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"The prime minister has made it clear about following the prefixed roll-out plan for the second dose of Covid-19 inoculation, scheduled to start from April 8."

CABINET SECRETARY KHANDKER ANWARUL ISLAM AFTER CABINET MEETING



"I will win Bengal on one leg and in the future, will get victory in Delhi on two legs."

WEST BENGAL CM MAMATA BANERJEE EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN HER CHANCES TO WIN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



"As we continue to make good progress on our vaccine programme...regular rapid testing is even more important to make sure those efforts are not wasted."

BRITISH PM BORIS JOHNSON ON COVID

'Lockdown' goes lightly on first day



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government restrictions, imposed to rein in the rising number of Covid-19 cases and deaths, were not enforced strictly on the first day yesterday.

Many city dwellers continued to disregard health safety rules even in this grave situation. They did not wear masks, let alone follow social distancing.

Streets in the capital were less crowded, large malls remained closed, but shops in alleys were open. People thronged those shops.

Intercity and long-haul buses did not operate but cars, auto-rickshaws and

rickshaws ruled the thoroughfares.

Commuters suffered during the morning rush as government offices and private firms were open on a limited scale.

Many rode rickshaws while many others took auto-rickshaws to get to work, spending extra. Some had to change vehicles multiple times and even walk to work.

Most shops on main roads could not avert the law enforcers and had to remain closed. Shops and convenient stores in neighbourhoods were open for business as usual.

In some places, law enforcers were seen asking people to follow health guidelines. A

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Exhausted, a migrant worker dozes off near a gate of a terminal at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:30am yesterday. He along with the others, seen in the photo, had been waiting there since Sunday night to catch a flight to Saudi Arabia at 7:00pm yesterday. They reached the airport early due to the weeklong restrictions on transport and public movement imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19. The flight left on schedule.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Tales of woes hang heavy at hospitals

ANISUR RAHMAN

When Mozammel Haque was taken to Mugda Medical College Hospital in an ambulance, it was evident that the Covid-19 patient needed oxygen support.

Gasping for air, Mozammel lay on his stomach, while his son, a university student, held an oxygen mask to his face.

The son begged the authorities for a bed, so that his father could get some life-saving treatment. The only thing available was a cold steel gurney. It was given to Mozammel.

A hospital employee wheeled the gurney into the emergency section and he was given oxygen support, for about 10 minutes. The hospital employees had no choice but to take the oxygen cylinder away and give it to a patient who just arrived.

Elsewhere in the hospital, where people are supposed to be inoculated, a sign was hung up to turn away people coming for the vaccine.

Abdus Sobhan and his wife came holding their vaccine cards, but had to leave without taking the shot even

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

1ST, 2ND DOSE VACCINE DRIVES Despite dearth, govt to press on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even after a dearth in the supply of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, the government has decided to continue administering the first dose and to start giving the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine as scheduled.

"The Prime Minister has made it clear to follow the prefixed roll-out plan for the second dose of the Covid-19 mass vaccine inoculation scheduled to start from April 8," Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told reporters yesterday.

During the briefing after the weekly Cabinet meeting, he also said that the government has enough stock to begin administering the second dose. "I had a conversation with the health director general. There will be no problems. While we are administering the vaccine in hand, more will come," Islam added.

The health directorate also issued a fresh directive on April 4 saying that administering the first dose will continue simultaneously along with the second dose.

The countrywide vaccination campaign will continue during the "lockdown" and the month of Ramadan, said a circular from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Covid-19 Vaccine Preparedness and Deployment Core Committee on Sunday.

Those who have received the first dose will receive a confirmation text message for the second dose from April 5 onward, said the DGHS circular.

It also said that from tomorrow Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd will start transporting the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to different district-level government storages as per the distribution list.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Mob torches Saltha UNO's office, 2 cars

Enforcement of Covid curbs sparked it

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A mob set fire to Saltha upazila nirbahi officer's office and two government vehicles early today after officials trying to enforce Covid-19 guidelines at a tea stall sparked anger.

Locals said Assistant Commissioner (land) Marufa Sultana went to Fukra Bazar under Sonapur union and tried to enforce the Covid rules around 6:30pm. Ansar members, who accompanied her, beat a man for having tea with others violating the rules, the locals alleged.

At one stage the official left the scene and police from Saltha Police Station went there and clashed with the crowd.

SI Mizan and two

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

NEWS ANALYSIS

Slow response brings us here

WASIM BIN HABIB

In the first week of last month when the country started seeing a resurgence of Covid-19 infections, healthcare experts sounded alarm, urging the government to take immediate measures to rein in the surge before it goes out of control.

The government's response to a looming crisis, however, was lackadaisical.

The authorities blamed people's reluctance to follow the health safety guidelines for the spike and relied largely on procedural work such as sending letters to district administration for enforcing the guidelines and limiting mass gathering.

Even in the fourth week of last month when Covid cases as well as deaths from the virus kept soaring, the health directorate officials ruled out any possibility of re-imposition of a shutdown. It did not spell out any measures to deal with the situation that had the signs of an impending crisis.

Then on March 30, the government issued an 18-point directive to curb the rapid surge in cases. By that time, the country was already on course to see the highest infection rate ever. But nowhere in the 18-point directive the government hinted about any restriction or lockdown.

Two days later, the countrymen saw a careless act on the part of the health directorate as it allowed the holding of the entrance test for medical colleges without considering the health hazards it could pose.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

COVID SURGE ICU beds to double in Dhaka

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has decided to double the number of Intensive Care Unit beds in Dhaka to accommodate the surge of Covid-19 patients.

"We are working to double the [number of] ICU beds in Dhaka hospitals within seven to 10 days," Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The decision to ramp up the ICU facilities, as well as general beds, in both public and private hospitals came after a meeting yesterday between the DGHS and the hospital officials.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

3RD PHASE WB POLLS Challenging for BJP; TMC feels at ease

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

As voting for the third phase of the West Bengal election takes place today, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) will focus on keeping its traditional bastion intact while India ruler Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will try to end its duck in the battle for 31 Assembly seats.

The third phase of the election will be held across three districts -- Howrah, Hooghly and South 24 Parganas -- where Muslim voters play a key role, according to experts.

The ruling TMC won an overwhelming 29 assembly seats from these constituencies in 2016, while National Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) shared the other two.

The BJP on the other hand not only failed to win a single seat, but got just 6.91 percent of the votes. The party, however, managed to increase its votes to 37.45 percent in the constituencies that consisted of these 31 seats in 2019 Lok Sabha (National Election) polls.

In third phase, the main challenge for the TMC is to ensure that it keeps its Muslim votes intact. The worrying factors for the TMC is a possible split of Muslim votes between TMC and the coalition of CPM, Congress and the Indian Secular Front of Abbas Siddiqui.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Sabit Al Hasan, the launch which sank in the Shitalakkhya in Narayanganj on Sunday night, was salvaged in a joint operation yesterday noon. At least, 24 more bodies were recovered yesterday, taking the death toll to 29. Inset, a relative of a victim wails during the rescue operation.

PHOTO: SANAD SAHA

N'GANJ LAUNCH CAPSIZE

Death toll 29, 7 still missing

STAR REPORT

Twenty-nine bodies were recovered and seven people remained missing till last night after a passenger launch capsized in the Shitalakkhya river in Narayanganj on Sunday.

Among the deceased are 15 women, six children and eight men, said Narayanganj Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nahida Barik. The bodies were handed to family members and relatives.

Families of each of the deceased were provided with Tk 25,000 for funeral expenses on behalf of the district administration, the UNO said.

Rescue operations to trace the seven missing persons were going on when this report was filed around 8:00pm.

The launch named Sabit Al Hasan left Narayanganj Launch Terminal for Munshiganj with nearly 50 passengers around 5:56pm on Sunday. Around 15 minutes later, it sank near the third Shitalakkhya Bridge at Koylaghat of Syedpur area when it was hit and dragged by a tanker.

Immediately after the accident, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), Fire Service and Civil Defence, Coast Guard and Police joined the rescue operation.

Five bodies were recovered on Sunday night, but authorities concerned had to halt the rescue operations around 2:00am yesterday due to adverse weather.

After a four-hour break, the BIWTA resumed the rescue operation around 6:00am yesterday. A rescue vessel of BIWTA started its operation to salvage the sunken launch around 10:00am.

The capsized launch was pulled out of the water around 12:20pm, said Abdullah Arefin, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Narayanganj.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BANGLADESH
UPDATE

7,075
New cases in 24hrs

6,44,439
Total cases

9,318
Deaths

5,55,414
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE

2,870,030
Deaths

132,269,317
Total cases

GLOBAL
UPDATE

2,870,030
Deaths

132,269,317
Total cases

Peace pre-requisite for development

PM tells outgoing Afghanistan ambassador

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said establishment of peace is a pre-requisite for ensuring development.

"Peace is a must for development. We involve people so that their support can help establish peace," she said.

The PM was talking to outgoing Afghanistan Ambassador to Bangladesh Abdul Qayoom Malikzad yesterday when he paid a farewell call on her at the Gono Bhaban.

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

During the meeting, the Afghanistan envoy informed the Bangladesh premier that the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was translated into Afghan language.



Talking about Covid-19 situation, Hasina said, "Coronavirus is a problem for all as it is a global pandemic. We have been fighting this deadly disease collectively."

Describing Bangladesh-Afghanistan relations as wonderful, the PM said the two countries have worked together in the international arena.

The premier also expressed her desire to help Afghanistan in its development. She said Bangladeshi NGO Brac has been working in Afghanistan for its socio-economic advancement.

Hasina said her government has been working to make Bangladesh a poverty- and hunger-free country as envisioned by the Father of the Nation.

The PM also conveyed her regards to Afghan president.



Retiree Mozammel Haque, a Covid-19 patient, being taken out of an ambulance by his son, left, and another youth in front of the Mugda Medical College Hospital around 10:30am yesterday. Mozammel had been having breathing problem and his condition worsened earlier in the day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's daily Covid cases top 100,000

Maharashtra announces night curfew

AGENCIES

India has reported a record rise in coronavirus infections, becoming only the second country after the United States to register more than 100,000 new cases in a day, as hospitals in its worst affected state are overrun by patients.

Maharashtra, home to India's financial and entertainment capital Mumbai, recorded nearly 60,000 cases in the last 24 hours.

The struggling state authorities tightened the evening curfew to allow only people involved in essential services out of their homes from 8:00 pm to 7:00 am.

The region of 110 million people will also see weekend lockdowns, with gatherings of over four people banned and places of worship and restaurants shut.

In Mumbai over the weekend, one of Bollywood's biggest stars, Akshay Kumar, became the latest celebrity to test positive.

The shooting of the religious epic "Ram Setu" that Kumar was making was halted after 45 crew members also

tested positive.

"How long shooting remains halted depends on Akshay Kumar's recovery. We can replace all our crew members, but we cannot replace the star of the film," Ashok Dubeay from the Federation of Western India Cine Employees told AFP.

Kumar, 53, tweeted meanwhile that he had been hospitalised "as a precautionary measure under medical advice".

"The new variant, or variants of concern, probably explains a lot of it, rather than simplistic explanation of behaviour," said Rajib Dasgupta, head of the Centre of Social Medicine & Community Health in New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

India has found hundreds of cases of the virus variants first detected in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil.

Subhash Salunke, a former WHO official who advises Maharashtra on its Covid-19 strategy, said cases in the state would continue to rise for another couple of weeks. He said a way out was vaccinating all adults in its hardest-hit cities such as Mumbai, Pune and Nashik.

ICU beds to double in Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

The meeting was aimed at assessing the current situation and devising the next course of action, said Khurshid Alam.

Ventilation support is a key factor for critical Covid-19 patients. Over the past few weeks, as the Covid-19 infection rate spiked again, patients and their relatives have been complaining about not getting ICU support or general beds at public and private hospitals in the capital.

The number of daily coronavirus cases crossed the 7,000-mark for two consecutive days as 7,075 new infections were recorded yesterday.

According to the updated DGHS statistics, there are 2,555 Covid-19 general and 128 ICU beds in government hospitals in Dhaka. There are 772 general and 180 ICU beds in private hospitals.

The DGHS said that it has already started increasing the number of ICU beds.

"We will increase ICU beds in public hospitals to more than 200," he said, adding that normal beds would be increased to around 5,000.

He also said the process was on to turn the Dhaka North City Corporation kitchen market in Mohakhali into a makeshift hospital for coronavirus patients.

"This will be the largest Covid-19 dedicated hospital in the country and there will be 251 ICU and HD beds. The main feature of this hospital would be that we will provide ICU facilities in all 1,200 beds," the DGHS director general said.

He added that not only the ICU beds but the general beds will also be doubled by this time as all Covid-19 designated hospitals have begun expanding.

For example, he said, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital has already added 200 beds and will add another 200 in the next few days.

The National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases has also already started working to open 200 additional beds.

The National Institute of Mental Health and National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology have started adding 100 beds each.

Even private hospital, like Aagar Ali Hospital, Evercare Hospital and United Hospital, have started increasing the number of their beds as well, he said.

The DG also said the meeting has decided to provide no objection certificates to public hospitals so that they can purchase the Meropenem injection, which is used in Covid-19 treatment, from their own sources.

Challenging for BJP

FROM PAGE 1

This worry is quite logical as Abbas Siddiqui, custodian of the famous Furfura Sharif shrine in Hooghly, has a huge number of young Muslim followers mostly in Howrah, Hooghly, and North and South 24 Parganas.

On the other hand, BJP's main challenge is to maintain the momentum of their growth, which has risen from 6.91 percent to 37.45 percent within three years, while the Left Front, which had its dominance in these areas before, will try its best to regain its field.

South 24 Parganas is a TMC dominated area with a Muslim population of nearly 36 percent. In Howrah, the Muslim population stands at 26 percent and 35 percent in Hooghly.

BJP's target is to capture Hindu dominated seats in South 24 Parganas like Gosaba, Sagar, Patharpratima, Kakdwip, Sonarpur and Jaynagar.

The party was in a comfortable position in the last two phases of polling for 60 seats where the share of Muslim voters was low. But the third phase would be really challenging for them.

However, to woo voters in its third phase campaign, it targeted the TMC over corruption issues in the Amphan relief fund as the three districts were worst affected during last year's cyclone.

The TMC on the other hand banked on its welfare schemes like "Duare Sarkar", "Swastho Sathi" and

"Kanyashree" to counter the BJP.

Both the parties filed candidates for all seats while the CPIM has fielded 13 candidates, All India Forward Bloc filed two candidates, Revolutionary Socialist Party filed one, Congress nominees are contesting in seven seats and in eight Indian Secular Front has fielded its candidates.

In today's polling, bigshots like BJP leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta is contesting from Tarakeswar in Hooghly, BJP leader and popular actress Tanushree Chakraborty is contesting from Shyampani in Howrah, former Minister and senior CPIM leader Kanti Ganguly is contesting from Raidighi under South 24 Parganas, West Bengal Speaker Biman Banerjee is contesting in Baruiপুর Paschim and prominent TMC leader Saukat Molla is contesting from Canning Purba Assembly seat.

In today's poll, around 78 lakh voters will exercise their franchise to decide the fate of 205 candidates.

A total 618 companies of central forces were deployed for the third phase to guard 10,871 polling stations, all of which have been marked "sensitive" by the Election Commission.

Of 31 assembly seats, 16 are in South 24 Parganas, seven in Howrah and the remaining eight in Hooghly.

The fourth phase of polling, when 44 constituencies will go to polls, is scheduled for April 10.

'Lockdown' goes lightly on first day

FROM PAGE 1

Rab mobile court fined some for violating the rules.

Meanwhile, shop owners and employees in New Market and nearby areas demonstrated for the second straight day yesterday, protesting the government decision to put restrictions "on their businesses".

The situations outside Dhaka were almost similar, reported our correspondents.

Traders and businessmen in Rajshahi, Chattogram, Kushtia, Jhenaidah and Panchagarh staged demonstrations, demanding shops be allowed to remain open.

On Sunday, the Cabinet Division issued an 11-point directive to be followed from 6:00am yesterday to 12:00am on April 11 to contain the spread of the virus in the country. Punitive actions were supposed to be taken against violators of the directives.

