

## Golam Rasul Mallick's death anniversary today

STAR REPORT

Today is the 15th death anniversary of Golam Rasul Mallick, a freedom fighter and founding editor of Eastern News Agency (ENA), said a press release.



On the occasion, the family will hold a Qurankhani and destitute-feeding programme at his residence after the Asr prayers.

During the 1971 Liberation War, he launched ENA as a Bangalee journalist. A pioneer in journalism, Golam Rasul Mallick worked for the development of the media throughout his life.

He was elected chairman of Commonwealth Press Union, Bangladesh wing for three times and was the first member of Press Institute Bangladesh.

## Mosque imam

FROM PAGE 12

the girl more lessons and raped her.

Rahman let the girl go home after threatening her not to disclose the incident with others.

After returning home, the girl suffered bleeding and then shared the incident with her family.

Then, her parents and locals caught Rahman and handed him over to the police on the same night.

Later on yesterday morning, the victim's father filed a case against the accused, said Roksana Khatun, officer-in-charge of Naragati Police Station.

## Junta moves

FROM PAGE 12

manipulated vote, though the electoral commission at that time had rejected its complaints.

## Instigation, late payment

FROM PAGE 12

of the equity), SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation, China and HTG Development Group Co Ltd, China, according to the official website of S Alam group.

One Rashid and his brother Nurul Alam are among the locals made accused in the case filed by S Alam power plant Chief Coordinator Faruk Ahmed.

Asked about the rationality of police firing on workers, Zakir said, "As the workers turned violent, police had no other option to save the lives of the Chinese workers and properties. At the first, police tried to disperse the workers firing rubber bullets from shotguns but the workers did not leave the living quarters of the Chinese workers, which is when police fired shots."

DIG Anwar said, "Rationality of police firing will be probed by the [district] administration. Apart from that, the issue will also be investigated during the investigation of the case."

The 300-page probe report includes the testimony of witnesses, photos and CCTV footage.

The probe report also found that the incident happened on "instant provocation" and not in a "pre-planned manner".

"The incident took place following some manpower agencies' negligence as they did not pay workers' wages on time... some issues centring

Ramadan, provocations of some local outsiders, and inadequate sanitation in the living quarters of Bangladeshi workers," Additional DIG Zakir told The Daily Star on Wednesday after submitting the report.

"Apart from that, language barrier between Chinese and Bangladeshi workers and a lack of coordination of power plant coordinators were also responsible for the clash," he said.

"Someone asked the agitating workers over loudspeakers to gather and stage a demonstration. The workers then became violent and started gathering in front of the Chinese quarters. Rashid, his brother Nurul Alam along with 25 outsiders later joined them and provoked the workers," Zakir said.

The committee also came up with a seven-point recommendation which included a boundary wall being built across the power plant to secure the project; paying workers' wages on time; formation of a labourers welfare fund; arranging the power plant's own security to work alongside police; removing language barrier between Chinese and Bangladeshi; taking steps to arrange security measures as per the Key Point Installation guidelines upon the completion of construction work and making a friendly environment between workers and owners, which can be maintained through holding monthly meetings.

## Another 36 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 12

The Bangladesh mission has already communicated with the earlier rescued 32 Bangladeshis and provided them with the necessary support, says the Facebook post. They were in good physical condition, it adds.

Quoting Tunisia's Defence Ministry, AFP reported more than 50 people were missing on Tuesday when their boat sank after leaving Libya heading to Europe.

Tunisia's Defence Ministry spokesman Mohamed Zikri told AFP the survivors of the shipwreck were picked up after clinging to an oil

platform off the southern coast of Tunisia.

The boat, crammed with the passengers, left the Libyan port of Zuwara on Sunday, the report said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the boat to sink, but vessels leaving the North African coast for Europe are often heavily overloaded makeshift crafts, departing at night even in rough weather to avoid detection from the coastguard.

At least 1,200 migrants died in the Mediterranean last year, most of them crossing the central part of the sea, AFP reported referring to the United Nations statistics.

## WB approves

FROM PAGE 12

3,200 villages in 20 districts.

Both the projects have a maturity of 30 years, including a grace period of 5 years.

"In Bangladesh, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the livelihoods of thousands of people, particularly female workers, youths, and returnee migrant workers," acting World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Dandan Chen said.

He said these two projects will help empower and mobilise rural poor people, prepare them for the future job market and support entrepreneurial opportunities, especially for women and disadvantaged groups.

