

The Baily





Your Right to Know

Record foreign aid use in next budget

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

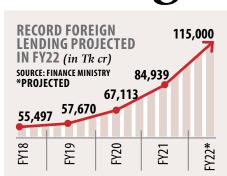
Making hay while the sun, it appears, is the finance ministry's mantra as it goes about preparing the budget for fiscal 2021-22, its second in the backdrop of the extraordinary challenges thrown by the pandemic.

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 given 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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

'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 One of the demonstrations was by Nagorik Somaj, a citizens' platform,

which organised a protest rally in front of the National Museum in the 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

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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

29 countries saw 1m extra deaths

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

MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

Nearly one million extra deaths relating to the Covid-19 pandemic occurred in 29 highincome 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 SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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.



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.

RASHED SHUMON

New KSA Travel Advisory

Migrant workers' woes rise further

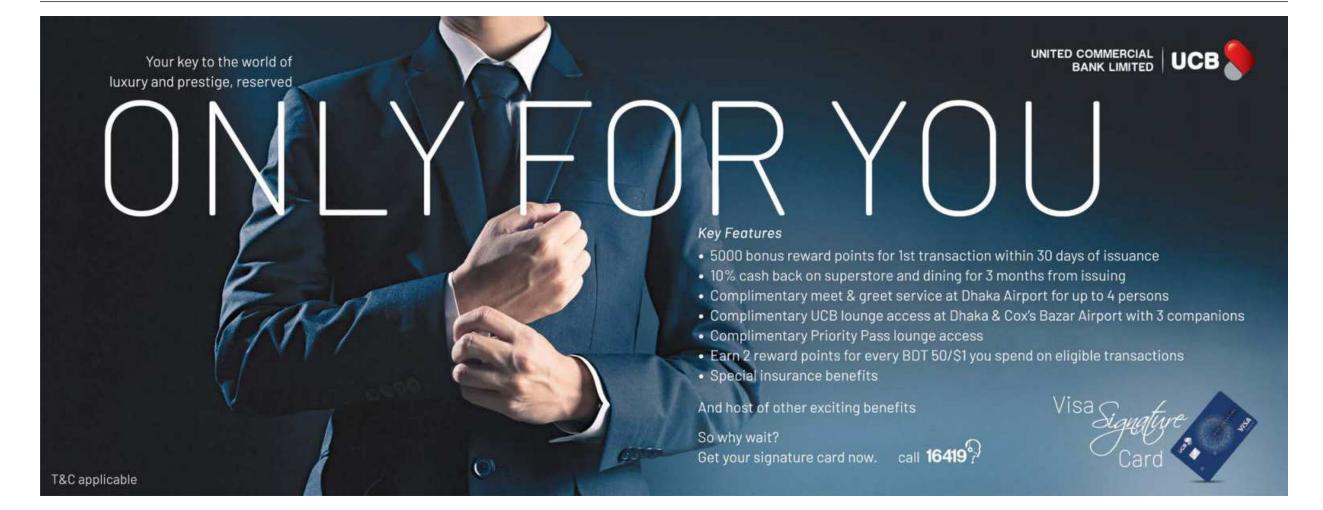
RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

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, Saudibound 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.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2













Take up fish farming

Hasina urges the youth

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged take up fish farming as profession.

of of the of opportunity employment in sector and this should

be utilised," she said in a pre-recorded video message marking the 18th founding anniversary of Awami

Matsyajibi League. The PM said the government has taken measures to improve fish production through expansion of pisciculture and research.

Reiterating her government's goal of making Bangladesh economically self-sufficient, Hasina said the country will move forward following the ideals and principles of Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On the 50th anniversary of our independence and birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, our pledge will be to make the country developed and prosperous.

"We will build Golden Bangladesh of the Father of the Nation," she said.

The PM said the government is providing training to youths on fish farming so that they can make the country more advanced in fish

City

Karmasangsthan Bank is providing collateral-free loan to youths so that they can stand on their own

Hasina said instead of running after office jobs on completion of studies, educated young

people can engage in fish production for their livelihood

The government is setting up 100 economic zones where food processing industries can be set up to create

opportunities for marketing, she added. The premier asked Matsyajibi League leaders to strengthen its organisational capacity to supplement the government's

efforts to increase fish production. She said the per capita fish consumption in the country is now 62

The citizens of the country no longer suffer from malnutrition due to the government's initiative to ensure nutrition, the PM said.

Hasina said to increase fish production further, which is now around 50 lakh tonnes a year, the government is renovating ponds, and excavating canals, lakes and rivers.

She also said the government has taken special measures to improve hilsa production in which Bangladesh is

Record foreign aid use

For developing countries, a budget deficit is not unusual as the government needs to spend big on building infrastructure to shore up future economic activities. The government meets the gap between income and expenditure through domestic and foreign borrowing obtained as loans or

But keeping the deficit within 5 percent is recommended by the International Monetary Fund, and is in fact considered international best

Historically, in Bangladesh, when the budget is drafted, a 5 percent deficit was projected but the actual deficit would invariably be about 4 percent every year as the ministries and divisions failed to

use their allocated funds. However, since fiscal 2018-19, the budget deficit has been trespassing the 5 percent-mark. This fiscal year, it is

tipped to cross the 6 percent-mark. But, that is no cause for alarm -- yet.

"A 6 percent budget deficit is technically a nonissue even in normal times, not to speak of a health exigency and economically distressful time such as the pandemic," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

As long as the 6 percent deficit goes towards the areas where extra funding is needed for the pandemic, it would not be a problem.

The areas that have risen in the priority list because of the pandemic include health, social protection, education, CMSMEs, agriculture and rural development.

A rise in budget deficit due to an increase in expenditure in these areas could pay high economic and social dividends, Hussain added.

The finance ministry is not too worried, either.

"There is no long-term risk for the government's higher expenditure for the

this fiscal year. In fact, the debt-GDP is still in the comfortable zone," said a finance ministry official requesting anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with media.

In the first nine months of fiscal 2020-21, revenue collection increased 6.4 per cent from a year earlier. But because of the ongoing countrywide shutdown, the momentum has taken a hit, it added.

Most countries are following an expansionary fiscal stance and the Bangladesh government is no different, said Zaid Bakht, a former research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

"On one hand, everyone is saying that you must spend to prop up the economy and do the health sector interventions -- even if there is a deficit. And on the other hand, our tax-GDP ratio is very low and there has been a big shortfall in revenue target in recent times. Where would the funds come

The raft of stimulus packages has increased the money supply in the economy and gave rise to inflationary

"So for the government, foreign borrowing is a low-cost funding source. It is a logical conclusion that foreign loans are being used for deficit financing," said Bakht, currently the

chairman of Agrani Bank. Hussain, however, is doubtful of the government's ability to spend the foreign financing projected for the next fiscal year.

"It is highly ambitious. There is money in the pipeline, but the billiondollar question to get nearly \$12 billion disbursed in one year is whether the administration can raise their game in implementing aided projects and carry out the reforms needed to get budget support from the donors," he added.

In fiscal 2019-20, the government managed to use about \$7.3 billion, which is the highest yet.

Mangoes, arquably the most popular fruit in Bangladesh, have hit the markets as the country reels under the heat wave. The photo was taken in the capital's Gulistan yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'Rozina in jail as she exposed graft' of looking at it emotionally," the Chowdhury, editorial board president

Convener of Nagorik Oikya Mahmudur Rahman Manna, former Ducsu VP Nurul Haque Nur, and member Rashtrochinta Advocate Hasnat Quaiyum also spoke at the rally.

journalists' Meanwhile, associations together demanded Rozina's release at a meeting at the Jatiya Press Club.

