



# The Daily Star



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## Record foreign aid use in next budget

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

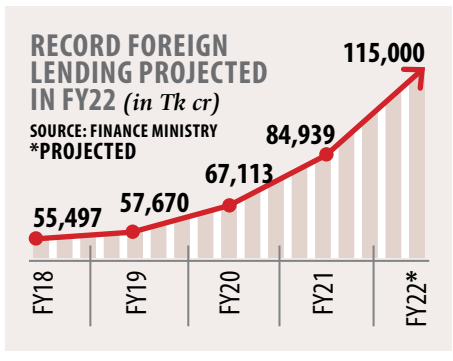
Making hay while the sun, it appears, is the finance ministry's mantra as it goes about preparing the budget for fiscal 2021-22, its second in the backdrop of the extraordinary challenges thrown by the pandemic.

The government is sitting on a record amount of foreign aid and at the same time, the development partners are chipping in liberally to help Bangladesh weather the pandemic gale. Closer to home, banks are sitting on excess liquidity and nowhere to lend to give the precarious state of the economy.

It is these two wellsprings of funds that the ministry will draw upon for the most part to bankroll the budget for the next fiscal year amid shrunken domestic revenue mobilisation.

The government is hoping to use a record Tk 115,000 crore (about \$13 billion) in foreign funding in fiscal 2021-22, up 35.4 percent year-on-year, according to finance ministry officials.

At present, about \$50.4 billion of foreign aid is present in the pipeline, while the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and other development partners have expressed their intent to provide budget



support to the Bangladesh economy to better manage the pandemic whirlwind.

Banks are expected to provide Tk 76,252 crore towards the financing of the budget, down 4.4 percent from this fiscal year.

The government would extract Tk 37,000 crore from non-bank sources, up 4.8 percent from fiscal 2020-21.

Subsequently, the budget deficit, which is the shortfall in the government's income compared with its spending, is projected to hit 6.1 percent of GDP -- the highest in recent memory.

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Buses taking a U-turn at Amin Bazar, Savar, causing a nearly two-kilometre tailback on Dhaka-Aricha highway, after they had dropped off passengers in the scorching heat. The passengers would have to walk or get other transport to the capital. After spending the Eid holidays at their hometowns, scores of people have been coming back to the city, often flouting health guidelines.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Movement curbs likely to go on for another week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to extend the ongoing restrictions on public movement and transport by another week to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The Cabinet Division has sent a proposal to extend the restrictions to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), sources said.

If the prime minister approves, the division is expected to issue a circular in this regard today, they added.

This current phase of restrictions will end today.

However, the ongoing restrictions remain only on paper as there is little enforcement by government agencies to control public movement and plying vehicles.

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## ASTRAZENECA

### Govt moves to buy jabs from pvt UK supplier

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh has taken an initiative to buy two million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from the private sector, after appeals to the US and UK governments for Covid-19 shots yielded nothing.

The director general of the health services directorate in Dhaka recently held a virtual meeting with a supplier of the Oxford vaccine in the UK after the Bangladesh High Commission in London contacted the supplier, a high commission official told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The DG Health had some questions for the supplying company and the answers have been provided," the source said, adding that the price of the doses is being discussed.

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## 'Rozina in jail as she exposed graft'

Protests rage on for fifth day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demonstrations to demand the immediate release of Prothom Alo journalist Rozina Islam raged on for the fifth day, with different organisations yesterday staging protest rallies, human chains and a token hunger strike.

One of the demonstrations was by Nagorik Somaj, a citizens' platform, which organised a protest rally in front of the National Museum in the evening.

The platform placed a four-point demand including Rozina's release, punishment of those who harassed her and the removal of the health minister and secretary.

"The prime minister should apologise for the mistakes made by her people," said Zafrullah Chowdhury, trustee of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, at the rally.

Rozina wrote reports on irregularities in recruitment of the health ministry and on the minister who remained absent at office, said Asif Nazrul, a professor of the Dhaka University.

"This is the only reason this incident happened," he added.

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## BAIL HEARING

### All eyes on court today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All eyes are on the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) court in Dhaka as it is expected to deliver its order on the bail petition of Rozina Islam, senior reporter of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, today.

On Thursday, a virtual hearing of the petition began at 12:50pm and went on for more than an hour. The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Baki Billah then took two hours to deliberate on his decision.

Later, on the day, the prosecution sought more time and the court postponed deciding on the

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## 29 countries saw 1m extra deaths

Study led by Bangladeshi researcher at Oxford finds assessing impact of pandemic last year

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

Nearly one million extra deaths relating to the Covid-19 pandemic occurred in 29 high-income countries in 2020, found a study led by a team of Oxford University researchers.

Experts said although there are no equivalent statistics, Bangladesh also had more deaths than expected last year. This needs to be addressed through better healthcare to prevent avoidable deaths, they said.

Published in the British Medical Journal on May 19, the study found that except for Norway, Denmark and New Zealand, all other countries examined had more deaths than expected in 2020, more so among men than women.

The five countries with the highest absolute number of excess deaths were the US, UK, Italy, Spain, and Poland.

Measuring excess deaths -- the number of deaths above that expected during a given time period -- is a way of assessing the impact of the pandemic on deaths in various countries, said the researchers.

A team of international researchers, led by Bangladeshi physician-epidemiologist Dr Nazrul Islam from the Nuffield Department of Population Health at Oxford, set out to estimate the direct and indirect effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on mortality in 2020 in 29 high-income countries.

"The extra deaths indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic has claimed many men than women."

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## Cops took no steps despite two GDs

Alleges family of slain Pallabi trader

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

After being attacked three times in last six years, receiving numerous death threats, and even after filing general diaries in this regard, Shahinuddin, a trader, was attacked once again on May 16 and lost his life this time.

Last time he was attacked by a group of organised criminals in November last year, he fought for his life and survived.

This time, luck did not favour him when he was attacked by the same group yet again on May 16 in the capital's Pallabi area and died on the spot.

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Journalists of Prothom Alo and the paper's fans hold a candle-light vigil near their office in the capital's Karwan Bazar, demanding release of their colleague Senior Reporter Rozina Islam, who has been sued under the Official Secrets Act and arrested. The reporter, currently in jail, had written several in-depth reports on corruption in the health sector amid the pandemic.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## NEW KSA TRAVEL ADVISORY

### Migrant workers' woes rise further

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

Several thousand Saudi-bound Bangladeshi migrant workers have been struggling due to the new travel advisory given by Saudi Arabia, which requires medical insurance, covering the risk of Covid-19 infections and hotel reservations for institutional quarantine.

The Saudi authorities said violators shall be deported and banned indefinitely from entering the Middle Eastern country.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday at the Saudia (Saudi airlines) office in the capital's Karwanbazar, Saudi-bound workers said they need to spend around Tk 65,000 to Tk 70,000 to comply with the new conditions.

Following the fresh travel regulations that came into effect from May 20, Biman Bangladesh Airlines was forced to suspend all its international flights to Saudi Arabia for five days till May 24, saying they need time to make arrangements in line with the fresh advisory.

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## Can't go door to door killing mosquitoes

Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister Md Tajul Islam said punitive measures will be taken against those found responsible in Aedes mosquito breeding.

"It is difficult for the city corporation to go door to door to kill mosquitoes," he said while speaking as chief guest at the inaugural function of an awareness campaign organised by Dhaka North City Corporation at Mirpur yesterday.

"City dwellers are being made aware of the issue through campaigns. Entire communities cannot be harmed due to the negligence of a few," he said of those who facilitate mosquito breeding through accumulation of water in and around their homes, despite repeated warnings.

"This is a punishable offence," the minister added. "If these mosquito breeding grounds are not destroyed, legal action will be taken against the negligent by conducting mobile courts," he warned.

Tajul said the two city corporations have appointed 10 magistrates to run the mobile courts. DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam also joined the programme.



LGRD Minister Tajul Islam himself spray-paints a big red cross, along with a sticker, inset, on the gate of a building in the capital's Mirpur area where aedes mosquitoes were found. Dhaka North Mayor Atiqul Islam accompanied him at the launch of an awareness campaign against mosquitoes yesterday.

## Indigenous people worst sufferers of climate change

Experts tell webinar marking Int'l Day for Biological Diversity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people are the worst sufferers of the impact of climate change in the world including Bangladesh, said environmentalists and researchers at a webinar yesterday.

They also said Bangladesh's biodiversity is under immense threat, and the situation is similar worldwide. To solve this problem, there should be policy reformation, conservation of wildlife and greenery, regulatory use of renewable natural resources, and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before implementing any project.

Marking International Day for Biological Diversity, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) organised the webinar titled "Policy Reforms for Transformative Changes for Protection of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services".

The theme of this year is "We're part of the solution".

IUCN Country Representative Raquibul Amin, during a presentation said, "Climate, biodiversity, ecosystem and everything changed a lot over the years. We have seen its negative effect mostly in areas lived by the indigenous and the poor community."

Referring to the IUCN red list of threatened species, he said 24 percent of animals and plants of Bangladesh are under threat of extinction, while globally it is 28 percent.

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## Return to Dhaka still a hurdle race for many

People struggle to reach capital as long-haul and waterways transports remain suspended

STAR REPORT

Defying coronavirus scares and multiple hurdles on their way, a large number of Dhaka dwellers yesterday returned to the city after celebrating Eid at their village homes.

As operation of public transports remained suspended, people were seen travelling on trucks, pickups, minibuses, motorbikes and other small vehicles, risking their lives.

Many were seen walking for miles after failing to avail any transport.

As passenger launch operations remained suspended, people from southern districts had to cross the river Padma on ferries.

On Shimulia-Banglabazar ferry route, a huge crowd of Dhaka-bound people were seen. People boarded ferries in crowds, in complete absence of health safety rules.

Many passengers were seen travelling without wearing masks.

The ferry route's Shimulia point is



Massive crowds at Banglabazar Ferry Terminal yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

located at Munishiganj while Banglabazar is located at Madaripur.

A total of 17 ferries were in operation on the route yesterday, said Profullah Chowhan, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Shimulia terminal.

Several hundred private cars and cargo carriers crossed the river yesterday through

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## Babunagari's assistant Enamul held in Ctg

Hefajat leader Monir remanded in Dhaka over 2013 violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested top Hefajat leader Junayed Babunagari's personal assistant Enamul Hasan Farooqi in Chattogram on Friday night over mayhem in Hathazari on March 26.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Monir Hossain Kashemi, finance affairs secretary of Hefajat-e-Islam's dissolved committee, on a four-day remand in a case filed with Paltan Police Station over the 2013 mayhem in Dhaka.

Lt Col Moshirur Rahman Juel, commanding officer of Rab-7, told The Daily Star, "Rab men from Hathazari camp held Enamul Hasan Farooqi (24) from Boro Digharpar area in Fatehabad union of Hathazari around 11:30pm."

"Farooqi is FIR-accused in a sabotage case filed over the mayhem on March 26 with Hathazari Police Station. Apart from that, he is also an accused in Shah Ahmad Shafi murder case filed by Shafi's brother-in-law," added Rab CO.

Farooqi, who was handed over to Hathazari Police Station, used to send press releases of Hefajat to the media, he said.

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Saheb Bazar, a bustling commercial area is Rajshahi city's most traffic-congested neighbourhoods by far, according to residents.

PHOTO: STAR

## Misplaced priorities?

Tk 850cr project undertaken by Rajshahi City Corporation to build five new flyovers, but most congested spot skipped 'due to fund issues'

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) has taken up a Tk 850-crore project for constructing flyovers at five more locations in the city, but has skipped the city's most traffic-congested area, Shaheb Bazar.

