

IT IS A GENOCIDE' Canada's parliament passes motion condemning China's treatment of Uighurs PAGE: 6

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Some BB officials feed off scams

HC blasts central bank for failure to stop irregularities at NBFIs, say ACC, SEC too didn't play their role

ASHTOSH SARKAR and AKM ZAMIR UDDIN The High Court yesterday came down heavily on a section of Bangladesh Bank officials over their alleged links with financial scams involving People's Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (PLFSL), a non-bank financial institution.

served the departments responsible for monitoring NBFIs, gained undue benefits from scammers between 2002 and 2019. Taking the benefits, the officials remained silent regarding different irregularities in the NBFIs, it said.



With his baby seated precariously in the basket, a man takes the child out on a bicycle in the city. He is amongst fast-moving vehicles in the middle of the street. A bus behind is also trying to pass him. The photo was taken in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Syed Abul Maksud (1946-2021)

A full stop to 'symbol of protest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Protesting the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Syed Abul Maksud started boycotting stitched clothes. Since then he wore two pieces of white cloth.

SHAHJALAL AIRPORT OPERATIONS Japanese firm keen to take charge

High-level meeting on PPP to discuss the proposal today



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RASHIDUL HASAN

Two new project proposals, including one on the operation and maintenance of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), will be placed at a high-level meeting between representatives of Bangladesh and Japan today and there will be discussion whether those can be implemented under public private partnership (PPP).

VACCINATING TEACHERS, STUDENTS

Health ministry begins planning

Giving of 2nd dose likely to start from April 7

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The health ministry has started to work on a plan to include university teachers and students in the inoculation campaign to comply with a government decision. Education Minister Dipu Moni Monday said the universities will reopen in May after vaccinating the teachers and students.

AUGUST 21 ATTACK 2004 Huji man who threw grenades arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Rab yesterday arrested a fugitive convict in the August 21 grenade attack case who hurled bombs at the Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

The Rab chief said Iqbal fled to Malaysia in 2008. When he was identified as an illegal immigrant late last year, the Malaysian government deported him in December last year.

Advertisement for 'বঙ্গবন্ধু স্কলার' (Bengabandhu Scholar) selection and award ceremony. Includes details about the selection process, eligible subjects, and contact information for the P.M.E.A.T. board.



Just a couple of days after Amar Ekushey, two children ride bicycles while many other people walk on the foot of the Central Shaheed Minar with their shoes on yesterday. To protect the sanctity of the memorial for Language Movement martyrs, the High Court even issued an order prohibiting such activities there. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A cruel end to a mother's frantic search for her son

Dead for a month, he was buried unclaimed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was their daily routine to try to reach him over the phone, after Sadman Sakib Rafi went missing on January 13 this year. On the 14th day since he couldn't be traced, the family again called his number and this time a woman answered, saying she did not know Rafi but found the SIM card at Hatirjheel lake while cleaning the area.



Sadman Sakib Rafi

BANGLADESH
UPDATE

399

New cases in 24hrs



5,44,116

Total cases



8,374

Deaths



4,92,887

Recoveries



2,491,066

Deaths



112,481,859

Total cases

We will build our own fighter jets: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed the desire to build fighter jets in Bangladesh to protect its sovereignty.

"We are building the Air Force to make it competitive. We have a desire to build fighter jets in Bangladesh. We are preparing to protect our air border by ourselves," she said.

The premier was addressing the programme marking the handing over of the National Standard to 11 and 21 squadrons of Bangladesh Air Force.

The event was held at Air Base Bir Sreshtha Matiur Rahman in Jashore. The PM joined it virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said the government has taken steps to protect the country's sovereignty and take the country some steps ahead in defending it. She expressed optimism that the country would be able to get success in this regard.

She mentioned about the "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University" and aeronautical centre where the research works would be done effectively.

The PM said protecting the dignity of the national flag is the sacred duty of all the armed forces personnel. She said she thinks that the members of the armed forces would always remain ready to make any sacrifice for protecting the dignity of the flag, the country's independence, sovereignty and while performing duties in UN peacekeeping missions so that the dignity of

Bangladesh could be enhanced.

Recalling the efforts made by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to build the Air Force after the country's independence, Hasina said Bangabandhu in 1974 had formulated Defence Policy for Bangladesh.

"Following that footsteps, we have formulated Forces Goal 2030 to make our armed forces a time-befitting and modern one, and we have started implementing that."

Hasina briefly described the introduction of various modern and technology-based equipment in the Air Force.

As the country is celebrating Mujib Borsho, the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation, the government has taken massive programmes for its overall development and implementing those to change the fate of the general people, including those living in rural areas, she added.

"We will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our independence. Let's promise on the eve of that to make ourselves patriot and fearless."

She said Bangladesh would be built as a developed and prosperous "Golden Bengal" with the united efforts of all to materialise the dream of the Father of the Nation.

Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat, on behalf of the premier, handed the national flags to 11 and 21 squadrons of Bangladesh Air Force.



An Air Force official hands a memento to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday marking the handover of the National Standard to 11 and 21 squadrons of Bangladesh Air Force.

PHOTO:
PID

Japanese firm keen

FROM PAGE 1

Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister, and Momura Masafumi, vice minister of MLIT, among others, are expected to deliver speeches in the day-long meeting.

Besides, officials from both the countries and agencies and companies concerned will also take part in the meeting which was scheduled for March last year, but deferred due to the pandemic.

Bangladesh and Japan have already agreed to work on five important projects under PPP with government-to-government initiative.

Under the arrangement, Japanese companies will invest under the government-to-government system without participating in any bidding.

At the first meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Joint PPP Platform on December 6, 2017, Bangladesh's PPPA sought multi-billion-dollar support from Japan for implementing 18 infrastructure projects.

Five projects have been selected so far.

TWO NEW PROJECTS

Speaking to The Daily Star, PPPA Director (investment promotion) Najmus Sayadat yesterday said, "Two new project proposals would be placed at tomorrow's [Wednesday] platform meeting."

He said the proposal on Nabinagar-Paturia Expressway project was supposed to be placed before the platform meeting last year. Later, Japan picked JFE Engineering Corporation for the project and the company talked with the RHD on different issues regarding the project.

"They [Japanese authority] have given initial concurrence regarding the project," he added.

Asked about the airport project, Sayadat said the Japan government and Mitsubishi Corporation showed interest.

Air Vice Marshal Mafidur Rahman, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), which operates the country's airports, said Mitsubishi Corporation submitted their proposal on December 19 last year.

"As it is a sensitive issue involving the security of the country's prime airport, we have decided to assess pros and cons of the proposal by a third party and check whether it will be financially viable for us," he told this newspaper yesterday.

Mafidur said they were also considering how deeply the country's interest would be protected through operating its main airport by a foreign company.

Currently, Aviation Dhaka Consortium (ADC), comprising Mitsubishi Corporation, Fujiata Corporation and Samsung C&I, is implementing the third terminal project of HSI A at a cost of Tk

20,598 crore.

In 2019, CAAB earned around Tk 1,500 crore from HSI A. Biman Bangladesh Airlines operates the ground handling activities at the airport.

However, there are widespread allegations that services at the airport are not up to the mark.

An RHD official said the length of Nabinagar-Paturia expressway -- with four normal lanes, two emergency lanes and two service lanes -- would be around 58km. The exact length would be known after the selection of the location for the second Padma bridge.

PROGRESS OF FIVE PROJECTS

The five selected projects are: Construction of Multimodal Transport Hub (MmTH) at Kamalapur Railway Station; Construction of MmTH at Biman Bandar Railway Station; Detailed design, construction, operation, and maintenance of MRT Line-2; Construction of Outer Ring Road (southern part); and Improvement of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway.

Under the improvement of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway project, the 136km long highway would be upgraded to a four-lane highway with service lanes on both sides. The estimated cost of the project is \$1.693 billion.

The authorities have already appointed Buet as consultant for reviewing a feasibility study on the project. The deadline for completing the work is June 30.

The 24km MRT-2 line will connect the capital's Gaborli with Chattogram Road via Basila, Jhigatala, Science Lab, Azimpur, Central Shaheed Minar, Golap Shah Mazar, Motijheel, Mugda, and Demra. The project's estimated cost is \$3.465 billion.

The government has planned to construct 48km expressway along the southern part of the capital's outer ring road to link Dhaka-Aricha, Dhaka-Mawa and Dhaka-Chattogram highways.

The project's estimated cost is \$1.20 billion. The RHD has already appointed consultants for carrying out a feasibility study and prepare a detailed design.

Marubeni Corporation was selected for these three projects.

Under Kamalapur MmTH project, the railway station would be turned into a multimodal transport hub, which would have connectivity with different modes of transport, including conventional train, high speed train, metro rail, bus.

Kajima Corporation has already outlined a concept in this regard.

Similarly, Biman Bandar Station would be turned into a multimodal transport hub. The project's estimated cost is \$200 million. The Japanese government initially selected Sojitz Corporation, but later picked Mitsubishi Corporation for the work.

Police Station in this regard.

"Law enforcers repeatedly told us that my son might have joined a militant group. They told us that my son might be taking the training. I repeatedly told them that he could never join a militant group," she said.

"What an unfortunate mother I am that I can't see my son's body," she lamented.

The family is now trying to locate Rafi's grave with the help of Anjanam Muftidul Islam which buried the body.

According to the GD, Sadman left the house on the morning of January 13 without informing anyone. His mobile phone was found switched off.

Monowara earlier said that her son returned to Dhaka from Malaysia in September 2019. But he could not go back to Malaysia due to the coronavirus situation.

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

SI Hafizur Rahman of Bhatara Police Station, who was in charge of investigating the GD, said they had tried to locate Rafi using technology, but failed.

SI Harun-or-Rashid of Hatirjheel Police Station said the woman identified the unclaimed body seeing the photographs and clothing.

Some BB officials feed off scams

FROM PAGE 1

have recently given confessional statements to lower courts regarding financial scams.

Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar said the ACC does not arrest the errant people in most cases as well.

"We are now forced to spend time in dealing with the misdeeds done by SK Sur Chowdhury and PK Halder [Prashanta Kumar Halder] as the regulators [BB and SEC] have not done anything," the judge said.

The ACC has been investigating Halder's involvement in siphoning off around Tk 10,000 crore from four financial institutions -- PLFSL, ILFS, FAS Finance, and Reliance Finance -- between 2009 and 2019.

PK Halder left the country after embezzling a huge amount of money, but the ACC and the BB took no steps against him, the HC said.

The officials concerned of the central bank are not doing anything to pay back the depositors' money, which cannot be allowed, it added.

In reply, BB's lawyer Tanjib-Ul-Alam told the court that his client was working to that end. He, however, said it cannot be done without assistance from the authorities concerned.

During the court proceedings yesterday, 51 of 143 people who defaulted on loans from PLFSL, the beleaguered NBFI, appeared before the HC bench in line with its January 21 order.

The borrowers who did not appear before the court yesterday will be given

another chance to provide explanation to the court within two weeks.

If they fail to do so, a directive will be passed to arrest them, Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar warned.

Some 137 defaulters will have to present before the HC bench tomorrow when the judge will discuss with the BB governor, the chairmen of the ACC and the SEC on exploring ways to recover non-performing loans (NPLs).

As many as 280 defaulters have been asked to appear before the court in connection with the scams involving PLFSL.

PLFSL is a listed company with the capital market, meaning that 80 percent of its shares are owned by common people, the HC bench observed.

The court said depositors and shareholders of the NBFI are facing deep trouble as they have not yet got back their hard-earned money.

Some defaulters even told the HC bench that they had not opened any accounts with PLFSL.

The management of the NBFI opened accounts in their names illegally without informing them, they said, adding that the management even transferred funds from one account to another in order to trade shares.

For instance, the wife of a former PLFSL managing director, who died in 2018, said she never knew that she had a beneficiary owners' (BO) account with the NBFI.

"My husband had operated the

account using my name and transacted shares without informing me," she said.

Meanwhile yesterday, the same HC bench reconstituted a BB's fact-finding committee to look into the financial scams in the NBFI sector.

The central bank had formed a five-member committee, led by one of its deputy governors, on February 15.

Yesterday, the HC bench included two persons -- Moyeedul Islam, a former district and sessions judge, and Dr Nurur Rahman, a former secretary -- in the committee so that the inquiries can be done properly.

The body will also investigate whether the central bank officials' had any involvement in the scams since 2002 till date.

The committee will be allowed to interrogate any official of the BB.

Lawyers Mejbahur Rahman appeared for PLFSL while Khan Mohammad Shamim Aziz, Tanjib-Ul-Alam and Kazi Ershadul Alam represented the central bank and several lawyers argued for defaulters in the court.

PLFSL, which commenced its operation in 1996, faced a wide range of financial scams from 2004, which forced the central bank to appoint an observer in 2015.

In addition, the central bank removed five directors of the NBFI in 2015 for their alleged involvement in embezzlement of Tk 358 crore.

Despite that, the central bank failed to restore corporate governance in PLFSL. In the meantime, the financial health of the NBFI continued to worsen.

Health ministry begins planning

FROM PAGE 1

The student dormitories at those universities will reopen on May 17, she said.

All procedures to this end will be completed following the health guidelines, she said, adding that 1.30 lakh residential students, 15,000 teachers, and other staff members of public universities will be vaccinated before May 17.

"Vaccination is a must for students if they want to return to their halls," she said.

No examinations will be held at those universities before the reopening. But online classes will continue, the minister said.

Experts, however, said educational institutions irrespective of universities should be reopened immediately and vaccination for students and teachers can also run simultaneously.

"The plan for reopening educational institutions after vaccination is not a realistic one. The World Health Organization (WHO) has instructed to go for reopening if the positivity rate remains stagnant below five percent for more than two weeks. We have this situation here for around a month and we can reopen step by step by ensuring health rules," Mushtaq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) told The Daily Star

yesterday.

He said that further delay is not good for the education sector.

"The residential institutions should be reopened first. The daily academic activities can be arranged in shifts by reducing the time and number of the students. And the vaccination can be done simultaneously."

There are 48 public and 107 private universities, including the National University, in the country. About 41 lakh students are currently enrolled in public universities and their affiliated colleges, while the private universities have around 3.50 lakh students.

SECOND DOSE LIKELY FROM APRIL 7

Health Minister Zahid Maleque told reporters yesterday that the government is planning to start administering the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine from April 7.

"Everything will depend on the availability of the vaccines," the minister said while addressing a press conference at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Affairs.

He called upon women to take the vaccine as there is a gap between the male and female recipients.

"We have received 20 lakh doses of vaccine early today (yesterday) but we were supposed to get 50 lakh," the minister said, adding that the government is asking the Serum Institute of India (manufacturer of the

Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine) to send more as soon as possible.

But the supplier is also under pressure due to the huge demand for vaccines in India, he added.

"Some new suppliers have also applied for supplying vaccine (to us). We are considering those," the minister said.

Bangladesh is expected to receive 1.31 lakh doses of Pfizer vaccine under the COVAX arrangement by the end of this month, according to health officials.

The country is expected to get 6.8 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine from Covax, the global vaccine alliance.

The minister also said those who will travel abroad will require a Covid-19 negative certificate even after taking two shots of covid vaccines.

Bangladesh started the mass inoculation campaign on February 7 with 70 lakh Oxford vaccine shots in hand. Apart from the 50 lakh doses of purchased vaccine, the country received another 20 lakh doses of Covishield from the Indian government as a gift.

After two revisions, the government now plans to vaccinate 70 lakh people in the first month.

Meanwhile, the number of people who have registered on www.surokha.gov.bd rose to 3,646,970.

Of them, around 2,491,053 lakh have been given the shots, including yesterday's 182,896.

A cruel end

FROM PAGE 1

more weeks, Monowara on Monday thought there might be clues in the Hatirjheel lake area as her son's SIM card was found there.

She did manage to trace him -- his corpse unclaimed and already buried.

A body recovered from Hatirjheel lake on January 14, a day after Rafi went missing, was her son.

"I thought my son went through Hatirjheel as his SIM card was there. I decided to look for my son and ask everyone, even muggers in the area, showing his photos," she told The Daily Star.

The mother went to Hatirjheel police for help. A police officer listened to her and showed some photos of an unclaimed body they recovered.

