



The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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"Rozina will get a fair judgment... no doubt about that."
FOREIGN MINISTER
AK ABUL MOMEN



"I believe we have a genuine opportunity to make progress and I'm committed to working toward it."
BIDEN ON GAZA CEASEFIRE



"Total deaths are at least two to three times higher than officially reported."
WHO ASSISTANT DG
SAMIRA ASMA ON COVID

Pandemic curbs only on paper

Due to slack enforcement, 'restrictions' fail to stop movement, crowd of people; experts fear fallout of home rush next week

MUNTAKIM SAAD and MOJIBUDDIN AHMED SUJAN

The restrictions to contain the spread of Covid-19 remain only on paper as there is little enforcement by government agencies to control public movement and plying of vehicles.

With inter-district buses off the road, those who left the capital for village homes to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr are now returning in jam-packed vehicles, flouting the health safety guidelines.

Yesterday, thousands of holidaymakers from southern districts flocked to Banglabazar, Daulatdia and Kazirhat ferry terminals to reach the capital, crossing the Padma.

Besides, the number of people on the streets, and at kitchen markets, shopping malls, restaurants and parks in the city has gone up significantly. Many of them do not wear any facemasks and follow the social distancing rules.

Health experts have again warned that such careless acts amid lax enforcement of the restrictions could result in a spike in coronavirus cases.

There has been a rise in Covid infections after the Eid. Over 1,500 cases were reported yesterday, up from 261 a week ago.

Experts and health officials had earlier said the Indian and three other variants of Covid could cause another surge in infections unless strict restrictions were enforced properly.

Noted virologist Prof Nazrul Islam said the way holidaymakers have been travelling across the country clearly showed that the restrictions were not being implemented.

"Instead of keeping the buses off the road, those should be allowed to operate, maintaining the health safety rules," said the member of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19.

Commenting on the bureaucratic tangles at different ministries, he said, "The advisory committee sends recommendations to the health ministry.

"The file then lies idle there for days. We don't know the officials who see these recommendations and make decisions. Then the file goes to the public administration ministry. Do you even know how many officials are involved in the process? This is not the right way to get things done."

By the time the officials reach a decision, the recommendations lose their timeliness, he said.

RUSH AT ENTRY POINTS

In five days from May 15, at least 5,345,826

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Passengers get off a ferry at Shimulia ghat in Munshiganj's Louhajang upazila around 3:00pm yesterday. People returning to Dhaka after celebrating Eid did not maintain physical distancing as there was a huge rush of passengers. Eighteen ferries carried mostly passengers on Banglabazar-Shimulia route throughout the day.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

World leaders hail Gaza ceasefire

Vow to help Palestinians to rebuild; fresh clashes in Jerusalem



AGENCIES

World leaders have hailed a ceasefire that took hold in the early hours of yesterday and vowed to help rebuild Gaza, after an Israeli bombing campaign that killed more than 240 people and Palestinian rocket attacks that killed 12 in Israel.

The worst violence since 2014 ceased after 11 days under an agreement mediated by Egypt.

The United Nations secretary general urged Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers to observe the ceasefire and called on global leaders to develop a reconstruction package "that supports the Palestinian people and strengthens their institutions".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

SINOPHARM VACCINE China to give another six lakh doses as gift

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China yesterday announced providing the second batch of 600,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine to Bangladesh as gift.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi had a phone conversation with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abul Momen in this regard.

In a statement, Chinese embassy in Dhaka said China pays close attention to the latest epidemic situation in Bangladesh.

At this critical time in Bangladesh's fight against the epidemic, China is concerned about the urgent need for vaccine of Bangladeshi friends, the embassy said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Hospital suffers, so do patients

National Institute of ENT almost crippled due to lack of necessary workforce; ICU non functional

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Patients are deprived of an intensive care unit at the National Institute of Ear, Nose and Throat as the authorities have failed to make it functional over the years due to the dearth of necessary workforce.

While the ICU lies idle, costly artificial respiratory ventilator (ARV) machines have remained unused at the institution for around two years.

Eight ARV machines and other equipment gathering dust for years in a store room and the non-functional ICU were highlighted in an Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) assessment report in March last year.

"In many cases, critical patients needed ICU support after complicated operations. But the patients are not getting this service in the hospital," the report read.

One biochemistry semi auto analyser, Eliza auto washer, Eliza plate incubator, eight ICU ventilators, one CO2 laser,

diode laser machine, and one unit sleep lab equipment were found to be non-functional, the IMED also found.

In the year since the report was released, little has changed at the National Institute of ENT, located in the city's Tejgaon area. The Daily Star found from hospital sources.

The government spent Tk 62.41 crore under a project called the "Establishment of National Institute of ENT 1st Phase in Dhaka", aimed at supplying the lone specialised ENT hospital with modern equipment so that it could better serve patients.

While the project was officially completed in 2014, most of the equipment reached the hospital in 2018.

All the eight costly ARV machines had been lying idle in a store room since, and much of the hospital equipment had gone out of order in the meantime, said the report.

According to hospital sources, six ARV machines after necessary repairs were sent to Jashore General Hospital in April last

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

PALLABI TRADER MURDER Accused killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

Prime accused ex-MP Awal, 2 others remanded

STAR REPORT

An accused in trader Shahinuddin murder case was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion in Eastern Housing area of the capital's Pallabi early yesterday.

Deceased Manik, 32, was directly involved in the killing of the trader on May 16 in front of his seven-year-old son, said Rab.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed former lawmaker MA Awal (Lakshimpur-1), the prime accused in the case, and two other accused Zahirul Islam Babu and Md Hasan on four-day remand each for interrogation.

The Rab arrested Awal from Bhairab in Kishoreganj early Thursday. It claimed that Awal planned the murder with Taher and Sumon at his office in the capital's Kalabagan four to five days before the incident.

According to the elite force, Sumon, who led a group of assailants, called Awal after the killing and said: "Sir, finished".

Yesterday, the court placed the three accused on remand after investigation officer Syed Iftekhar Hossain, also an inspector of the Detective Branch of police, produced them before it seeking 10-day remand for each, said court sources.

The Rab arrested Zahirul from Patuakhali on Thursday and Hasan from Chandpur on Wednesday.

Awal is a former secretary general of Bangladesh Tarikat

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COVID PANDEMIC 26 more die, 1,504 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials yesterday reported 1,504 new cases of coronavirus and 26 deaths from the disease.

This takes the number of confirmed infections to 7,86,698 and deaths to 12,310, reads a release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, a 17-year-old boy named Sakib Uddin, who recently returned from India, died yesterday in Chuadanga from Covid-19.

Besides, a six-month-old baby and a 11-year old child tested positive after spending 14 days in quarantine since returning from India.

He was a cancer patient taking treatment in India, said ASM Fateh Akram, resident medical officer of Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

Sakib returned to Bangladesh through Benapole on May 9, he added.

Sakib's brother Akib said he was admitted to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Journalists stage a protest in front of Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital's Shegunbagicha yesterday demanding release of Prothom Alo senior reporter Rozina Islam. The protesters threatened waging a tougher movement if the journo was not freed from jail by tomorrow.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

83 eminent citizens demand Rozina's release

Journos to go for tougher programmes if she's not freed by tomorrow; Momen tells CNN she'll get fair treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty-three eminent citizens of the country have demanded unconditional release of daily Prothom Alo's Senior Reporter Rozina Islam, who was arrested in a case filed by the health ministry on Monday.

In a statement yesterday, they said, "We strongly demand the immediate withdrawal of the motivated case against Rozina Islam, her unconditional release, an inquiry to identify those responsible for harassing her and bringing them to book."

They said everyone, including the civil society, had hoped that Rozina would have been granted bail on Thursday in consideration of the sensitive nature of the incident, the citizen's right to bail and the question of justice.

However, the decision on bail order was fixed for tomorrow.

The eminent citizens said, "The delay by the court in taking a decision regarding Rozina's bail disappointed us."

They said all the charges in the case against Rozina were bailable and if she had been granted bail, there would have been no obstacle to the next hearing of the case.

The statement said, "There has been strong protest and reaction from home and abroad about the arrest of senior woman journalist Rozina on fabricated charges by the health and family welfare ministry. The journalist community, civil society and even senior quarters within the government have issued statements terming the arrest of Rozina unwarranted and an embarrassment for the government. The United Nations has expressed its concern at the incident too. The issue has appeared in leading

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

TANGENTS BY IHTISHAM KABIR

House Sparrow



House Sparrows, Hail Haor, Bangladesh.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

While we may not give them a second look, sparrows have distinguished lineage. They lend their name, Passer, to the order Passerines, which comprises more than half of the world's bird species. Another name for Passerine is songbird.

There are twenty five species of sparrows in the world. Of these, two are found in Bangladesh: House Sparrow and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Most species of sparrows remain localized and shy of humans. However, the House Sparrow is extraordinary. By coming close to humans while retaining its wild nature, it has spread all over the globe.

It is about 6 inches long, coloured brown and black. Male and female House Sparrows look different. The most prominent distinction is that the male has a black "bib" on its chin.

Over time, the House Sparrow has adapted well to humans. Its natural food is seeds of grass and weeds. But its feeding depends on the activities of humans. And so it

eats our leftover food and crumbs and scavenges for food in garbage containers. When eating food that it has difficulty digesting, it swallows small pieces of stone or other hard material. These "grits" stay in the bird's intestines for a long time and help grind up food. Eventually the "grits" are passed with the stool.

To cleanse itself, the House Sparrow, like many other birds, prefers sand baths over water baths. I have seen this in sandy paths in villages as well as construction sites where sand is kept. It will dig a hole in the sand to dip itself, shaking vigorously and flapping its wings. A social bird, it often bathes in groups, taking turns dipping into the sand.

Another adaptation helping the House Sparrow thrive is its nesting and breeding habits. It builds nests in hollow areas of buildings such as roof overhangs and crevices. During courtship males engage in agitated twittering and strut around the female. It is prolific in reproduction, laying up to seven clutches of four or five eggs every year. However, the high birth rate

is offset by a high mortality rate: young birds, as they leave their nest, fall prey to cats and bigger birds.

The House Sparrow has come along with humans for thousands of years. In general the association is favourable: in Greek mythology it is a symbol of love and in Chinese culture it is considered auspicious. I imagine at least some of this is due to its abundant fertility, which also resulted its eggs being eaten as an aphrodisiac during the Middle Ages.

The bird has a large and versatile population. It can easily spread in a new place and drive away native species. Over the world, it is found in all continents except Antarctica. Among the estimated 50 billion bird population of the world, House Sparrow is one of only four species that cross a billion. The others are Barn Swallow, Ring-necked Gull and European Starling.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

Speak up for Palestine

Ambassador Rabab Fatima urges int'l community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima yesterday urged the international community to take urgent and decisive actions to resolve the longstanding crisis in Palestine.

She was speaking at the "Joint Debate on the Situation in the Middle East and the Question of Palestine", convened by the president of the UN General Assembly.

Ambassador Fatima informed the assembly that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a letter to Palestine president, denounced the abhorrent acts of violence against innocent civilians of Palestine.

She reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment in realising the rights of the people of Palestine for an independent homeland, based on the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

She asked for an immediate halt to the Israeli aggression and deplored repetition of such senseless cycles of violence and atrocities by the occupying Israeli forces.

Ambassador Fatima highlighted some priorities towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian crisis and peace in the region.

They include genuine efforts of the international community to address root causes of the crisis and fulfilment of the charter responsibilities by the security council and general assembly to turn around the culture of inaction and enforce compliance of all international human rights and humanitarian laws, and relevant UN resolutions.

She called for engaging with all relevant actors to ensure early implementation of the Road Map, Arab Peace Initiative and the efforts of the diplomatic quartet. She said humanitarian needs of Palestinian people must be met urgently and underscored the importance of ensuring accountability of the occupying Israeli forces.

More than 100 UN member states participated in the daylong joint debate, addressed by the UN secretary general and president of the General Assembly. All speakers called for an urgent resolution to the Palestinian crisis.

JS budget session to be cut short due to Covid

RASHIDUL HASAN

The daily order of business of this year's budget session will be carried out with minimum lawmakers in the House to maintain social distancing and avoid risk of Covid-19 infection, and the duration of the session will be brief.

"Maintaining all health guidelines, the budget session will continue for around two weeks," Zafar Ahmed Khan, senior secretary of the parliament secretariat, told The Daily Star.

"Due to the ongoing second wave of Covid-19, the budget session would be as short as possible to avoid risk of infection," he said.

"No other business except for budgetary and other important activities will be done during the upcoming session," the senior secretary added.

The 11th Jatiya Sangsad will go into budget session at 5pm on June 2, while Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal is scheduled to place the budget for 2021-22 fiscal the following day.

This will be the 13th session of this parliament.

Usually the budget session continues for 30-35 working days, and discussions of the general budget take 55-60 hours.

The last budget session of current 11th parliament was prorogued after only nine working days due to the pandemic, which was the shortest budget session in recent history of Jatiya Sangsad.

Only MPs, staffers and officials of the parliament secretariat who will be tested negative for Covid-19 will be allowed to attend the session, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

The question-answer session for the prime minister and other ministers in the budget session will be tabled, added Zafar Ahmed Khan.

The parliament has taken various health safety measures during the budget session.

Apart from budget-related officials and employees of the parliament secretariat, others will

be discouraged to come to the parliament, sources said.

Senior members of the parliament will be advised not to take part in the session, considering their age.

The parliament will conduct tasks every day with 80-90 lawmakers, so that they can sit maintaining distance in compliance with the health guidelines, sources said.

