DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 7, 2021

SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

www.thedailystar.net

Regd. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 111 | Baishakh 24, 1428 BS [Your Right to Know] Ramadan 24, 1442 Hijri | 16 Pages Plus Toggle Price : Tk12.00

UKRAINE CRISIS

Blinken urges Russia to cease 'reckless actions'

SEE PAGE 6

"Public transports have been allowed to operate in the capital and within the districts due to pressure from various quarters."
HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE

"We won't be intimidated by these manoeuvres."
FRENCH EUROPE MINISTER CLEMENT BEAUNE AFTER UK SENDS WARSHIPS TO CHANNEL ISLAND OF JERSEY OVER FISHING ROW

"The extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures."
WASHINGTON'S TRADE REPRESENTATIVE KATHERINE TAI AMID GROWING INTERNATIONAL CALLS

First 9 Months of This Fiscal Year

Tk 14,295cr cash, assets legalised

10,000 people pay Tk 1,439cr in taxes to legalise their undisclosed wealth

Rejaul Karim Byron *and* Dwaipayan Barua

Undisclosed assets worth a staggering Tk 14,295 crore have been legalised in the first nine months of this fiscal year.

At least 10,034 people paid Tk 1,439 crore in taxes to legalise the record amount of assets, taking the opportunity the government gave aiming to boost the economy during the pandemic, said a high official at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday.

Some 9,693 people legalised assets by paying Tk 1,390 crore in taxes for their undeclared fixed deposit receipts (FDRs), saving certificates, cash, and properties.

They legalised assets worth Tk 13,860 crore. Of the amount, 90 percent was in cash, FDRs, saving certificates, etc, the official said.

Another 341 people, who had invested their undisclosed money in the share market, paid Tk 49 crore in taxes to make Tk 435 crore in investments legal.

In 15 tax zones in the capital alone, some 4,885 people legalised assets by paying around Tk 980 crore against their undisclosed FDRs, saving certificates, cash, and homes.

Another 204 legalised their share market investments paying Tk 34.02 crore.

In four tax zones in Chattogram, 1,106 people took the government issued opportunity and paid around Tk 121 crore against their undisclosed FDRs, saving certificates, cash, and homes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Buses back on streets; crowds at city malls

Safety rules hardly followed at markets

Muntakim Saad

Heavy traffic returned to the streets of the capital after operation of public buses resumed within districts yesterday following over three weeks of suspension.

Besides, Eid shoppers continued to pour into the malls, which struggled to ensure the health safety rules. It raised concerns over the spread of Covid-19.

Addressing a virtual discussion, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said buses were allowed to run within Dhaka and other districts in the face of pressure from different quarters.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Celebrate Eid where you are now

PM urges all to help curb spread of virus

Unb, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked Muslims to celebrate the upcoming Eid-ul Fitr in their present locations to help check the spread of novel coronavirus in the country.

"We shouldn't travel risking our lives on the occasion of Eid. Celebrate Eid where you are now," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the inauguration of a good number of infrastructures and water vessels of different agencies under the shipping ministry through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

All for money?

137 recruited at RU on last day of VC's tenure; ministry terms it illegal, orders probe; BCL men clash over recruitment

Anwar Ali *with* Arafat Rahaman

Outgoing Rajshahi University Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan violated a ministerial embargo by appointing 137 teachers and staffers on his last day in office yesterday, giving rise to daylong chaos and clashes on the campus.

After news of the recruitments leaked around noon, a clash ensued between leaders and activists of RU Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) who went to the campus to receive appointment letters and a city unit BCL group, which opposed the recruitments.

Shortly afterwards, the education ministry termed the recruitments "illegal" and formed a four-member committee headed by University Grants Commission member Prof Muhammad Alamgir to investigate the VC's action.

In December 2020, acting on a report of the UGC on corruption at the university, the education ministry had issued an embargo on all kinds of recruitment at RU.

"It appears [from the chaos] that the VC signed the appointment letters under pressure of the ruling party's student leaders, but it was only money that worked behind the last-minute corruption," said Prof Sultan-ul Islam, the convener of Teachers' Society against Corruption, which has been protesting irregularities at the public university.

"As we were protesting the VC's corruptions, many job seekers were pleading with us to stop and save them. Many told us that they paid [for the appointments] with money they gathered by selling off their lands and properties," he said.

Earlier, the RU authorities under Prof Sobhan had called meetings of the finance committee on May 2 and the university syndicate on May 4 to fulfil the requirements for approving recruitments.

But teachers and students foiled the attempt by staging protests and requesting the committee members not to attend the meetings.

The VC then requested RU Registrar Prof Abdus Salam to sign the appointment letters, but the registrar denied the requests on Wednesday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Treatment Abroad

Khaleda not fit for long-haul flights

Say doctors; legal issues regarding her travel still unresolved

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health might not be stable enough for a long flight, her doctors said as her family members want to take her abroad for better treatment.

Her travel abroad also depends on renewal of her passport, visa from the destination country, and the Bangladesh government's approval.

BNP Secretary

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Quest for Covid Vaccine

Dhaka seeks 4m doses from US

Staff Correspondent

The government has sought immediate delivery of 4 million vaccine doses from the US, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday.

"We've sought immediate release of 4 million doses of vaccine," he told reporters after his meeting with US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller at his foreign ministry office, reports UNB.

This was the latest government effort to collect vaccines from alternative sources as the stock of Oxford-AstraZeneca jabs is running out fast, making the ongoing countrywide vaccine inoculation uncertain.

Already, the government suspended administration of the first dose on April 26, immediately after the Indian government barred export of Covishield -- the AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India.

The Bangladesh government had a stock of 1.02 crore doses of the Oxford vaccine. After 58,19,185 people received the first doses, there is a shortage of 14,39,708 doses for the second doses, according to the health directorate.

Momen said the government wants to continue the vaccination programme collecting vaccines from alternative sources.

He informed reporters that his ministry has sought a total of 10 to 20 million jabs of vaccine from the US.

The foreign minister said the US government needs permission from the Food and Drug Administration to export vaccines which is a time-consuming process. "But we need it immediately."

Momen also said they have written to Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar requesting for 3 million shots of vaccine to address Bangladesh's immediate need.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Suhrawardy Udyan

Trees felled to implement mega project

Legal notice served on government

Staff Correspondent

After facing backlash from different organisations and environmental activists, the public works department said it cut down trees at the Suhrawardy Udyan upon directives of the Liberation War affairs ministry for the implementation of a mega project at the historic site.

On Wednesday, the Liberation War affairs ministry in a statement claimed that there was a misunderstanding among people due to different media reports that published partial news regarding the project implementation.

It, however, admitted that some trees were felled at the Suhrawardy Udyan as part of the implementation. But at the same time, around 1,000 new trees will be planted there, said the ministry, adding that it expects support from citizens in this regard.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3
READ MORE ON PAGE 3

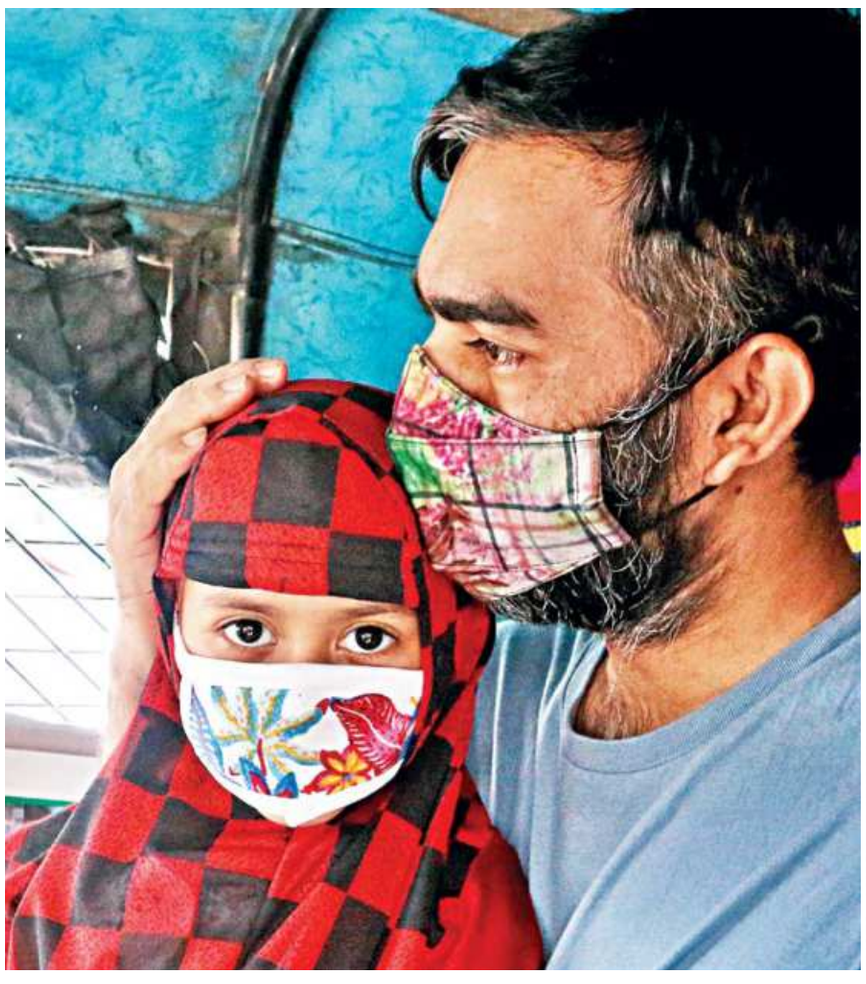


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Seven-year-old Jannat came to take her father Alamin home after he was released from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Alamin contracted the Covid-19 and had to be at the hospital for over a month. He was allowed to go to his family in the capital's Banasree after his coronavirus test result came negative recently.

Provocative Speech

Cops to take action against such speakers

CTTC unit making list

Mohammad Jamil Khan

Counterterrorism officers are preparing a list of extremist speakers making provocative speeches online and at public gatherings.

Seven individuals have already been identified and the list is being updated, officers said.

The number of militant acts has fallen, thanks to crackdowns, but the threat of radicalisation is on the rise, said Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of police.

"The list we have been making contains the names of several leaders of Hefajat-e-Islam. We are working to bring to book the extremist speakers who are popular among militants," he said.

The speakers will be accused under the anti-terrorism act as "instigators".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BANGLADESH UPDATE 1,822 New cases in 24hrs | 7,69,160 Total cases | 11,796 Deaths | 7,02,163 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE 3,262,653 Deaths | 156,355,625 Total cases

HEFAJAT MAYHEM IN CTG

Fayezi, several others financed, organised it

Cops claim after grilling the detained ex-publicity secy of the Islamist outfit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Mowlana Jakaria Noman Fayezi, publicity secretary of the recently dissolved Hefajat-e-Islam central committee, was one of the financers of Chattogram mayhem, said police.

Fayezi directly patronised the chaos in the port city between March 26 and March 28 during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said officials of Chattogram district police yesterday.

The law enforcers came up with the information after arresting the Hefajat leader from Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar on May 6 and grilling him in custody.

A court placed Fayezi on a five-day remand in connection with a case filed over the violence.

SM Rashidul Haque, superintendent of Chattogram district police, said in primary quizzing Fayezi accepted that on March 26 he organised Hefajat men at Hathazari upazila with ill intention.

Addressing a press briefing, the police official also said that from other arrestees they got several names of Hefajat's financiers in the mayhem.

"Jakaria Noman is one of them," he said, adding they were investigating every aspect.

The police official also said that the arrested Hefajat men, during interrogation, admitted that they intended to create unrest situation in Bangladesh by carrying out subversive activities and toppling the government.

Police charge truncheon to disperse Chhatra League men on Paris Road on the Rajshahi University campus. At least 15 people were injured as activists of the pro-Awami League student body's Rajshahi city and RU units clashed in the area yesterday.

PHOTO: ARAFAT RAHAMAN

All for money?

FROM PAGE 1

"I turned my phone off because he [VC Sobhan] was calling me repeatedly and asking me to sign the recruitment documents," Prof Abdus Salam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Failing to convince the registrar, Prof Sobhan called Deputy Registrar Md Yousuf Ali and took his signature on the appointment letters the same day.

"Finding proof of bribery is difficult, but don't the activities and compulsion for the recruitment tell the story?" asked Prof Md Elias Hossain, a member of the Teachers' Society against Corruption.

During yesterday's clash, these correspondents saw that city BCL leaders assaulted Mamun-ar-Rashid, an assistant registrar, wrongly thinking that he was the signatory of the appointment letters.

When another RU official Abdullah Al Masud went forward to save Mamun, the BCL men tore his shirt and pushed him into a gutter.

Police brought the situation under control through baton charge.

Some 15 members of both BCL groups sustained minor injuries in the incident, they claimed.

Rajshahi city BCL President Nur Mohammad Siam said he did go to the campus to resist the illegal recruitments, but the city unit BCL members did not assault anyone.

RU BCL Vice-president Mahfuz Al Amin said Rajshahi city BCL leaders came to the campus to create unrest.

At 2:30pm, VC Prof Abdus Sobhan came out of his residence along with his family members, heavily cordoned by the police, and left the campus.

The VC stopped near the main gate and told journalists, "I performed my duty successfully."

He also said, "The chair was challenging, but I dealt with the challenges."

These correspondents tried to contact the VC for further comments, but he did not answer phone calls.

The Daily Star obtained lists of names of appointed persons in different posts. Among them, nine were appointed as teachers, 24 office assistants, 19 section officers and 85 third- and fourth-class employees.

Md Mamun-ar-Rashid, assistant registrar, confirmed the contents of the list.

RU sources said yesterday more than 50 former and current leaders of RU BCL were recruited while some 10 journalists, both from the campus and city, were given appointments.

FOUR YEARS OF IRREGULARITIES

During his four-year tenure, there were a flurry of allegations of irregularities and corruption against VC Prof Sobhan.

In January 2020, some teachers and job-seekers submitted 17 allegations to the Prime Minister's Office.

Investigating the allegations, the UGC uncovered more allegations and eventually found basis in a total 25 allegations of corruption, irregularities and nepotism against Prof Sobhan and other heads of his administration.

Some of the allegations include providing false information to the university's chancellor on Prof Sobhan's voluntary retirement, lowering qualifications for appointing relatives, including his daughter and son-in-law as teachers, and several financial anomalies.

The UGC in its October 2020 report ordered cancellation of 34 illegal recruitments and in December, the education ministry issued the embargo on recruitments based on this report.

In January this year, RU BCL leaders and activists demanding jobs confined the VC and other officials at the VC's residence and padlocked the administrative buildings.

The VC assured them of "highest priority" in getting jobs, according to a leaked phone conversation reported in newspapers.

On April 2, BCL men again locked the VC residence demanding the same.

RU teachers said the last-minute recruitment would never be legalised, but it would create "additional pressure" on the upcoming RU administration.

They said they never before saw such an instance of "open corruption and arbitrary recruitment".

Prof Sultan-ul Islam, the chairman of geology and mining department, said the VC defied the government order and the government should take steps now.

None of the police officials present during yesterday's clash was willing to talk on the matter.

The university's top officials also remained tight-lipped.

Ex-bureaucrat's appointment at public university irks teachers

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The appointment of a former additional secretary as treasurer of Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University in Jamalpur has irked teachers of public universities.

They said such an appointment was not a breach of the university law, but it is "unethical" and "unacceptable" and that they would announce programmes against the decision soon.

A teachers' leader said it was a "test case" and if the authorities became successful, they would try to appoint more former bureaucrats to different positions of universities.

Former additional secretary Abdul Mannan was appointed as treasurer of Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University, with the approval of President Abdul Hamid, also the chancellor of universities, said a Secondary and Higher Education Division gazette notification issued on Wednesday.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association, said they were stunned by the government decision.

"It is unethical and unacceptable. We condemn the decision. We will hold a meeting on Saturday and declare programmes protesting the decision," he said.

Although appointment of a former bureaucrat was not a breach of the university law, there is tradition that university teachers usually become treasurers, he said.

Criticising the decision, Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof Rahmat Ullah said, "This is an unfortunate incident ... it is a test case, they [government] will appoint more people to different positions."

"Wait and see, you might find former bureaucrats in the top positions of universities," he added.

AKM Aftab Hossain Pramanik, additional secretary of Secondary and Higher Education Division, said the appointment was made in line with the law of the university. "There is no clause that only a teacher will be a university treasurer."

He refused to comment on the teachers' concern against the decision.

A top education ministry official said the university was established in 2018 and it was upgraded from an agriculture college.

"So, the authorities did not find any well qualified person among the university teachers to appoint him as treasurer. They thought as many administrative works of the university are incomplete, an experienced administrative person will help them do the job," the official said.

Earlier, the incumbent government appointed two former additional secretaries as treasurer and registrar of Islamic Arabic University and a government college teacher as Jashore University of Science and Technology treasurer.

Teachers had protested a government decision of giving Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University registrar the charge of vice-chancellor of the university.

The registrar was not a teacher.

Khaleda not fit for long- haul

FROM PAGE 1

General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the government to look at the matter from a humanitarian perspective and make the arrangements needed to send Khaleda abroad for treatment of her post-Covid complications.

Hospital sources said Khaleda's health has been showing no sign of improvement.

"This non-improvement is not a good sign and her condition is not suitable for flying for a six- or eight-hour flight," a doctor involved in Khaleda's treatment told The Daily Star.

The former prime minister is having breathing difficulties without oxygen support, he said.

"Her health neither improved nor deteriorated. But this stability is not good."

On the other hand, BNP sources said Khaleda's family members received "a positive signal" from the UK government regarding her treatment in a London hospital.

They will start preparing to fly her to London as soon as they get the clearance from the Bangladesh government.

Besides, it has not yet been decided which hospital to take her to and whether a special flight or an ambulance will be needed to fly her out of the country.

Fakhrul told reporters that BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman was coordinating the process.

BNP leaders said getting the government approval remained the main challenge as she was released from jail through an executive order of the government on the condition that she does not leave the country.

That's why Khaleda's brother Shamim Iskandar wrote to the home ministry seeking permission on Wednesday night.

The BNP chairperson can be flown abroad if the law ministry amends the order, they added.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said he might give his opinion on the next work day, which would be Sunday.

"I received the file [regarding Khaleda Zia's treatment abroad] from the office of law secretary at 4:00pm. I will go through the file before giving my opinion on the matter," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Family sources said they will apply for a visa once they get the government approval. If she wants to go to the UK, then they will decide which hospital to take her to.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told reporters that Khaleda will get the passport soon.

Her passport expired in 2019.

A passport owner's fingerprint and her signature are required on a passport, but the rule has been relaxed in her case, family members said.

The home minister on Wednesday told reporters that the government was "considering the issue positively".

Khaleda was admitted to Evercare Hospital on April 27, three days after she tested positive for coronavirus a second time. She first tested positive on April 11. She also has arthritis, diabetes and eye problems.

She was taken to the hospital's Coronary Care Unit with breathing difficulties Monday afternoon.

Her family members are thinking of taking her to the UK or Thailand or Singapore.

The government released Khaleda from jail on March 25 last year, suspending the sentence as per section 401 (1) of the Criminal Code of Procedure.

The suspension was later extended twice.

The BNP chairperson landed in jail on February 8, 2018, after a special court sentenced her to five years in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. On October 30, 2018, the High Court raised her punishment to 10 years.

Tk 14,295cr cash, assets legalised

FROM PAGE 1

Some 52 legalised their investments in the share market by paying Tk 4.51 crore in taxes.

A total of 544 people legalised undisclosed assets in Khulna, 538 in Cumilla, 488 in Narayanganj, 387 in Rangpur, 369 in Gazipur, 295 in Rajshahi, 263 in Bogura, 241 in Mymensingh and 230 in Barishal.

The window the government provided to legalise undisclosed assets ends on June 30.

The NBR official, however, said the rate of legalising undeclared money dropped significantly in April due to what the official said was the second wave of Covid.

The top records of legalising undisclosed assets were in fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09 when the army-backed caretaker government was in power.

At that time, Tk 9,682.99 crore in total was legalised, according to NBR data.

The government this fiscal year allowed legalisation of undisclosed assets to accelerate economic growth, increase investments, and develop the stock market as previous attempts did not pay off.

It introduced a provision that no authority, including the NBR and the Anti-Corruption Commission, could question the sources of the legalised assets.

People were allowed to disclose any undisclosed homes, land, buildings, or flats by paying taxes as per the size of the property.

They were able to legalise undisclosed cash, bank deposits, saving certificates, shares, bonds or any other securities by paying 10 percent in taxes.

They were also allowed to invest in the capital market for at least a year and show the investments in their tax returns.

Talking to The Daily Star, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, said the scope for legalising undisclosed assets was on a limited scale before and the latest one was quite liberal.

TAX ZONE	TAXPAYERS	TAX PAID
Dhaka	6,134	Tk 1,170cr
Chattogram	1,696	Tk 146cr
Khulna	544	Tk 40cr
Rajshahi	558	Tk 35cr
Mymensingh	241	Tk 15cr
Sylhet	244	Tk 15cr
Rangpur	387	Tk 11cr
Barishal	230	Tk 7cr
PERIOD	JULY-MARCH 2020-21	

Since no agency could question the matter, a lot of money was legalised.

"But we cannot see the other side of this… What is the impact of such an opportunity on honest taxpayers who paid a lot more in taxes abiding by the rules? This matter needs to be considered," he said.

"Why would the honest taxpayers pay taxes when many legalised their undisclosed assets paying only 10 percent in tax?" he asked.