"The body in the photos was swollen but still I found similarity with my son. Then they brought his clothes and shoes [police preserved them as evidence]," she said.

"The shoes belonged to my son. He left the house wearing the shoes on January 13... My son was killed that night," the sobbing mother said.

"Law enforcers could not identify the body, and it was left unclaimed for a month at the hospital... What's the distance between Hatirjheel and Bhatara police stations?" she asked.

Sadman's mother earlier filed a missing person's case (CID) with Bhatara

18 more die, 399 get Covid

STAR REPORT

Eighteen people have died from Covid-19 in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday and at least 399 new infections were recorded in that duration.

The total number of deaths has now reached 8,374 and the death rate stands at 1.54 percent, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The 399 new infections take the total number of people infected to 5,44,116, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 3.13 percent, down from 3.3 percent the previous day, while the total positivity rate stands at 13.7 percent.

A total of 12,748 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.

At least 828 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the period.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 4,92,887 and the recovery rate at 90.58 percent.

Among the deceased, 10 were men and eight were women.

One was between 21 and 30 years old, four between 31 and 40, one aged between 41 and 50 years, two between 51 and 60, and the rest were above 60 years old, added the release.

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

Nine women arrested over Philippine bomb plots: military

AFP, Manila

Nine women suspected of plotting to blow up military targets in the restive southern Philippines have been arrested, the army said yesterday.

Security forces detained the women and seized bomb-making equipment during raids on Friday of several homes on Muslim-majority Jolo island, a stronghold of the Islamic State-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

Huji man

FROM PAGE 1

he returned is being investigated," the Rab chief said.

The orchestrated attack on the rally of AL President and current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left 24 party leaders and activists dead and hundreds of others injured. Hasina, the then leader of the opposition, narrowly survived but suffered injuries to her ear.

In the 2018 verdict, the court sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home affairs Lutuzzaman Babar, former deputy education minister Abdus Salam Pintu and two top intelligence officials, to death in connection with the grenade attack.

Among those sentenced to death were 14 members of the militant group Harkatul Jihad (Huji-B).

Besides, 19 people, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, were sentenced to life in prison and 11 others were given sentences of different terms and fined.

The special court also found Tarique, Babar and 36 others guilty in the case filed under the Explosives Substance Act and handed punishments ranging from death sentence to 20 years in prison.

At the press conference, Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun said Rab has arrested 15 people, including Mufi Hannan and his brother Muhibullah alias Mofiz alias Abbi. In addition, 16 Arges grenades were recovered in 2007.

He said the elite force was trying to arrest Iqbal since the incident. He spent his days in Jhenaidah, Gazipur and Savar in the guise of security guards, workers and rickshaw-pullers, he added.

He fled the country in 2008. The Rab chief said they had got little time to interrogate Iqbal after his arrest.

Iqbal told Rab that he joined Huji-B through a local member in Jhenaidah in 2001.

He got close to Mufi Hannan and other top Huji leaders in 2003 and took part in militancy training.

"In August 2004, he came to Dhaka on Mufi Hannan's directive and took shelter in a hideout. He developed close relationships with Hannan and other Huji members," the Rab chief said.

He also attended different clandestine meetings with Mufi Hannan.

About the August 21 grenade attack, Iqbal told Rab members that he took part in the attack directly on Hannan's directive. Hannan also supplied him with grenades to perpetrate the attack and he threw grenades targeting the stage.

After the attack, he went into hiding back in Jhenaidah.

Son of Abdul Majid Mollah from Jhenaidah, Iqbal was once involved with BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, said the Rab DG. He was an elected class representative of KC College (Jhenaidah) student union in 1994. He studied up to HSC.

From 1995 to 1998, he was in Malaysia, where he worked. Upon his return, he was engaged in ISD phone and other businesses.

70pc people of four districts took wage cut during pandemic

Sanem, ActionAid survey also reveals alarming situation in online education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly seventy percent of people in Barguna, Kurigram, Rajshahi and Satkhira faced wage reduction in November last year due to the coronavirus pandemic, while a little over 81 percent of self-employed people faced reduction in profits, revealed a recent survey by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem) and ActionAid.

The organisations interviewed 1,541 people in the districts of Kurigram, Satkhira, Rajshahi, and Barguna. The respondent households' major sources of income were agriculture, industry, service etc.

Almost one-third of households claimed that their business had to be closed either permanently or temporarily since March 2020.

Several reasons were identified behind the business closures such as the economic shutdown, falling demand for goods, reductions in price, increased cost of production, Covid-19 related additional costs and so on.

The findings were shared yesterday at a webinar titled "Pandemic and the Youth in Bangladesh: Findings from Four Selected Districts," jointly organised by Sanem and ActionAid Bangladesh.

The survey explores the current state of household incomes and earning profile of the sample, their status of education, healthcare, gender-based violence, and some key youth-specific areas such as youth engagement in civic, climate and political actions, amongst others.

According to the survey, only 10 percent of people received benefits from the new programmes initiated to tackle pandemic-induced shocks, SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Bangladesh Mukhtijoddha Santan Sangsad, a platform of freedom fighters' children, staged a sit-in, blocking the capital's Shabbagh intersection yesterday to press home their seven-point demand, including reinstatement of 30 percent quota in government services. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

GHATARCHAR-KANCHPUR ROUTE 155 buses to run under one company: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said 155 buses would run under a single company on the proposed Kanchpur Bridge-Ghatarchar pilot route in the capital.

"As per the previous announced date, we hope we will be able to operate buses on the route from April 1," said the mayor while talking to reporters after the 16th meeting of the Bus Route Rationalisation Committee held at the Nagar Bhaban.

Taposh said after introduction of this pilot route under the project, other routes would be linked up with it. Within seven days, a draft of joint venture agreement for the single company would be prepared for the route, he added.

He said Bangladesh Road Transport Authority has sent a proposal to the road transport and bridges ministry to set the fare for buses on the route at Tk 2.20 per km.

Currently, the fare rate is Tk 1.70 per km for 52-seat buses and Tk 1.60 for 36-seat buses in Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan cities.

Taposh said currently 155 buses of two companies are running in the route.

BNP trying to 'jeopardise' peace to cover up failure

Says Obaidul Quader

BSS, Dhaka

BNP is trying to "jeopardise" peace in name of planned movement in order to cover up their failure, said Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said this while speaking at the Chatmohar upazila Awami League conference through a video conference from his official residence in the capital.

Just like their election campaigns and movements, Quader said, BNP's ill political motive on corona vaccination has been rejected by people of the country.

Conducting propaganda against the government in home and abroad, arson attack by BNP and the recent smear campaign by Al Jazeera against the government and the country are interlinked, he said.

Quader asked party leaders concerned to form committee through conference, as any pocket committee would never be allowed. Leaders must be made depending on the support and opinion of activists, he added.

Chaired by Chatmohar upazila AL president Shakhawat Hossen, the conference was attended, among others, by AL organising secretary SM Kamal Hossen,

AL central committee members Nurul Islam Thandu, Merina Jahan Kabita and Abdul Awal Shamim, former state minister for home Shamsul Haq Tuku and district AL general secretary Golam Maruf Prince.

TAKE LESSONS FROM BANGABANDHU Earlier, at a discussion organised by the Roads and Highways Department marking Bangabandhu's birth centenary, the minister emphasised on taking lessons from integrity of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to steer the country ahead by facing future challenges.

"To fulfill the dream of Bangabandhu, We have to strengthen Sheikh Hasina's hand... by taking lessons from his honesty, to move the country forward through facing all imminent challenges," he said while joining the event through a video conference.

Chaired by Roads and Highways Division chief M Abdus Sabur, the meeting was virtually attended, among others, by Bangabandhu Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee chief coordinator Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Prime Minister's Office secretary M Tofazzal Hossain Mia and other RHD officials.

Zafrullah slams BNP for failing to wage movement

UNB, Dhaka

Criticising BNP for its failure to wage any movement with public issues, Gonoshasthaya Kendra Founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday said senior leaders of the party have apparently become "deaf and blind".

"Though there are many big leaders in BNP, I think they have become deaf and blind. The government has been making mistakes one after another, but they cannot do anything as they cannot see or hear anything," he said.

Zafrullah came up with the remarks while speaking at a discussion arranged by Jatiya Party (Zafar), one of the components of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, at Jatiya Press Club, marking Amar Ekushey, Language Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day.

Ignoring public issues, he said, BNP has long been talking about only one issue -- release of its chairperson Khaleda Zia. "Even, they cannot speak in a straight manner about the release of Khaleda Zia," he said.

The freedom fighter said Khaleda has a right to go abroad for medical treatment as she is unwell. "The rights have to be realised," he added.

He said though all the offices, courts, madrasas and makhtabs are now open, general educational institutions still remain closed.

Zafrullah slammed leaders of BNP and 20-party alliance for not taking position in favour of the students seeking immediate reopening of the universities and dormitories.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Govt making list of 'fake' freedom fighters: BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that the government is making a list of "fake" freedom fighters comprising Awami League supporters and their relatives who did not join the Liberation War in 1971.

"Those who are now in power did not fight the Liberation War. They did not witness how the war took place in the battlefield. That's why they want to snatch the title from real freedom fighters," said BNP senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Speaking at a human chain, he alleged, "They (govt) are making a list of fake freedom fighters comprising those belonging to Awami League."

Referring to BNP senior leader and gallantry title recipient freedom fighter Hafizuddin Ahmed's remark, Rizvi said only 80,000 freedom fighters had fought the Liberation War in 1971.

"But Awami League is making the list of 2.5 lakh freedom fighters. They are including the names of their relatives and grandchildren, who were not born in 1971, in the list of freedom fighters," he alleged.

Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB) arranged the programme in front

of Jatiya Press Club, protesting a move to revoke BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's "Bir Uttam" title.

Rizvi warned that those who are making "evil efforts" to revoke Zia's Bir Uttam title will one day be tried in a "people's court".

He said he was shocked seeing Al Jazeera's recent report on Bangladesh. "Criminals have been pardoned by the state, but the law and home ministers said they do not know anything about it. This is how the government is doing evil acts and injustice by introducing a mafia system," the BNP leader alleged.

He said AL needs a "mafia system" to run the country as it has "obliterated" democracy, freedom of expression and press freedom only to cling to power.

Rizvi said the government has taken a move to remove Zia's gallantry title to divert people's attention from its "misdeeds" exposed by the Al Jazeera report.

The BNP leader said it is the government, not Zia, who will get humiliated if his Bir Uttam title is revoked.

Nothing will happen to Ziaur Rahman as he is a well-established freedom fighter. He declared independence and inspired the nation to fight for independence, Rizvi added.

Misinformation severe deterrence to progress

Says BIPSS President ANM Muniruzzaman

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) President Maj Gen (ret'd) ANM Muniruzzaman yesterday said fake news and misinformation are severe deterrence to any nation's progress.

"Therefore, it's of paramount importance for individuals to know how to discern fake news from authentic ones, especially for the youth," he said at a BIPSS workshop titled "Developing a Critical Understanding against Fake News and Disinformation" held in the capital.

Muniruzzaman said society has evolved at a rapid pace in the last decade but so have the methods of producing fake news.

The BIPSS president said key information, such as legitimacy of the Covid-19 vaccine, are questioned due to propagandist media production.

"The most prioritised target audience of misinformation is the youth. They're a vulnerable population and it's important for us to make sure that they can distinguish between what's authentic and what's fake," Muniruzzaman said.

He said the impact of misinformation is absolutely pervasive, and it touches all sectors of society. "This can lead to massive security implications and result in social destabilisation."

The interactive workshop was attended by young professionals, students and youth representatives from various disciplines.



Asaduzzaman Noor

Sara Zaker

Asiatic 3Sixty gets new chairperson, co-chairperson

CITY DESK

Asaduzzaman Noor and Sara Zaker have been appointed as the new chairperson and co-chairperson of Asiatic 3Sixty, respectively, said a press release.

The decision was finalised at Asiatic 3Sixty Board of Directors' meeting on Thursday, and has been implemented with immediate effect. Previously, Noor and Zaker held positions of vice chairperson and executive vice chairperson respectively.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

ATIA MAHAL ANTI-MILITANT DRIVE CASE

Deposition deferred for absence of witnesses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Sylhet yesterday deferred deposition of witnesses in the case filed over the sensational five-day anti-militant drive at Sylhet's Atia Mahal in 2017.

As no witness was present before the court, the tribunal could not proceed with the case's witness recording, and the judge, Muhammad Nurul Amin Biplab, deferred the date, said Khokon Chandra Sarkar, assistant commissioner (prosecution) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police. However, the new date for witness deposition is yet to be confirmed by the tribunal, he said.

On the early night of March 24, 2017, police cordoned a building named Atia Mahal at Dakshin Surma upazila's Shibbari area on information about militancy activity.

From March 25, Bangladesh Army conducted the drive, codenamed "Operation Twilight", till March 28. Four militant suspects died at the house during the drive.

In the evening of March 25, 2017, while the drive was ongoing, two grenades were blasted around 400 metres away from Atia Mahal, which claimed seven lives, including Rab intelligence chief Lt Col Abul Kalam Azad and two police officers.

Police on April 4 filed two separate cases, one regarding the militant hideout and another for the twin grenade blasts, with Moulabazar Police Station, accusing unnamed people after the operation.

Following an order of Police Headquarters on May 2 that year, Police Bureau of Investigation took over the cases from the police station and started investigation from May 9.

Dewan Abul Hossain, inspector of PBI in Sylhet and investigation officer of the case, submitted a charge sheet in the case on September 6, 2019.

In the charge-sheet, Jahurul Haque alias Jashim Uddin, Md Hasan and Jahurul's wife Arjina alias Rajia were indicted, while five others, who died during the anti-militant drives in Sylhet and Moulvibazar, were asked to be acquitted.

The trio was arrested in connection with several other militancy cases and later shown arrested in this case on January 17, 2019.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Five killed, 15 hurt in Sirajganj bus-truck collision

Two others die in road accident at Chapainawabganj

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and 15 injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Sirajganj, a bus and a truck collided head-on at Konabari near Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone, leaving at least five people dead and 15 injured, said police.

The truck driver and four bus passengers died on the spot. Of them, three were identified as Md Fazlur Rahman (70), a freedom fighter from Bogura; Bimal Kumar Das (45) from Sherpur upazila; and Abdul Hannan (55) from Belkuchi, Sirajganj, said the law enforcers.

Identities of two other deceased could not be known immediately.

Md Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Banagabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station, said the accident took place around 8am on Bangabandhu Bridge Link Road as a Dhaka-bound bus of Jugantor Paribahan from Bogura collided with an oil-laden truck going to Sirajganj.

The bus driver lost his control over the steering after one of the vehicle's front wheels got punctured, said Nurul Islam, adding, "Eventually, it hit the oncoming truck."

Police and fire fighters rushed the spot and rescued the injured who were admitted

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Over a hundred people from different banks demanded justice for the murder of Agrani Bank officer Moudud Ahmed, who was beaten badly by transport workers and died at Sylhet hospital on February 20 night. The bankers formed a human chain in front of Sylhet Shaheed Minar yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

SHIFT Automobile magazine, February 2021 edition is available now

Dhanmondi: Gyankosh, Road # 4, Ph# 862-3251 & Subhanbag Madrasa Market Ph# 811-2441 News Corner, Shop #12, H#1, R#10, Alta Plaza, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Ph# 01819-154848 Unimart, H# 80, R# R/A, Sat Masjid Road, Dhanmondi, Ph# 01620-014000	New Market: Jahir Book House, Gate No-1, New Market, Ph# 01715-352471	Md. Torzel, Rashid Centre, Sector#3, Uttara, Ph# 01915-397544
Motijheel: Amir & Son's, Purana Paltan Ph# 01711-137851, 88-02-9556484	Gulshan: Md. Kalam, DMCC Market, Gulshan-1, Ph# 01720-319283 Unimart, Gulshan Centre Point, H# 25-26, H# 90-91, Gulshan-2, Ph# 01955-550000	Banglamotor: Batigor, Ctg. Press Club, Jamal Khan Road Ph# 01733-067005 Chittagong: The Daily Star Chittagong Office, Ph# 01818140535
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Dr Mizanur passes away

Dr Mizanur Rahman, former director general of Directorate General of Health Services and a freedom fighter, passed away at Square Hospital in Dhaka on Monday night, aged 73, said a press release.