As per the rules of parliament procedure, the presence of 60 out of 350 members of parliament is mandatory for ensuring a quorum to start the sitting of a parliamentary session.

➤ Session to continue for 2 weeks

➤ Question-answer to be tabled

➤ Journos not allowed to cover in person

Presence of respective ministers and MPs would be ensured on days when the session will have business related to them.

The constitution has an obligation to pass the budget before June 30.

The rules of procedure also instruct the members of parliament to discuss the proposed budget.

Sources at the parliament secretariat said media will be requested to cover the budget session through live telecast on Sangsad Television instead of coming to parliament.

No pass will be issued to journalists to cover the budget session this time due to the Covid-19 situation.

However, one reporter from each media outlet will be able to collect budgetary documents.

Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and four others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Brahmanbaria, two people were killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between a microbus and a pickup van on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bijoyagar upazila.

The accident took place at Alinagar in Budhanti union of the upazila around 9am.

ASI Abdul Hamid of Islampur Police Outpost said of the two deceased, one was identified as Roni Khandaker (18) of Habiganj. Roni was helper of the pickup van driver. Identity of the driver could not be known, the ASI said.

ASI Hamid said a Sylhet-bound microbus collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound pickup van coming from the opposite direction. Two passengers of the pickup died instantly. The injured were sent to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex in Habiganj.

In Rajshahi, a truck helper was killed and the driver injured after a truck overloaded with paddy sacks hit a tree after veering off Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj highway.

The driver, Md Faisal, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital after he was rescued two hours later, he said.

The accident occurred at Kosba around 5:45am while the truck was transporting paddy from Jashore to a Chapainawabganj rice mills.

Pangolin rescued, released in Lawachhara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A pangolin was rescued in Lawachhara forest in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar on Thursday evening after seven days of treatment.

Green activists and the Forest Department rescued the endangered mammal from Kulaura on May 13.

"It was being treated at Lawachhara Rescue Centre," said Sohel Shyam, coordinator of Stand for Our Endangered Wildlife.

Acting on a tip-off that some people were trying to sell the pangolin, the organisation with the help of Forest Department and Moulvibazar Sadar range officer rescued it, said Divisional Forest Officer Rezaul Karim Chowdhury.



After an exhausting day under the sweltering heat, this rickshaw-puller stopped at Chattogram city's CRB area to savour the ultimate summer treat -- borof er gola. Vendors around Chattogram city prepare the lolly by pouring brightly coloured, flavoured syrups over moulded, crushed ice. Adults and children alike gobble up the sweet treat as a refresher amid heatwaves.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHAN

'Isolation leaves them deprived'

Speakers suggest integrating tea workers into mainstream; International Tea Day observed

STAR REPORT

"There is poverty in every sector, but tea workers suffer the most as they're geographically confined due to several reasons. They must be integrated into the mainstream," said Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, an eminent economist, yesterday.

He was speaking as chief guest at a discussion titled "Protection of Tea Workers: Challenges and Accountability of Actors."

The virtual discussion marking International Tea Day was organised by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) in partnership with Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union. It was supported by Canada Fund for Local Initiative.

Prof Wahiduddin said, "Workers of other sectors are part of the common society. But the isolation of tea workers leaves them particularly deprived."

"The tea industry is mostly private and relies on productivity and profit, which must be increased at all times. During negotiation of wages and other terms, these business owners should be transparent," he said.

He urged Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to prepare a statistical report on the industry that will assist policies.



A worker collects tea leaves at a garden in Habiganj. PHOTO: STAR

Philip Gain, director of SEHD, presented the keynote paper while Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), chaired and facilitated the dialogue.

In the keynote paper, Gain mentioned tea workers are being deprived by the labour law, while women workers are suffering the most.

They have substandard quality of living and there is a lack of health and education facility, he said. He also mentioned in the paper that the tea workers have no right to land and are not able to get the benefits of the government's social safety services.

Gain also stated that the wage of tea workers in cash is Tk 120 per day along with ration and other facilities. Workers say the value of these facilities and ration is Tk 200. So their total wage comes to Tk 320, he said.

But Bangladesh Tea Association estimated that to be Tk 378.91 in a report to Wage Board in 2019, he said.

KM Abdus Salam, secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment; M Shah Alam, chairman of Bangladesh Tea Association (BTA); Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, and Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, VC of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, were present as guests of honour.

Leaders of Cha Sramik Union and Trade Union Centre also participated as discussants. Tahsin Chowdhury, convener of labour and welfare sub-committee of BTA, also participated.

Prof Tanzimuddin Khan of Dhaka University and member of SEHD gave the vote of thanks.

ফ্লু ভ্যাকসিন নেয়ার সময় এখনই

ফ্লু একটি মারাত্মক ছোঁয়াচে রোগ যা ইনফ্লুয়েঞ্জা ভাইরাস এর কারণে হয়ে থাকে। যারা দীর্ঘমেয়াদী জটিল রোগে আক্রান্ত, তাদের এই সময়ে ফ্লু সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি বেশি থাকে। যেমন-

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ভ্যাকসিন প্রয়োগের জন্য যোগাযোগ করুন
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শুধুমাত্র রেজিস্টার্ড চিকিৎসকের ব্যবস্থাপত্র মোতাবেক এন্টিবায়োটিক সেবন করুন।

GAZA'S WAR IN NUMBERS

GAZA

243 Palestinians including 66 children killed in Israeli air strikes in the besieged coastal enclave since May 10.

More than 1,900 people including 560 children wounded in that same period, according to the same source. 91,000 people have been forced to flee their homes.

1,447 homes -- houses or flats -- hit. 205 residential blocks completely destroyed. 75 governmental and public facilities damaged. 454 cars or means of transport destroyed or badly damaged.

14 kilometres of water pipes, 50 water wells, and 17 kilometres of sewage pipes have been affected. 31 electrical substations and 79 kilometres of cables affected, nine main lines cut off.

3 mosques completely destroyed. 40 mosques and one church damaged.

ISRAEL

12 killed in Israel, including one Israeli child, one Arab Israeli teenager and her father, one Indian, and two Thai national. 357 people have been wounded by rockets.

Of 4,070 rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups towards Israel, around 90 percent were intercepted by Israel's air defence system. 2,061 claims received for homes hit by rockets and 1,367 more for cars in southern and central Israel.

WEST BANK

25 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces since the outbreak of hostilities in the occupied territory. The Israeli army says at least five of them had attempted to ram or stab Israeli forces at checkpoints.

SOURCE: AFP

'And who is going to pay?'

Amid rubble of homes, Gazans seek answers after latest round of violence

REUTERS, Gaza

After huddling at home during Israel's 11-day bombardment of Gaza, the shock of seeing houses and other buildings destroyed after yet another conflict tempered Palestinian joy that this round of fighting was over.

"It's like a tsunami," said Abu Ali, standing next to a heap of rubble that had been a 14-storey tower in Gaza City.

"How can the world call itself civilised? This is a war crime. We are ruled by laws of the jungle," he said yesterday, hours after a truce was declared.

Commercial buildings, residential towers and private houses across the Palestinian enclave that is home to 2 million people were damaged or destroyed by the time Israel and Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas announced Friday's ceasefire.

Gaza's housing ministry said on Thursday, shortly before hostilities stopped, that 16,800 housing units were damaged, with 1,800 of those unfit for living and 1,000 destroyed.

Palestinian medics said 243 people were killed in Gaza in air strikes that pounded the enclave day and night since May 10.



"We returned to our homes to find destruction," said Samira Abdallah Naseer, whose two-storey house was hit by a blast. "No place to sit, no water, no electricity, no mattresses, nothing."

Gaza now faces the task of rebuilding, after the fourth conflict with Israel since Hamas took control of the enclave in 2007, setting up a rival power centre to the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

"Now we are back to the dilemma of Gaza reconstruction. Who will carry it out, Hamas or the Palestinian

Authority? And who is going to pay?," said Emad Jawdat, a 53-year-old businessman.

"Some people have still not been compensated for their losses in 2014," he said, referring to last war with Israel that lasted 50 days.

Gaza's challenge is compounded by an Israeli-led blockade, also supported by Egypt which shares a short border with the enclave. Israel says it imposes a blockade to prevent weapons reaching militants. Palestinians call it collective punishment.

Palestinians have already received some pledges of financial help for reconstruction. Egypt, which mediated the truce, said it would allocate \$500 million for rebuilding. US President Joe Biden said his government would work with the United Nations and others to marshal aid.

Gaza officials said this war caused damage worth \$40 million to industry, \$22 million to the power sector and \$27 million to agricultural facilities.

In the northern Gaza Strip, thousands of Palestinians who lived close to the border and who had fled to UN schools further south for shelter made their way home - piling belongings into cars and onto donkey carts and tractors.

Trudging home along streets littered with potholes and past heaps of broken masonry from damaged buildings, some voiced relief they had survived - and even a sense of victory after a conflict with one of the Middle East's most powerful armies in which militant rockets hit Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities.

Salwa Al-Batrawi and her family were returning home "as victors", the 60-year-old said.

"I will kiss the ground, because I made it out (alive), with my children. I can't describe the feeling," she said.

COVER-UP ON 'FAKE' DIANA INTERVIEW

BBC in a tight spot

AFP, London

The British government on Friday warned of potential action against the BBC, after unprecedented criticism from the royal family about its use of deception to secure a 1995 interview with princess Diana, piling pressure on the corporation as it fights attacks on several fronts.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, whose brief includes media, said an independent inquiry into the affair highlighted "damning failings at the heart of the BBC", which is publicly funded.

Ministers would now "consider whether further governance reforms at the BBC are needed", as talks approach for renewal of its royal charter covering its running and regulation, he added.

Diana's interview with journalist Martin Bashir was a global scoop, and saw the princess detail her crumbling marriage to heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, as well as admitting to adultery.

But a retired senior judge on Thursday concluded Bashir had faked documents to falsely claim Diana was being kept tabs on by her closest aides, which persuaded her to take part.

Diana and Charles' eldest son and second-in-line to the throne, Prince William, was scathing in his criticism on Thursday, accusing the BBC of failing his mother and the public -- and worsening his parents' relationship.

William's younger brother Harry also waded in, adding: "The ripple effect of a culture of exploitation and unethical practices ultimately took her life." The revelations could not have come at a worse time for the BBC, as its annual licence fee funding model comes under ever closer scrutiny. Newer, subscription-based platforms and streaming services have prompted mounting calls for the charge -- currently set at £159 (\$226) -- to be scrapped.

The report's findings dominated British newspapers on Friday. Bashir, as quit as religion editor of BBC last week citing ill health.

The BBC's own media editor Amol Rajan on Thursday night said blanket criticism from government ministers to the future king and his brother left the BBC "severely injured, probably scarred".

"For an organisation that exists on the whim of public affection and respect, that is a dreadful place for the BBC to be," he said.

IMF proposes \$50b plan to end Covid pandemic

EU, vaccine firms pledge billions of vaccine doses

AGENCIES

The IMF yesterday proposed a \$50 billion plan to end the Covid-19 pandemic, aiming to expand immunisation drives around the world, while vaccine firms pledged to supply billions of doses to poorer nations by the end of next year.

The pledges came as Spain said it would open its border to all vaccinated travellers next month, offering hope that Europe's tourism season could bounce back after suffering a battering last year.

In Washington, the International Monetary Fund announced a \$50 billion recovery plan to end the pandemic which aims to have at least 60 percent of the world's population vaccinated by the end of 2022.

"Our proposal sets targets, estimates financing requirements, and lays out pragmatic action," IMF head Kristalina Georgieva said at the Global Health Summit held in Rome as part of the G20.

The summit also saw the heads of three leading Covid vaccine makers, Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, promise



around 3.5 billion vaccine doses at cost or discount to middle and low income countries this year and next.

Pfizer will deliver two billion doses, Moderna up to 995 million doses, and Johnson & Johnson up to 500 million doses, representatives of the three pharmaceutical companies said.

Earlier, the EU pledged to donate 100 million vaccine doses to poorer countries.

Vaccines are offering countries hope that they can finally emerge from the pandemic that has ravaged the global economy and killed more than 3.4 million people since it first emerged at the end of 2019.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

College Education Development Project (CEDP)
Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education		
2	Agency	University Grants Commission/ National University		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Principal, Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur		
4	Procuring Entity Code	N/A		
5	Procuring Entity District	Pirojpur.		
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for the Classrooms, Laboratory and general purpose.		
7	Invitation Ref No	IDG/GSC/2020-21/OTM(G-10)		
8	Date	20/05/2021		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit)		
11	Development Partners	International Development Association (IDA), World Bank		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12	Project Code	224017200		
13	Project Name	College Education Development Project (CEDP)		
14	Tender Package No.	G-10		
15	Tender Package Name	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for the Classrooms, Laboratory and general purpose.		
16	Tender Publication Date	20/05/2021		
17	Tender Last Selling Date	05/06/2021, Time: 05:00 PM		
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	06/06/2021, Time: 1:00 PM		
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	06/06/2021, Time: 1:45 PM		
20	Name & Address of the office	Office of the Principal, Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur.		
	Selling Tender Document			
	Receiving Tender Document			
	Opening Tender Document			
21	Place /Date/Time of Pre- Tender Meeting (Optional)	will not be held		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	1. The tenderer shall have a minimum of three (03) years overall experience in the supply of goods and related services; years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper 2. The minimum specific experience as supplier in supply furniture of at least 1 (one) single contract successfully completed within the last 5 years, each with a value of at least Tk.27.00 Lac. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. 3. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderers shall be Tk 27.00 Lac. 4. Others mentioned in Tender Document.		
23	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Mentioned in Tender Document		
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Mentioned in Tender Document		
25	Tender Document Price	BDT 1,000.00 (One Thousand)		
26	Name of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount(Tk.)	Completion time in Days
	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for the Classrooms, Laboratory and general purpose	Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur	70,000.00 (Seventy Thousand Taka only)	30 Days
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Professor Syed Ali Azam		
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Principal		
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur.		
30	Contract Details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel : 0461-62650	Fax : N/A	E-mail : gscpirojpur@gmail.com
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			

Professor Syed Ali Azam
Principal
Govt. Suhrawardi College, Pirojpur.

