



IPL SUSPENDED AS COVID CASES MOUNT; FOREIGN CRICKETERS SET TO LEAVE INDIA
SEE PAGE 11



INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS

Hardly cared for in hard times

Inadequate govt support, job loss leave them ravaged amid pandemic; no official data on those affected by the crisis

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The latest restrictions on movement have dealt another fatal blow to workers in the informal sector in the absence of adequate government support required to survive a prolonged period without work. Last year, these workers had endured a difficult time between March 26 and the end of May when the government imposed a general shutdown to keep the coronavirus pandemic at bay. The state of their livelihoods has only worsened this time around.

"Some organisations and people extended their hand by way of giving relief to workers during the last year's lockdown. Such initiatives are completely absent this year," said Md Murshikul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Hawker Workers Trade Union Centre.

"Our lives are going up in flames, but nobody is thinking of us and how we are struggling to survive. We have so far not got any support from the government. How can we live?"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

» 85.1% of 6.08 crore labourers work in informal sector as per 2016-17 BBS survey

» An estimated 1.35 crore workers lost job in the sector during last year's lockdown

JOB CLAIMED BY PANDEMIC

- Construction: 16 lakh
- Hotels, restaurants and bakeries: 29 lakh
- Transport: 50 lakh



Holding a paperboard over her head to shield herself from the scorching sun, Fulmoti, 75, waits for handouts at Khilkhet level crossing in the capital yesterday. Widowed after the Liberation War, the mother of two used to work at a local restaurant as a cooking assistant. She lost informal sector job last year after the eatery was shut amid the pandemic. She now depends on others' donations to survive.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

BUSINESS

BB clips National Bank's wings

The central bank has taken a raft of measures to put National Bank Ltd back on track in the wake of massive irregularities at the first-generation private lender. Now, NBL will not be able to disburse fresh loans before bringing down the advance deposit ratio to 87 per cent. It has been asked to take permission before appointing consultants, advisers, and additional and deputy managing directors.

STORY ON B1

Mamata to take oath as CM today

BJP demands CBI probe on post-polls violence in WB in which 12 die

AGENCIES

Trinamool supremo Mamata Banerjee will be sworn in as West Bengal chief minister for a third straight term today amid post-polls violence that left at least 12 people dead.

During the violence, rival political workers clashed, party offices were torched and homes looted, resulting in the deaths and prompting the Union home ministry and state governor to



seek reports, reported Indian media.

Besides, Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday spoke to governor Jagdeep Dhankhar about the "alarmingly worrisome" law and order situation in West Bengal as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) blamed the Trinamool Congress (TMC) for "unprecedented" post-election violence in the state.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

CHINESE SHOTS Dhaka hopes to get them before Eid

UNB, Dhaka

The Chinese government is working to start the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines before Eid even though there is a five-day May Day holiday in China, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

Seeing it as a sign of "special friendship" with Bangladesh, he said Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jiming recently

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

PROCURING SPUTNIK-V VACCINES Dhaka, Moscow close in on a deal

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has made considerable progress in procuring Russia's Sputnik V vaccine with health officials now working on finalising a government-to-government contract.

"We have got the agreement paper on Monday from the foreign ministry. We are now examining the terms and conditions. We have some observations about some conditions and we will reply with these tomorrow [Wednesday]," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The minister hoped that the purchase agreement with the Russian authorities would be completed soon.

Asked about the price of the vaccine, the minister said it was not mentioned in the agreement proposal.

"Basically, this agreement proposal is on the level of terms and conditions if such as when the authorities can send vaccines and what would happen if

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Khaleda Zia's condition now 'improving'

Say family sources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's condition improved a little and she was stable, said sources in her family yesterday.

Fluids were removed from her lung and no malignancy was found in it, said the sources quoting doctors who are treating Khaleda at Evercare Hospital in the capital.

"Her oxygen saturation level dropped below 90 percent following withdrawal



SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Unregistered motorboats are parked at Shimulia speedboat ghat in Munshinganj's Lauhajang upazila yesterday, a day after 26 people were killed in a speedboat accident near Bangla Bazar Ferry Ghat in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila. These vessels ferry passengers on Shimulia-Bangla Bazar route illegally.

PHOTO: STAR

Speedboats unregulated for decades

SAHAJ HOSSAIN and SUZIT KUMAR DAS

Right under the authorities' noses, unskilled drivers have been operating unregistered speedboats on the Padma's Shimulia-Bangla Bazar route for over a decade.

The issue has come into the limelight after one such motorboat crashed into a sand-laden bulk carrier near Bangla Bazar Ferry Ghat in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila on Monday morning, leaving 26 passengers, including women and children, dead.

Sources in the Shimulia Ferry Terminal

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

A breath of fresh air in Covid crisis

Buet researchers develop low-cost portable device to provide Oxygen to critical coronavirus patients

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

As the demand for oxygen increased at hospitals amid this second wave of the pandemic, a group of Buet researchers has developed a low-cost portable ventilator that can deliver oxygen to patients efficiently without electricity.

The non-invasive device, which requires a connection with an oxygen cylinder or medical oxygen supply, is designed to help severe coronavirus patients with low oxygen levels, according to the researchers.

Named OxyJet CPAP by the researchers from Buet's Department of Biomedical Engineering, it has already been field-tested and approved for clinical trials.

This device can be used in remote villages or ambulances -- wherever it is possible to



carry cylinders -- as an alternative to the high-flow nasal oxygen (HFNO) support.

"We've developed a non-invasive CPAP ventilator that runs without electricity. The main goal of the device is to provide oxygen treatment to patients of general wards and prevent ICU admission," Dr

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ
Bangladesh Food Safety Authority

৭১-৭২ ইকোটন গার্ডেন, ঢাকা।
www.bfsa.gov.bd

নোটিশ

বিজ্ঞানসম্মত পদ্ধতির যথাযথ অনুশীলনের মাধ্যমে নিরাপদ খাদ্য প্রাপ্তির অধিকার নিশ্চিতকরণে বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ নিরলস কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। "নিরাপদ খাদ্য আইন, ২০১৩" এর ধারা ৮৭ এর ক্ষমতাবলে ধারা ৪১ ও ধারা ৪২ এর উদ্দেশ্য পূরণকল্পে বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ "নিরাপদ খাদ্য (বিজ্ঞাপন) প্রবিধানমালা, ২০২১" এর খসড়া প্রণয়ন করেছে। উক্ত খসড়া প্রবিধানমালা বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষের ওয়েবসাইটের (নোটিশ বোর্ডের ঠিকানাঃ <http://www.bfsa.gov.bd/site/view/notices>) নোটিশবোর্ডে ১০৬ নম্বর নোটিশে মতামত প্রদানের জন্য প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। আগামী ২০ মে, ২০২১ তারিখের মধ্যে আপনার বিজ্ঞ মতামত প্রেরণের জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

সচিব
বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ

জরুরী প্রয়োজনে:
শেখ মোঃ ফেরদৌস আরামাত
আইন কর্মকর্তা, বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ
মোবাইল নম্বর: ০১৭৭৭৫৯৯৬৮৬

Beds vacant as positivity rate drops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the number of daily coronavirus cases on the decline, most of the general and ICU beds at the Covid-19 dedicated hospitals across the country remains vacant.

There are 12,289 general beds for coronavirus patients across the country. Of those, 9,291 or more than 75 percent were vacant as of yesterday, according to data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total 1,090 ICU beds, 586 or more than half were unoccupied. Since the second wave of the pandemic spread across the country in the second week of March, the number of daily cases started going up. The number of daily new cases and deaths broke all previous records.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MORE NEWS

Elevated metro line collapse kills 23 in Mexico
PAGE 6

Myanmar announces ban on satellite TV as security threat
PAGE 6

Charbaria massacre, never to be forgotten
PAGE 3

WE MOURN

Veteran Industrialist and social worker, our honorable Director MR. REZAKUL HAIDER has expired on April 23 2021 at the age of 67 (inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajiu). We all pray to Almighty Allah for granting him Jannat.

Directors and All Employees of

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,914
New cases in 24hrs



7,65,596
Total cases



11,705
Deaths



6,95,032
Recoveries



3,231,590
Deaths



154,548,008
Total cases

MAYHEM OVER MODI'S VISIT

Hefajat demands release of detained leaders, activists

Places 4-point demand before home boss; 3 more leaders of the outfit arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hefajat-e-Islam last night demanded release of "Ulema and religious-minded general people" who were arrested over violence by the Islamist organisation in March during demonstrations protesting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh.

A 10-member Hefajat delegation, led by Secretary General of its convening committee Nurul Islam Jihadi, put four-point demand to Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan during a meeting with him at his city residence.

Describing the minister as a guardian of Ulema, mosques, and madrasas, the Hefajat leaders also demanded stopping the "ongoing harassment of religious-minded general people" across the country.

Their other demands include withdrawal of cases filed in connection with the Hefajat mayhem at the capital's Shapla Chattar in 2013 as per an earlier decision.

Under pressure from the government due to an ongoing crackdown on Hefajat high-ups, leaders of the Qwami madrasa based organisation called on the home minister to reach a consensus on release of its arrested leaders, sources said.

The meeting started around 9:20pm and continued for more than two and a half hours.

Under pressure from the government, Hefajat Amir Junayed Babunagari was forced to dissolve its central committee on April 26. He named a five-member convening committee, headed by him.

State Minister for religious affairs Faridul haque Khan, ruling Awami League MP RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury from Brahmanbaria-3, among others were also present at the meeting last night.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Hefajat leader Nurul Islam Jihadi said the home minister assured them of considering their demands.

Hefajat insiders said leaders of the organisation at the meeting tried to convince the government side of their non-involvement in the violence from March 26 to 28.

The government side responded saying that Hefajat leaders who were involved in recent violent activities must be brought to book.

Hefajat leaders also said they wanted

to end the "misunderstanding" between the government and their organisation centring the demonstrations against Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh.

The Islamist outfit on March 26-28 had carried out mayhem in different parts of the country, particularly in Brahmanbaria, during the protests.

So far, 142 cases have been filed and around 21 top leaders of Hefajat and 890 people, mostly supporters of the organisation, have been arrested in connection with the violence. Among the arrestees is Hefajat leader Mamunul Haque.

3 MORE HEFAJAT MEN HELD
Meanwhile, police yesterday arrested three more Hefajat leaders in connection with the violence during the anti-Modi protests in Chattogram and Brahmanbaria in March.

In Chattogram, police arrested Mowlana Mohammad Arif, science and technology affairs secretary of Hathazari municipality Hefajat unit; and Mowlana Mohammad Tajul Islam, assistant dawah affairs secretary of Hefajat Hathazari upazila unit, reports our Chattogram correspondent.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station, said the arrestees' involvement in recent Hefajat mayhem at Hathazari municipality was found during the investigation of the cases filed in this connection.

They were shown arrested in two cases filed with the police station after the March 26 violence, he said.

Four people, including three madrasa students, were killed during the violence in the area.

In Brahmanbaria, police arrested Mufti Abdur Rahim Quasemi, the joint general secretary of Hefajat district committee, yesterday.

Quasemi was arrested from Bhadughar in Brahmanbaria municipality area around 4:00pm, reports our Brahmanbaria correspondent.

The Hefajat leader had earlier resigned demanding the authorities bring those involved in the March 26 and 28 violence in the district to book.

In another development, Hefajat's former joint secretary general Mamunul Haque and its Dhaka city unit's former president Junayed Al Habib were placed on different terms of remand yesterday in five cases filed with Paltan Police Station over the 2013 mayhem and the recent violence in Dhaka.



Staffers of Dhaka Medical College Hospital bring old beddings out of the Corona unit of the hospital yesterday for dumping. The beddings would be replaced with new ones.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Hardly cared for in hard times

FROM PAGE 1

This is not only the case for hawkers but also for workers in transportation, construction, hotels and restaurants, and other arenas of the urban informal sector who are suffering the dire consequences of no social or legal protection and job benefits.

Hunger is now a regular feature of their lives, said leaders of various workers' unions in the informal sector. While some will receive the cash support the government is providing to the poorest, experts say the amount is too little and the number of recipients too few to have an impact on the large informal sector.

Murshikul said a good number of hawkers took out microcredit loans at a high interest rate of around 25 percent from non-government organisations to do business ahead of the upcoming Eid.

"Hawkers usually enjoy a good earning during Eid every year. We had missed the business of last year's Eid when the government imposed a lockdown, which destroyed all our savings," he said.

There are around 10 lakh hawkers in the country, who are now unable to provide for their family's basic needs, Murshikul said.

The government has so far announced 23 stimulus packages involving Tk 1,24,053 crore, more than four percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). But the majority of these schemes were created to free the formal sector.

There are 6.08 crore employed labourers in the country, 85.1 percent of whom work in the informal sector, according to the Labour Force Survey 2016-17 carried out by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Though the sector contributes around 50 percent of the economy, its workers are left out of government support schemes.

A major reason for this is there is no government database of informal workers or recent official figures on how many such workers are there across the country.

KM Abdus Salam, secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said the government is now operating relief programmes under district commissioner (DC) offices.

It is slightly tough to identify workers in the informal sector as there is no database on them, he added.

Razequzzaman Ratan, president of the Socialist Labour Front, said according to their estimates, at least 60 percent of informal sector workers have lost their jobs due to the pandemic and ongoing economic situation.

Although there is no government survey on how many people lost their jobs due to the economic shock caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Rizwanul Islam, a former special adviser to the employment sector of the International Labour Organisation, estimated that around 1.35 crore workers in the informal sector lost their jobs during last year's shutdown.

Published in the form of a book titled "Shocks of Coronavirus on the Economy and Labour Market" in March this year, Rizwanul, also a

former teacher of Dhaka University's economics department, calculated this based on data from the Labour Force Survey 2016-17.

WORKERS' WOES
Aktarujjaman Khan, president of the Bangladesh Hotel Restaurant Sweetmeat Bakery Workers Union, said no workers of the union have so far got any support from the government since the start of the pandemic.

Around 30 lakh workers are involved in the sector. Of them, more than 96 percent are now unemployed, he said.

Almost all hotels and restaurants were closed across the country during last year's shutdown and the current situation is once again the same after the government declared restrictions on movement since April 5.

"We have so far submitted four statements to the prime minister and the state minister for labour in the last year. But the government has not paid heed to address our woes," Aktarujjaman said.

At least 40 percent workers -- 12 lakh -- who were rendered unemployed failed to get back their jobs between June last year and this March, even after the government relaxed the shutdown, as restaurant owners kept a reduced number of staffers at their establishments, Aktarujjaman said.

The union demanded the government provide Tk 10,000 per month as an incentive to every unemployed worker.

Employed workers have also now lost their jobs in the wake of the recent restrictions, he said, as only very few restaurants are now open to sell iftar items.

Md Abdur Rajjak, general secretary of the Imarat Nirman Sramik Union Bangladesh, said his organisation had lost interest in demanding support from the government for construction workers.

Earlier, they placed their demands to the government a number of times, but no response has so far been forthcoming, he said.

He, however, said a few construction workers managed to get relief support from several DC offices last year.

At least 40 percent of construction workers -- 16 lakh -- have become unemployed due to the ongoing restrictions on movement, he said.

"The workers are now in a critical condition as they do not have any income sources except their labour. But this way is now largely closed," Rajjak said.

At a Road Transport Workers Federation press conference at the National Press Club on April 30, General Secretary Osman Ali said around 50 lakh transport workers became jobless and their livelihoods uncertain ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

"They are leading a miserable life along with their family members," he said.

Some organisations involved in the transport sector recently demanded the government provide financial assistance and introduce rations for workers, urging the government to sell rice at Tk 10 per kg at the bus terminals to workers.

The federation also demanded

public transport services be resumed immediately, which remain officially suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions till at least today.

CASH SUPPORT TOO LITTLE

Like last year, the government is providing another round of Tk 2,500 cash assistance through mobile financial service providers to the same families which received assistance last year.

Around 34.97 lakh families got Tk 2,500 each under a Tk 1,258-crore stimulus package last year.

The target beneficiaries included rickshaw-pullers, day labourers, construction workers, farmers, shop employees, people working at small businesses, and transport workers.

However, the cash support provided by the government is not adequate, said Nazneen Ahmed, a senior research fellow of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, adding that no lockdown can be effective if the government does not provide adequate support to the poor.

A four-member household requires at least Tk 6,000 per month to live in an urban area as per the Household Income and Expenditure Survey carried out by BBS in 2016, she said.

"But the capacity of the government to provide such financial assistance is weak. So, workers of the informal sector should be allowed to join their work by relaxing the restrictions."

However, the government has not taken sufficiently strict measures to ensure people are following health protocols, Nazneen added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, also said, "Both the amount and the number of beneficiaries are too small given the size of the informal sector."

Although the country's economy is greatly dependent on the informal sector, the workers are neglected in terms of getting assistance from the government, he said.

Informal sector workers in general face various troubles in doing their jobs as they lack legal protection from their employers and the Covid-19 situation has worsened their situation as many of them have lost their jobs outright, Khondaker said.

The authorities concerned should take a plan to provide cash support at least thrice this year as the initiative will help improve their purchasing power, which will have a positive impact on the overall economy, he said.

The amount of cash support for the informal sector is significantly lower than the funds the formal sector has received in the form of stimulus packages from the government.

The government should also create a database of the workers in the informal sector with the help of the different labour unions, which will also allow them to reach out to the proper people to provide the cash support, Khondaker added.

Asked whether the labour ministry had taken any initiative to create a database, Secretary KM Abdus Salam said that they have taken a move to this end.

Bangladeshi shot dead inside Indian territory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Bangladeshi was shot dead allegedly by a group of villagers inside Indian territory near Kendribil in Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila yesterday morning.

The victim, Makbul Hossain, 25, was the son of Jamshed Ali of Kendri village in the upazila.

The incident happened when four Bangladeshis, including Makbul, crossed the Indian border allegedly to smuggle something in the morning, said Lt Col Ahmed Yusuf Jamil, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion-48 in Sylhet.

"Seeing them, indigenous Khasi villagers opened fire on the four Bangladeshis, leaving Makbul dead on the spot," he said, adding that the other fellow Bangladeshis brought the body inside Bangladesh territory and then fled the place.

Golam Dastagir, officer-in-charge of Jaintapur Police Station, said, "On information, we recovered the body from the border and sent it to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for an autopsy."

"A group of villagers often go inside Indian territory to smuggle things like betel nut and logs of wood," he said.