United Hospital marks Int'l Mother Language Day

United Hospital Limited on Sunday organised a special event on the occasion of International Mother Language Day, said a press release. The event was attended by expats working in Bangladesh, who, in their mother tongues, talked about Bangladesh and the fight against coronavirus.

EWU holds orientation for freshers

The orientation programme for the newly admitted students for the spring semester 2021 of East West University (EWU) was held on Zoom on February 20, said a press release. Nearly 900 students were admitted to graduate and undergraduate programmes in 14 departments.

ERRATUM

The news published yesterday on this page headlined 'Prof Tawseef Hossain appointed IUB VC' erroneously spelled the name of Prof Tanweer Hossain as Prof Tawseef Hossain in the headline. We sincerely regret this unintentional error.



Bhawal Badre Alam Govt. College Gazipur. e-Tender Notice 02/2020-2021. Tender closing date & time: 11-March-2021 11:00pm.

Deposition

The Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Sylhet on May 10 last year formed charges against the trio, who are reportedly active members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, referred to as Neo-JMB.

Five killed

FROM PAGE 3 To Sirajganj General Hospital. In Chapainawabganj, two motorcyclists were killed as a truck hit a motorcycle from the opposite direction on Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid land port highway at Ranihati in Shibganj upazila.

Asiatic

It is an honour to be appointed as chairperson of Asiatic 3Sixty, Noor said. "It is my solemn responsibility to spearhead an organisation that has such a decorated past and an incredible present potential, and so, I am grateful to all for placing their confidence in me.

70pc

FROM PAGE 3 and of them, 68.8 percent were new recipients of such aid. Since the start of the pandemic, online classes have been most frequent in Rajshahi (37.8 percent) and least frequent in Kurigram (16 percent).

Only 4.96 percent of women took legal action after experiencing any type of violence, and reasons behind that are -- lack of awareness on where to lodge complaints, shame, fear of household members, financial constraints and much more.

6th DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MD. RAFIUDDIN (BABLU). Today the 24th February is the 6th death anniversary of late Md. Rafiuddin (Bablu), Managing Director of Modhumita Group and youngest son of late Md. Sirajuddin founder of Modhumita Group.

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক (সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ) প্রধান কার্যালয় মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ বাংলাদেশ. নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি. ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সদস্যত্বক ৮টি ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে সম্মতিসহকারে নিম্নবর্ণিত সংখ্যক শূন্য পদ প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে পূরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রস্তুত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের সিকট হতে Online এ সংঘাত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

China's treatment of Uighurs is 'genocide'

Say Canadian MPs; Beijing slams move as a 'malicious provocation'

AFP, Ottawa

Canadian MPs have voted to label Beijing's treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang as genocide, a move angrily slammed by China yesterday as a "malicious provocation."

Rights groups believe at least one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities have been incarcerated in camps in the northwestern region, where China is also accused of forcibly sterilizing women and imposing forced labor.

The motion "Uighurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide" passed unanimously in the Canadian House of Commons, and ministers called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to officially label it as such.

The motion also called for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics to be moved if the "genocide" continues.

The United States has already used the label, with the administration of former president Donald Trump slamming China in January for a "systematic attempt to destroy Uighurs."

Following a G7 meeting, Trudeau said Canada was consulting with its allies on the use of the term "genocide" for the treatment of Uighurs.

Beijing hit back yesterday, saying the motion had "disregarded facts and common sense" and "deliberately smeared China."

After initially denying the existence of the camps in Xinjiang, China later defended them as vocational training centers aimed at reducing the appeal of Islamic extremism.



Protesters hold up the three finger salute as they take part in demonstration against police and government corruption in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong to disqualify disloyal politicians, officials

Hong Kong yesterday announced plans to ramp up the ideological vetting of politicians and officials, with anyone seen to be disloyal to China or a national security threat barred from office. The draft law will be sent next month to the city's legislature, a body now devoid of opposition after a number of figures were disqualified because their political views were deemed a security threat. Officials have detailed a "negative list" of offenses that could see their colleagues removed from office, including acts that endanger national security, advocating for independence or refusing to accept China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. The city's Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Eric Tsang confirmed that criticism of the Chinese Communist Party could also be a disqualifying factor.

Wife of Mexican drug lord 'El Chapo' arrested in US

US authorities arrested the wife of jailed Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman on Monday at an airport outside of Washington on narcotics smuggling charges, the Justice Department said. Emma Coronel Aispuro, 31, faces one charge of conspiracy to traffic cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana for importation into the United States, the department said. Guzman was the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel, one of Mexico's most notorious drug trafficking groups. He ran an operation that delivered hundreds of tons of narcotics into the United States and was behind multiple murders of those who crossed him, according to court filings. He was extradited to the United States in 2017 to stand trial, and was convicted and sentenced to life in prison two years later.

Indian climate activist granted bail in sedition case

A New Delhi court yesterday granted bail to 22-year-old climate activist, saying there was "scanty and sketchy evidence" of sedition in her efforts to help farmers protest in a case that has drawn global attention. Disha Ravi was arrested in the southern city of Bengaluru on Feb. 13 and charged with sedition for her alleged role in the creation of an online toolkit that police said contained action plans used to foment violence during the farmers' protest. Judge Dharmender Rana said there was little to hold Ravi, a founder of the local chapter of Swedish climate crusader Greta Thunberg's movement, in custody any longer and criticised the authorities for detaining anyone who differed with government policy.

SOURCE: AFP, NDTV

'Heartbreaking milestone'

Biden leads Americans in moment of silence to mourn 500,000 deaths

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden ordered flags lowered to half mast Monday after the United States crossed the "heartbreaking" milestone of 500,000 Covid-19 deaths, while Britain eyed lifting lockdowns in the latest sign of global gains against the pandemic.

An emotional Biden asked everyone to remain vigilant and urged maintain the hygiene practices.

Biden, accompanied by his wife Jill and Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff, then stood outside the White House to mark a moment's silence in front of 500 candles representing the toll -- the highest reported of any country.

But signs are also emerging that progress is being made both in the United States and around the world, with infections dropping sharply and vaccine deliveries rising steadily.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UK eyes 'fully reopening' in June after vaccination success

First vaccine dose cuts transmission and hospitalisation: UK studies

Analysis from Public Health England has shown the vaccine manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech reduces the risk of catching infection by more than 70 percent after a first dose. That risk is reduced by 85 percent after a second dose.

Hospitalisation and death from Covid-19 is reduced by over 75 percent in those who have received a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, according to the analysis.

Meanwhile India, the world's second worst-hit nation in terms of infections, passed a bleak threshold on Monday by registering its 11 millionth case following a renewed rise in transmission. Fresh restrictions on gatherings came into force in the western state of Maharashtra, home to financial capital Mumbai, which has logged almost 52,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlined a "gradual and cautious" approach to lifting curbs in England that could see life there return almost to normal by the end of June. The first step will be the return of children to schools from March 8.

Meanwhile, data from two separate studies published in the UK on Monday, one in England and another in Scotland, have shown vaccines against Covid-19 are effective in cutting disease transmission and hospitalisations from the first dose.

Facebook to restore Australia news service

Agrees to pay media companies after changes to media laws

AFP, Sydney

Facebook yesterday said it will lift a contentious ban on Australian news and pay local media companies for content, after a last-gasp deal on pending landmark legislation.

Australia's Treasurer Josh Frydenberg announced a face-saving compromise that will see Google and Facebook plunge tens of millions of dollars into the struggling local news sector.

In return the US digital firms will, for now, avoid being subjected to mandatory payments that could cost them vastly more and create what they see as an alarming global precedent.

Just hours after the compromise was unveiled, Facebook announced its first proposed deal with an Australian media company, Seven West, and was said to be pursuing commercial deals with other local news organisations. The company is expected to use the content to launch a dedicated news product in Australia later this year.

The social media firm sparked global outrage last week by blacking out news for its Australian users in protest at the proposed legislation, and inadvertently blocking a series of non-news Facebook pages linked to everything from cancer charities to emergency response services.



Pakistan's PM Imran Khan (C) walks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapakse (center R in white) at Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake yesterday after Khan arrived for a two-day official visit to Sri Lanka. India yesterday allowed Imran Khan's airplane to use its airspace to visit Sri Lanka. In 2019, Pakistan had denied opening its airspace for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flights to the US and Saudi Arabia citing alleged human rights violations in Kashmir. PHOTO: AFP

POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL

SC reinstates House dissolved by PM

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Supreme Court yesterday overturned the prime minister's decision to dissolve parliament, terming the move unconstitutional.

In December Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli abruptly dismissed the House of Representatives and accused members of his Nepal Communist Party of being uncooperative. He called for elections in April and May.

More than a dozen writs were filed in the Supreme Court challenging his decision, while a wave of protests and clashes took place in the streets.

"The Supreme Court has ordered to reinstate the dissolved House of Representatives after concluding that the government's decision was unconstitutional and against parliamentary practices," Kishor Poudel, the press expert at the Supreme Court, told AFP. Poudel said the court had ordered a session of parliament within 13 days.

The court's decision was welcomed by the opposition as well as members of the dissident faction of Oli's own party. The Oli government came to power in 2018 with a two-thirds majority, aiming to end years of instability and short-lived governments.

The dissolution of parliament came after months of clashes with former Maoist rebel leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who helped Oli come to power when their parties merged in 2018.

The split in the party has now left Oli without a majority in parliament, and he is likely to face a no-confidence vote.

2019 EASTER SUNDAY TERROR ATTACK IN SRI LANKA

Ex-president, intel chiefs should face charges: probe

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ex-president and his intelligence chiefs should be prosecuted for failing to prevent suicide bombings two years ago on Easter Sunday that killed 279 people, according to an investigation released yesterday.

Maithripala Sirisena, who left office last year, was found to have been negligent by an investigation he set up five months after the Islamic militant attacks on three hotels and three churches on April 21, 2019.

It quickly emerged that Indian intelligence had warned Sri Lanka 17 days beforehand about the risk of attacks, following a tip-off from a suspect.

The report by the presidential commission of inquiry said the "balance of probability" was that Sirisena was told by his intelligence chief about the warnings before the attacks.

The commission, which heard from 440 witnesses and handed over its report to parliament on Tuesday, said the attorney

general should "consider instituting criminal proceedings against (former) president Sirisena under any suitable provision in the Penal Code".

Sirisena, now a ruling party legislator, has previously denied any knowledge of the warnings, and made no comment about the report.

The probe also found Sirisena's head of intelligence Nilantha Jayawardena was criminally liable for failing to act on the warnings from Indian intelligence.

Jayawardena had "diluted the weight of the intelligence" from India, the report said. It added that police inspector-general Pujith Jayasundara should also be prosecuted for negligence.

Jayasundara and the top defence ministry official at the time, Hemasiri Fernando, already face charges over their failure to prevent the attacks.

Two days after the attack, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility, but investigators say they have not found a direct link between the local jihadists and IS.



PTD (Public Tender Division) and BTCL (Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited) logos.

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International Tender Notice

1	Ministry/Division	Posts and Telecommunications Division.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited.
3	Procuring entity name & code	Project Director, STNP, Code: 224282800.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Invitation for	Tender Goods Single Lot.
6	Invitation Ref. No. & date	No. 14.33.0000.310.07.008.19-87, Dt: 23-02-2021
7	Procurement method	International Competitive Tender (ICT).
8	Budget and source of fund	Government of Bangladesh.
9	Development partner	Not applicable.
10	Tender package No. & name	No. 01 (one), Name- "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of IP Based ANS Gateway-2 Exchange in BTCL on Turn-key Basis".
11	Tender publication date	24-02-2021
12	Tender last selling date	07-04-2021 during office hour.
13	Tender submission date and time	08-04-2021 at 11:00am (BST).
14	Tender opening date and time	08-04-2021 at 11:10am (BST).
15	Name and address of the office of selling, receiving & opening of tender document	Office of the Project Director (STNP), Mohakhali Earth Station, Karail, Banani, Dhaka-1213.
16	Place, date & time of pre-bid meeting	Venue: Conference Room (2nd Floor), BTCL, Tejagajog Bhaban, 37/E, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000. Date: 15-03-2021, Time: 10:30am (BST).
17	Eligibility of tenderer	All eligible bidders.
18	Brief description of goods and works	"IP Based ANS Gateway-2 Exchange".
19	Brief description of related services	Installation, Testing and Commissioning related services.
20	Price of tender document (Tk)	BDT 10,000 (ten thousand) only (non-refundable).
21	Tender security & completion time	USD 58,000 (fifty-eight thousand) only or BDT 50,00,000/- (fifty lac) only. Completion time: 180 days.
22	Name, designation & address of the official inviting tender	Quazi Nizam Uddin, Project Director, STNP, Mohakhali Earth Station, Karail, Banani, Dhaka-1213.
23	Contact details of the official inviting tender	Tel: +880-2-9872787 Email: pd.stnp@btcl.gov.bd Website: http://www.btcl.gov.bd
24	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.	
25	NB: This tender is also available at websites: http://www.cptu.gov.bd & http://www.btcl.gov.bd	

GD-362

Quazi Nizam Uddin
Project Director

India's endangered lion prides conquer disease to roam free

AFP, Gir National Park

Three years after a deadly virus struck India's endangered Asiatic lions in their last remaining natural habitat, conservationists are hunting for new homes to help booming prides roam free.

The majestic big cats, slightly smaller than their African cousins and with a fold of skin along their bellies, were once found widely across southwest Asia.

Hunting and human encroachment saw the population plunge to just 20 by 1913, and the lions are now found only in a wildlife sanctuary in India's western Gujarat state.

Following years of concerted government efforts, the lion population in Gir National Park has swelled to nearly 700, according to an official census last year.

But just three years ago, the conservation success looked to be in danger when several lions started to die in one part of the 1,400 square kilometre (545 square mile) forest.

The canine distemper virus -- a highly infectious disease -- was detected among dozens of the royal beasts, killing at least 11 of them.

"We picked all the lions from the area and isolated them," Dushyant Vasavada, the park's chief conservator of forests, told AFP.

Authorities imported special vaccines from overseas and each animal was given three doses each, followed by a booster shot.

Cattle and dogs living near the park were also inoculated as suspected carriers of the virus.

"We vaccinated the lions in captivity and successfully controlled the disease and no new outbreak has been observed,"

Vasavada said.

Lions are a source of pride for India, particularly in Gujarat's Saurashtra region, where man and beast coexist.

A cattle-rearing tribe lives among the animals in the sanctuary, and it is not uncommon to see a pride of lions crossing a highway as motorists wait and watch.

The king of the jungle is also a major tourist attraction, along with leopards, panthers and other big cats found in the sanctuary. Around 550,000 people visit the park each year, riding in open-top jeeps as they try to spot the predators prowling among pale yellow deciduous trees.



But the 2018 virus outbreak was a reminder that the steady growth in the animal's population cannot be taken for granted. Wildlife biologist Ravi Chellam said that outbreak underscored the need to move a few prides to other sites nearby.

Efforts to move some lions to other states have been mired in legal wrangles with the state government, which wants to keep the animals in Gujarat. Authorities have instead proposed finding new homes for some lions in other parts of the state.

আম্মা
তুমি ত্যাগী,
সার্থক,
ব্রহ্মগর্ভা

১৯৩২-২০১৩

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মরহুমা সায়মা খাতুন এর
৮ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী

২৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২০ইং

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COVER STORY

OF PRESENT AND FUTURE

Over the years, versatile artists Ashna Habib Bhabna and Animesh Aich thrived in their respected works. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the duo talked about director's perspective and what they plan for their future.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored with Rafi Hossain*. Today, we have two guests with us: Animesh Aich and Ashna Habib Bhabna. Welcome, Animesh and Ashna. How have you both been doing throughout this pandemic?

Animesh Aich: Both Ashna and I are awaiting the release of our novels.

Rafi Hossain: Why do many people assume that directors play favourites regarding their partners once they're romantically involved with an actor?

