



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. No. DA 781

Vol. XXXI No. 64

CHAITRA 4, 1427 BS

Your Right to Know

SHABAN 3, 1442 HUIJI

16 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk12.00



66



"The independent and democratic Bangladesh was built based on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's love for his people."

CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER
JUSTIN TRUDEAU



"My heartfelt homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a champion of human rights and freedom, on his birth anniversary."

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI



"The people of Bangladesh have stayed true to their conviction and triumphed over challenge one after another."

CHINESE PRESIDENT
XI JINPING



"Bangabandhu had made tremendous efforts to strengthen bilateral ties with Japan after the independence of Bangladesh."

JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER
YOSHIHIDE SUGA



50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE



From left ... Bangabandhu's daughters -- Sheikh Rehana and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina -- and guest of honour President of the Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, and Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid at the inaugural day of the 10-day celebrations of Mujib Borsho and Golden Jubilee of the country's independence.

PHOTO: PTI

Now time to forge ahead

Says Hasina; 10-day celebrations begin

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The history of the people of this land is that of repression, of colonialism, and of being ruled and looted by foreign forces. So, their struggle for liberation and self-rule was something that was the most sought after.

While many leaders emerged and fought for this cause, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the one who ultimately inspired, mobilised, and led the people in snatching independence from the last of their rulers -- the then West Pakistani junta. The Pakistanis



"Anti-Bangladesh forces are still active at home and abroad and they want to disparage the achievements through various malpractices."

discriminated against the Bangalee nation and dominated them in all possible terms, be it political, economic or cultural.

Yesterday was the birth centenary of the great leader and also the National Children's Day. This year is special because the nation is celebrating the golden jubilee of its independence.

To mark the occasion, the government has taken up a 10-day celebration programme, under the title Mujib Chirantan (Eternal Mujib). The country went into a festive mood with the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

A symbol of democracy, freedom

Maldives president on Bangabandhu

UNB, Dhaka

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih yesterday said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a symbol of democracy and freedom, whose efforts were instrumental in securing an independent destiny for Bangladesh's people.

He said Bangabandhu would remain a source of inspiration for many generations to come.

The visiting Maldivian president spoke as the guest

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



3 patients die after ICU fire

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bulbul Ahmed Kajol heard an explosion near ICU bed-12 at the Covid-19 unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's (DMCH) new building around 8:10am yesterday.

Soon after, he saw smoke spreading out from the ICU bed.

The sudden and awful incident forced him to evacuate the ICU and shift his ailing brother Abdullah Al Mahmud, 48, a critical Covid-19 patient, like attendants of 13 other ICU patients there.

Three of those ICU patients, including Bulbul's brother, died after they were relocated.

Two other dead were identified as Engineer Kazi Golam Mostafa, 66, of Chandpur, and Kishore Chandra Roy, 70, of Tangail.

Some of the 14 critical patients were taken to a nearby coronary care unit (CCU)



on the same floor of the 10-storey building whereas some were shifted to other wards or hospitals.

According to Bulbul, the smoke spread out so dangerously that they could not even see anything or breathe easily.

"When I was taking my brother out of the room like others, nurses instructed us to rush to the nearby CCU."

"But my brother died after two hours as there was no high-flow oxygen supply," he told The Daily Star.

"None of the hospital officials helped us while evacuating the ICU. I had to put off medical equipment from my brother's body while moving him out," he said.

Five firefighting units brought the flames under control around 8:40am and completely doused the fire at 9:35am.

Seeking anonymity, a nurse who was

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

DGHS wants full lockdown

Recommends govt not open schools, hold public exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The DGHS has proposed that the government not reopen educational institutions and hold any public examinations in the wake of rising number of Covid-19 patients.

In Tuesday's meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, the DGHS officials also suggested going for a complete lockdown to curb the virus transmission.

The high-ups of the PMO, however, opined that the authorities concerned will make decision on such issues and asked the DGHS to strengthen enforcement of health safety guideline and reopen the Covid-19 hospitals that were shut down earlier.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BUSINESS

USE OF FOREX RESERVE

Caution in the air

Warning is in the air, as the government gears into using its burgeoning forex reserve of \$43 billion for the first time in what it calls its "strategic development projects".

Good development, because a small portion of the emergency fund will now be used in infrastructural development to give more

MORE ON PAGE 2

STORY ON B1

Accelerate your business growth.

Introducing the new **Visa Business Card**.
One-stop-business solution | Packed with great benefits

Benefits of your Visa Business Card



Convenience

- Better than carrying cash
- Hassle-free payments (domestic or international)



Control over finance

- One card for all your business expenses
- Helps track, monitor and reconcile business expenses

Avail exclusive domestic and international offers



eCommerce



Digital marketing



Cloud and web services



Business productivity



Entertainment

and more.

Apply for a Visa Business Card today | For more details, visit: bd.visa.com



*The image used is for illustrative purposes and the person in the image is a model. All brand names and logos are the property of their respective owners.

VISA everywhere you want to be

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,865
New cases in 24hrs



5,62,752
Total cases



8,608
Deaths



5,15,989
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



2,686,941
Deaths



121,592,985
Total cases

World leaders hail Bangabandhu

Xi, Modi, Trudeau, Suga deliver special messages on his birthday

UNB, BSS Dhaka

Chinese President Xi Jinping has said he will work with President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to strengthen the complementarities between two development strategies, advance Belt and Road cooperation, and take the strategic partnership of cooperation to a new height.

"We must always remember what the elder generation of leaders did for growth of China-Bangladesh relations, and shall pass on the baton of the China-Bangladesh friendship to future generations," he said.

In a pre-recorded speech, President Xi wished Bangladesh prosperity and its people happiness. "May the China-Bangladesh friendship last from generation to generation!"

The Chinese president made the remarks marking the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence, reports UNB.

President Hamid, his Maldivian counterpart Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, PM Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana were present at the function held at the National Parade Ground.

The Chinese president said 50 years ago, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had founded the People's Republic of Bangladesh. "A man who devoted his whole life to his country and people, he is fondly remembered by the people in Bangladesh to this day."

He said the "Sonar Bangla" Bangabandhu envisioned is still galvanising the 160 million Bangladeshi people in their pursuit of national rejuvenation.

"Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was an old and good friend of the Chinese people. On his two visits to China in 1952 and 1957, he forged friendships with Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai, and other Chinese leaders of the elder generation," he said.

As a Chinese saying goes, Xi said, "Do not forget those who dug the well when drinking water from it."

Over the five decades of independence, the people of Bangladesh have stayed true to their conviction and triumphed over challenge one after another, he added.

"The two countries have supported each other and made progress together. Today, both countries are at a crucial stage of revitalisation and development. The Chinese dream of great national renewal can well connect with the 'Sonar Bangla' dream."

Xi said his country would not forget that at the height of its fight against the novel coronavirus, the Bangladesh government and people donated a large quantity of medical supplies to China.

TRUDEAU DELIVERS MESSAGE

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in a video message said the independent and democratic Bangladesh was built based on Bangabandhu's love for his people.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Politics on reverse gear

Says President Hamid

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid has said politics in Bangladesh is now moving in the opposite direction and some opportunists have made politics a profession.

"The cardinal motto of politics should be -- party takes precedence over person and country over party. It seems that politics is moving in the opposite direction," he said.

The president was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a 10-day special programme at the National Parade Ground yesterday, marking the 50 years of Bangladesh's independence and the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hamid delivered the welcome speech at the programme, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

He called upon the politicians to learn from the life and deeds of Bangabandhu and devote themselves to serving the country and its people.

"Politics and profession is not the same thing. With a profession, one earns a livelihood for himself and his family. Politics is a greater field to work for the welfare of the country and its people. If one considers politics as a profession then he will have to reel in the family cycle forgetting the country and the people," he said.



Neither family happiness nor comfy life could distract the Father of the Nation from his goal, Hamid said, adding that if Bangabandhu wanted he could have become the prime minister of undivided Pakistan and spent his days happily with his family.

"He could have immersed himself in wealth. But he very easily rejected all this and took the interest of the country and people as his vow of life."

The president said Bangabandhu always dreamt of building a happy and prosperous country along with political independence.

The incumbent Awami League government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is making relentless efforts to realise his dream, he added.

Praising the current development

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Hefajat supporters attack Hindu homes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Several hundred supporters of Hefajat-e Islam attacked, vandalised and looted at least 75 Hindu houses in Sunamganj's Noagaon village yesterday morning over a Facebook post.

Thirty-five houses were damaged badly and 40 more partially in the attack, said Md Jahangir Hossain, deputy commissioner of Sunamganj.

"We have assured the victims of all sorts of help from the administration. We've told them that the attackers and their patrons will be identified and legal action will be taken against them," he stated.

The attackers also vandalised several idols and looted valuables from the Hindu houses in the village under Shalla upazila, locals said, alleging that police were late in reaching the spot.

Carrying locally-made weapons, Hefajat supporters from villages adjacent to Shalla upazila started gathering at a bazar in Noagaon village around 9:00am and launched the attack about an hour later.

The mayhem continued for nearly an hour till police reached the spot at about 11:00am and brought the situation under control.

However, no one was arrested and no case was filed over the attack.

Rontu Das, a resident of Noagaon village, said locals from adjacent villages carrying weapons started gathering near the village yesterday morning even though police on Tuesday night arrested the young man, also a resident of his village, who made

posts on Facebook about a Hefajat leader.

"All of a sudden they attacked our village. We ran for our lives, leaving everything behind. The attackers kept ravaging our houses until police arrived," he said.

Sajal Chandra Das, another resident of the village, said, "The attackers were mostly from nearby Nachni, Chandipur, Santoshpur and Samangal villages of Derai upazila and Kalimpur of Shalla upazila."

Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police in Sunamganj, said, "On information of the attack by Hefajat supporters, police and officials of the local administration rushed to the spot, pacified the angry mob and brought the situation under control."

On Monday, Hefajat unit of nearby Derai upazila, organised a rally in the upazila where the organisation's Ameer Junayed Babunagari and Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque spoke.

At the rally, Mamunul criticised the celebration of Bangabandhu's birth centenary and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit marking the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence, according to local media reports.

The following day, Jhumon Das Apon, a youth from Noagaon village, made posts on his Facebook wall, slamming Mamunul for trying to create a religious divide, said Nazmul Haque, officer-in-charge of Shalla Police Station.

At this, Hefajat supporters became

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Now time to forge ahead

FROM PAGE 1

celebrations beginning yesterday in the presence of foreign dignitaries.

It started with the musical item "Anandaloke, Mongolaloke Birajo Sotro Sundaro..." around 4:30pm, performed by 100 children at the National Parade Square at the capital's Tejgaon, which was decorated with colourful billboards welcoming the foreign dignitaries.

As the children performed patriotic songs, an animated film on Bangabandhu was screened at the venue. Earlier, President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and his wife First Lady Madam Fazna Ahmed, and Sheikh Rehana, daughter of Bangabandhu, and National Professor Rafiqul Islam took seats on the stage after being invited by cultural personality and former minister Asaduzzaman Noor.

Verses from the holy books -- the Quran, the Geeta, the Tripitaka and the Bible were read.

"Ebarer Sangram, Amader Muktir Sangram; Ebarer Sangram, Swadhinatar Sangram" -- the historic call of Bangabandhu for emancipation was being played through loudspeakers, reminding the audience of the unequivocal call for independence of Bangladesh.

Eminent musicians sang "Tumi Banglar Dhrubo Tara, Tumi Hridoyer Batighar" [you are the polar star of Bangla and you are the lighthouse of heart], the theme song of the programme, written by poet Kamal Chowdhury and composed by Nakib Khan.

A video of Bangladesh Air Force places in formation in the shape of "100" was also screened, leaving the audience, which included cabinet ministers, government officials and foreign diplomats, impressed. The event was limited to people due to the pandemic.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Japanese counterpart Yoshihide Suga delivered video messages addressing the people of Bangladesh on the occasion.

Presiding over the inaugural event, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "On this day in 1920, a child was born in a secluded village of Tungipara. The child, who came to this earth enlightening the lap of mother Sheikh Sayera Khatun and father Sheikh Lutfur Rahman, illuminated the life of the Bangalees and brought them freedom."

She said the freedom of the country came as a result of the continuous struggle initiated by Bangabandhu on March 11, 1948, with the ultimate target of political-economic and cultural emancipation of the Bangalees.

"It was a war-ravaged country, which was under hundreds of years of subjugation. In just three and a half years, he carried out the mammoth task of building a fully-fledged sovereign state where people were suffering from exploitation, deprivation, hunger, and poverty."

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had done many things which seemed impossible. Hasina said, expressing sincere gratitude to all the friendly countries and leaders who extended necessary help during the Liberation War and post-war reconstruction of the country.

She said Bangladesh is going to celebrate the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation and the golden jubilee of independence at a time when the country is well on track to graduate from the LDC status to that of a developing nation.

She stated that the country's per capita income has exceeded \$2,000; the poverty rate has declined below 20.5 percent; the country has become self-sufficient in food grain production and the average life expectancy has increased to 73 years.

Hasina warned about the active threat of "anti-Bangladesh forces" both

at home and abroad, saying, "They want to disparage this achievement through various malpractices."

"On the birthday of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, let us, in a united manner, resist all evil-sprouts and take the beloved motherland forward towards the path of development and progress."

"Now it's time to move forward. There is no chance to look behind. Overcoming all obstacles, we shall establish this country as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's exploitation-free, deprivation-free, hunger-free, poverty-free, illiteracy-free, non-communal Golden Bangladesh."

Addressing the event, National Prof Rafiqul Islam said the Bangalees were an unfortunate nation, and their bitter experiences are unforgettable. The nation had always been under the foreign rulers and looters.

"To rid the nation of foreign rule, one leader was born. He is no other than Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who throughout his life fought for the oppressed people," he said.

Bangabandhu had to sacrifice his own life and that of most of his family members in a military coup on August 15, 1975.

"However, today he remains immortal. His most important contribution is an independent country, liberation from the curse of slavery. We are indebted to him forever," Prof Rafiqul Islam said.

Today, Bangladesh is advancing in an irresistible speed, he said, adding that the theme of yesterday's event, therefore, has been set as "Bhengechhe Duar, Eshcheche Jyotimoy, Tomari Hok Joy".

British Journalist Sir Mark Tully, BBC's Indian affairs correspondent in 1971, who covered Bangladesh's Liberation War, in his recorded video message said he shared to the world the pain and anguish of the Bangalees during that time.

Now that the country is advancing, he rejoices in the celebrations. Tully recalled the memories of Bangabandhu, saying he was a great leader as well as very affectionate as a human being.

He congratulated Bangladeshis and the leadership for the progress it made over the decades.

Audiovisuals, animated films and cultural shows performed at the programme yesterday featured the life and legacy of Bangabandhu, his struggles for peoples' rights and independence. Cultural troops from India and Bangladesh took part in the cultural show that began around 6:30pm and continued till 8:00pm.

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa will arrive on March 19, Nepalese President Bidya Devi Bhandari on March 22, Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering on March 24 and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 26 to attend the celebrations.

Besides, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen would deliver recorded speech on March 18, OIC Secretary General Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen on March 20, Unesco DG Audrey Azoulay on March 23, Pope Francis on March 24, South Korean Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun and Japanese friend of Bangladesh Takashi Hayakawa's son Osamu Hayakawa on March 25.

The theme of today's event is "Mohakaler Tarjoni"; "Jatokal Robe Padma, Jamuna" on March 19; "Tarunner Alokshikha" on March 20; "Dhangshastoope Jiboner Gaan" on March 21; "Banglar Mati, Amaar Mati" on March 22; "Narimukti, Sammya O Swadhinata" on March 23; "Shanti, Mukti O Manabatar Agradoot" on March 24; "Gonohattay Kalratri O Alokter Obhijatra" on March 25 and "Swadhinatar 50 Bochchor O Agragot'r Subamarekha" on March 26.

The programmes would be broadcast live on electronic and social media platforms.



Charred and melted medical equipment at the ICU of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital after a fire yesterday morning swept through this critical care unit causing the deaths of at least three Covid-19 patients.

PHOTO:
PALASH KHAN

3 patients die after ICU fire

FROM PAGE 1

deployed at the unit, said, five of them were inside the ICU ward when the fire broke out.

"Five others were inside the nurse staff room," she added.

After the smoke spread out, the hospital officials instructed all the patients to be shifted to the nearby CCU, she said.

"We have managed to take more than 15 different ICU devices to the safe zone," she added.

According to officials, the main ICU unit of the country's largest tertiary hospital has around 900 Covid-19

dedicated beds at a time.

Since this Covid-19 unit was launched after the coronavirus transmission started in the country in March last year, these 14 ICU beds had "never been vacant" so far, they said.

There was no injury directly caused by the fire, the hospital authorities said in a press release.

Three committees -- a five-member committee on behalf of the health ministry, a nine-member committee on behalf of the DMCH, and another four-member committee on behalf of the fire service -- have been formed to

investigate the fire incident.

In the recent past, at least three fire incidents took place at the DMCH, including one in the general ICU of the hospital in early January.

Brig Gen Nazmul Haque, director of the hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday that the adjacent 20-bed Post-CCU unit has been kept closed but will be resumed within days.

"As we will need time to resume the Covid-19 ICU unit, we will convert the 10-bed high-dependency unit at the burn unit to ICU within a week," he added.

A symbol of democracy, freedom

FROM PAGE 1

of honour at the official ceremony marking the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The event was held at the National Parade Square in the capital.

Solih said throughout his life, Bangabandhu was a firm advocate of democracy and political liberty and that he advocated those ideals which resonated with people from all walks of life.

Despite the tragic circumstances of his death, Bangabandhu would always have an honoured place in the hearts of those who yearn for democracy and freedom, the president added.

He shed light on Bangladesh's extraordinary work in uplifting the lives of its people and developing the nation.

The Maldivian leader expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Bangladeshi government for the assistance it has

provided to the Maldives. He praised the welcome presence of a team of healthcare professionals from the Bangladesh Air Force. They have travelled to the Maldives twice to assist the country in curbing the spread of Covid-19.

Solih extended invitations to President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to visit to the Maldives at an opportune time.

DGHS wants full lockdown

FROM PAGE 1

"We have just presented those points for discussion. Those were our proposal for discussion. We have discussed, but the authorities concerned will decide. But we have been asked to vigorously run campaigns on health guidelines," Prof ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star last night.

In this context, there was discussion on social media whether tomorrow's 41st public service examinations will be held or not.

"We have only one day left before the

exams. We have sent question papers and other logistics to different exam centres. Examinees have also come to the divisional cities. It is tough to stop the exam now," Shahjahan Ali Mollah, a member of Public Service Commission, said last night.