An individual can end up paying as high as 25 percent income tax a year.

He said if this opportunity was given due to the pandemic, then why were honest taxpayers not given a similar opportunity?

To even consider the economic benefit of such a step, it needs to be seen if it has increased revenue, then how much, if at all, he said.

No policy should have so much discrimination, said the economist.

Former NBR chairman Nasiruddin Ahmed said such opportunity has been given due to the pandemic.

The high amount of legalised money was due to authorities being barred from questioning the sources of the money, he opined.

Regarding benefits to the economy, he said, "Tk 14,000 crore is not that much compared our GDP of around Tk 23 or Tk 24 lakh crore."

Such opportunities are given for the benefit of some individuals and it creates conflict between honest and dishonest taxpayers, he said.

There are many influential people … such facilities might have been given due to their influence and that is not right, he said.

The government should rather rationalise the corporate tax and gradually reduce the existing tax-policy anomalies, like tax exemptions and multiple tax rates. This would increase tax collection, he said.

However, former NBR chairman Muhammad Abdul Mazid said exchanges through hundi (an illegal channel of sending and receiving money) is closed due to the pandemic and that was the reason many legalised their undisclosed assets and money.

Regarding the economic benefit of such a step, he said this money was in the private sector and it remains in the private sector.

The government even got less tax in this way as the tax rate was only 10 percent, he said.

Had such legalisation opportunities were given for setting up makeshift hospitals or any project for creating employment for those who lost jobs during the pandemic, it would have been logical, he said.

All three experts said such opportunity for legalising undisclosed assets was not logical economically or morally and that such scopes should not be given in the future.

Covid may affect children big way

Warns Indian expert, says situation may worsen between Oct and Nov

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *New Delhi*

An Indian virologist has warned the third wave of Covid-19 is expected to affect children in the country in a big way between October and November and both the Central and state governments should be ready to handle the situation.

The warning by virologist V Ravi came even as India's total daily fresh infection tally crossed the four lakh mark for the first time since the pandemic broke more than a year ago as the country reported 4.12 lakh cases, the Health Ministry data said this morning.

India also recorded 3,980 deaths in the last 24 hours, the highest in a day so far, pushing the total fatalities to 2, 30,168.

V Ravi, a member of Covid technical advisory committee in southern Indian state of Karnataka, one of the worst-hit, emphasized on the need to tone up medical infrastructure to treat Covid-infected children.

"We don't have enough pediatric Covid care wards and intensive care units for children. This has to be urgently scaled up," he said.

"The government should take some important policy decisions on what is their approach towards starting school the next academic year considering that the next wave will affect children, according to Ravi.

He said children would be more vulnerable because they are not vaccinated as of now by Covid vaccine.

The virologist also suggested the government take some stern steps to prevent crowding of people even after the end of the second wave.

Ravi, who is also the nodal officer for genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 virus in Karnataka, said the double mutant Indian variant (B.1.617) of the virus is spreading rapidly. "At the end of March, double mutant variant was detected in 5-10 per cent of community samples while it has now shot up to 45 per cent."

Cops to take action

FROM PAGE 1

The CTTC has an online monitoring process, he said, "But radicalisation cannot be stopped by monitoring alone. We have taken steps to take action."

Saiful said the move comes after a 20-year-old man arrested on Wednesday told officers that he was taken to militancy after watching online videos and had plans to attack the national parliament.

Al Sakib was arrested in the capital's Sher-E-Bangla Nagar area around 7:45pm, the officer said, adding that the suspect is a member of the Al-Qaeda inspired militant outfit Ansar Al Islam.

Police found a black flag, a black handkerchief, a large knife and a mobile phone in his possession.

Sakib told police that when he contacted the speakers, they inspired him to make a terrorist attack through forming a group of like-minded individuals.

He sent invitations to people on messaging applications and had the large knife made by a local blacksmith.

He reached Dhaka from Sirajganj on Wednesday with a plan to gather 313 individuals and die in police firing while attacking the national parliament, said DC Saiful Islam. Thankfully, no one responded to his invitation.

Around 10:30am yesterday, police arrested Ali Hasan Osama, 27, in Rajbari on charges of advising Sakib to be involved in terrorist acts, Saiful said.

Osama is one of the speakers who had inspired Sakib.

CTTC officials said Osama is popularly known as "Banglar Osama".

"Osama has assumed the role of being the spiritual leader of Ansar Al Islam after the arrest of Mufti Jasim Uddin Rahmani in 2013. Osama had written between 40 and 50 instigating books in the last five years and we kept him under surveillance for the last two years."

Rahmani was sentenced to five years in prison in connection with the murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider.

Saiful said many in Osama's large base of followers became radicalised by watching his speech on YouTube, and Telegram.

Earlier, a Bangladeshi citizen arrested in Singapore and two others in India told law enforcers that they were radicalised by watching Osama's online speeches, said the officer.

Osama used to meet 50 to 100 followers everyday at different mosques and houses in Rajbari.

Mufti Harun Izhar, former education and cultural affairs secretary of Hefajat, is also identified as an inciter, officers said.

Izhar was arrested by Rab on May 2 on charges of his involvement in the violence in Hathazari on March 26. He is an adviser of the Shirajganj madrasa where Sakib studied.

Izhar will also be accused of militancy as he is an active organiser of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, a CTTC source said.

Celebrate Eid where you are now

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said people can meet their near and dear ones later when the situation will be normal.

"In order to stop the spread of coronavirus throughout the country, I would like to request you all to abide by health protection rules and not to travel from one place to another unless there is an urgent issue."

She said no one knows who is carrying the virus during journeys. "When an infected person travels from one place to another, he may get many others infected and thus cause problems to their lives. This is why the government has taken steps to limit the movement of people."

Mentioning that the pandemic is now inflicting severe sufferings on people, Hasina said her government is making all-out efforts to assist people properly.

She said the government has already extended cash support of Tk 2,500 to each of 36.5 lakh families of extreme poor, jobless or day-labourers, rickshaw-pullers, van-pullers, transport workers, and low-income people who have been hit hard by the pandemic.

Besides, the disaster management and relief ministry continues providing food support to the people in need during the ongoing Ramadan. The government is assisting people in different ways, the PM added.

Hasina urged the affluent people of society to come forward to help the destitute during the pandemic period.

INAUGURATION

The infrastructures and water vessels that the PM inaugurated include TS Ilia Ahmed Chowdhury Dada Bhai Training Ship, 20 cutter suction dredgers, 83 dredger-auxiliary vessels, newly constructed dredger base in Narayanganj, special inspection vessel "Paridarshi", passenger vessels MV Tajuddin Ahmad and MV Ivy Rahman, and four marine academies in Pabna, Barishal, Rangpur and Sylhet.

Besides, Hasina inaugurated the distribution of 500 pucca houses, constructed under a rehabilitation project at Paira Port, among the families affected by land acquisition.

REGISTRATION MANDATORY

In an oblique reference to recent waterway accidents, the PM urged both operators and passengers of water vessels to remain careful and vigilant about the safety of their lives.

Hasina said sometimes vessels meet with accidents and people lose their lives due to overloading. "All will have to be careful and vigilant in this regard."

She said every water vessel will have to be registered. Problems arise in identifying vessels and realising compensations for lack of registration, the PM added. "If we can run vessels giving operators appropriate training, the rate of accidents will come down."

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury presided over the function, joining it from the Bangladesh Secretariat. PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus conducted the virtual event.

PHOTO: COLLECTED/STAR

Once these felled logs and branches used to be a part of healthy vibrant trees, which were cut for "beautification" at Suhrawardy Udyan. Like these, many more trees will soon be replaced by structures, *inset*, in the name of developing the premises.

Tree Chopping at Suhrawardy Udyan

Don't want concrete structures at greenery's expense: protesters

Legal notice served on govt to halt work in 48hrs

Staff Correspondent

Protesting an ongoing construction project at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan, as part of which many old trees are being felled, green activists and students held a rally at Shahbagh yesterday.

They demanded a stop to tree felling and instead, planting 10,000 trees during the upcoming rainy season.

The project was undertaken to develop the Udyan and make it greener. However, activists said the authorities concerned are seemingly contradicting one of their own goals, as under the same project, they are felling old trees to construct buildings. Meanwhile, social media has also been flooded with protest against the authorities' move.

The project -- Shawdhinata Stambha Construction Project in Dhaka Third Phase -- worth Tk 265.44 crore started in January 2018. Its implementation organisations are the Liberation War ministry, Public Works Department and Dhaka South City Corporation.

According to officials, under the project, seven public toilets, walkways, food stalls, pond, underground parking lot, underpass and a mosque will be constructed.

Experts, however, said whether building concrete structures at the expense of greenery, as sources are claiming, is really "enhancing the beauty".

During yesterday's protest, filmmaker Sudip Sajib said the balance of nature at the park has been damaged in the name of beautification. "Who will take this responsibility?" he said.

Those responsible [for cutting trees] should be brought to book through a fair probe, he added.

Mir Arshadul Hoque, a former student of Dhaka University who protested tree cutting around two years back at the Udyan, said the authorities should plant more trees at the park to recover the damage they did by cutting trees.

He said they cut the trees during the "lockdown" so that people won't be able to know about it. He also alleged that some officials were financially benefited for it.

"I have counted 50 to 60 trees which were felled in the last couple of days. They even tried to hide their misdeed," he said. "We don't want food stalls, concrete structures at Suhrawardy Udyan at the expense of greenery."

This newspaper visited the spot recently and saw the ongoing construction work of six structures for making canteens. Three are in the west, two in the north-east, and one in the south-east parts of the park.

On the western side, a number of old trees were felled and the area now looks barren. According to witnesses,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Girl's Death in Gulshan Flat

Activists make 9-point demand

Staff Correspondent

Demanding an impartial investigation and fair trial in the case of a college girl who was found dead at a Gulshan apartment, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) and National Committee for Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls and Social Injustice expressed grave concern over the increasing level of violence and abuse against women and girls in Covid-19 pandemic.

The two rights groups organised a press conference yesterday, where BMP central committee assistant general secretary Advocate Masuda Rehana Begum presented a keynote paper.

She said the deterioration of social values, lack of rule of law, delayed justice, weak implementation of law and corruption have been working as major key factors behind social injustice and violence against women and girls.

"Criminals are repeatedly getting away with crimes. The death of the young girl in Gulshan is a reflection of that," she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

UGC allows online exams for public univs

Mohiuddin Alamgir

The University Grants Commission (UGC) yesterday allowed public universities to hold exams online, considering students' interests and also reducing session jams.

The regulatory body urged all universities to maintain the quality and international standards of the tests while holding it online amid the pandemic.

Public universities will be able to conduct exams online in line with decision of their academic councils, deans' committees or other bodies concerned, UGC Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah told The Daily Star.

He made the comments after holding a meeting with vice chancellors of all public universities to discuss the process of holding online exams.

"None can say when the Covid-19 situation will end. We have to learn how to live adapting with it. There are some issues like sessions jams," he added.

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology VC Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed said all the universities agreed on to hold the online exams.

In April, the education ministry formed a committee to prepare a draft guideline on how to hold online exams at public universities. The committee presented their guideline at the meeting.

One of the committee members and UGC member Prof Muhammed Alamgir said they would send the recommendations to the education ministry soon.

The ministry itself can issue a directive regarding the matter, or they can assign the UGC to take steps regarding online exams at public universities, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Higher Studies in USA

Visa delays leave students worried

Asifur Rahman

Thousands of USA-aspirant students are worried about the future as visa-related services have been halted in Bangladesh amid Covid-19 related restrictions. Despite securing scholarships and funding for their degrees, the students remain unsure whether they will be able to pursue higher education in the United States.

The aspiring students submitted a memorandum to the prime minister and the state minister of foreign affairs last Monday in this regard. The memorandum was signed by 350 students.

They appealed to the PM and state minister to take the necessary steps to resume US student visa service maintaining health regulations.

The US embassy, Dhaka website reads, due to the ongoing countrywide lockdown imposed by the government of Bangladesh, the embassy has cancelled all visa appointments from April 5 to May 16, 2021.

Until yesterday, interview slots were open only on December 23, which would be past most students' admission dates. Classes will start in May for summer semester students and August for fall semester students.

"We need adequate interview slots in the months of May, June, and July," read the memorandum.

Yesterday evening, the US embassy opened around 300 visa slots between May 17-25. The appointments were taken up within a few minutes, and the majority of students are still waiting for future appointment dates.

Meanwhile, three student representatives met Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen at his residence.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Govt serving one company's interest'

Says GM Quader about import of Covid-19 vaccine

Staff Correspondent

The government did not keep any alternative source for importing Covid-19 vaccine to serve business interest of a particular company that have gained a huge profit, alleged Jatiya Party Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader yesterday.

It seemed that crores of taka are being misappropriated in the name of importing the vaccine through the company, he said.

In a statement, the JP chairman said now uncertainty has been created over vaccine management. "As a third party, a company has made profit of crores of taka but the guarantee of getting vaccine has not been ensured," he said.

GM Quader said according to media reports, a particular company that imported Covid-19 vaccine gained profit of Tk 77 for each ampule of vaccine. A stock market's website report says, it has earned Tk 38.367 crore by importing 50 lakh doses of vaccine from January to March.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

17 Years into Ahsanullah Master Killing

Wait for justice gets longer

Ashutosh Sarkar

Justice could not be delivered even 17 years after the grisly murder of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master as appeals in case are still now pending with the apex court.

The procrastination of case proceedings and wait for justice may take few more years because the regular judicial functions of the top court remain suspended for the Covid-19 pandemic.

Amid the harsh reality, the 17th death anniversary of Ahsanullah Master, a veteran freedom fighter and lawmaker from Gazipur-2 constituency, is being observed today.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is yet to start hearing on appeals filed against the High Court verdict in the case, although they were filed a few years ago.

Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain, principal defence counsel of the case, told The Daily Star that the Appellate Division is now hearing and disposing of the death reference and appeals of 2013.

The appeals and death reference in Ahsanullah Master killing were filed in 2016 and, therefore, they will be heard and disposed of few years later if they come up before the apex court maintaining serials, he said.

He said he will not place the appeals of his clients (convicts who are now in jail) before the Appellate Division for their quick hearing as it will not bring any benefit for them. "The Appellate Division will hold hearing on the appeals and death reference maintaining the serials."

Khandker Mahbub said his clients will have to serve in jail till the apex court deliver its verdict in the case.

Deputy Attorney General Bishwajit Debnath said the Appellate Division is now virtually holding the appeals filed against the ad-interim orders of the High Court Division.

The apex court is not hearing the appeals filed against the full verdicts of the High Court due to Covid-19 pandemic, he said, adding that the appeal hearing in Ahsanullah Master murder case will be held when they will be included in the hearing list of the Appellate Division.

On May 7 in 2004, assailants killed Ahsanullah Master and Omar Faruq Ratan, a student, and wounded 17 others in a staccato burst of fire on a rally of Swechchhasebak League at Noagaon near the lawmaker's house in Tongi.

His brother filed the case next day, against 19 people, including Nurul Islam Sarkar, a Jubo Dal leader.

On April 16 in 2005, a Dhaka court

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Eight returnees who fled hospital didn't carry Indian variant

Shows genomic sequencing report of their Covid-19 samples

Mokammel Shuvo

Eight Covid-19-positive Bangladeshis, who had returned from India and then fled from quarantine at Jashore General Hospital, were not infected by the Indian variant of coronavirus, according to the genomic sequencing report prepared by Jashore Science and Technology University's genome centre.

"Samples of eight returnees were processed and sequenced to check for the Bengal strain. Results didn't show the expected strain, rather one of mixed origins -- California, US, and Mexico," said Prof Anwar Hossain, the university's vice-chancellor.

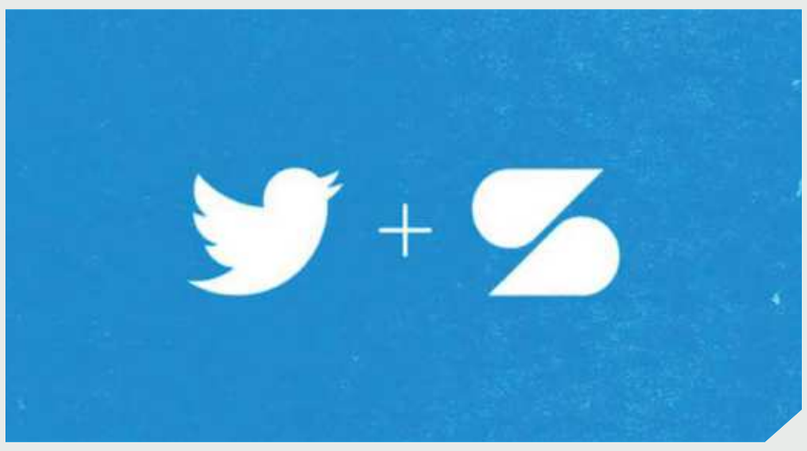
"We will sequence samples of the other 10 India-returnees to check for the strain," said Prof Anwar, a microbiologist and head of the university's coronavirus testing facility.

Meanwhile, Prof Tahmina Shirin, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said they have also recently received samples of the returnees, who are undergoing treatment at Jashore General Hospital, for testing.

Genomic sequencing of the samples by IEDCR was not done yet, as there are certain requirements to fulfil for conducting the procedure, she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

MINI BYTES



Twitter attempts to get into news subscription service by acquiring Scroll

Zarif Faiaz

Scroll, a $5-per-month subscription service that eliminates advertising from participating news outlets, is the latest addition to Twitter's acquisition spree. Twitter is developing a new subscription package that will include Scroll, the newly acquired Revue newsletter service, and other Twitter-developed services.

The Scroll service is a clever hack that tells websites not to serve you advertisements by using third-party cookies or browser extensions. It's not exactly an ad-blocker, but it does give a portion of your subscription fee to the websites you visit that participate. It will no longer welcome new signups now that it has been purchased by Twitter.

Scroll CEO Tony Haile says one of the reasons he sold his business is that "Twitter's goals are bigger than people suspect".

However, it's unclear what Twitter plans to do with Scroll. Twitter is undoubtedly developing a subscription package that will bundle a number of services, but only Twitter knows what will be included, how much it will cost, and who will share in the revenue.

"Scroll will become a meaningful addition to our subscriptions work as we build and shape a future subscription service on Twitter," said Mike Park, Product Manager of Twitter, in a blog post.

VP of product Mike Park teases Twitter's plans in an announcement message, implying that Scroll will be integrated directly into a more robust subscription that will, in part, be sending slivers of money to Revue newsletter authors.

Scroll says that its users donate more money to news organisations through subscriptions than they would through ad views. Applying the model to freelance newsletter authors will provide an entirely new set of incentives for media experts to consider.

Another choice is a service that competes with Apple News in several respects. It could be a feature inside the Twitter app itself — or even a potential news reading app — rather than a web tech hack that blocks advertising at the browser level.

Twitter is attempting to capitalize on its prominent position in the online lives of many journalists and newshounds. Scroll, according to Haile, aims to transform Twitter into a "great gathering of people who love the news and pay to sustainably support it."

Twitter has been attempting to find ways to monetise its services without interfering with the real-time flow of information that has been its defining feature. With Scroll, individual subscriptions, packs, and news reading experiences can all be mixed and matched. In order to put together a cohesive service and then justify it to potential customers, Twitter will have its job cut out for it.

Taking advantage of the authorities' lax approach, residents of Sylhet city are flouting health guidelines left and right. After a period of relatively limited activity, people and vehicles have come down to the streets in numbers, putting the entire region's health under risk.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

UGC allows

FROM PAGE 3

Public universities were holding online classes as they could not take in-person classes since March 17 last year, when the government closed all educational institutions due to the pandemic.

The closure has been extended till May 23 this year in phases.

According to UGC statistics, there are 49 public universities in the country. About 3 lakh students are studying at these universities, except National University, Islamic University and Bangladesh Open University.

PROPOSAL ON PROCEDURES OF EXAMS

The guideline says public university students have completed theory classes for two semesters since April last year, but they are yet to sit for semester final exams. Students are losing interest in their studies as they are not sure when the exams will be held.

It mentions that grades can be awarded to students after holding online exams on specific subjects by giving "creative assignments", "creative quiz/ MCQ questions", and holding "time-constrained class tests" and viva voce exams.

But students should keep the camera and microphone of their devices turned on while taking the exams online.

Practical tests will be held after normalcy returns.

"Universities must have to hold viva and they can also choose all the options or two or three of them", said UGC member and committee chief Prof Dil Afroza Begum.

She said there should be a viva board to take the exams and all activities should be recorded. Students should be asked different questions.

A committee member said universities can develop a system in which a student can write the answer and take a picture of it and send it to the university.

The member said universities will keep in mind that no student is affected due to shortage of digital devices or interrupted internet access, and there should be steps to stop adoption of unfair means by students during exams.

Dil Afroza said that UGC had earlier provided over 41,000 students of public universities Tk 8,000 each interest-free loans to buy smartphones.

It has also arranged 30GB internet data at the cost of Tk 200 for each public university student per month, so there will be no problem of internet access, she added.

Govt serving

FROM PAGE 3

The same company imported another two million doses of vaccine in April under the existing agreement, meaning that it has achieved a profit Tk 15.40 crore.

Quader said the supply of Covid-19 vaccine from India has suddenly been stopped and due to a lack of alternative source, the vaccination programme fell into extreme uncertainty.

"At a time when the pandemic is raging in Bangladesh, we are being forced to suspend the vaccination programme for want of vaccines," Quader added.