Animesh Aich: Everyone prefers working in their comfort zone, and Ashna is definitely in mine. But, it's not just her, I also enjoy working alongside many other individuals like Abul Hayat, Faruq Ahmed, Shahriar Shajib, Tamalika Kormokar, and so on. This is helpful to directors as we have a bond with the people we know and have worked with, especially if they understand our ideas. Of course, new people are added to the teams as well. Ashna and I have a very good artistic bond, but different characters need to be portrayed by different actors. For instance, if I want someone to play a forty-year-old woman, I will cast an actor like Bipasha Hayat who I'm comfortable working with.

Ashna Habib Bhabna: I believe I have to face a lot more criticism than Animesh in regards of this issue. Since he has been in the industry for a long time and is a respected director, people usually think twice before making these accusations against him. Since I'm new, they don't hesitate. I've even had people directly say that they can't cast me because I'm his girlfriend. However, I, myself, don't want to work alongside someone who views my identity as being someone's friend, daughter, or girlfriend. I would rather team up with someone who acknowledges my talents. I believe people judge more when a director is dating an artist because our society has normalised critiquing women harshly. Chiasuddin Selim casts Chanchal Chowdhury in his works quite frequently, but that is rarely talked about. Same goes for Mehzebien, Nisho, and Apurba. Our industry has a preconceived image of young

platforms, but are reluctant when it comes to national ones. This is because there isn't enough binge-worthy content available yet. Television channels also don't invest in such projects because they lack interesting ideas. We need to invest in research to figure out how to attract viewers. For instance, *Duronto Television*, which is targeted towards children, has made a name for itself quite quickly because they had a clear vision about what they wanted to do, and they executed it properly. On the other hand, most major channels have similar kinds of content.

Rafi Hossain: Most films that I watch nowadays are thrillers. Can you tell me why that is?

Animesh Aich: I would say that's a failure on our part. Our industry has a culture of replicating others' work. Since thriller, crime and such genres are quite popular on platforms like *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime Video*, directors here try to keep up with the trend and create similar movies as well. I believe this prevents the discovery of more possibilities. Rather than becoming fascinated by Western cultures and their films, we should try to highlight our traditions, indigenous cultures and so on.

Rafi Hossain: Are there any Bangladeshi OTT platforms that have gained traction yet?

Animesh Aich: Not that I know of, but I am hopeful. We readily pay for international

platforms, but are reluctant when it comes to national ones. This is because there isn't enough binge-worthy content available yet. Television channels also don't invest in such projects because they lack interesting ideas. We need to invest in research to figure out how to attract viewers. For instance, *Duronto Television*, which is targeted towards children, has made a name for itself quite quickly because they had a clear vision about what they wanted to do, and they executed it properly. On the other hand, most major channels have similar kinds of content.

Rafi Hossain: Another trend that I notice is that many new and young directors promote their own work too extensively, which makes it lose credibility. Do you believe it's a good strategy?

Ashna Habib Bhabna: In my opinion, this actually benefits some people. I find it odd, but there are many *Facebook* groups related to Bangla shows where people share their projects and others discuss its potential and promote it. Moreover, we see that many videos get over a million likes only hours or days after their release. There are many ways this can be achieved, such as buying subscribers. However, I don't want to speak

as he helped me edit and improve it. However, I am tired of hearing that he does all my work for me. Animesh tells me to not pay attention to these comments, but sometimes they make me really sad.

Rafi Hossain: What do you have to say about that, Animesh?

Animesh Aich: I would say that it's important to not pay heed to people's negative comments. I always tell Bhabna that because she is a celebrity now, people are going to criticise her actions constantly. It's important to remember who you are and your own accomplishments.

Rafi Hossain: I think a reason that many people say that you do Bhabna's work for her is because you both have similar interests. Would you agree with that?

Animesh Aich: That's definitely true. I believe it is natural to pick up positive aspects from the people around you. Bhabna has her own line of thinking, but I sometimes inspire her as well. We've known each other for many years now, and we discuss the arts together quite often. For instance, being a dancer herself, she understands dance very well. I had almost no knowledge of dancing before, but learning from her opened this new world to me. As long as we don't pick up any negative habit from each other, I would encourage this.

Rafi Hossain: Bhabna, you posted a dance video during the lockdown which I really enjoyed. Do you want to tell us more about that?

Ashna Habib Bhabna: Even though I am not known for being a dancer, it's something I have pursued ever since I was a little child. My mother and I have a strong bond over this as she was the one who enrolled me. During the lockdown, I saw that many celebrities, even those who aren't dancers, posted videos of themselves dancing in their homes. So, I wanted to do something similar. While it received a lot of love, especially from my gurus, there were a few rude comments left. This is something I don't understand, if I dislike someone's work, I will either be honest about it or keep quiet, even if it's a colleague of mine. I would never shame someone for their endeavours, especially on a public platform.

Rafi Hossain: I'm sure you both have to hear this question a lot, but are there any wedding plans coming up soon?

Ashna Habib Bhabna: Our families are already close to each other, and we all meet up during our birthdays and other events. We still haven't discussed a wedding in detail.

Rafi Hossain: I'm sure the audience has a lot of love and blessings for you both. Do you have any parting comment for the audience?

Ashna Habib Bhabna: I only want to say thank you to my followers because they are always kind to me. I would like to ask everyone to stay safe because COVID is still a danger to us. For my female followers, I would like to say that it's important to reflect on yourself and love yourself. For those living with your parents, I ask you to respect and cherish them.

Animesh Aich: I ask the audience to forgive me for discussing many grave topics today. I generally refuse to join lives like this because I believe I don't have much to preach. However, Rafi bhai is one of my most favourite people, which made this discussion enjoyable. Lastly, based on today's discussion, I would like the audience to remember that it is always important to operate social media safely. Stay well.

Rafi Hossain: Thank you once again for being with us today. Lots of love and blessings for you both.

Shreya Shomoyeeta



platforms, but are reluctant when it comes to national ones. This is because there isn't enough binge-worthy content available yet. Television channels also don't invest in such projects because they lack interesting ideas. We need to invest in research to figure out how to attract viewers. For instance, *Duronto Television*, which is targeted towards children, has made a name for itself quite quickly because they had a clear vision about what they wanted to do, and they executed it properly. On the other hand, most major channels have similar kinds of content.

Ashna Habib Bhabna: I don't believe that we're getting detached from television anytime soon. In Bangladesh, there is a concept of family time related to television, and that is still going strong. My parents still watch talk shows together, if not television shows. I also see Animesh's mother watching Indian channels like *Zee Bangla*, which there is a big audience for as well. But, I do believe that over time, we will move towards OTT platforms. This is inevitable. But, I agree with Animesh that people are quite unwilling to pay for a national platform to watch movies and shows. I did a project with *Binge*, and I noticed that many of my followers were asking for a *YouTube* link. Because of the widespread use of internet, people have a tendency to consume content for free. A reason that I identify behind this is a lack of patriotism. Whenever there's a new hit film or series on *Netflix*, I see people discussing and critiquing it extensively on *Facebook*. There is always an excitement for international content, but not for our own. People don't even go to cinema halls as much anymore.

Rafi Hossain: What do you think about this, Animesh?

against it because although it's a sad reality, this has become the trend now. Anyone can get casted based on their social media following.

Animesh Aich: I don't always share the news printed about me, but one instance I remember is when *Prothom Alo* made one about me. It was written by Zahid Reza Noor, and I shared it and thanked him in my caption. Later, he called me to say that there was no need to thank him because it was his duty. I really appreciated that, because oftentimes people get hurt when we don't share their work.

Rafi Hossain: Animesh, you're a student of *Charukala*, and Bhabna, you're a self-taught artist. Did you pick this hobby up as a kid or after meeting Animesh?

Animesh Aich: Bhabna first started painting with makeup, after which I gave her watercolour and tools to paint during the lockdown. She has a knack for it, because she is already selling her paintings to many renowned artists.

Ashna Habib Bhabna: I actually picked this hobby up during the first few months of the lockdown, when I was getting bored of watching movies and reading books constantly. I spend a lot of my time in my makeup room, even when I'm studying or taking classes. So, I painted something using my makeup without giving it much thought, and then I posted it on *Facebook*. However, I received a lot of appreciation on that post, which then encouraged me to continue. Afterwards, Animesh got me proper tools for painting, which was quite scary because I didn't have any knowledge of painting. He really helped me learn and grow, and guided me every step of the way. We always try to help each other with our work. For instance, his name is on my next novel, *Golapi Jamin*,

GRAPE VINE



PHOTO: COLLECTED

ANIMA ROY'S NEW SONG

Rabindra Sangeet artist Anima Roy has released a new song. The song, which has been written and composed by Atul Prasad Sen, is called *Bodhua Nid Nahi Akhi Pate*, and has been given tune to by Prattyush Bannerjee. The music video for it was directed by Yamin Elan. Anima Roy said, "In the past, I have performed songs by five different poets. I have also performed on multiple television channels. I hope that the listeners will like my new song."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

BUBLY'S BACK!

After an eleven-month long break, Shabnam Bubby is returning with two new films. She will be seen on the *Topu Khan* directed film, *Leader Ami Bangladesh*, alongside Shakib Khan, and also on the *Iqbal Asif Jewel* directed movie *Chokh* alongside Nirob. Bubby began her acting career in 2016, when she starred alongside Shakib Khan in several movies, including the likes of *Bossgiri*, *Chittagainga Powa Noakhaila Maia* and *Password*, among several others. She also has two movies awaiting release: *Casino* and *Bidrohi*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

PABEL ON A ROLL

Singer Zahed Parvej Pabel garnered a lot of attention for singing the old songs of the movies *Bidhi Tumi Bole Dao* and *Buk Chin Chin Korche*. On a drama, titled *Shilpi*, which is directed by Mohidul Mohim and starring Afran Nisho and Mehzebien Chowdhury, he sang in the voices of both the male and the female lead. The songs which he did in both voices gained a lot of popularity online. Pabel released his first solo album in 2015. He will soon be releasing the songs *Shundori* and *Shona Bondhure*.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



PHOTO: COLLECTED

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

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



IT'S A SIN

It's a Sin is a five-part drama TV series, surrounding a friendship between gay men in 1981 England through the quick development of HIV and AIDS. It was written and created by Russell T Davies, directed by Peter Hoar, produced by Phil Collinson under the banner of *Red Production Company*, and stars Olly Alexander, Omari Douglas and Callum Scott Howells, among others. It was first released on January 22 2021 on *Channel 4*.

SUPERMAN AND LOIS

Superman and Lois is a comic-based action-drama series, developed by Todd Helbing and Greg Berlanti, produced under the banners of *Berlanti Productions*, *DC Entertainment* and *Warner Bros. Television*, distributed



by *Warner Bros. Television Distribution*, and stars Tyler Hoechlin, Elizabeth Tulloch and Jordan Elsass, among others. The storyline follows the most famous DC superhero, Superman, as he navigates through life being a working parent. It was aired on February 13, 2021 on *The CW*.

NOMADLAND

Nomadland is a neo-western drama film, released in theatres on January 29, 2021. It was directed by Chloé Zhao, produced by her along with Frances McDormand, Peter Spears, Mollye Asher and Dan Janvey under the banners of *Highwayman Films*, *Hear/Say Productions* and *Cor Cordium Productions*, distributed by *Searchlight Pictures* through *Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures*, and stars McDormand, David Strathairn and Linda May, among others. The plot, which is based on the eponymous non-fiction book by Jessica Bruder, follows a woman on her journey through the American West on a van after losing everything in the Great Depression.



Amina Hossain

Unseating MP Papul is not enough

He must be tried in his own country for the crimes he committed

WE are relieved to see, finally, that a clear decision has been taken by the parliament regarding disgraced lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam, also known as Kazi Papul, on grounds of moral turpitude. On January 28, 2021, Kazi Papul was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment by a Kuwaiti court for bribing Kuwaiti officials. He also faces two more cases, one for human trafficking and the other for money laundering, in that country. According to media reports, Kazi Papul has been carrying out his criminal activities for many years.

Details have emerged of how he started as a worker, then becoming a recruitment broker and later establishing four companies that employed 9,000 workers. He earned his millions through his company; he would recruit workers in exchange for money, who later found that their visas were fake. Papul and his associates forced these workers to work for his company. Papul has also been found guilty of forcing workers to toil against their will, in inhumane conditions without wages or proper housing. He is also accused of threatening workers who opposed his views with false cases. Money laundering and human trafficking are also part of his crime portfolio.

After learning about the long list of serious crimes he was involved in, we cannot help but wonder, how did such an individual become an MP? What was the basis of his nomination? According to reports, Papul spent huge sums of money to get his nomination. Did the Election Commission bother to find out what kind of a person Papul was before accepting him as a candidate?

The conviction of Papul in a foreign court should be a wakeup call for the parliament and lead to some serious rethinking about the role and moral character of an MP. From reports, we know that Papul spent crores of money so that he could become an independent MP along with his wife, who became an MP from the reserved seats for women.

A Member of Parliament is a highly prestigious position; an MP is a public representative and lawmaker in the highest legislative body. Does not such a status come with certain expectations of integrity and moral uprightness? Unfortunately, we have often come across reports of abuse of power and corruption allegedly committed by our MPs, and the fact that they are rarely, if ever, prosecuted—let alone convicted—speaks volumes about the impunity they enjoy while in power. It is about time the parliament as a whole looked into the code of conduct of MPs and ensured that there is a system of accountability that will scrutinise whether an MP is playing his/her expected role inside and outside the parliament.

Papul's criminal activities and conviction has been a big blow to the image of the parliament and of the country. His crimes are heinous and include human trafficking and extortion. Just depriving him of his ill-gotten seat is not enough. We hope he is tried in his own country under the law of the land. The parliamentary secretariat must hold all MPs who commit crimes accountable. An MP candidate's nomination should be determined by their moral character and public acceptability, not by how many crores he can spend to buy his nomination.

Road accidents keep taking their toll

The systemic flaws remain unrectified

HARDLY a day passes without the painful news of deaths in road accidents. And it seems that we are helpless to do anything to redress the horrendous situation. Either that, or the administration is least concerned about the problem. Only the day before yesterday, a newborn was killed and at least 15 others were injured when an ambulance collided head-on with a bus in Barisal's Babuganj upazila. Yesterday, at least five people were killed and 23 others were injured in a head-on-collision between a bus and a truck at Konabari in Kamarkhand upazila of Sirajganj district. We accept that if we have vehicles on the road accidents will happen, but most of the accidents that occur so frequently on our roads and highways are quite avoidable.

Reportedly, the annual road crash deaths per capita in Bangladesh are twice the average rate for high-income countries and five times that of the best-performing countries in the world. Road accidents have actually taken the form of a pandemic in this country. It may sound like a strange comparison, but road accidents have taken more lives in the month of January, considering the seven-day average, than Covid-19 in the same month. According to the Road Safety Foundation (RSF), in January 2021 alone, as many as 484 people were killed and 673 injured in 427 road accidents across Bangladesh—a 25.58 percent rise year-on-year. At least 445 lives were lost in 340 road accidents in January last year.

It may sound cynical, but given the state of the vehicles that we see on the roads, the degree of sense and awareness of traffic rules of the drivers, their level of proficiency, and the wanton corruption that allows untrained drivers and unfit vehicles to ply the roads—it is perhaps surprising that even more accidents do not occur. The situation has gotten so bad that when one ventures onto the highways, it is likely he/she would be petrified the entire course of the journey, continuously praying to Providence for a safe termination of their travels.

According to a World Bank report published in February 2020, Bangladesh needs to invest an estimated extra USD 7.8 billion over the next decade to halve its road crash fatalities. We fully endorse the fact that the high death rate on Bangladesh's roads is due to a chronic lack of investment in systemic, targeted, and sustained road safety programmes. Added to that are the poor control measures in issuing road permits and driver's licenses, and non-enforcement of the road traffic laws. It is time for the government to act, and not simply look away as more and more innocent lives continue to be lost on our dangerous roads.

Ill-planned, if planned at all!

DSCC's short-sighted drive to remove four lakh rickshaws



A CLOSER LOOK

TASNEEM TAYEB

ON the face of it, it seems to be a logical move. An internal survey by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) is said to have found only 200,000 of the about 600,000 rickshaws plying the DSCC areas suitable for operation. Therefore, the remaining 400,000 will be evicted in stages from March 15, 2021. They added that this will be better for the traffic situation. The question they did not seem to address however is on a more general level—will this move be better for the nation?

