

'LET US STAND UNITED'

Karen rebels urge other ethnic armies to unite against Myanmar junta
SEE PAGE 6

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"This is our expectation that the existing relations between the two countries and neighbouring West Bengal will further develop...."
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTER HASAN MAHMUD ON WEST BENGAL ELECTION RESULTS



"If people again became indifferent to the health safety guidelines as they had become after the first wave [of Covid-19], the third wave could begin in the country very soon."
HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE



"And if you shut down, you don't have to shut down for six months..."
US PRESIDENTIAL MEDICAL ADVISER ANTHONY FAUCI ON INDIA LOCKDOWN

Bittersweet win for Mamata

West Bengal chief minister leads Trinamool Congress to a landslide but loses the battle for her own seat

Of blitz & brash in Bengal polls

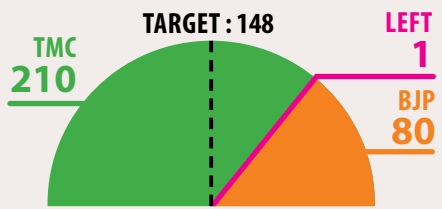
KUMAR CHATTERJEE

Main zindagi ka saath nibhata chala gaya... Har fikr ko dhuyen mein udata chala gaya... Remember Mohammad Rafi humming for Dev Anand in the film Hum Dono? The song was revisiting my mind since early yesterday morning when tubes began beaming how the fate of this state would be sealed this day - in the ruins or in the wrecks.

Does it matter, really? It does, perhaps, when you look at your child in his pre-teens and try to convince yourself that he is being raised up in an environment conducive for his growth as a human being, and not a human bomb, well, metaphorically.

Perhaps one of the dirtiest dances of democracy in the history of West Bengal came to an end on Sunday with the Trinamool Congress retaining power for the third term and the warring

WEST BENGAL POLLS



PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE AND PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Mamata Banerjee lost her seat in the high-stakes Nandigram assembly, but the charismatic Trinamool Congress supremo brought her party to power in West Bengal for the third time in a row.

Mamata showed the grit and political acumen needed to single-handedly defeat the Narendra Modi wave that has swept over India, despite his Bharatiya Janata Party launching an all-out campaign of the Saffron star cast.

Analysts say her victory is a triumph of secularism against the divisive politics of religion and nationalism.

However, the BJP has many reasons to cheer as it is now the second-most popular party in West Bengal, surpassing National Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist). These two parties ruled the WB for over 64 years combined.

The Congress and CPIM were absolutely decimated.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The foot bridge near the capital's New Market is teeming with pedestrians, many of whom are stopping to shop for various items such as handbags from makeshift stalls. Although the country is still in the midst of the restrictions imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus, many in this picture are seen without masks yesterday and there is no evidence of social distancing. Inset, shoppers in an accessories shop at a nearby market.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Vaccines will be bought at any cost: PM



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reaffirmed that the government would procure vaccines at any cost to protect the people from coronavirus.

"We're bringing more vaccines; no matter how much money is required, we'll bring more vaccines," she said.

The prime minister said this while providing cash support of Tk 2,500 to each of 36.5 lakh low-income families engaged in different occupations so that they can survive amid the pandemic.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

TACKLING COVID SURGE

Govt plans to isolate big cities

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

Amid fears of a further surge in Covid-19 infections, the government plans to segregate the big cities with higher transmission rate from the rest of the country and extend the nationwide restrictions with stricter surveillance.

A preliminary decision in this regard was made yesterday at a virtual meeting presided over by Health Minister Zahid Maleque. It may be finalised at today's cabinet meeting, said several top officials.

The ongoing restrictions are likely to be extended till May 17, mentioned the officials present at yesterday's meeting.

"As the infection rate is higher in the big cities, recommendations were made for segregating those [from the rest of the country] and the mayors concerned agreed. No vehicle will be allowed to enter or leave these cities. However, vehicles will run within those cities," said Prof Dr ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the health directorate, who attended the meeting.

The government will allow public transport to operate inside the cities, but inter-district transport services will not resume anytime soon, he told this newspaper.

The meeting was attended by, among others, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam, Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed and Health Secretary Lokman Hossain Miah.

It also decided that mobile courts will be engaged in penalising the shopping malls that are not adhering to the health safety guidelines.

"People who will go outside without masks will be jailed or fined as

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

COLLEGE GIRL'S DEATH Brother files murder case against AL whip's son

STAR REPORT

The brother of the college student found dead in a Gulshan flat filed a murder case against Nazmul Karim Chowdhury Sharun, son of Awami League lawmaker and parliament whip Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, with a Dhaka court yesterday.

This development comes less than a week after the victim's sister sued Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir over abetting the college student's suicide.

The college student was found hanging from a ceiling fan in a rented Gulshan flat on April 26, and her sister lodged the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

CHINESE VACCINE

5 lakh doses may arrive on May 10

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Bangladesh will receive over five lakh doses of China's Sinopharm vaccine on May 10 if everything goes as planned.

Officials are making preparations to receive the shots that will be used as the first jab. The government may send a special plane to bring the doses from Beijing, officials said.

"We have written to the foreign ministry to take action. Bangladesh Air Force will probably bring the vaccine from Beijing on May 10," Syed Mojibul Huq, additional secretary of the Health Services Division of the health ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Chinese embassy in Dhaka on April 29 in a letter addressed to Joint Secretary Shahriar Kader Siddiky of the Economic Relations Division said a special flight would be needed to bring the 5,02,400 doses.

It mentioned that Beijing would confirm the dispatch once the flight was confirmed.

If Bangladesh needs syringes, the Bangladesh government will have to notify, the letter read.

"We forwarded everything to the health ministry which will take the necessary action," Shahriar told The Daily Star.

Additional Secretary Mojibul said the health division received the letter and forwarded it to the foreign ministry, requesting necessary steps.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

THE BUSINESS

Cashless shopping & dining during Ramadan

Banks and financial institutions are trying to lure home-confined people with attractive offers and discounts ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. To know more about the offers read today's business supplement.

EXPERT'S VIEWS



Can we administer different vaccine for 2nd dose?

DR KHONDOKER MEHEDI AKRAM

Devastated by the second wave of the pandemic, India has imposed a ban on all kinds of vaccine exports.

As a result, Bangladesh is not receiving the pre-purchased and already paid for 30 million doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca (Covishield) shots from Serum Institute. Till date, we have received only 7 million doses from Serum Institute, and 3.2 million doses as a gift from the Indian government.

In total, we have received 30.2 million doses. It is highly unlikely that we will get the additional vaccines from Serum Institute any time before July.

Due to this, the countrywide vaccination programme that started in Bangladesh in February is facing a bump on the road since April.

The government has put a hold on administering the first dose due to scarcity of vaccines. Now, only the second doses are being administered.

With the amount of shots in hand, the scheduled second doses for some 1.3 million people on time have become

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



COVID SURVIVED... Jahanara Begum, 56, is flanked by her daughter and son in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's emergency department as they prepare to go to their Azimpur home yesterday. After testing positive for Covid-19, Jahanara was admitted to DMCH and battled the virus for 18 days, before finally testing negative on Saturday evening.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT 5 journos sued last month alone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just in the month leading up to World Press Freedom Day today, five journalists were sued under the Digital Security Act, according to voluntary research outfit Our Media, Our Rights.

A total of 24 journalists were sued under different laws in the month of April, it said in a statement yesterday.

Six of the plaintiffs had political backgrounds.

Five of the cases were filed for news reports and three for social media posts, found the group.

"Most of the cases were filed by ruling party lawmakers, or their men, after journalists shared news content on social media," said Ahammad Foyez, a journalist, who put out the research.

Last week, Article 19 said 38 DSA cases were filed in the first three months of the year, and five journalists were prosecuted.

It had also recorded 631 incidences of attacks on journalists and human rights defenders in 2020, according to its annual report.

A total of 265 journalists were attacked, said the organisation.

The report also recorded three major

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3
RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

PRESS FREEDOM DAY

1,359 New cases in 24hrs



7,61,943 Total cases



11,569 Deaths



6,87,328 Recoveries



3,213,308 Deaths



153,385,138 Total cases

PRESS FREEDOM DAY

200 violations of press freedom in Asia-Pacific

Half of them in South Asia, says IPI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 200 press freedom violations linked to the pandemic were reported in the Asia-Pacific region...

Meanwhile, India's increasingly illiberal government, stung by widespread criticism in the media...

Of blitz & brash in Bengal

FROM PAGE 1 sides taking a break from spewing venom on each other. The two sides - the incumbent Trinamool Congress and the 'outsider' BJP...

of might. At the end of every rally, you returned home with the looming fear of being counted among the over four lakhs being infected by the virus every day in this country.



A man hard at work on block printing clothes near the capital's New Market. Shoppers visit the stores to get their designs customised by the workers. The price of a block print dress depends on the design and can range from Tk 100 to Tk 500. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

69 more die of Covid, positivity rate drops

UNB, Dhaka

As the deadly coronavirus continues its onslaught in Bangladesh, health authorities reported 69 more deaths in 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday.

Can we administer different vaccine for 2nd dose?

FROM PAGE 1 FROM PAGE 1 No severe side effects were observed in the vaccine trial. A few deaths were reported during trial, but later was cleared as unrelated to the vaccine.

at the shot. Some 22 thousand adult volunteers in Russia took part in the trial phase, which continued from September to November last year.

However, other than Sputnik-V, all vaccines of this category are single vector vaccine. In Oxford-AstraZeneca, Chimpazee adenovirus has been used.

9 April 2021. Now, the Sinopharm vaccine is awaiting the WHO approval. The decision is anticipated to be made by next week.

Advertisement for Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) featuring SCIMAGO INSTITUTE RANKINGS 2021 and a list of undergraduate programs.

Advertisement for Mamata featuring the headline 'Bittersweet win for Mamata' and details about her political party's performance.

Shopping malls thrive amid lax lockdown

Transport workers demand resumption of services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lockdown imposed by the government to contain the second wave of Covid-19 appears to be in place only on paper, as there are little to no restrictions being implemented in reality.

Roads and shopping malls are crowded with vehicles and people amid the pandemic.

With Eid-ul-Fitr ahead, shopping centres and malls are filled with customers.

Visiting some major shopping malls and markets in Dhaka -- New Market, Chandni Chawk, Gausia, Noor Mansion, Chandrima Super Market, and Bashundhara City Mall -- yesterday, The Daily Star correspondents found customers pouring into the shops from 10am.

At most shopping centres, maintaining the health and safety rules appeared a big challenge due to the heavy flow of customers.

At the entry points of some markets, antiseptic mix was sprayed on customers, instead of providing them with hand sanitisers. Besides, there was not enough space inside most of the shops to maintain physical distancing.



This traffic jam at College gate on Mirpur Road resembles Dhaka as we once knew it -- long before lockdowns were on anyone's radar. The photo was taken yesterday around 10am.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

customers come in the afternoon from 3pm and do their shopping till 5:30pm before iftar. Many do their shopping after office time, so there is a heavy crowd of customers in malls starting from the afternoon.

On the other hand, as the businesses close by 8pm, few customers visit after iftar.

So the organisation demanded to extend the business hour till 12am ahead of Eid.

In the letter, they claimed that 95 percent people wear masks during shopping at the markets. However, during visits to popular markets and shopping malls, this correspondent found that many shopkeepers and customers wear masks incorrectly, and frequently take the masks off.

WORKERS DEMAND PUBLIC TRANSPORT RESUMPTION

Meanwhile transport workers yesterday brought out a procession in some parts of the city including Gabtoli and Sayedabad to press home their three-point demand including resumption of public transport services maintaining health protocols.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

CAAB PUTS OMAN ON HIGH-RISK LIST

Returnees left in the lurch

Expats term decision illogical, demand withdrawal

EZAZ MAHMUD

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh's (CAAB) latest decision to put Oman as one of 12 "high risk" countries has left hundreds of expatriates in the Gulf country waiting to come home on Eid vacation in trouble.

Bangladeshi community leaders demanded withdrawal of the decision as due to it expatriates will not be allowed to enter Bangladesh from Oman.

According to them, Oman in no way can be put as a "high risk" country. Over the past few days, although infection rate has increased slightly there, it was not out of control unlike other countries in the list.

Besides, at present Oman is not in the list of "high risk countries" of any other country.

After the new directive, two Dhaka-bound flights scheduled on April 30 night from Oman's Muscat International Airport were cancelled. About 200 passengers suffered immensely for that. They weren't aware of the CAAB directive, which came barely few hours before their journey to the airport.

CAAB allowed some international flights to operate conditionally from Saturday. However, special conditions have been

imposed for travelling to 38 countries identified as "highly risky" and "risky".

As per the CAAB notice, in group 'A' or "high risk" countries, Oman is the only country from six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and one of two Middle East countries, after Iran. As per it, passengers will not be allowed to enter Bangladesh from Oman, on direct or transit flight.

Bangladeshi expatriates or Bangladeshis who in the last 15 days were on visit to any of the 12 countries including Oman will be able to return to Bangladesh upon special permission from related government authorities, and have to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine in government-approved hotels at their own expenditure.

Expatriates from Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates -- which are in category 'C' -- as well as from three other GCC countries -- Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain -- which are in the list of 'risky' countries -- have not been barred from entering Bangladesh.

According to latest data of Worldometer, so far 1,95,807 persons have been infected with coronavirus in Oman. Of them, 2,043 died, and 1,76,833 recovered. Although infection rate increased during the second wave, it is not alarming and prevalence of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'It might create more panic'

HC bench refuses to interfere in govt's Covid measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday said more panic might be created if it interfered with the government's decisions and actions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The government has been trying its best to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. If we interfere in this situation, it might lead to more panic and confusion in the society," the bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir said, after a writ petition was filed seeking its directive on the government to formulate comprehensive short, mid and long-term national plans in Covid-19 management and to vaccinate all vulnerable citizens, irrespective of age.

The court refused to pass an order, asking how the government can formulate a comprehensive national plan for a virus whose patterns even national and international experts cannot predict.

The HC bench told the petitioners that the country is yet to reach an emergency situation where the court should pass such an order. It asked Mohammad Humayun Kabir Pallab, one of the writ petitioners, to wait and see how the situation develops and move the same writ petition should

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

HC clears way to hold FBCCI polls on May 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared way for holding election to the posts of directors of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) on May 5.

The court discharged the rule it had issued earlier questioning the inaction of authorities to halt the election process.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir came up with the order following a petition filed by election board of FBCCI.

Lawyer Imtiaz Moinul Islam told The Daily Star the petition filed by Amir Uddin Bipu challenging the election process is not acceptable as he is not a member of FBCCI.

There no legal bar to hold the elections, he said.

PRE-BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ensure economic incentive for indigenous people: MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government in its next budget must ensure a special economic incentive for indigenous people severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, demanded leaders of indigenous rights organisations yesterday at a webinar organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

They also consider it essential to have a specific allocation for the indigenous community to make the development activities more inclusive.

The leaders also demanded a separate paragraph in the national budget while allocating funds for the development of indigenous people.

Even if the budget speech is short, there should be a description of the ethnic people, their identity, rights, culture, lifestyle, development etc. at least in one paragraph, they demanded.

The points were made at the webinar titled "Specific and Inclusive Budget for Ethnic People".

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum President

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Fake currency gang busted in Dhaka

Three arrested with notes worth Tk 46 lakh, equipment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police claimed to have arrested three persons yesterday in connection with note forgery from Kamrangirchar area of Dhaka.

Of the arrestees, Imam Hossain and Md Pias completed their diploma from the Government Polytechnic College in Barishal. One of them used to work as a network engineer and another as an engineer at a textile mill.

They joined hands with the leader of a note forgery gang, Jiban Hossain, to earn some easy money. Jiban used to pay each Tk 22,000 per month apparently.

Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division of DB police, told The Daily Star police arrested the three from a house in Kamrangirchar, acting on a tip-off. Police found counterfeit money from under the bed, under the mattress, hidden inside clothes in the closet, and seized around Tk 46 lakh worth of fake notes and counterfeit money-making materials, he said.

The stockpiled equipment was enough to make another Tk 1.5 crore worth of fake notes, said police.

During interrogation, Jiban told police that he was arrested three years back but coming out of jail, he started making fake notes again, said DC Mashiur.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

49

JOURNALISTS KILLED IN THE LAST YEAR

635

PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS LINKED TO COVID-19 SINCE FEB. 2020

International Press Institute
IPI

These are global figures collected by IPI

“

A critical, independent and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy. The press must be free from state interference.

Nelson Mandela
1994 IPI World Congress in South Africa

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2021

Clash, case, counter-case over land in Ctg

Ex-minister's son, former BCL activist at loggerheads

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

A dispute over land has heated up between son of a former minister and a former Chhatra League activist, in the port city.

Sanowara Group managing director Mujibur Rahman, son of former minister for expatriates' welfare Nurul Islam, claimed he bought a piece of land in Chandgaon area next to a school founded by his father.

Meanwhile, Md Shahedul Islam, an officer of Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited, said Mujibur has grabbed their land by attacking and threatening his family members and demanded Tk 2 crore as extortion.

Claiming to be rightful owners of the land, the two parties clashed and filed case and counter case with Chandgaon Police Station last month.

An extortion case was filed against Mujibur and six others while a case was filed against Shahedul and his seven family members over demanding Tk 50 lakh, vandalising and looting "Chittagong Kindergarten and Hazera-Taju School and College", following the land dispute.

Shahedul's uncle filed the extortion case while Md Selim, a security guard of the school, filed the extortion case.

Contacted, Shahedul said their family had around 104-satak (around 62 kathas) of land in Murgir Farm area of Chandgaon's Pathany-Goda Bazar Road.

"Mujibur and his associates at different times threatened my family members to leave the property," he alleged.

He also claimed their family filed a case with the civil court but to no avail.

"A few days ago, Mujibur demanded Tk 2

crore to give our land back," said Shahedul.

"On April 19, a group of miscreants under the direction of Mujibur stormed into our land and tried to build a boundary. They also attacked us. Some of my family members including me got injured when we tried to stop them," claimed Shahedul.

He said the case filed against them was false. "Mujibur staged the attack on his school to frame us," he added.

Shahedul also held a press conference over the issue at Chattogram Press Club.

Contacted, Mujibur said, "Their [Shahedul] claims are baseless. We bought the land through proper channel to expand our educational institution."

He did not elaborate what he meant by "proper channel".

"After we bought the land, they [Shahedul's family] started claiming to be its rightful owners, which is a lie," he added.

"Shahedul and his supporters vandalised the school. When we tried to stop them, they attacked my employees. They also filed a false case against me to tarnish my image," he added.

Meanwhile, officials of the school, on behalf of Mujibur, held a press conference yesterday at Chattogram Press Club.

Asked, Deputy Commissioner (north) Mokhlesur Rahman of Chattogram Metropolitan Police said, "It's a disputed land and the matter is now under trial in the court."

"Both groups claim themselves to be the land's rightful owner. On April 19, they locked into a clash in this regard," he added.

Star journalist ABM Aminul Islam no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

ABM Aminul Islam Liton, Jamalpur correspondent of The Daily Star, died of stroke at a Delhi hospital on Saturday. He was 52.

He was in the ICU for the last two days, family quoted doctors as saying.

He left behind his wife, a third-grader son, a daughter, father, six brothers, a host of relatives, colleagues and well-wishers.

Hailing from Jurkhal Charbandha in Motherganj upazila of Jamalpur, Aminul Islam was also an assistant professor of English at Nurunnahar Mirza Kashem College in Motherganj.

Aminul -- who had been suffering from kidney complications for last two years -- went to Delhi for kidney transplant in January. He was scheduled for a transplant on April 26.

But he along with his wife and his kidney donor were infected with Covid-19. The others recovered a few days ago, said Aminul's younger brother Anisur Rahman Babul.



Returnees left

FROM PAGE 3

new variant is not significant either.

President of Bangladesh Social Club Sirajul Haque said, "Corona situation in Oman is under control. Offices and business outlets remain open maintaining health guidelines. 'Lockdown' remains effective from 9pm to 4am only. It is not understandable on what basis Oman has been put as a 'high risk' country."

It was learnt there were 38 passengers for Saturday night's Dhaka-bound suspended Oman Air flight and another 142 passengers in a Salam Air flight. All of them were returning home on Eid vacation.