The associations are: Dhaka Journalist Union (DUJ), Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Broadcast Journalists' Centre and TV Camera Journalist Association.

The leaders of the organisations will meet with Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Awami League General Secretary and Roads and Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader today.

"But we hope she will get bail in the meantime," said Kuddus Afrad, president of Dhaka Union of Journalists, while briefing the press after

the meeting.

If she does not get bail today, the journalist leaders vowed a tougher movement.

Some bureaucrats have brought the government and the media at loggerheads over the Rozina issue, said Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, former information advisor of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was present at the

"We want to move away from that position. We want to take democracy and the country forward. We want to create an environment for free journalism. Our movement will continue. We will not only release Rozina, we will work together to remove the restrictions that are hindering free media," he said.

The leaders of the BFUJ as well as those of the newly-elected committee of Directors Guild, an organisation of television drama directors, met with the information minister at his Minto Road residence separately yesterday, a day before a Dhaka court's order on the bail petition of Rozina.

"Look at the Rozina Islam issue from a realistic point of view instead

information ministers told the leaders

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Mahmud alleged that an antistate quarter is trying to take advantage of the incident involving the Prothom Alo journalist at the health ministry on

May 17.
"The Rozina Islam incident has been politicised as the anti-state quarters have become very active in capitalising on it." He also commented on the

statement made by Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesperson of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. The minister said Khaleda Zia's

former deputy press secretary Mushfiqul Fazal Ansari got a reply from an official on overall media by asking a question at the regular press briefing of the UN secretary-general. "There is an ill-intended effort to

conduct a campaign over that reply. The statement of a UN official and the UN's concern is not the same at all."

An investigation is going on to learn how Rozina has collected information in the past, Mahmud added. WHAT HAPPENED TO ROZINA IS

UNPRECEDENTED' Speakers in a webinar yesterday titled "Freedom of Press and Public Interest" described what happened to Rozina Islam as "unprecedented" and

demanded her immediate release. The Centre for Governance Studies in association with UK Aid and Asia Foundation organised the webinar.

"Rozina wrote investigative reports in the interest of the country and the people," said Julhas Alam, bureau chief of the Associated Press in Dhaka. The scope and capacity

investigative journalism in the country are declining, said Zahirul Alam, NTV's head of news. A variety of social alliances have been

The incident with Rozina Islam was nothing new as journalists were being harassed whenever it hurt the government's interests," said Shoeb

journalists do not work independently,

for others but for us, it is a process of information collection," said Shaymal Datta, editor of Bangla daily Bhorer

by curtailing the freedom of the media, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

TOKEN HUNGER STRIKE

Journalists yesterday held a token hunger strike demanding withdrawal of the case against Rozina Islam and her immediate unconditional release.

Sitting in front of Dhaka Reporters Unity, they demanded punishment of those who assaulted and harassed her at the secretariat. 'Corrupt officials are now teaching

investigative journalism. They Bangla.

Executive Editor of Prothom Alo Sajjad Sharif and Associate Editor Anisul

'FORM A NEUTRAL PROBE COMMITTEE'

Dhaka Sub-Editors Council formed

The organisation's President Mamun

"We hope Rozina will be released inconditionally tomorrow (today). If that does not happen, we don't have any option but for a "no return home" movement. We have no scope to go back," said Molla Jalal, president of a

ournalists from including Shariatpur and Bagerhat organised human chains.

Communist League of Bangladesh, among political parties, also held programmes.

of The Asian Age. "Theft of information may be theft

Kagoj. Public interest cannot be maintained

want to say writing reports based on their press release is journalism," said Shamima Dola, editor of News Now

Haque attended the strike on behalf of Prothom Alo.

a human chain at Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding a neutral probe committee to investigate the incident at the Secretariat and withdrawal of the

Farazi presided over a programme.

faction of the BFUJ.

Gonoforum and the United

Govt moves to buy jabs from pvt UK supplier

With the current stock about to be depleted completely and two million people waiting for their second shots of the Oxford vaccine, Bangladesh has been desperately appealing to different countries for the jabs.

Bangladesh earlier purchased three crore doses of the Oxford vaccine from drugmaker Serum Institute of India. But amid a steep rise in Covid-19 cases in India and reports of a shortage of the vaccine, the Indian government suspended vaccine exports in March.

Bangladesh requested the US and Canada to provide the shots, but has yet to receive what officials said is a positive Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen

Thursday said the US has an additional 80 million doses of the Oxford vaccine. The minister said he learnt unofficially that the US government is preferring to help India, Brazil, Spain and Indonesia before Bangladesh,

because the number of deaths and infections are higher in those countries. "Deaths and infections in Bangladesh

may be low, but we have been in trouble since India halted the export of vaccines. We need the vaccine," he said. During a phone conversation last week, Momen requested the Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to

donate 15 lakh doses since the ban is on After repeatedly requesting the UK for the vaccine, Bangladesh was recently told that the UK government could not provide any doses at the moment and

advised to contact the private sector. In July 2020, the high commission requested AstraZeneca to hold human trials of its vaccine in Bangladesh. The company responded by saying that it had an agreement with the Serum Institute of India.

"Although we are in talks with the private sector now, we are re-appealing to the UK government again for the

television network, Momen on Friday made an urgent appeal to the UK for the AstraZeneca vaccine. "I'm not asking for much. I'm only

The UK government should help the Commonwealth member states. Besides, Bangladesh is a good friend

of the UK and many Bangladeshis contribute to the UK economy, he said. China, meanwhile, provided Bangladesh with 5 lakh doses of the Sinopharm vaccine last week and announced giving 6 lakh more.

vaccine," the high commission official

In an interview with ITV, a UK

asking for 1.6m AstraZeneca doses that they have... they should immediately disburse those to Bangladesh so that people can have their second doses," he

Bangladesh is in the final stage of making a deal to buy the Sinopharm vaccine from China and Sputnik V

Movement

FROM PAGE 1

Except for long-route buses, launches and trains, it seems everything came

Although most of the government offices remained shut, almost all private offices remained open alongside some government offices.

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

There has been a rise in coronavirus infections after Eid-ul-Fitr, they said.

In five days from May 15, at least 5,345,826 active mobile phone subscribers entered the capital while 10,645,697 subscribers left Dhaka between May 4 and May 15, according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

of how many people have been travelling despite the restrictions on the operation of long-haul buses, trains and launches.

The numbers are an indication

Yesterday, there was moderate to heavy traffic congestion at different intersections in the capital.

The government first imposed a week-long restriction from April 5 to contain the second surge of Covid-19 pandemic.

Later the authority extended the restriction till May 23 on several

All eyes on

FROM PAGE 1

journalist Rozina Islam's bail until today.

Public Prosecutor Assistant Hemayet Uddin Khan Heron earlier said that the prosecutors would use the extra time to place a video before the court that mysteriously surfaced on social media the night before Rozina's bail hearing. The seven-minute-long footage

shows some health ministry officials and policemen interrogating and manhandling the journalist while she describes how she came inside the personal secretary's room at the Secretariat through a source.

At one point, she says, "I made a mistake and I would be willing to give a written undertaking.' However, this video only shows

seven minutes of Rozina's five-hour ordeal inside the ministry. Meanwhile, Rozina's lawyers argued that nothing Rozina said

under duress, without a magistrate's presence, could be used as evidence. Her lawyers also pointed out that the video could not be taken into cognisance by the court as the case rests solely on the first information report filed by the police, which does

not mention the video at all.

The health ministry has filed a case against Rozina under several sections of the Official Secrets Act and penal code. They accused the journalist of stealing and taking photos of "highly sensitive" government documents.