While the idea of a congestion-free Dhaka is something all Dhaka dwellers dream of, the DSCC's decision to phase out 400,000 rickshaws poses some serious questions. While studies tend to show rickshaws do indeed contribute to some of the lowest average vehicular speeds around the world, they are only one part of the problem.

On a purely mundane, logistical level, this decision will pose some challenges. The pavements and walkways of Dhaka city, when they are there, are notoriously unwalkable. They are mostly occupied by street vendors and are invariably litter-ridden. Then there are the motorcycle and bicycle riders who often resort to driving on the pavements to evade the traffic on the streets. And even amidst all these if one tries to walk, they are subjected to the random—and perhaps sometimes intentional—shoves and bumps, especially the women and girls.

Moreover, some of the streets and alleys of Old Dhaka, all of which fall

under DSCC's purview, are so narrow that often private cars cannot move through them. Under such circumstances, people have no other option but to resort to using rickshaws to commute from one place to another. While the young and the capable can always choose to walk, even on dirty walkways, jostling through the footpath vendors, what the elderly and the psychically challenged would do in the absence of rickshaws is something the

others whose livelihoods will be affected by the eviction of the 400,000 rickshaws will be rehabilitated. Are they going to be provided with alternative livelihood generation opportunities? Are they going to be sent back to their ancestral villages? If they do return, what are they going to do once back home? There are no answers to these questions. If the DSCC has these answers, then they must disclose these to the public and to those who are living

talk about easing the traffic situation of Dhaka, the first segment they point to are the rickshaw pullers. Talk about soft targets!

Instead of taking these whimsical—and at best piece-meal—measures to ease Dhaka's road congestion, the policymakers must look at the broader socioeconomic picture that is enabling this problem. Dhaka's traffic nightmare is not a black and white issue. If anything, it



Rickshaw-pullers sheltering from the rain inside sewage pipes/cylinders kept beside the road in Dhaka in 2019.

PHOTO: STAR/SK ENAMUL HAQ

The people who toil day and night to earn a meagre living do not do it for pleasure; they do it out of desperation, to survive in a world where the prices of essentials are on the rise, and where access to education and decent, formal workplaces remain limited to a few.

DSCC authorities need to clarify.

But on a more holistic level, the major issue that needs to be looked into by the authorities seeking to phase out 400,000 rickshaws is their economic rehabilitation. One must keep in mind that the rickshaw industry is a big one. There are multiple forward and backward supply chain stages that are linked with it: there are the parts suppliers of rickshaws, the makers, the painters, the rickshaw owners, the rickshaw pullers, the mechanics and the spare parts suppliers, among others, in this long chain. The phasing out of these rickshaws from DSCC would not only affect the lives and livelihoods of the 400,000 pullers, but also all those involved with the associated industries.

But more importantly, most of the rickshaw pullers are the main bread-earners of their families. When the DSCC talks about phasing out 400,000 of them from March 15, they must also consider its economic implication on the hundreds and thousands of people who are dependent on those rickshaw pullers.

There seems to be no plan on how the rickshaw pullers, their families and the

amidst fears of a bleak future.

A survey of 1,200 households of rickshaw pullers conducted last year by Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), in collaboration with Unicef, revealed that 31.81 percent of those surveyed have travelled to Dhaka from environmentally vulnerable areas in search of a better life. The people who toil day and night to earn a meagre living do not do it for pleasure; they do it out of desperation, to survive in a world where the prices of essentials are on the rise, and where access to education and decent, formal workplaces remain limited to a few.

These people brave the rains and storms, the scorching heat of summer and the bitter cold of the winter, peddling through the dirty waters when the roads are clogged, for a mere few Takas. And despite the backbreaking effort, they still peddle rickshaws because they have been left with no other option. They do not have access to finance or technical education, and they have no other means of earning a living except their Sisyphean jobs. Yet, every time the policymakers

is a complex maze where multiple factors are working together to exacerbate it. Rickshaws are certainly a part of it, but evicting them is not going to solve this problem.

If the policymakers really want to address this menace, they need to thoroughly assess all the factors that are contributing to it and take multi-pronged, comprehensive measures to ease the roads of the city, and this strategy should also include the bigger tasks.

Decentralisation of the capital, controlling internal migration and creating income opportunities in rural areas will be some of the major components of this strategy.

By removing 400,000 rickshaws from the roads of DSCC areas, the officials will be putting into uncertainty the livelihoods of 400,000 households. The DSCC officials should revisit this shortsighted move and come up with a better and detailed strategy to solve the problem of Dhaka's traffic, one that includes the rehabilitation of rickshaw pullers.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for *The Daily Star*. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem.

How should countries prepare if they want to transport the Pfizer vaccine?



PATRICK OWEKE

THE negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have necessitated various medical boards across the globe to begin the emergency usage of Covid-19 vaccines, bringing reprieve and optimism in

2021.

Pfizer-BioNTech is arguably one of the most effective Covid-19 vaccines, with a proven efficacy of 95 percent. The vaccine is, however, required to be stored between -80 degrees Celsius and -60 degrees Celsius. This implies that a home refrigerator cannot be used as a storage method given that its temperature is usually between 0 to -4 degrees Celsius.

The storage and the distribution of this vaccine, while maintaining its viability, will prove to be a challenge, and we are all wondering about the crucial question—how do you transport the temperature-sensitive vaccine from Pfizer's United States warehouse to the point of use in say, Pumwani Hospital in Nairobi?

Supply chain experts have adopted strategies such as the cold supply chain to distribute the vaccine across the world. Cold supply chains entail the transportation of the temperature-sensitive products along the supply chain through refrigerated packaging methods.

Refrigerated trucks fitted with dry ice will be required to transport the vaccine from the plant-attached cold storage to the airport or shipping companies. Dry ice is solid carbon dioxide, with a temperature of about -80C. Dry ice is preferred over regular ice or gel, simply because it does not melt. Its downside is that it sublimates when in contact with air. In preparing the refrigerated trucks to receive the consignment (vaccine), they are steam cleaned to reduce the risk of bacterial infections on the products. Insulated pieces, commonly referred to as quilts, are then placed over or around the

consignment to act as a buffer in the event of temperature variations due to outside conditions. Once the temperature control measures are in place, the vaccine is then loaded to the trucks and transported to holding facilities, and customs clearance is taken care of while waiting for either ship or air travel. The holding facility should be a dedicated cold storage facility where the required temperature is maintained.

Most cold storage facilities are

of the vaccines, route design and the environmental impact.

The demand for the Covid-19 vaccine is a lifeline to the airline industry, which for a major part of the year 2020 was faced with dwindling demand for passenger flights when compared to cargo and freight business. Kenya Airways has already remodeled some of their Boeing 787 airplanes to carry cargo. The route design for air transport is straightforward, simple and efficient. It simplifies



PHOTO: AFP

outsourced to third party logistics providers. There are various types of cold storage such as refrigerated containers, chillers, cold rooms, pharmaceutical grade cold storage, plant-attached cold storage etc. Specifically, for vaccines, transportation to a pharmaceutical grade cold storage would be ideal since they are custom made for the products' specifications. Once approval for shipping is received, the cargo is loaded.

Meticulous planning and preparation of the mode of transport and transit warehouse needs to be decided in advance. The pros and cons of shipping and air transportation need to be factored in. Some of the factors to consider are time to destination, cost, safety

transporting the vaccine from Airport A to B in the shortest possible time (reminds me of vector analysis!). The vaccines, to be transported by air, are packed with dry ice to act as a refrigerant. Data loggers and tracking devices are also packed to monitor the temperature and location of the vaccines during transport.

Data loggers are electronic devices that record data over time and have in-built sensors. The volume of vaccines to be transported requires an increase in the quantity of the dry ice that exceeds the previous amount allowed in airplanes during the pre-Covid-19 era. Data loggers and cargo tracking devices are powered by lithium batteries; hence, they have a high level of electromagnetic radiation

Meticulous planning and preparation of the mode of transport and transit warehouse needs to be decided in advance.

that may interfere with aircraft systems. Aviators need to come up with the optimal balance of the vaccine quantity, dry ice, and sensors for safe air transport.

The route design for ship transport must consider the most secure and effective route, sea turbulence levels, and the port clearing efficiency at the port of delivery. Ocean shipments will take longer than air travel, although it is more cost effective. With respect to environmental impacts, ships generally emit fewer grams of exhaust gas emissions than air transport. The risk with the shipping transport is that the cooling system in the reefer container may fail while in the high seas, or the ship itself can fail. There is a need to consider how fast they can get spare parts or what arrangements have been made by the service provider to ensure the integrity of the product. Once the vaccines are on the high seas, there are many risks. One of the major risks is piracy, which is mitigated by ensuring the choice of the route is secure. Some of the other risk factors are theft, temperature performance and liability issues (in the event of vaccine integrity breach during transit).

For successful transportation of vaccines, it is imperative that the recipient countries invest in infrastructure (building of cold storage centres at airports and ports), seamless custom clearance systems, railway or road transport networks and skilled personnel.

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Limiting free speech undermines the fight against Covid-19



MEENAKSHI GANGULY

ACTIVISTS are continuing to protest in Dhaka to demand the repeal of the Digital Security Act (DSA), a sweeping and vague law that the Bangladesh

authorities are using to arrest critics, including those who speak out over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recent protests ignited when, on February 4, Ahmed Kishore, a cartoonist, and Mushtaq Ahmed, a writer, were charged under the act after being held in pre-trial detention for nine months. Shafiqul Islam Kajol, a journalist, was also charged on February 4 under the DSA for posting defamatory information about Awami League leaders. The charges against Kajol come after he was allegedly forcibly disappeared for 53 days and held in pre-trial detention for seven months.

Ahmed, Kishore, and nine others named in the complaint were charged for posting on Facebook "propaganda, false or offensive information, and information that could destroy communal harmony and create unrest."

What did they post that was so offensive? Cartoons and political commentary criticising the government's response to the pandemic.

According to research recently published by Human Rights Watch, Kishore and Ahmed's arrests are part of a wave of actions by authoritarian governments using the Covid-19 pandemic as a pretext to censor free speech and the media. Human Rights



A group of citizens organised a protest at the Shaheed Minar in Dhaka on February 13, 2021 demanding the government abolish the Digital Security Act.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON/ STAR

Watch reporting shows that soon after the first cases were reported in March, instead of responding to complaints over shortages of protective supplies, the Bangladesh authorities cracked down. The authorities arrested (or cases were filed against) artists, students, political opposition members, and activists for writing on Facebook or other social media platforms about lack of PPE for healthcare workers or alleging underreporting of Covid-19 cases, or questioning whether Covid-19 relief measures are being properly implemented. Public sector healthcare workers and all other government officials were given notice to not

speak to media outlets regarding the pandemic response, with the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules from 1979 being cited to justify this.

Most of these arrests have been under the Digital Security Act, a law with broad and vague language that the authorities use in abusive ways. It was enacted to end abuses under the much-criticised Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT), but has ended up even more draconian in criminalising peaceful speech and forcing the media to self-censor. Praising his country's response to the pandemic and denying rampant censorship, Gowher Rizvi, the prime

minister's international affairs adviser, admitted however to DW's Conflict Zone that there are problems with the DSA: "Sadly, we have now learned that some of the wordings are very loose and vague, which leaves it open to its abuse."

Under the DSA, "propaganda" against "the Liberation War, the spirit of the Liberation War, the father of the nation, national anthem, or national flag" are punishable with up to life in prison. Publishing content that "hurts religious sentiments or religious values" or "destroys communal harmony, or creates unrest or disorder" is punishable with up to 10 years in prison. The terms

are so broad that the authorities can essentially arrest anyone they want based on any online activity, from "liking" a Facebook post to drawing a cartoon.

The international community, including the UN high commissioner for human rights, UN independent experts, and the European Union, as well as journalists in Bangladesh, have repeatedly criticised the DSA for stifling free speech and violating international law. In May, 311 members of Bangladesh civil society issued a joint statement calling for the government to release those held under the DSA.

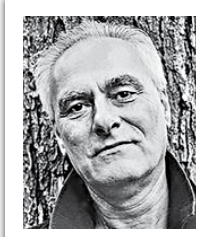
The Bangladesh government has ignored these calls, instead further building up its capacity to monitor and censor online commentary in order to issue more arrests under the DSA.

While the government has released thousands of people from detention to protect against the spread of Covid-19 in overcrowded prisons, it excluded critics and activists charged under the DSA. Kishore and Ahmed's bail pleas have been rejected six times. UN experts have called for Kishore's release on humanitarian grounds because he has insulin-dependent diabetes and his health is deteriorating, putting him at increased risk of complications from Covid-19. They have called for charges to be dropped "in light of Bangladesh's obligations under international human rights law."

As we reach the one-year mark of a global pandemic, it has become clear that for transparent, and timely access to information, the right to free speech is a priority. Bangladesh should stop arresting critics and urgently release Kishore, Ahmed, and other activists being held arbitrarily under the Digital Security Act.

Meenakshi Ganguly is South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Turkey signals sweeping regional ambitions



JAMES M DORSEY

NATIONALIST Turkish television station with close ties to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has dug up a 12-year-old

map that projects Turkey's sphere of influence in 2050 as stretching from South-eastern Europe on the northern coast of the Mediterranean and Libya on its southern shore across North Africa, the Gulf and the Levant into the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Buoyed by last year's Azerbaijani defeat of Armenia, TGRT, a subsidiary of Ihlas Holding, a media and construction conglomerate that has won major government tenders, used the map to advance a policy that has long constituted the agenda of some of Erdogan's closest advisors.

The broadcasting of the map, first published in a book authored by George Freidman, the founder of Stratfor, an influential American corporate intelligence group, followed calls by pan-Turkic daily *Turkiye*, Ihlas' daily newspaper that has the fourth-largest circulation in Turkey, to leverage the Azerbaijani victory to create a military alliance of Turkic states.

In a country that ranks only second to China as the world's foremost jailer of journalists, Ihlas Holding media would not be pushing a pan-Turkic, Islam-laced Turkish regional policy without tacit government approval at the very least.

The media group's push reflects Turkish efforts to capitalise on the fact that Turkey's latest geopolitical

triumph with Azerbaijan's Turkish-backed victory is already producing tangible results. The military victory has positioned Azerbaijan, and by extension Turkey, as an alternative transportation route westwards that would allow Central Asian nations to bypass corridors dominated by either Russia or Iran.

Turkmenistan, recognising the changing geopolitical map, rushed

Last month, Azerbaijan agreed with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan to develop the Lapis Lazuli transport corridor that would link the war-ravaged country to Turkey. At about the same time, Kazakhstan began exporting copper cathodes to Turkey via Azerbaijan in a first step intended to capitalise on the Caucasian nation's position as a transit hub.

Azerbaijan and Turkey's newly found



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev at a victory parade in Baku, Azerbaijan.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

in January to end a long-standing dispute with Azerbaijan and agree on the joint exploitation of Caspian Sea oil deposits. The agreement came on the heels of a deal in December for the purchase from ENI Turkmenistan of up to 40,000 tonnes of petroleum a month by the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR).

The agreement could boost the completion of a Trans-Caspian natural gas pipeline (TPC) that would feed into the recently operational Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), bypass Russia and Iran, and supply Greece and Bulgaria via the former Soviet republic.

advantage has rung alarm bells among Russian and Iranian analysts with close ties to their respective governments, even though the TGRT broadcast may have been primarily intended to whip up nationalist fervour at home and test regional responses.

Russian and Iranian politicians and analysts appeared to take the broadcast in that vein. Nonetheless, they were quick to note that Friedman's projection includes Russia's soft underbelly in the northern Caucasus as well as Crimea, while Iranians took stock of the fact that the Turkish sphere of influence would border on Iran to

the north, south and west.

Turkey and Ukraine have in recent months agreed to cooperate in the development of technologies with military applications related to engines, avionics, drones, anti-ship and cruise missiles, radar and surveillance systems, robotics, space, and satellites. Turkey has refused to recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea, home to Crimean Tartars, and criticised Russian support for Ukrainian rebels.