Shihab Uddin of Cumilla, who was a passenger of Salam Air, said, "I reached

airport three hours earlier and booked a hotel spending 75 Rial for three days. While waiting in the boarding queue around 10:30pm, we were informed that the flight was suspended. Airline staffer informed that we don't have permission to enter Bangladesh."

Md Masud of Chattogram said, "Amid pandemic, I saved money, purchased a ticket spending 200 Rial, underwent corona test and arranged quarantine at hotel. I would have returned home after two years. I don't know what's our fault."

Due to flight suspension, although passengers from the city could return to their residences, others who were from distant areas had to spend night at the airport.

President of Oman Bangabandhu Parishad Mohammad Shahabuddin said, "We demand steps from the foreign ministry and expatriates' welfare ministry to revoke such imaginary decision."

President of Chattogram Samiti in Oman, Yasin Chowdhury, echoed him.

On April 24, Oman imposed travel ban for Bangladesh along with India and Pakistan. Now, as both the countries have banned entry of Bangladeshis, Bangladesh Biman's flights to the country have been suspended till May 15, said sources at its Oman office.

US-Bangla Airlines also suspended its special flights on Muscat route.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

Shopping malls

FROM PAGE 3

The workers, under the banner of Dhaka Metropolitan Road Transport Workers' Union, brought out the procession in the morning.

They also demanded food assistance for unemployed workers.

On Friday, the transport owners' association urged the government to immediately resume bus service in the country. The following day, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said that the

government is considering resumption of public transport services in the country ahead of Eid.

Public transport services have been suspended since April 5, with the government announcing a countrywide lockdown.

Although operations of buses, train and launches have remained suspended, traffic movement on streets has increased significantly.

Yesterday, heavy traffic congestion was seen on Mirpur road, Technical

area, New Market, Elephant road, Bangla Motor, Panthapath, and Karwan Bazar areas.

Witnesses said, the crowd was heavier yesterday because of transport workers' protest and people rushing to the shopping centres.

Restrictions were imposed on the movement of people and public transportation to contain the second wave of Covid-19 on April 5. The restrictions have been extended until May 5 in phases.

ফ্যান্টারী বিক্রয়/দীর্ঘমেয়াদী লিজ
ঢাকার সন্নিকটে এয়ারপোর্ট থেকে মাত্র ৩৫ কি. মি. এর মধ্যে গাঞ্জিপুরে দুইটি বড় কমপ্লেক্সিত ফ্যান্টারী মিডিয়া / দালালের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয় হইবে। প্রকৃত মিডিয়া কোম্পানীদের যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলে।
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Fake currency

FROM PAGE 3

Police said the group set up the factory in Kamrangchar recently. Before, they had a factory in Savar, and from there they distributed fake notes to different districts.

DC Mashiur said Jiban is an expert in making fake notes and is connected with other gang members. Using the network, Jiban has already spread fake notes. Police are currently trying to estimate how much they spread so far.

The gang was planning to increase the production of counterfeit notes ahead of Eid, he said.

A case was filed against the arrestees under the Special Powers Act.

Ensure

FROM PAGE 3

Adivasi Forum member Flora Bably Talang said the government must ensure proper

disbursement of special incentives at the local level and create opportunity for Moulvibazar's indigenous betel nut farmers to access agriculture soft loans.

Planning Minister M A Mannan, who joined the programme as chief guest, assured that the government is committed to the rights of indigenous people and he will raise his voice for the necessary allocation for them from the next budget.

Speakers also discussed the absence of proper data about the actual number of ethnic groups and the total population. They said this is the biggest challenge in determining the amount of allocation for them.

According to the 2011 census, the government has data on 27 ethnic groups and the total population was 16 lakh.

However, in March 2019, the Ministry of Culture published a gazette list of 50 ethnic groups, which indicated that more than half of the groups were left out of the 2011 census, and there are many misconceptions about population number, speakers said.

They also demanded ensuring the involvement of indigenous people and organisations in the SDG implementation process and creating a proper mechanism for that.

MJF executive director Shaheen Anam presided over the programme.

Member of Parliament Rashed Khan Menon; Nirupama Dewan, former member of National Human Rights Commission; and Raja Devashish Roy, Chakma Circle Chief spoke at the event, among others.

It might

FROM PAGE 3

an emergency arise later on.

Justice Enayetur Rahim also remarked that public gatherings and people's lack of their awareness about Covid-19 are beyond control and that they need to be made conscious of the situation.

On April 27, Supreme Court lawyers Mohammad Humayun Kabir Pallab and Mohammed Kawsar had jointly filed the writ petition with the HC.

Expression of Interest (EOI) Official Drinks and Beverage Partner



Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/ Official Drinks and Beverage Partner / 2021/249

Date: 03rd May 2021

Expression of Interest (EOI)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby invites Expression of Interest (EOI) along with financial offers from the reputed Business Houses/ Companies/ Parties/ Agencies / Consortiums for acquiring the Official Drinks and Beverage Partner of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) from 18 May 2021 to 31 October 2023.

Area of Rights:

A detailed EOI document has been developed incorporating all necessary EOI details and documents for acquiring the Official Drinks and Beverage Partner of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Eligibility Criteria:

- Companies related to Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting, Online Betting shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- Any person(s) or entities with an existing unresolved dispute (i.e. Financial, Disciplinary and any other) with BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI Process.

Document Purchasing Procedure:

- Due to COVID 19 Pandemic situation, interested parties need to obtain a soft copy of the EOI Document (electronic version) via email from BCB on payment of the Non-Refundable fees of BDT 2,00,000 (Two Lacs Taka Only) in the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft/ Cash or for the Overseas participants USD 2500 (Two thousand and Five hundred US Dollar only) to be remitted to BCB (Account No. 01-7537131-01, Account Name : Bangladesh Cricket Board, Bank : Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh, SWIFT : SCBLBDDX). Please send your request for the EOI Document (Soft copy or printed version) along with the evidence of Bank Transfer /Payment receipt referred to above at the following email address: sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com
- The details of the EOI process, Tentative tour Itinerary, Bank Guarantee Format, Copy of the Agreement etc. are set out in the EOI Document. EOI Document will be available from **May 04, 2021 to May 12, 2021** (Except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

EOI Submission Procedure:

The EOI along with financial offer (prepared in accordance with the EOI Document) must be submitted at the BCB Management Office at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh during office hours (between BST 1000 to BST 1700) on or before **Monday 17 May, 2021** and should be in a sealed envelope to be addressed to: **The Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board.**

Due to COVID 19 Pandemic situation, interested participant may submit the EOI along with financial offers electronically via email at sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com.

The EOI needs to be accompanied with the following documents:

- Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.
- Updated auditor's report on financial statements (In case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
- Bank Solvency Certificate along with bank Statement.
- Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
- In case of Consortium, notarized consortium Agreement.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the EOI.

Chief Executive Officer

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216

Home Series-Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men) Title Sponsorship & Ground Branding Rights



Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/Title Sponsorship & Ground Branding Rights /Home Series/ 2021/248

Date: 03rd May 2021

Expression of Interest (EOI)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby invites Expression of Interest (EOI) along with financial offers from the reputed Business Houses/ Companies/ Parties/ Agencies / Consortiums for acquiring the Title Sponsorship & Ground Branding Rights of Home Series involving Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men) from 18 May 2021 to 05 October 2023.

Area of Rights:

A detailed EOI document has been developed incorporating all necessary EOI details and documents for acquiring the Title Sponsorship & Ground Branding Rights of Home Series involving Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men).

Eligibility Criteria:

- Companies related to Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting, Online Betting shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- Any person(s) or entities with an existing unresolved dispute (i.e. Financial, Disciplinary and any other) with BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI Process.
- Reputed Business Houses/ Companies/ Parties/ Agencies / Consortiums must have at least **03 (Three)** years of experience in marketing / selling international standard cricket events for the aforesaid rights will get preference in the EOI process.

Document Purchasing Procedure:

- Due to COVID 19 Pandemic situation, interested parties need to obtain a soft copy of the EOI Document (electronic version) via email from BCB on payment of the Non-Refundable fees of BDT 2,00,000 (Two Lacs Taka Only) in the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft/ Cash or for the Overseas participants USD 2500 (Two thousand and Five hundred US Dollar only) to be remitted to BCB (Account No. 01-7537131-01, Account Name : Bangladesh Cricket Board, Bank : Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh, SWIFT : SCBLBDDX). Please send your request for the EOI Document (Soft copy or printed version) along with the evidence of Bank Transfer /Payment receipt referred to above at the following email address: sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com
- The details of the EOI process, Tentative tour Itinerary, Bank Guarantee Format, Copy of the Agreement etc. are set out in the EOI Document. EOI Document will be available from **May 04, 2021 to May 12, 2021** (Except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

EOI Submission Procedure:

The EOI along with financial offer (prepared in accordance with the EOI Document) must be submitted at the BCB Management Office at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh during office hours (between BST 1000 to BST 1700) on or before **Monday 17th May, 2021** and should be in a sealed envelope to be addressed to: **The Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board.**

Due to COVID 19 Pandemic situation, interested participant may submit the EOI along with financial offer electronically via email at sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com.

The EOI needs to be accompanied with the following documents:

- Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.
- Updated auditor's report on financial statements (In case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
- Bank Solvency Certificate along with bank Statement.
- Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
- In case of Consortium, notarized consortium Agreement.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the EOI.

Chief Executive Officer

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216

IN MEMORIAM
Syed Tanweer Murshed
1938-1988
Loving father, devoted husband, always in our thoughts and prayers. May Allah grant him maghfirat and eternal peace.
Ameen.
Yasmeen, Maher and Madiha Murshed

কমাশিয়াল স্পেস ভাড়া হবে
জুলাশান-১ এ সম্পূর্ণ আধুনিক ডেকোরেশন করা ২১০০ বর্গফুটের অভ্যন্তরীণ কমাশিয়াল স্পেস ভাড়া দেয়া হইবে। যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১৫০০৫৩২৬

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2021-9166814
Request for Proposal (RFP): To Develop Training Module and Conduct Training of Trainers (ToT) on Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 and Rules 2018 for Child Marriage Prevention Committee, Government Officials and Local Government Representatives in Bangladesh.
UNICEF-Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong record and credibility of providing the above-required service. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to "supplybangladesh@unicef.org"
The deadline to submit the proposal is **Tuesday, 18 May 2021; Time: 11:00 Hrs**
Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process
www.unicef.org.bd

World Health Organization Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following positions under different contractual modalities:

- Consultant COVID-19 vaccination preparedness and response plan / SSA
- Coordinator for MoHFW Coordination Centre in DGHS, Dhaka / SSA

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

Qualified female candidates are highly encouraged to apply

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

- Campaign duration is from April 1, 2021 to May 15, 2021
- During the campaign period, the Cardholder issued with a Mastercard-branded Debit, Credit or Prepaid Card by any of the issuing Banks in Bangladesh must use it at least four (4) times at Point of Sale (POS) or Ecommerce portal for a minimum transaction value of BDT 1,000 (for Domestic Transactions) or USD 25 (for Overseas Transactions) on each occasion
- The campaign is an maximum points scored through frequency of transaction with the Mastercard-branded Card
- Each retail transaction will qualify for points under this campaign as follow:
 - 2 Points for a Domestic POS or Ecommerce Retail Transaction of Tk. 1,000 or above and for Overseas POS or Ecommerce Retail transaction of USD 25 or above on any Debit, Credit or Prepaid Card
- Split or multiple transactions at the same merchant location within the same day will not be eligible; and only one transaction will be counted. Any MFS account or e-wallet loading transaction will not be eligible for this campaign
- In cases where 2 or more Mastercard Cardholders score the same number of points, the winner will be decided on the basis of the transaction value. In case the transaction value is also identical for 2 or more Mastercard cardholders, the winner will be decided on the basis of who made the transaction earlier
- Top Prize includes Travel Vouchers, Electronic Vouchers, Gadget Vouchers, Dinner Coupons, Ecommerce Vouchers etc
- The winner selection procedure will be audited by a Certified Chartered Accountant Firm.
- Only retail transactions will be eligible for this campaign and Mastercard reserves the rights to disallow any transaction performed for commercial purposes
- Mastercard reserves the rights to modify, extend or suspend this campaign
- Any permanent or contractual employee of Mastercard, its Advertising Agency, PR Agency or any concerned vendor; and the Cards Business and Cards Operations Department of the participating Issuer Bank will not be eligible for this campaign
- For further details please visit: www.facebook.com/OfficialMastercardBangladesh

Brother files murder case

FROM PAGE 1
case with Gulshan Police Station the following day.

Yesterday, after recording the statement of the complainant, Metropolitan Magistrate Morshed Al Mamun Bhuiyan, ordered that all proceedings of the murder case be stayed until the probe report over abetting suicide is finalised.

According to the case filed by the victim's sister last Tuesday, the 42-year-old Anvir and the victim, who was 21 at the time of her death, were in a romantic relationship.

In the case filed yesterday, the victim's brother said Sharun used his sister to learn Anvir's business and personal secrets.

After a point, the victim, realising that Sharun was using her, stopped helping the accused.

That angered Sharun and so he sought revenge, the case statement said.

After entering her flat in Gulshan on April 26, Sharun brutally killed the victim with his associates and hung the body from a ceiling fan, the case statement added.

Ayub Ali, security guard of the flat, earlier told The Daily Star that none other than Anvir, the victim's sister and brother-in-law and one of her female friends used to visit the flat.

The victim's brother also mentioned in the case that his sister was just friends with Anvir, who had business enmity with Sharun.

Police investigators, however, said in the six diaries the police had seized from the flat, the victim had written about her extreme emotional distress and frustration because Anvir's family had become a barrier in their relationship.

According to the case statement, the victim was acquainted with Sharun and talked with him and met him at different times.

Asked about the case filed by her brother, the victim's sister -- who filed the case against Anvir over abetting suicide -- said it is common knowledge that there is a conflict between her elder brother and the two sisters over ancestral land.

"We have already filed a case against my brother," she said told journalists.

Both sisters filed a case with a Cumilla

court against their brother a couple of years ago over ancestral land, local sources said.

The sisters had no connection with the brother for the last three to four years, they added.

They also said the victim's body was not even taken to her ancestral home where the brother lives.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sharun Chowdhury on Wednesday said, "Anvir has personal enmity with me and Bashundhara Group is trying to divert the issue."

He made the remark when asked about a screenshot of his Facebook messenger conversation with the victim which spread on social media. He said the screenshot was fake.

GD OVER THREATS

Meanwhile, the victim's sister filed a general diary with Cumilla Kotwali Police Station on Saturday after she received threats from various mobile numbers.

According to the general diary, after filing the case against Anvir over abetting suicide, some people in favour of the accused put pressure on the victim's sister and her family to withdraw the case or reach a settlement over the matter.

When she did not succumb to the pressure, some unknown persons called her several times from various mobile numbers from April 28 till the early hours of May 1 and threatened to kill the family members if they did not withdraw the case.

"I along with other family members have been living in utter insecurity. We fear that our lives and properties may be harmed," read the GD.

Anwarul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station, told our Cumilla correspondent that they will investigate the matter and take security measures if necessary.

Meanwhile, protests continued demanding the immediate arrest of Bashundhara Group MD Sayem Sobhan Anvir and ensuring justice for the victim.

Cumilla City Lawyers Council and Cumilla Muktiyoddha Sangsad formed separate human chains in the town, demanding exemplary punishment of the Bashundhara Group MD.

Seasonal fish drying seeing bright prospect in Netrakona

Fishermen demand govt soft loans to thrive

MD AMINUL ISLAM

Hundreds of families in Netrakona haor areas have been drying fishes in traditional way and there is a bright prospect of this produce if this business is supported and properly monitored by the government, said the fishermen.

It is an ancestral profession for many families for survival and this business is profitable one as the demand of dry fishes, especially of country varieties is ever increasing, said Md Mujibur Rahman, upazila fisheries officer in Khaliyaur of Netrakona.

The families involved with this business mainly belong to fishermen families and they both catch and buy fishes to dry up. Local Dingaputa Haor, Boali Haor, Chhayer Haor, Kirtankhola Haor; and the rivers- Dhanu, Moghra, Satmadhalai and Kongsha flowing through the haor areas are the sources of fishes.

The dry fishes are mainly prepared in Boali, Ziakhara, Khaliyaur Bazar, Lepsia Bazar and Ballabpur in Khaliyaur; in Borokashia, Gaglajur, Borantor in Mohanganj upazila, and Singdha and Alokdia of adjacent Barhatta, sources said.

In September, there are huge catches of indigenous varieties of fishes in the haor areas. The season is the peak hours for the fishermen to start drying up fishes. They also buy fishes to gear up their business. The season continues till February.

For drying up the fishes in traditional way, the fishermen set up bamboo platform in the open field adjacent to their houses and spread the fishes on the mats on the platforms.

The fishes on the platforms are covered with nets so that the birds, especially crows cannot eat up the dry fishes.

After drying the fishes, these are taken to local bazaars where buyers come from different

areas of the country including Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj and Dhaka come to buy the delicacy, said the farmers.

As the dry country fishes of different varieties are very tasty, they have a good demand in Mymensingh region and outer districts for decades, said Mohsin Mia, a journalist in Khaliyaur.

Fishermen sell the fishes between Tk 200 to Tk 400 per kg according to the variety but the fishes are sold in the markets at high prices, said the journalist.

As there is no way for the poor fishermen to manage the cost to transport the fishes to different districts, so the middlemen eat up the lion's share of their profit, the journalist said.

If the government helps the fishermen, they will get a fair price of their produce. They are involved in this profession for decades but there is no change in their lives due to the absence of a proper marketing system, said the fishermen.

Ashrafal Kabir, senior fisheries officer in Netrakona's Mohanganj said the farmers are advised to produce quality dry fishes in hygienic atmosphere.

If the farmers could use dryer machines in tinned house, they could be able to dry fishes in many folds, accelerating their business, said the official.

Around 300 metric tonnes of dry fishes of different species like puti, chingri, shol, boal, batashi, tengra, chanda and other species are produced in Khaliyaur, Mohanganj and a part of Barhatta every year, said the official.

Talking to this correspondent, Moti Barman of Gaglajur village said he has been involved with the profession since his boyhood.

"I have so far prepared 350 maunds of chhayashutki this season. The demand is four times higher but I could not meet the rest of the

demand due to financial crisis", said a 55-year-old Moti.

Over the profit, the fishermen said the profit depends on the weather condition of the year. If the farmers can harvest a good boro production, the business sees a better way as dry fishes have also a good demand in Netrakona, said Moti.

Billal Hossain, 65, of Dewkhan village said though it was not his ancestral profession but he has been involved with this for 14 years.

Actually, the people involved with this profession are poor and have to depend on money from local middlemen and they enjoy the maximum profit, said Billal, a father of three children.

Many have to take loan from different non-government organizations (NGOs) to support the family and the business and it deprives them of a good profit, said a 55-year-old Banu Begum of Borantor.

If the government provides loan on soft interest and easy terms, the farmers can make a good profit every year, said the fishermen.

Hundreds of women are also involved in cutting and cleaning fishes and they earn Tk 40,000 to Tk 50,000 per season (six months), said the fishermen.

MDShahjahan Kabir, senior assistant director of Department of Fisheries in Netrakona said over 1200 families are involved in making dry fish in Mohanganj, Khaliyaur, Kendua, Barhatta, Madan, Kalmakanda and Purbadhala in the district.

We are planning to support the fishermen with facilities of cold storage, dryer machines and sheds so that they can get benefited. Asked if they have any plan to give soft loans to the fishermen, the official said they are considering the matter seriously.

5 journos sued last month alone

FROM PAGE 1

incidents of blocking and filtering online communications, 36 incidents of suppressing protesters by excessive force, and six instances of hate crime.

According to the report, about 16.32 percent of the attacks were physical where 11 people were grievously injured and 92 individuals suffered minor injuries.

Some 47 people were also threatened.

At least 71.95 percent of the victim journalists and human rights defenders were subjected to legal harassment, where they were implicated in various criminal cases for speaking out or expressing their views online. Of the cases, 11 were criminal defamation cases and 410 were against online expressions.

In four cases, the victims were subjected to contempt of court proceedings for being vocal on social media.

The organisation found that almost all the attacks against journalists were due to publication of news or while they were doing their jobs against corruption, irregularities of

government officials or local criminal groups.

Article 19 said as many as 1,600 journalists lost their jobs in 2020 due to closures and loss of income of media outlets during the pandemic. The journalists and the media industry are still trying to cope with the pandemic fallout.