Shibbir Ahmed Osmani, a deputy secretary of the health services division, filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station on Monday night. In his complaint, Shibbir said

Bangladesh was in negotiations with several countries for purchasing Covid-19 vaccines and there were 'non-disclosure agreements". Rozina's family members and her colleagues refuted the allegations and

said she was framed while discharging her professional duties because she exposed the corruption of certain health ministry officials. Rozina has written several in-depth

sector amid the pandemic. Rozina's confinement and arrest riggered countrywide protests by journalists.

reports on corruption in the health

launch tougher programmes if Rozina was not released by today. On Tuesday, Rozina was taken to Kashimpur Central Women's Jail after

Journalist leaders promised to

a Dhaka court rejected the five-day remand plea. The Detective Branch of Police (Ramna) is now investigating the

Cops took no steps despite two GDs Asked about presence of a police with a Dhaka court. His mother Aklima Begum alleged that team near the murder spot, the OC Following the filling the filling that the fillin

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, she said, "Police officials take financial benefits from such attackers and that is why my son had to die. The police

spot [where he died], but they took no action to save him. She said that had police provided some security, her grandson would not have had to be an orphan at the

However, Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-incharge of Pallabi Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday that Shahinuddin filed two separate GDs for security but he did not come to the police station when he was asked to provide details.

his home to ask about what kind of security they want... We later came to know that the victim went to meet with the attacker himself after filing the GD. So, police had nothing to do with the said that there was no police team near the spot. "Police acted soon after they learned about the incident. They said Shahinuddin was an

accused in around 26 cases filed with Pallabi police on different charges, including narcotics, arms, explosives and woman and child repression act. He was even arrested in the last week

of April and got released on bail on May

THE MURDER PLOT Shahinuddin's family has about 10 acres of land within the boundaries of a project by former lawmaker MA

Awal (Lakshmipur-1) called "Alinagar

Residential Area" in Burirtek Alinagar

Shahinuddin's father Joynuddin had been under pressure for a long time from the Haveli Properties to sell

Following the filing of the case, Joynuddin sons-- Shahinuddin and Mainuddin—had locked into a dispute with Awal, former lawmaker.

threaten the siblings. Due to continuous threats, their mother filed a GD seeking security in June 2015, sources said. Since then, Shahinuddin came under

His Family claims he went to file a case with Pallabi Police Station after the machete attack on November last year but police did not register. Even the attacker Sumon got released from jail after a couple of days of his arrest.

killed Shahinuddin. SEVEN PEOPLE TOOK PART IN THE KILLING MISSION

Investigators said the attackers, in Awal's Kalabagan office, had planned to murder Shahinuddin three to four days

Citing a conversation, a high

Shahinuddin earlier but he did not die. But this time, they would not let him go alive... Awal's 'cadres' Sumon, Manik, Monir, Iqbal, Murad and Hasan took part in the murder. While planning the murder, Awal told them they could take as much money as they need, but he

Sumon had taken money from Awal some of it to the other attackers.

Col Mohammad

Islam, director (intelligence) at Rab headquarters, told The Daily Star that they are now looking for two absconding members of the group and are hoping to arrest them soon. The Detective Branch of police is

now investigating into the murder. Six people, including Awal, were arrested and two have already given

confessional statements. Manas Kumar Podder, commissioner of the DB, told The Daily Star that Awal is now on remand.

"We have got some information [regarding the incident] and are analysing that. Only then we will be able to speak elaborately about the

pandemic and lower revenue collection

29 countries saw lives, both directly and indirectly. Even though not directly supported by our study, the situation in Bangladesh may not be very different from what we have observed in these developed nations,"

Dr Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star

"Covid-19 deaths have been shown

to be under-reported in most countries around the world. Moreover, deaths due to other causes such as cancers may have been higher than previous years, "Therefore," he added, "the actual

number of excess deaths due to the

Covid-19 pandemic may be higher than the reported deaths. Using a mathematical model, the research team calculated weekly excess deaths in 2020 for each of the 29 countries, accounting for age and sex differences between countries, and also for seasonal and yearly trends in

mortality over the four preceding years. Overall, an estimated 979,000 total excess deaths occurred last year in the 29 countries analysed. All countries experienced excess deaths, except New Zealand, Norway, and Denmark. The five countries with the highest

absolute number of excess deaths were the US (458,000), the UK (94,400), Italy (89,100), Spain (84,100), and Poland (60,100). Only New Zealand had lower overall deaths than expected (2,500 less). The excess deaths were largely concentrated among people aged 75 or

older, followed by people aged 65-74

years, while deaths in children under 15

were similar to expected levels in most

countries and lower than expected in

some countries. In most countries, the estimated number of excess deaths exceeded the number of reported deaths from Covid-19. For instance, in both the US and the UK, estimated excess deaths

were more than 30 percent higher than the number of reported Covid-19 deaths.

"It is unknown if everyone who died in Bangladesh in 2020 was tested to accurately determine whether the cause of death was Covid-19. So, the actual number of excess deaths due to Covid-19 may be higher than the reported deaths," Dr Nazrul said. "Moreover, the number of deaths

which makes it difficult to estimate the extent of excess deaths in the country." Dr Mushtuq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in Bangladesh, also thinks there were

excess deaths in the country last year.

"There is a need for similar death

due to causes other than Covid-19 is

also not precisely known in Bangladesh,

system during the pandemic," he told The Daily Star yesterday. "Actually, we need to focus on a community-based healthcare system to

prevent avoidable deaths.'

analysis in the country. It will help

to formulate policy in the healthcare

In most countries, age-specific excess death rates were higher among men than women, and the absolute difference in rates between the sexes tended to increase with age. However, in the US the excess death rate was higher among women than men in those aged 85 years or older, according to the study. 'Reliable and timely monitoring

of excess deaths will help to inform

public health policy in investigating

the sources of excess mortality in

populations and help to detect

important social inequalities in the

impact of the pandemic to inform more

targeted interventions," Dr Nazrul said. Future work will also be needed to understand the impact of national coronavirus vaccination programmes on mortality in 2021, the researchers concluded.

His mother Aklima Begum alleged that police negligence was the reason for her son's death.

did not take any step to ensure his safety even after he filed a GD... There were four to five policemen near the

"We then sent a police team to

area of North Kalshi in Pallabi. It was a project run by Haveli Properties Developer Limited.

the land. Awal had started applying muscle power as Joynuddin did not agreed to sell the land, alleged the victim's family. In early 2015, Joyunddin filed a case

Awal had been using his "cadres" to

attack by Awal's men a number of times.

Finally on May 16, the attackers

official of the Rapid Action Battalion, conducting shadow investigation and requesting anonymity, said, "The attackers said they had stabbed needs action. for the murder and even distributed

BANGLADESH New cases in 24hrs New cases in 24hrs Total cases

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.



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

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.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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, microbuses, motorbikes and other small vehicles,

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

of an awareness campaign against mosquitoes yesterday.

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 SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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

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

Lt Col Moshiur 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 Fatehbad 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

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

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

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

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 tne ones pianned, and as a resuit will involve huge costs, said the corporation's superintending 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, Bornali 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 ups those plans. If consulted with, quality services could have been ensured.7

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 Shusashoner 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 SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

CJ constitutes nine more HC benches for virtual hearing

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

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

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 Kajol; Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique and Justice KM Hafizul Alam; Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim; Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Ahmed Sohel;

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 Rafigul Islam told The Daily Star. He said they made 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

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

The EC prepared the draft of "Registration of Political Parties Act-2020", repealing the chapter VIA of the Representation of the People Order-1972 SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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 of with no choice but take their patient to the capital.

Another patient's relative complained, Even a healthy person will get sick here in this heat without any air conditioning. How can a heart patient stay here?'