Most Russian commentators sought to downplay the significance of the map, leaving Andrei Krasov, deputy chairman of the defence committee of the Russian parliament's lower house to warn that "if they (the Turks) want to test the strength of the Russian spirit and our weapons, let them try."

With Iran excluded from TGRT and Stratfor's projection of Turkey's emerging sphere of influence, Iranian officials and analysts have largely not responded to the revival of the map.

Yet, Iran's actions on the ground suggest that the Islamic republic has long anticipated Turkish moves even though it was caught off guard by last year's Azerbaijani-Armenian war.

For one, Iran has in the past year sought to bolster its military presence in the Caspian Sea and forge close naval ties with the basin's other littoral states—Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Viewed from Tehran, TGRT's broadcasting of the Stratfor map was the latest in a series of provocative Turkish moves.

They include Erdogan's recital of a nationalist poem while attending a military parade in Azerbaijan that calls for reuniting two Iranian ethnic Azeri provinces with the former Soviet republic, and publication by state-

run Turkish Radio and Television's Arabic service of a map on Instagram, depicting Iran's oil-rich province of Khuzestan with its large population of ethnic Arabs as separate from Iran.

The Instagram post came days after the disclosure that Habib Chaab, a leader of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz, or ASMLA, had been kidnapped in Istanbul by an Iraqi Kurdish drug baron in cooperation with Iranian intelligence and transported to Iran.

While senior Iranian officials talked down the Turkish provocations, Iran's semi-official Fars News Agency left little doubt about what Iran's true sentiments were.

"Those who have greedy eyes on the territories this side of the Aras River had better study history and see that Azerbaijan, specifically the people of Tabriz, have always pioneered in defending Iran. If Iran had not helped you on the night of the coup, you would have had a fate like that of former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi," protesters chanted in front of the Turkish consulate in Tabriz, the capital of Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

The protesters were responding to Erdogan's poem recital and referring to the failed military coup against him in 2016, as well as the toppling of Morsi in 2013 in a takeover by the Egyptian armed forces.

A podcast version of this story is available on Soundcloud, iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, TuneIn, Speaker, Pocket Casts, Tumblr, Podbean, Audible, Patreon and Castbox.

Dr James M Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and a senior fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore and the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

QUOTABLE Quote

RENÉ DESCARTES
(1596—1650)
French philosopher

Divide each difficulty into as many parts as is feasible and necessary to resolve it.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Throws
- 7 Long car
- 11 Physicist Einstein
- 12 Perfect place
- 13 West African nation
- 15 Very serious
- 16 Boot attachment
- 18 Citi Field team
- 21 Leaves
- 22 Car sections
- 24 Museum focus
- 25 Sandy color
- 26 Phone bug
- 27 Anchor place
- 29 Cautious
- 30 Close with a bang
- 31 Some babies

DOWN

- 1 Possesses
- 2 Inventor Whitney
- 3 Presidential nickname
- 4 Against
- 5 Mistake
- 6 Rough guess
- 7 Looked lewdly
- 8 Swearing-in vow
- 9 Gents
- 10 Low digit
- 14 Cleaner scent

- 16 Tender spots
- 17 Rose part
- 19 Moon of Saturn
- 20 Mail-order pioneer
- 21 Empty talk
- 22 Naughty
- 23 007, for one
- 25 Musical speeds
- 28 Bike accessory
- 29 Deplorable
- 31 Deli fixture
- 33 Over again
- 34 Butter unit
- 35 GI-entertaining org.
- 36 Pi follower
- 37 Sum up
- 38 Behold
- 39 Strange

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinon@gmail.com.

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS...
...BUT A SLEEPING SOLDIER CAN ACCUMULATE COB-WEBS QUITE QUICKLY
HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN THERE?
THE BEST THING TO DO IN COB WAS SLEEP!

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

M	A	R	S	H	T	W	I	N	S
E	L	A	T	E	H	A	B	I	T
G	A	T	O	R	E	X	I	L	E
		P	O	O	R	S	E	W	
O	P	O	S	S	U	M	S		
H	A	S	H	T	A	H	I	T	I
M	I	L	O	S	L	O	D	E	S
S	N	O	R	T	S	R	E	A	L
		T	A	L	L	T	A	L	E
S	O	T		B		Y	E	S	
C	O	R	A	L		A	T	O	L
A	Z	U	R	E		K	O	R	E
M	E	E	T	S		S	P	E	E

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

LET ME GET MY PHONE!
WHEEEEE!
NEIGH! NEIGH!
WREN NEEDS A PICTURE OF THIS IN HER BABY BOOK.
GOOD IDEA.
WE CAN PUT IT ON A PAGE WITH MY CHIROPRACTOR RECEIPTS.
DIDDY-UP!

Review, amend DSA, stop

FROM PAGE 12
associations need to be more united to defend their rights, he recommended.

"Unjustified pressure from the ruling party, lawmakers and public representatives, law enforcement agencies, businessmen and other professionals, unfavourable laws and ownership of the media are the major obstacles to publishing news in media," said Mir Shahidul Alam at the event titled "Freedom of Expression and Media: Trend and Way Forward". Journalists present at the event talked about their experiences with the repressive atmosphere in journalism.

Liton Haider, special correspondent at bdnews24.com, said, "There has recently been pressure from a certain vested quarter to remove some articles from our archive. We are trying to resist, but the outcome is still undecided."

President of Economic Reporters Forum (ERF) Sharmin Rinvi shared an experience about reporting at a television channel. "I once did a simple report on how a company is bringing children's snacks, which were banned abroad, to the local market. Following the report, I was threatened by several quarters. I was even the victim of a road 'accident' which was orchestrated as a threat to my life," said Rinvi.

"If only the government investigated assaults against journalists with the same kind of importance as it does with cases filed under DSA..." wondered Mir Mostafizur Rahman, special correspondent of Financial Express.

Discussants also said journalists

choosing to use the Right to Information Act are harassed personally so as to prevent them from seeking information.

Reaz Ahmed, executive editor at Dhaka Tribune, said laws to govern the digital sphere is necessary, but if it is being misused to repress freedom of expression, then it becomes a problem.

The discussants also recommended preparing a guideline mentioning the minimum criteria for being a journalist.

According to section 25 (1) of the act, "If any person using a website or any digital device-(a) deliberately or knowingly distributes any information or data that is attacking or intimidating in nature; or if a person publishes or distributes any information despite knowing that it is false to irritate, humiliate, defame or embarrass or to discredit a person. (b) Damages the image and reputation of the State or spreads confusion or with the same purpose publishes or distributes fully or partially distorted information or data despite knowing that it is false, and if any one assists in such actions then all such actions of the individual will be considered a crime."

Section 31 says, "If a person deliberately publishes or broadcasts via a website or any digital platform anything that creates enmity, hatred or acrimony among different classes or communities, or upsets communal harmony, or creates unrest or chaos, or causes or begins to cause deterioration in law and order, then that activity of the said person will be considered a crime."

Over 1,000 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 12
some two million foreign workers, including about four lakh Bangladeshis. The accusations of high migration cost, low wage or non-payment of wages, debt bondage, other forms of abuses by agents and employers have been there for long.

Qatar has been under watch by global rights bodies, especially since its winning the bid for the right to host the 2022 World Cup in 2010.

Mohammad Shahid Miah, a Bangladeshi worker, had paid a recruitment agent more than Tk 400,000 to secure his job in Qatar in 2017. The debt has now been passed on to his impoverished parents.

His father told The Guardian the heavy rains that lashed Qatar in late September last year were, to many, an inconvenience. To Mohammad Shahid Miah they were a death sentence. The rain water seeped into his worker accommodation and came into contact with some exposed electricity cables. When Miah stepped on the wet floor, he was electrocuted and died, his father told The Guardian.

As reasons for deaths, Qatari authorities mention multiple blunt injuries due to a fall from height,

asphyxia due to hanging; undetermined cause of death due to decomposition. However, the most common cause by far is so-called "natural deaths", often attributed to acute heart or respiratory failure.

The Guardian found 69 percent of deaths among Indian, Nepali and Bangladeshi workers are categorised as natural. Among Indians alone, the figure is 80 percent.

The Guardian reports while death records are not categorised by occupation or place of work, it is possible many workers who have died were employed on these World Cup infrastructure projects, says Nick McGeehan, a director at FairSquare Projects that specialises in labour rights in the Gulf.

The country has taken various labour reform initiatives, but Human Rights Watch last year said the efforts to protect migrant workers' right to accurate and timely wages have largely proven unsuccessful.

"Despite a handful of reforms in recent years, withheld and unpaid salaries, as well as other wage abuses, are persistent and widespread across at least 60 employers and companies in Qatar," the rights body said.

DU dorms opening on May

FROM PAGE 12
dormitories would not open and no major exams would be held before May 17, said the university's Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman.

He came up with the announcement hours after the university's academic council made the decision yesterday morning.

Students will have to get vaccinated before moving into dormitories. But, if anybody cannot get inoculated due to physical condition, their case will be considered as per doctor's prescription, the VC said.

The council also decided to complete giving the first dose of the vaccine to all students and teachers of the university within April 17.

Asked about the exams schedule announced for the seven DU-affiliated colleges, he said the university authorities would hold a meeting shortly to decide on it.

On Monday, a section of DU students staged agitation demanding reopening of dorms by the end of February so that they could stay at the halls from March 1.

Contacted, one of the agitating students Tanvir Alam Chowdhury said they would chalk out their next course of action later.

On Monday, Education Minister Dipu Moni announced that in-person classes at universities would resume on May 24 after the Eid-ul-Fitr and student dormitories at those universities would reopen on May 17.

Meanwhile, in Jahangirnagar University, agitating students vowed to continue their demonstration until

their demands, including reopening of the halls, are met.

They came up with the decision at a press briefing at the university's transport yard yesterday afternoon.

Apart from this, the students also demanded arrest of those, who allegedly attacked students at Gerua Bazar on February 19.

At least 30 students were injured in the incident.

A day later, students broke into at least six halls.

However, the university authorities yesterday started vacating the halls and issued a notice postponing all types of exams, the schedule of which have already been announced.

In Kushtia Islamic University, students yesterday announced that their movement would be beef up if the dormitories were not reopened by March 1.

The students came up with the demand at a press conference on campus.

They termed the government decision of reopening student dorms on May 17 "unreasonable" and alleged that the government did not want to normalise educational activities.

A students' delegation also met the university VC and placed their demands.

The VC, however, said they would act as per the education ministry's directives.

The university's acting registrar yesterday issued a notice postponing all examinations until May.

[Our Kushtia and JU correspondents contributed to the report]

5 Rohingyas died adrift

FROM PAGE 12
Rohingyas, 750,000 of whom fled brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017. Human smuggling of Rohingyas from the shores of Bangladesh or Myanmar has been happening frequently, with many of them intending to meet their families or for marriage in Malaysia or Indonesia.

Fortify Rights in a statement yesterday said it received taped phone conversations between Rohingya refugees, who claimed to be on the boat, and their relatives.

In another audio recorded on February 22, a Rohingya man on the boat says, "The India Navy is helping us. They provided food to us. Please tell my mother to pray for us. We can drink water now."

Mohammed Jubar (not his real name) in Kutupalong refugee camp told Fortify Rights on February 22 that his brother departed on the boat more than 10 days earlier. He said his brother called him from the boat on February 21, saying he and others were out of drinking water and stranded at sea.

"I heard people are dying on the boat," Jubar said. "If they have to stay on the boat, my brother will also die."

Jubar told Fortify Rights that on

February 21 he received a call from a broker requesting a payment.

"[The broker] told us to give Tk 200,000 [\$2,300]," Jubar said. "If we pay him, he said on the phone he will bring my brother home."

The name of the trafficker is on file with Fortify Rights.

Another Rohingya refugee in Malaysia, who spoke to a relative on the boat, told Fortify Rights that his relative and others on the boat "need water and food".

After locating the boat on February 22, the Indian Navy reportedly provided food, water, and first aid to the refugees on the boat.

The rights body called for the regional governments in South and Southeast Asia to support safe disembarkation and humanitarian assistance for scores of Rohingya refugees on a boat adrift at sea.

"Too many Rohingyas lives have already been lost at sea due to the callous inaction or pushbacks of regional governments," said Amy Smith, executive director of Fortify Rights.

"Regional governments in South and Southeast Asia should urgently protect those on board to prevent any further loss of life."

Most parents

FROM PAGE 12
Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, and distinguished fellow of CPD, said the government can give block allocations so that schools can take proper preparation of maintaining the health guideline.

Citizen's Platform's core group member and Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Rasheda K Choudhury said incentive packages in the education sector are needed.

Director of Brac Education Programme Saifuddin Islam said it would be tough to make up the academic loss of students due to the closure. A massive change is needed in the teaching and learning process.

Brac University Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed proposed that schools should be reopened in phases. He said schools that are outside the metropolitan cities should be opened first.

Veteran teacher leader Quazi Faruque Ahmed said, "We will take lessons from other countries on how they are covering the academic losses during the pandemic."

Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Nehal Ahmed said the government is planning to bring students who will sit for the next SSC and HSC exams in the classroom first.

He said schools would be reopened in line with the directives of the national technical advisory committee on Covid-19.

Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, said they would assist the schools that are failing to take preparation to maintain health protocols due to financial problems.

Several teachers, parents and students of different districts spoke at the virtual programme. Almost all of them said they want schools reopening with strict following of health guideline.

Shakhat Hossain, head teacher of a government primary school in Narsingdi, said as Qawmi madrasa is open now, many students have got admitted there.

3 robbers killed

FROM PAGE 12
Deceased Zakir was accused in around 20 criminal cases, including for murder and abduction, Mehedi said.

Talking to The Daily Star, a local said panic gripped the area during the "gunfight". Everybody rushed to take cover.

Myanmar junta

FROM PAGE 12
Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, the United States together with the EU -- said in a statement yesterday.

"Anyone responding to peaceful protests with violence must be held to account," they said, calling for Myanmar security forces to "exercise utmost restraint and respect human rights and international law".

The sharp condemnation comes after the overnight blacklisting of another two members of the regime by the United States -- air force chief Maung Maung Kyaw and fellow junta member Moe Myint Tun -- after Washington announced targeted sanctions against other top generals earlier this month.

"We will not hesitate to take further action against those who perpetrate violence and suppress the will of the people," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

Hours earlier, the European Union also approved sanctions targeting Myanmar's military and their economic interests, with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell saying financial support to government reform programmes was being "withheld".

Protesters continued staging rallies across Myanmar, though commercial hub Yangon saw much smaller numbers massing at key junctions yesterday, holding impromptu concerts.

"The military has always won using weapons and I don't like that at all," said protester Chan Mya. "We hate that and we'll keep protesting and expressing what we feel in peaceful ways."

Nasa releases first

FROM PAGE 12
said Dave Gruel, lead engineer for the camera and microphone system on Perseverance.

The high-definition video clip, lasting three minutes and 25 seconds, shows the deployment of a red-and-white parachute with a 70.5-foot-wide (21.5-metre-wide) canopy.

It shows the heat shield dropping away after protecting Perseverance during its entry into the Martian atmosphere and the rover's touchdown in a cloud of dust in the Jezero Crater just north of the Red Planet's equator.

"This is the first time we've ever been able to capture an event like the landing on Mars," said Michael Watkins, director of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which is managing the mission.

"These are really amazing videos," Watkins said. "We binge-watched them all weekend."

Thomas Zurbuchen, Nasa's associate administrator for science, said the video of Perseverance's descent is "the closest you can get to landing on Mars without putting on a pressure suit."

Jessica Samuels, Perseverance's surface mission manager, said the rover was operating as expected so far and engineers were conducting an intensive check of its systems and instruments.

Power plant filling up Meghna bank

FROM PAGE 12
filling up of the river continued, it might cause the power transmission tower of the national power grid in Char Sonarampur and the Ashuganj river port to go into the river.

Earlier, the APSCIL authorities tried to acquire about 300 acres of agricultural land in the vicinity of Sohagpur and Bahadurpur mouzas along the Meghna river, adjacent to the residential complex (B-type) of the company's officials.