"Article 19 expresses serious concerns about the rising numbers of cases against journalists and online communicators under the DSA and overall lack of security and protection of journalists and online activists and media workers," said Faruq Faisal, regional director of Article 19 Bangladesh and South.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) called for ensuring a conducive environment for free and professional media.

In a statement issued yesterday to mark the World Press Freedom Day 2021, the TIB said the risk of professional and economic crisis of mass media and journalists has intensified during the pandemic.

Even though the number of media outlets has increased, syndication of political people and businesses, and the DSA have become barriers to

professionalism, free flow of information, and the freedom of press, the statement said.

Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharruzzaman said article 39 of the constitution of Bangladesh has ensured the freedom of thinking and conscience as well as the freedom of speech and expression for all citizens. It also ensured the freedom of the press.

But due to direct and indirect pressure from different quarters, this constitutional right becomes a mere document, he said.

This failure to ensure freedom of the press and professional protection of journalists makes the democratic foundation of the country weaker and it also hampers the rights to free flow and non-partial information.

Businessmen own most of the media houses. "Media Capture" has become an institutionalised foundation due to direct and indirect political involvement of this business community, Iftekharr said.

For this reason in many cases professional journalists are also forced to hide news for their protection, he added.

Vaccines will be

FROM PAGE 1

She virtually inaugurated the disbursement of financial assistance for marginalised families from her official residence the Gono Bhaban.

Each family will directly receive Tk 2,500 as G2P (Government-to-Person) transaction through mobile financial services (MFS) -- Nagad, bKash, Rocket, and SureCash.

Stressing that the government will put its all-out efforts, Sheikh Hasina said, "We're procuring each dose of the vaccine spending money, but providing it free so that people can stay safe."

Hasina urged all to strictly follow health

guidelines for themselves and others, regardless of whether they have taken the vaccine or not.

Later, the prime minister spoke to various people, including beneficiaries of the cash support programme in Bhola, Joypurhat, and Chattoogram districts.

An amount of over Tk 1,500 crore has been allocated to ease the sufferings of marginalised people during the second wave of Covid-19.

Soon after the second wave of the virus emerged, the prime minister directed the authorities to start the activities of humanitarian assistance.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police Central Police Hospital Rajarbag, Dhaka.

Invitation for Tender

Sealed tender are hereby invited from the Suppliers/Local Agents Vehicles in their official pad for the purchase of the following items for the Project of "Modernization of Existing Police Hospital's" for the year 2020-21.

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2.	Agency	Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Bangladesh Police, Central Police Hospital, Dhaka.
4.	Invitation for	Ambulance.
5.	Invitation Ref No	MEPH/Tender-Vehicle/20-21/1460
6.	Date	29/04/2021

KEY INFORMATION

7.	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8.	Budget and Source of Funds	ADP Budget
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9.	Tender Publication Date	03/05/2021 & 04/05/2021.
10.	Tender Last Selling Date	16/05/2021.
11.	Tender Closing Date and Time	At 12.00 Noon on 17/05/21.
12.	Tender Opening Date and Time	12.30 pm on 17/05/2021.
13. Name & Address of the office(s)		
Selling Tender Document Office of the Project Director, Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka		
Receiving Tender Document Office of the Project Director, Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka		
Opening Tender Document Office of the Project Director, Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka		
14.	Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Bidder must present for avoiding any future hassle of ensure quality Product).	Office of the Project Director Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka Date 09/05/2021 Time 11.00

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15.	Eligibility of Tenderer	(1) Up-to-date Trade license (2) Up to date Income tax certificate (3) VAT Registration Certificate and (4) Other documents described in tender document.
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Brief Description of Goods

Sl. No	Name	Price of Tender Document	Tender Security in Taka	Completion time in Days
1.	Ambulance	Tk. 1000.00	13,00,000/-	90 Days from the date of work order

PROCUREMENT DETAILS

17.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Dr. Md. Emdadul Haque
18.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Superintendent of Police & Deputy Project Director
19.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka
20.	Contract details of official inviting tender	Tel 88-02-8312075 Fax 88-02-9342297
21. Special Instructions-		
a) No Tender will be received after the deadline for submission.		
b) The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceeding.		
c) Bangladesh police will establish framework agreement with the successful tenderer for supply of goods.		

(Dr. Md. Emdadul Haque)

Superintendent of Police & Deputy Project Director

For- Project Director

"Modernization of Existing Police Hospitals"

Central Police Hospital

Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka

Phone-8312075 Fax-9342297

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH		
1	Ministry/Division	Not applicable.
2	Agency	Not applicable.
3	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Bank.
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present.
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
6	Invitation for	The Procurement of Supply, Installation and Commissioning of UPS Module for Bangladesh Bank.
7	Invitation Ref. No.	ISDSD(SERVICES)-12(89)/2021
8	Date	03 May 2021.
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and source of funds	Own source.
11	Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project/programme code (if applicable)	
13	Project/programme name (if applicable)	
14	Tender package No.	ISDSD(SERVICES)-12(89)/2021
15	Tender package name	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of UPS Module for Bangladesh Bank.
16	Tender publication date	03 May 2021
17	Tender last selling date	Not applicable
18	Tender closing date and time	23 May 2021 03:00pm
19	Tender opening date and time	23 May 2021 03:15pm
20	Name & address of the office(s)	Address
NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS		
-Receiving tender document		BB e-Tender System (etender.bb.org.bd) and one hard copy document.
-Opening tender document		Information Systems Development and Support Department (ISDSD), Bangladesh Bank, 28th Floor, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka.
21	Place/date/time of Pre-tender meeting (optional)	None. Date Time
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
22	Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	Tenderers having five (5) years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of delivery of goods of at least ONE contract of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed over a period of five (5) years. Evidence of Work Order, Work Completion Certificate mentioning amount, item list, date etc. are required.
23	Brief description of goods	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of UPS Module for Bangladesh Bank.
24	Brief description of related services	03 (three) years OEM provided warranty & support with local supplier support & maintenance.
25	Price of tender document (Tk)	Not applicable.
Lot No. Identification of lot Location Tender security amount (Tk) Completion time in weeks/months		
1	Information Technology items	ISDSD 1,50,000.00 12 weeks
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
26	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Amir Hossain Pathan.
27	Designation of official inviting tender	Systems Manager.
28	Address of official inviting tender	Information Systems Development and Support Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel, Dhaka.
29	Contact details of official inviting tender	9530101 amir.pathan@bb.org.bd
30 The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.		
ব্যক্তিগত ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়ারানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে কোন বক্রন।		
সূত্র নং- ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২১-১৪২৬ তারিখঃ ০২/০৫/২০২১ GD-875		

sd/-

Md. Amir Hossain Pathan

Systems Manager

Phone: 9530101, E-mail: amir.pathan@bb.org.bd

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN INDIA

BJP's invincible image gets tainted

AGENCIES

BJP has failed to breach Mamata Banerjee's fortress in West Bengal and drew a blank in Kerala in the latest state assembly polls.

But the wins in Assam and Puducherry have failed to cover its huge embarrassment in West Bengal.

The relentless campaign and heated war of words for the last one year by Team Modi-Shah, effectively made the West Bengal polls a national election.

Considering BJP's incredible performance in 2019, where it more than doubled its vote-share and ended up just 3 percent behind the Trinamool, most of the pundits felt that the BJP could improve its tally in the assembly polls.

As it turns out, not only did the BJP not manage to consolidate on its 2019 gains, it failed to even hold on to that vote share. Despite all its money power, its dominance over both mainstream and social media, its heavy-hitting leaders, its attempts at polarisation, the party couldn't even improve on what it had achieved two years ago.

Has the Modi government's poor performance with the deadly second wave of Covid made it lose ground amongst Bengal's voters? Or the Bengal rejected the divisive tactics by the ruling party?

In the major reasons for its failure to win, BJP leaders point out that the lack of a local face as a chief ministerial candidate



Supporters of Chief Minister of West Bengal state and the Chief of Trinamool Congress (TMC) Mamata Banerjee celebrate after the initial poll results, amidst the spread of the Covid-19, in Kolkata, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

hurt them, but more importantly an over dependence on TMC defectors for both organisational heft and as candidates didn't go down well with the electorate.

Heavyweights like Rathin Chakraborti, Baishali Dalmiya, Prabir Kumar Ghosal who switched tents before the election failed in the voting contest.

The answer is not clear at moment as details of the voting haven't been released

yet. But it gives a clear signal to institutions across the country that Team Modi is not invincible.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya credited Mamata for the TMC's astounding performance in Bengal elections, and said his party would introspect the poll results.

"The TMC won because of Mamata Banerjee. It seems people have chosen Didi. We will introspect what went wrong, whether it was organisational issues, lack of face, insider-outsider debate. We will see

what went wrong," he said.

And challenges for the BJP are, now, both organisational and existential.

In Assam for example, the BJP's victory has thrown up the interesting conundrum of just who should be the new chief minister — sitting Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal or Health and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is the BJP's power house in the northeast holding its alliances in several states together, and managed to steer the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests away from politically harming the BJP in the State.

Senior party leaders have been saying that the party's parliamentary board will be taking a view on the matter, meaning that a question mark is hanging on the issue.

The big issue, however, is more deep, and that has to do with the gigantic second wave of Covid-19 that is battering India.

And while the jury is still out whether the second wave of Covid-19 and the long drawn out polling schedule had a bearing on the TMC victory and the BJP's loss, next year's electoral calendar is looming large.

Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, two States that are being battered by the pandemic and a health and governance infrastructure that is tottering and failing are scheduled to go to polls next year.

Both are states that have sitting BJP governments, and the party's own fortresses will be under siege. While the BJP has become a party of meticulous electoral planning and execution, the performance of its governments in these two states will be under the scanner, as of that of the Central government.

Tamil Nadu: DMK unseats AIADMK

Ruling LDF set to retain Kerala; BJP fails to win a single seat

AGENCIES

The opposition DMK-Congress alliance was heading for a big win in the 234-member Tamil Nadu assembly, according to polls results.

Till filing this report, the DMK and its allies were leading in 149 seats including Congresses 16. The ruling AIADMK was leading in 85 seats including its alliance partners PMK and BJP (3). The majority mark stands at 118.

The DMK has not been in power in the state for a decade, and this time the party and the AIADMK are contesting without their towering leaders, J Jayalalitha and M Karunanidhi whose deaths have brought a huge change in the political landscape.

Tamil Nadu's most iconic leaders J Jayalalitha died in 2016, and M Karunanidhi in 2018. Their absence has left a huge political vacuum that many have raced to fill.

"This has been an unprecedented election because of the pandemic. We are watching closely and frankly expected to perform better than what we are seeing so far," DMK's Manu Sundaram told NDTV.

"The people saw this election as a choice between the BJP and BJP-controlled alliances and that of the DMK, which stands to oppose the BJP and its ideology," he added.

The ruling CPI(M)-led LDF is set for a historic return to power, trends from the Election Commission at 6:00 pm show. Out of the 140 Assembly seats, the LDF is currently leading in 97 seats out of which it has won many. The Opposition UDF, which won 47 seats, is down by four seats. The BJP, which had one seat in the outgoing Assembly, is not likely to have an MLA in the Assembly.

By getting re-elected, the LDF is all set to make history by becoming the first state government in Kerala in the last 40 years to buck the trend of the state unseating an incumbent government in every five years. In the assembly elections in 2016, the LDF had bagged 91 seats.

Mutations may 'evade immune response'

India experts tell govt

REUTERS, New Delhi

A forum of scientific advisers set up by the Indian government has told authorities about minor mutations in some samples of the coronavirus that could "possibly evade immune response" and require more study, a leader of the forum has told Reuters.

However the advisers said while they were flagging the mutations, there was no reason currently to believe they were expanding or could be dangerous.

Scientists are studying what led to the current surge in cases in India and particularly whether a variant first detected in the country, called B.1.617, is to blame. The forum of advisers, known as the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genetics Consortium, or INSACOG, has now found more mutations in the coronavirus that it thinks need to be tracked closely.

'Let us stand united'

Karen rebels urge other ethnic armies to unite against Myanmar junta; 7 more killed in anti-coup protest crackdown

AGENCIES

A prominent rebel group in eastern Myanmar yesterday appealed to other ethnic armies to unite against the military, as the country enters its fourth month under a junta regime.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi was deposed in a February 1 coup, triggering a mass uprising across the country that killed more than 750 people.

Security forces yesterday opened fire on some of the biggest protests against military rule in days on yesterday killing seven people, media reported.

The protests, after a spell of dwindling crowds and what appeared to be more restraint by the security forces, were coordinated with demonstrations in Myanmar communities around the world to mark what organisers called "the global Myanmar spring revolution".

As security forces have deployed deadly violence against civilians to suppress a persistent anti-junta movement, some of Myanmar's myriad ethnic armies have spoken out against the military.

Among the most prominent opponents is the Karen National Union (KNU), which has admitted offering shelter to fleeing dissidents



in the territory they control along Myanmar's eastern border.

Clashes have escalated in Karen state between the KNU's fighters and the military. Yesterday -- after five days of air raids by military -- the vice chief of staff for the KNU's armed wing wrote an open letter calling for all ethnic Karen fighters to unite, regardless of their loyalties.

"Never has there been such a great opportunity during the 70-plus years of revolution. Take advantage of this and fight against the Burmese military dictatorship," said Lieutenant General Baw Kyaw Heh.

"In our generation, let us stand united... to escape the military dictatorship."

Baw Kyaw Heh also called for unity among ethnic Karen fighters in the Border Guards Forces (BGF) -- a subdivision of Myanmar's military made up of former ethnic insurgents.

Myanmar has more than 20 ethnic rebel groups, many of whom hold territories in the country's border regions. A messy struggle over autonomy, control of drug production and natural resources has long pitted them against each other and the military.

Sonowal or Sarma?

BJP in a fix over Assam leadership after polls win

AGENCIES

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its regional allies are set to retain power in Assam, overcoming the challenge of a combined opposition led by Congress.

The ruling BJP-led NDA is surging ahead of the Grand Alliance spearheaded by the Congress, and is inching closer to another victory, as per the data available on the Election Commission website. Assam has a 126-member assembly and 64 seats are needed for a simple majority.

The ruling BJP-led NDA in Assam has won 48 seats and is leading in 24 assembly seats, while the Grand Alliance led by the Congress has won 24 seats and is leading in 27 seats.

Despite the BJP's expected win in Assam, it seems the party is not going to have an easy time deciding its chief minister



nominee. Usually, the BJP projects an incumbent chief minister in places where it is trying to retain power, but it has not announced Sarbanand Sonowal as its chief ministerial candidate in Assam.

While Sonowal, who enjoys a clean image, managed to beat the so-called fatigue against his incumbent government, Himanta Biswa Sarma has also emerged as the face of the BJP in the last few years. His management of the Covid-19 situation and his leadership as the finance minister have helped the BJP secure a clear lead over the Congress-led combine in the state.

Sarma is considered the backbone of the BJP in the northeast region and believed to enjoy Amit Shah's confidence when it comes to the party's affairs in the region.

Office of the Superintending Engineer Chattogram PWD Circle-1. e-Tender Notice. Establishment of Modern Microbiology Laboratory with PCR in Chattogram Medical College Hospital under the project of COVID-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness.

Biden policy shows hostile US intent Says North Korea, vows response. North Korea lashed out at the United States and its allies in South Korea yesterday in a series of statements saying recent comments from Washington are proof of a hostile policy that requires a corresponding response from Pyongyang.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়. কক্সবাজার দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ. www.forestsouth.coxsazar.gov.bd. মোঃ হুমায়ুন কবীর. পরিচিতি নং-১৩১৫৯.

খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়. ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি. অত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েট প্রোগ্রামে (এম.এস.সি. ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/এমইআরপি/এম.এস.সি./এম.ফিল. ও পি-এইচ.ডি) ২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষের জুলাই সেমিস্টারে নিম্নলিখিত ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, মেকানিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইলেকট্রনিক্স এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড ম্যানেজমেন্ট, এনার্জি সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, বায়োমেডিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, আরবান এন্ড রিজিওনাল প্ল্যানিং, লেদার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, গণিত, রসায়ন এবং পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে Online এর মাধ্যমে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তি জন নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত বরমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

The early history of press freedom in Bengal

PRASUN SONWALKAR

In mid-eighteenth century Mughal India, slowly but surely, the old was giving way to the new in complex ways. The Mughal Empire was losing its influence, while the EIC gained political power and influence after the Battle of Plassey (1757), Battle of Buxar (1764) and the Treaty of Allahabad (1765), in which the Mughal Emperor formally acknowledged British dominance in the region by granting EIC the diwani, or the right to collect revenue, from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Supreme Court was founded in Calcutta in 1774. The EIC ceased to be simply a trading company and transformed into a powerful imperial agency with an army of its own, exercising control over vast territories with millions of people. As Thomas B. Macaulay said during a speech in the House of Commons on 10 July 1833: "It is the strangest of all governments; but it is designed for the strangest of all empires". Elsewhere, the close of the eighteenth century was a period of cataclysmic change: American and French Revolutions had a profound influence not only on rulers in England but also on officials of the EIC. Radical politics began to emerge in England from the 1750s, which was strongly resisted by the forces of status quo. The same fears gripped the early officers of the expansionist EIC as it established itself in Calcutta and spread its influence across India.

Journalism emerged amidst such conditions and uncertain attempts by the Company government to introduce new, modern ways of governance and other measures, most of which proved controversial and faced opposition from Indians. The Company government, at the time engaged in battles across India, watched uneasily as English-language journals were launched from 1780 onwards, when James Augustus Hicky published the first journal, Hicky's Gazette Or Calcutta General Advertiser. Alert to the dangers of Jacobinism, the EIC tried to control the press and prevent its growth from as early as 1799, by when British entrepreneurs and agency house came together to launch more journals. The question of freedom of the press first exercised colonial authorities at the time of Richard Wellesley's governorship (1798–1805), when the Company government interpreted any criticism in journals as lurking Jacobinism. In 1799, Wellesley introduced regulations for the press, which stipulated that no newspaper be published until the proofs of the whole paper, including advertisements, were submitted to the colonial government and approved; violation invited deportation to England. Until 1818, the regulations applied only to the English journals, because until that year, there were no journals in Indian languages.

The Company government succeeded in controlling the press until 1818, by when the combination of a proliferating commercially driven print culture, a growing British community, a new generation of British editors and administrators, Christian missionaries and Indian elites alert to new ideas and impulses, ensured the growth of journalism and the idea of a free press. Several English-language journals followed Hicky's journal.

If Hicky's journal is better known historically for publication of scandals, scurrilous personal attacks and risqué advertisements selling sex and sin, he was also the first to fight against the colonial government, then almost single-handed, to defend the liberty of the press. He wrote: "Mr Hicky considers the Liberty of the Press to be essential to the very existence of an Englishman and a free G-t. The subject should have full liberty to declare his principles, and opinions, and every act which tends to coerce that liberty is tyrannical and injurious to the COMMUNITY" (Barns 1940, 49, italics and capitals in original; in the days of letter press, "G-t" stood for "Government"). Hicky was soon hounded by Hastings and Impey, fined, imprisoned and his journal closed in March 1782. He died in penury in 1802.

By 1800, some journals closed for want of advertising and subscription, while others closed when British editors were deported to England after publishing material that was considered unacceptable by the EIC. Editors who attracted EIC's ire and found themselves on ships back to England included William Duane, editor of Bengal Journal, removed as editor and almost deported in 1791, and finally deported as editor of Indian World in 1794; Charles Maclean, editor of Bengal Hurkaru, deported in 1798; James Silk Buckingham, editor of Calcutta Journal, and his assistant, Sandford Arnot, deported in 1823; and C. J. Fair, editor of Bombay Gazette, also deported in 1823.

The year 1818 had witnessed developments that catalysed the growth of journalism in an expanding colonial India. As noted above,

deportation remained a key instrument to discipline British editors, but the measure could not be applied to editors who were Indians or to Europeans born in India. To remove the anomaly, the Marquess of Hastings, who was governor-general from 1813 to 1823, removed the 1799 censorship and issued a new set of rules in 1818. In a circular to all editors and publishers in Calcutta, he set out guidelines with a view to prevent the publication of topics considered dangerous or objectionable, or face deportation. But his new rules did not possess the force of law as they were not passed into a Regulation in a legal manner, which meant that in practice there were no legal restrictions on the press. The Marquess of Hastings was soon hailed in Calcutta as a liberator of the press. In the same year, the first journals in an Indian language—Bengali—were launched, the precursors of several Indian-language journals in other parts of India. There is a dispute about which was published first, the Bengal Gejeti edited by Harachandra Roy with the assistance of Gangakishore Bhattacharya, or Samachar Darpan, launched by the Baptist missionaries at Serampore—both were launched in May 1818 (some scholars claim that Bangal Gejeti was launched in 1816).

