



"The seismic shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic have shattered the lives of millions of women and girls and destroyed many of our gains."
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES



"I'm going to reflect on the recurring feeling I have of impending doom ... I'm scared."
US CDC DIRECTOR ROCHELLE WALENSKY WARNS OF A COMING SPIKE IN COVID CASE COUNTS

I don't think I have been involved in a game before where batters go out and don't know what the DLS target is.
BANGLADESH COACH RUSSELL DOMINGO AFTER LOSING THE SECOND T20I AGAINST NEW ZEALAND



Hardly any Hefajat hand in mayhem!

Only one of 25 police cases names Hefajat leaders

- **BRAHMANBARIA:** 7 cases, 8,200 accused, no named accused
- **HATHAZARI:** no case
- **HABIGANJ:** 1 case, 400 accused, 23 named accused with no political affiliation
- **NARAYANGANJ:** 7 cases, 3,900 accused, 166 named accused with BNP/Jamaat affiliation
- **KISHOREGANJ:** 2 cases, 2,250 unnamed accused, 64 BNP men named
- **DHAKA:** 8 cases, several thousand unnamed, 38 Hefajat men named

STAR REPORT

Although there is plenty of video footage and photos showing that the recent countrywide mayhem was unleashed by Hefajat-e-Islam, only a handful of people from the Islamist organisation have been accused in the cases over the violence.

As Hefajat began nationwide protests against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, the demonstrations turned violent in certain districts, including Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, Kishoreganj and Narayanganj.

At least 25 cases have so far been filed against over 15,000 people, but only one accused 32 top Hefajat leaders in Dhaka. Other than that, Hefajat names are nary in sight.

There are, however, many BNP leaders and activists who have been accused in the cases.

The Daily Star found this after going through statements of many of the cases and speaking to the officers-in-charge of the police stations concerned.

Following the Hefajat mayhem, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Sunday issued a note of warning saying no violence would be tolerated. He also warned that those involved in breaking laws and carrying out subversive activities would be identified and brought to book.

But when he was asked yesterday why the perpetrators identified in most of the cases do not include Hefajat men, he said, "The cases were filed immediately after the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Four female volunteers of Quantum Foundation taking the body of Mazeda Begum, 55, out of the capital's Mugda Medical College Hospital. Mazeda, a housewife from Narsingdi, died of Covid-19 yesterday after undergoing treatment at the hospital for two days. The volunteers washed the body and wrapped it in a shroud following health guidelines to get it ready for burial.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COMMENTARY

HEFAJAT'S MAYHEM A wake-up call for AL, for us all

MAHFUZ ANAM

The ostensible reason for the recent protests was Indian PM Narendra Modi's latest visit. The real reason was to signal that Hefajat-e-Islam (HI) under its new leadership was not the same party as it was under its former chief Shah Ahmad Shafi and his immediate followers and to announce that HI was ready to emerge as a new political force under the guise of protecting the majority faith. It is also a signal that the government's policy of appeasement has totally failed and the compromises and concessions so generously and unthinkingly given have only helped make them stronger and more determined to challenge the fundamental character of the country. The situation stands as a testimony to the follies of a politics of power and arrogance that has led the ruling party to cripple all its political allies representing secular and democratic forces.

To politically obliterate Jamaat, Sheikh Hasina wanted to create an alternative Islamic force. The choice was Qawmi-Madrasa based Hefajat-e-Islam (HI). The logic was as simple as it was attractive. The AL needed an "Islamic party" that did not have the unacceptable features of opposing the birth of Bangladesh and being involved in anti-liberation activities and whose leaders were not among the war criminals of 1971. By having such a force aligned with it, AL could easily obliterate the Jamaat.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt moves to raise number of hospital beds

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has taken steps to increase the number of beds in public hospitals and open temporary healthcare facilities in Dhaka to accommodate the rising number of Covid-19 patients.

As part of the move, Dhaka North City Corporation kitchen market in Mohakhali will be turned into a makeshift hospital dedicated for novel coronavirus patients.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said, "The makeshift hospital will be able to accommodate around 1,200 patients at a time. It will have 51 ICU beds."

He said they have instructed the city's three specialised public hospitals -- National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology -- to soon open units dedicated for coronavirus patients with 100 beds each.

"We are trying our best to improve hospital facilities. We have already given instructions in this regard."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Response delayed, and it lacks clarity

Experts say about govt's 18-point directive on containing Covid surge

MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

Experts say the 18-point directive that the government issued on Monday to curb the rapid surge in Covid cases is not only a delayed response but it also lacks clarity.

With daily cases crossing the 5,000 mark for the last couple of days, experts have strongly suggested imposing a lockdown in the Covid hotspots in Dhaka and Chattogram.

"I would say it is too late to issue such notifications. The daily infection positivity rate has risen to 18.94 percent from 2.30 percent. Now it is high time to enforce curfew in big cities. The hotspots where the positivity rate is high should be isolated from the rest of the country," Md Sayedur Rahman, chairman of pharmacology department at BSMMU, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The country recorded 5,042 cases and 45 deaths in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. On Monday, 5,181 cases were recorded, the

highest in a day since the pandemic hit the country in March last year.

Amid the sharp rise in Covid cases, the government on Monday issued fresh directives, including restrictions on social gatherings and extension of closure of educational institutions, with immediate effect.

Those will remain in force for at least two weeks, read a gazette notification signed by Ahmad Kaikaus, principle secretary to the prime minister.

As per the directives, the number of participants at public meetings must be kept at a limited scale and no gatherings will be allowed in the areas seeing high virus transmission.

But the government is yet to publish the list of such areas.

A source in the health directorate, however, said the government has classified Dhaka, Narayanganj and Chattogram as "high risk" zones. Four districts --

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ARRIVALS FROM EU, UK Institutional quarantine for 14 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All passengers arriving from the UK and other European countries will have to be in institutional quarantine for 14 days at government facilities or government-approved hotels at their own costs.

This will take effect on March 31 and continue until further notice, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh announced yesterday.

Caab came up with the announcement taking into consideration the deterioration of Covid-19 situation in the country and elsewhere, it said in a statement.

After the 14-day quarantine period, passengers will have to take Covid-19 tests and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Only 2 oxygen cylinders at emergency

Mugda struggles to deal with deluge of Covid patients

ANISUR RAHMAN

With only two oxygen cylinders, the emergency unit of Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital is struggling to cope with the influx of coronavirus patients.

Apart from treating follow-up patients, attending doctors and nurses in the emergency unit of the Covid-19-dedicated hospital were seen trying to serve the critical patients with severe respiratory problems.

Watching from a distance, this correspondent saw at least six such patients arrive at the hospital between 12:00pm and 2:30pm. But the emergency unit could only provide oxygen support to three of them with the available cylinders, which had to be switched from one patient to the other.

Since there were no beds
SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Two staffers take Monir Hossain, 50, out of Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital yesterday after doctors referred him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Monir, an employee of Titas Gas, has been suffering from cold, throat pain and breathing problems for the last 10 days. After being denied admission to two hospitals and a health complex due to unavailability of seats, he finally got admitted to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Buses, trains to ply at half capacity

Bus fare to rise 60pc from today; train, launch fare to remain same

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the country witnessing a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases and deaths, authorities concerned have imposed restrictions on carrying passengers in buses, trains and launches.

Buses and minibuses are going to charge 60 percent more than the existing fare from today on condition that they would carry 50 percent passengers of their capacities and maintain necessary health safety guidelines.

Bangladesh Railway yesterday started selling half the tickets of a train's capacity. However, it may take a few days to start operation with 50 percent passengers as many advance tickets up to April 4 have already been sold.

Launch owners have also been directed to carry 50 percent passengers on the deck from yesterday. However, launch and train fares would remain the same.

The government on Monday issued the new directives to curb the fresh and sharp rise of Covid-19 cases in the country.

As per the directives, issued by the Prime Minister's Office, public transport cannot carry passengers over 50 percent of the capacity.

Inter-district transport has to be limited to areas with higher infections, has to be suspended entirely if necessary, the directives said.

The new bus fare would be applicable for next two weeks unless the government issues any further directives, officials said yesterday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BANGLADESH UPDATE

5,042
New cases in 24hrs

6,05,937
Total cases

45
Deaths

5,40,180
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

2,810,063
Deaths

128,634,010
Total cases

Temples, Hindu houses attacked in several dists

STAR REPORT

Multiple Hindu temples and homes have come under attack since Sunday in different districts.

In almost all the incidents, the perpetrators have remained unidentified.

The recent spate of violence against the Hindus started with Sunday's attack on a Brahmanbaria temple launched from a Hefajat-e-Islam procession.

Members of the minority religion were targets of violence after the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation unleashed havoc in many areas on Sunday during their dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal.

Our correspondents from different districts reported the attacks on the minorities.

In Brahmanbaria on Sunday, around 200 Hefajat activists ransacked the district's biggest temple Sree Sree Anandamayee Kali Mandir around noon when Hindu devotees were observing the Dol Purnima festival there.

The attackers trashed and broke the idols of Krishna and Goddess Kali. The donation box for the temple and ornaments of idols were looted, while the artifacts used for ceremonies were ransacked and strewn about.

"We were performing prayers for Dol Purnima, when 200-300 armed men broke the temple gate and barged into our ceremony. We tried to protect the idol of Goddess Kali, but they shoved us aside and vandalised the idol," said Ashis Paul, president of Anandamayee Kalibari Temple Festival Celebration Committee.

The temple's priest Jibon Chakroborty said the attackers damaged everything and looted money and ornaments within 10 minutes.

In Magura, some unidentified attackers set fire to a cremation ground and its adjacent temple in Astogram area under Mohammadpur upazila on

Sunday night.

Three rooms of the cremation ground, known locally as Shita Pagoler Ashram, were burnt to ashes, said Swapna Rani Biswas, former vice chairman of Mohammadpur upazila parishad and organising secretary of the upazila unit of Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council.

Contacted, the district's Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ashraf Alam said the reasons could not be known immediately.

No one was arrested in this connection as police could not find any clue behind the incident, said Tarok Biswas, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur Police Station.

In Bogura, attackers vandalised an idol of Hindu goddess Saraswati at a temple at Tengrakhal village in Dhunot upazila early yesterday.

"I went to the temple around 4:00am today [Tuesday] for performing a ritual. At that time, I found a fire at the temple's fence. Then, I rushed inside where I saw the Saraswati idol was beheaded," said Sumoti Rani, a priest of the temple.

Contacted, the district's Additional Superintendent of Police Gazir Rahman said, "We have already visited the spot. After talking to locals, we have kept some people under surveillance as we suspect they might be involved in the incident. The process of filing a case in this connection remains underway."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad in a statement yesterday said a Hindu temple was vandalised at Bhabokhal village in Mymensingh's Sadar upazila and a Hindu home was set on fire at Monobhuiyan Para of Chattogram's Mirsarai upazila.

These attacks took place within the past two or three days, claimed the statement.

The parishad also demanded immediate identification of the attackers and their trial.

A wake-up call for AL

FROM PAGE 1

Following on the big showdown in May 2013, the government developed a close relationship with HI high-ups especially with its late chief Shah Ahmad Shafi, who termed the PM "Qawmi Ma" (Mother of the Qawmi) at a rally on November 4, 2018, after her government recognised the highest degree given out by the Qawmi Madrasas as equivalent to post graduate degree.

The ostensible reason for the recognition was that the government could not leave out of the "mainstream" the thousands of students who pass out from the Qawmi system. The real reason was to gain political favour. This decision becomes highly questionable in the face of the facts that the government has no say over Qawmi madrasas' curriculum, teaching methods, subjects to be covered, qualification of the teachers, etc. Compared with the Alia-Madrasa system over which the government has full control, as it should, it has none over the Qawmi system. Yet the official recognition came. This was HI's most persistent demand and the most coveted victory. In return, it remained docile and silent as Sheikh Hasina ramrodded her brand of politics down the throat of the rest of the society.

Awami League and Sheikh Hasina thought that they had a winning formula of politics -- divide the Islamic forces, replace the traditional opposition with a domesticated one and suppress the independent media and rule happily. It did not work, as it never did in the past, anywhere in the world. For fundamentalist forces political alliances are always a matter of convenience and thus temporary, and never a matter of principle.

Whatever may have been its original aim HI has become today a political party for all practical purposes. According to a report by our senior correspondent Rashidul Hasan, published on 9th December 2020, "Hefajat-e-Islam is now more than a political party with the strategic disclaimer of having no political agenda." "About one-third of its leaders of the new committee who seized control came from political parties who are part of a 20-party alliance led by BNP.

HI was formed in 2010 comprising teachers of several Madrasas in Chittogram and it was triggered by the draft "Women Development Policy" of 2009 that advocated equal inheritance of property for men and women. However, the real emergence can be said to have occurred in 2013 after the "Shahbagh movement" of students demanding death penalty for all war criminals of 1971. The HI countered by holding a militant demonstration at Shapla Chattar (in front of Bangladesh Bank) placing a 13-point demand that included, among many others, the introduction of a Blasphemy Law, punishment of atheists, changes in school curriculum, etc. Who were its targets? Free thinkers, liberal forces and advocates of inclusive values and culture.

Following the frontal confrontation between law enforcement agencies and HI activists leading to several deaths, the government went for a serious behind-the-scenes negotiations and with the acceptance of several of their 13-point demand, maintained a fragile peace between the two sides till the death of its leader Shah Ahmad Shafi that tilted the balance of power within HI towards the more anti-government faction of.

Sheikh Hasina's government is a victim of the classic notion of "Being too clever for its own good". The "know-all" and "have all the answers" attitude blinded them to the obvious faults and closed their minds to alternative suggestions. The fact that appeasement never works, especially against faith-based extremism, is a universally proven lesson that seem to have escaped this government.

On the other hand, for reasons that we know, AL went after BNP which, with all its faults, was not a faith-based organisation. In its determined effort to destroy BNP it destroyed a secular alternative in our political spectrum whose secular credentials, however, were considerably damaged by its alliance with Jamaat -- which officially still exists - and its ambiguous stance and ambivalent attitude towards the war crimes trial.

At the same time the ruling party went against the civil society, mocking them and denigrating them in various ways and even calling them "dustbins" who carry the sign "use me", meaning that they were such an unethical and unprincipled bunch as to be open for use by anybody willing to pay them for their services.

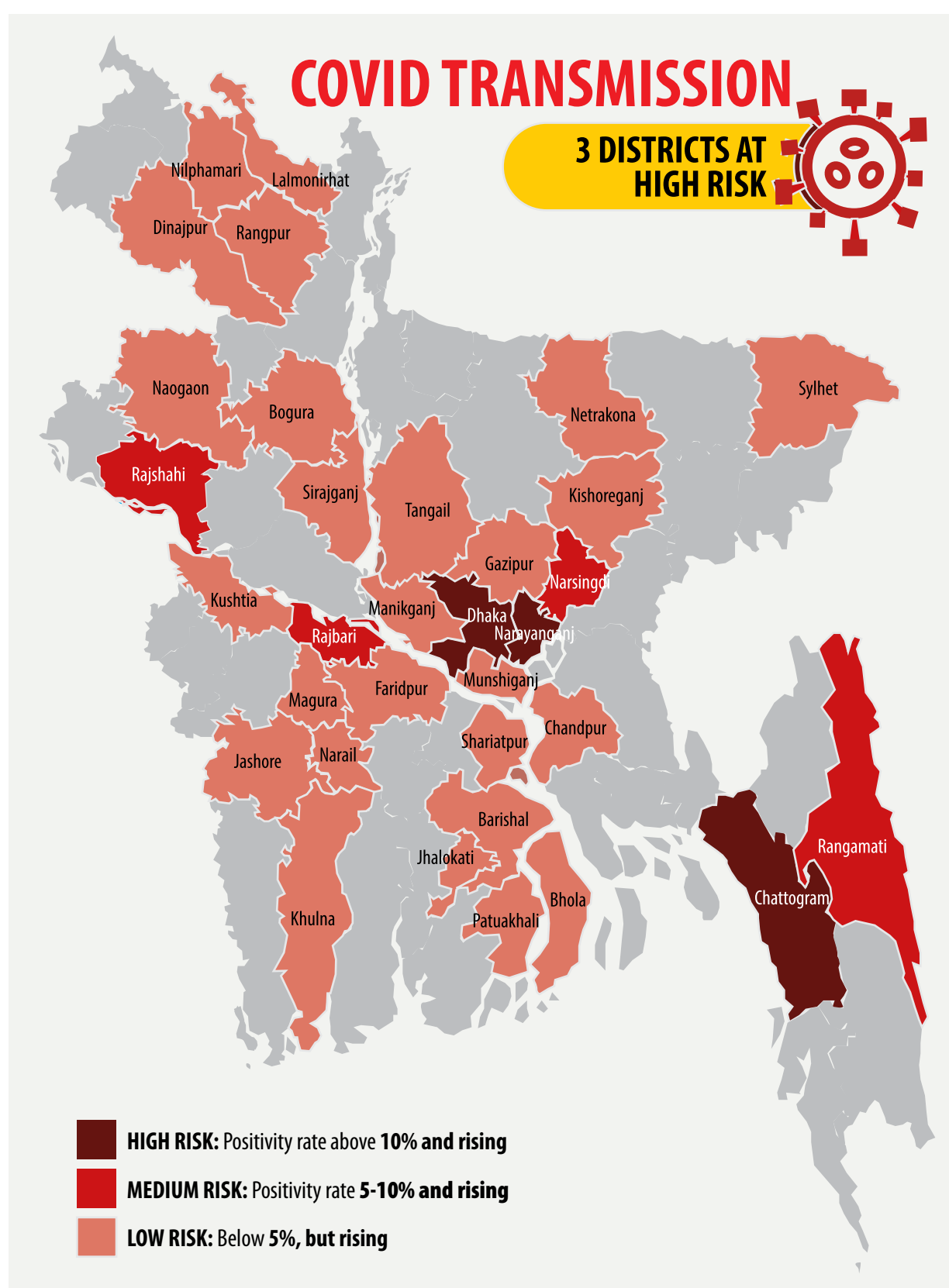
It was a similar story for the NGOs whose foreign funding was held up as their main identity and the fact of their several-decades-long contribution in the crucial social sectors -- like education, health, child mortality, etc -- being completely ignored. Their particular contribution in transforming lives at the grassroots level and also acting as a vital force for women empowerment and strengthening democratic and secular values were never given the credit that they deserved. Micro-credit which has been globally accepted as an effective method, albeit with some limitations, of poverty alleviation was literally mocked at as a method of entrapment of the poor into greater debt. Everything the NGO's achieved was questioned.

The independent media and voices of secular democratic dissent were shut with one singular step -- enactment of the DSA. Interestingly none of the hate-speech makers and the constant haranguing by the faith preachers of the supporters of the ideals of the Liberation War were ever brought under DSA. It was only as if to throttle the independent media and critics of the government that DSA was instituted and not for those whose politics, speeches, every utterance were directed at the fundamentals of our constitution.

All the above -- the civil society, the NGOs and the independent media -- were part of the secular and democratic forces that contributed to Bangladesh's globally praised journey towards advancement that we just celebrated with a 10-day gala function. It is these very forces that the government either ignored, denigrated or suppressed and who now, collectively, could have greatly strengthened the government's hands in its present and upcoming fight against forces whose ugly manifestations we just witnessed.

Just as the darkest spot lies where the light shines brightest, so also at the very moment of our most brilliant success we stand bare of a very serious vulnerability.

If there was ever a need for a wake-up call for the ruling party to re-examine its brand of politics, it is now. It must also serve as a wake-up call for us all.



Hardly any Hefajat hand in mayhem!

FROM PAGE 1

That is why the case statements don't mention names of Hefajat members. Our investigation to identify those involved in the violence is still underway.

"We will identify and take action against them."

Hefajat had issued a six-point demand. One of them was that no police case would be filed against its supporters.

Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattor Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, views the development as a government strategy to pacify the Qawmi-madrasa-based group.

"The fact that there are hardly any cases against Hefajat is an effort by the government to calm the group. It is unfortunate that those in favour of the spirit of the Liberation War are now speaking in favour of Hefajat," he said.

"It seems that a competition to pacify fundamentalist forces is currently underway in the country. It is nothing but a suicidal move," he added.

Among the 25 cases, only one -- filed with the capital's Paltan Police Station -- accuses 32 Hefajat men, including top leaders of the organisation's Dhaka unit.

Even though Brahmanbaria suffered Hefajat mayhem for two days, including on Friday, police cases filed in connection with the incidents do not name a single Hefajat man as accused.

Over the course of the hartal on Sunday, four police outposts were attacked, eight major public establishments, including the municipality building, were incinerated, a Kali temple was vandalised while a prayer service was going on, "Bhasha Chatter" was torched, and legendary musical-maestro Allauddin Khan's music academy was decimated. In addition to that, seven private residences of AL men were destroyed.

A total of seven cases were filed with police in the district, but none mentioned any named accused.

Md Abdur Rahim, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station, said three cases were lodged with the police station against 6,500 unnamed accused for vandalising and carrying arson attack on the office of the district's superintendent of police and the town police range.

He said two more cases were filed against 500 unnamed people for vandalising the district's Ansar and VDP office.

Fourteen people were picked up from the spot on Friday, he added.

Jabed Mahmud, OC of Ashuganj Police Station in the district, said two cases were filed for vandalising and carrying arson attack on a police

range and a toll plaza. Around 1,200 unnamed people were accused in the cases filed with the police station.

Clashes involving Hefajat left nine people, including a 14-year-old boy, dead in Brahmanbaria. But neither the police nor the family members of the victims filed any case over the deaths.

In Chattogram's Hathazari, where four people were killed after Hefajat men attacked a police station, not a single case was recorded until last night, said police sources.

In Habiganj, around 20 people, including seven policemen, were injured in clashes between law enforcers and Hefajat supporters in Jhingri area of Ajmeriganj on Ajmeriganj-Baniachang Road. The Hefajat men also set two police motorbikes on fire there.

Contacted, Md Nurul Islam, OC of Ajmeriganj Police Station, said a case was filed by the police and over 400 unnamed people were accused in it.

"Twenty-three people were named as accused. All the accused are basically picketers," he said.

Narayanganj too had turned into a battlefield on Sunday for a better part of the day when the Dhaka-Chittagong highway was barricaded by hartal supporters. At that time, journalists were hunted down and attacked, the road was littered with burning rubber tires, and Hefajat men locked in clashes with Border Guard Bangladesh members, leaving two men bullet-ridden.

A total of seven cases were filed across Narayanganj and 3,900 unnamed people and 166 named people were accused.

Not a single man linked with Hefajat was among those named in the cases.

Six of the cases were filed with Siddhirganj Police Station and the other with Rugganj Police Station.

The accused include the district BNP secretary, joint-coordinator, several Mohanagar Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal leaders, BNP leaders, a BNP councillor, a Jamaat leader and a Shibir leader.

Asked why names of Hefajat men were not accused in the case, Zayedul Alam, superintendent of police in Narayanganj, said "We have named those who we saw on the spot that day. We have specific information about who instigated the mayhem... we've collected evidence from photos and different video footage. No one was made accused because of their political affiliation."

"We have arrested four BNP men and are working to arrest the others," he said.

The SP claimed that those who hit the streets were not Hefajat men. "They had given us their word that

they would not cause mayhem on the streets and they kept their word."

In Dhaka, a total of eight cases were filed over the hartal by Hefajat and only the one with Paltan Police Station named top Hefajat leaders in Dhaka as accused.

Shah Iftekhar Ahmed, deputy commissioner of police (Wari Division), said, "Four cases were filed under our division over carrying out vandalism, sabotage, violence, obstructing police from carrying out duty and causing law and order to deteriorate. Those were filed with Jatrabari, Gendaria and Demra police stations."

"In Demra, six people were arrested from the spot and were named in the cases as accused. They are Hefajat supporters. In the other three cases, there is no named accused. We are investigating to find out who else was involved," said DC Ahmed.

Jatrabari Police Station OC Mazharul Islam said, "Two cases were filed -- one on Friday and the other one on Sunday -- with this police station. The charges include torching of vehicles, assault on police personnel, vandalism and sabotage. One of the cases was filed by the police, while in the other by a victim of the mayhem. One of the cases named 3,000-4,000 unnamed people as accused, while the other case does not have any specific number of accused."

Sources at Demra Police Station said 1,500 unnamed people were accused in one case and the six people were arrested from the spot.

The sources said the six, along with four held from Jatrabari the same day, were produced before court with remand pleas. The court, however, did not grant the remand prayers and sent all the 10 accused to jail.

Gendaria Police Station's OC Shaju Miah said, "On March 28, we filed a case accusing 600-700 unnamed people. We don't know who they are."

Syed Nurul Islam, deputy commissioner of police (Motijheel Division), said, "Two cases were filed with the Paltan Police Station. One was against many unnamed accused. Yesterday a case was filed where there are 32 named accused."

The case against the 32 was filed on March 29 and it is the only one where top Hefajat leaders in Dhaka, including General Secretary Mufi Munir Hossain, Maulana Kefayatullah, Maolana Jalaluddin Ahmed and others, were named as accused, according to the case documents.

Another case was filed with Hazaribagh Police Station following Hefajat's hartal. In that case, Nipun Roy Chowdhury, a member of BNP's central executive committee, was accused of instigating vandalism. She was arrested on March 28.

Response delayed

FROM PAGE 1

Rangamati, Rajshahi, Rajbari and Narsingdi -- have been classified as "medium risk" zones and 27 more as "low risk" zones.

Besides, gatherings must be at a limited scale at entertainment venues and tourist destinations. All kinds of fair and exhibition are discouraged.

Public transports cannot carry passengers more than 50 percent of their capacity and must follow the Covid-19 guidelines.

Inter-district transport services must be kept at a limited scale in areas seeing high infections. If necessary, such services have to be suspended.

About the directives, Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, said, "Science is absent in the government directives. It will have no effect on the Covid transmission."

"While the government has banned mass gatherings, the Sadarghat launch terminal in the capital, the book fair venues, and tourist spots in Cox's Bazar, Rangamati [and other areas] are open. Transmission will not decline this way. It will keep rising."

He recommended full lockdown in the capital and Chattogram city immediately.

"We need a full lockdown right now in Dhaka and Chattogram cities but there could be some exemptions only to continue economic activities. And the first and foremost task is to conduct a huge number of tests daily to isolate the Covid cases. Otherwise, the infected ones will keep spreading the virus."

The government should take all measures to keep the infected people in quarantine or at hospital, he noted.

Prof Nazrul Islam, member of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, however, said the directives could help curb virus transmission.

"But it's not clear how those measures will be implemented. The directive on tourist spots is incomplete. Besides, there is no action plan on how to implement those directives... It may create chaos."

As per the directives, the local administration will decide on the scale of measures to curb the virus.

Seeking anonymity, a Dhaka district administration official said they were yet to decide on the action plan.

"There is no plan to enforce lockdown in Dhaka. But we will run mobile courts and campaigns to enforce health safety guidelines from tomorrow [today]," said the official.

In Cox's Bazar, the district administration has started conducting mobile courts as well as awareness campaigns.

"We already had meetings with different stakeholders, including hotel and transport owners... We asked them to suspend hotel booking online and reduce different amusement services at the sea beach. Our target is to discourage tourists from visiting Cox's Bazar," said Zahid Iqbal, additional deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar.

About the fresh measures, Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said, "Though there is a need for lockdown, we will also have to consider the socio-economic reality."

"Current measures are target-based. If these do not work, we will suggest the government new measures. But hopefully this will help reduce transmission."

Only 2 oxygen

FROM PAGE 1

vacant at the hospital, they referred all those patients to other public hospitals in the city.

Monir Hossain was one of them. A Titas Gas employee, Monir was carried to the hospital in an ambulance from Homna in Comilla.

"We have come all the way from Homna. But doctors here said they don't have vacant beds to admit my husband. They have referred us to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. But we are not sure if we can get a bed in DMCH," said Halima, Monir's wife.

"We requested the doctors to give him oxygen support till we find a suitable transport. But the doctors said that they won't be able to continue the support for long since they have already referred the patient to another hospital," said Halima.

Contacted last night, Halima said they eventually got a bed for her husband at Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Jamaluddin was another patient who came to Muga with severe respiratory problems. The 60-year-old was referred there after he was taken to Police Hospital in Rajbarah.

Jamaluddin's daughter Kohinoor was facing a different kind of problem. The driver of the ambulance on which the 60-year-old patient was brought to Muga Medical College Hospital was in a hurry to leave.

"The driver is repeatedly saying that I will have to get my father out of the ambulance. But if we do that, he won't have oxygen support. We also could not admit him at Muga hospital. It is really a scary situation for us," said Kohinoor, before leaving with her father on the same ambulance in the hope of better luck at Suhrawardy or DMCH.

"Recently we have been facing a rush in the emergency unit. It happens often and it is normal. This time, too, we are facing a rush as Covid-19 transmission is rising in the country," Dr Asim Kumar Nath, director of Muga Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added, "We have only two oxygen support devices in the emergency unit. With limited logistics, it is tough to give emergency support to the patients. The situation becomes tougher when the patients' rush increases."

3 CASES FILED MONDAY

Shahadat, 15 Ctg
BNP men sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Chattogram court yesterday sent BNP's city unit convener Dr Shahadat Hossain and 15 other BNP leaders and activists to jail in three cases filed against them with Chawkbazar and Kotwali police stations on Monday.

The court of metropolitan magistrate Sarwar-e-Jahan sent the leaders and activists to jail after they were produced before the court at around 4:30pm, said Assistant Commissioner (AC) (prosecution) Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed of CMP.

"Police produced Dr Shahadat Hossain before the court seeking 10-day remand prayer in the extortion case filed with Chawkbazar police station while the court sent him to jail fixing Wednesday for remand hearing," said the AC.

Apart from that, Kotwali police pleaded before the court to show Shahadat arrested in two cases filed over vandalising a traffic box and attacking police during a demonstration rally in Kazir Dewri area on Monday, and sought seven-day remand of 15 BNP leaders and activists; the court also fixed Wednesday for hearing, he added.

Earlier, police filed a case with Kotwali Police Station accusing Dr Shahadat and 56 others BNP leaders and 60 unnamed persons over clash with police.

Shahadat, who was BNP's mayoral candidate in January's Chattogram City Corporation polls, was arrested on Monday night in connection with an extortion case.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN CHATTOGRAM

Little heed to health
guidelines despite
rise in infections

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Despite the sharp rise in Covid-19 infections in Chattogram, people remain apathetic towards health and safety guidelines.

According to Chattogram Civil Surgeon's Office, the rate of detecting positive cases of Covid-19 was at 4 percent on March 7. On the day, 63 out of 1607 samples were tested positive.

However, the number of positive cases kept increasing, and last Monday, 11.40 percent of all samples were tested positive for Covid-19 (212 out of 1,859 samples).

The increasing rate of coronavirus infections should be alarming, but the crowds in different areas of the city including Agrabad, Chawkbazar, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Jamal Khan, New Market and Anderkilla paint a contradicting picture.

Upon visits in these areas, this correspondent found that at least one-third of people gathered there do not wear face masks. Many people had masks, but wore them in the incorrect way, exposing their mouth and nose.

Public transportation was full, with no room for social distancing. Chittagong University student Tanmoy Chowdhury, said, "I am a regular commuter in the city and I always wear a mask when I'm outside. But every day I see that others are not doing the same, so my safety is also compromised despite me following the health guidelines."

"I would request the administration to go for tough action," he said.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Fazle Rabbi tested positive for Covid-19 yesterday. He received vaccine on February 7, said Dr Hasan Shahriar Kabir, director (Chattogram division) of Directorate General of Health Services.

Amid such dire circumstances, health experts opine that there is no alternative to following health and safety guidelines now.

"I have tested Dr Rabbi's antibody for research purpose. I found that no antibody has been developed against Covid-19 in his body," said Dr Abdur Rob, senior consultant of medicine and head of Covid-19 ward at Chattogram General Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

New political party
'Noitik Samaj' emergesConvener AMSA Amin says they want to
create principled leadership in politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj Gen (ret'd) AMSA Amin yesterday floated a new political party called "Noitik Samaj".

Amin, convener of the party, held a press conference at Jatiya Press Club to announce this. He said he launched the party to create principled leadership and moral values in politics.

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain spoke at the press conference as chief guest through virtual platform.

Gonosasthaya Kendra founder and trustee Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University, among others, addressed the programme.

Several top leaders of the new party -- who were present on the

occasion -- were retired army personnel.

In recent months, a number of new political parties were also formed.

AMSA Amin is a politician from Kurigram and a former ambassador. He retired from the army and joined the Awami League back in 2001.

In 2003, he was elected president of AL Kurigram district committee. He was defeated in the 2001 national elections from Kurigram-2 with AL nomination. Later, he joined Gonoforum in 2018.

He also lost the 2018 polls from the constituency under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Jote

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Ctg man accused of
raping sister-in-law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A student of a government college in Chattogram city has filed a case against her brother-in-law and sister on charge of rape, blackmail and forceful abortion.

The victim hails from Sandwip upazila, and she filed the case on March 28 with Sandwip Police Station. Police sent her to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's one-stop crisis centre for medical tests.

There are three accused in the case -- Md Atikur Rahman (50), his wife Kamrun Nahar (38), and the director of a private hospital in the city's Golpaha area.

According to the case statement obtained by this correspondent, the victim said that since 2011, she had been staying with her sister Kamrun Nahar and brother-in-law Md Atikur Rahman in the city because she went to school there.

As her parents were unable to afford education in the city, she was dependent on her sister and brother-in-law to continue her studies.

Quoting the case statement, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Bashir Uddin Khan

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



(Clockwise from top) A number of floating people have settled in at the park with their families, much to the annoyance of regular parkgoers. Fruit vendors and other hawkers also take up walkways inside it. Old structures, like this obelisk, appear to not have been cleaned for a long time. The photos were taken recently.

BAHADUR SHAH PARK IN CAPITAL

Renovation gone to waste?

Taken over by floating people, hawkers just a year after reopening

HASAN MEER

"Can we go now?" the disappointment was evident in Arman's voice.

His father, Rashidul Hasan tried one last time. "Look, this obelisk is over 100 years old," the Laxmibazar resident told his 10-year-old son.

The father and son were visiting Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka on a Friday afternoon recently.

Curious, Arman went a bit closer to take a look but soon returned to his father, as a group of homeless people -- who have made the premises their home -- occupied it.

By the time this correspondent caught up with Rashidul, he had also given up on finding a place for his son to play.

"I couldn't even find a spot to sit as most are occupied by vendors or floating people," said the private job holder.

Only a year after the park was renovated and freshly opened by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the park is no longer a safe and fun place for citizens.

"We don't have that many open places in Old Dhaka. When the authorities renovated and reopened the park, we were elated. But the present situation is not better than what this park used to be. The authorities should do something about it," he told this correspondent.

The weekdays at Bahadur Shah Park were not any better either, which became obvious during multiple visits by our correspondents over the last two weeks.

The park remains occupied by floating people and vendors most of the time while people continue to litter the premises.

Plastic bottles, polythene bags, peanut shells, cigarette stubs, torn

cloths and papers were either seen piled up in corners or scattered everywhere.

"How can I bring my children here?" said Kamrun Nahar, a local. "Addicts and the homeless have ruined the atmosphere and no one seems to care," she added.

Meanwhile, a group of youngsters were seen throwing plastic cups in the park after drinking tea from a vendor. When approached, they appeared nonchalant about it.

At the same time, some of the floating population became hostile towards this correspondent upon seeing him talking to people and taking pictures.

'MANPOWER SHORTAGE'

About the situation, Abul Hossain, a staffer of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) at the park, said, "Three of us work in shifts to look after the park. But it's not enough."

His co-worker Joynal echoed him. "To tell you the truth, we are also scared of the floating population inside the park. Often times, many of them become violent when we try to evict them," he said.

Aklima Begum, a worker at the public toilet on the premises, said, "Addicts, peddlers and the homeless often make the place dirty. They urinate here and there and use the park whichever way they want."

Even police seemed rather indifferent regarding the persisting situation. Asked, some of them, wishing anonymity, said they try their best to avert any untoward situation.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Enriched with wonderful architectural features, the park is located in Laxmibazar, near Jagannath University.

During the first half of the 19th century, Nawab Khwaja Abdul Ghani, the first Nawab of Dhaka recognised by the British rulers, took the initiative to establish it.

History says, from the time of its construction till 1957, the park was known as "Victoria Park", named after Queen Victoria. In 1957, the park was renamed after the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II.

In 1857, during the Sepoy Mutiny against colonial rulers, English soldiers executed many mutineers by hanging them from different trees of the place.

A monument in memory of the sepoys has also been erected at the park.

There are two entrances and two memorials (the tallest one is situated at the eastern side, in memory of the martyred sepoys and the other one is Khawja Hafijullah obelisk) at the park.

There is also a small obelisk signifying the throne of Queen Victoria.

But over the years, due to lack of proper maintenance, the former ambience of Bahadur Shah Park gradually lost its magnificence.

Most of the sculptures as well as the overall environment were in decrepit condition. The park became a gathering place for anti-social activities.

RENOVATION WORK

After a year-long renovation work, this historic park reopened in March last year with an aim to provide a green respite for Old Dhaka residents.

The work was done under a "park modernisation project" of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) with a cost of around Tk 6 crore, according to city officials.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Dhaka was noticeably empty on the government holiday for Shab-e-Barat yesterday, and the leaves were noticeably greener. New leaves of spring are bringing life back to the city after a smoggy winter. This photo was taken at Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CJ reconstitutes
jurisdictions of
17 HC benches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has reconstituted jurisdictions of 17 High Court benches, as both the Appellate and High Court divisions of the Supreme Court will reopen today after a 12-day vacation.

A notification was issued to this effect on Monday. Among the 17 benches, 15 are two-member (division) benches and two are one-member (single bench).

A total of 52 HC benches will hear and dispose of the cases, SC sources said.

Both the Appellate and HC divisions of the SC went on an annual vacation on March 19.

Ninth-grader stabbed
dead, two injured by
teen gang in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage boy was stabbed dead and at least two were injured after a teen gang attacked them at the capital's Sutrapur area on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Ananta (14), a ninth-grader at a local school. He bore stab marks on his body.

The injured -- Saju and Sohel -- were receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The incident happened at Mill Barrack Lalkuthi area of Sutrapur around 11:30pm.

A few days ago, Ananta and his friends had an altercation with a teen gang sheltered by criminals, said Saju.

As Ananta and his friends went to the spot, the gang attacked them. At one stage, the gang members stabbed them indiscriminately, he told reporters at DMCH.

They were rushed to DMCH, where doctors declared Ananta dead, said SI Abdul Khan of DMCH Police Outpost.

Abdur Rahman, a sub-inspector at Sutrapur Police Station, said they have so far arrested a 13-year-old in connection with the incident.


Rain likely
across country

BSS, Dhaka


Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday forecast rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at some places of the country in the next 24 hours.

"Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Sylhet division and at one or two places over Dhaka, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Chattogram divisions with hails at isolated places," said a bulletin of Met office.

"Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country," the bulletin said.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ সড়ক পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ (বিআরটিএ)



গণপরিবহনে স্বাস্থ্যবিধি প্রতিপালন সংক্রান্ত জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) সংক্রমণ রোধে গণপরিবহনে নিম্নোক্ত স্বাস্থ্যবিধি ও শর্তাদি প্রতিপালন করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে সর্বশেষ অনুরোধ করা হলোঃ

- ধারণ ক্ষমতার ৫০ ভাগের অধিক যাত্রী পরিবহন করা যাবে না;
- বিদ্যমান ভাড়ার অতিরিক্ত ৬০% এর বেশী ভাড়া নেওয়া যাবে না;
- সংক্রমণের উচ্চ ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ এলাকাসহ আশুপাড়া, জেলা যান চলাচল সীমিত করতে হবে; প্রয়োজনে বন্ধ রাখতে হবে;
- গণপরিবহনে যাত্রী, চালক, সুপারভাইজার/কন্ডাক্টর, হেল্পার এবং টিকেট বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রের দায়িত্বে নিয়োজিত ব্যক্তিগণের মাস্ক পরিধান/ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করতে হবে; তাদের হাত ধোয়ার জন্য পর্যাপ্ত সাবান-পানি/হ্যান্ড সেনিটাইজারের ব্যবস্থা রাখতে হবে;
- যাত্রার শুরু ও শেষে যানবাহন পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নসহ জীবাণুনাশক দিয়ে জীবাণুমুক্ত করতে হবে;
- বাসে উঠার ও নামার ক্ষেত্রে সামাজিক দূরত্ব বজায় রাখতে হবে;
- গণপরিবহনের জন্য প্রয়োজ্য অন্যান্য স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলতে হবে;
- এ নির্দেশনা ৩১ মার্চ, ২০২১ হতে পরবর্তী নির্দেশ না দেয়া পর্যন্ত (আপাততঃ ০২ (দুই) সপ্তাহের জন্য) বলবৎ থাকবে।

বিআরটিএ

জিডি-৬৪৭

Sirajul Islam passes away

CITY DESK

Sirajul Islam, a former official of Padma Oil Company, died on March 26 in Lahore, Pakistan while undergoing treatment. He was 79, said a press release.



He left behind his wife Selima Islam, daughters Rumana Islam and Wajida Islam, siblings, grandchildren and numerous well-wishers to mourn him.

Sirajul Islam worked for Padma Oil Company for a long time. Prior to his retirement in 1999, he was the resident manager of the company.

His body will arrive at Dhaka airport around 5am tomorrow and will be kept for some time at his ancestral residence: 4/1 (B), Block-E, Lalmatia, Dhaka.

He will be laid to rest at Banani graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at Lalmatia Bibi Mosque at 1:30pm on the same day. Family members of the deceased requested all to attend the funeral prayers.

'UN instrument key to upholding rights, protecting environment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN draft resolution on business and human rights is crucial for upholding human rights, and protecting environment and labour rights, speakers said yesterday.

Talking at a webinar on the draft UN resolution, they also mentioned that Bangladesh will need to have an action plan on how the instrument will be implemented in the country.

International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) jointly organised the webinar.

Distinguished Fellow of BEI Ambassador Farooq Sobhan said the international community has taken several attempts to prepare a resolution.

In the past, developing countries tried to impress on developed countries that transnational or multi-national companies should follow code of conduct in developing countries, particularly in regards to upholding human rights, protecting the environment, respecting labour rights and avoiding corrupt business practices.

But developed countries, and International Chamber of Commerce said there should be a code

for every party, not only multinational companies.

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan presented the keynote paper.

She said: "We should be associated with such instruments, as foreign companies are working in almost all big mega projects."

Due to the way work of flyovers is going on, the country's air quality became the worst globally, she said. "If you ask the same companies to work the way they do in China and Japan, they would not be allowed to work in the same style."

Supreme Court Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said Bangladesh will need to address the issue of how the UN resolution would be implemented. "Until a domestic law recognises it or a local law was made, international instruments cannot be executed directly in Bangladesh."

Dhaka University's Assistant Professor of Law Mohammad Golam Sarwar said Bangladesh needs to revise its laws, so that it can make corporations accountable for environmental pollution.

BEI President Ambassador Humayun Kabir delivered the welcome remarks, and IBFB President Humayun Rashid presided over the webinar.

Language veteran Yusuf Kalu no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Mohammad Yusuf Kalu, a Language Movement veteran, freedom fighter and journalist, died at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal on Monday, aged 90.

He left behind his wife, a son, and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

Born on January 18, 1931, Yusuf joined the Language Movement while studying at Barisal Brojomohon Institution.

In 1971, he joined the Liberation War under sector-9, said Putul Chandra Ghosh, a freedom fighter.

Yusuf was buried at Kanudaskathi Miyabari in Rajapur, Jhalakathi following state honour and namaz-e-janaza yesterday.

Two 'JMB men' arrested with firearm, ammo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday claimed to have arrested two members of banned militant outfit Jamatu Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) with a firearm and ammunition in the capital's Tejuri Bazar area on Monday.

A pistol, two bullets and Tk 35,000 in cash were seized from Asifur Rahman (26) and Piash Sheikh (28), they said. They opted for robbery to avoid money, said Shahadat Hossain Suma, an additional deputy commissioner (Tejgaon Division) of the Detective Branch of DMP.

Accused in separate cases under the Anti-Terrorism Act 2013, both were arrested earlier, said Shahadat. The DB official said this group spends its robbed money for the fellow militants in prisons and financially insolvent ones.

They established a food delivery shop named "Halal and Fresh" and under its banner, they carry out militant activities and spread their ideology, the ADC said.

According to detectives, at least 14 persons were arrested in connection with at least six robberies in Hatirjheel, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Mohammadpur between October last year and February this year.

Some of them gave confessional statements before magistrates and revealed militants' involvement in robbery.

New political

FROM PAGE 3

of which Dr Kamal Hossain is chairman.

Amin is also chairman of the Center for Security and Development Studies, an NGO.

AMS Amin said many political parties exist in the country but most of them create problems.

"In the last 50 years, they couldn't be the part of resolving problem as anarchy is currently prevailing everywhere in the country."

Amin also said major political parties failed to bring honest, meritorious and quality individuals to politics.

"Today, democracy, election and human rights are at stake. We will have to establish morality in politics... To meet this necessity, Noitik Samaj [Moral Society] has been established,"

he added.

Welcoming the party, Dr Kamal emphasised that new generations should be taught morality.

"Morality and honesty must be nurtured. Wicked people cannot and will not lead us forever," said the noted jurist.

Dr Kamal also said everyone must be united against injustice.

Addressing the event, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury said absence of morality is seen everywhere.

He said minorities are being persecuted one after another and the ruling party people committed all these heinous activities. "All these are happening due to a lack of moral sense," he added.

He also criticised the recent killing of Hefajat men in different parts of the country.

Asif Nazrul said, "I want to be optimistic when I see something new. We have lost morality from society. Without morality, no good initiative can take place. If there is morality, it is possible to stand up against injustice."

Pointing to Hefajat's vandalism, Asif Nazrul said, "Who had patronised Hefajat and brought them to the present state?"

"It is the present government that has given the scope," he said.

He further said, "What message is being given through not giving space to BNP, Jamaat and left parties to exercise politics?"

Noitik Samaj leaders -- former Justice Abdus Salam Mamun, and Maj (ret'd) Mujibul Haque -- among others, were present at the event on the occasion.

Renovation

FROM PAGE 3

Under the project, four-foot deep drain has been constructed to improve the park's drainage system. Earlier, the park used to remain submerged due to rain. There are also benches, a fountain, and two restrooms inside the park. Also, the park's boundary railings have been removed.

There is also a plaque, highlighting when it was reopened.

"Seems like, that's all the city corporation did. They renovated the park, which we appreciated of course. But what about maintaining it?" said Anwarul Haque, an elderly Old Dhaka resident.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

The park falls under ward-42 of DSCC.

Regarding its present situation, councillor Mohammad Selim (ward-42) said he has asked the city corporation for help but to no avail.

"Visitors cannot sit at the north side of the park as bus drivers park their vehicles there and urinate publicly. To solve the problem, we have a plan to turn it into a garden," he said.

"This is the only open place we have in the area. Some floating people and junkies occupy the area, but police are not doing anything about it. If they could be rehabilitated, it would have been better," he added.

"Besides, we need guards and dedicated cleaners for the park. I have to clean the park with cleaners of the ward," said Selim.

Asked, DSCC zonal officer-4 Haider Ali said, "It's an open space and accessible to all. Therefore, people from any tier of life can visit the place. But if the floating people sleep at the park and the situation is not environment-friendly, we'll look into the matter."

Regarding maintenance, he said, "Our workers keep the park clean regularly. However, visitors need to be aware too. They continue to make the place dirty by throwing garbage. We will take steps in this regard."

Contacted, Muhi Kabir Seraniab, additional deputy commissioner (Kotwali zone) of Lalbagh division police, said they have noticed that a small group of street children used to take shelter near the park.

"They used to sniff glue (inhalant) there. We often conducted drives and sent them to shelter homes. But more started to gather in Sadarghat area after travelling from different parts of the country," he said.

Police are also working to create awareness through bit-policing among shopkeepers and local inhabitants in this regard, said ADC Seraniab.

He appealed to voluntary organisations to come forward to help these children and said police would provide all necessary support.

Little heed to

FROM PAGE 3

"It takes time to develop antibody after receiving vaccine. In fact, minimum two weeks is required to develop antibody in one's body after receiving the second dose of vaccine," added Dr Abdur Rob.

"Moreover, I think, some new strains of mutated coronavirus, which are more contagious, are responsible for the present sharp rise in Covid-19 cases," he said, "So there is no alternative to strictly following health rules until the pandemic is under control."

Contacted, Dr Hasan Shahriar Kabir said he wrote three letters to Chattogram District Administration to go for tough stance to ensure maintenance of health guidelines in the city.

"As we have received the 18-point instruction from the government regarding maintaining health rules, we have asked the restaurants to serve customers at half capacity. Same instructions have been given to public transport owners and recreation centres," he said, "I hope the administration would ensure that these instructions are being followed properly."

Contacted, Sumani Akter, additional district magistrate of Chattogram, said the district administration's mobile courts have already begun drives in different areas to ensure adherence to health guidelines.

Asked why so many people are still seen in public without face masks, she said the administration would go for tougher action starting today.

Until March 7, there were 35,788 total cases detected in Chattogram, while the death count was 378. Within about three weeks, the number of total detected cases rose to 39,706, and the death count stands at 385.

দি ইনস্টিটিউট অব ব্যাংকার্স, বাংলাদেশ (আইবিবি)
 ডিআর টাওয়ার (৩৩ তলা)
 ৬৫/২/২, বীর প্রতীক গাজী গোলাম দস্তগীর সড়ক
 (বঙ্গ কালভার্ট রোড), পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০
 টেলিফোনঃ ৫৫১১২৮৫৭-৬০

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইনস্টিটিউটের ব্যাংকিং ডিপ্লোমা পরীক্ষার ১ (এক) লক্ষ উত্তরণের ও ২ ½ লক্ষ (দুই লক্ষ পঞ্চাশ হাজার) ছুট শীট মুদ্রণ ও সরবরাহের জন্য অত্র ইনস্টিটিউট ও তার বিভিন্ন সদস্য ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে তালিকাভুক্ত অসহী মুদ্রণ প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে তাদের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক লেটারহেড প্যাড-এ একক দর ও মোট মূল্য উল্লেখসহ সীলমোহরকৃত যানে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাবে। দরপত্রের সাথে কাগজের নমুনা ও মোট উক্ত দরের ৫% আর্নেস্ট মানি ডিডি/পে-অর্ডার-এর মাধ্যমে অত্র ইনস্টিটিউটের অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে। বিজ্ঞাপন প্রকাশের দিন হতে ১২-০৪-২০২১ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা হতে বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকা)-এর মধ্যে উত্তরণের ও ছুটশীটের নমুনা দেখা যাবে এবং তাঃ ৩০০/- মূল্যে টেন্ডার সিলিভ জমা করা যাবে। দরপত্র আদায়ী ১০ এপ্রিল, ২০২১ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে ইনস্টিটিউট কার্যালয়ে রফিক টেন্ডার বাল্লে দাখিল করতে হবে। একই দিন দুপুর ২.৩০ মিনিটে দরপত্রদাতাদের (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) সম্মুখে দরপত্রসমূহ খোলা হবে। ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

জিডি-৬৪২ প্রকাশ চন্দ্র বৈরাগী, মহাসচিব (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
 PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
 Phone: 8181658-61, Website www.pksf-bd.org, Facebook: www.facebook.com/PKSF.org

TENDER NOTICE for OTM-Goods (Re-Invitation)

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has been implementing a project for the extreme poor titled 'Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People (PPEPP)', jointly financed by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); formerly DFID and the European Union (EU). For this project, PKSF invites a sealed envelope tender from competitive suppliers for the supply of the goods under package titled "Procurement of Desktop Computer, Laptop, Colour Printer, Multimedia Projector, DSLR Camera and UPS with accessories".

'Tender Document' is obtainable from the office of PKSF during office hours from 29/03/2021 to 12/04/2021 on payment of a non-refundable amount of BDT 1000/- (One Thousand) Interested suppliers are requested to visit the website: <http://pksf-bd.org> for the detailed Tender notice.

The tender should be submitted at the office of PKSF by **12:00 noon** on or before **12/04/2021**. Bid documents will be opened at **12:15 pm** on **12/04/2021** in presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.

PKSF reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all the bid documents without showing any reason whatsoever.

Dr. Md. Jashim Uddin
Deputy Managing Director

Ctg man

FROM PAGE 3

of Sandwip police station told this correspondent, "Atikur first raped the girl at their house in 2011, when she was 16. Since then, he has raped her many times, threatening to withdraw support for her education if she didn't comply."

The case statement also mentions that Kamrun and Atikur took the girl to a private hospital in 2011 and forced her to abort a fetus.

"A few days ago, the girl got married to an expatriate and moved out. But Atikur began threatening her over phone and tried to force her to visit their home again," the OC quoted the case.

"The victim disclosed the matter to her husband, and then filed a case with the police station," said OC Md Bashir.

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
 ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়
 প্রধান কার্যালয়
 ঢাকা।
 তারিখ : ১৪ জুলাই, ১৪২৭
 ২৮ মার্চ, ২০২১

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যত্ব সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এ ২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক 'মেডিকেল অফিসার' এর ০১ টি শূন্য পদ প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে পূরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে Online এ দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে :

ক্রমিক	শিরোনাম	বিবরণ																
১.	পদের নাম	'মেডিকেল অফিসার' (২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক)																
২.	বেতন স্কেল	জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল, ২০১৫ এর টাকা ২২,০০০/-.....৫০০৬০/- স্কেল এবং তৎসহ নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধা।																
৩.	শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা	(ক) কোন স্বীকৃত মেডিকেল কলেজ হতে এমবিবিএস উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে। (খ) বিএমডিসি হতে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। (গ) প্রোগ্রেস পত্রভিত্তিক প্রকাশিত ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০০৯ ও ০২/০৩/২০১০ তারিখের প্রজ্ঞাপন নং শিম/শাঃ১১/৫-১(অংশ)/৫৮২ এবং শিম/শাঃ১১/১৯-১/২০০৭/১৭৪ অনুযায়ী বর্তমান প্রচলিত জিপিএ বা কেএমএত, সিজিপিএ এর বিপরীতে পূর্বের ১ম ও ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি নিম্নরূপে নির্ধারিত হবেঃ <table border="1"> <tr> <td>জিপিএ ৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব</td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>জিপিএ ২.০০ থেকে ৩.০০ এর কম</td> <td>দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ</td> </tr> </table> (২) অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সিজিপিএ এর ক্ষেত্রে- <table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">অর্জিত সিজিপিএ</th> <th>সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ</th> </tr> <tr> <td>৪.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে</td> <td>৫.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব</td> <td>৩.৭৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব</td> <td>প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি</td> </tr> <tr> <td>২.২৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম</td> <td>২.৮১৩ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম</td> <td>দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি</td> </tr> </table>	জিপিএ ৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ	জিপিএ ২.০০ থেকে ৩.০০ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ	অর্জিত সিজিপিএ		সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ	৪.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে	৫.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে		৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	৩.৭৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি	২.২৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম	২.৮১৩ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি
জিপিএ ৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ																	
জিপিএ ২.০০ থেকে ৩.০০ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ																	
অর্জিত সিজিপিএ		সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ																
৪.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে	৫.০০ পয়েন্ট স্কেলে																	
৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	৩.৭৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ/শ্রেণি																
২.২৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম	২.৮১৩ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি																

৪. বয়স : ০১/০৩/২০২০ তারিখে সকল প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে অনূর্ধ্ব ৩২ বৎসর হতে হবে।

৫. আবেদনপত্র দাখিল ও কি প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় : ১২/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫৯ টা।

৬. **Verify Payment (Prepaid পদ্ধতি) এবং Tracking page** সফলতার শেষ তারিখ ও সময় : ১৫/০৪/২০২১ তারিখ, রাত ১১.৫৯ টা।

৭. আবেদন ফি এর পরিমাণ: পরীক্ষার ফি অফেরতযোগ্য টা. ২০০/- (টাকা দুইশত মাত্র) যা ডাচ বাংলা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর Payment Gateway 'রকেট' এর মাধ্যমে প্রদান করতে হবে।

৮. আবেদন পদ্ধতি:

ক. **Online Application Form:** তথ্যমাত্র বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) -এর Online Application Form পূরণের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। Online এ আবেদন দাখিলের সময় ফরম পূরণ করার নিয়ম ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী ওয়েবসাইটেই পাওয়া যাবে।

খ. **প্রার্থীর বিবরণ:** প্রার্থীর নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম এসএসসি অথবা সম্মানের সনদে যেভাবে লেখা আছে Online আবেদনে ঠিক সেভাবে লিখতে হবে।

গ. **প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা:** প্রার্থীর ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/ পৌরসভার মেয়র/ ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জাতীয়তা সনদে উল্লিখিত স্থায়ী ঠিকানা প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা হিসেবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অনলাইন আবেদন উল্লিখিত প্রার্থীর স্থায়ী ঠিকানা বর্ণিত পদের ক্ষেত্রে কোনভাবেই পরিবর্তনযোগ্য নয়। তবে অবিবাহিত মহিলা প্রার্থীরা আবেদন দাখিলের পরে বিবাহবন্ধনে আবদ্ধ হলে যথাযথ প্রমাণ সাপেক্ষে স্থায়ী স্থায়ী ঠিকানার অনুকূলে নিজের স্থায়ী ঠিকানা পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন।

ঘ. **ছবি (Photo):** নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 600x600 pixel এর কম বা বেশি নয় এবং file size 100 KB এর বেশি নয় এরূপ মাপের অনধিক তিন মাস পূর্বে তোলা প্রার্থীর রঙিন ছবি (সাদা ব্যাকগ্রাউন্ড সখলিত) scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। ছবি তোলায় সময় দু'খ ও কানের উপর আবরণ রাখা যাবে না। সাদাকালো ছবি এবং Informal ছবি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

ঙ. **স্বাক্ষর (Signature):** নতুন আবেদনকারীর ক্ষেত্রে Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত স্থানে 300x80 pixel এর কম বা বেশি নয় এবং file size 60 KB এর বেশি নয় এরূপ মাপের প্রার্থীর নিজের স্বাক্ষর scan করে আপলোড করতে হবে। আপলোডকৃত প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর অবশ্যই সাদা কাগজের উপর কাগো কাপিতে প্রদত্ত হতে হবে।

চ. **অর্জিত ডিগ্রির ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ:** Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত সনশ্রিট ডিগ্রির ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।

ছ. **বিশেষ ডিগ্রিধারী প্রার্থী:** প্রার্থী 'O' Level ও 'A' Level পাশ হলে দেশীয় সনশ্রিট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) এবং বিশেষ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ডিগ্রি প্রাপ্ত হলে দেশীয় সনশ্রিট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরি কমিশন/শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রি ও ফলাফলের (শ্রেণি/ বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ উল্লেখসহ) তথ্য মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় চেকিং বোর্ডে অবশ্যই উপস্থাপন করতে হবে। অন্যথায় মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

জ. **CV ID No. গ্রহণ:** বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মাধ্যমে ইতিপূর্বে আবেদনকৃত প্রার্থীদের বিদ্যমান CV ID No. এবং Password ব্যবহার করে **Online Application Form** পূরণ করতে হবে। নতুন আবেদনকারীরা ওয়েবসাইট (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) এর মাধ্যমে **Online Application Form** এর প্রয়োজনীয় সবকিছু পূরণ করলে একটি CV ID No. এবং Password প্রাপ্ত হবেন। প্রাপ্ত CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনেদ(-) পূর্বের অংশ] আবেদন কি প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যবহৃত হবে।

ঝ. **Job ID No.:** বর্ণিত পদের **Job ID No. 10136** আবেদন ফি প্রদানের সময় নির্ধারিত স্থানে ব্যবহার করতে হবে।

ঞ. **আবেদন ফি প্রদান পদ্ধতি:** আবেদন ফি জমা দেয়ার পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত জানতে <https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd/onlineapp/rocketprepay.pdf> ওয়েবসাইটে ডিভিট করতে হবে। Instant এবং Prepaid উভয় পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী নিজে অথবা এজেন্ট একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে ফি প্রদান করতে পারবেন। Instant পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী তার রকেট একাউন্ট ব্যবহার করে সরাসরি ফি প্রদান করে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। Prepaid পদ্ধতিতে একজন আবেদনকারী এজেন্ট অথবা নিজের একাউন্ট এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন করতে পারবেন। প্রার্থীপণ নির্ধারিত **Job ID No** এবং তাদের CV ID No. এর ১ম অংশ [হাইফেনেদ(-) পূর্বের অংশ] এর বিপরীতে আবেদন ফি প্রদান করবেন। আবেদন ফি প্রদান করলে প্রার্থী অক্ষয় ফি এর বিপরীতে একটি Txn ID নম্বর পাবেন।

ট. **Tracking Page সফল:** ফি প্রদানের পর বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে সফলিত প্রার্থীর Online Application Form এর নির্ধারিত ঘরে Txn ID নম্বরটি বসালে ফি প্রদানের verification সাপেক্ষে তাঁকে একটি Tracking ID No. প্রদান করা হবে। Tracking ID No. প্রাপ্ত হলেই প্রার্থীর আবেদন যথাযথরূপে সম্পন্ন হয়েছে বলে বিবেচিত হবে। Tracking ID No. সখলিত Tracking Page টি ভবিষ্যতে ব্যবহারের জন্য প্রিন্ট করে যথাযথভাবে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। কোনো অবস্থাতেই Tracking Page এর Duplicate Copy সংরক্ষণ করা হবে না।

বিশেষ ট্রিটব্য: শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও নির্ধারিত ফি প্রদানকরত **Tracking Page** টি হার্ডকপি আকারে সংরক্ষণ করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

৯. **Online Application Form** এ প্রার্থীর নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী জেলা, জন্ম তারিখ, ছবি, স্বাক্ষরসহ অন্যান্য তথ্য অত্যন্ত সতর্কতার সাথে নির্ভুলভাবে নিজে পূরণ করতে হবে। **Online Application Form** এ প্রদত্ত সার্বিক তথ্য, ছবি, স্বাক্ষর ইত্যাদি verification সাপেক্ষে প্রার্থীদের যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের নির্বাচন করা হবে।

১০. প্রার্থীকর্তৃক যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশপত্র ও নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষার তারিখ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি যথাযথরূপে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত ওয়েবসাইটে ও জাতীয় দৈনিক পত্রিকায় প্রকাশ করা হবে।

১১. প্রার্থীদেরকে MCQ Test এবং/ বা লিখিত বা মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে।

১২. প্রার্থীদেরকে Online আবেদনের সময় কোনো কাগজপত্র জমা করতে হবে না। লিখিত পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীপণকে অনলাইন আবেদন প্রদত্ত প্রকৃতি তথ্যের স্বপক্ষে যথাযথ সনদ/প্রত্যয়নপত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। **Online Application Form** এ প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত তথ্যের সঠিকতা যাচাইকালে কোনো substantive জটী ধরা পড়লে মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ থাকবে না। তাছাড়া, মৌখিক পরীক্ষা শেষে প্যানেল প্রশ্নকালে কোনো প্রকার জটী পরিণতি হলেও প্রার্থীকে প্যানেলভুক্ত করা হবে না।

১৩. চাকরীভার প্রার্থীদের তাদের নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের পূর্বনির্দেশনাক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার দিন উক্ত অনুমোদনের কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।

১৪. নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কোটা সংক্রান্ত সর্বশেষ সরকারী নীতিমালা ও অন্যান্য বিধি-বিধান যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।

১৫. সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রার্থীদের নিয়োগ প্রদান করা বা না করার ক্ষেত্রে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।

১৬. মেধাতালিকা তথ্যমাত্র এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত ২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক ০১টি শূন্য পদের জন্য প্রয়োজ্য হবে। সনশ্রিট ব্যাংক ০১/১২/২০১৯ তারিখের পরে শূন্য তথ্য পদের জন্য এ মেধাতালিকা হতে প্রার্থী নির্বাচন করা হবে না।

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২১-১২০৫
 তারিখঃ ২৯/৩/২০২১

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

(আরফ হোসেন খান)
 মহাব্যবস্থাপক ও সদস্য সচিব
 ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি

GD-643



The 'Morar Bhita' killing site at Nandipara of Harhar village, in Batajor union of Barishal's Gournadi upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

MASS KILLING OF 135

Still no memorial at 'Morar Bhita' killing site

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Locals call it 'Morar Bhita' (house of the dead), as at least 135 civilians, mostly women and children, were slaughtered at the place by the Pakistan army in 1971.

But after about 50 years of the massacre, no memorial was made at the site -- in Nandipara of Harhar village, under Batajor union of Gournadi upazila.

On May 15, 1971, the Pakistani occupation forces, with the help of local collaborators, opened fire indiscriminately on the inhabitants, about 400, of Nandipara and killed almost one-third of them. The youngest of the victims was five months of age while the oldest was 85.

Abdus Salam Montu, a freedom fighter from the area, said after finding out that the freedom fighters had set up camps at Ashwini Kumar Secondary School and at Adhuna village in Batajor union, a large contingent of Pakistan army attacked Adhuna village and torched Shubho Sarkar's house.

On way back to their own camp, the troops with the help of several locals -- including Khadem Sarder, Manik Rari, Adom Ali Sarder, Jabbar Sarder and Akkas Bepari -- attacked

Nandipara, one of the remotest places in Harhar village, said Ismat Hossain, another local freedom fighter.

After the enemies were defeated in the war, locals gathered the skeletons and remains of the victims from the spot and buried those beside a Hindu temple in Batajor market area, he added.

Abhilash Nandi, now 53, is one of the survivors of the attack. His mother Nirmala Nandi and a sister Rama



Nandi died during the gunfire. He and another of his sister, Gita Nandi, sustained severe bullet injuries.

When infant Abhilash was rescued after the bloodbath, he was still suckling at his lifeless mother's breast. "I was rescued from a pile of corpses," said Abhilash.

Paritosh Nandi witnessed the mass murder from a hideout nearby. The army would never come to the remote place in Nandipara, surrounded by bushes and jungles, unless they got directions and assistance from the local collaborators.

They counted 92 bodies after the

carnage was over, he added.

The attack on the village started around 11:00am and lasted till around 1:30pm, said Aroti Rani Das, another eyewitness, who is now 75 years old.

She said the Pakistanis sprayed the victims -- including 85-year-old Ashwini Kumar Das -- with hundreds of bullets and when they left the spot, the bodies were lying there beyond recognition.

Some of the victims locals identified were: Ashwini Kumar Das (85), Bipin Singh (60), Nirmala Rani Nandi (55), Rama Nandi (10), Anita Nandi (4), Gayn Nandi (23), Sudhir Gayen, Makham Haldar (45), Sonai Haldar (23), Malati Haldar (26), Archana Haldar (4), Jatindra Karati (32), Basna Rani Karati (24), Sumon Karati (10), Sajal Karati (6), Saraswati Haldar (36), Manoranjan Karati (35), Annada Mandal (60), Keshta Mandal (56), Jatish Karati (30), Sumati Gayen (60), Sunodi Gayen (20), Rabindra Nath Gayen (15), Dhiren Gayen (35), Radhakanta (five months), and wife and son of Kalu Raj.

Contacted, Gournadi Upazila Nirbahi Officer Bipin Chandra Bishwas said they were planning to construct a memorial at the site of the massacre.

150 injured as BNP men clash

FROM PAGE 12

at one stage they started beating up the party men, alleged Ashfaq.

They also fired gunshots and lobbed teargas shells, he added.

It was an exceptional incident as police attacked the party men without any reason and around 100 were injured, said Hazi Israil Mia, another organising secretary of the district BNP who has been leading the procession in Ekrampur area.

The injured party men were taking treatment at different private clinics and hospitals in and outside the district.

Emdad Hossain, 32, joint-secretary of Jubo Dal's Sadar upazila unit convener, sustained bullet wounds at different parts of his body and he was shifted to Dhaka in critical condition, claimed Hazi Israil.

Contacted, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station Abdullah Al Mamun said defying the government's instruction for not holding any public gathering as coronavirus pandemic takes its serious turn, BNP men brought out the processions in Sholakia and Ekrampur areas and they also ransacked several shops on their way.

On information, separate police teams rushed to the spots and asked the party men not to organise any public rally but the unruly BNP men attacked police teams first with brick chunks, and in retaliation, police went on action for the safety of people and their wealth, the OC said.

Denying firing on the party men, the OC also said police fired blank shots and

lobbed teargas to bring the situation under control.

The OC also said that three policemen, including sub-inspector Joyanal Abedin and two constables, were injured during the attack and they were given primary treatment.

The situation is under control now and additional police have been deployed in the town to avert the further untoward situation, he added.

In Naogaon town, at least 50 people were injured as the BNP men clashed with the police for almost half an hour yesterday.

The clash ensued at 12:00 noon when several hundred BNP men attempted to bring out a procession at KD's Intersection and the police dispersed them by charging batons.

The police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets while the BNP men regrouped minutes later, threw brick chips toward the police, and tried to set fire on tires on the road, Nazrul Islam, OC of Naogaon Sadar Police Station, said.

The district BNP convener Hafizur Rahman said their men were attacked without any provocation when they brought out a procession as part of their countrywide programme.

BNP activists Mili Akter and Azizul Haque were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while others were treated at local clinics, he said.

The OC said at least six policemen were also hurt with brick chips in the clash.

Our correspondents in Rajshahi and Mymensingh contributed to this report.

Ethnic rebel group warns

FROM PAGE 12

violence against civilians.

A spokesman for the Myanmar junta did not answer calls seeking comment.

Opponents of the coup have called for a united front with insurgent groups to help those standing up to the military.

Rebels have battled the government for

decades for greater autonomy in remote border regions. The military has justified its long grip on power by saying it is the only institution capable of ensuring national unity.

Military aircraft bombed KNU fighters on the weekend, sending some 3,000 villagers fleeing to neighbouring Thailand.

Bangladesh behind Nepal

FROM PAGE 12

"This suggests a lag between 4G coverage rollout and usage of 4G services. This lag in usage is largely explained by issues related to the affordability of devices, low levels of knowledge and digital skills, a perceived lack of relevance, as well as safety and security concerns."

High sector-specific taxes, a fragmented licensing regime, as well as issues with the pricing and usage restrictions on spectrum have been identified as barriers to expanding coverage.

Bangladesh, however, fares better compared to Nepal and Sri Lanka in terms of 4G connections. Only 17 per cent of the population has 4G connections in Nepal, and 18 per cent in Sri Lanka, according to the report.

India has the highest 4G connections at 63 percent of the population followed by Pakistan.

Bangladesh has 17 crore mobile connections. Of them, nine crore are unique subscribers, giving a penetration rate of 54 percent as of December 2020.

Some 47 per cent of subscribers use 2G connections and 25 per cent 3G connections. The report said internet and digital technology played a key role in helping drive economic growth and societal development in Bangladesh.

Digital technologies, mobile in particular, will be crucial to implementing the government's 2041 Perspective Plan, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and recovering economically in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the report said.

UP Polls: 12 injured in Barguna clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 12 were injured in clashes between the supporters of Awami League (AL)- backed chairman candidate and Independent candidate in Barguna's Amtali upazila on Monday night.

Five motorcycles were also torched during the clashes.

Of the injured, Shanu Hawlader, 50, Shahidul Mallik, 45, Jasim Gazi, 40, Zakaria, 26, Lokman Sikder, 45, Nasir Hawlader, 50, and Abdus Salam, 30, were admitted to Amtali Upazila Health Complex first and later shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Locals said 10 to 12 men, led by and upazila Chhatra League President Mahbub Islam, also supporters of AL nominated chairman candidate Akhtaruzzaman Badal Khan, attacked Shanu Hawlader, a follower of Independent chairman candidate Advocate Mohsin, in the Patakata dam area under Chawra Union and vandalized his shop.

Hearing the news, Mohsin's supporters rushed to the spot and locked in a fierce clash with their rivals that left 12 people injured.

Woman found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday recovered the body of a woman in Ishwarganj upazila.

The victim, Rabeya Khatun, 28, was daughter of Hadis Mia of adjacent Gouripur upazila.

People of Galahar village spotted the body at a paddy field in the morning and informed the police, who recovered it around 10:00am and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for autopsy, Officer in Charge of Ishwarganj Police Station Abdul Kader Mia said.

Trials of organisations ever elusive

FROM PAGE 12

line with its electoral pledge.

"We are committed to try any organisation that had committed crimes against humanity and war crimes. A proposal for amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973 for trying the organisations is awaiting the cabinet's approval," the minister said.

He said they would take necessary measures to this effect after the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic was over.

But the long delay is utterly disappointing for justice-seekers and war crimes victims and their families who have long been demanding trial of anti-liberation organisations, including Jamaat-e-Islami.

Delivering its verdict in the case against former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam on July 15, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 observed, "...Jamaat-e-Islami, as a political party under the leadership of accused Prof Ghulam Azam, intentionally functioned as a criminal organisation, especially during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971."

Established by highly controversial Abul Ala Moududi in 1941, the Jamaat had been banned twice before the independence of Bangladesh, in 1959 and 1964, for creating communal violence.

In independent Bangladesh, the party was banned immediately after liberation but was later allowed by the Ziaur Rahman regime to do politics.

Eminent writer and war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir said it was frustrating that the government was not taking initiative for trying the anti-liberation organisations.

"Only the individual war criminals have been tried so far after the international crimes tribunals were established. But no initiative was taken yet to try the organisations, including the then Pakistan army high command, Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, Al Badr, Al Shams who were directly involved in the crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971, which is not acceptable to the war crimes victims," he told The Daily Star recently.

Shahriar Kabir also said the law minister has been saying since 2014 that the government would amend the International Crimes Tribunal Act to try the organisations but no initiative was taken yet.

He, however, argued that such organisations can be tried under the

existing law.

War crimes investigators in 2014 recommended banning Jamaat and six other organisations for their involvement in grievous crimes committed during the Liberation War.

The six organisations were Islami Chhatra Sangha (ICS), Jamaat's then student wing now called Islami Chhatra Shibir, Shanti Committee, Razakar Bahini, Al Badr Bahini, Al Shams Bahini, and Jamaat's mouthpiece Daily Sangram.

The demand for the trial of Jamaat as an organisation got momentum after youths occupied the Shahbagh intersection in the capital in February 2013 calling for the highest punishment to be handed down to war criminals and a ban on Jamaat and Shibir.

Following the protests, the government amended the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, allowing the state to appeal against inadequate sentencing.

Some legal experts at that time said the Act had no provision for handing down punishment to any organisation and that the law should be amended again before the trial starts.

So far, a total of 100 persons have been tried for 1971 crimes at two separate special tribunals with six of them executed in the last 11 years.

Besides, appeal hearings of a total 22 war-crimes related cases have been pending with the Appellate Division for around 28 months. There is no possibility of quick hearing and disposal of the appeals due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The Awami League-led government formed the first International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-1) on March 25, 2010 in line with the party's electoral pledge to try people who committed crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971.

The second tribunal (ICT-2) was formed on March 22, 2012, to expedite the trials. But the government kept one of the two tribunals almost dormant since September 15, 2015 following the drop of number of pending cases at the tribunals.

The ICT-1 has delivered a total of 31 judgments on war crimes related cases since February 28, 2013 to February 11 this year, while the ICT-2 has delivered 11 verdicts on such cases since January 21, 2013 to July 16, 2015, according to the information available on their websites.

According to a study of the Law Lab, a law chamber that conducts research

on different legal issues, a total of 100 persons -- including 52 absconding convicted accused -- were tried so far at the two tribunals.

Of them, 67 were sentenced to death, 26 to life imprisonment, five got 20 years in jail, one (Ghulam Azam) was sentenced to 90 years' imprisonment, and one was acquitted.

A total of 34 appeals have been filed with the apex court challenging the war crimes tribunals' verdict, nine appeals were heard and settled and three appeals filed by accused -- Ghulam Azam, Mawlana Abdus Sobhan, and Abdul Alim -- were declared abated following their deaths, advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, head of the Law Lab, told The Daily Star.

International Crimes Tribunal Registrar Sayeed Ahmed could not be reached for information and his comments on this issue despite repeated attempts over the phone.

Supreme Court spokesperson Mohammad Saifur Rahman said his office has no specific information about the pending appeals filed against the ICT verdicts.

The last war-crime related appeal hearing took place at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on December 3, 2019. Convicted war criminal Syed Mohammad Qaisar filed it, challenging the death penalty handed to him by a war-crimes tribunal in 2014.

However, law minister Anisul Haq said the progress so far has been satisfying.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led government was pledge-bound to bring the people, who had committed crimes against humanity and war crimes during the Liberation War, to trial. We are satisfied that the prime minister's commitment has been fulfilled as several war criminals have been convicted and sentenced to death and life imprisonment. Some of them were executed," he said.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told this newspaper that the government has formed the tribunals in order to fulfil the people's desire and expectations for trying the war criminals.

The tribunals have delivered several verdicts and many of the verdicts have already been executed after the apex court have disposed of the appeals and some appeals are pending with this court.

"I feel the government has fulfilled the people's expectations," he said.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12

Mujibur Rahman: An Iconic Leader of People's Struggle for Freedom."

The talk was organised by the Bangladesh Embassy in Belgium and Luxembourg, and Mission to the European Union in Brussels on 29 March, according to a statement of the Bangladesh embassy in Brussels.

"The military's reaction in the form of imprisoning Sheikh Mujib and initiating Genocide against the Bengalis ... To this day, no apology has been forthcoming and I think the people of Pakistan should urge the government of Pakistan to offer a formal apology to the people of Bangladesh for all the atrocities that were committed in 1971 ... an apology is the most courteous thing ..." said Haqqani, now a senior fellow and director for South and Central Asia at Hudson Institute.

He said Bangabandhu is not only the greatest Bengalee of all time, but an iconic figure of struggle for freedom that the world has seen.

The envoy said Bangabandhu is in the same league of great leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.

Bangabandhu had created the sense of freedom among the Bengali nation during his long struggle for independence and gave all the directives to his people to prepare for a war in his historic speech on March 7, 1971, in Dhaka, Haqqani said. He added that the then East Pakistan was the "Golden Goose" to the Pakistani ruling elites as most of the foreign exchange was earned from the eastern part.

Haqqani said now Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing countries in the world and the most successful country in South Asia -- the contribution of Bangabandhu and his daughter, current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, who addressed the event as the chief guest, said it was expected that Pakistan would apologise formally on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan sent a video message on the occasion but did not apologise.

UN to carry on dialogue

FROM PAGE 12

of the housing facility.

The government has already relocated some 13,000 Rohingyas to Bhasan Char from Cox's Bazar in phases since December last year. It is in the process of relocating more in the coming days.

The UN team included five officials from the UNHCR, four from the World Food Programme, three from the Food and Agriculture Organisation, two from United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and one official each from the IMO, WHO, UN Population Fund and UN Department of Safety and Security.

After the visit, the delegation, in a statement, said, "A United Nations team completed its first visit to Bhasan Char from March 17-20 in 2021. The team was made up of 18 experts from different UN agencies engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh. The visit was facilitated and accompanied by officials of the government of Bangladesh."

It said, "The UN team travelled by boat from Chittagong to Bhasan Char and back. During the visit, the UN team appraised the needs of Rohingya refugees living on Bhasan Char, including through meetings with Rohingya men, women, boys, and girls. The UN team also met with members of the local authorities and security agencies working on the island, as well as some of the NGOs and traders operating there."

UNHCR official Mostafa said the UN team also visited the infrastructure and facilities on Bhasan Char. "This included the accommodation, health facilities, multi-purpose structures, police and fire stations, transport infrastructure, power and telecommunications systems and the flood embankment."

The delegation, led by Fumiko Kashiwa, assistant representative of the Bangladesh chapter of UNHCR, will submit its report on

Kushtia reclaimed

FROM PAGE 12

parliament, on the government to do something. The demand for recognising Bangladesh as an independent state was also quite strong. But India's government took a cautious approach. Indira insisted on following "proper international norms" since any hasty step against Pakistan, a member of the UN, would be unlikely to find favour internationally.

Over the next two weeks, India's policy on the Bangladesh crisis began to take shape within this cautious framework. [Srinath Raghavan, 1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh, Permanent Black, 2013, pg. 61]

TAJUDDIN ENTERS INDIA

Tajuddin Ahmad and Amirul Islam crossed over to India in the early hours of March 30, 1971. They met senior Border Security Force (BSF) officer in West Bengal, Golok Majumdar, at the border post. Tajuddin briefed on the situation in Bangladesh and handed over a list of Awami League leaders and members of the National Assembly.

the trip to the foreign ministry.

Government officials expressed optimism that the UN would be involved in the relocation of Rohingyas after the visit, as the facilities on Bhasan Char are much better than those in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh Navy implemented the Tk 3,100 crore housing project after some 750,000 Rohingyas had fled a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017 and took shelter in camps in Teknaf and Ukha.

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 had raised concerns over risks of tidal surge and cyclone at the remote island, but the government said with 120 brick-built cluster villages and 120 cyclone shelters, flood protection embankments, facilities for education, farming and fishing, hospitals and playgrounds, the Char is a much better living place than the Cox's Bazar camps.

The UN said it wanted to send one of its technical teams to the island to assess the housing facilities. Asked by the government, it even submitted the terms of reference for the visit in December 2019. The move got stalled after that.

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

After relocation of the first batch of Rohingyas in December, some 44 NGOs volunteered to go there and started providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees. There were concerns over how funds needed for 100,000 Rohingyas would be managed after their relocation.

Sources said it seems that the UN team is happy seeing the facilities and its report would be positive.

Later they were driven to the airport in Kolkata where they met Director General of BSF KF Rustamji, who had arrived posthaste from Delhi.

BLOOD TELEGRAM

On March 30, 1971, American Consul General Archer K Blood in Dhaka, sent a telegram to the US State Department. After providing gory details of the Pakistan army's brutality in Dhaka University, the telegram read: Question of whether university professors subject of pre-planned purge still unanswered although actively being looked into. Academics met since military crackdown fearful for safety and in hiding. They believe they [are] subject to elimination. Systematic destruction of academic records at university suggests campaign underway to erase all traces [of] current "trouble making" generation at Dacca university. Figure of thousand dead at university nonetheless strikes us as exaggerated, although nothing these days is inconceivable.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

OVERHAUL OF HK'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

China passes new 'patriot' polls law

AFP, Beijing

Chinese leaders endorsed a sweeping overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system yesterday, creating powers to vet anyone standing for public office and slashing the number of directly elected politicians.

The new measures, which bypassed Hong Kong's legislature and were imposed directly by Beijing, are the latest move aimed at quashing the city's democracy movement after huge protests.

President Xi Jinping signed the new law after it was unanimously approved by China's top decision-making body. One of the most dramatic changes is the introduction of a committee that will vet anyone hoping to enter Hong Kong politics for their patriotism.

The body will include background checks by Hong Kong's new national security apparatus and its decisions cannot be legally challenged.

When Hong Kongers are allowed to vote in limited local elections, they tend to do so overwhelmingly for pro-democracy candidates, something that has rattled authoritarian Beijing.

Under the new measures, Hong Kong's legislature will be expanded from 70 to 90 seats. But only 20 of those seats will now be directly elected, down from 35. That brings direct representation down from half to less than a quarter of seats.

The majority -- 40 seats -- will be chosen by a reliably pro-Beijing committee. The remaining 30 will be chosen by "functional constituencies" -- bodies representing certain industries and special interest groups that have also been historically loyal to Beijing.



Hindu devotees take part in 'Huranga', a game played between men and women a day after Holi, the festival of colours, at Dauji temple near the northern city of Mathura, India, yesterday. India's Covid-19 situation is turning from "bad to worse," a senior government official said yesterday, as infections surge across several states.

PHOTO: REUTERS

West doubts virus origin report

India sees surge in cases; world pushes for pandemic preparedness treaty

AGENCIES

The United States led a chorus of concern from a group of nations yesterday over a WHO-backed report into the origins of the coronavirus in China, with accusations swirling that Beijing failed to give proper access to the investigators.

The US released a statement with 13 of its allies -- Britain, Japan and Australia among them -- saying the inquiry had lacked the data and samples it needed.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had earlier made a similar criticism, saying the international team he dispatched to Wuhan had found it difficult to get raw data during the mission.

The expert report on the origins of Covid-19 concluded that the virus probably came from bats and jumped to humans from another animal.

The experts judged it "extremely unlikely" that the virus was grown

in a lab, and were also unimpressed by Beijing's theory that the virus did not originate in China at all but was imported in frozen food.

The pandemic has killed nearly 2.8 million people worldwide since it first emerged in Wuhan in late 2019, with several countries now battling new waves of infection and being forced to

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

take drastic measures.

India's health secretary yesterday bluntly told the 28 federal states to get a grip on lax coronavirus prevention measures "right now" to prevent healthcare systems being overwhelmed by a surge in infections.

India's current caseload of 12.1 million ranks third behind only the United States and Brazil, with testing unable to keep up with demand. The daily rise in cases has quadrupled in the space of a month.

Yesterday, India recorded 56,211 new cases, a slight dip after a reduction in testing over a long weekend.

Italy yesterday said it would impose a five-day quarantine on travelers arriving from other EU countries, while Germany will beef up checks along land borders to ensure people arriving have negative Covid tests.

Meanwhile, world leaders yesterday called for a new international treaty to better fight future outbreaks and for countries to be ready if -- or when -- another hits.

"Together, we must be better prepared to predict, prevent, detect, assess and effectively respond to pandemics in a highly coordinated fashion," they urged.

More than 20 countries -- including Germany, France, South Korea and South Africa -- signed up to the plea.

Tedros had earlier urged the world to not waste any time in preparing for the next contagion.

EFFECT OF INDIA'S EXPORT CURBS ON COVAX

Asian countries seek alternative sources

REUTERS, Seoul/Manila

Several Asian countries sought alternative sources for Covid-19 inoculations after export restrictions by manufacturer India left a World Health Organization-backed global vaccine sharing programme short of supplies.

The export curb deepens the problems facing the Covax scheme, relied on by 64 poorer countries, and adds to previous setbacks that include production glitches and a lack of funding contribution from wealthy nations. The Serum Institute of India was due to deliver 90 million vaccine doses to Covax over March and April.

South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam are among countries to be hit by shipment delays to vaccines they have been promised under the Covax programme.

Both the Philippines and Indonesia are currently relying heavily on vaccines from China's Sinovac Biotech to run their inoculation drives. The Philippines and Vietnam have both approved Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, along with more than 50 other countries, mainly developing nations. The Philippines expects to receive its first batch of Sputnik V in April.

Nepal yesterday said it was set to restart Covid-19 inoculations after receiving 800,000 doses of China's Sinopharm vaccine from China.

Pakistan said it will import more coronavirus vaccines made by China's CanSino Biologics next month, equivalent to 3 million doses.

Buses, trains to ply at half

FROM PAGE 1

The government took similar measures last year to contain the spread of the pandemic. But there were allegations against bus and launch owners of operating over 50 percent capacity at that time.

A passenger's platform said it would be difficult to implement the decision of carrying 50 percent passengers in buses, especially city buses, while most offices, companies and factories are still open.

"The decision would rather increase passengers' sufferings," Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A special committee to fix public transport's fare proposed a 60 percent hike in bus fares on Monday and sent it to the road transport and bridges ministry.

The committee, led by Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, made the decision at an emergency meeting when transport owners proposed either giving subsidies or increasing bus fare like before in light of the new directives.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said 60 percent hike in bus fare will come into effect from today on condition that buses carry 50 percent passengers and follow the health safety guidelines.

The minister said this at a regular media briefing from his residence.

The hike in the fare will be applicable for a certain period and the previous one will be reinstated once the coronavirus situation is under control, he added.

The government in June last year increased bus fares by 60 percent when operation of public transport resumed after more than two months' suspension to curb the Covid-19 infections.

But authorities reinstated the previous bus fare in September last year when the restriction was withdrawn.

The government last increased the inter-district bus fares in May 2016 at Tk 1.42 a kilometre.

With the new hike, for example, it will cost a passenger Tk 700 (excluding tolls) to travel

to Barishal from the capital's Gabtoli via Faridpur. The existing fare is Tk 438.

Bus fares on routes inside the capital were last increased in September 2015 at Tk 1.70 a km.

Now, one has to pay Tk 53 instead of Tk 33 to travel to the Mirpur Zoo from Notre Dame College.

Contacted, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad yesterday said they already sent copies of a letter to transport leaders, divisional commissioners and authorities concerned to execute the new directives.

TRAIN, LAUNCH SERVICES
Bangladesh Railway yesterday started selling 50 percent of available tickets, its Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder told this correspondent.

BR headquarters has given necessary instructions in this regard, he said.

However, it may take a few days to implement the government instructions to maintain 50 percent occupancy because many advance tickets have already been sold, said BR officials.

Half of the 50 percent tickets will be sold at counters and the rest online, said Jahangir Hossain, general manager (east) of BR. They may consider selling all tickets online if the Covid-19 situation worsens further, he added. Ticket price will remain the same, he added.

Mihir Kanti Guha, general manager (west) of BR, said many advance tickets have already been sold, so it may take a few days to fully execute the decision of carrying 50 percent passengers of the capacity.

The BR also took similar steps last year. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Commodore Golam Sadeq said as per the government's directives, they instructed the launch owners not to take passengers at more than 50 percent of their capacities on deck.

Passengers using the cabin usually maintain health safety guidelines, so the restriction was not imposed on launch cabins, he added.

"They [launch owners] have been instructed to implement it from today [Tuesday]. We will take action if they fail," he told this paper yesterday. Launch fare will also remain the same, he added.

Govt moves to raise number

FROM PAGE 1

Zahid said it would take 10-15 days to make the DNCC market functional as a healthcare facility.

The minister said his ministry would hold a meeting with the owners of private medical college hospitals today to discuss increasing the number of beds at their facilities too.

"We would request them to raise the number of beds though they are already crowded with patients."

The minister also asked people to take patients to district hospitals having facilities for Covid-19 patients so that pressure on Dhaka hospitals is reduced.

"There are some medical facilities in Cumilla, Gazipur, Manikganj and some other districts around Dhaka. Patients should be admitted to those hospitals and they should not to come to Dhaka."

He also said containment of the virus is the most important factor. "Everyone has to follow the health guidelines. Otherwise, the situation would go out of control. Besides, people have to understand that the resources are limited."

Contacted, Dr Farid Hossain Miah, director

(hospitals and clinics) at the Directorate General of Health Services, said they were expecting to add another 2,000 Covid-19 beds in Dhaka within around two weeks.

"We are also expecting to add about 100 ICU beds in the capital," he added.

Farid said apart from 51 ICU beds at the makeshift hospital at the DNCC market, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, Kurmitola General Hospital and Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Government Hospital would have 10 ICU beds each.

Asked about additional workforce, he said if needed, they would mobilise resources from districts around Dhaka.

According to DGHS statistics, there are 2,461 Covid-19 general beds and 108 ICU beds in government hospitals in Dhaka now.

Yesterday, 45 people died from the virus in the country in 24 hours till 8:00am and the daily infection rate rose to 18.94 percent.

On Monday, the daily infection rate was 18.38 percent and the number of fatality was 45.

The infection rate started going up from the second week of March after staying below 5 percent for about two months.

Institutional

FROM PAGE 1

will be allowed to leave if the results come out to be negative, it said.

Passengers from other countries will have to be in home quarantine for 14 days. They must follow this rule strictly, the statement said. "They will be screened at the airport. If any Covid-19 symptoms are suspected or detected, they too will have to stay at the government facilities or government-approved hotels for the 14-day quarantine period," it said.

Caab also said whether or not passengers got vaccine shots, they must show the airport authorities PCR-based Covid-19 negative certificates while arriving or departing from the country.

The test must be done within 72 hours of the flight's departure.

On December 28 last year, the government had decided that all UK returnees must be in a 14-day institutional quarantine in the wake of the spread of a new variant of Covid-19 in the United Kingdom.

Later, the duration of quarantine was reduced to seven day.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kim's sister slams South's Moon as US 'parrot'

Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, slammed South Korea's president as "a parrot raised by America" for calling the North's recent missile test "concerning", state media KCNA reported yesterday. North Korea launched two ballistic missiles into the sea near Japan last week, underscoring steady progress in its weapons programme and ramping up pressure on the United States. Following the launches, South Korean President Jae-in Moon said the South, the North and the United States should make efforts to continue dialogue. Kim Yo Jong called Moon's remarks disgraceful for agreeing with the United States. "Such illogical and brazen-faced behaviour of South Korea is exactly the same as the gangster-like logic of the US," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by KCNA.

Nepal's schools close as air pollution hits alarming levels

Nepal has ordered schools to close for four days after air pollution climbed to hazardous levels, forcing millions of students to stay home across the country. Over the weekend, pollution levels hit their highest in the capital, Kathmandu, since the government began keeping records in 2016, government official Shankar Paudel told Reuters. Education ministry spokesman Deepak Sharma said about eight million students have been affected by the closures. The 24-hour average level of PM2.5, fine particulate matter that can reach deep into the lungs, was 214 micrograms per cubic metre in the upscale area of Bhaishapati in Kathmandu on Sunday, Department of Environment data showed. That compares with the government's standard level of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. People must stay safe indoors and not come out except for emergencies, the health ministry said. manufactured by the firm at US ports of entry.

Thai billionaire charged with royal insult over vaccine video



A billionaire Thai opposition figure was charged yesterday with defaming the monarchy after he questioned the government's alleged over-reliance on coronavirus vaccines from a company linked to the royal family. Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, founder of the now-dissolved Future Forward Party, posted a video on Facebook in January in which he queried whether Thailand was leaning too heavily on Siam Bioscience for its vaccination campaign. The company is owned by the Crown Property Bureau, which manages the royal family's multi-billion-dollar fortune. A Bangkok criminal court yesterday charged Thanathorn with lese majeste and a computer crime over that video. Those convicted under Thailand's strict royal defamation laws can face up to 15 years in jail per charge.

Forced labour: US to seize gloves made by Malaysia firm

The United States will seize products made by Malaysia's Top Glove after concluding the firm uses forced labour, officials said, dealing a fresh blow to the world's biggest surgical glove maker. Top Glove's profits and stock price surged last year as countries worldwide rushed to buy protective gear during the Covid-19 pandemic. But the firm, which can produce more than 96 billion gloves a year, has been rocked by a series of scandals including a virus outbreak in dormitories that infected thousands of migrant workers. US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) had already banned gloves from two of Top Glove's subsidiaries last year after saying it suspected the company was committing labour abuses. It went a step further on Monday, announcing it had "sufficient information" to conclude that Top Glove uses forced labour. The federal agency said it would seize any gloves manufactured by the company.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্মানিত গ্রাহকদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ব্যাংকের সিস্টেম আপগ্রেডেশনের জন্য আগামী ০১ এপ্রিল ২০২১ইং রোজ বৃহস্পতিবার হতে ০৩ এপ্রিল ২০২১ইং রোজ শনিবার পর্যন্ত ব্যাংকের প্রধান কার্যালয়, সকল শাখা, উপশাখা, কার্ড সার্ভিস, এটিএম বুথ এবং এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিংসহ সকল প্রকার ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম বন্ধ থাকবে। ০৪ এপ্রিল ২০২১ইং রোজ রবিবার হতে ব্যাংকের সকল কার্যক্রম পুনরায় চালু হবে।

গ্রাহকদের উন্নত সেবা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে এই সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য আমরা আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখ প্রকাশ করছি।

16671

১৬৬৭১

গ্লোবাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক

Global Islami Bank

বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট

স্বাধীনতা ভবন

৮৮ মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০

www.bffwt.gov.bd, Fax-02-9562258

আইন উপদেষ্টা নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্টের বিভিন্ন মামলা/মোকদ্দমা/চুক্তিপত্র/অংশীদারী চুক্তিপত্র/ডেভেলপারের সাথে সম্পাদিত চুক্তিপত্র/আমোক্তারনামা ড্রাফটিং এর কাজে আইনগত মতামত/সহযোগিতা প্রদানের জন্য ০১(এক) জন আইন উপদেষ্টা নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। আগ্রহী ও যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদেরকে তাঁদের জীবন বৃত্তান্ত ও প্রয়োজনীয় সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি, সদ্যতোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবিসহ আগামী ১১/০৪/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখের অফিস সময়ের মধ্যে সচিব, বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, স্বাধীনতা ভবন, ৮৮ মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-এর নিকট আবেদন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। উল্লেখ্য বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তানকে এই নিয়োগে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধার প্রমাণ স্বরূপ অবশ্যই মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের সনদপত্র ও গেজেট আবেদনের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা :

- ১। অবসরপ্রাপ্ত অতিরিক্ত সচিব/অবসরপ্রাপ্ত বিজ্ঞ জেলা জজ হিসেবে বর্ণিত কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

বিঃদ্রঃ- এই নিয়োগ প্রদান/বাতিলের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বময় ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করবে।

সাইদ মাহমুদ বেলাল হায়দার

সচিব

ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৫৫১৫

ই-মেইলঃ secy@bffwt.gov.bd

GD-640

GRAPE VINE



PHOTO: COLLECTED

APURBA-NUSRAAT FARIA TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A CINEMA

For the first time, actors Apurba and Nusraat Faria will work together in a cinema. The audiences are eagerly awaiting the release of the web film, *Jodi Kintu Tobu*, which will be released on the first of April. It will be released on the platform, ZEE5. This Shihab Shaheen-directed film will also feature the likes of Tariq Anam Khan, Imtu Ratish, and Naziba Basher, among others. Shihab Shaheen said, "The film is based around romance and comedy. The plot mainly revolves around how both the bride and groom get indecisive and get cold feet a few days before the wedding, and the funny incidents that can happen around that time."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



PHOTO: COLLECTED

NIRAB-MITHILA'S AMANUSH

Actor Nirab Hossain will be seen alongside Rafiath Rashid Mithila in the Anonno Mamun directed film, *Amanush*. It will also feature the likes of Rashed Mamun Apu and Naushaba, among others. Nirab said, "I loved the plot for the film, this will be the first time I do a role like this. I am acting opposite Mithila in this and I hope that we can make something amazing." Tabib Mahmud sang the title track for the film.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub



PHOTO: COLLECTED

ARJU IS HIMU

After making a name for himself with films like *Tumi Acho Hridoye*, Kayes Arju will be seen in the film titled, *Himur Boshonto*, to be directed by Mirza Sakhawat Hossain. Kayes Arju said, "This will be the first time I play a role of this magnitude and it will also mark the first time I work with this director. I am very hopeful about it, and I hope the audience will enjoy what we make. Arju Kayes has also appeared in the films, *Bajao Biyer Bajna*, *Mori Tor Jonno Paagol* and *Shei Tumi*, among others."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahbub

COVER STORY

A Collaborative Effort

Writer, playwright, director, and actor Leesa Gazi is the co-founder of the company 'Komola Collective' which aims to tell stories from women's perspectives that are often untold. Businessman and investor Abdullah Hil Rakib is the Managing Director of TEAM Group. Together, they join Rafi Hossain for a discussion where they talk about how their professions can support each other to grow and how, as a whole, this collaborative effort can help both the entertainment industry and the domestic economy prosper.

Rafi Hossain: Entertainment is a big part of any country or culture, so I think that investors and businessmen should invest more in the entertainment industry to help it grow. How should we go about that?

Abdullah Hil Rakib: We are trying to take Bangladesh from a low-income country to a middle-income country in many ways. Our goal is to enhance the welfare of our community which translates to increasing economic growth. Bangladesh is investing in many fields such as manufacturing, retail, pharmaceuticals, banking, food, and RMG, and the natural step to take is entertainment. Our mindset is influenced by our culture that makes it so that domestic entertainment does not garner enough attention and, as a result, the industry faces the same lack of attention. However, with the growth of the economy, increase in income per capita and improvement of lifestyles of the people, the attention towards entertainment will only rise. Regardless, the industry is still expanding. However, for investors to come into this industry, industry security, governance and ethics need to be aligned; otherwise, we will be unable to predict the future prospects of this industry. There are always risks attached to investing, so if we coordinate with the government to introduce policies to set parameters, it makes it possible to frame out future goals, and thus, make us want to invest.

Rafi Hossain: Why do you think there lies a gap between the artists and the financiers when creating and exhibiting projects?

Leesa Gazi: As someone living in London, I see that whenever we plan on working on something, the way the Indian community extends their help, be it through supporting, sponsoring, or financing, the Bangladeshi community does not even come close. When I began working on *Rising Silence*, I got many pats on the back, but never much actual help from our community. Even our executive producer is Abbas Nokhasteh, an Iranian. Our film was about the sexual violence against Bangladeshi women from Pakistani perpetrators during our War of Liberation. Still, we were unable to get much support for such an important topic that must be discussed on every platform. I have recently started working on a feature film and am yet to find a co-producer. Despite all of this, films are still being made, web series are on the rise and new directors are emerging. Pointing out what Rakib said, it is generally considered that entertainment comes after all those sectors, but COVID-19 has proven otherwise; in the grave time of a global pandemic, people turned towards art. People find solace in art as it is entwined with our existence and culture, so we should hold it as such. I encourage businessmen and investors to value art and invest in the entertainment industry because it deserves the investments, and also because it will open up the scope for numerous artists, albeit what form, to enhance their crafts and exhibit them.

Rafi Hossain: What do you think will encourage someone to invest in a project?

Abdullah Hil Rakib: This industry is a mine that has not been explored fully, so if we are able to show that our investments will be successful, many investors will come in. Personally, we do a lot of research and development in our business, fashion retailing, for example, that gives us insights into the lives of people and their stories. How we choose the materials or design of our products is quite similar to how a film is produced: keeping the consumers in mind. We have to know our target consumers, the gap analysis, social challenges, commercialisation, and expected profits. If there is at least a breakeven, we will want to invest. If we consider India, they have a huge market and many flourishing as well as prominent businesses. Their films acquire revenue both domestically and globally. There are also films that are financed by the government and they should be such that deal with social challenges like drug intake, women empowerment, equality, and racism, among others to facilitate awareness and fill the gaps. There are films that are not commercial successes but have important messages that need to be given out. Those films will generally not be financed by investors because there is not much profit to make. However, there are many investors who have social responsibilities and derive satisfaction from the welfare of the community. The same goes for investors in the entertainment industry. For it to be feasible, there needs to be transparent communication between them and the other parties involved.

Leesa Gazi: Firstly, there is a lack of communication between artists and financiers. Secondly, the consumers do not always know who these financiers are and how they are connected to the art form, so why would they even want to invest without any recognition? We need to bridge the gap between the communication of all the involved parties. If I am to make a film or a teledrama or a web series and there is an investor who wants to help me, the only way for us to collaborate is through proper communication. This can be done in a number of ways, for example by communicating our thoughts, plans, and how we envision our work.

Rafi Hossain: Rakib, if you ever want to invest in the entertainment industry, what kind of projects do



you think will attract you the most?

Abdullah Hil Rakib: There are two ways in which we might grow interested in a project: CSR (Corporate social responsibility) perspective and business perspective. Textile and RMG are two industries that are very profitable in Bangladesh, so investors are quite interested in investing in those industries. However, as time passes, they will want to diversify their investments. One such scope of diversification is entertainment. Some will make such investments due to one, a social responsibility they have undertaken, or two, commercial prospects. It depends on many more factors, like breakeven point, opportunities available, short term and long-term benefits, satisfaction, and sustainability. However, for all that to take place, there needs to be proper communication. There may be numerous artists waiting to

whomever we choose to work with will also have to have similar ideals. We look beyond financial abilities.

Rafi Hossain: Rakib, do you or people from your business fraternity ever see artists, be it filmmakers, musicians, writers, and such, and want to promote them for a certain period of time to help with their projects?

Abdullah Hil Rakib: BGMEA's main aim is to support businesses and the government in policy-making regarding such businesses. From that perspective, BGMEA cannot help in this regard unless it is related to our business. I am going to answer this question as an individual because my thoughts may not align with those of other members of BGMEA. We all want to establish branding. Aside from this, we also want to do something good for society. We have sponsored many initiatives about certain social challenges to attract customers so that they know that we recognise those issues and are standing with them. This both improves brand image and value, while also letting the customers know that we share the same sentiments. In the same light, films portray the stories of the people, so audiences connect to them. If that can go hand in hand with the investors' motives, it is absolutely possible for me to invest in films. Socially responsible investors will finance films dealing with social challenges and profiteering investors will invest in commercial films. Society's needs and industries' needs have to be aligned, possibly through government intervention through encouragement like tax benefits or subsidies.

Rafi Hossain: Can you elaborate on the new project of 'Komola Collective' based on Tahmima Anam's play?

Leesa Gazi: The new project is a play, titled *Shahrazad*, based on the eponymous character from the Arabian tales *One Thousand and One Nights*. Shahrazad is a woman who tells a story to a king every night but does not finish them by sunrise as she is to be killed when she finishes her stories. This play is based on this theme and is about the Shahrazads of now. We know that domestic violence peaked during COVID-19. In the UK, every day, two women are killed due to domestic violence and this only increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first play written by Tahmima Anam and we are very excited to take it to the stage. However, theatres are not fully accessible now; they are beginning to open slowly from May.

Rafi Hossain: Do you have a final message to the readers?

Abdullah Hil Rakib: The struggle we face for the betterment of the economy and society is facing challenges because our business is connected to the global market. We are all going through a difficult time. Both social and psychological challenges are increasing and people are feeling at a loss of what to do, leading to frustration. However, every challenge is an opportunity, so we must take these opportunities to grow and tell our story, be it through films or other forms. I am sure talented artists will be able to get many opportunities to make brilliant projects, and I hope that we also initiate small opportunities in the form of investments in the entertainment industry because we all want to be socially responsible.

Leesa Gazi: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to have this dynamic discussion today. If we are able to combine art with investment, it would lead to many amazing works to display. When art and art that is profitable combine, something great can emerge. I hope that investors will deem the entertainment industry a profitable and sustainable industry and invest in the works of many artists. We can see that many artists of the younger generations are emerging with talent and brilliant ideas, and we have the responsibility to support them.

Amina Hossain

PHOTO COURTESY: LEESA GAZI & ABDULLAH HIL RAKIB

Where did appeasing Hefajat get us?

The govt must wake up to the reality of the situation

EVEN though the Hefajat-e-Islam used the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their recent onslaught across the country, their main attack was on the government and the secular values that Bangladesh today stands for. And that becomes obvious once we look at what they targeted and destroyed—setting public offices on fire, attacking police stations, ransacking Mandirs and not even sparing the Ustad Alauddin Khan Music Academy. Alauddin Khan is considered one of the most high ranking classical musicians, who is not only respected in this region but also abroad by lovers of classical music. Why was his memorial destroyed? Why was the public land office attacked and land records destroyed? Why was a public train attacked?

If we look at all these factors, we see that Modi's visit was just the excuse—the chaos was intended for the occasion of Bangladesh's 50 years of independence. This is a wake-up call for the government, the Awami League and Sheikh Hasina, who has long been appeasing them by accepting all their demands, some of them quite outrageous. It was due to their pressure that a lot of changes were brought to our regular school education, including the exclusion of secular writers' stories from prescribed government textbooks. The government was forced to give due recognition to the degrees of the Qawmi madrasa system, which was particularly absurd when the government has no say over the curriculum of Qawmi madrasas and does not even have a complete list of how many Qawmi madrasas there are in the country.

With all these appeasements, they have now revealed their true colours, and if the government thinks this is just an anti-Modi movement and try and renegotiate with them again, it will be making a big mistake. While appeasing Hefajat, the government, in the meanwhile, suppressed all other dissenting voices, including that of the opposition BNP, civil society and the independent media. On the one hand extreme voices were given space, but on the other hand, secular dissenting voices were crushed. Now the government stands alone against this extremist force.

The handling of the situation over the last few days is also questionable. Was it really necessary to open fire on Hefajat activists? Were the necessary precautionary steps taken beforehand to prevent violence? And why was Chhatra League used as a counter force to the Hefajat? Why was that necessary when we already have the police and other law enforcement agencies?

What we witnessed over the past week is very alarming. The government must immediately rebuild bridges with secular voices in the country, including the dissenting ones, and thereby strengthen the force that needs to be brought together to curtail the rise of extremist organisations, including Hefajat.

Government's fresh directives on Covid-19

Compliance must be ensured

IN the face of exponentially higher daily coronavirus infection rates, the government on Monday issued a gazette notification containing 18 new directives aiming to combat this spike. One had hoped that the new directives from the government related to the Covid-19 pandemic would come sooner. The world is seeing another spike in the infection rates, and many countries, European ones in particular, are in complete lockdown. The dangerous aspect of the virus is that it has mutated into new strains that might be more infectious and more difficult to control. There are also concerns that vaccines developed so far may not provide as much protection against the newer strains.

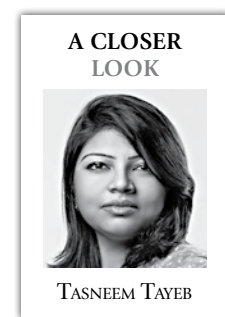
In Bangladesh, unfortunately, we have, across the board, let our guards down over the past couple of months. Beginning in January, there was an untoward relaxation of protective measures (both at individual and collective levels), due to the reduced number of Covid-19 cases, and given the business-as-usual attitude, it seemed as if Covid-19 was history. Of course, that was not so, and we are learning it again the hard way. Health facilities, for one, have been saturated, with the number of infections and hospitalisations rising sharply.

While we commend the new restrictions, a few of the guidelines do require clarification. However, it is just as well that the confusion regarding quarantine of passengers has been clarified. From now on, incoming passengers from Europe will have to quarantine for 14 days in government facilities or government-approved hotels at their own expenses, and returnees from other regions will have to quarantine at home if they do not show symptoms upon their arrival in Bangladesh.

The new directives also mandate purchase and sale of daily necessities in open spaces, maintaining hygiene rules. But one wonders what would be the case for kitchen markets that are in enclosed areas, given that there are quite a few of those in Dhaka city. And what measure should shopping malls (enclosed and centrally air conditioned) apply to keep the number of people inside them to the level that the environment remains "safe"? It is imperative that these and any further directives from the government are not vague in any way, in order to eliminate all kinds of confusion during this crisis.

We believe that the administration should not rest by issuing directives only. It must also ensure that the suggested measures are followed strictly. For example, in the past, we had seen public transportation vehicles charging double the normal fare to defray the loss due to the restrictions in the number of passengers a bus could carry, yet carry the full capacity of passengers. One of the best ways of fighting the pandemic is to prevent its spread. The suggested measures will help in doing so, provided they are followed religiously. That must be ensured, and if needed, enforced.

Modi spreads neighbourly love, but key challenges rumble on



A CLOSER LOOK

TASNEEM TAYER

development of the region and concerted efforts to meet common goals: "For our millions of people, for their future, for our fight against poverty, for the fight against terrorism."

PM Modi generously presented Bangladesh with 109 ambulances and 1.2 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presented PM Modi with a gold and a silver coin which were released marking the birth centenary of Bangladesh's Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with a silver coin released on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the country's independence. The Indian Prime Minister reiterated India's Neighbourhood First Policy and the two leaders also virtually opened some projects together. On the surface, the relationship between the two countries could not be better.

The two countries also signed five MoUs on March 27, 2021, to enhance bilateral cooperation in a host of areas, including: trade, ICT, disaster management and sports. To be specific, the MoUs are: MoU on disaster management, resilience and mitigation; MoU between Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and National Cadet Corps of India (INCC); MoU on the Establishment of a Framework of Cooperation in the Area of Trade Remedial Measures between Bangladesh and India; MoU on Supply of ICT equipment, courseware and reference books and training for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital Service and Employment and Training (BDSET) Center; and MoU on Establishment of Sports facilities at Rajshahi College field and surrounding areas.

"India and Bangladesh signed MoUs in key sectors such as disaster management, sports and youth affairs, trade, technology and more. These will add strength to our development partnership and benefit the people of our nations, especially the youth", tweeted Narendra Modi post the signing of the MoU between the two neighbours.

"Relationship going from strength to strength!" tweeted Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson for the Indian External Affairs ministry.

Indeed, India-Bangladesh relations have improved significantly over the years. Bangladesh today is one of India's largest trading partners in South Asia, connectivity between the two countries has improved significantly over the last few decades, and so have security, academic and cultural ties, healthcare support, and people-to-people relationships, among other parameters.

However, despite all the positives, there remain some unresolved, contentious issues that plague the India-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

Rampant killings of Bangladeshi civilians at the India-Bangladesh border by the Indian border security forces, uncertainty over the Teesta water sharing agreement, and anti-dumping duty on Bangladesh's exports to India are some of the many issues that need to be resolved to forge a lasting bond between the two nations in the long run. Unfortunately, none of these could get the spotlight during Modi's recent visit to Bangladesh.

Human Rights Watch quoting Odhikar reported earlier this year that Indian "border forces have killed at least 334 Bangladeshis since 2011 and committed other instances of severe abuse, including 51 killings in 2020."

Even as late as March 20, 2021, BSF killed a Bangladeshi national named Bappa Mia at a border village in Tripura. He was allegedly a cattle smuggler. And

Bangladeshis at the border. One can only hope that India would take Bangladesh's request seriously and act on stopping the unnecessary loss of human lives at the border.

With regard to the Teesta water sharing agreement, the Indian Foreign Minister during his recent visit to Bangladesh firmly asserted that India's position remains unchanged and that soon, secretary level meetings would take place to discuss the issue in detail. However, India could not say anything concrete about how long it might take for them to resolve this issue. While the Indian centre seems committed to sharing Teesta waters with Bangladesh, the state through which the river flows—West Bengal—has vehemently opposed this idea.

And with the centre and the state at odds over Teesta water sharing, unfortunately for Bangladesh, this issue is unlikely to be resolved any time soon. During PM Modi's visit, PM Hasina stressed the importance of signing the

Despite multiple requests from Bangladesh, the anti-dumping duty and countervailing duty levied by India have not been lifted. This is significantly hurting Bangladesh's trade and in the long run, will keep on being a burning issue for both countries.

The Indian and Bangladesh prime ministers discussed the issue of removing tariff and non-tariff barriers to balance and bolster trade ties, and Bangladesh again requested India to withdraw the anti-dumping duty. How India will respond to this remains to be seen.

India's muted response to the Rohingya crisis has also put a dent in India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh has sought India's support to resolve the Rohingya crisis on multiple occasions. India, in the past, had mostly confined its reaction to the Rohingya issue to more tactical statements of concern.

Only recently did we see a strong stance by India on the Rohingya issue, when India's Permanent Resident to the UN, Pawan Badhe said, "We remain committed to ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy repatriation of displaced persons from Rakhine state, currently staying in Bangladesh, to Myanmar, based on the understanding reached between the two countries. We will continue to support efforts in this direction."

During Modi's just concluded Bangladesh visit, the Indian foreign secretary suggested that India will work for the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, but India's response to the issue is perhaps too little too late. In the wake of the Myanmar military coup and the internal political instability ripping the country apart, engaging the Myanmar military leaders to find a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis will not be easy.

These outstanding issues will continue to be a challenge for India-Bangladesh relations in the long term. While the two countries have reached agreements on multiple bilateral issues over the years, resolving these will be key in forging a stronger relationship.

There is no denying that India-Bangladesh relations are deeply rooted in shared history, heritage and culture. The two countries have been friends even before Bangladesh actually became a reality. It was with the support of India that Bangladesh was finally able to quash the enemy during the Liberation War.

Indeed, PM Modi's visit to Bangladesh, as put by the Indian Foreign Secretary, has been "substantive, historically symbolical and very special." In Bangladesh, we really appreciate India's warm gestures.

And it is in the spirit of these deep-seated shared bonds that India and Bangladesh must now work together to minimise differences and take this friendship to newer heights of camaraderie. While both countries have said all the right words praising each other, only time will tell how much value both attach to these ties. Actions, after all, speak louder than words.

Tasneem Tayer is a columnist for *The Daily Star*. Her Twitter handle is: @TayerTasneem



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana hold high the Gandhi Peace Prize-2020 awarded to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman posthumously by the Indian government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen applauding next to them.

PHOTO: PTI

except for 2018, when 11 Bangladeshis were killed at the border, the killings by BSF have remained high.

Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's comment earlier in March on border killings—"Every death is regrettable but we also have to ask ourselves why is there a problem, and the problem is because of crime. So our shared objective should be a no-crime-no-death border and I am sure if we can get it right, we can address this problem effectively"—does not help the cause.

Intruder, smuggler, trafficker, criminal: whatever the crime is, the border guards cannot simply just kill individuals. There is the law that decides the punishment for criminals and if a person has committed a crime—whatever it may be—they should be referred to the courts of justice, in compliance with due processes.

Bangladesh has urged India to use non-lethal weapons at the border to bring down the casualties to zero. Even during Modi's visit, Bangladesh "strongly requested" India stop the killing of

Teesta water sharing agreement, in response to which her Indian counterpart reiterated his country's commitment to seal the deal.

With regard to the Indian request for early finalisation of the draft from Bangladesh on the Feni River water sharing issue, the Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said, "River water cooperation is something that will continue." If that is the case, then India must surely try and address the Teesta issue and also accommodate Bangladesh's request to allow drawing of water for irrigation from Kushiara River.

Similarly, there is no end in sight to the problem of the anti-dumping duties imposed on certain Bangladeshi exports to India. In January 2017, India levied anti-dumping duties on certain imports from Bangladesh, including hessian and jute yarns. In April that year, India imposed similar duties on imports of hydrogen peroxide from Bangladesh. In 2018, the country imposed another duty on imports of fishing nets from Bangladesh.

Celebrating 50 years of British-Bangladesh relations

There is huge scope for collaboration in tackling climate change in the next 50 years



POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

SALEEMUL HUQ

Elizabeth of England, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prince Charles. There were also many celebrations in the United Kingdom to mark the occasion, such as the lighting up of the iconic London Eye ferris wheel in the green and red colours of the Bangladesh flag.

As a proud Bangladeshi citizen who has spent many years in London, first as a student and later as a professor and scientist, I hold both the UK as well as Bangladesh close to my heart. As such, I will suggest some ways in taking forward the relationship between our two countries to the next level in the coming years.

I will do so in the context of the greatest global emergency of climate change, which will have to be faced by every country from now on. In this context, it is noteworthy that the UK will be hosting the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, Scotland in November this year, while Bangladesh will be the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) group of countries at COP26.

Hence, there are a number of issues on which the leaders of the two countries



PHOTO: COLLECTED

can bring forward ideas to tackle climate change at the level that it deserves to be dealt with. A British-Bangladesh climate change accord could be agreed upon between the two countries, which could set out ways forward for all the other countries to emulate and follow to make COP26 a success.

However, there are also many other opportunities for the two countries to continue to collaborate to tackle climate change in a mutually beneficial manner, rather than with the UK providing aid to Bangladesh, which was the main feature of our relationship in the past.

Over the last two months, I had the privilege of co-moderating a series of eight webinars on UK-Bangladesh collaboration to tackle climate change, where we had

presentations from experts from both Bangladesh as well as the UK talking about adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, renewable energy and finally, climate finance.

This excellent series of webinars identified a number of ways in which the two countries could collaborate to tackle the common global emergency of climate change. The following are only a few of the ideas that came up in those discussions.

The first session on adaptation and resilience highlighted the fact that Bangladesh has become globally recognised as a world leader in adaptation to climate change, and there were tremendous opportunities for a two-way learning exercise between the two countries in research, learning and capacity

building on adaptation to climate change. This could be built on the longstanding relationship between universities in the two countries.

The second major area of collaboration identified was for promotion of nature-based solutions for future infrastructure in both countries, with plenty of opportunities for learning from each other, particularly on wetlands management.

The third area of opportunity identified was mainly for the private sector companies in both countries to invest in renewable energy, which would include both solar and wind energy. In particular, the potential of using the latest technology for large-scale offshore wind energy generation in the Bay of Bengal, which is currently being deployed in the North Sea, would be a potential game-changer for Bangladesh's future energy pathway.

Finally, the strong social and family ties between the British citizens of Bangladeshi descent and their relations in Bangladesh is another excellent foundation upon which future relationship between citizens of the two countries can be taken to the next level in years to come.

In my many years of living in London, I had the opportunity to meet many young British citizens of Bangladeshi origin who were particularly interested in the topic of climate change and how it might affect both the UK as well as Bangladesh. That is why I strongly believe that using the framework of tackling climate change can become the basis of the relationship between the two countries for the next 50 years.

Dr Saleemul Huq is Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development at the Independent University, Bangladesh.

NRB expertise and skills must be tapped aggressively

There is a need for an online network

AN OPEN DIALOGUE



ABDULLAH SHIBLI

NON-RESIDENT Bangladeshis (NRB) have played an important role in the economic growth of the motherland. Whether it is the remittances we are talking about or the "diaspora network" that facilitates technology transfer, NRBs have increasingly energised our economy as well. Nonetheless, compared with what other countries such as China, India and the Philippines have reaped in terms of the globalisation dividend, Bangladesh still has a long way to go. The NRBs on the one hand, and the public and private sector on the other, have a lot of work to do if we want to pull our country out of the "transition to middle-income" status and propel it into a robust and autonomous growth path.

Let me first take up an issue that I mentioned above, i.e., the contribution of the NRBs to our foreign exchange coffers. Defying all expectations, Bangladeshis working abroad have increased the volume of money they send home during the Covid-19 crisis. Even as late as June 2020, in the thick of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Economic Forum forewarned of a looming remittance crisis; but Bangladeshis working abroad bucked the trend. While the amount of money migrant workers send home globally is projected to decrease by 14 percent by 2021, according to the World Bank, Bangladesh reportedly witnessed a "whopping" 53.5 percent year on year increase in remittance flows during the July-September period in 2020. Buoyed by these news, the government has outlined a plan to raise USD 150 billion through remittances in the next five years.

Who are these Bangladeshis? According to the information of Bangladesh's Wage Earners' Welfare Board, around 1.2 crore Bangladeshis workers reside abroad, and they are spread out all over the globe. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) categorises a Non-resident Bangladeshis (NRB) as a Bangladesh citizen living abroad with valid status. This could either be as a foreign country's permanent resident or with a valid work permit. However, this definition still leaves out those who are living abroad without a "valid status" and make

contributions to our economic well-being. While Saudi Arabia and UAE were the first and second "countries of origin" in terms of remittances for Bangladesh, over the last seven months, the US has taken the second spot, overtaking the UAE. And needless to mention that many of the Bangladeshis living in the US do not have any legal status. The flow of remittances has helped us to reduce poverty, overcome food insecurity, support balance of payments, and boost our economic growth.

The question is, how else do the NRBs contribute to the development of Bangladesh besides providing remittance? We can identify three additional areas: investment, networking, and knowledge transfer. Migrants engage in direct and portfolio investments, or through the establishment of new ventures in their homelands. Much has been written in professional journals and the media about the impact of the "diaspora" on their home countries. Many countries, both developed and developing, have successfully tapped into their respective diaspora to enhance the growth and development in their respective home economies.

Looking into the future, we can see the wisdom of the statement made by Yevgeny Kuznetsov more than a decade ago. "Expatriates do not need to be investors or make financial contributions to have an impact on their home countries. They can serve as "bridges" by providing access to markets, sources of investment, and expertise. Influential members of diasporas can shape public debate, articulate reform plans, and help implement reforms and new projects. Policy expertise and managerial and marketing knowledge are the most significant resources of diaspora networks."

Increasingly, even the entry-level jobs they take in factory production or the healthcare sector in host countries demand and teach problem-solving skills that blur the line between management and labour. Whether these new skills can be redeployed back home is an open question, but the changing nature of migrants' work suggests the possibility that these "birds of passage", traditionally in transit between a native land that cannot support them and a rich country that remains alien, may one day form distinctive, medium-skill diaspora networks that complement the diasporas of managers and entrepreneurs.

Bangladeshi diaspora comes in different

shapes and sizes, and a government agency dedicated to NRB affairs would be well-advised to consider these angles in proposing future policy actions. A "one size fits all" policy or programme will not be able to take full advantage of the remittance pool or talent, and a sizeable magnitude will remain untapped. For example, during my recent discussion, Rezaul Haque, a senior manager at Intel Corporation mentioned that many of his fellow NRBs, as well as tech giants,

Migration Policy Institute recommend that "governments can certainly do more to remove obstacles and create opportunities for diasporas to engage in economic development. Specific actions include identifying goals, mapping diaspora location and skills, fostering a relationship of trust with the diaspora, maintaining sophisticated means of communication with the diaspora, and ultimately encouraging diaspora contributions to national development."

different countries. Migrants are also more likely to know the regulatory environment in both countries, which are crucial for establishing bilateral business transactions. With the help of the Chinese diaspora, China has won the race to become the world's factory. In a similar vein, with the help of the Indian diaspora, India could become the world's technology lab. Capital from diaspora investment and entrepreneurship has also played an important role in industrialised countries, such as Israel, Ireland, and Italy, furthering economic growth and innovation.

What is also missing, however, is a way to inform the NRBs and a way for them to stay connected to the research, educational, and governmental systems in Bangladesh. Given the reservations that the expatriate communities have about the existing economic system (since its very inefficiencies were prime reasons for emigrating), the formulation of any network method to enable the transfer of knowledge should be a first step.

One idea that has been implemented in other countries is the creation of a professional network on the internet. The creation of an electronic database along the lines of LinkedIn for Bangladeshis can be a platform for NRBs from various backgrounds, such as STEM experts, SME owners, and skilled professionals. The goal of the network would be to provide a registry of highly skilled Bangladeshis who live and work abroad; a global map and network of NRB scientists, professionals, and entrepreneurs; and updated information on opportunities in Bangladesh.

The most important factor that we need to keep in mind is that NRBs have a lack of information about how they can help Bangladesh and how to connect with other Bangladeshis with similar professional interests. Whether or not an expatriate intends to physically return soon, there is an immediate need for a virtual return of knowledge and experience as well as interconnectivity with Bangladesh. The defining characteristic of networks of expatriate professionals, also known as "diaspora networks", is that they pertain to talent—be it technical, managerial, or creative.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and has been working in higher education and information technology for 35 years in the USA and Bangladesh. He is also Senior Research Fellow, International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-tank in Boston, USA.



A mural celebrating the Bangladeshi community in Detroit, painted by artist Victor "Marka27" Quinonez as part of the OneHamtramck mural project titled "Bangladesh: Coming to America."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

are keenly interested in partnership with government entities.

Secondly, an NRB's decision to save and remit is to a considerable degree driven by a rational process where he/she weighs the choices he/she faces with his/her earnings, and the opportunities for investment in both the host country and Bangladesh. While NRBs receive some savings/investment benefits offered by Bangladesh Bank, including Non-Resident Foreign Currency Deposit, Wage Earners' Development Bond, Non-Resident Investor's Taka Account, etc, there is a need for these to be streamlined.

Kathleen Newland and Sonia Plaza of

Migrants and diasporas are, to some extent, "unexploited capital".

Our government and the various ministries and departments, including the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) need to review their programmes to draw in the expertise of NRBs.

I will not dwell on the strengths that migrant entrepreneurs and technologists bring to the table. Migrants can reduce the transaction costs by assisting businesses in navigating informal trade barriers and overcoming the communication and language barriers typical of two natives from two

BOOK REVIEW

Rivers and sustainable development

A compelling argument on protecting rivers for environmental and social justice



DARRYL KNUDSEN

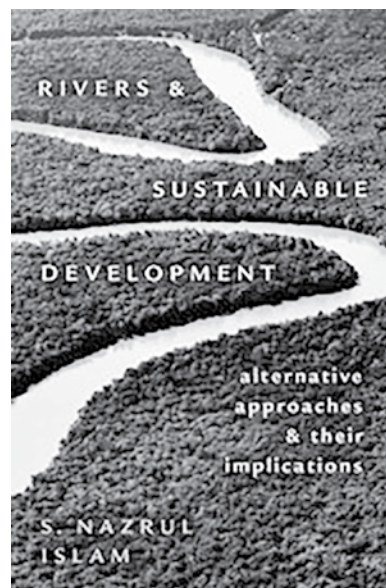
As the executive director of International Rivers, I highly recommend *Rivers and Sustainable Development*:

Alternative Approaches and their Implications by Professor S Nazrul Islam (2020). Whether you are just getting started on your journey to becoming a river activist or you are already an expert in water policy and sustainable development, this book will widen your knowledge and better equip you in the fight of our lifetime.

disrupt a river's flow—something he dubs the "Commercial and Cordon policy approach" prioritises commercial gains while ignoring the long-term negative ecological, and ultimately human, consequences of doing so.

Islam's purpose is to support countries to make informed policy decisions about river management, many of which can be counterintuitive. I particularly appreciate his acknowledgment of the important role civil society organisations and grassroots movements must play in setting the policy agenda if it is to be fair, equitable, and successful.

This book is eminently readable, keeping the research accessible to increase participation in river policy worldwide. Islam



This work is a welcome addition to the ever-growing evidence base that can be used to fight against the inequitable impacts of rapid ecological degradation, human rights abuses, and climate injustice at large.

Rivers and Sustainable Development (2020) goes hand in hand with our work at International Rivers. Most recently, this work echoes our latest report and online global call *Rivers for Recovery*. Like the book, we make the case that protecting rivers for environmental and social justice is the necessary path in a Covid-19 recovery. At International Rivers, we work to uplift river communities, specifically Indigenous peoples, to support their own ecologically minded river governance. Thus, as the book makes clear, understanding the synergies between human rights, social justice and environmental sustainability is both essential and critically important.

Darryl Knudsen is Executive Director at International Rivers, an international organisation focusing on protecting rivers and human rights.

Professor Islam's book provides a timely and compelling case that the best way to manage rivers in line with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is to allow rivers to flow naturally without the restraints of artificial barriers such as levees, or embankments, something he calls the "Ecological and Open policy approach."

Professor Islam's book provides a timely and compelling case that the best way to manage rivers in line with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is to allow rivers to flow naturally without the restraints of artificial barriers such as levees, or embankments, something he calls the "Ecological and Open policy approach." He argues that the widespread practice of using industrial and artificial developments to divert, block, or

impressively weaves a varying range of case studies to illustrate the implications of both the Ecological and Commercial river policy approaches. Together, these case studies demonstrate how ecologically centred policy agendas promote true economic, social, and environmental sustainability and are thus instrumental in achieving the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
 Institutional Development and Capacity Building (Phase-2) Project
 River Research Institute, 72 Green Road, Dhaka
 Phone: +880-2-58155538 Fax: 0631-63065 Web Site: www.rrri.gov.bd

Memo No.- RRI/Pra. Unnoyon/1312/2018/1405 Date: 28/03/2021

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

This is to notify all concern that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl.No.	Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date	Opening Date
1	548715	08/04/2021	11/04/2021
2	561077	08/04/2021	11/04/2021

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 portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Dr. Moniruzzaman Khan Eusufzai)
 Senior Scientific Officer & Project Director
 mkeusufzai@rrri.gov.bd

GD-639

বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট
 স্বাধীনতা ভবন
 ৮৮ মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০
 www.bffwt.gov.bd, Fax-02-9562258

প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্টের বিভিন্ন মামলা/মোকদ্দমা পরিচালনার জন্য প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আগ্রহী ও যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদেরকে তাদের জীবন বৃত্তান্ত ও প্রয়োজনীয় সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি, সদ্যতোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবিসহ আগামী ১১/০৪/২০২১ খ্রিঃ তারিখের অফিস সময়ের মধ্যে সচিব, বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, স্বাধীনতা ভবন, ৮৮ মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-এর নিকট আবেদন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। উল্লেখ্য বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তানকে এই নিয়োগে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধার প্রমাণ স্বরূপ অবশ্যই মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের সনদপত্র ও গেজেট আবেদনের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।

যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা :

- ১। আগ্রহী প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই বাংলাদেশ বার কাউন্সিলের সনদসহ সদস্য পদ থাকতে হবে।
- ২। দেওয়ানি ও ফৌজদারি/শ্রম বিষয়ক মামলা পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে কম পক্ষে ১০(দশ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
- ৩। জমিজমা সংক্রান্ত বিষয়/চুক্তিপত্র/অংশিদারী চুক্তিপত্র/ডেভেলাপারের সাথে সম্পাদিত চুক্তিপত্র/আমোক্তারনামার ড্রাফটিং-এ পারদর্শী হতে হবে।

বিঃদ্রঃ- এই নিয়োগ প্রদান/বাতিলের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বময় ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করবে।

(স্বাক্ষর) ২৯/০৩/২০২১
 সাদ্দিন মাহমুদ খেলাল হায়দার
 সচিব
 ফোনঃ ৯৫৫৫৫১৫
 ই-মেইলঃ secy@bffwt.gov.bd

GD-641

ORGANISED BY: **The Daily Star**

SUPPORTED BY:



BANGLADESH'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Daily Star and Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS), with the support of UN Women, jointly organised an online discussion titled "Bangladesh's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security" on March 18, 2021. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



ROKEYA KABIR,
Executive Director,
BNPS

We are celebrating the 50th year of our independence, and those who had been active at that time in the movement and war of liberation are aware of the necessity of peace, especially for women. Post-war conflicts are common. So, one of the primary concerns of the government after liberation war was to maintain peace so that we could start working towards the development of the country. In this backdrop, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had called for the surrender of arms after December 16, 1971. Freedom fighters who participated in the war surrendered their arms.

During that time, I was a student of Dhaka University along with being a member of the organisation named Student Union. We carried out our post-war efforts in an organised way to tackle violence and conflicts. This organised efforts of many sections of the society and government was what led to the maintenance of peace.



TANIA SHARMIN,
Programme Analyst,
WPS, UN Women

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is important for UN Women and the UN as a whole. In October 2000, the UN Security Council (UNSC) took the historic step of responding to women's demands by recognising and enshrining the essential role of women in securing and maintaining peace. The Security Council Resolution 1325 led to a shift in the architecture of peace processes and reconstruction to include women and gender analysis. Bangladesh was a pioneer in the adoption of this landmark resolution on WPS.

The WPS agenda does not merely relate to conflict or post-conflict situations. It is about ensuring secure and peaceful societies at all times. Bangladesh has demonstrated that it is committed to the WPS agenda by adopting and launching its National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS in November 2019.

Crafting the NAP WPS was a highly consultative process. UN Women provided technical support to the development process of this NAP. BNPS was a valued partner at the time, bringing the voices of women from the grassroots level all the way up to the national level.

The WPS agenda is highly important in the current context of the global COVID-19 pandemic which has affected our lives in unprecedented ways. Women have been disproportionately affected and harmed, whether as frontline workers, health workers, field workers, or at home with the increased care burdens and greater vulnerability in terms of their health, safety, and security. Online bullying, misogyny, and hate speech against women are on the rise as we continue to shift work to the online sphere. The pandemic is affecting women's ability to support and build resilient, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

Actions for peace and security must extend to many fronts. UN Women supports the Secretary General's five goals to realise inclusive and sustainable peace through the WPS agenda in the coming decade. Some vital actions include - women's full inclusion in all peace efforts; last minute, ad hoc, and merely symbolic participation of women is not acceptable. In cases of pushback to women's full participation and inclusion, it must be met with unconditional defence of women's rights. We need to launch a data revolution that fills the knowledge gap and leads to rapid action. With enough support, the WPS agenda will become one of the key issues that we work on together in Bangladesh on the path to ensuring gender equality and a peaceful, inclusive, and tolerant society.



TOUFIQ AL MANNAN,
Human Rights &
Gender Specialist

Derived from the four pillars of the WPS agenda, the NAP has been primarily divided into three main areas.

The first area is prevention. This area addresses the prevention of various forms of violence and conflict. It outlines what must be prevented and how it must be done, particularly in the case of sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, it recommends strengthening social cohesion and religious harmony and efforts to ensure acts of violence are not normalised. Those involved in governmental

institutions should ensure that there are sensitive laws and initiatives to promote peace and harmony for all genders. A platform should be created to enable regular discussions among representatives of civil society, women leaders, and women organisations.

Participation is the second area. This area is built on playing a role in raising awareness regarding the necessity of women's participation, having laws and policies needed to increase their participation, and increasing women's capacity to participate at the community and national levels. A national awareness campaign is required to assess the obstacles to women's participation in decision-making. A large number of women work as labourers now but there is a huge lack of female supervisors. Research must be conducted to assess the reasons behind this. Informing women's committees in the parliament, especially about the WPS agenda, are important. At the regional level, arrangements should be made to make representatives of the government, NGOs, and community-based organisations (CBOs) aware of these issues.

The third area is protection, relief and recovery. It is concerned with how security and support will be provided and how women can be rehabilitated and can return to their normal lives. The objectives of this area are as follows: when a critical situation arises, whether natural or man-made, it is addressed appropriately. Secondly, it is expected that the peacekeeping missions will have increased skill and capacity, with a rise in women's participation and decision-making abilities. Additionally, first responders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to ensure women's safety, security, and well-being.



MEGHNA GUHATHAKURTA,
Executive Director,
Research Initiatives
Bangladesh (RIB)

Certain differences exist between the NAP of developed and developing countries. Some developing countries are in a post-conflict situation or are currently in conflict. Bangladesh differs in this aspect and therefore had to diverge from the NAP of both these groups of countries.

We had decided to take on prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery as the pillars of our NAP. But post-pandemic, we need to consider if recovery should be dealt with separately.

Other issues are the humanitarian crises and climate change, areas in which we have a lot of experience considering natural disasters and the influx of refugees and displaced persons here. During recent work involving both the local and Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar, it was observed that the most prevalent form of violence was domestic violence. In local communities, there was an absence of a support base and a culture of silence regarding domestic violence against women. As for the Rohingya community, there has been an escalation of violence. The NAP and WPS agenda have a special responsibility in those regions in these times.



SHIMA MOSLEM,
Joint General
Secretary, Bangladesh
Mahila Parishad

We know that in any crisis, it is women who face all forms of torture but it is also women who simultaneously maintain and protect the household. Moreover, in our patriarchal society, women are at the centre of men's whims, whether as sources of their entertainment or as victims of their violence. As a result, with men being inside homes during the lockdown, the severity and incidence of oppression of women rose significantly. Furthermore, we have lost many of the gains we had made before the pandemic. There is currently an increase in children's dropout rates, a rise in child marriage cases, and working women have had to contribute more to household work.

The biggest problem in Bangladesh is that despite the adoption of several policies, there is a subsequent lack of implementation and an absence of sufficient monitoring systems. As a result, women are not being empowered.

The coordination group formed through our NAP should take the form of a full committee and regularly monitor the activities outlined in the action plan. In today's time, one cannot plan or implement without documents, research, and data. Therefore, research should be given particular importance.

Our increased dependence on technology owing to the pandemic will be long-lasting. However, it has led to a rise in cybercrimes. Cybercrimes have to be especially considered and dealt with in our NAP. Hence, monitoring of such online activities should be seen as a significant issue in our action plan.

Our conflicts aren't related to war, but rather

to communal tensions and climate disasters, the latter of which, as with other issues again, places an extra burden on women. In addition, it must be said that all women do not face the same kinds of conflicts and it varies across class and ethnicity. We must be cognizant of the differences in their situations and adapt the plan accordingly.



DR SAYEMA HAQUE BIDISHA,
Professor, Department
of Economics, Faculty
of Social Sciences,
University of Dhaka

The part where we keep getting impeded is implementation. What often occurs is that sufficient funding is not received. If sufficient monetary resources are allocated to the cause, it is often not used properly. At the same time, monitoring and evaluation infrastructure are lacking. Lastly, psychological and societal obstacles remain. When we think of the implementation of the action plan, we must keep all these factors in mind.

We must focus on the goals which have been stated so clearly in the NAP such as the goals tied to attaining equality, prevention of violence against women, and the establishment of peace. These goals align well with our plan of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 5 and 16. We can tag these plans together.

Oftentimes, because something was in the gender budget, we have been prone to getting sidetracked in tackling these issues. What we need instead are clear and definite plans and programmes to attain the goals we set. At the end of the year, monitoring and evaluation should reveal which plans had what outcomes, which ministries were more or less successful in achieving their goals, and based on the results we must plan and allocate funding accordingly. Therefore, since this is a long-term plan,

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allocate an adequate budget for implementation of the NAP WPS
- Ensure meaningful inclusion of women in the peace building efforts
- Strengthen social cohesion and religious harmony
- Formulate gender sensitive policies and initiatives to promote peace and harmony for all
- Create a platform to enable regular consultation between representatives of civil society, women leaders, and the government for implementing NAP WPS
- Launch a national awareness campaign to identify the obstacles in the way of women's participation in decision-making
- Ensure proper implementation of the NAP WPS with a roadmap of proper monitoring and accountability
- Pay special attention to cybercrime and hate speech issues in the NAP WPS
- Increase availability of gender disaggregated data in gender related issues
- Make education policy gender sensitive and remove gender insensitive content from textbooks and media

monitoring and evaluation should be integrated with financing.

The importance of data on gender issues is undeniable. Alongside this, the several vulnerable communities who have suffered severe harm should be given monetary support while those who have been spared to some extent economically should be employed in meaningful jobs.



FARIDA YEASMIN,
Deputy Police
Commissioner, DMP

Our nation has made progress and we remain ahead of neighbouring countries in our achievement of various goals and agendas. Still, if we look at the different statistics in the police department, we can see that gender-related issues such as the violence experienced by women are seeing an upsurge at a concerning rate. In all the cases of violence, the truth is, we are fighting for women's existence. Are women not human beings?

The humiliation suffered by women is at the hands of men who are someone's father and brother. We have to look at it from that perspective.

Instead of the pandemic being seen as an opportunity for families to spend more time together, it has taken on a ghastly form with an increase in women's oppression. Women are left with no place to go to.

From the perspective of Bangladesh, we have seen that in natural or man-made disasters, nutrition, hygiene, reproductive health, and shelter for women are negatively affected. An unnatural amount of expectations are placed on women, and attempts to meet them have led to immense stress, anxiety, and trauma, along with the denial of their very humanity.

Of the different organisations which have collectively made the action plan based on WPS, I am from the Ministry of Home Affairs. We are engaged in various activities, of which,

"999" is a service most people in Bangladesh are aware of. Whenever a woman or a child faces a dangerous situation, we try to respond immediately to rescue them. We also have rehabilitation and support centres throughout Bangladesh. Alongside this, we have the Women, Support, and Investigation Division. Currently, we have established support systems for women, children, the elderly, and people with physical and mental challenges in over 500 police stations.



DR NAZNEEN AHMED,
Senior Research
Fellow, Bangladesh
Institute of
Development Studies
(BIDS)

We do not require a separate framework since we have limited resources, and our bureaucracy has limitations. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of this strategy can very well go with the M&E of our gender budget.

One challenge in meeting the goal of women's empowerment is women's financial capability. But there's a different dimension surrounding the financial capabilities of women. One issue is whether we can provide proper safety to women who are going out to work. Secondly, a new wave of violence has begun due to women, especially educated women, becoming financially independent. Working women are bombarded with accusatory questions from family members about their work, resulting in them quitting their stable jobs and opting for online businesses. Even though these situations fall under violence against women, how many women take legal action? What's stopping women from lodging complaints is, again, our society.

We need to grow a gender-sensitive mindset in people through content in textbooks. To achieve psychological change, we require

Implementation is surely an important aspect of the NAP. But, along with that, accountability is just as important. In terms of the budget, it needs to be very precise in regards to which aspect of the NAP it is contributing to. We also need specific ideas about the roles of each person involved in the implementation of the plan.

The issue of coordination should also be taken into account since so many different ministries and organisations will be involved in the NAP.

The referral mechanism needs to be strengthened. Women usually do not have a clear idea as to which organisations they should refer to for their specific issues. We also need to raise awareness about the consequences of the fear of violence imposed on women. In a lot of cases, women step back from even taking an initiative just due to fear. This fear needs to be included in our discussions as well.

We need more young women to stand as role models and promote women's leadership in the media. We need to nurture young women from an early age so that they can grow up to contribute to important decision-making roles. More attention needs to be paid to the voices of young women to ensure that their ideas and needs are not lost in the chaos. An intersectional perspective must be adopted whereby girls and young women are included.



FALGUNI TRIPURA,
Development Worker,
Kapaeng Foundation

Even before COVID-19 struck our country, the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) saw a rise in the prevalence and incidence of measles. My question is, even in this age, why are the marginalised communities still deprived of basic medical facilities such as vaccination for measles? It has been reported that people living in the CHT do not want to take the vaccines due to certain superstitions. But, what initiatives has the government taken to clear these misconceptions?

A lot of ministries are going to be involved in the implementation of the NAP and I want to know how much participation indigenous women would have in the decision-making process of this action plan. Would their recommendations be taken into account with equal importance?



TASNIM ODRIKA,
Journalist, The Daily
Star

The media has an immense role in furthering the WPS agenda by ensuring that women are always portrayed in the correct manner. This will help in changing the general population's perspectives about women. Although gender-sensitive changes in the textbooks are important, the media usually has a far greater impact on children. Therefore, changes in the portrayal of women in the media will have a far more consequential impact.

ROKEYA KABIR,
Executive Director,
BNPS

We all know that for the development of a country, a peaceful environment is required. We recognise that this peaceful society is what we aspire for. We must also recognise the importance of women's role in building a peaceful society.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected women the most. It is globally recognised that despite this increased suffering, women have provided unmatched leadership in overcoming the situation by managing the household, children's education, and work all at the same time. Furthermore, nations with women as head of the state managed the COVID-19 crisis most effectively. In any natural disaster or conflict situation, women's leadership proved their capacity to manage the situation. But it is always observed that most of the time women are not included in decision making process. We also see a sharp increase of investment on war but we do not invest enough when it comes to dealing with the issues of gender inequality.

In our 50th year of independence we have made some significant achievements. Now we need to consolidate our achievements while moving forward and dismantle the disabling environment that hold us back. A citizen living with equality and dignity is a constitutional right in Bangladesh and we need to make this constitutional right a reality. This is the way we can pay our proper respects to the three million martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for our independence.



KASHFIA FERAZ,
Director, Girls'
Right Project,
Plan International
Bangladesh



The match officials had to stop play for five minutes soon after Bangladesh began their chase as there was no clarity on the target till that point. New Zealand had been forced off the field by rain after batting 17.5 overs, during which they had scored 173 for 5. It seemed that Bangladesh batted the first nine balls of their innings with the knowledge that their target in 16 overs was 148. Except, they were chasing 170. Which, later, correctly, was changed to 171. "I think there was a bit of confusion because we didn't know what the DLS score was, it kept changing on the scoreboard. It can happen in the game. First five overs we were on track but we didn't finish well enough. Naim and Soumya batted really well. We didn't capitalise on the balls we missed," said Bangladesh T20 skipper Mahmudullah Riyad. "I've experienced a few things in cricket and this is not one of them," New Zealand veteran Ross Taylor said on commentary.

'It all seemed to be stacked against us'

SPORTS REPORTER



The dramatic rain-interrupted second T20I in Napier between New Zealand and Bangladesh had everything. There was a bit of drama due to confusion about the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method and a blunder from officials kept Bangladesh in the dark for a while about their revised chase of 171 runs off 16 overs.

One thing that was constant was a lack of consistency from the visitors so far, be it with bat, ball or in the field. The result was also all too familiar, Bangladesh losing the game by 28 runs and handing the hosts an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

The result means the Black Caps have won all seven of their home series this season, an unbroken run of success on New Zealand soil that extends to nine if results against India last year are included. It includes wins over the West Indies, Pakistan and India in Tests, Bangladesh and India in one-dayers and the West Indies, Pakistan, Australia and Bangladesh in T20s. "It's been a great summer to be part of so it'd be good to finish it on the right note," said stand-in captain Tim Southee,



Soumya Sarkar 51

Rain led to a stoppage with New Zealand on 173 for 5 after 17.5 overs, which was eventually concluded at that point.

But for nine deliveries, Bangladesh were in the dark about their target. The big screen showed a target of 148 in 16 overs, which was also mentioned by the Black Caps' Twitter page.

It was later corrected to 171 in 16 overs.

Visiting head coach Russell Domingo expressed frustration over the mistake but the South African also mentioned that he did not want to use it as an excuse. "I don't think I have been involved in a

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND

173 for 5 in 17.5 overs (Guptill 21, Allen 17, Conway 15, Young 14, Phillips 58 not out, Chapman 7, Mitchell 34 not out, extras 7; Saifuddin 1-35 Taskin 1-49, Shoriful 1-16, Mahedi 2-45)

BANGLADESH

142 for 7 in 16 overs (Naim 38, Liton 6, Soumya 51, Mahmudullah 21, Aff 2, Mithun 1, Mahedi 12 not out, Saifuddin 3, extras 8; Southee 2-21, Bennett 2-31, Milne 2-34, Phillips 1-20)

Result: New Zealand won by 28 runs (D/L method) and lead the three-match series 2-0. Player-of-the-match: Glenn Phillips.

yet. They were waiting for the printouts and calculations to take place. There were delays and all sorts of stuff. No excuses, but this is just very frustrating for us."

In their chase, Bangladesh were dominating the hosts at one point riding on Soumya Sarkar's blistering batting and had reached 94 for two before the left-hander was dismissed for a quickfire 51 off 27 balls.

Opener Naim Sheikh also started well and added 38 and skipper Mahmudullah added 21 but the batsmen, like the bowlers, could not finish well and eventually ended up scoring 142 for 7.

Questions raised by poor fielding will continue after Bangladeshi fielders once again dropped easy catches and fumbled the ball in the field, but Domingo believed the wet outfield played a role.

"I don't think a team field for that long in that much rain. It was slippery, the ball was wet. No excuses but it all seemed to be stacked against us this evening in terms of conditions. I have never seen a game starting in the rain when we came out for four or five overs. I don't think the rules have changed but I was under the impression the covers don't come off until rain stops. The first ball can't be bowled until the rain stops. Maybe the rules have changed. I am not too sure."

Domingo was still on a search for positives and said that the players would need to press the issue of consistency in the third and final T20I, which will be Bangladesh's 32nd attempt to win a match against the hosts in their backyard.

Records tumble as Rajshahi demolish Barishal



Rajshahi players take a selfie following their victory against Barishal on the second day of the second round Bangabandhu National Cricket League (BNCL) at the BKSP-3 ground in Savar yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi entangled Barishal to register a first win in the Bangladesh National Cricket League (BNCL), ending the Tier-2 game before lunch on the second day amid a flurry of records at the BKSP-3 ground in Savar yesterday.

Left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam ended with figures of 10 for 33, the most economic 10-or-more wicket haul in Bangladesh's first-class history as Rajshahi sealed an innings-and-nine-run win over Barishal in the second round.

After being bowled out for 82 in the first innings, Barishal folded meekly again for just 60. Their aggregate 142 runs is the lowest in a first-class match.

They had a chance after bundling Rajshahi out for 151 in their first innings, but were unable to utilise the opportunity.

Left-arm spinner and man of the match Taijul Islam bagged eight wickets in the game.

In the other Tier-2 game at the main ground of the Sheikh Kamal

SCORES IN BRIEF

TIER 1

Khulna v Rangpur
Khulna: First innings 221 all-out and Second innings 4 for 1 in 1.3 overs (Imrul 4 not out; Mukidul 4-1)
Rangpur: First innings 364 all-out in 97.1 overs (Ariful 97, Nasir 66; Masum 4-78, Robiul 2-41)
Sylhet v Dhaka Division
Sylhet: First innings 370 all-out in 114.4 overs (Zakir 159, Jaker 67, Asadulla 67; Shuvagata 4-86)
Dhaka: First innings 239 for 6 in 63 overs (Shuvagata 89 not out, Saif 42; Rahatul 3-65, Tanzim 2-42)

TIER 2

Barishal v Rajshahi
Barishal: First innings 82 all-out and Second innings 60 all-out in 34 overs (Mominul 28; Sunzamul 6-15, Taijul 4-23)
Rajshahi: First innings 151 all-out in 48.5 overs (Junaid 43, Taijul 37; Gazi 6-65)
Result: Rajshahi won by an innings and nine runs
Chattogram v Dhaka Metropolis
Chattogram: First innings 402 for 8 declared (Pinak 159, Shahadat 53; Sunny 3-120, Shohidul 2-78)
Dhaka Metropolis: First innings 132 for 3 in 48 overs (Shamsur 68, Zabid 46 not out; Nayeem 1-42)

International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar, Chattogram declared on 402 for 8 in their first innings. In reply, Dhaka Metropolis ended the second day on 132 for 3 in their first innings.

After reaching his century the day prior, Chattogram's Pinak registered

his first-class best score of 159.

Dhaka lost opener Azmir Ahmed on ten but Shamsur Rahman and Zabid Hossain added 118 for the second wicket before Shamsur departed for 68.

However, Zabid was unbeaten on 46 as Dhaka Metropolis ended the day on 132 for 3, trailing by 270.

In a Tier-1 clash at the Rangpur Cricket Garden, the hosts took a first-innings lead of 143 over Khulna after being bowled out for 364.

Rangpur skipper Ariful Haque missed out on a hundred by just three runs, walking back for a 164-ball 97 that featured eleven fours.

Nasir Hossain also continued maintained form and scored 66 while pacer Masum Khan bagged four wickets for the bowling side. In their second innings, Khulna ended on 4 for 1 and trail by 139 runs.

At the outer ground of the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar, Dhaka division trail Sylhet by 131 runs after ending the day on 239 for six.

Resuming on 282 for 6, Sylhet were bowled out for 370 in their first innings after riding on Zakir Hasan's second hundred of the league. Off-spinner Shuvagata Hom bagged four wickets for Dhaka.

Meanwhile, the BCB looks set to reduce the number of venues for the tournament with Covid-19 in mind after a few cricketers, including Test captain Mominul Haque, tested positive and missed the second round of the league.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the board is focused on continuing forward, but will also give top priority to the safety.

'A City legend forever'

APP, LONDON

Sergio Aguero, who will always be associated with a single gilded moment in Manchester City's history, is starting his long goodbye from the club with his position secure as one of the Premier League's all-time greats.

Fans in the blue half of Manchester are coming to terms with the impending departure of the 32-year-old striker, who will leave when his contract expires at the end of the season.

Aguero joined City from Atletico Madrid in 2011, three years after the club was taken over by Abu Dhabi owners, and will leave after 10 trophy-laden years as the club's record goalscorer, with 257 goals in 384 games so far. "When a cycle comes to an end, many sensations



arise," the Argentine wrote on Twitter. "A huge sense of satisfaction and pride remains in me for having played with Manchester City for a whole 10 seasons -- unusual for a professional player in this day and age."

Aguero has won four Premier League titles, with a fifth looking almost certain this season for City. Pep Guardiola's side also remain in the hunt for a historic quadruple.

City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak has revealed a statue of the striker has been commissioned to stand alongside those currently being made to honour Aguero's former team-mates David Silva and Vincent Kompany.

Team-mate Kevin De Bruyne hailed him as a "City legend forever" while City defender Aymeric Laporte described him as a "class act" on and off the pitch. Aguero has struggled with injuries since having knee surgery in the close season. A hamstring problem complicated his comeback and then he had to sit out a month after a coronavirus infection.

Day, Jamal fault system

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh coach Jamie Day is apparently satisfied to have achieved the target he set for the players in the Three Nations Cup football tournament in Nepal, but sees no immediate change of fate for the team until the domestic structure is reformed.

The men in red and green suffered a 2-1 defeat against Nepal in the final at the Dasharath Rangasala on Monday. The two goals Bangladesh conceded in the first half were due to childish errors, and Mahbubur Rahman Sufil's late strike only reduced the margin.

"The target was to give some new players international experience and see if they are ready for playing at this level. We have achieved that during this week and reaching the final was a bonus," Day told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"We achieved what we needed to from the tournament. I was pleased with the matches apart from the first half of the final, but we saw players lacked composure in games when there was pressure."

Bangladesh played the final with a vulnerable defence, which looked nervous staying off constant pressure from the Nepalese forwards. The outcome is that the coach will likely have to rely on proven campaigners such as Bishwanath Ghosh, Tapu Barman, Rahmat Mia - all three missing this tournament due to injuries or sickness.

"There were two sloppy goals; they didn't pass the ball quick enough or with any purpose and did not create enough chances," said the 41-year-old coach urging the authority concerned to restructure the domestic league.

"I think the problem is never going to change. I said so many times that if we

don't change the league structure and if we don't care for the local players playing in the right positions, it is never going to change. A player plays in four positions (in domestic league matches); they don't know how to run' don't know how to play as a centre-forward and we have been seeing this for the last 15 years. What changed? Nothing," rued Day.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan was disappointed and apologised to the fans while identifying the weaknesses of the forwards.

"We could not win because we could not score and the reasons for that is the foreign players playing in attacking positions in our domestic league," Jamal said. "I just want to say sorry to the fans. As a captain



I am really disappointed because we could not deliver in the final."

Jamal also lamented the childish mistakes in defence.

"We did not play well in the first half because of nervousness, having many new players in the squad even though I instructed them to play without pressure. They did not perform in new positions in front of a huge crowd. We made childish mistakes to concede two goals because there was no marking. We have to learn from this mistake and not repeat it in future," said the Bangladesh captain.

"I really feel sorry because it was a great stage and a great opportunity," said 30-year-old.



Bangladesh players try to catch a Nepal raider during their match of the Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi Tournament at the Volleyball Stadium in Paltan yesterday. Bangladesh beat Nepal 35-20 to register their third win in three matches.

PHOTO: STAR

At the moment we are going to reduce the venues of the BNCL as a precaution. We are preferring Dhaka and Cox's Bazar. The board is closely monitoring the situation but we still feel we can continue with proper management. So, our primary step is to reduce venues.

NIZAMUDDINCHOWDHURY
BCB CEO

1971 WAR CRIMES

Trials of organisations ever elusive

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Awami League government has partially fulfilled its electoral pledge to hold trials over 1971 war crimes by bringing individuals to book but it is yet to make any considerable progress in trying organisations.

Since the last amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 in February 2013, which has provisions for trials of only individuals, the government has been saying necessary amendments would be made to facilitate the trial of anti-liberation organisations.

The law ministry prepared a draft to amend the law in 2014 but over the last seven years no visible steps have been taken to pass the amendment, leaving unfulfilled the demand for trial of the organisations which acted as collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces to commit one of the deadliest genocides of the last century.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on many occasions said the government was working to amend the law but his words are yet to be translated into deeds.

Contacted on March 23, Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that the government would take necessary steps to try the organisations involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes during the Liberation War, in

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Members of the Detective Branch and Naogaon district police beat up BNP activists who gathered in the town's KG's More area to stage a protest over the "killing on the Independence Day".

PHOTO: COLLECTED

150 injured as BNP men clash with cops

STAR REPORT

At least 150 people were injured in separate clashes between police and BNP activists in Kishoreganj and Noagaon yesterday.

The clashes ensued when the party activists tried to bring out processions as a part of their central programme.

In Kishoreganj town, at least 100 people were injured in two separate clashes between BNP activists and policemen.

Aminul Islam Ashfaq, organising secretary of the BNP's Kishoreganj district unit, claimed that some 100 men were injured when police attacked them at the town's Sholakia and Ekrapur areas without any provocation.

As per the party's central programme, protesting "killing people on Independence Day", the party men in processions were on way to the district party office in Rothkhola area around 11:30am.

Soon after bringing out the processions, police rushed to the spot and started throwing abusive words towards them and

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Kushtia reclaimed

MARCH 30 & 31, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

THE BATTLE OF KUSHTIA

At 4:00am on

March 30, 1971,

Bangladeshi forces,

comprising East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), police and

chivildars under the leadership of Abu Osman

Chowdhury, then a major and commander of

the fourth wing of EPR, attacked the Pakistan

occupation army in Kushtia from three sides.

The Pakistani soldiers apparently panicked at the

thought of being engulfed by so many thousands

of furious Bangladeshis. They started fleeing the

outposts and, subsequently, took shelter at the

district headquarters. The Pakistan army suffered

heavy casualties in their retreat. By the end of

the day Bangladeshi forces took control of the

whole of Kushtia except district headquarters and

its adjacent areas. The war continued next day.

Bangalee forces reclaimed Kushtia, and only a few

Pakistan army men managed to escape the district

town alive.

A detailed report on this furious resistance was

published in the Time magazine on April 19, 1971.

INDIRA PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH

On March 31, Indian Prime Minister Indira

Gandhi moved a resolution in parliament strongly

criticising the military action in Bangladesh. She

demanding an immediate end to the violence

"which amounts to genocide". She also promised

"whole-hearted sympathy and support" for the

people of "East Bengal".

Earlier, Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's

tepid tone as to India's response to the events in

Bangladesh was criticised in parliament. There

was growing pressure, both inside and outside the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



ROHINGYA RELOCATION UN to carry on dialogue with govt

Diplomats to visit Bhasan Char April 3

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Wrapping up a three-day visit to Bhasan Char, a UN delegation said it wants to continue dialogue with the government.

"The United Nations is grateful to the government of Bangladesh for its facilitation of the visit and looks forward to continuing the dialogue," Mostafa Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, assistant communication officer at UNHCR Bangladesh, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, a delegation of foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka is likely to visit the island in Noakhali's Hatiya on April 3 to take a first-hand view of the housing facility for 100,000 Rohingyas.

Sources said the envoys may go to the island by helicopter and are likely to return the same day.

The development comes following an impasse of more than a year between the government and the UN regarding the global body's technical assessment

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Bangladesh behind Nepal, Pakistan in smartphone use

Says GSMA report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is lagging behind most of its South Asian peers in terms of smartphone use, according to a report of GSMA, which represents mobile operators worldwide.

The report, released yesterday, said 41 per cent of mobile phone users had smartphones in Bangladesh.

India has the highest percentage of smartphone users, at 69 per cent, followed by Sri Lanka with 60 per cent, Nepal 53 per cent and Pakistan 51 per cent.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

The report was unveiled at a virtual roundtable organised jointly by GSMA (Groupe Spécial Mobile Association) and the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB).

The report, titled "Achieving mobile-enabled digital inclusion in Bangladesh", said 4G network now covered 95 per cent of the population. Yet, there was still a significant usage gap of 67 per cent as only 28 per cent of the population had 4G connections.

Today is the 50th Death Anniversary of S N H Rizvi



We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember him in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of his soul

1971 GENOCIDE Pakistan should offer apology to Bangladesh

Says ex-Pakistani envoy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A former Pakistani diplomat has said the people of Pakistan should urge their government to offer a formal apology to the people of Bangladesh for the genocide its military committed in 1971.

Hussain Haqqani, who served as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States from 2008 to 2011, made the remarks during a virtual talk titled "Bangabandhu Sheikh

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

COUP IN MYANMAR Ethnic rebel group warns of conflict

Calls for int'l intervention against military crackdown; protest death toll tops 500

REUTERS

One of Myanmar's main ethnic minority rebel groups yesterday warned of a growing threat of major conflict and called for international intervention against a military crackdown on opponents of last month's coup.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the army ousted an elected government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, detaining her and reimposing military rule after a decade of tentative steps towards democracy.

While cities and towns across the country have been consumed by protests against the military, fighting has also flared between the army and insurgents in frontier regions and refugees are spilling over borders.

The Karen National Union rebel group, which operates in the east along the border with Thailand, said it was bracing for a major government offensive.

"Now, thousands of Burma military ground troops are advancing into our territories from all fronts," the group said in a statement.

"We have no other options left but to confront these serious threats posed by the illegitimate military junta's army in order to defend our territory."

The group urged the international community, Thailand in particular, to help Karen people fleeing the "onslaught" and for countries to cut ties with the junta to stop the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

উচ্চ মূল্যমান ব্যাংক নোটের প্রধান নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য

www.bb.org.bd → Bank notes & coins → Security features

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এর প্রতিকৃতি সম্বলিত ১০০, ২০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমানের নোট লেনদেনে নিম্নবর্ণিত নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য খেয়াল করলে আমরা সহজেই আসল নোট চিনতে পারব :

নিরাপত্তা সূত্র : ১০০ ও ৫০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের বাম পাশে ৪ মি.মি. চওড়া চুলের বেণী সাদৃশ্য নিরাপত্তা সূত্র রয়েছে যার একটি অংশ লাল হতে সবুজ রঙে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং অপর অংশে নোটের মূল্যমান (১০০ টাকা/৫০০টাকা) মুদ্রিত রয়েছে। ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের বাম পাশে ৪ মি.মি. চওড়া নিরাপত্তা সূত্র রয়েছে যা লাল হতে সবুজ রঙে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটে ৫ মি.মি চওড়া নিরাপত্তা সূত্র রয়েছে যা সোনালী হতে সবুজ রঙে পরিবর্তিত হয়। ২০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের নিরাপত্তা সূত্রায় বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মনোহারাম ও নোটের মূল্যমান (২০০ টাকা/১০০০ টাকা) মুদ্রিত আছে। নোটগুলো নাড়াচাড়া করলে এতে হলোগ্রাফিক ইমেজ পরিদর্শিত হয়।

সুকানো ছাপা : ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের সামনের দিকের নিচে মাঝ বরাবর নোটের মূল্যমান ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ এবং ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটে TWO HUNDRED TAKA লুকায়িত অবস্থায় মুদ্রিত আছে, যা নোটটি অনুভূমিকভাবে ধরলে দেখা যাবে।

অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারের লেখা : ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনের দিকের চিহ্নিত অংশে অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারে BANGLADESH BANK এবং ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনের দিকের চিহ্নিত অংশে অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারে ২০০ মুদ্রিত রয়েছে, যা আতশী কাঁচ অথবা উন্নতমানের স্মার্ট মোবাইল ফোনের ক্যামেরা প্রয়োজন মত জুম করে কিংবা "Flashlight & magnifying glass" App এর সহায়তায় মোবাইল ফোন ধরে দেখা যাবে।

রং পরিবর্তনশীল কালি (OVI) : ১০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোট এদিক-ওদিক করলে রং পরিবর্তনশীল কালিতে মুদ্রিত অংশ সোনালী হতে সবুজ এবং ৫০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটে এটি মেজেন্টা হতে সবুজ রঙে পরিবর্তিত হবে। তাছাড়া, ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনে বাম দিকে থাকা হালকা নীল রঙের BANGLADESH BANK লেখাটিও নোট এদিক-ওদিক করলে দেখা যাবে।

SPARK : ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের উপরের ডান কোণায় সোনালী থেকে সবুজ রঙের SPARK (Optically Variable Magnetic Ink) ঘুরা ২০০ লেখা রয়েছে, নোটটি নাড়াচাড়া করলে যা সোনালী থেকে সবুজ রঙে পরিবর্তন হবে। পাশাপাশি একটি উজ্জ্বল বার উপরে নিচে উঠানো করবে।

অসমতল ছাপা : ১০০, ২০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমানের প্রত্যেক প্রকার নোটের সামনের ও পেছনের দিকের ডিজাইন, মাঝখানের লেখা, ইংরেজী ও বাংলা সংখ্যায় লেখা নোটের মূল্যমান, ৭টি সমান্তরাল হেলানো সরলরেখা (তবে ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটে ৮টি সমান্তরাল সরলরেখা) এবং এর ঠিক নিচে অবস্থিত ছোট ছোট বৃত্তাকার/ত্রিভুজাকৃতির ছাপ খসখসে অনুভূত হবে।

UV লাইটযুক্ত জাল নোট সনাক্তকারী মেশিন ও মোবাইল ফোন এবং আতশী কাঁচ দ্বারা জাল নোট সহজে পরীক্ষা করা যায়।

নোট জালকারী চক্রের প্রতারণা থেকে নিজেকে রক্ষা করুন এবং এসকল নোট জালকারীকে ধরিয়ে দিন। আসল নোটের বিভিন্ন নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পর্কে নিজে জানুন এবং অপরকে জানতে সহায়তা করুন।

ব্যাংক নোটের ব্যবহার সম্পর্কে সচেতন হোন