Firoz Alam, deputy assistant engineer of Barishal's Public Works Department, confirmed the eight air conditioners' situation. "They have been damaged for a long time. This has been reported to higher authorities."

There is also a personnel crisis at the unit. One patient's attendant informed that doctors and health assistants come to check on patients for only a little while, which is nowhere near sufficient for critical patients.

Asked about this, an on-duty doctor of the unit, on condition of anonymity, said, "There is only one registrar and three medical officers at our unit. As a result, it has become impossible to continue providing satisfactory medical service for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



The English name for it -- Bombay duck -- is quite confusing to the uninitiaited. 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.

ANISUR RAHMAN

Experts urge CCC and Wasa to rush water ATM booth project

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

At 12 noon on Friday, rickshawpuller Md Belal stood at Jamal Khan Road with his clothes stuck to his body with sweat. The 37-year-old has been pulling rickshaws for long, and dealing with heat is a part of the job. Yet, the scorching sun was threatening to get the best of him. Exhausted, Belal pulled out a Tk 5 note and went for the nearest lemonade vendor.

According to the Met Office, the highest temperature in the city was 35 degrees Celsius yesterday. The same mark was hit over the last two days, while average temperature remained similar. Coupled with high humidity, this was enough reason to put people -- especially those who do hard labour -- in misery.

People across the port city, especially day-wage earners like Belal, suffered immensely due to working directly under the sun throughout the day. This correspondent came

concern for the people who work under this scorching sun," said Dr Sujat Paul, head of Medicine at Chattogram Medical College.

Across the city, one other tale echoed: dehydration. Withstanding the heat is one thing, but what compounded these working people's woes is the unavailability of

According to health experts, safe and unsafe drinking water can be like diarrhoea, jaundice and typhoid, especially during this heat wave.

But due to the lack of safe sources, most people have to resort to other means, like untreated water from drains and canals, or straight from the tap, said Dr Paul.

For example, Belal said he is well aware of the consequence of drinking unsafe water; his fifth-grader daughter told him about it. But he has no options.

"My daughter forbade me to drink unsafe water from roadside shops and gave me a bottle of boiled water when I came out with the rickshaw in the morning," said Belal. "But I finished that one litre of water within an hour."

'My earnings are stuck at Tk 300 a day because I cannot work through the day fighting the severe heat," he told this correspondent. "From this, Tk 50 goes to the owner. If I spend Tk 30 to 50 for bottled water, what do I take back home?" The most he can afford is the Tk 5 he spent for the lemonade, whose water possibly comes from a dubious source.

As a solution, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, convener of Public Health Protection Committee, Chattogram, said public service providing organisations Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) and Chattogram Wasa should set up safe drinking water booths for every two kilometres, working together for this if needed.

"It will not be a costly project but

will hugely benefit people from the low income group who cannot afford bottled water," he said.

Beyond the working class, the drinking water booths will also be of immense help for other demographic groups too, like students, said SM Nazer Hossain, vice president Consumers Association of Bangladesh (Cab).

"Commuters and workers of the city have a right to safe drinking water, which they should have either for free or at a nominal cost," Nazer added.

Contacted, Ariful Islam, superintendent engineer Chattogram Wasa, admitted to the necessity of setting up drinking water booths across different points in the

"We've already started a pilot project -- in collaboration with a private company -- to set up water booths from where people can buy a litre of drinking water at fifty paisa,"

"For starters, a few of these water ATM booths have been set up at Khulshi, Agrabad and Halishahar areas under pilot project," Ariful said.

"We will set up a total of 100 booths in the city," he said. "We are talking to CCC in this regard as we do not have sufficient space to set up the booths.

Despite repeated attempts over phone, CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury could not be reached for

> **Experts say people** who work outside in hot and humid weather carry tremendous risks of heat stroke. It is advised to drink lots of clean water and take breaks whenever possible, like this rickshawpuller is doing under the shades of a tree at the city's CRB area. This photo was taken on Friday.

> > PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Ferdousi Rahman no more

CITY DESK

Ferdousi Rahman (Ely), a resident of London, died of cancer at May Day Hospital in London on May 19. She was 65.

She left behind two daughters and a son to mourn her death.

She was the second daughter of late Md Eshaque and late Hafiza Khatoon and wife of ABM Hafizur Rahman, a former Sonali Bank official.

Ferdousi was a former student of Motijheel T&T High School. Her family asked all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul, said a press release.

Body of missing teen recovered, UP member among six arrested Our Correspondent, Mymensingh

Police yesterday arrested six people in connection with the death of a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinee, whose body was recovered in Mymensingh's Sadar upazila on Friday evening, three days after he went missing.

The deceased was identified as Akash Mia (17) -- son of Akram Hossain, ex-member of Astadhar Union Parishad. Akash was an SSC examinee from Astadhar Bahumukhi High School, police said.

Quoting family members, Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Md Firoz Talukder said Akash was in a relationship with a girl, and they got married, appearing before a court on May 2 without family consent.

On Wednesday, Ziarul Islam, the girl's father and a member of Astadhar UP, allegedly called Akash to his house, and since then, he had gone missing, the OC said.

As Akash did not return home, his family informed police, and law enforcers visited Ziarul's house on Friday.

As an officer found blood stain at the house, police searched the premises and recovered the decomposed body from there. The body was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Victim's father Akram lodged a case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing 14 persons on Friday night.

Soon after filing the case, police started drives and arrested Ziarul (50), his wife Rozina Akter (40), son Nazmul Islam (20), daughter (17), brother Julhas Mia (45), and sister-inlaw Nargis Akter (37), early yesterday, the OC said.

They were produced before a Mymensingh court, which sent them to jail.

Rashid Babu passes away

Our Correspondent, Dinajpu

Rashid Babu, president of Rangpur Press Club,

passed aw ay following a cardiac arrest at his home on Saturday

morning, aged 68.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter, and numerous well-wishers.

He was involved in various socio-cultural organisations in the district.

According to his family, Rashid underwent open heart surgery in March after he suffered a cardiac arrest. On Saturday, he was feeling sick and his family took him to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where he died around 5:22am.

Rashid started working as a journalist in Rangpur

in the 1970s. He was buried at his family graveyard after a janaza at Jummapara Karimia Madrasa ground.

Indigenous people

To mitigate the problem, proper implementation of existing laws, and funding innovations to find new ways to solve the problem were suggested.

Criticising the bad side of tourism, Bela Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan said Saint Martin's Island has many establishments of private organisations and the government body, and this will result in the extinction of natural characteristics of the island.

"Similarly, by promoting tourism in Ratargul swamp forest, we are destroying its natural features...We have to walk towards the economy that prioritises the environment."

Criticising the injustice against nature, researcher Pavel Partho said, "People use pesticides in fields. However, the National Organic Agriculture Policy-2016 promotes organic pesticide instead of chemical ones. Besides, people kill different birds to save their crops and fruits. This is terrible for the biodiversity and the environment as a whole."

"There are many hotspots of biodiversity in Bangladesh. In every area, research and conservation landslide, and it happens mostly in fulfil the SDGs, he added.

centres are necessary, accessibility and participation of locals," he said, adding that biodiversity does not only mean plants or animals; human beings are also part of the biodiversity.

Referring to a Global Watch report and different newspapers, former executive director of Arannayk Foundation Farid Uddin Ahmed said during the pandemic, deforestation did not stop, and the area that suffered the most is Chittagong Hill

Regarding the misconception centring jhum (shifting) cultivation, he said jhum is a part of CHT's people and culture. Without jhum cultivation, there would be no existence of many species of plants

Referring to a website of Global Environment Facility, Soil Resource Development Institute Principal Scientific Officer Ameer Md Zahid said, "Almost 3.2 billion people are affected by land degradation worldwide, and it's 72 million in Bangladesh. One of the reasons for degradation is land erosion and

hilly areas, particularly in CHT."