The JP chairman said doing business over import of Covid vaccine is not acceptable during the pandemic period

No excuse for polluting the environment: Gowher Rizvi

Star Report

Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi yesterday said industries are important for economic growth, but there is no excuse behind polluting the environment recklessly.

"Most of the pollution is coming from industries. They are bound by government regulation to ensure ETP [effluent treatment plant] is installed and operated, but they're not doing so. That's unacceptable, and as a society, we must demand from them of their societal responsibilities," he said while speaking as chief guest at launching of a project on "Promoting Democratic Governance and Collective Advocacy for Environmental Protection in Dhaka City" held virtually.

The project will be jointly implemented by Waterkeepers Bangladesh, Department of Geography and Environment of Jahangirnagar University, and Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Studies of Stamford University, with support from USAID, UKAID and Counterpart International.

He also said public interest litigation (PIL) plays a great role in environmental protection, and the courts have shown that they are open to the matter.

"Why do we need PIL for laws to be pushed? It often takes away the responsibility of the administration and agencies, as they wait until the court gives an order," he said.

Rizvi said the government is now more receptive to advocacy of NGOs, but it must be based on evidence-based research.

Habibun Nahar, deputy minister for environment, forest and climate change, said the responsibilities centring environmental pollution surely falls on her ministry, and people only blame them. "But we, including the people, are always concerned about our rights, not our responsibilities."

Sultana Kamal, chairperson of Blue Planet Initiative, said, "This project aims to address challenges of environmental pollution affecting rivers, which has been marked as a human rights issue by planners."

At the webinar, Atiqul Islam, mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation; Judith Herbertson, development director of Foreign of Commonwealth and Development Office; Prof Mohammad Ali Naqi, vice-chancellor of Stamford University; and Marc Yaggi, executive director of Waterkeeper Alliance, also spoke as special guests.

The launching programme was moderated by the consortium lead and BPI Executive Director Sharif Jamil, while Prof Dr Nurul Islam of Jahangirnagar University addressed the vote of thanks, and Mainuddin Ahmed, chief of Promoting Advocacy and Rights (PAR), gave the welcome speech.

Eight returnees

FROM PAGE 3

She suggested following health guidelines rather than giving importance to the variant.

A total of 18 people with Covid-19 came to Bangladesh from India through Benapole Land Port since April 25, a day before Bangladesh closed its land ports for passengers to stop entry of the deadly virus from neighbouring country India.

Sixteen of them were still undergoing treatment at Jashore General Hospital till yesterday, and they are doing well, said Dr Arif Ahmed, resident medical officer of the hospital.

None of them needs oxygen or had any complication, Dr Arif said.

Two patients were released from the hospital yesterday, as their Covid-19 test results came out negative, he said.

"Bangladeshis are entering Bangladesh with Covid-19 certificates. The 18 were identified by their certificates, which stated that they were Covid-19 positive," he continued.

"Earlier, we sent eight samples to IEDCR for testing. However, we did not get results from them yet, and we have sent 10 other samples on Wednesday," he added.

The hospital sends samples to both the university and IEDCR for testing.

A total of 1,410 Bangladeshis have entered Bangladesh from April 25 till yesterday through Benapole Land Port, and are currently under institutional quarantine at hotels and dormitories of Jashore and adjacent Khulna, Satkhira, Jhenidah and Narail districts, since Jashore alone cannot accommodate so many people, said Jashore Deputy Commissioner Tamijul Islam Khan.

"We have taken initiatives to stop the Indian variant's entrance into our country," the DC said.

The Jashore administration has taken prompt action to arrange accommodate for the India-returnees. However, many returnees alleged that they are not getting proper facilities by hotel authorities.

They said they are facing financial hardship for staying at hotels, after spending a lot of money in India for treatment purposes. They demanded quarantine in their own district.

Despite the administration's initiatives, the risk of the Indian variant remains high, due to truckers continuing to enter Bangladesh through Benapole Land Port.

Some 350 trucks bring goods to the land port from Indian states; some of those states have been badly affected by Covid-19.

The truckers do not follow health guidelines during their stay at the port, our Benapole correspondent reports.

Although they were directed to stay inside their vehicles at the port, they roam around freely, claimed Mafizur Rahman Sazan, president of C&F Agents Association, Benapole.

People's concerns in the bordering areas of Bangladesh are growing, as the pandemic's second wave has devastated India.

India recorded 3,980 deaths in the last 24 hours till Thursday morning, the highest in a day so far, pushing the total fatalities to 2,30,168.

Don't want

FROM PAGE 3

15 trees, planted in the '70s, have already been felled there.

Contacted, Asifur Rahman Bhuiyan, superintendent architect of the Department of Architecture, involved with the planning and designing of the project, said they will not construct any restaurant in the Udyan, clearing trees.

He said they will construct walkways so that they can protect the greenery. Asifur said they are trying to save the big trees that are aligned with the design of the walkway, but they will cut the small ones if they fail to protect those. He also said they will plant more trees, taking suggestions from experts.

"We will set up seven toilets and sheds next to those," he said. There will also be seven small food stalls, he added.

Suhrawardy Udyan has already had several structures like the 150 feet glass tower, Shikha Anirban, an underground museum, amphitheatre, mural, and a reflecting pool.

The official said a parking lot will also be built with a capacity of 500 cars. He said they will construct it without damaging any natural groundwater recharge capacity or cutting trees.

Besides, Asifur said, the Shahbagh police box will be relocated, and 50 flower shops will be set up in place of the existing flower market.

LEGAL NOTICE SERVED

Meanwhile, a Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice on three government high officials concerned, asking them to cancel the activities of clearing trees and setting up restaurant at Suhrawardy Udyan in 48 hours.

Lawyer Manzill Murshid sent the notice to Liberation War Affairs Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Public Works Department Chief Engineer Md Shamim Akhter and Chief of Architect of Bangladesh Mir Monzur Rahman through email.

In the notice, Murshid said if they don't stop such activities in 48 hours, a contempt of court petition will be filed against them.

He said many trees at the Udyan have been cut and its environment has been damaged to establish restaurant or shops, ignoring the 2009 High Court verdict.

Following a petition, the HC on July 7, 2009 directed the government to identify and preserve all the important historic places related to the republic's Liberation War and to set up memorial monuments at the historic places at Suhrawardy Udyan so that people from home and abroad can pay homage to martyred freedom fighters.

The HC had ordered the government to take steps to protect and maintain the historic places at the Udyan where Bangabandhu delivered his historic speech on March 7 in 1971 and where the Pakistan army surrendered on December 16, 1971.

Activists make

FROM PAGE 3

Advocate Masuda also presented a nine-point demand for a fair probe of the Gulshan incident. She said the accused must be brought under the law immediately, action should be taken for providing a quick autopsy report, the safety of the family members of the victim must be ensured and the government and the administration must play an active and effective role in ensuring a fair and speedy trial.

She also demanded to stop the practice of victims-blaming, urged media to play a responsible role in such incidents, and called on to formulate a national commission for framing necessary guidelines for the elimination of violence against women.

BMP president Dr Fauzia Moslem said, "the movement to prevent violence against women is not just the duty of women's rights organisations. Everyone has to work for it."

"Those involved in the Gulshan incident are not seen to be on quick trial. We are now seeing how the abundance of money can make people inhumane, who can buy the entire society," she added.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Nizamul Haque Nasim, who is also a member of the national committee, urged journalists to dig deep and present accurate information in the case of the Gulshan girl and law enforcement agencies to be more active in this regard.

He also called on the government, law enforcement agencies, judiciary, media and women's rights groups to work together to prevent violence against women.

Former National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman said it is very sad to demand a fair and impartial trial for the death of a woman in the 50 years of independence.

"The fair trial of violence against women and girls should be a normal process in the administration of justice," he said.

The conference was moderated by Advocate Maksuda Akhter, legal advocacy and lobby director of BMP.

BMP general secretary Maleka Banu, joint general secretary Shima Moslem, legal aid secretary Shahana Kabir, and finance secretary Dil Afrose Begum among others, joined the conference.

Wait for

FROM PAGE 3

handed death sentences to 22 people and life terms to six others. A decade later, on June 15, 2016, the High Court confirmed death penalty of six, including Nurul.

The HC, however, commuted capital punishment of seven others to life imprisonment, upheld life term of two and acquitted 11 of charges.

Currently, five appeals challenging the High Court verdict are pending with the apex court, including those by Ahsanullah's brother Motiur Rahman, the government and convicts, attorney general office sources said.

The appeals sought death penalty of all convicts, while convicts sought acquittal from all conviction and sentences.

Visa delays

FROM PAGE 3

Contacted, Shelley Salehin, director (personnel) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Daily Star that they are serious about the memorandum. "The minister held a meeting with the US ambassador yesterday and he said they will consider the visa interview issue," she said.

Multiple students recounted their experience to this correspondent. Kirtaniya Rahul, a graduate of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), had to cancel his scholarship for Fall-2020 as he couldn't guarantee he would get a visa last year.

"I then applied to four US universities for this year, and I have secured a fully-funded PhD offer. I quit my job after getting this offer as I thought the visa process will be expedited this year," he said.

Roushney Fatima, a representative who met the foreign minister, said, "I got accepted in a PhD program in the Medical University of South Carolina, with a Doctoral Fellowship and Dean's Scholarship in fall 2020. I was supposed to work on cancer biology with a large group of international researchers but I was the only one who couldn't join the lab due to visa complications."

Anupam Bose, who secured graduate admission to Iowa State University, said, "I have been preparing for graduate studies for over one and a half years now. The standardised tests (IELTS, GRE) and university applications not only require a lot of time and effort, but also cost a hefty amount. Now all of that can become a sunk cost if we don't get the visa on time."

Every year, around 2,000-2,500 people receive student visas for higher studies in the United States, according to the US state department website. Last year, this number was 1,252 as a large portion of students were unable to get visas in due time.

বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইনস লিঃ Biman BANGLADESH AIRLINES LTD.

HEAD OFFICE, BALAKA, KURMITOLA, DHAKA-1229, BANGLADESH, PHONE- 8901600-14, 8901680-94, FAX: 88-02-8901558, www.biman-airlines.com

ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সূত্রঃ ৩০.৩৪.০০০০.০২৩.০৪.০০০.২০২১. তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ

এতদ্বারা বিমান বাংলাদেশ এয়ারলাইন্স লিঃ এ ক্যাটাগরি "এ" ও ক্যাটাগরি "বি" শ্রেণিতে নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি ও তালিকাভুক্তি নবায়নের জন্য খ্যাতনামা সিভিল/ইলেক্ট্রিক্যাল/ইন্টেরিয়র ডেকোরেশনের ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/আসবাবপত্র প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারী/মেরামতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এর নিকট হতে ২০২১-২০২২ ও ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বছরের জন্য নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি ও বর্তমান তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারদের তালিকাভুক্তি নবায়নের নিমিত্ত নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহবান করা হচ্ছে। তালিকাভুক্তি ও নবায়নের নির্ধারিত ফরম আগামী ২৭/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন নগদ ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকার বিনিময়ে (অফেরতযোগ্য) ব্যবস্থাপক হিসাব, ক্যাশ এন্ড ব্যাংকিং, বলাকা ভবন (নিচতলা), বিমান প্রধান কার্যালয়, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকা থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে এবং আগামী ৩১/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১৭:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সকল কর্মদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সিভিল শাখা, কক্ষ নং-৪০৫, ৪র্থ তলা, বলাকা, বিমান প্রধান কার্যালয়, কুর্মিটোলা, ঢাকায় উক্ত দরখাস্ত গ্রহণ করা হবে।

কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়া বিমান কর্তৃপক্ষ সকল অথবা যে কোন আবেদন গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।

বোসরা ইসলাম
মহাব্যবস্থাপক প্রকল্প ও পূর্ত

জিডি-৯১৫

প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
মসজিদ ভিত্তিক শিশু ও গণশিক্ষা কার্যক্রম প্রকল্প
ইসলামিক ফাউন্ডেশন
আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭
www.ifmoushik.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-১৬.০১.০০০০.০২৫.১৫.০১৬.২০.১২৭৪ তারিখঃ ০৬/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র দাখিল ও দরপত্র বাক্স খোলার তারিখ পরিবর্তনের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মসজিদ ভিত্তিক শিশু ও গণশিক্ষা কার্যক্রম (৭ম পর্যায়) শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের আওতায় স্মারক নং-১৬.০১.০০০০.০২৫.১৫.০১৬.২০.১১৩৬, তারিখঃ ১৫/০৩/২০২১খ্রিঃ ৪টি প্যাকেজ পত্রিকায় বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করা হয়। বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুসারে দরপত্র দাখিল ও দরপত্র বাক্স খোলার তারিখ ১৯/০৪/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ পরিবর্তন করে পূর্বে নির্ধারিত সময় ও স্থানে আগামী ১৯/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ তারিখ নির্ধারণ করা হলো।

ফারুক আহম্মেদ
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (যুগ্মসচিব)
মসজিদ ভিত্তিক শিশু ও গণশিক্ষা কার্যক্রম
ফোনঃ ০২-৮১৮১৫৫৪

জিডি-৯১৪

Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
141-142 Love Road, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208
Phone : 8870422, PABX-103, 107; Website: www.aust.edu

SEARCH FOR FACULTY & ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS

Applications are invited for **different administrative & teaching posts** for the following Office & Departments:

A. Treasurer's Office
1. Director (Finance)
2. Accounts Officer

B. Faculty Member(s) in the following Departments

1. Civil Engineering 2. Computer Science and Engineering 3. Electrical and Electronic Engineering. 4. Mechanical & Production Engineering (for ME and IPE specializations) 5. Textile Engineering 6. Arts and Sciences & 7. School of Business.

Details can be obtained from the website.

Candidates are advised to apply through online format (downloaded from www.aust.edu) and send to regr@aust.edu with cc to vc@aust.edu) with full CV, copy of published articles/papers, recent passport size colored photographs and attested copies of all certificates, mark sheets/transcripts, testimonials etc. on or before 15 May 2021 for Faculty positions and 30 May for Administrative posts. One hard copy should be sent to the Registrar. Only short listed candidates will be called for an interview.

Internal candidates may also apply for the next higher post.

PUBALI BANK LIMITED
Registered Office
26 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

DISCLOSURE RELATING TO UN-AUDITED FIRST QUARTER (Q1) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank Limited in its 1284th Board Meeting (physical and virtual) held on Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 1:30 PM in the Board Room of the Bank's Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka has approved the First Quarter (Q1) un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank as on March 31, 2021 and disclosed the following key financial indicators of the Bank:

Measures	31 March 2021		31 March 2020	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Operating Profit	2,421,229,432	2,475,012,695	2,268,379,774	2,300,954,489
Net Profit/ (loss) after Taxation	979,107,986	1,011,563,973	871,250,551	882,385,629
Net Assets Value (NAV)	39,825,547,535	39,744,699,526	29,755,389,190	29,615,918,066
NAV Per Share	38.73	38.65	28.94	28.80
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	0.95	0.98	0.85	0.86
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	3.58	3.98	4.58	4.91

The details of the un-audited First Quarter (Q1) Financial Statements as on March 31, 2021 is also available in the website of the Bank at www.pubalibangla.com.

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

Dated: Dhaka
May 6, 2021

Award of job under this recruitment is subject to securing fund from respective donor

CARE is a leading international humanitarian agency working in Bangladesh since 1949 to help people achieve social and economic well-being. We put women and girls at the center of our work because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities. We seek dynamic, innovative thinkers to further our mission. Currently, CARE Bangladesh is looking for following positions for **W-GDP Women Thrive in Bangladesh Activity Project.**

- **Chief of Party/Project Director**
- **Deputy Chief of Party**
- **Technical Coordinator - Advocacy and Communication**

CARE is seeking to increase diversity in its staff profile, qualified women with appropriate experience will get preference. We are committed to a workplace that is supportive of women.

There is no cost involved with applying for positions with CARE Bangladesh. Any solicitation of job application costs should be regarded as fraudulent.

If you feel confident about your suitability then please visit for details and apply online by **May 10, 2021** at https://career.carebangladesh.org/

Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh
Economic Relations Division
Ministry of Finance
Admin-3 Section
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.erd.gov.bd

Reference No: 09.00.0000.074.07.008.20/405 Date: 06/05/2021.

Tender Notice (e-GP)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of goods details in table:

Sl. No	Tender ID No.	Description of Goods/ work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1.	576909	Procurement of Computer and Others	23.05.2021 at 11.00	23.05.2021 at 12.00	23.05.2021 at 12.00

1. 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.
2. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
3. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.
4. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

6/5/2021
(Quazi Arefin Rezoane)
Senior Assistant Secretary
Phone: 48114354

GD-919

Kuakata municipality authority digs lake risking the nearby 53-year-old flood control dyke. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: STAR

Protection dyke at risk as mayor starts beautifying lake

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Kuakata Municipality Mayor Anwar Hossain has started excavation work on Kuakata beach in the name of beautification of a lake putting the 53-year-old embankment at extreme risk.

Meanwhile, the Water Development Board (WDB) has issued a notice to stop the work and the district administration has also started an investigation.

The beautification of the lake is being done just 200 meters east of Kuakata Zero Point (adjacent to the sea).

However, the Patuakhali district administration owns the site where the construction of the lake has started. That means it is government khas land.

Adjacent to the lake is a 53-year-old embankment. The dam was built on the shores of the sea in 1968 to protect the people of the area and agricultural land.

The excavation of the lake might endanger the embankment as it is being built on the slope of it. Due to this, the Water Development Board (WDB) fears that the embankment may be damaged by the strong tidal wave of the sea.

They sent an official letter to the Kuakata mayor on April 20 requesting that the digging of the lake be stopped.

Visiting the spot on Thursday, it was seen that the excavation work of the lake is almost finished. The surroundings have been filled with sand. Roads are being built on both sides of the lake. The concerned contractor is constructing a public toilet on the east side.

Kuakata Municipal unit Awami League president and former mayor Abdul Barek Mollah said, "It is the mayor's personal project. In order to undertake any development project of the municipality, it has to be done by maintaining the proper process and with the approval of the Ministry of Local Government. This was not done in the case of this project. Moreover, in order to implement the project on the government's khas land, the ownership of the land has to be brought in favor of the municipal authority from the concerned authority. There have been irregularities here."

> Water Development Board (WDB) has issued a notice to stop the work, while the district administration also started an investigation.

Admitting that the project was not approved by the authority and no money was allocated, Kuakata Municipal Mayor Anwar Hossain said, "The work has been initiated to beautify the ghats, public toilets and the lake for the convenience of tourists. However, the cost of the beautification work will be adjusted from the annual development program (ADP). As the excavation work of the lake is likely to be disrupted during the onset of monsoon, the work of cutting the soil has already started. The official project will be approved later."

Asked about the allegation of irregularities, he said, "I am doing it in the public interest. There is no personal gain or loss for me. However, the work was stopped on the instructions of the WDB and the district administration," he also said.

Shawkat Iqbal Mehraj, sub-divisional engineer of Kalapara Circle of the WDB, said a letter was sent from WDB on April 20 to stop digging the lake. Because if the lake is excavated, there is a danger of flood, tidal wave, collapse of the embankment and loss of life and property of the people of this region.

Patuakhali Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) GM Sarfaraj said, "I saw the matter on the spot on Tuesday on the instructions from Deputy Commissioner (DC)." I have instructed to stop the excavation work of the lake. Municipal authorities cannot do any work on government land without approval."

"We are taking legal action," he said, adding that the municipal authorities would be served a show cause notice.

They don't let one soul go hungry at night

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

A group of youths roams around the streets of Pabna town until the wee hours of the morning.

They are the volunteers of Tohura Aziz Foundation (TAF) and their mission is to lend a hand to the hungry as well as the ones suffering without food on their plates for Sahri during the month of Ramadan.

Many disadvantaged people -- who lost their jobs, the low-income population, such as rickshaw pullers, whose earnings reduced due to the pandemic, the homeless population living on the streets, security guards and shopkeepers who work late hours -- in the town are primary recipients of the Sahri served by TAF, said Dewan Mahabub, executive director of the organisation.

Members of the organisation go to different parts of the town with food packets on auto-rickshaws and distribute those till early morning to the underprivileged and the ones who need food for Sahri.

Starting from the fifth of Ramadan, TAF has been distributing 200 packets of food containing servings of chicken or fish curry and vegetables every night -- a quantity that is not sufficient to feed a good number of the hungry on the streets of Pabna.

Each food packet costs them about Tk 50 and the members of TAF, their friends, family and well-wishers make contributions to raise funds for the food drive every day, Mahabub added.

Rickshaw puller Amzad Hossain said he had been working all through the night for the past several weeks as his earnings dropped significantly during the period due to Covid-19 restrictions. "So I don't get to have Sahri often. But now, that problem is gone and I get a packet of Sahri every night."

Security guard Jamshed Hossain's work starts before Iftar time in the evening and goes on till next morning. He often brings Iftar from home, but cannot afford to bring food for Sahri, as it can spoil without refrigeration.

> Members of the organisation go to different parts of the town with food packets and distribute those till early morning.

But lately, he has been having Sahri -- thanks to the food packet given by the young members of TAF, he said.

"Our hearts fill with joy when we see the faces of people on the streets light up in the dead of the night after getting food packets from us," said Towhidur Rahman Limon, a member of TAF.

Founded in 2011, TAF is also involved in various other philanthropic activities such as installing tube wells, providing medical treatment for the ultra-poor and empowering women through education and vocational training.