The area needs a longer flyover than the ones planned, and as a result will involve huge costs, said the corporation's supervising engineer Noor Islam. RCC is planning a separate project to build a flyover at that point, but it is not happening anytime soon, he informed.

"It is difficult to gather funds for a flyover at Shaheb Bazar," said Islam.

The city corporation has been building a flyover at the city's Mohonpur area since 2018. Rajshahi Development Authority is also building another flyover beside Rajshahi University of Engineering Technology.

Now, the corporation has taken the fresh "Urban Infrastructure Development Project" for constructing the five new flyovers -- at Horogram, Court Station railway crossing, Bhadra railway crossing, Borna intersection and Martyred AHM Qamaruzzaman Square areas.

However, locals said other than the flyover at Qamaruzzaman Square, most flyovers would be barely used.

However, Noor Islam, who is also the project director, said the flyovers will be utilised in the near future, as the city's population has been soaring.

Prof Md Kumruzzaman, head of

Urban & Regional Planning department at Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (Ruet) said RCC's plans for the flyover were logical in the sense that these would be essential in the near future with increase of population and vehicles. However, he criticised the city authorities' approach.

"I felt sorry that the corporation didn't think to consult with the university's experts before taking up those plans. If consulted with, quality services could have been ensured."

He also said a prior assessment would have been required to figure out how many flyovers the city of about 90 square kilometers needs.

Ahmed Shafi Uddin, president of Rajshahi chapter of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, said some of the locations chosen for constructing the flyovers have no more than five-minute congestions.

"Contrarily, reducing traffic of Shaheb Bazar is an emergency," he said, adding that he and many others avoid Shaheb Bazar even when necessary to avoid congestion in office hours.

Shafi, also a retired Rajshahi University officer, said the flyovers have become an obsolete technology and create environmental pollution in many cities.

"Developed world is installing mass rapid transit systems," he said.

On Thursday afternoon, Noor Islam signed agreements with three architectural institutions for preparing designs for the

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## CJ constitutes nine more HC benches for virtual hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday constituted nine more High Court benches for virtually hearing and disposing of urgent cases, as the court will reopen today, after a two-week annual vacation.

With these nine benches, a total of 16 benches of the HC will perform judicial functions from today, using information technology and maintaining health and hygiene guidelines. They, however, cannot hold hearing on anticipatory bail petitions till further notice, Supreme Court sources said.

Of the nine benches constituted yesterday, six are division (two judges) benches, and three are single (one judge) benches, according to a notification issued by the chief justice.

The division benches are of Justice Krishna Debnath and Justice KM Zahid Sarwar Kajo; Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique and Justice KM Hafizul Alam; Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim; Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Ahmed Sohel;

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## WOMEN IN POLITICS

## Parties get another nine years to ensure 33pc representation

EC stipulates in draft law as all parties fail deadline

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Political parties of the country are likely to get another nine years to keep at least 33 percent positions of all committee at local and national levels reserved for women as all the major parties failed to ensure it before the deadline.

The Election Commission in 2008 gave a deadline of 12 years to the political parties to ensure women's representation. The move was taken to encourage and ensure more participation of women in politics.

The deadline ended last year, but the parties failed to implement the directive. Now, the EC has raised the time-frame till 2030.

In a draft law titled "Registration of Political Parties Act-2020", it proposed that all political parties should keep 33 percent positions for women by 2030 and they will now need to report to the EC about fulfilling the reservations annually.

Although the EC is still in the dark as to which parties have or haven't met the deadline, it is also going to send letters to all the 39 registered political parties, asking them about the progress in achieving the target of 33 percent women

representatives by 2020.

"This is our proposal, that the political parties can be given another 10 years to ensure 33 percent women representatives at parties," Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star.

He said they also discussed the proposal as there were discussions about increasing the deadline.

EC Deputy Secretary Abdul Halim Khan said they will send the draft of the law to the law ministry soon.

Reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions, including that of the central committee, for women by 2020 is a pre-requisite for any political party's registration with the EC in line with the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

This target came about following an amendment to incorporate this provision into the RPO in 2008, and failure to meet this means the EC can cancel registration of a political party, according to EC officials.

The EC prepared the draft of "Registration of Political Parties Act-2020", repealing the chapter VIA of the Representation of the People Order-1972

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## CCU at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in disarray

Angiogram machine out of order for six months, air conditioners don't work either

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

The Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) of Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) is not in operational condition. Its only angiogram machine is not working, and all its air conditioners are out of order, which means the unit is barely functioning.

While the angiogram machine has been out of order for at least six months, the air conditioning has not been working for around two years, sources told this correspondent.

On top of this, the 12-bed unit has to regularly deal with two to four times its capacity. The situation has become so bad now that patients from the city are looking for alternative healthcare facilities, despite the hospital's locational convenience.

Speaking to this correspondent, the relative of an admitted patient said due to the environment at SBMCH, they are left with no choice but take their patient to the capital.

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The English name for it -- Bombay duck -- is quite confusing to the uninitiated. Also known as bombil and locally popular as loitta, the lizardfish is not nearly as popular in its natural form as it is dried, and a group of small traders make the most out of the low prices in the market by leaving them to dry under the sun, hanging them by fences at the capital's Tejgaon. Once dried, the fish is then packed and sold at nearby markets for a much better price. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



# Litchi might be costlier this year



Litchis, the red and succulent summer delight, are hanging from trees in an orchard at Char Silimpur village of Ishwardi upazila in Pabna. Right, several dozen bamboo baskets full of the produce are ready for shipment, straight from the orchard.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Abdus Salam bought three litchi orchards with 150 trees in his area this year at a cost of Tk 2.5 lakh, expecting to have a harvest of around 3.5 lakh to 4 lakh fruits.

A resident of Char Silimpur village in Ishwardi upazila, Salam started harvesting litchis in his orchard a day before the Eid-ul-fitr. But he is now worried about incurring losses after the harvest so far has been half of his expectations.

"This year I got a yield of 10 to 12 thousand litchis from each of the larger trees. The same tree produced 15 to 20 thousand fruits last year. Yield of the smaller trees

has been only 1,500 to 2,000 litchis, which is half of the targeted yield," he added.

The harvesting of local variety of litchis began a week ago and it will last until the next couple of weeks.

Many locals involved in litchi farming and trading believe that the recent heat waves affected the yield of litchis this year.

"The heat waves badly affected flowering of the fruit this year. Many trees did not flower as expected. Many fruits on the trees were damaged. Because of this, the yield has come down to half this year," said Dulal Miah, a litchi farmer from Char Silimpur village.

He said he expected a total sale

of Tk 5 lakh from two hundred litchi trees this year, but so far the harvest has been disappointing.

Abdul Kader, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension in Pabna said more than 41 thousand tonnes of litchi is expected to be harvested in the district this year.

Hot temperatures in early January affected flowering of litchis this year and intermittent heat waves caused damage to a large amount of fruits on trees, resulting in 20 to 25 percent fall in yield.

But the loss in production will likely be recovered when the Bombay variety of litchis will be harvested in early June, he added.

Despite the poor production, litchi farmers and traders have been happy with the higher prices they are getting for the produce at markets this year.

"Every one hundred of 'Aati' litchi [local variety] is selling for Tk 1,700 to Tk 2,300 this year, whereas the same variety sold for Tk 1,200 to Tk 1,700 last year," said Abdul Mannan Shamim, a litchi trader and farmer in Digha village of Ishwardi upazila.

Hoping to make good profit this year, he said after harvesting of the local varieties is over, the harvesting of 'Bombay' litchi, the most sought-after variety, will begin from early June.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

# Two siblings drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two siblings drowned in a pond in Baghil area of Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abida, 12, daughter of Adam Mondol of Pashchim Akur Takur Para in the town, and her younger brother Rifat, 10.

Dainna Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Lavlu Miah said Adam and his two kids come to visit one of his relative's house in Baghil Bazar.

Local people saw their bodies floating in a pond adjacent to their relative's house yesterday noon and recovered their bodies.

# Woman, 2 daughters found murdered

Man kills uncle in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A woman and her two daughters, including a minor one, were found murdered at their residence in Champatoli area of Lama upazila on Friday night.

The deceased were identified as Majeda Begum, 40, wife of Kuwait expatriate Nur Mohammad, and her daughters, Rafi, 13, and one-year-old Nuri police said.

Being informed by the neighbours, police recovered their bodies around 8:00pm, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Lama Circle) Rezwanul Islam said.

Away in Rangpur, a man was killed by his nephew allegedly over a trifling matter in Baderganj upazila on Friday night, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

The deceased is Rafiqul Islam of Dakkhin Moksudpur village. Police said Rafiqul and his nephew Helal Uddin locked in an altercation over the fair distribution of cattle meat and, at one stage, Helal stabbed Rafiqul with a sharp weapon. Injured Rafiqul died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital the same night.

# Fortune smiles on Jhenidah Aman growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Aman farmers in Jhenidah are having a joyous time -- thanks to favourable weather conditions followed by a bountiful harvest and, most importantly, good prices for the paddy.

Each maund of the crop is now selling for between Tk 1,000 and Tk 1,300 at different markets in the district, while the average cost of production for the same amount was Tk 800, said farmers.

While the targeted cultivation of Boro Aman (harvested in summer time around May) was on 77 thousand hectares of land this season, farmers in six upazilas of the district cultivated it on 80,284 thousand hectares, according to data from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Jhenidah.

Driven by good profits during last year's Ropa Aman (harvested in winter time around December) season, the



The nature has been bountiful to Aman farmers in Jhenidah where good prices of the paddy are helping create a festive atmosphere in the district this time around. The photo of two workers threshing paddy was taken from Solaimanpur village in Kotchandpur upazila recently.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

Boro Aman has been cultivated on 20,199 hectares in Sadar, 12,205 hectares in Shailakupa, 9,860 hectares in Harinakundo, 18,570 in Maheshpur, 5,700 hectares in Kotchandpur and 13,750 hectares in Kaliganj upazilas of the district during 2020-21 fiscal year.

The crop was cultivated on 77,535 hectares in fiscal year 2019-20 while on 88,504 hectares the year before, as per the DAE.

Farmer Towaz Ali, from Raghunathpur village in Kaliganj upazila, said he was happy to sell the Aman paddy this time for Tk 1,100 per maund.

Another farmer, Altaf Hossain, from Solaimanpur village in

Kotchandpur upazila, said the price he got this year has been fair and he has no complaints as he harvested 84 maunds of Boro Aman from four bighas of land and already sold 40 maunds for Tk 40 thousand.

He found encouragement in planting Boro Aman on a total of four bighas of land this year after getting a very good yield of Ropa Aman last season from two bighas of land, he added.

DAE Deputy Director in Jhenidah Md Asgar Ali said soil in Jhenidah is highly suitable for both types of Aman farming and the local farmers grew the crop in a larger area after they made good profit from Ropa Aman last season.

While the targeted cultivation of Boro Aman was on 77 thousand hectares of land this season, farmers in six upazilas of the district cultivated it on 80,284 thousand hectares.

farmers planted Boro Aman on an extended area this season, said many of them.