Quoting locals, the OC added that Khasi people opened fire on four Bangladeshis as they had an altercation with them after they entered India.

BGB-48 Battalion's commanding officer also said, "We are vigilant at the border and continue awareness campaign among locals. But it is not improving the situation as local union parishad representatives are not cooperating."

"We urge all people not to risk their life by entering India," he said.

Khaleda Zia

FROM PAGE 1

of oxygen support. But it went up to 99 percent after the support was restored... It [the saturation level] is fluctuating," said one of the sources.

Khaleda's blood sugar level fluctuated between 14 and 18 millimoles per litre after she was injected with Remdesivir used for treating Covid-19 patients. Despite all these, her mental condition was good.

Her family members are trying to take her to the UK or Singapore or Thailand for better treatment but there are some legal bars in this regard, the source mentioned.

On behalf of her family, the party contacted the government high-ups about her treatment abroad but they maintained that such a decision has to come from the court since it involves legal issues, it added.

Earlier yesterday, the 10-member medical board, formed to oversee Khaleda's treatment, assessed her physical condition.

Khaleda's personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain, also a member of the board, said they examined her and saw some improvements.

"Some new medicines were administered to her," he told reporters last night without giving details.

Khaleda was admitted to Evercare Hospital on April 27 night for diagnosis after testing positive for Covid for the second time on April 24. She first tested Covid positive on April 11.

On Monday afternoon, she was shifted to the coronary care unit at the hospital with breathing difficulties.

She has also been suffering from arthritis, diabetes and eye problems.

BRIEFINGS
Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said no request was made to the government for taking Khaleda abroad for treatment.

"We have not received any application from Khaleda Zia's family..."

he told journalists after distributing Eid gifts on behalf of the prime minister among unemployed people in the city's East Rajabazar area.

The minister also mentioned that the government already extended suspension of Khaleda's sentences for another six months.

Meanwhile, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin said it is up to the government to decide whether Khaleda will be sent abroad for treatment.

"I think court's permission is needed in this regard as the government suspended her jail sentences under Section-401 (of the code of criminal procedure). I cannot say specifically about it without seeing the relevant documents and laws," he told reporters on the Supreme Court premises.

Amid the Covid-19 outbreak, the government on March 25 last year freed Khaleda for six months through an executive order suspending her jail sentences in two corruption cases.

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

The government on August 27 last year extended the suspension of her sentences for six months. It was extended for another six months on March 15 this year.

On February 8, 2018, the BNP chief landed in 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.

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

Dhaka, Moscow

FROM PAGE 1

they cannot send vaccines on time."

The minister however said they were expecting to get the Sputnik V vaccine at a reasonable price.

Sputnik V has been priced at about \$10 per shot in other countries, according to media reports.

"Many countries are using this vaccine. So, it won't be a problem for us to know the price of the vaccine from other countries. We hope the price will be reasonable," said the health minister.

He said after the initial agreement, the Bangladesh embassy in Russia will further negotiate other issues including the price before the final agreement.

"We are trying to sign the agreement at the soonest," the health minister said.

The government also approved in principle the local coproduction of Russia's Sputnik V involving Bangladeshi drug makers.

On April 27, the government authorised the emergency use of Sputnik V in the country.

Bangladesh's mass inoculation programme suffered serious setbacks after the Indian government restricted the export of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India.

Due to vaccine shortage, the

government suspended administering the first doses from April 26.

However, the emergency use authorisation of Sputnik V means there is no bar to importing and administering that vaccine. Health officials said they can resume the first dose of vaccination once they the Russian vaccine arrives.

Maj Gen Mahbubur Rahman, director general of Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), told The Daily Star on April 27 that Russia will give Bangladesh 40 lakh doses in May and June. He also said Sputnik V will be administered as the first dose.

Sputnik V is the second vaccine the DGDA approved after Covishield -- the AstraZeneca vaccine produced by Serum -- on January 4.

The Russian vaccine has been registered in around 60 countries and is currently in use in some of those countries.

Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Myanmar have already approved Sputnik V. India has recently approved the use of Sputnik V as the country faces shortages of jabs amid an intensifying second wave of the deadly virus.

Russia approved the Sputnik V vaccine for domestic use in August last year. The country claimed that its efficacy is around 91 percent, but the vaccine is yet to get approval from the World Health Organization.

Beds vacant as positivity rate drops

FROM PAGE 1

The highest 7,626 new cases were recorded on April 7, while the highest 112 deaths were reported on April 19.

The daily positivity rate kept on declining since April 16, thanks to the "movement restrictions" imposed on April 5.

In the previous two months, the daily positivity rate remained below five percent.

61 MORE DIE

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 8.71 percent against 21,984 tests, according to a DGHS press release.

A total of 1,914 new infections were recorded in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total number of

infected people to 765,596.

Sixty-one more people died from Covid-19 during the same 24-hour period. With this, the total number of deaths reached 11,705. The death rate now stands at 1.53 percent.

As many as 3,870 coronavirus patients recovered during the 24-hour period. The total number of recoveries reached 6,95,032 and the recovery rate is 90.78 percent.

Among the 61 deceased, 36 were men and 25 women. One of them was aged between 11 and 20, three were between 31 and 40, two between 41 and 50, 11 between 51 and 60 and 44 were aged above 60.

A breath of fresh air in Covid crisis

FROM PAGE 1

Taufiq Hasan, the supervisor of the project and a co-inventor, told The Daily Star.

They took the initiative taking into consideration the high demand of oxygen in the country amid the Covid-19 crisis.

He said it is better to use a medical oxygen supply in a hospital to have high oxygen concentration but in case of emergency, Oxyjet CPAP can be used, although it will not last long.

In the general wards, most hospitals of Bangladesh have the mechanism to provide oxygen to patients up to 15 litres per minute.

When a critically-ill Covid-19 patient requires more oxygen, they are usually administered the HFNO treatment. However, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is also one of the key methods that can be used to treat such patients.

Depending on the patient's need, Oxyjet CPAP can provide up to 60 litres/min of 100 percent oxygen in the general wards before ICU admission.

Non-invasive respiratory support strategies, such as CPAP or HFNO, are attractive treatment options that might avoid the need for invasive mechanical ventilation and its inherent risks, according to the acclaimed medical

journal, the Lancet.

HFNO is delivered by an air/oxygen blender, an active humidifier, a single heated circuit, and a nasal cannula. Though effective in treating severe Covid-19 patients, it is too expensive for public hospitals.

On the other hand, Oxyjet CPAP requires a standard CPAP mask with accessories and a connection to an oxygen source without any electricity.

"We hope that our device can be a low-cost alternative to HFNO, especially for patients treated at the suspected or confirmed Covid-19 wards, and reduce ICU admissions," said Dr Taufiq.

"When we are faced with peak COVID-19 spread, it is not possible to accumulate an adequate number of high-flow nasal cannula devices in the country. Due to the lack of expert operators, these devices cannot be efficiently utilised," he said.

With the approval of Bangladesh Medical Research Council, Oxyjet CPAP has already passed the first and second stages of the clinical trial and got the permission for the third stage of a randomised controlled trial. In the third phase, the safety and efficacy of the device will be compared against HFNO.

The third phase trial is currently going on in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. "If the trial is successful, with the

approval of the authorities concerned and the advice of physicians, this device can be used as a low-cost alternative to high-flow nasal cannula," Dr Taufiq said.

The Oxyjet CPAP project is being funded by Ankur International Foundation; Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Academy Establishment under the ICT Division of the government, and Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Dr Forhad Uddin Hasan Chowdhury, medicine and infectious diseases specialist at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said, "In the phase three trial, a total of 20 patients will be administered oxygen with high-flow nasal cannula while 20 others with Oxyjet CPAP."

"We have so far enrolled about 14 patients and now collecting data. We hope to get the results within two months."

Dr Forhad, who is involved in the study, said Oxyjet CPAP was used for the patients who required more than 15 litres of oxygen per minute. It can be handled by any physician after only one hour of training while the use of HFNO devices is more complex.

The other benefit of this ventilator is that it is cost effective as it takes around Tk 25,000 to make the device. The cost will go down once the commercial production begins, he said.

Aid available for all journo in need

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said government aid is available for all destitute journalists, even those who criticise the government.

"The state is for everyone. If the journalists, who criticise the Awami League-government, fall in the destitute category and come under our policy, this aid is open for them too. We've implemented it," said the minister.

He said this at a cheque distribution event at the Press Institute of Bangladesh in the capital.

A total of 200 journalists and their families were given Tk 2 crore 8 lakh and 50 thousand in 2020-21 fiscal from Bangladesh Journalists Welfare Trust (BJWT).

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Early-season mangoes have begun to arrive at the markets in the capital, as summer rolls on. Sellers say **Gopabhog** and **Gonindabhog** are now available, at a price of Tk 100-120 per kg. The photo was taken earlier this week from Jatrabari.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Inter-district commuters find lockdown workaround

Transport workers arrange private vehicles on sharing basis for them at Gabtoli

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Since the countrywide "lockdown" started from April 5 to curb the spread of Covid-19, construction worker Md Sumon has been unable to find any work.

So the Mirpur resident decided to go back to his home in Magura as it was getting difficult for him to stay in the capital without work. Besides, he could also celebrate Eid holidays with his family members at home.

On Monday afternoon, the 45-year-old went to Gabtoli inter-district bus terminal, hoping to find a bus service. But he could not, due to the ongoing restriction on movement of inter-district buses.

When he was about to return, some transport workers came up to him and offered to arrange transport for him on a microbus. But he has to pay additional fare and share the ride with other passengers, they informed.

"They said I have to pay Tk 1,500 if I want to go to Magura on a microbus but I'm bargaining with them to get the service at Tk 1,000," Sumon told this correspondent.

Like Sumon, many passengers who want to go to other districts are being offered such services by some transport workers of inter-district buses.

They arrange microbus, ambulance and private car for passengers and take commission from them.

Considering the current Covid-19 situation, the government extended the ongoing restriction on inter-district transport movement till May 16. But it has allowed public transport to operate within the cities from tomorrow. Launch and train services will also remain suspended till May 16.

During multiple visits to the Gabtoli Bus Terminal, this correspondent found a good number of people waiting for transport to go back to their home in northern and southwestern districts.

This newspaper also saw many transport workers talking to passengers, asking them about their destinations and negotiating fares. Once fixed, they are taking them to the vehicles -- some parked inside the terminal while others on the streets nearby.

Many staffers of bus companies said this has become a regular scenario at the terminal -- people waiting and hoping to find a transport to go back home, especially ahead of Eid.

To help them, they said, some transport workers came forward and started arranging microbus, ambulance and private car services.

But they are charging more than double the fare compared to bus fare, said passengers. Also, maintaining physical distancing remains a far cry as workers are more interested in filling up all the seats

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

The web should be more accessible for visually-impaired

Speakers demand at webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a webinar yesterday demanded special technologies and methods to make websites of different organisations more accessible to people with visual impairment.

They also said that although there are active web portals in 353 upazilas of 57 ministries of the country, most of the government web portals and company web pages in the country are not usable for persons with disabilities.

The webinar, titled "Web Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities" was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), in collaboration with non-government organisation Young Power with Social Action (YPSA) and Bangladesh Visually Impaired People's Society (BVIPS).

Vashkar Bhattacharya, consultant on disability at the government's a2i

programme, presented a report titled "Web Accessibility Report by Identifying Gaps and Barriers with Recommendations and Guidelines" at the webinar.

Vashkar shared the common barriers that persons with visual impairments face, such as, they do not have access to appropriate keyboard, cannot read Bangla in the PDF file format or enter security and captcha code, or read tables and charts. There is no alternative text for the image and much more.

He also shared some adaptive technologies, such as mobile, screen reading software, screen magnifier, Braille display, and specific apps on smartphones for persons with visual impairments.

According to Vashkar, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Teachers harassed, syndicate meeting suspended at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) administration suspended a syndicate meeting yesterday, after a hostile incident involving the university's teachers and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) took place. During the incident, a number of teachers said they were harassed.

The syndicate meeting, which was supposed to be the last meeting of RU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof M Abdus Sobhan's tenure, was scheduled to be held at the VC's residence around 10:30am yesterday.

Members of RU Progressive Teachers' Society Against Corruption, however, took position near the residence in the morning to halt the syndicate meeting. They said they feared "illegal" recruitment would take place during the meeting.

Meanwhile, around 100 current and former leaders of BCL also took position in front of the residence.

As the teachers tried to enter the residence to meet the VC around 10:30am, the BCL men barred and harassed them in front of police and the university's proctorial body. Proctor Prof Lutfor Rahman was also harassed in the mob, as he tried to intervene, teachers said.

During that time, a BCL youth shouted at the teachers, saying "we will shoot you", which then created an hostile situation involving the teachers and BCL men, they said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Inter-district passengers get in a private car, arranged by transport workers, at the capital's Gabtoli Bus Terminal area.

PHOTO: STAR



Instead of keeping his eyes on the road, this motorcyclist was spotted checking his phone in the middle of the road. If that wasn't careless enough, the pillion is holding a helmet with one hand instead of wearing it, as she sits precariously on the moving vehicle while holding bags with the other. The photo was taken from the capital's New Market area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Violating health rules Shopping mall closed for four hrs in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

China Town shopping mall in Dhaka's Paltan area was shut down for around four hours after its authorities failed to follow health safety rules yesterday morning.

Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity, an association of shop owners, shut down the market around 9:30am after its leaders found violation of health rules there.

"Many shopkeepers were seen without masks; shopkeepers and customers were seen using both gates for exit and entry, and maintaining no physical distance," Helal Uddin, president of the association, told The Daily Star.

He said, "We have adopted zero tolerance in this regard. There is no chance to operate any mall without maintaining health rules. We will continue our drives."

Helal, however, said they later allowed the authorities to open the market after they pledged to ensure health rules.

Meanwhile, two executive magistrates carried out drives against those violating health directives at Bashundhara City Shopping Mall and New Market area.

The drives began around noon. The executive magistrates visited shops and

SEE PAGE 4

UK, South African variants behind 2nd Covid-19 wave in Ctg

Finds limited-sample study

ARUN BIKASH DEB, Ctg

A study by researchers of Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) found that mostly the UK variant and partly the South African variant of coronavirus are behind the second wave of Covid-19 in port city, which started in late March.

However, the Indian variant (B.1.617) of SARS-CoV-2, which is responsible for the raging second wave in India, was not found in any sample collected from both hospitalised and non-hospitalised Covid-19 patients in port city between March 28 and April 3.

In that period, 2,392 people were Covid-19 positive out of 17,023 tested, and 12 died.

"We initiated the study at the peak of the second wave to know

which variant of SARS-CoV-2 is behind infections in Chattogram," said Prof Dr Goutam Buddha Das, vice-chancellor of CVASU, who led the study. "We have found that mostly the UK variant and partly South African variant are behind the second wave in Chattogram."

"Sixty percent of the samples had traces of the UK variant, while thirty percent had the South African variant," he said.

"Although we have taken a very small number of samples, the significance of the study is that all those have been taken at random and covered different age groups, ranging between 22 and 65 years, of both male and female patients," he continued.

"The study will help in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Charbaria massacre, never to be forgotten

The first mass killing in Barishal region during 1971 war

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

By the time April of 1971 was coming to an end, the Pakistan army started to form an idea of Barishal as a bastion of freedom fighters. The onslaught first began on the 18th of that month. They attacked Barishal city with a barrage of bombs.

But a coordinated attack was yet to come. After the fall of Faridpur city on April 24, a large contingent of the occupation force started their march towards Barishal. The following day, on the 25th, they launched simultaneous operations by road, water, and air, according to historians and freedom fighters.

That day, the occupation force carried out a massacre at Charbaria union, killing around 47 people.

The story unfolded at Bhurghata point. As the Pakistan army reached the area, they suddenly came under attack from freedom fighters in Kotoksthal area. Five Mukti Bahini members and several Pakistani military personnel were killed in the clash, recounted freedom fighters of Barishal city.

The massacre at Charbaria began after Pakistan paratroopers on two helicopters landed in the area. At the same time, three gunboats started firing at

Junahar and Shaistabad areas. The freedom fighters rushed to set up camps at Mahabaj High School in Charbaria, to try to contain the Pakistan army on the river.

Flight sergeant Fazlul Haque, lieutenant Imam Al Mehdi, and habildar Panchanan Ghazi were in charge of the camps. The freedom fighters tried to take advantage of their position by anchoring two steamers named "Irani" and "Majvi" near Jhunahar and repelling the incoming Pakistan gunboats.

When the gunboats crossed Jhunahar and Taltali, the freedom fighters fired from Shaistabad and Charbaria. But soon, shells rained down from the gunboats. The freedom fighters were no match. The two steamers -- Irani and Majvi -- drowned fast.

Locals said no one was spared in the massacre. Everyone, from two-year-olds to 90-year-olds, were killed. There were 25 people who were injured from the gunshots, many of whom later lost their working capacity and died of various diseases. At least 200 houses were set on fire there, they said.

Abdul Mannan was a 10th-grader at the time. The Charbaria native had lost both his father Abdul Rahman and grandfather Ali Azim Khan in the atrocity.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Manage groundwater properly to save Barind from water crisis: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The government should take steps for proper management of groundwater to save the Barind region from scarcity of water, demanded speakers at a virtual meeting yesterday.

Arbitrary abstraction of groundwater is causing crisis of drinking water in the region covering 16 northern districts, they said, demanding review of the laws that hinders actions against the practice.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela), Rajshahi chapter organised the discussion titled "Steps to control arbitrary groundwater abstraction".

Bela programme coordinator AMM Mamun chaired the discussion while head of programmes Khurshed Alam moderated it. Around 50 discussants from different northern districts took part in the programme.

In his speech, Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan of Geology and Mining Department of Rajshahi University, said the country's groundwater was never managed.

In the Barind region, extraction of groundwater has become unsustainable, he said.

"Demand for water for drinking, agriculture and industrial purposes is increasing whereas the groundwater is ceaselessly depleting in the aquifers," said the professor.

Prof ANM Wahid of Law and Justice Department at RU said there are flaws in the law that allows groundwater abstraction as taking legal actions against such permission is difficult for common people.