Young Brits want to ditch monarchy: poll

REUTERS, London

Young people in Britain no longer think the country should keep the monarchy, a poll yesterday showed.

According to the survey by YouGov, 41% of those aged 18 to 24 thought there should now be an elected head of state compared to 31% who wanted a king or queen. However, overall the survey had better news for the royals, with 61% favouring the monarchy.

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ASSET DEVELOPMENTS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Manikganj

e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

Memo No:-23-EED-Manikganj-Non-Govt. Repair/TMED-2020-21 Date: 20/05/2021

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Last date and time of selling documents	Tender closing date/time	Tender opening date/time
01	570650	Repair and Renovation works of Sorupai Alhaz A. Alim Dakhil Madrasa at Sadar Upazila Manikganj District.	06-June-2021 15:00pm	07-June-2021 11:00am	07-June-2021 11:00am
02	570652	Repair and Renovation works of Romjan Ali Technical School and College at Sadar Upazila Manikganj District.	06-June-2021 15:00pm	07-June-2021 11:00am	07-June-2021 11:00am
03	570653	Repair and Renovation works of Khaserchar Mahmudia Alim Madrasa at Singair Upazila Manikganj District.	06-June-2021 15:00pm	07-June-2021 11:00am	07-June-2021 11:00am

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to **15.00pm on 06-June-2021**. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

M. Mustafizur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Manikganj



PHOTO: STAR

Ilias Kanchan on career, regrets and current projects

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

National Award winning actor Ilias Kanchan has achieved a lot during his career, being one of the most successful leads of his time.

He has also successfully forayed into production, and has worked tirelessly as the head of "Nirapad Sharok Chai", making roads safer for everyone with his efforts.

This Eid, the actor has starred in the much talked about "Moronottom", a web film produced by Bongo, which was also televised by four channels.

We talk to the eminent actor for his thoughts on the industry, future plans and more.

"Moronottom" was your first web film. What was your reaction when you first saw it?

I have been a rebellious voice all my life, so I was exceptionally happy when I saw "Moronottom" myself.

The film, which tells the story of a girl who undergoes harassment and commits suicide, is a touching tale by Sanjoy Samadder.

It was telecast on four channels at once, so I must say that it was a record for me, and I am proud of "Moronottom".

How was your experience working on the film?

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, I have not gone out much, unless it was an emergency. However, I took four days to shoot for this film. I must say, Sanjoy Samadder is an excellent director and handled it very well. I have done more than a hundred small-screen projects, but outside of films, I have rarely seen such a great production team.

Everyone on the unit was careful, wore a mask and followed the safety protocols. I had a great experience shooting in Pubail, Shahid Minar and

Old Dhaka for this project.

What was your most memorable memory from the shoot?

When I was shooting at a very old residence in Old Dhaka, and later realised that it was the home of the publisher of "Begum Potrika". It was a great moment for me, as I had the chance to speak to him when we received the "Nagar Padak" from former mayor, Sadeque Hossain Khoka back in the day. Since he is not with us anymore, I reminisced him during that time.

You recently worked with long-time colleague Rozina for a new film. Tell us about that.

Rozina and I go way back, we did many films together. She recently directed a film named "Fire Dekha", which is based on our great Liberation War. It is a government granted film, and more importantly, I took up the offer because I am very fond of the subject.

I'd like to say that there are unfortunately no institutes in the country where you can formally learn direction. Greats like Amzad Hossain and Subhash Dutta learned from others. My belief is that Rozina, having acted in more than 300 films in her career, will do well in direction.

Do you have any regrets in your career?

My only regret is that I have not been able to continue my "Nirapad Sharok Chai" movement because of this pandemic. We usually go around schools, and give motivational training to drivers as well.

However, I am very grateful for the career that I have had. I was able to star in "Beder Meye Jochona", one of the country's most commercially successful films. I have been able to help people with "Nirapad Sharok Chai", after I started to appear less in films. The Almighty has given me a very respectable life, and I cherish it very much.

MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

For the last two years in a row, I had taken much joy in correctly predicting the Oscar winners for best actor. Both Rami Malek ("Bohemian Rhapsody") and Joaquin Phoenix ("Joker") transcended the barriers of storytelling on their own to give memorable performances in their respective films. 2020 was not the same for movies, or otherwise. As cinema theatres remained shut around the world contributing to the sense of grief and the loss of normalcy that were universally experienced, many anticipated an underwhelming year for new films.

Yet, despite the unprecedented circumstances or perhaps because of them, poignant stories were told, boundaries of creativity were pushed, and most importantly, smaller movies (those with less Hollywood fanfare) received the limelight. Sir Anthony Hopkins delivered a gripping performance in one such movie, called "The Father" and deservedly, was awarded the Oscar.

"The Father" tells the story of an old man (also named Anthony), as his mind unravels due to age and dementia. Olivia Colman as his daughter Anne, deftly depicts the intricacies involved in the face of difficult decisions.

A few weeks back, I read a 2019 article in *The New Yorker*, titled "Why We Can't Tell the Truth About Aging". I understood that when much of classic literature was penned, the average life expectancy of man couldn't have been more than fifty. For the first time in history, we have an aging population. The stories of the elderly not only deserve to be told, but there is a wide audience for them which comprises the old and the young, who wish to know more about what old age can look like, and that picture is not always pretty.

In this regard, "The Father" fits perfectly into the current cultural landscape, which is hyper fixated on how to stay young and look young for as long as possible. Growing old however, is inevitable: skin will wrinkle, hair will grey and fall out, energy will be low, and some will lose their minds.

MOVIE REVIEW

The Father: A gripping tale about the reality of old age

Director Florian Zeller intentionally scripted the movie entirely from the perspective of Anthony. As a result, the audience at any given moment in the film only knows what he knows, and sees what he sees. Anthony is highly speculative, fearful, and arrogant. At times, the movie can seem like a mystery-thriller in which one is compelled to question whether a mean trick is being played on this old and vulnerable man.

In a 2021 interview with BBC, Zeller says, "I wanted *The Father* to be a bit more than a story, but like an experience, as if you [the viewer] were the one losing your bearings."

The movie is shot almost entirely inside an apartment, which we initially know as Anthony's own. Throughout the film, bits and pieces of the apartment change, furniture is switched around, and a painting disappears. The set is used as a device to convey a change in timeline. Ultimately, I wondered if the events of the movie were simply a recurrence of what Anthony goes through on a given day.

Hopkins astoundingly depicts the reality of how dehumanising old age can be — the image of a man in his 80s whimpering for his mother as though he was a young kid will certainly stay with the audience. Hopkins portrays strength and fierceness when he is stubborn and helplessness when he is weak. The dichotomy of his performance is not only haunting, but also leaves the viewers with much to ponder about their own relationship with aging, and elderly parents and grandparents.

"The Father" brings to light the unfathomable difficulty of being in the position of someone responsible for an elderly person — there are not one but two characters in helpless positions. Anne struggles with the weight of her decision to live out her life on her own terms and what it means for her father's life.

The movie illustrates a simple but harsh reality of old age: one's way out of a life of complete dependence and into a better place is death.



A snippet from "The Father".

A candid chat with Digghi

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

National Award-winning actor Prarthana Fardin Digghi started off her career as a child artiste. She made her comeback on the silver screen with "Tungipapar Miabhai", last year. She has also been in talks for her role in the upcoming Shyam Benegal directorial Bangladesh-India joint venture "Bangabandhu". In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the actor talks about her upcoming ventures, future plan, and more.

How was your experience of working in "Bangabandhu", the biopic of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman?

This project has been one of the greatest opportunities one, as an actor, could hope for. I am playing the role of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, while she was aged between 13 and 15 in the film's timeline. I had to travel to India to shoot for this production in two lots. The shooting of my part is done and the director has much appreciated my performance. "Bangabandhu" is a historic film and being a part of such a larger-than-life character feels

like a blessing.

Before you started shooting, you had a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Any incident in particular that you cherish about the meeting?

This was yet another epic moment for me in my career. When I told the honourable Prime Minister that I was to play the character of her mother, she shared many unknown sides of



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, which has really helped me absorb the role.

How did you prepare for this project?

I had to undergo tremendous formulation, both mental and physical, for this role. It started with intense research and conceptualisation as I wanted to perfect her projection from books to the screen.

Your film "Tungipapar Miabhai" was released a while ago. How was your experience with it?

Coincidentally, I played the same character in that film. It got a positive response from both the audience and critics. Sadly, the number of audiences allowed in the theatres was limited in the pandemic. However, I am still hopeful about the impact it would leave on the audience in the longer run.

What are your upcoming ventures? Are you shooting during this lockdown?

I am not shooting currently and spend most of my time at home. I am working on a web film "Shesh Chithi" where I will share the screen with Yash Rohan, among others. The project, directed by Sumon Dhar, is jointly written by Bobby Rahman and Sumon Dhar.

Carrying the legacy of Gaudiya Nritya across borders



Mahua Mukherjee

ASHLEY SHOFTORSHI SAMADDAR

Noted Gaudiya dancer Rachel Priyanka Perris developed a keen interest in dance from an early age. She met Mahua Mukherjee in 2004 at a 15-day dance workshop, where she was performing with the popular dance troupe Nriyanchal. The workshop changed her life forever, compelling her to choose Gaudiya Nritya professionally. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, Gaudiya Nritya exponent Mahua Mukherjee and her protégé Rachel Priyanka Perris share their experiences, and more.

Rachel clearly remembers the first time that she came across her dance guru Mahua Mukherjee. "Almost 200 dancers from all over the world attended the workshop to get a glimpse at Gaudiya Nritya. It was my first proper workshop," she says. After planning and working her way up for a couple of years, Rachel finally decided to visit Mahua Mukherjee in 2006. "I didn't even try for any other university, I had to get the ICCR scholarship," she adds. Rachel chose Bharatanatyam as her subject, since there was no major graduation course in Gaudiya Nritya at that time.

Mahua Mukherjee was introduced to dancing by her grandparents when she started living with them in Chhattisgarh from the age of five. "The first aspect that won over my mind was the tribal folk dance of Chhattisgarh. After coming across performances of maestros like Birju Maharaj and Lila Samson, I started inclining towards classical dance,"

she mentions.

At the tender age of three, she met her first dance teacher, 'Shapan Master' who came from Raipur, four stations away from Chhattisgarh to teach a batch of girls once a week, as many could not afford to pay for his classes. Within a couple of years, Mahua started performing at various festivals, including Rabindra Jayanti and Nazrul Jayanti. "I used to go to

glimpses of dancers in literature. She later went on to restore the long-lost dance form Gaudiya Nritya over the next 20 years, with her resources. Her research involved examining old sculptures in museums, temples, and other archaeological sites.

When asked about their events and work together, the Guru-Shishya duo said that they have lost count of the number of times they



Rachel Priyanka Perris

Bhatapara three times every year to pair up with the tribal girls and dance on their routines," she reminisces.