Launch staffs and workers staged a demonstration and bring out a procession in Patuakhali town, demanding resume of the launch service in all the domestic and long routes. Bangladesh Naval Workers Federation, Patuakhali unit, organized the programme on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

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 পারিলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ ও তৎসংশ্লিষ্ট সংশোধিত আইন ও বিধি মোতাবেক ২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধ সালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের বিভিন্ন ইউনিটে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন টিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক ও অস্থায়ী প্রকৃত টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী/বাবসাধী/প্রকৃত/কর্মচারী/বেরামতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিজ প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাকেট সীলমোহরযুক্ত নামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, সুনামগঞ্জ।
৪	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	জেলা পুলিশের।
৫	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং-	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি আরক নং প্রশাঃ-১৫৯৪/ই, তারিখঃ ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৬	তারিখ	তারিখঃ ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।

কাজের বিবরণ  
 ৭ দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।  
 ৮ বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত রাজস্ব খাত।  
 ৯ তথ্যাদি:  
 ১০ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।  
 ১১ দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ২০/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ৩.৩০ ঘটিকা।  
 ১২ দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময় ২২/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।  
 ১৩ দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় ২২/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।

অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা:  
 ১৪ অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।  
 দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস ১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।  
 ২। ডিআইজি, সিগেট জেঞ্জের কার্যালয়।  
 ৩। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিগেট।  
 দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী/অফিস ১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।  
 দরপত্র খোলার স্থান পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।  
 ১৫ খ্রি টেন্ডার সন্ধান স্থান, তারিখ, সময় ২১/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।  
 দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময় ২৭/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।

দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্যঃ

লট নং	সরবরাহতর্য মালামাল	পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য (অধিকারহযোগ্য)	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়
I	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে পুলিশ অফিস মনিহারি মালামাল সরবরাহ (কোড নং- ৩২৫৫১০৫)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	২০,০০০/-	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধ সন (জুলাই/২০২১- জুন/২০২২)
II	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে পুলিশ অফিস ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি মালামাল সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০৬)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	৩০,০০০/-	
III	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে পুলিশ অফিসে শাস্ত্রা বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ (কোড নং- ৩২৫৫১০৭)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১৫,০০০/-	
IV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে পুলিশ পরিদর্শক হতে তদুপক কর্মকর্তাদের জন্য নিরিমোনিয়াম ড্রেস ও গয়ারি ড্রেস (সামার টিউনিক, উইন্টার টিউনিক, ব্রু রেজার, হাফ শার্ট, ফুল প্যান্ট, ফুল শার্ট) পোশাক সামগ্রী সেলাই/রিম সরবরাহ কাজ।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
V	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ ফোর্সের পোশাক সেলাই (কোড নং- ৩২৫৫১০৮)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২৫,০০০/-	
VI	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ ফোর্সের জন্য রিমন সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০৯)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	৮,০০০/-	
VII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ এর অনুবুলে মাসিক ভাড়ার ইঞ্জিন চালিত দেশীয় কাফি মোটর (কোড নং-৩২১১০৭) সরবরাহ।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
VIII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ এর অনুবুলে মাসিক ভাড়ার (মাইক্রোসেল/লিকআপ) সরবরাহের কাজ (কোড নং-৩২১১০৭)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
IX	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ হাসপাতালের ঊষধ ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি ক্রয়/সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০৫)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
X	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০১)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
XI	২০২১-২০২২ যন্ত্রপাতি ও অ্যান্ড্রো অফিস সরঞ্জাম সরবরাহ কাজ (কোড নং- ৩২৫৫১০৩, ৩২৫৫১০৫)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
XII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের মটরযান শাখার গাড়ির টায়ার, টিউব, ব্যাটারী ক্রয়/সরবরাহ।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
XIII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের মটরযান শাখার গাড়ির কাঁচামাল সরবরাহ ও যুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ কাজ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০৫)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
XIV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের জন্মানের যুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ ও মেরামত কাজ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১১৮)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	
XV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের জন্য বেসরকারি জনবল (আইউসোর্সিং) সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২১১০৩)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	৩০,০০০/-	
XVI	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের আসবাবপত্র ক্রয়/সরবরাহ কাজ (কোড নং-৪১১২৩১৪)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৭৫০/-	২০,০০০/-	
XVII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্ধসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের খেলাপুলার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫৫১০৭)।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	৮,০০০/-	
XVIII	সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের দারকার কর্মচারী/চতুর্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	

দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণঃ

১৭	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান বিপিএম।
১৮	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	পুলিশ সুপার, সুনামগঞ্জ।
১৯	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।
২০	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	ফোনঃ ০৮৭১-৬২৬০৫, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬১৪০৪, E-mail: spsunamgonj@police.gov.bd

২১ বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ

ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। সর্বনিম্ন দর গ্রহণে কর্তৃপক্ষ বাধ্য নহে।  
 খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।  
 গ) দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত হলে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি বা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।  
 ঘ) দরপত্রের বিধি/২০০৮ ও বিধি/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।

মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান, বিপিএম  
 বিপি-৭২০৩০২০৮০৮  
 পুলিশ সুপার, সুনামগঞ্জ  
 ফোনঃ ০৮৭১-৬২৬০৫, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬১৪০৪  
 E-mail: spsunamgonj@police.gov.bd

জিডি-১০২৮

## Nepal set for Nov polls amid crises

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's parliament was dissolved for the second time in five months yesterday and new elections called for November as the Himalayan country battled political turmoil alongside the coronavirus pandemic.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari made the order after declaring that neither Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli nor Sher Bahadur Deuba, leader of the opposition Nepali Congress, had a majority to form a new government.

Political rivalries between the communist prime minister and his former Maoist allies hit a new peak as the country battles a severe coronavirus wave with acute shortages of oxygen and vaccines.

Authorities have been reporting about 200 deaths a day, but experts say there are a lot more and the United Nations has launched an emergency Covid-19 appeal saying that Nepal is at "breaking point".

Bhandari dissolved parliament in the early hours of Saturday after a new breakdown in talks.

"The president... has dissolved the current House of Representatives and fixed the first phase of general elections on November 12 and the second phase on November 19," his office said in a statement.

Oli was reappointed the PM only last week as no leader could muster a majority after the veteran communist lost a vote of confidence. The 69-year-old had a month to win a new vote of confidence in parliament but the president called on other parties to try to form a government as Oli struggled to win support.

Bhandari, who hails from the ruling party and is considered close to Oli, has been criticised for agreeing so quickly to Oli's recommendation for a new election.

Chandrakanta Gyawali, a constitutional expert, said the president has "derailed from the spirit of the constitution" by giving in to Oli so easily. "This decision could be challenged in the court again."

In December, Oli dismissed the legislature and called elections, accusing members of his Nepal Communist Party of blocking his moves. After nearly two months of protests, the Supreme Court reinstated parliament, saying Oli's move was unconstitutional.



A Palestinian child stands amidst the rubble of buildings, destroyed by Israeli strikes, in Beit Hanun in the northern Gaza Strip. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'What fault did we do to deserve this?'

Teenage son of leading Gaza doctor reveals ordeal after Israeli airstrikes wipe out his entire family

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

For twelve hours, Omar Abu al-Ouf, 17, clung to the body of his dead sister as they lay pinned under a patchwork of concrete floors, ceilings and walls that had collapsed on top of them.

In the mangled debris above him, his neighbour was also alive but suspended upside down between the snarls of steel and brick walls.

Just a few metres away his father, Dr Ayman Abu al-Ouf, one of the most senior doctors in Gaza, who was handling the coronavirus crisis, had been crushed to death.

The celebrated medic was killed alongside 12 other members of his extended family, as the several-storey building where they lived on Wehda Street, in Gaza City, was completely levelled in a rage of airstrikes.

"When the second missile hit, I tried to take my sister in my arms to protect her, but the third missile brought this wall of fire, and the floor disappeared beneath us," Omar told The Independent from his hospital bed.

"A fourth missile hit the building and everything was wiped out."

The secondary school student, whose arm is broken, his legs swollen with bruises, spoke from al-Shifa hospital, where he is being treated and where his father used to work

as head of internal medicine.

His entire family, including his parents, two siblings and grandparents, was wiped out by the bombardment. Wounded and alone, Omar is struggling to comprehend being the sole survivor.

"I just want to know why they targeted my family? We are normal civilians, doctors," he added, his face frozen in shock. "What fault did we do to deserve this?"

### 2021 HAMAS-ISRAEL FLARE-UP

After 11 days of bombardment that killed more than 248 Palestinians, including 66 children and 39 women, a ceasefire was announced on Thursday.

But while the truce silenced the rocket launchers and halted the warplanes, in Gaza, families whose homes and lives were hit in the bombardment now have to come to terms with the extent of the devastation.

Many angrily questioned the point of many of the targets. The 16 May bombing of Wehda street, a heavily populated civilian neighbourhood and the main thoroughfare in Gaza's biggest city, has sparked particular outrage.

According to Amnesty International, that night of

airstrikes completely levelled two residential buildings belonging to the Abu al-Ouf and al-Kolaq families, killing 30 people - 11 of them children.

Further down the same road it also killed Dr Muin Ahmad al-Aloul, Gaza's only neurologist, with his five children and wife.

Witnesses and survivors told The Independent that none of the buildings or clinics were given prior warning ahead of the strikes. Israeli military said they targeted a secret Hamas base under the road in front of the houses.

But for the families that were caught up in the bombing of the building which the Abu al-Oufs called home, it was devastating.

Riad Shkuntina, 42, whose family lived a floor above Dr Abu Al-Ouf, said the last thing he remembers is watching his wife try to pull their children out from underneath the rubble of the initial airstrike before a second missile levelled the entire building.

"She was screaming, and then the floor fell from beneath my feet," he said.

"They found my daughter Susie upside down with her head between two bricks, which saved her. I was under the rubble for six hours, my daughter for ten."

The other four children and his wife were killed.

## Suu Kyi to appear in court soon: junta

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta chief has said deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi is in good health and will appear in court within days during the general's first television interview since the coup.

Min Aung Hlaing, who toppled Suu Kyi in a February 1 putsch, gave a two-hour interview to Hong Kong's Phoenix Television on Thursday, with the full programme yet to air.

"Aung San Suu Kyi is in good health. She's been staying at home and will appear in court in a few days," he said in an excerpt released on social media yesterday.

Suu Kyi has not been seen in public since she was placed under house arrest.

She has been hit with a string of criminal charges. The most serious charge alleges that she violated the country's colonial-era Official Secrets Act. Suu Kyi is expected to appear in person in court tomorrow for the first time, after weeks of delays to her legal case.

Min Aung Hlaing has justified his power grab by citing alleged electoral fraud in the November poll, which was won by the NLD in a landslide. The junta on Friday threatened to dissolve Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party over the alleged voter fraud.



A medical worker inoculates a girl sitting on a bike with a dose of the Covishield Covid-19 coronavirus vaccine during a special drive-in vaccination camp held in Bhopal, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## BIDEN ON DENUCLEARIZATION OF NORTH KOREA

### 'We're under no illusions how difficult this is'

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden acknowledged Friday there is no easy path to getting North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons but reaffirmed his "iron-clad" commitment to the US alliance with South Korea after talks with President Moon Jae-in.

"We're under no illusions how difficult this is -- none whatsoever. The past four administrations have not achieved the objective. It's an incredibly difficult objective," Biden told reporters at a press conference with his South Korean counterpart at the White House.

The US leader also announced he had named veteran diplomat Sung Kim, the former US ambassador to Seoul, as his special envoy for North Korea.

Facing a nuclear-armed North Korea and an increasingly assertive China, Biden stressed his faith in traditional US alliances. Biden called the US-South Korean partnership "the linchpin of peace, security" and promised a "shared approach" to the stand-off with North Korea.

Moon called denuclearization of the Korean peninsula "the most urgent common task."

US relations with historic allies in Asia and Europe suffered turbulence under Donald Trump, who recast long-standing partners as cutthroat business competitors and freeloaders.

Moon came to Washington as Biden's second foreign guest and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who visited last month, was the first.

## DIANA INTERVIEW SCANDAL

### Ex-BBC chief quits high-profile job

AFP, London

A former BBC chief who was criticised for his "woefully ineffective" probe into Martin Bashir's deception in securing a bombshell interview with Princess Diana yesterday resigned as chair of Britain's National Gallery.