Agreeing with the speakers, Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Chairperson Saber Hossain Chowdhury said to solve all climate and biodiversity-related problems, the government needs a roadmap to achieve SDGs.

As the parliament passed Planetary Emergency motion, and secured improvement of the environment and preservation of biodiversity through the constitution, the country can go ahead with help from different stakeholders, he said.

Meanwhile, in another online workshop on St Martin's and restoration of biodiversity, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin said, "All necessary steps have been taken to restore and save the environment and biodiversity of the country, including the coral island -- St

To preserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable development, the government is implementing an SDG action plan, while also targeting to

Parties

that now deals with the process of registration of political parties.

EC decided to write the law in Bangla in place of the RPO's English to make it easy to read and understand, EC officials said.

In a draft prepared in June 2020, EC did not incorporate any deadline for reserving 33 percent women positions at political parties leadership. But it said besides keeping 33 percent positions for women, political parties will need to report to the EC about fulfilling the reservations annually.

"During the amendment of RPO 2008, there were no direction on political parties about giving report to the EC about fulfilling the reservations," said an EC official.

"As result of that EC cannot oversee properly which parties have or haven't met the deadline. If they report annually, it would help us to monitor the progress," the official added. According to party insiders, 19 out of the

ruling Awami League's 74-member central committee are women (26 percent); seven posts are also empty as of now. Contacted recently, Awami League Presidium Member Piyush

Bhattacharya said the party is a womencentric party and already has many women leaders and activists.

"We should fulfill the requirement, we will take more initiatives to ensure this 33 percent," he said.

percent of the party's 73-member advisory body, with only eight women.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said they are well aware of the requirement and are also

party's standing committee meeting. We have decided to ensure 33 percent of women in all the committees and we are working on it," he added. Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)

has around 15 percent of women in their central committee. Among other parties, Jatiya Party (Manju) has 16 women in its core committee of 101 members (15.8 percent) and around 11 percent of the Workers Party of Bangladesh's central committee constitute women.

Three months after political parties failed to meet the deadline of 2020, the commission had no specific information on how many women leaders there are in the central and other committees of the parties.

meeting, held on April 1, decided that it would send letters to all the registered political parties, asking them about the progress in achieving the target of 33 percent

all registered political parties soon.

Babunagari's

the remand order for Kashemi after Md Forman Ali, a sub-inspector of Detective Branch of Police and also the investigation officer, produced him before the court with a In the prayer, the IO said Kashemi and other FIR-accused

carried out the mayhem in Paltan, Shapla Chattar and other places in the capital on May 5, 2013. So, he needs to be remanded to find out the whereabouts of others, the

petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer on grounds that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him.

pleas and placed him on a four-day remand for interrogation.

Kashemi was arrested by Detective Branch of Police (Gulshan Division) last night from the capital's Baridhara

that there is a shortage of doctors and other staffers at the CCU unit, while also confirming the angiogram and AC situation. He said he has contacted the Directorate General of Health Services regarding the matter.

"I have written to the higher authorities in the last one month about the staffing issue, as well as the out of order angiogram and air conditioners. But so far, none of them have been resolved.

problems and hope they will be resolved soon," the director told this correspondent on Friday.



GD-1016

College Education Development Project (CEDP) Govt. BL College, Khulna

Dated: 23 May, 2021

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender (htt wor

580017	CEDP/2020-21/G-9	09-Jun-2021	10-Jun-2021					
	Procurement of Books	16:00	14:00					
	and Journals							
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the								
National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.								
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal								

(http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any branch of any registered banks within the date mentioned in the tender notice. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP

> Prof. Sharif Atiquzzaman Principal (In charge) Govt. BL College, Khulna

Return to

through this route, he informed. Dhaka-Chattogram yesterday witnessed a huge rush of private

vehicles heading towards the capital. "The flow of private vehicles much higher compared to other times," said Sultan Ahmed, sub-inspector of Daudkandi

Highway Police Station in Cumilla. A traveller Partha Karmakar, who came from Chattogram to Dhaka yesterday, said, "There was a huge rush of vehicles on the highway. Even, I had to get stuck for around an hour at Cumilla's Gouripur area."

Similar situation was noticed in Sirajganj near Bangabandhu Bridge, which is considered as the gateway of 16 northern districts. Dhaka-bound rush from northern region was observed all day long.

There is no transport here. But my Eid holidays have been concluded. Now, I along with my wife have decided to return to Dhaka riding on motorbike," said a man who works at a garment factory on the outskirts of the capital.

The Bangabandhu Bridge has been witnessing a huge rush of Dhaka-bound private vehicles since the last couple of days, said Md Mosaddek Hossain, officerin-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge (West Zone) Police Station.

[Our Munshiganj, Cumilla and Sirajganj correspondents contributed to this report]

Misplaced FROM PAGE 3

flyovers at Rajshahi Nagar Bhaban.

Addressing the ceremony, RCC mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton directed the designers to make the flyovers eye-catching.

The mayor in his speech said the government is releasing Tk 3,000 crore for different city development works, and that he was lobbying for Tk 4,000 crore more.

Other than the flyovers, the corporation is also spending Tk 353 crore for 19 other projects, including those for constructing a Central Shaheed Minar, conventions centres,

libraries, markets, and for landscaping and

beautifying the city. He also said the corporation is playing a role in setting up a new Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation estate and Tannery Industrial Park, and acquiring

22 ponds to create natural parks in the city. SARM Associates Limited, Design Planning and Management Consultant Limited, and Vistaara Architects Private Limited are designing for the projects. The designing would cost the corporation Tk 7.36 crore.

Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Center (BITAC)



Ministry of Industries Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 116 (Kha), Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 Phone: 02-8890194, Fax: 8870728



E-mail: purchasedhaka@bitac.gov.bd, Website: http://www.bitac.gov.bd

Ref. No. 36.06.2692.026.07.040.21

23 May 2021 En.

Re-e-Tender Notice tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal

(https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods. Details in the table Last selling Description of Closing Opening Package No. date & time date & time goods BITAC.PUR.2020-07/06/2021 07/06/2021 07/06/2021 Procurement of 579603 21.GR-39.66 02:30pm 03:00pm 03:00pm Welding Tools Procurement of 07/06/2021 07/06/2021 07/06/2021 BITAC.PUR.2020-Electrical 02:30pm 03:00pm 03:00pm 579604 21.GR-32 Installation and Maintenance

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from

e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk: https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) The procurement entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal

Md. Mostafizur Rahman Pabel Purchase Officer BITAC, Dhaka

for Director General

GD-1027

(DTE), Dr. Md. Morad Hossain Mollah, Chairman, Bangladesh Technical Education Board BTEB), Stuart Dunlop, Regional Director, ACCA Middle East & South Asia, Nilusha Ranasinghe, Head of ACCA South Asia, Zarif Ludin, Head of ACCA Market Partnerships and other respected government high officials were also present there and shared their appreciation notes.

across several stories of heat strokes. "Heat stroke is a common heath

affordable safe drinking water.

the decider for water-borne diseases

In the case of BNP, women constitute 11

BNP Standing Committee Member

"We have discussed the issue in the

Against this backdrop, a commission

women representatives by 2020. Halim said they will send the letter to the

$\underset{\scriptscriptstyle{\text{FROM PAGE 3}}}{CJ} constitutes$

Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil; and Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Akhtaruzzaman. The single benches are of Justice

Mahmudul Hoque, Justice Zafar Ahmed

and, and Justice ASM Abdul Mobin. A full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, and its chamber bench will conduct judicial functions virtually like they did earlier, Supreme Court Spokesman Mohammad Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile yesterday, SC Registrar General Md Ali Akbar issued a circular under directive from the chief justice, stating that the lower courts concerned can hear applications filed by the accused of criminal cases seeking bail upon surrender.