The government's restrictions come at a time when the country reported 7,075 new infections yesterday with a positivity rate of 13.39 percent. Another 52 people died from the virus in 24 hours ending 8:00am yesterday, taking the death toll to 9,318.

Two correspondents of this newspaper visited the capital's Mirpur, Ibrahimpur, Bshantek, Shyamoli, Tejgaon, Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, New Market areas and found most of the shops in the alleys open.

The circular said while shops and malls would stay closed, they would be allowed to sell products online. Besides, sellers would have to follow the health safety guidelines and no buyers would be allowed in person, the circular read.

In the morning, many had to come out of home as the restrictions were not applicable to office-goers and transports involved in maintaining law and order, emergency services, relief distribution, health services, and electricity, water and gas supply, fire, telephone and internet services.

Besides, banks remained open

from 10:00am to 12:30pm. Industrial units and factories were allowed to stay open. Amar Ekushey Boi Mela remained open from noon to 5:00pm.

Despite being a mode of public transport, auto-rickshaws operated and carried passengers, often more than their capacity. Many passengers were seen sharing rides.

Many people took bike rides, even though it was prohibited as per the restrictions.

Many passengers in Rayerbagh area of the city's Jatrabari staged demonstrations on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, demanding transport so that they could go to work.

A good number of garment factories are situated in the city's Mirpur area. As these factories were out of the purview of the restriction, many workers were seen walking in groups to their factories.

SHOP OWNERS STAGE DEMO Shop owners and employees of different markets in New Market and nearby areas in Dhaka demonstrated for the second consecutive day yesterday.

They demanded that the government allow them to keep their shops open ahead of Pahela Baishakh and Eid by maintaining health safety rules.

Witnesses said several hundred shop owners arrived in the market area around 10:00am and started demonstration.

Additional police members were deployed to keep the situation under control, said SM Kaiyumi, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station.

"We managed to convince them to leave the spot," he said.

Traders and shop employees in the city's Islampur area also demonstrated over the same demand.

In Rajshahi, traders demanded exclusion of small businesses from the "lockdown", reports our staff correspondent.

They blocked the Shaheb Bazar Road, right in the middle of the

city, in the morning and staged demonstrations. Several shops in RDA Market near Zero Point area were kept open.

Our correspondents from Chattogram, Kushtia, Jhenaidah and Panchagarh also reported similar protests by shop owners.

SOME STEPS TAKEN

Rab yesterday conducted a drive in the capital to ensure that people wear masks.

The drive, led by Rab's Executive Magistrate Palash Kumar Basu, was conducted at the capital's Shahbagh intersection for two hours from noon.

At the spot, the mobile court fined 25 people a total of Tk 10,000 for not wearing masks and carrying passengers on motorcycles.

"Some people have been fined Tk 200 to Tk 500 each for not wearing masks in public. We are also trying to stop the unnecessary movement of people," the executive magistrate said.

He also said free masks have been distributed to about 2,500 people in those two hours.

The mobile court also fined a man as his 13-year-old son was driving their car. Asked, the father, who was sitting next to the boy, could not answer why it was necessary for them to come out of home.

Later, the members of the Rab team gave them a ride home in Paribagh.

The executive magistrate said the purpose of Rab's drive was to raise more awareness about the spread of the coronavirus.

Around 4:00pm, police in Bshantek and Mirpur-10 areas were seen asking shoppers to close their shops immediately.

In Savar, a mobile court fined owners of a shopping complex, long-distance buses and four pedestrians for disobeying the instructions.

Drives were carried out in various markets, restaurants and transport services' offices in Savar and Hemayetpur areas as many shops remained open in those areas violating rules.

Mob torches Saltha UNO's office, 2 cars

FROM PAGE 1

The mob torched the UNO's office and vandalised the upazila agriculture officer's office. They also torched two vehicles parked in garages inside the compound.

AC (Land) Marufa Sultana said, "I went to Fukra Bazar as my routine duty for lock down enforcement around 6:30pm. There I found two tea stalls where locals were passing time. I asked my Ansar members to tell them to close the shop. When they went to tell them a group of 50-60 people with sticks tried to attack us. So, we left the place and informed police. After that

what happened I have no idea."

Sumiur Rahman, additional superintendent of police (Nagarkanda and Saltha) said, "A fundamentalist group took the opportunity under the cover of common people. Bangabandhu's mural was also attacked. They also blocked the road by logs, the reason for which police from district headquarters could not come."

Superintendent of Police of Faridpur Md Alimujjaman said people getting killed in police fire was just a rumor.

FROM PAGE 1

Contacted, Babu Lal Baidya, assistant director of BIWTA at Narayanganj Launch Terminal, said, "In primary investigation, we have come to know that the passenger launched was rammed by cargo tanker SKL-3. We will take further legal action after talking to the higher authorities concerned."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Shaheedul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Narayanganj River Police, said, "We will start a drive to seize the tanker after a case is filed against it."

Contacted, Narayanganj launch owners' association's President Badiuzzaman Badal said, "We will surely file a case against the vessel."

'THEY DIED ON THEIR WAY HOME' Sorrow and grief engulfed the area since dead bodies of victims were being kept on the bank of the Shitalakkhya since Sunday night.

Family members and relatives of the victims broke down with grief upon seeing bodies of their loved ones.

Most of the deceased were residents of Munshiganj.

Twelve-year-old Mahin was rendered speechless when he saw the bodies of his father and mother last evening. The body of his eight-year-old sister was recovered later in the night.

"We live in Sonir Akhra in the capital. My father, mother and sister were going to our village home in Munshiganj," said Mahin.

"Now, I have become alone. How will I spend the rest of my life without them?" he weiled.

Three members of a family of Munshiganj Sadar upazila's Ramjanbeg village also died in the accident.

"My wife, daughter and mother-in-law have died in the accident," said Mohammad Arif, a resident of the village.

"My wife Brithi Begum was 25 years old, daughter Arifa was one and mother-in-law Pokhina Begum was

45. They had gone to a diagnostic centre in Narayanganj. They died on their way home."

Two sisters -- Lata Begum, 22, and Sadia Akhter, 10 -- who were residents of Nayagan area of Munshiganj town, went to visit a doctor in Narayanganj. They died on their way home, said their elder sister Tunj Begum.

Protima Ghoshal, 45, a resident of Malpara area of Munshiganj town, used to work in a government office in Narayanganj. She was returning home on the launch and lost her life on the journey, said her husband Pritimoy Ghoshal.

He also said his wife usually travelled between Munshiganj and Narayanganj by road. But she along with some other people opted to travel by launch that day to avoid the rush on the highway following the announcement of the seven-day restrictions to curb the spread of coronavirus.

[Our Correspondents from Narayanganj and Munshiganj contributed to the report]

No sehri, iftar at mosques

Religious affairs ministry announces guidelines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Religious Affairs yesterday said people will not be allowed to have iftar and sehri at mosques during Ramadan.

To curb the spread of Covid-19, the ministry notification said soap, water, hand washing facilities or hand sanitisers should be available at the entrance of each mosque, and everyone must wear a mask.

People should come to the mosque after performing the ablutions and Sunnah prayers at home, it said, urging people to wash their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds while performing the ablution.

The notification, signed by Deputy Secretary Sakhawat Hossain, also said carpets should not be laid in mosques and each worshipper has to bring their own prayer mat. The entire mosque should be cleaned with disinfectants before each prayer.

Social distancing must be ensured during prayers. Children, the elderly, and those engaged in taking care of the sick should refrain from praying in congregation, the directive further mentioned.

Soaps and hand sanitisers should be kept where worshippers perform ablutions in the mosques. Prayer mats and caps kept in the mosque should be avoided.

Khatibs, imams and mosque management committee members have been asked to implement these directives, said the notification.

If these are not complied with, the administration and law enforcement agencies will take action against those concerned.

Tales of woes

FROM PAGE 1

though yesterday was the date for their inoculation.

"They told us that the vaccine shots have yet to arrive here today. Since they do not know when the vaccine will arrive, we have not been told when to come back," Sobhan said.

At the queue of people coming to get tested for coronavirus, a man named Munir said at 8:30am that he arrived there for the test before daybreak and was still waiting for his turn.

"There are still 70 people ahead of me," he said.

Four Niger soldiers killed in double 'terror' attack

AFP, Niamey

Niger's defence ministry said Sunday that four of its soldiers had been killed the day before in twin "terrorist" attacks in the country's southeast, the day after President Mohamed Bazoum was sworn in.

"Several terrorists" had been killed in the simultaneous Saturday morning attacks against military positions, the ministry said using a term usually used to describe jihadists.

It added that the "heavily armed" attackers "came from a neighbouring country" in a reference to Nigeria, where groups linked to Boko Haram are active.

Despite death

FROM PAGE 1

As of yesterday, the government has inoculated 55,39,494 people, while 69,45,678 people have registered with the Surokkha app for vaccination.

The mass inoculation campaign started on February 7 with 70 lakh vaccine doses in hand.

The country got 50 lakh doses of the Oxford vaccine from the Serum Institute of India (SII) on January 25. The country also received 20 lakh doses of Oxford vaccine as gift from the Indian government.

The 50 lakh doses were the first instalment of the three crore vaccines the country purchased from the SII. As per the agreement, the government was supposed to get 50 lakh doses of vaccines each month for six months.

But the government received only 20 lakh doses of vaccines in the second instalment on February 22. The country received another 12 lakh doses of Oxford vaccine as gift from India last month, taking the combined tally to 1.2 crore so far.

However, the government was yet hear anything concrete from the SII or its local agent Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited regarding the third consignment, which was due late last month.

Besides, the Covax programme, led by the World Health Organisation and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has committed to give Bangladesh a total of 6.8 crore vaccine shots. As part of the commitment, the country is expected to receive 10,908,000 shots of the Oxford vaccine by May.

Global media reports said that the Indian government has reportedly imposed a temporary restriction on all major exports of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the SII to meet domestic demands.

India's decision on restriction has also impacted the global supply chain of the vaccine, global media also reported.

Nazmul Hassan Papon, managing director of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, on Sunday told The Daily Star that they were yet to get any specific date from the SII about the next consignment.

'Exempt us from the lockdown'

Small traders rally in Rajshahi
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, RAJSHAHI

Small traders in Rajshahi staged a demonstration in the city yesterday, demanding exclusion of their businesses from the lockdown.

They began demonstrating at 10am, blocking the road in front of RDA market and chanting slogans for allowing them to keep their shops open during the lockdown.

Two hours later, police and district administration officials went to the scene and talked to them. At 12pm, demonstrators withdrew, as the administrative officials agreed to sit with them in the afternoon.

The traders announced that they would occupy the street again today, if their demands remain unfulfilled.

They threatened to defy the prohibition on opening shops and markets.

Abu Aslam, additional deputy commissioner of Rajshahi, said the district administration heard the traders, and they would convey their demands to the government high-ups. "Everyone should have to abide by the rules of the lockdown

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



People were seen queued up in front of a Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) truck at Abdul Gani Road in the capital, buying groceries at a fair price amid a week of shutdown. But many had their masks below their noses, and social distancing was a forgone concept.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FIRST DAY OF LOCKDOWN IN CTG

Commuters bear the brunt of it

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CTG

On the first day of the countrywide seven-day lockdown, port city commuters suffered immensely due to acute shortage of public transport.

For office-goers, the situation remained the same as the previous few days, as they were subjected to the demand of reaching their workplaces, which remained open even though there weren't nearly enough transportation available.

While visiting different areas including Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Chawkbazar, Panchlaish, Rahattarpool, Katalganj, Baduratala, Kapasgola, and Chandpura, this correspondent found clusters of office goers waiting for a bus or a human haulier in every intersection throughout the day.

However, very few public transports were plying the roads, and they had to maintain the government mandated 50 percent seat capacity limit. As a result, rickshaws and motorbikes were seen dominating the roads.

Many bikers were seen carrying contracted passengers, but even that couldn't balance out the overwhelming imbalance between passengers and their demand for a ride.

"Lockdown or no lockdown, my office is still open," said a frustrated Minhaz Uddin Mahmud, who works at a private firm in Agrabad. "I have managed to come to Chawkbazar bus stand on a rickshaw half-an-hour ago. I've been waiting for some kind of a motorised vehicle ever since."

Asked whether he knew public transports would be limited during the lockdown, he said, "Does it matter to me? I have to get to my office anyway. If the government didn't want people to get out, why couldn't it

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Same crisis, a year later

Experts urge action to curb Covid-19 in Sylhet, before things go out of hand

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

On April 5 last year, Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital Assistant Professor Dr Md Moyeen Uddin tested positive for Covid-19. He was the very first of such patients in Sylhet, and was the first doctor of the country to have succumbed to the virus on April 15.

A year later, Sylhet is among the districts with the highest Covid-19 cases, with 11,043 cases and 225 deaths till yesterday, according to the Divisional Health Office in Sylhet.

According to a list prepared by Sylhet Health Department based on multiple factors, the district is at fifth-highest risk of Covid-19. Sylhet has been under high risk for many reasons, including inbound UK returnees carrying new strain of Covid-19, failed institutional quarantine system for returnees and lax vigilance of

administration when imposing health rules.

As a result of such negligence of authorities and citizens, Covid-19 dedicated hospitals in Sylhet were overwhelmed with 161 patients yesterday.

Dr Chayan Roy, acting resident medical officer of Sylhet Shaheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital, said, "We're maxed out every day, and there is no bed available at the ICU [intensive care unit], although many infected patients in the regular ward need ICU support."

The 100-bed hospital, dedicated for treating Covid-19 patients, has only 16 ICU beds.

"Unlike the very first months of the pandemic, patients are now coming in worse conditions, and are demanding more oxygen. We're struggling to manage more inbound patients," the doctor explained.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Covid cases keep rising in Barishal

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

With coronavirus infection rate increasing in Barishal every day, the district administration has instructed people to strictly follow health guidelines.

However, people seem to be oblivious to the risk, said officials.

Dr Basudeb Kumar Das, Barishal divisional health director of Directorate General of Health Services, said now 35-40 people are being infected every day. From the end of February to the first week of March, the infection rate was 2 to 3 percent in the division and currently it's 22 percent. The total number of patients on March 31 was 1,1267. Now the figure is 11,554.

A total of 204 people died of Covid-19 in the division till Sunday.

According to DGHS in Barishal, 77 people were infected in six districts of the division from March 13 to 19 while 226 were infected in seven days from March 20 to 26. On Saturday, 77 tested positive.

Meanwhile, doctors at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital said they do not have any empty ICU bed left at this major hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Work with honesty for country's advancement'

Speakers at discussion urge youth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday urged the young generation to be imbued with patriotism and work with devotion and honesty aiming to contribute to the country's advancement.

Speakers at the award-giving ceremony of second essay competition of Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation also said students should have relentless effort to know the country and work for betterment of society and gaining knowledge.

Razzaq Foundation awarded six winners of essay competition through a virtual programme yesterday evening.

For school and college-level students (first to 12th grade), the topic for the essay competition was "Bangabandhu's dream and the achievements of Bangladesh" and for university level students, the topic was

"The role of students and teachers in the emergence of Bangladesh".

Presiding over the ceremony, Chairman of Bengal Foundation and founding trustee member of the foundation Abul Khair said if one does not have patriotism, they cannot progress in anything.

"If you have patriotism, you will have interest in learning your language, knowing your country and practicing your culture. If anyone has these virtues, they can become a humanitarian. If someone is humane, they try to do something for the country", he said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said patriotism has a deeper meaning. "Wherever we are, whatever we are doing -- an engineer, a doctor, a writer, a journalist -- we can express our patriotism

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

PM's speech unmasked 'exploiters of religion'

Obaidul Quader urges all to 'resist the evil forces'

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's speech has uncovered the faces of "those who exploit religion".

"Her remark on the moral degradation of a Hefajat leader is factual and true," he told a press conference on contemporary issues at his official residence in the capital.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said people thought that the so-called leaders would apologise in public after this "shameful incident", but they did not do so. He said people of the country will not allow them to turn religion "into a tool".

The AL general secretary said after an immoral incident at a resort in Sonargaon, the phone conversation of a Hefajat leader also went viral on social media.

He said the vandalism and arson attacks are being carried out at different parts of the country supporting such an immoral incident revealed the nature of extremists and communal forces.