Journalist Bashir tricked Diana into giving a 1995 BBC television interview in which she lifted the lid on her troubled marriage to Prince Charles, an independent investigation concluded on Thursday.

Tony Hall, who had led an earlier investigation into the interview and was later named head of the BBC, said he had today resigned as Chair of the National Gallery, adding "he believe leadership means taking responsibility."

Retired senior judge John Dyson said Bashir commissioned faked bank statements that falsely suggested some of Diana's closest aides were being paid by the security services to keep tabs on her.



Bashir then showed them to Diana's brother Charles Spencer, in a successful bid to convince him to arrange a meeting between himself and Diana and earn her trust. Questions have long been asked about how Bashir convinced Diana to talk on the BBC's flagship "Panorama" programme in November 1995, which was watched by a record 22.8 million and won a string of television awards. In it, she famously said "there were three people" in her marriage -- her, Charles and his long-time mistress and now wife, Camilla Parker-Bowles

-- and also admitted adultery.

Bashir, now 58, stepped down from last week where he worked as religion editor, citing ill health.

A 1996 internal inquiry by Hall cleared Bashir of wrong-doing, but Dyson called that probe "flawed and woefully ineffective".

In particular, it did not ask Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, for his version of events, Dyson said, lambasting it for failing to scrutinise Bashir's actions properly.

Diana's son Prince William said the interview had made "a major contribution" to the demise of his parents' relationship, while the BBC's "woeful incompetence" in uncovering the truth had "contributed significantly to her fear, paranoia and isolation" in her final years.

Diana died in a high-speed car crash while being chased by paparazzi photographers in 1997.

Hall took charge of the BBC in 2013, and stepped down last year.

## SEIZING REPORTERS' PHONE, EMAIL RECORDS

### Biden says he won't let Justice Dept do that

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden on Friday said he would not allow his Justice Department to seize the phone or email records of reporters, saying any such move would be "simply wrong."

Biden's comments came a day after CNN reported that the Justice Department had told its correspondent Barbara Starr that the former Trump administration had secretly obtained two months of her phone and email records in 2017.

The Washington Post earlier this month said the Trump administration had also secretly obtained the phone records of three of its reporters over work they did in 2017.

"Absolutely, positively, it's wrong," Biden told reporters after a joint news conference with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. "It's simply, simply wrong. I will not let that happen."

CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer welcomed Biden's comments as "really encouraging news."

Former president Trump had a contentious relationship with the press, often publicly lambasting reporters and their outlets as "fake news."

The National Press Club earlier this month said the Trump administration's moves to seize reporters' phone records marked "another deeply disturbing example in a series of violations by the Trump administration of America's trust in government and an outright assault against the press and the First Amendment."

"While the government has a right to probe leaks of classified information, it must take great care to avoid a harm that could prove more serious: chilling the flow of information to the free press," the club's leaders said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Greta Thunberg aims to change how food is produced

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has set her sights on changing how the world produces and consumes food in order to counteract a trio of threats: carbon emissions, disease outbreaks and animal suffering. In a video posted on Twitter yesterday, Thunberg said the environmental impact of farming as well as disease outbreaks would be reduced by changing how food was produced. "Our relationship with nature is broken. But relationships can change," Thunberg said in the video marking the International Day of Biological Diversity. Thunberg said the spillover of diseases from animals to humans was caused by farming methods, adding that a move to a plant-based diet could save up to 8 billion tonnes of CO2 each year.

### Report: US considered nuke strike on China over Taiwan

US military planners pushed for nuclear strikes on mainland China in 1958 to protect Taiwan from an invasion by Communist forces, classified documents posted online by Daniel Ellsberg of "Pentagon Papers" fame show. US planners also assumed that the Soviet Union would aid China and retaliate with nuclear weapons -- a price they deemed worth paying to protect Taiwan, according to the document, first reported by the New York Times. Former military analyst Ellsberg posted online the classified portion of a top-secret document on the crisis that had been only partially declassified in 1975. Ellsberg, now 90, is famous for his 1971 leak to US media of a top-secret Pentagon study on the Vietnam war known as the Pentagon Papers.

### 'Father of hybrid rice' dies

An agronomist hailed as a Chinese national hero for helping develop hybrid rice and easing hunger for millions worldwide died yesterday at the age of 90, state-run Xinhua news agency said. Yuan Longping, known in China as the "father of hybrid rice", is credited with cultivating the world's first high-yield hybrid rice strain in 1973. Hybrid rice, which can yield 20 percent above conventional varieties according to experts, was subsequently widely planted in China and rice-growing areas around the world.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

# Mucormycosis: the deadly black fungus

## STAR HEALTH DESK

Mucormycosis, also known as black fungus, is a rare but dangerous infection. It is being increasingly seen in vulnerable patients in India, including those with COVID-19, as the country continues to struggle in the pandemic. Usually very rare, mucormycosis has a high mortality rate and is difficult to treat. The US Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates mucormycosis with an overall all-cause mortality rate of 54%.

Mucormycosis is affecting COVID-19 patients more due to prolonged administration of steroids and subsequent immunocompromised state. People with diabetes, on steroids and humidified oxygen for a long time, and COVID-19 patients with pre-existing comorbidities are the most at risk.

It is caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes and often affects the sinuses, lungs, skin, and brain. You can inhale the mold spores or come into contact with them in things like soil, rotting produce or bread, or compost piles.

The infection can happen to anyone at any age. Most



people will come into contact with the fungus at some point in their everyday lives. But you are more likely to get sick if you have a weakened immune system because of a medication you are taking or because you have a health condition like uncontrolled diabetes, cancer, bad health due to poor nutrition etc.

The symptoms of mucormycosis will depend on where in your body the fungus is growing. They may include but not limited to fever, cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, swelling on one side of your face, headache, nausea and vomiting, sinus pain, diarrhoea etc. If your skin is infected, the area can look blistered, red, or swollen. It might turn black or feel warm or painful.

People who have mucormycosis often do not know they have it. You should see your doctor for any type of suspected infection. Fluid and tissue samples may be taken to confirm a diagnosis. Your doctor may do imaging tests like CT or MRI scans to find out whether the infection has spread to your brain or other organs. Mucormycosis is particularly

dangerous because it spreads quickly throughout the body. Left untreated, the infection can spread to the lungs or the brain. This can cause brain infection, paralysis, pneumonia, seizures and even death.

If you are diagnosed with mucormycosis, you should start treatment as soon as possible with antifungal medications prescribed by your doctor. These medicines stop the growth of the fungus, destroy it, and bring the infection under control. Treatment may also include surgical debridement, which involves cutting away all infected tissue. Removing infected tissue has been shown to prevent the infection from spreading further.

Mucormycosis is not contagious, so you cannot get it from an infected person. If you have a weakened immune system, it is important to keep yourself safe outdoors. Wearing a mask while outside and bandaging all wounds until they heal will help prevent fungal infections. People should also maintain personal hygiene, ensure if they have diabetes that it is well controlled, and doctors should discontinue immune-suppressing drugs such as steroids as soon as patients are able.

## WOMEN CARE



### Urgent action needed to reduce global burden of CVD in women by 2030

In the first-ever global report on cardiovascular disease (CVD) in women, researchers call for urgent action to improve care and prevention, fill knowledge gaps, and increase awareness to tackle the worldwide leading cause of death among women. The all female-led Commission report was published in *The Lancet*.

The *Lancet* women and cardiovascular disease Commission: reducing the global burden by 2030 is authored by 17 leading experts from 11 countries. The Commission aims to help reduce the global burden of cardiovascular conditions – including heart disease and stroke – that account for 35% of deaths in women worldwide by 2030. The Commission's calls to urgently address and reduce CVD in women align with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to reduce premature deaths from non-communicable diseases, including CVD, by one-third by 2030.

The authors have outlined 10 ambitious recommendations to tackle inequities in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention to reduce CVD in women, including educating health care providers and patients on early detection to prevent heart disease in women; scaling up heart health programmes in highly populated and underdeveloped regions; and prioritising sex-specific research on heart disease in women and intervention strategies.

## HEALTH bulletin



### Non-hospitalised COVID-19 patients have low-risk of serious long-term effects

A new study published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal has found that the risk of delayed acute complications after non-hospitalised SARS-CoV-2 infection is low, but persistent symptoms in this group could lead to increased visits to general practitioners or outpatient clinics in the six months following infection. The study assessed only those complications that led to contact with hospitals.

Results found SARS-CoV-2 positive individuals were at a slightly increased risk of initiating medications to help improve breathing and alleviate migraines, and had a slightly increased risk of receiving a first diagnosis for breathing problems and blood clots in the veins.

The research also analysed the use of health services in the follow-up period and found that those with a positive SARS-CoV-2 test visited their general practitioners around 20% (1.2 times) more often than those that tested negative, and visited outpatient clinics 10% (1.1 times) more often. However, there was no difference in the visits to emergency department or being hospitalised.

The researchers call for large population-based studies of patient-reported symptoms and healthcare visits to fully evaluate the duration and range of any persisting symptoms after SARS-CoV-2 infection.

## NCDs: a greater threat than COVID-19 to women

### UMMAY FARIHIN SULTANA

The matters of grave concern in health are not the epidemic, flues or parasites that reign over the news and take most of the government's effort, rather they are the everyday diseases that people can address yet fail to take action.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have emerged as the leading cause of death and disabilities, contributing 67% to the total death in Bangladesh. The chronic nature of NCDs extends both patients' experience of suffering and duration of treatment, creating further economical strain on them. A recent survey states that prevention and treatment services for NCDs have been severely disrupted since the COVID-19 pandemic started, and low-middle income countries like Bangladesh are the most affected.

Women face a particularly high risk of NCDs and interrelated health challenges that are underpinned by inequality and marginalisation. Approximately two out of every three women die from an NCD, amounting to 16.8 million deaths globally. Apart from that women's health status also relates to the health and vulnerability of her children, being born to a malnourished mother increases an infant's risk of under-nutrition, low birth weight, and increased vulnerability to NCDs in adulthood.

Even when healthcare services are affordable, the socio-cultural status of women translates into reduced access to health resources and health literacy. Women from lower socio-economic backgrounds often give up accessing care or funds of medicines to provide food or education



materials for their children. Further, many young women and girls are unable to make healthcare decisions even for their children without the explicit approval of their husband or another family member.

Although both men and women are being affected by NCDs, there lies a different level of vulnerability to risk factors: women are more likely to become obese than men. Particular NCDs like CVDs seem to be diagnosed lately among women, revealing symptoms differently.

The modern way of life is a major cause of many non-communicable diseases, leading to serious consequences and tremendous costs for health care systems. The status of NCDs as the biggest killer is further fueled by air pollution and unhealthy diet which is

accompanied by highly processed foods rich in fat, sugar and salt. As these products have become more widely available, the prevalence of NCDs has exploded.

Above all, the implementation of sustainable solutions for NCDs calls for political action. Besides, acknowledging and researching the existing gender barriers in the community and healthcare system can be the first step to alleviating some of the harm caused.

The integrated initiative of both the public and private sector to start outreach programmes that help to address the gender bias will help make people more aware of such barriers and how it manifests.

The writer works at the Eminence Associates for Social Development. E-mail: farihin@eminence-bd.org

### Bemcentinib: potential oral drug for COVID-19

#### MD EKHTEAR MAHMUD

University of Bergen spin-off biotech company BergenBio proclaimed that their drug bemcentinib is fast-tracked in a phase-II clinical trial as a potential treatment against COVID-19.