The year 1818 also saw the launch of Buckingham's Calcutta Journal, on 2 October, a biweekly of eight quarto pages, which was to come into frequent conflict with EIC and also encourage the growth of the indigenous press by often publishing extracts from the Indian-language journals and commenting favourably on their growth. A Whig, Buckingham propagated liberal ideas and views through his journal that almost reached the record daily circulation figure of 1000 copies. As the editor, he wrote, he conceived his duty to be "to admonish Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults, and to tell disagreeable truths" (Barns 1940, 95). Setting himself up as a champion of free press, Buckingham saw a free press as an important check against misgovernment, especially in Bengal, where there was no

initiatives in the realm of religion, education and social awareness (in particular, for his campaign to abolish sati or widow burning).

Roy was closely associated with at least five journals: Bengal Gejeti (Bengali, 1818), The Brahmical Magazine (English-Bengali, 1821), Sambad Kaumidi (Bengali, 1821), Mirat-ul-Akhbar (Persian, 1822) and Bengal Herald (English, 1829). Roy—easily one of the foremost examples of an "argumentative Indian" (Sen 2005)—often engaged in lengthy debates with Baptist missionaries and used his polemical skills to oppose the Press Ordinance.

Adam's Press Ordinance was submitted to the court on 15 March 1823, and two days later, Rammohun Roy and four others submitted a memorial, asking the court to hear objections against it. Besides Roy, it was signed by three Tagores (Chunder Coomar, Dwarkanath, Prosunno Coomar), Hurchunder Ghosh and Gowree Churn Bonnerjee.

The memorial discussed in a logical manner the general principles on which the claim of freedom of the press was based in all modern countries, and recalled the contribution Indians had made to the growth of British rule. It created a sensation at the time and came to be described as the "Aeropagitica of Indian history" (Collet 1988, 180, italics in original). The memorial pointed out the aversion of Hindus to undertaking an oath because of "invincible prejudice against making a voluntary affidavit, or undergoing the solemnities of an oath". Using the rhetorical strategy of professing loyalty and attachment of the Indians to British rule, the memorialists wrote that they were "extremely sorry" to note that the new restrictions would put a "complete stop" to the diffusion of knowledge, promoting social progress, and keeping government informed about public opinion. It pointed out that the natives "cannot be charged with having ever abused" freedom of the press in the past, and went on to audaciously state:

The memorial was read in court, but the

afford the means of combination against the Government, but not to mention that extraordinary emergencies would warrant measures which in ordinary times are totally unjustifiable, your Majesty is well aware, that a Free Press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world because, while men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the supreme Government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed; whereas, where no freedom of the Press existed, and grievances consequently remained unrepresented and unredressed, innumerable revolutions have taken place in all parts of the globe, or if prevented by the armed force of the Government, the people continued ready for insurrection. (Collet 1988, 407)



Raja Ram Mohan Roy in London (1833), portrait by Rembrandt Peale.

A key aspect of the memorial was Roy's recall of Mughal history and the akhbarat (newsletters) system instituted during their rule. In two paragraphs (43 and 50), the memorial regretted the new press restrictions, made veiled criticism of British rule and stated:

Your Majesty is aware, that under their former Muhammadan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussalmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and often chosen as advisers to their Prince, without disqualification or degrading distinction on account of their religion or the place of their birth ... Notwithstanding the despotic power of the Mogul Princes who formerly ruled over this country, and that their conduct was often cruel and arbitrary, yet the wise and virtuous among them, always employed two intelligencers at the residence of their Nawabs or Lord Lieutenants, Akhbar-navees, or news-writer who published an account of whatever happened, and a Khoofea-navees, or confidential correspondent who sent a private and particular account of every occurrence worthy of notice; and although these Lord Lieutenants were often particular friends of near relations to the Prince, he did not trust entirely to themselves for a faithful and impartial report of their administration, and degraded them when they appeared to deserve it, either for their own faults or for their negligence in not checking the delinquencies of their subordinate officers; which showed that even the Mogul Princes, although their form of Government admitted of nothing better, were convinced, that in a country so rich and so replete with temptations, a restraint of some kind was absolutely necessary, to prevent the abuses that are so liable to flow from the possession of power. (Collet 1988, 413, 416–417)

Roy took another daring step at the time: closing his Persian journal, and setting down the reasons for doing so in its last edition.

On 4 April 1823, the day the Press Ordinance was registered in the Supreme Court and became law, Roy closed Mirat-ul-Akhbar in protest. In the final issue, he set out the reasons for doing so:

Under these circumstances, I, the least of all the human race, in consideration of several difficulties, have, with much regret and reluctance, relinquished the publication of this Paper (Mirat-ool-Ukhbar). The difficulties are these:

First—Although it is very easy for those European Gentlemen, who have the honour to be acquainted with the Chief Secretary to

Government, to obtain a License according to the prescribed form; yet to a humble individual like myself, it is very hard to make his way through the porters and attendants of a great Personage; or to enter the doors of the Police Court, crowded with people of all classes, for the purpose of obtaining what is in fact, already [? Unnecessary] in my own opinion. As it is written—

Abrooe kih ba-sad khoon i jigar dast dihad Ba-oomed-I karam-e, kha'jah, ba-darban ma-farosh

(The respect which is purchased with a hundred drops of heart's blood Do not thou, in the hope of a favour, commit to the mercy of a porter).

Secondly—To make Affidavit in an open court, in presence of respectable Magistrates, is looked upon as very mean and censurable by those who watch the conduct of their neighbours. Besides, the publication of a newspaper is not incumbent upon every person, so that he must resort to the evasion of establishing fictitious Proprietors, which is contrary to Law, and repugnant to Conscience.

Thirdly—After incurring the disrepute of solicitation and suffering the dishonour of making Affidavit, the constant apprehension of the License being recalled by Government which would disgrace the person in the eyes of the world, must create such anxiety as entirely to destroy his peace of mind, because a man, by nature liable to err, in telling the real truth cannot help sometimes making use of words and selecting phrases that might be unpleasant to Government. I, however, here prefer silence to speaking out:

Guda-e goshah nashenee to Khafiza makharosh Roo mooz maslabat-i khesh khoosrowan danand

(Thou O Hafiz, art a poor retired man, be silent, Princes know the secrets of their own Policy).

Taken together, even though the two memorials and closing Roy's journal were couched in courteous terms and some rhetoric, they were essentially an act of political defiance, which was delivered in the language and discourse of the new rulers. The opposition to the Press Ordinance won new converts among the British (such as Lieutenant Colonel Leicester Stanhope), and provided a template for future political opposition on other issues, such as the controversial Jury Act, Indian property and labour, the rights of Britons in India, taxes, education and making English the medium of instruction.

Roy closing his journal in protest and the two memorials did not succeed in changing policy, but their significance lies in the ways in which the colonial authorities dealt with the press subsequently. The memorials were much appreciated in England, where Buckingham had continued his campaign in print against the EIC and its exercise of arbitrary powers in India. Lord Amhurst, who took over from John Adam as the governor-general of India in 1823 (he was in office until 1828) did not implement the Press Ordinance rigorously, neither did his successor, Lord Bentinck. The memorials, closure of Roy's journal and Buckingham's activities in London had generated much publicity on the issue of freedom of the press in colonial India, with governors-general choosing to avoid taking major action against the fast growing press. In 1835, it was another acting governor-general, Charles Metcalfe, who, aided by Macaulay, removed Adam's licensing and other restrictions on the press through Act No. XI. By then, the idea of a free press had become a key element of a growing public sphere in Calcutta and elsewhere in colonial India. Metcalfe, who was later penalised by EIC authorities in London for removing the press restrictions, was hailed as a liberator of press and immortalised in Metcalfe Hall, a major landmark in Calcutta, which was built with public subscription in the style of imposing empire architecture in his honour. The press had become a key site of discussion and protest as the Company government introduced new laws and initiatives to govern India. The largely permissive situation for the press continued until the 1857 rebellion, by when opinions and positions had hardened on both sides, as Indian journals openly criticised the British and the EIC imposed new restrictions on the press.

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This is an excerpt of the article titled Indian Journalism in the Colonial Crucible which was published in the Journalism Studies (Vol 16, Issue 5, 2015).



(L) The first page of the first issue of Hicky's Bengal Gazette in a bound volume at the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft Library. (R) Samachar Darpan, a Bengali weekly newspaper published on 23 May 1818 from the Baptist Mission Press at Serampore, is considered to be the first Indian-language newspaper.

legislature to curb executive authority.

Print journalism had found a fertile soil in colonial Calcutta, but it also generated near-panic among colonial officials about its potential subversive effect on the army. Expressing "intense anxiety and alarm", Chief Secretary John Adam (1822) wrote in a lengthy minute on the press: "That the seeds of infinite mischief have already been sown is my firm belief". When the Marquess of Hastings sailed for England on 9 January 1823, he was temporarily succeeded as governor-general by John Adam, whose first act was to deport Buckingham to England, which led to the closure of Calcutta Journal. Secondly, Adam promulgated a rigorous Press Ordinance on 14 March 1823, which made it mandatory for editors and publishers to secure licences for their journals. To secure the licences, they had to submit an affidavit to the chief secretary under oath. For any offence of discussing any of the subjects prohibited by law, the editor or publisher was liable to lose the licence.

The following sections set out the Indian response to the Press Ordinance, mainly directed by Rammohun Roy (1772–1833), who is less known for his contribution to Indian journalism than for his reformist

judge, Francis Macnaghten, dismissed it, but admitted that before the Press Ordinance was entered or its merits argued in court, he had pledged to the government that he would sanction it. The ordinance was registered in the court on 4 April 1823. The memorial was much appreciated but failed to prevent the ordinance from becoming law. The only other recourse Roy and his group had was to appeal to the King-in-Council in London. Roy then drafted another memorial, more sophisticated in its logic and arguments, and sent copies to Lord Canning (then Foreign Secretary and Leader in the House of Commons) and to the EIC's Board of Control, in London. Over 55 numbered and lengthy paragraphs, Roy repeated the opposition to the Press Ordinance.

Continuing the rhetorical strategy of mixing fulsome praise with caution, warning and criticism, the second memorial recalled world history and put it to the King:

Men in power hostile to the Liberty of the Press, which is a disagreeable check upon their conduct, when unable to discover any real evil arising from its existence, have attempted to make the world imagine, that it might, in some possible contingency,

Who will hold the reins of private hospitals?

Hospitals are making obscene profits in Covid-19 treatment

IT is common knowledge that the cost of Covid-19 treatment is much higher in private hospitals than in public ones, like all treatments basically. But how much higher, we didn't know. We do now thanks to a study conducted by the Health Economics Unit of the health ministry, and the revelation is quite startling. While the government spends an average of Tk 1.28 lakh for the treatment of a Covid-19 patient in general beds and Tk 4.08 lakh for those treated in intensive care units (ICU), in case of private hospitals, the average cost is much, much higher—around Tk 2.42 lakh in general beds and around Tk 5.09 lakh in ICU beds. Treatment of Covid-19 patients is free in government hospitals, barring the expenses of diagnostic tests and medicine. But the costs in private hospitals are completely borne by the patients. The inequality between the two groups of treatment-seekers couldn't be more pronounced.

The major differences were found in diagnosis and medicine costs which, according to experts, were due to private hospitals not following the national Covid-19 treatment protocol. They are charging abnormally high fees for these services, emboldened by the total lack of scrutiny by the relevant authorities. Just think, the diagnosis cost alone was 17.7 percent of the total expenses in private hospitals, over seven times higher than the diagnosis cost in public hospitals, as the study revealed. The fact that these hospitals can charge whatever they please and get away with it, no matter what the consequence, speaks volumes about the sorry state of private-sector healthcare in Bangladesh. This is not just an ethical issue. It's a crime against the people, when they are at their most vulnerable. This is what happens when corporate profit becomes the underlying impetus of the treatment campaign. Short of a functional central oversight mechanism, ordinary patients are fair game in such an environment.

The question is: whose responsibility is it to ensure the private sector doesn't corporatise Covid-19 treatment? Clearly, with the limited number of public hospitals, it's the private sector that has to bear the burden of treatment for the majority of the patients. It will be unfair to say they are totally failing at that job. But the obscene profits that most private hospitals are making at the expense of patients, without any oversight from the government, run contrary to the spirit of humanity shown by certain members of the private sector, most recently by Gonoshasthaya Kendra. The GK's recent initiative to "bring hospital at the doorsteps of patients"—by dispatching mobile medical teams in different patients of the capital and providing diagnostic services and treatment at subsidised rates—is an example of what the private sector, and its public counterpart, can do to serve the nation at this hour of crisis. That the opposite is happening is mostly a failure of the health authorities. The government must discipline the private sector and ensure no one can exploit the patients by overcharging. The national Covid-19 treatment protocol must be enforced without any exception.

Woes of the migrant workers

The government should provide for their subsistence

ONE of the sectors hit hardest by the pandemic is the migrant workers' sector. Every country has been affected by the pandemic fallout, in greater or lesser degree. Since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 a great majority of our expatriate workers had to return home. Unfortunately, many of them returned with very little cash in hand. As it is, the record shows that Bangladeshi workers invariably get the raw deal. Their pay remains in arrears in many cases, and since they had to return home in a hurry, they had no opportunity to claim their dues. Most of the returnees are from the Middle East.

It is not surprising that the expatriate workers would find themselves without employment at home too. The pandemic-compelled lockdown have caused job opportunities to shrink, adding to the number of unemployed and pushing more people below the poverty line. It is therefore not surprising that 47.23 percent of returnee migrants find themselves without any ostensible means of income now. This is according to a survey by Brac Migration Programme of 417 expatriate workers who returned home last year. The survey was conducted in March-April 2021 to assess their state a year after their return. Of these returnees only 35 percent have been able to set up small business. The others are doing odd jobs. A redeeming feature is that the situation now is somewhat better than last year when a similar survey by Brac found 87 percent of 558 returnee migrants did not have income opportunities.

Being without regular income and without guarantee of reemployment in their jobs abroad it is not surprising that they would be under tremendous mental duress. We believe that the administration, led by the ministry of expatriate welfare, should initiate a plan to provide support to the returnees. Loans on easy terms should be provided to them for the time being. Alongside this, the ministry should take up the matter with respective countries so that the expatriate workers could return to their jobs without going through fresh paper work once the situation improved. We should not forget that the 45-billion-dollar foreign exchange reserve we are boasting of today are due mostly to our expatriate workers and we have a moral obligation to take care of them during these hard times. Losing their jobs means losing our source of foreign exchange too.

Prepare for the price to be paid for learning loss

MACRO
MIRROR

FAHMIDA KHATUN

SINCE the beginning of the pandemic, educational institutions have been closed in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus. Face-to-face education had been stopped at schools, colleges and universities. Around 188 countries have suspended face-to-face education during the pandemic. Hence, countries which were already facing crisis in the area of education could now potentially face a catastrophe.

In Bangladesh, about 40 million students have been affected due to the closer of the educational institutions in view of the pandemic. Schools have been closed since March 2020. Only a handful of educational institutions are imparting education through online platforms while most are closed and their students are sitting idle at home with tremendous mental agony. There are no online teaching and learning facilities in most parts of the country. Villages, sub-urban areas and remote places are not covered by quality internet services. Students from poor families do not have access to computers, smart phones and internet. Parents of most students do not have the skills to teach their children at home. Children of poor families are particularly in difficult situations as these families are also going through livelihood crisis. Boys are asked to search for and get engaged in income earning activities for their families. Girls are being married off as they are considered burden for their families. Early marriage and early child bearing will potentially risk the health of both mothers and children. Therefore, several achievements made over the decades are apprehended to be reversed due to the pandemic. Not only the inequality of learning is going to accentuate, but inequality in terms of health and nutritional status and economic opportunities will be visible much more than before.

Even the children who are receiving online lessons face several problems. Though the education sector has observed some digitisation through television, internet, and radio learning during the last few years, students are not fully used to this yet. Teachers also did not have experience of online teaching. Teaching materials for online classes were not developed. Hence the quality of education is lower than face-to-face education.

Since the pandemic is primarily a

health threat which has also hit the economy hard, the attention of the policymakers has been mainly on controlling the virus and keeping the wheels of the economy turning. Sending children home was part of the health and safety measures for the students. In doing so, the medium to longer term issues have remained out of sight. Meeting up the learning needs of students during the pandemic is one such issue which has long term implications for the country.

for smooth implementation of health protocols at schools.

Second, the education approach will have to be different than the pre-pandemic period given the emerging situation. We need to bear in mind that we will not be able to regain what has been lost just by opening the schools and colleges and taking exams in the physical classrooms. It is likely that during these last several months since March 2020 there has been a decline in core

and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The organisation suggests allocating 4-6 percent of GDP for education in its Education 2030 Framework for Action. Given that the loss in learning is huge, the budget allocation for education will have to be doubled what the government usually allocates. That is, in the coming budget for FY 2021-22, the government should allocate four percent of GDP for the education sector.

Fourth, higher allocation in the budget is of course, not the only remedial for restoring the education losses due to the pandemic. The education ministry has to know how to spend the allocated resources efficiently. Sadly, the allocated resource remains unutilised and the budget allocation for most sectors, including the education sector has to be revised downwards due to low spending. More often than not, there is more interest in physical infrastructure and less on soft infrastructure. Hence, recruitment of adequate number of school teachers and training are less prioritised by the authorities. As a result, teacher-student ratio in schools and colleges is high, and the quality of education is less than satisfactory.

Finally, the pandemic has intensified the already existing challenges in accessing quality education in the country. Though the school enrolment has been increasing, the quality of education has not. There seems to be a lack of realisation that investment in human capital is key to economic development. Countries which have skilled human resources have progressed more than which do not. Skilled people have more opportunities in the labour-market, and they are more productive and economically better off than those who are not. As Bangladesh is on its journey of graduation from the least developed country group by 2026, human capital will play a critical role in its smooth journey.

While the pandemic has brought in much distress in all aspects of our lives, this can be considered as a turning point to prepare our education system for facing any future interruptions and crisis. This is an opportunity to enhance the digitalisation of the education system and access to technology so that students and teachers get equipped for both in-person classroom and remote learning methods. This is also an opportunity for building a stronger education system which is based on quality, inclusivity and equity.

Let us not waste a good crisis!

Dr Fahmida Khatun is the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of her organisation.



In Bangladesh, about 40 million students have been affected due to the closer of the educational institutions in view of the pandemic. PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

In view of the damage caused by the pandemic, the whole outlook and approach towards the learning loss have to be changed. The depth of the seriousness has to be recognised first. There have been discussions on opening the schools for some time now. The second wave of the pandemic has once again discouraged and delayed the decision. One also does not know when the pandemic will be gone. But everyone expects that once the wrath of the pandemic slows down, educational institutions will have to be opened up. Children are also eagerly waiting to go to schools and colleges.

Once such a decision is taken, adequate preparation has to be taken by all institutions and concerned administration. First and foremost is to strengthen the capacity of schools and colleges to maintain health and safety protocols. Facilities for rapid testing, tracing, masks, and sanitisation will have to be maintained. There is a need for coordination among the education and health officials at the field levels who can guide teachers and students. Community level health workers can also be involved

competency of students. As it is, despite progress in a number of educational indicators over the past years, the quality of education has not improved much. Particularly, poor performance in mathematics, science and English even after secondary and higher secondary level education is very disappointing. Therefore, education experts have suggested that once the schools are opened, students need not study all subjects in the first year. They should rather focus on a few core subjects such as Bangla, English, mathematics and science during this one year so that the students have a stronger foundation before going back to their full curriculum.

Third, adequate resources will be required for implementing the above measures. Unfortunately, the budget for the education sector is stagnant around two percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the last few years. Education sector received only 2.09 percent of GDP and 11.7 percent of total budget in the national budget for fiscal year (FY) 2020-21. The allocation is much less than what is suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific

Bangladesh apparel industry: It's time to shift perceptions



MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

FOR better or worse, Bangladesh as a sourcing hub has become the global bellwether for CSR issues in apparel supply chains.