A volunteer of Tohura Aziz Foundation hands over a food packet early in the morning, before Sahri time, to a rickshaw puller on Abdul Hamid Road in Pabna town. PHOTO: STAR

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Plant Quarantine Wing
Department of Agricultural Extension
Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215
www.dae.gov.bd

Memo No: 2466 Date 06/05/2021

E-GP Tender Notice

Tender ID	Brief Description of Goods and Related Service	Tender Publication	Last Selling	Tender security submission	Closing & Opening
		Date and Time			
576802	Supply of Pesticide Aluminum Phosphide 56% in tubes	06-May-2021 15:00	20-May-2021 15:00	23-May-2021 11:00	23-May-2021 12:00

The above mentioned tender is an online tender, where e tender will be accepted in the national eGp portal and no offline copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender register in the e-Gp portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of the mentioned package from the national e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank by up to particular date specified on the tender notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal and e-Gp gelp desk.

06/5/2021
(Mohammad Anwar Hossain)
Director
Phone: 02-9131296
dpqw@dae.gov.bd

GD- 917

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ
জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট(নিপোর্ট)
১৩/১ শেখ সাহেব বাজার রোড, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৫।
www.niport.gov.bd

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নং: ৫৯.১২.০০০০.০০১.৪৩.০৫৮.২০২০-৩৯০
তারিখ: ২৩ বৈশাখ ১৪২৮ বঙ্গাব্দ
০৬ মে ২০২১ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
২.	বাস্তবায়নকারী সংস্থা	জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট)
৩.	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির নাম	মহাপরিচালক ও লাইন ডিরেক্টর, ট্রেনিং,রিসার্চ এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট (টিআরডি), আজিমপুর, ঢাকা
৪.	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটির কোড	১৬২০৫০১২২৪১০৮৮০০
৫.	প্রকিউরিং এনটিটি জেলা	ঢাকা
৬.	যা ক্রয়ের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হয়েছে	বিছানাপত্র
৭.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং	নং: ৫৯.১২.০০০০.০০১.৪৩.০৫৮.২০২০-৩৯০
৮.	তারিখ	০৬/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি.
	কী ইনফরমেশন:	
৯	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
	অর্থের উৎসের তথ্য:	
১০	বাজেট ও অর্থের উৎস	ট্রেনিং,রিসার্চ এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট (টিআরডি)-জিওবি (উন্নয়ন) ও আরপিএ (জিওবি)
	পার্টিকুলার ইনফরমেশন:	
১১	প্রস্তাবিত দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	GDA4 (জিডিএ৪)
১২	প্রস্তাবিত দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	GDA4 (জিডিএ৪)-বিছানাপত্র
১৩	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৯/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. বিকাল ৫.০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৪	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২০/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. দুপুর ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৫	দরপত্র বিক্রয় ও জমা দেয়ার স্থান	(ক) জাতীয় পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন একাডেমি (এনএপিডি), নীলক্ষেত, ঢাকা। (খ) বিভাগীয় পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কার্যালয়, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা (গ) জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট), ১৩/১ শেখ সাহেব বাজার, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা, হিসাব শাখা (৩য় তলা)
১৬	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট) সভাকক্ষ, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৫। ২০/০৫/২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ, দুপুর ১২.৩০ টা
১৭	দরপত্র জমাদানকারীর যোগ্যতা	বর্ণিত বিছানাপত্র সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। অন্যান্য প্রাসঙ্গিক যোগ্যতা দরপত্রে উল্লেখ থাকবে।
১৮	মালামালের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	

ক্রম	প্যাকেজ নং	মালামালের বিবরণ	সংখ্যা/পরিমাণ	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত(ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি/ পে অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে)
ক	জিডিএ৪ (GDA4)	বিছানাপত্র ক্রয় (দরপত্রে বর্ণিত স্পেসিফিকেশন মোতাবেক)	দরপত্রে বর্ণিত	১০০০/- টাকা (অফেরৎযোগ্য)	১,০০,০০০/-(ফেরৎযোগ্য) (মহাপরিচালক, নিপোর্ট এর অনুকূলে)

১৯	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন) ও উপসচিব, জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট), ১৩/১ শেখ সাহেব বাজার, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৫।
২০	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন) ও উপসচিব, জাতীয় জনসংখ্যা গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট (নিপোর্ট), ১৩/১ শেখ সাহেব বাজার রোড, আজিমপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৫, ফোনঃ৫৮৬১৭৩১৩, ইমেইলঃddadmin@niport.gov.bd
২১	বিশেষ নির্দেশিকা	ক. সকল ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন (পিপিএ) ২০০৬, পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা (পিপিআর) ২০০৮ অনুসরণ করা হবে। খ. দরপত্রে বর্ণিত অন্যান্য শর্তসমূহ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই কর্তৃপক্ষ দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন। গ. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির শর্ত/তথ্যাবলী দরপত্রে উল্লেখ থাকবে।

০৬/০৫/২১
(মো. মিজানুর রহমান)
উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন) ও উপসচিব
নিপোর্ট

GD-920

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ড্যান্টের কার্যালয়
পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, টাঙ্গাইল
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ০১/২০২১-২০২২ তারিখঃ- ০৫/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি.

পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, টাঙ্গাইলের ২০২১-২০২২ আর্থিক সালে পুলিশ রেশন স্টোরের মশুর ডাল, সয়াবিন তৈল সরবরাহসহ নিম্নবর্ণিত গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক কাজের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদার/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে "দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রেগুলেশন' ২০০৮(সংশোধনীসহ)" মোতাবেক নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	বিভাগ/মন্ত্রণালয়	ঃ	পুলিশ বিভাগ, স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২।	সংগ্রাহক সত্ত্বার নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইল।
৩।	অর্থায়নে	ঃ	পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, সরকারী বরাদ্দকৃত অর্থ।
৪।	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের নং এবং তারিখ	ঃ	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ০১/২০২১-২০২২ তারিখঃ- ০৫/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি.
৫।	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।

৬।	কাজের নাম		ঃ	পরিমাণ	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য(অফেরৎ যোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানত	কাজের সময়সীমা
	১.	পিটিসি,টাঙ্গাইলের রেশনীদের জন্য মশুর ডাল সরবরাহ।	ঃ	চাহিদা অনুযায়ী	১০০০/-	২৫,০০০/-	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসর
	২.	পিটিসি,টাঙ্গাইলের রেশনীদের জন্য সয়াবিন তৈল সরবরাহ।	ঃ	ঐ	১০০০/-	২৫,০০০/-	ঐ
	৩.	পিটিসি,টাঙ্গাইলের রেশনীদের জন্য পোলাও চাউল সরবরাহ।	ঃ	ঐ	৫০০/-	১০,০০০/-	ঐ
	৪.	পিটিসি,টাঙ্গাইলের রেশন স্টোরের গম পিষাই।	ঃ	ঐ	৫০০/-	১৫,০০০/-	ঐ
	৫.	পিটিসি,টাঙ্গাইলের রেশন স্টোরের মালামাল পরিবহন ও মালামাল উঠানো-নামানোর কুলি খরচ।	ঃ	ঐ	৫০০/-	১৫,০০০/-	ঐ
	৬.	পিটিসি, টাঙ্গাইলের রেশন স্টোরে রক্ষিত পাটের/প্লাস্টিকের ব্যবহৃত খালি বস্তা নিলামে বিক্রয়।		যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে	৫০০/-	৫,০০০/-	ঐ

৭।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	কমান্ড্যান্ট এর কার্যালয়, মহেড়া, টাঙ্গাইল/পুলিশ অফিস, টাঙ্গাইল
৮।	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইল
৯।	দরপত্র খোলার অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, টাঙ্গাইল
১০।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	ঃ	২৫/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. পর্যন্ত (প্রত্যেক কার্য দিবসে) বেলা ১৬.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১।	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৭/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৭/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায়
১৩।	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়		২৭/০৫/২০২১ খ্রি. দুপুর ১৪.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৪।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ	দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত যাবতীয় শর্তাবলী পিপিআর' ২০০৮(সংশোধনীসহ) মোতাবেক (যেমন- ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদ, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদ, ব্যাংক লেনদেন সংক্রান্ত মার্চ/২১ খ্রি. পর্যন্ত স্টেটমেন্ট এবং রেশন সামগ্রী সরবরাহ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, প্রমাণক হিসেবে সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের কার্যাদেশের কপি ও প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজ/দলিল পত্রাদি অবশ্যই দরপত্রের সংগে দাখিল করতে হবে)। সিডিউল ক্রয়ের সময় আবেদনের সাথে উপরোক্ত কাগজপত্র ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত কপি সংযুক্ত করে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর নিকট হতে প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে সিডিউল ক্রয় করতে হবে।

১৫।	নির্বাচিত ঠিকাদারকে সুষ্ঠুভাবে কার্য সম্পাদনের নিশ্চয়তাস্বরূপ নিরাপত্তা জামানত	ঃ	১০% (শতকরা দশ টাকা) হারে অপরিবর্তনীয় পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট কমান্ড্যান্ট, পিটিসি, টাঙ্গাইলের অনুকূলে দাখিল করতে হবে (দরপত্র অনুমোদিত/গৃহীত হলে)।
১৬।	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী	ঃ	দরপত্রের সকল কার্যক্রম পিপিআর' ২০০৮(সংশোধনীসহ) মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে এবং নির্বাচিত ঠিকাদারকে কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের ০৭ দিনের মধ্যে চাহিদা মোতাবেক মালামাল সরবরাহ করতে হবে। তবে কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের পূর্বে মালামাল সমূহ সুষ্ঠুভাবে সরবরাহের নিশ্চয়তা স্বরূপ নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর সংগে আনুষ্ঠানিক চুক্তিপত্র সম্পাদন করতে হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনরূপ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোন দরপত্র আংশিক কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের সম্পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

০৫/০৫/২১
(মোঃ ময়নুল ইসলাম, এনডিসি)
বিপি- ৬৬৯১১০৪৬০১
কমান্ড্যান্ট(ডিআইজি)
পুলিশ ট্রেনিং সেন্টার, টাঙ্গাইল
ই-মেইল- cmdptctgl@police.gov.bd

GD- 911

Silver lining in climate fight

Study says 1.5C warming cap could 'halve' sea level rise from melting ice

AFP, *Paris*

Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius could halve how much sea levels rise due to melting ice sheets this century, according to a major new study modelling how Earth's frozen spaces will respond to ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Since 1993, melting land ice has contributed to at least half of global sea level rise and scientists have previously warned that the vast ice sheets of Antarctica were disappearing faster than worst-case scenarios.

An international team of more than 50 climate scientists combined hundreds of melt simulations of the Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets, which contain enough frozen water to raise the world's seas some 65 metres (213 feet).

They also included melt modelling from Earth's more than 220,000 glaciers, which make up only one percent of ice on the planet but contribute as much as a fifth of sea level rise.

The team analysed the models to come up with probability estimates of how much melting ice would raise oceans under a variety of emissions pathways.

- Under 3C of warming scenario, sea-level will rise by 25 centimetres
- If world can limit warming to 1.5C, sea level to rise by 13 centimeteres
- World's glacial melting will also be halved if countries keep climate pledges

They found that if mankind successfully limits warming to 1.5C -- the goal set down in the Paris climate deal -- it could halve ice's contribution to sea level rise by 2100.

This is compared with the roughly 3C of warming Earth would undergo if countries' current emissions-cutting pledges played out.

"Global sea level is going to continue to rise," said lead study author Tamsin Edwards, from King's College London's department of geography.

"But we could halve that contribution from ice melting if we limit warming to 1.5C degrees, relative to current pledges."

The study, published in the journal Nature, found that the average contribution to sea level rise from melting ice at 1.5C was 13 centimetres (five inches) by 2100, compared to the 25 centimetres currently projected.

The analysis showed that sea level rise attributed to the Greenland ice sheet would fall 70 percent if the 1.5-C target was met, and land-based glaciers' contribution would roughly halve.

However the projections were less clear and varied widely when it came to Antarctica.

Co-author Sophie Nowicki, from the Nasa Goddard Flight Center, said the uncertainty in the models was largely down to what extent increased snowfall across a warming continent would offset melting from the ice shelves.

"Greenland is really sensitive to atmospheric changes, and so in a warmer world you get more melting on the surface of the ice sheets," said Nowicki.

"In Antarctica it is very complex. A warmer world could mean more snowfall, but it could also mean more melt at the side of the icesheet."

The calculations showed a 95 percent chance that Antarctica would contribute less than 56 centimetres to sea level rise by 2100.

But under a "pessimistic scenario", the study showed, Antarctica could raise global oceans by more than that even if humanity manages to cap warming at 1.5C.

A second study, also published Wednesday in Nature, found that limiting warming to 2C above industrial levels was likely to maintain the current rate of ice melt in Antarctica.

However, if current emissions-cutting pledges are not intensified by 2060, the models showed that the continent could contribute half a centimetre to sea levels every year by 2100.

Furthermore, the study warned that if emissions continue at their current levels, a tipping point will be reached around 2060 which would lead to Antarctic melt that would be "irreversible on multi-century timescales".

Impose UN arms embargo on Myanmar

Urge 200 rights groups

Reuters, *New York*

More than 200 civil society groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, called on the UN Security Council on Wednesday to impose an arms embargo on Myanmar to help protect civilians peacefully protesting a military coup.

Since the military seized power on Feb. 1, Myanmar has seen daily protests and a surge of violence with security forces killing more than 770 civilians.

"Imposing a global arms embargo on Myanmar is the minimum necessary step the Security Council should take in response to the military's escalating violence," the civil society groups from around the world said in a joint statement.

"The time for statements has passed. The Security Council should take its consensus on Myanmar to a new level and agree on immediate and substantive action," the civil society groups said.

French fishing boats protest in front of the port of Saint Helier off the British island of Jersey, yesterday. Britain withdrew its Royal Navy vessels from the waters off Jersey yesterday but said it would remain on standby to support the Channel island after a dispute with France over post-Brexit fishing rights escalated rapidly. France and Britain both deployed maritime patrol vessels to the area after a flotilla of French trawlers sailed in protest to Jersey's main harbour. French fishermen say they are being unfairly deprived of access to rich fishing grounds off the coast of Jersey, a self-governing British Crown Dependency.

PHOTO: AFP

METHANE EMISSIONS

UN says 30pc cut in a decade possible

AFP, *Paris*

Industry could cheaply and easily slash humanity's methane emissions by at least 30 percent in a decade, the United Nations said yesterday, adding that such cuts would slow global warming and prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Curbing emissions of methane from farming, fossil fuel operations and waste management is a crucial part of efforts to restrain runaway climate change. The powerful greenhouse gas, which is short-lived but many times more potent than carbon dioxide, also contributes to toxic air pollution, harming human health, plants and ecosystems.

Certain sectors already have it in their power to dramatically cut their emissions, according to the new Global Methane Assessment by the UN-led Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

Technical solutions -- mostly in the fossil fuel and waste sectors -- are "readily available" and can reduce humanity's methane emissions by more than 30 percent this decade, the analysis found.

Together with other affordable measures that are currently available, the reduction could be as much as 45 percent, it said. It said the more ambitious 45 percent reduction could avoid nearly 0.3 degrees Celsius of warming over the next two decades and reduce ground level ozone pollution.

It would also, each year, prevent 255,000 premature deaths, as well as effectively increasing global crop yields by 26 million tonnes.

Methane has a warming potential 28 times greater than CO_2 over a 100-year period and its concentration in the atmosphere has more than doubled since the Industrial Revolution. Over a 20-year period, it is more than 80 times as potent.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ex-Maldives leader Nasheed injured in 'bomb attack'

A suspected bomb blast injured former Maldives president and current parliament speaker Mohamed Nasheed yesterday and he has been rushed to hospital, officials and residents said. The explosion went off as Nasheed, 53, was getting into his car in the capital Male, an official from his Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), told AFP by telephone. "It looks like some sort of an improvised explosive device, possibly rigged up to a parked motorcycle," the official said adding that an investigation was under way. There were no details of the injuries suffered by Nasheed. At least one of his bodyguards was also taken to hospital. Nasheed became the country's first democratically elected president after winning the first multi-party elections in 2008.

Tensions high as Jerusalem clashes wound 22 Palestinians

Twenty-two Palestinians were wounded in overnight clashes with Israeli police in annexed east Jerusalem, the Red Crescent said yesterday, as tensions flare over a controversial land rights case. Police confirmed 11 arrests in the latest unrest to rock the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood near Jerusalem's walled Old City, where land disputes between Palestinians and Jewish settlers have fuelled hostility for years. The legal case centres on the homes of four Palestinian families on land claimed by Jews. Earlier this year, a Jerusalem district court ruled the homes legally belonged to the Jewish families, citing purchases decades ago. The Palestinian families implicated in the case have provided evidence that their homes were acquired from Jordanian authorities, who controlled east Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967. Israel's Supreme Court to hear the case on Monday.

Blinken warns Russia against 'reckless actions'

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday called on Russia to cease "reckless and aggressive actions" against Ukraine, saying that Moscow has kept "significant forces" near the border. "We stand strongly with you... and we look to Russia to cease reckless and aggressive actions," Blinken told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kiev. Blinken's one-day visit comes after Russia last month amassed 100,000 troops on Ukraine's borders, the biggest mobilisation since Moscow seized the majority-Russian peninsula of Crimea in 2014 and war broke out in eastern Ukraine. But Russia quickly announced a pullback after the latest buildup, leading some experts to believe President Putin was testing the will of Biden while seeking to intensify pressure on Ukraine.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Taliban capture key Afghan dam as fighting escalates

Afghan journalist shot dead after Taliban warning

AFP, *Kandahar*

The Taliban have captured Afghanistan's second-biggest dam after months of fierce fighting in their former bastion of Kandahar, the insurgents and officials said yesterday, as US began to pullout from the country.

Dahla Dam, which provides irrigation to farmers via a network of canals as well as drinking water for the provincial capital, was now under Taliban control, local officials told AFP.

"We have seized the Dahla Dam in Arghandab," Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP. Haji Gulbuddin, governor of an adjacent district, confirmed the dam "is now in the control of the Taliban.

Dahla was built by the United States nearly 70 years ago to provide water for irrigating land in about seven districts of Kandahar.

In neighbouring Helmand, thousands of people have fled their homes in the face of a massive Taliban offensive against government forces. US warplanes have been providing air support for the Afghan forces despite the drawdown of foreign troops.

Meanwhile, a high-profile Afghan television journalist was shot dead in southern Kandahar city yesterday, officials said, a day after the Taliban warned against "biased reporting" by the media.

Nemat Rawan was until last month a popular talk show host with the country's leading broadcaster Tolo News, before joining the ministry of finance as a communications specialist.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack, but the Taliban have been blamed for a wave of assassinations targeting journalists in recent months.

Drug raid in Rio slum kills at least 25

AFP, *Rio de Janeiro*

A massive police operation against drug traffickers in a Rio de Janeiro favela yesterday left at least 24 suspects and a policeman dead, Brazilian media reports said.

The early-morning raid turned the impoverished neighborhood of Jacarezinho, on Rio's north side, into a battlefield, with residents posting videos on social media of explosions, heavy gunfire and helicopters hovering overhead.

The sting targeted drug traffickers accused of recruiting minors, police said in a statement.

India's neighbours close borders over virus rampage

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka yesterday became the latest of India's neighbours to seal its borders with the South Asian giant as it battles a record coronavirus surge.

Bangladesh and Nepal have also banned flights and sought to close their borders with India, where a huge rise in numbers in the past three weeks has taken deaths past 230,000 and cases over 21 million.

All three countries are fighting their own pandemic surges, which Red Cross leaders have described as a "human catastrophe".

The Sri Lankan government banned flight passengers from India entering, as the country reported its highest daily toll of 14 deaths and 1,939 infections in 24 hours.

Sri Lanka's navy said it had stepped up patrols to keep away Indian trawlers, adding that on Tuesday it stopped 11 such vessels which had crossed the narrow strip of sea dividing the two neighbours.

Bangladesh halted all international flights on April 14 because of its own surge and shut its border with India on April 26.

Nepal suspended international flights a week ago, until May 14. Border crossings are only allowing starnded Nepalis to return home.

Many hospitals, specially bordering India, in Nepal are overflowing with Covid-19 patients, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Even the luxury tourist destination of the Maldives has tightened restrictions for Indian visitors, insisting on negative test results on entry.