Bemcentinib is a potent and highly selective AXL inhibitor. The drug is administered orally once a day as a capsule dosage form. It has been reported earlier to demonstrate potent antiviral activity in preclinical models against numerous enveloped viruses, including Ebola and Zika virus. Current data have expanded this to SARS-CoV-2.

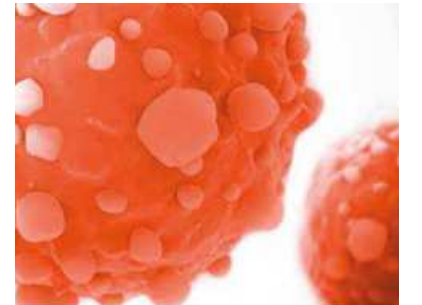
AXL kinase that is a cell membrane receptor is an important mediator of the biological mechanisms underlying deadly diseases. In COVID-19, AXL has

two synergistic mechanisms of action, it helps the virus enter the host cell and suppress the Type 1 Interferon immune response by host cells and in their environment. It has been confirmed by research data that bemcentinib impedes SARS-CoV-2 host cell entry and stimulates the antiviral Type 1 interferon response.


Richard Godfrey, Chief Executive Officer of BerGenBio said, "Bemcentinib has shown to be generally safe and well-tolerated in hospitalised COVID-19 patients. We look forward to receiving further data and continuing our analysis of the patient populations and datasets, and subsequently discussing these results with the market, regulators, industry and Government partners to determine the next steps."

If positive results are seen, bemcentinib will develop rapidly into the large-scale Phase III trials currently in progress across the United Kingdom.

The writer works at Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Limited. E-mail: ekhtearup@gmail.com



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## Inefficiencies in Covid-19 vaccine purchase

Foreign Minister's candid remarks—a wake up call

At a time when the country's Covid-19 vaccination efforts are grinding to a halt due to shortage of doses, the foreign minister has remarked about delays in the procurement process caused by the health ministry's mismanagement. We appreciate the candour of his statement. The inefficiencies such as those highlighted by the minister in the urgent procurement process are regrettable to say the least.

While Bangladesh's vaccination efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic started out strong, the recent deadly surge of cases and deaths in India, coupled with shortage of doses there and a reported ban on exports, has meant that the country's planned supply of the Covishield vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India was affected. With the country running out of available doses, many people who have received the first dose may be unable to receive the second jab in time. Considering the situation, the government has been looking towards urgent procurement from other sources—particularly China and Russia—to continue the vaccination efforts.

China has already gifted Bangladesh 500,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine, with reports of another 600,000 to be provided. The foreign minister has remarked that there are ongoing efforts to collect vaccine from other sources as well, including from the US. However, other countries with higher death rates may be prioritised. In this context, the importance of a steady supply of the vaccine is crucial to continue our vaccination efforts. Thus, these delays in efforts for procuring from China and Russia—due to signing of wrong documents for example—have far-reaching consequences. They undermine the proactive efforts of the health and foreign ministries towards sourcing vaccines.

Only recently we saw how badly prepared our health sector has been in dealing with large number of cases as people had to rush from hospital to hospital looking for vacant ICU beds. Vaccination is crucial for slowing down the rate of new infections, preventing deaths, and ultimately towards ending this pandemic. Second doses for those who have received the first dose already are needed to ensure maximum efficacy of the vaccines. At the same time, we are far from vaccinating enough people in the country to reach herd immunity. Remembering these realities, we hope that the foreign minister's remarks are taken seriously, and concerted efforts are undertaken to resolve the inefficiencies and mismanagement he has highlighted in the vaccine procurement process. It is urgent for Bangladesh to resume large-scale vaccination and the longer the delays, the longer this pandemic will last.

## No regard for health guidelines post-Eid

Do we have nothing to learn from the crises in India and Nepal?

While the most recent "lockdown" had helped bring down the number of positive Covid-19 cases in the country, it is now disappointing to see both members of the public and the authorities reverting to ways which led to the worst surge in the number of cases last month. The same disregard for health guidelines and restrictions that we witnessed before Eid, especially with homebound people, is being repeated now that those same people are flocking back to the capital. And with them, a fresh but morbidly familiar fear of a possible third wave of the virus.

The entry points into the capital are packed with thousands of people, while the enforcement of rules and regulations is lax, and ferry terminals are operating accordingly with each ferry leaving packed to the brim. Even though inter-district bus services are still closed, that is no hindrance to holidaymakers as they return to Dhaka in hazily packed vehicles.

Restaurants, shopping malls, kitchen markets, parks, and mosques also seem to have returned to their normal state of not paying any heed to health guidelines or safety restrictions. To top this, law enforcement is also losing its zeal of checking if people are engaged in essential travelling or not.

We wonder if this is the right attitude to have for a nation sharing its borders with India, a country that is still going through one of the worst Covid-19 crises the world has seen yet. Is it also of no concern to the authorities or the general public that the Indian variant has been detected in Bangladesh and that it is much more potent than any variant we have dealt with in the past?

All this is telling of the lack of responsibility and transparency within concerned authorities, such as the health ministry. According to virologist Prof Nazrul Islam, the recommendations sent to this ministry by an advisory committee have been left idle for days. Because the committee does not know which health ministry officials see their recommendations, receiving updates after a file has been sent is difficult. Listing down preventative rules and restrictions is only the first step of curbing the spread of the virus. These rules have to be implemented strictly by every arm of the government in every public corner of the country. The government must ramp up awareness regarding the need to adhere to all the safety guidelines so that people voluntarily abide by them. Hopefully it is still not too late to take these steps and stop a possible third wave of Covid-19 in its tracks.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### Free press under threat

There can be no denying that the right to free speech in our country has been under threat for some time. The recent treatment of a senior Prothom Alo journalist is another example of how the media in our country is being suppressed. This is a worrying sign of authoritarianism.

Wahiduzzaman, Dhaka

# Domestic cracks in blanket US support for Israel

Palestine no longer anathema, but there's still ways to go



ASHFAQUR SWAPAN

NO child, Palestinian or Israeli, whoever they are, should ever have to worry that death will rain from the sky. How many of my colleagues are willing to say the same, to stand for Palestinian human

rights as they do for Israeli? How many Palestinians have to die for their lives to matter?

— Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Democrat of Michigan, in a speech in the US House of Representatives condemning pro-Israel bias in the US. Tlaib is the first Palestinian American member of the US Congress.

The world heaved a collective sigh of relief after a ceasefire in the horrendous Palestinian-Israeli conflict, though who knows how long it will last.

In the US, the hostilities have revealed signs of change.

Unequivocal bipartisan support for Israel, come hell or high water, is being questioned. US President Joe Biden has been taken to task by progressive Democrats. Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, whose grandmother is in Gaza, made an impassioned plea to Biden during a brief meeting.

The times, they are a-changing. There was a time when the US media—and popular opinion—refused to even acknowledge the existence of Palestinian nationhood.

Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir had once infamously said that there were no Palestinians. US supporters of Israel, who tend to regard the conflict as a zero-sum game, agreed. For many decades, the term "Palestinian" was rarer than hen's teeth in US media.

As late as the 1960s, the US mainstream media promoted the notion that Israel was the only shining democracy in a neighbourhood of thuggish Arab nations.

Yes, Israel was democratic. So was erstwhile apartheid South Africa. (Perhaps not coincidentally, both nations were great chums.)

The anti-Palestinian animus was exacerbated by the Cold War. The most radical supporters of Palestinians were headline pro-Soviet Arab states like Syria, Iraq and Algeria.

The thaw began with the 1978 Camp David accords between Egypt's Anwar

Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin, negotiated by US President Jimmy Carter. The word "Palestinian" began to pop up in the US media.

Even as late as 2007, I vividly recall how Carter was essentially blacklisted by the media when he went on a book-promotion tour for his book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" (2006). Never mind that the book went on to become a New York Times bestseller.

The response this time around is

Netanyahu Government") and Jewish Currents editor Peter Beinart ("Palestinian Refugees Deserve to Return Home. Jews Should Understand.")

A profound, broader shift in the mood in the Democratic Party appears to be driven by two factors.

The Black Lives Matter movement continues a long tradition of minority rights activists feeling an instinctive kinship with international freedom struggles. In 1967 boxer activist

movements like Black Lives Matter and the demand to address global warming, powered by a progressive, younger cohort, has gained more traction and is beginning to make electoral inroads.

Another factor is the growing rightward shift of Israeli politics and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's frankly partisan embrace of former President Donald Trump and the Republican Party.

All told, young people are driving this change, and even the Jewish community is affected.

"A Pew survey last year found that fewer than one-third of young Jews in the United States rated Netanyahu as good or excellent, and barely one-quarter strongly opposed the BDS movement to boycott Israel," according to a New York Times column.

However, the support-Israel-no-matter-what lobby still wields considerable power.

"America's mainstream institutions have gone to extraordinary lengths to obscure (Palestinian) oppression," Eric Levitz writes in New York magazine. "Few (if any) forms of political expression are more aggressively suppressed in the US than anti-Zionist dissent. Seventeen US states have passed laws that penalise businesses and individuals who endorse boycotts of Israeli settlements. Academics are routinely fired for pointed criticisms of Israeli violence. And the State Department's official definition of anti-Semitism suggests that calling Israel—which is, at present, a de facto apartheid state—a 'racist endeavour' is tantamount to hatred of Jews."

Take the case of Emily Wilder, a Stanford University graduate who recently joined the Associated Press. Stanford's student Republicans created a stink about the fact that in her student days Wilder was associated with Justice for Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace. Boom. AP fired Wilder.

So, there is still some ways to go, but what is heartening is that more and more people are saying it's time to stop giving Israel a blank check.

"If you oppose war crimes only by your enemies, it's not clear that you actually oppose war crimes," Nicholas Kristof wrote in his New York Times column entitled "The 'Unshakable' Bonds of Friendship with Israel Are Shaking."

Ashfaqur Swapan, an Atlanta-based writer and editor, is contributing editor for Silliconeer, an online South Asian publication.



A child holds up a sign that reads 'Palestinian Freedom' as pro-Palestine protestors rally outside The Venetian hotel and casino in Las Vegas, US, May 15, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

different. Public radio network NPR provided detailed reports on the grossly disproportionate damage and human suffering in the Gaza strip.

New York City, arguably the US media capital, has a heavy Jewish influence. The New York Times, in addition to in-depth reporting, has carried guest essays by Palestinian American writers. Emmy and Peabody award-winning journalist Laila Al-Arian wrote about the heartbreaking story of her grandfather Abdul Kareem in "My Grandfather Bought a Home in Gaza With His Savings. An Israeli Airstrike Destroyed It." Writer-scholar Yousef Munayyer provided an incisive analysis in "This Moment is Different."

The newspaper has also published sympathetic guest essays by mainstream Jewish Americans like Vermont's Democratic Sen. Bernie Sanders ("The US Must Stop Being an Apologist for the

Muhammad Ali gave up his boxing license for refusing to fight in the Vietnam War. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. who considered the war an imperialist project, praised him.

Especially since its early days of inception dominated by European Ashkenazi Jews, Israel and the US had a disturbing unspoken historical similarity rarely spelled out by its supporters—both nations felt a deep need to create a triumphant historical narrative whose validity depended on the denial of the humanity of the people it sought to displace. Ethnic minorities, many directly at the receiving end of colonial oppression and/or horrendous racial discrimination, instinctively see through the pious humbug that seeks to obscure the less salubrious reality of oppression and dispossession.