During her eleventh grade, Mahua Mukherjee grew keen on exploring the origin of classical dance. She started gathering pieces of evidence in this regard, treasuring anything she could find in textbooks to discover

performed together. "During my time in Kolkata, we performed at numerous shows, especially between 2010 and 2014 until my training was complete and I came back home," shares Rachel. "With long train journeys, and almost no time to rest, we flew from sets to stages spreading the magic of Gaudiya Nritya," adds

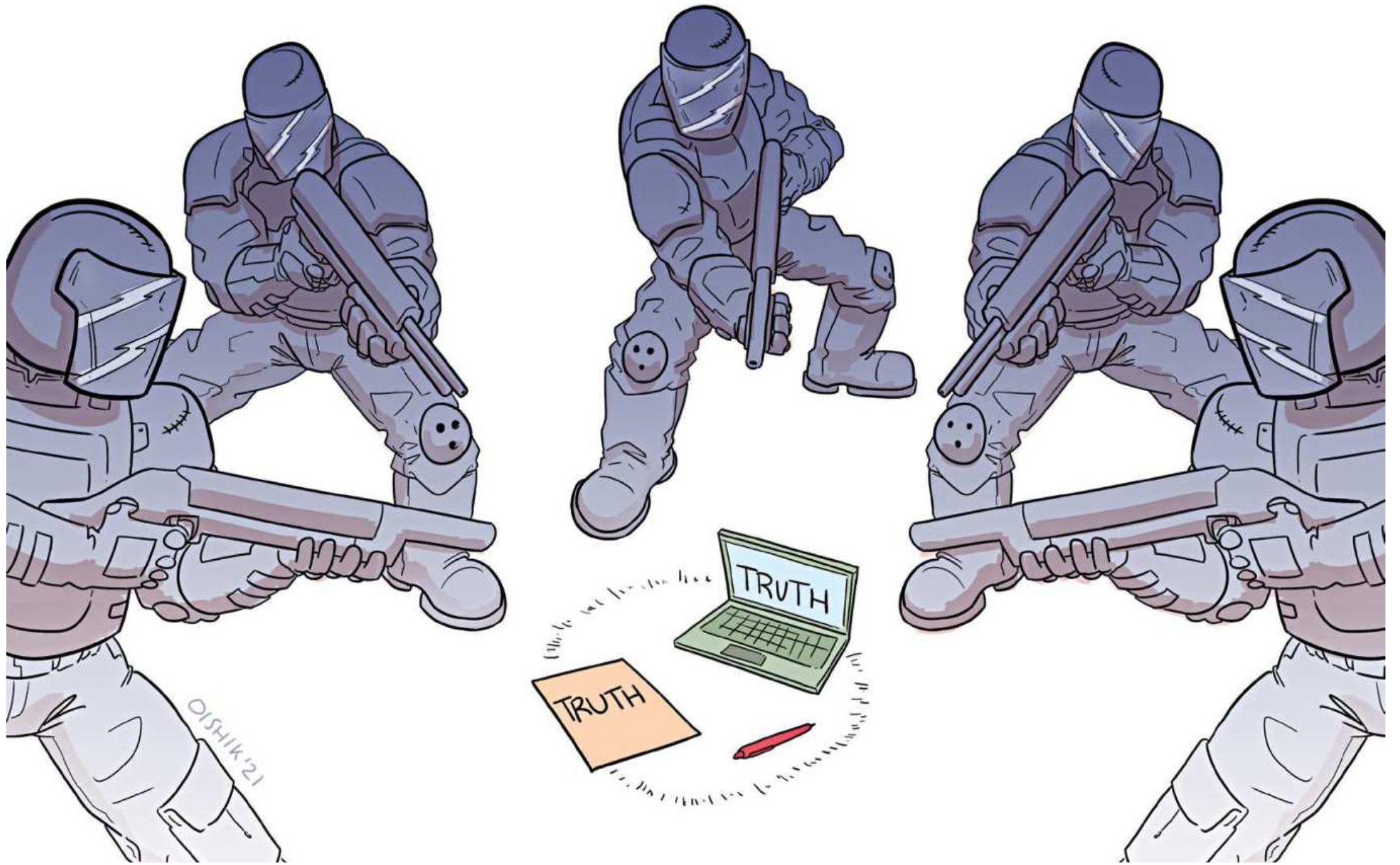
Mahua. Later, duo was reunited when Mahua Mukherjee returned to Dhaka as the Rabindra chair for Dhaka University.

Both of them also addressed characteristics that they admire the most about each other. "I used to scold Rachel for her over fascination with make-up, but her tenacious heart for classical dancing won my respect," smiles Mahua. "Her determination to keep on learning and improving year after year, even after attaining fame showcases her love towards dance."

Rachel expressed her adoration for Mahua, not just as a dancer, but also for being an amazing teacher. "Mahua aunty knows how to forge an artiste from a simple girl," she shares. "She taught me how dance is like a bird, with two wings, one bearing the burden of theoretic knowledge and the other holding on to the beauty of perfect execution."

"Be it her classes, her household duties, her dance rehearsals or performances, Mahua aunty manages it all within just 24 hours seamlessly. I wish I could multitask like her," Rachel further adds.

The duo also shared that dance should be a discipline to learn, not only a source of entertainment. "If the standards for a singer, instrumentalist and dancer are at similar levels, dancers are counted at the tail of the hierarchy, due to popularity," says Mahua Mukherjee. Rachel supported her point. "We need to get out of these attitudes to uplift dancing at a national level," she concludes.



#JOURNALISMISDEAD

Government offers information streaming service Proper Gander for only 300 BDT per month

Rojina Law passed

OSAMA RAHMAN

The government yesterday declared that not all citizens had the right to information, but they could get it by paying a modest amount.

The decision was made after a law had been passed earlier criminalising journalism.

"Journalism is dead. By pursuing click-bait and offensive stories -- many of which hurt our very, very religious sentiments in this secular state -- journalists have killed their profession

themselves and turned rogue. You can no longer trust them with information," Disinformation Minister Abdul Kamal said at a press conference.

He expressed shock at how the plan of giving private corporations an information oligopoly had backfired. "While you cannot trust private corporations, you can surely trust the government. That is why we are now collating and analysing information and disseminating it among our people," he said.

For only Tk 300, anyone can now become a member of the government's information streaming site called "Proper Gander".

"All information will be given here in a simple and accessible manner. We are following the footsteps of the likes of The New York Times, Xinhua News Agency and Völkischer Beobachter," he said.

Meanwhile, last week's The Rojina Law was finally passed in parliament. According to the Rojina Law, no person

shall seek to ask questions to important government officials. Furthermore, those found in possession of a pen, notepad or recorder will be punished by a maximum of five years in prison.

Commentators had called upon the government to revise the law given its vague wording. Legal expert Jakir Hossain told this NOT A NEWSPAPER that the law was too open for interpretation. "It says anyone carrying any paraphernalia through which government workers could be recorded

in any form will be punished. While it says pen, notepad, etc., it could also mean just about anything else," Jakir said.

Contacted, the law minister lied like all other ministers and said, "These are remnants of British colonial laws."

When pointed out that British laws existed in the subcontinent to subjugate the natives and had no use for democratically-elected servants of the people, the law minister said, "Imao" and hung up.



PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Unmasked roundtable at a round table in Hotel Just-In on Eid home-goers spreading Covid-22

VIRAL CORRESPONDENT

People going home in droves during Eid in Chapasthan was the main reason Covid-22 will spread throughout the country, the capital city's elite said at a roundtable at Hotel Just-in yesterday.

"You know, at the end of the day, it is a matter of education," said Simin Cashapa, a CEO of the local arm of a multinational company. "It is a little unfair that while we the educated are taking all the precautions, others are in a mad rush to go home. Why? Can't they just stay put like us?"

A businessman (who refuses to be known as a businessperson) named Bhaskar Kotipoti, ordered a crème Brulee and looked back around the table.

"Seriously, the government should take some action against the homegoing hordes. They should all be quarantined together, in a big boat out in the middle of the river," he said as he checked his watch, a Rolex, and bellowed at the waiter to bring his food in fast.

"Geez, I can't even tell which one our

waiter is... they're all wearing masks," he muttered.

"You know, that's not a bad idea... in fact, it would be pretty easy. They're already boarding ferries in the thousands... just take them out to the middle of the river and throw away the key," said Raga Meghmolla, a banker.

Then they all looked at each other, 10 bejewelled, hairsprayed, perfumed, jamdanied and suited crème de la crème of Dhoka society, and laughed heartily. "That was a good one. But you know, it's not that bad an idea," said Tanmatra Rubaiyyat, a beauty salon owner who was responsible for half of the hairdos around the table. "It may have to come to that, the rest of us shouldn't suffer because of them."

"Like I said, it's so uneducated. Why can't they just stay where they are for Eid. I mean, it's not just Covid-22, a number of them have died being trampled in the rush to get on ferries and buses," Simin said.

"Well, maybe it's just that their living conditions in Dhoka are so bad that



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

they feel like taking the risk to go home and get some fresh air," said the only member of the group, an eleventh, who was wearing a mask. "And it's not like we are exactly staying put -- we are here sitting close together and not wearing

masks. Well, I am for now, till the food arrives.

"Also, people staying back have been going en masse to shopping malls for Eid shopping -- not exactly social distancing, is it? And at least the

thousands on ferries are in the open air, and not indoors where Covid is more contagious."

The 10 others were now looking at this 11th with mouths agape, visible because none were wearing masks.

"Well, we have all been vaccinated," said Ayanta Amarabati, a restaurant owner.

"I haven't been," said Bhaskar.

Simin smiled a crore taka smile and said, "It doesn't matter. We are careful because we are educated... they are not."

Meghmolla then looked at the masked woman and asked, "Wait a second. Who the hell are you?"

"I am the journalist here to cover the roundtable," she said.

"This isn't a roundtable... this is dinner!" shouted Bhaskar. "Who let this woman in? And why has she been taking pictures? Waiter!! Manager!! Call the guards!"

The above account was mailed in from the kitchen of the hotel, where our viral correspondent is still detained

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SATURDAY MAY 22, 2021, JAISHTHA 8, 1428 BS

How long before Israel breaks this truce?

Lasting peace only possible under the two-state solution

AFTER 11 days of violence, we are relieved that an Egypt-mediated truce between Israel and Hamas came into effect on Friday. However, to call the violence perpetrated over the last 11 days lopsided would be an understatement, as Israel, a country armed to the teeth thanks to the advanced weaponry supplied by the most powerful western countries in the world, relentlessly bombed the already devastated remnants of Palestinian lands. In response, Hamas launched missiles towards Israel. But truth be told, it was the Palestinians who had suffered the most casualties and continues to do so, as Israel continues to brutally occupy their land illegally under international law and in complete disregard of international agreements and UN resolutions.

In the last 11 days of devastating Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip, 232 Palestinians were killed, including 65 children. Almost 2,000 Palestinians were wounded, and 90,000 people were displaced, according to the UN. Around 1,800 housing units were destroyed, 74 government facilities were bombed, 33 media centres were destroyed and six high-rise buildings were levelled by the Israelis. While on the Israeli side, there were barely a handful of casualties and injuries. How can that be termed a conflict?

Even though a truce has been declared between Hamas and Israel, the latter continues to occupy Palestinian land and conquer more of it daily through the removal of Palestinian families from their homes, demolishing Palestinian houses and erecting illegal settlements. And that continues to remain the crux of the matter—that Israel, through western backing, continues to carry out its genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people.

Until the international community forces Israel to end its brutal genocidal crusade against the Palestinians, there can never be any real peace for the Palestinians, or for the Israelis for that matter. Now that the Israel-Palestinian conflict has returned to making international headlines, world leaders must realise that this is not a matter that should be swept under the rug once again until the next time Israel decides to bomb the already devastated Gaza Strip. This issue must be resolved once and for all in a way that ensures justice for the Palestinian people, who have suffered endless human rights violations for decades under Israeli occupation.

The RHD must be commended for their efficiency

We hope all government bodies will emulate this rare example

WE applaud the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) for its Kanchpur, Meghna and Gumti 2nd Bridge Construction and Existing Bridges Rehabilitation Project, which won the Technology Award of the Japan Society of Civil Engineers Award 2021. This was conferred to the RHD for the construction of three new bridges and the repairs of three old bridges, which was finished not only before its deadline, but was also done at a lower cost. In fact, the RHD managed to save almost Tk 1,400 crore from its budget during the course of the project.

This is a rare departure from the norm. Project delays are far too common in Bangladesh, and they end up costing the taxpayers crores of Taka that could easily have been invested elsewhere. In February this year, the Prime Minister expressed her frustrations over frequent revisions of projects and directed the authorities to take legal action against those responsible for flawed project designs that ultimately push up costs. This was after two projects, by the Local Government Engineering Department and by Dhaka Wasa, went up by Tk 5,433 crore. Subsequently, we have seen reports of the cost of the Super Specialised Hospital Project at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) going up by Tk 195 crore. The National Household Database project, which could have been an important tool for the government in assisting the most underprivileged households in the pandemic, has also seen delays so lengthy that the data collected has become obsolete, and the costs have gone up by almost Tk 400 crore.

In this context, it is heartening to see this example of timeliness and cost efficiency from the RHD, proving that if there is a will, there certainly is a way. We hope that other government ministries and bodies will take their cue from this and follow suit. Before the RHD constructions and repairs, motorists often suffered in tailbacks for up to eight to 12 hours due to the bottlenecks near the old bridges. These travel times will now be significantly reduced. We hope that every government project will ultimately serve their purpose in this way, and be of benefit to the Bangladeshi public.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

The disease of corruption

We know how badly corruption impacts our society. Yet, seeing how often it occurs, it begs the question: does one hate corruption because it creates chaos, or does one hate it because they do not get to enjoy the benefits? Corruption and the ability to corrupt ourselves lies within us. Given the opportunity, we are given two choices: do we yield, or do we oppose? We need the determination to oppose. Only then can we curb corruption, along with better law enforcement against corruption of course.

Abir Hasan, North South University

How do I hate myself? Let me count the ways



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

THE holiday lethargy has caused me self-loathing. Let me count some of the factors as to why I am beginning to hate myself. I hate myself for living in an age that still sees religion-based racism overshadowing motherhood. I hated it when a sweet social media post on Mother's Day on May 9 turned bitter when actor Chanchal Chowdhury, a household name in the Bangladeshi cultural scene for over two decades, posted on Facebook a photograph of his mother wearing vermilion over her forehead. This was followed by serious backlash as some bigots attacked the *Aynabaji* actor for his religious identity. This narrow-minded crowd felt "cheated" since they had crowned the versatile actor with a Bangla name that lacks any religious tag as "one of their own" for such a long time, only to find out that he was "actually" their religious "other", and they did not have either the sophistication or the civility to hide their bigotry. I shall hate myself further if I have to stoop low enough to

engage with such arguments. Suffice to say, a mother in whatever hue is sacred and beautiful. By the same token, an artist is an extraordinary individual who exists outside our daily drudgery, who tries in his or her given capacity to make the world a better place.

I hate myself for seeing the same crowd defending the rights of minorities in other parts of the world where the role is reversed. Their frustrations and

expose the system where individual benefits are prioritised over collective ones. While I was glued to the TV seeing a tower building housing media outlets being bombed to clouds of dust, I realised that someone else was choking the voice of media in our own backyard. A senior female journalist has been accused of stealing government secrets from the Ministry of Health. Her bail has been denied, and she has been sent to jail.

there when the doctors are forced to be silent, and the empty pitchers of the admin officials start sounding.