These communal forces are a threat to the country's independence and sovereignty and they want to take revenge for their past defeats by

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LOANS FOR COVID-HIT RETURNEE MIGRANTS

Tk 146cr of 700cr fund disbursed so far: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About Tk 146 crore has been disbursed so far from the government's Tk 700-crore special reintegration loan fund for pandemic-affected returnee migrants, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said yesterday.

"[From] July to December, we had the disbursement... of only Tk 12 crore," he said, adding the loan disbursement got pace since January this year.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day international conference -- held virtually -- on reintegration of returnee migrants.

The minister said they are expecting loan disbursement to reach over Tk 200 crore by the end of June.

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in collaboration with Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and British Council's project Promoting

Knowledge for Accountable Systems (Prokas) organised the two-day conference on "Reintegration of Returnee Migrants Affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic".

Speakers during the inaugural session stressed for multi-dimensional approach from the government for ensuring social and economic reintegration of returnee migrants.

About 4.28 lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers have returned home in about a year amid the pandemic, said Imran Ahmad, addressing the event as chief guest.

He said they have taken various initiatives for the returnees, including the special loan support, and providing them with recognition of prior learning (RPL) certificates.

The minister said about 1.44 lakh migrant workers have gone overseas in the first three months of this year through official channels.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

21 police personnel hurt in B'baria road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

At least 21 policemen, including two police inspectors and two drivers of vehicles carrying police were injured when a passenger bus collided with two pickup vans in Brahmanbaria yesterday morning.

The accident took place around 8am on the Cumilla-Sylhet highway in West Medda Markazpara area of the district town when the Econo Paribahan bus coming from Dhaka collided with pick-up vans, confirmed Additional Superintendent of Police Md Roish Uddin.

Police arrested the bus driver and helper from the spot. All the injured policemen came from Kishoreganj district. They were deployed to carry out special duties to maintain law and order situation after the Hefajat-e-Islam mayhem in Brahmanbaria from March 26-28.

Md Roish Uddin told The Daily Star that six of the injured, including a driver, were in critical condition.

They were sent to National Orthopaedic Institute and Hospital in Dhaka.

Arifuzzaman Himel, on-duty doctor at the emergency department of Brahmanbaria General Hospital, said six of the injured had been referred to Dhaka as their condition was critical. Five other injured were admitted to a hospital and 12 were given first aid.

The ASP said, "Members of police got out of the district police lines in two pickup vans for their duty. Later, the Econo Paribahan bus coming from Dhaka collided with pick-up vans carrying the policemen, leaving them injured. Both the bus and police vehicles were damaged in the crash."

Fewer than half of smokeless tobacco makers pay taxes

Finds study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A significant number of smokeless tobacco (SLT) manufacturers in Bangladesh have managed to slip away from the government's tax net, anti-tobacco platform Knowledge for Progress said yesterday, referring to a recent study.

The platform said informal nature of SLT production was the main impediment in ensuring tax compliance in the sector, according to a press release.

Findings of the study "Factors Inhibiting Smokeless Tobacco Tax Payments by Smokeless Tobacco Manufacturers Operating Outside the Tax Net in Bangladesh" was disclosed during a webinar jointly organised by National Heart Foundation, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Ubining, and Voice and Knowledge for Progress -- also known as Progga.

Conducted with assistance from Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the study revealed that of 483 SLT manufacturers, 435 zarda and 48 gul producers, only 218 pay taxes.

Also, 33 percent of 88 SLT manufacturers in 29 districts do not have valid trade licence.

It said 91 percent manufacturers produce SLT products manually, with an estimated monthly gross turnover of Tk 2.7 crore.

The study recommends a reform of the SLT tax structure, with a view to safeguard public health and increase revenue collection.

National Board of Revenue Member Zakia Sultana said SLT use should be reined, not only for the sake of revenue but also for public health.

In the 2019-20 fiscal, SLT sector contributed Tk 30.6 crore as revenue, Progga said.

SLTs are severely detrimental to health and responsible for causing oral, oropharyngeal and other types of cancers, it said.



Despite all the government health directions, attendants of a stall at the book fair, who regularly come into close proximity with customers, can be seen without face-masks. Even the official instructing visitors to maintain health guidelines is wearing his mask incorrectly, inset. The photos were taken yesterday as the fair remained open despite the lockdown.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Youth 'behind vandalism of Bangabandhu mural' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-14) yesterday claimed to have arrested a youth, who was involved in vandalising the mural of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Brahmanbaria, on the day of the strike enforced by Hefajat-e-Islam on March 28.

The arrestee was identified as Md Arman Alif Malik (22), of Nasirnagar.

Identifying him from video footage, a team of Rab-14 arrested Malik from the district highway area around 9pm on Sunday, Lt Col Abu Nayeem Mohammad Talat, commander of Rab-14, said while addressing reporters at Brahmanbaria press club auditorium yesterday.

Later, the Rab-14 team conducted drive at the district's Kazipara Mahalla, where Malik used to live in a rented house, and recovered a weapon, two magazines of ammunition, four rounds of bullets and a shovel from there, he said.

The Rab official said during preliminary interrogation, Arman

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Covid cases

FROM PAGE 3
SBMCH Indoor Doctors Association President Dr Sudip Haldar said as the ICU is overflowing with patients, many who are in critical condition are unable to receive required support. He said only a week ago, the number of patients was only 14; but on Tuesday, it stood at 90. Barishal Sadar Hospital sources said even 10 days ago, 14-15 people tested Covid-19 positive, now around 70 people are being infected every day. Dr Mizanur Rahman of Barishal city, said, "Given the situation, many are receiving treatment at home while many are going to the capital."

Meanwhile, two magistrates of Barishal District Administration are operating mobile courts on a daily basis to carry out awareness programmes and take actions against those ignoring health directives. Subrata Biswas, in-charge of public relations of Barishal District Administration, confirmed that 37 people and 5 organisations were fined Tk 9,200 in the last two days. Deputy Commissioner Jasim Uddin Haider said people have to abide by health rules at this stage. "Mobile courts are ensuring that," he said.

Same crisis

FROM PAGE 3
Meanwhile, other hospitals providing Covid-19 treatment facilities like North East Medical College Hospital and Mount Adora Hospital have also seen a sharp rise in patients in the last couple of weeks. Dr Md Anisur Rahman, recent former assistant director (disease control) of Sylhet Divisional Health Office, said, "After a year of the pandemic, we have realised that prevention capacity is more important than treatment capacity. Stricter initiative is a must to control the situation, before it goes out of hand." Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, president of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik's (Shujan) Sylhet chapter, said, "Since the very beginning of the pandemic, we've seen that people are not much aware of the situation, and the administration always failed to impose laws to control the state of affairs. They must be strict to enforce law, so that the situation doesn't go out of hand this time." M Kazi Emdadul Islam, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, said, "We're acting as per government instructions, as infections are spreading rapidly. Stricter action will be taken as per government order."

Exempt us

FROM PAGE 3
until the government itself relaxes some of those." Meanwhile, the city streets were almost vacant on the first day of lockdown, while most shops and markets remained closed. Biponno Kumar Sarker, a tea-shop owner at Shaheb bazar Zero Point, expressed his helplessness amid the lockdown. He kept his shop shut yesterday and said he was observing the situation, and if there was no fear of harassment, he would open his shop from tomorrow. "I have been restless since I heard about another lockdown. I had to remain half-fed during the last one," he said. His mother, aged about 70, has been suffering from her heart disease for the last two weeks. "There is nothing but darkness ahead me. If my daily income stops, how would I run my family and ensure treatment for my mother," he added.

Work with

FROM PAGE 3
by doing the work with excellence in the profession." "Your patriotism will be showcased from your thoughts on society, your humanistic approach and by getting deep knowledge and skill on the subject you are reading," he said. Students should have a minimum level of interest about history, political science, science, physics, and they should have intellectual curiosity, he said. Rights activist Sultana Kamal said everyone should strive toward acquiring knowledge. "We should respect our work. We should not work for getting anything or for just doing it. If we do not work with devotion, we will not be able to reach the target," she added. Razzaq Foundation Director General Ahrar Ahmad, in his welcome speech, said it was inspirational that 110 students participated in the competitions. Three Dhaka University students Shurid Sadik (first place), Arju Afrin Kathy (2nd place) and Md. Akmal Hossain (3rd place), won the competition in university category. Barishal's Amrita Lal Dey College student Ayon Chakrobarty, the capital's Willes Little Flower School and College student Nazifa Tarannum Ruhya and Cumilla's Kalai Gobindapur Mahila Dakhil Madrassa student Sharmin Akhter won the first, second and third prize in the school and college category respectively.

PM's speech

FROM PAGE 3
targeting the spirit of the Liberation War, Quader said. He urged all to get united to resist the evil forces. The AL general secretary mentioned that after conducting probes into the vandalism carried out on the occasion of the country's golden jubilee, the government has started taking legal action against those involved in the destructive acts. The people of the country are with Sheikh Hasina's government, so the faces of those, who are inciting and financing the communal forces, will also be exposed, he added. About the Covid-19 situation in the country, Quader said as both the coronavirus infection and death rate have increased in the country, the government is enforcing the seven-day lockdown. He urged all to follow the 18-point directives of the government and health guidelines.

Youth behind

FROM PAGE 3
admitted to breaking the mural. Arman went into hiding and got a haircut and shaved his beard to avoid arrest, he said. Preparations were underway to file a case in this regard, the official said. Asked about any identity or link with Hefajat, Lt Col Talat refused to disclose it. Rab-14 Bhairab Camp Assistant Director Rafiuddin Mohammad Jobair and other officials were present during the press brief.

Legal notice on govt seeks maternity leave be one year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on the government to take necessary steps in 15 days to remove discrimination in public and private sectors regarding maternity leave. The notice also included the demand of enhancing this leave period from six months to one year. Md JR Khan Robin sent the legal notice on behalf of lawyer Shammi Akhter to the respondents saying that if they don't take steps to dispel the discrimination in public and private sectors regarding maternity leave in 15 days, appropriate legal action will be taken against them. Secretaries to the cabinet division, ministries of public administration, health, and women, as well as legislative and parliamentary affairs division under law ministry have been made respondents to the legal notice. JR Khan Robin said in the legal notice that the government has increased the maternity leave period of government service holders from four months to six months by amending rule 197(1) of the Bangladesh Service Rules in 2011, which is highly inadequate especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Commuters

FROM PAGE 3
go for a complete shutdown and declare a general holiday?" This correspondent reminded him of the government's instruction to keep offices open with limited staff and ensure transportation by office vehicles. This astonished Minhaz. "They will never do something like that until the government compels them to. But no such initiative from the government will be taken, and as always, we employees will have to bear the brunt," he said. "If the government wants to curb Covid-19 cases, it should go for all out shutdown for at least two weeks," said Bahaddarhat's Rashed Mahmud, another office goer. "You see how close people are standing, waiting for vehicles. You see how shops are open, and people around them are gossiping without their masks on. If people do not stay home, how will the transmission be controlled?" Meanwhile, almost 90 percent shops in main thoroughfares were closed, while roughly two-thirds of shops in the lanes and by lanes remained shut. While mobile courts were seen in the main thoroughfares, lanes and by lanes were found almost without surveillance. At the city's Oxygen intersection, executive magistrate Fahmida Afroz was conducting mobile court drives. She said the court was fining people Tk 100 for not wearing face masks.

Contacted, SM Nazer Hossain, central vice-president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said the government should ensure that private offices provide their staffers with vehicles during the lockdown. "The government instructed all offices to run with limited staff and carry them with own vehicles, but there's no monitoring of this. The district administration has to ensure it," he said. Echoing the same, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, convener of Public Health Right Protection Committee, Chattogram, said alongside the main roads, the government has to ensure lockdown in lanes and by lanes, otherwise the number of cases will not be curbed. Local committees in every area should be involved in this regard, he said. Contacted, Sumani Akter, additional district magistrate of Chattogram, said mobile courts cannot go to every vicinity due to resource limitations, and so public awareness is key to the success of the lockdown. "When the government announces lockdown, that means it passes a signal to everyone that the situation is alarming. Everyone has a role to play in that," she said.

Tk 146cr

FROM PAGE 3
Also, the country received about US\$18.4 billion in remittance till March in the ongoing fiscal, which is already higher than US\$ 18.2 billion that the country received in remittance in the last fiscal year, he said. Mentioning migrant workers' immense contribution to the country's economy, RMMRU Executive Director Prof CR Abrar said unfortunately, their reintegration had all along been a major issue, which was worsened by the pandemic. The government has been taking various efforts to ease the situation but it is a herculean task, he added. Migration is what a worker does for himself, but reintegration is what a state can do for the migrant and the state as a whole for development, said MFA Coordinator William Gois. He said the conference can be an opportunity to see reintegration as an "untapped potential" of development agenda in terms of skills, resources and knowledge. There are at least four Sustainable Development Goals which are directly related to reintegration, said former foreign secretary M Shahidul Haque. He said reintegration has always been a "very sensitive, contested and debated issue" and continues to remain so. Mohamed Yusuf, governance adviser of the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, also addressed the inaugural session.

ONGC VIDESH LIMITED
Jolchhobi, 7th Floor, House No. 40/8, Gulshan North Avenue, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh
Phone: +880-1620900793/ 1852791322
Corrigendum-2
TENDER No. OVL/DLH/MM/Bangladesh/110/2020-21
Reference is invited to the NIT published on 25.02.2021 for tender for drilling of exploratory wells, Titi-1X& Matri-1Xof Bangladesh on integrated/turkey basis, timelines of the tender has been extended as under:

	Existing	Revised
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting	31/03/2021	12/04/2021
Tender closing date & time	03/05/2021 (14:00 Hrs. BST)	12/05/2021 (14:00 Hrs. BST)
Tender opening date & time	03/05/2021 (15:00 Hrs. BST)	12/05/2021 (15:00 Hrs. BST)

For the detailed pre-bid meeting and tender updates, please refer ONGC Videsh website: <https://www.ongcvidesh.com/tenders>
Country Manager

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
চীফ কমার্শিয়াল ম্যানেজার (পূর্ব) এর কার্যালয়
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি কার্যক্রম স্থগিত
নং-৯৩-সি/১৩৭/১৫০/১৪৯/১৩৮/অনবোর্ড/সিআরডি-৩/২০২১ তারিখঃ ০৫/০৪/২০২১
ঢাকা-কিশোরগঞ্জ-ঢাকা রুটে চলাচলকারী
১৩৭/১৫০/১৪৯/১৩৮ নং 'এগারসিক্স প্রভাতী/গোধূলী'
ট্রেনে অনবোর্ড সার্ভিস প্রদানের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি যুগান্তর-
তারিখঃ ১৬/০৩/২০২১, সমকাল- তারিখঃ ১৬/০৩/২০২১,
এবং ডেইলি স্টার তারিখঃ ১৬/০৩/২০২১ পত্রিকায়
প্রকাশিত হয়। সারা দেশে করোনার প্রাদুর্ভাব বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায়
সরকার কর্তৃক লকডাউন ঘোষণার কারণে দরপত্রটির
কার্যক্রম এতদ্বারা স্থগিত করা হল।
মোহাম্মদ নাজমুল ইসলাম
চীফ কমার্শিয়াল ম্যানেজার (পূর্ব)
বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে, চট্টগ্রাম
S(21)(91)
GD-687

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Govt. M M College, Jashore
Kharki Road, Jashore-7400
E-mail: principal.mmc.jessore@gmail.com
Memo No. CEDP/GMMC/2020-2021/G-09/AC-031 Date: 05/04/2021
e-Tender Notice 01/2020-21 (Re-Tender)
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	564733	Procurement of Air Conditioner (AC)	21/04/2021 1:00pm	21/04/2021 2:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 20-04-2021, 4:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. Md. Abdul Mazid
Principal
Govt. M M College, Jashore
Phone: 0421-68554/68564
GD-680

Eastern Refinery Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chittagong-4204
Bangladesh
Corrigendum Notice
Following corrections have been made in the Tender Documents of the Invitation for Tender Ref. No. ER/PUR/IT-14-17/2021 DT. 17.02.2021.