"The law should be reviewed and made people oriented through public hearings," he said. A separate law should be enacted to manage all the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dr. Ekram Hossain Passes Away



We deeply mourn the passing away of Dr. Ekram Hossain, former secretary to the Government of Bangladesh, on 3rd May 2021. He began his career as a former CSP officer in 1960 after completing his education from the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka. Later, he went abroad for educational purposes and secured his PhD from Tufts University. He served as economic minister at the Bangladesh embassy in Germany in the 70s, advised the Saudi government and was secretary of several ministries of the Govt. of Bangladesh, notable amongst which was information, industry, and planning. Dr. Ekram also served as Chairman, National Board of Revenue, NBR. He served two terms as Rector PATC. His last post was Rector, PATC from 1997 to 2001.

He died of cardiac arrest on May 3, 2021 and leaves behind his wife, a daughter, grandchildren and a host of well-wishers. We, his family and friends pray for his soul.

D-66

Man arrested for gang-rape in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police arrested a man on charge of gang-rape in Rajshahi's Bagha upazila early Tuesday.

The arrestee, Suruj (35), along with two other men, Jhantu and Rushdar, has been accused of gang-raping a 28-year-old homemaker.

According to the FIR filed with Bagha police station, the trio broke the tin door and stormed into the woman's house after she went to bed. Her two children were with her.

Brandishing weapons, the trio confined the two children in another room.

Rushdar kept watch while the others raped her, threatening to use the weapons on her. The woman's husband was not at home as he went to harvest paddy at Chalan Bil.

OC of Bagha Police Station Nazrul Islam, said Suruj was sent to a Rajshahi court yesterday to record a confessional statement.



The sluggish repair work of Chattogram city's Strand Road has made the thoroughfare inconvenient for vehicles, as many drivers have a hard time manoeuvring through the puddles and mud. This photo was taken yesterday from Majhir Ghat area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

Manage

FROM PAGE 3 natural resources, he added.

Tanmay Sanyal, coordinator of Rajshahi unit of Bela, presented the keynote paper and said Barind Multipurpose Development Authority began extracting groundwater in 1985.

BMDA has so far installed some 15,553 deep tube-wells by which it withdraws 2583.62 million cubic metres of groundwater annually to irrigate at least 5.25 lakh hectares of farmland. Now the private users of deep tube-wells have doubled than that of BMDA, the paper said.

Referring to a Department of Public Health Engineering report, the keynote said groundwater table in Dinajpur has been declining by three to 4.5 metres in every 10 years. Groundwater in the district was available at 6.26 metres in 1985, while the level went down to 41 metres in 2019.

It said the annual rainfall in Barind region is 44 percent lesser than the country's total rainfall.

Kutupalong camp to get solar lighting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Beyond2020, a UAE-driven humanitarian initiative has announced deployment of solar energy lighting solutions at Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. This is expected to benefit at least 4,500 residents.

The deployment in Bangladesh aims to enhance security and create better conditions for social and community activities after dark. This marks the second phase of 20by2020, which recently rebranded to 'Beyond2020' to serve as a flagship platform for continuous global outreach, said a press release yesterday.

Electricians Without Borders, a France-based non-profit and Zayed Sustainability Prize 2020 winner, was tasked with installing the technology on behalf of Beyond2020, at the world's largest refugee camp, it added.

Electricians Without Borders provided its expertise in the field of renewable energy projects for off-grid communities by installing 240 solar home systems and 640 solar lamps in the refugee camp while training its residents in equipment maintenance for their respective households, it reads.

"The Beyond2020 deployment in Bangladesh targets all refugees, with a focus on people with disabilities, pregnant women, and young girls," said the press release.

Beyond2020 donates sustainable technologies and solutions to vulnerable communities, with a total of nine countries reached to date.

As part of the initiative's first phase, a total of eight deployments have been rolled out, including energy, health, water and food-related solutions in Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda, Jordan, Egypt, Cambodia, Madagascar, and Indonesia. In addition to Bangladesh, another 11 countries have been identified for phase two.

Inter-district

FROM PAGE 3

before a vehicle starts its journey, they added.

Workers, however, said as Eid approaches, more people are trying to leave the capital and are rushing to the terminal in search of a transport.

A staff member of a bus company said for more than 10 passengers they arrange a microbus, if the number remains between five and 10 then an ambulance and if it is less than five then a private car.

"I have been working at a bus counter for the last 32 years and I know many passengers quite well. They keep on requesting me to arrange something for

them in this situation. And this is how we started the service," he said.

He said many also show up with their families to go to their home districts and they arrange transportation for them along with known passengers.

"We take Tk 100 from each passenger for the help" he said.

This is not only assisting them to sustain amid the "lockdown", but also helping people as many do not have the ability to hire a private car just for themselves due to the high price, said another worker.

Around 50 transport workers are involved with arranging transportation for people during this lockdown, he said.

Teachers

FROM PAGE 3

Around 11 am, after the incident, the university authority was forced to suspend the meeting. Earlier on Sunday, a finance committee meeting was also suspended in the same way.

TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

Talking about the matter in a press conference held after the incident, Prof Shafikunnabi Samadi said the VC is responsible for the incident. No one would have the courage to threaten university teachers like this, if the VC worked for betterment of the university.

Prof Sultan ul Islam, convener of Teachers' Society against Corruption, said, "We had information that the VC would illegally recruit some 150 peoples on ad-hoc basis through this meeting. To discuss the matter, when we tried to enter the VC's residence, they [BCL men] harassed us in front of the proctor and police officials."

Teachers from the conference demanded authorities concerned remove the administration as soon as possible and take legal actions against them.

AUTHORITIES' COMMENTS

Talking to The Daily Star, RU Registrar Prof Abdus Salam said the meeting was suspended for unavoidable reasons. In a reply, Prof Salam said, "We did not have any agenda regarding any recruitment in the meeting."

Terminating the incident as "unexpected", Proctor Prof Lutfur said, "We had instructed police officials to control the situation, but it happened so quickly."

The VC could not be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts. His term as VC will expire on May 6, as he was appointed for four years on May 7, 2017.

This correspondent tried to get a reply from BCL activists, but they refused to comment on the matter.

Mentionable, on December last year, following a probe report of University Grants Commission, the government postponed all recruitment process to the university until further notice. Since then, the authority could not recruit anyone to any post.

UK, South

FROM PAGE 3

understanding the mode of the second wave and taking preventive measures," he said.

"We conducted a similar type of study, after onset of the pandemic last year, and it was seen that the Italian and Chinese variants were behind the first wave," said Dr Goutam.

As part of the study, 10 samples were collected for whole genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2, said Prof Sharmin Chowdhury of pathology at CVASU, also a member of the research team. The samples were sent to the laboratory of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) for whole genome sequencing.

After genome sequencing, it was seen that six of them were infected by the UK variant (B.1.1.7), while three were infected by the South African variant (B.1.351), and

one was infected by the Australian variant.

Of the 10 patients, five were to be hospitalised, and the others took treatment at home, said Dr Sharmin.

"Apart from seven researchers from CVASU, two researchers from BCSIR also took part in this research," she said, adding that result of the study was updated in the international database.

Asked, Dr Goutam said to prevent spread of the Indian variant in the country, Indian truck drivers, who transport goods from India, should be allowed to enter into Bangladesh after checking Covid-19 negative certificate.

"Besides, a 14-day mandatory institutional quarantine should be imposed on those who would come from India and other countries labelled as highly risky," he said. "The most important point for everybody is to follow health rules when going outside."

Aid available

FROM PAGE 3

The minister handed over cheques to 30 journalists and their families, said a press release.

Hasan Mahmud said, "The journalist-friendly Awami League government has ensured freedom [of the media] and its development."

"The media of Bangladesh enjoy unlimited freedom, which is unprecedented for a developing country. But it is necessary for the sake of the country, society's multidimensional progress and development. We're working with this belief," he said.

He requested the persons concerned to distribute the special allocation of Tk 2 crore for journalists during the pandemic.

Regarding BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's treatment, the minister said she was the country's prime minister and a senior politician. "I wish her early recovery," he said.

Replying to a question, he said the treatment for coronavirus is similar all over the world.

"The treatment facility of our country is far better. I don't understand the reason for taking her abroad for treatment," he said.

Among others, state minister for Information Murad Hasan and secretary to the ministry Khajra Miah spoke at the programme.

BJWT managing director Zafar Wazed presided over the event.

Charbaria

FROM PAGE 3

"It was around 10 or 11 am. At one point of their attack, they went down to Taltali and started firing from door to door."

"It took until the afternoon for the violence to subside a bit. But the danger was far from over, as some soldiers remained stationed in the gunboats," Mannan continued.

The next day, they set fire to some houses in Charmonai union and fired on their residents, he said. "The army kept marching towards Barishal city. A number of anti-Bangladesh people welcomed them in Barishal launch area."

"The following day, all the bodies were buried," chronicled Mannan. "It was also the day when all the seven family members of Abdus Sattar Hawladar were killed, after the occupation army found out that they were hiding in a trench."

"A memorial for the deceased was later set up at Hawladar Bari, and another one was built at Taltoli Bazar. In addition, I've built a library in memory of my father, martyred Abdur Rahman," Mannan said.

However, very few people have traced down the families of all the 47 martyrs there. Many families, including the Hawladar family, have been wiped out by indiscriminate firing of the Pakistan army, said locals.

Putul Ghosh, divisional secretary of Sector Commanders Forum, said it was the first massacre by Pakistan forces in Barishal region. Once breaching through this area, the army proceeded to set up their military base in the city's Wapda area and continued the onslaught across different parts of Barishal over the next couple of months.

Journalist Nazrul Biswas of Charbaria told The Daily Star on Sunday, "Today is a day of mourning for the people of the union. The Charbaria massacre shall never be forgotten."

Shopping mall

FROM PAGE 3

finned shopkeepers and customers who were not wearing masks.

Around 12:45pm, executive magistrate Sanjib Das fined Asian Jewellers in New Market Tk 500 after the mobile court found one of its employees without mask.

The magistrate said he fined a very insignificant amount of money as they are conducting drives to raise awareness.

He, however, warned that the mobile court would slap a hefty fine for similar offence for the second time.

Later, talking to reporters, Sanjib said they found almost all shopkeepers and customers wearing masks in the shopping complex.

"Our aim is not to fine but to raise awareness about following health rules," he said.

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 Phone: 9022875, 9022932 Fax: 9016239
 Website: www.bmdf.gov.bd Email: info@bmdf.gov.bd

Corrigendum/Time Extension

The last date for submission of applications for the post 'Managing Director' of the Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund (BMDF) has been extended from 5 May, 2021 to 20 May, 2021 due to unavoidable circumstances. All other terms and conditions mentioned in the advertisement published in this newspaper on 12 April, 2021 will remain the same.

Company Secretary
 Bangladesh Municipal Development Fund (BMDF)
 GD-888 Phone: 9022932/9022875

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Office of the Chief Controller of Stores
 Bangladesh Railway
 Pahartali, Chattogram-4202
 Phone: +88-031-659604, Email: ccsphtr@railway.gov.bd

No. P5/EB1/04/2021/RT Date: 02/05/2021

Corrigendum to Notice-2

The following corrigendum to tender document have been carried out in respect of Tender Last Selling Date, Tender Closing Date & Opening Date of Tender No. P5/EB1/04/2021/RT date: 08/03/2021, Opening date: 06/05/2021 of this Procuring Entity:

Sl. No.	Description of Corrigendum	Read	For
1.	Tender last selling date	01/06/2021	05/05/2021
2.	Tender closing date	02/06/2021	06/05/2021
3.	Tender opening date	02/06/2021	06/05/2021

This corrigendum to tender document shall be treated as an integral part of the Tender Document. All other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unaltered and unchanged.

This is issued with the approval of the Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram.

Md. Anwar Hossain
 Assistant Controller of Stores (P-1)
 For the Chief Controller of Stores
 Phone: 01823-926220

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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১	মহাপাশ/বিভাগ	১	সমাজসেবা মহাপাশ।
০২	প্রোগ্রাম	১	সমাজসেবা অভিবাসন, সিসি-১৩৭।
০৩	সম্মানিত সন্ত্রাস নাম	১	মহাপাশ/বিভাগ, সমাজসেবা অভিবাসন, ঢাকা এর পক্ষে প্রোগ্রাম, কুষ্টিয়া।
০৪	সম্মানিত সন্ত্রাস কোড	১	কুষ্টিয়া।
০৫	বে কালের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	১	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থবছরে সমাজসেবা অভিবাসন পরিচালিত কুষ্টিয়া জেলায় (১) সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), কুষ্টিয়া (শে-১); (২) সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালক), কুষ্টিয়া (শে-২); (৩) সামাজিক প্রতিবন্ধী মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র, বর্তমানে, কুষ্টিয়া (শে-৩) এবং (৪) সমর্থিত দূর্গ প্রতিবন্ধী শিশু কার্যক্রম, কুষ্টিয়া (শে-৪) এর বিদ্যমান অংশ বাতিল ও বাদ্যনুসরণ, শিশু, প্রশিক্ষণ, ব্রহ্মসী, পোশাক-পরিচ্ছদ ইত্যাদি এবং বিধি মন্ত্রণালয় সংক্রান্ত।
০৬	দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	১	সি-৪১.০১.০০০০.০০২.০১.১০২.১৮-০২৪ তারিখ ২৯-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ।
০৭	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	১	০৪-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ।
০৮	সম্মানিত পদ্ধতি	১	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (প্রক্রিয়া), প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ।
০৯	ব্যাংক ও স্থানীয় উদ্যোগ	১	প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ (নির্ধারিত)।
১০	দরপত্রের পাতকের মূল্য	১	১১টি।
১১	দরপত্রের পাতকের নাম	১	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থবছরে সমাজসেবা অভিবাসন পরিচালিত কুষ্টিয়া জেলায় ০৪টি আঞ্চলিক প্রতিবন্ধী মেয়েদের জন্য (৩-প্রশু বাবা ও বাধ্যনুসরণ (অপসমীল) ও পুনর্বাসন), GR-1, ব-প্রশু শিশু, প্রশিক্ষণ, ব্রহ্মসী ও অন্যান্য সামগ্রিক (GR-2), ব-প্রশু বাবা ও বাধ্যনুসরণ, শিশু, প্রশিক্ষণ, পোশাক-পরিচ্ছদ, বাবা, ব্রহ্মসী (GR-3) এবং ৪-প্রশু বিধি মন্ত্রণালয় (GR-4) সংক্রান্ত।
১২	দরপত্র সিটি/টাউন বিক্রেতার তারিখ	১	০৪-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ২০-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ অবধি চলবে। ০১-০৬-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ১৪-০৬-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ অবধি চলবে। (প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে)
১৩	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১	২৭-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। (প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে) ১৬-০৬-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। (প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে)
১৪	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১	২৭-০৪-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা দরপত্রের খোলার তারিখ হতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)। ১৬-০৬-২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ হতে ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা দরপত্রের খোলার তারিখ হতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)। (প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে)
১৫	কার্যক্রমের নাম ও টেন্ডার/ক, দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	১	(১) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া; (২) উপবিভাগ, জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া; (৩) সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), কুষ্টিয়া; (৪) সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালক), কুষ্টিয়া; (৫) সামাজিক প্রতিবন্ধী মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র, বর্তমানে, কুষ্টিয়া ও (৬) সমর্থিত দূর্গ প্রতিবন্ধী শিশু কার্যক্রম, কুষ্টিয়া।
১৬	ক, দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	১	(১) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া; (২) উপবিভাগ কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া ও (৩) জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
১৭	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
১৮	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
১৯	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
২০	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
২১	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।
২২	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	১	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া।

(ক) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (খ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (গ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঘ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঙ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (চ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ছ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (জ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঝ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঞ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ট) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঠ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ড) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ঢ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ণ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ত) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (থ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (দ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ধ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ন) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (প) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ফ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ব) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ভ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ষ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (শ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (ষ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
 (জ) সিটি/টাউন-২০০৬ এবং সিটি/টাউন-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এবং প্রোগ্রাম/কর্তৃপক্ষ পুনঃ দরপত্রের প্রোগ্রাম হলে।
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COVID-19 FALLOUT

Jhenidah's bamboo artisans seek urgent help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

The ongoing restrictions on public transport and reduced business hours imposed on shops and marketplaces, to contain the second wave of the pandemic, are causing severe financial hardship to Jhenidah's bamboo artisans.

In Kayargachhi Abashan Prokolpo of Jhenidah Sadar upazila, 20 families of Bed community rely on bamboo crafts for their livelihood. Around 25 more families of the community also live in Garaganj Bazar area of Shailakupa upazila and 10 families in Sadhuhati union of Sadar upazila in the district.

Members of the Bed community have been making household and agricultural accessories, tools and novelty items with bamboo for ages. The craft is passed on to the next generation, especially to the boys, when they reach around 10 or 12 years. The Beds do not usually send their children to school or take on other profession.

While visiting the Prokolpo area in Sadar upazila, many of the Beds told this correspondent that their income from the sale of bamboo items had been dwindling over the last two or three decades and the community has been struggling for survival.

But the various restrictions imposed during this year's outbreak of Covid-19 pushed them to the curb, forcing them to live from hand to mouth. Without any significant earnings, most of them have been getting deeper in debt, they also said.

Ananda Kumar, a resident of the Prokolpo, said he has expertise in making Sharpsh (food cover),



A member of Bed community, in Kayargachhi Abashan Prokolpo of Jhenidah Sadar upazila, making household accessories with bamboo.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

Turi (a type of serving bowl) and novelty items such as flower vase, pen holder and toy winnowing fan.

The craft he inherited from his father, and his father from Ananda's grandfather, did not help his father or him maintain solvency. Despite the fact, his father never asked Ananda to go to school at young age, as value of education has no meaning to the Bed community.

His weekly earnings fell to around Tk 1,500, from around Tk 5,000 that he earned during pre-Covid restriction days. Like him, most of them now cannot afford to have even two square meals a day,

Ananda added. Projapati Rani, another member of the community, said she and her husband can make 50 to 60 pieces of basket, toy winnowing fan and Sharpsh in one week's time, at a cost of Tk 300.

During regular times, their weekly earnings from sales would be around Tk 800 to Tk 900, which is not enough to support the family. But now, they do not even have that income, as wholesalers do not come to the local market anymore.

Finding no prospect in the craft, their son has decided to become a barber, she also said.

Requesting urgent assistance from the government, the members of the community said unless they are provided financial stimulus or bank loans with low interest and relaxed repayment options, survival will be extremely difficult for them.