I hate myself when I hear schools and colleges will reopen once everyone concerned is jabbed. My jaw drops while counting the number of ampoules that need to be imported and distributed before education resumes. Ah, the scheme and the number game: who cares for how long our children will stay away from books and classes! Let the vaccine orders be processed and let Covid-19 morph into Covid-21! We will have more "auto pass", while our corrupt officials will get more "free pass" to abuse the system. I hate myself for seeing our local businessmen, politicians and corrupt officials indulge in shopping sprees abroad, or invest in post-career settlements or second homes in overseas countries, with the money that they have milked or skimmed from our system.

I hate myself for seeing a bureaucratic system that is at odds with our democracy and all our democratic norms. I hate myself when my academic colleagues disgracefully leave their offices, accused of misappropriation of funds, negligence of duties, nepotism and what not. Our incompetence allows people from outside the civil society (both BCS and ISSB certified) to take over our jobs and offices. Conversely, our national incompetence allows the so-called "experts" from outside to drain away the bulk of the hard-earned currency that our low-skilled labourers are sending in from abroad.

I hate myself for being an educator in a country that has no respect for education. I hate myself for being in a country that allows an education system that runs amok in at least three different strains and fails to include the issues of racial intolerance, intellectual and moral bankruptcy, human rights, and transparency in its curricula. I hate myself for being in a system that fosters discriminations and discrepancies. But I shall hate myself more if I fail to be part of a strategy that offers to create a counter-system; a system that teaches empathy, humanity, fairness and honesty.

P.S. The title alludes to Elizabeth Browning's Sonnet 43, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

Shamsad Mortuza is Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), and a professor of English at Dhaka University (on leave).



ILLUSTRATION: KAZI TAHMIN AGAZ APURBO

I hate myself for being in a system that fosters discriminations and discrepancies. But I shall hate myself more if I fail to be part of a strategy that offers to create a counter-system; a system that teaches empathy, humanity, fairness and honesty.

helplessness are evident in their *ad hominem*, fallacious attacks and invectives aplenty as they realise that they do not have any control over the truth or untruth propagated by the powerful other, in which their own kinds are minorities. They resort to verbal violence. They do not realise their poorly constructed arguments and abuses hurt our national pride on an international setting. Their supposed bravado paints the country they represent with the wrong brush. Potential tourists, for instance, will think twice before visiting our country if they feel that the people here are hostile to different colours and creeds. Their case, which is valid, can be presented in a rational and logical fashion. For that, we will need a culture of constructive criticism and fairness. For that, we will need a general mood of empathy—something that we failed to extend towards actor Chanchal Chowdhury.

I hate myself when I fail to render support to someone who wanted to

Rozina Islam is an investigative journalist for the leading Bangla daily *Prothom Alo*, who has published a series of reports on the alleged corruptions that are eating away at the health sector. I hate myself for writing "alleged" as I was taught by my seniors when I started my career as a cub reporter three decades ago. Even after all these years, I am handcuffed to such journalistic protocols. But Rozina Islam wanted to go beyond simple accusations; she wanted proof. Those of us who are eating the "corruption" pudding, we instinctively or circumstantially know where the proof lies. The proof is out there in the open when a canopy hospital appears like Aladdin's palace in the middle of nowhere and disappears when the evil vizier steals away the lamp containing the genie. The proof is out there when the middleman appears as a saviour figure at the start of the vaccine hunt and then disappears when the shipment is delayed. The proof is out

Harnessing marine renewable energy in Bangladesh



MOHAMMAD ALAUDDIN

BECAUSE of their continuous renewability and inexhaustibility, ocean energies are known as marine renewable energy (MRE). However, all ocean-based renewable energy resources are not considered MRE. For example, the production of biofuels from marine biomass is generally regarded as a form of bioenergy instead. Likewise, offshore wind is considered a particular application for wind energy technology. MRE resources are those that use the kinetic, potential, chemical or thermal properties of seawater. Ocean waves, tidal currents, tidal range, ocean currents, ocean temperature and salinity gradients are all examples of this. These renewable resources can be harnessed using various energy conversion technologies into a useful form, typically electricity.

The conversion of MRE resources into electricity could play an important role in the use of renewable energy, while meeting growing energy demand and bolstering economic activity. It also contributes to offsetting emissions from conventional greenhouse gas (GHG)-intensive electricity generation. Therefore, it has been recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a means of mitigating climate change. A special report commissioned by the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) on "The Ocean as a Solution to Climate Change: Five Opportunities for Action", published in 2019, estimated that ocean-based climate solutions could reduce global GHG emissions by nearly four billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per annum in 2030. Additionally, ocean-based renewable energy has the potential to support a wide range of socioeconomic benefits, including new opportunities for economic activity, job creation and local value creation, and position itself as the main source to power the blue economy.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency's (IRENA) report "Fostering a blue economy: Offshore renewable energy," published in 2020, the theoretical resource potential for electricity production from all marine renewable technologies combined ranges from 45,000 terawatt-hours (TWh) to well over 130,000 TWh per year, while global electricity demand in 2019 was 25,814 TWh. Despite huge potential, the worldwide cumulative installed capacity of all marine renewable energy in 2020

was 535 megawatts (MW). Several challenges stemming from technology, infrastructure, finance, policy, market and environment may be accounted for this low uptake.

According to a recent study based on cost data provided by developers, the existing levelised costs of energy (LCOE) for tidal and wave energy are estimated to be between USD 0.20/kilowatt-hour (kWh) and USD 0.45/kWh, and

is principally distributed in the tropics. Salinity gradient and tidal range are more patchily distributed. In any case, some form of marine renewable energy is available at every coast and often more than one form could supply local power needs. Currently, over 30 countries around the world are pursuing MRE. The European Commission set a goal of producing at least one gigawatt (GW) of wave and tidal energy by 2030 and 40 GW

such as remote islands, which depend on relatively costly fossil fuel imports. Following a resource mapping exercise, suitable wave and tidal positions among these islands must be established, which has yet to take place in Bangladesh. A number of countries including Canada, Chile, the UK, and the United States have mapped their marine renewable energy resources on a national scale. These countries can assist developing countries



Representational image.

PHOTO: REUTERS

between USD 0.30/kWh and 0.55/kWh respectively. Harsh marine environment and relatively low maturity of most of the technologies with poor grid connection infrastructure and supply chain result in high LCOE. Technology costs typically fall as deployment increases, as well as other factors such as supply chain sophistication and investor confidence. Looking at the learning curve of other renewable energy sources—for instance, between 2010 and 2019, offshore wind costs fell 29 percent to USD 0.115/kWh and solar photovoltaic fell 82 percent to USD .068/kWh, as reported in IRENA's 2020 publication "Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2019"—it is clear that significant cost reduction occurred in the past. In the same way, greater capacity deployment and accelerated learning are projected to lower the costs of MRE.

Marine renewable energy resources are vast, but they aren't evenly distributed. Waves tend to be greatest at higher latitudes, whilst ocean thermal energy

by 2050. Bangladesh has the Bay of Bengal to its south, with about 710km of coastline extending from St Martin's in the south-east to the Sundarbans in the south-west. Many small islands are scattered along the Bay of Bengal and the word "Char" is used in many of the names. The long coastline and many small islands have the continuous presence of strong tides and waves coming from the Bay of Bengal. However, the ability to tap energy is contingent on technological readiness. Of all MRE technology, tidal technologies have the highest level of readiness and are nearest to commercialisation. Tidal power can be generated using two technologies—tidal stream and tidal barrage. Tidal stream power plants are now preferred because of their lower environmental footprint. Wave energy comes next to tidal in terms of technological readiness.

Tidal and wave energy technologies could be competitive in niche markets

with access to the sea in determining their marine renewable energy resources to expedite global energy transition.

Harnessing inexhaustible indigenous sources as much as possible is key to ensuring energy security in the context of regional and global political economy. In Bangladesh, terrestrial renewable energy is limited by land available for capacity expansion, while fulfilling the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement requires substantial increase of renewable energy. Marine renewable energy should thus be one of the important elements, not only for driving the blue economy for Bangladesh but also for the transition to a clean energy future. An initiative to map marine renewable resources and launch a pilot project could pave the way for a new renewable energy frontier to emerge.

Mohammad Alauddin is Chairman of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

From the distant coastline

Mitigating the disconnect between policymakers and fishers in coastal Bangladesh is key for ecological sustainability



ALIFA HAQUE

THE concepts of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), blue economy or global biodiversity targets have gained traction in Bangladesh, so much so that it would not be unfair to say that the terms and phrases are often overly

used. However, what is lacking is a coherent understanding of achieving these goals or creating a process pathway at the local level. Existing conservation mechanisms are devoid of meaningful consultation with affected communities, leading to inequality, a vicious cycle of poverty, expensive and ineffective policies and inevitable non-compliance.

I specialise in marine species conservation in the Bay of Bengal, particularly sharks and rays. My work adopts an interdisciplinary lens placed at the crossroads of the biological and social sciences. In my studies, which are heavily dependent on fieldwork in the remotest parts of Bangladesh, from Dublar Char to St Martin's Island, I am striving to answer critical conservation questions and mainstream local ecological knowledge in the pursuit of answering them. When I began my work in 2016, I only felt passionate about saving all sharks and rays. After five years, I have realised that conservation is not a one-way street where we save the fish and forget the fishers.

I have no qualms admitting that there was a time when I would only think about the fish in our seas. In the not too distant past, I wrote: "Our study (2016-2020), in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh region, found an estimated 67,000-13,533,800 individuals of sharks and rays were caught per trip within the artisanal fishery. An average of 8,000-20,000 tonnes of annual shark landing and an 80-335 percent unreported trade is alarming because this includes protected species heading to unnoticed extinction due to their low resilience to fisheries pressure. All these unreported-by-catches happen to consist of at least 85 species, including 10 Critically Endangered and 22 Endangered species (sawfish, guitarfish, hammerhead sharks, manta rays), threatened with extinction. The high catch rates are due to either targeted or

unintentional interaction of fishing with these species which needs to be halted."

Yet when I began to envision what by-catch mitigation efforts may look like, I was exposed to vastly untapped vulnerabilities of fishers, which prevented them from taking positive conservation decisions. Coastal fishers in Bangladesh are poverty prone due to debt-driven fishing practices. Most of them do not own boats and nets, and they do not have a secondary source of income, efficient markets, or any facilitation to adhere to regulations. Financial vulnerabilities of fishers are exacerbated by limited access to information and technology, lack of safety at sea, or of basic amenities like education, healthcare and social security. There is little interest or political will in creating better markets that operate sustainably and ensure equal opportunities for all fishers. Yet profits from sustainable practices being returned to fishers, thereby reducing poverty and ensuring better livelihoods, could have been an equitable and effective first step towards sustainable fishing practices and species conservation. What I am trying to say is, fish and fishers are inherently and invariably interconnected. I learned that species conservation is primarily about people. However, there is a huge disconnect between global and national policies for marine conservation and small-scale fisheries protection.

During countless conversations with fishers, my team and I talked about by-catch mitigation, live release of Critically Endangered species and overall protection for critical habitats which may conflict with fishing grounds. It is worth remembering, 29 species of sharks and rays are protected under the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act (WCSA), 2012. However, the WCSA 2012 and other conservation laws and policies do not "speak" to the fishers. And because they do not speak to fishers, they are by and large ineffective.

How do we know that the laws don't reach the fishers? We interviewed more than a thousand coastal fishers engaged in sharks and ray fisheries in almost all coastal fishing communities. In 2016, most of the fishers spoke to had limited knowledge about the protected status of sharks and rays. Although in subsequent years, a small number of fishers showed some knowledge of some laws, they did not know which species were protected.



Spadenose shark being dried in one of the fish drying centres in Cox's Bazar.

PHOTO: ALIFA HAQUE

They did not know what to do if they accidentally caught a protected shark. Often during our conversations, we would become the interviewees. Fishers would ask us a range of thought-provoking questions: who is going to provide the lost income if targeted fisheries are prohibited? What is going to happen if we discard dead sharks at sea out of fear of being fined or jailed? Will our livelihood-related problems be solved if we take positive conservation decisions? And so on.

These questions come from a place where some fishers "knew" about some of the laws and regulations but hardly possessed any clarity or acceptance about such laws, or access to knowledge/information or facilitation to adhere to them. In short, "awareness" remains mainly absent, despite fisheries compensation schemes and awareness generation programmes in Bangladesh. We need to be conscious of the difference between "knowing" the law and being "aware" of it. The effectiveness of such laws and policies is directly dependent upon awareness of them, which is achieved only when one possesses a deeper understanding and accept why they need to be adhered to.

This brings us to a more fundamental

question. Why are these laws not working? In my view, what is critically missing here is democracy in real terms, which ensures fishers' participation when marine conservation laws, regulations and policies are framed and having their voices heard, respected and represented during that process. This is what will ensure the generation of the so-far elusive "awareness".

In Bangladesh, the very existence and application of conservation laws are top-down. The law-making process does not consider crucial and indispensable local knowledge of fishers, let alone empower them. They are framed in a way that fails to consider the external impacts of those laws. For instance, when a particular law bans the fishing of sharks from a specific date, it looks good on paper, which may be a triumph for a conservationist. Still, it does not consider the income lost by fishers. As a result, most of the time, these regulations only prevail on paper. Even if they are enforced to an extent, it may come with corruption, and uninformed and unprepared governance.