Serial No.	Reference Number	Corrections
a)	Spares for Pump 6119A/B	Tender closing date & time: Immediate working day after withdrawal of lockdown announced on 04/04/2021 for COVID-19. Time: 11:15 Hrs.
b)	Mechanical Seal Spares for Pump 1103 A/B, 1108A, 1108B, 1106	
c)	Mechanical Seal Spares for Pump PM 1204 A/B	Tender opening date & time: Immediate working day after withdrawal of lockdown announced on 04/04/2021 for COVID-19. Time: 11:30 Hrs.
d)	Intelligent Buoyancy Type Level Transmitter	

All other terms and conditions of Invitation for Tenders shall remain unchanged.
"দুর্নীতি বিরোধী অভিযানে, এসো অংশ নেই সকলে মিলে"
GD-689

Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Executive Engineer
Zone-4, Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka
Re-e-Tender Notice
Re-e-Tender are invited in e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Office of the Executive Engineer, Zone-4, Nagar Bhaban, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of following packages, which will be available at e-GP website from date: 05/04/2021, 20.00.

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Ref No. & Package No.	Name of works	Last selling date and time	Tender closing date and time
1.	561242, 46.207.014.24.09.24.2020-2021 z4w31	Development Work of A.C Roy & D.C Roy Road with drain at Ward No. 31.	18-Apr-2021 17:00	19-Apr-2021 15:00
2.	561749, 46.207.014.24.09.26.2020-2021 z4w38	Development Work of Bonogram Road & bylane with drain at Ward No. 38.	18-Apr-2021 17:00	19-Apr-2021 15:30
3.	561752, 46.207.014.24.09.27.2020-2021 z4Road-Cutting Repairing work-1	Repairing work of road cutting of different roads of Ramna BTCL Telephone Exchange area for optical fibre cable laying of HDD & open cut method by Modernization of telecommunication network for digital connectivity project of BTCL under Zone-4.	18-Apr-2021 17:00	19-Apr-2021 15:30

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

Md. Harunur Rashid
Executive Engineer
Zone-4 (Nagar Bhaban)
Dhaka South City Corporation
e-mail: zone4Xen@dhakasouthcity.gov.bd
Ph: 9567666
Ref No. 46.207.007.24.09.03.2020-2021
ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/১৪৬/২০২০-২০২১
GD-692

Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.
comillasadar south@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd
Memo No.UHC/Cumilla Sadar South/Cumilla/2021/১৩৭ Date ০৫/০৪/২০২১
M.S.R Open Tender Notice
Invitation for Procurement of Diet & Linen (Laundry) for Upazila Health Complex Sadar South, Cumilla in Tender Financial Year 2020-2021.

01. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare/Health Service Division.			
02. Agency/Office Name	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
03. Procuring Entity Name	Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer.			
04. Procuring Entity Upazila	Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
05. Invitation for	Diet & Linen (Laundry)			
06. Invitation Ref. No. & Date	Memo No-Sha:Adhi/Budget/2020-21/2614 Date- 18.11.2020 & All Budget of Ministry of Health & Family welfare and Director General of Health Services.			
07. Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)			
08. Budget & Source of fund	GOB(DGHS), Ministry of Health & Family welfare			
09. Tender Publication Date	06 April, 2021.			
10. Tender last selling date & time	19 April, 2021 (During office hour).			
11. Tender Submission date & time	19 April, 2021 (up to 12-00 Noon).			
12. Tender opening date & time	20 April, 2021 (At 12:30 Noon).			
13. Tender Document Selling Place	Upazila Health Complex, Upazila Parishad Office, Model Thana, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
14. Place of Tender Document Received	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
15. Place of Tender opening date & time	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla. 20 April, 2021, at 12:30 Noon.			
16. Place of Pre-Tender Meeting, date & time	Upazila Health Complex, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla. 19 April, 2021 at 2:30 pm.			
17. Qualification of Tendered	Diet & Linen (Laundry) Trade License for the financial year 2020-2021, Income Tax, Vat registration, Bank solvency, Experience & Nationality certificate, Specimen signature, Pass port size Picture etc (as per condition)			
18. Particulars of Purchasing Goods	Diet & Linen (Laundry)			
19. Price of Tender Document :				
S.L No.	Name of Group	Accounting unit	Price of Tender Document (Non refundable) in Taka	Security Amount (Refundable) in Taka
a)	Diet	Each	750/=	20,000/=
b)	Linen (Laundry)	Each	500/=	15,000/=
20. Name of official inviting Tender	Dr. Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman.			
21. Designation of inviting Tender	Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer, Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.			
22. Address of official inviting Tender	Upazila Health Complex, Sadar South, Cumilla.			
23. Contract details of official inviting Tender	Tel- 0888-08042-57055 E-mail-comillasadar south@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd			
24. Validity of Tender	This Tender Valid up to 30 th June, 2021.			
25.	Other terms & condition regarding this Tender notice are available at the office of the undersigned during office hour. The concerned authority reserves the complete rights to accept or reject any part or all the Tender notice or the authority reserves absolute rights to adopt any decision in this connection according to the direction of the Government.			

(Dr. Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman)
Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Cumilla Sadar South, Cumilla.
GD-685

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinians approve 36 groups to run in May vote

Palestinian election officials announced Sunday that 36 candidate lists had been approved to run in legislative elections set for next month, the first Palestinian polls in 15 years. The vote, which precedes a presidential election called for July 31, is part of an effort by the dominant Palestinian movements -- Fatah secularists and Hamas Islamists -- to boost international support for Palestinian governance. Groups had until Wednesday to submit their lists of candidates to contest in the May 22 legislative polls. Individual names on each list are due to be published today, but the Palestinian electoral commission announced on its website that it had approved all 36 applications. President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah movement, which controls the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, is contesting the polls, as is Hamas, which has run the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip since 2007.

Putin signs law allowing him to serve two more terms

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday gave final approval to legislation allowing him to hold office for two additional six-year terms, giving himself the possibility to stay in power



until 2036. The 68-year-old Russian leader, who has already been in power for more than two decades, signed off on the bill yesterday, according to a copy posted on the government's legal information portal. Putin proposed the change last year as part of constitutional reforms that Russians overwhelmingly backed in a vote in July. Lawmakers approved the new bill last month. Putin was first elected president in 2000 and served two consecutive four-year terms.

Vietnam's pandemic response leader sworn in as president

The man behind Vietnam's successful handling of the coronavirus pandemic, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, was formally sworn in as president in Hanoi yesterday. Phuc, 66, was Vietnam's prime minister for the last five years, a period in which the economy boomed, and his government's Covid-19 response won plaudits at home and abroad. Following secret voting yesterday, Phuc scored the maximum votes among the almost 500-member rubber-stamp national assembly. "This is his well-deserved award," said Nguyen Khac Giang, a Vietnamese politics expert from New Zealand's Victoria University of Wellington.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Indonesia rescue agencies search for bodies at an area affected by flash floods after heavy rains in East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara province yesterday. Floods and landslides triggered by tropical cyclone Seroja in a cluster of islands in southeast Indonesia and East Timor have killed more than 100 people, with many still unaccounted for and thousands displaced, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Will win Bengal on one leg'

Mamata tells rally as West Bengal gears up for third phase polls in 31 assembly constituencies today

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Ahead of the third phase of assembly elections in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday expressed confidence in her chances to win the assembly election. She said, "I will win Bengal on one leg and in the future, will get victory in Delhi on two legs."

Mamata was addressing a public meeting in Hooghly's Debanandapur. The comments were in reference to the leg injury she sustained in an alleged attack in Nandigram last month. Mamata has been campaigning on a wheelchair since the incident.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo also attacked the Election Commission of India (ECI) reiterating that the polls should have been held in a short period of time in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. She also accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government of meddling in ECI's affairs.

"What was the need for an eight-phase election?"



It was done by BJP Mandal. Given the present situation (Covid-19), shouldn't they have wrapped up the election within a short period of time?" she asked.

Mamata slammed the BJP for not being able to find a local candidate to contest polls. "BJP, can't you find a local candidate to contest elections? They don't have locals, all their people are borrowed from either TMC or CPM. They're sprinkling money like water from a hosepipe. They who can't say Sonar Bangla properly, can't rule Bengal," she said.

Meanwhile, the ECI rejected Mamata's claims about the presence of outsiders at a polling booth in Nandigram as "factually incorrect" and "devoid of substance". A total of 31 Assembly constituencies including eight in Hooghly, seven in Howrah and 16 in South 24 Parganas will go to polls in phase 3 today. The counting of votes will take place on May 2.

Myanmar protesters clap to denounce junta

REUTERS

Protesters in Myanmar clapped together yesterday in the latest show of dissent against the military junta, as a regional bloc prepared for talks on the crisis that has killed nearly 600 people.

Clapping began in various parts of the main city Yangon at 5:00 pm in response to a call by protest organisers, residents said.

The gesture would honour "Ethnic Armed Organisations and Gen Z defence youths from Myanmar including Yangon who are fighting in the revolution... on behalf of us," Ei Thinzar Maung, a protest leader, wrote on Facebook.

Despite the killing of at least 564 people by the security forces since the February 1 coup, protesters have been coming out every day, often in small groups in small towns, to voice opposition to the overthrow of an elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and the return of military rule.

The movement, which some protesters

are calling a "spring revolution", has included street marches, a civil disobedience campaign of strikes and quirky acts of rebellion organised via social media.

Yesterday, one person was killed in the central Sagaing region when security forces broke up a protest, the Myanmar Now news outlet reported. Earlier, demonstrators with placards of Suu Kyi and signs calling for international intervention marched through the second-biggest city Mandalay, images posted on social media showed.

Brunei, chair of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), threw its support yesterday behind a regional leaders' meeting to discuss Myanmar.

After talks between Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin and Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Brunei said both countries had asked their ministers and officials to make the "necessary preparations for the meeting."



OPEN LETTER DEFENDING ACCORD

Turkey detains 10 retired admirals

AFP, Ankara

Turkey yesterday detained 10 retired admirals after a letter signed by more than 100 of them warned against a possible threat to a treaty governing the use of Turkey's key waterways.

Turkey's approval last month of plans to develop a shipping canal in Istanbul comparable to the Panama or Suez canals has opened up debate about the 1936 Montreux Convention.

In their letter, 104 retired admirals said it was "worrying" to open the Montreux treaty up to debate, calling it an agreement that "best protects Turkish interests".

The Ankara chief public prosecutor's office said arrest warrants were issued for the 10 and ordered four others suspects to report to Ankara police within three days, opting not to detain them because of their age.

They are accused of "using force and violence to get rid of the constitutional order", NTV broadcaster reported.

The prosecutor launched a probe on Sunday into the retired admirals on suspicion of an "agreement to commit a crime against the state's security and constitutional order".

Netanyahu back in court

Prosecutors accuse the Israeli PM of treating favours as 'currency' at the opening of graft trial

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli prosecutors yesterday accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of treating favours as "currency" at the opening of a corruption trial which, along with an inconclusive election, has clouded his prospects of remaining in office.

Netanyahu, who has pleaded not guilty to charges of bribery, breach of trust and fraud, came to Jerusalem District Court in a dark suit and black protective mask, conferring quietly with lawyers as his supporters and critics held raucous demonstrations outside.

"The relationship between Netanyahu and the defendants became currency, something that could be traded," prosecutor Liat Ben-Ari said in presenting



so-called Case 4000, concerning the premier's alleged ties to the owners of an Israeli news-site.

"This currency could distort a public servant's judgment."

Netanyahu left before the first prosecution witness testified in the first such trial of a sitting Israeli prime minister. He has described himself as the victim of a politically motivated witch-hunt.

Meanwhile, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin began consulting with party heads on who might form the next coalition government - a toss-up after the March 23 election, the fourth in two years, gave neither Netanyahu nor his rivals a clear mandate.

Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd.
Bangladesh Navy
Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj
Phone: 880-02-7661480, Fax: 02-7661027
E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd, www.dewbn.gov.bd
Ref: 06.02.6758.165.07.194.21.1637 Date: 05 April 2021

Invitation for Tender

01	Procuring entity name	Dockyard & Engineering Works (DEW) Ltd., BN, Narayanganj.
02	Invitation for	Supervision, Repair and/or Renewal of Propulsion System of 05 (five) Bangladesh Navy Ships during docking at DEW.
03	Procuring method	Open Tender.
04	Budget & source of funds	Own finance.
05	Last selling date & time	14 April 2021 Time: 16.00pm.
06	Tender closing date & time	15 April 2021 Time: 12.15pm.
07	Tender opening date & time	15 April 2021 Time: 12.30pm.
08	Name & address of the office: a. Selling of tender document	Cash Section, Account Department, Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	b. Receiving tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj.
	c. Opening tender document	Dockyard & Engineering Works Ltd., Bangladesh Navy, Sonakanda, Bandar, Narayanganj. Tenderers and their authorized representative are allowed to attend.
09	Price of tender document	Tk 1,000.00 (one thousand only) (non-refundable).
10	Contact details	Mobile: 01769719887 Web: www.dewbn.gov.bd E-mail: commercial@dewbn.gov.bd
11	Eligibility	1) Company must have experience of carrying out similar repair works onboard ships of Bangladesh Navy/Coast Guard. 2) Company must have minimum 5 (five) years of experience of working in shafting system having hydraulic coupling. 3) Document required: a. Trade license. b. TIN certificate. c. VAT registration/BIN certificate. d. Bank statement. e. Experience/work completion certificate for carrying out similar repair works onboard ships of Bangladesh Navy/Coast Guard.
12	Special instructions	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any part of the tender prior to acceptance without showing any reason.

GD-684 For Managing Director

S'PORE PM'S DEFAMATION CASE

Blogger crowdfunds to pay damages

AFP, Singapore

A Singaporean blogger said he had crowdfunded almost \$100,000 that he was ordered to pay as damages for defaming the prime minister by sharing an article on Facebook.

Leong Sze Hian was sued by Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong after sharing the piece, which linked Lee to the money-laundering scandal at state fund 1MDB in Malaysia.

Critics say the case is the latest example of the government seeking to silence dissent online in the tightly regulated city-state.

A court last month found in Lee's favour and ordered the blogger to pay the prime minister Sg\$133,000 (US\$99,000) plus costs, which are yet to be determined.

Leong launched an online fundraising drive and said late Sunday more than 2,000 people had contributed the full amount after 11 days.

"We hit 133k, thanks to all Singaporeans," he wrote on Facebook.

"It's thanks to your help that we had the courage to face them."

The article that Leong shared, originally published on a Malaysian news portal, alleged that Lee was the target of an investigation in neighbouring Malaysia over the 1MDB state fund.

Billions of dollars were looted from the investment vehicle in a scandal that involved Malaysia's former leader Najib Razak and his inner circle.

Lee took the stand at the start of the trial in October and accused Leong of making "malicious and baseless" allegations that had undermined the government's "integrity and honesty".

Bangladesh Energy and Power Research Council (BEPRC)
Power Division
Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources
IEB Bhaban (11th Floor), Ramna, Dhaka.
www.eprc.gov.bd

SPECIAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON ENERGY AND POWER RELATED APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS
(9th Program Solicitation)

To bring technological innovation in energy and power sectors as well as to ensure energy security through research and development, BEPRC is looking forward to funding applied research projects. The idea is to seek innovative solutions for efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable development of Bangladesh's energy and power infrastructure.

The Program Solicitations mainly focus to fund applied research based projects that would unfold technologies, tools, and strategies for upgrading, repowering and revolutionizing the over all energy and power sectors of Bangladesh.

Research Focus Areas
Proposers submitting applied research proposals should address one of the following key research areas:

1. Responsible Energy Conservation
2. Energy Efficiency and Demand Management
3. Renewable Energy
4. Conventional Energy
5. Transmission and Distribution Integration and Infrastructure
6. Energy Storage

For details of each of the above mentioned research areas, please refer to program solicitations at the link: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

Who May Submit a Solicited Proposal?
Individuals and organizations in the following categories may submit proposals:

1. Universities and Colleges
2. Non-profit, non-academic organizations
3. For-profit organizations
4. Government Organizations
5. Individuals
6. Foreign organizations

For details, please refer to the BEPRC grants proposal submission guideline at: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

How to Submit Proposals?
Proposals to BEPRC shall be submitted via online portal of BEPRC. For proposal submission via online, the guideline specified in the BEPRC Grants Proposal Submission Guideline applies. Proposal submission link: <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

No hard Copy Submission is allowed. Only proposals submitted online will be considered.

BEPRC will ensure maintenance of strict confidentiality of the proposals.