India is the largest tourist market for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka has reported 117,529 infections with 734 deaths since the start of the pandemic. The Maldives has reported 32,665 cases with 74 deaths.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project
Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Memo No. 54.01.0000.689.07.004.21-06 Date: 06.05.2021

Request for Expression of Interest (FIRM) (International)
for
Consultancy Services for Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project
[ADB Loan 6030 BAN]

1.	Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for implementing Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project. A portion of the loan is intended to be used for payments under the Contract for Consultancy Services for which this Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) is being issued.
2.	Bangladesh Railway (BR), Ministry of Railways of the Government of Bangladesh will implement the project as the Executing Agency. The Project Director of Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project shall be the Client for the Consulting Service Contract.
3.	Brief Description of the Services: The assignment will advance project readiness of ensuing projects (i.e., subprojects) in the railway sector of Bangladesh, by preparing feasibility study, detailed design, safeguard documents, bidding documents and other project documents for 11 subprojects to be studies under the Consultancy Services. Detailed terms of Reference (ToR) have been uploaded at ADB's website.
4.	The Consultant will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS; 80:20) Method in accordance with the procedures set out in the ADB Procurement Policy 2017 ("Policy") and the Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers 2017 ("Procurement Regulations"): https://www.adb.org/documents/adb-procurement-policy https://www.adb.org/documents/procurement-regulations-adb-borrowers
5.	BR will conduct 'short-listing' of the interested Consulting Firms who will have submitted Expression of Interest (EOI) for the abovementioned Consultancy Service. For this purpose, qualifications and experience of the Consulting Firms required are as follows:
a)	Technical Competence: general experience, specific experience in similar assignments (Detailed Design, Feasibility Study of similar railway projects with comparable scale and technical complexity);
b)	Geographic Experience: experience in similar geographic area;
c)	Contractual Management Experience: Substantial experience in managing FIDC contracts as a Firm and by the key members of the team;
d)	Management Capabilities: Financial (Annual Turnover); capability to retain the required number of Key Experts who are preferably permanent employees of the consulting firms with adequate qualifications.
e)	Experience to work with Multilateral Development Banks-MDBs (i.e. ADB, WB etc.) The interested applicants should submit necessary documentary evidence in favor of their submission i.e. in case of turnover audited financial report in USD/BDT. Applicants may obtain further information by applying to undersigned during normal office hours preferably by email.
6.	The applicants may associate with other firm(s) to enhance their qualifications and association with foreign firms is encouraged.
7.	According to ADB's Procurement Regulations, an REOI for this Consulting Service has been published electronically in the ADB's Consultant Management System (CMS) which can be accessed through the following link: https://selfservice.adb.org/OA_HTML/adb/xxcrs/jsp/ADBCsrnFwd.jsp?sel=168517 The applicants shall have to submit their EOI electronically through ADB's CMS by 17 June 2021 on 11:59pm Manila Local Time (Bangladesh Local Time 09.59pm).
8.	If any contradiction is found between CMS notice and Newspaper notice, the information on CMS notice shall prevail. For technical inquiries/assistance, the Consultants may seek advice by emailing to the following email address: cmshelp@adb.org
9.	Offline submission of EOI is **NOT allowed.**
10.	The Client will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the firm(s) in connection with the preparation or delivery of the EOI. The Executing Agency reserves the right to accept any EOI or reject all EOIs without assigning any reason.

Md. Mahbubur Rahman
Project Director
Railway Connectivity Improvement
Preparatory Facility Project
Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban, Dhaka
Phone: +8801711692999
E-mail: pdrcipf@gmail.com

GD-916

INTERVIEW

A sibling duo's inspiring journey

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

PHOTO: **COURTESY OF ZAHIN RAZEEN AND RIZVANA HREDITA**

Siblings Zahin Razeen and Rizvana Hredita were named in the Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list recently, under the category of Social Impact, for cofounding Hydroquo+, a Dhaka-based startup that uses AI to improve water management. Last September, Razeen, CEO of Hydroquo+, was selected as one of the United Nations' 17 Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals, for leading efforts to combat the world's most pressing issues. *Star Youth, The Daily Star,* caught up with the duo to learn about their work, and more.

How did Hydroquo+ start out?

Zaheen: I was one of the fellows in One Young World in Hague, back in 2018. I pitched the concept of Hydroquo+ and got funding opportunities. We started out with a government contract. We monitor the health of water in real-time. By using mathematics and real-time existing sensors, spectrophotometers, we measure the wavelength of water, ensuring its safety. Hydroquo+ delivers autonomous water testing and monitoring, real-time data stream monitoring, analytics and alerts. We have significantly reduced cost in labour and equipment, providing accurate lab test results. We are collaborating with different national and international organisations to expand our model. Our goal is to reach 164 million people of Bangladesh in the next four years.

Rizvana: Our implementation project was divided into two phases, for getting the machine and deploying it. Combatting several obstacles in our way, we implemented our machine under Dhaka WASA supplying potable water across Zone 3 Dhanmondi to more than 200,000 people so far.

Tell us about your education and childhood.

Rizvana: Initially, I wanted to study law but later, I realised that I wanted to pursue finance. I went to York University in Canada to study finance and then, I worked at the Royal Bank of Canada for two and a half years. Zahin was always a curious and mischievous kid, he always tried to find out how things work from an early age. When I was beginning to lose sight of my goals, I came back to help Zaheen with Hydroquo+, leaving my life in Canada behind. We always have each other's backs, no matter what.

Zaheen: I went to six different schools growing up. I studied mechatronics engineering in my first year as an undergraduate student at the University of Glasgow, and later, shifted to mathematics. My elder sister left Canada to come and help me pursue my dreams. She took a huge risk, which worked out in the end. She is someone that I can always rely on.

How would you define the vision of Lingwing, another venture of yours?

Zaheen: it is an AI-personalised language learning application. Users can learn specific languages like Bangla, and it is appropriate for anyone who doesn't understand a word of English or other languages. We have beginners and elementary stages for English, Georgian, Italian, Spanish, French and Russian. As I am partially dyslexic, I designed it for dyslexic people to make it an inclusive learning platform.

Rizvana: Usually, people spend a lot for language courses. Lingwing provides a more affordable way for them. We have a freemium mode, where people can learn languages for free.

With an emerging social business scene in Bangladesh, what do you think we should focus on?

Zaheen: We need effective thought leaders, who will equip people to leverage soft skills and match them to socioeconomic opportunities. We must focus more on practicality and unlearn every cognitive bias embedded in our system.

Rizvana: Young people in Bangladesh are now more driven towards purposeful work rather than going for safe job options. They are thriving to break through conventional norms and to find innovative solutions to the problems around us. We must make way for them to win, and work on their methods.

The author is a night owl who likes binge-watching, reading, and writing. Write to her at rasheektmondira@gmail.com.

ILLUSTRATION: **TAHSIN MOSTAFA CHOWDHURY**

TALESPEOPLE SPIELS

Of words and limits

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

A frequently-asked question during this year's Sehri Tales was 'why the 250-word limit?' My knee-jerk reaction has been to want to snap 'Do you also ask why a limerick has to be five lines, or a haiku three?" Since anger never solved anything, I figured a more level-headed explanation was necessary.

Sehri Tales was created as an exercise in writing discipline. The first part was of course committing to doing this within a narrow window of time every night. The second part was to be conscious of form and the rules of various poetry/micro-fiction formats. I found the challenge of these restrictions very grounding, and it has helped my writing and mental health more times than I can count. That's what I decided to stick to when I made it available to other participants.

But don't just take my word for it. The standard upper limit for most forms of flash fiction – and let's please not forget that Sehri Tales is essentially a flash fiction contest – is 250 words. You'll find it easier to get published if you stick to that. That's also a good size for college essays, mission statements, book blurbs and elevator pitches, so, those are good writing muscles to build.

It's easy to rant and ramble while trying to find a story. But if you can distil your idea into a smaller piece, cutting it down to its very essence, that's a powerful writing tool to include in your skillset. Happy writing!

The author is a writer and journalist, and the creator of the annual Sehri Tales creative writing challenge.

SPOTLIGHT

Behind the wheel with young delivery agents

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE AND SADIA TAHSIN

ILLUSTRATION: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

Delivery agents stand among the frontline workers keeping the country safe and running amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Beating the heat and other tough conditions every day, they do their work diligently, posing risks to their safety.

Fariya Tabassum's classes at Narsingdi Govt College are currently discontinued. After moving to Dhaka, she found work at Foodpanda as a delivery rider, which allowed her to be self-sufficient. She cycles around in Dhanmondi to deliver packages. "It is empowering to be working in a platform that is expectedly male-dominated," Fariya said. "Riders always carry cash and devices, which puts them at risk on the streets. We need to be attentive at all times."

Adil Rahman, a student of Green University of Bangladesh, is a delivery agent at Uparjon, a platform that connects service providers with clients, promoting socio economic development. People, including small business owners, can choose what kind of doorstep services they need from Uparjon's app. Adil does his delivery job during the day, as his classes are in the evening. "I stay on a schedule, and have learnt to juggle multiple responsibilities," he added.

Priyanka, a student of Eden Mohila College, covers zones in Gulshan with her scooter. "I joined Foodpanda amidst the pandemic. Right now, the demand for groceries, medicines, and food is very high. Nonetheless, being a part of a public service in these tough times is rewarding," she shared.

Siddik Al Amin, a student of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, has been a food delivery agent since 2019. "Initially, I used to deliver packages from my acquaintances. Last month, I started working for Meals on Wheels, a company for homemade food," he said. Siddik also said that his merchants are immensely respectful. "At times, the merchants also have iftaar with us," he shared.

Shahin Alam, a student of Government Titumir College, has been a delivery agent for the past one year. "I picked up a job at Shohoz during the pandemic to earn some money in my free time," he shared. He ensures his safety by wearing masks and following social distancing protocols during work. Even though it is a demanding job, as most of the delivery agents explained, they are proud to be able to do something meaningful for the country.

The authors are freelance journalists. Write to them at mislammonamee@gmail.com and iamsadiatahsin@gmail.com, respectively.

FYI: FOR YOUR INFORMATION

When Rabindranath Tagore met Albert Einstein

MORMEE MAHTAB

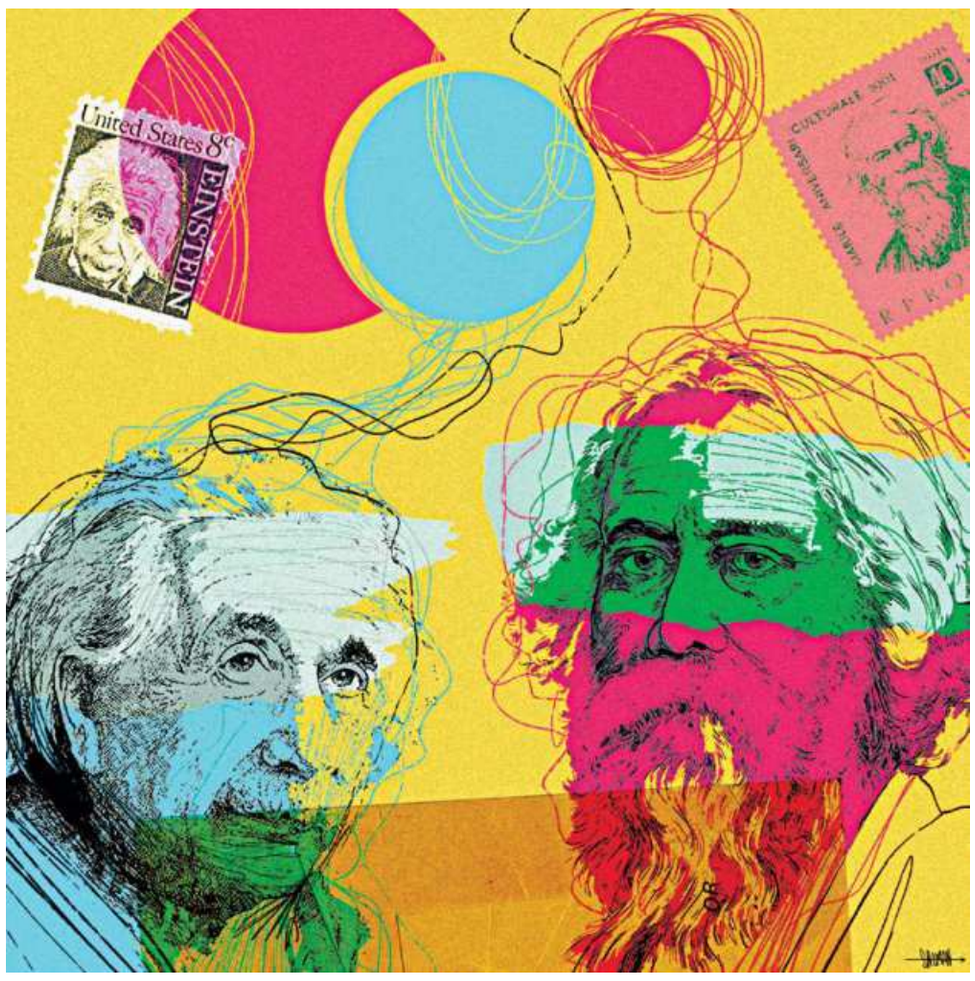


ILLUSTRATION: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

What transpired when a poet met a physicist and they participated in a stimulating debate around the fundamental aspects of human existence? The spark of intellectual ingenuity anticipated between Albert Einstein and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore is evident from the conversation between them when Einstein invited Tagore to his residence in Berlin on July 14, 1930.

The two personalities explored their individual reflections on the nature of reality and its relationship to man, while discussing the long-standing friction between the scientific and philosophical visions of reality.

Both Einstein and Tagore disagreed upon the existence of any form of divinity isolated from that of the world. However, when it came to the nature of truth and reality, their perceptions took separate routes. Tagore perceived reality as reflections of human consciousness contrary to Einstein's belief, which implies that some truths of the universe exist in their own right and are independent of humanity.

Tagore, who took a spiritual stance in this regard, argued that absolute reality does not exist. Rather, every individual's truth is relative to their own reality. He also believed that truth is limited to human perception and science can only direct us towards those limitations. However, it is only through religious reconciliation and the harmony of a man's consciousness with that of the universe, that one attains the virtue of truth. This essence of the cosmic reconciliation of the collective human consciousness lies at the core of Tagore's endeavours in music, literature, and poetry.

Both Einstein and Tagore believed that the existence of beauty is not possible without an admirer, and requires the sense of value attached to it by man. In this regard, Tagore perpetrated: "Beauty is in the ideal of perfect harmony which is in the Universal Being; Truth the perfect comprehension of the Universal Mind. We individuals approach it through our own mistakes and blunders, through our accumulated experiences, through our illumined consciousness — how, otherwise, can we know Truth?"

In this brilliant exchange, Tagore's philosophical perspectives complemented Einstein's scientific beliefs, touching upon the concepts of science, religion, beauty, consciousness, and human existence.

The author is a freelance journalist and a potential political scientist who likes to read poems and write short stories. Write to her at mormeemahtab23@gmail.com.

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI
DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 7, 2021, BAISHAKH 24, 1428 BS

Covid-19 variants from India spreading across Nepal

Bangladesh could be next if we are not careful!

ACCORDING to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Nepal is now being overwhelmed by a surge in Covid-19 infections as India's outbreak spreads across South Asia. Nepal is currently recording 57 times as many cases as it did only a month ago, with a testing positivity rate of 44 percent. Nepalese towns near the Indian border are already struggling to cope with the increasing number of people showing symptoms of Covid-19. And the Red Cross has warned that the horrific scenes being witnessed in India could very well be a preview of what lies ahead for Nepal, should it fail to contain the virus quickly.

India accounted for nearly half the cases reported worldwide last week. On May 5, the World Health Organization said that Covid-19 deaths in South Asia rose by a record of 3,780 during the previous 24 hours. The mutated variants spreading across India seem to be more contagious, with those infected experiencing severe symptoms. Over the past weeks, India's healthcare system has been completely overwhelmed by the number of Covid-19 patients. States in India and national government agencies are scrambling to provide oxygen to hospitals across the country, as patients are dying in record numbers every day from the disease and due to a lack of oxygen supply.

In spite of that, scientists are still warning that the worst may not be over for India and that its government should prepare for a third wave of the virus. That means that we, too, must act. Besides constantly shoring up the healthcare sector, the government should also focus on guarding our borders against the disease. Already the mutated virus seems to have spread across boundaries from India to Nepal, as confirmed by the Red Cross. Therefore, the government must take all necessary measures to ensure that this spread caused by new variants does not spill into Bangladesh, which will be cataclysmic.

Unfortunately, every day people are coming and goods-laden truck drivers are entering Bangladesh from India. It's time the government organised a special drive to monitor them and ensure they are not spreading the virus. This will mean enforcing the quarantine even more strictly for those coming from India and ensuring that those who have tested positive do not leave the hospitals at the border until they are fully recovered. Already we have reports of a number of Covid positive individuals coming in from India, escaping a hospital in Jashore and then being readmitted after being apprehended by police. What about the people they came into contact with while they were out of the hospital? Has there been any contact tracing to find out potential concentrations of the virus? Experts have been asking the government to remain vigilant and do much more to prevent the Indian virus from entering the country. And the government should pay heed and be more proactive in that and in monitoring border districts strictly for this purpose.

The re-employed are not faring well

Urgent support needed for better recovery

A recent CPD-Oxfam survey on 2,600 households from 16 districts has painted a grim picture of the pandemic's effect on people's incomes and livelihoods. The survey found that more than 60 percent of the respondents had lost their jobs at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic last year in April-May. On average, it took them 95 days to find new jobs but almost all of them returned to the workforce by February of this year, which is of course a positive development. Yet, the survey also found that 78 percent of the households had reduced their expenditure and more than half had to resort to changes in their diets (e.g. cutting down on protein consumption).

On top of this is the disheartening news that only 20 percent of the households had received any form of support from the government, and most had lived on charity from friends, relatives, and private organisations. The average income of individuals had also reduced by around 12 percent, and more people had been pushed into the lower-income category with income inequality also rising. It was also seen that some groups suffered worse than others, such as the tea garden workers, victims of river erosion, tribal people, the "untouchables", char and haor dwellers, and floating workers in Dhaka city.

According to the CPD's Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, the government needs to come up with a framework spanning two to three years and a core budget to properly recover from the pandemic, and that the one-year time frame is not enough. He also pointed out the "state of reluctance and denial" of policymakers when it came to determining a strategy to help the country out of a "virus-induced downturn". Though many of the surveyed individuals have found jobs again, they have not been compensated for the losses they suffered during unemployment. And now, they are also having to go through worsened standards of living by eating less or by pulling their children out of school.

No doubt, recovering from the virus itself should be our main priority as a nation. We have to limit its spread and it must be ensured that the majority of the population is inoculated as early as possible. However, we would urge the government to also have more foresight when it comes to developing plans for the future that will affect the people's livelihoods. Those who require government assistance must be recognised and helped urgently so that they do not fall into further poverty.

We used to have such elections, once

Why were Bangladeshis so keenly interested in the West Bengal elections? What are we to make of its results?

THE THIRD VIEW

MAHFUZ ANAM

ABOUT the just-concluded West Bengal assembly elections, there are three things to celebrate and one to be worried about. The celebrations are for the fact that: a) people's will got expressed and to that extent democracy worked; b) religion-based politics took a battering, but only just; and c) a new charismatic woman leader has emerged whose sheer willpower, inexhaustible energy, fighting spirit, self-belief and personal honesty could inspire a whole generation of young leaders who may be able to steer India away from today's corrupt politics and also be an example for the region.

It is most gratifying to see democracy in operation next door while in many countries, including ours, we are witnessing a highly controlled expression of people's will and a gradual denigration of individual rights and freedoms. With governments becoming more and more powerful, with public money being increasingly usurped by those holding power for personal and party politicking purposes, and with newer technologies empowering governments to spy on their citizens, manipulate both their perception and opinion, control freedom of expression and punish and even eliminate critics—the overall democratic culture is on the wane, to say the least. In such an environment, to see a regional party headed by a woman stand up against a giant of a party with an unending financial war chest and inexhaustible muscle power, and defeat the politics of hatred and division through democracy's most vital instrument—elections—is indeed heart-warming for every lover of democracy.

The battering of religion-based politics in West Bengal is indeed a happy augury for us. West Bengal going saffron would have had serious repercussions on Bangladesh's politics. It would have given a spurt to our fundamentalists. The exponents of religion-based politics could have seen the developments across the border as an opportune moment for their own assertion. The religion-based politics that the BJP is advocating all over India, and wanted to bring next door, is a matter of great worry from which we appear to have been spared for the moment.

In addition to the overall issue of secular versus communal politics, we in Bangladesh had some specific concerns that naturally caused us to lean against BJP. To start with, we were stunned by the negative image that was being portrayed of Bangladesh by no less a person than the central home minister, who was also the chief of the present ruling party of India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). His words were disrespectful and arrogant and, equally importantly, false. He exhibited absolutely no concern as to how his words would impact the hearts and minds of the people of the country that India terms as its closest and friendliest neighbour.

He depicted Bangladesh as a country from where starving people were flocking into India. He castigated the incumbent chief minister as an appeaser of Muslims, as if it was a crime, and as if the people he was referring to were not Indian citizens. What sort of inner impression of Bangladesh and what sort of feeling for its people does Mr. Amit Shah harbour that could have made him call our citizens "termites"? It is not lost on us that he never withdrew his comments, let alone apologise for them.

The whole BJP contingent that poured down on West Bengal over the election period made Muslim-bashing one of their primary election strategies, implying that all of them were part of a massive illegal migrant population which were a "burden" on India and thus needed to be shunted out. The NRC (National Register of Citizens) and the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019) both have strengthened the government's hands to implement this policy, which, we feared, would be expeditiously implemented if BJP won.

A supporter of Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee, wearing a face shield with her image on it, gestures during celebrations after the initial poll results in Kolkata, on May 2, 2021. PHOTO: REUTERS

The third point to celebrate is the emergence of a new Indian leader whose stature and charisma can now match anyone else's at the national level, especially that of Prime Minister Modi, whose reputation of having a magnetic appeal among voters stands significantly dented. If Modi gained from a humble-beginnings image, so did Mamata. Additionally, she scored high for simple living, even after being in power for two terms. In a recent TV interview, she said that she does not take a paisa from the state exchequer—no salary, no TA/DA, no official residence (she lives in her old, modest flat), no official car (uses her own Maruti), travels economy class, pays for hotels and guest houses—and runs her family affairs and personal expenses from the royalty she gets from her 87 books (many of them bestsellers, she claimed) and numerous CDs where she is the lyricist. It is indeed a very powerful story of an honest leader at a time when corruption in politics is an everyday phenomenon, not just in India but also regionally. (Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about many of her senior party leaders).

Purely from an election point of view, Mamata Banerjee proved that if a leader is really connected with her base and if people have trust in their leader, then money, muscle power, administrative support, false and misleading propaganda and religion-based campaign can all be overcome, and decisively so. The election became an excellent example of a contest between two parties ultimately reducing itself to a clash of two personalities. The more it became so, the more it helped Mamata, who emerged as a lone lady standing against the all-out efforts of a giant all-India party with more money than it needs, backed by the prestige of a sitting prime minister with charisma and formidable popularity, with all the attendant advantages of support from the administration that holding the highest office in a South Asian country automatically brings.

So, what is it about this election that should worry us?

Hidden within Mamata's victory is another victory that is appearing to get buried under the momentary relief that the saffron wave has been thwarted. That victory is of the BJP. They may not have captured power but they have come a long way towards it. They have expanded their presence in the Bidhan Sabha from a mere 3 seats in the last election to 77 seats at present. By any standard, this can be considered a significant victory. But because BJP had set itself a target of getting 200 seats and created the hype of forming the government this time around, their result—a significant success on its own—is appearing to be the very opposite, creating a false scope for complacency of the victors. It is quite possible that the real strategists of RSS-BJP knew well that capturing power in 2021 could be an impossible task and have thus set their eyes on 2026 as the real turning point, making the present election a mere dress rehearsal. This apparent defeat may germinate into something totally different in the future, and there is a pertinent historical precedent to guide us here.

When the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government lost to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004, after being in power for five years, many saw it as a defeat of communal politics to the secular forces. Then, when the UPA coalition got re-elected in 2009, it was taken to be additional proof that religion-based politics would never succeed in India and that the post-Independence legacy of the ideals set forth in the Indian constitution had found sufficient roots in the hearts and minds of common Indians for obscurantism not to have any future in modern India.

The 2014 election saw a complete reversal of the previous outcomes and the NDA's re-election with massive support in 2019 shocked the secularists, bringing BJP to the centre stage of present-day Indian politics where, some say, it will stay for a while.

So is Trinamool Congress's victory a serious rebuff to communal politics, or is it a precursor of a repeat of the UPA defeat at the hands of the NDA? The present outcome in West Bengal elections may have sown the seed for a repeat of what had happened at the centre in 2014.

But why should it concern us, in Bangladesh, as to which political party comes to power in West Bengal or in India? On the face of it, it shouldn't. But there is more than the "face' to the rest of the reality. Didn't Trump's election and his subsequent defeat affect us? Isn't the US and the world now a better place because Trump is gone, along with his white supremacist politics? The reason we are concerned is because BJP, along with RSS and others of the family of such parties, are far more than mere political parties. Normally, a political party asks for votes. But these religion-based political parties—like ours in Bangladesh—ask not only for our votes but also for our minds, our intellectual space, our emotional space, our cultural space—in fact, our whole being. As the now-famous election strategist Prashant Kishor, who is credited for Mamata's stunning performance, recently said in a TV interview, parties like BJP "just don't want only your votes. They want to dominate the mind-space—dictate what we should wear, eat, hear, see, how to run our lives. They want to have a say in everything. That is problematic."

As we analyse elections held in West Bengal and in four other states—as we did earlier for the US elections too—we cannot but feel a tinge of jealousy. As we see robust electioneering, spirited campaigning and finally people exhibiting the "majesty" of the public will elsewhere, we naturally wonder what has happened to ours. For, we too used to have such highly contested, freely participated and fearlessly voted elections which reasserted, time and again, that people were "sovereign" and that they were the ultimate arbiter of who could be entrusted to run our affairs. Whatever happened to that?

When will we get our elections back?

Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, *The Daily Star*.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

A European-Style United Nations

SANDRA BREKA *and* BRIAN FINLAY

LAST September, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly adopted a landmark declaration affirming a commitment to "mobilise resources" and "show unprecedented political will and leadership," in order to ensure "the future we want." The so-called UN75 Declaration was an inspiring statement. But will it lead to meaningful change?

History suggests that it just might. After all, past anniversaries of the UN's founding have delivered significant structural reforms. On the UN's 60th anniversary, for example, world leaders established a Peacebuilding Commission to help countries in transition from war to peace, upgraded the Human Rights Commission to a stronger Human Rights Council, and adopted the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine to help safeguard civilians in conflict zones.

Improving the UN75 Declaration's prospects further is the fact that it reflects the will of civil society. Ahead of last year's General Assembly, the UN conducted a global survey to discern what ordinary people cared about. Of more than 1.3 million respondents, 87 percent said that international cooperation was vital to deal with today's challenges. The UN also supported more than 3,000 dialogues in 120 countries on "the future we want, the UN we need." The results of these dialogues—which took place in "classrooms, boardrooms, parliaments, and community groups"—helped to shape the declaration.

At the same time, national governments have been working to revive multilateral cooperation. For example, in April 2019, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian launched the Alliance for Multilateralism to promote global cooperation at a time of resurgent nationalism. The Alliance now has the support of more than 50 countries. Similarly, this past February, G7 leaders, including US President Joe Biden, proclaimed that they would work together to "make 2021 a turning point for multilateralism." Cooperation on the pandemic recovery and "building back better" were deemed top priorities.

Countries are also supporting the UN75 Declaration, in particular. Two months after its unanimous adoption, ten heads of state and government, convened by Spain and Sweden, published a joint statement reiterating their commitment to the Declaration and the ambition it embodies and calling for reforms of the UN's three principal organs to create a "more agile, effective, and accountable organisation" that can "deliver better" results.

All of this bodes well for the future of multilateralism. But transforming words into action is rarely easy, especially when dealing with so many actors with competing visions and interests. With nationalist and populist forces potent in many parts of the world, the challenge ahead is all the more formidable. To meet it, we should look to Europe.

The European Union has been a reliable champion of multilateralism. In February, for example, the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, issued a joint communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism. Likewise, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, European Council President Charles Michel, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen joined UN Secretary-General António Guterres and Senegalese President Macky Sall in calling for a more inclusive multilateralism.

Europe's leadership in this area makes sense. Though the EU is often decried as slow, risk-averse, and inflexible, it stands out for its success in forging an effective supranational polity and pooling resources to meet shared challenges. Europeans are also particularly supportive of international cooperation. In the UN survey, more than 90 percent of Europeans—several percentage points above the global average—described international cooperation as "very important" or "essential."

Building on Europe's example of active multilateralism, our organisations, the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH and the Stimson Center, together with other partners recently convened leading policymakers and experts from Europe and around the world to debate how to make the UN75 Declaration a reality. We identified several key imperatives. For example, in order to ease pressure on the UN Security Council and the global humanitarian system, world leaders must take action to address the root causes of conflicts. This means, for example, ensuring that basic social needs are met; improving representation in politics; and strengthening national and regional governing institutions.

Moreover, we must tackle the "crisis of expertise"—including growing scepticism of science—which is undermining Covid-19 vaccination programmes and climate-mitigation efforts. This can be achieved through international and national outreach campaigns that foster trust and combat disinformation. A third imperative is to change the architecture and approach of global and regional financial institutions, in order to bridge gaps in digital participation, bolster education, and make progress toward gender equality. Equally critical are reforms to legal and normative frameworks—to meet the challenges of today's online and offline world.

Multilateral solutions can be arduous to devise, agree on, and implement. This can make them seem inefficient and uneconomical, with actors assuming they are better off going it alone. And yet, as Europe has proven time and again, the solutions forged from multilateral processes tend to be more inclusive, effective, and durable. Europe owes its longest-ever period of peace and stability to those processes.

That alone should qualify the EU to provide some valuable lessons for the UN's renewal. An inclusive, adaptive, and empowered UN that takes into account the EU's experience can form a strong foundation for a rules-based international order that advances global peace and stability, while facilitating action on shared challenges. Such an institution could not be more worthy of our steadfast commitment and care.

Sandra Breka is a member of the Board of Management of the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH. Brian Finlay is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Stimson Center.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021.
www.project-syndicate.org
(Exclusive to *The Daily Star*)

Kamal Ziaul Islam: A legend in his own time

BELAL EHSAN BAAQUIE

A titan, a legend, an iconoclast, a pioneer—these are some of the words that come to one's mind when recalling the memory of Kamal Ziaul Islam, popularly known as KZ Islam, who passed away on May 3, 2021. It is hard to accept that his charming personality and uplifting presence will no longer be a part of our lives. A charismatic figure, equally at ease with seniors, contemporaries and juniors, KZ Islam was the life of every gathering and his infectious optimism and ebullient personality would win him friends wherever he went.

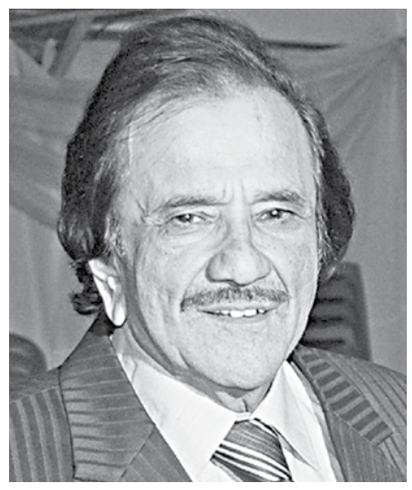
KZ Islam's contributions to Bangladeshi cricket are well-known, and he had had many accolades and achievements, such as being the President of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (presently Bangladesh Cricket Board), President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), President of Gulshan Club, and so on. I will instead focus on his personal side, which is as fascinating as his public persona.

KZ Islam's story starts 86 years ago in Mymensingh, where he was born, one of eight siblings, of illustrious parents Khan Bahadur Sirajul Islam and Rahat Ara Begum. His mother was a renowned person in her own right—a writer of short stories in Urdu. At the age of 11, he was awarded a scholarship to the Royal Indian Military College in Dehradun, but due to the Partition of India, he went on to complete his schooling at Lawrence College at Murree, Pakistan (1947-52). He completed his education by getting a BSc in chemistry from Calcutta University (1955) and earned BCom (Hons) at the University of Leeds, UK, in 1960. After becoming a Chartered Accountant in 1962, he held a few positions in the UK and returned to Bangladesh in 1964.

He continued his professional life as a Chartered Accountant in various private and public institutions, and had a large circle of friends both in Dhaka and Chattogram. He was a leading socialite for many years and an accomplished singer. On many occasions, he would entertain family and friends with a large repertoire of songs.

In 1971, he moved to Dhaka from Chattogram and continued to serve in public-sector corporations. In 1976, he ventured into the world of business and was one of the pioneer entrepreneurs of Bangladesh, launching his own company called Nirman International Limited. It is in the name of this company that he later founded the Nirman School Cricket Tournament in 1982. Nirman was a construction firm that built the first 32-storied skyscraper in the country for Bangladesh Bank in 1985, and later diversified into projects overseas as well as project promotion and implementation in the power and telecom sector, property development and real estate, marble business, cold storage and so on.

The Nirman School Cricket Tournament was a result of the abiding interest KZ Islam had in the sport of cricket and his perennial optimism and confidence in the abilities of the youth of the country. He was the President of Ramblers Club from 1975 till he passed away, a club of enthusiasts who would play cricket on weekends for personal entertainment. He was always worried about the fact that there were not enough playgrounds for the youth to develop their sporting skills. KZ Islam's abiding faith in the youth led to his consistent personal support of cricket at a time when there was no professional or any form of organised cricket in the country.



KZ Islam, who died on May 3, 2021.

He combined his love of cricket with philanthropy and decided to take it upon himself to develop and fund the sport of cricket for the youth of the country. The seeds that he sowed resulted in Bangladesh becoming a part of the international union of cricket champions. KZ Islam did not stop at cricket; he went on to contribute to the development of football in the country, being the Chairman of the Development Committee of Bangladesh Football Federation (2003).

KZ Islam's philanthropy extended beyond sports, and among the many projects he supported was Shishu Polli, an NGO for marginalised women, of which he was a patron.

One would have thought that being a professional Chartered Accountant, a pioneer entrepreneur and a philanthropist would have been enough, but not for KZ Islam whose creativity took yet another turn when he developed a serious interest in writing and scholarship. Starting with writing a column in the weekly Holiday on the great personalities of the world, which was later transformed into a book called *Glimpses of the Great* (2012), KZ Islam turned his attention to an event that has occupied many a great mind: the Partition of India.

Based on meticulous scholarship and painstaking in-person interviews of leading personalities still alive in South Asia and the UK, who wrote or were involved with the Partition, he wrote a voluminous book with a tentative title *The Mountbattens and the Partition of India* (to be published). In the book, he showed, using multiple original and secondary sources, that Mountbatten had a clear bias towards India and against Pakistan; in fact, an earlier title of his book was *Mountbatten's India Bias*.

In the view of KZ Islam, if not for Mountbatten being the Viceroy of India, the Partition of India would have been fair to both sides instead of being biased towards India. One may agree with or contest this rather momentous conclusion, but one cannot fault the scholarship that went into KZ Islam coming to this conclusion.

KZ Islam was sharp-witted, humorous, light-hearted, brilliant—a delightful and engaging person. His magnetic personality would win over all those who would come across him, and he was the first to help anyone whom he could, without any hesitation or expectations. During the Liberation War of 1971, he helped many people under very trying circumstances.

KZ Islam was a loyal member of his extended family, and being one of his nephews, I can vouch that for us he was a hero and a role model that we all tried to emulate. What intrigued me the most was how KZ Islam could manage to be so many different things with such felicity. He was always the bedrock of support for all family members. I remember on many occasions my late father would call KZ Islam at odd hours, and he would always find a willing helping hand in KZ Islam.

KZ Islam came from a deeply religious family, with many famous Islamic scholars amongst his ancestors. He was a religious person who had a firm belief in the tenets of Islam, and he practiced all the compulsory edicts. His practice of Islam was also a model for us, his extended family members, as we saw a thoroughly modern person effortlessly combining the practice of Islam with the contemporary world.

The recounting of the achievements of KZ Islam is to throw light on the many dimensions of his personality: professional, entrepreneurial, philanthropist, scholar, socialite, a religious person and a loyal family man. KZ Islam combined so many diverse dimensions into a meaningful life full of attainments, achievements, joys and struggles. He was a legend in his own time, and his legacy lives on. He leaves behind his wife and four sons.

One can only wish him well in his journey to the eternal life, with the conviction that all the good he has done to so many people and over so many years will stand him in good stead on his final journey. But his absence will be sorely felt, and his memories will remain with us.

Belal Ehsan Baaquie is a professor at the International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance, Malaysia.

Can Biden save our planet from overheating?

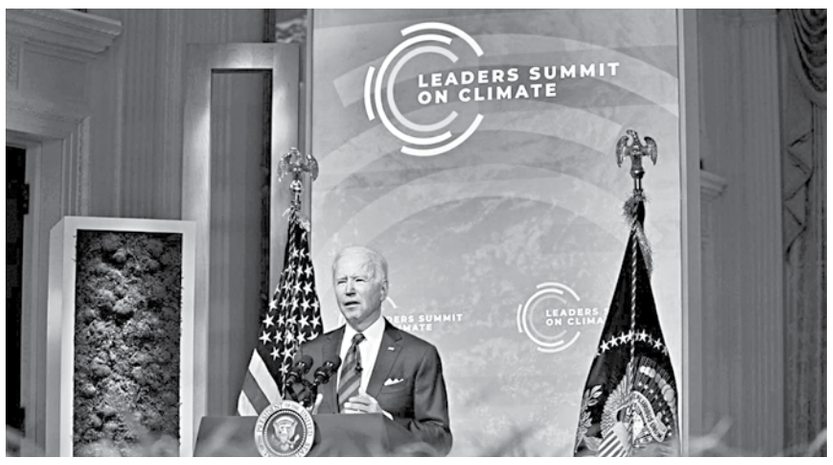
QUAMRUL HAIDER

EVERY year, the Earth Day comes and goes while we continue to dig ourselves deeper and deeper toward climate and ecological disaster. Since the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, we have pushed our planet to the brink of climate catastrophe, so much so that for those of us born in this century, every year has been warmer than the 20th-century average with last year rivalling the hottest year in modern times.

For the first time in recorded history, concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide measured last month at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii was more than 420 parts per million. It is a disconcerting milestone, especially if we note that the planet has already warmed by more than one degree Celsius around halfway to doubling pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide.

Then there is methane, a greenhouse gas that is a shape-shifter. The rapid rise of methane from an obscure trace gas to a major player in forcing climate change is often ignored by the policy makers, although global methane concentration in the atmosphere is now nearly two and a half times the pre-industrial levels of roughly 770 parts per billion. Methane may account for a minuscule portion of the greenhouse gases, yet it is extremely efficient at trapping heat from the Sun. Over a period of 20 years, it is 80-85 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Armed with these alarming data, on this year's Earth Day, President Joseph Biden of the United States of America invited 40 world leaders, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, for a two-day virtual summit to discuss plans on how to save humankind from the looming "existential threat" resulting from anthropogenic climate change. At the summit, he urged them to combat climate change collectively in order to prevent the planet from heading toward the climate tipping point—a critical threshold where a tiny change could push the climate system into a completely new, irreversible state. Some scientists believe that a "global disaster" is already unfolding because the climate may have crossed the tipping point.



President Joe Biden speaks to the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate from the White House in Washington, US on April 22, 2021. PHOTO: AP

Biden announced an ambitious plan to cut US greenhouse gas emissions to half their 2005 levels by 2030, reaching zero emissions no later than 2050. Although the proposed cut was part of the Nationally Determined Contribution under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, the White House did not provide a specific road map outlining what has to be done to implement the plan. Nevertheless, the target of 50 percent cut by the end of the decade will entail a steep and rapid decline of fossil fuel use in virtually every sector of the US economy. And that will require, among other things, producing electricity from renewable sources, cars and trucks running on electricity, phasing out chemicals used in refrigeration and air-conditioning that are thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide at warming the planet, and using greenhouse gas removing technologies to suck carbon dioxide out of the air.

While a broad spectrum of people in the USA and elsewhere welcomed Biden's plan as an encouraging starting point, environmental activists argue that his aggressive goals to switch to clean energy by 2030 is "nowhere near enough" to keep our planet habitable. According to them, as the "biggest historical polluter," the USA needs to aim for at least a 70 percent reduction compared to 2005 levels—the high point for US emissions—if he wants to achieve zero emissions by 2050. More importantly, they are justifiably concerned that Washington's history of backing out of or failing to ratify climate commitments will jeopardise support for Biden's plan.

To the conservatives and anti-environmental groups, Biden's plan is a political hot air. They fear that if implemented, there will be massive destruction of wealth, surrender of America's international trade advantages, creation of a huge intrusive government-run bureaucracy, inhibition of free markets and a precipitous drop in the living standards of most Americans. A cadre of Republicans beholden to Donald Trump and the ultra-right Fox News even claimed, albeit falsely, that Biden will take hamburgers and steaks off the menu as part of his plan.

It is, therefore, an open question whether Biden's new policies will survive the American political system. In the past, policies on climate change have repeatedly shifted when Republicans were in power—first with George Bush undoing Bill Clinton's attempt to join the Kyoto Protocol, and then with Donald Trump pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement negotiated by Barack Obama. Hence, for Biden's policies to succeed, he has to convince moderate Republicans to break ranks with their conservative colleagues who have succumbed to Trump's fallacious argument that climate change is a Chinese hoax. Biden's policies could also face obstacles in the courts.

Not only will Biden have to contend with congressional Republicans, he will also have to balance the demands of environmental groups that want him to go big on renewable energy while at the same time be wary of what it will mean for organised labour—in part because there are fewer union jobs in the renewable energy sector.

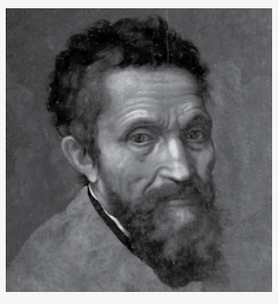
Biden's age is also a big factor. In the best-case scenario, setting an emissions target for the next ten years seems plausible if he remains president for two terms. In the worst-case scenario, 78-year-old Biden will in all likelihood be president for only one term. What if Trump or another Trump-like chump comes to power in 2024 and rolls back everything put in place by Biden? After all, the Republican-controlled Congress wiped out most of the Obama administration's environmental rules in the first 16 weeks of Trump's presidency.

Biden's plan overlooks an important aspect that plays, and will continue to play, a devastating role in heating up our planet. It totally ignores the fact that the heat-trapping gases presently in the air will not magically vanish even if we instantly stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. That is because different greenhouse gases take different amounts of time to break down via chemical reactions. Carbon dioxide has an atmospheric lifetime of hundreds to even thousands of years whereas nitrous oxide lingers for about 100 years. Methane dissipates relatively quickly, persisting for about 12 years. But there is a problem—a feedback-loop situation. When methane breaks down, it can turn into carbon dioxide, thereby replacing one greenhouse gas with another.

So, can Biden save our planet from overheating? Anyone hoping that Biden's plan will lead to a habitable future on this fragile planet should be circumspect because like most politicians, Biden is working with targets, not solutions. Moreover, he is trapped by the short-term self-interest of multi-national corporations and fossil fuel industries who fear that any real change will cut into their profit and power. Besides, his initiative of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without simultaneously removing the ones currently in the atmosphere will not be enough to stop the nightmarish effects of climate change.

Quamrul Haider is a Professor of Physics at Fordham University, New York.

QUOTABLE *Quote*



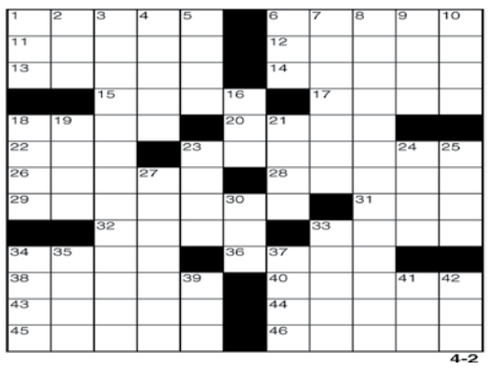
MICHELANGELO
(1475-1564)
Italian sculptor

There is no greater harm than that of time wasted.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Golf feat
6 Long tales
11 River catch
12 Make amends
13 Squirrel's find
14 Caller's need
15 Campus leader
17 Dutch cheese
18 Field workers
20 Imperfection
22 Moody music
23 Snowbird's destination
26 Like some online videos
28 Weasel's cousin
29 Rock concert venue
31 Bowler, e.g.
32 A bunch
33 Saddler's tools
34 Pronto, in memos
36 Go it alone
38 Way to go
40 Fable ending
43 Borders
44 Agassi of tennis
45 Phoenix source
46 Bowler's button

DOWN
1 Greek vowel
2 Curved path
3 Entertaining
4 Entices
5 Sicilian peak
6 Easy victim
7 Basically
8 Glib
9 Visitor to Siam
10 Appear
16 Saints' org.
18 Guns
19 Give off
21 Weaving machine
23 Move like a moth
24 Start a hand
25 Fine study
27 Pet from the pound
30 Fleet letters
33 Singularly
34 Open space
35 Supplies with turf
37 General Bradley
39 Slalom section
41 Is for two?
42 Rent out



4-2

TUESDAY'S **ANSWERS**

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

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

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Nixon's letter to Yahya

FROM PAGE 12

exception of two-- an independent member and the president of the Moslem League -- had pressed for immediate recognition of Bangladesh.

Indira Gandhi, according to these sources, said at the closed meeting that India was delaying a decision not because of the threat of war with Pakistan or out of fear of a confrontation with Communist China, but for "more weighty reasons".

Gandhi wanted to see if the Bangalee independence fighters could establish effective administrative control over a sizeable area. What other governments do about recognition will also be a factor, but not the deciding one, these sources said.

She told the opposition leaders that India had sounded out several friendly countries on the recognition issue, but that at least for now these countries tended to regard the crisis as a Pakistani internal matter.

Indira Gandhi reportedly contended that Indian recognition now might hurt the Bangalees' cause by seeming to substantiate the Pakistani charge that the independence struggle was engineered by India and was being kept alive only by Indian arms aid.

PRESS IS WARNED ON 'IRRESPONSIBLE' REPORTS

The military government of Yahya Khan warned the newspapers today "not to jeopardize efforts to bring the country back to normalcy by publishing irresponsible reports".

An official announcement said newspapers would not be allowed to infringe on a martial law regulation that bars publication of anything calculated to harm the integrity of Pakistan. The regulation was promulgated on March 26, when General Yahya announced the military crackdown.

"The nation today is faced with a crisis and everything has to be subordinated to it," the new announcement said.

"Some newspapers have started acting in an irresponsible manner which is against the interest of the nation," it added.

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

Buses back on streets; crowds

FROM PAGE 1

He did not elaborate on the matter.

"Train and launch services will remain suspended as the ongoing restrictions have been extended ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr," he said.

Although public buses did not run on the city streets for 22 days amid the Covid-19 restrictions, traffic had been increasing over the past few days. In the absence of public transport, people took rickshaws, CNG-run auto-rickshaws and cars on rent to reach their destinations.

Yesterday, after buses started operating again, Dhaka once again witnessed its perennial traffic congestion. Police said it happened due to a huge pressure of shoppers ahead of Eid, which will be celebrated in a week.

Buses started leaving their depots in the morning and ran on roads, including in Dhanmondi, Mirpur, Uttara, Banani and Mohakhali, at half capacity.

Passengers were seen wearing masks and strictly following the Covid safety protocols.

Those people, especially office-goers, expressed relief over the resumption of public transport.

Saeed Ahmed, who works at a private organisation in Gulshan, said it had cost him Tk 200 to go to work from his home in Mohammadpur in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

Yesterday, he spent only Tk 30 as he took a bus.

But experts said buses often carry passengers over the stipulated capacity and if they do so again, the coronavirus infection may spread further.

Heavy traffic congestion was seen on Mirpur Road, Elephant Road and other prominent streets in Gulshan, Banani, Mohakhali, New Market, Bangla Motor, Panthapath, and Karwan Bazar areas.

The congestion became even heavier in the afternoon. Traffic police at some key intersections were seen busy controlling traffic movement.

The government imposed restrictions on movement of people and public transport on April 5 to contain the second wave of Covid-19. The restrictions were extended till May 16 in phases.

As per a new government circular, public transport, including buses and minibuses, were allowed to operate only inside the territory of each district from yesterday. However, inter-district bus services would remain suspended in the country during the ongoing "lockdown".

Meanwhile, a huge number of cars and microbuses continue to carry passengers to and from Dhaka on rent, charging almost double the usual bus fare. The number of such vehicles is expected to go up during the Eid.

The rush at the ferry terminals is also increasing every day.

With Eid-ul-Fitr around the corner, shopping centres and malls are filled with customers.

Sellers at different shopping centres and malls said the number of customers increased yesterday. They think they would see a heavier rush at the malls today as it is the last weekend before Eid.

Visiting some major shopping malls and markets in Dhaka -- New Market, Chandni Chawk, Gausia, Noor Mansion, and Bashundhara City Mall -- yesterday, The Daily Star correspondents found customers pouring into the shops from 10:00am.

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

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

Lifestyle brand Aarong's Asad Gate branch was fined Tk 1 lakh for not maintaining health safety rules by a mobile court. Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam accompanied the team. DNCC Executive Magistrate Tajwar Akram Sakapi Ibne Sazzad said the outlet was heavily crowded. Children were being allowed to enter without masks.

Mobile courts in the capital also conducted raids in Mouchak and Bailey Road areas yesterday to ensure compliance of the health rules.

A total of 23 people were fined Tk 8,500 at two shopping centres for not wearing masks.

Although food courts in the malls were asked not to allow people to sit and eat, the shops in the Bashundhara shopping mall were seen calling customers to do so, dodging law enforcers.

Whenever they sensed any trouble, they put their shutters down.

During iftar, many were seen sitting in groups on the floors of the malls and taking their meals.

During the last one month, the government has relaxed many of the Covid-19 restrictions. It reopened shopping malls ahead of Eid and thousands of shoppers are thronging them every day, ignoring health safety rules.

It has alarmed health experts.

The experts said the Covid situation in Bangladesh could worsen due to the increased public movement centring the Eid. They warned that the situation can turn dangerous if a new variant found in India made its way here.

দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন

প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা

"সবাই মিলে গড়ব দেশ, দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ"

মাইক্রোবাস আউটসোর্সিং সংক্রান্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নং-০০.০১.০০০০.১০৩.৬৪.০০১.২১.১২১০৮ তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ/এজেন্সি	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন।
২।	সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম, জেলা ও কোড	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, ঢাকা, ৬৭০১।
৩।	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	ঃ	১ জুলাই ২০২১ থেকে ৩০ জুন ২০২২ পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত শর্তাদি সাপেক্ষে দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকার কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীগণের অফিসে যাতায়াতের জন্য ৫টি এবং কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীগণের অফিসে আনা-নেয়াসহ কমিশনের কাজে ব্যবহারের জন্য ৪টি অর্থাৎ মোট ০৯ (নয়)টি সিএনজি চালিত ১২ আসন বিশিষ্ট Climate Controlled মাইক্রোবাস [২০১৪ বা তৎপরবর্তী মডেলের অনধিক ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছর ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে এমন] ভাড়া।
৪।	দরপত্র সূত্র ও তারিখ	ঃ	নথি নং-০০.০১.০০০০.১০৩.৬৪.০০১.২১-১২১০৮ তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৫।	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (OTM)।
৬।	বাজেট ও অর্থের উৎস	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশনের রাজস্ব বাজেট।
৭।	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	ঃ	০৭/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৮।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	৩০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
৯।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	৩১/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়ে পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব) এর অফিস কক্ষে আগামী ৩১/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে।
১১।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান/দপ্তর	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১২।	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান/দপ্তর	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১৩।	প্রতিসেট দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	ঃ	প্রতিসেট দরপত্র ডকুমেন্টের মূল্য ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১৪।	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা জামানত	ঃ	দরপত্রের সাথে দরপত্র জামানত হিসেবে প্রতিটি মাইক্রোবাসের জন্য ২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার যে কোন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক (সিডিউল ব্যাংক) হতে সহকারী পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব), দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা-এর অনুকূলে দাখিল করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
১৫।	দরপত্রের বৈধতার মেয়াদ	ঃ	দাখিলকৃত দরপত্রের কার্যকারিতা (Validity) দরপ্রস্তাব খোলার তারিখ হতে ১২০ (একশত বিশ) দিন পর্যন্ত বহাল থাকবে।
১৬।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা ও প্রয়োজনীয় দলিলাদী	ঃ	মাইক্রোবাসের প্রকৃত মালিক/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান। দরদাতাকে দরপত্রের সাথে গাড়ির হালনাগাদ ব্লু-বুক, ফিটনেস সার্টিফিকেট, ট্যাক্স টোকেন, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আপ-টু-ডেট রেজিষ্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট, টিআইএন সার্টিফিকেট ও আয়কর পরিশোধের প্রত্যয়নপত্রের ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
১৭।	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ঃ	ক. কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। খ. দরপত্রের বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে। গ. অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই সময়ে ও স্থানে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	ঃ	মোহাম্মদ আব্দুল আওয়াল।
১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	ঃ	পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব)।
২০।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর ঠিকানা	ঃ	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা।
২১।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগের বিবরণ	ঃ	০২-৫৮৩১৬৪৭৬ (অফিস)।

মোহাম্মদ আব্দুল আওয়াল
পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব)

জিডি-৯১০

Trees felled to implement mega project

FROM PAGE 1

The project, titled "Shawdhinata Stambha Construction Project in Dhaka", began its third phase, worth Tk 265.44 crore, in January 2018.

Implementation organisations of the project include the Liberation War affairs ministry, the department of public works and Dhaka South City Corporation.

Under the project, public toilets, walkways, food courts, artificial ponds, underground parking lots, underpasses and mosques will be constructed.

Environmentalists and educationists yesterday lambasted the government for destroying environment at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

Architect Iqbal Hossain, joint general secretary of the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, yesterday told The Daily Star that bureaucrats added the idea of setting up restaurants and amusement centres in the project without informing experts.

"This is like the coronavirus -- the way it attacked our lung without our knowledge, they [bureaucrats] have also moved to attack the heart of Dhaka city," he added.

He demanded that the government bring to book the perpetrators involved in destroying the environment.

Educationist and Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury said it is an unfair and unjust act. The city does not have enough trees to begin with, so cutting trees at the Suhrawardy Udyan is not justified in any way.

"No matter how much development is taking place, we have to keep the trees safe," he added.

Architect Mubasshar Hussein said the work should have started with a public hearing.

"They would then have various suggestions… Suggestions could be made on how to do this by keeping the trees alive. If a restaurant had to be built, it could be made of straw or bamboo between the trees. People have welcomed it before -- our architects have won the Aga Khan Award for their bamboo installations."

Referring to the indirect damage caused by deforestation, he said, "Everyone sees it as just deforestation. But, in my view, it is more than that. As a result of cutting trees and laying concrete, rain water can no longer go underground… If all access to groundwater is blocked this way, the danger will increase."

LEGAL NOTICE SERVED

Six rights organisations and an architect collectively served a legal notice to the government yesterday, demanding of it not to cut the trees at Suhrawardy Udyan and to damage environment and natural characteristics in the capital.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Association for Land Reforms and Development (ALRD), Nijera Kori (NK), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), and architect Mubasshir Hossain sent the legal notice.

The notice was served to the authorities of the government asking them to plant trees three times higher than those have been cut at the same places in Suhrawardy Udyan.

In the legal notice, they also requested the authorities to protect and preserve the original and natural historical shape of Suhrawardy Udyan.

Mamata takes centre stage

FROM PAGE 12

described her as a courageous grassroots leader and a modern "Jhansi ki Rani" who proved that no matter the odds, "Goliaths can be humbled".

Another senior Congress leader Manish Tewari also called Mamata the "Rani of Jhansi who has rewritten history", and Anand Sharma said her win "has given a ray of hope to all those who believe in an inclusive and democratic India".

Perhaps the most ringing endorsement came from veteran Congress leader Kamal Nath, former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, who said Mamata was "the leader of India".

Even amid the fulsome praise for Mamata, who broke away from Congress in 1987, all the aforementioned Congress leaders avoided going into the issue of putting up a common face of the opposition to take on Modi in the next general elections.

Kamal Nath, who had led his party to victory in the heartland state in the 2018 assembly polls there against the BJP, had to step down as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh when a majority of Congressmen defected to the BJP in 2020, bringing the saffron party back to power there.

Asked if Mamata, the leader of TMC, could be the face of the opposition in the 2024 electoral battle, Nath stated the obvious on Wednesday: it is for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Congress to decide.

TMC and its electoral symbol of the "Jora Ghas Phul" is not part of the UPA, which ruled India from 2004 to 2014 under Manmohan Singh's prime ministership and Sonia's chairmanship of the alliance before it was voted out by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

But that the senior Congress leaders are publicly lavishing praise on Mamata's leadership is itself significant – political observers see it as a curt message to the Gandhi family (Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka) to go for the much-needed organisational changes.

What appears to have strengthened Mamata's claim to be the opposition's face is no doubt TMC's unexpectedly momentous win in Bengal. But there are still hurdles she has to negotiate and many questions and considerations with which the opposition has to contend.

First: is an anti-BJP front possible without Congress and is it fair to write the political obituary of the grand old party just because it has lost in the recent round of assembly elections in Kerala, Assam and was wiped out in Bengal?

Many political pundits tend to write off Congress every time it loses general elections or state-level polls. The same pundits then hail the party's resilience when it overcomes setbacks and returns to winning ways like the party had done in the assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in 2018.

One must not forget that Congress is still the party with the highest number of Lok Sabha seats (51) after BJP -- more than any regional party.

Secondly, Congress continues to retain its pan-India footprints and is in power in three states -- Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab which together account for a total of 49 Lok Sabha seats. By contrast, no regional party has appeal beyond the border of a state. Congress too had won against the might of the BJP in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh assembly elections in 2018.

Thirdly, regional parties are more concerned with protecting their respective state turfs where they are in competition with either BJP or Congress and, unlike Congress, lack a pan-India agenda or vision. Only Tamil Nadu witnesses a direct fight between two regional parties -- Dravida Munnetra Kazagham and its principal rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazagham.

Fourthly, observers think Mamata is not the only powerful regional leader to set up a national network of regional parties. Sharad Pawar, the head of Nationalist Congress Party, is also regarded as an influential prime mover of opposition unity.

Pawar's party, also an offshoot of Congress, is a key constituent of the ruling coalition in Maharashtra with the second highest number of Lok Sabha seats (48) after Uttar Pradesh (80).

Without Congress in it, the framework of a joint anti-BJP opposition has to be essentially a sum total of regional parties and states as an alternative to the Modi-led BJP. Can these parties with state-specific agendas have a common national programme and agree on a common prime ministerial candidate? How durable will such an arrangement be and how appealing will it be to voters who often vote differently in state assembly and national elections?

One saw how in 2015 an opposition alliance led by Nitish Kumar crumbled in Bihar and how Mamata herself had unsuccessfully tried to put together an anti-BJP front through a series of meetings in 2018 in the run up to the 2019 general elections.

The history of regional party leaders or breakaway Congress leaders becoming PMs like Charan Singh, H D Deve Gowda, Morarji Desai, V P Singh, Chandrashekhar and Inder Kumar Gujral does not inspire confidence about the stability of governments under them.

Dhaka seeks 4m doses from US

FROM PAGE 1

"They [India] have verbally said keep your fingers crossed," he said.

The US will share up to 60 million doses of its Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine with other countries as they become available.

In another development, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said five lakh doses of Sinopharm's vaccines from China will arrive in Dhaka on May 12.

He added that the government is "at the final stage of signing a deal" for Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

"We've already made a huge progress in discussions with Russia over procuring its vaccine … now we're at the stage of signing a deal in this regard," the minister said while addressing as the chief guest at a virtual discussion titled "Tackling the Second Wave of Covid-19 and Oxygen Crisis".

Bangladesh Private Medical College Association organised the event.

The minister said, "They [China] informed us that five lakh doses will arrive in Bangladesh on May 12. We've also sent a letter to them seeking more vaccine doses."

The Chinese government is now assessing the possibility of vaccine export to Bangladesh, he said.

He added that they are also trying to procure the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from other countries besides India, while the prime minister, health ministry, foreign ministry and other ministries concerned are making joint efforts to buy vaccines from other sources.

"So, we're making all-out efforts to collect the vaccine. Even, we're trying to have AstraZeneca's vaccine from other countries as it is being manufactured in different countries. So, every effort is there to bring vaccines. We hope our efforts will yield good results, and we may be able to give you good news over the vaccine very soon," he said.

The minister also said they will encourage the private sector if it tries to manufacture vaccines in Bangladesh. "If anyone can produce vaccines, we'll provide them all-out support, and it's my commitment."

World powers back US plan

FROM PAGE 12

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday said he supported the idea of a waiver on patent protections for coronavirus vaccines and urged his government to consider lifting them for Russia's jabs.

"We are hearing from Europe an idea that, in my opinion, deserves attention -- namely, to remove patent protections from vaccines against Covid-19 altogether," Putin said during a televised meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova.

Russia has registered three coronavirus vaccines, and yesterday approved a fourth -- a single-dose version of its Sputnik V jab called Sputnik Light, reports AFP.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government welcomed Biden's announcement.

The Africa Union's health watchdog also praised the United States' support for waiver on patent protections as a "remarkable expression of leadership".

But the US move is opposed by a consortium of big pharmaceutical companies, which described the decision as "disappointing" and warned it could hamper innovation.

Drugmakers said Biden's move could disrupt a fragile supply chain, and urged rich countries instead to share vaccines more generously with the developing world.

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations said a waiver would invite new manufacturers that lacked essential know-how and oversight.

While Wall Street's main indexes opened flat on Thursday, vaccine makers' shares fell. Moderna was down 9.1% at 1351 GMT. Pfizer fell 3.6% and Novavax fell 6.2%. In London, AstraZeneca, which has sold its vaccine at cost price, was down less than 0.1%.

Shares in Asia-listed vaccine makers -- including Shanghai Fosun Pharmaceutical, CanSino Biologics and JCR Pharmaceutical sinking -- tumbled yesterday after the US announcement.

The move "probably isn't great news for the vaccine manufacturers who will now face generic copies of their vaccine", said Olivier d'Assier, head of APAC applied research at Qontigo GmbH.

More than 155 million people have been reported to be infected by the coronavirus and almost 3.4 million have died, according to a Reuters tally.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch yesterday urged the Covax global vaccine-sharing scheme to "enhance transparency" and publish its contracts with jab manufacturers.

In a joint statement, HRW, Amnesty and the US consumer rights advocacy group Public Citizen said they had written to Covax with recommendations relating to transparency, and vaccine availability and affordability.

Hasina greets

FROM PAGE 12

pandemic, we are committed to working together on the basis of friendly regional cooperation aiming to overcome the crisis," said the PM.

She said India is a genuine friend of Bangladesh. "Particularly, our relations with the people of West Bengal are very close, hearty and everlasting."

Hasina recalled with gratitude the contributions of the people and the political leaders of West Bengal to the Liberation War of Bangladesh as well as the same cultural heritage and lifestyle of both Bengals on the auspicious moment when Mujib Year, the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and the 50 years of India-Bangladesh diplomatic relations are being celebrated in 2021.

The premier wished Mamata good health, long life and continued success.

Singer Anup

FROM PAGE 12

career began in the 60's, as a singer at the Rajshahi station of the then Radio Pakistan.

He had worked as a composer and music director at Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra during the Liberation War.

His voice is present in liberation songs including "Teer Hara Ei Dheu-er Sagor", "Rokto Diye Naam Likhhechhi", "Purbo Digonte", and "Nongor Tolo Tolo".

Later in his career, Anup emerged as a composer with immensely popular songs like "Baishakhi Megher Kachhey Jol Cheye", "Shuk Pakhi Rey Pinjira Tor", "Ekattorer Juddher Diney", "Pakhi Janey Na Keno Kandey", "Lalon Tomar Aarshinagar", and "Notey Gachh Moraeye Na", among more than 100 songs in his illustrious career.

Anup had worked with names like Andrew Kishore, Mitali Mukherji, Rafiqul Alam, Dilruba Khan, and Samina Chowdhury, among many others.

He is considered to be one of the forerunners of Bangladesh's "adhunik" genre.

The artiste, whose last rites will take place in Dhaka today, is survived by two daughters.

Spread of Covid

FROM PAGE 12

state of Uttar Pradesh - home to about 200 million people - "there are deaths in almost every second house", he said.

"People are scared and huddled in their homes with fever and cough. The symptoms are all of Covid-19, but with no information available many think it is seasonal flu."

India's Goa state, a hugely popular tourist destination on the western coast, has the highest rate of Covid-19 infections in the country, with up to one in every two people testing positive in recent weeks, government officials said.

Evidence suggests the pandemic is moving eastward of India and a rise has been noticed in the number of daily cases in five eastern states, including West Bengal and Assam, along with rising mortality, according to the Indian Health Ministry.

This was stated at a high-level meeting on Wednesday chaired by Indian Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan. States officials from Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand attended the meeting, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

Several states have imposed various levels of social restrictions to try and stem infections, but the federal government has refused to impose a national lockdown.

India's southern state of Kerala, which has 376,004 active cases, announced it will impose nine days of curbs on movement from Saturday.

LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS

In the capital Delhi, fewer than 20 of more than 5,000 Covid-19 intensive care beds are free at any one time.

Student doctors like Rohan Aggarwal, 26, recruited to fight the second wave, are being forced to make life and death decisions.

His Holy Family Hospital in Delhi normally has a capacity for 275 adults, but is currently caring for 385. "Who to be saved, who not to be saved should be decided by God," Aggarwal told Reuters during a grim overnight shift.

"We are not made for that – we are just humans. But at this point in time, we are being made to do this."

Experts have said vast vaccination can be a solution to get out of this crisis.

While India is the world's biggest vaccine maker, it is struggling to produce enough product for the surge in infections. Its two current vaccine producers will take two months or more to boost total monthly output from the current 70 million to 80 million doses.

The earliest

FROM PAGE 12

wrapped in a shroud with her or his head resting on what was probably a pillow, "indicating that the community may have undertaken some form of funerary rite", said lead author Maria Martinon-Torres, director of the National Research Centre on Human Evolution, in Burgos, Spain.

The extraordinary find highlights the emergence of both complex social behaviour among Homo sapiens, and cultural differences across populations of modern humans in Africa and beyond.

Star SPORT
e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net
DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 7, 2021, *BAISHAKH 24, 1428 BS*

WHAT TO WATCH

PTV SPORTS
Pakistan vs Zimbabwe
Second Test (Day 1)
Live from 1:30 pm
T SPORTS
Bangladesh Premier League
Rahmatganj vs Abahani Limited
Live from 4:00 pm
Uttar Baridhara vs Bangladesh Police
Live from 7:00 pm
Brothers Union vs Bashundhara Kings
Live from 9:00 pm
T SPORTS & STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
English Premier League
Leicester vs Newcastle
Live from 1:00 am (Saturday)
FACEBOOK
La Liga
Real Sociedad vs Elche
Live from 1:00 am (Saturday)

HIGHLIGHTS

Thomas Tuchel is the first manager in the UEFA Champions League/European Cup history to reach the final in consecutive seasons with different clubs.

Since taking over as Chelsea boss in January, Tuchel has now beaten Zinedine Zidane, Pep Guardiola, Jurgen Klopp, Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti, and Diego Simeone (twice).

Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy has kept eight Champions League clean sheets this season, the most ever by a goalkeeper for an English club in a single season.

This season's Champions League final will be contested by two English teams for the third time, also occurring in 2008 (Chelsea v Manchester United) and 2019 (Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur).

"I can't put it into words at the moment. It was a great performance. We should have had about five, but the most important thing is that we won. To get that goal late on, you could see by the celebrations how massive it was, giving us breathing space in the last five minutes."

MASON MOUNT

Chelsea's Mason Mount (R) celebrates his side's second goal with Christian Pulisic during their 2-0 victory over Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinal second-leg match on Wednesday. Mount (22 years and 15 days) became the second youngest Englishman to score in the semifinal of the competition after Wayne Rooney (21 years 182 days). PHOTO: TWITTER

ALL-ENGLISH FINAL IN ISTANBUL

Tuchel's Midas touch

AGENCIES

Since replacing the sacked Frank Lampard in January, Thomas Tuchel has overseen a remarkable revival in Chelsea's fortunes. His finest moment came in Wednesday's Champions League semi-final second leg as Chelsea beat Real Madrid 2-0 at Stamford Bridge to clinch a 3-1 aggregate success.

Goals from Timo Werner and Mason Mount booked an all-English Premier League showdown with Manchester City in the final in Istanbul on May 29.

Tuchel arrived with a solid CV after leading Paris Saint-Germain to the French title and last season's Champions League final. But few expected him to have such an immediate impact on under-performing Chelsea. Lampard loyalists even cried foul at the brutal sacking of the club's leading scorer and they were singing his name loudly outside the ground before the kickoff of the return leg.

But with Tuchel having taken Chelsea from ninth in the Premier League to fourth, into the FA Cup final and now into their first Champions League final since 2012, few would deny that hiring the 47-year-old German was anything other than a masterstroke.

Defensive excellence has been the trademark of Tuchel's reign and once again he organized Chelsea superbly as they kept Real at bay and posed a sustained threat on the counter. Under him, big-money signings Kai Havertz and Timo Werner have begun to flourish, young English midfielder Mason Mount has taken his game to another level and N'Golo Kante has rediscovered his best form.

It was Chelsea's 18th clean sheet under Tuchel and the statistic could hint at a defensive, cautious approach. But the opposite is true. Tuchel's side produced a dazzling display of fluent attacking football against Real and but for a flurry of missed chances that had the German raging on the touchline, it could have been a rout.

While Chelsea enjoyed a possession figure of only 32 percent against Real, their appetite to win the ball back was as great as ever. The central pair of Jorginho and Kante disrupted Zinedine Zidane's team's build-up play by making interceptions. Mount's three tackles, the joint-highest for the Blues', showed the idea to shut Real down all over the pitch.

When asked if the world had seen a 'Thomas Tuchel style' or he was getting the job done 'on a week to week basis' in the post-match press briefing, he replied, "I am pretty happy with what I see. When I came out, I was pretty happy with what I saw from the first training session ahead of Wolves."

"I don't have the feeling that it is only me. I played my part but the players did what we see here. What we saw was pretty strong because we adapted to multiple situations. We have answers to a lot of questions that are asked. Today, for example, we cannot always find a skillful solution," Tuchel added.

"At times, we hang in and fight. We use our bodies, we use our work rate and if we couldn't outplay them we were ready to outwork them with hunger and energy."

Tuchel has already masterminded a victory over Manchester City in the FA Cup semi-final and a repeat in Turkey would cap an incredible debut season.

Mustafizur, Shakib back home

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman returned home yesterday after the Indian Premier League (IPL) was suspended indefinitely on Tuesday.

The two players boarded a flight from Ahmedabad at 1:00pm and landed in Dhaka at 4:00pm.

"Thank you @Sah75officia, happy to know you've landed home safely in Dhaka with Bangladesh teammate @Mustafiz90 from Ahmedabad," tweeted Shakib's franchise Kolkata Knight Riders.

"Alhamdulillah, we are safely back in Bangladesh without any trouble. I would like to thank @rajasthanroyals and @KKRiders franchises for making it happen. I would also like to thank our health ministry for it's contribution," wrote Mustafizur on facebook.

The chartered flight that Rajasthan Royals' Mustafizur and Kolkata's Shakib boarded were arranged by the BCCI with their respective franchises sharing the cost of the flight.

Even though the Directorate General of Health Services had earlier confirmed that both players will have to complete mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine, it is possible that the decision on the number of days in institutional quarantine for the two players will be made within two days.

"They just returned. Now let's see what happens with their quarantine time," said a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official.

Shakib and Mustafizur will be staying at different city hotels.

The Bangladesh team management is looking forward to getting back their two key players in time ahead of their crucial ODI series against Sri Lanka later this month.

The Tigers will play Sri Lanka in the upcoming three-match ODI series from May 23, and even if the star duo has to quarantine for 14 days, they will be able to take the field in time before the first ODI. The question, however, remains whether it will be possible for them to practice together for a few days ahead of the series.

Pakistan eye series clean sweep

ICC

Babar Azam will look to continue his unbeaten record as Pakistan Test captain when Zimbabwe and Pakistan meet for the second Test on 7 May at the Harare Sports Club.

Pakistan won the first Test comprehensively beating Zimbabwe by an innings and 116 runs. Hasan Ali's nine wickets coupled with Fawad Alam's knock of 140 helped Pakistan cruise to a comfortable victory. Babar is yet to face defeat as Test captain of Pakistan.

With a solid team in place, it will be interesting to see whether Pakistan give a chance Haris Rauf or Shahnawaz Dhani.

Zimbabwe meanwhile will be hoping for better performance with bat and ball. Apart from the opening pair of Kevin Kasuza and Tarisai Musakanda, none of the Zimbabwe batsmen were able to deal with the Pakistan bowling attack in the second innings of the Test.

Their regular captain Sean Williams is expected to return to the fold after missing the missing the first Test because of an injury. He will likely replace one among Tarisai Musakanda and Roy Kaia.

The hosts might also look to give a chance to Luke Jongwe, who had a successful T20I series.

India confident of hosting T20 World Cup

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's cricket board is hoping it might be able to squeeze the remainder of its lucrative Indian Premier League into a crowded calendar and is still confident of hosting the T20 World Cup later this year, a top official told Reuters on Thursday.

Already looking at a $270 million revenue loss following the suspension of the IPL, the board faces a second financial hammer blow if the Covid-19 pandemic prevents India staging the ICC tournament in October and November.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), however, has not given up hope of cramming the 31 remaining IPL matches into the season, despite the tight demands of cricket's international schedule.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) have lined up the United Arab Emirates as the back-up T20 venue in case there is no improvement but BCCI Treasurer Arun Singh Dhumal told Reuters by telephone that he was confident there would be no need. "We will keep monitoring the situation but as of now we are going ahead as per our original plan," he said.

"Hopefully things will get better and we'll be able to organise it in India. Given the experience in other countries,(the coronavirus surge is) likely to come down.

Bangladesh, SL eye rise in Super League standings

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka will arrive in Dhaka on May 16 to play three ODIs against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The series presents both teams with the chance to move up the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League ladder.

Sri Lanka currently sit 12th on the standings with -2 points and can climb as high as ninth if they win the series 3-0, while Bangladesh could skyrocket to the top of the ladder with a series win.

The Tigers currently sit sixth but only trail top-placed England by 10 points. A 2-1 series win would lift them to 50 points, 10 more than England, Pakistan and Australia, who all have 40 points.

Bangladesh will be desperately looking to win the series against Sri Lanka at home after a disappointing 1-0 Test series loss away to the Lankans.

Sri Lanka local newspaper reports suggested that the selectors have decided to infuse plenty of young blood in their ODI team for the series. And according to reports, they have dropped a few veterans such as Dimuth Karunaratne, Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal.

Karunaratne was the former Sri Lanka ODI skipper and Mathews was the one who led Sri Lanka in their previous T20I series against West Indies, in the absence of regular skipper Dasun Shanaka.

Chandimal, notably, had already been dropped from the Sri Lanka team in the recent Test series against Bangladesh.

Kusal Mendis, who had been dropped from the national side due to poor form, has been recalled for the Bangladesh tour, the report added.

Hubbard set to become first transgender Olympian

AFP, *Wellington*

New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard is poised to become the first transgender athlete to compete at the Olympic Games, in a move that will reignite the often vitriolic debate over the ethics of trans sport.

The 43-year-old, who was born male but transitioned to female in her 30s, is on the verge of reaching the Tokyo Olympics under coronavirus-enforced new qualifying rules.

Hubbard, who also competed as a male, became eligible to lift as a woman after showing testosterone levels below the threshold required by the International Olympic Committee.

She is aiming to make New Zealand's Tokyo Olympics squad to contest the women's +87kg category, an event in which she is currently ranked 16th in the world.

Hubbard is already in the history books after becoming the first transgender Commonwealth Games athlete at the Gold Coast in 2018, when she had to withdraw after suffering an elbow injury that almost ended her career.

While the New Zealand team is yet to be named, officials said Hubbard was likely to meet new qualification criteria that have been simplified by the International Weightlifting Federation because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The NZOC can confirm that revised international federation (IF) qualification systems are very likely to see a number of New Zealand weightlifters, including Commonwealth Games transgender athlete Laurel Hubbard, allocated an IF quota spot for Tokyo 2020," the

New Zealand Olympic Committee said.

The NZOC has strongly backed Hubbard's right to compete in the past, and said all athletes selected for Tokyo would receive its support. "The New Zealand team has a strong culture of manaaki (caring), inclusion and respect for all," it said.

Not all in the sporting world have been so welcoming and Hubbard's appearance at the Games is sure to generate intense interest and spotlight the thorny issue of transgender athletes.

She has become an unwitting lightning rod for discussion on the issue, with some arguing she has an unfair advantage over female-born athletes and others saying she meets the criteria laid down by the IOC.In a vastly complex debate, both sides claim to have science on their side.Current IOC rules state a trans woman can compete provided her testosterone levels are below 10 nanomoles per litre, a criteria Hubbard meets.

In 2018, Oceania Weightlifting Federation general secretary Paul Coffa defended Hubbard's participation in the Commonwealth Games.

"She's done everything according to the IOC rules and she's proven that she's a woman... so give her a chance and let her continue," he said.

But the Australian Weightlifting Federation unsuccessfully tried to have her barred from the event, arguing the physique and power she developed as a male before transitioning gave her a physical advantage regardless of testosterone levels.

"In our respectful view, the current criteria and its application has the potential to devalue women's weightlifting and discourage female-born athletes from pursuing the sport at an elite level in the future," it said.

While there are genuine issues to be debated, discussion about transgender sport is a hot-button topic that frequently descends into acrimony and name calling, particularly online.

British television presenter Piers Morgan targeted Hubbard last year, when her Olympic berth began looking a realistic prospect after strong comeback performances following the elbow injury. "This is insane. Women's rights to basic fairness & equality are getting destroyed at the altar of political correctness," Morgan tweeted.

Hubbard rarely gives interviews but told Radio New Zealand in 2017 that she just wanted to compete in the sport she loves and "blocked out" criticism. "If I try and take that weight on board it just makes the lifts harder... I am who I am," she said. "I don't want to change the world. I just want to be me and do what I do.

HIGHEST SELLING CEMENT for more than 15 years
SHAH CEMENT

Spread of Covid in rural India deepens crisis

Daily cases, deaths break previous records; evidence suggests epidemic moving towards eastern states

AGENCIES

Hopes that India's deadly second wave of Covid-19 was about to peak were swept away yesterday as it posted record daily infections and deaths and as the virus spread from cities to villages across the world's second-most populous nation.

India reported a record 412,262 new cases in the past 24 hours and a record 3,980 deaths. Covid-19 infections have now surged past 21 million, with a total death toll of 230,168, health ministry data show.

Government modelling had forecast a peak in second wave infections by Wednesday.

"This temporarily halts speculations of a peak," Rijo M John, a professor at the Indian Institute of Management in the southern state of Kerala, said on Twitter.

Medical experts say India's actual figures could be five to 10 times the official tallies.

Covid-19 crisis has been most acute in the capital, New Delhi, among other cities, but in rural areas - home to nearly 70% of India's 1.3 billion people - limited public healthcare is posing more challenges.

"The situation has become dangerous in villages," said Suresh Kumar, a field coordinator with Manav Sansadhan Evam Mahila Vikas Sansthan, a human rights charity.

In some villages where the charity works in the northern

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

After 22 days of bus service suspension, due to movement restrictions enforced to curb Covid transmission, buses started plying within cities and districts across the country yesterday. This photo was captured from Paltan intersection in the capital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Country sees lowest daily Covid deaths in 39 days

41 die, 1,822 test positive in a day

UNB, *Dhaka*

Amid the declining trend in Covid-19 infections and fatalities after an alarming surge in April, Bangladesh registered 41 coronavirus-related deaths in 24 hours until yesterday, pushing up the total fatalities to 11,796.

This is the lowest number of coronavirus deaths in the country after March 28 this year. Bangladesh saw 35 deaths on March 28.

However, 1,822 new cases were detected during the period after the test of 21,585 samples.

The mortality rate remained static at 1.53 percent, said the Directorate General of Health Services in a handout.

The number of coronavirus-related deaths came down to 50 after over a month on Wednesday as the country saw 50 deaths on April 1 and it had kept rising since then.

The daily infection rate fell to 8.44 percent from Wednesday's 8.59 percent.

Mamata takes centre stage

Becomes focus of opposition parties to unitedly stop BJP juggernaut in 2024 polls

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, *from* NEW DELHI

It may be too early to tell, but the signs seem promising for Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee.

TMC's landslide victory in the West Bengal assembly elections over the Bharatiya Janata Party, helmed by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, is propelling Mamata to becoming the focal point of opposition parties' united effort to halt the BJP in the 2024 general elections.

An array of senior Congress leaders, who had shot off a letter to party President Sonia Gandhi last year seeking organisational changes after its abject defeat in the 2019 parliamentary polls, have been gushing over Mamata's leadership since the Bengal poll results came out on May 2.

Among those leaders are Ghulam Nabi Azad who termed Mamata as the "Lioness of the East" for fighting and winning against all odds. In a tweet, Kapil Sibal

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Nixon's letter to Yahya

MAY 7, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

US President Richard Nixon in a letter issued today to Pakistan President Yahya Khan expressed his concern over the loss of life and human suffering in East Pakistan. However, he sympathised with Yahya and said, "I understand the anguish you must have felt in making the difficult decisions you have faced."

Nixon further said, "We look forward to an early renewal of your national development effort and of normal economic activity throughout Pakistan. We especially hope for the restoration of internal communications in East Pakistan to forestall food shortages, and we are prepared to support international humanitarian relief there."

The letter concluded, "It is to no one's advantage to permit the situation in East Pakistan to lead to an internationalization of the situation. Foreign involvement could create new problems and compound the difficulty of securing an ultimate settlement. We have been in touch with the Government of India and have discussed the implications of the present situation. We have stressed the need for restraint."

INDIA'S POSITION ON RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reportedly told opposition leaders today that her government wanted to watch developments for a while before deciding whether to recognise the government proclaimed by the Bangalee independence movement in Bangladesh.

Official sources reported that all the opposition leaders with the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Singer Anup Bhattacharya no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighter and Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste Anup Bhattacharya passed away at a city hospital around 7:30pm yesterday. He was 77.

His son-in-law Sudip Chakroborthy told The Daily Star that he got admitted to the capital's Asgar Ali Hospital with age-related complications before he breathed his last.

The legendary artiste had long suffered from lung problems, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Sudip said, "His only regret was that he did not get his due respect from the authorities regarding his Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste status. Even two days ago, he expressed his grief over the issue."

Born in Sylhet's Zakiganj, Anup's musical

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

The earliest known human burial discovered in Africa

AFP, *Paris*

A child no older than three laid to rest sideways in an earthen grave 78,000 years ago, legs carefully tucked up against its tiny chest, is the earliest known human burial in Africa, researchers reported Wednesday.

The sunken pit, in a cave complex along the coast of Kenya, was bereft of ornaments, offerings or ochre-coloured clay carvings found in the region's more recent Stone Age graves, they detailed in the journal Nature.

But "Mtoto" -- Swahili for "child" -- had been

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING MAY 7

	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	3-57	12-30	5-00	6-34	8-00
JAMAAT	4-07	1-15	5-15	6-44	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

evaly

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAY	SEHRI	IFTAR
24	7		6:34
25	8	3:51	6:34
26	9	3:50	6:35

Hasina greets Mamata over polls victory

To work together to fight Covid pandemic

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina congratulated Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee after she was sworn in as the chief minister of West Bengal for a third straight term.

"The huge victory of Trinamool Congress in the assembly election of 2021 is a reflection of deep-rooted trust of West Bengal people in you," she said in a message sent to Mamata on Wednesday.

Hasina wished overall development and continued progress of the West Bengal people under the able leadership of Mamata.

She expressed optimism that the relations between Bangladesh and West Bengal will deepen further in future in order to build a prosperous future for the people of two Bengals.

"At this critical time of the global coronavirus

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

NATURE QUEST

A common green magpie sitting on a tree branch after taking a dip in a small pond in the Satchhari National Park in Habiganj's Chunarughat. This beautiful bird builds nests in trees and large shrubs.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ASKER IBNE FIROZ

COVID VACCINE PATENT WAIVER

World powers back US plan

WHO hails 'historic' move as drugmakers push back

AGENCIES

The United States threw its weight behind a waiver on patent protections for Covid-19 vaccines as the GAVI vaccine alliance urged Washington to help manufacturers transfer know-how to boost global production.

Rich nations have faced accusations of hoarding shots while poor countries struggle to get inoculation programs off the ground, with the virus surging across the developing world in contrast to the easing of restrictions in Europe and the United States.

Under intense pressure to ease protections for vaccine manufacturers, Washington's Trade Representative Katherine Tai said Wednesday the country "supports the waiver of those protections for Covid-19 vaccines".

"The extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures," she said in a statement.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised the "historic" move and said it marked "a monumental moment in the fight against Covid-19".

Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen -- who has previously voiced reluctance to waive patents -- said yesterday the bloc was ready to discuss the US proposal.

EU governments lined up to weigh in, with French President Emmanuel Macron saying he was "absolutely in favour" of a global waiver, while Germany said it was open to discussing the proposal.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

EDITOR & PUBLISHER : MAHFUZ ANAM. Printed by him from Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, Tel: 09610222222, 9144330 & 9117796, Fax: 58156306, GPO Box No: 3257, for Advertisement: 01711623910, e-mail: editor@thedailystar.net, reporting@thedailystar.net, advertisement@thedailystar.net