More often than not Bangladesh is portrayed as a case study on poor working conditions. If international media wants to highlight safety, Bangladesh is their favourite punching bag. And, of course, for pollution, water wastage and so on, the spotlight is always put on Bangladesh.

I got thinking about a lot of these issues in recent weeks in the run up to the anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy. No surprise, the spotlight has been on Bangladesh once again, and I have seen many international commentators making all sorts of circumspecions or throwing their views on the country. If one were to read everything they say, it is likely they would never purchase another garment from here.

So, I began to wonder, how many people who criticise Bangladesh have first-hand knowledge of this issue? I know for certain that many of our most ardent critics have never stepped foot on Bangladeshi soil! Often, I read about Bangladesh and our factories and I see an industry I simply do not recognise! This picture I see too often is the Bangladesh of a decade ago.

Let me be clear: Rana Plaza is an event we should never forget and, of course, we need to remember those who lost their lives in the most tragic incident every year. The terrible incident that will be forever etched in the history of Bangladesh's apparel industry. The country and the world were shocked, pained and saddened with grief and mourning for the tragic loss of human lives.

But I think it is also important to promote the fact that we have had several years during which the Bangladesh Accord and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety supported a huge overhaul of the Bangladesh apparel factories.

Major remediation works were carried out costing tens of millions of US dollars, alongside the rolling out of key safety features across the industry. In a recent survey conducted by QIMA and Just Style, Bangladesh ranked second in "Ethical Manufacturing" with a score of 7.7 only behind Taiwan which scored 8.0. Vietnam came in third, followed by Thailand, Pakistan, Turkey, China, India and Brazil, respectively.

Bangladesh successfully eliminated child labour from its apparel industry with the help of the ILO. The workers' wages have steadily risen and their rights have also increased, although we must all keep fighting on these issues and stay humble.

The country has by far the largest number of LEED factories (138) in the world, among them 39 are LEED Platinum certified and as many as 84 are LEED Gold certified. Yet, so often, I see news popping around Bangladesh and the images used to represent factories do not represent the modern apparel factories here. Perhaps, as an industry, we need to improve our public relations although that is a story for another day.

Bangladesh has moved beyond Rana Plaza. The landscape stands neatly transformed.

But it goes deeper than this. I have been running my own factory for almost two decades. It is difficult to put into words the amount of change I have seen during the time in the industry. The Bangladesh apparel sector is a completely different proposition to what it was back then. It has had no choice but to change to meet the demands of a global fashion industry which never stands still.

There is also the issue of garment workers. Is worker unrest an issue in Bangladesh? From time to time yes, of course it is (as it is in many countries, even those in the west). Yet if one were to follow the social media streams of some NGOs, one would get the impression that Bangladesh garment factories are in a regular state of infighting and chaos.

My intention here is not to criticise people who write about Bangladesh. Many are doing fine work and I have faith that in most cases they are coming from a place of goodwill. The industry should

be ready to take this extraneous pressure as a motivation to even accelerate the improvements and get better beyond what it has already achieved. But the significant improvements the industry made over recent years should also be recognised by all stakeholders. Any mis-portrayal of the industry will actually demean the concerted efforts made by the manufacturers, buyers and the government to transform it.

I say with reasonable basis that too

the internet. This is not what Bangladesh looked like in the reports they had read, they tell us.

This modern side of our country, the real Bangladesh, is something we all need to play our part in promoting looking ahead as we seek to win hearts and minds and encourage would-be investors to look beyond the headlines.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all our foreign friends to Bangladesh to see the Bangladesh apparel



In a recent survey conducted by QIMA and Just Style, Bangladesh ranked second in 'Ethical Manufacturing' with a score of 7.7 only behind Taiwan which scored 8.0.

PHOTO:
TASLIMA AKHTER

many people incorrectly label Bangladesh without ever coming to the land and visiting the factories. There is the other group of individuals who visit us on a regular basis—the buyers from big fashion brands who are witness to the quiet transformation. They are better placed than anyone else to speak for the real progress in Bangladesh apparel industry.

New buyers are often positively shocked when they come here. The reality does not match the perception they had formed by reading about us on

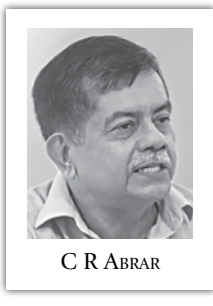
industry with their own eyes. We always appreciate any constructive criticism. But making sweeping comments that simply is not representative of the truth and publishing news that is far from the reality are not only undermining the progress Bangladesh made, but also barring the honest march of the global fashion industry towards safety and sustainability.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Unattained aspiration

Golden jubilee, citizens' rights and freedom of the press



C R ABRAR

A nation commemorated the golden jubilee of their independence a little more than a month ago. While the official functions and ceremonies were effectively restricted to the invited guests counting top dignitaries from the region and far, ordinary citizens weary of the unannounced blockades of the main thoroughfares (purportedly to provide security to VIPs and facilitate their movements) while reeling under the deadly Covid-19 pandemic, got an opportunity to engage in introspection about the significance of the anniversary and what independence meant to them.

Millions of Bangladeshis remembered with fondness and pride the thumping of the streets of Dhaka by the participants of countless processions observing the civil disobedience movement beckoned by their unquestioned leader on March 7, 1971. They shivered in horror in recalling the barbarity that was unleashed on the ordinary people on the night of March 25 lasting for nine long months. They noted with deep anguish the ultimate sacrifice of the valiant freedom fighters and members of their families. Bangladeshis also remembered the myriad scenes of jubilant crowds showering petals on the returning members of the Mukti Bahini in revving jeeps and fluttering of the red, green and yellow flags on rooftops of tin-sheds to multistoried buildings in December 1971. At that moment they all aspired and genuinely believed that this would be the new beginning.

For all patriotic Bangladeshis, gaining a separate homeland after defeating the brutal Pakistani army and their henchmen was the single most important event of their lifetime. While the netizens celebrated the event by posting their photos, donning green and red dresses, conscientious citizens reflected if indeed the cherished goals of decades of democratic struggle and the nine-month gory war of liberation were achieved. To them attainment of statehood and the concomitant national flag were only the symbols

of the beginning of the realisation of larger and substantive goals to establish "equality, human dignity and social justice" that found place in the proclamation of independence of the provisional government of Bangladesh formed in Mujibnagar on April 10, 1971.

The deliberations of the Constituent Assembly that was tasked to frame the Constitution of the Republic in 1972 also reveals that democracy based on the rule of law was the foremost concern of the architects of the Constitution. Ensuring a balance between various arms of the state with the executive being accountable to the legislature and an independent judiciary was a cherished goal. Citizens' right to hold public offices and elect representatives of their choice to public offices through impartial, fair and credible elections was yet another objective. No less important was ensuring enjoyment of other civil and political rights and an effective mechanism for people to seek redress. Included among those rights were equality before the law, protection of the law and freedoms of assembly, of association, of thought, conscience, and of speech. Freedom of the press is a pre-requisite to ensure enjoyment of freedom of thought, conscience and of speech and expression.

During the course of the jubilee celebrations the achievement of the government was claimed on economic and (a few) social indicators. However, its performance fell far short on the goals listed above. In effect, there has been a roll back on certain instances and freedom of the press has been one of those.

Over the years, the state in Bangladesh has curtailed free speech through legislative instruments and administrative practices. Foremost among those are the Information and Communication Act (ICT), 2006 and the Digital Security Act (DSA), 2018. From the inception of DSA on October 8, 2018 until March 3, 2021, 1,228 cases were lodged. Interestingly, of those as many as 549 cases (45 percent) were dismissed.

The defamation provision in the DSA and Penal Code of 1860 is another legal instrument to intimidate journalists and free thinking individuals. While in most countries defamation is a civil offence, it is a criminal offence in Bangladesh. Although Section 198 of the CrPC

of 1898 explicitly stipulates that the plaintiff has to be an aggrieved party, in practice defamation cases filed by individuals who had no *locus standi* to file them were admitted by the magistrates. The Special Powers Act also accords substantive powers to state functionaries to detain individuals, including journalists and whistleblowers for committing "prejudicial act". The draconian laws

of harassment. In a sensational case in October 2020 journalist Golam Sarwar remained involuntarily disappeared for three days and was tortured for posting a piece in his news portal alleging corruption of a politically connected powerful industrialist of Chattogram. Although little progress has been made in the investigation of the case he filed, Sarwar was slapped with two defamation cases, forced to vacate his

1,024 journalists sustained injuries after being attacked while conducting their professional duties. During the same period cases were lodged against 248 journalists and 89 were arrested.

The State also enjoys a number of prerogatives to control the media. Included among those is the authority to issue license, control and direct the flow of advertisements and influence the formats and contents of reports/programmes through "informal advice", a practice that had its roots during the military dictatorships.

The carrot and stick policy of the state and the ruling establishment have led to the erosion of civil society institutions. The concomitant result has been a fractured civil society along partisan lines, taking a toll on the media fraternity as well. This, in turn, has created conditions for the growth of "embedded journalism", a relatively recent phenomenon that encourages journalists not to search for facts and be objective in reporting events, but engage in rationalising what they want to present as facts, very often at the behest of the state. Needless to say, perks, positions, privilege and power come in handy in return. All these have a debilitating effect on the free press and the citizens' right to access information and alternative interpretations of facts.

Freedom of expression and that of the press has remained a chimera for the people of Bangladesh. Armed with an array of laws and administrative practices backed by brute force, those in command of the state in Bangladesh and their cohorts are engaged in denying the citizens their right to access facts and contending interpretations of events and developments. This is a flagrant violation of the spirit of the Liberation War. It's a pity that the sections of the citizenry who have taken up the mantle to defend that spirit have thus far remained oblivious to this aberration. Likewise, the apathy of academics, learned bodies and artists, poets and writers' guilds is also painfully disappointing.

The right to free speech and free press is the pathway to secure other rights. Therefore, in this golden jubilee year of independence it is incumbent on every conscientious citizen of Bangladesh to defend the right to free speech, the mother of all rights.

CR ABRAR is an academic with interest on human rights and migration issues.



Rahat Karim, a freelance photojournalist, is attacked allegedly by BCL men at Science Lab intersection in Dhaka on August 4, 2018. PHOTO: IBNUL ASIF JAWAD

and administrative practices and their wanton application create conditions for self-censorship by the media, sapping the vitality of the Fourth Estate.

Meting out violence against journalists is a regular phenomenon. On several occasions journalists were murdered for conducting their professional duties. Odhikar reports that at least 15 journalists were killed from January 1, 2009 to January 1, 2021. Investigations in the high profile murder cases of Sarwar Shagor and Meherun Rumi of Dhaka (2012), Jamaluddin of Jashore (2012), Ahmed Kabid of Narshindi (2012) and dozen others are yet to register any progress. The criminal justice system of the country tainted by malfeasance, incompetence, inefficiency and delay has been largely unable to provide due redress. An incisive *Daily Star* feature (November 8, 2019) notes that in 23 years, at least 32 journalists, publishers and writers were killed, "but only four of their murder cases ever saw the light of justice".

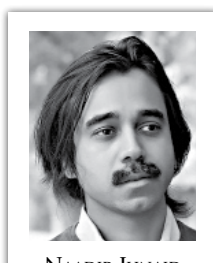
In recent years journalists have been subjected to a range of physical attacks, repression, intimidation and

rented premise and is under pressure to remove his report. At a press conference in Dhaka on April 12 he alleged that attempts were made on his life and he was under constant surveillance.

A number of reporters in the capital and other towns and cities have been physically attacked while performing their duties. A number of journalists including those of *Manabzamin* and *The Daily Star* were assaulted while covering the elections of December 2019. In August 2018, during the peaceful protest demanding safe roads protesters and journalists came under intense attack from the ruling party activists wearing helmets and the law enforcement agencies. In a number of instances journalists belonging to local dailies including those of Mymensingh and Rangpur were beaten up.

In most instances these attacks are orchestrated by the financially and politically powerful, often connected with the establishment, with active support of the state agencies. Such tactics work as major impediments for journalists to work freely. Odhikar sources further inform that from January 1, 2009 to January 1, 2021,

Power to the profundity and imagination: Timeless films of Satyajit Ray



NAADIR JUNAID

FROM the 1920s to the early 1950s, several directors working within Hollywood—as well as filmmakers in former Soviet Union, France, Italy, Germany, and Japan—considered cinema not as a mere tool of entertainment but as a medium for creative expression. Filmmakers such as Charlie Chaplin, Sergei Eisenstein, Jean Renoir, Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio De Sica, Akira Kurosawa, and others deployed artistically innovative filmic devices to convey profound statements about the complexities of life. Some of the aesthetically satisfying films produced during this period were hailed as cinematic masterpieces. Films in India, however, prioritised clichéd elements such as sentimental slush, ersatz emotion, theatricality, romantic tales, spectacle-like songs, and happy endings in these decades. Instead of making serious attempts at formal experimentation, Indian directors continued catering to the lowest common denominator audience.

In one of his articles written in 1948, Satyajit Ray said, "There has yet been no Indian film which could be acclaimed on all counts. Where other countries have achieved, we have only attempted and that too not always with honesty [...] What the Indian cinema needs today is not more gloss, but more imagination, more integrity, and a more intelligent appreciation of the limitations of the medium." And in 1955, Satyajit Ray's maiden feature *Pather Panchali* brought the much-needed breakthrough in Indian cinema. The film went against the grain by incorporating location shooting, non-professional actors, a background score evocative of rural Bengal, and images depicting the scenic beauty of the countryside. Ray did not cast any superstars in the film. Instead, he chose Chunibala Devi, an octogenarian former actress for an important role. Who would come to the movie

theatre to see such an old lady, and a story that has no songs and romantic elements? Raising these questions, the producers showed no interest in financing Ray's film. But Ray was determined not to give in to the market demands. In order to continue the shooting of *Pather Panchali*, he even pawned his wife's jewellery and sold some rare books and classical music records from his personal collection.

box-office success in Kolkata. In 1956, *Pather Panchali* won a special jury award as the "Best Human Document" in the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. Upon its release in the US, the film ran for 36 weeks in the Fifth Avenue Playhouse in New York. *Pather Panchali* broke the record for the longest run in that movie theatre set by the famous German film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. As we remember Satyajit Ray on his



Satyajit Ray (May 2, 1921 – April 23, 1992).

PHOTO: COURTESY

Later, the Chief Minister of West Bengal provided funds for the film from the money allocated for community development. Having seen the stills of *Pather Panchali*, one of the main directors of Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Monroe Wheeler, became very interested to hold the film's world premiere in MoMA. Would the affluent western audiences be interested to watch the plight and suffering of a poverty-stricken family based in a village in Bengal? The question ran through the mind of Ray when the film was sent to MoMA for its international debut. But soon he was informed that American film critics and audiences appreciated the film immensely. Shortly afterwards, the film became a

birth centenary, it is important that we should encourage our budding filmmakers to find inspiration in the determination of this legendary Bengali filmmaker to use cinema as a means of self-expression and social responsibility. Still, we observe reluctance among the majority of our off-beat or alternative filmmakers to completely rid their films of light-hearted elements conventionally used to attract audiences. Having seen that our films rarely include socially significant subject matter, imaginative cinematic language, and social criticism, we cannot help wonder if our filmmakers are aware of the fact that films cannot make an impression unless they turn out to be the cinema

of ideas and change. Strict censorship has often been regarded in our country as an obstacle to confronting burning problems in cinema. But, as Satyajit Ray imparted, censorial restrictions compel filmmakers to make statements subtly and obliquely, which can be interesting at times.

Under the guise of a fantasy film, for instance, Ray's *Hirak Raajar Deshe* provides scathing criticisms of despotic rule and the tendency of sycophants to flatter a powerful figure for personal gain. Showing a chamber used by the tyrannical ruler to brainwash the citizens, Ray makes the viewers aware of the contemporary way of instilling the dominant ideology in people via various social and cultural institutions to ensure social control. Lyricism, subtlety, and understatement are some of the key attributes of Ray's films. The lyrical approach combined with his success in arousing universal emotions makes his films appealing across geographical boundaries. However, some critics deemed Satyajit's penchant for a classical structure and permanent values unsuitable for grappling with the problems of contemporary reality. But various scenes from Ray's films suggest that such a claim is not well-founded. In *Pratidwandi*, the bureaucrats do not select the protagonist Siddhartha for a job, marking the young man as a communist because of his admiration for the courage of the Vietnamese people. In *Seemabaddha*, the senior executives of a business firm organise a bomb explosion in their own factory in order to gain benefits immorally. Due to the explosion, an ageing guard of the factory is badly hurt. In *Jana Aranya*, the young protagonist Somnath is asked "What is the weight of the moon?" during a job interview and an educated young woman from a lower middle-class family has to take up prostitution because of poverty. These scenes are understated, yet they disturb and unsettle the audience. Through his subtle approach, Ray provides bitter denunciations of corruption, callousness, and injustices prevailing in contemporary society. Instead of acting like a

propagandist, Ray wanted to make people aware of the persistence of certain social problems. *Devi* and *Ganasatru* show people's blind religious beliefs, *Sakha Prasakha* discloses the involvement of the top officials with bribery and corruption, *Shatranj ke Khilari* indicates the indolence and lack of political consciousness of the wealthy people, *Aranyer Din Ratri* reveals the insensitivity and boasting of the urban young men, and *Mahapurush* mockingly exposes the failure of the urban elite to embrace rational thoughts. Given the necessity of making people conscious of the same problems in present-day society, these films are still relevant today. Ray's films also made a departure from tradition by frequently including strong women characters. Sarbajaya in *Pather Panchali* and Aparajito, Manisha in *Kanchenjunga*, Arati in *Mahanagar*, Charu in *Charulata*, Karuna in *Kapurush*, Aditi in *Nayak*, Aparna and Jaya in *Aranyer Din Ratri*, Sundarshana in *Seemabaddha*, and Ananga in *Asani Sanket* appear as bolder, more confident, and more resilient than the male characters. In an interview, Ray states that the inclusion of unwavering women characters reflects his own attitudes towards and personal experience with women.

Whenever we talk about radical filmmaking in the realm of Bengali cinema, Satyajit Ray's maiden feature (made in the face of tremendous odds) is mentioned. From *Pather Panchali* to his last film *Agantuk*, Ray never compromised on high standards, thereby making a huge impression. Having a greater familiarity with the oeuvre of Ray would enable people to understand the impressive qualities and importance of socially-meaningful cinema. We are surely in need of films that would make us perceive the beauty of a dewdrop on a blade of grass, strengthen our sense of humanism, and raise our social consciousness—hence, the everlasting relevance of the cinema of Satyajit Ray.

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5 lakh doses may arrive

FROM PAGE 1

The Bangladesh government approved emergency use of the Sinopharm vaccine last week.

The Directorate General of Drug Administration then informed journalists that it would inoculate 1,000 people first and review the outcome. Mass inoculation will launch later.

In early 2020, the Beijing Institute of Biological Products developed an inactivated coronavirus vaccine called BBIBP-CoV. China, the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, Pakistan and some other countries across the world are currently using it.

The World Health Organization has yet to approve it, but the WHO's advisory panel said the Sinopharm has presented data on its vaccine indicating the levels of efficacy.

This vaccine consists of two doses to be administered 28 days apart.

Bangladesh's mass inoculation programme stumbled after the Serum Institute of India failed to ship the vaccine.

As per an agreement, Bangladesh was supposed to receive three crore shots in six months. Serum delivered

the first 50 lakh doses in January, but shipped only 20 lakh in February. No shipment has been made since.

Looking for alternative sources, the government has been in talks with vaccine suppliers in Russia and China.

Last week, the government approved in principle the local co-production of Russia's Sputnik V and Sinopharm vaccines.

A meeting was held between the health officials and the representatives of three companies to discuss the co-production of Sputnik V.

Health secretary and other officials of health ministry were present in the meeting where the private drugmakers were asked to communicate with the Russian vaccine authorities.

"Russian vaccine authorities will come and inspect those factories and then the issue of co-production will be settled," Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of DGHS, told The Daily Star.

He also said representatives from Incepta Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Popular Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd were present in the meeting.

Khaleeda

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admitted to the capital's Evercare Hospital under cardiologist Shahabuddin Talukdar.

Zahid said once all the tests are carried out, the reports will be reviewed and the medical board will decide her treatment plan accordingly.

The physician said as she was taken to hospital after a long time, doctors want to do all the necessary and regular medical tests.

The BNP chief has been suffering from arthritis, diabetes and ophthalmological problems.

Khaleeda tested Covid-19 positive on April 11 and in the follow-up test on April 24, she tested positive again.

Asked whether she tested Covid-19 negative, the physician yesterday said she does not have any symptoms since April 27 and now she is being treated at non-Covid unit of the hospital.

Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the government on March 25 last year freed Khaleeda from jail for six months through an executive order suspending her jail sentences in two graft cases.

She was released from the prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University the same day. Since then, Khaleeda has been staying at her Gulshan residence.

The government extended her release period for six months on August 27 last year. It was extended for another six months on March 15 this year.

On February 8, 2018, the BNP chief was sent to the Old Dhaka Central Jail after a court sentenced her to five years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. The High Court later doubled her sentence.

Khaleeda was found guilty in another graft case the same year. Her party, however, claims both the cases are politically motivated.

Journo sued

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the district's Ghoraghat upazila.

The journalists reported that the truck belonged to BCL leader Inan.

On information, Inan went to the police station and filed a case against them.

Babu was arrested on April 30 night. He is now facing 10 cases, including two lawsuits filed under the DSA, claimed his family members.

Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Dinajpur, said they handed Babu over to the Detective Branch of police in the district after the arrest.

Scientists

FROM PAGE 12

measured", said Dr Brett Addison, a University of Southern Queensland astrophysicist, in a statement.

"It is a particularly interesting discovery as the host is one of the hottest stars with a transiting planet we've ever found, and because TOI-1431b is in such close orbit around its star, it's one of the hottest planets surveyed."

This temperature is significantly greater than the melting point of most metals, many of which will turn to liquid at under 2000 degrees Celsius. Titanium melts at 1670 degrees, platinum at 1770 degrees, and stainless steel at between 1375 and 1530 degrees.

However, the world still does not manage to top the blistering temperatures of The Sun, which has a surface temperature of 5505 degrees.

These types of planets, known as ultra-hot Jupiters, are rarely discovered but this particular one is even more unusual due to its retrograde orbit.

"If you look at the Solar System, all the planets orbit in the same direction that the Sun rotates and they're all along the same plane. This new planet's orbit is tilted so much that it is actually going in the opposite direction to the rotation of its host star," Dr Addison said.

Cops seek

FROM PAGE 12

two years promising that he would marry her.

Besides, two violence cases were lodged against Mamunul and many other Hefajat men for vandalism and arson in Sonargaon on April 5.

Mamunul, former joint secretary general of the defunct central committee of Hefajat, has been behind bars since April 18 in a violence case filed with Paltan Model Police Station in the capital.

Meanwhile in Brahmanbaria, a lawmaker filed a case under the Digital Security Act against 14 named persons, including Hefajat's district unit president and general secretary, and 150 other unnamed ones.

RAM Obaidul Muktar Chowdhury, ruling Awami League lawmaker from Brahmanbaria-3, lodged the case with Sadar Police Station.

In the case statement, the lawmaker alleged that the Hefajat men spread rumour and hate speech through social media to provoke people to be violent.

[Our Narayanan] and Brahmanbaria correspondents contributed to this report.]

Some int'l flights

FROM PAGE 12

For people coming from Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, the quarantine period is three days, it said, adding that after the three days, if they test negative for coronavirus, they will be asked to be in home quarantine for 11 days.

If the people from the aforesaid 26 selected countries had transit in India, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Mongolia, Oman, South Africa and Tunisia, they will be allowed to enter Bangladesh provided that they remained at the airport during the transit, it said.

People arriving from any other

country will be asked to be in home quarantine for 14 days.

The government suspended regular flight operations on all international routes on April 14, said the statement.

It allowed operation of special flights to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Singapore and Oman from April 17 so that several thousand expatriate workers, whose visas and work permits were about to expire, could fly to their work places.

Special flights to China, Bahrain and Kuwait were also resumed later.

US-BANGLA TO OPERATE FLIGHTS TO MALAYSIA

US-Bangla's Boeing 737-800 with 164 seats will leave Dhaka for Kuala Lumpur every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:00pm from May 4, officials said.

From Kuala Lumpur, the flight will leave for Dhaka at 3:00am on Wednesday and Friday and will reach Dhaka at 5:00am.

US-Bangla Airlines is currently operating flights from Dhaka to Dubai, Doha, Singapore and Guangzhou as per the government's instructions amid the pandemic.

The airlines suspended flight operations to Muscat, Chennai and Kolkata due to restrictions.

Govt plans to isolate

FROM PAGE 1

per section-269 of the penal code. The cabinet may issue a circular in this regard," said Khurshid.

The circular will also include other directives aimed at curbing the virus transmission, he mentioned.

At the meeting, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) placed a set of recommendations as the ongoing restrictions proved not so effective, he said.

The recommendations include district-wise lockdown, shutting down shops and malls that are not following the health safety guidelines and amendment to the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act 2018.

"We have observed that most of the cases of virus transmission occurred in the city corporation areas. We have recommended stricter surveillance in the cities. Otherwise, there is a high risk of a rise in transmission again."

"The upcoming restrictions will not be like the current ones... We have discussed the next course of action to contain Covid-19. Hopefully, we will get a final announcement tomorrow [today]," Khurshid added.

According to health ministry sources, the cabinet today will decide on the recommendations discussed at yesterday's meeting.

The cabinet may come up with some decisions, including extension of the ongoing shutdown of public and private offices till the Eid; restrictions on leaving work stations during the holidays; sending garment workers on leave in phases; closure of shops and malls for a certain period after the Eid, they said.

Meanwhile, at another virtual meeting at the health directorate yesterday, the health minister sounded a note of caution, saying that if people remain indifferent to the health safety guidelines like they did during the first wave of Covid-19, the country may see a third wave very soon.

As the country was hit by the second Covid wave in the second week

of March, the government imposed countrywide restrictions from April 5, which was extended in phases till May 5.

It, however, allowed markets and shopping malls to reopen from April 25.

Though Covid cases have been in decline since mid-April, the DGHS warned that reopening of shopping malls and people's reluctance to comply with the health safety guidelines may lead to a further rise in infections.

Health officials said the risk of virus transmission has gone up recently due to an increase in people's movement ahead of the Eid.

In another development, transport workers yesterday staged demonstrations in different parts of the country, demanding resumption of public transport.

EXPERTS' WARNING

Experts have warned that huge gatherings at shopping malls and a possible mad-rush ahead of the Eid may increase the virus transmission once again.

People in large numbers are likely to leave the capital for village homes to celebrate the Eid with their loved ones. In normal times, 80 lakh to 1.2 crore people leave Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Gazipur before the Eid, according to passenger welfare organisations.

The DGHS data shows that the number of Covid cases went up after every home rush.

To ease the rush this time, the government is likely to extend the closure of public and private offices until the Eid as there would be only three working days between May 6 and the Eid holidays, a Cabinet Division official told this newspaper, seeking anonymity.

Earlier on Wednesday, the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 advised the government to be stricter in enforcing the health safety guidelines.

Pakistan denies refugee

FROM PAGE 12

a neutral position in the fighting in Bangladesh, ordered the shipments be suspended as neither the Japanese government nor the business wanted to take any risk regarding payment. The Japanese authorities were now looking for alternative markets for goods originally meant for Pakistan against aid agreements.

MAHMUD ALI SETS UP BANGLADESH MISSION IN NEW YORK

Mahmud Ali, who on April 26 denounced Islamabad and swore allegiance to the Government of Bangladesh, was authorised by the provisional government to establish a Bangladesh mission in New York. In fact, Bangladesh already had the nucleus of its first political presence abroad except the one in Kolkata because Mahmud Ali, without wasting a moment, rented a small office near the UN headquarters and declared it as the Bangladesh Mission in New York. The mission under Mahmud Ali would try to provide a broad general platform to be used to create in this part of the world public opinion in favour of accepting Bangladesh as a new member in the family of nations.

UN WON'T RESUME WORK ON PROJECTS IN BANGLADESH

The United Nations decided that there was no early prospect of its resuming work on various development and aid projects in Bangladesh. A UNDP circular to various UN-specialised agencies conveyed this view and advised that technical experts engaged for work in Bangladesh should be

resigned or their services terminated. The move was essentially one based on financial and economic considerations. After the outbreak of fighting in Bangladesh, UN Secretary General U Thant ordered the evacuation of all personnel working in Bangladesh for the UN or its specialised agencies.

PAKISTAN ACCUSES INDIAN AIR FORCE

Amid signs of a deterioration in the already hostile relations between India and Pakistan, Pakistan charged that Indian fighter planes had violated Pakistani air space on May 3 on two occasions.

The Pakistani radio reported that Indian aircraft had flown over the Rangpur district of East Pakistan in the morning and again at noon. The broadcast did not identify the type of aircraft allegedly involved.

It was the first time in the present crisis that Pakistan had charged that Indian planes had violated her air space.

In another development, it appeared that negotiations had been nearly completed for the repatriation of Pakistani diplomats from Calcutta in India and of Indian diplomats from Dacca in East Pakistan.

Pakistan's deputy high commission, or consulate, in Calcutta had been the centre of a diplomatic war since the predominantly Bangalee staff took it over and transformed it into a mission of the newly-proclaimed provisional government of Bangladesh.

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

More Covid aid lands

FROM PAGE 12

"It is a necessity now. We are seeing so many people testing positive."

Social media platforms have been flooded with desperate pleas from people looking for oxygen cylinders, medicines and hospital beds as the Covid-19 wave causes widespread shortages.

The dire situation prompted

many nations including the United States, Russia and Britain to send emergency supplies including oxygen generators, face masks, and vaccines.

Aid from France reached India yesterday, including eight oxygen generator plants and 28 ventilators, adding to the 120 ventilators from Germany that arrived a day earlier.



PUBALI BANK LIMITED

REGISTERED OFFICE

26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

NOTICE OF THE 38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given to all concern that the 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Pubali Bank Limited will be held on **Thursday, 03 June 2021 at 10.30 AM (Dhaka Time) at Pubali Bank Auditorium, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka** with physical presence and also virtually through the link **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021** by using digital platform to transact the following businesses:

AGENDA

Ordinary Business:

- To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2020 and Reports of the Directors and Auditors thereon.
- To declare Dividend for the year ended 31st December 2020 as recommended by the Board of Directors.
- To appoint/re-appoint Auditors of the Bank for the year 2021 and to fix their remuneration.
- To appoint/re-appoint Corporate Governance Compliance Auditor for the year 2021 and to fix their remuneration.
- To elect / re-elect Directors.

Special Business:

- To adopt, consider and resolve the following agenda as "Special Resolution"

"The proposal for issuance of unsecured, contingent-convertible, BASEL III compliant, perpetual bond (PB) of BDT 5,000 million by Pubali Bank Limited subject to approval of regulatory authorities as part of the Bank's Additional Tier I regulatory Capital with the Loss Absorption Option by conversion of Tier - I Bonds into shares upon occurrence of a Trigger Point Condition. The condition for conversion summarily includes: (i) if the Bank's consolidated CET-1 ratio falls below Bangladesh Bank requirement (currently of 4.50%) and stays below for 03 (Three) successive quarters (the "Trigger Point Condition"), the option of conversion of Bonds into shares (the "Loss Absorption Option") shall be exercised; (ii) At the end date of successive 03 (Three) quarters during which Trigger Point Condition exists, the Loss Absorption Option shall be exercised upon conversion of the outstanding principal of the Bonds to common shares at the Conversion Strike Price (i.e. average of 180 business days market price of the Bank's ordinary shares prior to the 3rd quarter end on which the Bank's consolidated CET-1 falls below Bangladesh Bank requirement (currently of 4.5%) or Par Value (BDT 10) whichever is higher) by such amount which shall not exceed the amount which would be required to bring the consolidated Common Equity Tier 1 (CET 1) ratio to 4.5% of risk weighted asset; (iii) If an issue in relation to issuance of a fractional share arises upon conversion, the Bank will round the number of shares issuable, up to the next whole number. Fractional lot size will also be rounded to the next whole number; (iv) The Bondholder will not be eligible for the interest payment if the same situation prevails (Bank's consolidated CET-1 ratio remains below the regulatory requirement of 4.5%) after the publication of audited financials. In case of exercise of the Loss Absorption Option, the portion of Bonds that will be required to be converted, no such interest shall be paid on such converted Bonds."

All the honorable members/shareholders of Pubali Bank Ltd. are requested kindly to make it convenient to attend the meeting physically or virtually in time.

Dated: Dhaka
28 April 2021

By order of the Board of Directors
sd/-
Zahid Ahsan
Deputy Managing Director &
Company Secretary

NOTES:

- The members whose names will appear on the Members/Depository Register as on the "Record Date" i.e. **Sunday, 09 May 2021** are eligible to attend/participate and vote in the 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and also entitle to receive dividend.
- The AGM shall be held maintaining strict social distancing protocols with due regard to public health concerns during the Covid 19 Pandemic.** Members/shareholders wishing to participate in the AGM virtually may do so through the link **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021** by using digital platform in pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission's order No. SEC/SRMIC/94-231/91 dated 31 March 2021.
- As per Companies Act 1994 under Regulation 79, 80 and 81 of schedule- I and as per article no. 90 & 91 of the Bank's Articles of Association, one-third of the directors need to retire every year and they will be eligible for re-election. Under this circumstances, the honorable directors (a) Mr. Habibur Rahman (b) Mr. Fahim Ahmed Faruk Chowdhury (c) Mr. Musa Ahmed and (d) Mr. Asif Ahmed Choudhury will retire in the 38th Annual General Meeting and they are eligible for re-election.
- A Member entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting may appoint a Proxy to attend and vote in his/her stead. He / she shall have to submit his / her proxy form, duly filled in, signed and stamped (along with other necessary papers, if any) through online after successful completion of Registration or Paper based Manual form in the Share Department, 3rd floor, Registered Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka of the Bank no later than 48 hours before commencement of the Annual General Meeting i.e. **Tuesday, 01 June 2021 up to 10.30 AM.**
- An entitled member who wants to attend the meeting and cast his/her vote physically has to submit his/her duly filled and signed registration form to the registration counter at Registered Office of **Pubali Bank Limited, Credit Conference Room, 5th Floor, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka** of the Bank. Then an OTP (One Time Password) will be sent to his/her mobile number and email address mentioned in the registration form. By using the OTP, he/she will be able to attend in the meeting physically in the AGM venue (Pubali Bank Auditorium, 13th floor, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka) and exercise his/her voting right through ballot paper (at Registered Office of Pubali Bank Limited, Credit Conference Room, 5th Floor, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka of the Bank). Time for physical registration will be Thursday, 03 June 2021 from 8.00 AM to before closure of the Meeting and time for physical voting will be Thursday, 03 June 2021 from 10.30 AM to before closure of the Meeting.
- An entitled member who wants to attend the meeting virtually by using digital platform and cast his/her vote through online has to go to the link: **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021** for login to the system. After putting his/her 16 digit BO ID/folio ID, an OTP (One Time Password) will be sent to his/her registered mobile number and email address (as per CDBL data). By using the OTP, he/she will be able to attend and cast his/her vote through online. Time for online registration and e-voting will be Wednesday, 02 June 2021 from 8.00 AM to before closure of the Meeting on Thursday, 03 June 2021.
- A valid proxy holder may attend the meeting virtually through link: **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021** by using digital platform or physically in the AGM venue (Pubali Bank Auditorium, 13th floor, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka) and may cast his/her vote through online (link: **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021**) from Wednesday, 02 June 2021 at 8.00 AM to before closure of the Meeting on Thursday, 03 June 2021 or paper ballot (at Registered Office of **Pubali Bank Limited, Credit Conference Room, 5th Floor, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka** of the Bank) from Thursday, 03 June 2021 at 10.30 AM to before closure of the Meeting.
- The last date of submission of nomination paper through link **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021** or manually at Board Division for election of Directors is 18.05.2021 up to 5.00 PM. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be completed on 20.05.2021 and will be published the eligible candidates list in the Notice Board of the Bank's Registered Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka by the Chief Election Commissioner and also in the bank's website by 5.00 PM. Last date of withdrawal of nomination paper through email to "chiefelectioncommissioner@pubalibankbd.com" or paper based manually on 24.05.2021 up to 5.00 PM and list of names of final candidates to be published in the Notice Board of the Bank's Registered Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka by the Chief Election Commissioner and also in the bank's website on 24.05.2021 after 5.00 PM.
- Nomination Form, Registration Form and Proxy Form will be available in the Bank's website **www.pubalibangla.com**
- All the online related activities are available in the link: **www.pubalibangla.com/AGM2021**
- Pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Notification No. BSEC/CMRRC/2006-158/208/Admin/81 dated 20 June 2018, the soft copy of the Annual Report 2020 will be sent to the email addresses of the Members available in their Beneficial Owner (BO) accounts maintained with the Depository. The Members are requested to update their email addresses through their respective Depository Participant (DP). The soft copy of the Annual Report 2020 will also be available on the Investor Relations section of the Bank's website at: **www.pubalibangla.com.**
- Honorable Shareholders are requested to update their Mailing Address, Bank Account no., Branch Routing no., Signature, Mobile Number and other related information through Depository Participant (DP) of their BO Account before record date i.e before 09 May 2021.**
- Hon'ble Shareholders under BO are requested to update their respective BO Accounts with 12 Digits Taxpayer's Identification Number (e-TIN) through Depository Participant (DP) and Hon'ble Shareholders under Folio are requested to provide their e-TIN Certificate to Share Department of the Registered Office before record date i.e before 09 May 2021, failing which Income Tax at Source will be deducted from payable Dividend @ 15% (Fifteen Percent) instead of @ 10% (Ten Percent) as per amended under section 54 of IT Ordinance 1984.**
- Merchant Banks and depository participant (DPs) are requested to email the soft copy of their margin clients list (in MS Excel format) as on 'Record Date' at boardpbi@pubalibankbd.com within 27 May 2021 for facilitating payment of Cash Dividend.
- The Board of Directors has recommended M/s Howlader Yunus & Co. Chartered Accountants and M/s A. Qasem & Co. Chartered Accountants to appoint/re-appoint as auditor of the bank for the year 2021.
- The Board of Directors has recommended M/s Mohammad Sanaullah & Associates, Chartered Secretaries & Management Consultants to appoint as Corporate Governance Compliance Auditor of the bank for the year 2021.

Payment of Dividend:

- Cash Dividend amount will be credited to the respective bank account of the shareholder through BEFTN.

Familiar patterns as Tigers unravel

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's inability to play consistent cricket was exposed yet again, with the visitors on the verge of a Test defeat after brilliant execution from the Sri Lankan spinners on a Pallekele pitch that offered plenty of purchase.

The Tigers were struggling on 177 for five in chase of a mammoth 437 after bad light forced an early end to the fourth day's play. The hosts will be hoping to get the remaining wickets on the final day to win the Test and clinch the two-match Test series 1-0.

Off-spinner Ramesh Mendis bagged three wickets while left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama picked up two to take his match tally to eight as the Bangladeshi batters struggled to spend time at the crease in their second innings.

According to Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo, fatigue has set in after the Tigers spent 179 and 159.2 overs on the field in the two Tests against Sri Lanka. He believed it had taken the players close to their physical and mental breaking point.

That fatigue may have forced the Bangladeshi batters to opt for an attacking strategy even when the need of the hour was some sort of resistance designed to save the match. In fact, the top five Bangladeshi batsmen who were dismissed yesterday managed to get starts but none of them were able to display enough patience on the crease.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Sri Lanka: First innings-493 for 7d and Second innings 194 for 9d (Karunaratne 66, Dhananjaya 41, extra 1; Miraz 2-66, Tajiul 5-72, Taskin 1-26, Saif 1-22)

Bangladesh: First innings-251 all out in 83 overs (Tamim 92, Saif 25, Mominul 49, Mushfiqur 40, Miraz 16, extras 12; Lakmal 2-30, Ramesh 2-86, Jayawickrama 6-92) and Second innings-177 for 5 in 48 overs (Tamim 24, Saif 34, Najmul 26, Mominul 32, Mushfiqur 40, Liton 14 not out, Miraz 4 not out, extras 3; Ramesh 3-86, Jayawickrama 2-58)

The strategy to attack Lankan spinners backfired in the second innings, with in-form Tamim Iqbal once again starting off brilliantly. But this time he had to return to the dressing room before reaching a fifty for the first time in the series.

The left-hander was dismissed by a brilliant Mendis delivery and was caught behind after scoring 24 off 26 balls. His partner Saif Hassan was guilty of playing too many shots and



Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque looks back at his shattered stumps after his dismissal by Sri Lanka spinner Ramesh Mendis during the fourth day of the second Test at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: SLC

eventually paid the price when he gave a simple catch to cover while trying to play an inside-out shot to Jayawickrama on 34.

Najmul Hossain, who scored consecutive ducks after scoring his maiden ton in the first Test, was the third Bangladeshi wicket to fall before tea. The left-hander also got a start and reached 26 before Jayawickrama's delivery went through his defensive gate and struck timber.

With one session to go before stumps, Bangladesh were on 104 for 3 with an initial plan of playing out the day. However, the visiting batsmen had other ideas. Both experienced campaigners Mufsiqur Rahim and skipper Mominul Haque continued to play with an attacking mindset after tea, but that did not work well for the visitors.

Mominul, on 32, was played on while trying to guide Mendis through the slip cordon just five overs before the final session of the day. Mushfiqur was also riding his luck and was lucky twice before he too perished, being caught at short leg for 40 off the bowling of Mendis as Bangladesh started to anticipate a defeat.

"It is natural that the spinners will get the assistance from the pitch on

the fourth and fifth day of a Test match. We all started well but were unable to convert those starts into a big one. Maybe if we didn't lose more than three wickets today (yesterday) it would have been a good day for us," Najmul told media. "On such wickets, it is very difficult for batters if they remain negative. It's not that being positive means we have to hit every ball, but everyone tried to play with intent."

Earlier, Sri Lanka declared their second innings on 194 for nine shortly after lunch yesterday, with skipper Dimuth Karunaratne top-scoring with 66. Left-arm spinner Tajiul Islam bagged his second five wicket haul away from home after the Lankan batters tried to score some quick runs in the end.



TIGERS BEGIN TRAINING FOR SRI LANKA ODI SERIES

Imrul Kayes, who last played an ODI in 2018, and Mahmudullah Riyad took part in the training sessions along with the other group members at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The group started training after Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 23-member preliminary squad on Saturday for the three-match ODI home series against Sri Lanka this month.

The selectors have named Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman, both currently playing in IPL, in the squad although it is not clear whether they will join the camp on time. The series is likely to start on May 23. The IPL's league stage also concludes on May 23, with the final on May 30. The preliminary squad will train till May 9; after which they will get a seven-day break for the Eid festival. Most of the preliminary squad is made up of cricketers who played in Bangladesh's recent white-ball tour of New Zealand. The three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka is part of the ICC's Super League. (SQUAD) Tamim Iqbal, Naim Sheikh, Imrul Kayes, Litton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Mithun, Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain, Mosaddek Hossain, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Tajiul Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Saif Uddin, Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam and Shohidul Islam.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mohammedan planning to revive their glory days

SPORTS REPORTER



Although Mohammedan's rich trophy cabinet is still a point of envy for their rivals, the Black and Whites have lagged behind in terms of winning silverware over more than a decade. The Motijheel-based outfit still live with the regret of not winning the professional football league since its introduction in 2007.

Inefficiency of club officials has been a major reason behind Mohammedan's failures, which began with them finishing behind the champions in the first three editions before the team were apparently stripped of all pride and turned into a mediocre side, much to the frustration of their large number of supporters that have not wavered despite the lean years.

The new board of directors elected in early March are now taking initiatives to restore that lost pride by paying attention to football. As part

of the initiatives, the board yesterday formed a 25-member football committee for the next 2021-22, five months before the ongoing 2020-21 season comes to an end.

Engineer Golam Mohammad Alamgir and Engineer Dato Mohammad Ekramul Haque were named chairman and vice chairman respectively while Abu Hasan Chowdhury Prince was named secretary of the committee. The committee will be assisted by a nine-member technical committee and five-member advisory committee.

"Each club usually forms their squad before the season is declared, so the football committee has been formed to work on forming a champion calibre team for next season. The same committee will also look after matters regarding the team for the ongoing season," Abu Hasan told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We have already estimated a budget for the next season and decided to sign quality foreign players like the foreign recruits of Bashundhara

Kings as well as rope in at least 10 new players, including some national players," explained Hasan.

However, former footballer Imtiaz Sultan Jonny said he was not aware of the duties of the technical committee, which besides him also comprises former Mohammedan footballers like Jakaria Pintu, Rummon Bin Wali Sabbir, Kaiser Hamid, Shafiqul Islam Manik, Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu and Riaz Uddin and organiser Fazlur Rahman Babul.

"Mohammedan has already recovered from a poor condition and I still don't know the responsibilities and duties of the technical committee. I can tell you once we meet the football committee, which must have a vision before forming the squad," said Jonny. "In the past 15 years, there are no satisfactory tales of Mohammedan football. I think we still have to do a lot of work to restore the pride and the committee should think of contributing to the country's football along with Mohammedan success."

England's Jos Buttler celebrates his maiden Twenty20 ton during Rajasthan Royals' 55-run victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League (IPL) yesterday. Buttler's 124 was the centrepiece of the Royals' 220-3, coming off 56 balls including 10 fours and five sixes. The Sunrisers only managed 165-8 in reply at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium. Bangladesh and Royals pacer Mustafizur Rahman picked up three wickets for 20 runs.

PHOTO: BCCI



EUROPEAN FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Inter win first Serie A title in 11 years

AGENCIES



Inter Milan clinched their first Serie A title in 11 years on Sunday after Sassuolo drew 1-1 with Atalanta to assure Antonio Conte's side of the league crown.

Inter are 13 points clear in first place with four games remaining, and their triumph ends a run of nine consecutive title wins for Juventus.

The league title is Inter's first since winning the Serie A, Coppa Italia and Champions League Treble in 2009/10 under Jose Mourinho, and their 19th overall.

Inter have therefore overtaken AC Milan, who have 18 Serie A titles, to become the second-most successful club in league history behind Juventus, with 36 league wins.

Inter beat Crotona 2-0 on Saturday to go 14 points clear at the top.

Coach Antonio Conte's consistency in selection aided his side's consistency in performance. Inter have grown into the season after a shaky start, and their league form was undoubtedly helped by a disappointing group stage elimination from the Champions League at the end of 2020.

Conte's side lost to AC Milan and dropped points against Parma and Atalanta as they struggled to juggle domestic and European exertions.

But after finishing bottom of a group with Real Madrid, Borussia Moenchengladbach and Shakhtar Donetsk in December, Inter were the only team in Serie A's top seven that had no European distractions remaining.

That allowed Conte's side a full week of preparation for most league games, and they went on to become the first Serie A team to start the second half of a season with 11 consecutive wins.

Inter Milan manager Antonio Conte said his players deserve praise. "The season we are having is the result of a constant growth from every point of view, not only technical and tactical, of mentality, sharing, living it intensely," Conte told Sky Italia.

Meanwhile, Manchester City were also on the brink of a third Premier League title in four seasons after a 2-0 win at Crystal Palace on Saturday secured with goals by Sergio Agueero and Ferran Torres.

City's title will be confirmed if Liverpool win at Manchester United on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side have 80 points with four games left, while second-placed United are on 67 with five to play.

"We can start to put the champagne in the fridge -- not to open yet but to think about it," said Guardiola, whose side face Paris St Germain on Tuesday in the home leg of their Champions League semi-final with a 2-1 lead.

"The Premier League is already there -- it is in our hands. We need one more victory, two more points."

In La Liga, Real Madrid's Brazilian duo Eder Militao and Casemiro struck in the second half to secure a 2-0 home win over stubborn Osasuna on Saturday and keep the heat on the La Liga leaders, Atlético Madrid.

Atletico Madrid stayed in charge of La Liga's four-way title race by grinding out a 1-0 win at struggling Elche on Saturday but rode their luck to the extreme when the hosts missed a penalty in stoppage time.



Inter Milan's Christian Eriksen celebrates after scoring their first goal during a 2-0 win over Crotona on Saturday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

MU fans invade pitch at anti-Glazer protest

REUTERS

Manchester United fans protesting against the Glazer family's ownership of the club stormed into their Old Trafford stadium and gathered on the pitch ahead of Sunday's Premier League game against Liverpool.

British media reported fans turned up at Old Trafford at 1 p.m. local time (1200 GMT) to protest against the owners with banners and flares.

They pushed down the barriers to force their way into the ground ahead of one of the biggest domestic games of the season, which is scheduled to kick off at 4.30 p.m. local time. They left the pitch after about 10 minutes. The anti-Glazer movement has gained momentum in recent weeks following the club's failed attempt to form part of a breakaway European Super League last month.

United owner Joel Glazer, who was named the European Super League vice-chairman when the announcement was made, has apologised to the fans in an open letter after they withdrew from the project.

However, that apology seems to have been rejected by the club's supporter base who protested outside Old Trafford last week.

The invasion of the pitch followed a protest outside the Lowry Hotel, where the United squad traditionally spend the night before any home match in preparation for games. United was bought by the American Glazer family for 790 million pounds (\$1.1 billion) in 2005.

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SHAH CEMENT

More Covid aid lands in India

Death toll hits new record; Canada, Brazil struggle with outbreaks

AGENCIES

India struggled to contain one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks with nearly 400,000 new infections reported yesterday, as more international aid arrived in the South Asian nation to help end the crisis.

Deaths from Covid-19 jumped by a record 3,689 in 24 hours, with the eastern state of Odisha imposed two week lockdown as the nation's creaky healthcare system is unable to cope with the massive caseload.

Surges in Brazil and Canada also highlighted the persistent threat of the pandemic, with the Covid-19 death toll approaching 3.2 million even as many nations ramp up vaccination drives.

India expanded its vaccination programme to all adults on Saturday, but many of its states are struggling with shortages despite an export freeze for shots produced in the country.

Long queues were seen at vaccination centres in cities across the nation at the weekend, with people desperate to be inoculated against a disease that has overwhelmed the healthcare system and even crematoriums and graveyards.

"We are here early in the morning to get vaccinated... I left my three-year-old at home to get vaccinated," said Megha Srivastava, 35, at a private immunisation centre in the capital New Delhi.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



A herd of deer takes shelter under a tree to protect themselves from the scorching sun at the Bangladesh National Zoo in the capital yesterday. A spell of heat wave continues in the country.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Khaleda to be in hospital for a few more days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's medical check-up is yet to be completed and she needs to stay in hospital for a few more days.

Although she is physically stable and has no symptoms of Covid-19, her medical tests, due for more than one and a half years, will be done soon, her personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain told The Daily Star.

Asked how many days it take to complete, Zahid said, "All the tests cannot be completed within a day or two. So it will take time, but it cannot be said exactly when it will be done."

"The medical board examines Khaleda almost every day and also reviews the results of those conducted."

On Tuesday night, the former prime minister was

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Some int'l flights resume after 17 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Operation of regular international flights to and from Dhaka resumed on May 1 after a 17-day suspension due to coronavirus restrictions.

But there is a travel ban on India, Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Mongolia, Oman, South Africa and Tunisia, according to a circular issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

This ban excludes the Bangladeshis who went to these countries for a short visit in the 15 days prior to their arrival in Dhaka and have special permission from the authorities, it said.

And people arriving from 26 countries will be required to be in quarantine for up to 14 days at government-selected hotels at their own expenses, it added.

The countries are: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Chile, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Kuwait, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Uruguay.

Airlines will check whether a hotel has been booked before issuing a boarding pass, it said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistan denies refugee exodus

MAY 2 & 3, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

PAKISTAN'S DENIAL West Pakistan newspapers on May 3 quoted government sources as denying that large numbers of refugees were fleeing East Pakistan to neighbouring India.

Statements attributed to officials in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad said the majority of persons who had crossed from East Pakistan into India since March 25 were Indian military infiltrators who had been sent to cause trouble in Pakistan.

According to the Pakistan government, these and local "miscreant" followers were crushed by the Pakistani army and survivors were returning to West Bengal Province in India.

The Pakistani statement followed reports from India that roughly one million East Pakistani refugees had arrived in India, posing a severe economic problem for the New Delhi government.

The Dawn quoted Pakistani government officials as saying: "West Bengal in India under the best of circumstances has a large floating population and hundreds of thousands sleep on the pavement in Calcutta as a matter of daily routine. To any unsuspecting foreign visitor these could be shown as refugees from across the border."

JAPAN SUSPENDS FOOD SHIPMENTS TO PAKISTAN

Japan successfully resisted pressure from West Pakistan to divert to Karachi shipments of textile machinery and food originally meant for Bangladesh. The Japanese government, which maintained

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Cops seek 24 days of remand for Mamunul

STAR REPORT

Narayanganj police yesterday sought a 24-day remand for Hefajat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque in three cases filed with Sonargaon Police Station.

One of them is rape case, while two others are violence ones, said Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

In response, Narayanganj's Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court Ahmed Humayun Kabir set May 9 for hearing the petition, said Asaduzzaman, Narayanganj court inspector.

On April 30, a woman, whom Mamunul claimed his second wife, filed the rape case against Mamunul with Sonargaon Police Station.

In the case statement, the woman alleged that Mamunul raped her multiple times over last

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Scientists discover 'hellish' world



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A "hellish" world that could be the hottest planet in the known universe has just been discovered by scientists.

TOL-1431b, also known as MASCARA-5b, was found 490 light-years from Earth. Nearly twice as large as Jupiter, the planet reaches temperatures that exceed the scorching red dwarf stars in our own Milky Way galaxy.

"This is a very hellish world - daytime temperature of ... approximately 2700 degrees Celsius and nighttime temperature approaching ... approximately 2300 degrees Celsius - no life could survive in its atmosphere. In fact, the planet's nighttime temperature is the second hottest ever

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING MAY 3

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-01 12-45 4-45 6-32 8-00
JAMAAT 4-11 1-15 5-00 6-42 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAY	SEHRI	IFTAR
20	3	6:32	
21	4	3:55	6:32
22	5	3:53	6:33



Plates full of iftar items being organised on a footpath yesterday in the capital's Lalmatia D-block for distributing among the poor. Voluntary organisation, "Mehomankhana", has been giving iftar to 1,000-1,200 people every day there.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Journo sued under DSA sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court on Saturday sent a journalist to jail in connection with a case filed under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA).

The accused is Itexhar Ahmed Khan Babu, 40, a correspondent for the daily Delta Times, an online news portal in the district.

Golam Imtiaz Inan, general secretary of Dinajpur unit Chhatra League, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station against Babu and two other journalists.

The other accused are Jahid Hossain, 35, Dinajpur correspondent for Delta Times, and Monjurul Bari Noyon, 34, editor of news portal Dhaka Protidin.

According to the case statement, the journalists published a false and fabricated report against the BCL leader.

On April 25, police seized a truck loaded with Phensidyl, an illegal Indian cough syrup, in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Congratulations

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Digital payment: A saviour amid the pandemic



MAHMUDUL HASAN

As cashless transactions turbocharged across the world during the pandemic, for Zyma Islam, a resident of the capital's Dhanmondi, digital mode of payment turned out to be a saviour.

From buying manure to fertilise the plants in her garden to shopping for toiletries, she purchases almost everything online and makes payment with her credit card.

"Cashless payment has become more important than ever and it is now a lifestyle. I have forgotten when I last withdrew cash from the bank booth," she said.

For Zyma, who is a credit cardholder of Standard Chartered Bank, one of the main drivers of cashless payment has been the app of the bank that has made money management much easier for her.

"The app is super user friendly. It no longer requires me to record my spending manually and I can keep track of all my

one-free offers, teaming up with brands, consumer goods companies, restaurants, airlines and different service providers.

Asif Rahman of the capital's Mohammadpur said he purchased a refractor at Tk 60,000 last year availing equal monthly instalment (EMI) facility.

"I started using a credit card a little more than a year ago and I have bought some essentials, home appliances and electronic products using the EMI option. It helped me a lot during this tough time of Covid," he added.

He also regularly purchases groceries from superstores using his card.

Maizur Rahman, a merchandiser in the capital, considers credit cards as an emergency backup.

"It not only helps with purchase of goods abroad, eliminating the need to carry cash, but if you ever miss a flight, the credit card can basically rescue you," he said.

He also uses a debit card that enables him to avail cash without visiting bank branches.

Ibrahim Mollik, a Cox's Bazar resident, purchased essentials and home appliance products worth over Tk 1 lakh from Evaly using the app of MFS provider Nagad.

"In the last one month, I purchased grocery items worth Tk 20,000 and received a discount of Tk 2,000. No brick-and-mortar shops give me such discounts," said Mollik.

According to him, utilising MFS benefits him in two ways. Firstly, he is able to avail discounts. And secondly, he feels safer using MFS, as making cash transactions can expose people to the virus.

Rubel Hussain, a resident in the capital's Rupnagar, said he now shops daily necessities without using his wallet as many shops now accept bKash payment through its merchant payment option.

"It's like magic. My mobile has turned into a wallet," said Hussain, adding that if more shops introduced such payment systems, then in the future, physical notes will no longer exist.

Besides, he is very cautious about coming into contact with cash because of the virus.

Md Shahed, who resides in Uttara, said he recently bought a washing machine using his credit card.

"Amid the pandemic, I got an

opportunity to buy the washing machine by availing EMI facility as well as a 10 percent discount," Shahed said.

As the second wave has forced the government to ban dine-in services in restaurants, credit card offers and buy-one-get-one offers for iftar home delivery are now common.

"I avail some buy-one-get-one offers for iftar using my cards,"

Shahed added.

"A few months ago, one of my family members got sick and we sought emergency medical help at a nearby hospital. It was night time and we had no cash. But the biggest relief was that I had a credit card which helped me buy medicine and pay the hospital bills," Shahed observed.

However, for Ishtiaq Parvez, credit

cards have never brought him ease.

"Credit cards are not the best option in Bangladesh because banks charge preposterously high interest rates," said Parvez.

He also noted that some banks hire third parties to push cardholders to pay their dues if they miss a payment. These third party individuals severely misbehave with clients.

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Chaldal 10% Cashback	Fair Mart 10% Cashback	foodpanda 10% Cashback	HungryNaki 10% Cashback	meandclick 10% Cashback
pathao 10% Cashback	sailor 10% Cashback	shohoz সবার জন্য 10% Cashback	10% Cashback	unimart 10% Cashback

*Cashback offer only applicable for BRAC Bank Credit Cards.

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12% Off	aadi 10% Off	Additional 10% Off	10% Off	10% Off
Additional 10% Off	freeland 10% Off	nti 10% Off	10% Off	10% Off
Up to 10% Off	Buy Tickets Up to 7% Off	ShareTrip Up to 7% Off	Additional 5% Off	MASCO bazar 5% Off

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Bank offers luring home-confined people ahead of Eid

MD ABU TALHA SARKER

Private and commercial banks are trying to lure home-confined people with attractive offers and discounts ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the largest religious festival of the Muslims. Since Covid-19 hit the country, lenders have been engaged in e-commerce or related online activities. Recently, the government slapped lockdown-like restrictions in the wake of the deadly second wave that caused an alarming

spike in Covid-19 infections and deaths. Two weeks after getting the government's nod to relax the restrictions, the banks came forward and joined hands with the traders, who opened the shutters of their businesses at the city's prime business centres and shopping malls. Some banks unleashed their erstwhile offers and some are adopting a slow-go policy because they are still fearful of Covid-19 contagion and exercising caution in terms of allowing in-person sales.

The airline and tourism sectors along with the hotel business, which have been left devastated by the deadly virus, are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel as people are planning to travel to tourist destinations to spend their Eid vacation, now that infection caseloads are declining once again.

Banks are planning to lure holidaymakers and cardholders with attractive discounts. And so, most of the banks are reintroducing their usual Eid offers including discounts, cashback, and buy-one-get-one free buffet/takeaway (dining and iftar) offers besides their online facilities, as restrictions begin to be relaxed.

Dhaka Bank Ltd, BRAC Bank, Mutual Trust Bank Ltd, Bank Asia, Eastern Bank Ltd and Standard Chartered are working on building tie-ups with various merchants to come up with cashback and discount offers on cashless transactions before and after Eid.

Simplifying payment for different goods and services, the lenders have been synced with a large number of businesses through the plastic card with payment to be made in the form of equated monthly installment (EMI), a fixed amount of money paid by a borrower to a lender at a specified date each calendar month.

Through the mode of payment, a credit cardholder can avail different products in a much easier way.

All the cardholders of the banks will get the benefits of dining and iftar at the top hotels and restaurants under the buy-one-get-one free takeaway offers. Also included are set menus and popular items of cereal for home delivery. Discounts and cashbacks include different medical services as well.

EASTERN BANK
Keeping Eid in mind, Eastern Bank Ltd (EBL) has launched some activities under the banner of a big campaign which has been visible in many places in Dhaka during Ramadan.

Under the campaign, they have selected five top hotels and restaurants. Food items from these places are available for home delivery. Food will be delivered through Foodpanda.

They have a DCI card and Dinos card through which a cashback offer can be availed with Aarong.

EBL introduced Sky points or Reward points for the first time in Ramadan. On the basis of the transaction, the lender will give points to its cardholders. The points will 'double' in Ramadan and 'triple' in Eid.

If EBL cardholders make their payments for shopping and 'edi' by using Sky apps, they will avail a 50 percent waiver, said Ahsan Ullah Chowdhury, head of Digital Financial Services, EBL.

"If the cardholders want to send edi to their children or family or relatives to bKash or A/C using their credit cards through Sky banking, we

waive the processing fee. These things were not there previously. These are novel offers that we are introducing," he said.

DHAKA BANK
During the lockdown, Dhaka Bank used to work online like the other banks. As the market is opening, they are preparing to take a different approach to lure its cardholders with attractive offers. They have tie-ups with around 100 merchants.

They have collaborated with around 1,000 local merchants. If the cardholders buy products from their designated merchants' outlets, they will get discounts and cashback benefits. They have EMI with around 500 merchants. If customers buy home appliances including furniture, TV, fridge, computer, etc., they will get the EMI facilities.

They have agreements with popular footwear brands Apex and Bata along with Aarong and

HM Mustafizur Rahman, head of retail banking, Dhaka Bank, said they introduced some facilities since the onset of the pandemic – features that set them apart from others. "We've introduced a lounge fee. When our customers go out of the country, they can get lounge fee benefits by using our card. They do not need to collect priority cards," he said.

"By using the plastic card, the customers transfer half of the card limit money to their account. Even the cardholders can take out loans," Mustafizur said.

BRAC BANK
Like the other banks, BRAC Bank has come up with Ramadan and Eid offers for which they have signed deals with 250 physical and 82 online partners.

With online food orders from Foodpanda, HungryNaki, Pathao and Shohoz, BRAC Bank cardholders can get a 10 percent cashback.

Cardholders can also benefit by availing savings and cashback offers up to 10 percent in leading grocery supershops of Shwapno, Chaldal, MeenaClick and Unimart.

For online purchases, the customers can avail a 15 percent cashback offer at Infinity, Lubnan and Richman with BRAC Bank's credit card.

"We have all types of offers, including discounts and cashback. For the last two weeks, what we were doing was e-commerce or related to online activities as there was a lockdown," said Md Mahiul Islam, head of retail banking, BRAC Bank.

"We are moving forward carefully because of Covid-19. With our takeaway offers, we are trying to deliver at home."

The number of credit card users at BRAC Bank has crossed two lakh, the second largest in Bangladesh after CDMX.

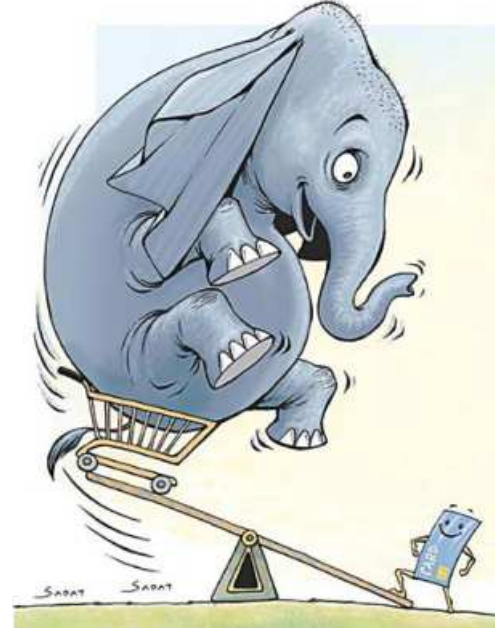
MUTUAL TRUST BANK
By using VISA, Signature, Platinum, World and Titanium cards of MasterCard, the cardholders of Mutual Trust Bank can avail striking Ramadan and Eid offers.

The lender is giving customers a hefty 25 percent discount for online shopping. The MTBL cardholders can enjoy the offer irrespective of debit or credit.

Mutual Trust Bank has tie-ups with 61 popular brands online, including Cat's Eye, Kay Kraft, Well Food, PriyoShop.com and AladinerProdip.

"We have a cashback offer of Tk 1,500 for Signature and MasterCard, whilst VISA Platinum, MasterCard Titanium, Unionpay Platinum, VISA, MasterCard and Classic Gold enjoy a cashback of Tk 1,000," said Md Shafquat Hossain, head of SME and Retail, MTBL.

They have agreements with 51 popular hotels and restaurants for iftar takeaway offers. Customers are getting the highest 15 percent cashback on MTB VISA Signature and MasterCard World credit cards.



Shwapno where the cardholders can enjoy a cashback of 10-15 percent by purchasing goods.

The cardholders of the bank can get a hefty cashback of 10-30 percent on lifestyle products. The lender has agreements with 21 popular brands including Sara, Zaara, Kay Kraft, Pavilion, Artisan, Red Origin, Nabila, Chandrabindu, etc. For online purchases, the lender is offering a 5-15 percent discount to its designated cardholders. They have deals with 10 companies including Khaas Food, Freehand, Priyo, Beshideshi, Casual Polo, etc.

They have a buy-one-get-one takeaway offer during the month of Ramadan for which they have signed agreements with 24 top hotels and restaurants.

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SEE PAGE 3

Bank offers luring home-confined people ahead of Eid

FROM PAGE: 2

All credit cardholders can enjoy buy-one-get-one-free takeaway offers in 20 upscale hotel food establishments, including Ascott Palace, Authentic Kabab Express, Abacus Restaurants, Asia Hotel, Dhaka Regency Hotel, LongBeach, Fars, etc.

"We are discouraging customers not to go to the markets, hotels, restaurants physically in such a critical situation. We are not targeting or promoting tourism at this moment. How would we while flights remain shut?" said Hossain.

"We have deals with local airlines Novo Air and US Bangla. Currently, Cox's Bazar, the main tourist spot of the country, is closed. So, we couldn't promote this offer right away. Let's see what happens in the next two weeks. And then, we will decide what we can do. We had a pre-lockdown agreement with the top hotels in Cox's Bazar - from airport pick-up and air ticket discounts to hotel discounts," he added.

BANK ASIA

Bank Asia has synced with a large number of businesses through the plastic card with the payment to be made in the form of EMI. Credit cardholders can make hospital bill payments on EMI (up to 12 EMIs) at 5 percent flat interest, with a minimum transaction amount of Tk 20,000. The lender's cardholders can enjoy any POS purchase EMI at 9 percent flat interest (up to 12 EMIs) with a minimum transaction amount of Tk 20,000.

Cardholders can buy electronic gadgets from the 20 designated companies availing 12-month EMI facilities. They have also collaborated with 28 mobile phone companies, including Apple Gadgets BD, Camera and Gadget, Cell Garden, Edison Technologies Ltd, Excel Telecom PVT Ltd, from where cardholders can avail 12-month EMI offers.

The lender's customers can also enjoy 12-month equal monthly installment facilities at seven different furniture companies such as Brothers Furniture, Hatil, Muntafi Furniture, Nadia Furniture, Navana Furniture, Otobi, and The Hi-Tech Lifestyle.

They have a collaboration with 10 companies for computer/IT products, which can be purchased at 12-month EMIs offered to cardholders. The bank has deals with 20 companies for air ticket and tourism plans including Air Asia, NovoAir, US Bangla, etc. They are providing motor bike purchasing offers to its customers, who can buy motorbikes from Bajaj Collection, Kohinur Motors and Znen Motors on 12-month EMIs.

In e-commerce, the bank has tied up with eight companies including Desh Logistics Co. Ltd (Othoba.com), Software Shop Ltd, Walletmix Ltd, Bagdoom.com, Daraz, Pickaboo, online Bangladesh Shop and Soft Tech Innovation Ltd (Aamarpay).

Female customers can look forward to purchasing from the following jewellery companies: Amishee Fine Jewellery, Diamond World Ltd, New Royal Diamond and The Sandiwip Jewellery.

Saidur Rahman, vice-president and head of cards, Bank Asia, said they have hospital and health service deals with five merchants so that clients can avail discounted rates.

The bank has tie-ups with 16 different upscale hotels and resorts from where cardholders can avail up to 55 percent discount on accommodation. Ocean Paradise, Seagull Hotels, Hotel the Cox Today, Rose View, Hotel Sea Crown and Dusal are giving 50 percent discount to Bank Asia's clients.

The bank's Signature, Platinum/Titanium credit cardholders can enjoy buy-one-get-one-free dine offers. The bank has tied up with a number of five-star hotels such as The Westin, Intercontinental Dhaka, Radisson Blu Dhaka, Radisson Blu Chattogram, Le Meridien Dhaka, etc.

By using Bank Asia's card, customers can avail cashback benefits up to 20 percent in Ramadan at popular brands like Anjans, Sadakalo, Bisshorong, Artisti, Neha, Zaara, Ansha, Jennys, Quality, Leatherex, IraniBorka Bazar, Kay Kraft, Youngkay, Leelaboti, Mahjabin and Pavilion.

Rahman said the cardholders can avail Eid offers up to 37 percent at RANGS and up to 32 percent at Transcom.

Eid celebrations from the safety of your homes

TASNIM ODRIKA

After a long day of working from home, I decided to browse through a perfectly curated website of a prominent brand selling ethnic wear. All their products are neatly organised into different categories for ease of choosing and within five minutes, I was able to find the perfect item to gift my mother for Eid. As I went to the checkout window, I was faced with a variety of payment options - from debit cards and credit cards to different mobile financial services. I chose to pay with my debit card and within a matter of minutes, the payment was done and all I had to do was wait a few days for the product to arrive.

This is the second year in a row that we will not be visiting a shopping mall filled to the brim with people getting their last minute shopping done the day before Eid. In fact, that scenario is the last thing we would want right now.

Although Bangladesh is known to be a country that celebrates numerous festivals, popularised by the saying "Baro mashe tero parbon", Eid-ul-Fitr is without a doubt the biggest celebration. And one of the key celebratory aspects of this festival is shopping for our near and dear ones. But we are in lockdown just like many other countries worldwide and even though some of the shopping malls are open for a limited window of time, visiting them is risky.

However, this does not mean that the spirit of Eid has to be completely absent. Eid is an occasion of giving and thanks to the growth of digital payments, we can still continue to do so from the comfort of our own homes.

Digital shopping was still more or less an alien concept for the majority of us this time around last year. But, over the course of the year, we have all familiarised ourselves with this concept, because we had to. Our go-to brands have also adapted to this change and most have built new websites or incorporated safe digital payment options into their websites.

Now, of course shopping online will never equate to the actual experience. But, one thing most of us will not really miss is the price hike and haggling during Eid. Expecting any kind of

discounts while shopping for Eid was a distant dream. But, not anymore!

There is a range of cashback offers and discounts that come with digital payment and most of these offers have been curated with the occasion of Eid in mind. Shops like Kay Kraft are offering 15 percent flash discount offers for shopping with select debit or credit cards while other stores have similar offers for payments via select mobile financial services. Apex Footwear has an Eid discount code

Online grocery delivery stores such as Pandamart offer free delivery and a range of offers designed especially to cater to meals prepared for Ramadan and Eid.

In case we do not want to cook meals and just spend time with our family that is also covered by the delivery stores and restaurants. Pathao offers 15 percent discount for payment through select cards along with special Ramadan discount codes and other cashback offers. We might miss sitting in a packed restaurant with all our close friends or just trying to find a place to eat right at the last minute, but for the time being, we shall have to settle with video calling all our closed ones while ordering in the meals.

Electronics and furniture are another huge purchase that occurs during Ramadan as most people like to invite their friends and family over for Eid to a newly decorated house. And these sectors are not holding back either. Along with the discounts and cashback offers for shopping online, electronics and furniture stores are also offering free delivery and installation of their products.

Now that you have brought all the necessary items for yourself and your loved ones, how will you take it to them? There is no need to risk going outside at all as you can safely send them parcels through various delivery stores; and, with Pathao, you can also avail a 20 percent flat discount while doing so.

As I scroll through more offers, my mind still unwittingly shifts back to the days of exhausting myself by walking from store to store trying to find the best deals and making sure that I am not getting the shorter end of the stick. Now, the best deals can be found at our fingertips and can also be crosschecked with other similar offers. Although there was some sort of delight in shopping side by side with a hundred others and racing to get your hand on the best outfits before the last piece is sold out, it is not something we can hope for anytime soon.

But, Eid is an occasion of giving and giving is the true joy that Eid brings to everyone. The spirit of this festival can still be kept alive and the occasion can be celebrated much more safely and effectively if we shop online and utilise the power of digital payment.



which can only be availed through online shopping along with an exclusive collection of shoes only available in their website and not in stores.

Obviously shoes and clothes do not sum up our entire Eid shopping experience. Eid means cooking a range of delectable items for one's family and distributing groceries to the less privileged. Grocery shopping has also been made easy online and a few might even prefer this over carrying heavy bags of groceries home.

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The journey towards becoming a cashless society

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

It was 1994 when Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Bangladesh rolled out automated teller machine and debit cards in tandem, which are considered to be the first example of technology integration in the country's banking sector.

ANZ Grindlays Bank that later merged with SCB then brought out credit cards in 1997, a development that can be viewed as the first mode of cashless transaction in Bangladesh.

Although it has been more than two and a half decades since the inception of the plastic money, cashless transaction only got its momentum in the last one decade.

The pandemic has given a great boost to these technology-based transactions as clients now prefer the digital platforms to settle transactions, sitting from the comfort of their homes, to decrease exposure to the virus.

Carrying out transactions without going to branches has become common among the middle class in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, the following question arises: how close are we towards becoming a cashless society?

It is difficult to measure what proportion of the total transactions are settled through the various digital platforms as the central bank does not have any clear statistics to this end.

Analysts, however, predict that 30-35 percent of the total financial transactions are now settled in a cashless manner.

Although both the government and the central bank have taken plenty of initiatives in the last couple of years to reduce the use of hard cash, Bangladesh still has a long way to go in terms of becoming a cashless society, they said.

ATM booths and debit cards began getting popularity during the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, but this had little impact on cashless transactions.

The central bank introduced one-time password (OTP) or two factor authentication in 2010 for both debit and credit cards, which reduced the use of cash.

Before the two factor authentication process was introduced, clients had to take prior approval from the branch over the phone for the settlement of e-commerce transactions.

This initiative helped e-commerce gain momentum, encouraging cardholders to purchase goods and services through plastic money.

In addition, the central bank move has also inspired clients to embrace the plastic

money in recent years.

The use of both credit and debit cards has been on the rise consistently during the pandemic as more and more people are purchasing goods and services through e-commerce platforms from their homes.

The total amount of credit card loans held by lenders stood at Tk 1,509 crore in February, up 24 percent year-on-year while spending through debit cards increased 22 percent to Tk 14,776 crore.

Considering the potential of the electronic modes of payment, the Bangladesh Bank rolled out the Bangladesh Automated Cheque Processing System (BACPS) in 2010, replacing the regional clearing houses, which were operated on a manual basis.

Under this system, banks settle inter-bank cheques within one working day instead of two to three days needed by the manual system.

The Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services requested the central bank and the finance and ICT ministries last year to provide 3 percent subsidy to clients and 2 percent to merchants on the use of cards, respectively.

In 2011, the central bank introduced the Bangladesh Electronic Fund Transfer Network (BEFTN) that allows corporate entities to pay wages and salaries to their staff and make bulk payment.

People can also pay utility bills, loan installments and insurance premiums through the platform.

On average, clients settle Tk 13,000 crore per day through inter-bank cheques and BEFTN, data from the central bank shows.

In 2012, the central bank set up the National Payment Switch Bangladesh (NPSB) with a view to attaining interoperability among banks for card-based and online retail transactions.

At present, the NPSB is processing interbank ATMs, POSs and the internet banking fund transfer (IBFT) transactions.

In a major move, the central bank launched the Real-time Gross Settlement



System (RTGS) in 2015, facilitating a safe and efficient interbank payment system in a digital manner.

The system allows banks to transfer funds from one bank's account to that of another on a real-time and gross basis.

The RTGS is designed to settle high-value (more than or equal to Tk 1 lakh) local currency as well as foreign currency transactions on a real time basis.

Prior to that, the central bank rolled out mobile financial services (MFS) in 2011, which are hugely popular among people from all walks of life.

The number of MFS accounts exceeded 10 crore in January with monthly transactions reaching Tk 57,253 crore.

Agent banking, another digital banking channel which has been in operation since 2016 in the rural areas, now helps lenders give out loans and mobilise deposits in tandem.

Deposits through the window soared 113 percent year-on-year to Tk 15,977 crore at the end of December last year while loan disbursement grew 324 percent to Tk 1,893 crore.

The digital financial platforms introduced by the central bank have had a positive impact on economic growth.

For instance, a garment worker can now send a portion of their salary to their near and dear ones in the village instantly by using a MFS channel at low costs.

This helps increase the currency movement in the economy and lets people fulfill their needs quickly, either for business or for their own consumption.

Mobile app-based transactions have also

played a great role in increasing cashless transactions in the last five years, said Naser Ezaz Bijoy, chief executive officer of SCB Bangladesh.

Clients now pay different kinds of utility bills through the app, which also allows them to pay installments of both deposit pension schemes (DPS) and loans.

There is no need to visit branches to make such payments, which is a great relief to people amid the pandemic, Bijoy said.

The government should incentivise cashless transactions as this would help widen the tax net, he said.

This will allow people to move funds effortlessly within the financial sector in real-time and at lower costs.

The boundary of cashless transactions will expand manifold when the Interoperable Digital Transaction Platform (IDTP) is operated by the central bank, Bijoy said.

The new system will be set up to establish interoperability among banks, MFS operators and payment service providers (PSPs) and would give a major boost to cashless transactions in the days ahead.

The central bank will set up the required hardware and software to start the new payment method in a full-fledged manner this year.

Illicit financial flows will be tackled efficiently to keep up with the expansion of the digital transaction platforms, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

Those who are involved in money laundering show reluctance to settle transactions under the formal channels, he said.

The expansion of the digital platforms will bring the launderers under the banking sector, which will curb illegal transactions.

This will have a positive impact on tax mobilisation as well, Rahman said.

Md Arfan Ali, managing director of Bank Asia, said that handling cash incurs huge costs.

For instance, the country has to count more than Tk 9,000 crore in transactions each year due to its heavy dependence on cash, according to a BB report prepared in 2019.

Shops and banks have to bear the most—33 percent each—for using cash followed by corporate entities at 13 percent, the government at 10 percent and individuals at 6 percent, the report said.

The report titled "Reducing the cash transaction" mentioned that the maintenance costs of printed money are nearly 0.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The central bank made this calculation based on a survey by McKinsey & Company, a consultancy firm in the US.

"So there is no option but to reduce the use of cash," Ali said, adding that micro-merchants and quick response (QR) codes will become the next big modes of cashless transaction.

The small businesses, like owners of grocery shops, are allowed to open micro-merchant accounts with banks as per the central banking guidelines.

Customers can pay their bills against their purchased products from the shops through QR codes by using their smartphones, Ali said.

The payment mode will become hugely popular in the days to come, especially in the remotest parts of the country.

"We should promote digital payment in the interest of the economy. Both the government and the central bank should take policy measures to this end," said Syed Mohammad Kamal, MasterCard's country manager.

The Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services requested the central bank and the finance and ICT ministries last year to provide 3 percent subsidy to clients and 2 percent to merchants on the use of cards, respectively.

"If the government accepts the offer, the country's digital payments will grow significantly," Kamal said.

The subsidy should continue for a certain period so that people can become habituated to the plastic money gradually, he said.

MTB CARDS towards a cashless society

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