Details of Program Solicitations including Award Information, Key Activities Schedules and Eligibility information are available at <http://researchgrant.eprc.gov.bd/>

For any queries, Please contact:
Farhan Hussain, Director (Innovation), BEPRC.
email: farhusseng@gmail.com

Solicitation Release Date
06.04.2021

Last Date of Proposal Submission
06.05.2021

LAW INTERVIEW

There is an acute need for independent legislation in relation to data protection

Omar H. Khan is a Barrister-at-Law of Lincoln's Inn and an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. He heads one of the top full-service corporate law chambers in Bangladesh, namely, Legal Counsel. Legal Counsel provides legal services to a large number of corporates from various sectors for over decades and is also known for its legal innovations and pro-bono services. Law Desk, The Daily Star talks to him on the following issues.

Law Desk (LD): How would you evaluate the growth of commercial laws in Bangladesh since Independence?

Omar H. Khan (OHK): Since independence, Bangladesh has taken various initiatives for ensuring sustainable economic growth. In the recent years, the growth has been magnificent. Various laws relating to trade and commerce have been enacted. The Consumer Protection Act, the Competition Act, several amendments to the Companies Act,

treaties etc., give a very positive ray of hope. In pursuit of sustainable achievement, it is aspired that more commercial laws shall be enacted and updated for addressing the ever-increasing demands, particularly in relation to data protection, intellectual property laws, laws related to businesses conducted through digital platforms, CSR etc.

LD: What are the key legal matters a corporate should consider in conducting their business?

OHK: Before starting a venture, the appropriate legal structure of the business and the pros and cons associated therewith needs to be carefully identified. Upon establishment, the necessary licenses need to be procured. Apart from ensuring legal and regulatory compliance in general, one needs to also be mindful of whether any sector specific laws are applicable to them. It is important to consider compliances with the applicable laws and regulations, timely submission of different regulatory returns, full compliance with the income tax and VAT obligations, audit obligations, etc. In fact, large corporates maintain independent departments/divisions to ensure different aspects of compliance and corporate governance. For SMEs, while engaging large manpower may not be viable, they still need to ensure all the compliances in full.

LD: In your opinion what are the three fastest-growing corporate law areas in the world and how effectively the laws of Bangladesh address such growing need?

OHK: There are many legal areas



which are growing rapidly. In my opinion, the following are three of the fastest-growing areas of corporate laws in the world:

i) Digital Security Laws: Bangladesh has recently enacted the Digital Security Act 2018 for ensuring a safe cyber space and it also has an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act 2009 which addresses a wide range of information and communication related matters. However, I feel there is still an acute need for independent legislation in relation to data protection.

ii) Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As): M&As are growing all over the world. Bangladesh, even being a fast-growing economy, its M&A environment has still been in an immature stage. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that although public M&As are rare, the Bangladeshi market has been primarily driven by private M&As.

Moreover, Bangladesh has even witnessed one of its biggest cross-border acquisitions in recent times on a tobacco company and mergers of 2 telcos. With regard to the legal environment, it is observed that laws such as the Companies Act 1994, the Competition Act 2012, laws and regulations relating to Securities, etc. are all in place. We shall focus on smooth implementation of these laws with additional attention on easing the foreign exchange regulations in order to avoid unwarranted delay and procedural difficulties in M&A transactions.

iii) Labour and Employment Laws: There has been a continued growth of this particular area of corporate law over the years. Bangladesh Labour Act was enacted in 2006 (repealing 25 pieces of legislation and codifying largely all labour laws in one piece of legislation), along with the Bangladesh Labour Rules in 2015. It should be noted that the BLA has been amended 5 times since 2006. Moreover, recently Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act 2019 has also been enacted. Considering the organic growth in economy and ever-changing employment conditions, such laws need to be constantly updated.

LD: How competitive is the corporate law practice in Bangladesh and what attributes helped you to stand out?

OHK: Corporate law practice in Bangladesh is, indeed, very competitive and it really takes tremendous hard work and determination to stand out in such

a field. Nonetheless, with utmost passion and dedication, we have always aimed at providing the highest possible standard of legal services to each client. I believe and pursue the global business principles of quality, integrity, and unity. Moreover, Legal Counsel is engaged in various social and philanthropic causes, provide pro bono services and also conduct legal practices in the most environmentally friendly way. We have different internal policies and practices in place in the model of top law firms of North American and European jurisdictions. We also maintain our strength in litigations and ADR besides providing advisory services. I certainly feel professionally content to pioneer legal innovations in the country which are replicated not only domestically but also internationally.

LD: What advice would you give to aspiring corporate lawyers?

OHK: Legal field is extremely challenging, yet very rewarding. It takes a lot of hard work, passion, dedication, sincerity and patience. Aspiring corporate lawyers should not only be enriched with the knowledge of substantive law, but also be well-aware, and prepared for the practical challenges and hurdles in the legal field. They should be updated on the current legal affairs and global corporate developments at all times, be smart, sincere and prepare themselves to critically analyse legal problems of their clients to provide the best possible legal solution to them, thereby serving their best interests.

LD: Thank you very much
OHK: You are most welcome.

In pursuit of sustainable achievement, it is aspired that more commercial laws shall be enacted and updated for addressing the ever-increasing demands, particularly in relation to data protection, intellectual property laws, laws related to businesses conducted through digital platforms, CSR etc.

the BIDA Act, the One-Stop Service Act, regulations in relation to listed companies, laws related to special economic zones, Public-Private Partnership Act, Money Laundering Prevention Act, codification of the labour laws are only to name a few. Enactment of such laws, regulations, policies along with ratification of international trade related agreements,

RIGHTS WATCH

Addressing gender inequality during Covid-19 pandemic

LAW DESK

The 2021 theme for International Women's Day is "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". As the world gradually sets its sight on rebuilding the world after the COVID-19 pandemic, questions of gender equality have become more pertinent than ever. In many ways, the pandemic has brought into focus the existing facets of inequality and has made more prominent the urgency of addressing these inequalities to better prepare for the future. With that in mind, it's important to evaluate the impacts the past year has had on women and girls of the country.

Experts have repeatedly brought to attention the need to view the pandemic-induced crisis through a gendered lens and have brought attention to the increased vulnerability to which women were subjected as a result of not only physical restrictions due to lockdown measures, but also lack of access to income, healthcare and for girls, education. Surveys have noted an increased incidence of child marriage – schools have been shut down since March 2020, creating both social and economic burdens on parents leading them to opt for marrying their daughters off. A significant rise in incidence of domestic violence was reported by rights organisations, the plight of which was exacerbated by limited access to legal and medical support for victims. Thousands of female workers, largely those who worked in the RMG sector and in the informal sector as domestic workers, lost their jobs or faced significant reduction in pay.

In the backdrop of these growing concerns, some legislative and judicial developments having bearing on women's rights have taken place. Although not all have received unanimous support, they require some reflection.

The most notable legislative development in 2020 was perhaps the introduction of death penalty as a punishment for rape. In the face of countrywide protests, an Ordinance was passed (later enacted by the Parliament) amending *Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain 2000* which made death penalty the highest punishment for rape. The law previously punished rape with life imprisonment. The quantum of

punishment under the law left no room for sentencing discretion and combined with the shortcomings in the prosecution and trial level meant that convictions under the law were rare. As such, the increase in punishment without any effective improvement to the investigation and trial process is unlikely to result in any significant change. Although it may be too early to evaluate the deterring effect of the higher penalty imposed by the amendment, it is worth noting that according to the survey of *Ain O Salish Kendra*, 160 reported



cases of rapes took place in about the last three months 2020 after the passage of the amendment and 84 cases of rape were recorded in January 2021 alone.

Increased incidence of domestic violence was reported by various surveys and reports of rights organizations. According to the statistics of *Ain O Salish Kendra*, 554 women were victims of domestic violence of which 367 died and 90 committed suicide. 218 women were subjected to violence for dowry of which 89 died as a result of the abuse and 18 committed suicide. Although the National Helpline for Violence against Women remained open during the lockdown, providing effective legal, medical and psychosocial support to victims within the existing constraints proved to be a challenge. The Domestic Violence Act 2010 provides certain remedies for victims of domestic violence; however, the lack of adequate number of government funded safety shelters and trained personnel hinder

proper implementation of this law.

According to the reports of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, incidence of child marriage has increased by 13% during the COVID pandemic, making this the highest rate of child marriage in the country in the past 25 years. Child marriage rates significantly increased during May, June, July, August and September. The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 penalises the solemnisation of underage marriage. However, the Act creates an exception for underage marriage in 'special circumstance',

thus effectively removing a minimum age of marriage. As per rule 17 of the Child Marriage Restraint Rules 2018, the parties to the marriage or their parents and legal guardians may file an application to the appropriate court along with the necessary legal documents for marriage in special circumstances. Although the Rules seek to clarify the controversial provision of the law, the absence of a minimum age of marriage leaves room for its misuse and creates valid concerns about the wellbeing of girl children with increased vulnerability to child marriage.

To work towards the goal of an "equal future in a post-COVID world", it is imperative that laws are properly amended to reflect the country's commitment to international standards of equality and non-discrimination. It is equally important that a holistic and coordinated effort is led by all stakeholders in the effective implementation of the laws.

LAW OPINION

Judiciary participating in law-making An analysis on the Southern Solar Power Ltd Case

NAFIZ AHMED

In the 2019 case, *Southern Solar Power Ltd and another v Bangladesh Power Development Board and others* [(2019) 2 LNJ] the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (HCD) held, "the Constitution of Bangladesh empowers the High Court Division to declare any law to be void, this Court is competent to make observations about any law, including what ought to be in the Act." To justify its position, the HCD went on to hold that as the framers of the Constitution intended the Supreme Court to be the guardian of the Constitution, it is the duty of the Court to assist the Parliament by pointing out the loopholes in the law. To its credit, the Court went on to note that the Court's view is not binding upon the Parliament. The Court does not provide any detailed justification for taking this position in this judgment. The Court seems to believe that since it has the jurisdiction to decide the constitutionality of a law, it also possesses the power to make observations as to what the content of a particular law ought to be. This would then mean that the power of judicial review arms the Court with suggesting contents of the law. This position is different from what judiciaries in most liberal democracies take.

The principle of separation of powers has been at the center of legal and political debate ever since its inception. Although many credit its modern form to Montesquieu's writings, traces of its existence can be found long before his writings. The principle is adopted to reduce the possibility of one organ of the state holding all governmental power and becoming a tyrant. If one wants to simplify this complex principle, one may say that it requires the distribution of governmental authority to different organs of the state in a manner that allows each organ to check on the actions of the other. In most liberal democracies, the governmental authority is divided into the legislature, executive, and judiciary. Different versions of this principle have been adopted in different legal systems. It varies from Constitution to Constitution. For instance, separation of power in the US is very strict, whereas, the UK follows a relaxed version of it (if any at all).

In *Anwar Hossain Chowdhury v Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh* [41 DLR (AD) 165], separation of powers has been held by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, to be a fundamental feature of the Constitution, which is beyond the scope of amendment power of the Parliament. As illustrated by the Supreme Court on several occasions, the Constitution of Bangladesh provides for a partial version of separation of powers. This means that there can be no watertight compartmentalisation and there in



fact are certain overlaps of powers among the three organs of the state. Despite there being some overlaps, the principle of separation of powers lays down certain barriers for each organ which they cannot cross. For instance, the AD in *Abdul Mannan Khan v Government of Bangladesh and others* [64 DLR (AD) 169] notes that the question of violation of the principle of separation of powers may arise if a Court or its presiding officer goes for judicial legislation.

The people, through the Constitution, entrust the law-making power to the Parliament. It grants the power of judicial review to the HCD which allows the HCD to strike down any law that contradicts the Constitution. It is generally accepted that ordinarily, in a judicial review of legislation, a Court will look at whether it contradicts a superior law. The Court can also look into the reasonableness of a legislation while exercising its judicial review power. However, the Court should not enter the realm of policy-making. When a particular law is challenged before a Court exercising the power of judicial review, it is expected that the Court will look into its constitutionality, not suggest amendments to the law that may make it more constitutional.

The Court's position in *Southern Solar Power Ltd* case may be considered to be in a way extending the power of judicial review. If a law is not unconstitutional, deference should be given to the policy choice of the legislature. Upon reading the HCD's *dictum* one may be tempted to ask, should a judgment be the place to express a Judge's view on how a certain provision should be amended to be more efficient? It is noted that the HCD carefully stated that it does not hold that the suggestions are binding. The Court's benevolent intention while suggesting the amendment is not doubted by any means. However, if it is accepted that the HCD is competent to make observations regarding what ought to be enacted, it would introduce a new dimension to judicial review. Such action may make the HCD a direct participant in the law-making process since it is suggesting the content of the law.

The writer is an LLM Candidate at the University of Cambridge.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 6, 2021, CHAITRA 23, 1427 BS

Another deadly capsizes, another avoidable tragedy

Govt must answer for failure to prevent recurrence of such accidents

WE are shocked by the news of yet another launch capsized that took place in the Shitalakkhya river in Narayanganj late Sunday. At least 27 people reportedly drowned after a cargo ship rammed through the Munshiganj-bound passenger boat, leading it to capsize. The launch, named Sabit Al Hasan, was reportedly carrying nearly 50 passengers when it was hit near an under-construction bridge. The remaining passengers managed to swim to shore. The ship responsible for the collision, we are told, still remains untraced, as the authorities scramble to present an accurate account of what happened, and why.

This is the latest disaster for a country haunted by regular maritime accidents. One may still recall the horrors of the launch capsized in Buriganga River on June 29 last year, which occurred after a collision with a ferry, leading to the deaths of 34 passengers. Those who thought the sheer number of casualties would be enough to bring discipline to this unruly sector were in for a rude awakening when another boat, carrying 30-35 passengers, sank following a collision with a stone-laden barge in Karnaphuli River in mid-February, killing at least three. The manner in which such accidents keep happening—with heavy casualties inflicted almost every time—is deeply disconcerting. Every time, we see a routine reaction from the authorities: probe committees are formed (as they were this time, too), “carelessness” of the vessel operators is blamed, and compensation for the victims is promised. But no substantive reforms are undertaken to check such accidents.

Experts have often cited a number of reasons for the launch disasters in Bangladesh, including faulty designs, structural weaknesses, lack of adequate safety measures, weaknesses in inspection procedures, obtaining of fitness certificates through unfair means, overcrowding, disregard for weather forecasts, and of course, negligence and carelessness of the ship’s crew. No doubt the latest probe committees will also highlight one or two of these reasons—and those responsible should be detained and punished according to law—but whether or not this will lead to a significant reform necessary for safe maritime transport is uncertain. Unless the authorities overseeing maritime transport, especially Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), overhaul the sector and address the bigger issues of corruption and accountability to check their own inefficiencies and failures, such accidents will recur.

Our hearts go out to the families of the victims of the Shitalakkhya launch capsized. No words of consolation or monetary compensation can make up for the wanton loss of lives and the agony of those who have lost their loved ones. The government must answer for these deaths, and for why it has been consistently failing to provide safety to the maritime passengers. Without significant reforms in how this sector is run, we may never be rid of the scourge of preventable maritime accidents.

Do we have the scientific data to fight the pandemic?

Govt must focus on generating local research

WE know how deadly Covid-19 infections can be, especially now with the second wave of the pandemic and a record number of daily death counts and infection rates. This is why it is so important to have accurate data that can give the kind of information required for policy-making and treatment. This has been reiterated by Dr Nazrul Islam in a report published in *The Daily Star* yesterday. In another report published by the same daily just four days ago, the chief of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 (NTAC) echoed this view, highlighting the importance of vigorous scientific research to find out the reasons behind the second-wave of the Covid-19 epidemic. Both suggestions point to the dearth of scientific data having adverse impacts in tackling the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

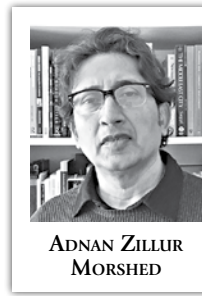
According to the WHO, public health surveillance is needed as an early warning system to identify public health emergencies, guide public health policies, and monitor the epidemiology of a condition to set priorities. An effective surveillance system is comprised of detection of health events, collection of pertinent data, investigation of cases or outbreaks, preparing routine reports and forwarding them to respective administrative levels for further actions. The entry also mentions that some systems called “AFP Surveillance” have been set up in many countries which work as the backbone in curing vaccine-preventable diseases. Also, a global laboratory network has been established to find out the underlying reasons that cause vaccine-preventable diseases.

The joint advisory group that Dr Nazrul is part of was formed as a collaboration between the WHO and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs with a view to help the member states of these organisations to collect estimates of the number of deaths due to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic. Since 2016, the group has been analysing death reports from 29 countries around the world. Unfortunately, Bangladesh is not in this list as the country lacks in accurate and robust data collection on vital statistics, which help to analyse the trends and patterns of usual deaths and compare them with the deaths caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government must take urgent steps to include Bangladesh in the aforementioned surveillance systems and global laboratory networks. Also, creation of a research culture in our local educational institutions is also crucial to lessen our dependence on foreign research activities in managing our domestic challenges. The government has to increase its spending, both to enable the academic community to carry out impactful scientific research projects, and also to set up new research organisations. Hiring the best academic staff, ensuring necessary infrastructure for high-quality research and foreign and domestic scholarship opportunities for bright but needy students can also be some of the measures that the respective authorities can initiate to reduce the dearth of scientific research work in our country.

How about experiential indicators of wellbeing?

We must measure the state of our development on the ground rather than blindly trusting trickle-down economics



ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

THAT gross domestic product (GDP) is not a fully satisfying measure of a country’s progress is no longer news. The awareness of GDP’s inadequacies in revealing a nation’s

state of development is now almost mainstream. The driving mantra that “anything that can be measured can be improved” has been faulted for excessive linearity and misleading objectivity. A year after winning the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998, Amartya Sen published *Development as Freedom*. The book starts with this straight-shooting statement: “Development can be seen... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialisation, or with technological advance, or with social modernisation.”

A decade later, in 2009, three economists—Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi—led a groundbreaking study on alternatives to GDP, commissioned by the then French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

Then, after more than a decade of contestations and, now, in the wake of a global pandemic that has both revealed and magnified the systemic social inequities across the world, measuring a nation’s progress in a holistic and meaningful way seems more urgent than ever before.

Meanwhile, since 1972, Bhutan has been promoting a “gross national happiness (GNH)” index as a way to balance the influence of modernity and the preservation of tradition with a Buddhist ethos of compassion, contentment, and calmness. After the 2008 financial crisis, the world took a serious look at GNH as a viable alternative to growth-centric development models.

Ironically, when in 2017, the United Nations released a report ranking countries by happiness, Bhutan came 97th, while Norway claimed the title of the happiest country. Lately, the people of Bhutan have not been unified in their country’s self-branding as a “happy country.” A Bhutanese radio host summarised the rising cynicism within the country this way: “The idea of GNH may have put Bhutan on the map, but the concept has been hijacked by the West—and quantified to a degree that makes it unrecognisable to ordinary Bhutanese.”

Measuring happiness remains elusive due to its disconcerting range of subjectivities—from happiness as personal emotion at a particular time (I am feeling happy because I had an ice cream today) to happiness as a cognitive evaluation of something (I love riding the commuter train because it brings me to my destination safely and punctually every day).

Many experts have been talking about “wellbeing” as a more inclusive and sustainable metric than the ones that predominantly focus on measurable indicators such as per capita income. Consider this: Bangladesh’s per capita GDP is nearing USD 2000. Bangladesh is now the third fastest growing economy in the world. A paltry USD 8.75 billion at the time of its independence, its economy is expected to reach nearly USD 500

anxious about being sexually harassed on public transportation.

If seven out of 10 random respondents on the street express more or less the same feeling, then there is a serious policy need to come up with new indicators of the quality of everyday life. This, of course, does not mean that GDP is obsolete. The argument here is that the conventional indicators should be complemented with other types to understand the effects of

address. Walk Score is based on how long a person needs to reach a nearby urban amenity (such as a park or a hospital or a metro station). The highest score is awarded to an address where an amenity is reached in five minutes by walking, while zero point is given to those that have facilities requiring more than a 30-minute walk. A “walker’s paradise” has a Walk Score of 90-100. Walkability makes a city humane, democratic, and

start using the Urban Neighbourhood Green Index (UNGI) to assess the quantity and quality of green spaces at the neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood competitions to improve UNGI should have an impact at a city scale. The fruits of economic growth must be experienced in our daily lives.

Quality of public space: A city without accessible, pedestrian-friendly, and democratic public spaces is like a



The experience of daily life can be measured with a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics, such as the use of zebra crossing as a street safety tool. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Not an end in itself, development must be assessed (both quantitatively and qualitatively) for the quality of its effect on people’s lives, while the very notion of development must be open to public reasoning. On the flip side, blanket criticism of “development” has lately become a popular middleclass pastime and a biased prop for government-bashing. What we need is objective assessments of, among others, the effects of a flyover in mitigating traffic congestion in the metropolis or quality of community-building through the restoration of urban parks or economic dividends of the Padma bridge.

national development on daily lives.

How should policymakers recalibrate prevailing metrics to assess conditions on the ground? The experience of daily life can be measured with a combination of quantitative (air quality) and qualitative metrics (use of zebra crossing as a street safety tool). Could supra-indicators like GDP or other health measures be complemented by what could be called

healthy. It represents an urban area’s state of wellbeing and the best weapon against oligarchic segregation of the city.

Public transportation: It is now common wisdom that the backbone of sustainable urbanism is mass transit because it is the most cost-effective and environment-friendly way to facilitate urban mobility. Cities use Transit Score to measure how well a location is served by mass transit. It is calculated by the usefulness of public transport in terms of the routes used, frequency of service, and accessibility to the nearest station on the route. The forthcoming elevated metro in Dhaka should be an opportune moment to institute Transit Score as a measure of urban wellbeing in Dhaka.

Waste management: Going around in the streets of Dhaka or any other big city in Bangladesh, one would face the inevitable environmental calamity: the rotting solid waste on the street. We have a precariously low public hygiene threshold for reasons that require national debates and robust anthropological studies. With Bangladesh’s rapid urbanisation, the total solid waste generation in cities is expected to reach up to 47,000 tons per day by 2025. If 50 percent of Dhaka’s daily solid waste remain uncollected on the streets, how would GDP reduce the stench? We need Solid Waste Management Score (SWMS) to measure the state of public health in a location. If I go to Lalmeta to rent a house, I should be able find out the area’s SWMS and then decide whether I should rent there or not.

Access to green and natural environment: Nature is therapeutic. Urban greenery are our best and cheapest public-health infrastructures that rejuvenate us and keep us healthy. Livable cities create miniature forests as urban oases, building an ecosystem of trees, birds, wind, air, smell, and quiet. A green park can create Zen moments, lowering the mental stress of hectic city life. City corporations and municipalities should



The backbone of sustainable urbanism is mass transit. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

billion by 2025. The world appears to consider Bangladesh a success story. This is great news.

However, the experience of impressive national development in the country’s everyday life is considerably uneven. If you ask a woman on the way to work near a bus stop in Dhaka about how her life is these days, she may answer you like this: life is much better than before since I can make ends meet, but my house rent is too high and finding an affordable, quality primary school for my children is a constant struggle. Besides, I am always

“experiential indicators?” (I focus here only on cities; there should be indicators for rural wellbeing too).

The following experiential indicators could be considered.

Footpath and Walk Score: People of all economic classes and gender should be able to use footpaths comfortably, safely, and pleasurably. Footpaths must have adequate width to facilitate a two-way pedestrian traffic and be free of obstructions. Many cities now use Walk Score to measure the walkability of an

room without a window, suffocating, claustrophobic, and unhealthy. Public spaces nurture community spirit among urban inhabitants. If you are in Barcelona for the first time as a tourist, you are most likely to visit Las Ramblas before finding out Spain’s GDP. Most “public spaces” in Dhaka are street nodes like Shabbagh Mor, TSC intersection, or Manik Mia Avenue. None of these nodal places are designed as safe and healthy public spaces. What would be Dhaka’s Public Space Index?

Internet accessibility: The global competitiveness and digital democracy of cities will increasingly be determined by their access to broadband. Almost a quarter of urban Americans—23 percent or 62 million people—do not have broadband access. In Brazil it is 38 percent, India 31 percent, and Germany 11 percent. According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in 2019, in Bangladesh, 62 percent of households do not have internet access at home. The reasons for this disparity are quality of the internet, affordability, IT literacy, and socioeconomic conditions of a country. In a post-pandemic world, the measure of a city’s digital democracy will be one of the ways to determine its livability and wellbeing. The quality of the virtual space will be as important as the physical space. However, measuring the adverse effects of excessive online usage, particularly social media, on people is equally important.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence and introspect on its progress, it would be prudent to be creative about experiential indicators to measure the state of our development on the ground rather than blindly trusting trickle-down economics. It is also important to measure the environmental and social costs of development. Not an end in itself, development must be assessed (both quantitatively and qualitatively) for the quality of its effect on people’s lives, while the very notion of development must be open to public reasoning. On the flip side, blanket criticism of “development” has lately become a popular middleclass pastime and a biased prop for government-bashing. What we need is objective assessments of, among others, the effects of a flyover in mitigating traffic congestion in the metropolis or quality of community-building through the restoration of urban parks or economic dividends of the Padma bridge.

Nicholas Kristof’s recent op-ed in *The New York Times* on Bangladesh’s hard-earned ability to teach the world “how to engineer progress” through investment in “education and girls” was a great birthday gift. It is beneficial to get good press. But the gushing reaction of Bangladeshis around the world almost suggested that unless we receive the validation of western media and pundits, we cannot be so sure of ourselves. The most important sign of a nation’s self-confidence is its ability to self-assess, while aspiring to loftier goals.

Adnan Zillur Morshed is an architect, architectural historian, and professor. He can be reached at morshed@cua.edu.

Gallant freedom fighters

FROM PAGE 12
 In its proposal, the Liberation War ministry said a total of 5,222 wounded freedom fighters under four categories are getting Tk 25,000 to Tk 45,000 monthly. Family members of 952 deceased freedom fighters who were wounded in 1971 are getting Tk 25,000 per month.
 Family members of 5,816 martyred freedom fighters are getting two festival allowances (Tk 10,000 each).
 The wounded freedom fighters and family members of martyrs were not getting the Pahela Baishakh allowance. Wounded freedom fighters were also not getting the Victory Day allowance.
 Families of the seven Bir Shreshthas are getting Tk 35,000 per month, 68 Bir Uttam Tk 25,000, 175 Bir Bikram Tk 20,000 and 426 Bir Protik Tk 15,000.
 But the gallantry award-holding freedom fighters are currently not getting festival and Pahela Baishakh allowances. Gallantry award recipients who are alive today also do not get Victory Day allowance, the ministry said in its proposal.
 There were five agendas in yesterday's cabinet meeting.
 Other than those, the price of daily essentials and Covid-19 vaccination issues were discussed.
 Cabinet Secretary Anwarul said Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, who was present at the meeting, assured the cabinet of being fully prepared for Ramadan.
 The cabinet secretary said that the commerce ministry has proposed vat exemption on oil imports as the

oil price is high in the international market.
 "They will ensure the reflection of exemption in the retail price [if proposal is approved]," he said.
OFFICE HOURS RESCHEDULED
 The government has rescheduled office timings for the upcoming holy month of Ramadan to a 9:00am-3:30pm workday for all government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions.
 The decision was made at the cabinet meeting.
 "During Ramadan, 9:00am to 3:30pm was fixed as the office timing from Sunday to Thursday. There will be a 15-minute break from 1:15pm to 1:30pm for Zuhr prayers," said Anwarul.
 He said other institutions like Bangladesh Railway, the agencies involved in emergency services like fire services, hospitals, state-owned industries and factories, other companies and the Supreme Court will reschedule their own office timings for Ramadan following their own rules and considering public interest.
 Replying to a question, he said the banks will follow directives of the central bank.
 The cabinet also approved the draft Chattogram Port Authority Act 2021, keeping the provision of one-year imprisonment and Tk 5 lakh fine for pollution.
 "Often, hazardous substances are stored. Sometimes ships release excessive fumes -- dangerous for humans. The punishment will be applicable for them," the cabinet secretary said.

Slow response brings us here

FROM PAGE 1
 Over 1.16 lakh candidates and their guardians thronged 55 centres across the country amid a shortage of transport. The centres saw huge crowds of examinees and guardians outside -- oblivious to the necessity of maintaining social distancing. The examinees had to make their way through crowds to enter the exam halls.
 The following day, quite unexpectedly came the announcement of a weeklong lockdown.
 The decision to impose restrictions on transport, public movement and businesses caught the people off guard, sending them into a frenzy to stock up on food supplies and household essentials.
 Hundreds others belonging to the lower strata of society hit the bus and launch terminals and went back to their village homes with their families. Social distancing norms were discarded as they squeezed into buses and launches. The mass exodus raised the concern of spreading the deadly virus to remote villages.
 Shop owners and employees of different markets were also taken back by the sudden decision. They hit the streets, protesting the government restrictions. They staged

demonstrations for the second consecutive day yesterday.
 All these expose not only the government's weaknesses in decision-making but also a lack of coordination and seriousness required to respond to such a health emergency.
 These also beg a question: did the government have any plan to tackle a resurgence of Covid-19 infections? If so, then why there was no cohesion in all these decisions? Why do all these steps seem an outcome of muddled thinking even after dealing with the pandemic for more than a year?
 Because of such muddled thinking, we saw people, having little time to prepare for a lockdown, rush to groceries and shopping malls in hordes.
 We even saw some contradictions in the government circular which said public and private offices would remain open, albeit on a limited scale. But at the same time, the government imposed restrictions on all types of public transport.
 So, how do people go to their workplaces?
 Similarly, the kitchen markets have been ordered to stay open from 8:00am to 4:00pm every day. But how will people go to markets since public

transports remain off the road?
 Yesterday, we saw many wait in anguish for transport to go to their workplaces.
 Then comes another contradiction. The government kept Ekushey Boi Mela open to public from noon to 5:00pm every day while it discouraged all types of fair and banned all political, social and religious gatherings.
 The government's order seemed to be aimed mainly at the people of cities, especially the capital. There is no clear guidelines for the vast number of people living in rural areas.
 The bigger question is: how will a large number of people who live on a daily income survive during the period of restrictions? Will the government provide them with food? A restriction or lockdown alone cannot effectively ensure a successful enforcement of the health safety regulations unless it is aided by comprehensive relief and cash incentive programmes for the poor.
 In this crucial time, the government cannot repeat the mistakes it made during the first wave of Covid-19. We hope that the government will show prudence and farsightedness in making decisions so that its actions do not lead to new problems and miseries in public life.

272 Lebanon

FROM PAGE 12
 at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, told The Daily Star.
 The government will bear their expenses during their stay in quarantine, said Sazzad.
 A sick and aged worker was admitted to a city hospital, while a pregnant worker was allowed to stay in home quarantine on humanitarian grounds, he added.
 At first, the returnees refused to go to the institutional quarantine and staged demonstrations at the airport. Relatives of many workers also joined them, airport sources said.
 "But following discussions with the respective officials, they finally agreed to go to the Hajj Camp to be quarantined," Sazzad said.
 Sources at the airport said carrying the Bangladeshi workers, a special chartered flight of Biman was supposed to land in Bangladesh on April 1 but the flight had to be delayed.
 An airport official, wishing anonymity, said yesterday the flight was not initially allowed to land. The flight landed at 3:30am following foreign ministry intervention.
 The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh on April 1 announced that passengers from the European countries, except the UK, and 12 other countries will not be allowed to enter Bangladesh from April 3. The ban would continue till April 18.
 Lebanon is among the 12 countries.
 According to sources at the Bangladesh embassy in Lebanon, the embassy took special permission from CAAB for operating the special flight.
 The embassy added that the respective authorities of Bangladesh also did not inform them about mandatory institutional quarantine.
 The return of 272 is part of an ongoing repatriation of Bangladeshi migrant workers from Lebanon.
 Those who returned yesterday were undocumented workers, sources said.
 Although a total of 283 workers were supposed to return, 272 came back home. The rest couldn't avail the flight as some of them tested positive for Covid-19 and others due to case-related issues.
 Around 1.30 lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers in Lebanon have been facing an acute financial hardship amid an economic downturn, worsened by its US dollar shortage, according to reports by international media.
 Plagued by this crisis, 5,990 migrant workers have applied for repatriation via the Bangladesh mission as of March 19, while several thousand others were waiting to be registered for return.
 According to the Bangladesh mission in Beirut, as of late March, over 4,600 of the registered workers have been repatriated in special flights starting from February 15.
 Around 10,000 Bangladeshi workers, in addition to those already registered, were waiting to come back home but many of them are unable to manage the money to pay for the air ticket.
 Shariful Hasan, head of Brac's migration programme, yesterday said nearly 6,000 Bangladeshi returned from the Middle East country between April and December last year.
 He said Lebanon's economic downturn, dollar crisis, and absence of good governance caused serious impact on Bangladeshis working there.
 Shariful added that the situation worsened after the Beirut explosion in August last year.

Dangerous dissent

FROM PAGE 12
 in New Delhi. They sought asylum in India and the request was immediately granted. They decided to break with the Islamabad regime in view of the Pakistan Army's massacre of the people of Bangladesh.
THE DISSENT CABLE
 Denouncing the US policy towards the crisis in Bangladesh, American Consul General in Dhaka Archer K Blood and his colleagues, including officers of USAID Dhaka and USIS Dhaka, sent the famous "dissent cable" today to the US State Department: "Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen likely and deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy, ironically at a time when the USSR sent President Yahya a message defending democracy, condemning arrest of leader of democratically elected majority party and calling for end to repressive measures and bloodshed."
TALES OF GRIM FIGHT
 More than 100 foreign evacuees arrived in Kolkata today after a 34 hour voyage from Chittagong. They shared the latest eyewitness reports about the Pakistani army's attempt to suppress the independence movement.
 "It's a massacre," said John Martinussen, a Danish student who later became an authority on international development policy.
 Refuting the Pakistan government's propaganda, Martinussen, who came to Chittagong seven months ago with his wife Karen to study Pakistani

politics as part of his master's degree programme at Aarhus University in Denmark, said, "Nothing is calm, and nothing has come back to normal."
 "They systematically burned down the districts of the poor people, apparently because they felt they couldn't search them thoroughly," he went on. "They seemed to be enjoying killing and destroying everything."
 "Many Bengalis have been killed," the 23 year old student said. "In the river just four days ago, you could count 400 bodies floating in one area."
 The evacuees informed that after several days of fighting, the army -- all West Pakistani troops -- had pushed the Bangladeshi resistance forces out of the city. But, they added, the army's control ends five miles outside the city, at the banks of the Karnaphuli River.
 Everything from the river south, they said, is in the hands of the "liberation army" which consists of civilians and members of the East Pakistani police, the East Pakistani Rifles and the East Bengal Regiment who have come over to the independence movement.
 The evacuees further said they could hear shooting on the outskirts of the city even as they were leaving for Kolkata yesterday morning. Most of the residents had fled the city and gone into the countryside, they added.
INDIA DENIES DEPLOYMENT
 A spokesman for the Indian Government today denied that Indian troops had been moved to the border of East Pakistan.
 The spokesman was reacting to protests sent by Pakistan to several governments, including the Soviet Union, asserting that six Indian army divisions had been deployed near the border.
Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Fresh move made to stop

FROM PAGE 12
 2011 due to the lack of technical knowhow and efficiency.
 The implementation of the meeting decisions will be monitored and supervised by the Ministry of Industry.
 The ship-breaking industry in Chattogram, which caters to 80 percent of domestic steel demand, remains extremely dirty and dangerous for workers and the environment.
 On December 19 last year, The Daily Star and Finance Uncovered, a reporting organisation in London, jointly investigated and ran a report on how cash buyers use false documents in sending toxic ships for dismantling to the Chattogram coast.
 Officials in the meeting observed that the lack of efficiency in assessing toxic waste in ships sent for scrapping exposes the country's shores to pollution.
 They decided to have an online database of ships being imported by domestic buyers for scrapping, for better coordination among various inspecting government bodies, read the meeting minutes obtained by The Daily Star recently.
 At the meeting, Additional Secretary (ship recycling) of the Ministry of Industry Md Zafar Ullah stressed the

need to enhance the efficiency of the Department of Environment (DoE) to inspect and detect dangerous waste.
 He said IHM for ships could be implemented in various phases, adding that ships that are imported for dismantling should be verified as to whether they are on the Greenpeace list. Greenpeace enlists toxic ships worldwide in a bid to stop them from crossing international maritime borders to get dismantled.
 The then director of DoE Chattogram Mohammad Moazzom Hossain informed the meeting of ships entering Bangladesh's borders by changing names, and underscored the need to strengthen surveillance so that no toxic ships can enter hiding information.
 Additional secretary of environment ministry, Md Moniruzzaman, told The Daily Star last month that the current practice is to inspect the ship when it arrives at the outer anchorage of the Bay of Bengal.
 "But we are now thinking the importer will have to declare that the ship is free of toxic items [through an IHM]. When an importer self-declares that the ship has no hazardous materials, then the responsibility lies on him if any toxic substance is found

later," he said.
 He said they gave their opinions and sent these to the Ministry of Industry.
 Coordinator of YPSA (Young Power in Social Action), an NGO which works with shipbreaking yard workers, Mohammad Ali Sahin told The Daily Star that while preparing an IHM is a core principle of the Hong Kong Convention, importers rarely carry out one.
 "IHM is very expensive, which is why the importers of scrap ships don't want to do it. The leniency of authorities in enforcing the Hazardous Waste and Ship Breaking Waste Management Rules, 2011 is helping shipyard owners get away with pollution," he said.
 Contacted recently, Md Zafar Ullah of the Ministry of Industry told The Daily Star that the ministry currently doesn't have the facilities to verify IHM for ships.
 "We are trying to increase the efficiency of labs under DoE so that shipbreakers can have it done [preparing IHM] from here. As it is time-consuming, we want to implement it in phases."
 He added, "We have to implement it as per international legal obligations before 2023. So, we are trying to find ways to accelerate it."

Over 7,000 daily Covid cases again

FROM PAGE 12
 via home delivery service.
 Only open-air kitchen markets and shops selling essential items can remain operational from 8:00am to 4:00pm.
 In an event in Manikganj yesterday, Director General of Directorate General of Health Services Prof ABM Khurshid Alam made a similar statement about the restriction.
 Whether the ongoing restriction would be prolonged or not will depend on the Covid-19 infection rate in the country, he said while replying to a journalist's query during his visit to Manikganj 250-bed District Hospital.
 The DGHS chief also said, "The health ministry will campaign across the country with the help of information ministry to raise awareness."
 In 24 hours ending at 8:00am

yesterday, 7,075 people tested positive, while the number was 7,087 the previous day.
 With yesterday's new cases, the total number of people infected reached 6,44,439, said a DGHS press release.
 The positivity rate, however, increased a bit yesterday -- to 23.40 from the previous day's 23.07.
 Some 30,239 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.
 During the time, 52 people died from Covid-19, raising the death toll to 9,318.
 The death rate was 1.45 percent.
 Meanwhile, 2,932 Covid-19 patients recovered in the 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 5,55,414.
 This is more than 86 percent of all confirmed cases in the country.
 Among the 52 deceased, 34 were

men and 18 women.
 One was aged under 10 and another between 11 and 20. Three were aged between 31 and 40, six 41 and 50, nine 51 and 60, and 32 were above 60 years, according to the DGHS press release.
 After the second spike in November and December last year, the positivity rate started going down from January. Throughout February, this rate was below three percent but started rising early last month.
 For nearly a month now, hospitals, especially in Dhaka city, have been struggling with the rising number of critical patients.
 As of yesterday noon, only 11 ICU beds out of 118 in Dhaka's Covid-19 dedicated public hospitals were vacant.
 Of the 2,555 general beds in those hospitals, only 201 remained vacant.



GAZI WIRES LIMITED

(An Enterprise of BSEC under Ministry of Industries)
 28-FIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.



International Tender Notice

1	Procuring Entity Name	Managing Director, GAZI WIRES LIMITED (BSEC), 28-FIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram -4212, Bangladesh.	
2	Procuring Entity District	Chattogram.	
3	Invitation for	Supply of Electrolytic Copper Wire (8 mm dia.) under Framework Contract	
4	Invitation Ref. No	GW/PUR/027/OTM (ICT)/2021-2022 Dated: 05-04-2021	
5	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (ICT) (Single/One Stage Two Envelope System)	
6	Budget and Source of Funds	Gazi Wires Limited's Own Fund.	
7	Tender Package No.	GW/PUR/027/OTM(ICT)/2021-2022	
8	Tender Publication Date	06-04-2021	
9	Tender Last Selling Date	23-05-2021 (During Office Time)	
10	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date	Time
		24-05-2021	11.30AM (Bangladesh Betar time)
		24-05-2021	11.45 AM (Bangladesh Betar time)
11	Tender Opening Date and Time		
12	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address	
(a)	Selling Tender Document	1) Cash Section, Bangladesh Steel & Engineering, BSEC Bhaban, 102-Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka- 1215, Bangladesh. 2) Cash Section, Gazi Wires Limited, 28-FIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.	
(b)	Receiving of Tender Document	1) At the office of Gazi Wires Ltd., 28-FIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.	
(c)	Opening of Tender Document	1) At the office of Gazi Wires Ltd., 28-FIDC Road, Kalurghat, Chattogram-4212, Bangladesh.	
13	Price of Tender Document (Each)	BDT. 3000.00	
14	Brief Description of Goods		
	Tender Package No.	Description of Goods and works	Tender Security Amount (BDT / USD)
	GW/PUR/027/OTM(ICT)/2021-2022	Supply of Electrolytic Copper Wire (8 mm dia.) under Framework Contract	BDT 38,25,000.00 or Equivalent USD 45,000.00
15	Regarding Tender Document	The Tender Document may be purchased by the interested tenderers on the submission of a written application to the addresses as mentioned in serial no. 12(a) and upon payment of a non refundable fee BDT. 3000.00. The method of payment will be in the form of cash in favour of Gazi Wires Ltd. No Tender will be sent by Courier or mail. One tender document cannot be used for submission of tender proposal (s) by more than one tenderer.	
16	Delivery Period / Shipment Schedule	Shipment will be within three years from the date of Contract (LC by LC).	
18	Special instructions	<p>i. The Tenderer shall enclose the original Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal in different envelope. The envelopes will be marked as Technical Proposal Original and Financial Proposal Original. Similarly copies of Technical and Financial proposal will be enclosed in two different envelopes and the envelope will be marked 'Copy Technical Proposal' and 'Copy Financial Proposal'. Then original Technical Proposal envelope and copy of the technical proposals will be put into another envelope and the envelope will be marked as Technical Proposal. Similarly Original of the Financial Proposal and Copy of the Financial Proposal will put into another envelope will be marked as Financial Proposal. These two envelopes of Technical Proposal and Financial proposal shall then be enclosed one single outer envelope. All the envelopes should be duly sealed and signed by the bidder.</p> <p>ii. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without showing any reason.</p>	



(Dr. Mohammad Gislam Kabir)
 Managing Director
 Gazi Wires Limited
 Phone : +88031-670346
 E-mail : gaziwiresltd@gmail.com

Jubo League leader held


FROM PAGE 12
 Narayanganj.
 M. Salman Ahmed, local leader of Islami Andolon Bangladesh, said, "Islamic leaders in the area and Hefajat supporters were furious about Emad's post, and we informed police about the situation. They detained Emad to avoid unwanted incidents."
 OC Latif said no one filed any written complaint with the station against Emad.

Modi thanks

FROM PAGE 12
 to congratulate the Bangladesh government for flawlessly organising the spectacular celebrations on March 26 to mark 50 years since Bangladesh's liberation as well as the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," Modi wrote.
 The Indian premier also recalled his meeting with Momen. "It was a pleasure to exchange thoughts with you during the visit."

Scientists

FROM PAGE 12
 person's brain motor cortex.
 Trial participants with paralysis used the system to control a tablet computer, the journal IEEE Transactions on Biomedical Engineering reports.
 The participants were able to achieve similar typing speeds and point-and-click accuracy as they could with wired systems.
 John Simeral, an assistant professor of engineering at Brown University, said: "We've demonstrated that this wireless system is functionally equivalent to the wired systems that have been the gold standard."
 "The signals are recorded and transmitted with appropriately similar fidelity, which means we can use the same decoding algorithms we used with wired equipment."
 "The only difference is that people no longer need to be physically tethered to our equipment, which opens up new possibilities in terms of how the system can be used."
 It marks the latest advance in the rapidly growing field of neural interface technologies, which has attracted the likes of Elon Musk and Facebook.



Zila Parishad, Manikganj

www.zpmanikganj.org.bd

Memo No. ZPManik/e-Tender/02/2020/146 Date: 05/04/2021

e-Tender Notice No. 05/2020-2021 (OTM)

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

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of scheme
565823	e-GP/ZPM/05/REV/G-01	Supplying of Hand Sanitizer, Hand Wash, Soap & Mask Distribution among the Poor People of the District to Protect the Corona Virus situation.

This is online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
 The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited through online from any registered banks branches up to **12.00pm on 21/04/2021**. Publication Date & Time 12:00am on 07/04/2021. Last Date and Time for Tender Security Submission 13.00am on 21/04/2021, Tender Closing Date & Time 14.00pm on 21/04/2021. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Mozammel Haque
 Assistant Engineer
 Zila Parishad, Manikganj
 Tel No. 02-7711005



(L-R) Faisal Ahmed and Kajal Mia set two of the four records in swimming events on the fifth day of the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games at the Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh Army's Faisal won the 400m freestyle gold in record time while Bangladesh Navy's Kajal grabbed gold in 200m butterfly with a new record.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Records tumble as electronic timer lies unused

SPORTS REPORTER

The Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur continued to see records tumble in the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games in hand-timing mode as the newly-installed electronic timer is not being used.

Following six records on the first two days, there were four more records in the pool on Monday, thanks to efforts from Kajal Mia, Jewel Ahmed, Faisal Ahmed and the Bangladesh Army relay team. The total tally so far of 10 records is nothing surprising as the 2019 national swimming championships witnessed more than 20 national records.

Yesterday Kajal set a new record in 200m butterfly by clocking 2:10.92 minutes, eclipsing previous record of 2:11.57 minutes set in 2019 by Jewel. Jewel, himself, improved his own timing in 50m backstroke, clocking 00:27.97 seconds. He had earlier set a record in the same event in 2019 with a timing of 00:28.12 seconds.

Like Jewel, Faisal also bettered his previous record in 400m freestyle after clocking 04:18.23 minutes. The previous record set in 2019 was 04:18.25 minutes.

Both Jewel and Faisal from Bangladesh Army were happy to set new records, but not satisfied with the false impression of hand-timing.

"I am happy to have improved

HIGHLIGHTS

As many as 13 national records in 21 events were made in cycling. Five records were made on the final day at Banani Army Stadium yesterday.

Four more records were made by Kajal Mia, Jewel Ahmed, Faisal Ahmed and in 4x100m men's relay on the third day of swimming events at Syed Nazrul Islam National Swimming Complex in Mirpur. A total of 10 records were made in swimming.

Weightlifter Mostain Billah and Smriti Akter also joined cyclists and swimmers in writing their names to the record book. Mostain made a record in snatch of the 61kg category by lifting 106kg before lifting overall 227kg to win the gold medal. Smriti also made a record in snatch of the 49kg category by lifting 66kg. She lifted a total of 139kgs to win gold medals.

Magura DSA clinched the title of the women's football event with a 3-2 win in a penalty shootout against Brahmanbaria after the match ended in a 1-1 draw at Kamalapur Stadium on Sunday night.



Bishwas Faisal Hossain Five gold medals in cycling

Sylhet DSA, Bangladesh Army, Satkhira and Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan moved into the last-four of men's football event in Cumilla yesterday.

Bangladesh Ansar emerged champions in skating after grabbing all 12 golds -- six gold each in men's and women's categories -- at Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex yesterday.

Prolific archer Ruman Sana was knocked out from recurve individual event after losing 1-7 to Jewel Khan of Dhaka Archery Club in 1/8 competition on Sunday.

SA Games gold medalist archer Sohel Rana was also eliminated from the compound individual event after losing to Faysal Ahmed in the quarterfinals yesterday.

my national record as Bangladesh Army gave us every facility for the Bangladesh Games despite a big gap in training due to the

coronavirus pandemic," said Jewel. "Of course, we are not happy with the hand-timing record because we can't get exact personal

timing. We struggle at international competitions and see a big difference with foreign swimmers in those competitions," said Jewel, who currently holds five national records.

Faisal said, "Despite having pain in my hands, I am really happy to set a new national record. However, we would have been happier if the time was recorded through the electronic timer."

In 2019, the National Sports Council (NSC) renovated the swimming complex spending Tk 8.5 crore and installed a new electronic timer worth approximately Tk 4 crore.

However, the electronic timer is not being used to record timings as officials claim the device is not working properly and it is backdated.

"We have not been handed over the electronic timer from the National Sports Council even though the installation work completed in 2019," Bangladesh Swimming Federation's general secretary MB Saif said. "We are not using the electronic board because it can't provide timing of all lanes at a time, so we can't take any risk which is why we use stopwatch."

Computer World BD, the service providers of the newly-installed electronic timer, had previously denied all allegations and claimed US-based Daktronics Electronic timer was working fine but the swimmers were not touching the pads properly.

'We are not planning to have a bigger squad'

SPORTS REPORTER



Despite the rising number of coronavirus infections across the country over the last one month which forced the government to impose a seven-day nationwide lockdown and prompted the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to suspend the third round of the Bangabandhu National Cricket League, the board is positive about the national team's upcoming tour of Sri Lanka this month.

The Tigers are scheduled to travel to the island nation on April 12.

It has been learnt that the BCB has asked the players to stay at home and that the selectors are going to announce the squad for the two-match Test series, part of the ICC test Championship, within a couple of days.

As the cricketers returned from their tour of New Zealand on Sunday, the members of the Test side will not hold a training camp in Bangladesh ahead of the tour.

"We are planning to announce the Test squad for the Sri Lanka tour within the next couple of days. However, we are not planning to have a bigger squad this time

like we picked for the New Zealand tour. We are confident about having Mushfiqur Rahim, who got injured and was unable to take part in the T20I series in New Zealand, recovered fully ahead of the Sri Lanka tour," selector Habibul Bashar told media yesterday.

According to sources, the players are keen to travel to Sri Lanka for the upcoming series where the visitors will play an inter-squad two-day warm-up game on April 17 and 18 at the Chilaw Marians Cricket Club Ground in Katunayake.

Both Tests will be played at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy, with the first Test scheduled to start on April 21 and the second one to begin on April 29.

Sri Lanka Cricket backedtracked from its decision of imposing a strict quarantine protocol, which had forced the BCB to cancel a planned tour to the island nation in September last year.

Quarantine protocols were later relaxed for a touring England side in January this year where the visitors were asked to isolate for three days after landing in Sri Lanka before being allowed to practise among themselves in the next four days.



HURKACZ STUNS SINNER

Jannik Sinner congratulates Hubert Hurkacz, who was vaulted into the top 20 for the first time in his career on Sunday after clinching his maiden Masters 1000 title at the Miami Open, a win he said provided added "motivation" to succeed. Poland's Hurkacz downed Sinner 7-6(4), 6-4 in the men's final as a handful of double-faults in the match proved costly for his 19-year-old Italian opponent. "I had a big belief in myself... Winning the tournament like this like gives you extra, I think, like motivation and self-confidence," said 24-year old Hurkacz, now 16th in the world. The 19-year-old Sinner would have been the Miami event's youngest winner had he defeated Hurkacz. "When you're 19 and playing finals, obviously it's tough, and I wanted to win. It has been a good week anyway. But obviously I'm not here for making finals, I'm here to win tournaments. It's going to be back to work and then we will see what I can do on the clay," said Sinner.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Solskjaer hails improving Greenwood

REUTERS

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Mason Greenwood is adding a new dimension to his game after the young forward scored an instinctive winner in Sunday's 2-1 Premier League victory over Brighton & Hove Albion.

Former United striker Danny Welbeck headed Brighton into a 13th-minute lead before Marcus Rashford equalised and Greenwood, 19, got on the end of a speculative Paul Pogba volley to complete the Old Trafford side's comeback.

"I'm so happy for him... When he gets those goals, we know that he's going to add another dimension to his game," said Solskjaer, who will be without defender Eric Bailly for "a little while" after he tested positive for COVID-19 on international duty with Ivory Coast.

"I'm pleased with his overall performance again very good. He was bright, tidy, clean on the ball, hit the post and one that went over the bar, maybe deflected, in the second half."

IPL to continue despite lockdown

AGENCIES



Royal Challengers Bangalore batsman Devdutt Padikkal has become the third player to test positive for COVID-19 ahead of the new Indian Premier League (IPL) season, which begins on Friday.

Delhi Capitals spinner Axar Patel and Kolkata Knight Riders batsman Nitish Rana tested positive for the virus after joining their teams.

Participants will have to stay in a restricted health environment for this year's IPL, which will be played across six venues in India, initially without spectators.

Bangalore are scheduled to face five-time champions Mumbai Indians in the season opener on Friday at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium.

Meanwhile, Sourav Ganguly, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President, has confirmed that the IPL 2021 will proceed as scheduled notwithstanding the weekend lockdown imposed in Maharashtra by the government in wake of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases.

From Friday 8 pm to Monday 7 am the state will be in lockdown, only essential services, and transportation including buses, trains, and taxis will be allowed. Wankhede Stadium will host 10 matches this season from April 10 to 25. However, the former India captain has assured the tournament will continue as planned.



Bangladesh ace paceman Mustafizur Rahman reached India to play the IPL. "Landed in India safely and mission IPL starts with Rajasthan Royals. Keep me in your prayers," he wrote on his official Facebook account.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERFINALS

Guardiola knows Dortmund better than anybody

AGENCIES

Manchester City's pursuit of an unprecedented quadruple continues on Tuesday when they welcome Borussia Dortmund to the Etihad Stadium for the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final tie.

City are the clear favourites heading into the tie. But Borussia Dortmund will be out to show that they have what it takes to pull off an upset.

City's success this season can, of course, be attributed to their scintillating attacking play and final-third devastation,



but defensively they have also evolved into a very stubborn and resilient side, culminating in seven successive clean sheets in the Champions League, a record only bettered by Arsenal in 2005-06 (10 in a row).

Haaland, though, has proven capable of cutting open even the most obdurate of defences, and he will likely have a say in this meeting.

Dortmund invest heavily in the future of their squad and pay agents huge sums to bring in top young talent, City manager Pep Guardiola said ahead of Tuesday's quarterfinals against the Germans.

"If any one person in the city of Manchester knows Borussia Dortmund, it's me," Guardiola said. "About the culture of that club, the way they play."

"I will not find one single player at Dortmund without quality. They spent a lot of money on young players and pay a lot of money to agents to bring these players there because they have an incredible quality."



HIGHLIGHTS

Real Madrid and Liverpool have won three games apiece out of the six matches played between them in the tournament.

Liverpool have lost their last three games against Los Blancos in the competition, but in the two teams' only previous two-legged knockout European tie, the Reds won 5-0 on aggregate against Real in the last 16 of the 2008-09 season.

Manchester City and Borussia Dortmund met in the UEFA Champions League group stage in 2012-13, the only two previous meetings between them saw a 1-1 draw in Etihad and a 1-0 Dortmund win at Signal Iduna Park.

Man City have won only 1 of their previous 4 quarter-finals of the tournament, whereas Dortmund's record in the same stage is: won 4, lost 4.

Real, Liverpool meet in a repeat of 2018 final

AGENCIES

Two of the most successful teams in the history of the European Cup will lock horns in the Spanish capital on Tuesday night as Real Madrid welcome Liverpool for the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

Madrid, who are 13-time winners of the competition, will be looking to secure an advantage at the Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium ahead of the reverse fixture at Anfield on April 14.

Two of the European Cup's most successful clubs meet in a repeat of the 2018 final. Madrid won that one before Liverpool went one better 12 months later; neither side has been going great guns in 2020/21, particularly the Reds, but both have a habit of pulling a top performance out of the bag, particularly in this competition. Madrid will have to do it without the injured Sergio Ramos, though.

Los Blancos have hit a touch of form of late, as Zinedine Zidane's team heads into this big clash on the back of an 11-game unbeaten run in all competitions, including nine wins after a weekend 2-0 win over Eibar in La Liga.

When it comes to the Champions League, Zidane's team also have a stellar recent record.

Jürgen Klopp's team seems to have now recovered from their major slump in February and March. The Merseysider's go into this clash on the back of three straight victories in all competitions, having kept clean sheets in all three wins.

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Fresh move made to stop toxic ships

Two ministries decide to make Inventory of Hazardous Materials mandatory for ship breakers

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Two ministries which regulate the shipbreaking industry decided earlier this year to make an Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) mandatory for shipbreakers, in phases, to stop toxic vessels sailing into Bangladesh.

Officials of the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change took the decision in a meeting held on January 24 this year.

Ziaul Hasan, secretary of the environment ministry, said in the meeting that the IHM was made mandatory in the Hong Kong Convention. If it is also done here, it will be possible to keep the environment pollution-free, he said.

The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 makes it mandatory for cash buyers and importers to have an IHM -- a document which helps identify the amount, type, and location of toxic substances on board -- done for safe dismantling of ships.

As the IHM is not yet compulsory for importers in issuing clearance to enter Bangladesh's shores, the possibility of pollution is substantial, he said in the meeting, reiterating the fact that it is currently not possible to assess hazardous materials as per The Ship Breaking and Recycling Rules,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



The wholesale market under the second Buriganga bridge on Mitford Road's Babubazar is full of hand sanitizers and masks for sale as the demands for such products have increased with the rising Covid-19 infection rate. Taking advantage of this, salesmen have increased the prices of masks and sanitizers.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Over 7,000 daily Covid cases again

Restrictions to be reviewed Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With fresh Covid-19 cases crossing 7,000-mark for the second consecutive day yesterday, Cabinet Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam said they would make decision on extension of ongoing restriction in a meeting on Thursday.

"It will be evaluated on Thursday. Let's see what the situation turns to," Anwarul said while speaking at a press briefing after yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

As part of measures to curb the spread of the virus, the government has imposed a countrywide restriction on people's movement for seven days starting yesterday.

During the period, all public transport, excluding international flights, will remain suspended and all shopping malls will remain closed. However, shop owners will be allowed to sell their products online

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Gallant freedom fighters to get festival, Victory Day allowances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of freedom fighters martyred in the Liberation War and those freedom fighters who were wounded in 1971 and received gallantry awards will get festival and Victory Day allowances.

The cabinet yesterday approved the Liberation War ministry's proposal to provide two festival allowances (Tk 10,000 each) and a Victory Day allowance (Tk 5,000) to gallantry award recipients.

It also approved the proposal of giving Tk 2,000 as Pahela Baishakh allowance to wounded freedom fighters, gallantry award recipients, and the families of martyred freedom fighters.

"They [martyrs' families, wounded and gallantry award-holding freedom fighters] are not getting the three allowances which general freedom fighters have been getting," said Cabinet Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam while briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting held at the Bangladesh Secretariat. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the meeting virtually

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Dangerous dissent

More than 100 foreign evacuees arrived in Kolkata on April 6, 1971 after a 34 hour voyage from Chittagong. Photo: Ananda Bazar

APRIL 6, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

2 BANGLAEE DIPLOMATS DEFECT FROM PAKISTAN
Two Bangalee diplomats -- Second Secretary KM Shehabuddin and Amjadul Huq, assistant press attaché at the High Commission of Pakistan in New Delhi -- today announced their decision to defect from Pakistan and pledged allegiance to Bangladesh at a press conference

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Modi thanks Dhaka for excellent arrangements

BSS, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has thanked Dhaka for making an "excellent arrangement" during his March 26-27 state visit.

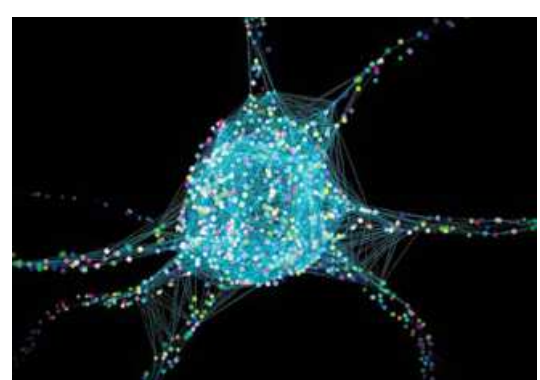
"I write to convey my thanks for the excellent arrangements made during my recent state visit to Bangladesh," he wrote to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, a foreign ministry press release said here yesterday.

Modi visited Bangladesh to join the grand celebrations marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence. He also held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"I would also like

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Scientists connect human brain to computer wirelessly



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The first wireless commands to a computer have been demonstrated in a breakthrough for people with paralysis.

The system is able to transmit brain signals at "single-neuron resolution and in full broadband fidelity", say researchers at Brown University in the US.

A clinical trial of the BrainGate technology involved a small transmitter that connects to a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

272 Lebanon returnees get quarantined

RASHIDUL HASAN

Some 272 Bangladeshi migrant workers returned home from Lebanon yesterday amid a ban on incoming passengers from the Middle East country due to a rapid surge in coronavirus infections.

Except two, the rest were sent to the institutional quarantine for 14 days at the city's Ashkona Hajj Camp, Shahriar Sazzad, in-charge of the health desk

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man crosses the street unlawfully through a gap in the divider with a handful of shopping bags. To make movement "easier", locals near Shantinagar's Habibullah College broke two bars of the guard rails. Taking advantage of this, many people now opt to cross the road through the gap risking their lives.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

POSTS ON MAMUNUL Jubo League leader held

ASI suspended for defending Hefajat leader

STAR REPORT

A Sunamganj court yesterday granted bail to a local Jubo League leader from Tahirpur, hours after he was detained for allegedly writing about Hefajat leader Mamunul Haque on Facebook.

Meanwhile in Kushtia, an assistant sub inspector of police was suspended for defending Mamunul on Facebook.

Emad Ahmed Joy, 38, the Liberation War affairs secretary of Tahirpur Upazila Jubo League, was detained on Sunday night. He was released after he got bail.

Contacted, Abdul Latif Tarafdar, officer-in-charge at Tahirpur Police Station, said, "Police detained him to avoid clashes and undesired situation in the area. He committed a cognisable offence."

Locals said Emad made a "derogatory Facebook post" about Hefajat leader Mamunul after the latter and a woman were detained by locals at a resort in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

MORE NEWS

- Covid cases rising in Sylhet, Barishal **PAGE 3**
- Myanmar protesters clap to denounce junta **PAGE 6**
- Jordan prince strikes defiant tone amid palace turmoil **PAGE 6**
- Records tumble as electronic timer lies unused **PAGE 11**

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অবৈধ পয়ঃনিষ্কাশন লাইন বিচ্ছিন্নকরণ সংক্রান্ত গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন এলাকায় সূষ্ঠ পয়ঃনিষ্কাশন ব্যবস্থাপনার লক্ষ্যে বিভিন্ন বাসাবাড়ি, বাণিজ্যিক প্রতিষ্ঠান ও অন্যান্য স্থাপনায় সরকারি বিধি অনুযায়ী সেপটিক ট্যাংক ও সোকওয়েল স্থাপন করার বিধান রয়েছে। এ সত্ত্বেও অনেক বাসাবাড়ি ও স্থাপনার পয়ঃনিষ্কাশন লাইন সরাসরি ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের বিভিন্ন স্টর্ম ওয়াটার ড্রেন, খাল, লেক ও জলাশয়ে সংযোগ দেয়া হয়েছে। যা পরিবেশের জন্য মারাত্মক হুমকিস্বরূপ এবং স্থানীয় সরকার (সিটি কর্পোরেশন) আইন ২০০৯ অনুযায়ী শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ।

এমতাবস্থায়, ১৬ জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪২৮/৩০ মে ২০২১ এর মধ্যে সকল অবৈধ পয়ঃনিষ্কাশন লাইন নিজ উদ্যোগে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে সেপটিক ট্যাংক ও সোকওয়েল স্থাপন করে পরিবেশসম্মত পয়ঃবর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। অন্যথায় আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৪৮/২০২০-২০২১
জিডি-৬৯৩

কর্তৃপক্ষ
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন