



THE DAILY

Star

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"The last thing we need is Neanderthal thinking that in the meantime, everything's fine -- take off your mask, forget it. It still matters."
US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AS TEXAS AND MISSISSIPPI ORDERS TO LIFT MASK MANDATES



"Myanmar's military must stop murdering and jailing protesters."
UN RIGHTS CHIEF MICHELLE BACHELET AFTER SECURITY FORCES KILL 38 ANTI-COUP PROTESTERS IN A DAY



"A couple of things went through my mind before the sixth ball... I told myself 'Wait Polly, take a chance.'"
WEST INDIES CAPTAIN KIERON POLLARD ON HITTING SRI LANKA SPINNER AKILA DANANJAYA FOR SIX SIXES IN AN OVER. PAGE 11

METHAMPHETAMINE IN BANGLADESH

Crystal death SUMMONED

The highly addictive drug arriving by air and land became big headache of police, anti-narco officials



ICE IN BANGLADESH
 >> Smuggled in by air, land from Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia
 >> Returning expatriates often used as carriers
 >> 10g costs at least Tk 1 lakh
 >> Syndicates target upscale neighbourhood

Big haul of meth seized in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control said it seized two kilogrammes of highly addictive crystal methamphetamine, popularly known as Ice, near a Rohingya camp in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar. Officers arrested 31-year-old Abdullah, a Bangladeshi, during the raid on Rohingya Camp-28. There is no established market for the substance in Bangladesh, said DNC

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Targeting users in upscale neighbourhoods, organised syndicates have been smuggling in high-priced crystal meth over the last few years, much to the concern of law enforcers and narcotics control officials. The highly addictive drug, also nicknamed ice, arrives in Bangladesh from Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar, and the syndicates often use expatriates travelling back home as carriers, according to investigators. At least two to three consignments of the drug, each weighing around 0.5kg-1.5kg, have arrived every month over the last three years through the

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With her sister Sheikh Rehana beside her, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives her first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. The photo was taken at the Gono Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PID

Scars of torture all over him

Cartoonist Kishore describes his ordeal to The Daily Star hours after getting out on bail

ZYMA ISLAM

"If you come close to me you will smell the pus."

This was the first statement by Ahmed Kabir Kishore to this correspondent. He was released from Kashimpur Central Jail-2, on bail, around 12:20pm -- mere hours back. The cartoonist had spent 10 months in prison for the crime of drawing cartoons, prosecuted under the Digital Security Act.

Kishore turned his head to show an oozing ear canal, before rolling up his jeans to show numerous scars on his leg. The scar tissue shone mottled, scaly and white against his wiry dark legs. The 10 months in prison has rendered



him absolutely skeletal, his glassy eyes sunk deep. "The jailer took photos of my legs, the day before yesterday. The inspector general of prisons also met me and told me, 'You will get out in two days, please get your ear treated outside,'" narrated Kishore. "I had asked the prison doctor on many occasions to take me outside for medical treatment, but I was told that detainees cannot be taken out at the moment," he said. "I was prescribed antibiotics and painkillers but that did not work."

But how did he come by the ear and leg injuries? For that, Kishore takes us back to May 2, 2020.

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THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZ ANAM

Why is personal freedom such a plaything of the law enforcers?

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Connectivity can change the region

Visiting Indian FM stresses stronger connectivity between India, Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India are looking forward to stronger connectivity between the two countries and with South Asia and beyond in the next 20 years.

As the two neighbouring countries celebrate their 50th year of diplomatic relations, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, "Connectivity is productivity."

Emerging out of a meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the state guesthouse Padma yesterday, he said, "If we can get connectivity right between India and Bangladesh, I can tell you the entire geo-economy of the region will change. The Bay of Bengal will look very different."

At a joint press conference after the meeting, Jaishankar said they spoke about involving a third country, preferably Japan, which is a very good friend of Bangladesh and India, in terms of connectivity. Japan is already involved in a number of major connectivity projects in the Bay of Bengal under the Bengal Industrial Growth Belt.

"Our relations transcend orthodox partnerships, and I believe our bonding is central to the realisation of the dream of a peaceful, prosperous



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Fake businessmen joined hands with financial rogues

HC observes on People's Leasing scams

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Some unscrupulous people in the guise of businessmen conspired with rogues of the financial sector to loot the money of general people, said the High Court in an order on the liquidation of People's Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (PLFSL).

It also observed that a vested group was hatching plots to destabilise the economic growth for which the people of the country worked so hard.

The court said it expected all constitutional and statutory bodies, divisions, departments, and directorates to work fast and transparently to prevent the undermining of the economic solvency of the country.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar made the observations in the full text of the order after Bangladesh Bank in 2019 sought permission to liquidate People's Leasing, a

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Using his gamcha (towel) and small sticks, this van puller has come up with a unique way of taking protection against the scorching sun. Temperature has gone up across the country in recent days after the departure of winter. The photo was taken in Amin Bazar area on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BASIC BANK SCAMS Fate of 56 cases still up in the air

Current ACC's term ends this month

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN



The five-year tenure of the Anti-Corruption Commission is about to end and a new one is to take charge this month but the fate of the probes into 56 cases filed in connection with the BASIC Bank loan scam remains uncertain. Whenever asked about progress in the last five years, the ACC sounded like a scratched record. It always said it had failed to find the Tk 4,500 crore siphoned off from the bank between 2009 and 2013.

Dissatisfied with the ACC's delays, the High Court in 2018 even raised the question of whether the investigation officers was in "connivance with the

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FULL INTERVIEW OF ACC CHIEF ON PAGE 9

WE DEEPLY MOURN

With deep grief, we announce that Mrs. Bakhtunnesa Chowdhury, beloved mother of Mr. Azam J Chowdhury, Chairman of East Coast Group and Managing Director of MJL Bangladesh Limited, passed away on Tuesday night (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un).

May Allah grant her Jannatul Firdaus.
We convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Mobil MJL Bangladesh Limited

BANGLADESH UPDATE



619

New cases in 24hrs



5,48,549

Total cases



8,435

Deaths



5,00,468

Recoveries



2,574,825

Deaths



115,960,837

Total cases

NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Existing problems should be resolved thru' discussion

PM tells visiting Indian external affairs minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the existing problems between neighbouring countries need to be resolved through discussions.

"There might be problems among neighbouring countries. The problems should be resolved through negotiations and discussions," she told visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar when he met her at the Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

The Indian minister praised Hasina's leadership for meeting the eligibility criteria for Bangladesh's graduation from the LDC group to a developing country.

"It's a great achievement. The development of Bangladesh is miraculous," Jaishankar was quoted as saying.

About Covid-19, Hasina said Bangladesh took prompt actions to check the pandemic by engaging all concerned, including physicians, law enforcers, members of the armed forces and the administration.

The PM said Bangladesh launched a nationwide vaccination programme last month. "The [inoculation] programme is being rolled out in phases as it aims to include everyone ..."

She appreciated the support received from India on Covid-19 vaccine.

Hasina said the economy of Bangladesh is progressing despite the pandemic, recent floods and cyclones.

Its remittance inflow has also increased during the period, she added.

She said the government also extended support to Bangladeshi expatriates who returned home during this tough time.

Jaishankar reaffirmed India's commitment to assist Bangladesh in facing the pandemic. "We all of this region face difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic."

He said it is a great honour for India to participate in the celebrations of Bangabandhu's birth centenary and Golden Jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh.

The Indian minister said he had a fruitful meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart AK Abdul Momen over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh to join the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Jaishankar presented two books, including one titled "Liberation War of Bangladesh" written by his father K Subrahmanyam, to Hasina.

The Bangladesh premier also gifted seven volumes of a 14-volume book titled "Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" to the Indian minister.

Jaishankar arrived in Dhaka on Thursday morning on a brief official visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Foreign Minister Momen.

PM's International Relations Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi, Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus, and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram K Doraiswami were present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina talking to visiting Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as he called on her at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Modi to visit Tungipara, Barishal

Bss, New Delhi

Alongside Bangabandhu Memorial in Tungipara, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Orakandi, a sacred shrine of the "Matua" community in Gopalganj, and "Satipith" in Shikarpur, Barishal, during his upcoming Bangladesh visit.

Modi is set to visit Bangladesh on March 26-27 at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to join the 50th anniversary celebration of the Independence of Bangladesh, the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu, and the 50th year of Bangladesh-India diplomatic ties.

The Indian premier is set to visit the Bangabandhu memorial in Tungipara to pay homage to Bangladesh's Founding Father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 27 and on the same day he is expected to visit Orakandi temple and "Satipith".

Diplomatic sources told BSS that if everything goes well PM Modi is likely to visit Orakandi Temple to pay homage to Harichand Thakur, the founder of the "Matua" community and "Sugandha Shaktipith" (Satipith) in Shikarpur in Barishal district.

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Crystal death summoned

FROM PAGE 1

country's various airports, mostly from Malaysia.

It is sold to affluent people living in upscale neighborhoods -- 10g at minimum Tk 1 lakh, said Detective Branch officials.

Crystal meth is the common name for crystal methamphetamine, a powerful drug that affects the central nervous system. It comes in the form of clear crystal chunks or shiny blue-white rocks.

Use of the drug poses high risks of stroke, heart attack, teeth decay, and permanent hallucinations, among other short and long-term health effects, according to the website of the US National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Smugglers use different techniques such as calling it a "gold-melting chemical" to deceive law enforcers, according to the officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, which is currently investigating a case regarding the smuggling and sale of crystal meth.

The case was filed following the arrest of six people from Bashundhara, Gulshan and Banani areas in the capital on November 4 last year. During the drive, the arrestees were found in possession of around 600g crystal meth.

The six include the drug syndicate's Bangladesh chapter leader Chandan and his sub-dealers Siraj, Ovi, Jewel, Rubaiyat, and Canny, said officials.

Chandan, a gold shop owner, used to sell the drug in broad daylight -- saying it was a chemical for melting gold, they added.

Police later arrested a female dealer of the syndicate -- Nusrat -- after collecting information from the six. A readymade garments factory owner, she is allegedly involved in maintaining a drug network of around 50 people.

Officials investigating the case said all the arrestees themselves were crystal meth addicts.

Regarding the Malaysian connection, investigators said they have already identified three people, including a relative of Chandan, mainly responsible for maintaining the racket from Malaysia.

Assistant Commissioner of DB police Javed Iqbal Pritom told The Daily Star recently that they have already collected some details of the smugglers living abroad.

The DB official, however, refused to disclose further details for the sake of investigation.

COMES BY AIR, LAND Crystal meth was found arriving in Bangladesh through different airports until last month.

On February 25, Rab-7 arrested two drug peddlers with this drug during a raid in Muzaffarnagar area of Chattogram.

The arrestees were identified as Shafiqul Alam, 34, and Yasin Rana, 50. The elite force recovered 150g of crystal meth from their possession.

"We have primarily come to know that the consignment entered Bangladesh from Myanmar but it may have originated from another country," said Major Musfiqur Rahman of Rab-7, involved with the operation.

Replying to a question, he said a

CRYSTAL METH FACTS

- » A form of methamphetamine
- » Increases dopamine production in brain
- » Highly addictive
- » Popular among young adults at dance clubs, parties
- » May cause speech problems, stroke, heart attack, tooth decay, hallucinations

clandestine market of crystal meth has started to grow in Bangladesh.

On Wednesday, a team of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) recovered 2kg of it from Teknaf upazila.

DNC officials said the consignment came to Myanmar from Thailand and then entered Bangladesh through the Teknaf border, an established gateway for yaba. Its destination was Dhaka.

On June 28, 2019, DNC arrested a Nigerian national from Dhaka with around 500g of ice. It was learnt that the drug came to the man, Ajah Anayochukwa Onyeanywusi, through a parcel service from Uganda.

On February 27, the department busted a narcotic manufacturing lab and recovered five grams of crystal meth from Jhigatola in the capital. The drug reportedly came from Thailand to Bangladesh, said DNC officials.

According to an intelligence official, methamphetamine goes to Myanmar from Thailand and China to be used in making yaba. Sometimes, Bangladesh and India are used as a transit route, said the official.

SMUGGLED IN TRAVELLERS' BAGS Syndicate members often convince expatriates that they want to send a gift to their relatives living in Bangladesh and then put the drug inside gift items like packets of coffee and tea, chocolate boxes or blankets, according to investigators.

The drug is also hidden in silica gel packets, and if anyone asks, the expats are coached to say that these are used for removing moisture, they said.

In a majority of cases, the syndicate's local members receive the packets from the airport as soon as the expatriates clear customs and other checks on arrival.

Quoting the arrestees, a high official of DB said if any expatriate refuses to bring a package to Bangladesh, the syndicate would convince him or her by offering an expensive gift.

HIGH SOCIETY CUSTOMERS Investigators claim to have gathered information of over 100 users of ice in the country -- the list includes businessmen, private university students, and youngsters from rich families in Dhaka.

These users mainly became addicted to the drug when they went abroad and they provide it at parties they throw for their friends in the country, said a DB official.

Users take crystal meth by smoking,

snorting, injecting directly into the body, or taking in the form of tablets.

Once friends at these parties show interest in the drug, the hosts then provide it, said the official. "Ice dealers never sell it to unknown people, and they provide home delivery," he added.

DBAC Javed Iqbal said they are now looking for drug users to get further details of dealers as they are known to each other and interconnected.

Associate Professor at the National Institute of Mental Health Mekhala Sarkar told The Daily Star recently that the effects of ice are devastating.

"Ice-addicted people may face hallucination, delusion and even schizophrenia-like symptoms may develop. Symptoms of paranoia are likely to develop among the patients."

"If an addict takes this drug for a long period, the person might face depression and may behave abnormally. Physical problems like hypertension, stroke, brain hemorrhage and sexual dysfunction may be observed among the patients," she added.

CRYSTAL METH TRAVERSING BORDERS In the fourth bilateral meeting between the DNC of Bangladesh and Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) of Myanmar on December 15 last year, Myanmar's officials claimed that they have seized around 16.8 tonnes of ice from January 1 to November 30, 2020.

They also claimed that ice and amphetamines were mainly smuggled from China and Thailand to Myanmar, according to sources present at the meeting.

Director (intelligence and operation) of DNC Kusum Dewan, told The Daily Star recently that they were surprised and worried to know about such a huge quantity of ice recovered in Myanmar.

"We have already increased our vigilance and started collecting information about the sources of ice," added the DNC director.

DB police said they have come to know that the persons involved in smuggling crystal meth from Malaysia are also involved in smuggling the drug from China and other countries.

HM Azimul Haque, deputy commissioner of DB (Ramna Division) police, said they have already arrested a number of people and drives are on to arrest others involved in smuggling ice.

This drug is more hazardous than yaba, he told this paper, saying people should be made aware and alerted about the side effects of crystal meth.

On February 14, Abdur Rauf Mia, a deputy secretary of the home ministry, directed the DNC to implement the decision of setting up scanners and dog squads at airports and land and river ports to detect narcotics entering the country.

The decision was taken in the first meeting of the national narcotics control advisory committee, held on December 27 last year, virtually presided over by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

Khaleda may take Covid vaccine jabs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia seems to be positive about taking Covid-19 shots, but she is yet to give consent to it, says her personal physician.

Party leaders said there is a question over how 76-year-old ailing Khaleda will be vaccinated as she is not free. She is now staying at her Gulshan home as the government suspended her sentences for 12 months in two phases.

She was freed on two conditions -- she will not leave the country and will receive treatment at her home.

"Chairperson Khaleda Zia seems to be positive about taking vaccine jabs as all her staffers have already received the shots. She is not free. It is not possible for her to take shots by going to a vaccination centre. Once we get permission, we will complete the registration process," BNP Vice Chairman AZM Zahid Hossain, also a personal physician to Khaleda, told

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Fate of 56 cases still up

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accused".

Following an HC order, the ACC quizzed former BASIC Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu at least five times between 2018 and early 2019, and questioned all directors of the then bank's board. But there was not much headway in its investigation.

In contrast, when a loan scam of over Tk 10,000 crore in the country's four non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) came to the fore in 2019, the ACC took little time to uncover the channels through which money was routed before reaching the destination.

When asked why charge sheets have not yet been submitted, outgoing ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmood, in office since March 2016, in an exclusive interview said he had restructured the pattern of investigation and enquiry after assuming office.

"This is a question [the delay in submitting the charge sheets] I get asked often, and rightly so, based on the gravity of the crime."

"One has to take into account that these cases were lodged with the ACC before its restructuring," he said.

Iqbal reiterated that the ACC has already instructed the investigation officers to trace the destinations of the siphoned money relating to the BASIC Bank loan scam.

"These cases and their investigations are still ongoing. As the chairman, I am unable to comment on cases under investigation," he added.

Last month, the ACC chairman hinted lightly at the fate of the 56 cases the commission had filed in connection with the scam in 2015.

On February 8, at the launch of the ACC's 2019 Annual Report during a views-exchange meeting, Iqbal said around Tk 3,500 crore out of Tk 4,500 crore had been returned to BASIC Bank.

"Let's wait and see whether the final report is given instead of charge sheets," he said.

Ironically, neither former BASIC Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu nor any of the bank board members were named as the accused in these cases.

The perpetrators will undoubtedly be brought to justice in due time, the ACC chairman said, adding that in order to carry out this justice effectively, the ACC has to complete a transparent, detailed, and credible investigation.

The mistaken implication of jute mill worker Jaha Alam in corruption cases in 2019 has been another stain on Iqbal's five-year career.

This commission came under fire for the investigation officers' mistake in 2019 when Alam, wrongly imprisoned for more than three years in place of the actual accused Abu Salek, was released following media reports and the HC's intervention.

SOME GOOD PRACTICES However, some bold steps were taken by this commission under Iqbal's leadership, that offered some solace to justice seekers.

For instance, the introduction of the anti-corruption hotline, 106, was a milestone. Soon after the beginning of the service, the ACC's call center was flooded with allegations, on the basis of which the ACC nabbed several government officials on bribery charges.

Another commendable task carried out by the commission under Iqbal's leadership was bringing several dark spots of corruption at different government organisations to light -- though its recommendations went mostly unheeded, as the chairman himself recently admitted at the views-exchange meeting last month.

Asked, the outgoing chairman said there are no better alternatives to systemic reforms for reducing corruption and harassment prevalent in the delivery of public services.

Had the government followed the ACC's recommendations, the systemic anomalies, corruption and procrastination prevalent in the government's service-providing agencies could have been mitigated exponentially, Iqbal observed.

He also suggested that the cabinet division takes up the responsibility of implementing and enforcing the anti-graft watchdog's recommendations to ensure corruption- and hassle-free services for the public.

Big haul of meth seized

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Director General Ahsanul Jabbar, adding that the estimated price of the recovered substance would be around Tk 10 crore.

The rich people are the usual consumers of the substance, Jabbar told a press briefing at the DNC office in the capital's Segunbagicha yesterday.

Officers said this has been the largest consignment of Ice to be caught in Bangladesh.

On November 6, 2020, the Detective Branch of police recovered 600gram of Ice.

In June, 201, the DNC recovered around 500 grams of Ice.

DNC officials said the highly addictive drug is popular in Thailand. The seized consignment came from Thailand to Myanmar and then to

Bangladesh, said Jabbar.

He added that officers had information about the stash since six months ago, he said.

Jabbar didn't say where the stash was intended to be sold. "It will be disclosed after further investigation."

A case was filed with Teknaf Police Station against Abdullah and his brother Abdur Rahman, who is on the run now.

Officers still don't know who is behind smuggling the drugs into Bangladesh, Jabbar added.

The DNC laboratory confirmed that the substance was 100 percent methamphetamine.

Jabbar said Ice is 100 times more powerful than yaba pills and it can be smoked in pipes, snorted in, injected or swallowed.

Fake businessmen joined hands with

FROM PAGE 1

non-bank financial institution.

The liquidation process began after the board of People's Leasing informed the central bank in April 2019 about its inability to pay back its depositors' money despite maturity of the deposits.

The HC said the situation in People's Leasing resulted in a few hundred depositors and creditors filing petitions with the court.

"When the country is receiving recognition of acquiring financial solvency at the cost of hard work with unquestionable integrity of the head of the government from foreign countries and international bodies, it is really alarming for the nation to notice that a vested group is hatching plots to destabilise the economic

growth of the country."

The HC bench wanted to directly consult with the chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission, governor of Bangladesh Bank and chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) for solutions to the predicaments regarding PLFSL and other financial institutions.

It invited them to attend a virtual meeting with the court at 2:30pm on March 9.

"There shall not be presence of any lawyer or any other person at the time of the proposed conference," Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar said in the full text of order.

It said if one of the three officials are unable to attend the meeting, the others would not be required to

1.21 lakh more get vaccinated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 vaccine recipients continued rising for the second consecutive day as another 1,21,010 people were vaccinated all over the country yesterday.

Between Sunday and Tuesday, the number of people vaccinated daily was declining.

On Sunday, 1,25,752 people were vaccinated, while 1,16,300 were vaccinated on Monday and 1,14,680 on Tuesday, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) data.

The number started rising again from Tuesday, when 1,18,654 people were vaccinated.

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Conduct research to diversify exports

PM urges scientists, researchers

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged scientists and researchers to work for the welfare of mankind, as evolution of research and science is inevitable for the country's development.



"We want that you [scientists and researchers] will conduct your researches for people's welfare as fellowships are being given from the public fund," she said.

She also urged researchers to conduct studies to diversify Bangladesh's export basket alongside modernising and mechanising the agriculture sector, reports UNB.

"Research is essential if we want to increase our export items. I hope you all will pay special attention so that our export continues (to thrive) with diversified products," she said.

The premier made the remarks while distributing Bangabandhu Fellowship, National Science and Technology

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Crowds gather at Central Shaheed Minar to pay respects to HT Imam, who passed away early yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Abdul Hamid expressed deep shock and sorrow at the revered political advisor's passing. HT Imam was mourned by a host of well-wishers, including Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Law Minister Anisul Huq and other ministers and high-level officials of the government.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NORTHERN PVT MEDICAL COLLEGE RANGPUR

Suspended, yet charging Tk 10 lakh for admission

Students demonstrate for 26 days, demand transfer to other institutions in Rangpur

KONGKON KARMAKAR, Dinajpur

Despite the government's suspension on Northern Private Medical College's educational activities in Rangpur five years ago, the medical college authorities have continued student enrollment, taking a huge amount of money from them.

In a meeting on June 12, 2016, then Health Minister Md Nasim had instructed the suspension of three institutions including Northern Private Medical College in Rangpur. He said the medical college was not following proper admission protocol, and there was a lack of facilities, crisis of skilled manpower, and shortage of patients and required beds.

The college also did not operate on its own land.

Minister Nasim had also said that the students of the suspended institutions will be transferred to other local institutions with adequate facilities.

Five years have passed since, and the students of Northern Private Medical College are in big trouble with their academics as lessons have almost come to a halt due to lack of teachers and other facilities.

There are 250 students enrolled in different years at the medical college;

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Draft Hindu property succession law prepared

National-level coalition emphasises equal inheritance rights for men and women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A draft Hindu succession law has been prepared with emphasis on equal rights of both men and women inheritors to their ancestral properties.

The draft "Hindu Succession Act-2020" has been prepared by the national level coalition "Hindu Ain Pronoyoney Nagorik Udyog", said a press release from Manusher Jonno Foundation, which is the secretariat of the coalition.

Different aspects of the law was discussed during a webinar yesterday, the press release said.

The draft copy of the law will be submitted to the law minister, said Rina Roy, director of MJF.

In the draft law, alongside sons and daughters, the rights of inheritors belonging to the "third gender" has also been included.

According to classical Hindu law, all daughters of a man are not equally eligible to inherit.

Unmarried daughters and married daughters with sons can inherit, while childless widowed daughters or daughters with no sons or with no possibility of having sons are excluded. However, property achieved by Hindu women can be inherited by their male successors, said the MJF release.

Due to inequality in inheriting properties, many Hindu women have to face discrimination and torture, even though the country's constitution guarantees equal rights of all citizens, it said.

Aspects of the draft law was discussed at meetings attended by Hindu lawyers, other professionals and representatives of Hindu religious organisations in different divisional cities, according to the press release.

Yesterday, High Court bench judge Justice Krishna Devnath, lawmaker from reserved seat Aroma Dutta, and Hindu community leaders Kajal Devnath and Milon Kanthi Datta, among others, addressed the webinar chaired by MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam.

First metro train leaves Japan for Dhaka

Expected to reach in April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first set of metro train left Port of Kobe in Japan yesterday and expected to reach Dhaka via Mongla port next month.

"The train left the port at 18:00 Japan Standard Time [3pm Bangladesh time]," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) -- the implementing agency of the project -- told The Daily Star.

The first train was supposed to leave the port on February 20, but could not -- due to inclement weather, MAN Siddique told reporters on February 28.

"We hope the train would reach Dhaka within April 23. However, it would depend on weather," he said yesterday.

The train would reach a depot in Dhaka's Diabari area via Mongla port. It will have six coaches with the highest capacity of 2,308 in total, according to DMTCL sources.

Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 or MRT-6, country's first ever metro rail, is being built from the capital's Uttara third phase to Motijheel at the cost of Tk 22,000 crore.

DMTCL, in August 2017, signed a contract with Kawasaki-Mitsubishi Consortium for manufacturing 24 sets of trains for the metro rail. Five sets of train were manufactured within December last year. The second train is likely to reach the depot on June 16, and the third on August 13.

The original implementation period of the project was 2012-2024. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later directed that metro services from Uttara to Agargaon be made operational by 2019, and from Agargaon to Motijheel by 2020.

Failing to meet the deadline, authorities in May 2019 said the project would be launched on December 16, 2021, as the country celebrates golden jubilee of its independence.

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CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS AT BEGUM ROKEYA UNIV

VC claims innocence, edu ministry snubs it

STAR REPORT

Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah yesterday denied all findings of University Grants Commission's (UGC) recent report on his reported irregularities, saying it is biased and fabricated, and Education Minister Dipu Moni patronised and insisted on it.

Hours after, the education ministry denounced Prof Nazmul's statement, terming it fabricated, baseless and motivated.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, Prof Nazmul said, "I state without any hesitation that Education Minister Dipu Moni, for her personal animosity towards me, forced UGC to prepare the fabricated and biased report."

Hours after, the education ministry denounced Prof Nazmul's statement, terming it fabricated, baseless and motivated.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, Prof Nazmul said, "I state without any hesitation that Education Minister Dipu Moni, for her personal animosity towards me, forced UGC to prepare the fabricated and biased report."

Prof Nazmul also claimed that he was a victim of local politics of Chandpur district.

"UGC member Muhammad Alamgir, who led the investigation team, is from Chandpur and served the minister's agenda by making me a scapegoat of corruption done by the previous VC," he said.

UGC had launched an investigation on 45 allegations against Prof Nazmul.

Recently, a probe body found irregularities surrounding construction of two 10-storey buildings and a mausoleum at the university. It recommended taking measures against those involved, including the VC.

In the press statement, the education minister said they have received the investigation report, on which a high-level meeting will be held soon at the ministry.

UGC TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER
UGC will investigate more allegations against the vice chancellor.

Higher-ups of UGC in Dhaka have already formed a body, although identities of all its members and convener could not be known. However, Md Jamal Uddin, senior assistant secretary of UGC's administration department, is the body's member secretary.

It is likely to visit the campus on March 14.

According to campus sources, seven BRUR teachers filed complaints with the education ministry in 2019, bringing various allegations against the vice chancellor, including irregularities, anomalies and corruption.

The seven are Gazi Majharul Anwar of physics department; HM Tariqul Islam, associate professor of chemistry department; Khairul Kabir, associate professor of finance and banking department; Mosiur Rahman and Komollesh Chandra Roy, associate professors of mathematics department; Sabbir Ahmed, assistant professor of public administration department; and Belal Uddin, assistant professor of economics department.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Food security deteriorated in Bangladesh: FAO

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has placed Bangladesh in a list of countries that require external assistance for food to brave "severe localised food insecurity". The list includes 45 countries, including nine Asian countries.

Economic constraints due to effects of Covid-19, monsoon floods and high prices of staple foods have worsened food security and resulted in increased need of import or humanitarian aid, FAO says.

The information was revealed in the quarterly global report of crop prospects and food situation, published yesterday by FAO's Markets and Trade Division of under Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture.

The report is said to be based on information available as of February 2021.

Despite the government's expansion of social safety net programmes, the report quoted official estimates indicating 30 percent of Bangladesh's total population was poor as of June 2020, compared to 21 percent in June 2019.

While poverty levels increased due to income loss and a decline in remittance caused by the pandemic, the country witnessed recurrent floods throughout 2020, causing damages to the agricultural sector and households, and aggravating food insecurity conditions.

Crop damages and increased demands led to soaring prices of rice, and prices in January 2021 reached its highest. It is more than 35 percent higher on a yearly basis since October 2017, constraining access to food.

Yet, the country has been hosting about 8,60,000

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

2 die in Dhaka road accidents

UP member killed in Jashore road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons were killed in separate road accidents in Dhaka's Jatrabari and Khilkhet areas early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Prasenjit Kumar (25), a toll collector at Postogola Bridge, and Ashique Abdullah Helal (42), a staffer at a private security company.

Prasenjit was hanging from the window of a Dhaka-bound covered-van from Mawa to collect toll at Postogola Bridge around 3am.

An altercation took place between him and the driver and the driver sped up to Jatrabari with Prasenjit still hanging from the window, said Sub-inspector Avijit Podder of Jatrabari Police Station, quoting the deceased's colleagues.

At one stage, Prasenjit got hit by a roadside concrete block. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

WOMENS' EMPOWERMENT

ActionAid awards 4 grassroots leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four grassroots leaders have been recognised with "Nasreen Smriti Padak" yesterday for their outstanding contributions to women empowerment and society.

The award is a signature initiative of ActionAid Bangladesh in memory of Nasreen Parvin Huq, former country director of the organisation.

The awardees are Susmita Sultana Swarnali, a student of Chattogram, MS Hasna Begum, an agro-based entrepreneur from Gaibandha, and MS Rani Begum, a farmer from Gaibandha and Sohanur Rahman, a social worker of Jhalakathi.

They were awarded for their contributions towards women leadership in the local government system, entrepreneurship in agriculture, leadership in Covid-19 response and setting an example against sexual harassment and abuse, respectively.

ActionAid Bangladesh announced the awards at a webinar yesterday, titled "Celebrating Women Leadership", to celebrate achievements of women leaders from different generations all over Bangladesh, ahead of International Women's Day.

Grassroots and national-level women leaders also shared their untold stories of struggle, survival and bravery at the webinar.

Prof Firdous Azim, chairperson of Brac University's English and humanities department and member of Naripokkho, joined the webinar and said women's rights will be ensured only when social equality is established.

Academic Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to the caretaker government, said women's rights have always

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Renowned consumer brand Lux was relaunched by its parent company, Unilever Bangladesh Limited (UBL), at the capital's Radisson Blu Water Garden hotel yesterday through a gala event. UBL Chairman and Managing Director Kedar Lele unveiled their latest products with modern branding in the presence of Lux Superstars and brand ambassadors of different generations including Zakia Bari Mamo, Moushumi, Kusum Sikder, Shamim Ara Neepa, Afsana Mimi and Bidya Sinha Saha Mim.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Is the future of social media audio only?

ZARIF FAIAZ

Social media, as we know it, might be headed for a big change. In the world of texts, photos and videos, an old trick is making a silent, but stomping comeback – audio chat rooms.

The trend started off with a buzzing audio only social networking platform called Clubhouse where anyone can host their own shows while others join in to start a conversation or simply just listen in. The platform has been getting a lot of attention lately in Silicon Valley and has had millions of downloads despite being currently only on iOS and invite-only.

What makes Clubhouse a popular choice with users worldwide is the flexibility to just step in and out of a live call with random strangers, celebrities, icons and stars as well as the ability to garner exposure by creating and hosting their own live shows.

It's a world of exclusivity and flexibility that don't require scrolling, interacting and paying attention to visual cues and offers a heightened degree of exposure to an exclusive audience.

The idea of Clubhouse has gotten so popular that it has prompted social media giants like Facebook and Twitter to step in and launch their own competing products. Facebook

is said to be working on one while Twitter has already launched its own, called Spaces.

Twitter announced on Wednesday that it is opening up Spaces to users. Spaces will allow users to join in talk in 'spaces' and soon, start their own 'spaces' as well.

The move by Facebook and Twitter to copy and release their own version of a competitor's product is hardly new. If records have shown anything, it's that products that generate hype enough to be adopted by giants usually catch on and stay on to live. In the past, Facebook has adopted Snapchat's features to create its own 'stories' feature that has, over the years, become immensely popular.

All these hype about the audio only social media has not only generated buzz, but also attracted security and privacy concerns from regulators. Clubhouse has been accused of breaching privacy and of allowing unmonitored, unfiltered content to pass through in the form of live audio broadcast. The company has said that it is reviewing the allegations and concerns and will soon address them in a future update.

Despite concerns, the buzz is all too loud to ignore and as Facebook and Twitter boards the hype train, it will be interesting to see what the future holds for social media.

Illustration: Zarif Faiaz

Ex-Jamalpur DC will never be promoted

Gazette notification issued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamalpur's former deputy commissioner Ahmed Kabir, who was made an officer on special duty (OSD) days after a leaked video showed him in a compromising situation with a female colleague last year, will not get any promotion during his service.

A gazette was published in this regard yesterday.

Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration Sheikh Yusuf Harun told The Daily Star that Ahmed Kabir was punished following the incident in Jamalpur.

He will not be promoted in future and always will remain as deputy secretary, Harun said.

Ahmed Kabir, who was drawing salary in fifth grade under the 2015 national pay scale as deputy secretary, will now on get it in the last tier of the sixth grade.

He will remain in the same post and the salary will be almost half due to demotion, public administration sources said.

Ahmed Kabir was made OSD in August last year, days after a leaked video showed him in a compromising situation with a female colleague.

OSD is a post that rarely offers opportunity for work.

Two video clips from the incident went viral on Facebook. Media reports identified the man in it as the Jamalpur DC and the woman as a staffer at his office.

The room seen in the video clip was found to be inside the DC's office premises.

Speaking to journalists, Kabir at that time denied the allegations brought against him, calling it a "conspiracy".

Food security

FROM PAGE 3

Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, the report says.

The price increases are attributed to stagnant production, limited imports and upsurge in domestic demand due to Covid-19.

The country's 2020 aggregated output of cereals (rice paddy, coarse grains, wheat) was stagnant at 59.8 million tonnes, registering a mere 0.7 percent increase over the previous year, slightly above the country's five-year average production of 57.4 million tonnes.

This was due to bumper Boro and Aus harvests, offsetting Aman crop losses caused by floods in July and August 2020. Bangladesh's total cereal import in 2018-19 was 7,666,000 tonnes, including 927,000 tonnes in food aid. It rose to 7,866,000 tonnes in 2019-20.

In 2020-21, Bangladesh needs a total cereal import of 9,454,000 tonnes from the international market, the report says quoting official estimates.

Conduct

FROM PAGE 3

Fellowship and Special Research Grant at an event held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

The PM joined the programme virtually from her official residence Gono Bhaban.

She said no nation can move forward without science education and research so "you have to continue research and the next generation will do the same following your footsteps".

Hasina said the government has diversified education with the establishment of different types of universities, BSS adds.

"We've emphasised on skilled manpower and that is why we've established 18 new public universities from 2009 to develop human resources," she added.

The government has also set up high-tech cities, hi-tech parks and software technology parks to attain economic development through skilled manpower.

The prime minister said after assuming power in 1996, they saw that there was no allocation for research and science education. "So we took initiatives to establish science and technology universities and kept separate funds for research."

Laying emphasis on research for modernisation and mechanisation of the agriculture sector and expansion of the export basket, the prime minister called on researchers to conduct more study for product diversification.

She also stressed on the necessity of making the research and development (R&D) wing of every industrial factory effective and stronger.

She said the government has been setting up 100 special economic zones across the country, where research is essential.

2 die in

FROM PAGE 3

College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the SI said.

The driver fled the scene. Prasenjit's colleague Arman said, "The van driver killed him. It was not an accident, it was murder."

Meanwhile, SI Shamimul Islam of Khilkhet Police Station said another victim, Helal, was talking to his colleague, sitting on his motorcycle near 300 feet area around 5am when a truck hit him, leaving him dead on the spot.

Hailing from Barishal, Helal was in-charge of the security company on site.

In Jashore, an UP member was killed when his motorcycle hit a tree at Manirampur upazila yesterday morning, reports our Benapole correspondent.

The deceased, Shariful Islam (62), was president of Awami League in ward-5 of Shyampur Union Parishad.

His son Abdur Rahman (28) was seriously injured in the accident, said police.

First metro

FROM PAGE 3

Planning Minister MA Mannan recently said the first phase -- from Uttara to Agargaon -- of the metro rail is likely to be operational in December this year.

Asked whether they would start operation of the first phase in December, MAN Siddique on February 28 said they would be able to inform about the plan after the rail reaches Bangladesh, expectedly in April.

MAN Siddique, on February 4, told reporters that they might start a trial run of the first metro rail service in July, as the first train is expected to arrive in April. The trial run might continue for as long as six months, he added.

According to a monthly report, the first phase from Uttara to Agargaon, witnessed 81.42 percent progress as of February, while Agargaon to Motijheel saw 54.61 percent, and the third phase, which refers to installation of the tracks and procurement of the carriages and other equipment, witnessed 49 percent progress.

Suspended, yet

FROM PAGE 3

They said that when they sought transfer as per the minister's instructions, the college authorities told them to continue their studies at Northern Private Medical, and said they will see to the matter of suspension.

Authorities did not give transfer certificates, and continued to keep students previous educational certificates.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEVERE MISMANAGEMENT

Navid Rahman, who paid Tk 10 lakh last October to get admitted at Northern Private Medical College, said, "The authorities assured me that it's a government-approved college by showing us documents. I now realise that they fooled me and my parents."

"The students have been cheated. Every month, the college makes us pay tuition of Tk 8,000," he added. "Apparently the authorities have been enrolling students despite the suspension from health ministry. Now us students are paying the price. We came here with the dream of becoming doctors but those dreams are being crushed by the greediness of medical college authorities," said final-year student Ashraf Islam, who enrolled in 2014-15 academic session.

There are 20 students in the college who came from Nepal. They have paid Tk 20,00,000 as admission fees. Demonstrating students told The Daily Star that the college maintained no facilities relevant to their academic area.

The infrastructure falls short in every aspect, and there are no ICU and CCU facilities.

The medical college claims it has 500 beds, but in reality, it has less than half that number of beds. Patients do not come to the hospital as there are no specialist doctors or laboratory facilities.

Moreover, Northern Private Medical College has no affiliation with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) and Rajshahi University, he alleged. The college

has a few lecturers but there are no doctors working as professors, said the students.

Due to these issues, district health authorities visited the hospital a year ago and ordered suspension of all activities.

Internships of around 100 students also remain pending.

STUDENTS DEMAND TRANSFER

Demanding migration to other private colleges, the students have been demonstrating in front of the college for since February 10, but to no avail.

For the past 26 days, they have been demanding migration to another private medical college free of charge. They said they will continue until the demand is met.

Students said college authorities hired goons to disrupt their demonstration, and one student was injured on Monday.

The students demanded that the college authorities unconditionally return all educational certificates and other documents that they are keeping in their custody. They also demanded punishment for those who attacked a fellow student.

Last Thursday, students handed a memorandum to Rangpur Divisional Commissioner, seeking his help.

Rangpur Divisional Commissioner Abdul Wahab Bhuiyan said he would look into the matter.

Begum Rokeya Lavelly, chairman of Northern Private Medical College in Rangpur, said a conspiracy against the college is going, and students have been agitating with outsiders' provocation.

She also said the college has updated all relevant documents but they have been facing problem getting reapproved to enroll students and provide treatment from the ministry of health.

She refused to answer further questions from this correspondent, and told him to never call her again.

However, insider sources at the college alleged mismanagement and conflict among those running the medical college.

ActionAid

FROM PAGE 3

been neglected in textbooks. Even works of women writers are being removed from textbooks, she said.

She called upon all to bring social change to eradicate all uncertainties for women in educational institutions.

Gender and sexual rights activist and trans-feminist Hochemin Islam said gender diversity was nowhere to be found in the women's movement, as no special action has been taken even for transgender women.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said women are underrepresented in many spheres. In Decision-making positions, women are still few and far between in every sector, including, politics, business, corporate, media, health and education.

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, and Dr Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, among others, spoke at the event.

VC claims

FROM PAGE 3

All seven got separate letters from UGC on Wednesday, which requested their cooperation during the body's visit, providing all relevant documents centring the allegations.

Among the 45 allegations, the VC's absence at campus; corruption, anomalies and violating UGC's guidelines centring workforce recruitment; discrimination in promoting officials; unauthorised occupation of several administrative posts; and irregularities in purchases are some notable ones.

Meanwhile, a faction of BRUR teachers declared the VC

as "unwanted" at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, protesting Prof Nazmul's remarks against UGC.

Under the banner of "Bangabandhu Parishad", it threatened to not allow the VC to be on campus until he apologises for his comments.

Mosiuur Rahman, general secretary of Bangabandhu Parishad, BRUR, mentioning a series of reported corruptions and anomalies of Prof Nazmul, questioned how a VC remains absent at campus for so long.

The VC himself, violated many rules of the university, he said.

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কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়

সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গত ২৬/০২/২০২১ তারিখে অত্র পত্রিকায় কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়ের মনিটরিং ও রিপোর্টিং শাখা হতে ২০১৮-১৯ এবং ২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বছরের সমাপ্তকৃত মোট ৪৬টি কর্মসূচি এবং সমাপ্তকৃত মোট ৪টি প্রকল্পের নিরীক্ষা ও মূল্যায়নের জন্য প্রকাশিত দু'টি আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ প্রস্তাব আহবান (EOI) বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে EOI গ্রহণের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ১৩/০৩/২০২১ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকা নির্ধারিত আছে। অনিবার্য কারণবশত: EOI গ্রহণের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ১৩/০৩/২০২১ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকার পরিবর্তে ১৬/০৩/২০২১ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকা নির্ধারণ করা হলো।

(স্বাক্ষর)
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Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) (WFP/BDCO/EOI/21/01)

For the Supply of Food Commodities (Rice, Pulses, Fortified Vegetable Oil, High Energy Biscuits and Fortified Rice Kernel)

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites application from eligible suppliers/manufacturers/producers/millers for the enlistment in the WFP Bangladesh vendor roster for supply of food commodities such as Rice (White, Parboiled), Pulses (Red Lentils, Yellow Split Peas), Fortified Vegetable Oil (Refined Soybean Oil, Sunflower Oil, Palm Olein), High Energy Biscuits and Fortified Rice Kernel.

Interested suppliers are required to provide the following documents:

- The filled in EOI Response Form, which includes:
 - Table 1. WFP Requirements
 - Table 2. Supplier's Information;
 - Table 3. Supplier's Financial Status;
 - Table 4. Supplier Relevant Experience.

The EOI Response form shall be signed by the authorised signatory on behalf of the company (supplier/manufacturer) and sealed with valid company stamp.

- Supplier Vendor Registration Form (completed)
- Initial Paper Assessment Form (completed)

The detailed EOI information, necessary forms, and specifications are available in WFP electronic tendering system called IN-TEND and the submissions must be through IN-TEND only.

- The complete In-Tend User Guide is available in the following link: <https://rebrand.ly/yzdk11c>
- Before submission on IN-TEND, you must register by clicking on the following link: <https://ungm.in-tend.co.uk/wfp/>

The project name on IN-TEND is Expression of Interest for Enlistment as Food Supplier (reference: WFP/BDCO/EOI/21/01)

Should you have any questions please contact us at ban.foodprocurement@wfp.org

The deadline for submission of EOI Document is Thursday, March 25, 2021, 4:30 PM (Bangladesh Time)

Chuadanga Scam: Charges framed against four

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A special tribunal in Kushtia framed charges against four people in a case filed over using bamboo sticks in place of iron rods in construction of a government-funded building in Chuadanga in 2015.

The four accused in the case are Monir Hossain, proprietor of construction firm Joy International Limited, Ayub Hossain, in-charge of project equipment procurement at Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Abdus Sattar, managing director of construction firm Consortium, and Kamal Hossain.

Ashraful Islam, judge of the tribunal, ordered to frame charges against the four accused on Monday in connection with the filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Office in Kushtia, lawyer Al-Mujahid Mithu said on Wednesday.

According to the case statement, construction work of 3,750 square-foot plant control office and a building, under Phyto Sanitary Capacity Strengthening Project of DAE, in Chuadanga's Darshana municipality started on December 1 in 2015 at a cost of Tk 2.1 crore.

The building was scheduled to be handed over to the authorities concerned in June 2017.

After completion of about 70 percent work of the project, local people staged demonstration on April 6 in 2016, protesting use of bamboo sticks instead of iron rods in the construction work.

Later, DAE formed a probe committee headed by Marina Jebunnahar, senior monitoring and evaluation officer, who filed a criminal case with Damurhuda Police Station accusing Monir Hossain, Ayub Hossain, Kamal Hossain and Abdus Sattar in April 12 the same year.

According to the ACC office in Kushtia, ACC submitted the charge-sheet to the court on November 20, 2018.

SHYKH SERAJ

Starting today's article with statistics provided by the Bangladesh Bank. According to the statistics, in six months, from July to December 2020, banks have given loans a total of Tk 12,077 crore (USD 1420 million) to the farmers, collected Tk 14,091 crore (USD 1657 million) from the farmers at the same time. It means, banks have collected 22.53 percent more agricultural loans, compared to the total disbursement. Although, there was a special instruction from the Bangladesh Bank regarding the payment of instalments, farmer kept on paying off their loan instalments. It can be said that our farmers were at the forefront who worked hard towards a sustainable economy during the coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, Bangladesh Krishi Bank has distributed agricultural loans worth Tk 4,636 crore (USD 545 million) and despite the spread of COVID-19, the bank was able to recover Tk 4,000 crore (USD 474 million) that year. Real farmers are not defaulters and they have proved it even during the pandemic. Whenever they failed to repay a small loan, the law enforcers are always there to arrest them, but the big fish manage to escapes through the loopholes of the law.

It is difficult for a farmer to get a loan as we have prolonged negligence regarding the farmers and farming



Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.

Connectivity can change the region

FROM PAGE 1
and progressive South Asia," he said. The purpose of Jaishankar's visit is to prepare the groundwork for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh on March 26-27. It will be the Indian premier's first travel outside India since the coronavirus pandemic as well as his second as PM to Bangladesh. Modi virtually held a meeting with his Bangladesh counterpart on December 17 last year.

Jaishankar, who arrived in Dhaka around 10:00am yesterday, also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and inaugurated a branch of India's Cultural Centre in Gulshan before flying back to Delhi last night.

PROJECTS TO BE INAUGURATED MAR 26-27
Modi and Hasina are likely to inaugurate Shwadinata Sarak that connects India from Mujibnagar; Feni Bridge, Dhaka-New Jalpaiguri passenger train service, and Babu-Bangabandhu Digital Museum, a memorial for the Indians who were martyred in 1971, officials concerned told this correspondent.

Modi is also likely to visit the memorial of Bangabandhu in Tungipara, Gopalganj, and Orakanda, a place of worship of the Matua community, in the district.

Dhaka and Delhi are scheduled to sign some MoUs that were discussed in yesterday's nearly two-hour Momen-Jaishankar meeting. The MoUs are on connectivity, trade, water sharing, security, border killing, energy, and post-Covid cooperation.

The Indian minister stressed on connectivity -- rail, road, and waterways. There are a number of connectivity projects under Indian Line of Credit worth \$7.86 billion. Five rail lines out of total eight that were suspended since 1965 are already operational.

Under MoUs signed between the two countries, India can use Chattogram and Mongla ports to transport goods to its northeastern states. It will allow the landlocked Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura states to access open sea trade routes. India is constructing the roads and rail lines to Sabroom as part of its massive development work in the northeast, according to Indian media. Bangladesh sought to join the

India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral highway to improve connectivity with the Southeast Asian countries.

"India welcomed our proposal and said it will talk to the countries concerned," a foreign ministry source said.

Bangladesh also seeks materialisation of the Bangladesh-India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement. Indian officials say a protocol needs to be signed for this. A Bangladesh official said the government has already submitted a draft protocol to Nepal and was awaiting response.

"The significance of our ties with Bangladesh lies in its centrality for our 'Neighbourhood First' and its growing relevance for our 'Act East' Policy. We see Bangladesh as a key neighbour and a valued partner not only in South Asia but also in the broader Indo-Pacific region," Jaishankar said.

He said after connectivity, India also gives high priority to people-to-people connectivity, health, education, and culture.

BORDER KILLING
Bangladesh has been raising the issue of border killings before India, urging it to bring the number down to "zero". At a home-secretary-level meeting on February 27, Bangladesh asked India to use non-lethal weapons.

According to Ain O Salish Kendra, at least 49 Bangladeshi citizens were killed along the India-Bangladesh border by Indian Border Security Force last year. The figure was 15 in 2018 and 43 in 2019.

According to the Indian government, in 10 years until December 10 last year, a total of 132 Bangladeshis and 95 Indians were killed in BSF firing on the Indian side. During the period, 17 BSF personnel died and 1,110 BSF members were injured in confrontations with smugglers.

Jaishankar said many of the border killings happen deep inside India and the issue was discussed in yesterday's meeting. One needs to ask why the problem is there, he said.

"Every death is regrettable ... so, our shared objective should be no crime no death at the border. I am sure if we can get it right, no crime no death, we can together address this problem effectively."

WATER SHARING
Sharing of water of the Teesta has been

Agri-loan, key to farming success



A farmer at his onion field in Chapainawabganj.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

only 6 percent of the total loan comes from Krishi Bank. IFPRI's survey found that 36.4 percent of the total loans were borrowed from NGOs, where the farmer has to pay an interest of more than 20 percent. According to IFPRI, 19 percent of farmers take loans from relatives. 15 percent from the landowner, 11.4 percent come from moneylenders and 3.6 percent from various associations and cooperatives. Farmers get the largest share of the loan from the Krishi Bank, which is about 15 percent. Large, medium and small farmers together get 36 percent of the total loan while marginal farmers get about 5 percent. The total percentage of loan all the farmers get is 36 percent. Sharecroppers, the farmers who cultivate other people's land on lease, do not get this loan. As a result, they have to rely on loans from other sources, including NGOs.

Small NGOs and associations began to form in the districts and upazilas from the 80s to the early 90s of the last century. Along with other developmental activities, these institutions started a micro-credit programme. Institutions thrive mainly on interest earned from loans. But there is no such change in the farmer I have witnessed. The farmer falls into a debt trap and sometimes carry the burden of prolonged loans that they take from NGOs and local moneylenders. Farmer Rafiqul Islam from Natore, at one of the open-air discussion among

farmers and policymakers, popularly known as 'Krishi Budget Krishoker Budget' (Farmers' Voices in Budget, aired on Channel i), said he has never seen any political person become poor while doing politics, but the farmers are not well off doing their profession, which is farming. "We don't have capital, no one thinks about our market, no one talks about us," Rafiqul angrily said. Such anger doesn't only come from Rafiqul, but almost every farmer bears the same agony. Most importantly, the moneylenders expanded their business by capitalizing on the poor state of the farmers and they never want them to get out of this vicious circle of borrowing money from the locally-rich and powerful people.

Usually, the prices of fruits and crops are not that well during the season. So if the crop is preserved, the farmer would probably get a higher price during the off-season. After harvest, a farmer has to sell the crop for two reasons. Small and medium farmers do not have any arrangement for crop storage. After taking loan at a high interest from a moneylender, it becomes obligatory to repay the loan in time. Usually, the farmer has to sell the crop from the land to repay the loan. Otherwise, he will not get a loan from the moneylender for the next crop. According to a recent research report by Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), farmers have to sell 52

percent of their surplus paddy within a month at the beginning of the season. In one to two months 25 percent paddy has to be sold, in two to three months 18 percent and in four months or more 5 percent. However, if the farmer had three to four months to repay the loan and there was a system to save the crop, they could have benefited a lot. Once upon a time in this country, farmers used to get loans by storing grains in food storages. That excellent project called 'Foodgrain storage loan project' was stopped by the muscle power of the moneylenders.

Another problem regarding loans is arranging loans for landless farmers and sharecroppers. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 19 percent of the 35.5 million agricultural households in the country are sharecroppers. According to this calculation, the number of sharecropping families in the country is more than 65 lakh (6.5 million). There are about 23,23,270 (2.3 million) landless farming families in Bangladesh and these families are directly engaged in farming, by leasing other people's land. According to the existing agricultural loan policy of the government, the owner of land up to five acres will get a maximum loan of Tk 2.5 lakh (USD 2964) and they have to mortgage their land. Those who do not have land will also get this loan, but in that case, they have to submit the lease

agreement. But the reality is different. Last year, when the government announced stimulus package for farmers, considering the coronavirus outbreak, Bangladesh Bank promised to provide loans at an interest rate of Tk 4 percent. However, many sharecroppers called me and said they didn't get any loan. They had leased the land but they did not have any contract, since the landowner doesn't usually provide the agreement. This is because if the land is allotted through a written agreement, the landowner has to pay a certain amount of fee to the government.

I can see some ray of hope amid frustration regarding loans. I have always been an optimistic person. I believe that one day everything will be in favour of the farmers. In this crisis of corona, many of us have realized the importance of agriculture. Anyway, I was talking about hope. Last year, I heard that Rupali Bank was giving interest-free loans to farmers for tomato cultivation. I inquired about their programme with great interest. They gave a loan of Tk 50,000 to 500 tomato growers in Natore through a pilot project. I have repeatedly spoken of such a programme. In my 'Krishi Budget Krishoker Budget' programme, many farmers have shared their bitter experiences on getting loans or failing to receive a loan.

Some have also criticized the debt trap of the NGOs. One day I had a long talk with Rezvi Newaz, special correspondent of Channel i News. I was telling him that in any programme on agriculture, the farmer's end should be considered most. The farmer has to make sure that he gets the right price for his produce. Developing the farming sector and the farmers will be the key to the sustainable development of Bangladesh. I think the real farmer has the right to get a loan at 4 percent interest without any other conditions. Whereas, we see farmers have to take high-interest loans from various NGOs or intermediaries. Where industrialists get loans at 9 to 15 percent interest rate, small farmers have to pay more than 20 percent interest rate. Considering the number of defaulters, write-offs, corruption and irregularities in the banking sector, the government can provide interest-free loans of Tk 15,000 crore to Tk 20,000 crore (USD 1764 to 2353 million) without interest.

Our country is entering the era of agricultural industrialization. Industrialists are investing in farming and agricultural technology is evolving and spreading fast. Small and medium farmers have to survive, otherwise, many will leave the profession and the number of unemployed people will rise. Small and micro-enterprises should be given a chance to succeed. Agricultural loans should be made easy and available. Government banks specialized in agriculture should come forward with more earnestness.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Cyphers
Ministry of Defence
Ganabhaban Complex
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207



Invitation for Tender(IFT)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence		
2	Agency	Department of Cyphers		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director, Department of Cyphers		
4	Procuring Entity Code.	Not used at present		
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka		
6	Invitation for Tender Ref.& Date	23.10.0000.001.07.031.18-169 , Date: 04 -03-2021		
KEY INFORMATION				
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
8	Budget and source of funds	Government of Bangladesh		
9	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
10	Project/Programme Code(if applicable)	N/A		
11	Project/Programme Name(if applicable)	N/A		
12	Tender Package No.	01		
13	Tender Package Name	Personal Computer (Desktop)		
14	Tender Publication Date	05-03-2021	Date	
15	Tender Last Selling Date	15-03-2021	5:00 PM	
16	Tender Last Submission Date and Time	22-03-2021	12:00 PM	
17	Tender Opening Date and Time	22-03-2021	12:15 PM	
18	Name and Address of the Office(s) -Selling Tender Document (Principle) -Selling Tender Document (Others) -Receiving Tender Document -Opening Tender Document	Department of Cyphers, Ministry of Defence, Ganabhaban Complex, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
19	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Not Applicable		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
20	Eligibility of Tenderer	Detailed Tender Description are given in TDS.		
21	Brief Description of Goods or Works			
22	Brief Description of Related Services			
23	Price of Tender Document (TK)	1000/(One thousand) Taka		
	Package No.	Location	Tender Security Amount (TK)	Completion Time in Weeks/Months/days
24	01	Dhaka	3% of the price offered by the bidder.	30 days
PURCHASER DETAILS				
25	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mohammad Hossain Ali		
26	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Deputy Director (Admin & Technical)		
27	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Department of Cyphers, Ministry of Defence, Ganabhaban Complex, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207		
28	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: 58152635		
29	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders			

Mohammad Hossain Ali
04.03.2021

(Mohammad Hossain Ali)
Deputy Director (Admin & Technical)

Covid cases rising again in Europe

Says WHO as 4 nations agree to fast-track vaccines for new variants

AFP, Copenhagen

The number of new coronavirus cases has risen in Europe after six weeks of decline, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

"Last week, new cases of Covid-19 in Europe rose nine percent to just above one million. This brought a promising six-week decline in new cases to an end, with more than half of our region seeing increasing numbers of new infections," said WHO Europe's regional director Hans Kluge.

"We are seeing a resurgence in central and Eastern Europe. New cases are also on the rise in several western European countries where rates were already high," he said. "We need to get back to the basics. We need to enlarge" the vaccine portfolio, he said.

WHO's Europe region comprises 53 nations and vaccination drives have begun in 45.

Meanwhile, Russian Sputnik V shots could soon be doled out across Europe after the EU said it was assessing the vaccine, as Britain and four other nations pushed ahead under a pact to fast-track jabs adapted to fight new strains.

The agreement will avert the need for lengthy clinical studies if authorised vaccines are adapted in future, as long as the manufacturers offer "robust evidence" of their potency and safety, according to the agreement by the ACCESS Consortium.

The consortium comprises Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and counterparts from Australia, Canada, Singapore and Switzerland.

The virus has killed at least 2,561,937 people since it emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources yesterday.



People yesterday attend the funeral of Angel a 19-year-old protester also known as Kyal Sin who was shot in the head on Wednesday. Hundreds of mourners gathered in Myanmar on Thursday for the funeral of a 19-year-old protester shot and killed at a demonstration against military rule. She was killed in the city of Mandalay while wearing a shirt bearing the message "Everything will be OK". Angel was one of 38 people killed on that day, according to a United Nations tally.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

US House passes police reform act

A sweeping police reform package that bans choke holds and combats racial profiling cleared the US House of Representatives Wednesday, five days before the trial of a white officer charged with murdering African-American George Floyd. The bill is named after Floyd, who died last May 25 at age 46 when then-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee on the victim's neck for more than eight minutes. The shocking killing was caught on video and sparked mass protests across the nation. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act cleared the House last year but was blocked in the Republican-led Senate, likely scenario for this time too when it heads to senate.

Nearly a fifth of all food wasted in 2019: UN



Seventeen percent of the food available to consumers worldwide in 2019 -- almost one billion tonnes -- was thrown away by households, retailers, institutions and the hospitality industry, far more than previously suspected, the UN said yesterday. If all the wasted food were packed into 40-ton container trucks parked end-to-end, they would circle the Earth seven times, he said. Nearly 700 million people, meanwhile, go to bed hungry every night, according to UN estimates. Food waste issues will be addressed at the first-ever UN World Food Systems Summit, set to take place in September or October.

Rare 15th century Chinese bowl found at US yard sale



How about this for bargain-hunting? A small bowl bought for \$35 in a yard sale in the US turned out to be a rare 15th century Chinese artifact possibly worth \$500,000. The porcelain bowl -- with delicate floral motifs -- was acquired by a buyer, whose identity is being kept secret, in the northeastern state of Connecticut. Experts said it was painted for the court of Emperor Yongle, the third emperor of the Ming dynasty who ruled from 1402 to 1424. There are only six other such bowls known in the world.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

US ready to confront China

Says Blinken, vows to engage with Beijing from position of strength

AFP, Washington

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that the United States was ready to confront China wherever necessary, calling Washington's ties with the Asian power the "biggest geopolitical test" of the century.

In his first major speech, Blinken promised that President Joe Biden's administration will prioritize diplomacy over military action and build cooperation with the world on global challenges such as climate change and Covid-19.

"We will manage the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century: our relationship with China," Blinken said at the State Department Wednesday.

He vowed to champion the rights of Hong Kong and the ethnic Uighurs, saying that if not, "China will act with even greater impunity."

"China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system -- all the rules, values and relationships that make the world work the way we want it to," he said.

"Our relationship with China will



be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be and adversarial when it must be. And we will engage China from a position of strength."

Blinken's remarks come amid a hardening of views in Washington since the turbulent presidency of Donald Trump, who alongside his top diplomat Mike Pompeo made a hard line on China a signature campaign issue and castigated Beijing over the pandemic and trading practices.

Blinken has said he does not fundamentally disagree with Trump on China but believes the United States can be more effective -- through working with allies and, in narrow cases, finding common ground. The Interim National Security

Guidance pointed to climate change, global health, arms control and nonproliferation as areas to seek China's cooperation.

The strategy said that China's leaders too often "behave aggressively and coercively" and vowed that the United States would "position ourselves, diplomatically and militarily, to defend our allies."

The Biden administration also pledged to keep up US support for Taiwan, a self-governing democracy that is claimed by Beijing.

Blinken also voiced alarm over an "erosion of democracy" worldwide. But he said Biden had no interest in bringing democracy to the world "through costly military interventions or by attempting to overthrow authoritarian regimes by force."

"We have tried these tactics in the past. However well intentioned, they haven't worked," Blinken said.

He was likely alluding to the 2003 Iraq invasion as well as the 2011 intervention -- which he supported as part of Barack Obama's administration -- in support of an uprising that overthrew Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, ushering in a decade of chaos.

Disagreeing with govt not sedition

Observes Indian Supreme Court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Expressing a view which is different from a decision taken by the federal government cannot be said to be seditious, India's Supreme Court has observed.

"The expression of a view which is dissent from a decision taken by the central government itself cannot be said to be seditious. There is nothing in the statement which we find so offensive as to give a cause of action for a Court to initiate proceedings," a top court bench said on Wednesday.

The remarks by the bench came while dismissing a PIL seeking action against National Conference President Farooq Abdullah over his comments on abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution which had given special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hemant Gupta rejected the PIL and also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on the petitioners for making such claims.

The top court was hearing a plea which referred to Abdullah's statement on restoring Article 370 and contended it clearly amounts to a seditious act and therefore he is liable to be punished under section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code.

The petition filed by Rajat Sharma and Neh Srivastava, both belonging to an organisation Vishwa Guru India Vision of Sardar Patel, alleged that the former J&K CM is trying to "hand over" Kashmir to China and thus, he should be prosecuted for sedition.

TARGETED KILLING IN AFGHANISTAN

Female doctor, 7 Hazaras killed

AFP, Jalalabad

A female doctor was killed in a bomb blast claimed by the local affiliate of the Islamic State (IS), in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad in yet another targeted hit, officials said yesterday, just days after three women media workers were gunned down in the area.

Journalists, religious scholars, activists and judges have all been victims of a recent wave of political assassinations across Afghanistan, forcing many into hiding -- with some fleeing the country.

In the latest incident, the doctor was killed after a magnetic bomb was attached to the vehicle she was travelling in, according to a spokesman from the provincial governor's office. A child was also injured by the explosion.

Meanwhile, in the country's restive east, at least seven members of Afghanistan's persecuted Hazara ethnic group were brutally murdered, officials said Thursday.

The group of migrant Hazara labourers had their hands bound behind their backs and were shot to death late Wednesday, according to Nangarhar provincial council member Ajmal Omar.

Are they showing pornography?

India's SC says favours controls on video streaming services

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's top court yesterday said it favoured a screening mechanism for online video streaming services, dominated in the country by Amazon and Netflix and which currently are aired freely.

The US streaming platforms have faced complaints from lawmakers belonging to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party and others that some of the shows promote obscenity or offend religious beliefs.

"We are of the view there should be some screening of these types (of content). What they are showing? They are showing pornography also," Supreme Court Justice Ashok Bhushan said.

Traditional film viewing in India, home to the thriving Bollywood industry, has changed as fewer people go to cinema halls and web series have become common, Bhushan said.

The remarks came as the Supreme Court heard a plea from Amazon's head of India content for Prime Video, Aparna Purohit, for protection against arrest in a case involving a controversial political drama "Tandav", a Hindi word for "fury".

Tandav stars top Bollywood actors but has been battling police and court cases which allege the show depicted Hindu gods in a derogatory manner and offended religious beliefs.

The court will continue to hear the case today. Bhushan has asked the government and the



platform to submit details of any regulations that currently govern online video platforms.

Content on these platforms is not subject to vetting. But the government has ordered that the platforms classify content into five categories based on the age groups it would be appropriate for.

Purohit's counsel told the Supreme Court her case was one concerning freedom of expression. Last week, the executive was questioned for nearly four hours by police in Uttar Pradesh in a separate case filed against the show.

Purohit approached the apex court after a state court rejected her request for anticipatory bail, saying the Tandav series hurt religious sentiment and she must cooperate with police.

Amazon this week issued a rare public apology for "Tandav", saying some scenes that were found objectionable had been edited or removed.

Buckingham Palace 'perpetuating falsehoods'

Says Meghan Markle as split with UK royals widens

AFP, Los Angeles

Meghan Markle says Buckingham Palace is "perpetuating falsehoods" about her and her husband Prince Harry, according to part of an interview she has done with Oprah Winfrey.

The explosive claim is the latest salvo in an increasingly heated public relations battle between the British royal family and the US-based couple.

The clip, released Wednesday, came hours after Buckingham Palace said it was investigating claims Markle had bullied household staff in the months after her fairytale wedding to the prince.

"I don't know how they could expect that after all of this time we would still just be silent if there's an active role that The Firm is playing in perpetuating falsehoods about us," Markle told Winfrey.

"The Firm" is a sometimes-derivative name for the British royal family.

Harry and Meghan announced last year they were stepping back from royal duties, in what became an increasingly



acrimonious split from the family.

Their permanent removal from duties was confirmed earlier this year, with the royal household and the couple jockeying to control the narrative of the separation -- and public sympathies.

The interview with Winfrey is due to air in the US on Sunday, and in Britain on Monday.

Harry, who is Queen Elizabeth II's grandson, married Markle in a glittering wedding at Windsor Castle in May 2018.

Their marriage was seen as breathing new life into the centuries-old British monarchy. But relations soon soured and they moved to the US, relinquishing their honorary titles and patronages.

71kg of waste found in stray cow's stomach

INDIA, Faridabad

Indian vets have extracted 71 kilograms (156.5 pounds) of plastic, nails and other garbage from a pregnant cow, but both the animal and her baby died.

The case has highlighted the country's twin problems of pollution and stray cattle. An estimated five million cows roam India's cities, with many gorging on the vast amounts of plastic litter on the streets.

This cow was rescued after a road accident in late February by the People For Animals Trust Faridabad.

A vet soon noticed the pregnant bovine was struggling. In a four-hour operation on February 21, vets found nails, plastic, marbles and other garbage in its stomach, said trust president Ravi Dubay.

They also attempted a premature delivery. "The baby did not have enough space to grow in her mother's belly so she died," Dubay told AFP.

Three days later, the cow also died. "In my 13 years of experience, this is the most garbage we have taken from a cow... we had to use muscle power to get it all out," Dubay said.

Previous surgeries done by the organisation based in the northern Indian state of Haryana have found up to 50 kilograms of waste in cows' stomachs.

There is no official, nationwide data on how many cows die every year from ingesting plastic.

But in 2017, a Times of India report cited veterinary officials and animal welfare groups estimating that around 1,000 cows die annually just in the northern city of Lucknow from eating plastic.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari
Telephone No. 0551-61403
E-mail: eenil@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.7364.456.07.012.20-411 Date: 04-03-2021

e-Tender Notice

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

e-Tender is invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Nilphamari for the procurement of:

Tender ID & Tender No.	Name of works	Tender docume price (in BDT)	Tender security (in BDT)	Last selling & opening (date and time)
e-TID No. 555110, Tender No. e-GP-27/EE/RHD/Nil/2020-2021	Supplying Skilled Unskilled Labour & Mason for Routine Maintenance work of different roads under Road Division Nilphamari during the year 2020-2021	1000	50000	Date: 21-03-2021 Time: Up to 17.00 & Date: 22-03-2021 Time: After 12.00

Md. Monzurul Karim
ID No. 602000
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Nilphamari

GD-443

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
হিউম্যান রিসোর্সেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১
(রিক্রুটমেন্ট এন্ড আউটসোর্সিং উইং)
প্রধান কার্যালয়
মতিবিল, ঢাকা-১০০০
ওয়েবসাইট: erecruitment.bb.org.bd

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং: ১৬/২০২১ তারিখ: ১৭ ফাল্গুন, ১৪২৭
০২ মার্চ, ২০২১

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক 'অফিসার (এক্স ক্যাডার- পাবলিকেশন)' পদে নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের তালিকা

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক 'অফিসার (এক্স ক্যাডার- পাবলিকেশন)' পদে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে গত ২৭/১১/২০১৯ তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ৫৫/২০১৯ এর আলোকে গৃহীত লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে নিম্নোক্ত রোল নম্বরধারী ০৫ (পাঁচ) জন প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের জন্য নির্বাচিত করা হয়েছেঃ

নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের রোল নম্বর (বাম থেকে ডানে মেধাক্রমানুসারে):
১০১৫৬১, ১০১১৩৫, ১০০১৭৭, ১০৪৩২৬, ১০৪৯৯০

নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের চরিত্র ও প্রাক-পরিচয় সম্পর্কিত পুলিশ বিভাগের সন্তোষজনক তদন্ত প্রতিবেদন প্রাপ্তি ও প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে অন্যান্য দলিলাদি যাচাই সাপেক্ষে নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত পরবর্তী কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।

ব্যাকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

ডিসিপি: ৪৮/২০২১-৮৭৩ তারিখ: ০৪/৩/২০২১ জিডি-৪৪৪

কাজী আকতারুল ইসলাম
মহাব্যবস্থাপক

▶▶ SPOTLIGHT

Graduating in the shadow of a PANDEMIC

MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

Graduating and navigating the start of your career can be daunting even under normal circumstances. The Covid-19 pandemic added more challenging aspects to this experience. The mental toll of taking on a job for the first time amidst a pandemic has weighed down on many young individuals.

Muyeed Murshed, an EEE graduate of BRAC University, co-founded the start-up Catch Bangladesh in 2017. Due to the pandemic, he had to face uncertainties for the future of his business. "Initially I was scared, but after doing some research, I realised that the job market in Bangladesh was not heavily affected due to the pandemic," he said. "Some renowned companies were carrying on their recruitment process at the same rate as before. Moreover, due to the unique circumstances, some organisations implemented friendlier hiring practices." Muyeed elaborated that certain multinational companies have introduced a virtual internship programme, which allowed young professionals from different parts of the country to be eligible, without leaving their homes.

On the other hand, Atish Kabir*, a CSE graduate from IUB, noticed a lack of opportunities on online job portals, especially for full-time employment. "I already completed an unpaid internship. I expected to attain a full-time job after that, but it has been slim pickings for me," he said. "I am working as an intern again at another company, but I hope I will be promoted soon." For many like Atish, navigating the purely virtual nature of applying for jobs, attending exams and appearing for Zoom interviews has been difficult.

Leeyana Rahman, an EEE graduate from BRAC University, had been trying for a while to get a job. "It has been tiring to keep tabs on every relevant job opening and following up with them. When I got rejected from my dream job in the final interview, I decided I needed a break," she said.

Fariha Mahzabin's thesis was delayed, and she also felt the impact of the lack of faculty

support and supervision on her work. An English major from Metropolitan University of Sylhet, she was set to graduate in April 2020. Most universities took a couple of months to begin online classes at that time. Eventually, Fariha finished her undergraduate thesis in January 2021, but not without derailing her postgraduate plans. She wanted to go abroad for further studies, but is currently finding it difficult to make any decisions. Maliha Akhter, another English major from the university, found the experience of her last semester unsatisfactory, and missed the face-to-face discussions.

Atanu Chowdhury, currently a master's student at Rajshahi University, also graduated during the pandemic from the same institution. "It took nearly an additional year for me to

complete my undergraduate education. During that time, I lost all inspiration for studying abroad, as I had previously hoped to do," he said. Atanu's family faced financial instability due to the pandemic. Consequently, he picked up freelance jobs, whilst continuing his studies.

Most universities in the country do not hold convocation ceremonies annually. So, this aspect of graduating has not been visibly impacted. Yet, finishing up their undergraduate education from their homes was a strange and sad experience for these students.

The author gets by in life with books, movies and making fluid art, while maintaining a job in software engineering. Write to her at madihak1923@gmail.com.



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

▶▶ YOUNG ACHIEVER

Courting success

Mashfia Afrin started playing tennis from the age of four. Her father being the administrative officer of Bangladesh Tennis Federation, Mashfia got to visit the court regularly. She participated in more than 40 national tournaments and more than 12 international tournaments.

LABIBA KABIR

A student from Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, she is set to sit for her SSC exams this year. "I never had trouble balancing my studies and tennis," explains Mashfia. "Sometimes, I have to participate in tournaments all day and study at night for an exam tomorrow, but that does not bother me. Time management is one of my best traits, I would say." Her family and friends have always been supportive of her playing tennis.

Her first participation in competitive tennis came with the Engineer Jabbar Memorial Tennis Tournament, hosted by Bangladesh Tennis Federation. She might have missed her first win, but her training started off.

Mashfia feels that female players in Bangladesh have to face different setbacks, in terms of a lack of sponsors and security.

In inter school tennis championships from 2011 to 2015, Mashfia bagged five championship awards in singles and duets. She won the best duet at the Asian Under 14 Series 2018, alongside Sajida Raji. She played in the semifinals in the singles game that time.

She took part in the ITF Asian Under-14 Development Championships 2019, which was approved by the International Tennis Federation (ITF). She took a place in the quarter finals at the championship. Although she did not get any award there, the coach was satisfied with

everyone's performance.

After returning to Bangladesh, everyone was surprised to see the international results. Mashfia's name rose to 30th in the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) Junior Tennis Tour Rankings for girls under 14 on the week of January 28, 2019. According to the Bangladesh Tennis Federation, it was the highest rank for any Bangladeshi girl in the last few years. "It was my dream to be among the top 50 in the ATF Rankings. I was really happy. Now, I am trying to be in the ITF's World Tennis Tour Junior Rankings for girls under 18, as in the last few years, no Bangladeshi girl has had a ranking in it," concludes Mashfia.

The author is a freelance journalist. Write to her at labibakabir99@gmail.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF MASHFIA AFRIN

▶▶ YOUTH IN ACTION

A modern-day haven for women

ZAREEN NAWAR

Anondolokey, a hostel for women and girls in Bashundhara, was founded by Moriom Mannan around six years ago. Ahead of International Women's Day (March 8), she talks about her journey with *Star Youth*, *The Daily Star*.

What began as Moriom's idea of being able to live fearlessly and comfortably around women, became a driving force for her in 2018.

She took part in Bangladesh's Quota Reform Protests to peacefully get the points across, but never imagined that she would be tormented in the streets, and detained by the police for more than 24 hours.

Moriom was living in Dhaka, away from her family in Khulna, before the incident. When she went back to Khulna, she was not welcome. Her family was more concerned about what people were saying about her, as opposed to being concerned about her well-being.

The people at Anondolokey also turned their backs on her. After returning to Dhaka, she found refuge in a hostel at Indira Road. She met a woman named Fatema Khatun by the end of 2018, and they formed a close bond.

Fatema inspired Moriom to continue her work towards Anondolokey instead of aban-



Moriom Mannan

doning it, and eventually, became a shareholder of the hostel. Moriom shared that Fatema is one of the most important people in her life. Her support was essential for Moriom to tread on with her dream to build a safe space for women and girls.

Moriom rents out rooms to women who find it hard to arrange accommodation, as independent individuals. She also provides space to destitute women, free of cost.

Throughout the pandemic, Moriom wit-

nessed an influx of women renting out space to take breaks from their otherwise exhausting lives. She accommodated a pregnant woman and several injured women for weeks, because they were craving space and time for themselves. A young girl's aunt left her with Moriom since the girl's mother passed away and her father abandoned them prior to that. Moriom took the girl's responsibility without any hesitation.

A European woman took refuge under Moriom's care, after she was violated at home. Last year during Ramadan, Moriom cooked meals for rickshaw pullers around the hostel, alongside cooking for the 17 women under her care. "At the cost of wanting to help as many women as I can, I was hurt several times by unfaithful people, but the women at Anondolokey add value to my life," she said. Anondolokey operates under certain strict rules. For example, the women are required to inform Moriom about their whereabouts, in case they plan to come home late.

"In the future, I hope to pay off my debts and get more renters for the empty rooms that I procured," Moriom added.

As a progressive and understanding woman, she is making our community a better place through her efforts.

The author is a freelance journalist. Write to her at nawarzareen@gmail.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF AWSAF KARIM

▶▶ NURTURING DREAMS

Dedicated to improving mental healthcare

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Established in 2017, The Johnson & Johnson One Young World (JJOYW) Scholarship Program recognises young leaders who are striving to leave behind an extraordinary impact in healthcare. Awsaf Karim, Founder of Orodho Health, received this prestigious scholarship. The programme is set to begin on March 15 with a six-month accelerated training, organised by Johnson & Johnson and conducted by trainers from renowned universities. This will be followed by individual coaching from senior Johnson & Johnson leaders.

The highlight of the programme is the One Young World Summit 2021, where the scholars will get to interact with renowned personalities, including Kofi Anan, Prof Dr Mohammad Yunus, J K Rowling, Emma Watson, and Meghan Markle. It will officially end in September, with the scholars being promoted to One Young World Delegates.

Healthcare professionals across the world are eligible to apply for the programme. The procedure begins with a nomination from One Young World, for which applicants are asked a series of questions. "If your nomination form stands out, it will be accepted and you will be called for an online interview conducted by One Young World from London. During the interview, you will be asked more questions about the work you do, and share your thoughts about the future of global healthcare, before the selection," Awsaf shared.

Being a student of Army Medical College, Chattogram, he closely saw how memorising was an integral part of our education system.

"Almost none of my peers have a knack for spending time in research and innovation. This problem was even more evident during the ongoing pandemic, when our medical infrastructure is changing and innovation has become mandatory," he said.

Orodho Health was formed after Awsaf conquered his battles with mental health issues. "I suffered from depression and anxiety. While seeking help from professional psychologists, I realised that counselling services were really expensive," he shared.

The platform provides peer support through their Facebook page. After registering as a client, the person seeking help is assigned to a dedicated member. "If any client requires professional help, we refer them to one of our partner psychologists, and arrange therapy sessions for them at low prices" Awsaf added.

Orodho Health's Facebook group, Project Uddipok, promotes mental wellbeing of the youth. They encourage creative activities such as art and music to keep the members engaged and active during these difficult times.

Their e-book, *Heal-ink*, features true stories from people who triumphed over their mental health issues. "We are planning to make the book an annual publication, with a new volume releasing annually," Awsaf added. Their future plans also include collaborating with a team of psychologists, who will provide professional services free of cost, around Bangladesh.

The author is a freelance journalist who likes reading, planning and scribbling. Write to her at mislammonamee@gmail.com.



Moriom rents out rooms to women who find it hard to arrange accommodation, as independent individuals. She also provides rooms to destitute women, free of cost.

PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

A case that holds the answers to big questions

Will justice be allowed to run its course?

ACCORDING to a report published by this newspaper on Thursday, a CID probe has found that former Faridpur Awami League leader Sajjad Hossain (alias Barkat) and his brother Imtiaz Hasan (alias Rubel) amassed Tk 2,535.11 crore beyond their known sources of income. They did so under the protection, and with support, of at least eight other accused in a money laundering case, including the brother of a former minister, according to the probe. Only Tk 9.75 crore of the amount was found in their bank accounts, while the rest was siphoned off abroad.

This is perhaps the first time that a charge sheet has been submitted against someone connected to such a high-profile political family. And we are encouraged to see law enforcers going after these crooked individuals for their widespread corruption, despite their political associations. Once this family was untouchable—as the litany of corruption and wealth gathered all happened due to political protection.

These are not your run-of-the-mill criminals. Their rags-to-riches stories unfolded under political protection. And we are finally beginning to see the powerful patrons they had getting exposed. That being said, we also have to express our apprehension about whether this investigation will go to the very end—or whether there will be some political compromise or wheeling and dealing going forward, letting these people escape justice. The reason for the apprehension is simple: we have seen so many instances before where law enforcers go forward only to take a step back later. Only recently, we have seen the son of a high-profile politician being charged with all sorts of crimes, but then suddenly the cases were mysteriously dropped.

So if the government wants to claim that nobody is above the law, this should be a test case of a fair dispensation of justice. With that in mind, we hope the law enforcers are allowed to go through with their investigations without any outside interference or political pressure. Let justice take its own course.

26,695 rape cases filed in last 5 years!

But why is the conviction rate still three percent?

ACCORDING to a report by the office of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) submitted to the High Court recently, a total of 26,695 rape cases have been filed across the country in the past five years. As the incidents of rape are on the rise, the number of cases being filed in these incidents have also increased. However, when it comes to the conviction rate in rape cases, the situation is as grim as it was before. Reportedly, the conviction rate in rape cases is still only three percent, with around 97 percent of the accused getting acquittal from the court.

While the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals (present in all 64 districts of the country) must finish the trial of the rape cases within 180 days of framing charges, the tribunals are not being able to complete the trials within the stipulated time. Delays in filing cases and conducting investigations are like a norm here while submitting the charge sheets takes years in some cases. There is also the culture of rapists intimidating the victims and their families so that they don't file cases or withdraw the cases that have already been filed. In such cases, the rape survivors rarely get protection from the law enforcers. Arbitration or out-of-court settlements are still a reality. And the legal system is still not friendly to the rape survivors in a society that often blames the victims, instead of the rapists, for the rape.

Moreover, while ensuring compensation for rape survivors and their families is as important as the prosecution of rape cases, the issue has been largely ignored. We know that a law has been drafted to address compensation for victims of violent crimes, including rape, but it could not be finalised in the last 14 years!

However, the High Court recently issued a rule directing the government to ensure compensation for rape victims, which is a positive development. It is also good to know that a monitoring cell has been formed in line with the HC directive to monitor whether the trials of the cases filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, are completed in 180 days. We hope the cell will discharge its duty efficiently. However, it worries us to learn that a HC bench has recently issued a condition that the accused in a rape case will be granted bail if they marry their victims in jail, given that there was a previous relationship between them.

There are so many critical factors including the legal loopholes that contribute to the delay in ensuring justice to the rape survivors. All these factors must be addressed efficiently by our legal system and the society at large to ensure that the conviction rate in rape cases increases. Only with an increased conviction rate may we see a decrease in rape cases across the country.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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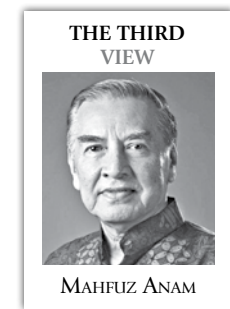
Rice self-sufficiency is vital

With natural disasters of various types occurring around the world, we need to attain rice self-sufficiency and ensure a reliable supply chain so that there is enough food for people at all times. As we boost our agricultural production, we also need to have a good buffer stock which needs to be amassed. As a result, the normal rice production will naturally keep the market price stable and the government will be able to focus more on other national issues.

Shafkat Rahman, BIAM Model School and College, Dhaka

Why is personal freedom such a plaything of the law enforcers?

Arresting people on flimsy grounds is not rule of law, but its aberration



THE THIRD VIEW

MAHFUZ ANAM

Isn't personal freedom one of the most cherished and universally celebrated principles of our civilisation? Isn't guaranteeing this freedom the most sacred task of a modern state?

Hasn't individual freedom been recognised as one of the fundamental rights of every person, and as such enshrined in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Hasn't that right been pledged to each and every citizen in every constitution of every modern state? Doesn't this—the guarantee of freedom to all—form the very basis of our own constitution? If all the above questions reflect irrefutable truths, then why are we so indifferent, so disrespectful, when it comes to assuring this fundamental right to our citizens?

One of the realities of the present-day administrative and justice systems that worries us deeply is the utter disdain with which personal freedom is treated by people who are in a position to decide whether a citizen will be free or in prison—the government, its law enforcement agencies and, we're afraid, even the justice system. We arrest people so easily, deny bail so swiftly, grant remand at the asking, and care nothing about what it means to the individuals who are at the receiving end of this seriously questionable process.

The provision for bail in our laws is there to ensure the freedom of the accused (not to be confused with a convicted person) while the investigation and trial are on. The bail is a right because the person has still not been found guilty. He has only been accused and the judicial process may find him innocent. So, denying an accused bail is actually punishing him before the judicial pronouncement has been made. Doesn't it amount to miscarriage of justice?

We make the above points not to point out the deficiencies of our justice system—which must also be addressed if justice is to have a real meaning for our people, especially the poor—but to underscore the more fundamental and vital flaw of our habit of undervaluing the notion of individual freedom.

Take the three recent cases for example. Photojournalist Kajol got bail on his 14th attempt while being in jail for seven months and "missing" for two. Cartoonist Kishore got bail on the 7th attempt after being in jail for 10 months. Poor Mushtaq tried for bail seven times, unsuccessfully, and later he died in prison, after 10 months since his arrest.

Whatever may be the official findings about the cause of Mushtaq's death, it was the system that condemned him to it. Imagine the judicial process that would be needed to mete out death penalty to the most vicious of criminals. Consider the appeal process that would be available to him to further seek justice. Writer Mushtaq was "condemned" and his punishment implemented without the minimum due process of law being available to him. In a sense, we are all guilty for his death. We should avoid making light of his death by saying no unnatural cause was found in relation to his death. His being in jail was unnatural—his failure to procure bail was unnatural. The whole circumstances of his incarceration depressed him. The unjustness of it all further affected him

psychologically and mentally. On top of it all, physical and mental torture added to a burden that he was unable to cope with.

We must immediately move away from the casual and cavalier attitude we take in granting and not granting bail. Personal freedom should only be denied when a person is an "immediate" danger to society and when his staying "free" poses some sort of a threat to others for which the person concerned needs to be denied his freedom and put into prison.

Did any of the above fall into that category? The RAB members who arrested him, the police that kept him incarcerated, the public prosecutors who pleaded against their bails, and the judges who repeatedly denied them bail must answer the question as to what necessitated their being in jail while their cases were being investigated.

Even the dreaded DSA, in section 40, specifies that the investigating officer must complete his work in 60 days. Then, with due permission, it can be extended to an additional 15 days. A further 30 days can be granted by the Tribunal, making for a maximum time of 105 days that an investigating officer can take to complete his investigation.

Kajol got bail after more than 210 days in prison, and Kishore after over 270 days



From left: Mushtaq Ahmed, Ahmed Kishore, and Shafiqul Islam Kajol.

When the honourable judge denied bail to Mushtaq, was the fact that he was already in prison for 270 days, and that the investigating authority had gone way past the legally allowable time of maximum 105 days, taken into consideration? Should this failure of the investigating officer be seen as the "weak" nature of the case? Shouldn't this have almost automatically qualified Mushtaq for bail?

According to available information, the investigating officers in all the three above cases did not seek any permission from the higher authority or from the Tribunal for the extra time they took for investigation. Therefore, the only legally allowable time available to the officers concerned was 60 days. The extra time they took were all outside the scope of the law. Instead of denying Mushtaq bail, the judge may have seen it fit to upbraid the investigating officer for failing to do his duty on time.

To us, this is a very important point and we urge our respected higher judiciary to take it up *suo moto* as it concerns the constitutional question of guaranteeing for fundamental rights and implementation of the law. If we still believe in the fundamental principle of our law that a "person is innocent till proven guilty", then we must stop treating "accused" persons as "guilty" and punishing them by denying bail, which is a right of an innocent person.

We think Mushtaq's death should compel us to work together to prevent its repetition. The government, the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary

must put their heads together to make the process of arrest and bail more aligned to the global standards of fundamental rights.

The Digital Security Act (DSA) has not only been a cause for serious injustices to many of its victims but also an example of how self-defeating we sometimes can be, and how we end up damaging our own international image that could have easily been avoided.

Just the other day, the UN recommended Bangladesh for its graduation into the group of developing countries from 2026, and at the same time, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said, "Bangladesh urgently needs to suspend the application of the Digital Security Act and conduct a review of its provisions to bring them in line with the requirements of international human rights law." One was a global acknowledgement of our success, and the other a criticism of a draconian law that has done us more harm than good.

Let there be no doubt that moving away from the LDC status is a tremendous success for Bangladesh. Given its severely challenging development hurdles and dysfunctional politics of the eighties, nineties and early twenties, few people

3) that the law be amended to safeguard the interest of journalists. We believe that while formulating the rules for this law, opportunity exists to meet many of our demands and make the law acceptable to all."

Now, looking back over two and a half years since the enactment of the DSA, it appears our apprehensions have proved to be more than justified, and the whole process appears to be drenched in bad faith. There was not even an iota of sincerity in what was being said. The promises that were made by Law Minister Anisul Huq and then-Information Minister Hasnatul Haq Inu—that this law would not be used to curb the free press and against professional journalists—have all proved to be hollow. I recall the express commitment by the aforementioned ministers: that during the process of formulating the "Rules" for this law, provisions would be made to accommodate the fears and concerns expressed by the media representatives so that misuse does not occur. In fact, the "rules", as they now exist, maintained all the anti-free press provisions, and in some instances, have made the implementation even harsher.

Our protest against the DSA has been continuous and unrelenting since its enactment in September 2018. Yet it needed the death-in-custody of writer-commentator Mushtaq to stir some rethinking. We welcome the granting of bail by the High Court to cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore on his 7th attempt. There are credible claims of torture on Kishore that we demand be investigated.

While we welcome the comments made by our law minister to the BBC, that no one will be arrested or sued under the Digital Security Act (DSA) before investigation, we saw one person arrested under DSA on the same day, Tuesday, in Dinajpur, for allegedly spreading "fabricated information with ill intention". On the same day, a court in Khulna rejected the bail petition of a person belonging to a socio-political group. He was picked up on February 26 and sued under the DSA. The minister's comments will have to be backed up with some immediate and credible actions for us to have faith in his words.

As Bangladesh aspires—and we all rejoice at it—to become a developing country, and at a later stage, a developed one, we must not only build infrastructure for the economy, but must also build "infrastructure" for good governance and justice. We must make our legal system modern so that it can dispense justice fairly, expeditiously and without political influence. A modern judicial system is just as important and necessary as anything else we do to modernise ourselves.

The way the government and the justice system have flouted the right to freedom of Kajol, Kishore and Mushtaq should set us all thinking about how sacrosanct personal freedom is and how never to allow it to be abused so easily and frequently.

Let Mushtaq's death not go in vain. Let it make us doubly aware of the importance of protecting individual rights. We hope that his agony, pain and sufferings will be a constant reminder that every citizen has some fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution and that nobody has the right to deny them those rights. We hope that the law enforcement bodies will respect the constitution and our laws more sincerely, and the judiciary will come to the aid of the citizens when those rights are violated.

Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star.

Apparel diplomacy for the post-LDC era



FARUQUE HASSAN

The recommendation of the United Nations' Committee for Development Policy (CDP) for Bangladesh's graduation out of the Least Developed Country (LDC)

status is both a matter of pleasure and of pride for every patriotic person of the nation. After the committee's recommendation for Bangladesh to become a developing nation, the proposal now will be sent to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for its endorsement in June this year. The UN General Assembly is scheduled to finally approve the proposal in September.

In the recommendation, three eligibility criteria for graduation such as per capita income, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability were considered, all of which Bangladesh met in the second triennial review of the LDC category by the CDP. We all know that our Readymade Garments (RMG) industry, which accounts for more than 83 percent of the country's total export earnings, has largely contributed to this graduation. So this is especially a happy occasion for all

the apparel entrepreneurs, workers and professionals in the country.

However, the growth of our RMG industry has been accelerated by the fact that Bangladesh as an LDC enjoys duty-free market access to the European Union (EU)—which accounts for more than 60 percent of our total apparel exports—under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP).

After graduating to a developing country status from an LDC, Bangladesh will no longer be eligible for the GSP facilities. But Bangladesh will have the opportunity to continue to enjoy duty-free access to EU countries if it can attain the GSP Plus. In order to be awarded the GSP Plus status, a country must fulfil two criteria set by the EU—namely, products that qualify for GSP Plus must be in the top seven largest exports from the country (apparel is the largest in Bangladesh), and the three-year average of exports of that product cannot exceed 6.5 percent of the total import of that product into the EU. Here, Bangladesh faces an issue, as its apparel export to the EU already accounts for about 9 percent of the latter's total apparel import from the world.

Therefore, Bangladesh needs "apparel diplomacy" to negotiate with the EU and convince them that this threshold should be extended to 12-13 percent, given that the apparel sector is the lifeline of Bangladesh's economy and also considering the EU market's importance

to the industry as a whole.

In view of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our economy, the UN's CDP has recommended that Bangladesh be provided with a five-year time till 2026, instead of the usual three years, to prepare for the transition. In these five years, Bangladesh will remain eligible to get duty-free access to the EU under the GSP. During this transition period, we need to continue our apparel diplomacy to confirm the GSP Plus for the post-LDC period.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Bangladesh currently possesses some of its finest and talented apparel diplomats led by the Senior Foreign Secretary who himself has proved his mettle in the field. What we need is close collaboration between the industry and the government to secure Bangladesh's interests in the changing apparel landscape. It's worth mentioning here that the export threshold was extended from 4 percent to 6.5 percent when Pakistan was awarded with the GSP Plus. So, I believe with the industry insights, expertise of our civil servants, and the vision of the government, Bangladesh is well-placed to pursue the required apparel diplomacy for securing the extension of the threshold to around 12-13 percent.

Forming a joint taskforce with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) would be really effective to

perform the required apparel diplomacy for attaining GSP Plus.

Nevertheless, our RMG industry can no longer just depend on the two traditionally preferred business markets: the USA and the EU. While we need apparel diplomacy to keep the benefits of the traditional markets alive, we should also explore and exploit non-traditional markets like Japan, South Korea, Russia, Latin American countries, and even China and India.

The recommendation for Bangladesh's graduation came at a time when the country is ready to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its independence and the 100th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. So, it's a moment to celebrate and also an occasion for making our footings stronger. Further strides in the economic journey of any country come with certain conditions. We can no longer expect to rely on favourable or subsidised trading terms—we have to learn to evolve, adapt and survive among the fittest. We need to develop an industry that is fit-for-purpose for the years ahead. It's time to pursue active apparel diplomacy from both our government and representative trade bodies to ensure the continuation of a fruitful relationship with our largest apparel trading partners.

Faruque Hassan is the Managing Director of Giant Group. He is also former Senior Vice President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

'ACC guidelines can help prevent systemic graft in government offices'

Iqbal Mahmood took charge of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) five years ago with the goal of curbing graft. During these years, he took several bold steps like bringing reforms in the enquiry and investigation processes, introducing a hotline service and pinpointing loopholes and pockets of corruption within government organisations. Yet he had to face criticism for the long delay in investigating the BASIC Bank loan scam and failing to nab the big fishes. As the ACC chairman nears the end of his term this month, he shares his experience, achievements and expectations with The Daily Star's Mahbubur Rahman Khan.

How do you view your journey at the ACC?

First of all, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is a statutory body tasked with combating, preventing and controlling corruption and also promoting the best practices in professional conduct. My responsibility as chairman has been laid out in the Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2004. It states that my sole duty is to execute the ACC's legal mandate to fight against corruption. This inherently puts the chairman in a precarious position as a just, indiscriminate application of the law will undoubtedly cause some negative opinions. Our goal has always been to let the law take its due course. I can say with utmost confidence that the commission has functioned in accordance with the law during my tenure.

I carried out my responsibilities with absolute impartiality. I am privileged to have had the support of the civil society, the media, politicians, the administration, my fellow colleagues and the public in general during the last five years. And I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those who supported the anti-corruption mission of the commission.

Can you recall any particular struggle you've had while bringing major changes in the ACC during your tenure?

After joining ACC, I thought about how we could turn ACC into an institution that people could rely on. It is my firm belief that no institution can achieve its goal without public support. Without an integrated action plan, it is not easy to deal with offences like corruption. Hence, we took the initiative to formulate an action plan for the ACC, and in 2017, the ACC's Five-Year Strategic Action Plan was approved. This plan details multi-dimensional initiatives regarding inquiry, investigation, prosecution, administration, monitoring, evaluation and prevention. Before the approval of this strategic plan, the commission consulted with the media, members of civil society, NGOs, teachers, students, bureaucrats, politicians, development partners, etc.

Including vital members of society in forming our plan resulted in it being an instrument that would enable us to effectively and unwaveringly work for the people of this country. We started our journey with confidence. The public will be pleasantly surprised to know that the ACC has apprehended approximately one thousand perpetrators involved in corruption cases without the use of any firearms during my tenure. Even though ACC officials arrested offenders in the late hours of the night and, sometimes, were attacked by miscreants and suffered injuries, we did not slow down our operations. We have become successful to an extent that the public can rest easy knowing that no one is above the law. The law will apply to all people regardless of their position, and will inevitably take its course.

Some of your bold steps gained popularity and created hope among people. Yet there are issues like BASIC Bank. In the last five years, it has been repeatedly said that investigating officers or IOs have been trying to trace the destination

of the money involved with the BASIC Bank scam, while we've seen the IOs being able to trace the money in PK Halder's case so quickly. Why this difference? Is it a failure on the part of ACC?

This is a question I get asked often, and rightly so, because of the gravity of the crime. One has to take into account that these cases were lodged with the ACC before its restructuring. These cases and their investigations are still ongoing. As chairman, I am unable to comment on the cases under investigation, but it is a fact that the commission has already instructed the IOs to trace the destinations of the siphoned money relating to the BASIC Bank scam. The IOs are working tirelessly to complete the investigations. In the meantime, many new cases generated from the BASIC Bank scam were lodged, and many more will be lodged in the coming days. These are ongoing matters, but the perpetrators will

reforms than our guidelines. The systemic anomalies, corruption and procrastination prevalent in these organisations can indeed be mitigated exponentially after thorough examination and strict implementation of the laid-out recommendations.

The Cabinet Division, being responsible for matters concerning the ACC and for inter-ministerial coordination, can take up the responsibility of implementing and enforcing these recommendations as per their discretion. The public would be pleased to know that some of the recommendations were, or are, already being implemented by some of the government agencies.

There was renewed hope after the introduction of 106 hotlines. But we've seen a drastic drop in the number of bribe-mongers caught red-handed after the enactment of the Public Service Act 2018, which prohibits arrest of any public

The commission proceeds with legal action on the basis of specific allegations relating to offences as stated in the Schedule of the Anti-Corruption Act of 2004. This has nothing to do with comfort or preference, but everything to do with the exact fulfilment of the commission's legal mandates.

The National Board of Revenue plays a big role in giving certificates

carry out its duties under the legal framework only.

According to the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, Bangladesh's status has deteriorated. What can be done to reduce the magnitude of corruption in the country?

Corruption is a global problem. It is rampant in many countries of the world. Recently, the TI published

focus on actual groundwork. The reality of this world is that it more often does not correspond with concrete values and data. Whatever comes our way, we will have to analyse, adapt and overcome. Things have always been this way. Therefore, it is not worth our time denying that corruption in Bangladesh persists in a wider expanse. The commission has devoted much of its effort to combatting, controlling and preventing corruption and will continue to do so. As we have learned over time, hard work will pay off, resulting in better days in the future.

What needs to be done to make ACC more vibrant?

The commission is constantly working on revising, modifying and reinventing its legal tools and techniques. Whatever we might lack in capacity we make up for it in our sincerity. This is a continuous process. I believe we should continue to emphasise the need for engaging with the public as, according to our constitution, all the power in the Republic of Bangladesh belongs to the people. We should create an environment where people have a bigger platform and role in fighting against corruption. We still have a long way to go regarding raising public awareness against fighting corruption, but we are well on our way there.

What is your plan after retirement?

I have had the opportunity to serve the nation in various capacities for the last 40 years of my life. I have many good memories. However, the harsh reality is that I feel I was unable to give enough time to my family. I plan to make up for the lost time with them. I also have plans to pass on my experiences and knowledge to the future generation so that I am able to serve my beloved country in another capacity (teaching).



Iqbal Mahmood, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

undoubtedly be brought to justice in due time. In order to carry out this justice effectively, the ACC has to complete a transparent, detailed and credible investigation.

One of the commendable jobs of the commission during your tenure was enquiring into institutional corruption. The ACC brought to light several dark spots of corruption in different service-providing government organisations but it was apparently ignored. People would have gotten better services had the authorities complied with the ACC's suggestions. You have also brought the matter before the media. Why are the authorities not sincere about fulfilling your recommendations?

As part of its mission to prevent and reign in corruption in accordance with the rules and regulations of the ACC Act, the ACC has made a host of recommendations for systemic reforms in the working processes of different ministries and divisions or their subordinate departments or agencies since 2016. However, the ministries and divisions concerned do not appear to have taken up any remarkable measures to implement those recommendations as of yet. We believe that for reduction of corruption and harassment, which are prevalent in the delivery process of public services, there are no better alternatives to systemic

servant on criminal charges without the government's approval. Isn't it one kind of interference in ACC's work on fighting corruption? What is your opinion?

I can confidently say that the ACC did not stop nabbing bribe-mongers after the enactment of the Public Service Act, 2018. On the contrary, a significant number of public servants were caught red-handed while taking bribes. More than 16 trap cases were launched during 2019 with the goal of catching bribe-takers red-handed. Similarly, in 2018, the commission made 57 arrests, while in 2019, the number rose to 123, which was about 116 percent higher than that of the preceding year. This indicates that the Public Service Act did not hamper the ACC's operations. The purpose of the act is to prevent government officials from engaging in corrupt practices, especially while carrying out public duties.

The ACC seems more comfortable with dealing with illegal asset cases rather than handling real-time corruption. What are the reasons behind it?

Taking legal action against entities in possession of ill-gotten wealth is a legal mandate of the ACC. Moreover, article 20 of our constitution states, "The State shall endeavour to create conditions in which, as a general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes..."

to assets but often controversy is created at the time of enquiry and investigation, as the ACC found those illegal. Where are the loopholes? How can these be resolved?

The main functions of the National Board of Revenue are to assess, collect and manage taxes or duties for the exchequer. Generally, the tax collectors are less concerned about the sources of income. On the other hand, the responsibility of the Anti-Corruption Commission is to take lawful action against those who have earned assets beyond known sources of income. Pursuant to sections 26 and 27 of the ACC Act of 2004, and the Money Laundering Prevention Act of 2012, action is taken against entities that have accumulated assets by means of taking bribes, engaging in corruption or via any other illegal means. The ACC is bound to

its report on the Global Corruption Perceptions Index in which Bangladesh seems to have moved down in rank. During the same time period, the TI published another report (The Global Corruption Barometer: Asia 2020) where it was indicated that 86 percent of the people in Bangladesh had confidence in the ACC. This goes to show that not all factors were considered in generating these reports. This is natural as these organisations operate as outsiders, and as a result, are unable to take into account all aspects of our situation in Bangladesh.

Empirical data, which they have less of, is vital in order to look at the bigger picture. We should treat these reports as optional tools in our arsenal which we may or may not learn from—in other words, less focus on hard numbers and more

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়
২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন
মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখ: ০৩/০৩/২০২১ খ্রিঃ
২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ কোর্সের নিম্নোক্ত লাইভ ডিউটি কাজের জন্য 'দি দায়িত্ব প্রকটিকরণ আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকটিকরণ আইন-২০০৬' এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে রিক্রুটমেন্টের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি রিক্রুটমেন্টের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাবে।

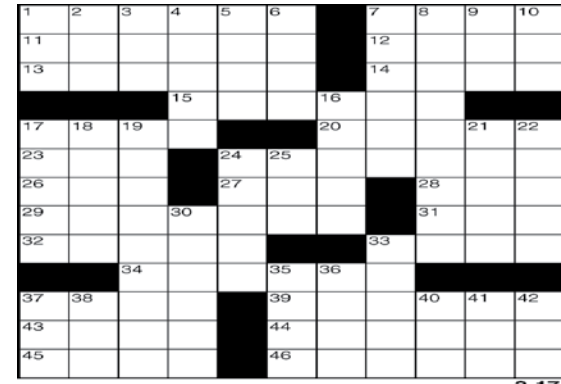
ক্র.সং.	মন্তব্য/বিভাগ	স্বাগত মন্তব্য/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।		
০১।	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।		
০২।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনাকারী প্রধান	কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি), ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।		
০৩।	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহবান	২০২০-২০২১ ও ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে লাই-১, ২, ৩, ৪, ৫ ও ৬-এ বর্ণিত কাজের জন্য রিক্রুটমেন্ট নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে।		
০৪।	সম্মানিত সন্তান/জেনা	ময়মনসিংহ।		
০৫।	দরপত্র আহবানের সূত্র নম্বর	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর নং-প্রশা-২৭৩-২১/৭৯৯		
০৬।	তারিখ	০৩ মার্চ ২০২১ খ্রিঃ		
কাজের বিবরণ				
০৭।	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)		
অফিসের উদ্দেশ্য				
০৮।	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক বাত	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বাতে অর্থ বরাদ্দ গ্রাভি সাপেক্ষে।		
বিশেষ তথ্যাবলী				
১০।	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	০৭/২০২০-২০২১		
১১।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৩ মার্চ ২০২১ খ্রিঃ		
১২।	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০১ মার্চ ২০২১ খ্রিঃ বেলো ১১:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১৩।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়	০১ এপ্রিল ২০২১ খ্রিঃ বেলো ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।		
১৪।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০১ এপ্রিল ২০২১ খ্রিঃ বেলো ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা।		
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা				
১৫।	দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	(ক) এপিবিএন হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা। (খ) ডিআইজি, এপিবিএন, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা। (গ) কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি), ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।		
	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিস	কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।		
	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়, ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।		
১৬।	প্রি ট্রায়ার সভার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	২ এপিবিএন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ। তারিখ: ২৮/৩/২০২১ খ্রিঃ, সময়: ১২:০০ ঘটিকা।		
দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য				
১৭।	দরপত্র বোধ্যতা	(ক) হালনাগাদ ব্যবসায়িক বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদপত্র (গ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র (ঘ) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদপত্র (ঙ) বাংলাদেশের নারিকট/জাতীয়তাসনদপত্র (চ) এমিগ্রেশন মুলে ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকানা ঘোষণাপত্র (ছ) প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাকেজ প্রতিনিধির স্বাক্ষর সত্যায়নসহ ক্ষমতা অর্পণ দিতে হবে (জ) ১ম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সকল দলিলপত্র/নিসিফ ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাকেজ আবেদনপত্র গ্রাভি সাপেক্ষে দরপত্র তফসিল (সিডিউল) বিক্রয় করা হবে এবং দরপত্র তফসিল ক্রয়ের সময় ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব সীল সসে আনতে হবে (ধ) অন্যান্য বোধ্যতা বা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউলে উল্লেখ আছে।		
১৮।	মাশালার বিবরণ			
লট নং	আইটেম	দরপত্রের মূল্য (অনুমানিত/প্রকৃত)	দরপত্রের জামানত	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়সীমা
১	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের টাটকা রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সরবরাহ কাজ	১,২৫০/-	৪,০০,০০০/-	(স্থলাই ২০২১ খ্রিঃ হতে জুন ২০২২ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত)
২	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের জ্বালানি কাঠ ক্রয়/সরবরাহ কাজ	১,০০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	
৩	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের গম লিফটো কাজ	১,০০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	
৪	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের স্কেনা রেশন সামগ্রী সরকারি যে কোন বাদ্য গুদাম হতে গাড়িতে উঠানো এবং বিএন সদরে গাড়ি হতে নামিয়ে রেশন স্টোরে গুদামজাতকরণ কুলি সরবরাহ কাজ	৮৫০/-	৪৫,০০০/-	
৫	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টারের রিএসটিএসআই কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত ডিটামিন 'এ' সন্মুখ কোলেস্টেরলমুক্ত সুপার রিফাইন্ড তেল/জাতীয় (সোয়াবিন) সরবরাহ কাজ	৮৫০/-	৫০,০০০/-	(এপ্রিল ২০২১ খ্রিঃ হতে জুন ২০২১ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত)
৬	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরে কোর্সের ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টারের প্যাকেজকৃত উন্নতমানের হোটেলনা মন্ত্র ডাল (দেশী) সরবরাহ কাজ	৭৫০/-	৩০,০০০/-	
দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম				
১৯।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	জনাব মোহাম্মদ নাজরুল হোসেন।		
২০।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি)।		
২১।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।		
২২।	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	ফোন: ০৯০২৮-৭৫৩৪৪, ফ্যাক্স: ০৯০২৮-৭৫২০১		
বিশেষ শর্তাবলী				
ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।				
খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।				
গ) দরপত্র উন্মুক্তভাবে আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।				
ঘ) দরপত্র দাবি করা ক্ষেত্রে বিজ্ঞপ্তি তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র গ্রহণকালে অফিস হতে এবং দরপত্র তফসিলে পাওয়া যাবে।				
ঙ) দরপত্র পিপিআর/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।				
চ) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লেখিত প্রতিটি কাজের জন্য পৃথক পৃথক বাধ্য পৃথকভাবে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।				
উল্লেখ্য, উক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি CPTU এর ওয়েবসাইটে (www.cptu.gov.bd) পাওয়া যাবে। (৩য়মার্চ লট-১ এর ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য)।				

মোহাম্মদ নাজরুল হোসেন
বিপি নং-০৯০৮০১০০৪৪
কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি)
২ এপিবিএন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ
ফোন: ৭৫৩৪৪, ফ্যাক্স: ৭৫২০১

ক্রিডি-৪৪২

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Religious retreat
 - 7 Big gulp
 - 11 One of TV's "Friends"
 - 12 Washed out
 - 13 Entertain
 - 14 Cruise stop
 - 15 Tear off
 - 17 June honorees
 - 20 Messing on TV
 - 23 Memorable time
 - 24 Disbursed
 - 26 Guitarist Paul
 - 27 Swearing-in vow
 - 28 Maximum amount
 - 29 Takes a breath
 - 31 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
 - 32 Dark fur
- DOWN**
- 16 Spanish farewell
 - 17 Sub shops
 - 18 Place for a game
 - 19 Odometer
 - 20 setting
 - 21 Held power
 - 22 Travel aid
 - 24 Stacked
 - 25 Sports drink suffix
 - 30 Brass and bronze
 - 33 Over-flowing
 - 35 Fizzy drink
 - 36 God of war
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

C A R E W A O R T A
U V U L A T R I E S
B E L L S T H E C A T
A R E A W E M O
E B O N Y
M A R D I S E U S S
G R A S A S I A
M I T E R T R A C T
L I M O S
A P T N A P A M S
C H E W S T H E F A T
E R I E A R E N A
S W I G S T A W N Y

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

Finish probe

FROM PAGE 12
several others for their involvement in the BASIC Bank loan scam.

The court may decide whether to grant Iqbal bail in the cases if the ACC failed to submit the charge sheets in two and half months, the HC said in the verdict.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim gave the orders while disposing of 20 bail petitions filed by Iqbal.

The countdown to the two-and-a-half month period will begin the day the ACC receives a copy of the verdict, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told The Daily Star.

The ACC filed the 21 corruption cases in 2015 accusing the businessmen and bankers of embezzling around Tk 700 crore by inflating the prices of mortgaged properties of borrowers at the bank.

Iqbal, who was sent to jail on July 12, 2019, secured bail in one of the 21 cases from the HC earlier.

The HC yesterday asked the state and the ACC to explain why Iqbal should not be granted bail in the remaining 20 cases, DAG Manik said.

Hearing the petitions on Wednesday, the HC bench said the accused caused financial damage to the state and the inflating of the prices of properties must stop.

Merits of the cases will go to waste and the corruption accused will get bail if it took so long to submit the charge sheets, the bench observed.

On Wednesday, the HC heavily rebuked the ACC for its failure to submit the charge sheets in more than five years.

"If the corruption watchdog fails to discharge its responsibility, how the corruption and irregularities will be eradicated?" it said.

Lawyer Momtaz Parvin represented Iqbal, while Khurshid Alam Khan and AKM Fazlul Hoque the ACC during the hearing on the rules.

According to a Bangladesh Bank enquiry, between 2009 and 2013, about Tk 4,500 crore was swindled out of BASIC Bank.

Khaleda may take

FROM PAGE 2
The Daily Star yesterday.

He said people are now receiving vaccine shots at hospitals and vaccination centres, but the question remains how she will be vaccinated.

Khaleda was freed from jail for six months on March 25 last year, just a day before the government announced a general holiday to contain Covid-19 transmission in the country.

Family members and physicians said the treatment of the former prime minister was greatly hampered due to the pandemic.

The government had stayed Khaleda's conviction for six months and freed her on humanitarian grounds considering her age.

Since the beginning of the nationwide vaccination campaign on February 7, BNP leaders were critical of the government's vaccine management. They alleged that the government's shortsightedness created uncertainty over collecting a vaccine.

The party also demanded the government clarify its position on vaccine collection, pricing, storage and distribution as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, family members of Khaleda have urged the government to extend her stay out of jail to ensure her proper treatment that faced setbacks due to the pandemic.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Wednesday said the decision on relaxing "bail conditions" and waiving Khaleda's sentences would be taken after discussions with the law ministry.

Khaleda's younger brother Shamim Iskandar submitted the petition to the ministry on Tuesday, according to home ministry.

In the application, the family mentioned that they could not arrange treatment for the BNP chief during the pandemic and asked for relaxing the "bail conditions" and waiving sentences, said the home minister.

Khaleda received treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital when she was in jail.

She is suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, and ophthalmological and dental ailments.

The BNP chairperson landed in jail on February 8, 2017 after being sentenced to five years' imprisonment by a special court in Dhaka in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

On October 30 the following year, the High Court enhanced her punishment to 10 years after dismissing her appeal in the case.

The former premier was convicted by another special court in Dhaka in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case on October 29, 2018. She was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment by the court.

Scars of torture

FROM PAGE 1

"I was picked up on May 2. It was an hour before iftar. I was taking a nap when I was woken up by loud knocking. When I opened the door, around 17 men in plain clothes barged in. Four of them had small arms on them," said Kishore.

Point to be noted here -- the first information report filed by Rab-3 claims that Kishore was picked up from his Kakrail home around 2:30am on May 5, which is a direct contradiction of Kishore's statement.

The FIR states that Kishore was arrested by Rab-3 in the early hours of May 5, and produced in court on May 6, which is in line with detention laws that only allow for 24 hours of detention before it is mandatory to produce an arrestee in front of a magistrate. However, Kishore's claim alleges a period of arbitrary detention of at least 60 hours before his "official" time of arrest.

When asked about this time discrepancy, Rapid Action Battalion's media and legal wing director Lt Col Ashiq Billah said there was no violation. "He was produced in court during the time period specified by law. An aggrieved person can say anything he wants to."

Furthermore, Kishore alleged that it could not be ascertained whether the people who picked him up belonged to any law enforcement agency because they were in plain clothes.

"When I asked them for their identities, they just scolded me for making them wait. One person said his name is Jashim," said Kishore. "They ordered me to change out of my lungi and wear pants, and put on a clean shirt. When I asked why I would do that, Jashim replied, 'Just do what I tell you to do.'"

Kishore's lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua stated that law enforcement had no legal right to enter Kishore's house without a warrant or without showing their identification. "If they wanted to arrest him under section 54, certain strict conditions have to be met pertaining to his detention, which were not followed."

"We were in the room which had all my art supplies and computer hardware. Jashim was smoking a cigarette and he put it out on the floor. I asked him not to do that, and bent down to pick up the stub from the floor, when I saw a man take out a bag of red pills and a gun and try to plant it on my stack of books," described Kishore.

"That is when I started yelling. I held the hand of the person. He shook me off. I told him that you cannot do this to me and I asked them if they had a warrant," said Kishore. "Seeing that I was yelling, Jashim signalled the men to back off. He asked me to get out too, but I refused because I was afraid they would plant more things."

That is when they hauled him out. He saw that his entire house was turned upside down. "When I asked the reason, they just said, 'I will tell you the reason when we get into the car,'" narrated Kishore.

"When I came outside, I saw that they brought two strangers and made them sign a made-up seizure list. That is when they put a monkey cap over my head that completely covered my face up to my neck," said Kishore. "I was cuffed before being taken into the car, on the staircase."

Right before his head was shrouded in the monkey cap, Kishore noticed a line of six vehicles in front of his home. "The car right in front of me was a grey V6. There were two of these. There was a car with a licence plate that said 'Dhaka-Metro Sho-1812' or something like that. There was a Nissan Patrol. All the vehicles had tinted windows," described Kishore.

"My face was covered before I was put into a car so I don't know which vehicle I was in, but it was probably the grey V6," he said.

He did not know who was taking him, and where he was being taken, and every time he asked, they kept saying that they will let him know everything if he cooperates. "If you help us, I will help you," was what they told him, Kishore said.

"Once inside the car they turned on music and yanked the volume to the maximum. They were playing some very loud Hindi music followed by SD Rubel's music. It seemed like they were playing music so that if I scream, nobody can hear me," said Kishore.

He said the journey took around 40 minutes.

"I counted the minutes meticulously. They did not beat me inside the car, but when I kept asking why I was arrested, they just said 'Don't talk so much,'" he added.

In between, the car stopped at a place and the men stood on the road and ate iftar. "I realised I could lift up the cap using the two index fingers of my handcuffed hands, and when the car stopped, I lifted only enough to be able to see through the rim," said Kishore.

He said the place where they stopped had a mechanical roadblock. As the men ate, Kishore took a few minutes to gauge his captors.

"There was a house and a person got out of the house and went into a car -- I did not see his face but I saw his shoes. He was wearing moccasins. There was a person sitting in the seat in front of me. In his hand he had a cell phone and I caught a glimpse of the screen -- there was a map of some sort and a black text box with numbers. He kept moving the numbers around his screen with his fingers," said Kishore.

After iftar, the car resumed its journey again. "When the car stopped, I was told to get out. I tripped and stumbled and fell down, and it was then that they shoved and dragged me. I was dragged into a room, still blindfolded," narrated Kishore.

He felt his way around the room and found three plastic chairs. "The floor was tiled, but it felt old, scuffed, damp and slimy. There was an air-conditioned room nearby, because as I was brought into this room, I felt a blast of cold air coming from somewhere. A person came in -- he took my hands, which were cuffed in front of me, and cuffed them behind my back," said Kishore.

He kept begging for food, saying that he is diabetic and cannot go long periods without eating, but nobody responded.

"After a long while, they took me into another room -- it was a long walk from the room where I was being kept. They sat me down on a hard chair. There were things attached on the handles and the legs of the chair. They opened my blindfold and said in English, 'If you look

back, you will be killed'," Kishore narrated, adding that he could sense about 10-12 people.

"They pulled down a projector screen and put up a cartoon. It was a cartoon I had drawn depicting mother nature stitching the clothes of different countries. They asked me: 'Who did you draw? Did you draw the prime minister?'"

"I said I did not and that this was a conceptual cartoon about nature healing the world during the pandemic," said Kishore.

Kishore said they showed him one cartoon after another and asked about the characters he drew -- they asked regarding all of the female characters if they were the PM, and regarding all the male characters if they were the Father of the Nation.

"I got mad and asked, Bangabandhu has a mark on his face, does this cartoon have one? They then hit me on the leg with a thick stick with a steel knob on the tip. There were four sticks displayed in the front to hit me with," he said.

Kishore lashed back and said they don't understand cartoons.

"A person got up, and slammed both sides of my head with his palms."

Kishore felt a searing pain shoot through his left ear -- that is when his ear drum burst, he said.

The interrogation went on for a while, and each time Kishore fought back and refused to give in to their line of questioning, he was hit. "They hit me at the back of the head because my cap was up."

He was hit on the back, on his legs, behind his head.

"They asked me for the passwords of my email and social media accounts. But by then I was not hearing anything in my right ear, which was bleeding. So, they had to write out the instructions for me, and I responded in writing," he said.

They continued interrogating him about the "I Am Bangladeshi" Facebook page, which used to share his posts, and asked him about how he knew Swedish-Bangladeshi journalist Tasneem Khalil, Hungary-based businessman Saer Zulkamain, and Germany-based blogger Asif Mohiuddin. They also repeatedly interrogated him about a prominent businessman who had featured in one of his cartoons.

In addition, Kishore said that he was interrogated about radical extremists and about whether he was involved in the blogger killings.

"I said that my friends were the ones being attacked and killed," he said.

"I was in the room for between four and five hours. I heard the azaan once, and there was a strong smell of petrol which made me sneeze. There was also a lot of noise from cars," he said.

At one point, Kishore told them that he needed to go to the bathroom, or that he would soil his clothes. "The bathroom was not smelly or dirty but there was a lot of blood on the floor. I was still blindfolded, but I saw from beneath the edge of my blindfold," said Kishore.

He requested that the blindfold be removed while he uses the toilet, but his captor prodded his back with a stick and ordered him to walk up front and urinate.

After a while, he was sent back to the first room.

"I was in a lot of pain and blood was pouring out my nose and ears, but I was determined to not stay in there. I even stood up and opened the door, but two people came up and said they would kill me if I move. They told me they had not done anything to me yet."

In the early hours of the morning, a person with a crew cut came into his room and gave him stale pulao and meat to eat.

A few hours later he was taken back into the interrogation room, and round after round of questioning and torture continued.

"I lost sense of time and days. I was only fed twice -- the first one was the spoilt pulao and the second was a packet of something, but there was so much pain in my mouth that I could not eat," said Kishore.

At one point, during evening time, Kishore said his captors took him to Rab-3's office in Khilgaon.

"The minute they took my blindfolds off, cameras started flashing. That's when I saw Mushtaq [Ahmed, the writer who died in custody on February 25]. He said, 'Be proud man! You have not done any crime!'"

"Mushtaq was smelling strongly of urine. He too had been picked up a few days ago, and had been beaten a lot. He was electrocuted in the genitals. There were newspapers on the floor and I asked Mushtaq to use that to clean himself. He took off his underwear and threw it away -- I saw that it had excrement in it. He had defecated in his pants from the torture, he told me," said Kishore.

An assistant superintendent came to question them.

"I asked to go to a bathroom, but requested a clean bathroom... and the officer took me to their personal bathroom. The officer told someone to clean the blood from the ear. I was also given biscuits and tea once," said Kishore.

The duo was taken to Ramna Police Station at dawn. "The duty officer asked me if I was tortured, and I wanted to say yes, but Mushtaq stopped me, saying that we could not tell the truth, or we would be tortured more," said Kishore.

Hours later, they were taken to the court and thus began their 10-month ordeal in prison.

"Mushtaq and I were in different prisons, different cells. I only saw him on February 23. I got to know about Mushtaq's death from another inmate who got the newspaper. He saw the news of Mushtaq's death," said Kishore.

And it was at that point when the man, who had up until then been describing the horrifying torture that was inflicted upon him with an impassive, defiant face, broke down in tears at the mere mention of Mushtaq.

"I am having to hear that it is because he died that I am free. I did not want freedom like this. Mushtaq told me 'let's get out, get fit and go see Mt Everest'. We were supposed to get out together," he wept.

On March 4, Kishore's lawyer Barua appealed to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim to accept a complaint against the Rab members under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.



Members of East Pakistan Students' Union brought out a procession on March 5, 1971 to protest the police firing in Tongi which left 4 workers dead and 25 injured.

An end foretold

FROM PAGE 12

president would be visiting Dhaka soon but the date is yet to be confirmed. The same night, around 9:10pm, Yahya rang Yaqub and said, "I have changed my mind. I am not coming to Dhaka."

He hung up saying, "I cannot come because I am convinced that it won't bring me anywhere near the solution."

Immediately, General Yaqub made a telephone call to Peerzada and told him, "Peer, if the President cannot be persuaded to come [to Dhaka], I may be relieved of my responsibilities. I will send you my formal resignation tomorrow morning." [Siddiq Salik, Witness to Surrender, UPL 1997, pg.50]

Lieutenant General Tikka Khan, nicknamed "the Butcher of Baluchistan", was appointed in Yaqub's place. The official announcement of Tikka Khan's appointment as the governor of East Pakistan came on March 6, 1971.

Both Admiral Ahsan and General Yaqub was removed by Yahya for having protested a hard line against the Bengalees. They advised Yahya to settle things politically, not militarily.

BANGABANDHU FORESAW THE END OF PAKISTAN

Air Marshal (Ret.) Asghar Khan, leader of National Movement for Solidarity party, called on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at his Dhanmondi residence on March 5, 1971. We get a glimpse of their discussion in Asghar Khan's book Generals in Politics: he [Mujib] was certain that Yahya Khan had already made up his mind not to hand over power and that he would use the army to crush the

East Pakistanis. He said that he was a Pakistani and had played a part in the Pakistan movement, having travelled from Calcutta to Delhi with a Pakistan flag shouting "Ban kar rahega Pakistan".

"Where were Yahya Khan and Bhutto then?" he had asked in an emotion choked voice. ... I asked Mujib-ur Rahman [Mujibur Rahman] what scenario he visualised and how the stalemate could be broken. He replied that the situation was very clear. Yahya Khan would come to Dhaka [Dhaka] first, followed by MM Ahmed [Head of the planning commission], who would be followed by Bhutto. Yahya Khan would then order military action and that would be the end of Pakistan. [Mohammad Asghar Khan, Generals in Politics: Pakistan 1958-1982, UPL, 1983, pp.29-30]

ARMY WITHDRAWN TO BARRACKS
The martial law authorities withdrew the army to the barracks on March 5. According to a government announcement, the action followed Bangabandhu's appeal for peace, after which there had been considerable improvement in the general law and order situation.

Meanwhile, a completehartal was observed in the capital as well as other parts of the province. Security forces opened fire on the demonstrating workers of Telephone Industries at Tongi, which left four workers dead and 25 others injured. A 10-hour curfew was imposed in Rangpur town from the evening. Shamsuddin Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Jail super, 4 others sued

FROM PAGE 12

"Taking the case into cognisance, the court ordered the Police Bureau of Investigation to probe into the case and submit a report," added Bhulon Lal.

The case statement said Ratam and Rupam were business partners and, following a feud, Ratan filed a case with the court against Rupam, after which the latter was sent to the jail on December 15 last year.

"A few days ago, the jail authority phoned the victim's wife saying that Rupam was in bad condition and was being treated in hospital. They also said they will bear the cost of Rupam's treatment and asked them [Rupam's family] not to worry," said Bhulon Lal.

"Following the information, the victim's wife submitted a plea before the court to shift her husband to hospital from jail on February 28. The court granted the plea. Later, she was able to meet her husband at CMCH, where she found injury

marks all over his body and learned of the torture he had to endure," said the lawyer.

Citing the case statement, he said, "The accused injected drugs into the victim's arms for mental distortion and gave him electric shocks to force a confession out of him."

"The incident took place between 24th and 25th February at Sangu-1 of the jail territory," he added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Md Shafiqul Islam, the accused jail super, said, "The allegation is baseless. We are the custodians of the prisoners and there is no room for torturing a prisoner for confessions inside the jail," adding that Rupam was admitted to CMCH on February 25 because of diabetes.

He also said the Rupam was suffering from some kind of infection in his groin, which was later operated on by doctors while he was in hospital.

"A five-member probe committee was formed by the jail authority to investigate the incident," added the jail super.

Halt vicious crackdown

FROM PAGE 12

who have joined the civil disobedience movement to support efforts to hold military leaders accountable for serious human rights violations, through UN investigations and proceedings at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday he was horrified by the escalation of violence in Myanmar.

"We stand with the people of Myanmar in calling for an immediate end to military repression, the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and others, and the restoration of democracy," Johnson said on Twitter.

Activists said they refused to accept

military rule and were determined to press for the release of the detained Suu Kyi and recognition of her victory in a November election.

Defiant anti-coup protesters returned to the streets across Myanmar yesterday after the deadliest day of the junta's crackdown.

Police opened fire and used tear gas to break up protests in Yangon and the central town of Monywa, witnesses said. Police also fired in the town of Patheingyi, west of Yangon, and used tear gas in Taunggyi in the east, media reported.

In Yangon, hundreds of protesters soon assembled again to chant slogans and sing.

Modi to visit Tungipara, Barishal

FROM PAGE 2

The sources, wishing not to be named, said that PM Modi has also desired to visit Rabindra Kuthi Bari in Kushtia and the ancestral home of Bagha Jatin, a revolutionary leader against the British rule, in Kushtia.

An official of Bangladesh mission here said, "It was almost certain that the Indian PM is visiting Orkandi temple but his visit to 'Satipithi' and other areas are not confirmed yet."

He said separate groups of Indian High Commission officers in Dhaka and Bangladesh security personnel have already visited these areas to examine security aspects there ahead of the high-profile visit.

However, media reports here said that Modi would pay the visit to Orkandi temple to win over the "Matua" community voters ahead of the West Bengal state government polls scheduled to begin on March 27.


The state assembly election would be held in eight phases.

The "Matua" community votes are believed to be a decisive factor in the North 24-Parganas and Nadia district as the BJP and TMC (Trinamool Congress) are involved in a huge tussle to win over the voters there.

Besides, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jay Shankar will visit Dhaka tomorrow to set agendas regarding the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh.

According to PM Modi's visit schedule, he will arrive in Dhaka on March 26 by a special aircraft and will leave Dhaka for New Delhi on the next day after wrapping up his two-day Dhaka visit. It would be Modi's first foreign visit after the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the first day [March 26], the Indian PM will join the celebration programmes with other dignitaries, and the next day, he will hold a summit with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh high commissioner sources told BSS recently.

 রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক/ স্নাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণীতে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার রুটিন শিক্ষাবর্ষঃ ২০২০-২০২১				
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১৪-০৬-২০২১	ইউনিট C (বিজ্ঞান)	গ্রুপ ১	গ্রুপ ২	গ্রুপ ৩
১৫-০৬-২০২১	ইউনিট A (মানবিক)	গ্রুপ ১	গ্রুপ ২	গ্রুপ ৩
১৬-০৬-২০২১	ইউনিট B (বাণিজ্য)	গ্রুপ ১	গ্রুপ ২	গ্রুপ ৩
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Bangladesh players seem in high spirits during their first practice session yesterday at the Lincoln Green since landing in Christchurch on February 24.

PHOTO: BCB

Tigers' mood picks up as they start training

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiqur Rahim's picture on his official Facebook page showing the cricketer smiling broadly said it all as he and the rest of the Bangladesh squad participated in their first practice session in Christchurch since landing in New Zealand on February 24.

The challenge facing the Tigers is a multi-faceted one. They returned to international cricket after a long pandemic-induced gap with the West Indies series at home, following a number of series cancellations last year. On top of that, their past forays in Kiwi soil is yet to yield a single win over the hosts and if that in itself is difficult, the players have found the strict quarantine protocols difficult at the beginning.

The New Zealand government is strict on maintaining protocols -- both Pakistan and West Indies had their training privileges revoked in November last year during their tour of the country.

The Bangladesh players were all confined to their own rooms for the first three days of self-isolation. After that the players were allowed to walk inside the hotel premises for 30 minutes each day. ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal said he felt he was seeing his teammates "after years" following self-isolation while spinner Mehedi



Hasan Miraz remarked that being confined to a room "felt like a jail". Time inside a bubble can stand still.

However, things are looking up. The Tigers returned to training yesterday after they tested negative in all three coronavirus tests so far. All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, following their first practice session in small groups, relayed in a video message yesterday that their job was to adjust to the conditions as well as possible.

"After home quarantine for the first seven days, on the eighth day we went to practice in small groups. Everything was good and it was a first-time experience with such quarantine [protocols] and coming to the New Zealand tour. As sportsmen we try to adjust ourselves to all kinds of conditions," he said.

The vibes were good within the Bangladesh camp after the start of training. "In today's practice, we mostly worked on our fielding -- short and high catches. Because there's a matter of weather and windy conditions here, we practised catching in order to adapt to that. Then we also undertook batting and bowling in short sessions. There was also a little fitness training at the end as we haven't been able to work on fitness in seven days. We did some running as per the trainer's instructions. As more days pass, I will be looking to adjust better with the short practice session."

The positivity of the camp was reflected in Saifuddin saying they would like to take back a result this time around. The all-rounder echoed ODI skipper Tamim's sentiment of changing the record.

"There obviously are expectations [to win matches] because we are a very good team in ODIs. So, if we can all play at our best, if the day is ours, then, of course, the result will talk in our favour. Besides, there are also T20s. And as we are yet to fill in the achievement column [in New Zealand], we will try to ensure we can take something back this time around," Saifuddin said.

The Tigers' key focus will still be on adhering to the 14-day mandatory quarantine period after which things will get much easier as they will be able to mix with locals and roam around during the rest of the tour.

Abahani, Sheikh Russel complete first phase with wins

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani and Sheikh Russel KC completed the first phase of their Bangladesh Premier League campaign with wins over Uttar Baridhara Club and Bangladesh Police respectively at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani survived a scare to notch up a hard-fought 2-1 win against Baridhara after Sheikh Russel thumped Bangladesh Police 5-0.

The outcome helped Abahani regain second place with 25 points from 12 matches, five points clear of fourth-placed Sheikh Russel, who now have 20 points from 12 games.

Following a disappointing 1-2 defeat against Uttar Baridhara in their previous game, Sheikh Russel bounced back brilliantly as they toyed with helpless Police throughout the game.

Former champions Sheikh Russel took only six minutes to break the deadlock when Nigerian Obi Moneke headed home a Habibur Rahman throw-in from inside the box before Brazilian Lopes Rodrigues doubled the lead in the 28th minute.

Mohammad Abdullah increased the lead further in the 34th minute as Sheikh Russel went to the half-time break with a comfortable 3-0 lead. Abdullah completed his brace in the 69th minute when he saw his cross from the right flank make it into the back of the net.

courtesy of Police goalkeeper Saiful Islam Khan's poor attempt to clear with fist.

Despite having struck four goals, Sheikh Russel looked hungry for more and they netted their fifth in the 83rd minute -- a tap-in by Tajik defender Siyovush Asrorov.

In the second match under the floodlight, Uttar Baridhara, boosted by a surprising win over Sheikh Russel in the previous money, gave their opponents a run for their money before suffering their fifth defeat in the league.

Abahani, the six-time champions, however, squandered a lot of opportunities with goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Shohel making some crucial saves that eventually helped the Sky Blues leave the ground with their heads held high.

Brazilian Francisco Rodrigues gave Abahani the lead in the 26th minute, converting a penalty after Mohammad Sohel brought down Abahani's Jewel Rana inside the box.

After the resumption, Abahani's lead was doubled in the 55th minute, thanks to an own goal by defender Saiddoston Fozilov. The Uzbekistan defender fired home from inside the box while attempting to clear a powerful cross from Haitian Kervens Belfort. Afterwards both sides squandered a good number of opportunities before Uttar Baridhara reduced the margin through a tap-in from Egyptian Abdel Rahim in the 90th minute.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Abahani's Brazilian forward Francisco Rodrigues celebrates his team's first goal against Uttar Baridhara Club while (Right) Sheikh Russel's Mohammad Abdullah celebrates one of his two goals against Bangladesh Police during yesterday's Bangladesh Premier League matches.



Pacer Mohammed Siraj struck the biggest blow when he trapped England skipper Joe Root in front with an inswinger on a pitch where Indian spinners claimed eight wickets on the opening day of the fourth Test in Ahmedabad yesterday. [Bottom] Tempers flare as India skipper Virat Kohli and England all-rounder Ben Stokes engage in heated exchange.

PHOTO: REUTERS

England caught in spin web again

REUTERS

England endured a top-order collapse before they registered a below-par 205 in their first innings in the fourth and final Test against India in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

A sixth consecutive sub-200 total looked on the cards for the tourists after they slumped to 30-3 in the morning session. Ben Stokes (55) and Dan Lawrence (46) propped them up but England might regret not making the most of the perfect batting conditions at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

India, who are 2-1 up in the four-test series, were confident against a spin-heavy England attack with James Anderson as the lone frontline seamer, while Stokes battles an upset stomach.

"We're more than capable of scoring at least 300 on that pitch," Stokes said afterwards. "It's frustrating, but we can't dwell on it too much. Overall, it's a much better wicket than the last time we played



here."

Axar Patel was the wrecker-in-chief in that match, which India won in two days, and the left-arm spinner returned to haunt England again after Joe Root elected to bat.

Indian spinners claimed eight of the 10 English wickets...Patel (4-68), Ravichandran Ashwin (3-47) and Washington Sundar (1-14)...on a pitch which looked quite different from the one used for the third test in which 30 wickets fell in five sessions.

"It was a batting wicket, and it was coming onto the bat nicely, so we planned to bowl patiently and keep bowling at the same spot," Mohammad Siraj said.

Triple delight for Alif

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP student Abdur Rahman Alif continued to shine against seniors as the 10th-grade student of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) clinched gold in men's recurve event of Bangabandhu 12nd National Archery Championships in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Alif, who came into



the limelight after beating Ruman Sana in the semifinals on way to winning the gold medal in the Victory Day Archery tournament in December, beat national archer Hakim Ahmed Rubel 7-3 to win back-to-back gold medals.

It was also triple delight for Alif who, pairing with his BKSP teammates grabbed gold in the recurve team and mixed events to help BKSP finish behind Dhaka Army Archery Club (DAAC), who topped the table with five gold and two silver medals.

Mehenaj Akter Monira of DAAC beat Najmin Khatun 6-0 in the final to win the women's recurve gold medal before grabbing women's recurve team gold along with Nasrin Akter and Rabeya Akter.

Koeman can't ask for any more from his team

REUTERS, Barcelona



Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman praised his side for their never-say-die attitude after they reached the Copa del Rey final with a 3-0 win after extra time over Sevilla on Wednesday to pull off the latest in a series of great turnarounds in the competition.

Barca lost the first leg 2-0 but Ousmane Dembele's thumping early



missed a penalty.

Martin Braithwaite's extra-time header completed a 3-2 aggregate win and continued a remarkable journey in this year's Copa, in which Barca needed extra time to knock out third division Cornellia 2-0 and came from behind to beat second division Rayo Vallecano 2-1.

They were 2-0 down at Granada until the 88th minute in the quarter-finals but levelled with two late goals before winning 5-3 after extra time. "We always believed, we have never thrown this Cup away," Koeman told reporters. "It's

a question of mentality, and as a coach I can't ask for any more from my team than what I saw tonight. We kept on fighting in extra time, it was incredible. I'm very satisfied with how hard we worked tonight. We deserved the win."

Unlike previous coaches, Koeman has prioritised the Copa del Rey and rested players in league matches to keep them fresh for Cup games, saying the competition was Barca's best chance of a trophy due to Atletico Madrid's dominance in La Liga and the fierce competition of the Champions League.

'I told myself: Wait Polly, take a chance'

REUTERS



Akila Dananjaya went from hero to zero in the space of two overs, claiming a hat-trick before being smashed for six sixes by Kieron Pollard as West Indies beat Sri Lanka by four wickets in their first Twenty20 international at Antigua on Wednesday.

"I felt after hitting a couple of sixes, I understood how the pitch plays, it was important to be positive and play your shots," Pollard said. "Back yourselves to clear the boundary." "A couple of things went through my mind before the sixth ball, I thought should I go for the six or take the 30 runs in the over, he went around the wicket and bowled it onto my pads, I told myself 'Wait Polly, take a chance'," he added. "That's how I have played my cricket all along, especially against the spinners."



HIGHLIGHT

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard on Wednesday became only the third man to hit six sixes in an international over in the opening Twenty20 international against Sri Lanka. Pollard followed in the footsteps of South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs (2007 World Cup against Netherlands) and India's Yuvraj Singh (2007 T20 World Cup against England) by achieving the rare feat. The hapless bowler was Akila Dananjaya who in his previous over had claimed a hat-trick of wickets.

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PHOTO COURTESY: MOUSUMI STRAJ

An oriental-white eye spotted on a Mandar tree branch at Satchhari National Park in Habiganj's Chunarughat. During this time (February-March), Mandar flowers bloom and around 50 species of birds gather on the trees and the oriental-white eye is one of them. This bird collects nectar from the flowers. The photo was taken recently.

BASIC BANK SCAMS

Finish probe of 21 cases in 75 days

HC orders ACC
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to submit within two and a half months the charge sheets in the 21 cases filed over BASIC Bank loan scam. There are 21 corruption cases with the trial court against Iqbal Hossain Bhuiyan, managing partner of SD Survey Firm, and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

COUP IN MYANMAR

Halt vicious crackdown

UN rights chief urges junta

REUTERS

The United Nations human rights chief yesterday called on Myanmar's security forces to halt their "vicious crackdown on peaceful protesters" and urged the military to release people unlawfully detained since the February 1 coup.

Michelle Bachelet said that more than 1,700 people have been arbitrarily detained and that arrests were escalating. They included 29 journalists arrested in recent days, some charged with incitement to opposition or attending an unlawful assembly.

At least 54 people have been killed by Myanmar police and soldiers since the

coup, but the actual death toll could be much higher, she said in a statement, citing figures her office has been able to verify.

"Myanmar's military must stop murdering and jailing protesters," Bachelet said, decrying the use of live ammunition against peaceful protesters across the country where hundreds have been wounded.

Soldiers and police are reported to be conducting door-to-door searches and detaining people, some of whom disappear into custody without their family being told about their whereabouts, a practice known as enforced disappearance, she said.

Bachelet urged Myanmar officials

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

CTG CENTRAL JAIL
Jail super, 4 others sued for torturing prisoner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five people, including Chattogram Central Jail's superintendent, were sued yesterday for torturing a prisoner with electric shocks and drug injections.

The other four were the jailer, assistant surgeon of the jail's hospital, and one civilian

The prisoner Rupam Kanti Nath has been undergoing treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) under the jail authority's custody, said the prisoner's lawyer Bhulon Lal Bhoumik.

The victim's wife Jhama Rani Debnath, 42, filed the case with the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ashfaqur Rahman accusing the jail officials and one Ratan Bhattacharya, business partner of Rupam, of torturing her husband in custody. The plaintiff did not mention any other names in the case.

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 5

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-15	12-30	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

An end foretold

MARCH 5, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



GENERAL YAQUB RESIGNS

General Yaqub, who had taken charge of East Pakistan from Governor Ahsan on March 1, 1971, sent his resignation by telegram on the morning of March 5, 1971. Siddiq Salik, then public relations officer in the Pakistan army at Dhaka, recounts the

events leading to Yaqub's resignation in his book Witness to Surrender.

On March 4 General Yaqub rang up General Peerzada, principal staff officer to Yahya Khan, and told him to request the president to visit Dhaka without further delay. Peerzada, after having a word with Yahya, rang back and informed Yaqub that the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Deepest Condolences to my dearest friend Azam J Chowdhury



I know that this is a difficult time for you and your family, and I wish I had words to make it easier.

The loss of a mother is such a great loss that cannot be filled by others. Your mother was an angel in human form.

Mothers never really die, they just keep the house up in the sky, they polish the sun by day, and light the stars that shine at night, keep the moonbeams silvery bright and in their heavenly home above, they wait to welcome those they love.

My deepest condolences on the loss of your beloved mother, **Mrs. Bakhtunnesa Chowdhury.**

You and your family are always in our thoughts and prayers.

Our heartfelt sympathies from

Bin & Vernon Khoo
and
The Directors & staff of Flagship Dhaka CETP Bd Ltd.

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