Contacted, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Shahin said currently they have been concentrating on providing assistance to transport workers who had been out of jobs due to the restrictions.

The Bed community has not been affected severely and their issues might be addressed at a later time, he also said.

BORO HARVEST

Hopes dampened by falling prices in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

The joy of reaping a good harvest this year did not last long for Boro farmers in Pirojpur after they stumbled on unexpectedly low prices at markets.

The harvesting of Boro began in the last week of April and likely to be over around the first week of May.

Farmers said the harvest has been good this year according to their anticipations, as they did not face any natural calamity or serious pest attacks in the rice fields.

Farmer Golam Mostofa Howlader, from Jujkhola village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila, said, "This year I hope to get over 50 maunds of paddy from each bigha of land."

Another farmer, Shohag Sheikh, from Uttar Kadamtala village in the same upazila, said they did not encounter any problem in the fields during harvesting this year -- thanks to clear days without rain.

However, day labourer wages during this peak season rose to between Tk 750 and Tk 800, he also said.

Many of the farmers said that despite a good yield amid favourable weather conditions, their hopes for a good return of investment are being dampened by the falling prices of paddy at markets.

Even though the government buys paddy every year, only a few farmers can sell it to the government, they also said.

"Now the highest amount you can get for a maund of paddy is Tk 700," said farmer Barun Kanti Majumder, adding that Tk 900 for a maund of paddy on an average would ensure minimum profit for them.

Wholesale paddy buyer Milton Mridha, from Jujkhola village in the upazila, said the prices of Boro has been going down after rice millers stopped its procurement.

Shepon Chandra Ghosh, agriculture officer in Sadar upazila, said, "This year the production of paddy is good and if no natural disaster occurs before harvesting, they will benefit from it."

They were also providing necessary assistance to farmers so the latter can sell paddy to the government, he added.

According to data from the Department of Agricultural Extension in Pirojpur, Boro has been cultivated on 24,533 hectares of land in the district this year, up from last year's 22,915 hectares.

The government has set a target of buying 4,260 tonnes of paddy, at Tk 27 per kilogram, between April 28 and August 16 this year, as per a notice issued by the food ministry.



Farmers busy harvesting Boro paddy in a field at Jujkhola village of Pirojpur Sadar upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Dhaka hopes to get them before Eid

FROM PAGE 1 informed them that the vaccines would start arriving before Eid while Health Minister Zahid Maleque shared a more specific date -- May 10.

"The health ministry will decide when and how many doses of the vaccine will arrive, and what will be the transportation system. They know when we'll need it," Momen told UNB, adding that they just have helped the health ministry establish communications with China and Russia.

The foreign minister said everything was closed in China due to the holidays and that the holidays would end today.

"It takes some time as vaccines are produced based on orders," Momen said, adding that discussions with Russia and the United States were on to get more vaccines.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday reaffirmed that the government would procure vaccines at any cost to protect its people from coronavirus. "We are bringing more vaccines, no matter how much money is required; we will

bring more vaccines." China was supposed to give 5 lakh doses of vaccine as a gift apart from supplying vaccines through commercial purchase.

Bangladesh has received 7 million Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine doses produced by Serum Institute of India (SII) through a contract. Bangladesh also received 3.3 million doses of vaccine as a bilateral partnership gift. This is the largest amount sent from India to any country.

The US has decided to share its entire stock of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines with the world once it clears federal safety reviews, the White House said. As many as 60 million doses expected to be available for export in the coming months.

"We sought vaccines from the US as they've a stock of 60 million doses. We would definitely welcome it," Momen said.

He said they came to know, not through any letter (formal channel), but publicly that the US identified India and

Brazil as priority countries to supply the vaccines.

Momen said the US assured all concerned of making the vaccines available for other countries, including Bangladesh, once they have surplus.

"I can assure you when we can reach the level of the critical mass vaccination and we've surplus, we'll absolutely make vaccines available in whatever different ways," said John Kerry, US special presidential envoy for climate, told reporters during his recent visit to Bangladesh.

The foreign minister said they were continuing their diplomatic activities using digital tools despite global disruptions due to the pandemic.

"We're continuously connecting with everyone," he said, mentioning that webinars and WhatsApp emerged as means of communication.

Momen said in-person meetings and negotiations came down significantly due to the current situation. "But in-person meetings are good for better negotiations."

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation advertisement including logo, address, website, and a detailed table of job openings with columns for job no., name, grade, pay scale, and age limit.

Public Procurement Rules-2008 notice from Bangladesh Police. Includes header with logo, title, and a table with 19 items detailing procurement rules and procedures.

Elevated metro line collapses in Mexico

At least 23 killed, dozens hurt

AFP, Mexico City

An elevated metro line collapsed in the Mexican capital on Monday, leaving at least 23 people dead and dozens injured as a train came plunging down, authorities said.

Carriages were seen hanging from the overpass in a tangle of twisted cables with the ends pointing towards the ground in a V-shape.

"Unfortunately there are 23 deceased," including minors, Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum told reporters at the scene in the south of the capital.

Around 65 others received hospital treatment following the dramatic accident, one of the worst to strike the Mexico City metro since it was inaugurated in 1969.

Anxious relatives gathered at the site awaiting news of those believed to have been aboard the train.

Dozens of emergency workers were seen trying to rescue victims from the carriages.

The work had to be suspended because of fears the wreckage was too unstable, but it later resumed with the help of a crane.

A car was trapped under the rubble, but a person inside managed to get out alive, she said.

Sheinbaum promised a structural examination of the affected metro line, which will remain closed, and a full investigation into the causes of the accident.

"We will report the whole truth. Our support to all victims," Sheinbaum tweeted.

The Mexico City subway has 12 lines and carries millions of passengers each day.



Rescuers work at a site where an overpass for a metro partially collapsed with train cars on it at Olivos station in Mexico City, Mexico on Monday night. At least 23 people were killed and 65 were hospitalized when the railway overpass and train collapsed onto a busy road.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Netanyahu faces midnight deadline to form govt

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a midnight deadline yesterday to form a government, a daunting task that would likely require convincing the Jewish far right to cooperate with an Islamic party. Netanyahu was given a 28-day window to forge a majority coalition following a March 23 general election, Israel's fourth inconclusive vote in less than two years. The prime minister's right-wing Likud party won the most seats in the vote, but he failed to secure a majority in the 120-seat parliament. A coalition will require coming to terms with his estranged former protégé Naftali Bennett, leader of the hawkish Yamina party. It will also require persuading the far-right Religious Zionism alliance to tacitly cooperate with the Islamic conservative Raam party.

Biden to allow up to 62,500 refugees into US after row

President Joe Biden announced Monday, after coming under fierce criticism, that he was raising the maximum number of refugees allowed into the United States this year to 62,500 -- up from the 15,000 cap imposed by his predecessor Donald Trump. The change follows backlash from allies over Biden's earlier decision to keep the Trump-era limits -- a politically costly moment of confusion that stood out in a White House notable for its iron discipline in its first three months. The program is only for refugees selected by US security and intelligence agencies from United Nations camps around the world.

Twitter bans Kangana Ranaout for hateful posts



Twitter Inc says it has banned leading Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaout, known for her ardent support of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing her of violating its rules on hateful conduct and abusive behaviour. Following the election in by TMC over Modi's BJP, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's party was accused of violent attacks on its defeated opponents, which it denies. In her tweet, Ranaout called Banerjee an "unleashed monster" and urged Modi to "tame her". "We need super gundai (hooliganism in Hindi) to kill gundai... Modi ji (a honorific) please show your Virat roop (larger-than-life form) from the early 2000s," she posted, an apparent reference to 2002 Gujarat riots that took place when Modi was the state chief minister.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'People have shown the way'

Mamata says Bengal showed 'BJP can be defeated' as she dodges question on her possible PM bid in 2024

NDTV ONLINE

The Bengal election results have proved that the BJP can be defeated and people have shown the way, Mamata Banerjee said yesterday on her remarkable victory.

"They need political oxygen," she quipped in an exclusive interview to NDTV.

Defying most projections, Mamata Banerjee won 213 seats (total 292) in Bengal, limiting the BJP to double digits (77).

"The BJP can be defeated. At the end of the day it is a democracy and it is the people's choice that matters. People have shown the way. In a democracy you should not show audacity or ego. I will request the Election Commission to follow rajdharma and back not only the BJP but all parties," she told NDTV, bringing up her party's allegations about the poll body's bias and discrimination.



"The BJP is a communal party, they are trouble-mongers, they are creating fake videos, they are misusing their powers, they misuse agencies; they want to demolish federalism, bulldoze the federal character of the country."

People must come together to fight the BJP, she said.

"This kind of agency politics (using CBI, Enforcement Directorate) should come to an end and that will be the end of the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah era of politics. Even the old BJP members

reject the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah style of politics. The country cannot face this kind of politics anymore. There are many better candidates than Modi and Amit Shah."

But the firebrand politician, set for her third term as Bengal Chief Minister, was cautious on the possibility of emerging as the opposition's candidate to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2024.

"Sometimes you cannot decide all the things right now. It is different during election time. There has to be a common minimum programme... Now is the time to fight the Covid battle. After the Covid battle is over, we will decide, we will set up an expert team also so that they can guide us. Automatically it will come up. Because the country cannot face this disaster. This BJP means disaster."

AFTERMATH OF US TROOPS PULLOUT

Thousands flee as clashes flare in Afghanistan

AFP, Kandahar

Thousands of Afghans were forced to flee their homes as fierce fighting erupted between government forces and the Taliban in a southern province after the US military began withdrawing its remaining troops from Afghanistan, officials said yesterday.

Afghan forces pushed back insurgent attacks on multiple checkpoints in the past 24 hours in the province of Helmand where the US military on Sunday handed over a base to government forces as part of its formal pullout that began on May 1.

About 1,000 families have fled their homes to escape the fighting that erupted on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand, and some other parts of the province, said Sayed Mohammad Ramin, the region's director for refugees.

He said the families had taken refuge in Lashkar Gah and had come from areas where fighting was intense in the past two days.

The defence ministry said government forces had killed more than 100 Taliban fighters in Helmand in the past 24 hours when the insurgents attacked some checkpoints on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah. Another 22 al-Qaeda fighters from Pakistan were also killed in the fighting, the ministry said.

Officials said the Taliban fighters initially captured some checkpoints but they were retaken by government forces who pushed back the insurgents. Taliban claimed to have killed dozens of Afghan forces.

Mamata to take oath as CM today

FROM PAGE 1

BJP spokesman Sambit Patra, in New Delhi, said the situation in West Bengal had never been witnessed in India's electoral history and termed the situation "unbelievable".

The National Congress also condemned the post-polls violence saying such incidents were unacceptable and people of the state have not voted for lawlessness.

"The post-polls violence that has been unleashed by the TMC on the Congress workers is unacceptable. Even women and children are not spared. I'm sure the people of West Bengal did not vote for this lawlessness," said Congress West Bengal in-charge Jitin Prasada.

A BJP leader has appealed to the Supreme Court for a probe into the violence by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). In his appeal, he said BJP workers were attacked and killed and women have been raped.

Killings of at least 12 people in the post-poll violence -- a figure that may be higher than the number of those killed during the month-long election.

Governor Jagdeep Dhankar tweeted yesterday to say that the PM expressed "serious anguish and concern at alarmingly worrisome law and order situation".

In a tweet tagging Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, he also said, "I share grave concerns given that violence, vandalism, arson, loot and killings continue unabated".

The BJP announced that it will hold a nationwide dharna protesting the violence today. Party president

JP Nadda will present at the programme in WB.

The TMC came to power for the third time in a row in West Bengal, pocketing 213 of the 292 Assembly seats that went to polls, while its main challenger, the BJP, bagged 77 seats.

On Monday, Mamata called on Governor Jagdeep Dhankar at Raj Bhavan and resigned as the chief minister, as is the practice, before she would be administered the oath of office and secrecy again.

Senior TMC leader Partha Chatterjee said the newly elected MLAs would be sworn in on Thursday. The oath-taking ceremony will be a low-key affair due to an unprecedented surge in Covid-19 cases. Sources said it will be a brief ceremony spanning 55 minutes.

"Taking note of communication @AITCofficial electing @MamataOfficial as leader of 17th WB Legislative Assembly have invited her to take oath of office of Chief Minister on May 5 at 10.45 am at Raj Bhawan. In view of current Covid situation function will be with limited audience," he tweeted.

Indian cricket board President Sourav Ganguly along with opposition leaders like BJP's state chief Dilip Chosh, Left Front chairman Biman Bose, Congress leader Abdul Manna and former chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee have been invited to the swearing-in ceremony, local media reports said.

Abhishek Banerjee, Prashant Kishor, Firhad Hakim are expected to be among the TMC leaders to accompany Mamata for the occasion.

In her address to the people yesterday, Mamata Banerjee appealed for calm and blamed the BJP for

the violence.

"Bengal is a peace-loving place," said the chief minister.

"During the elections, there has been some heat and dust... The BJP did a lot of torture, also the CAPE. But I appeal to all for calm. Don't indulge in violence. If there is a dispute, inform the police about it. The police must manage law and order," she added.

Mamata accused the BJP of trying to create trouble in areas where they have won.

"This is BJP's propaganda. Some sporadic incidents are there, but it happens in every state. I am not justifying violence. BJP is trying to create communal clash, because of their shameful defeat," she said, insisting that she had been telling her supporters to stay indoors and not celebrate at all.

Separately, in an interview with NDTV, Mamata said the West Bengal election results have proved that the BJP can be defeated and people have shown the way.

"The BJP is a communal party, they are trouble-mongers, they use fake videos, they misuse their powers, they misuse agencies; they want to demolish federalism, bulldoze the federal character of the country."

But the firebrand politician, however, was cautious on the possibility of emerging as the opposition's candidate to take on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2024.

"You cannot decide on these things now. There has to be discussion..." she said leaving the possibility open.

Rickshaw 'ambulance' offers free oxygen to Covid patients

AFP, Bhopal

When Indian auto-rickshaw driver Mohammad Javed Khan saw people carrying their coronavirus-stricken parents to hospitals on their backs as they were too poor to afford an ambulance, he knew he had to help.

Khan, a 34-year-old driver in the central Indian city of Bhopal, sold his wife's jewellery and converted his three-wheeled vehicle into a small ambulance, fitting it out with an oxygen cylinder, an oximeter to measure oxygen levels in the blood, and other medical supplies.

As India grapples with a harrowing Covid-19 crisis that has seen infections skyrocket and the healthcare system stretched to breaking point, individuals like Khan have stepped forward to try and help their local communities.

"A critically ill patient cannot be brought to the hospital without oxygen support. So, I thought, why not turn my three-wheeler into an ambulance. It's not as spacious as an ambulance, but it can surely save lives," Khan told AFP.

"I see young people struggling without



oxygen. Even when they call ambulances, the ambulances are charging 5,000-10,000 rupees (\$70-140). How will a poor person be able to afford it?"

A donor provided him with a cylinder and another with the oximeter. A doctor taught Khan how to use the cylinder and oximeter to safely supply the lifesaving gas to patients as he drove them to a hospital.

Khan briefly ran into trouble with the authorities when police charged him for operating his auto-rickshaw without an emergency permit during lockdown, India Today reported. But after an outcry on social media, police withdrew the charges and issued him with a special pass, it added.



Jamilur Reza Chowdhury
(1943-2020)

IN REMEMBRANCE AND PROFOUND RESPECT FOR THE LIGHTHOUSES OF PERSEVERANCE

Jamilur Reza Chowdhury
National Professor, Engineer, Researcher
and Scientist

A M M Safullah
Researcher and Educator

Two of the foremost guardians in the development of our country's infrastructure. Our progress continues to be illuminated by the light shown by them, which we pledge to uphold.



A M M Safullah
(1947-2021)



IN REMEMBRANCE

MISHTI MEYE KABORI

The final curtain drops on the "Mishti Meye" of Bangla cinema. On April 17, 2021, we had to bid our final farewell to the legendary actor Sarah Begum Kabori. The heartthrob of the 60s and 70s film industry has made immense contributions towards the growth of the Bangladeshi film industry. She has won the National film award twice, along with many other notable accolades. She will always be in our hearts as a symbol of courage and commitment. In remembrance of Sarah Begum Kabori, prominent personalities Mamunur Rashid, Gitiara Nasreen, Chinmoy Mutsuddi, Tariq Anam Khan, and Sohana Saba sat with Rafi Hossain to pay homage to the late actor.



Mamunur Rashid

"Kabori started acting back in 1963, and in 1964 her movie Sutorang was released. Back then, in Bangladesh, people could enjoy international movies. We got not only Indian or Hollywood films, we even got to see films coming from Lahore. Even with so many foreign films being shown, Sutorang became a massive hit. After that film, I became a big fan of Kabori and her acting. Then when we were making the television adaptation of Shongshoptok, based on Sahidullah Kaiser's novel, we were looking for a female lead. So, we wanted to have Kabori in that role, and after asking her, she agreed on doing it. Unfortunately, we could not run the drama for too long as it was in the early months of 1971. She also appeared in one of my dramas, Manob, where she acted amazingly. She was also in Danob, where she acted alongside Tariq Anam Khan. Kabori was a very gifted actor. She used to listen to the director's instructions very well. When she was working on Sutorang under Subhash Dutta, she meticulously followed the director's instructions. When people close to you pass away, it feels like a part of you is gone. With Kabori's passing, it feels like that to me. She was not someone who limited herself to do just acting. She was involved in politics and even working with different institutions. Kabori did whichever work that she wanted to do. In a way, Kabori was lonely throughout her life. For artists, it is normal to feel lonely in life, and Kabori was no different. I think that a biopic about Kabori and her life should be made. It would be a



Mamunur Rashid PHOTO: COLLECTED

great sign of respect to her and also be a good opportunity for artists."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

Gitiara Nasreen

"I can speak as an audience regarding this. My mother was a cinema fanatic, and as a kid, she would always take me with her to watch movies. As I was very young, I can't remember Kabori's first film that I watched. But I can still recall watching her in Shaat Bhai Champa. I even remember the iconic scenes as clear as day. However, I didn't only know her for her performance on the silver screen. In my youth, I saw her attend different events of the Film Society and their movements which had significant effects on the creation of good

films. So, while many have said that she went from being an actor to a leader, I did not only see her on-screen but also on the road. She took part in many of our events as a film researcher as well. For instance, I remember seeing her at the Press Club one day, and we were discussing the film censor board. She was very vocal about her views on the vagueness of the censor board regarding films that portrayed violence and abuse against women. We call a brave man a hero, but Kabori was a brave woman; I would say she was a shero. She was an activist, an artist. It is apparent in all of her work and writings. Initially in her career, she had an accent from living in Chittagong. She soon changed that and even learned how to perfectly lip-sync to songs in her films. The films during that time required a certain



Gitiara Nasreen PHOTO: COLLECTED

dramatic manner of acting, but Kabori tried to make her work seem easy and relatable, despite playing a range of different roles. Generally, we see female actors disappearing after working for few films. However, despite being someone who came into the limelight in 1964 and at the age of thirteen, she remained relevant in the film industry even till 2021. She broke many stereotypes. And, undoubtedly, she was also a prominent personality in the film industry, being the co-star in the debut films of five different actors who all went on to gain fame. She was sweet, brave, vocal, and a fighter. However, like many artists, she also dealt with loneliness. I find this to be natural given the society she grew up in and worked in. For example, I saw many people mention how she was known to be a sweet person on screen but in reality, had a bold personality. It seems as though in the industry, the word sweet and bold cannot co-exist in the discussion of women; it seems as if sweet must be synonymous with gullible. What is unique about Kabori is how she did not attempt to hide her feelings regarding this. She talked about it in her interviews and also wrote about it. She did not attempt to conceal her feelings of love. She was completely unscripted, and that is a difficult thing to do in our society where it is deemed ungracious, especially for a woman. Many aspects are absent in her writings, but I believe it is possible for us through this process of reminiscing to cherish her memories and those missing pieces. I want to celebrate Kabori, her work, contributions, and visions."