In the last 10 days, the transmission of novel coronavirus had been gradually rising every day with experts fearing spread of the new strains of novel coronavirus, including those first detected in the UK and South Africa.

The meeting also discussed several other issues, including the stop to mass gathering, limiting different

markets, political gatherings, election, tourist gathering, religious meeting, and iftar events; strengthening screening at all entry points to the country -- airports, seaports and land ports -- and quarantining people who come in contact with any infected people.

The new Covid-19 strain was found in 10 European Union returnees, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday, UNB adds.

He was speaking at a programme marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

BUSINESS

FROM PAGE 1

USE OF FOREX RESERVE

Caution in the air

pace to the economy. Alarm, because of the existing track-record of project implementation and fraudulences in financial sector. Economists and development experts gave a mixed bag of reactions when approached by The Daily Star. The fate of the reserved fund is going to be sorely tested by the good governance or the lack of

it, they observed. In a nutshell, the government will take loan from the reserved state coffer for government projects to be implemented by the government. And, for loan repayment, it's also the government, who would give the sovereign loan guarantee and pay it back in case of defaulted loan.

So, what's going to happen if the good development stumbles on to poor monitoring, lack of transparency and quick-fix mechanism? The government will have to fork out the penalty from its one pocket to another. It will be the public money that is destined to be wasted. "Forex reserve plundered" will replace in the typical headlines of "public bank plundered".

STORY ON B1



Abul Mansur Ahmad’s 42nd anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 42nd death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist, and politician of the sub-continent. He died in 1979. One of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature, he was also a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism. He worked for prominent newspapers such as Krishak, Nabajug, Sultan, and Mohammadi, and was editor of the Kolkata-based Daily Ittehad from 1946 to 1948.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Working for a better future for children: PM

President, premier pay homage to Bangabandhu marking his birth centenary, Nat’l Children’s Day

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is doing everything possible for ensuring a better future for the children of the country. “We want to make the lives of children more colourful, beautiful, successful and fruitful. This is our aim,” she said. The PM was addressing a children’s rally and cultural programme marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children’s Day on Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex premises at Tungipara, Gopalganj. She joined the programme virtually from her official residence Gono Bhaban. “We’ve become a developing country, we won’t just stop here. Bangladesh should move forward further. Now our aim is to make Bangladesh a developed and prosperous country by 2041,” she said. Hasina said the government is taking all the necessary steps and formulating all the policies to make Bangladesh a developed country by 2041.

“Those who will come to power in the future will follow the policies and continue the trend of development. That’s what we want,” she said. The prime minister briefly mentioned the steps taken by her government for the children during its different tenures. She urged guardians, teachers, eminent personalities, religious leaders, public representatives and others to remain alert so that the children do not fall prey to any destructive behaviour. Hasina said the government has amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention law to ensure tougher punishment for offenders. The prime minister said the pandemic will fade away and the schools will be reopened then. She urged the children to continue their studies staying at home alongside continuing their cultural activities. “Sports and cultural activities are urgently needed.” Highlighting various measures taken by Bangabandhu for the welfare of children, SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A woman walks to a latrine -- the sorry-looking structure made from crumpled corrugated tin sheets -- with a small water-pot in hand for ablution. The photo was taken yesterday from a slum in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area, but the situation is not much different in any of the settlement in the capital.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DEPLORABLE SANITATION CONDITIONS IN DHAKA SLUMS

Women bear the brunt of it

NILIMA JAHAN

Thirty-year-old Aklima Akter of Mirpur’s Duaripara slum shares her tiny and slippery “hanging latrine” with over 80 people in her neighbourhood. The latrine is made out of tin and installed above a waterbody. It allows feces to fall through a pipe and contaminate the water. In absence of running water and hand-washing facilities, Aklima and her neighbours depend on one wash jug (bodna) of water to clean themselves after defecation. During menstruation, it becomes more challenging for the poorest of the poor like Aklima to wash unsanitary rags inside the tiny space with such a small amount of water. If she goes out to collect another

wash jug of water, she hears taunting words from the male neighbours. Duaripara slum houses around 6,000 families, where most of the inhabitants pull rickshaws, work in garments or as domestic help, or run small businesses. There are only 40 community toilets in the slum, while the rest are unsanitary hanging latrines. “In the morning, there is a long queue outside the latrine, and people like me who stay home usually don’t get any chance to use the toilet for long periods. Most of the time, I pile up my damp rags inside the room, and when there is lesser rush, I wash those to use further,” said Aklima. Although it causes discomfort, itching, irritation and urinary tract infections (UTI), Aklima says with certainty that “she has no other

options.” The scenario is similar in the Kalshi and Wapda slums in Mirpur. During recent visits, a large number of women and schoolgoing girls were seen sharing hanging latrines. The challenges of sanitation have intensified since a large number of women workers lost their jobs in the pandemic (mostly RMG workers and domestic help) and schools have been shut for almost a year. According to a 2018 World Bank report, about 50 million people in Bangladesh use shared, rudimentary toilets and only 28 percent of toilets are equipped with soap and water. Access to clean water, adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, with special attention to SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Returnee migrants can go back as skilled workers with certificate

Says expatriates’ welfare minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With government-provided recognition of prior learning (RPL) certificates, returnee migrant workers will be able to go abroad as skilled workers, said Expatriates’ Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday. “They will be able to earn more,” he said while addressing a discussion at the auditorium of Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKITTC). BKITTC, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Mohila Technical Training Centre (SFMMTTC) and Bangladesh German Technical Training Centre (BGITTC) organised the discussion marking birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children’s Day. Addressing the event as chief guest, Imran Ahmad said about 4 lakh Bangladeshi workers returned home amid the pandemic last year. The ministry has undertaken initiative to provide them with RPL certificates based on skills they have amassed abroad, he said. Marking Bangabandhu’s birth centenary, he said the ministry has taken initiatives to create “Bangabandhu Corner” at each technical training centre (TTC) in the country. The minister handed over RPL certificates among three returnee migrants from Qatar, Jordan and Malaysia at the event. Besides, winners of an essay and drawing competition also received crests and certificates. Officials of the ministry and its different organisations as well as principals of the TTCs also addressed the programme.

Moudud’s body to arrive today

UNB, Dhaka


The body of BNP standing committee member and noted lawyer Moudud Ahmed will be brought back home from Singapore today evening. “All the necessary formalities have been completed to bring back sir’s (Moudud’s) body to the country from Singapore by a flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines,” said the late BNP leader’s personal assistant Mominur Rahman Sujon. He said a flight of Biman carrying Moudud’s mortal remains is scheduled to leave Singapore at 3:50pm today. Upon arrival, Sujon said, the body will be taken to the mortuary of United Hospital. He said Moudud’s first namaz-e-janaza will be held on the High Court premises at 10am on Friday while the second one will take place in front of BNP’s Nayapaltan central office at 11am. Another janaza for the former six-time MP may be held at the South Plaza of the National Parliament, subject to the Speaker’s permission, he added. Later, Moudud’s body will be taken to his SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

BRTC launches special Tungipara-Mujibnagar service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) yesterday launched a special bus service between Tungipara of Gopalganj and Mujibnagar of Meherpur to mark the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain inaugurated the service through video conference. BRTC Chairman Tazul Islam was special guest at the programme. Tungipara is the birthplace of Bangabandhu while Mujibnagar is a town in Meherpur where the provisional government of independent Bangladesh took oath on April 17, 1971. The special service will connect these historic places directly to encourage people to visit, BRTA said in a press release yesterday. Two AC-buses-- one from Tungipara and one from Mujibnagar -- will start from 6am every day. The route of the service will be: Mujibnagar- Meherpur town- Chuadanga- Jhenaidah- Magura- Faridpur- Bhanga- Gopalganj and Tungipara. The bus ride is priced at Tk 200 for the first 10 days, after which the fare will be fixed on the basis of passenger demand.

In memory of
Bushra Hossain 1974-2020



The hours you were given were too short, but we know your life was long in moments of joy and happiness. In these times we cannot invite anyone to come for her prayers, but we hope you will take a moment to remember her today.

“Dentists in Bangladesh are now far more adept at treating major dental diseases”



Professor Dr Syed Morshed Moula
Head of Dental Unit
Dhaka Community Medical College

There has been tremendous development in every sector of the country. As part of the dentistry community, would you say there has been similar development in the oral healthcare sector?

In the past, there were not sufficient institutes in the country offering a degree in Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). All over Bangladesh, we only had one dental college situated in Dhaka. But this scenario slowly changed with time. At present, there are around 20 dental colleges in Bangladesh offering the BDS degree. This expansion in the dentistry education sector has resulted in increase in knowledge regarding oral and dental healthcare as well. One very good trend we have observed is that nowadays parents are concerned about their children’s oral health from a very early age and they conduct regular dentist visits. We believe that accessibility to better oral healthcare treatment has caused this rapid increase in awareness among the general populace. We are now far more adept at treating all major dental diseases and disorders. As a result, many people are living healthier and happier lives.

What steps would you suggest everyone to take in order to properly care for their teeth and oral health?

It does not require much effort or money to properly care for one’s teeth. All it requires is the maintenance of proper oral hygiene. The only way we can keep our mouth and teeth clean is by regularly brushing our teeth. I recommend brushing twice a day; once in the morning and once before bed. I consider regular brushing to be a form of vaccination for the teeth, as it acts as the primary prevention mechanism against various ailments and diseases. Along with regular and

proper brushing of the teeth, it is just as important to monitor one’s diet. Foods high in refined sugar in particular can have damaging effects on one’s dental health and may lead to diseases such as gingivitis.

Teeth sensitivity has been a major topic of debate in recent times. What are the signs of someone suffering from sensitive teeth? How can we combat teeth sensitivity?

What we need to understand first is the difference between the terms sensitivity and hypersensitivity. Everyone’s teeth are more or less sensitive to environmental stimuli. Our teeth are naturally sensitive to foods and drinks that are too hot or too cold. But, if your teeth hurt when you bite into a cold ice cream or when you drink hot soup, your teeth might be suffering from hypersensitivity. This is when the outer coating of our teeth, called the enamel, gets damaged.

There are various reasons for this hypersensitivity starting from unhealthy, food habits to wrong brushing techniques. I recommend using anti-sensitivity toothpaste in order to combat this hypersensitivity. Along with that, it is also necessary to use the right set of toothbrush with soft bristles to ensure protection of the enamel.

Recently, we saw a campaign circulating called “Not a BDS, not a dentist”. What is the purpose behind this campaign?

The main purpose behind this campaign is saving people from quack doctors. A lot of people work in this profession although they do not have the necessary qualifications. It is very difficult for the ordinary person to judge whether the dentist they are going to has a proper educational background or not. Through this campaign we hope to shed light on this issue. At least a BDS degree is necessary in order to be a dental surgeon and treat patients.

Interviewed and written by Tasnim Odrika of The Daily Star.




শিরশির অনুভূতি দূর করে মাত্র ৩০ সেকেন্ডে

SENSITIVE EXPERT
Pepsodent

#DefeatSensitivity
*Based on in vivo study, on finger applications

ADCOMM 2021



জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধুর
জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে
শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলী

হোসাফ গ্রুপ
হাই টাওয়ার, ৯ মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২।

Pakistan seeks to improve relations with Bangladesh

Country's president tells envoy to Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan President Dr Arif Alvi has said his country wants to improve commercial and cultural relations with Bangladesh.

Pakistan highly values its ties with Bangladesh and wants to further expand cooperation by using the existing bilateral mechanisms, including Political Consultations at Foreign Secretary Level and Joint Economic Commission, the president said while talking to Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the presidential palace, in Islamabad Tuesday, according to a press statement from the Pakistan High Commission in Bangladesh.

The statement comes when Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of independence from the oppression of Pakistan through a brutal war in 1971. Bangladesh has reiterated the importance of resolving outstanding bilateral issues with Pakistan, including an official apology from Pakistan for the genocide it committed during war. Dhaka has also sought completion of the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, and settling the issue of the division of assets.

There is some trade between the two countries, but recent actions by Pakistan have seriously irritated Bangladesh. For example, the Pakistan parliament adopted resolutions against the war crimes trial of Bangladesh, in which some major criminals who committed crimes against humanity in 1971 were convicted and hanged.

According to the Pakistan High Commission statement, Pakistan President Alvi underscored the need to enhance commercial relations, business-to-business cooperation and people-to-people contacts.



A young cyclist pops a wheelie at the front of a rally in Barishal city yesterday. On the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children's Day, Barishal City Corporation organised the vibrant bicycle rally where people of all ages joined. Starting from the zila school area, the rally paraded the city. This photo was taken yesterday afternoon from C&B area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Fire guts 80 tin-shed rooms in Ashulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A fire gutted dozens of tin-shed rooms at a workers' colony in Ashulia of Savar yesterday.

Fire service sources said the fire broke out around 9:30am in the colony at Berun in Jamgora area.

Jahangir Alam, senior station officer of DEPZ fire station, told The Daily Star that 70-80 rooms made with bamboo and tin were burnt. However, no casualty was reported, said the fire official.

"We suspect that an electric short circuit from a nearby shop caused the fire that spread quickly," said Jahangir.

Four firefighting units from the station rushed to the spot and doused the blaze in one and half hours of efforts, he said.

Contacted, Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Begum Shamim Ara Nipa said they heard about the fire incident. "We will try our best to help the fire victims after discussing with the district administration."

FLAT FOR RENT
2200 SFT, 4 BED, 5 TOILET, VARANDA, DRAWING/ FAMILY LOUNGE, CAR PARKING, LIFT, UTTARA SECTOR-4, ROAD-9, HOUSE-21, 1ST+3RD FLOOR FOR RENT.
CONTACT: 01715000166

Abul Mansur

FROM PAGE 3

He wrote about the language issue from early 1940s and contributed to the Language Movement as the editor of the Ittehad.

A very successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad played a key role in the formation of the Awami Muslim League. He served as vice-president of the organisation from 1953 to 1958.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was the author of the famous Ekush Dafa (21-point programme) election manifesto of Jukta Front in the 1954 election through which the Muslim League was ousted from power. The Ekush Dafa was the first comprehensive articulation of the political, economic and cultural demands of the Bangalees of the then eastern part of Pakistan.

He was elected a member of East Bengal Provincial Assembly in that election, and served as health minister in the United Front cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. In 1955, he was elected a member of Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

He was the minister for education in the United Front government of East Pakistan in 1956 and the minister for commerce and trade in 1956-1957. After the promulgation of martial law by Ayub Khan in 1958, he was imprisoned and subsequently released in 1962. He then retired from politics.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was known for his strong stand in favour of regional autonomy of East Pakistan. He also made remarkable contributions to industrialisation of the long neglected East Pakistan. He always propagated secularism in a manner unparalleled in the forties, fifties and sixties.

Ahmad's publications include great satires like "Aina", "Asmani Purdah", "Gulliver Safar Nama" and "Food Conference". He also penned insightful works on social and political history of Bengal such as "Bangladesher Culture". He has two autobiographical writings -- "Atma Katha" and "Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bachar".

He was born in 1898 in Dhanikhola village of Trishal, Mymensingh.

In 2015, five researchers were awarded for their works on Abul Mansur Ahmad -- Dr Nurul Amin, Dr Rajib Humayun, Dr Chengis Khan, Dr Mizanur Rahman, and Imran Mahfuz. A special honorary memorial award was given to Professor Emeritus Dr Rafiqul Islam for editing a six-volume work of Abul Mansur Ahmad.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Create pvt sector opportunities for them: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a webinar have stressed on creating employment in the private sector for persons with disabilities.

Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry organised the session on "Disability Inclusive Skills & Employment Opportunities in the Private Sector" on Tuesday.

The event was held as a part of a project called Innovation to Inclusion (i2i) funded by the British Government (Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office).

It was attended by BBDN and CCCI members and business representatives. Deputy Minister of Education, Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury was present as chief guest.

Salahuddin Kasem Khan, chairperson of BBDN; Mahabubul Alam, president of CCCI; Vashkar Bhattacharjee, national consultant for accessibility, Aspire to Innovate (a2i); Murteza Rafi Khan, CEO, BBDN; Zahir Bin Siddique, country representative, Leonard Cheshire; Sadaf Saz Siddiqi, trustee and chair of executive committee, BBDN were present at the event as panelists.

The webinar was moderated by Aziza Ahmed, head of operation, BBDN.

Working for

FROM PAGE 3

Hasina said the father of the nation had made the primary education free for students and the secondary education for girls.

With a view to protecting the rights of children, Bangabandhu enacted the Children Law in 1974, the prime minister added.

RALLY AT TUNGIPARA

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Gopalganj district administration jointly organised the rally of schoolchildren from different educational institutions of Tungipara, the birthplace of Bangabandhu, with Anusua, a class six student, in the chair.

The theme of this year's birth anniversary of Bangabandhu and National Children's Day is "Bangabandhur Janmadin, Shishur Ridoy Hok Rangin".

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira and Women and Children Affairs Secretary Md Sayedul Islam spoke at the programme at Tungipara.

Swapanil Biswas, a second-grader, presented the shorter version of Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech.

Safwan, a class three student, and Rubaba Zaman, a sixth-grader, spoke on behalf of the children.

Later, the prime minister exchanged greetings with some students who were present at Tungipara.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira, on behalf of the prime minister, distributed prizes among the children who participated in the literary and cultural competitions organised by Gopalganj district administration marking the day.

BSS adds, President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid rich tributes to Bangabandhu on the occasion.

They placed wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi Road No-32.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana, Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain were present.

Moudud's body

FROM PAGE 3

village home in Noakhali's Companiganj upazila.

He will be buried at his family graveyard after his final jazana at Bashurhat Government Mujib College after Asr prayers, Sujon said.

Moudud Ahmed died at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore around 6:30pm on Tuesday, at the age of 81.

The BNP leader had serious kidney complications and was struggling to get oxygen due to lung congestion.

The veteran politician was admitted to Mount Elizabeth Hospital for advanced treatment on February 1.

BNP TO MOURN TODAY

BNP will observe today as a mourning day over the death of its senior leader Moudud.

Party senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi came up with the announcement at a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan central office on yesterday.

He said the party will hoist a black flag at party offices across the country while party flags will be kept at half-mast throughout the mourning day.

Moudud Ahmed is one of the founding members of BNP. He joined Jatiya Party in 1985 and served as prime minister and vice president in military ruler HM Ershad's government.

After the fall of Ershad, Moudud returned to BNP in 1996 and was made law minister in Khaleda Zia's government in 2001.

He also served as the first post master general of Bangladesh after independence.

He was elected MP five times from Noakhali-5 seat and once from the Bogura-6 constituency.

Women bear

FROM PAGE 3

the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations is closely linked with the Sustainable Development Goal-6, and menstrual hygiene management is linked with SDG-3 of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all.

However, in Bangladesh, there is still a long a way to go to ensure clean water and decent toilets. Even after paying around Tk 2,500-5,000 per month on rent and utilities, people in informal settlements are deprived of most civic utilities.

WHO LOOKS AFTER THIS?

Based on the experience of working on the "WASH4Urban Poor" project -- supported by WaterAid Bangladesh, Morjina Akter, a field officer of Dustha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), said that reproductive health complications are common among women in slums.

"Almost everyone is reluctant to see a doctor for ailments due to social stigma and financial crisis, while some buy medicine from local dispensaries," she added.

"Sometimes, men intentionally open doors when young girls go to the toilets, just to harass them," said Morjina.

"They even abuse women and girls sexually on the way to toilets, but parents usually force girls to ignore the incidents to avoid further chaos. The girls are usually blamed for the whole incident, which is traumatic for them," added Morjina.

Reproductive health rights activist Monjun Nahar, also the advocacy manager of Marie Stopes Bangladesh, said, "Because in our policy and society, reproductive health rights are still considered as "women's issue", it doesn't get enough priority compared to other essentials like electricity or gas connection, in slums."

"But if we want to achieve SDG-3 and 6, there must be enough prioritisation of health and wellbeing of women, along with their safety and security. They must be kept away from reproductive health hazards like UTI, pelvic pain, uterus ailment, rashes, and allergic problems," she added.

Since Morjina's project works on setting up shared community toilets for slum dwellers with a separate chamber for

women's menstrual hygiene management facilities, many women and girls requested her to set up a toilet for them in Duaripara slum during the pandemic.

"I remember a girl was requesting me to install a toilet and asked every person in her locality to manage space for the toilet, as the shared latrine became intolerable for her. Last December, we finally constructed the 30th toilet in the slum, for 80 male and female inhabitants," said Morjina.

Under this project, a total of 99 shared community toilets have been set up in 27 slums of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), while a total of 47 toilets have been established in 30 slums of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Although DNCC and DSCC have separate department for development of slums, DNCC CEO Selim Reza said since these slums are established on encroached land, they don't have the authorisation or budget for infrastructure development in slums.

However, the Local Government Division (LGD), under the LGRD ministry, with financial and technical support from United Nations Development Programme, the Bangladesh government and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has been working on setting up community toilets in 71 slums under the initiative titled Livelihood Improvement of Urban Poor Communities Project (LIUPCP).

Both city corporations have been implementing this project in Dhaka slums.

According to LIUPCP National Director Abdul Mannan, also a joint secretary of LGD, the project has constructed 32 community toilets in 2020 in both DNCC and DSCC. The work of constructing 30 more toilets in both city corporations in 2021 are underway.

But a major challenge in setting up toilets is the availability of land in the slums, while keeping the toilets clean is difficult due to the huge number of people using it.

Akhil Chandra Das, project manager of DSK said the management of fecal sludge is another big issue, as the machines used to extract sludge from septic tanks cannot enter the narrow space of the slums.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
উপ-প্রকল্প ব্যবস্থাপকের (অধ্যক্ষ) কার্যালয়
কলেজ এডুকেশন ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট (সিইডিপি)
সরকারি সৈয়দ হাতেম আলী কলেজ, বরিশাল
কলেজ কোড: ১১১০ (জাঃ বিঃ), ০২৩৪ (মাউশি), ১৮২৫ (বোর্ড) ই.আই.নং ১০০৮৭৬, ফোনঃ ০৪৩১-৬৪৯০৮
Website: www.gshac.gov.bd E-mail: hatemalicollegebarisal@yahoo.com
স্মারক নং-জি.এস.এইচ.এ.সি/CEDP/HAC/C-1023/2020-2021/G-11 তারিখঃ ১৬-০৩-২০২১

e-Tender Notice: 03/2020-2021
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
01	558969	Procurement of TV & DSLR Camera Digital Android Advertisement Kiosk & Sound System for Classrooms.	01-04-2021 Time: 1:00pm	01-04-2021 Time: 2:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 31 March 2021, 16:00.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. Mostofa Kamal
Principal
Govt. Syed Hatem Ali College, Barishal

GD-549

INTERNATIONAL TENDER FOR SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION OF MALE LATEX CONDOM

Tender Ref. No. icddr,b/SCM/OTM/2021/12 Date: 18 March 2021

Proposals are invited by icddr,b for **Supply and Distribution of Male Latex Condoms under Global Fund financing**. The supplier must be WHO/UNFPA pre-qualified and shall have 5 years experiences as manufacturer and 3 years experiences as distributor in the relevant field. Details terms and conditions of the tender are available in the RFP document and the bid document can be downloaded from <https://www.icddrb.org/work-with-us/tender-notices>.

Online Pre-tender meeting will be held on **25th March 2021 at 3:00 pm**. Please send your participating request to the email: supplychain@icddrb.org, within **23th March 2021 COB**; mention **'Participation request in Pre-bid Meeting for Supply and Distribution of Male Latex Condom'** in the email subject.

The last date of proposal submission will be **8th April 2021 at 2.30 pm (Dhaka local time, GMT+6)**. icddr,b will accept only signed soft copy of the proposals. Proposal opening will not be conducted as 'Public Opening'.

Special Instruction :
a) All activities in connection with the said procurement of Goods will be guided as per the Global Fund and icddr,b Procurement Policies.
b) icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject all/part tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. This tender notice will also form a part of the contract and will be binding upon the tenderer.

Senior Manager, Procurement
Tel: +880 (0)2-2222-77001 to 10, Ext.# 4400/4407

Eastern Refinery Limited
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chittagong
www.erl.com.bd

Ref: ER/LP/LT/EP-8810/2021 Date: 16/03/2021

e-Tender Notice
e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal for procurement of the goods as stated below:

Sl #	Tender Reference	Tender ID	Description of goods & related service	Tender doc last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	ER/LT/EP-8/2021	554685	Supply of Activated Carbon & Anthracite	01-04-2021 12:00 hrs	04-04-2021 10:30 hrs
2	ER/LT/EP-10/2021	557496	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Air conditioner	01-04-2021 12:00 hrs	04-04-2021 10:30 hrs

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted through National e-GP Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

"সবাই মিলে গড়বো দেশ, দূরীভূতমুক্ত বাংলাদেশ"।

GD-552

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ বন গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট
যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম
www.bfri.gov.bd

নংঃ ২২.০৪.০০০০.০০৩.০৩.১১০.১৯-৩৪০ তারিখঃ ১৫/০৩/২০২১খ্রিঃ

প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক গণশুনানির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, জাতীয় শুদ্ধাচার কৌশল ও সেবা প্রদান প্রতিশ্রুতি (সিটিজেনস্ চার্টার) অনুযায়ী অংশীজন, ভোক্তা ও নাগরিকের সেবা প্রদানে স্বচ্ছতা ও জবাবদিহিতা নিশ্চিতকরণে বাধ্যবাধকতা রয়েছে। সেবা প্রদান কার্যক্রম আরও সহজিকরণের লক্ষ্যে সেবা প্রত্যাশীগণের বাংলাদেশ বন গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিএফআরআই)-এর সেবা সম্পর্কে সম্ভূত না হলে বা প্রদেয় সেবার সাথে বিধি বহির্ভূত কাজ অথবা নাগরিক/ভোক্তার সেবা প্রদানে অস্বীকৃতির বিষয়ে কোন অভিযোগ থাকলে এবং সেবা আরও উন্নীতকরণে পরামর্শ থাকলে সে সকল বিষয়ে প্রত্যক্ষভাবে শ্রবণের জন্য ইনস্টিটিউট প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক গণশুনানি আয়োজন করছে। আগামী ২২ মার্চ ২০২১ তারিখ রোজ সোমবার বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকায় অভিযোগ নিষ্পত্তি কর্মকর্তা (অনিক)-এর উপস্থিতিতে বিএফআরআই মিলনায়তনে আয়োজিত গণশুনানিতে সেবাশ্রীত্যা ও সেবা প্রত্যাশীগণ উপস্থিত থেকে মতামত ব্যক্ত করতে পারবেন। সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল।

ড. রফিকুল হায়দার
আইবায়ক, এনআইএস কর্ম-পরিকল্পনা বাস্তবায়ন কমিটি ও
মুখ্য গবেষণা কর্মকর্তা
বাংলাদেশ বন গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, চট্টগ্রাম
ফোনঃ ০৩১-৬৮১৫৮১
haider_bfri@yahoo.com
জিডি-৫৫৩

Record potato production in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh expected

Md QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAYAT

Agriculture officials and potato growers are expecting to achieve a record potato production in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh in the ongoing season of harvest.

Along with more acreage than the target, the growers are getting good yield as they were able to save crop fields from pest attack and diseases using their experience and knowledge during adverse weather in mid-winter.

Despite getting good yield, the growers are worried about making good profit as the market price of the item is on downward trend at present.



Farm workers remain busy harvesting potatoes at a field in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

acre of land and got about two tonnes of potato.

In first phase, he sold potato directly from the field at Tk 12 per kg about a week ago but the price has come down to Tk 9.75 on Saturday.

Replying a query, Rasel said he spent about Tk 75,000 for cultivating the crop. If the price continues going down, he would not get a good profit.

Replying to a query, he said he had to sell a portion of his produces to repay loans which he took at the beginning of potato cultivation. Though he has about a tonne of potatoes for preserving but



PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

Fruit trees of different kinds at the huge orchard of Mofijur Rahman Mafi, inset, in Hat Gobindapur village of Faridpur Sadar upazila.

Fruit farming bears success for entrepreneur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

After returning home from Kuwait in 2007, to Hat Gobindapur village in Sadar upazila, Mofijur Rahman Mafi was 26.

The young man tried to settle down and tried his luck on various business ventures including running a grocery store, growing seasonal crops and rearing cattle commercially.

But none of his efforts produced much hope.

Finally, success followed him in 2019 when he put his mind into producing different varieties of exotic and highbred local fruits that are high in demand.

At 40 years of age, Mafi now employs near about a dozen workers who look after his fruit orchard on 42 bighas of land.

“At last, in 2019, I leased seven bighas of land in the village for an orchard of Kashmiri apple kul,” said Mafi.

Seeing the unimpressive and small saplings of the fruit, his father discouraged him to invest in the orchard. But nine months later, witnessing a huge yield of Kashmiri apple kul, his father changed his

mind.

That year alone, Mafi sold Tk 30 lakhs worth of Kashmiri apple kul, from an initial investment of only Tk 5 lakh, Mafi added.

He leased another 25 bighas of land the same year to grow Thai guava-8 and BARI malta-1.

Now he has orange on 6 bighas of land, malta-1 on 2 bigha, three varieties of kul -- including Kashmiri apple, Bol Sundari and seedless kul -- on 16.50 bighas, guava on 23 bighas, dragon fruit on 30 decimals, sapota (sapodilla or chikoo) on 30 decimals and wood apple on 26 decimals of land.

“Alongside these, I’ve also planted 1,250 saplings of different mango varieties, including Katimon, Surjomukhi and Gourmouti, and 900 lemon saplings,” Mafi said.

So far this year, he sold about Tk 75 lakh worth of kul, guava and Malta (a type of blood orange) from his orchard and around Tk 1.5 crore worth of saplings of different fruits to farmers across the country.

While visiting Mafi’s orchard, one of the workers, Kanchan Sardar, said he had been working there for two years and he did not have any

permanent job before he was hired by Mafi.

People from across the country, especially educated youths, have been paying visits to Mahi’s orchard and buying a good number of saplings from him.

Azadul Islam, from Islampur village in Bhurungamari of Kurigram, said, “In 2019, I saw a video on Kashmiri apple kul in Mafi’s orchard. I visited the orchard in December that year and in March of 2020, I bought 1,250 saplings of the fruit from his orchard. I sold kul from the plants this year.”

Another of his clients, Osman Goni, from Fazilpur village in Noakhali Sadar upazila, said after watching a video about Mafi’s fruit orchard, he contacted him and bought 50 pieces of Kashmiri apple kul saplings from him.

Hazrat Ali, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension in Faridpur, said Mafi has become a role model for the unemployed educated youth in Faridpur and many of them have been seeking advice from them for making similar fruit orchards.

2 boys die of electrocution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two boys died from electrocution when they came in contact with an underground illegal power connection in Kurigram’s Phulbari upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Al Amin, 11, son of Mominul Islam, and his cousin Alimul Haque, 6, son of Azidul Islam of Balatari village.

Al Amin was a Class V student, and Alimul of Class I at Balatari Government Primary School.

Chhakir Uddin, grandfather of the deceased, alleged that one Abu Bakkar Miah of the village was irrigating his paddy field using an underground electricity cable connection from his house illegally.

The two children were electrocuted and fell unconscious on the spot when they went to collect plums from a tree nearby the paddy field.

Family members rushed the kids to Phulbari Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors declared them dead.

Madrasa teacher killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Unidentified criminals stabbed a madrasa teacher to death in Nandail upazila on Monday night.

The victim, Anisur Rahman Chowdhury, 50, of Rasulpur village, was teacher of an Ebtedayee madrasa in Netrakona’s Kendua upazila, police said.

Quoting locals, Officer in Charge of Nandail Police Station Mizanur Rahman Akanda said criminals waylaid Anisur while he was returning home from local Atharabari Rayer Bazar carrying a gas cylinder in his bicycle and started stabbing him indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured around 8:00pm.

Locals rushed him to Nandail Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Free health camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

About six hundred paralyzed and physically disable patients received free health consultancy from specialist doctors at a free medical camp yesterday.

Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) authority and Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), Savar, jointly organised the health camp at PUST campus.



Janata Bank Limited
Divisional Office, Sylhet.
2nd floor, Dewan Complex, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100.
Tel: 0821-716256, 0821-715877, 0821-713410.
E-mail: sylhet@janatabank-bd.com. Web: www.jb.com.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited under the provisions of the Public Procurement Rules-2008 for the Goods and related Services and under the terms and conditions outlined below and detailed in the Tender Document:

- Tender Ref. : JBI/DO/SYLHET/IT214/OTM-01/2021
- Tender Name : **Tender for procurement of Computer (PC), Laser Printer, Scanner & Line Interactive UPS-650VA (Supply, Installation and Commissioning) for Different Offices/Branches Under Control of Janata Bank Limited, Divisional Office, Sylhet following Open Tendering Method.**
- Brief description of Goods/services: The items shall be internationally renowned while the UPS must be at least BSTI/ISO certified. No clone/Assembled items will be accepted:

Lot	SI	Item	Quantity
Lot-1	i	Computer(PC)	84 units
	ii	Laser Printer	33 units
Lot-2	i	Scanner	21 units
	ii	Line Interactive UPS-650VA	114 units


- Time for completion of delivery : 8(Eight) weeks for all Lot from the date of Issuing of NOA.
- Eligibility of Tenderers :
 - The Tenderer shall be the developer/manufacturer/authorized dealer/distributor/reseller/ bonafide supplier having minimum 3 (three) years of overall business and specific experience of supplying, installing, commissioning, operating of similar goods and providing support service to different organization/banks in Bangladesh in multi-user environment.
 - Must have strong presence and support offices in Dhaka/ Sylhet with well-equipped service cell manned by adequately qualified technical personnel for maintenance and support for the proposed Goods and Services. Floating or home address shall not be considered as established offices.
 - The participating company may offer proposals for the items in any or all lots and must quote all the items in that/those lot(s). Evaluation will be done Lot by Lot basis and contract will also be awarded Lot by Lot basis. Partial offer for any lot will not be accepted.
 - The offers should have validity for at least 120 (One Hundred & Twenty) days from the date of opening the tender.
- Name and address of the Office(s) Selling Tender Document : Janata Bank Limited, Divisional Office, Sylhet, 2nd Floor, Dewan complex, Airport Road, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100. Interested Tenderers may view the Notice at the website of the Bank. (Website: www.jb.com.bd)
- Price of Tender Document : TK. 500/= (Five Hundred) only (nonrefundable) in the form of Pay Order favoring “Janata Bank Limited” from any scheduled Bank in Bangladesh for a single lot. Interested tenderers have to purchase different tender documents for different lots.
- Amount of Tender Security : A tender security money favoring Janata Bank Limited shall be required for : Lot-1:- BDT 1, 26,000/- (One Lac Twenty Six Thousand) Only. Lot-2:- BDT 25,000/- (Twenty Five Thousand) Only. Lot-3:- BDT 19,000/- (Nineteen Thousand) Only. The Tender Security must be valid till: 03/08/2021
- Last Date and Time for Selling Tender Document : 31 -03-2021 within 3.00 P.M.
- Last Date and Time for Submission of Tenders : 01 -04-2021 within 3.00 P.M.
- Name and address of the Office(s) Receiving and Opening Tenders. : Deputy General Manager, Janata Bank Limited, Divisional Office, Sylhet, 2nd Floor, Dewancomplex, Airport Road, Ambarkhana, Sylhet-3100.
- Date and Time for Opening of Tenders : 01 -04-2021 at 3.15 P.M. Tenderer's authorized representative(s) are allowed to attend, if any.
- Special Instructions :
 - The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings without showing any reason.
 - The procuring entity shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest quotation.
 - If any “force majeure” situation arises in the specified date mentioned in the tender data sheet or/and invitation for tender, the event will take on the next working date.



(Sandeep Kumar Roy)
Deputy General Manager
Janata Bank Limited
Divisional Office, Sylhet.

GD- 548

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Naogaon
www.lged.gov.bd



শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.6400.07.000.001.20-667

Date: 16/03/2021 খ্রীষ্টাব্দ
০২/১২/১৪২৭ বঙ্গাব্দ

e-Tender Notice No. 35/2020-21
Tendering Method (LTM)

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

SI No.	Description of work & Package No.	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)	Tender opening (date & time)	Estimated cost (Tk)/ remarks
01	Improvement of Mohadevpur-Mohishbatan GCM road from Ch. 2500m-5170.00m road ID 164502005 under Mohadevpur Upazila District Naogaon (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Mohadevpur-16/20-21, Tender ID No. 551227)	21 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	22 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	22 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	OSTETM
02	Improvement of Pinur More-Tatulia Madrasa road from Ch. 00-360.00m road ID 164065088 under Badalgachi Upazila, District Naogaon. Salvage Cost Tk. 36991.00 (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Badalgachi- 10/20-21, Tender ID No. 549458)	07 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 25,58,044.00
03	Improvement of Tilar More-Lakargari road from Ch. 00-955.00m & Construction of 01 No. U-Drain Size 625mmx625mm at Ch. 72m & 02 Nos. Croos Drain Size 0.450x0.500 at Ch. 20m & 617m road ID 164064064 under Badalgachi Upazila District Naogaon (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Badalgachi-09/20-21, Tender ID No. 549457)	07 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 75,27,996.00
04	Improvement of Enayetpur Pacca road-Indhai-Embankment road from Ch. 500m-1500.00m road ID 164505068 under Mohadevpur Upazila District Naogaon (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Mohadevpur-19/20-21, Tender ID No. 548126)	07 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 73,75,874.00
05	Improvement of Dohali-Dohali GPS-Dohali village road from Ch. 650m-1150.00m road ID 164505021 under Mohadevpur Upazila District Naogaon. (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Mohadevpur- 18/20-21, Tender ID No. 548124)	07 Apr.2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 34,16,087.00
06	Improvement of Kachukuri-Binodpur road from Ch. 00m-500.00m road ID 164504074 under Mohadevpur Upazila District Naogaon (Package No. RDRIDP/Naog/Mohadevpur-17/20-21, Tender ID No. 548123).	07 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 34,16,087.00
07	Maintenance work of Sapahar Bazar Mohuri Potti-Shahapara village road from Ch. 00-362m road ID 164864008 under Sapahar Upazila District Naogaon. (Package No. RDR ID P/Naoga/Sapahar/Maintenance-19/20-21, Tender ID No. 546626).	07 Apr/2021 (17.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	08 Apr/2021 (16.00pm)	LTM 4,05,064.00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to last selling date & time as mentioned above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Maksudul Alam
Executive Engineer
Ph: 0741-62416
E-mail: xen.naogaon@lged.gov.bd

GD-550

NEWS IN BRIEF



Trump tells his supporters to get vaccinated

Former president Donald Trump on Tuesday encouraged his Republican supporters -- one of the main groups resistant to Covid-19 vaccines -- to get their shots. "I would recommend it," Trump said during an interview on Fox News. "I would recommend it to a lot of people that don't want to get it and a lot of those people voted for me, frankly," he said. "It's a great vaccine, it's a safe vaccine and it's something that works." This was Trump's most explicit endorsement for the national mass vaccination campaign since he left office in January. Meanwhile, Trump remained non-committal about seeking to recapture the presidency following his one term in office. "Based on every poll, they want me to run again," he said. "But we're going to take a look and we'll see."

EU agrees first China sanctions in three decades

The European Union yesterday agreed to blacklist Chinese officials for human rights abuses, two diplomats said, the first sanctions against Beijing since an EU arms embargo in 1989 following the Tiananmen Square crackdown. EU ambassadors approved the travel bans and asset freezes on four Chinese individuals and one entity, whose names will not be made public until formal approval by EU foreign ministers on March 22, as part of a new and wider rights sanctions list. The Chinese officials were accused of human rights abuses against China's Uighur Muslim minority, EU diplomats told Reuters. They said the move reflected deep concern about the Uighurs in Europe, the United States and Canada. The EU last sanctioned China, its second-largest trade partner, in June 1989, imposing an arms embargo on Beijing that is still in place.

Rights group slams Lanka's 'de-radicalisation' law

Sri Lanka faced renewed criticism yesterday over a new "de-radicalisation" law which rights groups see as another weapon targeting dissidents and minorities in the fractured nation. New York-based Human Rights Watch said new regulations expanded the "draconian and abusive" Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) -- which a previous government promised to scrap but never did. On Friday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa announced new rules under the PTA allowing the detention of anyone suspected of causing "acts of violence or religious, racial or communal disharmony". HRW said Colombo should immediately withdraw the rules, which the government said was aimed at the "de-radicalisation" of religious extremists.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

India fears 2nd Covid-19 wave

Modi eyes quick steps as country sees highest cases in 3 months

AGENCIES

India needs to take quick and decisive steps soon to stop an emerging second "peak" of Covid-19 infections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday as several countries reported spike in cases raising the possibility of new curbs.

"If we don't stop the growing pandemic right here, then a situation of a nationwide outbreak can get created," Modi told a virtual conference of leaders of Indian states.

India's daily coronavirus infections jumped by 28,903, data from the health ministry showed, for the highest increase since Dec. 13 and taking the nationwide tally to 11.44 million.

Deaths swelled by 188, the highest figure in two months, to stand at 159,044.

The federal government has blamed crowding and a general reluctance to wear masks for the spike, ruling out the virus mutations that have been a factor in Western countries.

On Tuesday, 10,149 new deaths and 491,222 new cases were recorded worldwide pushing the global death tally to at least 2,671,720 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were Brazil with record 2,841 new deaths, followed by the



A health worker collects a swab sample from a woman during a rapid antigen testing campaign for the coronavirus disease, at a railway station platform in Mumbai, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

United States with 1,242 and Italy 502.

Meanwhile, UK's health minister claimed in a newspaper article published yesterday that the AstraZeneca's Covid vaccine shot is safe and there is no evidence of health risks, after some EU countries halted rollouts over fears of blood clots.

The European Medicines Agency which previously approved the jab, is conducting a review of the vaccine but said in the meantime it remained convinced of its benefits.

Meanwhile, The Philippines yesterday said it will close its border to foreigners and

restrict the number of Filipinos entering the country as authorities battle to contain a spike in coronavirus infections. The order will take effect from March 20.

The temporary measures come after the number of daily cases hit a seven-month high of 5,404 on Monday and experts predict the figure could double by the end of March.

The WHO's expert vaccine advisers yesterday said they could recommend Johnson and Johnson's Covid-19 jab for use in countries where coronavirus variants of concern are circulating.



BIDEN ON 'RUSSIAN MEDDLING' IN US POLLS

Putin will 'pay a price'

REUTERS, Washington

President Joe Biden said Russian President Vladimir Putin will face consequences for directing efforts to swing the 2020 US presidential election to Donald Trump, and that they would come soon.

"He will pay a price," Biden told ABC News in an interview that aired yesterday. Asked what the consequences would come, he said, "You'll see shortly."

His comments come after a US intelligence report on Tuesday bolstered longstanding allegations that Putin was behind Moscow's election interference, an accusation Russia called baseless.

Washington is expected to impose sanctions on Moscow as soon as next week because of the allegations, three sources said on Tuesday on condition of anonymity. Those sanctions could also address the cyber hack blamed on Russia that used US company SolarWinds Corp to penetrate US government networks. Russia has denied any involvement in that hack.

China walks a tightrope in Myanmar

AFP, Bangkok

Chinese factories torched as mainland workers hunker down under martial law -- Beijing is being pulled into the ulcerous chaos in Myanmar, an unravelling country it had carefully stitched into its big plans for Asia.

During a January 2020 visit to Myanmar, Chinese President Xi Jinping elevated the Southeast Asian neighbour to "country of shared destiny" status, Beijing's highest diplomatic stripe.

The aim was to nudge Myanmar decisively towards China -- and away from the United States -- and drive through projects worth billions of dollars under the Belt and Road Initiative, including an oil and gas pipeline and a port to the Indian Ocean.

Fast-forward one year, and the strategically located country has tipped into bloody chaos after a coup took out Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

The massive pro-democracy movement which has since unfurled accuses China of waving through the generals' power grab and trading Myanmar's freedom for its own strategic gain.

As Myanmar security forces kill protesters -- more than 200 so far -- Beijing faces a dilemma: back the men with guns or side with an increasingly anti-China public.



"China doesn't really care who is in government, but it wants a government that will protect Chinese projects and interests," said Richard Horsey, a Myanmar political analyst.

But "this is a military that Beijing doesn't think can bring stability... and the more China tries to build a relationship with that regime, the more the public will be put offside."

That is laden with danger for Chinese interests. At least 32 China-owned textile factories were burned down in several Yangon townships on Sunday, according to Chinese state media, causing around \$37 million in damage.

A foreign ministry spokesman in Beijing demanded the immediate protection of "Chinese institutions and personnel".

Chinese businesses were closed Tuesday

in the flashpoint areas, leaving workers holed up in a "hostile environment" cloaked by martial law, according to a representative of a garment factory in Yangon's Shwepyithar township.

Ominous commentaries have since seeped out of Chinese media with one saying Beijing could be prodded "into taking more drastic action... if the authorities cannot deliver and the chaos continues".

Twitter accounts of Myanmar pro-democracy groups allege -- without offering clear proof -- that the army carried out the factory attacks to justify a crackdown in which dozens of protesters died.

Ripples of anti-China sentiment in Myanmar could become waves across a Southeast Asian region suspicious of China's reach, influence and penchant for debt-trap diplomacy to get BRI projects over the line.

"Any broad-based popular uprising against Chinese interests can be contagious and percolate anti-China grievances through Cambodia, Laos and elsewhere," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University.

"China had figured out this piece (Myanmar) of its geostrategic puzzle," but now there is "no easy play ahead".

Endangered Australian songbird 'losing its song'

AFP, Sydney

Australia's endangered regent honeyeater bird is losing its song, a sign that it could be nearing extinction, scientists warned in new research released yesterday.

A rapid decline in the rare songbird means its young are struggling to learn mating calls as adults disappear, according to researchers at the Australian National University.

Male regent honeyeaters sang rich, complex tunes in more populated habitats, but resorted to simplified songs elsewhere, the scientists wrote in a study published in the peer-reviewed journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

Lead author Ross Crates said the findings were a "major warning sign the regent honeyeater is on the brink of extinction" -- and the loss of song knowledge could also reduce chances of mating.

Scientists found 18 regent honeyeaters, or around 12 percent of the total remaining male population, who could only mimic other species' songs



-- not their own.

"This lack of ability to communicate with their own species is unprecedented in a wild animal," study co-author Dejan Stojanovic said.

The rare bird, with its black and yellow markings, was once found across much of eastern Australia but is now largely confined to eucalyptus forests in the country's southeast.

The study also found regent honeyeaters born in captivity have different songs that could reduce their attractiveness to wild birds. The scientists now hope to teach the captive birds to sing like their wild counterparts, by playing them audio recordings.

US facing biggest surge of migrants in 20 years

Says homeland security

REUTERS, Washington

The United States is facing the biggest surge of migrants at its southwestern border in 20 years, the homeland security secretary said on Tuesday as the Biden administration races to handle an influx of children trying to cross the US-Mexico border alone.

The number of attempted border crossings by people from Central America and Mexico has steadily increased since April 2020, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said.

Poverty, violence and corruption in the Mexico and the Northern Triangle - Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador - have led people to seek a better life in the United States for years, and there have been surges in the past.

US border agents conducted 100,441 apprehensions or expulsions of migrants at the border with Mexico in February, the US Customs and Border Protection said last week, the highest monthly total since a border crisis of 2019.

Single adults make up the majority of people who are being expelled, Mayorkas said. Children traveling alone, some as young as six years old, are not being turned back. Nearly 4,300 unaccompanied children were being held by Border Patrol officials as of Sunday, according to an agency official who requested anonymity.

Republicans in Congress say the Biden administration sparked the border surge by promising to unwind some of former President Donald Trump's hardline policies against illegal immigration.

MASS SHOOTING IN US

Asian women among 8 killed

White man in custody likely behind all three attacks in Atlanta; many Asian-Americans on edge following recent spike in hate crimes

AFP, Atlanta

Six Asian women were among eight people shot and killed at spas around the US city of Atlanta Tuesday, with a white man in custody on suspicion of staging all three attacks, police said.

The shootings came with many Asian-Americans already on edge following a recent spike in hate crimes against the community, and triggered immediate fears that Asian-run businesses may have been deliberately targeted.

Four of the victims were killed at Young's Asian Massage near Acworth, a suburb of Georgia state capital Atlanta, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

Captain Jay Baker of the Cherokee County sheriff's office told the paper the victims were two Asian women, a white woman, and a white man, while a Hispanic man was wounded.

Police separately confirmed that four women had been killed in attacks on two other spas in the northeast



Robert Aaron Long

of the city. Police told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that all four were Asian women.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported the country's foreign ministry had confirmed that four of the victims were of Korean descent.

Authorities have identified Robert Aaron Long as a suspect in all three shootings based on CCTV footages.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was assisting in the investigation, a spokesman told AFP.

The shootings come as reports of attacks against Asian-Americans, primarily elders, have spiked in recent months -- fueled during the Covid-19 pandemic, activists believe, by talk of the "Chinese virus" by former president Donald Trump and others.

News of the shootings came just hours after the release of a report by the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate suggested a marked increase in hate crimes against Asia-Americans -- with women disproportionately affected.

In a tally of incidents reported to the group between March 2020 and February this year, almost 70 percent of Asian-American survey respondents said they had faced verbal harassment and just over one in 10 said they had experienced physical assault.

In an address to the nation last Thursday, President Joe Biden forcefully condemned what he called "vicious hate crimes against Asian-Americans who have been attacked, harassed, blamed and scapegoated."

War in Yemen is 'back in full force: UN

REUTERS, New York

The war in Yemen is "back in full force," the United Nations mediator Martin Griffiths told the Security Council on Tuesday amid renewed attempts to get the warring parties to talk.

He said new fronts in the war is opening up in Hajjah and Taiz and Hudaydah. "The war is back in full force," he told the 15-member council.

A Saudi Arabia-led military coalition intervened in Yemen in 2015 after the Iran-aligned Houthi group ousted the country's government. The Houthis say they are fighting a corrupt system.

The UN describes Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Some 80% of Yemenis need help, with 400,000 children under the age of 5 severely malnourished.

CLIMATE DISASTERS

10.3m displaced in last 6 months

REUTERS, Singapore

About 10.3 million people were displaced by climate change-induced events such as flooding and droughts in the last six months, the majority of them in Asia, a humanitarian organisation said yesterday.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said about 2.3 million others were displaced by conflict in the same period, indicating the vast majority of internal displacements are now triggered by climate change.

Though the figures cover only a six-month period from September 2020 to February 2021, they highlight an accelerating global trend of climate-related displacement, said Helen Brunt, Asia Pacific Migration and Displacement Coordinator for the IFRC.

Some 60% of climate-IDPs (internally displaced persons) in the last six months were in Asia, according to IFRC's report.

Statistics from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) show that on average 22.7 million people are displaced every year. Globally, 17.2 million people were displaced in 2018 and 24.9 million in 2019. Full-year figures are not yet available for 2020, but IDMC's mid-year report showed there were 9.8 million displacements because of natural disasters in the first half of last year.

More than 1 billion people are expected to face forced migration by 2050 due to conflict and ecological factors, a report by the Institute for Economics and Peace found last year.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

College Education Development Project (CEDP)
Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur
New Market, Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur

Invitation for Tenders (Re-Tender)

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/ National University.
3	Procuring entity name	Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.
4	Procuring entity code	N/A.
5	Procuring entity district	Sherpur.
6	Invitation for	Goods.
7	Invitation Ref. No.	SGMC/CEDP/094/2021
8	Date	18/03/21

KEY INFORMATION	
9	Procurement method
Open Tendering Method (National).	

FUNDING INFORMATION	
10	Budget and source of funds
Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit).	
11	Development partners
International Development Association (IDA), World Bank.	

PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
12	Project code
224017200	
13	Project name
College Education Development Project (CEDP).	
14	Tender Package No.
G-8 (Re-Tender).	
15	Tender package name
Procurement of furniture and fixtures for classroom, labs, library etc. (Re-Tender).	
16	Tender publication date
18/03/2021	
17	Tender last selling date
27-03-2021	
18	Tender closing date and time
28-03-2021, 1.00pm.	
19	Tender opening date and time
28-03-2021, 4.00pm.	
20	Name & address of the office
(1) Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.	
(2) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sherpur.	
(3) Office of the Superintendent of Police, Sherpur.	
(4) Office of the Principal, Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.	
21	Pre-tender meeting
Will not be held.	

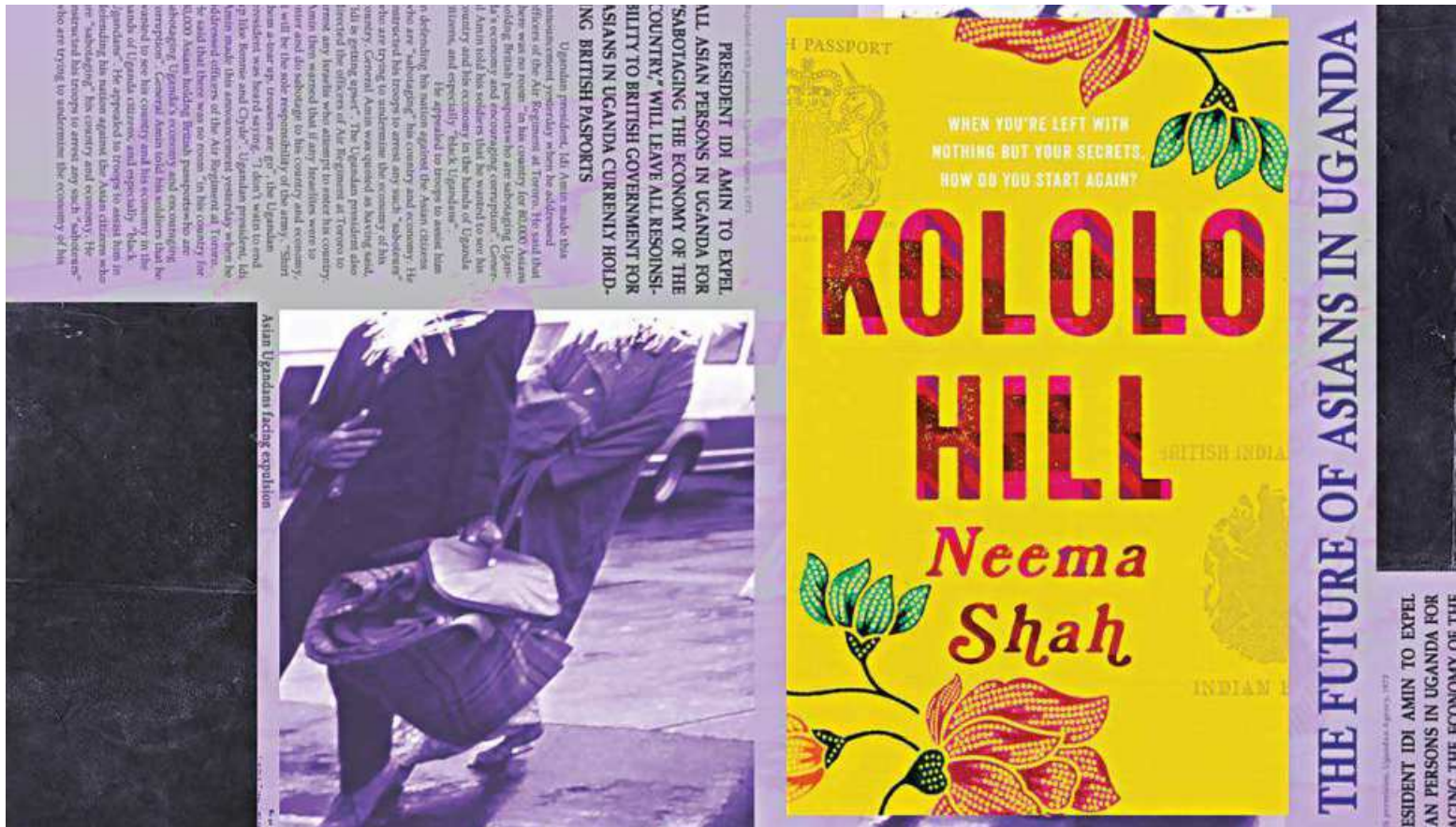
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

22	Eligibility of tenderer	(1) The tenderer shall have a minimum number 03 years general experience in the supply of goods and related services as supplier. (2) The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 01 (one) contract(s) successfully completed within the last 05 (five) years, each with a value of at least Tk 15,00,000.00 (fifteen lac) only. (3) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 20,00,000.00 (twenty lac) only. (4) Other requirement mentioned in Tender Document.			
23	Brief description of works	Executive table, Computer table, Revolving Chair, Visitor Chair, Steel Almirah, Book shelf, Classroom Bench etc.			
24	Brief description of related services	Related service shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Contract, Section 6: Schedule of Requirements and Section 7: Technical Specification of the tender document.			
25	Tender document price	BDT 1,000.00 (one thousand Tk only).			
26	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in months
	N/A	N/A	Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur	40,000/- (forty thousand)	1.5 months
27	Name of official inviting tender	Professor Afia Ferdous.			
28	Designation of official inviting tender	Principal.			
29	Address of official inviting tender	Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur.			
30	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 0931-61460			Email: shergmc@gmail.com
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.				

Professor Afia Ferdous

Principal
Sherpur Govt. Mohila College, Sherpur

GD-551



COLLAGE: MEHRUL BARI

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

The unfortunate Asians of Uganda

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

In the 1890s, many South Asians were brought to Uganda by the British Empire for administration and development purposes. The Uganda Railway remains a timeless reminder of the South Asian workforce's contribution. Throughout the years, as the Asian population multiplied in the country, their domination in the economic sphere grew rapidly. Many native Ugandans turned resentful at the trend. "Indophobia" was on the rise. In 1972, after Idi Amin rose to power following a coup, he issued a decree requiring all Asians (80,000) to leave Uganda within 90 days, leaving their property and wealth behind.

Neema Shah's debut novel, *Kololo Hill* (Picador, 2021), is set against this backdrop. Hers is a South Asian history which is rarely portrayed in art. I first became aware of the Asians' expulsion from Uganda after watching Mira Nair's film *Mississippi Masala* (1991) two years ago. I was delighted to hear about *Kololo Hill's* release given that it is a novel that illuminates this history.

Asha and Pran have been married for a few months when the decree is issued. They both grew up in Uganda, never stepping foot in India, their ancestral country. Pran's parents, Jaya and Motichand, are the only characters through whom we get glimpses of India and migration to Uganda in the novel. Pran and his brother Vijay have tirelessly worked to save the family business that Motichand started many years ago. President Idi Amin's decree at such a moment proves disconcerting for the family. What makes the prospect of leaving more difficult is the intimate and wholesome bond the family shares with December, their native Ugandan domestic help. He is a man from the

predominantly Christian Acholi tribe, which is on Amin's execution list alongside the Lambi tribe. Moreover, being on friendly terms with Asians poses threats to native Ugandans.

Ethnic resentment is evident from the very first scene in the novel when Asha stumbles across a lake full of bodies. As the story progresses, we see how each character comes to terms with their grim reality. Curfews, segregation, soldiers' harassment, fear-laden conversations among friends and family, all

"As the story progresses, we see how each character comes to terms with their grim reality. Curfews, segregation, soldiers' harassment, fear-laden conversations among friends and family, all mark the shared general experience of South Asians in Uganda of the time.

mark the shared general experience of South Asians in Uganda of the time.

As they finally leave the country, memories, traumatic experiences, a terrible secret, and the trials and tribulations of starting a new life from scratch hang over the family. It is worth noting how all these factors shape the characters' arcs and make them memorable and alive in the reader's mind. For instance, back in Uganda we see Vijay as a subordinate figure to his brother. But in Britain, circumstances force him to take charge. Another element that brings some variety to the reading experience is

the way all the chapters are arranged according to each character. Aside from Motichand and December, the rest are given enough space to make the novel a multi-protagonist narrative. In just 340 pages, we get a complete sense of each protagonist's struggles.

It was especially satisfying to find that the story divided equally between Uganda and Britain. The plot points in the first half explore political instability in Uganda while in the second half, we witness the characters forging new paths of life and the turbulent trajectory the lives of the many political migrants took then. For South Asian readers, the common cultural elements—from food items to rituals—blended with the knowledge that this is a culture undiminished by change in location, acts as a bonus. I particularly loved the solidarity between the South Asian and the Black community reflected through December's relationship with his employers.

Didactic descriptions of political affairs do not taint this novel. We get to know of the political scenario through its physical manifestations and the ways they affect the storyline, from disappearances to lootings and arbitrary arrests. The simple yet poetic prose reminded me of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (Knopf, 2013) and Tahmima Anam's *The Bones of Grace* (HarperCollins, 2016).

Shortlisted for the Bath Novel Award and the First Novel Prize, *Kololo Hill* is an essential and searing novel about xenophobia, racism, family, loss, migration, and colonialism's legacy across Asia and Africa.

Shah Tazrian Ashrafi is a contributor.

BOOK REVIEW: NON-FICTION

A new book explores the mediascape of Bangladesh

MOSTOFA SHOBUIJ

We barely see cross-disciplinary initiatives that try to understand our media, culture, society and politics. In this wake, Dr Ratan Kumar Roy's *Television in Bangladesh: News and Audiences* (Routledge, 2021) offers a rich ethnography of television news practices in Bangladesh, with a foreword by Marcus Banks, Professor of Visual Anthropology at Oxford University.

Dr Roy has been trained in anthropology and sociology from the University of Dhaka and the South Asian University, New Delhi. He formerly worked as a broadcast journalist in Bangladesh and is currently working as a fellow at the Jamia Millia Islamia University (New Delhi). In this latest work, he draws a synoptic history of television media, public engagement, and politics in Bangladesh, and shows how political regimes and public participation have contributed to the development of television media culture.

"[H]istorical analysis reveal[s] that television has neither been an innocent medium nor are its viewers helpless consumers or morbid subjects on the receiving end", Roy writes. He addresses

a possible alternative he shows how 24-hour news channels have sustained and contributed to the emergence of youth protests and social mobilisation in Bangladesh, how marginal localities engage with, connect with, and contradict popular representation by mainstream media. On the other hand, he highlights some underlying issues plaguing the news cycle—based on interview responses from journalists, news editors, and high ranking officials from the newsroom, Roy identifies the external forces that often regulate and control news culture. "[A]lmost every second day there is a phone call from these external bodies and at least once a month the key officials have to meet them in person", he writes.

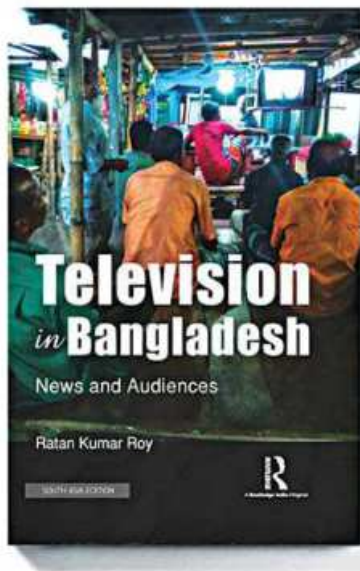
Roy uses interviews and narratives to highlight the discomforts and challenges faced by media professionals. Journalist Tushar Abudullah, who was at the forefront of many news-based television channels in Bangladesh, tells Roy: "[T]he rape case of college student and cultural activist Tonu in Cumilla in 2016 was one such case where the viewers' demand enabled [us] to take up the issue".

"Our managing director himself is a journalist, he understands news values, but when he advises us to undermine some important news, then we understand it is due to [...] pressure from external bodies", Shumee Shahabuddin, a senior news editor at a 24-hour news channel, tells Roy in another interview.

Based on such empirical evidence, Dr Roy's book argues that television news practice in Bangladesh is ambiguously professional and commercial in character. It has not been able to become a mature and profitable business industry because it still surrenders to the whims of ownership, political ideologies, and biases. It also operates with values and ethics that are often contradictory to the logic of the market economy of media. This is why self-censorship has been a prevailing factor for news television, and this is why viewers are switching to digital media platforms.

Following such a shift in viewership, mainstream media has started exploring digital possibilities, such as incorporating special "web desks" and investing in social media outreach, the latter of which can sometimes be sensational. But the challenge of facing the Digital Security Act remains a vital concern.

Mostafa Shabuij is Bogura correspondent, The Daily Star, and a former student of Sociology at the South Asian University, New Delhi, India. Email: mostafashabuijstar@gmail.com



how the emergence of 24/7 news channels in Bangladesh contributed to the formation of a localised public sphere, wherein tea stalls, *paan* shops, rickshaw stands, clubs, and small restaurants became locations for debate and discussion over current affairs. These audiences can read and consciously engage with televised news and the media practices of news professionals.

On that note, Roy invites readers to delve deeper into the workings of news media in contemporary Bangladesh beyond the parameters of state-control, democracy, freedom of expression, hegemony, and political biases. As

THE BIRTH OF BANGLADESH IN BOOKS

War of attrition

After half a century from where we began, Daily Star Books will spend all of this year—the 50th year of Bangladesh—revisiting, celebrating, and analyzing some of the books that played pivotal roles in documenting the Liberation War of 1971 and the birth of this nation.



COLLAGE: MEHRUL BARI

SHADMAN IQBAL AND RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

When searching for literature covering the role of the Mukti Bahini in the victory of 1971, a noticeable dearth of objective analyses is apparent. Literature on warfare strategy is dominated by narratives of the 13 days of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war. History would likely have been different if India did not enter when it did, allowing the resistance to engage in a direct frontal war with the Pakistanis on equal grounds. But the legacy of the Mukti Bahini is the true heart of our story. Books such as *Guerilla Theke*

Shommukh Juddhe, *Muktijuddhe 2 No Sector Ebong K-Force, 1971: Resistance, Resilience and Redemption, 1971: Bhoreto Baire*, and even bits and pieces of Jahanara Imam's *Ektattor Dinguli* offer glimpses of the war from the freedom fighters' perspective.

Read this article online on The Daily Star website or on fb.com/dailystarbooks, @thedailystarbooks on Instagram, @DailyStarBooks on Twitter, and Daily Star Books on LinkedIn.

THE SHELF

Four new books to read this March

MEHRUL BARI

In this list, we highlight four of the very best releases of the past few weeks, featuring Nobel Prize winners, celebrated authors, debutantes and short story writers.

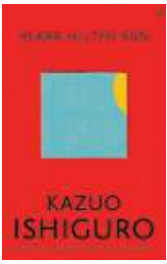
No One Is Talking About This
Patricia Lockwood
(Riverhead Books, 2021)

In July of 2013, Patricia Lockwood wrote the decade's most immediate and pressing poem, "Rape Joke". Already by then Lockwood had amassed prizes and praises enough to fill a few cabinets. Late last month, Lockwood released her debut novel, *No One Is Talking About This*, which as of this writing has been labelled "transcendent" and longlisted for the 2021 Women's Prize for Fiction. Concerning the nervous breakdowns of a social media influencer, and served in chopped-up fragments of prose-poetry text, Lockwood's first work of fiction is perhaps the book to read this March.



Klara and the Sun
Kazuo Ishiguro
(Knopf, 2021)

Ishiguro's first novel in six years sees science fiction's most humane writer return to themes of artificial intelligence, coming-of-age, apathy, and empathy. Echoing *Never Let Me Go* (Faber and Faber, 2005) in spirit, the Nobel Prize winning author's latest is centred on narrator Klara, an Artificial Friend, who observes human life through the display case of a store, hoping to one day be bought herself. "To some extent as a writer you're always in dialogue with your earlier books", Ishiguro told *TIME*. "Part of me wanted to reply to *Never Let Me Go*, which is a very sad book. It's not pessimistic exactly, but it's very sad. So I wanted to reply to that vision".



Burning Girls and Other Stories
Veronica Schanoes
(Tordotcom, 2021)

Schanoes' stories revolve around her research interests: fairy tales, folktales, fantasies, and feminism. The Shirley Jackson Award winning writer combines genres, disparate moods, and varying levels of vengeance in her debut short story collection, *Burning Girls*. The 13 stories that comprise the book confronts anti-Semitism and American history, reimagines Bloody Mary and the Baba Yaga, dips its toes in politics and anarchy, and all throughout, Schanoes sets a smooth and eased path for her readers to navigate splendidly. Beautiful and horrible, *Burning Girls and Other Stories* may be the perfect read for fans of dark fantasy and genre fiction.



Rabbit Island
Elvira Navarro
(Two Line Press, 2021; transl. Christina MacSweeney)

Few directors, let alone writers, warrant comparisons to David Lynch, yet Navarro, Madrid's resident surrealist, through her stories on the absolute mundane has done just that. Of the nothing-special hotel cook of the book's eighth story, Navarro writes: "Her features were so average, so unremarkable, that, on the rare occasion when she left the kitchen, the guests never noticed that a living being was crossing the dining room". The one thing that keeps the cook from quitting her job is that at night she dreams, and in it she inhabits the dreams of every hotel resident and employee. The heroes and heroines of *Rabbit Island* are Gregor Samsas and Laura Palmers—only they would wholly welcome whatever horrific things might come their way, if only just to feel.



Mehrul Bari S Chowdhury is a writer, poet, and artist. His work has appeared in Kitaab, Sortes Magazine, and Marias at Sampaguitas, among others.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 18, 2021, CHAITRA 4, 1427 BS

Violence continues to escalate in Myanmar

The entire region is likely to suffer from the fallout

THE people of Myanmar have been protesting the Myanmar military’s unlawful seizure of power since the beginning of February. The country’s military seems to have only gotten bolder in their total disregard for human rights and the democratic right to protest of every citizen—it started with disproportionate force and has now resorted to downright violence in putting an end to the pro-democracy protests in the country. The images coming out of Myanmar are grim, with pictures of bloodied teenagers lying on the streets flooding social media. Reuters reports the death toll to be nearing 200, with as many as 20 protesters being shot on Monday alone.

Has the sluggish reaction of the international community emboldened the military to continue to use such brutal and repressive tactics against pro-democracy protesters (which include using live ammunition on unarmed civilians and mass detentions of protesters and political/civil society actors, including 37 journalists)? So far, the US, the UK and the EU have only imposed some very basic sanctions on the military leaders who directed the coup. Yesterday, it was reported that the EU will begin to sanction the Myanmar military’s business interests from next week. While this is a step in the right direction, we wonder why it took them so long to reach this decision, especially since rights organisations have been calling for targeted sanctions and an arms embargo on Myanmar ever since the military coup took place.

The silence of Myanmar’s regional allies with regard to the military coup is conspicuous, to say the least. We must remember that unrest in Myanmar has always spilled over into our borders and has had a negative impact on the region, especially Bangladesh. The Myanmar military’s genocide against the Rohingya has forced Bangladesh to provide refuge to 1.1 million refugees on humanitarian grounds. How will we be impacted in the coming days, especially as reports resurface of brutal force being used, especially against minorities in Myanmar?

In early March, we warned in these very pages that as long as China, India, Bangladesh, the ASEAN countries and the rest of the international community fail to work together and strongly condemn the unlawful military coup in Myanmar, we run the risk of watching history repeat itself. Our fears have been confirmed, as we once again witness the oppression of the people of Myanmar by the unelected military leaders who are continuing to act with impunity. If we do not collectively act now, Myanmar’s journey to democracy is likely to come to an abrupt and violent end.

Fire at DMCH: Could the tragedy have been avoided?

Hospitals must stringently take all fire safety precautions

WE are shocked and saddened by the deaths of three patients after they were shifted from Dhaka Medical College Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ICU) dedicated for Covid-19 patients when a fire broke out in the ICU facility. The patients died when they were shifted to the CCU from the ICU.

So far, the cause of the fire that broke out at the ICU in the hospital’s new building is not clear, and a probe committee has been formed to investigate the incident. It is eerily reminiscent of the terrible tragedy that occurred at the United Hospital in May last year, when an isolation unit caught on fire and five patients perished as the duty doctor and nurses fled from the scene instead of trying to rescue the patients. In this case at DMCH, all the patients were transferred to the CCU from the ICU but three of them, who were on life support, lost their lives after being transferred.

While accidents can happen anywhere at any time, it is unacceptable that they should occur in a hospital, that too in the ICU where the most critical patients are treated. We hope that the probe will unravel whether any kind of negligence took place, especially in terms of having proper safety measures installed for all electronic equipment. Meanwhile, the hospital authorities with the help of the fire department must make a thorough inspection of all such areas of the hospitals where fires could break out, and must ensure that fire-fighting equipment are operational and close at hand.

We commiserate with the families of the deceased patients. If the investigation finds any trace of negligence causing the fire, we hope the authorities will ensure that the families receive compensation although nothing will make up for the loss of their loved ones. The incident should be a wake-up call for all hospitals to make sure that all their units, especially those that have specialised electronic equipment and electrical appliances, are regularly inspected and maintained. Hospitals must also take all precautions to avoid fires and have regular training of staff on fire safety protocols.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Control population growth

Bangladesh is one of the most populous countries in the world. At present, our population figure stands at over 160 million, and the continuous growth in numbers is having a negative impact everywhere. Child marriage, child labour, poverty, unemployment, etc.—all related to overpopulation—are adversely affecting the development of our society. Overpopulation has also led to unplanned urbanisation, declining arable land, increasing groundwater scarcity, traffic jams, etc. There is a widespread lack of public awareness about family planning. I think our population control policies should be strictly enforced, otherwise the situation will be much worse in the future.

Ariful Islam, Chattogram

Can Myanmar’s civil disobedience movement restore democracy?

NICOLA WILLIAMS

SINCE Myanmar’s military coup on February 1, the commander-in-chief of the Tatmadaw, General Min Aung Hlaing, has been working to remake the country’s political landscape by removing the National League for Democracy (NLD) party, detaining its leadership and installing a military junta. But the success of the coup is not guaranteed, given the junta’s lack of control over parts of the state apparatus, population and the spiralling economy.

The civil disobedience movement is spreading across key ministries. Staff from the Central Bank of Myanmar and from commercial banks are striking

internal cohesion facing off against a nation and multiple crises? Based on 2020 election results, there may even be hints of support for the NLD within the military.

A number of possible scenarios are emerging with different enabling factors, not least of which is the Myanmar people’s sheer determination to achieve democracy.

One scenario is a return to absolute military rule. The junta would use the crises, violence and coercion to remove any semblance of social order, and then present a false dichotomy to the population: anarchy or dictatorship. A delay in holding elections for several years would be justified under the guise



People flash a three-finger salute as they take part in an anti-coup night protest at the Hledan junction in Yangon, Myanmar, on March 14, 2021.

PHOTO: REUTERS/STRINGER

and limitations placed on withdrawals indicate a looming liquidity crisis. Foreign trade is frozen, with exports down by 90 percent. Medical professionals are striking and two-thirds of the country’s hospitals are not functioning properly during a pandemic. Some members of the police have also joined protests, refusing to do the “dirty work” of the military.

A groundswell of protests has swept across the country, with Myanmar’s tech-savvy youth proving to be a creative, mobilising force that the old guard has not faced before. As Min Aung Hlaing sports bulletproof vests in rare outings and uses state media to blast the civil disobedience movement and protesters, the junta’s own propaganda machine suggests the resistance is having an impact. Can the military maintain

of restoring stability.

A second scenario follows the path set by General Hlaing: hold elections within a year and reinstall a semi-elected parliament. The military has likely realised by now that the political system they had designed under the constitution does not guarantee its political victory. The military-backed Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) has been unable to secure enough seats to outnumber the NLD, even with the advantage of a quarter of parliamentary seats being assigned to the military.

In such a scenario, the junta may attempt to redesign the electoral system from first-past-the-post to proportional representation, framing this as an opportunity for ethnic and other political parties to gain more seats in a new

election. A sham election could then take place with the NLD removed from the electoral map.

While ASEAN countries initially seemed tempted by this track, it does not provide a pathway to de-escalate resistance. A rigged military-run election would fail to transfer the electoral legitimacy that voters bestowed on 2020-elected officials, some of whom have formed the Committee Representing the Union Parliament in opposition to the junta.

In a third scenario, the coup neither clearly fails nor succeeds, creating a protracted crisis. For over 70 years, the Myanmar military has failed to win a number of asymmetric internal armed conflicts. The battle for state control would become another front line of drawn-out crises, where the use of state-based violence breeds further resistance and new support for the civil disobedience movement.

A protracted crisis could also materialise if there is significant reorganising of power within the military, leading to unforeseen contests. Potential stalemates due to the military and civilian blocs not recognising each other for negotiations, as called for by several ASEAN countries, could also prolong events.

In scenario four, the coup fails and there is a return to the hybrid government under the 2008 constitution, with NLD members released and the 2020 election results honoured, as called for by the United Nations and much of the international community. For the coup to fail, the civil disobedience movement would need to sustain popular and financial support, and continue to impact the junta’s control over the economy and administration. This scenario hinges on the possibility of support for Min Aung Hlaing’s leadership waning as multiple crises hit

regular military families and businesses.

But scenario four is unlikely with Min Aung Hlaing at the helm of the armed forces. It would also require Western countries to hold off on normalising relations with the junta, and ASEAN countries pursuing negotiations between the elected government bloc and the military, not just with military-appointed officials.

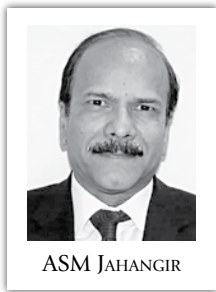
In a final, fifth scenario, the coup fails and the civilian government leads a new transition. Many protesters and groups are calling for a new political arrangement through the removal of the military from political life and the military-drafted 2008 constitution. Rather than exclusively supporting the NLD or Aung San Suu Kyi, many in Myanmar are marching for democratic federalism—a system ethnic minorities have been striving for since 1947.

For this last scenario to take hold, a counter-coup within the military may be needed to deliver a new leadership willing to work under the civilian government—a tall order indeed. Elected officials would take up their positions and an inclusive constitutional committee could be established (including armed groups, civil society and ethnic political parties) to draft a new constitution. While Nepal provides an example of a federal transition following civil war and a people’s movement, this process is complex and loaded with challenges.

Ultimately, the people of Myanmar must choose their system of government—and thus, their fate—for it to be legitimate. A prolonged return to military rule or an illegitimate government will only perpetuate continued suffering and instability.

Nicola S Williams is a PhD candidate at the Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University.
Courtesy: East Asia Forum

Understanding poverty through Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs



ASM JAHANGIR

prime concern of the poverty-stricken life. The thought process of the poor seldom transcends beyond the threshold of survival. Poverty-stricken people in a society or nation are considered a burden and generally looked down on.

An American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, came up with the theory of the hierarchy of human needs in 1943. Known as the pyramid of needs, it begins with the most basic human needs and climbs up the pyramid to the most challenging needs. Using the pyramid model, Maslow created a classification system reflecting five sets (or stages or tiers) of human needs.

Modern-day psychologists categorise the two most basic sets of needs—physical and security—as “material” needs, while the top three sets of needs are categorised as “spiritual” needs. Maslow underscored that human beings can hardly focus on the next tier of needs unless a significant proportion of their

needs in the tier below are met.

Now, let us juxtapose the needs of the poor with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. If the needs in the first tier—classified as physical needs (such as air, water, food, rest, health)—are further broken down according to their necessity in human life, air and water come first. Fortunately, nature is generous in bestowing the living beings with plenty of air and water to breathe and drink and meet other



‘Poverty not only stunts human growth but also gravely demoralises the people, preventing them from thinking positively, creatively and critically.’

PHOTO: STAR

necessities. Constant fiddling with nature over time has, however, fundamentally affected the quality of air and water, which are absolutely essential for our survival. The poor have no time to spend on the issue as they immediately shift to the mode of seeking food, their most tangible basic need.

Most of the people living in extreme poverty are relentlessly engaged in securing sufficient food to survive on a day-to-day basis. They are so absorbed in the hunt for food that they only rest when their physical limitations force them to do so. The question of healthcare crosses their mind only when they fall sick, restricting their ability to seek food.

When the most basic needs in the first tier of “material” needs are met, the poor look for satisfying the next tier of material needs, classified as security

needs (such as safety, shelter, stability). In this tier, the poor look for safety essential for consolidating their livelihood, a shelter for those who don’t have it, or improving the shelter’s overall condition for those who have it. Consolidating their livelihood brings some semblance of stability in their mindset.

At this tier, the poor as well as those graduating out of poverty explore various ways and means for a brighter future

move to the next tier, also the first of the upper three tiers classified as “spiritual” needs. (These remaining three tiers basically involve self-fulfilment and psychological needs, such as the need for love, belongingness, recognition, self-esteem, power, prestige, achieving one’s full potential, etc.) The people in abject poverty, however, remain mostly absorbed in arranging necessary food for them and their families, a shelter of some kind, and healthcare when falling sick.

At this stage, necessary support is essential to prepare this segment of the population for a productive economic life. Once the most basic human needs—food, shelter and healthcare—are met, the focus should shift to creating economic opportunities for them via skills development, financial support and creation of employment opportunities of various kinds.

Ideally, no one in a civilised society should live in poverty. Such expectations are not very practical, however. There will always be some people mired in poverty for various endogenous factors. The aim, therefore, should be to bring the proportion of people living below the poverty line to a bare minimum in order to enable a nation to put its available human resources to the best possible use.

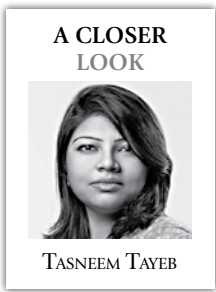
If a large segment of the population languishes in poverty, a nation’s full potential will remain unrealised. The poor will relentlessly struggle to meet their basic material needs, meaning they will remain stuck in the bottom two tiers of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. They will be restrained from exploring the finer sides of human potential like love and care, social activities, status, esteem and above all, doing something remarkable for the society or nation.

Poverty not only stunts human growth but also gravely demoralises the people, restricting them from thinking positively, creatively and critically. In an aggravated situation, it may increase criminal activities, cause social unrest and jeopardise the peace of a nation.

It need not be so. With some calculated efforts, the poor can be turned into a treasure capable of transforming a nation into a peaceful hub of economic prosperity.

ASM Jahangir is a former Senior Program Manager of USAID, Bangladesh.

10 years on, the birds of prey circle over Syria



TORTURE, forced disappearance, displacement, chemical attacks, butchery, loss of lives and limbs, death of family and friends, mass murder: the Syrian people have been through it all in the last 10 years.

It all started with protests on March 15, 2011 triggered by a graffiti on a school wall in the southern province of Deraa, which read: "It's your turn now, doctor!" It was written by some students who were clearly not happy with the state of affairs under the leadership of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The doctor in the graffiti referred to the president, who had served as a doctor in the Syrian Army. His specialisation was ophthalmology.

The graffiti was a manifestation of the elephant in the room, and the common people started to rise up to voice their dissatisfaction. Set against the backdrop of the newly-lit flames of the Arab Spring, the protests soon gained momentum and spread like wildfire from one province to another, and eventually throughout the country.

The crackdown on protesters by the Assad regime had been swift and brutal, and soon the protests turned into a civil war, with the people fighting for or against the government. The Syrian political landscape—already rife with factional divisions among the Kurds, the Salafi jihadists, the Sunni groups, and other factions trying to leverage the people's anti-government sentiment to serve their vested interests—splintered into many rebel groups. This is where Syria fell apart.

Foreign powers, regional and global, soon joined in the mad dash for geopolitical power, siding with one party or another. The US, Russia, France, the UK, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, along with other countries, got involved in the war in some way or another. While Iran backed the Hezbollah fighters in support of the Assad regime, Qatar and Saudi Arabia facilitated the rise of various predominantly Sunni militant factions. Turkey's tussle with Syrian Democratic Forces—engaged in the fight against terrorist groups, specifically the ISIS—across the

northeastern border of Syria played a role in strengthening the base of the terrorist group.

The swift emergence of militant outfits in the war-torn country, facilitated by the power vacuum in leadership, turned Syria into a lucrative spot for foreign intervention. Under the pretext of fighting international terrorism, many western powers including the US intervened

the past decade, according to verified data—an average of more than three children a day," reported the Unicef on March 10 this year.

Unfortunately, in the last 10 years, children were not only killed in Syria, but also recruited to fight in the war. According to Unicef data, more than 5,700 children have fallen victim to the bloodthirsty predators. Some of the recruits were as young as seven.

Syrian economy has crumbled under the pressure of the war.

Al Jazeera cited a UN report saying that more than 80 percent of the Syrian population is now living below the poverty line. The Syrian pound has plummeted to 4,000 against one US dollar in the black market. The economic cost of the war over the last decade has been north of USD 1.2 trillion, according to World Vision.

While efforts have been made, especially in recent years, to diffuse tensions in Syria, many of the refugees do not ever want to return to Syria. They just want peace and a life as normal as it can get.

And with the Assad regime still wielding strong political power and control over the majority of the land, one can only wonder why the refugees are unwilling to return to their motherland. Assad's ruthlessness in dealing with dissent is known to the world—156,329 of all the casualties are attributed to the Syrian government—and fear of repercussions remains high among the anti-establishment population.

The protests in Syria, along with the spirit of change that sparked those protests in the first place, have died down, and the country has been crushed by the decade-long conflict. The country has gained nothing in the last 10 years; if anything, it has lost its people, its resources, its infrastructure, its control over itself.

One of the main reasons why this has happened is the inability of the various factions to unite for one single cause: democracy and change. Except for the common people, who had solely taken to the streets imbued with the inspiration of the Araba Spring, all the actors in the Syrian war had been only interested in serving their individual political gains, and it is this failure of the actors to unite behind one cause that has been self-defeating for the common Syrians.



Ten years on, Syria is a country nearly destroyed.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

with military measures, all vying for greater control in this resource-rich region. And of course, many of these countries engaged in profitable arms trade thanks to the perpetual state of war in the country.

The result: 387,118 casualties till December 2020, more than one-third of them civilians (116,911 civilians, to be more precise). This data was published by the UK-based monitoring group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR).

In addition, around 205,300 people remain traceless—either dead or just missing—including more than 88,000 civilians who are "believed to have died of torture in government-run prisons", as reported by the BBC.

But the worst sufferers have perhaps been the children. "Almost 12,000 children were killed or injured in

And no one knows how many have died in the line of fire.

Thousands of children have been separated from their families or just orphaned with nowhere to go or turn for support. What of those children born of the fighters? Hundreds and thousands of them are living miserable lives in the various camps across Syria. Case in point: camps across northeast Syria, including the infamous Al-Hol camp, which house around "27,500 children of at least 60 nationalities and thousands of Syrian children associated with armed groups," as reported by Unicef.

The Unicef report further added that more than half a million Syrian children under the age of five suffer from stunting due to chronic malnutrition. The prices of food went up by 230 percent in 2020 alone. The

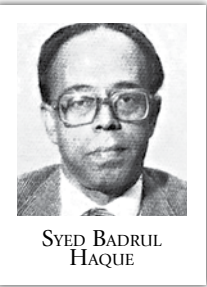
"Even if the war ended today, its cost will continue to accumulate to the tune of an additional USD 1.7 trillion in today's money through to 2035", the World Vision report added.

Yet, those who have been lucky to survive amidst the massacre and the mayhem live on the charity of donors, at times the same ones who had sold arms at lucrative prices to fuel the war. And many have been forced to flee, often multiple times, to survive the carnage of the warring parties.

In the last decade, more than 12.3 million people have been displaced. While 5.6 million Syrians have been registered as refugees outside the country, around 6.7 million have been internally displaced. The total number of displaced is more than half of the pre-war Syrian population of around 22 million.

The protests in Syria, along with the spirit of change that sparked those protests in the first place, have died down, and the country has been crushed by the decade-long conflict. The country has gained nothing in the last 10 years; if anything, it has lost its people, its resources, its infrastructure, its control over itself.

Bangabandhu: A public leader extraordinaire



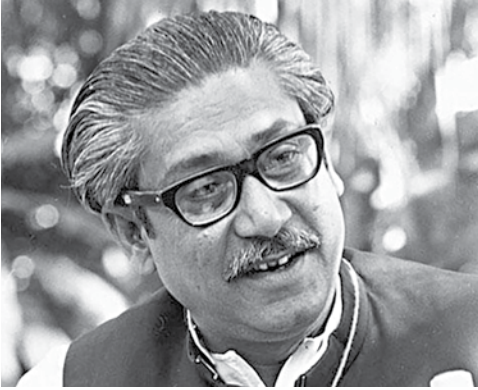
public leader extraordinaire, Bangabandhu suffered extended imprisonment, braved life-risking challenges and finally wrested liberation from the colonial rulers for his people.

My reminiscences about Bangabandhu date back to the late fifties when Bangabandhu took over as a minister in charge of commerce, labour and industries in the provincial cabinet of East Pakistan. On his personal selection, I, with a stint in journalism behind, joined as his press officer. This assignment was obviously the high-water mark of my service career and beyond. I was somewhat nervous initially, but then felt reassured and comfortable when he asked me to send my copies to the news media without his vetting.

The room which he occupied was located on the first floor of the Shahbag canteen

(presently known as Secretariat canteen), which was rather small for ministerial accommodations. Around his secretariat table, there were four wooden chairs without any cushion and a sofa-set that would accommodate only three persons. Visitors were few and far between. His table was never cluttered with pending files. The curtains of his one-door room and two windows were of moderate variety, as was the norm in those days. It exuded a gentleness and a quiet ambience that characterised the secretariat premises at the time.

Regretfully, his room is still unmarked and unrecorded by the secretariat authorities. Also the time that he had spent at the secretariat as a minister rarely finds mention in print or



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. PHOTO: ARCHIVES

Bangabandhu suffered extended imprisonment, braved life-risking challenges and finally wrested liberation from the colonial rulers for his people.

electronic media, although every phase of his career was singularly important in shaping his political thought and career. His tenure as a minister had, in fact, offered him a unique opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the exploitation of the Bengalis by the Pakistani rulers since Partition. It reinforced his conviction that liberation was the only option left for the Bengalis if they were to live honourably in the comity of nations.

Notably, the ministerial job was the only appointment that Bangabandhu had accepted under the Pakistani regime. But then, that was indeed the defining moment to chart his

next political strategy. At times there were moments when he seemed austere private, a loner—it was rather impossible to recognise the inner turmoil in his far-away look and the frozen melancholy of his features.

In one of his official tours to the Faridpur town, Bangabandhu asked me to accompany him during an inspection visit to the district jail. As he was going around the jail premises in brisk steps, he suddenly stopped in front of a cell, and remained standing there for some time. Later he told us that in his student days, he had been jailed for protesting the price hike of daily necessities by a West Pakistani district magistrate. I still vividly remember those moments when he seemed lost in nostalgia.

But before the year's end in office, Bangabandhu elected to opt out from the cosy club of ministerial comfort and authority and be with his hapless people to galvanise them to fight for freedom, albeit on a graduated scale, a role that he seemed to be preparing for all his life. Since then, much time elapsed, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became Bangabandhu and the Father of the Nation, as Bangladesh emerged on the world map from a classic war of liberation in contemporary history.


In the early days of independence, we had streams of visitors from all corners of the globe. On one occasion, I, then

an information officer, accompanied a venerated German writer during her visit to Bangabandhu at Dhanmondi 32. Bangabandhu received the guest at the doorstep of his residence and took her to the drawing room. The writer complimented Bangabandhu on his unique leadership in the liberation movement that won freedom for the Bengali nation. Bangabandhu was also appreciative of the support extended by her country in building our ravaged economy.

Before seeing the visitor off, much to my surprise, Bangabandhu called me by my first name. He remembered it even after so many years had elapsed. I was close to tears—it was the most unforgettable moment that remained etched in my mind. Like me, so many people have had fond memories of being pleasantly surprised when Bangabandhu called them by their first names, a gesture that showed how deeply he cared about his people.

Presently, as the nation commemorates the centenary of Bangabandhu's birth, let us recommit ourselves to fulfil his dream of Sonar Bangla. The attainment of the status as a developing nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a luminous tribute to his birth centenary on behalf of the nation.

Syed Badrul Haque is a contributor to The Daily Star.



CONFUCIUS
(551 BC—479 BC)
Chinese philosopher

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 1992 Nicholson film

6 Cardiff's land

11 Spring sign

12 Detached

13 Orange coats

14 Endures

15 Wine choice

16 Help out

18 Important time

19 Powerful bunch

20 Dos preceder

21 Texas's Houston

22 Movie photos

24 Film editing transition

25 Web user

27 Lion feature

29 Tried to lose

32 Fuss

33 Energy

34 Longoria of TV

35 Mythical flyer

36 PC key

37 Umbrella part

38 Pay for everyone

40 Pizzeria sights

42 Therefore

43 Dance music

44 Showy flower

45 Consumed

DOWN

1 Singer Emmylou

2 Set straight

3 Absolves, in a way

4 Flowed into

5 Military attack

6 Character found in kids' books

7 Copying

8 Becomes bored

9 Corner

10 Tahini base

17 Guts

23 Writer Harper

24 Petite

26 Address ender

27 George's wife

28 Loves to pieces

30 Show clearly

31 Applies daintily

33 Piper of rhyme

39 Court feat

41 Through

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

SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BEEBLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

UN team

FROM PAGE 12
facilities at Bhasan Char, appraise the needs of the Rohingya refugees relocated there, as well as discuss with the authorities and others currently working at Bhasan Char,” Sazzad said.

The UN delegation reached Bhasan Char around noon, said officials.

The development comes following an impasse, which lasted for more than a year, between the government and the UN regarding the global body’s technical assessment of the facility.

The government has already relocated some 13,000 Rohingyas to Bhasan Char, an island in Noakhali, from Cox’s Bazar in phases since December last year. Relocation of more Rohingyas is under process.

Bangladesh Navy implemented the Tk 3,100 crore housing project at Bhasan Char after some 750,000 Rohingyas had fled a military crackdown in Myanmar’s Rakhine state in 2017 and took shelter in Cox’s Bazar camps.

Apart from the risk of landslides in the hilly terrain, the government cited issues such as drug peddling, human trafficking, gender-based violence, conflicts between factions of the refugee communities in Cox’s Bazar, and environmental degradation as major reasons for the relocation.

The UN said it wanted to send a technical team to the island to assess the housing facilities. Asked by the government, the UN submitted the terms of reference for the visit in December 2019.

The move had got stalled after that.

Project officials said separate buildings for the UN and other international aid agencies have also been constructed in Bhasan Char.

The government has urged the UN to begin its operations in Bhasan Char, but the UN as well as donor countries sought an independent technical assessment of the facility.

The government, however, maintained no such technical assessment was necessary as Bhasan Char has been equipped with a well-built facility developed by maintaining international standards and addressing all risks involved.

NGO officials said if there was any gap in communication between the UN and the government on the Bhasan Char issue, it must be solved.

Highest new

FROM PAGE 12
maintaining health safety guidelines. With yesterday’s count, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 5,62,752.

In the same 24 hours yesterday, 11 Covid-19 patients died, raising the total number of casualties caused by the lethal virus to 8,608.

Against 24,275 tests, the positivity rate was 7.68—lower than the previous day’s 8.29 percent, according to the Directorate general of health services (DGHS).

In the last one month till march 9, the positivity rate, number of new cases and deaths were going down.

Meanwhile, the recovery count rose to 5,15,989 after another 1,510 patients were discharged from hospitals during the period.

Of all Covid-19 confirmed patients, more than 91 percent have recovered so far, while 1.53 percent died.

The first three Covid-19 positive cases were reported in the country on March 8.

Operation

FROM PAGE 12
between March 2 and March 9”. According to Mujib, the fundamental issue was whether the deployment and use of force was in aid of ulterior political purposes. The commission was further shut out from enquiring into the actual atrocities, which had been reported from various parts of East Pakistan, involving hundreds of casualties, he added.

Bangabandhu further argued that the commission would be incapable of conducting an unbiased enquiry because no representation was provided for the aggrieved. It was yet another demonstration of West Pakistani insensitivity towards the concerns and rights of Bangalees. Yahya was also disillusioned by Mujib’s rejection of the commission. He was under immense pressure from army officers and the civil service, and defended the proposed composition of the commission. [Richard Sisson and Leo E Rose, War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh, UCP, 1990, pg. 115]

The negotiation between Sheikh Mujib and Yahya, rolled into third day. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*

WHO endorses

FROM PAGE 12
The European Union’s medicines regulator on Tuesday insisted there was no evidence linking the jab to blood clots – termed thromboembolic events – after several nations suspended the shot over health fears.

The WHO said that in mass vaccination campaigns, it was routine for countries to flag up potential adverse events after people have been immunised.

“This does not necessarily mean that the events are linked to vaccination itself, but it is good practice to investigate them. It also shows that the surveillance system works and that effective controls are in place,” it said.

“Vaccination against Covid-19 will not reduce illness or deaths from other causes.

“Thromboembolic events are known to occur frequently. Venous thromboembolism is the third most common cardiovascular disease globally.”

Bangladesh most polluted

FROM PAGE 12
pollution dropped around 80 percent only in April last year as there was countrywide lockdown, but the situation started getting worse again when the lockdown was withdrawn.

In 2020, all Indian cities that were monitored observed air quality improvements compared to 2018, while 63 percent saw improvements over 2019.

The report said with annual average PM 2.5 concentrations of 77.1 microgrammes per cubic metre, Dhaka ranked the second most polluted capital cities in the world, while Delhi with an average annual PM 2.5 concentrations of 84.1 microgrammes per cubic metre topped the list.

“The connection between Covid-19 and air pollution has shone new light on the latter,

especially as many locations have observed visibly cleaner air -- revealing that air quality improvements are possible with urgent, collective action,” the report said.

According to the report, only 24 out of 106 monitored countries met World Health Organisation (WHO) annual guidelines for PM 2.5 in 2020.

“The year 2020 brought an unexpected dip in air pollution. In 2021, we will likely see an increase in air pollution due to human activity again,” said Frank Hammes, CEO of IQAir.

“We hope this report will highlight that urgent action is both possible and necessary to combat air pollution, which remains the world’s greatest environmental health threat.”

Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst

Politics on reverse gear

FROM PAGE 2
in the country, Hamid said if this pace of development continues, Bangladesh will emerge in the world as a developed and prosperous country by 2041.

Stressing the preservation of the invaluable memories and mementoes of the Father of the Nation through the implementation of the action plan adopted on the occasion of his birth centenary,

the president said it would enable future generations to know about the glory of the Bangalee nation as well as the courage and patriotism of their predecessors.

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih attended the inaugural function as guest of honour while Chinese President Xi Jinping and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered welcome speeches virtually.

at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), who also contributed to the report, said many parts of the world experienced unprecedented, but short-lived, improvements in air quality in 2020, as restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic caused a steep drop in fossil fuel consumption.

An official of the Department of Environment told The Daily Star that due to the lockdown, air quality improved in April and that continued till August. “But from October when the dry season began, the situation is getting worse,” said the official, wishing not to be named.

The official said the government had taken various steps to contain the air pollution, including regular mobile drive against the polluters.

Welcoming the president of the Maldives, Hamid said the Maldives and Bangladesh share excellent ties of friendship and understanding, which have grown significantly during the recent years.

He also expressed heartfelt thanks to his Maldivian counterpart for his valuable speech.

The Maldivian president arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

World leaders hail Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 2
“Something we are able to celebrate [50 years of independence] today because of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s vision for independent and democratic country, one which built on his love for its people,” he said in the message marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu and 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence.

The video message was screened during yesterday’s event, reports BSS.

The Canadian premier said Bangabandhu’s vision became a reality because Bangladesh’s founding father put his people first.

“My friends, today is a time for reflection and celebration. We reflect upon the legacy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- 100 years after his birth -- and celebrate 50 years of independence,” he said.

Mentioning that Bangabandhu reminded of the power that individuals bring to creating lasting change, Trudeau said, “As we face some of the greatest challenges of our life time, we -- leaders and citizens -- must do the same”.

He thanked PM Hasina for the invitation to the programme. He

also congratulated everyone on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh’s independence.

JAPANESE PM
In his video message delivered on the same occasion, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga yesterday said Bangabandhu had made tremendous efforts to strengthen bilateral ties after the independence of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

He said Bangabandhu had led Bangladesh to independence with his indomitable spirit 50 years ago. Japan was one of the first countries that recognised Bangladesh as a nation state right after its independence, he recalled.

“We had a privilege of welcoming Bangabandhu to Japan. During his stay in Japan, Bangabandhu visited farming and fishing villages in rural areas where he interacted with many local Japanese citizens,” the premier said.

Bangabandhu said he considered the development of Japan as a model to follow, Yoshihide Suga added.

Bangabandhu later made tremendous efforts to strengthen bilateral ties, he continued.

Buddhist group condemns junta

FROM PAGE 12
government-appointed organisation also said in a draft statement its members intended to halt activities, in an apparent protest.

The State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee planned to release a final statement after consulting the religious affairs minister today, the Myanmar Now news portal said, citing a monk who attended a meeting of the committee.

Monks have a long history of activism in Myanmar and were at the forefront of a 2007 “Saffron Revolution” against military rule, an uprising that, although suppressed, helped usher in democratic reforms.

Committee members could not immediately be reached for comment, but their reported stance would signal a significant rift between authorities and a group that usually works closely with the government.

Pope Francis also appealed for an end to the bloodshed, saying: “Even I kneel on the streets of Myanmar and say ‘stop the violence.’”

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted Aug San Suu Kyi’s elected government on February 1, detaining her and members of her party, drawing international condemnation.

Ousted members of parliament,

most from Suu Kyi’s party, pushed for a united stand against the coup in the ethnically diverse country, saying the designation of terrorist would be lifted from all autonomy-seeking insurgents fighting for democracy.

More than 180 protesters have been killed as security forces try to crush a wave of demonstrations, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners activist group says.

Protesters confronted security forces over a sand-bag barricade on one street in the city of Yangon. Police opened intermittent fire and one man appeared to get shot in the head, according to footage on social media.

UN sounds alarm on S Asia

FROM PAGE 12
“The fall-off of these critical services has had a devastating impact on the health and nutrition of the poorest families,” said Unicef regional director George Laryea-Adjei.

“It is absolutely vital that these services are fully restored for children and mothers who are in desperate need of them, and that everything possible is done to ensure that people feel safe to use them,” Laryea-Adjei said.

The estimates were based on actual observed changes and modelling exercises using data from before the pandemic in

South Asia, where in 2019 alone 1.4 million children under five died, 63 percent of them newborn babies.

Countries in the region, like elsewhere, imposed stringent lockdown measures to halt the spread of coronavirus. Many restrictions have since been eased although many schools remain shut.

The report said that even where health services were not shut down, the number of people visiting them declined.

In Bangladesh and Nepal, for example, the number of young children being treated for severe

acute malnutrition (SAM) fell by over 80 percent, while child vaccinations fell sharply in India and Pakistan.

With some 420 million children in South Asia out of school due to the pandemic, the report also warned that nine million children were likely never to return to school, the report added.

This in turn is expected to lead to an increase in child marriages, resulting in an additional 400,000 adolescent pregnancies, as well as an increase in the number of maternal and neonatal deaths, and in rates of child stunting.

Hefajat supporters attack Hindu homes

FROM PAGE 2
agitated. Locals of Noagaon village caught Jhumon at a bazar on Tuesday night and handed him over to police.

“We took him [Jhumon] into custody. Local Hefajat leaders are preparing to file a case with the station over his post on social media.”

However, no case was filed in this connection till 10:00pm.

Following Jhumon’s Facebook post, members of the Hindu community in the village had been in fear of attacks.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Bibekananda Majumdar Bokul, chairman of Habibpur union and a resident of the village, said officials of police and the administration on Tuesday night

held a meeting with local Hefajat leaders who assured that there would be no trouble since Jhumon had already been arrested.

“Probably, this was the reason why the administration didn’t think it necessary to take security measures to protect the members of the Hindu community.

“The attack has left us speechless... I still cannot believe that this happened to us,” said Bibekananda whose house was also vandalised.

Contacted, Deepak Chandra Ghosh, president of Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad in Sunamganj, said, “Whatever the youth posted on Facebook is a matter of investigation by the authorities. He had already been detained. But the attack despite his

detention is heinous. We strongly condemn it.

“As the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police assured the locals of justice, we demand that police identify the attackers and bring them to justice without delay.”

Hefajat Naye-b-e-Amir Maulana Abdul Basir, also former president of its Sunamganj unit, said he heard about the incident but was yet to get details.

The man who criticised Mamunul has already been detained, and he has to be brought to justice through due legal process, he mentioned.

“But the attack on the houses of innocent people is regrettable,” said Basir.

Bangladesh, the Maldives

FROM PAGE 12
Fayyaz Ismail, has also joined him.

According to the foreign ministry, Bangladesh and Maldives have been working closely on bilateral and international issues since the establishment of the diplomatic relationship in 1978.

The Maldives, an island country and a major tourist destination of the world, is home to some 100,000 Bangladeshis. The two countries have a limited scale of trading too, but there are enormous scopes for boosting it, officials said.

Foreign ministry officials said Bangladesh and Maldives signed two MoUs during the visit of Maldives Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid in February this year.

One was on cooperation on training foreign services officials and the other on human resources recruitment from Bangladesh. Today’s meeting against that backdrop is likely to further cement the relations, said officials.

Mashfee Binte Shams, secretary (east) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the Maldives largely depends on imports.

Given the expertise and availability of manufacturing and IT services base, Bangladesh can greatly boost exports to the Maldives, she said.

She also said, “We can extend products and services to the Maldives. We can also enhance cultural cooperation,

“The Maldives has a lot of experience in deep-sea fishing and Bangladesh can take technical expertise from it,” she told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Maldives Rear Admiral Mohammad Nazmul Hassan said Bangladesh can export processed food, ceramics, leather goods, RMG, jute products, pharmaceutical products.

“Presently, transport cost is high because our products need to be exported via

Singapore or Colombo ports. So, we have proposed a direct shipping service between Bangladesh and Maldives. This can greatly reduce transport cost and help increase trade,” he told this correspondent on Tuesday.

Now only three Bangladesh pharmaceutical companies have the approval to export medicines to the Maldives, and the number can be increased as there are a lot of world-class pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh also proposed a Preferential Trade Agreement for the consideration of Maldives.

Given that the Maldives is the world’s leading tourist destination, tour operators from the two countries can have joint ventures to promote tourism, and Bangladesh can also learn from Maldivian expertise on tourism, he said.

Also, Maldives is a major exporter of tuna fish. Bangladesh has a vast area of the deep sea but does not have the skills of deep-sea fishing.

“We can establish a joint venture in this field,” he said.

As a good number of undocumented Bangladeshis are living in the Maldives, it may seek their repatriation as their economy is now not in a good shape due to the coronavirus pandemic, Nazmul Hassan said.

“We would request that those who volunteer to return can surely be repatriated. But those who want to continue should have a chance for regularization and continue to work,” Nazmul Hassan said.

The Maldives also seeks to recruit more doctors and nurses from Bangladesh. The foreign ministry has referred the issue to the health ministry for consideration, he said.

“We already have very friendly relations with the Maldives. We would like to take this to the next stage,” the Bangladesh envoy said.

First baby born with Covid

FROM PAGE 12
world that was reported of a baby being born with antibodies after a vaccination.”

Gilbert and another Florida doctor, Dr Chad Rudnick, have written up the findings in an online journal, medRxiv, that has yet to be peer reviewed.

“This is one small case in what will be thousands and thousands of babies born to mothers who have been vaccinated over the next several months,” said Rudnick.

“Further studies have to determine how long this protection will last. They have to determine at what level of protection or how many antibodies does a baby need to have circulating in order to give them protection.”

He said that scientists were still learning about how the vaccine interacts with women who are pregnant.

Some pharmaceutical companies have started to include pregnant women in their studies of the vaccine.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ	
সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট	
☎ঃ ০৪৬৮-৬২৪৮৫	
☎ঃ ০৪৬৮-৬৩২২৪	
ই-মেইলঃ eebeg@rhd.gov.bd	
স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.০১০৮.৪০০.০৭.০০১.২১-৩০৫৯	তারিখঃ ১৬-০৩-২০২১খ্রিঃ
সেতুর ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (৮ম আহবান)	
সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং ইজারাদার/ইজারাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে স্ব-স্ব লাইসেন্স এর ক্ষমতা/অভিজ্ঞতা অনুযায়ী সীলমোহরকৃত খামে বাংলাদেশ ফরম নং-২৯১১ তে কোটেশন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।	
০১। ইজারা কোটেশন নং-	ঃ ০১/বাসবি/২০২০-২০২১ (৮ম আহবান)
০২। ইজারার বিবরণ	ঃ ২০২১-২০২২, ২০২২-২০২৩ ও ২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক বৎসর (০১-০৭-২০২১ হতে ৩০/০৬/২০২৪ পর্যন্ত = ৩ বছর)-এর জন্য সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট-এর অধীন নওয়াপাড়া-বাগেরহাট-পিরোজপুর (আর-৭৭০) আঞ্চলিক মহাসড়কের ১৯তম কিঃমিঃ-এ অবস্থিত দড়াটানা সেতুর টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।
০৩। ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	ঃ ৩ (তিন) বছর (১০৯৬ দিন)।
০৪। ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য	ঃ টাকা ৫০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)।
০৫। বায়নার টাকার পরিমাণ	ঃ উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে।
০৬। ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ৩০/০৩/২০২১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ পর্যন্ত।
০৭। মুখবন্দ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ৩১/০৩/২০২১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ পর্যন্ত।
০৮। ইজারা ডাকে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	ঃ ভ্যাট ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারি/বেসরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকাদার।
০৯। যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন জরুরের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে	ঃ বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, খুলনা বিভাগ, খুলনা/তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, খুলনা সড়ক সার্কেল, সড়ক ভবন, বায়রা, খুলনা/তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, খুলনা ফেরি সার্কেল, সড়ক ভবন, বয়রা, খুলনা/জেলা প্রশাসক, বাগেরহাট/পুলিশ সুপার, বাগেরহাট/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা/সাতক্ষীরা/বাগেরহাট/ফেরি বিভাগ, শিরোমনি, খুলনা/গ্লানিং বিভাগ-১, সড়ক ভবন, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা/উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২/১ম সারি কারখানা উপ-বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট।
১০। যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্দ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	ঃ (ক) তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, খুলনা সড়ক সার্কেল, সড়ক ভবন, বয়রা, খুলনা। (খ) জেলা প্রশাসক, বাগেরহাট। (গ) পুলিশ সুপার, বাগেরহাট। (ঘ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট।
১১। ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ স্থানঃ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট। তারিখঃ ৩১-০৩-২০২১খ্রিঃ। সময়ঃ বেলা ০৩.০০ ঘটিকা।
১২। ইজারা আহবানকারী যে কোন সময় যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
মোঃ ফরিদ উদ্দিন পরিচিতি নং-৬০২২১৮ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (চ.দা), সওজ সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট	
জিডি-৫৫৫	

T SPORTS & STAR SPORTS 1
India vs England
Fourth T20I
Live from 7:30 pm
SONY SIX
UEFA Europa League
Shakhtar Donetsk vs AS Roma
Live from 11:55 pm

Young Boys vs Ajax
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)
TEN 1
UEFA Europa League
Arsenal vs Olympiacos
Live from 11:55 pm
Rangers vs Slavia Prague
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

TEN 2
UEFA Europa League
Dinamo Zagreb vs Tottenham
Live from 11:55 pm
AC Milan vs Manchester United
Live from 2:00 am (Friday)

Can Tigers work as a streak to defy the streak?

NABID YEASIN AND SABBIR HOSSAIN



Records need not be pointed out to show that Bangladesh are yet to make big strides in the longest format of the game compared to their achievements in limited-overs cricket. When compared to other Test-playing nations, that gap only becomes more prominent.

Hence, pundits, journalists, Bangladesh's fans and even the players almost instantly acknowledge the fact that the Tigers are a better limited-overs side in the international arena -- especially favouring ODIs. But despite being a better ODI side when compared within their own matrix, the Tigers' record away from home even in their strongest format is far off the standards set at home.

Bangladesh have had rare moments of success in both ODI and T20I World Cups and other major limited-overs ICC events over the years.

And while those remain some of the country's most iconic cricketing moments that glorify and enrich the country's cricketing history, the Tigers can boast of very few triumphs in overseas series.

After a number of heartbreaks in major tournament finals, Bangladesh were only able to win their maiden multi-team ODI tournament when they lifted a trophy in a tri-nation tournament including the West Indies and hosts Ireland in 2019.

The Tigers won a three-match ODI series 2-1 against a full-fledged West Indies side in July, 2018, but other than that victories in overseas series against top-ranked sides have been few and far between. The fact that they are yet to taste victories in bilateral series in four foreign nations -- South Africa, New Zealand, Pakistan and Australia -- only adds to



the Tigers' woes.

But it is their failure in New Zealand that comes to the fore vividly as the Tigers have toured the nation four times, more than the three aforementioned countries, playing and losing 26 matches against the Kiwis in their backyard -- 13 ODIs including one in the 2015 World Cup, four T20Is and nine Tests. They have had far more success against them while playing at home, with the famous 4-0 'Banglaway' in 2010 being the most noteworthy of all.

While talking about the Tigers' disreputable away record, one might be misled into thinking that the they have not had their moments of exhilaration away from home,

especially in New Zealand.

However, with the Tigers currently on their fifth New Zealand sojourn for three ODIs and as many T20Is, we can find a number of inspiring individual performances across formats if we turn our focus to their previous outings against the Kiwis in their backyard.

But those knocks were just that, inspiring but never backed up by support from the team and that resulted in inevitable defeats.

Fifties from Henry Nicholls, Ross Taylor, skipper Tom Latham and cameos from James Neesham and Colin de Grandhomme helped New Zealand cruise to 330 for six in the third and final ODI against

Bangladesh in Dunedin in February, 2019. Despite Sabbir Rahman scoring a century in that game, a lack of support from his teammates -- only four others recorded double digits -- culminated in Bangladesh losing by a huge margin of 88 runs.

Similarly, Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 128 in the 2015 World Cup game in Hamilton, Imrul Kayes' 101 in Christchurch in 2010 or Mushfiqur Rahim's 86 in Dunedin in 2010 were all trumped by a concerted team effort from the Kiwis, something the visitors missed on every occasion.

On every tour of New Zealand, it has been repeatedly proven that, aside from instances of individual brilliance, Bangladesh still have a

long way to go in growing as a team. Can Tamim Iqbal, who is on his first overseas tour as Bangladesh's ODI captain, bring his troops together to make amends in that particular aspect of the game in New Zealand this time around?

As evidenced by past tours, it is certainly not rare for Bangladeshi players to flourish in Kiwi conditions. But maybe what needs changing is a supply of ample support from other members of the team when any individual is having his day out in the middle. Maybe that could be the mantra for the Tigers to change the infamous record -- that of not winning in 26 international games in New Zealand till date -- on this tour.

PREMIER DIVISION TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE

Players to get back into swing after 3 years

SPORTS REPORTER



After a three-year hiatus, including a Covid-19-induced one-year break, the Premier Division Table Tennis League is set to get underway today at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium amid tales of joy and sorrow.

The players' happiness is unquestionable as they finally got an opportunity to earn some money from the top-flight league after three long years while the enrollment of Bangladesh Police Club in the league added to their delight. On the other hand, they were dismayed by Biman Bangladesh Airlines Table Tennis's decision to pull out of the league to which they returned after a five-year hiatus in 2017, participating that year and the next.

Biman, once an unparalleled team, taking the decision to withdraw apparently gave the teams that remain a bit of room to relax and not spend big behind their squads because now only one



of the 10 teams faces the threat of relegation.

Former junior champion Imran Hossain Ridoy, ranked Bangladesh's fifth-best player, was supposed to represent Biman in the postponed 2020 league, but is now playing for Ajax SC for approximately Tk 70,000 than what he would have gotten from Biman.

"Those who were supposed to play for Biman are now getting Tk 50,000 to Tk 70,000 less from other teams, who are not interested to spend big because only one team

will be relegated this time due to Biman's withdrawal," Ridoy told The Daily Star.

"We are not only facing financial damage, we also spent our own money to buy gear because Biman used to provide gear to the players," said Ridoy, hoping that Ajax SC would fight for a top-three position although Sheikh Russel and Bangladesh Police Club look to be ahead of the other eight on paper.

Parag, Antu Hossain Joy, Saleha Parvin, Moumita Rumi and two other players were also supposed

to play for Biman and are now struggling to land good positions.

Biman tried to be included at the eleventh hour, but the federation shut the door on them because it was too late to make arrangements for their inclusion.

Although Ridoy is playing for Ajax, he was pleased to see a new team -- Police Club -- join the league, saying it could provide good opportunities to players in future.

Inspired by their success in the Chess League, Police Club showed intent in the table tennis league as well by forming a strong squad that includes defending champion Muhatasin Ahmed Ridoy and promising players Sabbir and Ramhin.

"In our debut season, Bangladesh Police became champions in the Premier Division Chess League, which inspired us to step into other indoor games. We hope our team will deliver a good result in the table tennis league too," Superintendent of Police M Mahabubur Rahman, a focal member of the executive committee of Police Indoor Games, said.

REAL, CITY BREEZE THROUGH TO QUARTERFINALS

'Real played splendidly from start to finish'

REUTERS, Madrid



Real Madrid easily overcame Atalanta 3-1 at home in their Champions League last-16 second leg on Tuesday to stroll into the quarter-finals 4-1 on aggregate.

"You have to congratulate the players because we played splendidly from start to finish, against a team that demands a lot of you physically," said Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane.

"We did exactly what we needed to do, both in defence and when we had the ball. We could say it was a complete performance."

Karim Benzema scored a sixth goal in five games to put the 13-times European champions in charge after 34 minutes while captain Sergio Ramos converted a penalty on the hour mark.

The Italian side managed to get one

the opening goal.

"We all know the player Modric is, he may be 35 but he sure doesn't look it out on the pitch," Zidane told reporters.

'I am delighted to be in the next stage'

REUTERS, Budapest

Manchester City marched into the quarter-finals of the Champions League for the fourth straight season after a 2-0 win over Borussia Mönchengladbach on Tuesday to complete a 4-0 aggregate victory.

First-half goals from Kevin De Bruyne and Ilkay Gundogan secured a comfortable victory in another impressive display from Pep Guardiola's side in the home leg, played in the Hungarian capital due to Covid-19 travel restrictions.

"It was a good performance, in control for the 90 minutes. We moved the ball quick, played really well again. A lot of players with quality who don't lose the ball. I am delighted to be in the next stage," said Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola, who has seen his teams score 100+ goals in all his 12 seasons as a manager, since 2008-09.

City have won 24 of their past 25 matches in all competitions (lost one). Since a 1-1 draw with West Brom on December 15, City's 24 wins are at least seven more than any other side has managed in all competitions in the top-five European leagues.

They are only the third team in Champions League history to keep seven consecutive clean sheets, after AC Milan (seven ending in April 2005) and Arsenal (10 ending in April 2006).

Guardiola heaped praise on centre backs Ruben Dias and John Stones after Tuesday's Champions League win and said their solid partnership was a key factor in the club's stellar campaign.

"We just conceded one goal against Porto and that is quite impressive," Guardiola said. "You can't deny that Ruben and John made an incredible step forward for the team this season."



BOOTERS LEAVE FOR NEPAL TODAY

Bangladesh players seem in high spirits during their last practice session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, prior to their departure for Nepal today to take part in a tri-nation football tournament. The tri-nation tournament involving hosts Nepal, Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan U-23 team is set to start on March 23 and will continue till March 29. The tournament will be played in round-robin format. There will be a total of four matches with the top two teams playing in the final. The Dashrath Stadium will host all the matches.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Stage set for Ibra's return

AFP, Paris

Zlatan Ibrahimovic looks set to face Manchester United in AC Milan's Europa League showdown with the English giants on Thursday as the resurgent 'Rossoneri' aim to announce their return to the big stage.

The Swede should be in good spirits after announcing his return to international football after nearly five years away on Tuesday, and appears to be winning the race to face his old club in the second leg of their last-16 clash at the San Siro.

The tie is locked at 1-1. Italian media reported on Tuesday that the veteran forward trained with the rest of the Milan squad and should be available for the first time since he left his side's 2-1 win at Roma with a high injury at the end of last month.



goal back thanks to a free kick from Luis Muriel in the 83rd but any hope they had of completing a comeback was quickly dashed a minute later by a low strike from Real substitute Marco Asensio.

Real coach Zinedine Zidane however praised an evergreen Luka Modric after the 35-year-old midfielder produced a majestic display in a comfortable win over Atalanta on Tuesday as the Spanish side reached the Champions League quarter-finals.

Modric played a crucial role in breaking the deadlock by contributing to his side's high-pressing game and intercepting a kick out from Atalanta keeper Marco Sportiello to set up Karim Benzema for

Manchester City marched into the quarter-finals of Europe's elite club competition for a fourth straight season. Meanwhile, City have reached the last four only once, in 2015-16 under Chilean Manuel Pellegrini.





WORLD AIR QUALITY REPORT 2020

Bangladesh most polluted

Dhaka remains 2nd worst capital

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Air quality of Bangladesh was the worst in the world, while its capital Dhaka was the second most air polluted city in 2020, said a global report.

"South Asia remained the most polluted region of the world with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sharing 42 of the 50 most polluted cities worldwide," shows new data from IQAir's global air quality data platform in its World Air Quality Report 2020.

The report published yesterday said the average annual PM 2.5 concentrations in Bangladesh was 77.1 microgrammes per cubic metre (mcg/m3) of air, which is seven times above WHO exposure recommendation.

Researchers from IQAir -- a global air quality information and Swiss-based tech company -- analysed pollution data from 106 countries, specifically measuring PM

2.5, a microscopic pollutant that can cause serious health risks.

"An estimated 13-22 percent of deaths in this region are linked to the health effects of air pollution exposure, with associated estimated costs equating to 7.4 percent of the region's GDP," the report said.

Experts said Bangladesh has ranked top of the worst polluted countries since 2018 and this result showed that the situation did not improve in recent years.

"Basically, we did not see any concrete steps that can help reduce the air pollution. Even if there are some steps taken by the government to improve the air quality, it seems that the steps are not enough," Prof Abdus Salam, of Dhaka University's Chemistry department, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Salam, who is an air quality expert, said due to the pandemic, transport-related air

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a floral wreath before the portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu museum on Dhanmondi Road-32 yesterday on the occasion of the Father of the Nation's birthday.

PHOTO: PID

UN team on Bhasan Char to inspect facilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 18-member UN delegation reached Bhasan Char yesterday on a three-day visit to take a first-hand view of the housing facility for 100,000 Rohingyas.

Facilitated by the Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations' visit to Bhasan Char is taking place from March 17 to 20, said Mostafa Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, assistant communications officer at UNHCR Bangladesh.

The three-day visit would bring together experts from UN agencies engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh, he told The Daily Star.

"The visit will look at the current situation and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ASTRAZENECA JABS

WHO endorses continuation of vaccination

Says experts still reviewing safety data

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization said yesterday its experts were still reviewing safety data on the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine following concerns around blood clots but recommended that injection programmes continue.

While millions of doses of the vaccine have been administered, small numbers of people have developed blood clots, prompting countries including the EU's three largest nations -- Germany, France and Italy -- to suspend injections.

"The WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety is carefully assessing the latest available safety data," the UN health agency said in a statement.

"At this time, WHO considers that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh its risks and recommends that vaccinations continue."

It said that once the committee had completed its review, the WHO would immediately communicate its findings.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Operation searchlight inked

MARCH 18, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

PREPARING 'MILITARY SOLUTION'

On the morning of March, 18, 1971, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, then general officer commanding of 14 Division in East Pakistan, and Major General Rao Farman Ali, then military adviser to the governor of East Pakistan, assembled at the former's office to work on the plan for military action, the infamous Operation Searchlight. Khadim asked his wife to keep his Bengali ADC busy and away from his office. "I did not want to arouse his suspicions about Farman working with me in my office the whole morning as it was a very unusual get-together in that environment," writes Khadim in his memoir. The two generals agreed on broad details and decided to write their respective pieces: Farman was to supervise the operations of the Dhaka garrison while Khadim was responsible for the rest of the

province. They met again at the Command House on the same evening. The plan was presented before the top generals and it was passed without any discussion except the deception involving the president. The deception plan was overruled as President Yahya had his own plan -- to flee from Dhaka prior to the military action. [Khadim Hussain Raja, A Stranger in My Own Country: East Pakistan (1969-1971), UPL, 2012, 71]

MUJIB REJECTS PROBE BODY

Bangabandhu today rejected the commission of enquiry set up by the martial law authority "to go into the circumstances which led to the calling of the army in aid of civil power in various parts of East Pakistan

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Bangladesh, the Maldives to sign 4 deals today

PORIMOL PALMA

The Bangladesh-Maldives bilateral relationship is set to see a boost as the two South Asian countries are going to sign at least four MoUs on trade, tourism, fisheries, and health today.

The MoUs are likely to be signed in a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at the Prime Minister's Office.

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning to attend the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and the golden jubilee of independence.

His wife, First Lady Madam Fazna Ahmed, is accompanying him.

Besides, a delegation of 27, including Maldives Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid and Economic Development Minister

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

First baby born with Covid antibodies



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A healthcare worker in Florida has given birth to a baby with Covid antibodies - the first known case of this happening after a person was vaccinated.

In a case that experts say could have significant implications for efforts to fight the pandemic, it was reported that the woman, had been vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine when she was 36 weeks pregnant.

She gave birth three weeks, in January, a blood sample was taken from the baby girl, and a DNA test was performed.

"We tested the baby's cord to see if the antibodies in the mother passed to the baby which is something, we see happen with other vaccines given during pregnancy," Palm Beach pediatrician Dr Paul Gilbert told Florida's WPBF.

"To our knowledge, this was the first in the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Highest new Covid cases in 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate reported 1,865 fresh cases of novel coronavirus infection in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, the highest in last three months.

On December 15, at least 18,77 cases were reported in the country.

Experts assumed that the recent spike in transmission was likely linked to the spread of new strains of novel coronavirus and people not

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 18					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 5:00	12:45	4:30	6:14	7:45	
JAMAAT 5:35	1:15	4:45	6:18	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					



Relatives of Hashem Khan cry at Chattogram Medical College Hospital after he was stabbed to death following a clash between two groups at Agrabad of the city yesterday during the celebrations of the Father of the Nation's birthday. The clash began over blocking a street for a celebration programme. Police held one suspect in this connection. The suspect allegedly confessed that he had stabbed Hashem.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

UN sounds alarm on S Asia child deaths

Blames drastic cuts in availability of essential health services across countries, including Bangladesh

AFP, New Delhi

The coronavirus pandemic may have indirectly contributed to around 228,000 additional child deaths in 2020, 11,000 maternal fatalities and 3.5 million unwanted pregnancies in South Asia, the UN said in a report yesterday.

The study commissioned by Unicef blamed "drastic cuts in the availability and use of essential public health services" because of the pandemic across India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, home to 1.8 billion people.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

CRACKDOWN IN MYANMAR

Buddhist group condemns junta

UN investigators seek evidence of criminal orders by military

REUTERS

Myanmar's most powerful Buddhist monks' association called on the junta to end violence against protesters and accused an "armed minority" of torture and killing innocent civilians since last month's coup, media said yesterday.

In its most forthright condemnation of the military's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations, the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

মুজিব চিরন্তন

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবার্ষিকী ও স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণজয়ন্তী উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষ্যে অনুষ্ঠানমালা

স্থান: জাতীয় প্যারেড স্কয়ার ১৮ই মার্চ ২০২১, বৃহস্পতিবার

থিম (Theme): মহাকালের তর্জনী

সময়	কর্মসূচি
বিকাল ৫.১৫	মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও আবহ সংগীত (থিম সং ভিডিও প্রদর্শন) স্বাগত সম্ভাষণ ও সঞ্চালনা (বাস্তবায়ন কমিটির পক্ষে) মহাকালের তর্জনীভিত্তিক অডিও ভিডিও প্রদর্শনী থিমভিত্তিক আলোচনা: ড. আলমগীর মোহাম্মদ সিরাজুদ্দিন সম্মানিত অতিথির ধারণকৃত বক্তব্য: কথোড়িয়ার মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী হুসেন আলোচনা পর্ব সমাপ্তি
সংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান	কর্মসূচি
সময় সন্ধ্যা ৬.৩০	বঙ্গ রাষ্ট্রের সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানের ধারণকৃত ভিডিও পরিবেশনা (ভিয়েতনাম) মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও থিমের ওপর একটি সিজি এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-১ ঐতিহাসিক এই মার্চের ভাষ্যের সাথে অর্কেস্ট্রা মিউজিক উপস্থাপনা (পটের গানের মাধ্যমে) পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-২ বিভিন্ন সময়ে বঙ্গবন্ধুকে নিয়ে রচিত গানের পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৩ বঙ্গবন্ধুর এই মার্চের ভাষ্যের ওপর ভিত্তি করে লাইট ও সাউন্ড শো পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৪ দুই প্রজন্মের শিল্পীদের মেলবন্ধনে মিশ্র মিউজিক পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৫ অনুষ্ঠানের সমাপ্তি
রাত ৮.০০	

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন জাতীয় বাস্তবায়ন কমিটি