Mokhlesur Rahman, World Bank team leader for the ASSET Project, said building on the success of earlier projects, STEP and NARI, the new project will help modernise and build resilience of the technical vocational education and training sector of Bangladesh.

It will set up an international standard model polytechnic in the country.

"Further, the project will benefit the informal sector workers through expanding the Recognition of Prior Learning programme."

Jean Saint-Geours, World Bank team leader for RELI Project, said the project will provide immediate and tailored livelihood support to rural poor people for responding to urgent needs, improve their ability to cope with future shocks and help them come out of poverty through income-generating activities and skill development.

With over 90 percent female beneficiaries, the project will also support entrepreneurship and encourage crop diversification, good nutritional practices, while raising awareness of climate risk adaptation and mitigation, the spread of diseases, and gender-based violence.

## 6-8 million

FROM PAGE 12

"Acknowledging that the reported Covid numbers are only a fraction of this full impact, we have been looking at the excess mortality attributable to Covid-19 for the year 2020," Msemburi said.

## 'Bangalees are true Muslims'

FROM PAGE 12

The frightened refugees pouring into India from East Pakistan posed for New Delhi a problem perhaps as serious as any it had faced since independence, reported the New York Times.

According to Indian figures, the number of Bangalees who crossed over to escape the Pakistan army exceeded three million. Tens of thousands more arrive every day -- pitiful, dazed, broken people carrying a few salvaged belongings. Some are wounded. Others died on the way, the report added.

The New York Times further wrote that sanitary facilities were inadequate, adding to an already severe health problem. Indian hospitals were overflowing with the wounded and sick, many of whom had to lie on mats in the corridors and aisles. Dysentery was rife. Cholera and smallpox had broken out. And much of this was taking place in difficult-to-reach border regions -- Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura-where medical care in normal times was either inadequate or nonexistent.

The problem of getting enough food to these remote areas was also straining India's limited resources. In West Bengal, the refugee influx caused food shortages and forced prices up. At the same time, refugees offering to work in the fields at any price driven the daily wage rate down. Resentment among local poor Indians already surfaced. Hindu-Muslim tensions were also feared.

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

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He further said that Bangalees were true Muslims and more faithful to Pakistan than anyone else. Pakistan had been created by their efforts because at the pre-Partition time a Muslim League government existed only in Bengal.

Asserting that the present conflict in Pakistan was not for the integration of Pakistan but for holding on to power by the capitalists and the military lords from Punjab, the Pakhtoon leader said the only fault of East Pakistan leaders was that they had won the elections.

REFUGEE SITUATION WORSENS

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## New horned

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The fossilised remains of the dinosaur were found in rocks known as the Menefee Formation in northwestern New Mexico in 1996 by Paul Sealey, a research associate of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. New research has revealed the fossils as a previously unknown species.

## ROUNDTABLE

act:onaïd The Daily Star

# Implementing National Youth Action Plan in the Context of the Pandemic

The Daily Star and ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) jointly organised an online discussion titled "Implementing National Youth Action Plan in the Context of the Pandemic" on April 21, 2021. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

### SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has curtailed young people's opportunities and posed barriers not just in the realm of institutional education but also in skills development. The discussion highlighted how the National Youth Action Plan (NYAP) should be implemented during this time. Marginalised groups should be prioritised to uphold the spirit of giving young people the credentials to make decisions. Engagement of youth as active participants in all stages is crucial for the implementation of the NYAP. The NYAP must be harmonised with the eighth Five Year Plan. Its implementation would require time-bound specific activities with estimated resource allocations. A national youth council is of the utmost necessity, not just at the national level, but also at the divisional level, in order to be more inclusive and representative. Coordination among the government ministries and departments would be vital to start this government led implementation process. External policy actors, i.e. civil society and youth community, should be part of the implementation process.

**Farah Kabir**, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh

We have, for several years, emphasised on the need of a National Plan of Action for the implementation of the National Youth Policy (NYP) 2017. The NYAP developed during the pandemic raises concerns as to whether we should proceed with the plan without taking into consideration the impact of the pandemic. Addressing the issues of young people regarding education, health, employment, representation, and their mental health demands a critical review. We all know that young people, particularly young women, are living in various kinds of vulnerabilities and they require dedicated support to address the present-day challenges along with the existing structural challenges of discrimination and inequity.

In the midst of the pandemic, we have seen how young people are deprived of institutional education and skill development opportunities. We have also seen young people taking up the challenge and taking initiatives. Fortunately, Bangladesh does not have a dearth of talent and it is manifested in their multiple achievements. What the young people need is investment so that they can flourish. Government should develop its plans and systems for providing those opportunities to the marginalised young people in a targeted manner.

Our discussion focuses on ways we can implement the NYAP and here we need to ensure inclusivity of all youth and not restrict ourselves to helping a specific population of young people. It took us four years to come up with the NYAP, we cannot invest another four years coming up with a youth council. Therefore, the alternative can be creating a shadow youth council. Let the citizens consider



FARAH KABIR



KORBAN ALI



SABI RANI RABIDAS



MAHMUDUL HASAN



SADIK HASAN ROHID



KORVI RAKHSAND



REFAT JAHAN NODE



NAZMUL AHSAN



DR KAZI MARUFUL ISLAM



SHAMMUY WADUD



AKTAR UDDIN



AROMA DATTA



SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

taking such action.

**Korban Ali**, Deputy Manager-Youth Representation, ActionAid Bangladesh

Our review of the NYAP observes that, in contradiction of the spirit of the youth policy, it offers young people an invited space to engage in discussions, rather than a space constructed for them to engage in decision-making. The plan seems to view young people as service recipients, overlooking their equal citizenship. Lastly, it speaks of indirect engagement of the youth with policymakers instead of direct ways of sharing their views. Prioritising a bureaucracy-centric approach, the action plan mostly remains silent on how civil society and youth community will engage with its implementation process.

The authority can urgently consult relevant stakeholders to find ways of addressing the shortfalls of the plan in its implementation process. A space can be constructed where youth, youth organisations, and civil society can come together and participate in the national steering committee for enabling the implementation of the NYAP.

**Sabi Rani Rabidas**, Member, Agrogani Jubo Foundation, Nilphamari

When the pandemic first hit in 2020, I took training to be a driver. Four months' training took me over a year to complete, but even then I was unable to obtain a license to drive. Same thing happened to the place I volunteered. I joined a training programme in February, but it was all stopped again for the lockdown.

**Mahmudul Hasan**, National Consultant, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

One matter that is not addressed is the digital divide. If we want to create jobs for the youth, we need to invest in this area. We need to take a coherent approach for providing skills training. In one of our recent consultations with

young people, they stated that they are often invited to express their views, but these recommendations are not systematically captured or followed up on. A systematic platform where their views will be reported and checked as to whether they are being reflected in the policy and implementation system was recommended. The National Youth Council or the Youth Ministry could play a role here.

**Sadik Hasan Rohid**, President, Shopnoproyash Jubo Sangstha, Kushtia

In the beginning when people were anxious about the pandemic and unwilling to leave their houses, it was the youth who stepped up.

These very youths have been severely impacted by the pandemic. Educational institutions being closed has led to various negative impacts on them. They are experiencing tremendous amount of mental pressure and loneliness due to being house bound, so it must be considered in the NYAP.

**Korvi Raksand**, Founder, JAAGO Foundation

The problems of a youth in Dhaka and the problems of a youth in Rangpur will not be the same as their problems are very diverse. A national youth council of sorts with both a national and divisional body can help us find the solutions to problems in a localised way.

We need to set some targets and deadlines to know what we plan to achieve within a specified period of time.

**Refat Jahan Node**, Member, Youth Voice of Chattogram

a very short time.

Many young people have lost jobs. Furthermore, owing to joblessness, many are turning towards addiction. These contexts must be taken into account for the implementation of the NYAP.

**Nazmul Ahsan**, Manager-Young People, ActionAid Bangladesh

Young people should be engaged in all sorts of development discussion not as passive recipients rather as active participants in planning, implementing and in the follow up process.

Grassroots young people are underprivileged and they have very little space to engage in the governance structures. Designing and delivering services to these people is crucial and putting a gender lens here is a must in the NYAP implementation process. The current NYAP planning seems rather vague. The plan requires time-bound specific activities where required resources should be estimated and allocated. The NYAP implementation process must be harmonised with the eighth Five Year Plan. In addition, it is assumed, coordination among the government ministries and department would be vital to start the implementation process.

The NYAP implementation strategies must be made very clear and there should also be a monitoring mechanism consisting of the active participation of young people.

**Dr Kazi Maruful Islam**, Professor, Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka

Our online education is not inclusive. Many youths do not have proper devices and cannot afford to buy mobile data. Although our NYAP was created before the pandemic began, it should have still included steps for crisis management regarding youth education and livelihoods.