But the authorities had to stop in the face of villagers' resistance. Later, they started illegally filling up the Meghna as an alternative, the complainant said.

While visiting the area, this correspondent found that the APSCIL authorities were filling up the area after constructing long boundary wall about 2km north from the Ashuganj river port. The filling work is almost in the final stage.

Kabita Rani Das, a member of the local union parishad, told The Daily Star that around 2,000 families of fishermen live in Char Sonarampur

village. They would be homeless if the APSCIL continued the river grabbing, said Kabita, also a resident of the village.

According to locals, the place used to be under water always. Large boats loaded with paddy used to be anchored there. However, the place has now dried up.

Contacted, Firoza Parveen, assistant commissioner (Land) of Ashuganj upazila, yesterday said, "We already visited the spot and will submit a report soon."

Ranjan Kumar Das, executive engineer (acting) of Water Development Board in Brahmanbaria, said their officials visited the place.

"After checking the river map, we informed our higher authorities that will take steps in this regard," he said, adding that filling up of the river bank is illegal.

The APSCIL did not take permission from the Water Development Board, BIWTA or the Department of Environment.

Contacted, Md Shahidullah, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water

Transport Authority in Ashuganj and Bhairab river ports, said the company built a jetty there without informing them.

In reply to a query, Engineer AMM Sazzadur Rahman, managing director of APSCIL, said, "We have acquired the land as per the government rules."

The allegation of grabbing the river land is not true, he added.

Arabinda Biswas, Ashuganj upazila nirbahi officer, said the company has total 41 acres of land acquired in 1964-65.

"But here we can see they have filled up a vast portion of the river behind the rest house of the APSCIL. They have already filled up seven to eight acres of land," he added.

Md Nurul Amin, deputy director of Department of Environment in Brahmanbaria, said the APSCIL authorities did not take any permission from them about filling up of the river.

"We sought clarification from them and they gave us a clarification that is not satisfactory. We have informed the Chattogram office of DoE," he said.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
ঢাকা বাস র‍্যাপিড ট্রানজিট কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ঢাকা বিভাগটি)
ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
বাড়ী নং ০৪, রোড নং ২১, সেট্টার নং ০৪, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২৩০
ফোনঃ ০২-৪৮২৫৯১০১, ০২-৪৮২৫৯১০২
e-mail: md.dbrtc@gmail.com

স্মারক সংখ্যা: ০২.আরএইচটি.০০০০.বিআরটি(এমডি).১৪.০০৩.২০১৩-২১৫ তারিখ: ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বাস র‍্যাপিড ট্রানজিট কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (ঢাকা বিভাগটি) একটি শক্তিশালী সরকারি মালিকানাধীন প্রতিষ্ঠান। আধুনিক বাস সার্ভিস সুদৃঢ়ভাবে পরিচালনার মাধ্যমে মানসম্মত, নিরাপদ ও সময় সঞ্চারী উচ্চতর যাত্রী সেবা প্রদানই ঢাকা বিভাগটির মূল লক্ষ্য। উচ্চ লক্ষ্য পূরণের উদ্দেশ্যে বর্ধিত পদসমূহের বিপরীতে উল্লিখিত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন অগ্রাধী বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে বর্ধিত শর্তে জনকল নিয়োগের জন্য দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম	পদের নাম ও বেতন	পদ সংখ্যা	জন্ম তারিখ	কর্মপরিধি	যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১.	উপ-সহকার্যকর্মকর্তা (অর্থ ও প্রশাসন) গ্রেড-০৩ মূল বেতন ১০৫,০০০/-	০১	জন্ম তারিখ ০১-০১-১৯৭১ এর পূর্বে নয়	- প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থাপনা; - বেতন-মজুরিসহ মানবসম্পদ ব্যবস্থাপনা; - প্রশিক্ষণ ও মানবসম্পদ উন্নয়ন; - বাজেটিং; - হিসাব ও আর্থিক ব্যবস্থাপনা; - অত্যন্ত নির্দীক্ষণ; - রাজস্ব ব্যবস্থাপনা (বাস ভাড়া, পার্কিং এবং বিজ্ঞাপন); - ক্রিয়াকর্ম হাটক ব্যবস্থাপনা; - বাস বহুর উন্নয়ন ফাউন্ডেশন; এবং - সময়ে সময়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অন্যান্য দায়িত্ব পালন করা।	শীতক কোনো বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ৫.০ থেকে ৩.৫/৪ থেকে ২.৫ সিভিলিঞ্জ বা সমমানের ডিগ্রিমান রিসোর্স/ ম্যানেজমেন্ট/ কমার্স/ ফিন্যান্স/ একাউন্টিং/ বিজনেস এডমিনিস্ট্রেশন বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী আবশ্যিক; তবে শিক্ষাজীবনে কোনো তৃতীয় বিভাগ/প্রশি প্রশংসাপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। অনু্য ১২ (বার) বৎসরের কর্ম অভিজ্ঞতা, অত্যধিক অনু্য ২ (দুই) বৎসর সংশ্লিষ্ট ক্ষেত্রে উর্দ্ধতন পদে কর্ম অভিজ্ঞতাসহ অংশীদারী নেতৃত্ব প্রদানের সক্ষমতা থাকতে হবে।
২.	সহকার্যকর্মকর্তা (প্রশাসন) গ্রেড-০৪ মূল বেতন ৭৯,০০০/-	০১	জন্ম তারিখ ০১-০১-১৯৬১ এর পূর্বে নয়	- প্রশাসনিক ও মানব সম্পদ ব্যবস্থাপনা বৈশেষ প্রশাসন; - মানব সম্পদ উন্নয়ন ও ব্যবস্থাপনা; - নিয়োগ, মুদ্রায়াম এবং প্রশিক্ষণ; - পদ্ধতি ও প্রক্রিয়া উন্নয়ন এবং বাস্তবায়ন; এবং - সময়ে সময়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অন্যান্য দায়িত্ব পালন করা।	শীতক কোনো বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ৫.০ থেকে ৩.৫/৪ থেকে ২.৫ সিভিলিঞ্জ বা সমমানের ডিগ্রিমান রিসোর্স/ ম্যানেজমেন্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী আবশ্যিক; তবে শিক্ষাজীবনে কোনো তৃতীয় বিভাগ/প্রশি প্রশংসাপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। অনু্য ০৮ (আট) বৎসর সংশ্লিষ্ট ক্ষেত্রে কর্ম অভিজ্ঞতাসহ অংশীদারী নেতৃত্ব প্রদানের সক্ষমতা থাকতে হবে।
৩.	সহকার্যকর্মকর্তা গ্রেড-০৫ মূল বেতন ২৫,০০০/-	০২	জন্ম তারিখ ০১-০১-১৯৯১ এর পূর্বে নয়	- ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালকের ডায়েরি ও টাইম সিভিলিঞ্জিং এবং ডিটেকশন প্রকল্প; - নৌগ ও নৌ ব্যবস্থাপনা; - সার্ভ, সেকিয়ার, এ্যাপ্রোপ্রেসেইট, অসার্ভান, উপস্থাপনা, সমন ইত্যাদি ব্যবস্থাপনা; - টেলিফোন যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা; - সময়ে সময়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অন্যান্য দায়িত্ব পালন করা।	শীতক কোনো বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে যেকোনো বিষয়ে স্নাতক ডিগ্রী আবশ্যিক। সংশ্লিষ্ট ক্ষেত্রে অভিজ্ঞ প্রার্থী অগ্রাধী।
৪.	অফিস সহকারী-কাম- কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক গ্রেড-০৬ মূল বেতন ২২,০০০/-	০২	জন্ম তারিখ ০১-০১-১৯৯১ এর পূর্বে নয়	- টাইপিং, মেসেজিং, প্রতিবেদন প্রস্তুত সংক্রান্ত কার্যক্রম; - ডিগ্রিগেট আদান-প্রদান ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ; - মেসেজিং করা; - মেসেজিং পুনরাবরণ এবং মেসেজিং নিশ্চিত করা; - কম্পিউটার ও প্রিন্টার ব্যবস্থাপনা; এবং - সময়ে সময়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অন্যান্য দায়িত্ব পালন করা।	শীতক কোনো বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চমাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতাসহ কম্পিউটার পারদর্শী। তবে, স্নাতক ডিগ্রীধারী অভিজ্ঞ প্রার্থী অগ্রাধী। প্রতি মিনিট কমপক্ষে ৫০০/মিনিটে ২০টি শব্দ ও বাংলায় ২০টি শব্দ টাইপের পতি থাকতে হবে।

অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী:

- নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি www.rtdh.gov.bd, dcca.portal.gov.bd, rhd.portal.gov.bd, www.dhakabrt.com ও <http://dbrtc.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে পাঠ করা যাবে।
- প্রার্থীপত্রকে <http://dbrtc.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে প্রবেশপূর্বক Online Application Form পূরণ করার মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদন করার পদ্ধতি উল্লিখিত ওয়েবসাইটে হতে বিজ্ঞপ্তির জানা যাবে। আগামী ০১ মার্চ ২০২১খ্রি: সন্ধ্যা ১০:০০ টা হতে ৩১ মার্চ ২০২১খ্রি: তারিখ রাত ১২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত আবেদন করা যাবে। পূর্বকৃত আবেদন ফরমটি অবশ্যই download করে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। আবেদন ফরম পূরণের সর্বশেষ সময়ের পরবর্তী ৭২ ঘণ্টার মধ্যে শুধুমাত্র আবেদন কী অর্থা প্রদান করা যাবে।
- প্রার্থীপত্রকে আবেদন কী বাধ ০০০.০০ (তিন শত) টাকা (অফেরৎযোগ্য) Teletalk এর মে কার্ডে Prepaid নম্বর থেকে SMS এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করতে হবে।
- ঢাকা বিভাগটি কোম্পানীর "কর্মচারী চাকরি প্রবিধানসমূহ, ২০১৯" অনুযায়ী বেতন-ভাড়া, বৌধ বিমা, ভবিষ্যৎ তহবিল, গ্রাউন্ডিং, পেনশন ইত্যাদিসহ অন্যান্য সুবিধাদি নির্ধারিত হবে। আয়কর সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে সরকারের প্রচলিত আইন প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে হতে বাধ্যতাবদ্ধ ও যোগ্য প্রার্থীপত্রকে পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। কেহনামে, প্রার্থীদের বিধিত পরীক্ষাপত্রীকাসমূহের ফলাফল অনুযায়ী প্রস্তুতকৃত মেসেজিং/ভিত্তিতে উপযুক্ত প্রার্থীপত্রকে যৌথিক ও বাহ্যিক পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত অপ্রাধিকারিক হবে।
- মাসিক মূল সার্টিফিকেট পরীক্ষা (এসএসসি) বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার সনদপত্র উল্লিখিত অর্থ তারিখ অনুযায়ী প্রার্থীর বয়স নির্ধারিত হবে। বয়সের ক্ষেত্রে কোন এক্ষেত্রেই প্রশংসাপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
- O' Level এবং A' Level এর ক্ষেত্রে এশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate), বিশেষ বিবিদ্যালয় হতে প্রাপ্ত ডিগ্রীর ক্ষেত্রে দেশী সংশ্লিষ্ট বিবিদ্যালয়/বিবিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন/উপকৃত কর্তৃপক্ষ ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রী ও ফলাফলের কথা প্রদান করতে হবে।
- একজন প্রার্থী কেবলমাত্র ০১ (এক) টি পদের জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
- কোনো পর্যায়ে পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রার্থীপত্রকে কোনো ডিগ্রী / ডিগ্রি প্রদান করা হবে না।
- ভুক্তিভুক্ত মেসেজিং প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই যোগ্যপত্র নির্ধারিত ডিক্লারেশন / ডিক্লারেশন প্রকল্পে কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরীয়াক্ষর উঠানি হতে হবে।
- নির্ধারিত পরীক্ষার সময় পরীক্ষার্থীপত্রকে অবশ্যই প্রয়োজনীয় প্রস্তুতিসহ কনম / পেনসিলসহ অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় সরঞ্জাম সাথে আনতে হবে। প্রবেশ পত্র প্রদান নির্দেশনা এ ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- নির্ধারিত পরীক্ষার সময় পরীক্ষার্থীপত্রকে অবশ্যই আবেদন উল্লিখিত সকল সনদ, অভিজ্ঞতা ও প্রশিক্ষণ এবং জাতির পরিচয়পত্র (NID) এর মূল কপি প্রদান করতে হবে এবং এক কপি সত্যায়িত ডায়ালিগি অর্থা নিতে হবে।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- ভ্রম গোপন করে বা ভুল অর্থ প্রদান করে চাকুরিতে নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত হলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত বাতিল করে আইনমুখ স্বাক্ষর গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- বিধিত যৌথিক পরীক্ষার সময় ডিগ্রী ও স্থান বা কেবলের ঠিকানা, প্রবেশপত্র, ফলাফল ও অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় বিষয় আবেদনকারী কর্তৃক প্রদান হওয়াইল কোন নথির SMS এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করা হবে। এ ছাড়াও টেলিফোন ও ওয়েবসাইটে <http://dbrtc.teletalk.com.bd> এবং ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষের ওয়েবসাইটে www.dcca.portal.gov.bd এবং ঢাকা বিভাগটি এর ওয়েবসাইটে www.dhakabrt.com এ পাঠ করা যাবে।
- কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রয়োজন নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি অংশিক/সম্পূর্ণ সংশোধন/ব্যতিক্রমিত করতে পারবে এবং নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত কোনো বিষয় বা অংশের অসঙ্গত বা বাহ্যিক প্রয়োজন হলে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের ব্যাখ্যা গ্রহণ করা যাবে।

GD-358



Bangladesh T20I captain Mahmudullah Riyad and ODI captain Tamim Iqbal arrive at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday ahead of their departure for New Zealand. The Tigers are slated to play three ODIs and as many T20Is in a country where they have not won a single international match in their cricketing history.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'We will try to change the record'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's last New Zealand sojourn was a tragic and shocking experience as they survived the horrific Christchurch mosque shootings in March 2019. This time around, the Tigers will travel to New Zealand faced with the challenge of touring abroad for the first time since the pandemic.

A 35-member Bangladesh contingent is scheduled to land in Christchurch today with the primary target of winning their first international game in the country. However, expectations of the Tigers are low due to a lack of preparations ahead of the tough tour.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play three ODIs, starting from March 20 in Dunedin. The next

two games are scheduled for March 23 and 26 in Christchurch and Wellington respectively.

The visitors will then take part in the first T20I on March 28 in Hamilton before the second and third T20Is are played in Napier and Auckland on March 30 and April 1.

Although Bangladesh won the three-match ODI series against the West Indies at home, totally different conditions will be awaiting the visitors, who have often been tested in the past by seaming and windy conditions that favour the home pacers. However, Bangladesh are expected to conduct a five-day training camp in Queenstown before the start of the series.

After conducting three rounds of coronavirus testing before boarding the flight, the Tigers will undergo another test upon landing in New Zealand before starting a mandatory 14-day quarantine



"For me, the first priority is playing for the country. If I am included in the squad for the Sri Lanka Tests then I will play. And if I am not picked in the squad then BCB will inform me that. I'll then ask BCB [for permission to play in IPL] and if the BCB decides [to give me NOC] then I will play in the IPL. But, for me, the country comes first."

MUSTAFAZUR RAHMAN

at the Lincoln University Performance Centre outside Christchurch. All members of the team will have to stay in their hotel rooms for the first seven days and will be allowed to use the gym and also train together in the sports complex for the next seven days.

Bangladesh are yet to get a win in 26 international games in New Zealand, but ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal was hopeful of making history this time around. "Obviously, conditions in New Zealand have always been difficult for us, but it's nothing impossible. What we never achieved in New Zealand in the past... we will try to change the record this time around. We are hopeful," Tamim said before boarding the flight for New Zealand yesterday.

Bangladesh will surely miss star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who took a leave from the tour to stay beside his family for the birth of his third child.

Ctg Abahani breeze past Rahmatganj

SPORTS REPORTER



Chattogram Abahani registered back-to-back victories in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-0 win over Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian forward Chinedu Mathew put the port city side ahead in the first half before substitute Mannaf Rabbi wrapped up the victory to deliver the team's fourth victory in 10 matches, helping them to fifth position with 15 points.

Rahmatganj, on the other hand, remained in ninth position in the 13-team table with eight points from nine matches.

The charges of Maruful Haque had made a good start in the league but they failed to keep the momentum after losing to former champions Sheikh Russel KC and defending champions Bashundhara Kings, which were followed by draws against Abahani, Uttar Baridhara Club and Bangladesh Police.

However, they have started to show some consistency since the previous match, which they won 1-0 against Brothers Union. The port city side carried that form into

yesterday's match where they were hardly troubled by the Old Dhaka outfit.

Chattogram Abahani took only seven minutes to break the deadlock when national winger Rakib Hossain put a forward-pass for Mathew, who advanced into the box to shrug off his marker Nahidul Islam before placing a left-footer at the near post.

With Egyptian defender Alaedin Nasr thwarting a spate of Chattogram Abahani attacks, Rahmatganj came close to levelling the margin in the 33rd minute but Christ Remi's header on a corner from Mahmud Hasan Kiran narrowly missed the target.

In both halves, Chattogram Abahani earned corner kicks but they could not cash in on those opportunities while Uzbek defender Shukuar Ali took some free-kicks either side of the break, barely troubling Rahmatganj goalkeeper Rassel Mahmud Liton.

However, the former national goalkeeper was helpless when substitute Rabbi volleyed home from close range following a nice exchange of passes between Nixon Gylherme and Mathew outside the box.



An early miss lit a fire under Cristiano Ronaldo in a Serie A encounter against Crotona on Monday, with the Juventus striker netting twice in a 3-0 win. He headed home the opening goal with a trademark gravity-defying header before showing pure desire for the second. Ronaldo collected the ball almost 40 yards out of goal and struck a wicked shot that the goalkeeper palmed away. Incredibly, CR7 raced into the box as the loose ball was whipped back in, heading home his second of the night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ROUND OF 16



PHOTO: TWITTER

Real Madrid defender Ferland Mendy issued a rallying cry on the eve of their Champions League round of 16 clash against Borussia Monchengladbach tonight, saying that the players were "with Zinedine Zidane to the death" in response to criticism that they have come in for due to their poor recent form.

'Gladbach ready to face the best team' of Real Madrid clash

REUTERS, Moenchengladbach

Borussia Moenchengladbach coach Marco Rose heaped praise on their Champions League last 16 opponents Manchester City ahead of Wednesday's first leg, saying his players would be facing arguably the world's best team.

City are on a spectacular 18-game winning run across all competitions and are clear favourites, especially with the game having been moved to Budapest due to Germany's COVID-19 travel restrictions.

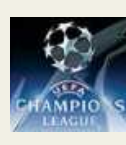
City are also on course for the Premier League title, having carved out a 10-point lead at the top of the table with Pep Guardiola's team in superb form. "I don't need to motivate our players. When you play as Gladbach in the Champions League round of 16 against Manchester City then you can only win from such a game," Rose told a news conference.

"It is a huge thing for the club to be in this competition and we have always said we want to prove ourselves. City have world class players on all positions and we have the chance to measure ourselves against arguably the best team currently in the world.

"That is exactly what we want, why we play football," Rose added.

A recent run of bad results has seen Gladbach drop to eighth in the Bundesliga. "The boys should go out and enjoy it tomorrow evening, that should be part of it," Rose said. "But they also have to be at their maximum to show what they can do."

APP, Bergamo



Luis Muriel has moved beyond his 'super-sub' role with a rich vein of form to boost Atalanta's hopes against Real Madrid in the first leg of their last 16 Champions League tie in Bergamo on Wednesday.

Colombian ace Muriel scored and set up countryman Duvan Zapata for another as Atalanta warmed up for the Spanish champions with a 4-2 win over Napoli to move up to fifth in Serie A at the weekend.

"Muriel is extraordinary, not only for the assist and the goal," said coach Gian Piero Gasperini after the forward scored in a ninth consecutive Serie A appearance as a starter.

"This year he has shown extraordinary mental, physical and athletic form, he has made a terrific leap in quality also in terms of consistency."

The 29-year-old is having the best campaign of his career with 17 goals so far including two in the Champions League group stages.

In his debut season, Muriel earned a reputation as a super-sub, scoring 18 Serie A goals despite only starting 10 matches.

This season he has scored 14 league goals, the same as AC Milan star Zlatan Ibrahimovic, and behind Cristiano Ronaldo (18) for Juventus and Inter's Romelu Lukaku (17). Interestingly, only one of Muriel's goals have been from the spot.

"The coach is giving me space and more playing time lately so I want to make the most of it," said Muriel, who has scored 36 goals in 71 games for Atalanta.

INDIA-ENGLAND TEST SERIES

Pink-ball battle at world's biggest cricket stadium

AFP, Ahmedabad



India and England head into a crucial third Test starting today at the world's biggest cricket stadium with more than a series between two of the biggest rivals at stake, according to their pace spearheads Ishant Sharma and Jimmy Anderson.

With the four-match series tied at 1-1, both sides need a win in Ahmedabad to be able to keep alive their hopes of reaching the World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

India just need to win the series to get through, while England have to win by 3-1. A tied series would let Australia through. The tension is rising in both camps who each registered a crushing win in the first two matches. "We have got to win two Tests matches, it is as simple as it gets for us," said Anderson who took crucial wickets in England's 227 run win in the first game. "I have just one thing on my mind," responded Sharma, India's 32-year-old veteran who will be in his 100th Test. "That is to win the next Test, win the series and qualify for the World Test Championship," Sharma said.

India captain Virat Kohli wants his side to approach the pink-ball Test against England like a normal five-day match but with the sessions reversed. Kohli's century helped India crush Bangladesh by an innings and 46 runs in their maiden pink-ball Test in late 2019. "Last time we experienced that the first session is probably the nicest to bat, when the sun is out and the ball doesn't do much," Kohli told a video conference on Tuesday.

HIGHLIGHT

The newly revamped Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad is all set to host the 3rd Test of the 4-match series which will be a pink ball fixture, to be played under lights. Motera Cricket Stadium is the largest cricket stadium in the world with a capacity of 1,10,000. As many as 55,000 fans are expected to be present at the stadium for the Day-Night Test, starting today.

"It seems to be a trend, and it's something that as a batting group you need to make sure that you stop," Root told a video conference on Tuesday.

"One thing that stands out to me is the vital first 20 balls -- making sure you get used to tracking the ball, get used to the conditions and being very aware of how things can change throughout the day."



India skipper Virat Kohli practises at the nets with the pink ball ahead of the third Test against England which starts in Ahmedabad today.

PHOTO: BCCI

Buffon not surprised by Inter's surge

AGENCIES, Turin

Gianluigi Buffon said after Juventus' 3-0 win at Crotona on Monday night that they would continue to chase Inter, but revealed that he was unsurprised by the form of Antonio Conte's men, who top Serie A after 23 games with 53 points.

Buffon kept a clean sheet in his 654th appearance for the Old Lady and left work satisfied on.

"The most important thing is that I get there by jumping," Buffon told Sky Sport Italia. "It's the greatest satisfaction. It's the way you get there that makes the difference. I measure the width of my jumps every week, as long as it's good, I continue."

Juventus are back on track after a winless run of three games and the veteran admitted the Bianconeri "needed the win" that took Juventus to third with 45 points and a game in hand on both Inter and AC Milan, who have 49 points, above them.

Buffon said that the quality that Inter have now was something that he expected under Conte, who coached Buffon at Juventus for several title-winning years.

"It's certainly not a surprise. I would have been surprised if they did not show the quality of their coach and their squad. They have a value equal to ours, at least."

Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo's belief was also steadfast. "All those behind Inter are antagonists, we are one of them and we will fight until the end," he said.

Pirlo also felt that his side were helped by the goals before the break.

"We started a bit nervous, maybe the last defeats had made us nervous," Pirlo told Sky Sport Italia. "Then the goals helped us and gave us peace of mind."

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Power plant filling up Meghna bank

River commission asks it to stop

MASUK HRIDOV, Brahmanbaria

The state-owned Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited (APSCL) is filling the Meghna bank with sand to construct a new unit near Sohagpur village. The sand is being extracted from the river bed.

Locals allege that the administration is sitting idle. Filling up the river bank without permission from the Department of Environment is a criminal offence, yet the company has already filled up around eight acres of the river bank and adjacent low-lying land claiming that it is their land.

Meanwhile, a team of the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) yesterday visited the spot and asked the APSCL to stop filling up the river.

"We will submit a report after verifying the land documents and talking to all related government agencies. However, river is the main priority of the NRCC. So, we will see whether they [APSCL] are hampering the flow of the river or not," said Md Shafullah, deputy chief hydrologist of the NRCC, after visiting the spot.

The move of APSCL came to the fore after one Nasir Mia, of Sohagpur village in Ashuganj, filed a complaint with the NRCC chairman.

He also complained to the deputy director of the BIWTA in Ashuganj and Bhairab river ports.

In the complaint, Nasir said the way the APSCL is filling up the river bank, it would hamper the flow of this river. If

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Sand from the Meghna being pumped to the shore via large pipes to fill up the bank to construct a new Ashuganj Power Plant unit in Brahmanbaria. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOV

5 Rohingyas died adrift in Andaman Sea

Says Fortify Rights

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

More than five Rohingyas, who were among some 90 on a boat adrift in the Andaman Sea, have died and the rest are desperate for food and water, said Fortify Rights, quoting families who talked to the refugees.

"More than five people died today... please try to send water by any means," a Rohingya man told the regional rights body in one recording.

Fortify Rights spoke with Rohingya refugees in Malaysia, Bangladesh, and India, who made phone contacts with passengers on the boat.

A Rohingya on the boat told a family member in Bangladesh over phone that there are 90 people on board, including 65 women, who departed Bangladesh on February 11 and that the boat went adrift after engine failure.

Bangladesh is home to some one million

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

3 'robbers' killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three alleged Rohingya robbers were killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Teknaf upazila's Shalbagan hill area yesterday afternoon.

Rab claimed that the deceased include leader of the gang Zakir.

The identity of the two other deceased could not be known immediately.

Rab said one of their personnel was shot during the "gunfight".

The law enforcers also recovered firearms and ammunition.

Maj Mehedi Hasan, deputy commander of Rab-15 in Cox's Bazar, said following a tip-off, a Rab team raided Shalbagan area around 4:00pm.

Sensing Rab's presence, the gang opened fire on the law enforcers, the major claimed.

The Rab team retaliated with gunfire in self defence, the officer said, adding that the exchange of fire lasted for around an hour.

At one stage, the robbers fled the scene and hid in a forest, the Rab officer added. Later, the law enforcers recovered the three bodies from the scene.

Rab recovered eight firearms and 25 bullets from the spot.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Most parents think it's still unsafe

REOPENING SCHOOLS
Finds survey of Citizen's Platform for SDGs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-five percent of guardians interviewed do not feel safe to send their children to schools when they will be reopened, a survey of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, said yesterday.

The schools have remained closed due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in the country.

The platform added that 51 percent of guardians consider that their children's schools are not capable enough of maintaining health guidelines.

It carried out the online survey between February 17 and 22, and 1,960 people were respondents of it.

Of them, 576 were guardians, 370 teachers and 1,014 a cross-section of people from across the board, said Avra Bhattacharjee, joint director of Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Avra made a presentation at a virtual discussion on "at last schools are reopening and how far we are prepared" organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

The online survey said 67 percent of guardians were not interested to provide any kind of extra fees to schools for maintaining the cost for ensuring health safety.

It added that 68 percent of teachers opined that their schools are capable enough of maintaining the health safety guideline. About 69 percent of teachers said the government should give money to schools for meeting the cost for ensuring health safety.

On March 17 last year, the government closed all educational institutions, aiming to contain the spread of coronavirus. The government in phases extended the closure till February 28.

Moderating the discussion, Debapriya Bhattacharya, convenor of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Review, amend DSA, stop its abuse

Say speakers at programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Digital Security Act 2018 needs to be reviewed and amended with more clarity, and abuse of this act to stifle journalists and others should be stopped, speakers at a programme in the capital said yesterday.

Society for Media and Suitable Human-communication Techniques (SoMaSHTE) recommended immediate amendment of the act, especially sections 25 and 31, at a programme at The Daily Star Centre.

"DSA prevents journalists from reporting on many issues. Self-censorship is common among journalists and sections 25 and 31 of the DSA are particular barriers for the free press," said SoMaSHTE director (programme) Mir Shahidul Alam.

Journalists need to be united, and journalists'

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Nasa releases first audio from Mars



AFP, Washington

The US space agency Nasa on Monday released the first audio from Mars, a faint crackling recording of a gust of wind captured by the Perseverance rover.

Nasa also released the first video of last week's landing of the rover, which is on a mission to search for signs of past life on the Red Planet.

A microphone did not work during the rover's descent to the surface, but it was able to capture audio once it landed on Mars.

Nasa engineers played a 60-second recording. "What you hear here 10 seconds in is an actual wind gust on the surface of Mars picked up by the microphone and sent back to us here on Earth,"

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

DU dorms opening on May 17

Says VC after academic council meet

STAR REPORT

Amid ongoing agitation by students, Dhaka University authorities yesterday

decided not to hold any exams or reopen student dormitories before May 17.

In accordance with the recent decision by the education ministry, Dhaka University (DU)

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:20 12:45 4:30 6:03 7:30
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:45 6:07 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

G7 CONDEMNATIONS, SANCTIONS Myanmar junta under renewed pressure

Anti-coup protesters gather again; Malaysia deports 1,086 Myanmar nationals



AGENCIES

Myanmar's military leaders came under renewed pressure yesterday as the world's wealthiest nations condemned the junta for responding to anti-coup demonstrators "with violence", a rebuke coming on the heels of tightened sanctions from Washington and Brussels.

Authorities have gradually ratcheted up their use of force against a massive and largely peaceful civil disobedience

campaign demanding the return of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Three anti-coup protesters have been killed in demonstrations so far, while a man patrolling his Yangon neighbourhood against night arrests was also shot dead on the weekend.

"Use of live ammunition against unarmed people is unacceptable," the foreign ministers of the G7 group of rich democracies -- comprising Canada, France,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Over 1,000 Bangladeshis died in Qatar in 10 years

The Guardian investigation finds

STAR REPORT

At least 1,018 Bangladeshi migrant workers have died in Qatar between 2010 and November 2020, reveals an investigative report of The Guardian yesterday.

They are among more than 6,500 migrant workers from South Asia -- India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka -- who have died in the Middle Eastern country.

Of the dead, 2,711 are Indians, 1,641 Nepalese, 824 Pakistani, and 557 Sri Lankans.

The Guardian says the total death toll is significantly higher, as these figures do not include deaths of workers from a number of countries, including the Philippines and Kenya, that send a significant number of workers to the oil-rich country.

Qatar is home to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Tanjina Ashraf Khan Mou participates in World Health and Wellness Congress

From Bangladesh for the first time a Mental Health Professional, Tanjina Ashraf Khan Mou has been conferred with the prestigious award of "The Global Healthcare Champions" endorsed by World Federation of Healthcare Leaders. The Global Healthcare Champions award glorifies the accomplishments made by those who work selflessly with the motive of providing happiness in our lives and making a difference to the society.

Tanjina Ashraf Khan Mou has been the driving force behind her successful enterprise 'Mentcouch International'. Her contribution has been recognized in the sector and she has been honoured as a "Mental Healthcare Achiever in Covid Time" for raising the bar with her dynamic spirit and innovative outlook. She developed intensive, ambitious business strategies and continuously made various mental health services accessible to local and global community in order to help during such unprecedented times.

The event took place in Taj Lands End, Mumbai, recently where various healthcare leaders and jury were present from all across the world.

World has come to know and see the other side of Bangladesh in terms of its presence in the field of Mental Health through her. This time only for her Bangladeshi flag has taken place in this global platform concerning the very important topic of Mental Health. Bangladesh is proud of Tanjina Ashraf Khan Mou. She is the daughter of Mr. Kamrul Ashraf Khan Poton former Member of Parliament, Narsingdi-2.