One cannot help but ask: how will bans be effective when fishers' earnings are below minimum wage? It all comes down to the

overarching capitalistic way of growth that has hazardedly increased the unequal distribution of wealth and marginalisation of the poor. When the lion's share of earnings goes to the money-lending boat owners and private companies, keeping the bare minimum for the actual fishers—we need to seriously think about the existing unjust financial mechanisms relating to marine and coastal fisheries in Bangladesh. Global landings data reveals that the average fishing wages in many countries that are home to a substantial share of fishers are below their national determined minimum wage. These result in the loss of legitimacy of laws and regulations relating to marine conservation.

Collectively, our results from the field portray the marginalisation of fishers, which takes place because global and national conservation laws and policies, in many cases, treat them as less important than marine species. In stark contrast, projects focusing on human well-being look at species as of secondary interest. Our results highlight the unresolved conundrum in marine conservation laws, which seeks to protect threatened sharks and rays but fails to accommodate the welfare of small-scale fishers.

Ecological sustainability must be grounded in the well-being of the fishers and the fish together through well thought out socio-ecological policies. We call for a regime change in the way we frame marine conservation laws and policies devised in high offices, detached from the coastline. Pre-policy discussions with fishers to understand the acceptance level and feasibility of laws and policies that are being framed are the need of the hour. This may sound difficult and time- and resource-consuming, but it will be a worthwhile pursuit given that problems arising from ineffective and impractical policies will lead to expensive and irreversible consequences. Human beings are known to adhere to rules they believe in and have taken part in creating. Abiding by restrictions disseminated through signboards and summons only go so far. Through a true "behavioural change" in the offices of lawmakers, Bangladesh can lead efforts from the Global South that will collectively secure the future of the fish and fishers of the world.

Alifa Haque is DPhil Researcher at the Nature-based Solutions Initiative, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford.

Rethinking international aid practices in Bangladesh

The microcosm of the global aid industry we see in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar needs to be questioned more



MALIHA KHAN

WHILE the pandemic was a first in recent times, there has been an international aid system in place for decades now to deal with the fallout of war, hunger, poverty, refugees, and forced displacement. Yet, that system is beset

with failings to include primarily the voices of the affected—over whose entire lives, others, who may not even know them personally or contemplate living in their shoes for a day, call all the shots.

Outgoing UN aid chief Mark Lowcock recently said that the humanitarian system, much of which is funded under the UN umbrella, does "not pay enough attention to what people caught up in crises say they want, and then trying to give that to them." It "is still set up to give people in need what international agencies and donors think is best, and what we have to offer, rather than giving people what they themselves say they most need," the UN Under-Secretary General for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief said last month.

He cited aid camps in Cox's Bazar and Chad where people provided with aid were selling off some of what they received, for things they wanted more. Anyone who has worked in or visited Cox's Bazar in the last four years has seen the markets that sprung up to sell relief items distributed to the refugees such as blankets, sanitary pads, fortified cereal, and dal, especially in the bazars or on roads on the way to and from the refugee camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Considering they can't earn and have no money, what the refugees repeatedly said they did want was more food options or the cash to buy chicken or fresh fish and vegetables for a well-rounded meal for their families.

"Accountability runs mostly to the donors, not to the affected people," Mark Lowcock also said. While still not entirely accountable to those they are providing aid to, it is now at least standard in the industry to take feedback from those affected and there is a drive for those affected to not just be consulted, but to be involved in decision-making. In a recent comprehensive report on refugee experiences and recommendations, titled "Anáar Báfana" (*Our Thoughts in Rohingya*), brought out by the NGO ACAPS and the IOM, refugees emphasised that it was not enough to be included in discussions but not in decision-making. "Rohingya participants feel overwhelmingly frustrated and helpless as passive recipients of aid and many are losing faith in humanitarians and feel that discussing their issues is pointless," stated the report.

However, it's not just the people in crisis aid agencies don't listen to; historically, it is people from the Global South in general. For a while now, debate has raged about the decolonisation of aid, a system where Western donors and practitioners have long imposed their decisions

in humanitarian settings and in particular, control funding and leadership positions.

Global aid still works with the principles popularised in the 1960s and 1970s, when famines and subsequent interventions led to a continuation of the white saviour complex that is still rooted in the system today. In the 1990s, the humanitarian system flourished as civil wars raged in several countries with Western humanitarians going to the most dangerous places in the world to make their



PHOTO: COLLECTED

fame (and fortune—it's a myth that aid workers are underpaid). Since then, however, the global aid industry has come under backlash for the parachuting nature of foreigners flying in with Western solutions to fix crises in poorer countries, the oligarchy large aid agencies have formed, and the omnipresent paternalism and sometimes outright colonial attitudes donors in the Global North hold towards those affected, and development practitioners, in the Global South.

Large INGOs and UN agencies dominate the country's aid landscape, commanding the largest amounts of funding while the rest scramble for what they can get, with local NGOs at the bottom of the food chain. Many local NGOs, which had been at the forefront of the developing Rohingya refugee crisis for years, were quickly pushed to the back of the room while predominantly European and American-based organisations and people flew in following the largest refugee influx into Cox's Bazar in 2017.

What has emerged since in Cox's Bazar very much displays the traditionally skewed power dynamics, where UN agencies and INGOs are at the top of the pyramid with national and local NGOs largely being treated as subcontractors. And while the INGOs and UN agencies hire locals and other Bangladeshis, leadership at these organisations is almost exclusively from the Global North. The uneven power dynamics are reflected in different pay scales for those from the Global North and those here in the

Global South—the same position fulfilled by an American or a Bangladeshi with the equivalent level of skills and experience would be very different. It is evident in a two-tier hiring practice at these aid organisations where skilled locals and nationals are only hired for low-paid frontline jobs while aid workers from the Global North, transplanted in from headquarters or another crisis for a short time, are placed in leadership positions.

While those part of the system are not necessarily at fault and have inherited a hegemonic structure within which they have to work, national staff in the UN system should reckon with the fact that they will almost never rise to the top of a system that is stacked against them. Even at the highest levels of the UN, leadership for certain positions goes to certain countries by default and not through any semblance of merit. Outgoing Mark Lowcock, for instance, will most likely be replaced as head of humanitarian affairs by another Briton put forward by the UK. In a system set up decades ago, the five countries that emerged victors from World War II sit permanently on the Security Council and can veto decisions on the fates of the other 190 countries. In a more informal power-sharing practice, they also put forward their own people for five of the top leadership positions in the UN.

That the UN agencies are as fallible as other organisations, and whose scale alone means it is more fallible in cases, is not a narrative well-acknowledged in the country. The current aid industry is pointlessly bureaucratic, has seen large-scale failure in several countries and disasters, and is based on an outdated global standing that emerged from the fallout of the Second World War. Global aid narratives now acknowledge bloated organisational capacity and misused resources, which sees a large portion going to administration and marketing rather than actual causes, and it's time we did too.

Jargon-y aid work means various days are celebrated in the name of tackling crucial social and humanitarian issues such as ending violence against women and children, but which has become about wearing a certain colour and holding empty-of-actual-meaning conferences and workshops that few outside of the organisations watch or read about. Many of these practices have seeped into local and national NGOs' work, which depend on the UN and donor governments for funding and work on projects based on donor agendas. The amount of funding national and local NGOs have to work with, however, is minuscule in comparison—passing through several hands before some, after operations costs at every level, dribbles down to the local implementing NGO. In the "Grand Bargain" agreement, donors and international aid organisations pledged to allot 25 percent of all funds to local and national organisations "as directly as possible" and to reduce transactional costs. Local NGOs in Cox's Bazar, in particular, have been clamouring for

this practice to become commonplace for some time now.

Involving those affected, rethinking how aid can be provided and distributed in a fair and dignified way, and channeling greater funds to training and capacity development here and directly in the refugee camps and other crisis areas can go

some way in addressing international aid practices often inconsistent with realities in the Global South. Locals and affected communities themselves can take care of their own and the global aid industry should work towards making this the norm, not the exception.

Maliha Khan is a journalist at *The Daily Star*.



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
(For Short listing of Construction Companies)

Reference No: REI- BD21-010
19-May-2021

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental humanitarian organization established in 1951 and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits both migrants and society.

In the framework of Health and Gender Support Project for Cox's Bazar District, IOM now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Construction Companies for the **Reconstruction of Community Clinics in Cox's Bazar District**. Along with this invitation, drawings are shared for reference to the interested bidder.

The Expression of Interest shall contain information on the following:

- range of relevant construction services offered,
- qualification and experience of relevant professionals and technical personnel currently maintained and proposed for the implementation of this project.
- track record and experience of the Construction Company in similar assignment including list of major clients served and
- other relevant information.

The Expression of Interest shall be submitted in original and duplicate copy and should be received either by hand or through mail by IOM with office address at **Muktijodha Building Complex, Motel Road, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh** no later than **14:00 hours 2nd June 2021**.

On the basis of the above information, IOM shall draw up the shortlist of Construction Companies and only short-listed Construction Companies will be invited to submit technical and financial proposals.

Interested Construction Companies may obtain further information from IOM Website at <https://bangladesh.iom.int/opportunities/work-as-service-provider>

IOM reserves the right to accept or reject any Expression of Interest, and to annul the selection process and reject all Expression at any time, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Companies/Service Providers.

Very truly yours,
IOM Cox's Bazar Procurement Unit

Minnat Ali's *Kafoner Lekha* and the biography of an autobiography

MD. MAHMUDUL HASAN

After savouring English and world literature for quite a while, I developed an interest in South Asian literature. This led me to study writers of this literary tradition. The latest in my list of authors is Minnat Ali (1932-2008), the recipient of the 1975 Bangla Academy Literary Award for short stories. I grew up hearing so much about the wordsmith of our district Brahmanbaria, but never had an opportunity to meet him in person.

During my trip to Bangladesh in February 2020, I contacted some of his

relatives and family members to know more about the writer and, if possible, collect his writings. Upon my request, one of his relatives, Mr Shamsul Alam Shahin (1964-) of our village Araisidha directed me to Minnat Ali's eldest son Khushbu Mohammad Al Aman (1963-).

I met Mr Al Aman at "Shuvo Bari" – as Minnat Ali's homestead is named – at the heart of Brahmanbaria town. Mr Al Aman treated me with proverbial Bangladeshi hospitality. He shared with me insights into the literary career of his father and was courteous enough to present some of his late father's books

to me as gifts. Among them was *Kafoner Lekha* (2005). Once back in Kuala Lumpur, I read the books. Even though the title sounded familiar, I was certainly not prepared for the treasure trove I found within the covers of *Kafoner Lekha*. In the book, Minnat Ali retells the autobiography of the renowned scholar, writer and freedom fighter Fazl-e-Haq (also spelled as Fadl-e-Haq) Khairabadi (1796-1861) – so named because he was born in Khairabad in what is now the Indian

relations in the region for the next ninety years. A number of local patriots and freedom fighters challenged imperialism head-on and, consequently, bore ruthless cruelty of the British occupying power. Khairabadi narrates the tragic end of Mughal rule in Delhi and critiques the sell-out intellectuals and opportunists who colluded with the British in return for perks and privileges. They made it possible for the foreign power to establish dominion over, and snatch independence from the people of South Asia.

The sexagenarian Khairabadi actively participated in the Rebellion. Moreover, as a prominent intellectual and religious scholar, he issued the famous anti-colonial nationalist clarion call *fatwa-e-jihad* against the British. He declared that it was a religious duty to fight the colonial system of exploitation. He visited Ayodhya (Ajothya) and other near and far-off areas to deliver firebrand speeches and motivated freedom fighters to jump into the battle against British rule to reclaim independence.

The colonial government became alarmed and accused Khairabadi of treason. After the fall of Delhi, it took prolonged punitive measures against the people of the land. Khairabadi and other anti-colonial intellectuals were arrested, tortured and faced punishments, including death. In 1859, a sham trial was conducted and Khairabadi was exiled for life on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

Though now a tourist destination and often compared to Hawaii for its scenic beauty, during the colonial period Andaman was a nightmare and synonymous with a death sentence, especially for anti-colonial freedom fighters. Mainly because of the horrors associated with the Andaman high-security prison and "the strong currents and shark infested waters surrounding it," the island gained notoriety and was popularly called *kala panir desh* (land of black waters).

At that time, the deputy jailor of the Andaman prison was a knowledgeable Englishman with a deep interest in eastern traditions, especially Indian astronomy. At his disposal was a precious Persian manuscript on the subject.

He knew there were erudite scholars among the inmates under his charge and gave it to one to unpack and decipher its content. That prisoner passed the work to Khairabadi who embraced it as a godsend opportunity to engage in scholarly activities after a long gap. He translated and annotated the book for the benefit of the jailor who read it and was amazed by the depth of Khairabadi's knowledge, as reflected in his notes and commentary. The jailor then rushed to the prison barracks to meet the great scholar.

Khairabadi was away on penal servitude (hard labour). After waiting for some time, the jailor saw him returning to the prison barracks with a spade on his shoulder and a bamboo basket in his armpit. This scene deeply moved the jailor who could not control his tears. He removed the spade and basket from Khairabadi's hands and deplored that such a man of letters had to do menial, laborious tasks with ordinary prisoners.

From that day onwards, the jailor spared Khairabadi prison labour. Meanwhile, having been exempted from penal servitude, Khairabadi decided to write his autobiography. He managed to collect some charcoal to use as pen and fabric material as paper and started writing his memoirs about the Great Rebellion in Arabic.