This time around, engaged progressive

## LEADERS' SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2021

# Climate change communication is a prerequisite for climate mitigation

Md MOFIZUR RHAMAN

CITIZENS' understanding about the causes of climate change and its consequences is vital for its mitigation. For that, communicating the relevant issues to the masses is a prerequisite. However, this has always been an issue in the circles of hard science and policy-making. There is a lack of planned initiatives by local and global stakeholders to make climate change knowledge understandable to the general public by using the mass media—with a few exceptions. On the other hand, the high-level summits including Conference of the Parties (COPs) have never been easy for citizens

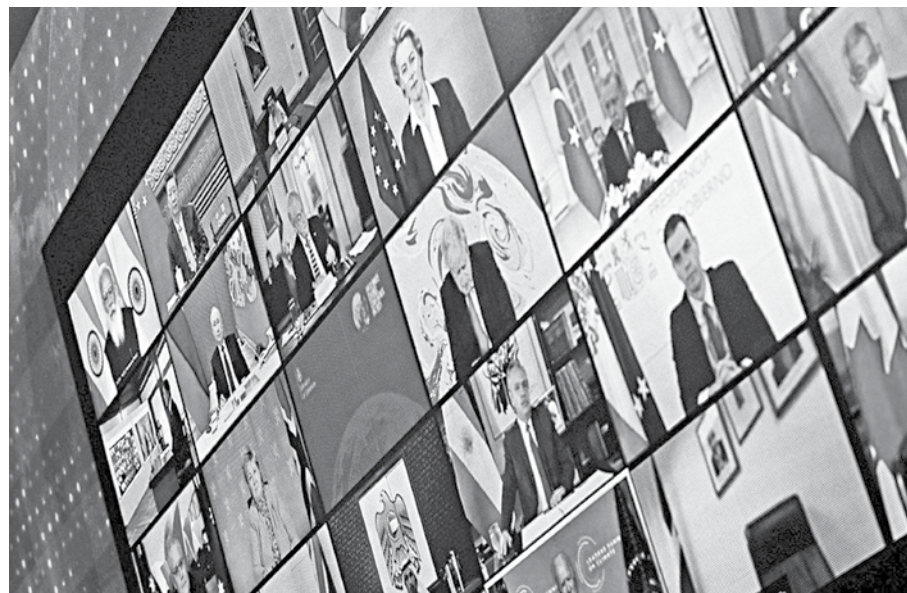
Though the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been saying for a long time that climate change is true and real and is largely caused by human activity, thus anthropogenic in nature, the international community took a long time to come to the consensus that climate change is an existential threat to human civilisation. Many debates took place since the Bali conference and finally the international community reached the Paris Agreement in 2015 with some definite goals and objectives. That created a global hope for action. However, when the Trump administration left the Paris Agreement, the hope for collective action for

*It is encouraging to see the Biden administration take visible initiatives by bringing the USA back on the table and in a leadership position for worldwide climate actions.*

particularly important while the world community is pursuing the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. On the other hand, Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister, emphasised on the lifestyle of Indians which he considers as climate friendly and called for a lifestyle change in order to fix the climate change problem. However, these issues cannot be achieved by the respective government or by adopting international policy actions imposed from the top. They need to be communicated to the public and their participation is a prerequisite for behavioural change in lifestyle and changing attitude towards nature for harmonising the coexistence of species, nature and culture, leading to sustainable development.

Media is largely considered an effective vehicle for communicating climate issues to the mass public. However, there are many problems in mediated communication on climate change. Firstly, most of the media, due to their focus on the political economy or for some other reasons, do not realise the urgency and necessity of addressing climate change issues to development, public health, food security, national-international peace, conflict and so on. The transfer of scientific messages through mass media sometimes remains ambiguous due to the gap between people of science and people in the media. It is hard for the scientific community to translate their hard science knowledge to the media in a media friendly language. Similarly, they become incomprehensible by media communicators due to a lack of understanding of the state of the art knowledge, professional tools and techniques, etc. This is a big hurdle when it comes to communicating climate related hard science issues to the masses. The macro and micro link of climate change to nature, land and river, insect and animal, bio-diversity, public health, greeneries, flora and fauna, tourism, food habit, lifestyle and so on, need to be communicated to the public through the media.

Dr Md Mofizur Rahman is Professor of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University.



World leaders during the climate change virtual summit. PHOTO: AFP

to directly access—except for the myopic media coverage of the events from the top. The recent youth climate actions taken mainly by students from around the world following Greta Thunberg's "climate emergency call" is an inspiring one for creating public awareness. These actions have been guided by grassroots organisations and civil societies in Bangladesh. However, they have largely been missing in the mainstream media coverage.

emission reduction, mitigation, adaption and technology transfer disappeared once again. Having the USA on board and its leadership for climate action is enormously important for achieving the targets. It is expected to contribute to the annual USD 100 billion climate funds for the low emitting climate victim nations—because of its past emissions leading to climate change. So, there are many science-related issues, as well as historical and international policy

related issues that form our common climate problems. However, most people are unaware of them.

It is encouraging to see the Biden administration take visible initiatives by bringing the USA back on the table and in a leadership position for worldwide climate actions. The April 2-3 virtual climate summit led by the Biden administration was organised to find how the USA can work together with the world community to achieve the climate related common goals. Despite the Covid pandemic, Joe Biden's special envoy on climate change set out on an international tour to invite potential leaders to the virtual summit and he also met our prime minister to personally hand her an invitation. That showed the seriousness of the current US administration to climate change issues and their undercurrents. Appointing a special envoy and organising this summit in the first 100 days of coming into office made the global public hopeful of future climate actions. As reported in the virtual summit, world leaders also raised their targets in country specific voluntary emission reduction, being inspired by Biden's initiative. Along with future emission reduction targets, some leaders have talked about public behavioural issues that require more rigorous, planned public communication actions.

China's leader Xi Jinping emphasised on the harmony of nature with development activities. This is



PROJECT SYNDICATE

# The right incentives for global vaccine access

MICHELE GOODWIN and GREGORY SHAFFER

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to reveal shocking underlying infrastructural inequalities around the world. While the United States rapidly rolls out vaccines even to children, countries like India suffer devastating numbers of fatalities each day. India recently reported more than 340,000 daily coronavirus cases—nearly half the global total—and the country seemingly has no end to its crisis in sight.

In response to intensifying political pressure to reduce low-income countries' suffering, US President Joe Biden's administration now supports a waiver of intellectual-property (IP) rights for Covid-19 vaccines so long as the pandemic lasts. This development has elicited two competing responses. Some commentators regard the new US stance as a paradigm shift in the US position that will affect IP protection. But others predict that Biden's new stance will have no impact on vaccine access.

Both positions fail to capture the bigger picture. First, IP protection will continue, including for Covid-19 vaccines in wealthy countries where pharmaceutical firms reap enormous profits. Second, with political will, the threat of a waiver can help shift patent-holding companies' incentives and catalyse mass production of Covid-19 vaccines for low- and middle-income countries. The argument that Biden's policy is destined to, or should, fail is thus unhelpful to US diplomacy and global cooperation during the pandemic.

The effort to achieve global vaccination confronts massive incentive problems. Private pharmaceutical companies responsible to shareholders seek to maximise profits. The longer the pandemic lasts, the more likely it is that new coronavirus variants will require adjusting and distributing new vaccines, and thus the more these firms will profit.

Meanwhile, rich-country governments face conflicting short- and long-term incentives. In the short term, domestic politics encourage vaccine nationalism, leading governments to contract for an exclusive vaccine supply. The US government, for example, has imposed a de facto ban on vaccine exports through its agreements with private companies.

But because viruses know no borders, these governments face the longer-term threat of new imported variants against which current vaccines may be ineffective. Such pathogens would pose a clear risk to citizens' lives and health, and to countries' economic well-being.

In parallel, there is a growing strategic rivalry between the US and China for control of the commanding heights of biotech production. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), a trade group, plays off this fear to demand control of its trade secrets. And trade secrets, not patent rights to Covid-19 vaccines, are clearly the major obstacle to ensuring wider access to Covid-19 vaccines (especially mRNA vaccines).

*The longer the pandemic lasts, the more likely it is that new coronavirus variants will require adjusting and distributing new vaccines, and thus the more these firms will profit.*



Over 3.4 million people have now died from Covid-19, and millions more lives could be lost as novel variants of the virus threaten to prolong the pandemic.

PHOTO: AFP

Technically, these trade secrets are not an IP right, but are instead protected by "unfair competition" law. The question is how to compel pharmaceutical companies to provide their trade secrets to other manufacturers to produce the vaccines, subject to a non-disclosure agreement and compensation on a cost or cost-plus basis.

Simply put, the incentives of patent-holding companies must shift. Compared to an IP waiver, it is in these firms' interest to sign contracts with manufacturers subject to non-disclosure agreements, thereby enabling mass production of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries.

The threat of a waiver can thus encourage and compel pharmaceutical companies to

enter such arrangements. Wealthy countries can bolster these incentives by pooling resources, including through the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility. After all, they have an enormous advantage over poorer economies that are grappling with endemic poverty and unequal negotiating power.

To reach a deal, a critical mass of rich countries—as well as other vaccine producers, including China and Russia—should agree not to benefit from any waiver, including from any compensation arrangement. Pharmaceutical companies then could continue to profit as before. And all countries—in both the Global North and South—would benefit, including from the

reduction of the risks posed by new virus variants.

Nonetheless, the waiver negotiations at the World Trade Organization risk becoming symbolic, thus distracting from needed action. The threat of the IP waiver must be real to persuade companies to contract voluntarily for mass global vaccine production. In parallel, a sufficient number of potential benefit by enabling countries to wield the waiver threat to encourage firms to enter the necessary contracts. The Biden administration should act in this vein.

Over 3.4 million people have now died from Covid-19, and millions more lives could be lost as novel variants of the virus threaten to prolong the pandemic. Thoughtful, immediate action on vaccines is needed as a matter of moral and practical urgency. For the Biden administration, that means taking steps now to shift the pharmaceutical industry's incentives.

Michele Goodwin is a professor at the University of California, Irvine and Director of the Center for Biotechnology and Global Health Policy. Gregory Shaffer is a professor at the University of California, Irvine and author of *Emerging Powers and the World Trading System: The Past and Future of International Economic Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2021). Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

# The expendable lives of our blue-collar workers



ARAF MOMEN AKA

ON May 1 the world celebrated the contributions of workers to societies especially to the economic growth of nations. Yet news reports on May 5 (*The Daily Star*) described the dire state of workers in

Bangladesh's informal sector as a result of the economic fallout of the pandemic. Sadly they were not in such a great state before the pandemic either.

The discriminatory practices and deprivation of workers in the formal sector have been talked about especially after the horrendous Rana Plaza tragedy of 2013 that took the lives of 1,134 ready-made garments (RMG) workers and left around 2,500 others injured. Bone-chilling images of the victims trapped and/or killed under the rubble and debris of the collapsed Rana Plaza building still haunt our minds—both within and outside our national borders.

Sadly, it was not until the loss of so many workers' lives that there was an outcry for drastic changes. There were terrible losses of lives because of workplace accidents before—like the Tazreen factory fire that killed at least 117 workers in 2012 and the That's It Sportswear Ltd factory fire that killed at least 27 workers in 2010—yet, those incidents hardly brought about any actions. Did those lives not matter? Or was the loss of lives not big enough of a statistic to draw attention?

While significant structural changes have taken place in the RMG sector to increase safety standards for formal workers since the Rana Plaza tragedy, the scenario is quite frightening in other labour-intensive work sectors nowadays—especially in the informal sector. Unsafe workplace conditions and lack of safety gear in other manual job sectors (like construction and metalworks) still exist.