Shreya Shomoyeeta



Chinmoy Mutsuddi PHOTO: COLLECTED

Chinmoy Mutsuddi

"I saw an advertisement, where it stated that the world is becoming smaller. Similarly, our cultural arena is also getting smaller as we bid goodbye to so many legendary faces. I do not know what the future awaits, but I can only pray. I grew up in the same town as Kabori, which is why, before seeing her on the silver screen, I saw Kabori do stage dance performances during my childhood. However, that is another side. On the work front, if I speak from the view of a journalist and celebrity relationship, then Kabori and my relationship long-lived. She knew me very well, vice versa, I knew her well, and it continued. In my 50 years of journalistic career, I have interviewed many prominent personalities and shared good relationships with many of them. But I feel some of the interviewees may have forgotten my name, and right at this moment, even I cannot recall each one of their names. But the relationship shared with Kabori was a unique and permanent one. Magazines and newspapers print different kinds of news and stories. When Kabori got involved with politics, she got criticized, and people talked about why the sudden change from entertainment to the political field. However, little does the world know that it was not sudden. She was always engaged in political and current affairs. While going through the pages of an old interview of Kabori taken by me from 1970, I realized half of the interview is political and global affairs discussion. Thus, her political stance was nothing new or surprising to me. To everyone, she is the "Mishti Meye," but people who have known her up close will address her to be a straight-forward woman. I positively say this. Till the end of her life, she was active in her profession and in whatever she thought of doing. On another note, I would like to request film fraternity, cultural and political agencies, and media agencies to come together and create an authorized biography for the legendary actor."

Shreya Shomoyeeta

Tariq Anam Khan

"It is great to see everyone here today, but I am sure the occasion is equally disheartening for all of us. Often it feels as though the world is getting smaller. When talking about an artist,

it is necessary to discuss their work. I believe more opportunities should have been present for Kabori to be involved in acting. She never differentiated between film and television projects like many often tend to do. A reason for this may be that you need to memorise dialogues when working on television. When I worked with Kabori in Matir Kole, I remember that she always had her lines memorised. I had the honour to act in my debut film alongside her in Lal Sabujer Pala by Syed Hasan Imam. As it was my first film, I was very nervous, but she helped me overcome it. During shooting, she had minimal makeup and no excessive aspects about her. She acted from her heart and painted clear emotions. Even in her later years, she would ask to make her part of projects. I was reading about her life a few



Tariq Anam Khan PHOTO: COLLECTED

days back, about how she became Kabori from Mina Paa, and I learnt that she originally wanted to pursue dancing, as she used to perform during her school years. In some ways, she stumbled into acting, but despite not planning a career in this profession, she succeeded nonetheless. Nowadays, acting entails unnatural expressions and dancing. I watched a music video of hers, and I noticed how she managed eye contact with the camera for so long and displayed emotions perfectly. Her work was always realistic and relatable to the audience, unlike those today. She also had a strong passion for enhancing and benefitting the arts. Once, we planned to meet with the government regarding taxes relating to the television production industry. She was the MP back then, and she organised the entire process. During the liberation war, she went to Kolkata to help. Kabori had a big heart; she loved the arts, and she loved people. She was brave and took risks with her projects. We as a country need to learn about such artists and their works. Otherwise, we will lose sight of the country we had envisioned. Kabori continued with her work in the creative field despite various struggles in her personal life. However, like many artists, she attempted to express her lack of fulfilment in life through her art. She also wanted to give something back to the people. She used to say it's not just the government's duty to make a change, but also our own. Her outspokenness is a trait we do not come across very often. I find that to be very admirable. Because of this, I believed that she would overcome this struggle and get well from COVID-19. I could not comprehend

that she would leave this world. For those that Kabori helped and gave happiness to, we have to remember and celebrate her memory, work, and vision of a liberal Bangladesh. Hopefully, someday an impartial recollection of history will do so too. I would love to engage in a conversation about Kabori and her art once again. She will not be lost. I hope she achieves eternal peace."

Shreya Shomoyeeta

Sohana Saba

"For me, it's still difficult to talk about Kabori apa. When I first met her, it was at her office. When I walked into the room, I was surprised to see how simple she was. I could see her express her feelings not just through her words but also through her facial expressions. She always kept her words straightforward. Kabori apa sat with the entire cast and showed us how to act and what to do before four or five months of shooting. There was a day when I went into her office, she reading a script in front of me when she just burst into tears. I was shocked at first, but then I understood her years of experience can make her burst into tears so easily. Kabori apu is someone who worked very hard to get to the heights she received. For everything she did, she took training. We also saw how much of an activist she was, and she not only spoke against injustice but worked against it. Kabori apu is someone who will be remembered not only through her films, but also her political career and



Sohana Saba PHOTO: COLLECTED

the things which she did for people. One thing that she once said struck me a lot. She told me not to trust men, and it made me realize that she may have experiences that made her think that way. By saying that she was not saying that all men are bad or do not trust any men ever, but to be wary of whom you trust. I think that with what everyone was saying, maybe she had been a bit lonely because of those experiences. She was a very active woman. She would cook food, feed it to her kids. Even when guests would go over, she would sit and talk to them and make them food. She did everything while still working with film directions and even holding meetings."

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MAY 5, 2021, BAISHAKH 22, 1428 BS

The Padma river speedboat tragedy could have been avoided

When will the responsible authorities be held accountable?

TWENTY-SIX people tragically died in the Padma river in Madaripur on May 3 when a speedboat capsized after crashing into a sand-laden bulk carrier. According to one of the survivors of the crash, the driver was not skilled at manoeuvring the speedboat and was driving haphazardly from the beginning.

Multiple government officials are now saying that speedboat services on this river route are illegal during normal times. Then why was this speedboat running when there is a lockdown in place? Even more alarmingly, the speedboat was not registered and its driver did not even have a licence. According to different government officials, this apparently is the norm, as around 400 speedboats are operating daily on this route, but none of them have any registration or fitness certificates from the government. And the drivers have no institutional training or license. If that is the case and it is so well known, then why are these speedboats being allowed to run on a regular basis? Which government authorities are responsible for overseeing the safety of these vehicles? And why aren't they doing their job?

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) under the Ministry of Shipping is supposed to be responsible for development, maintenance and control of water transport and waterways in the country. Yet, according to its Assistant Director, who is assigned to ensure marine safety and traffic management at Shimulia terminal, his department does not monitor speedboat operations on the Shimulia-Banglabazar route due to a lack of manpower. We would like to know for how long BIWTA has had this acute manpower shortage, and what steps it has taken to solve this problem. Surely, its high officials cannot be sitting around while BIWTA is unable to carry out its responsibilities due to a lack of manpower?

And what about the Coast Guard? Why are speedboats like this able to get away with carrying more people than the boats' capacity, and why are people allowed to get on them without wearing lifejackets? The entire situation reeks of gross mismanagement on the part of the authorities and a complete lack of safety oversight and monitoring by different government agencies.

The authorities have formed a six-member committee to investigate the accident. By now, we all know how that usually turns out: the committee does its job and gives certain recommendations, which are unabashedly ignored by the relevant authorities and we end up back at square one. How long will this continue? How many more lives have to be lost before the authorities responsible for ensuring people's safety are finally held accountable for not doing their designated duty?

Will the inter-district transport ban prevent movement of people?

The authorities must come up with innovative solutions to stop the Eid rush

AS part of its strategy to contain the spread of Covid-19, the government has extended the ongoing lockdown till May 16. During this time, all inter-district bus, launch and train services will remain suspended. However, the administration will allow public transport to operate within the cities and districts from May 6.

We believe that lockdown is the only way to address the transmission of Covid-19 and rein in the pandemic, but the way we have gone about the business so far has been at best halfhearted, if not warped. While public transport has been off the streets, private vehicles have not. In the first stages of the lockdown, before April 14, public offices were closed, but not private ones. Later on, all offices were closed except essential services, and restaurants and factories were allowed to operate as well, but no directives were given on how the workers in these industries are meant to reach their workplaces without public transportation. It would have been judicious if government transport could run with health caveats imposed and enforced strictly.

Understandably, this transport-suspension measure is intended to prevent the coronavirus affecting the outlying areas of the country, which so far have remained relatively free from the pandemic. However, the two Eid festivals are when there is a large exodus of people from Dhaka to other parts of the country and vice versa, although the inflow into Dhaka is not as high as the outflow. We, therefore, wonder if the administration would be able to prevent people from moving out of the workplace towards home, albeit for three days. Given the fact that intra-district buses will be allowed to operate, people will district-hop to reach home. While ordinary people will have to pay through their noses, the transport owners will make hay by charging them at their will, which they do during these festivals. With rail and launch services also suspended, it is possible that all hell will break loose on the streets.

While we appreciate the intention of the government in suspending long range public transport, the suspension is likely to be circumvented by innovative travellers. The government will therefore have to take into account such possibilities and be equally innovative in their approach to stopping people from spreading the virus to the villages.

Four steps to reopening schools and recovering learning losses



MANZOOR AHMED

THE second wave of the pandemic has hit life and livelihood hard and has thrown us all into deep anxiety. For 40 million students, life-and-livelihood is to be in school. Normal life has

been taken away from children and youth for over 14 months. How can their lives be returned to them? Four policy and action steps can help. The budget for the new year, starting in July, needs to make necessary provisions to support these steps.

In a webinar organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) on April 29, budget priorities for the pandemic-devastated education system were discussed in the presence of Planning Minister M Abdul Mannan and Education Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain. Speakers pointed to four kinds of measures that the budget should support and which would make it possible to restart school and begin the recovery of deep and unforeseen learning losses.

First, the authorities need to move away from the thought of reopening all schools all over the country on a fixed date. In Kutubdia and Khagrachhari upazilas, for example, total Covid-19 infection has been less than one person

plan has to be one that is based on the science of learning rather than what is administratively easy and convenient. The thinking so far is to count the number of lessons that can be delivered during the year after schools open, cut parts of the syllabus in all of the subjects (six in primary and 13 in secondary) to fit the number of lesson days, and test students at year-end on these lessons for promotion to the next class. The

concentrated efforts in core subjects and enable students to acquire the core skills appropriate for their grade.

Teachers and teacher's assistants, who may be recruited to help in the extra learning needed for students, will need subject- and grade-wise guidelines. They will need help in assessing students' levels, as well as tips on the best ways of helping students, linking digital materials to classroom lessons, communicating

the subjects in the syllabus, which lasts for six weeks or longer? The principle of the core competencies can be applied in this regard also. The SSC exams can be held on four papers for Bangla, English, math and science and can be completed in four days. At the HSC level, more papers on the separate streams have to be added, but the exams can still be completed within a week or so. A decision can be announced along this line for the school years '21 and '22 to relieve examinees of uncertainty and anxiety, and necessary preparations can begin for this purpose. The exact dates of the exams will depend on the pandemic situation, so that a certain number of in-person classes can be held before the exams. PECE and JSC exams may also be reconsidered along this line. Many educationists argue that abandoning them would do no harm and would actually be helpful.

Thirdly, proper implementation of school reopening and learning recovery will require a collaborative effort involving education NGOs, community organisations, local government and forums such as CAMPE, Health Watch and the Bangladesh ECD Network. The national directives have to be adapted and adjusted to each upazila and each institution, and appropriate work plans have to be prepared assessing local circumstances. Parents and teachers have to understand and support what has to be done. Resource requirements and sources of support have to be worked out. The implementation process has to be monitored and adjustments made as needed. Work teams that include officials and NGOs have to guide and carry out these tasks. An important activity would be to recruit, orient and supervise—in cooperation with education NGOs—teaching assistants to provide extra instructional support to students lagging behind. This cannot be left only to currently employed teachers in schools whose numbers are not sufficient and who are already overburdened.

Fourth, the school meal initiative, planned to be gradually expanded, should be accelerated to cover all pre-primary and primary level students, and at least selectively at the secondary level in ecologically and economically disadvantaged areas. All students at the elementary stage (up to grade eight) are offered a hot meal every school day all over India. During school closure due to the pandemic, rice, lentil and oil rations have been supplied monthly to every students' family in West Bengal. It is claimed that we have reached the per capita income level of India. If they can do it, we can as well.

The plan, implementation strategy and budget proposal for the steps suggested must come from the two ministries of education before the Ministry of Finance can consider these, with the Prime Minister's overall guidance, for inclusion in the national budget proposal. The ball is in the court of the two ministries of education.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed is professor emeritus at Brac University.



Nayeem, a student of class-III, has been selling cigarettes and betel leaves on the streets to support his family after schools shut down due to the pandemic. This photo was taken in December 2020.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Instead of trying to teach something in all the subjects in the syllabus, it is time now to concentrate on the core skills and knowledge subjects.

per 10,000. Is there any logic in keeping all schools shuttered and students confined to their homes in these areas? Schools can be opened in phases, taking into account the local infection rate. Health precautions and safety rules, however, have to be observed strictly. Upazila education and health authorities need to have a coordinated plan involving upazila health complexes and union health clinics for rapid antigen testing (to keep infection rate under surveillance), contact tracing, and treatment for symptoms as needed (It is difficult to understand why rapid antigen tests are not used widely). Health protection for students and teachers may be seen as ambitious, but a beginning in this direction has to be made. For all we know, we have to learn to live permanently with Covid-19 or similar epidemic threats.

Second, restarting school is not enough. A teaching-learning plan to compensate for the long cessation of learning has to be implemented. This

expectation is that school and students can go back to their normal routine next year.

Unfortunately, this administratively neat solution will not work for most students. The loss of over a year cannot be covered in the remaining days of the year (how many such days remain will depend on when schools can open). The science of education curricula and children's learning indicate that there are core competencies (such as in first language and math at the primary level) and in Bangla, math, science and English at the secondary stage that students must learn. There cannot be much scope for short cuts in these areas. Instead of trying to teach something in all the subjects in the syllabus, it is time now to concentrate on the core skills and knowledge subjects. Mastery in these skills will make students self-reliant and enable them to cope with other subjects eventually.

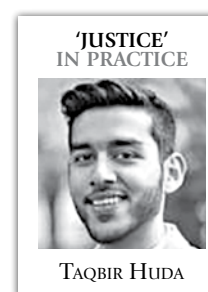
However, even devoting all efforts on Bangla and math at primary and the four areas at the secondary stage will not be sufficient to recover the loss of over a year (plus what students may have forgotten of their past learning) in the dwindling number of days in the school year. A prudent move would be to extend the current school year by at least six months up to June 2022. In other words, no year-end exam until June next year and promotion to the next class, after a summer vacation, in September next year. This "class-promotion holiday" will allow necessary time to plan for

with parents, and offering social-emotional support to students. Online teachers' portals should be built and teachers encouraged to participate. Teachers also need to be provided with financial incentives linked to results for the extra work and effort demanded of them. Methods should be devised to include non-government and non-MPO schools in these initiatives, since a large proportion of students are enrolled in these institutions.

By making a virtue of necessity, the school calendar can be changed in 2022, shunning the colonial era legacy of January-December to a climatically more appropriate—and in line with practice in many countries—schedule of mid-September to end-June, followed by a predictable and long break in the sultry and rainy times of the year. This would mean there would be no cyclical Ramadan holidays for school. Like all other businesses and offices, schools can remain open, but the daily school hours may be modified. Educationists have spoken about the time taken away from regular learning from November to February for annual year-end exams and starting the new year. This is the temperate and relatively rain-and-storm free time of the year that should be used for regular learning activities in school.

The education authorities are in a dilemma about when SSC and HSC exams may be taken this year, after abandoning the HSC examinations last year. Should they hold the exams with all

'I have no one else': How an eight-year-old girl lost her entire family at once



'JUSTICE' IN PRACTICE

TAQBIR HUDA

IN the early hours of Monday morning when most of us were tucked comfortably in our beds, eight-year-old Meem lost her entire family after the speedboat she was on crashed

and overturned in the middle of the Padma river, drowning and killing 26 passengers.

Meem was travelling with her father, mother and two sisters to her village after receiving news that her Dadu had suddenly died. Speaking to a journalist from *Desh Rupantor*, Meem disclosed that her hometown is in Terkhada village of Khulna and their family had been renting a house in Mirpur for the past five months. They had boarded the speedboat from Shimulia Ghat. Little did Meem's family know that attempting to visit a dead family member would cause their own deaths.

Meem was asleep when the speedboat crashed. She was holding a bag full of clothes on her lap. It is this bag that would save her life. As the boat overturned and passengers began drowning, Meem found herself floating on the water by holding on to the bag. That is when the rescuers noticed a floating child clutching onto a bag and rescued her from the water.

As soon as Meem was able to overcome her shock, she asked for her family. She was told that her parents and sisters were now stored in body-bags in a nearby primary school, along with other dead bodies. She was then taken in front of the line of corpses, and asked to identify her family members one by one. Meem was then rushed to the nearby Panchar Royal Hospital as she had

sustained minor injuries to her hands and eyes. Unlike most other passengers, no relatives had come for her or her family. Reporters found Meem in a state of disarray and constant tears. She murmured: "I have no one else."

The crash occurred when the speedboat hit a sand-laden bulkhead anchored in Padma, near the Banglabazar Ferry Ghat area in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila. Abdur Razzak, in-charge of

Rahima Khatun told press that the accident occurred as "there was not sufficient light in the morning and also the driver was not skilled enough" (*The Daily Star*). She further noted that the speedboat was carrying passengers, violating the restrictions imposed by the government amid the ongoing pandemic. Ghat authorities told press that the owner of the speedboat, Chandu Mia, does not have registration, while the

"investigate the accident". The committee, which includes magistrates, naval police and fire service personnel, has been asked to submit a probe report within three working days. But when was the last time any such probe committee formed after large-scale preventable "accidents" actually did anything to prevent the next one from happening?

Just last month in April, more than 30 people were killed when a large cargo vessel crashed into a ferry carrying 50 passengers rushing home from Narayanganj before the national lockdown. Last June, at least 32 people were killed when a ferry crashed into another ferry from the back in Dhaka, killing at least 32 people. In February 2015, at least 78 people died when an overcrowded ship collided with a cargo ship. How many committees were formed then and what action was taken based on their findings?

I am sorry Meem. I wish I had the words to console you, but the truth is, I have no idea what it feels like to lose my entire family in the blink of an eye. I am sorry you are now motherless, fatherless and sister-less, all because you had the misfortune of being born in a place where we have the luxury to hurt as many people as possible by being as negligent as possible; a place where basic safety standards do not matter because human lives do not matter.

What does the future hold for Meem and who will take care of her? Will she be an "economic burden" on a relative who will wait for the moment she reaches puberty to marry her off? Worse yet, will she end up as a victim of trafficking, as many young girls without a guardian are in this country?

I cannot stop wondering: what will happen to Meem?

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Eight-year-old Meem lost her entire family when the speedboat crashed.

PHOTO: REUTERS/STRINGER

the local naval police outpost, told press that the speedboat was coming to Banglabazar Ferry Ghat, taking passengers from Shimuliaghat of Munshiganj. Meem was one of five people rescued alive. Survivors blamed the speedboat driver for causing the crash, saying he was speeding "recklessly" right from the start of their trip. Madaripur Deputy Commissioner

driver employed by him to operate the boat, Md Shah Alam, has no license. When local authorities were asked how an unlicensed driver was still allowed to run an unregistered speedboat in the middle of a "lockdown", there were no clear answers.

Rahima Khatun told *The Daily Star* that the District Administration has formed a six-member committee to

TMC sweeps West Bengal assembly polls, but BJP gains ground

A CLOSER LOOK



TASNEEM TAYEB

THE 2021 West Bengal assembly polls have been a tussle for power between the centre and the state government. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) has had to fight it out till the last second for power in the state, and in the end it was the matriarch—the incumbent chief minister of the state, Mamata Banerjee—who emerged victorious by a landslide.

While the BJP had injected money and political and financial muscle in the election campaign, drawing massive media and PR coverage, the efforts seemed to have fallen short before the popularity of the incumbent among the grassroots population, including minorities.

And there are reasons why grassroots communities and minorities have given such strong backing to Mamata Banerjee. Her welfare schemes have played a major role in supporting the economic upliftment of the people of West Bengal. From schemes targeting women empowerment such as, *Rupashree* and *Kanyashree* that support them with grants for education and marriage, to allowances for elderly people and social security measures for the unemployed youth, Didi has a financial solution for every segment. Even for the religious groups, the

TMC government has allowances, despite facing backlash on occasions. They had been heavily criticised after announcing Rs 2,500 monthly allowance for Imams and Muazzins back in 2012, including from some of the Imams themselves, who said they cannot take money from other sources except for religious endowments. Thousands of Imams did, however, register for the allowance. Although the Kolkata High Court rejected the idea, the funds are now being channelled through the State Waqf Board.

Eight years down the line, in 2020, when the TMC-led government announced a similar allowance of Rs 1,000 for Hindu priests, the government had to face another round of criticism because the amount was lower than what the Muslim Imams are being given. The State Welfare Scheme for Purohitis also supports some priests from other communities, including Christian, Buddhist, Parsi and Jain communities.

Despite occasional criticism, these welfare schemes seem to have boosted public support for the TMC government. Muslim votes and women votes in specific have significantly helped TMC's win in the assembly polls.

West Bengal has a population of around 30 percent Muslims, the majority of whom have cast their polls in favour of TMC. The Furfura Sharif shrine based-Indian Secular Front (ISF) and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMM) had joined hands with the Congress and CPI(M), but could not distract the



PHOTO: REUTERS/RUPAK DE CHOWDHURI

Muslim vote bank of TMC.

And the state's strong pool of 3.7 crore women voters—forming about 49 percent of the votes—have also strongly backed Mamata Banerjee. And why not? Ever since coming to power in 2011, her party has taken up more than 200 female-centric social welfare projects, including employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, which have helped to empower women.

The ultra-Hindu nationalist narratives of the BJP have also failed to resonate with the secular Bengali nationalist spirit of the people of West Bengal. The state is historically known for its pluralistic characteristics, where the majority and minorities have coalesced together. BJP's ploy of "othering" and xenophobia certainly did not give the people the confidence to vote for the party, especially in the

light of the party's strong intent to implement the controversial National Register of Citizens (NRC) if elected to power.

Even the hard-line communists—including their senior most leadership—and TMC's arch nemesis until recently, warned the people against voting for the BJP. "There is no use in leaping from a TMC frying pan into the BJP's fire. In some places, the danger is already present. Our task is to bring back the people from this self-destructive mode," said former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, while talking to *Ganasakti* newspaper.

And there are also conspiracy theories that suggest the Congress and CPI(M) have sacrificed their votes to prevent BJP from winning over this last bastion of secularism in the country. Kailash Vijayvargya, BJP

general secretary in charge, suggested in frustration that "The Left and Congress surrendered to help the TMC win." The laidback campaigning from Congress had been apparent from the beginning. Even CPI(M) could not, or perhaps did not, push the limelight during the election campaigning. It was a tooth-and-nail fight between BJP and TMC, and in the end, it was TMC that prevailed.

The lack of leadership in BJP at the state level has been another major factor behind their loss. This void had been so apparent that Amit Shah had to say it out loud and clear, that no one from Gujarat will hold the reins of power in West Bengal if BJP is voted to power. But who could that person have been? Most of the BJP leadership in West Bengal are turncoats from TMC, CPI(M) or the Congress, with the baggage of corruption allegations hung around their neck like the albatross of Coleridge, including Suwendu Adhikari, Mamata's former protegee who managed to defeat her in Nandigram by a narrow margin of 1,956 votes.

However, the rise of BJP in the state has been consistent: during the 2016 assembly polls, BJP had only three seats while the Congress grabbed 44 seats, CPI(M) had 26, and TMC won the elections with a landslide 211 seats. This time around, while the TMC has retained its hold over the state, the BJP alone has gained more than 77 seats at the time of writing. Although the party could not cross the magical three-digit threshold, the remarkable progress made by it

is noticeable and certainly should be a concern for the TMC in the long run. Even during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP won 18 seats, while the TMC edged a little ahead with 22.

In the context of CPI(M) and Congress losing their ground in West Bengal and the steadily growing strength of BJP, the party has become the main challenger to the strength of the TMC. Mamata's party must know this is no time for complacency. In the short-run, she has to win the by-elections in six months time to retain her seat as the Chief Minister of the state. Knowing BJP's ruthless drive to gain hold of West Bengal, they will leave no stone unturned to influence the by-polls against Mamata Banerjee, because dethroning her will put the TMC in a difficult position.

In the long run, BJP will turn into a Medusa with fangs everywhere, if allowed to grow. All BJP needs to do is build a face the people can trust in the next election. With TMC embroiled in accusations of "cut-money" and other forms of corruption and irregularities, a solid opposition can easily wipe the party away, as TMC did to the once mighty CPI(M).

With BJP's position set in the centre, it will have ample resources to devote to strengthening its grip over West Bengal. The only way TMC can hold BJP at bay is by cleaning up its corrupt, minority-pleasing image. If not, then they might just as well set the sand-clock for the countdown.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem.

Bangladesh's climate diplomacy needs to take a whole-of-society approach

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

ONE can argue that the issue of tackling climate change in Bangladesh has already achieved a whole-of-government approach,

and is also rapidly moving towards a whole-of-society approach. However, our international diplomacy on tackling climate change also needs to develop both approaches.

What do these two terms mean, and how are they being rolled out? The whole-of-government approach means that not only ministries and departments, but also other branches such as local government, parliament, and even security and military apparatus, along with the judiciary, need to be involved. The whole-of-society approach means the additional inclusion of the private sector, media, academia, civil society and professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, planners and others.

Bangladesh has made great strides in involving all ministries and branches of government in tackling climate change at home. The fact that the Eighth Five Year Plan, the Perspective Plan to 2041 and the Delta Plan to 2100 have all included tackling climate change as major strategies is an example of this. At the same time, the Ministry of Finance has, for the last few years, included a climate change budget allocation for different ministries. In this year's climate change budget, over 20 ministries have been given a significant allocation of funds, which totals nearly eight percent of the national budget and is bigger than any other country in the world.

However, when it comes to climate diplomacy at the international level we are still, to a large extent, relying on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), which leads the annual Negotiations at the Conference of Parties (COPs) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) every year. While the MoEFCC and the Department of Environment (DoE) have a number of very competent negotiators, relying on the COP is no longer enough.

Since the achievement of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 at COP21, the need for climate diplomacy has become a daily necessity for all sectors of government. This need becomes more urgent as Bangladesh, under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is now the leader of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) countries.

The first thing that is needed, and indeed has been achieved, is for the PM herself to take this issue of climate diplomacy seriously and instruct her politicians and bureaucracy that everyone will have a role to play. This top-down focus is also necessary from the key ministers and in other

branches of government. The good news is that this has already started, but we have no time to lose, and we need to reflect on where we can improve our performance to become more effective.

We need to understand and take into account that the COP, which only takes place once a year, is no longer the only place where climate diplomacy occurs. Indeed, every diplomat in Bangladesh embassies across the world now needs to make tackling climate change a core issue of bilateral discussion with host governments. In developed countries, our advocacy will be to encourage them to fulfill their pledges made in the Paris Agreement, and in developing countries, our focus would be on exploring South-South collaboration on tackling climate change, where Bangladesh can share its knowledge on locally led adaptation (LLA) to climate change, particularly for the most vulnerable developing countries.

This would mean that all our diplomats need to learn and know about climate change. An important step in this direction has been made by the Foreign Service Academy, where a climate diplomacy course has been included in the training of all new diplomats since the last three years. The International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), based at the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), has had the privilege of assisting the Academy in delivering that course each year.

Another key ministry that must become involved in climate diplomacy is the Ministry of Finance, which needs to understand climate finance and learn how to access climate funds, both from global public as well as private sources. This is of particular importance, as Bangladesh hopes to develop out of being a Least Developed Country (LDC) within a few years and this will stop our access to grant-based international funding, so we need to enhance our ability to access global climate finance going forward. This is not only important in accessing the USD 100 billion of annual climate finance that the developed countries have promised the developing world, but in accessing the trillions of dollars of green finance that is now available globally (but we have not been able to access yet).

The ministries overseeing local governance are also of utmost importance, particularly the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), who are spearheading Bangladesh's efforts to become a world leader in LLA. This global expertise in LLA is a knowledge export—one that we need to make more of. Unlike other traditional forms of exports such as garments, LLA knowledge is not a commodity that has to be sent abroad, but rather a source of knowledge that is best shared by inviting representatives from other countries to come to Bangladesh and observe and learn from our

experiences of LLA. At ICCCAD, over the last few years, we have hosted nearly a thousand such international visitors, mainly from LDCs in Africa and Asia, to learn about LLA in Bangladesh. With more concerted efforts, this export of knowledge could be scaled up immensely.

Going beyond key ministries, parliamentarians also have a significant role to play. They have already made a major resolution on a Planetary Emergency, which has attracted a lot of attention from parliamentarians in many other countries. Also, the armed forces are already studying the security dimensions of climate change and having to discuss this issue when talking to their counterparts in other countries. The local government of Bangladesh can play a key role in sharing our experiential knowledge of LLA as well.

In terms of non-government stakeholders, the key one is the private sector, which can play a role in accessing global climate finance and building businesses to tackle climate change, both mitigation as well as adaptation. The good news is that the private sector has been very successful in providing solar home systems to millions of households in Bangladesh and we are already exporting that expertise to other countries as well. The new opportunity that we have yet to explore is to export knowledge of adaptation to climate change, which is a more difficult business proposition.

The other major stakeholders are academia, where the successful platform of more than 50 universities and research institutions have already come under the umbrella of the Gobeshona initiative, which has become a model for LDCs through the LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC). The NGOs in Bangladesh are already famous globally for their knowledge of development as well as tackling climate change. BRAC, the biggest NGO in the world, along with many other NGOs, is very active on sharing knowledge of tackling climate change globally.

At the same time, the Bangladesh chapter of the Climate Action Network (CAN), which is one of the biggest global civil society networks on climate change, is very effective. Through these different platforms, the civil society of Bangladesh has been playing a very constructive role in global advocacy to tackle climate change for many years. The latest development in this category is the efforts of the school children and youth in Bangladesh, who are a very important part of the global Fridays for Future movement led by Greta Thunberg of Sweden.

Climate change diplomacy now needs to follow a whole-of-society approach in which Bangladesh becomes more effective in our collective global advocacy, and we are able to turn tackling climate change into a positive brand for the country, which could even lead to income from

exporting our knowledge on LLA.

The initiatives taken by the PM when she became the chair of the CVF have played a crucial role, including supporting member countries to start developing Climate Prosperity Plans that will change their narratives

from vulnerability to resilience and ultimately, to prosperity. She also declared that Bangladesh would prepare the first such plan, named the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP), which is due to be released for public consultation very soon.

This pioneering plan has the potential to become a vehicle for Bangladesh's climate diplomacy for the next decade.

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

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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নথি নং-১(১৫)০৬/সাধাঃ/কম্পিউটার সরঞ্জামাদি/২০২০/১০৯৩

তারিখঃ ০২/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা প্রকৃত দরপত্রাদাতাগণের নিকট থেকে পাবলিক প্রিকিউরমেন্ট এ্যান্ড, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রিকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ মোতাবেক

Open Tender Method (OTM) অনুযায়ী দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ, অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা।
০২।	অধিদপ্তর/দপ্তর	ঃ	কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা।
০৩।	ব্যয়ের উৎস	ঃ	সরকার অনুমোদিত বাজেট।
০৪।	ক্রয়কারী সত্ত্বাধিকারীর নাম	ঃ	কমিশনার, কাস্টম হাউস, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা।
০৫।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর দপ্তরের নাম	ঃ	কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা।
০৬।	দরপত্রের নাম	ঃ	Procuring Computer for Official Use.
০৭।	দরপত্র তফসিল প্রাপ্তির দপ্তরের নাম	ঃ	বেতন ও হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা (৪র্থ তলা, কক্ষ নং-৪১৮)।
০৮।	দরপত্র সিডিউল গ্রহণের দপ্তরের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	ডেপুটি কমিশনার (সাধারণ শাখা), কক্ষ নং-২০৬, ২য় তলা, কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা।
০৯।	দরপত্র খোলার দপ্তরের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	ডেপুটি কমিশনার, কক্ষ নং-২০৬, ২য় তলা, কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা।
১০।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সময়কাল	ঃ	০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ থেকে ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে।
১১।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৩/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে দরপত্র বাজে জমা দিতে হবে।
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৩/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৩।	কার্য সম্পাদনের সময়	ঃ	চুক্তি পরবর্তী এক সপ্তাহের মধ্যে সরবরাহ সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের যোগ্যতা	ঃ	(ক) বাংলাদেশী প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান। (খ) দরদাতাগণকে উৎপাদনকারীর অনুমোদিত প্রতিনিধি/উৎপাদনকারীর স্থানীয় প্রতিনিধি/উৎপাদনকারীর অনুমোদিত ডিস্ট্রিবিউটর হতে হবে। (গ) দরদাতাগণকে কম্পিউটার আইটেম সরবরাহে কমপক্ষে ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের General Experience থাকতে হবে।
১৫।	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	ঃ	(ক) দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত সকল কার্যাদি পাবলিক প্রিকিউরমেন্ট এ্যান্ড, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রিকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে; (খ) দরপত্রের সাথে নিম্নবর্ণিত হালনাগাদ কাগজপত্রাদির সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবেঃ (১) হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স। (২) হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধের সনদপত্র। (৩) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (১৩ ডিজিট হতে হবে)। (৪) ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট (মুদ্রাসং ২০,০০,০০০/- (বিশ লক্ষ) টাকার স্থিতি); (৫) সমজাতীয় পণ্য সরবরাহ এর পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতার প্রমাণপত্র (দরপত্র তফসিল অনুযায়ী)।
১৬।	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	ঃ	কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা এর ব্যবহারের জন্য কম্পিউটার (বিস্তারিত স্পেসিফিকেশন ও পণ্যের সংখ্যা দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ আছে)।
১৭।	অনুচ্ছেদ-১৬ এ বর্ণিত পণ্যের দরপত্রাদাতাগণকে দরপত্রের সাথে ১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা জামানত যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংকের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট (ফেরতযোগ্য) কমিশনার, কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে দাখিল করতে হবে।		
১৮।	সোনালী ব্যাংক, কাস্টম হাউস শাখা, ঢাকায় ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) ট্রেজারী চালান কোড নং-১-১১৩১-০০০৫-২৬৮১ তে জমা দিয়ে চালানের মূল রশিদসহ নিজস্ব লেটারহেড প্যাডে আবেদনপূর্বক এ দপ্তরের বেতন ও হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), কাস্টম হাউস, ঢাকা এর নিকট হতে দরপত্র (তফসিল) ক্রয় করতে হবে।		
১৯।	দরপত্রাদাতাগণকে Instruction to Tenderers (ITT) অনুযায়ী Tender Data Sheet (TDS), GCC, PCC, Tender and Contract form, Schedule of requirements, Technical Specifications, Drawings প্রভৃতি যথাযথভাবে পূরণকরতঃ দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।		
২০।	দরদাতাগণকে Tender Qualification Criteria fulfill করে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।		
২১।	Instruction to Tenderers (ITT), Tender Data Sheet (TDS), GCC, PCC, Tender and Contract form, Schedule of requirements, Technical Specifications, Drawings প্রভৃতি বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী ও বিষয়াদি Tender Document-এ উল্লেখ রয়েছে।		
২২।	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনরূপ কারণ দর্শানো নাটিল জারি ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলসহ মালামালের পরিমাণ/সংখ্যা কম/বেশি করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।		

মোঃ সানোয়ারুল কবির

ডেপুটি কমিশনার

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সদস্য সচিব, দরপত্র কমিটি

ফোনঃ ৮৯০১৪৮০

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জিডি-৮৯৪

Fire doused after 30 hours

FROM PAGE 12
and frustration over the one-after-another fire cases inside the forest.

One such local named Afzal, of Rasulpur village adjacent to the forest, said, "Sundarban is like our mother. We depend on the forest for our survival. These fires are hurting us terribly."

"The reasons behind the fires are never clearly said to the people. Alongside the trees and animals inside the forest, we are also hurt by the fires. The authorities need to be more careful to avoid such incidents."

Another local named Fazlu Sheikh said the fire service was informed about the fire as soon as they saw the smoke. However, it took a long time to douse the fire because it was initiated in a deep forest and away from the locality.

Contacted, Golam Sarwar, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defense in Bagerhat, said there

was no fire inside the forest after they called down their operations.

"There was no visible fire. Still, if there is any fire left, and the forest department informs us, we will make arrangements for watering the area again tomorrow."

Mohammad Belayet Hossain, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the Sundarban (east forest division), said, "We were able to put out the fire with the help of the fire service. Even then, if there is any dormant fire, that will be extinguished. If necessary, the cooperation of the fire service will be taken again. Forest patrols have been intensified in the area where the fire broke out."

A three-member probe committee was formed to identify the reason behind the fire, he added.

He also assured that legal actions would be taken against the accused if the report of the probe committee finds out that the fire was man-made.

HC directs S Alam to pay

FROM PAGE 12
In the rule, the HC asked the government authorities to show causes why their inaction and failure to take appropriate legal actions against the perpetrators who killed and injured workers on April 17 and to ensure subsequent safety and security to the workers and their families should not be declared unlawful.

The HC in the rule also asked them to explain why they should not be directed to give compensations of Tk 3 crore to each of the families of the deceased workers and Tk 2 crore to each of the injured workers to ensure justice.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetullah and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir came up with the order and rule in response to two writ petitions filed by six rights organisations seeking its necessary directives in this regard.

Lawyers ZI Khan Panna, Sayeda Rizwana Hasan, Syeda Nasrin and Shahinuzzaman appeared for the writ petitioners, while lawyer Arshadur Rouf argued for S Alam Group and deputy attorney generals Bipul Bagmar and Arobindo Kumar Roy represented the state.

During the hearing on the writ petitions, petitioners' lawyer Rizwana told the court that police opened fire on the workers of the power plant without any provocation and in violation of the Police Regulation 1943 when they (workers) raised their lawful demands. The duty of police is to ensure safety and security of the people, but they have shot the labourers to death,

which is illegal and unconstitutional, she said.

Rizwana said four villagers were killed on April 4, 2016 and another was killed on February 1, 2017 in police firing over land acquisition for the same power plant, but no independent inquiry was carried out into those incidents and the victims' families did not get any compensation.

Opposing the writ petitions, S Alam Group's lawyer Arshadur Rouf said his client has already given Tk 3 lakh to each of the families of the deceased workers.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a leading rights organisation, filed one of the writ petitions as public interest litigation with the HC on April 21, seeking its directive on the authorities concerned to conduct a judicial inquiry into the April 17 incident.

On April 28, five other rights bodies collectively submitted another writ petition as public interest litigation seeking HC order on the authorities to conduct a judicial inquiry into the incident and to stop construction of the coal-fired power plant till completion of the inquiry.

The petitioners are: Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela); Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast); Nijera Kori; Safety and Rights Society; and Association for Land Reforms and Development.

Seven workers of SS Power I Plant, a joint venture involving S Alam Group, were killed and at least 19 other people injured in the April 17 incident.

DMCH team completes

FROM PAGE 12
mortem report ..." he told The Daily Star.

"It might take a month and a half or two to get the report," he said.

He earlier said they had asked for the DNA and viscera reports to determine whether the victim was poisoned. Replying to a question, the police official said DNA and viscera samples were sent to the CID.

The body of the college student was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her rented Gulshan flat. Police then sent the body to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College for an autopsy.

On April 27, the victim's sister filed a case against Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir with Gulshan Police Station for abetting the student's suicide.

According to the case statement, the victim was in a relationship with Anvir, an influential businessman, who would often visit the flat.

Anvir faces a travel ban issued by a Dhaka court following a police appeal.

According to the complaint, Anvir developed the relationship with the

victim, aged 21 at the time of her death, and promised to marry her. Police seized six dairies of the girl where she narrated ups and downs of her relationship.

After the body was recovered, Anvir's wife along with four other members of their family left the country in a chartered flight.

On Sunday, the victim's brother filed a murder case against Nazmul Karim Chowdhury Sharun, son of Awami League lawmaker and parliament whip Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, with a Dhaka court.

After recording the statement of the complainant, the court ordered that all proceedings of the murder case be stayed until the probe report on abetting suicide is finalised.

Police have already recorded statements of the flat owner Ibrahim Ripon, his wife and security guards, cleaners and staffers of the building under section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Ibrahim said police interrogated them about everything, including who rented the flat and who used to visit it.

2 held under DSA

FROM PAGE 12
The two were arrested under the DSA and also in a case filed under the anti-gambling law.

Cases were also filed against 14-15 others on the same charges, said OC Shah Alam.

Meanwhile, a 21-year-old was arrested and sued under the DSA by police in Cox's Bazar after he posted a video that allegedly levelled a death threat against the prime minister.

Mohammad Nur Alam was picked up by Chakaria police on Monday from his home in Kutakhali Union.

The case was filed by local Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Sujjan Dey.

The first information report states that on April 22, Nur posted a video titled "Team with Air Cox Media"

from his own social media handle.

In the video, Nur had a sentence threatening the Prime Minister, said the FIR. In addition, the FIR said that Nur Alam shared eight other links which were deemed inflammatory towards religion by the police.

Nur also has a YouTube channel where he posted content that could hurt the sentiments of "religious" people, said the FIR.

Dey said he felt that the content distributed by Nur Alam could provoke deterioration of the country's law and order. "That is why I filed the case," he told our correspondent.

Nur was sent to court where the magistrate ordered that he be sent to jail, said Shaker Mohammed Zubair, officer-in-charge of Chakaria police.

India's Covid cases

FROM PAGE 12
May 15, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said. With more than 100,000 infections, its death toll is nearing 3,000, government figures show.

The surge of the highly infectious Indian variant of the coronavirus has swamped hospitals and depleted supplies of oxygen, while sufferers have died in ambulances and car parks.

Rows of funeral pyres set up in parks and other open spaces are being used to cremate the overflow of corpses. A two-judge bench of the Delhi High Court has been holding almost daily video conferences to hear petitions from hospitals seeking oxygen and invoking India's constitutional right to protection of life.

But some hope surfaced in comments on Monday by a health ministry official who said infections in some regions were levelling out.

Government modelling points to a peak by today, a few days earlier than thought, since the virus has spread faster than expected.

India's surge has coincided with a dramatic drop in vaccinations due to supply and delivery problems.

At least three states, including Maharashtra, home to the commercial capital of Mumbai, reported scarcity of vaccines, shutting down some inoculation centres.

On Monday the state had injected 79,491 doses, after a record 534,372 a week ago.

Line laying to start in July

FROM PAGE 12
construction Padma bridge at a cost of Tk 39,246 crore.

Although the revised deadline of the total project is 2024, the authorities planned to operate trains on the Mawa-Bhanga section from the first day when the bridge would be opened for public. Currently, Bhanga is connected with railway network.

"Though there is still one year to go, the last railway viaduct at the Mawa end has already been connected with the main Padma bridge," the minister told reporters, who accompanied him during the visit.

"... We are hopeful that we will be able to complete the rest of the work on time -- the first day when the bridge would be opened for the public. We are satisfied with the progress," he added.

He said the 42-km Mawa-Bhanga section has so far witnessed 66 percent progress, while the overall progress of the project is 41.5 percent.

He thanked everyone involved with the project and handed over a certificate of appreciation to the contractor for their work even during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

CAN JUNE 2022 DEADLINE BE MET?
This correspondent found dozens of workers busy at a place where the Mawa Station would be constructed. Some basic structures have already been built there.

At the Mawa end, construction of 2.58km railway viaduct is almost completed, as erection of 66 piers -- out of 67 -- and instalment of 65 out of 68 spans have already been done. The remaining part of the work is likely to

be finished within July as the project authorities had to change design of two piers following the opposition of the Bangladesh Bridge Authority.

Similarly, 95 percent work of construction of 4km viaduct at the Janjira end was also completed. On this side, the authorities also had to bring changes in design of a pier and the work may be done within November, according to the BR papers shared with journalists.

The contractor has already completed pre-assembly of 7 km of track and produced around 9,500 special sleepers, out of the required 22,000.

PBRLP Project Director Golam Fakhruddin Ahmed Chowdhury said they would begin installation of railway track at the Mawa end from July and at the Janjira end from August.

It may take four to five months to complete the work at the Mawa end and five to six months for the Janjira end.

"We will be ready to install rail track on the Padma bridge within October. Specialised manpower, who would be required for the work, will come within the time," Fakhruddin said.

He added that they already asked BBA when it would be able to hand over the bridge for installation of rail track, but did not get any reply yet.

After completion of installing spans of the bridge last December, contractor of the bridge is now installing railway and road slabs and gullies.

Contacted, Shafiqul Islam, project director (PD) of Padma bridge, said

they were yet to fix the date for handing over the bridge as work is going on.

Replying to a query, he said, "It may take till February or March next year to complete the installation of gas line. However, we are trying our best to finish the work within January."

PBRLP PD Fakhruddin added that they may get the bridge in January or February. "In that case, it would be tight for us [to meet June 2022 deadline]. However, we will try our best."

Wang Kun, project director for China Railway Group Ltd, also known as CREC, the railway contractor, said the last span to connect the railway viaduct and the main bridge was completed 51 days ahead of the schedule time.

"In June, the work prior to the track-laying of Mawa-Bhanga of PBRLP will be almost completed and track-laying work is about to start. If the goal can be achieved, it means within effective working period of 2.5 years, new rail line is built and opened to traffic," he said in a press statement.

"This will be a historic achievement and is seldom seen all over the world except in China," he added.

"Achieving this goal of Day 1 [when the bridge would be inaugurated] will depend on the progress of construction of stations and signalling work, availability of quick decision-making and effective support from Bangladesh Railway and the consultant to the contractor, and the timely solutions to the issues related to delayed measurement and payment," said Wang Kun.

War with India

FROM PAGE 12
Yesterday, General Akbar Khan said the Indian Air Force placed six fields near East Pakistan on war alert, to which Pakistan responded by ordering an alert of her own.

General Akbar Khan commented, "Short of open war, India has taken everything possible available to it against us. We cannot rule out the possibility of war now, although we have no wish for it. In any case, we are ready."

The general regretted the inconvenience caused to newsmen by censorship but he sharply criticised foreign reporting of events in East Pakistan. He said censorship was necessary to preserve internal security.

General Akbar said he felt that many articles by foreign newsmen had distorted facts and "maligned our wonderful army tradition".

On March 26, as the Operation Searchlight began, foreign newsmen were expelled to West Pakistan and their notes and film were seized. Newsmen had since entered East Pakistan by crossing the Indian frontier.

General Akbar Khan denied that large numbers of civilian Pakistani refugees had fled to India.

"According to signals we intercepted two days ago, about 37,000 refugees, nearly all of whom are miscreants and common criminals, have crossed into India. India, which has a great many hungry people, claims there are one million refugees over there in order to get international help in feeding them."

DISAGREEMENT ON PLAN TO RETURN DIPLOMATIC STAFF

A tentative agreement between India and Pakistan on repatriation of their diplomatic staffs in Dhaka and Kolkata had bogged down over a Pakistani demand that India considers unreasonable.

Under the agreement two days ago, Pakistani diplomats in Kolkata and Indian diplomats in Dhaka would have been flown to their home countries at 11:00am today.

Two Soviet planes were standing by at Tashkent to airlift the Indian diplomats back to New Delhi, and an Iranian plane was reportedly standing by at an unknown airport to carry the Pakistani diplomats to Karachi.

But Pakistan said today that the repatriation could not take place until a Pakistani representative had interviewed individually "each and every member" of Pakistan's former deputy high commission in Kolkata to ascertain which ones did not wish to return to Pakistan.

RECOGNITION: SMALL NATIONS MAY TAKE THE LEAD

Sir S Ramgoolam, prime minister of Mauritius who was visiting London, gave sympathetic hearing to the plight of Bangladesh. But the question of the recognition of Bangladesh by Mauritius depended on the lead from the big powers although some small countries were consulting each other as well as the big powers on whether the latter would help the situation if they took the lead.

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

Speedboats unregulated for decades

FROM PAGE 1
in Munshiganj said around 400 speedboats are operated on the route, flouting the safety rules.

Only a few of them have registrations while the rest are operating illegally, said an official of the Department of Shipping (DoS), a government body authorised to regulate the country's water transports.

The drivers do not have any institutional training or license. They move up the ladder from a driver's assistant to becoming the driver after a few days of gathering experience, said multiple sources in the Shimulia terminal.

After the accident on Monday, the local administration, law enforcement agencies, DoS and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) are busy trading blame over the malpractice.

Talking to The Daily Star, Manjurul Kabir, chief engineer and ship surveyor of DoS, said registration of a speedboat is a must before it starts plying the country's waterways.

He also said drivers will not apply for their licences unless the relevant law is strictly enforced. The responsibility of enforcing laws falls upon law enforcers and other government bodies concerned, he said.

"It is our collective failure that we have not been able to force all the speedboats to complete registration," he added.

As per the Inland Shipping Ordinance, 1976, the owner and the driver of unregistered waterway transport can be handed two years' imprisonment or Tk 2 lakh in fine, said BIWTA officials.

Munshiganj Deputy Commissioner (DC) Moniruzzaman Talukder said the BIWTA is responsible to check the malpractice. The naval police and the coast guards will enforce the relevant law if any unregistered speedboat is operated, he added.

"Nevertheless, we have directed the local administration officials to ensure that unregistered vessels, including speedboats, are stopped from plying the Shimulia-Bangla Bazar route. The BIWTA, however, did not seek any cooperation from us," he added.

Contacted, Sirajul Kabir, in-charge of naval police at Mawa of Munshiganj, said his department does not have the authority to stop operations of such unregistered speedboats.

Rather, the terminal is "controlled" by the BIWTA and the leaseholder, he said, adding, "We have asked them [the BIWTA and the leaseholder] to stop such speedboats and train all drivers. But we have not received any response yet."

Earlier on Monday, Lt Ashmadul Islam, commander of the coast guard's Pagla station in Narayanganj, told The Daily Star they are only responsible for ensuring safety measures like wearing of life-jackets and controlling

overloading. The BIWTA is responsible for the overall services, he said.

Asked, BIWTA Assistant Director Md Shahadat Hossain said, "It is not possible only for the BIWTA to stop the malpractice. Rather, we need cooperation from all including police, coast guards and local administration."

"We have even asked naval police, coast guards and the leaseholder to take necessary measures so that speedboats cannot operate during the ongoing lockdown. But no action was taken," he said.

Contacted, Ashraf Hossain, elder brother of the terminal leaseholder Shah Alam Khan, said the process of registering speedboats was initiated a few years ago, but the initiative did not see any progress due to a lack of cooperation from speedboat owners and workers.

Meanwhile, a case was filed against four persons in connection with Monday's accident with Shibchar Police Station in Madaripur.

The accused are Shimulia ferry terminal's leaseholder Shah Alam Khan, the owners of the speedboat involved in the accident Chandu Miah and Jahurul Islam and the motorboat's driver Shah Alam, said police.

The driver is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital under police surveillance. The three others are on the run, said Miraz Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

The Gates split

FROM PAGE 12
asserted their legal union was "irretrievably broken," but said they had reached agreement on how to divide their marital assets. No details of that accord were disclosed in the filing in King County Superior Court in Seattle.

Bill Gates, 65, who co-founded Microsoft Corp, and his spouse, Melinda French Gates, 56, met after she joined the software giant as a product manager, and they dated for a few years before marrying in January 1994 in Hawaii.

"After a great deal of thought and a lot of work on our relationship, we have made the decision to end our marriage," the two said in a joint statement posted on each of their individual Twitter accounts.

"We no longer believe we can grow together as a couple in the next phase of our lives. We ask for space and privacy for our family as we begin to navigate this new life," they said.

The divorce petition, which states that the couple have no minor children, comes after the youngest of their three offspring recently turned 18.

Launched in 2000, the nonprofit Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation ranks as the largest private philanthropic foundation in the United States and one of the world's biggest, with net assets of \$43.3 billion at the end of 2019, according to the latest full-year financials shown on its website.

From 1994 through 2018, the couple gifted more than \$36 billion to the Seattle-based foundation, the website said.

Last year, investor Warren Buffett reported donating more than \$2 billion of stock from his Berkshire Hathaway Inc to the Gates Foundation as part of previously announced plans to give away his entire fortune before his death.

'NO CHANGES TO THEIR ROLES'
In their divorce petition, the couple asks the court "to dissolve our marriage" and to divide their communal property, business interests and liabilities "as set forth in our separation contract," though that accord was not made public.

Bill Gates is ranked No. 4 on the Forbes list of the world's wealthiest individuals, with an estimated \$124 billion fortune.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Chattogram
E-mail: xeneedctg@gmail.com

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

Tender Notice No. EE/EED/Ctg/e-Tender/2020-2021/52				Date: 03.05.2021	
Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID & procurement method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
01	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW05	Construction Work of Internal Drain at Nasirabad Govt. Boys High School, Khulsi, Chattogram	575652 OTM	19-May-2021 16:00	20-May-2021 15:00
02	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW08	Repair & Renovation Work of Guard Room at Chattogram Govt. Mohila College, Khulsi, Chattogram	575655 OTM	19-May-2021 16:00	20-May-2021 15:00
03	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW09	Repair & Renovation Work of Hall Room at Chattogram City College, Doublemooring, Chattogram	575656 OTM	19-May-2021 16:00	20-May-2021 15:00
04	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW12	Repair & Renovation Work of Academic Building at Chattogram Collegiate High School, Doublemooring, Chattogram	575660 OTM	19-May-2021 16:00	20-May-2021 15:00
05	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW06	Repair & Renovation Work of Auditorium at Chattogram Govt. Mohila College, Khulsi, Chattogram	575653 OTM	23-May-2021 16:00	24-May-2021 15:00
06	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW07	Repair & Renovation Work of 5-storied south building at Chattogram Govt. Mohila College, Khulsi, Chattogram	575654 OTM	23-May-2021 16:00	24-May-2021 15:00
07	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW10	Repair & Renovation Work Including Raising the Floor of the Academic Building (East) at Chattogram City College, Doublemooring, Chattogram	575658 OTM	23-May-2021 16:00	24-May-2021 15:00
08	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW11	Re-construction of Boundary Wall at Chattogram Collegiate High School, Doublemooring, Chattogram	575659 OTM	23-May-2021 16:00	24-May-2021 15:00
09	Ctg/Rev/MAUSI-4931/19-20/RW13	Repair & Renovation work at Chattogram Zela Shikha Complex, Doublemooring, Chattogram	575661 OTM	23-May-2021 16:00	24-May-2021 15:00

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Zalal Uddin Chowdhury
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Chattogram



Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal along with other team members returned home yesterday after the tour of Sri Lanka. The players will go through home quarantine before joining the other players of the preliminary squad for training ahead of three ODIs against Sri Lanka later this month.

PHOTO: STAR

SL ODIs another chance to 'bounce back'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh returned home yesterday after yet another disappointing performance, this time in Sri Lanka, where the Tigers lost the two-match Test series after a crushing 209-run defeat in the second Test.

The focus, however, is already shifting to the 50-over format, with Sri Lanka all set to arrive in Bangladesh to take part in a three-match ODI series later this month. Selectors have already announced a 23-member preliminary squad and those who were not part of the Sri Lanka tour have already started training at the home of cricket in Mirpur.

The two-match Test series in Sri Lanka also saw the Tigers complete their World Test Championship stint, during which time they have bagged just 20 points -- for the drawn first Test in Pallekele.

Head coach Russell Domingo, who returned with the team, expressed disappointment about the World Test Championship performance. However, the South African was keen to grab

the points in the upcoming ODI series against Sri Lanka, which will be part of the ICC ODI Super League.

"Players will have three days of practice before the Eid vacation. It will be good to have



Shakib [Al Hasan] and Mustafizur [Rahman] back when they do arrive. The next series will be important as qualification points are up for grabs. We need to bounce back after a tough

series in New Zealand," said Domingo.

Meanwhile, there were rumours that the board would closely observe the performances of the team in Sri Lanka and that it would have an impact on Domingo's future as Tigers' head coach. After the series defeat in the island nation, it was learned that the Bangladesh Cricket Board is not satisfied with Bangladesh's performance under Domingo's coaching.

There are even whispers that the board has started looking for alternatives to Domingo, so the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka can be an acid test for the 47-year-old. However, the board is also willing to give Domingo more time before making a final decision.

"Not really [concerned about future as Bangladesh head coach]. I'm enjoying working with the players. I'm enjoying the set-up. There's of course work to be done. I think it's important to try and look at the state of domestic cricket and the facilities the cricketers enjoy when we're not here as well. Of course, there have been tough results. But I have started to connect with the team well and I am confident going forward," he added.

IPL SUSPENDED

Foreign players fret over return

REUTERS, New Delhi

The Indian Premier League (IPL) was suspended indefinitely on Tuesday due to the Covid-19 crisis in the country, leaving many international players with major concerns over how they will return home.

The organising Indian cricket board (BCCI) and the league's governing council members convened an emergency meeting at which they decided to suspend the tournament with immediate effect.

The BCCI had forged ahead with the league despite fierce criticism for staging it in a country where coronavirus infections surged past 20 million on Tuesday.

"These are difficult times, especially in India, and while we have tried to

support staff.

IPL chairman Brijesh Patel told Reuters it was too early to say when the league, originally scheduled to culminate in a May 30 final in Ahmedabad, could resume.

"We are looking for another window," Patel said by telephone. "Right now we can't say when we can reschedule it."

A suspension looked almost inevitable after Monday's game in Ahmedabad had to be postponed after two Kolkata Knight Riders players tested positive for Covid-19.

Two non-playing members of Chennai Super Kings also contracted the virus in Delhi, prompting questions about the robustness of the league's bio-bubble arrangements.

The abrupt suspension left foreign players, including England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan and Australia's Steve Smith and David Warner, with a major headache.



14-day quarantine for Shakib, Mustafizur?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is working on bringing back Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahman following the suspension of the Indian Premier League (IPL) indefinitely.

"We are in close contact with Shakib and Mustafizur to bring them back to the country. We will facilitate the process and aid the authorities here in bringing them back. The two cricketers will abide by the guidelines that the health ministry will provide before joining the training camp ahead of the ODI home series against Sri Lanka," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told the Daily Star yesterday.

Prof Dr. Abul Bashir Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, confirmed yesterday that both players will have to complete a mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine. The government has made quarantine mandatory for all passengers from abroad considering global situation and upon advice from public health experts.

bring in some positivity and cheer, however, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the league said in a statement.

"The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021."

The eight-team IPL, with an estimated brand value of \$6.8 billion, is the richest Twenty20 league and attracts many of the best players from around the world to cricket-crazy India.

As many as 57 foreign players, including 14 Australians, are currently stuck in India along with dozens of



Chelsea host Real with slight advantage

AGENCIES

Chelsea welcome Real Madrid to Stamford Bridge tonight still with much to do to reach the Champions League final after failing to land the killer blow when the 13-time European champions were on the ropes in last week's first leg.

A 1-1 draw in the Spanish capital still gives the Blues the upper hand thanks to their away goal, but Thomas Tuchel's men could have had a much more convincing advantage but for a tale of two strikers.

Tuchel's men are looking to reach the biggest game in European club football for the third time, and hoping to replicate their 2012 success, when a mid-season change of manager proved a catalyst for European glory.

Real, meanwhile, are seeking a remarkable 14th title, which would mean they had won the trophy twice as many times as any other club in Europe, with AC Milan boasting seven wins. Real cannot rely on their resilient, albeit depleted defence to pave a way to the Champions League final, as they simply have to go for goals at Stamford Bridge in order to book their spot in the showpiece event.

Such a strategy could leave Zidane's

HIGHLIGHT

Chelsea made a thrilling start in the Spanish capital in the first leg and were in front inside 15 minutes through Christian Pulisic. Karim Benzema scored a brilliant equaliser -- a milestone 71st UEFA Champions League goal for the Frenchman -- before the half-hour, though, to keep the tie level heading into the return match.

men vulnerable to Chelsea's pace on the counter attack, and the Blues are not so bad at defending themselves, so there can envisage a narrow success for Tuchel's crop as they prepare to make the journey to Istanbul.

The visitors are set to be bolstered by the return of Sergio Ramos and Ferland Mendy, and Eden Hazard could also start after making an appearance off the bench in the first leg. Real Madrid unexpectedly lined up in a 3-5-2 formation for their home leg, but with his squad close to retaining full strength, Zinedine Zidane may be inclined to field their habitual 4-3-3 setup.

A familiar salve for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Six-time champions Abahani extended their unbeaten run against Brothers Union in the league to seven years when the Sky Blues handed an emphatic 5-3 defeat to the relegation-threatened All Oranges in a Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Following a 2-2 draw in their previous match against Bangladesh Police, which came shortly after they were ruled to be ineligible for the AFC Cup, Abahani sought some solace in routing Brothers Union, once powerhouses in domestic football. Abahani last lost to the Gopibagh-based outfit in 2014 and have since played out three draws while winning the other seven of their 10 league encounters.

The Sky Blues are now third in the 13-team table with 29 points.

Brothers, who are desperate to get out of the drop zone, held a tight line for the first 20 minutes before twice falling prey to long throw-ins as they usually do. Raihan

Hasan literally had a hand in the first two goals, with Sunday and Nasir Chowdhury heading home in the 22nd and 39th minutes respectively.

Brazil's Raphael Augusta almost struck in the 42nd minute with a powerful drive, only to be denied by keeper Jafar Sardar. However, he failed to thwart Jewel Rana two minutes later, the winger tapping home after a feeble clearance from

Jafar broke his way.

Sunday hit the far post three minutes into the second half before Belfort availed a through-ball from Sunday and darted into the box before placing the ball to Jafar's left in the 63rd minute.

Substitute Rubel Mia struck the fifth for Abahani in 79th minute, sandwiched between a brace from Nigeria's Awala Malagan, who struck in the 78th and 90th



Abahani's Kervens Belfort scrambles the ball across the Brothers goalline during a 5-2 victory in the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

minutes to reduce the margin for Brothers Union, who are second from bottom with five points from 14 matches.

In the day's second match, Bashundhara Kings toiled hard under floodlights to manage a 2-0 win over spirited Bangladesh Police.

Although Kings had demolished Uttar Baridara Club 6-0 in their previous match, they faced a stiff challenge from Bangladesh Police, who held the league leaders for 58 minutes before Towhidul Alam Sabuj gave Kings a lead after BPL top-scorer Robson Da Silva squandered a penalty in the 16th minute.

Despite conceding, Packer Ali's charges showed unbreakable character and fought on even footing but the Sri Lankan coach was left lamenting a lack of cutting edge up front in the absence of Argentinian striker Raul Becerra.

Captain and centre back Tapu Barman made the result safe after glancing home a header from a Jonathon Fernandes corner in the 62nd minute to help the leaders raise their tally to 40 points from 14 outings, 11 more than Sheikh Jamal DC and Abahani.

Tk 1650 crore approved for 186 mini stadiums

SPORTS REPORTER

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) yesterday approved Tk 1650 crore for building Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium in 186 upazilas. "The youth and sports ministry has placed a proposal for constructing Sheikh Russel Mini Stadium in 186 upazilas and the proposal has been approved by the 24th Ecne meeting today (Tuesday)," state minister for youth and sports Zahid Ahsan Russel said, thanking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who presided over the meeting from Gono Bhavan through a video conference. The government had earlier, under the youth and sports ministry, constructed mini stadiums in 125 upazilas.

Mourinho to take charge of Roma

REUTERS

AS Roma have appointed former Tottenham Hotspur manager Jose Mourinho as their new head coach on a three-year contract starting 2021-22 season, the Italian Serie A club announced on Tuesday.

The decision comes after the club announced coach Paulo Fonseca will leave his role at the end of the current campaign.

"We are thrilled and delighted to welcome Jose Mourinho into the AS Roma family," club president Dan Friedkin and vice-president Ryan Friedkin said. "A great champion who has won trophies at every level, Jose will provide tremendous leadership and experience to our ambitious project."

Mourinho, who has previously coached Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan, Real Madrid and Manchester United, was sacked by Tottenham last month after 17 months in charge of the London club.



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PADMA RAIL LINK Line laying to start in July

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from PADMA BRIDGE SITE

Authorities of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRLP) are likely to start installation of rail track on the Mawa-Bhanga section from July in a major development for the fast-track project being implemented by Bangladesh Railway.

They would be ready to install the rail track on the Padma bridge within October this year and it would take up to six months to complete the work, said officials.

However, before starting the work, Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), which is executing the long-cherished bridge project, has to hand over the bridge to BR's contractor for the work.

But the BBA may take up to February or March to complete their work before handing over the bridge, and in that case, it would be tough for BR to finish their work within June next year, the new deadline to open the bridge for public, said officials.

Meanwhile, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday said they are hopeful of starting railway service on the Mawa-Bhanga section, which is a priority section, when the Padma bridge will be opened for public likely in June next year.

The minister and top BR officials, including its Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder, and officials of the project and contractor firm, yesterday visited the project site one day after the railway viaduct at the Mawa end was connected with the main Padma bridge after the last span of the viaduct was set up on Monday.

The BR is implementing the project to connect the capital with Jashore with a 169-km rail line over the under-

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



A mobile court of Dhaka Metropolitan Police conducting a raid at the Chandrima market in the capital yesterday. It fined shop owners and customers who did not wear face masks and follow health guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

2 held under DSA for gambling on IPL

A first in the country

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Two people in Lalmonirhat were arrested on Monday night in a case filed under the Digital Security Act on charges of gambling.

The arrestees are Suzan Chandra Saha, 32, and Shahin Islam, 27.

Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, claimed that, for the first time in Bangladesh, a case was filed under the DSA against people for gambling.

The charges brought against the two were for committing an illegal e-transaction while betting on Indian Premier League matches using phone apps.

According to the DSA's section 30, if any person without legal authority, makes an e-transaction over electronic and digital means from any bank, insurance or any other financial institution or any organisation providing mobile money service; or makes any e-transaction though it is, from time to time, declared illegal by the Government or Bangladesh Bank, then such an act shall be an offence.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

HC directs S Alam to pay Tk 5 lakh each to victims' families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed S Alam Group, one of the owners of SS Power I Plant in Chattogram's Banskhalhi upazila, to immediately give Tk 5 lakh to each of the families of the seven victims who were killed after police opened fire during a demonstration by workers on April 17.

In response to two writ petitions, the HC asked the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police of Chattogram to submit their inquiry reports to it in 45 days.

S Alam Group has also been ordered to submit a report on what measures it has taken to compensate the families of the deceased and injured and also for their treatment to the HC in 45 days.

The HC directed the authorities concerned of the government and S Alam Group to ensure that any labour or person in that area was not harassed.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why a directive should not be given to them to form a judicial inquiry committee to probe the incident.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

War with India possible, says Pakistani general

MAY 5, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

AWAMI LEAGUE ACCUSED

The Pakistani government said today that news of slaughter carried out by Awami League members in East Pakistan before March 25 "has been kept strictly secret for fear of reprisals in West Pakistan".

An official statement said "thousands of bodies have so far been found in Chittagong and Khulna alone". It added that "a large number of casualties" has also been reported from three other areas.

The eight-page statement recapitulated the official government version of the East Pakistan crisis.

'WAR WITH INDIA POSSIBLE'

The chief of Pakistan's military intelligence service portrayed his nation today as facing large Indian military forces along the frontiers and said he could not discount the possibility of war.

Maj Gen Mohammad Akbar Khan told a group of foreign news correspondents that India had moved two and a half divisions of men (a division has about 30,000 men), mountain and airborne brigades, fighter, bomber and air transport units and her navy to supplement Indian forces already close to Pakistan's border.

He said with the Indian Army's regular strength around East Pakistan's borders, India's total army strength there was more than five divisions with a sixth in readiness nearby.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



COLLEGE GIRL'S DEATH DMCH team completes pry post-mortem

Declines to share findings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at Dhaka Medical College's forensic medicine department have completed the primary post-mortem on the body of female college student, which was recovered from her Gulshan flat on April 26.

Dr Mohammad Maksud, head of the department, however, declined to disclose any findings, saying that the information was confidential.

Contacted, Sudip Chakrabarty, deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday said Gulshan police had not received the report yet.

The primary post-mortem report will cover the physical analysis of the human remains. There will be no details. We will have to wait for the final post-

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

The Gates split after 27 years

Charitable foundation to remain intact



REUTERS, Seattle

Billionaire benefactors Bill and Melinda Gates, co-founders of one of the world's largest private charitable foundations, filed for divorce on Monday after 27 years of marriage but pledged to continue their philanthropic work together.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has become one of the most powerful and influential forces in global public health, spending more than \$50 billion over the past two decades to bring a business approach to combating poverty and disease.

The Gates have backed widely praised programs in malaria and polio eradication, child nutrition and vaccines. The foundation last year committed some \$1.75 billion to Covid-19 relief.

In a joint petition for dissolution of marriage, the couple

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PRAYER TIMING MAY 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 3-59 12-45 5-00 6-33 8-00
JAMAAT 4-09 1-15 5-15 6-43 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MAY SEHRI IFTAR				
22	5	6:33		
23	6	3:53	6:33	
24	7	3:52	6:34	

SUNDARBANS FIRE Fire doused after 30 hours

PARITHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

After 30 hours of frantic efforts, the fire at the Sundarban's (East Forest Range) Sharankhola Range was extinguished around 5:00pm yesterday.

The fire service officials, forest department members, community patrol group (CPG) volunteers, and locals jointly conducted operations to douse the fire that broke out on Monday noon.

The authorities, however, were yet to confirm the damage caused by the fire.

According to locals, at least five acres of forest were destroyed in the Daser Varani area inside the forest because of the fire.

On February 8 this year, three decimals of forest land were gutted by another fire in Chandpai Ranch of the forest. In the last 20 years, at least 25 cases of fire were reported in the Sundarban.

Locals expressed anger
SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



An elderly man from Chandpur comes to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital with breathing complications. For better oxygen supply, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Later, he required ICU support for which he was being taken to DNCC Dedicated Covid Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali. Such are the ordeals many patients have to endure every day. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's Covid cases top 20m

Health ministry official says infections in some regions levelling out

AGENCIES

India's coronavirus caseload topped 20 million yesterday as the pandemic continued to wreak havoc on the country's hospitals and the opposition leader said a nationwide lockdown was now the only way out.

Cricketer officials suspended the money-spinning Indian Premier League (IPL) as the pandemic spirals out of control, with the country adding 10 million cases in just over four months, after taking more than 10 months to reach the first 10 million.

With 3.45 million active cases, India recorded 357,229 new infections over the last 24 hours, while deaths rose by 3,449 to 222,408, health ministry data showed.

With hospitals running out of beds and oxygen and morgues and crematoria overflowing, experts say the actual numbers could be five to 10 times higher.

According to a Reuters tally, total infections were more than 20.2 million, second only to the United States.

"The only way to stop the spread of corona now is a full lockdown ... GOI's inaction is killing many innocent people," opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter, referring to the government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, widely criticised for allowing religious festivals and political gatherings attended by hundreds of thousands of largely unmasked people, is reluctant to impose a national lockdown for fear of the economic fallout, but several states have imposed social curbs.

The eastern state of Bihar ordered a lockdown until
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