizur 2-46, Nayeem 2-54, Taijul 2-84)
Bangladesh: Second innings 47 for 3 in 20 overs (Mominul 31 not out, Mushfiqur 10 not out, Shadman 5; Cornwall 2-28, Gabriel 1-13)

Nazmul Hossain Shanto dropped a rather straightforward catch at first slip off Joshua Da Silva when he was on 24 as he went on to score 42 runs and added 99 runs for the sixth wicket with Brathwaite.

Yasir Ali, who came on as a substitute for Shakib Al Hasan, also missed a couple of opportunities, at short leg and silly mid-off, which hurt the Tigers in crucial situations.

However, Bangladesh did manage to make a comeback by riding on the spinners. Mehedi

ended up picking four wickets while Taijul and Nayeem bagged two each as the Tigers staged a dramatic comeback in the last hour before tea.

The spinners picked up the last five wickets in just 23 balls at the cost of only six runs as the visitors folded for 259.

A lot will depend on the pitch too, which has not turned till the end of the third day. But according to Taijul, the pitch might get more difficult for the batters on the fourth day. He also added that a lead of 300 to 350 runs in the second innings would be enough for Bangladesh to win the Test.

"It's actually tough to say but it's natural that it may become difficult for the batsmen on the fourth day. The spinners can take more advantage from the pitch but to do that it will be important to bowl in the right areas consistently," Taijul said.

Shakib's participation in doubt

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram



When Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Nayeem Hasan were scalping wickets thick and fast in a West Indies batting collapse that saw the visitors lose five wickets in just 23 deliveries and get bundled out for 259, Shakib Al Hasan's injury update was in stark contrast to the home side's spark on the field.

A BCB press release stated that Shakib's MRI scan revealed that he suffered a fresh injury, a strain on his left thigh, putting the premier all-rounder's further participation in the ongoing Test against the West Indies in jeopardy.

The top all-rounder did not take any part in yesterday's play as he was taken to hospital for a scan. And even though the press release mentioned that "the BCB medical team will continue to treat and review his progress over the course of the first Test", it remained unclear if the Chattogram Test would see any more involvement from Shakib.

The injury happened when he came to bowl following Tea on Day 2. Shakib seemed to have pulled his groin muscle when he attempted to stop a ball with his leg after Windies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite pushed it towards mid-on for a single in the sixth over.

Shakib continued after that and bowled

three more overs but left the field clutching his groin muscle in the 17th over of the innings. And it seemed as if Shakib, who was clearly in a lot of discomfort, had aggravated an old groin injury.

Shakib was picked for the Test after recovering from a groin injury that he suffered during Bangladesh's third and final ODI against the Windies last month. However, even though his latest injury was ruled a fresh one, questions still remain over his match fitness.

"He is still not quite at 100 per cent," were the words of Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo following Tigers' practice session last Monday, just a day and a half before the first Test. He had however hoped that the premier all-rounder would gain match fitness in the remaining time.

Perhaps ominous signs were also there when the team physio was seen having a few words with the 33-year-old Shakib during almost every drinks break when Shakib was batting on the second day. Shakib, however, exhibited very little discomfort while wielding the willow during his 230-minute stay, during which he scored a 150-ball 68.

Bangladesh went with a sole pacer and a spin quartet, of which Shakib was a crucial part, for this Test. And while the team management's decision to involve a fourth spinner over giving another pacer a chance has already raised eyebrows, it now has to be asked whether there were doubts about Shakib's fitness from the start.



Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who barely recovered from a groin injury before the Chattogram Test, could not take to the field yesterday after leaving the field on the previous day with discomfort on his left leg. A scan, according to BCB, appears to have identified a fresh injury on the thigh.

PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan hit back after Nortje five-for

REUTERS

Anrich Nortje took five wickets as Pakistan were dismissed for 272 but South Africa's struggles with the bat in the sub-continent continued as they limped to 106 for four at the close on the second day of the second Test in Rawalpindi on Friday.

Captain Quinton de Kock (24 not out from 11 balls) and Temba Bavuma (15 not out) survived in the gloom at the close, but the tourists still trail by 166 runs and will be looking for a counter-punch on day three.



Nortje (5-56) was superb with the ball, his aggression and accuracy leading to a third five-wicket haul in Tests to wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan off the bowling of Hasan Ali (2-29), and the very next delivery Rassie van der Dussen was deceived by a ball that kept low and clattered into his stumps.



Root's 'very special' ton

AFP, Chennai

Skipper Joe Root hit a century in his 100th Test on Friday, but said England need a minimum 600 runs in the opening match against India.

England ended on 263 for three after Dom Sibley fell to paceman Jasprit Bumrah for 87 in the final over of day one and stumps were called in Chennai. England elected to bat after winning the toss in the first match of the four-Test series.

Root, unbeaten on 128 and battling cramp in the final session, put on 200 runs with Sibley after England slipped to 63 for two in the first session.

"I think we've got to look to try and get as many as we can - 600, 700 if we can, really try and make the most of the first innings while it's good," Root told reporters.

"Those footholes are starting to wear quite quickly. So, if we can bat the whole of tomorrow and maybe into day three then things could speed up quite quickly for us and you never know what can happen from that point onwards, but ultimately we've got to try and back up today."

Friday's effort was his third successive and 20th Test ton and termed it a "very special" knock.

"Yeah, very special. Last night the guys actually put a little surprise together for me - put some videos from some past players, some friends and family. And Ben in particular, stood up and said some really kind words," said Root.

Kings perfect, Abahani resurgent

SPORTS REPORTER



Holders Bashundhara Kings continued their perfect record in the Bangladesh Premier League with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Chattogram Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mahbubur Rahman Sufil scored the decisive goal in the second half to drive Kings to their sixth straight win, helping the Federation Cup champions to move to 18 points, four ahead of second-placed Abahani.

Bashundhara Kings took to the field on the back of morale-boosting 4-1 win over Mohammedan in Cumilla, but they faced stiff challenge from Chattogram Abahani, who threatened to snatch points despite playing with a depleted squad featuring only two foreign players.

The first half was an even contest, with both sides creating a couple of chances before Kings took the lead in the 61st minute when Sufil nodded home a well-judged corner from Jonathan Fernandes.

Chattogram Abahani had a shout for a handball turned down five minutes later when the ball hit Tapu

Barman's hand off a back-header from teammate Rimon Hossain but referee Jashim Atker overlooked the incident. Winger Rakib Hossain wasted a good chance to level the margin in the 71st minute as he failed to muster a proper shot, with only Kings' goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico to beat.



Kings also had two good chances to increase their lead but Sufil and Robson Da Silva drove wide on both occasions.

UTTAR BARIDHARA HOLD MOHAMMEDAN

Since their success in the opening match against Arambagah, a win has eluded Mohammedan in the past five matches as the Black and

Whites came from behind to play out a goalless draw against lowly Uttar Baridhara Club at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi yesterday.

Smarting from a 4-1 drubbing at the hands of holders Bashundhara Kings in the previous match, Mohammedan survived a scare

stoppage time of the first half after defender Papon Singh handled the ball inside the box while attempting to clear a shot from Uryu Nagata.

Arif Hossain put the ball in the back of Mohammedan's net in the 64th minute, but referee Bhuban Mohan Tarafder ruled it to be off-side.

ABAHANI BACK TO WINNING WAYS

After successive draws against Mohammedan and Chattogram Abahani, six-time champions Abahani returned to winning ways with an emphatic 4-1 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad at Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

Despite struggling to retain their lead against Mohammedan and Chattogram Abahani in previous matches, the Sky Blues hardly faced any trouble to score two goals in each half of the match. Poor goalkeeping from Muktiyoddha's Mahfuz Hasan Pritom helped Abahani's cause.

Masih Saighani scored twice while Sohel Rana and substitute Dipok Roy netted one goal each for Abahani while Sarwar Jaman Nipu pulled one goal back for Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

I'm still the best, insists Serena

AFP, Melbourne



Serena Williams on Friday insisted she was still the player to beat at 39, as she drew inspiration from ageless NFL quarterback Tom Brady ahead of the Australian Open.

Williams' comments came after her quarterfinal win at the Yarra Valley Classic where she looked in ominous form -- before pulling out of the tournament with a right shoulder injury.

The tennis icon, who is aiming for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title, said her advancing age was inconsequential and said she looked up to athletes like Brady, 43, who on Sunday is seeking his seventh Super Bowl title. "I feel good. I look at Tom Brady, it's so

inspiring," she said.

"I think with all the new things, all the new technology, all the new physical treatments, rehab, things that you can do ... obviously it prolongs careers for so long."

Williams, who defeated fellow American Danielle Collins 6-2, 4-6, 10-6 after a mid-match wobble, was set for a semifinal showdown with world number one Ashleigh Barty Saturday before the injury.

Asked whether she is still the best in the world when on top form, Williams was unequivocal. "I absolutely wouldn't be playing if I didn't think that," said the American.

Williams is drawn to play Germany's Laura Siegemund in the opening round of the Australian Open starting on Monday.





Getting a shot at a new life

Transgender people given 20 houses in Sirajganj under govt's Ashrayan-2 project on occasion of Mujib Borsho

MATHEWS CHIRAN, Back from Sirajganj

Before reaching her teen years, Borsha had to leave her parents' house.

The reason -- she was a transgender person. Not being accepted in her own family and bullied in many ways by her peers, she realised she needed to choose a separate path.

Knowing that she does not belong to traditional society, she started seeking other transgenders at the local bazar in Sirajganj's Rayganj upazila and eventually joined the transgender community.

Not having any formal education only compounded her struggles.

"The life led by those in the transgender community is not a dignified one. I had to ask for money from local stalls every day, people didn't like transgender people; they used abusive words when addressing us. It was pathetic," said a tearful Borsha, who is now 35.

"We didn't have a good place to live. People didn't want to rent to us. It was difficult to find good shelter. We had to live by cramming inside small rooms," she said.

"But now, we have a dignified life and a home. I never thought this would happen," said Borsha, wiping her tears.

Marking Mujib Borsho, the Prime Minister's Office built 20 houses under the Ashrayan-2 Project for 50 transgender people like Borsha in Sirajganj's Dhopakandi area, which falls under Hatikumul union in Ullapara upazila.

Similarly, 125 transgender people have also been rehabilitated in Sadar upazila of Dinajpur.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Borsha, a transgender woman, is all smiles while cuddling a goat named Ononto in front of her house in Sirajganj's Dhopakandi area. Borsha is one of the 50 transgender people in the district given houses and trained in new skills under the government's Ashrayan-2 project. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Hungary turns down Dhaka's vaccine offer

Reports Hungarian media STAR REPORT

A Hungarian newspaper reported that it was Bangladesh that offered the East European country 5,000 doses of a coronavirus vaccine.

The statement contradicts Bangladesh's foreign affairs State Minister Shahriar Alam's claim that it was Hungary that requested for the 5,000 doses.

Speaking on the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech at parliament on January 31, Shahriar Alam said Hungary and Bolivia requested Bangladesh to give them the vaccine doses.

"Hungary has requested us for 5,000 shots of Covid-19 vaccine. We will provide them with the vaccine from the stock we have. The prime minister and the ministry of health will decide on Bolivia's request," he said.

Hungarian newspaper, Hungary Today, yesterday reported that Bangladesh offered to send 5,000

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

GRAFT ENQUIRY, PROBE BY ACC No harm if same official does both

HC says in full text of verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in the full text of a judgement has upheld the rule that allows the Anti-Corruption Commission to assign the same officer the task of conducting both the inquiry and investigation of a corruption case, observing that there is no scope for the officer to become biased in doing this job.

"It is the Commission who may delegate or assign its power to its subordinate officer by a gazette notification to inquire or to investigate into the case.... In the process of tacking decision in submitting investigation report before the court concerned the investigating officer has nothing to do. Entrusting the same official to act as informant and investigator as well does not readily leave space of causing bias," the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahman and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman said in the verdict.

The full text of verdict was released on Thursday night.

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'America is back'

Biden ends support for Saudis in Yemen war, toughens stance on China, Russia, increases refugee cap in major US foreign policy reset

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden on Thursday promised a new era after the scattershot foreign policy of his predecessor, Donald Trump, declaring "America is back" on the global stage in his first diplomatic address as president.

In his speech, Biden signaled aggressive approaches to China and Russia, urged Myanmar's military leaders to halt their coup, and declared an end to US support for a Saudi Arabia-led military campaign in Yemen.

Biden also froze former president Donald Trump's plans to redeploy troops from Germany and dramatically increased the annual number of refugees whom US will accept.

"American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism, including the growing ambitions of China to rival the United States and the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy. We must meet the new moment ... accelerating global challenges from the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation," said Biden.

Trump angered European and Asian leaders with tariffs, fracturing of global alliances, and threats to withdraw US troops. He did little to push back against a wave of authoritarianism in some countries.

After a Trump-inspired mob attacked the US Capitol on Jan. 6, protesting Biden's election win, foreign allies and rivals alike expressed doubts about the health of American democracy.

Biden's speech on Thursday was a full-throated attempt to vanquish those doubts, and convince Americans of the value of a forceful international approach.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Allegations should be investigated

UN chief's spokesman says in response to question about Al Jazeera report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations is aware of the reporting done by Al Jazeera investigations concerning allegations of corruption against senior officials in Bangladesh and the press release issued by the Ministry of Defence in Bangladesh, Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, said in response to a question during a briefing on Thursday.

"The allegations of corruption [are] a serious matter that should be investigated by the relevant authorities," he said.

"Bangladesh is the largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. The deployment of such

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World's first flying race car unveiled



MAIL ONLINE

The world's first flying race car has been unveiled - with top speeds of 75mph and 'octocopter' speeders that will see it compete in a new event later this year.

Named Airspeeder, it will initially be flown by a remote pilot and can take off and land vertically, according to its developers Alauda Aeronautics.

Its first foray into the world of racing will see it operated remotely for a racing series that will act as a 'technical test-bed' ahead of a crewed racing series in 2022.

The flying vehicle has been in development for more than three years and is part of a bid to create a sport that can 'accelerate a new clean-air aerial mobility revolution'.

The firm, based in South Australia is developing a full grid of electric flying race-craft ahead of the

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Al Jazeera report ill-intended, fabricated

Says Bangladesh Police Service Association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association yesterday slammed and trashed the news report, titled "All the Prime Minister's Men", broadcast by Qatar-based international TV channel Al Jazeera on February 2.

BPSA termed the report "ill-intended, misleading and fabricated".

In a rejoinder yesterday, President of the association Md Shafiqul Islam,

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:52 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:56 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A view of the Metro Rail station at Uttara's Diyabari in the capital. Construction work of the station is almost complete and it has already become a landmark in the area. The Mass Rapid Transit-6 line starts from this station in Diyabari. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HARASSMENT OF BANGLADESHI WORKER Malaysia cops probing bribery allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in Malaysia are investigating an incident of bribery by law enforcement personnel, to which a Bangladeshi migrant worker reportedly fell victim near the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

A video of the incident, first circulated on Wednesday, has gone viral on WhatsApp, Free Malaysia Today (FMT) reported

yesterday, without disclosing the name and details of the Bangladeshi worker.

Brac termed the incident "unfortunate" and said incidents of maltreatment of Bangladeshis in Malaysia was "not new".

Brac Migration Programme urged the Malaysian police to stop harassing Bangladeshis workers, adding that it would send an official complaint to the

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বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন ২০২১-২০২৩
"Made in Bangladesh with Pride"

বিজিএমইএ কমপ্লেক্স: বাড়ী # ৭/৭এ, ব্লক # এইচ ১, সেক্টর # ১৭, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২৩০

সম্মানিত সদস্যদের জন্য নির্বাচন সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আসন্ন বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচনে শুধুমাত্র অটো ভোটারদের জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নির্বাচন রুলস এন্ড প্রসিডিউর এর ধারা-৩ এর বি মোতাবেক যারা অদ্যাবধি সদ্য তোলা ছবি (৬ মাসের অধিক পুরাতন নয়) জমা দেননি তাঁদেরকে আগামী ১০ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০২১ইং তারিখ এর মধ্যে অনুগ্রহপূর্বক ছবি জমা দেওয়ার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ জানানো হচ্ছে। উক্ত তারিখের মধ্যে নতুন ছবি জমা না দিলে ভোটার আইডি দেয়া সম্ভব হবে না। যারা ইতোমধ্যে ছবি জমা দিয়েছেন তাঁদের জন্য এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রযোজ্য নয়।

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