In 2020 alone, 117 construction workers died from causes such as falling off of under-construction buildings or electrocution while 86 others died in workplaces like hotels and workshops because of poor safety measures. A total of 432 workers were killed in 2020 in work-related accidents, according to a survey report of Safety and Rights Society. Informal sector workers are people who are employed by an employer outside an established working agreement (like fixed work times and wages) and they are often more at risk to

worker is to be treated. For instance, the Act highlights how workers are not to work more than 8 hours any day normally and 10 hours any day on overtime (section 100), how workers must be paid their wages in arrears within the seventh day after the agreed upon day of payment (section 123(1)) and so on. Yet, if the provisions of the Act were properly carried forward by the authorities for the sake of our workers (both formal and informal), there would not be frequent news about agitated workers protesting on the streets

because they refused to vacate the under-construction premises of the Banskhal power plant until their demands for payment of their arrear wages were addressed. The families of the deceased received Tk 2 lakh as compensation. That is what a life of a worker is worth: Tk 2 lakh!

Workers—in formal or informal—find it impossible to call peaceful strikes against injustices of their employers, they are unable to afford basic services like proper healthcare and housing; inadequate wages forces their standards of living further down. And the coronavirus pandemic has left workers poorer and even more helpless than before.

The government's stimulus package of a meagre Tk 2,500 per month in cash assistance to families at the grassroots level is simply not enough to cover the costs of urban living in cities like Dhaka. A report by *The Daily Star* earlier this May highlighted that around 34.97 lakh families received the Tk 2,500 every month last year. However, an average four-member family required at least Tk 6,000 a month to live in a Bangladeshi urban area in the year 2016, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' (BBS) Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016-2017 (a cost that has surely become more expensive in 2021). Receiving Tk 2,500 a month as cash assistance is not enough at all.

There are even doubts whether the cash assistance reached 3.5 million of the listed beneficiaries meant to receive the Tk 2,500 each. According to Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), the list of beneficiaries of workers is said to have been manipulated by field-level officials and local politically affiliated quarters for their personal benefits.

The pre-pandemic times were not much better either. Just think of day labourers and construction workers. How often have we seen them sleeping in some remote corners of the streets? For a large majority of the workers, their place of respite is either the cold and open corners of the streets, or in a

tiny room in a nearby slum—notorious for being unhygienic, cramped, unsafe and often making headlines as places where massive fire outbreaks take place.

It is not like the workers in the formal sector can afford a better standard of living either. The minimum wages for the formal job sectors like garments and textiles workers in Bangladesh are as abysmal as Tk 8,100 a month since 2020, according to Trading Economics. The Global Wage Report 2020-2021 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) pointed out that Bangladeshi RMG workers earn a mere USD 50 a month while an income of USD 252 a month is required for a decent lifestyle in Bangladesh. In contrast, Indian RMG workers earn around USD 62 while needing an income of USD 200 for a decent living in India.

Sure, we can praise our government for trying to make things better for our workers. A pool of Tk 1,24,053 crore for stimulus packages is nothing to scoff at. Improved working conditions in factories are a step forward. But there are still many factors that tend to dehumanise our country's working class. Workers need an official minimum wage for jobs in all informal job sectors for a proper livelihood. Workers need to be able to afford necessities such as proper healthcare and safe and better housing arrangements that will not endanger them in one way or another.

How long will we keep overlooking the welfare of our workers? When will we learn that the low costs of production our country enjoys come at the expense of putting the lives of our workers in financial jeopardy and uncertain futures? Or perhaps we already know that, we just do not act on it. If development comes at the price of the wellbeing of the majority of the population, can we call it development?

Araf Momen Aka is an intern at the editorial department of *The Daily Star*.



An injured worker of under-construction SS Power I Plant being taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital. Five workers were shot dead when they were demonstrating for salaries of up to three months in arrears.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

workplace exploitation compared to formal sector workers like garments workers. The Labour Act 2006, moreover, has no set official minimum wage for informal sector workers even today, giving scope for employers to pay them according to their whims.

The Labour Act 2006 of Bangladesh has many provisions that encompass how a

demanding for their rights to be upheld.

And whenever the workers rally to protest, they are dispersed by law enforcement officials forcefully, leaving their demands unheard and workers injured—or even dead. For a recent example, on April 17, five protesting coal power plant workers were shot dead by the police in Chattogram just

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**ALAN COHEN**  
author (1950—)

*If you know your true worth, you do not need anyone else to confirm it.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Took notice
- 6 Out of order
- 11 Make blank
- 12 Plain silly
- 13 They "wait for no man"
- 15 Maple fluid
- 16 Convent resident
- 17 Mafia leader
- 18 Dice, essentially
- 20 Left on a liner
- 23 Swiss trill
- 27 Hamlet, for one
- 28 Valentine word
- 29 Hang loosely
- 31 Exercised one's right
- 32 Forest sights
- 34 In the style of
- 37 Friend of Harry

**DOWN**

- 1 Hardens
- 2 Opera piece
- 3 Pack down
- 4 Trail mix bit
- 6 Bean-shaped organ
- 7 Crumb carrier
- 8 Bill stamp
- 9 Take apart
- 10 Freshman, usually
- 14 Essence
- 18 Moved stealthily
- 19 Lone flights
- 20 Throw in
- 21 Golf goal
- 22 Stop \_ dime
- 24 Braille bit
- 25 Planning time
- 26 Went ahead
- 30 Straying
- 31 Merchant
- 33 Long, long time
- 34 Bond component
- 35 Folk learning
- 36 Folk learning
- 36 Tibet setting
- 38 Enterpriser crewman
- 39 Veeps superior
- 40 Hand cost
- 42 Heir, at times
- 43 Binary base

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

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

**BEETLE BAILEY**

**BABY BLUES**

**BY MORT WALKER**

**BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT**





Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal intently watches Soumya Sarkar as he rushes forward to grab a high catch while both Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Taskin Ahmed hawk-eye the flight of the ball during a practice session in Mirpur yesterday. The Tigers seem to be determined to sharpen their fielding as a solid fielding unit which might play a pivotal role in the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'We want to get the basics right'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be eager to banish their 10-game losing streak across the formats as a busy home schedule kicks off against a relatively inexperienced Sri Lanka team.

The three-match ODI series will also provide a chance for the teams to improve their position in the ICC ODI Super League points table.

For Bangladesh, things have unraveled since a 3-0 ODI series win against the West Indies earlier this year. So, despite having the home advantage and playing their favoured format, the Tigers cannot afford anything fancy against a new-look Lankan side led by Kusal Perera.

"We have an experienced core of players in Mushfiqur [Rahim], [Mahmudullah] Riyad, Tamim [Iqbal] and Shakib [Al Hasan]. But it is always important to give opportunities to younger players. Those players won't be around forever. Hopefully, a guy like Afif can come into the series this time to make an impact," head coach Russell Domingo told a virtual press conference on the eve of the first ODI yesterday.

"We want to get the basics right as a team. If we can do that, we can get in a position when we can try one or two things. We haven't done that in the last couple of games. We did play well against the West Indies at home. With



This is an important series and we know that there are points [for the ODI super league] up for grab. It is a balancing act as performances now are very important, but also the development of the team going forward is equally important. Who knows, in two years' time you might not have Shakib, Tamim, Riyad or Mushfiqur available. And you have got to make sure that you develop some other players who can step into those roles and you have to be careful how you manage that.

RUSSELL DOMINGO  
BANGLADESH HEAD COACH

the team's confidence level being down, there's no need to get fancy and complicate things."

There is more than one area that the Tigers will be hoping to improve on. A lack of consistency with the bat from the likes of Liton Das, Mohammad Mithun and Soumya Sarkar and concerns over the fast-bowling and fielding departments all persist, with

### HIGHLIGHTS

Bangladesh so far played 48 ODIs against Sri Lanka and won only seven matches. Four of those wins came at home.

In their last ODIs in Bangladesh in January 2018, Sri Lanka defeated the Tigers by 10 wickets and 79 runs respectively after suffering a heavy 163-run defeat during the tri-nation tournament. Sri Lanka became champions in the tournament where Zimbabwe were the other team.

A series win could see Bangladesh go on top of the ODI Super League. The Tigers currently sit sixth but only trail top-placed England by 10 points. A 2-1 series win would lift them to 50 points, 10 more than England, Pakistan and Australia, who all have 40 points.

dropped catches a major reason behind their recent defeats.

The return of star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, however, should certainly help the team management form a balanced unit and strengthen the side both with bat and ball.

Shakib will return to his previous number three position and will provide a good balance

by adding an extra all-rounder to the playing eleven.

It will be interesting to see if the champion all-rounder and left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman can regain rhythm after neither got enough preparation since returning from the Indian Premier League due to mandatory quarantine.

There was also talk about relatively younger cricketers in the team needing to step up as Bangladesh looks forward to emerging as a better unit ahead of the 2023 ICC World Cup.

"Keeping the points for the ICC ODI Super League in mind, it will be crucial to grab those. It is tricky. It is a balancing act. Winning right now is always important but we also have to have one eye on the future. Sometimes you need to be a little bit aware of that and not just focus on the past. We have to look forward as well. This is an important series and points are up for grabs. The development of the team going forward is equally important," the South African said.

The will play a vital role and though the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium has traditionally played slow and low, the hosts' team management is hoping for a sporting track.

Weather can also be an issue throughout the three-match ODI series as cyclone Yaas is forming over the Bay of Bengal and may hit India's east coast around May 27. Rain is also in Dhaka forecast over the next few days.

## Ruman, Diya going for gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Ruman Sana and Diya Siddique will settle for nothing less than the gold medal, they said, when they take on Gabriela Schloesser and Sjef Van Den Berg of Netherlands in the final of the recurve mixed team event in the World Cup Stage 2 today.

The event will kick off at 3:30pm Bangladesh time in the Swiss city of Lausanne.

The two talented archers booked Bangladesh a place in a World Cup final for the first time, beating heavyweights like top-seeded Germany in the second round and then Spain in a shoot-off. They shot a perfect set of 40 points in the semifinal against Canada to book a final berth.

Before going to Switzerland, Bangladesh's expectations revolved mostly around gathering exposure ahead of next month's World Cup event in Paris, following a break of 16 months due to the pandemic. While the rust from the long international break was evident in most events they took part, the surprising result in mixed team event offset all those setbacks.

"I'm so excited - I don't even understand it's a final. It's so shocking," Diya told

worldarchery.sport after reaching the final.

Her teammate, Ruman, has more experience at this level as the best recurve archer of the country previously qualified for the Olympics an Olympic Games at the 2019 Hyundai World Archery Championships in Netherlands in 2019 before winning a bronze medal in World Archery Championship in Switzerland in the same year. "I don't know how to explain it. It's the first time Bangladesh made the final," Ruman said. "I'm really happy and grateful to my coach, my teachers, my family and my partner, who was supporting me so much."

Both archers expressed their optimism about giving their best in the final in video messages sent by the Bangladesh Archery Federation. They also thanked sponsors City Group for their continued support.



## Inexperienced but buoyant

SPORTS REPORTER

Things are not going right for Sri Lanka on or off the field in recent times but a relatively young Lankan team, led by newly appointed skipper Kusal Perera, will be looking to catch a positive vibe in the

three-match ODI series against Bangladesh starting today.

The visitors' selectors have orchestrated a massive overhaul for the Bangladesh tour, dropping experienced players such as Dimuth Karunaratne, who has been leading the side, alongside Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal.

The 18-member Sri Lanka squad has four uncapped players, presenting a huge challenge for Perera, who will be making his captaincy debut for the national team in any format.

Prior to the series, Perera mentioned that he wants to play a fearless brand of cricket. Apart from Perera, Kusal Mendis will also be crucial for the visitors after being appointed as vice-captain.

The right-hander is also the most successful batsman for Sri Lanka since 2017 in this format. The likes of Niroshan Dickwella and Dhanushka Gunathilleke will also have to take responsibility in the batting department.

The likes of Lakshan Sandakan, Akila

Dananjaya, Wanindu Hasaranga and uncapped Ramesh Mendis provides some variety in the spin department.

However, their six front-line seamers lack experience. Apart from Dushmantha Chameera, Isuru Udana, and Asitha Fernando, the visitors have three uncapped seamers in the form of Shiran Fernando, Binura Fernando and Chamika Karunaratne.

Perera said that he was looking forward to resolving death-over bowling, which has remained one of the weakest links in Sri Lanka's bowling department in the recent past.

"We have plans for our death bowling, but it's important to keep in mind that that's a role you only get better at with experience. We can't expect perfection from the start. Our bowlers are new to this role so we need to have patience. Sometimes you need to get hit and learn from your mistakes," Perera said ahead of the first ODI yesterday.

The 30-year-old is aware that the Tigers are a strong unit, especially in the spin bowling department, and is planning accordingly on a historically slow and low Mirpur surface.

The left-handed opener added that fielding could be a huge difference.

"We know that one of Bangladesh's strengths is their spin-bowling attack, so we expect wickets to cater to that. I think our fielding has the potential to make a huge impact on this series," he said.



## EUROPEAN FOOTBALL



## Everything on the line

AGENCIES

After three of the top four clubs in Ligue 1, save Lille, held serve last weekend and won their matches, the battle for the title and the final Champions League place remains tight as the final round of Ligue 1 fixtures takes place tonight.

Neutrals' favourites Lille are a point clear at the top of the table and only need to win at Angers to capture a well-deserved title, but PSG are lurking and ready to pounce. If Lille slip up and PSG win at Brest they will clinch a domestic double. It would be quite

the achievement for Mauricio Pochettino's team given the tumult and stress they have endured this season - from the dismissal of Thomas Tuchel to the agonising will-he-won't-he transfer saga surrounding Kylian Mbappe.

Monaco and Lyon are still locked in a battle for Champions' League place, following a shock win in the Principality last month by Rudi Garcia's side. Although a late victory for Marseille against Angers last Sunday seems to have given the southern side the edge, Rennes and Lens, who host Monaco, will still each want to cap their seasons with a European place.

## Will Juve qualify for the CL?

AGENCIES



A season.

The focus is on AC Milan, Napoli and Juventus, who are involved in a tight race for a top-four finish that would give them access to next year's Champions League.

Atalanta has clinched Champions League berth with 78 points but Milan (76), Napoli (76), and Juve (75) are interlocked after 37 rounds; the scenarios for what results are needed to take who into the Champions League next season are innumerable.

The Biaoconeri will have to win their final game of the season against mid-table Bologna and hope that one of Napoli or AC Milan drop points during the final round fixtures.

For third-placed AC Milan, things will be much more complicated as they Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta side away from home on the final match-day. Meanwhile, Napoli, who are currently fourth, also cannot afford a slip up on the final game of the season as they face tenth-placed Verona but on paper, they have a big advantage over Milan considering the fact that they have an easier fixture and that too at home.

## Race for Champions League spot

AGENCIES



Fans will be in attendance at each of Sunday's 10 Premier League fixtures as an unprecedented campaign played almost exclusively behind closed doors comes to a conclusion tonight.

While the destination of the title and relegation were settled with two weekends to spare, there are still plenty of talking points going into the season's finale.

Manchester City's canter to a third title in four seasons was confirmed on May 11, while the identities of the relegated trio - Fulham, West Brom and Sheffield United - were known the previous day.

City will be aiming to bounce back from an unexpected loss to Brighton when they lift the trophy in front of 10,000 fans at the Etihad Stadium following their clash with Everton. The Citizens also will be with one eye on the all-English Champions League final against Chelsea six days later.

On the other hand, Chelsea will be aiming to secure their place in the Champions League when they take on Aston Villa in the last game of the season.

Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel already said securing a top-four finish in the league will take some of the pressure off the Champions League final.

Chelsea head into Sunday's game on 67 points, one point ahead of both Liverpool and Leicester, with the Reds having the edge on goal difference.

Liverpool host Crystal Palace at Anfield knowing that if they win 1-0, Leicester would have to beat Tottenham by a five-goal margin to finish fourth - unless Chelsea fail to beat Villa.

Leicester City and Tottenham, the two teams who are eyeing a place in European competitions, face each other at King Power Stadium. Brendan Rodgers' men face a must-win situation against Spurs, but seeing that they head into the match with the lack of confidence, home win should not be considered.



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## Faulty process, false promises

Female migrant workers returning from Mideast with shattered dreams report abuse, malpractice

JAMIL MAHMUD

With a two-year job "contract" and dreams of a better life, Akhi Begum (not her real name) left for Saudi Arabia in mid-2019.

But the 27-year-old returned home in Munshiganj within three months, as the work conditions were nothing like what she had been promised.

An excessive workload for a 10-member family, along with a lack of livelihood support such as food and clothes, made the domestic worker soon flee her employer's house in Riyadh.

Saudi police later nabbed and imprisoned her for more than two weeks on charges of absconding before she was given an "out-pass" by the Bangladesh mission for deportation.

"I fled the [employer's] house because I could not bear it anymore," said the mother of three.

Akhi's tale is similar to the accounts of a number of female migrant workers who returned in recent years from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. They left Bangladesh to turn their lives around but came back home empty-handed and at times, having suffered horrid experiences.

### 'FAULTY' RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Around 151 Bangladeshi female migrant workers, or around 58 percent of those surveyed, returned home within one year of their migration to Middle Eastern countries after facing various challenges, including exploitative work

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



It's been years since the dredging started in the Karnaphuli in Chattogram. However, very little improvement could be made because of the continuous waste dumping and deposition of silt. The photo was taken from Amanat Shah Bridge yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Positivity rate keeps rising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The positivity rate of coronavirus tests continued to rise yesterday.

In the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, 1,028 people tested positive after 12,230 got tested.

This takes the total number of people who tested positive for the virus to 7,87,726.

The positivity rate announced yesterday was 8.41 percent, up from 8.22 the day before.

The rate has been rising since May 15, when it was 6.95 percent. The overall positivity rate was 13.57 percent as of yesterday.

Experts say that transmission may continue to rise because of people's habit of not following the rules.

Positivity rate is one of the important parameters to measure the transmission.

According to the World Health Organization, a five percent positivity rate or below for two weeks means the transmission is under control.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Israel-Hamas ceasefire holds

Biden insists on two-state solution for ending hostilities

AGENCIES

A ceasefire between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip held yesterday as Egyptian mediators pressed on with talks with the two sides on securing longer-term calm, officials said.

The ceasefire began before dawn on Friday, and Palestinians and Israelis are now assessing the damage from 11 days of hostilities in which Israel pounded Gaza with air strikes and militants fired barrages of rockets at Israel.

Palestinian officials put the reconstruction costs at tens of millions of dollars and medical officials said 248 people, including 66 children, had been killed in Gaza. The devastation has raised concerns about the humanitarian situation in the densely populated enclave. Palestinian attacks killed at least 13 people in Israel.

A source familiar with planning said US Secretary of State would visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday and Thursday, hoping to build on the ceasefire mediated by Egypt with US support.

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### ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

## Indira urges Sadat to persuade Yahya

MAY 23, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

### NIXON-KISSINGER CONVERSATION

On May 23, 1971, American President Nixon had a discussion with his Assistant for National Security Affairs

Henry Kissinger as to the situation in Pakistan. Kissinger informed the president that Indians were massing troops at the Pakistan border, and that he told Keating, American ambassador to India, to tell the Indians about the US's strong opposition to military action.

In reply Nixon said, "We certainly will; if they go in there with military action, by God we will cut off economic aid."

"That is the last thing we can afford now to have the Pakistan government overthrown, given the other things we are doing," Kissinger added.

"And there is absolutely no justification for it—they don't have a right to invade Pakistan no matter what Pakistan does in its territory. Besides the killing has stopped," Kissinger continued.

Nixon commented, "It has quieted down."

Kissinger replied, "Oh yes. It may not be a tenable situation in the long term, but again that is not for India to decide."

### INDIRA GANDHI'S MESSAGE TO SADAT

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent a personal message to Egyptian President Sadat which was understood to be primarily concerned with the grave situation in Bangladesh and

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## Tigers eye end to abysmal run

Take on SL in first ODI today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be looking to seal their first victory across formats since January when they take on Sri Lanka in the first of a three-match ODI series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The day-night contest is scheduled to start at 1:00pm. The second and third ODIs are scheduled for May 25 and 28 respectively and will be played at the same venue at the same time.

The Tigers have been in an abysmal run of form, with their last victory coming against West Indies at home in an ODI in January this year. Since then, Bangladesh played four Tests (two against West Indies at home and two away to Sri Lanka), three ODIs and three T20Is against New Zealand and

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## China's Mars rover starts roaming



AFP, Shanghai

China's Mars rover drove from its landing platform and began exploring the surface yesterday, state-run Xinhua news agency said, making the country only the second nation to land and operate a rover on the Red Planet.

The launch last July of the Tianwen-1 Mars probe, which carried the Zhurong rover, marked a major milestone in China's space programme.

Tianwen-1 touched down on a vast northern lava plain known as the Utopia Planitia a week ago and beamed back its first photos of the surface a few days later.

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## Weather over Andaman Sea 'may hit Bangladesh'

UNB, Dhaka

A low pressure area is developing over the North Andaman Sea and the adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal which can intensify into a cyclonic storm, the Met office has said.

The storm is likely to move north-westwards and reach the Odisha-West Bengal-Khulna coast around Wednesday, according to the weather department.

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### PRAYER TIMING MAY 23

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## DIGITAL SECURITY ACT: Journo held over report against former MP

UNB, Meherpur

A local journalist was arrested yesterday in a case filed under the Digital Security Act over publication of a report against a former Awami League MP.

Al Amin Hossain, Meherpur district correspondent of the Daily Business Bangladesh, was arrested at his home at Banshbaria of Gangni municipality, police said.

Sub-Inspector Md Sumon of Gangni Police Station said Sabuj Hossain, nephew of former lawmaker (Gangni-2) Makbul Hossain, also a district AL leader, had filed the case.

According to the case statement, a report was run by a local newspaper on May 11 last year accusing the MP of occupying a house for 26 years.

Sabuj filed the case against publisher of Meherpur Protdin MAS

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To help deal with the heat, a youth has a large glass of drink from a street-side vendor. Often these drinks are not prepared maintaining proper hygiene. The photo was taken in the capital's Gulistan area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Covid spreads to rural India

Daily death toll crosses 4,000 again; first death due to 'black fungus' reported in West Bengal

AGENCIES

India's Covid-19 outbreak has stabilised in parts of the country, a government official said, but deaths rose by 4,194 yesterday and infections were spreading in rural areas where public health services are scarce and already overstretched.

India reported more than 400,000 infections a day in early May but the numbers have gradually eased. Yesterday, government data showed 257,299 new cases.

Active cases in the richest state of Maharashtra and Karnataka, home to the tech hub of Bengaluru, and the coastal state of Kerala had fallen in the last two weeks, health ministry official Lav Agarwal told reporters.

However, daily infections in states including West Bengal, which recently concluded state elections, and the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were on the rise, he said.

A 32-year-old woman died of mucormycosis, commonly associated with Covid-19 infection, while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Kolkata in the first instance of death due to "black fungus" in West Bengal, a state Health Department official said yesterday.

At present, five patients are undergoing treatment for the disease in the state, the official said adding "all these patients are from neighbouring Bihar and Jharkhand states," our New Delhi correspondent reported.

The state Health Department has already constituted a committee of experts to deal with cases of black fungus

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