There was another writer-scholar named Inayat Ahmad from Kakori in Uttar Pradesh who had been jailed in Andaman before Khairabadi. Inayat Ahmad is known to have written a biography of Prophet Muhammad in prison and did a British official a comparable favour by translating an important Persian book on geography titled *Taqim al-Buldan* (A Sketch of the Countries) by the great scholar Abul-Fida (1273-1331). Upon recommendation by that British official, Inayat Ahmad was released from Andaman prison. When seeing off Inayat Ahmad, Khairabadi gave him his manuscript written on shrouds, saying, "Dear Brother, please give these grave clothes to my son Abdul Haq."

The Andaman prison authority did not scrutinize the content of the clothing parcel, as they took it for grave clothes. The parcel arrived in mainland British

India safely. Meanwhile, artists, writers and the intellectual community of the subcontinent submitted petitions to the Privy Council in London for Khairabadi's acquittal. As a result, in 1861 a release order was issued and his second son Shamsul Haq collected it from the then British colonial administrative centre of Calcutta.

With the release order in hand, Shamsul Haq started his voyage for Andaman in order to bring back his father. After four-day long sea journey when he reached Andaman, he found a long funeral procession. "Who passed away?" he enquired. "The well-known scholar Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi," came the reply. Shamsul Haq immediately said *inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rejiwoon* and cried out aloud: "Abba!" He joined the procession, buried his father in the ground of Andaman and returned home with a broken heart.

In the course of time, scholars of British India decoded the text of Khairabadi's autobiography written on grave clothes, made copies and circulated them to various parts of the region. They did so in secrecy, fearing colonial surveillance, censorship and punitive measures. After many decades in 1941, politician Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) persuaded a scholar named Abdus Shahid Khan Sherwani to translate the work into Urdu. While writing its introduction, Abul Kalam Azad titled the unnamed manuscript *Sawratul Hindia* (Indian Rebellion) under which the autobiography is now known. Soon after its Urdu translation along with the original Arabic text was published, the colonial government confiscated all its copies and subjected the publisher to harassment and torture. The book was freely available to the public only after independence in 1947.

[Acknowledgement: I am indebted to Minnat Ali's grandson, Md Habib Ullah Mormo for providing me with biographical information.]

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The Cellular Jail in Andaman.

relatives and family members to know more about the writer and, if possible, collect his writings. Upon my request, one of his relatives, Mr Shamsul Alam Shahin (1964-) of our village Araisidha directed me to Minnat Ali's eldest son Khushbu Mohammad Al Aman (1963-).

I met Mr Al Aman at "Shuvo Bari" – as Minnat Ali's homestead is named – at the heart of Brahmanbaria town. Mr Al Aman treated me with proverbial Bangladeshi hospitality. He shared with me insights into the literary career of his father and was courteous enough to present some of his late father's books

state of Uttar Pradesh. According to scholar Jamal Malik at Germany's Erfurt University, Khairabadi "was one of the first political prisoners of colonial times, who ... resigned from the post of *kutchery* chief and ... drafted the first constitution of Independent India based on the 'principles of democracy.'"

In his autobiography, Khairabadi provides an eye-witness account of the Great Rebellion of 1857-59 and its aftermath. A landmark event in British colonial history in South Asia, the Great Rebellion (known as Sepoy Mutiny in colonial officialese) impacted colonial



FICTION |

When the Gypsies Came to Town

WAQAR A KHAN

It happened sometime in the winter of 1959. There was a ripple of commotion in the 'kancha bazaar' (kitchen market) in Dinajpur town. Someone gave a clarion call, "The gypsies are here. Allah save us! Secure your things." It was as if a calamity had descended on the small town. Sajeed our domestic servant came running home from the bazaar and excitedly broke the news.

The kancha bazaar in those days was the hub of news, both real and imagined and the pulse of society. There was an immediate stir in our family. Everyone spoke excitedly. Mother was worried. Our Dadi (paternal grandmother), a pious, conservative lady of the old school who knew enough about gypsies from her childhood days in Malda, declared with a magisterial flourish that they were evil people. Prejudice and fascination combined with a litany of negative attributes ranging from: thievery, witchcraft, sorcery, black magic, kidnapping of children were all associated with them. Even our young teenage paternal aunt and uncle chipped in, "these people know Jadu" (magic). However, what struck me as a bit odd even as a 5 year old, was the sudden furor the news had aroused in an otherwise quiet, orderly household. I became very curious. Who were these strange people? Our front and backyard gates were promptly locked. It was debated if we (children) should be sent to school that day or not? Even our beloved pet dog Pinky sensed something was wrong and barked incessantly. Only our father maintained his calm. With a huff he rode off in his bicycle to his office, glad to get away from it all. "Don't forget to notify the police," mother called after him. Nobody cared to recall then, that our celebrated national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was enamored of the gypsy girl, and had admirably written an enchanting ode to the dancing Iranian girl who played the tambourine.

It was difficult for us children to go off

to sleep that night. We tossed and turned, dithered and shuddered. Mother scolded us. We were told to close our eyes and go to sleep. We feigned sleep for a while, before sleep and "dreamland" overtook our weary souls. However, as children our fear and excitement was palpable. Then all hell broke out the very next morning. Sajeed raised the alarm, "Amma O Amma, amgo khaise re khaise, gypsy ra bashar pechone aise!" (Mother O mother! We are undone. The Gypsies are right here in our backyard!) We all woke up with a start. For the first time I saw a look of concern on my father's face. He told everyone to stay indoors while he and uncle Akram hurried to our backyard to investigate. Sajeed was right. The house we lived in was previously owned by a Hindu pleader who had left for India soon after the partition. It stood on an elevated plot of land. In our backyard was a small patch of land we used as a kitchen garden, at the edge of which was a sheer drop of about four feet into a shallow, murky, dying canal called the Ghagra. It was once a prominent canal dug by Raja Ramnath of Dinapur for purposes of drainage and sanitation to ensure public health in the town. However, during our time, the Ghagra was silted and had very little water except in the rainy season. The canal previously drew water from a nearby ancient river called the Kanchan, mentioned even in the old Hindu scriptures. Sadly, when we saw the Ghagra, it slowly meandered through the town like an oversized drain carrying filth. Viewed from our backyard across the canal, lay a vast stretch of uninhabited land where the cattle grazed. The Gypsies had camped there. It was also there that the local communities of the *dom*, *chamars* and sweepers, the lower caste Hindus, used to let loose their pigs to forage. In winter we used to watch the hogs from our rooftops and wonder aloud why the pigs pictured in our English story books were always white or pinkish in color,



whereas, the ones we saw were dark, dirty and wallowed in filth. As small children, I and my older sister naively believed that since the English sahibs were white, so too, must be their pigs!

That day, we all ran up to the rooftop to watch the gypsies from a distance. There were probably four families of them who had pitched a few tattered tents. Their noisy, disheveled children were running around, while their donkeys grazed. But what alarmed us was the big black guard dogs they had brought along. These fierce dogs had already seen us and were furiously barking away. We despaired for our little Pinky and resolved to keep her indoors. Gypsy men in loose garments and headgear (turban) were busy scrounging the wasteland for firewood and dry leaves, while

their women in billowing colorful Ghagara (skirt) were already busy with their cooking pots. This was for the first time that I and my sister had seen gypsies. We were fascinated. Racially, they clearly stood apart from us. They were taller and bigger. Their skin color ranged from swarthy to fair. They spotted us on the rooftop, seemed to wave at first and then jeered. Our elders immediately brought us down into the house.

Soon the local administration sent for the police. There was some altercation between the gypsies and the police. Their children cried and the dogs barked menacingly. Later our father said that the gypsies had prayed for a day or two of reprieve before leaving. They had come from across the Indian border (West Dinajpur, West Bengal), to try and sell their wares in our part of Dinajpur.

It was said that they originally belonged to Rajasthan, India.

Next day all was quiet. The gypsies stayed put and we went off to school. Meanwhile, a most unnecessary incident took place. Our house-servant Sajeed had opened the rear boundary wall door of our house to let in the sweeper. As he did so, he was startled to see at close proximity gypsy women washing utensils and clothes in the brackish water of the Ghagra. They grinned at him and said in a smattering of Hindustani if the Begum Sahiba (meaning our mother) of the house would be interested to see their goods. A scared Sajeed lost his cool. He was abusive and threatened them with a piece of firewood. The enraged gypsies in turn screamed obscenities and lobbed a few bricks into our backyard. However, our uncle Akram managed to calm things down. The gypsy women grudgingly departed. Later, Sajeed was severely taken to task by our parents for his folly.

Couple of days later, while we were at school a commotion broke out again at the gypsy camp. This time the local police came and forcibly evicted them amidst much hullabaloo. Within an hour the gypsies after hastily packing their belongings on their donkeys left, all the while gesticulating wildly and taunting the police. They also left behind quite a mess, which was later set on fire.

As night fell on us with a hush, I ran up a high fever. Our Dadi prayed beside my bed, while mother gently wept. Aunt Sara anxious at the sudden onset of my fever, quipped, "It's all Sajeed's fault. He should never have behaved so rudely with them. Now the gypsies have put a curse on this house." Our father scolded, "Nonsense," he said. "It's just a bloody coincidence. Don't be so superstitious. It's un-Islamic."

Waqar A Khan is Founder, Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies.

FACEBOOK LIVE

LA LIGA

Huesca vs Valencia
Live from 10:00 pm
Valladolid vs Atletico Madrid
Live from 10:00 pm
Real Madrid vs Villarreal

Live from 10:00 pm

Elche vs Athletic Bilbao
Live from 10:00 pm
Celta Vigo vs Real Betis
Live from 10:00 pm
Osasuna vs Real Sociedad
Live from 10:00 pm

Eibar vs Barcelona

Live from 10:00 pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
FIA F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2021
Live from 3:55 pm & 6:55 pm



Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim (inset), both of whom turned up in Mirpur yesterday on a day of optional training, will have to step it up as Bangladesh face Sri Lanka in the first of the three-match ODI series tomorrow. (Bottom) The visitors played an intra-squad practice match in BKSP yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/BCB

'They have to deliver big-time'

MAZHAR UDDIN

Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal probably did the right thing as captain by backing his teammates when questions were raised regarding some of the areas of his team ahead of the Tigers' three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka.

Questions ranged from the ability of Mushfiqur Rahim as a wicketkeeper after the veteran dropped crucial chances in recent times to the potential of Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar, who are yet to prove consistency over the past five years or so.

An elegant batsman when on-song, Liton has failed to score consistently since making his international debut six years ago.

Despite an average of 28.88 in 42 ODIs and three fifties and three hundreds to his name, Liton has had a poor 2021, scoring just 76 in his last six ODI innings.

On the other hand, Soumya -- another highly rated talented left-hander -- has been seeking consistency and assurance despite apparently possessing all the tools

to become a world-class batsman.

Although a lack of consistency is still the concern for players like Liton or Soumya, Tamim believed the two have to deliver big time.

"I hope they take the lead. They have a tremendous amount of potential, but they have to deliver big time. We have seen glimpses from Liton and Soumya but if they do well now, it will help the team. They understand they should be more consistent - like Mushfiqur Rahim, for example. If they become consistent, we will

be a better ODI team at home and away," Tamim said during a virtual press conference ahead of the three-match ODI series yesterday.

Moreover, Bangladesh's fielding and catching are still a cause for concern.

Mushfiqur, who has been the most consistent batsman for the Tigers and has kept wickets in 347 international matches, remained sloppy behind the stumps on the New Zealand tour in March this year, dropping two chances in

the ODI series and also missing a crucial opportunity against West Indies at home in January.

Tampon opined that it is Mushfiqur's experience that makes him the top choice for the upcoming series.

"I am very happy with his wicketkeeping. (Half) chances and dropped catches are part of the game. I know how hard he works, so I have no complaints. The team management, coach and I definitely want him to keep wickets in the three ODIs.

"You are talking about some dropped catches but he has done a wonderful job as a wicketkeeper over the past 13-14 years. I have complete trust in him and give him my full support. I think he should continue to keep wickets for Bangladesh," he said.

Tamim will know that improving in these areas and ironing out small mistakes could be the deciding factor. But the Tigers' ODI captain will hope that his teammates prove him right and show some consistency as the Tigers aim to get back to winning ways. Otherwise, Tamim may have to return to defend his players again in the coming days.



Has Messi played his last for Barca?

AGENCIES

Lionel Messi has been given permission by Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman to miss this weekend's final La Liga match of the season against Eibar and take holiday, the club confirmed on Friday, meaning he may have played his last game for Catalan side.

"The striker can enjoy a rest before next month's Copa America after a season in which he is one of the



players in the squad who has played most," Barcelona said in a statement.

The Argentine's contract expires at the end of June and there has been no announcement on an extension. He requested to leave the club last year but ultimately stayed put for one more season.

Should Messi not sign a new contract then his final game for the club would be last weekend's dismal 2-1 defeat at the Camp Nou to Celta Vigo.

The 33-year-old has netted 30 times in La Liga this season and is set to win Spain's Golden Boot, however, Koeman's side can at best finish third, behind arch rivals Real Madrid and title favourites Atletico Madrid.

Atletico on cusp of glory but Real ready to pounce

AFP, Madrid



Barely a week has gone by this season without Diego Simeone pronouncing his mantra of "one game at a time" and now it really rings true, with Atletico Madrid one match away from winning La Liga.

If they beat Real Valladolid on Saturday, they will be crowned champions for the first time since 2014 and few could argue given they will have been top of the table since December.

But Real Madrid are lurking, only two points behind, and ready to dip their neck over the line at the last moment. They have not led La Liga since October 17.

Real Madrid will have to win at home against Villarreal to have any chance but the omens look good for Zinedine Zidane's side, given their opponents may not be at full strength.

A draw for Atletico could mean the top two are tied on points but that would see the trophy returned to Real Madrid, who would sneak it on head-to-head.



(L-R) While Karim Benzema and his teammates will be desperate to retain the La Liga title, Luis Suarez will want to prove a point by bringing the title back to Atletico Madrid in his first season with the side on the final day of the campaign.

PHOTO: TWITTER/REUTERS

In some ways, Atletico might benefit from the situation being clear. They will almost certainly have win to claim the title and can look for victory from the start.

Valladolid might have been relegated already had results gone against them last weekend but instead they are still fighting to be the one team out of three that survives.

Huesca and Elche are the others scrapping to finish 17th, with both of them two points ahead of Valladolid, the trio sandwiched between already-relegated Eibar and Getafe, who are safe.

It means only a win will give Valladolid hope, a scenario that could play into Atletico's hands if it encourages their opponents to attack, opening the spaces that were denied by the defensive approach of Osasuna, who so nearly spoiled Atletico's chances last weekend.

Luis Suarez's 88th-minute winner, which completed a stunning turnaround after Renan Lodi equalised only six minutes before, had the feeling of a pivotal moment, a dramatic twist to prove decisive in

who harnesses the prize.

Yet Real Madrid's priority on Sunday was survival and they beat Athletic Bilbao at San Mames to take Atletico to the last day, when the tension will be at its highest.

Simeone admitted "anxiety exists" among his players but in 10 years in charge he has tried to expunge the fatalist tendencies that haunted the club for so long.

Real Madrid have benefitted before, when Atletico conceded in the 93rd minute in the 2014 Champions League final in Lisbon and lost in extra-time. Atletico went close in the 2016 final in Milan too, only to be beaten by Real Madrid on penalties.

Now Simeone's team are within touching distance again, the difference this time that Real Madrid have no control, their own success now depending on what happens at the Jose Zorrilla stadium, 200 kilometres away.

Win or lose, it could be Zidane's final game in charge and there are serious doubts around the future of Ronald Koeman as well, ahead of Barcelona's last match against Eibar.

Success only for mixed team

SPORTS REPORTER

Although Bangladesh pulled a string of surprising wins to reach final in recurve mixed team event of the Archery World Cup, they were eliminated from both men's and women's recurve team events in Lausanne, Switzerland yesterday.

The men's team, comprising Ruman Sana, Krishna Saha and Tamimul Islam, got off to a fine start in pre-quarterfinal to beat 3rd-ranked Spain 57-54 in the first set before conceding defeats in next two sets (54-56, 54-58). Ruman and Co then bounced back in the fourth set to level things up with a score of 55-54, forcing the match to a tiebreak where they lost by 23-28 points.

In the women's event, the Spaniards dominated over Diya Siddique, Beauty Roy and Monera Akter to win the pre-quarterfinal by 6-2 set points. The 3rd-ranked Spain beat Bangladesh by 54-45, 44-53, 52-50 and 54-52 points.

Winning start for Niaz, Razib

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed and GM Enamul Hossain Razib made winning start in the Asian Continental Individual Chess Championship, a qualifying event for FIDE World Cup to be held in Russia in July, at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

In the game of hybrid system online chess, Niaz beat Al Ibrahim Abdulrahman of Kuwait while Razib beat Tenuunbold Battulga of Mongolia.

IM Fahad Rahman lost to Chinese GM Lu Shanglei, a second-seed player of the competition while IM Abu Sufian Shakil lost to Uzbek GM Vokhidov Shamsiddin.

A total of 82 players including 20 GMs, one WGM, 20 IMs and four WIMs from 15 countries are participating in the tournament, with top seven slated to qualify for the World Cup.

Day wants two closed-door matches

SPORTS REPORTER



Head coach Jamie Day has asked Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to arrange two closed-door practice matches at home to make up for the cancellation of a proposed Qatar camp for June's World Cup Qualifiers in Doha.

Day expressed his desire to play two closed-door practice matches on May 24 and 27 before they leave for Doha on May 30, though the initial plan was to play two practice matches in Qatar after leaving here for Doha today.

"Day has wanted to play two practice matches at home and I asked the BFF general secretary to learn from the coach about the type of the opponents he wants to play. If he wants club teams, then we will arrange it. Again, if he wants a foreign-player-studded team, then we will also be trying to assemble it," said national teams' committee member Satyajit Das Rupu.

He also informed that Abahani are also ready to play a match against the national team on May 28 as the players are scheduled to report on May 24 to resume the training following the Eid-ul-fitr vacation.

"Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal are also supposed to resume their training within a couple of days, so the Federation will also communicate with those teams to



offer them to play practice matches," said Rupu, adding that Abahani may even resume their training a bit earlier for the sake of the national team.

Asked how the national team would be benefited by playing practice matches against local club sides whereas Afghanistan and India are supposed to face strong opponents in their preparation matches, Day said, "Well, it depends on how fit the local clubs are and if the foreign lads play?"

"India and Afghanistan seem to have better preparation at the moment than we do," admitted Day.

"I don't want the media there reporting on the games for other people [Afghanistan and India] to see," Day said. "Any coach would assess any games the opposition play before that's our job to do. One of our opponents played friendly games last year before our match against the club teams which we got to see and study."



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Request for Proposals

Reference No: RFP- BD21-011

19-May-2021

The International Organization for Migration (hereinafter called IOM) intends to hire Service Provider for the *Technical Assessment, Reports, Drawings and Recommendations of the Existing Electrical and Mechanical System in District Sadar Hospital, Cox's Bazar* for which Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued.

IOM now invites Service Providers / Consulting Firms to provide Technical and Financial Proposal for the following Services that are provided in Annex A - Terms of Reference (TOR) shared along with RFP.

The Service Provider / Consulting Firm will be selected under a Quality-Cost Based Selection procedures described in this RFP.

The RFP includes the following documents:

- Section I. Instructions to Service Providers / Consulting Firms
- Section II. Technical Proposal – Standard Forms
- Section III. Financial Proposal – Standard Forms
- Section IV. Terms of Reference
- Section V. Standard Form of Contract

The Proposals must be delivered by hand or through mail to IOM with office address at *Muktijoddha Building Complex, Baharchara, Motel Road, Cox's Bazar* on or **03rd June 2021, 14:00 hours**. No late proposal shall be accepted.

A complete set of Bidding Documents is available for issuance to Interested Bidders at <https://bangladesh.iom.int/opportunities/work-as-service-provider>

IOM reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to annul the selection process and reject all Proposals at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to affected Service Providers / Consulting Firms.

Very truly yours,

IOM Cox's Bazar Procurement Unit

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BANSHKHALI POWER PLANT Instigation, late payment fuelled labour unrest

Says police probe report on April 17 clash that left 7 workers dead

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

A police probe found that instigation by outsiders, irregular payment of salaries and sanitation problems fuelled labour unrest in the SS Power I Plant in Chattogram's Banshkhali upazila, leading to a clash on April 17 that left seven workers dead in police firing.

Additional DIG (crime and operation) Zakir Hossain Khan, head of the three-member probe committee formed to investigate police firing on the workers and reasons behind the unrest, submitted the report to Chattogram Deputy Inspector General Md Anwar Hossain on Wednesday evening.

Anwar told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "The committee submitted its report and it was sent to Police Headquarters. Now, the Police Headquarters will analyse the report."

After the clash on April 17, Chattogram district administration had formed another five-member probe committee, headed by Additional District Magistrate Sumoni Akter, to look into the justification of police firing. That report is yet to be completed.

After the incident, which also left at least 21 workers injured, police filed a case with Banshkhali Police Station accusing 2,500 unidentified people on charges of attacking law enforcers. The power plant authorities lodged another case accusing 22 named and 1,040 unnamed people over setting vehicles on fire during the incident.

SS Power I Plant is a joint venture of S Alam Group (holding 70 percent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A view of the eroded bank of the Meghna river at Kandapara village of Brahmanbaria's Nabinagar upazila. River erosion has caused the destruction of houses of 16 villages and thousands of acres of cropland in the upazila over the last few decades. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDYO

BOAT CAPSIZE IN MED Another 36 Bangladeshis rescued off Tunisia coast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 36 Bangladeshi migrants were rescued off the Tunisian coast on Thursday, after a boat carrying them capsized in the Mediterranean, reaching the tally of rescued Bangladeshis from the incident to 68.

Earlier, 32 Bangladeshis were rescued after the boat carrying about 90 migrants sank on Tuesday, according to Bangladesh Embassy in Libya.

There has been growing fear that still some Bangladeshis are missing from the incident, the embassy said in a Facebook post yesterday.

The boat carrying Bangladeshis as well as some Nigerians and Moroccans started from the Libyan coast on Sunday, according to the embassy's post and AFP report.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

New horned dinosaur discovered in US



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Paleontologists in the US have discovered a new species of horned dinosaur which was an ancestor to the triceratops and lived in New Mexico 82 million years ago.

The species comes from a group of herbivorous rhinoceros-like dinosaurs known as the ceratopsid species, which generally lived in herds and are characterised by horns and frills and beaked faces.

The newly described species - Menefeceratops sealeyi - adds important information to scientists' understanding of the evolution of ceratopsid dinosaurs, as it is now the oldest member of the group.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Junta moves to dissolve Suu Kyi's party

Says media report

AGENCIES

Myanmar's junta-appointed election commission will dissolve Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy Party (NLD) because of what it said was fraud in a November election, news outlet Myanmar Now said yesterday, citing a commissioner.

Myanmar Now said the decision was made during a meeting with political parties that was boycotted by many parties including the NLD.

Myanmar's army seized power on February 1, overthrowing and detaining the elected civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who fought for democracy for decades before tentative reforms began a decade ago.

The military justified the coup by accusing Suu Kyi's NLD of obtaining landslide victory through a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

'Bangalees are true Muslims'

MAY 22, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

YAHYA'S OBSERVATIONS ON POLITICAL SITUATION

The US consul general in Karachi sent a telegram to the US State Department providing details of his meeting with Pakistan President Yahya Khan on May 22, 1971. As to the political situation in Pakistan, Yahya Khan affirmed his belief that the future of the wings were intertwined with the whole.

He reiterated with emphasis that law and order was the first prerequisite to the reinstatement of a peaceful political accommodation; that rebuilding had to begin with a prompt cessation of military action and, that this was his objective. He acknowledged that fear had to be dispelled and public confidence restored. He was optimistic that this could be accomplished within a time frame of several months which would allow both for political accommodation and economic rehabilitation.

Yahya further informed that he intended to go to the people via radio and television sometime next month. He said it was his plan to hold a by-election in East Pakistan for those provincial and National Assembly seats which were vacated by Awami Leaguers who had departed East Pakistan for India and elsewhere in the cause of Bangladesh, or who had committed capital crimes during the period leading up to and subsequent to the "secession" attempt.

Of the number of seats which would be vacated, President Yahya said he felt that no more than six or seven percent would be involved, and that it would be relatively a simple matter to hold an

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

HELPING 1.75M POOR WB approves \$600m for 2 projects

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank has approved \$600 million for two projects in Bangladesh to help over 1.75 million poor and vulnerable people.

These two projects will provide support to youths, women, disadvantaged groups, and returnee migrant workers to improve employability and livelihood opportunities, and build their resilience against future shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a WB media release.

The \$300 million Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project will equip more than 1 million youths and workers with skills needed for the future of work.

The project will particularly support youths, women and disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, to become skillful and to connect them to the labour market.

It will also support industries to retrain their workers during and after the pandemic and thus accelerate recovery.

The \$300 million Resilience, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Improvement (RELI) Project will help improve the livelihoods of about 750,000 poor and vulnerable rural people across

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Mosque imam arrested for raping girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police on Thursday night arrested an Imam of a local mosque in Narail's Kalia upazila on charge of raping a minor girl.

The accused Abdur Rahman, 20, used to teach children Islamic education at a mosque in the upazila where he also performed duties as Imam.

Like other days, children went to the mosque on Thursday morning. After completion of studies, Rahman let everybody go home except a six-year-old girl.

Then, Rahman took the girl to his residence, which is adjacent to the mosque, citing that he would teach

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A mother pours water over the head of her young son, barely two years old, in a slum in Moghbazar yesterday. As the mercury rises around the country, people from lower-income group living in overcrowded poorly ventilated conditions suffer the most.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

6-8 million may have died in pandemic

Says WHO; India faces antifungal drug shortage as rare complication adds to Covid woes

AGENCIES

Official tolls showing the number of deaths directly or indirectly attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic are likely to be a "significant undercount," the World Health Organization said yesterday, saying 6-8 million people may have died so far.

Presenting its annual World Health Statistics report, the WHO estimated that total deaths from the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 were at least 3 million last year or 1.2 million more than officially reported.

"We are likely facing a significant undercount of total deaths directly and indirectly attributed to Covid-19," it said.

The UN agency officially estimates that around 3.4 million people have died directly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic by May 2021.

"This number would truly be two to three times higher. So I think safely about 6 to 8 million deaths could be an estimate on a cautionary note," said Samira Asma, WHO's assistant director-general in its data and analytics division at a virtual press briefing.

WHO data analyst William Msemburi said that this estimate included both unreported Covid-19 deaths as well as indirect deaths due to the lack of hospital capacity and restrictions on movements among other factors.

The WHO did not give a breakdown of the figure, referred to by health experts as "excess mortality."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING MAY 22

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-40 8-00
JAMAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-45 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION