

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 Muktiyoddha Santan Sangsad, a platform of freedom fighters' children, staged a sit-in, blocking the capital's Shahbagh 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 it 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 (retd) 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 Biplob, 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 Moglabazar 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

0-100
KM (PIZZA)H
IN 4.9 SEC

Dhanmondi:
Gyankosh, Road # 4, Ph# 862-3251 & Subhambag 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# 8/A, Sat Masjid Road, Dhanmondi, Ph# 01620-014000

Mohammadpur:
Md. Kuddus, Townhall market, Ph# 01711-977348

Shahbag:
Parthak Samabesh, Aziz Super Market Ph# 01841-234612

New Market:
Jahir Book House, Gate No-1, New Market, Ph# 01715-352421

Motijheel:
Amir & Son's, Purana Paltan Ph# 01711-137851, 88-02-9556484

Gulshan:
Md. Kaim, DMCC Market, Gulshan-1, Ph# 01720-319283
Unimart, Gulshan Centre Point, H# 25-26, R# 90-91, Gulshan-2, Ph# 01955-550000

Airport/Uttara:
Book Worm (Old Airport) Ph# 912-0387

Mid. Towel, Kashi Centre, Sector#3, Uttara, Ph# 01915-397544

Farmgate:
The Daily Star Office Ph# 09610222222, 9144329

Banglamotor:
Batigor, 17 Myrmersingh Road, Banglamotor, Ph# 01973-304344

Chittagong:
Batigor, Ctg. Press Club, Jemal Khan Road Ph# 01733-067005
The Daily Star, Chittagong Office, Ph# 01818140535

Outside Dhaka- Please ask your local newspaper agent

To buy online scan the QR code