The courts of chief judicial magistrates, magistrates, metropolitan human trafficking offence prevention tribunals, and cyber tribunals will dispose of bail

petitions maintaining health guidelines. The accused will have to surrender before the courts for bail in the cases again.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Bangladesh and Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) for supporting and collaborating with each other. The virtual signing ceremony took place on 3rd

May.
Dr. Dipu Moni, Honourable Minister, Ministry of

Chowdhoury. Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Md. Aminul Islam Khan, Secretary, Technical and Madrasha Education Division MoU signed between ACCA Bangladesh (TMED), Ministry of Education graced the



signing ceremony with their kind presence. Along with them, Md. Helal Uddin, NDC, Directorate General, Directorate of Technical Education

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahmuda Akhter passed

On the other hand, defence for the accused, submitted a

After the hearing, the magistrate rejected the defence

CCU at

Contacted, SBMCH Director HM Saiful Islam admitted

"However, I'm trying my best to take care of all these

Memo No. BLC/CEDP/678

(http://ww	w.eprocure.gov.bd) for the	e procurement o	f the following		
work.					
Tender	Package No. and	Last selling	Closing date		
ID No.	description	date and time	and time		
580017	CEDP/2020-21/G-9	09-Jun-2021	10-Jun-2021		
	Procurement of Books	16:00	14:00		
	and laurnala		1		

help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

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 Eidul-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 of Tk 5 lakh from two hundred litchis, which is half of the targeted yield," he added.

The harvesting of local variety of last until the next couple of weeks.

farming and trading believe that is expected to be harvested in the the recent heat waves affected the district this year. yield of litchis this year.

flowering of the fruit this year. this year and intermittent heat Many trees did not flower as waves caused damage to a large expected. Many fruits on the trees amount of fruits on trees, resulting were damaged. Because of this, the in 20 to 25 percent fall in yield. yield has come down to half this year," said Dulal Miah, a litchi will likely be recovered when the

litchi trees this year, but so far the harvest has been disappointing.

Abdul Kader, deputy director litchis began a week ago and it will of Department of Agricultural Extension in Pabna said more Many locals involved in litchi than 41 thousand tonnes of litchi

Hot temperatures in early "The heat waves badly affected January affected flowering of litchis

But the loss in production farmer from Char Silimpur village. Bombay variety of litchis will be He said he expected a total sale harvested in early June, he added.

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

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.

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.

Two siblings | 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 Rafigul 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.





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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

> 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.



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 maunds for Tk 40 thousand. 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.

Towaz Ali, Farmer 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, 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

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

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



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.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি-০১/২০২১-২০২২



গাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ ও তৎসংশ্লিষ্ট সংশোধিত আইন ও বিধি মোতাবেক ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ সালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের বিভিন্ন ইউনিটে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক ও আগ্রহী প্রকৃত ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী/ব্যবসায়ী/প্রস্তুতকারী/মেরামতকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের

প্যাডে ই	নীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।						
۵	মন্ত্ৰণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।					
2	সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।					
9	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	পুলিশ সুপার, সুনামগঞ।					
8	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	জেলা পুলিশের। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং প্রশাঃ-১৫৯৪/ই, তারিখঃ ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।					
œ	দরপত্র সূত্র নং-						
৬	তারিখ	রখঃ ২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।					
কাজের	वेनज्ञः						
٩	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।					
অর্থের ট							
p.	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	রাজস্ব খাত।					
তথ্যাদিঃ	3						
৯	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	২০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ । ২০/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ৩.৩০ ঘটিকা। ২২/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। ২২/০৬/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।					
20	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ						
22	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়						
25	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়						
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ							
১৩	অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্চ।					
	দরপত্র ভকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।					
		২। ডিআইজি, সিলেট রেঞ্জের কার্যালয়।					
		৩। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিলেট।					
	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী/অফিস	১। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্জ।					
	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সুনামগঞ্চ।					
28	প্রি টেভার সভার 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						

ক) স্ব-স্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের অনুরূপ কাজের ব্যবসায়িক/ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স থাকতে হবে (হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত) খ) বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী বাসিন্দ হিসাবে নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র এবং ০১ কপি রঙ্গিন পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি দাখিল করতে হবে। গ) দরদাতা/প্রতিষ্ঠানের একক নামে বিগত এক বৎসরের ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদপত্র ও ব্যাংক স্টেটমেন্ট থাকতে হবে। ঘ) দরদাতার যোগ্যতা সংক্রান্তে প্রদন্ত সকল কাগজ একজন প্রথম শ্রেণির সরকারি কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে। জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র সত্যায়িত হতে হবে। ঙ) হালনাগাদ পরিশোধিত আয়কর সনদপত্র ও ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট থাকতে হবে। চ) পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সিভিউলে বর্ণিত যাবতীয় শর্তাবলী পালন ও কাগজ/দলিলপত্রাদি দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করার সক্ষমতা থাকতে হবে। ছ) বিগত সময়ে সুন্দর ও সূচারুভাবে যেসব প্রতিষ্ঠান মালামাল/সামগ্রী সরবরাহ করতে সক্ষম হয়েছেন সেসব প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। তাছাড়াও সুনামণঞ্জ জেলার ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান (ওয়ার্কসপ, ঔষধ সরবরাহকারী) সমূহকে অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

П	১৬	সরবরাহতব্য মালামালের বিবরণঃ							
	লট	সরবরাহতব্য মালামাল	পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়			
	নং			(অফেরতযোগ্য)	জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)				
	- 1	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে পুলিশ অফিসে মনিহারি মালামাল সরবরাহ (কোড নং-							
		७२৫६५०६)।	মোতাবেক						
	=	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে পুলিশ অফিসে ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি মালামাল সরবরাহ (কোড	চাহিদা	9&o/-	20,000/-				
		নং-৩২৫৬১০৩)।	মোতাবেক						
	III	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে পুলিশ অফিসে স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ (কোড নং-	চাহিদা	800/-	\$6,000/-				
		७२(१२)०४)।							
	IV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে পুলিশ পরিদর্শক হতে তদুর্ধ্ব কর্মকর্তাগণের জন্য	চাহিদা	9 <i>&</i> 0/-	২০,০০০/-				
1		সিরিমোনিয়াল ড্রেস ও ওয়ার্কি ড্রেস (সামার টিউনিক, উইন্টার টিউনিক, ব্লু ব্লেজার,	মোতাবেক	চাবেক	.,				
		হাফ শার্ট, ফুল প্যান্ট, ফুল শার্ট) পোশাক সামগ্রী সেলাই/রিবন সরবরাহ কাজ।							
V ২০২১-২০		২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ ফোর্সের পোশাক সেলাই (কোড নং-	চাহিদা	9&0/-	২৫,০০০/-				
		ত২৫৬১০৬)।	মোতাবেক						
	VI	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ ফোর্সের জন্য রিবন সরবরাহ (কোড	চাহিদা	800/-	৮,০০০/-				
		নং-৩২৫৬১০৬)।	মোতাবেক						
	VII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ এর অনুকূলে মাসিক ভাড়ায় ইঞ্জিন	চাহিদা	800/-	\$0,000/-				
		চালিত দেশীয় কান্ত্রি বোট (কোড নং-৩২১১১০৭) সরবরাহ।	মোতাবেক						
	VIII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ এর অনুকূলে মাসিক ভাড়ায়	চাহিদা	१৫०/-	২০,০০০/-				
		(মাইক্রোবাস/পিকআপ) সরবরাহের কাজ (কোড নং-৩২১১১০৭)।	মোতাবেক	960/-	২০,০০০/-	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ সন			
	IX	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশ হাসপাতালের ঔষধ ও শৈল চিকিৎসা	চাহিদা						
		সরঞ্জামাদি ক্রয়/সরবরাহ (কোড নং-৩২৫২১০৫)।	মোতাবেক			(জুলাই/২০২১-			
	Х	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ (কোড	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	960/-	२०,०००/-	জুন/২০২২)			
		নং-৩২৫৫১০১)।							
	XI			800/-	\$0,000/-				
		৩২৫৮১০৩, ৩২৫৮১০৫)।	মোতাবেক						
	XII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের মটরযান শাখার গাড়ির টায়ার,	চাহিদা	960/-	२०,०००/-				
		টিউব, ব্যাটারী ক্রয়/সরবরাহ।	মোতাবেক						
	XIII	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের মটরযান শাখার গাড়ির কাঁচামাল	চাহিদা	960/-	২৫,০০০/-				
		সরবরাহ ও খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ মেরামত কাজ (কোড নং-৩২৫৬১০৫)।	মোতাবেক						
	XIV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের জলযানের খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ	চাহিদা	800/-	\$0,000/-				
		ও মেরামত কাজ (কোড নং-৩২৫৮১২৮)।	মোতাবেক						
	XV	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থসালে সুনামগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের জন্য বেসরকারি জনবল	চাহিদা	960/-	७ ०,०००/-				
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			মোতাবেক						
	দরপত্র স	নম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণঃ							

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খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্রগ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন

গ) দরপত্রে উল্লেখিত যে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি বা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে। ঘ) দরপত্রে পিপিএ/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে 20-00-2022

> মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান, বিপিএম বিপি-৭২০৩০২০৯০৮ পুলিশ সুপার, সুনামগঞ্জ ফোনঃ ০৮৭১-৬২৬০৫, ফ্যাব্রঃ ৬১৪০৪

E-mail: spsunamgonj@police.gov.bd

PHOTO: STAR

Nepal set for Nov polls amid crises

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.

'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

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 Wedha 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

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.

SEIZING REPORTERS' PHONE, EMAIL RECORDS

Biden says he won't let Justice Dept do that

devastating.

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

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

"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

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

his version of events, Dyson said, lambasting it for failing to scrutinise

three people" in her marriage -- her, Charles and his long-time mistress and now wife, Camilla Parker-Bowles

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

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

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

isolation" in her final years.

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

Mucormycosis: the deadly black fungus

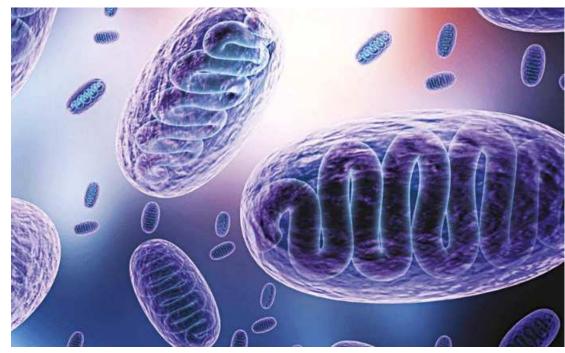
STAR HEALTH DESK

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 preexisting 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.

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.

Mucormycosis is not

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 sexspecific research on heart disease in women and intervention strategies.

HEALT H 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

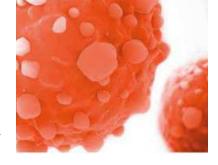
Bemcentinib: potential oral drug for COVID-19

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 I 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: ekhtearuap@gmail.com





HATS OFF NURSES

Carrying The Pandemic Upon Their Shoulders!

Nurses are the true beating hearts of any medical ecosystem especially in these unprecedented times where fear of losing lives is looming large.

These selfless warriors have hidden their fatigue behind their masks while they go about serving others incessantly without prioritizing themselves. Paladins to our patients who feel secure only when you are around and not with a reason.

Thank you for fighting so that others have a chance in life! We are because you are!



International Nurses Day 12 May 2021

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LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 23, 2021, JAISHTHA 9, 1428 BS

Inefficiencies in Covid-19 vaccine purchase

Foreign Minister's candid remarks—a wake up call

T 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?

THILE 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 hazardously 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



O 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 mediaand 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 hardline 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 bookpromotion tour for his book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" (2006). Never mind that the book went on to become a New York Times bestseller.

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

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

However, the support-Israel-no-matterwhat lobby still wields considerable

Israel," according to a New York Times

"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.'

Ashfaque Swapan, an Atlanta-based writer and editor,



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 Youssef 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 supportersboth 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

is contributing editor for Siliconeer, an online South Asian publication.

LEADERS' SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE 2021

Climate change communication is a prerequisite for climate mitigation

MD MOFIZUR RHAMAN

ITIZENS' 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



World leaders during the climate change virtual summit.

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

PHOTO: AFF

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.

related issues that form our common climate problems. However, most people

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

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

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

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 patentholding 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 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



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.

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 patentholding 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

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

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 developing countries could issue, or threaten to issue, compulsory licenses—with the support of the US, the European Union, and other countries from the Global North—to enhance their negotiating leverage.

This is not a revolutionary change, because the protection of IP rights has always been subject to public-health requirements. But, because the central difficulty lies with trade secrets and not with patents, the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is not the main problem. Even without it, pharmaceutical companies still would have no incentive to release their trade secrets. Paradoxically, TRIPS could now offer a 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 Fu-ture of International Economic Law (Cambridge University

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The expendable lives of our blue-collar workers



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

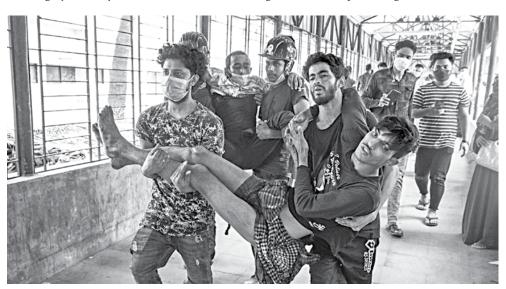
The discriminatory practices and deprivation of workers in the formal sector have been talked about especially after the horrendous Rana Plaza tragedy of 2013 that took the lives of 1,134 ready-made garments (RMG) workers and left around 2,500 others injured. Bone-chilling images of the victims trapped 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 beforelike 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 underconstruction 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



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.

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

because they refused to vacate the underconstruction premises of the Banshkhali 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—informal or formal—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

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

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

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*.

QUOTABLE



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 32 Forest sights

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37 Friend of Harry

and Hermione 38 Relaxing retreat 41 Have trouble sleeping 44 Hunter in the stars 45 Little hooter 46 Intended 47 Wake up

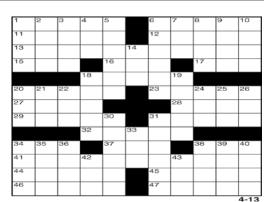
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14 Essence 18 Moved stealthily 19 Lone flights 20 Throw in 21 Golf goal 22 Stop _ dime 24 Braile bit 25 Planning time 26 Went ahead 30 Straying

31 Merchant 33 Long, long time 34 Bond component 35 Folk learning 36 Folk learning 36 Tibet setting 38 Enterprise crewman 39 Veeps superior 40 Hand cost 42 Heir, at times 43 Binary base

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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BEETLE BAILEY





BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

BY MORT WALKER



Emon is a member of the AL's central sub-committee.

All the accused had secured bail from the lower court. Recently, the court ordered their arrest after police submitted the investigation report.

Tigers eye

have lost all the matches except the one drawn Test against Sri Lanka in Pallekele last month.

The Tigers have missed a few key players during this period. Premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan skipped the New Zealand tour to attend the birth of his third child while he and with left-arm paceman Mustafizur Rahman were excused from national duty during Tigers' latest two-Test tour of Sri Lanka to take part in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

However, with the IPL being suspended midway earlier this month, both Shakib and Mustafizur are now available for the Sri Lanka ODIs, lending better balance and strength to the squad.

The Tamim Iqbal-led side could also eye the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League summit as a series win could see them go top of the ladder. The men in red and green currently sit sixth but only trail top-placed England by 10 points. A 2-1 series win would lift them to 50 points, 10 above than England, Pakistan and Australia, who all have 40 points.

And playing in their favorite format at home against a Sri Lankan side missing a number of senior players under the new leadership of Kusal Perera, this may be a golden opportunity for the Tigers to turn their fate around.

Covid spreads

FROM PAGE 12 which has been declared an epidemic by the Indian government.

Across India, the total number of black fungus patients is approximately 8,848, according to an official estimate today.

With hospitals overflowing, the health system overwhelmed in the cities and a shortage of vaccines, experts have warned India could face a third wave of infections in coming months.

"While it (spread of coronavirus) has stabilised in many parts of the country, and overall the burden has been lessened, we have a long way to go with this wave," Dr. V. K. Paul, part of a federal government panel on Covid-19 management, told a news conference.

"For the first time, we have seen that rural areas have been affected in this pandemic."

Total infections in the country stood at 26.3 million, the second highest in the world after the United States, while the country's total death toll was 295,525.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and state authorities have faced widespread criticism for failing to counter the pandemic as many

officials gear up for another surge. The slow pace of vaccination in the country is another major concern.

New Delhi's chief minister said city authorities had been forced to halt vaccinations for those aged between 18 and 44 as supplies had run out. The chief minister of Andhra Pradesh urged Modi to help with supplies as the state had no stocks to vaccinate those aged below 45.

Positivity rate

FROM PAGE 12 In January and February, the positivity rate stayed below five percent and started rising from March 9, indicating a second wave of Covid-19 in the country.

Experts say that the number of tests is too small to know the actual level of transmission.

Infectious disease specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman said, "With these few tests, it is impossible to reflect the reality. In fact, the transmission is much higher than reported. The number of tests should be increased immediately. Otherwise, the hospitals will be overwhelmed

Meanwhile, the health directorate reported 38 deaths from Covid-19 yesterday. With this, the total number of deaths from the disease reached 12,348, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

At least 759 Covid-19 patients have recovered, it added.

Of those reported dead yesterday, 25 were men, 13 women, two aged between 11 and 20, two between 21 and 30, three between 31 and 40, two between 41 and 50, 13 between 51 and 60, and 16 over 60, added the release.

Some 3,350 Bangladeshis have returned to the country from India through Benapole since April 26, reports our correspondent.

Of them, 17 tested positive for coronavirus, according to the Benapole Immigration Health Department.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research has so far confirmed six cases of the Indian variant in Bangladesh.



NEWS

A Palestinian policeman walks on the rubble of Arafat City, Gaza's police headquarters in Gaza City, yesterday, following a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants in the Israeli-blockaded enclave.

РНОТО

Israel-Hamas ceasefire holds

Egypt sent a delegation to Israel on Friday to discuss ways of firming up the ceasefire, including with aid for Palestinians in Gaza, Hamas officials told Reuters.

The delegates have since been shuttling between Israel and Gaza, with talks continuing yesterday, the officials said.

Despite confrontations between Israeli police and Palestinian protesters at a Jerusalem holy site on Friday, there were no reports of Hamas rocket launches from Gaza or Israeli military strikes on the enclave as of yesterday morning.

US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that Washington would work with the United Nations on bringing humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Gaza, with safeguards against funds being used to arm Hamas, which the West deems a terrorist group.

Besides reiterating his pledge the damage to industry, power

to help organize efforts to rebuild Gaza, he on Friday said creating a Palestinian state alongside Israel is the "only answer" to the conflict.

Biden also said he had told the Israelis to stop "intercommunal fighting" in the flashpoint city of Jerusalem. But he expressed his commitment

to Israel once again. "There is no shift in my commitment to the security of Israel, period, no shift, not at all," he Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday called on

Muslim states to support Palestinians

militarily and financially and

help rebuild Gaza, Iranian media reported. Saudi Arabia's King Salman condemned what he called Israeli aggression in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip during a phone call on Friday with

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Palestinian officials on Friday said it would cost \$100m to rebuild

and agriculture in the already impoverished territory struggling under a devastating 14-year blockade.

"People are still out on the streets trying to resume something approaching what was, even for Gaza, normal life before all of this took place," Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from Gaza City, said yesterday. "But everywhere you go around here you see the evidence of what has taken place in the last few days," he added, standing in front a row of bombedout buildings.

As major power infrastructures were hit, Gazans were now receiving 5 hours of electricity per day. Before the bombardment, they used to get 12

Gaza's 13 hospitals are very much under pressure not just from the sheer volume of patients but also shortage in fuel supply too.

World Health Organization spokeswoman Margaret Harris said

on Friday Gaza's health facilities were in danger of being overwhelmed by the thousands of injuries, and called for immediate access into Gaza for health supplies and personnel.

Meanwhile, convoys of trucks carrying aid began passing into Gaza through the Karem Abu Salem or Kerem Shalom crossing after it was reopened by Israel, bringing muchneeded medicine, food and fuel. The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund said it had released \$18.5 million for humanitarian efforts.

One of the most densely populated places on Earth, Gaza has for years been subjected to an Israeli blockade that restricts the passage of people and goods, as well as restrictions by Egypt. Sources said about 1,000 individual

homes have been completely destroyed, 700 have been severely damaged, and another 14,000 home units have been partially damaged. As a result, nearly 80,000 people have become homeless in Gaza.

Faulty process, false promises

FROM PAGE 12

conditions, according to a study report of Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan

two-year job "contracts".

returned between one and two years of migration, 32 between two and three years, and 23 returned more than three years after first migration, stated the report titled "Access to Justice for Bangladeshi Migrant Workers: Opportunities and Challenges", published in March.

Okup, a grassroots migrant rights organisation, conducted a survey of 262 female returnees in Faridpur, Narsingdi, Munshiganj, and Narayanganj who had migrated between 2010 and 2019. The majority of the workers returned between 2018 and 2019.

Non-payment of wages, illness, physical torture, sexual abuse, and excessive work were among the reasons behind their return, the survey found.

The key reason behind 151 women's untimely return within a year of their migration was the "faulty" process under which they were sent, said Okup Chairperson Shakirul Islam.

Some of the workers were provided with false job information, some were falsely assured of higher payment than

they were given, while others were sent without proper training, Shakirul told The Daily Star last month.

Programme (Okup). Over half of these 151 women, 81, They returned before ending their returned in less than three months of migration, 31 within three to six Another 56 female migrants months, and 39 within six to 12 months, Shakirul said.

The report found nearly 95 percent of the female returnees were recruited via local sub-agents and three percent directly by recruiting agents, with the remaining two percent migrating via their family members

EXPLOITATION AT HOME AND

According to the report, 88 percent of the female returnees said they were not provided with a formal job contract and were only told about the employer, job responsibilities, wages and benefits through informal discussions.

Almost 45 percent of returning female migrants said they did not receive the amount of wages and benefits that they had been promised by the agents or sub-agents.

Although the recruitment of female domestic workers to any country is supposedly free of cost as per government rules, 65 percent of the vomen surveyed mostly paid between Tk 5,000 and Tk 1 lakh to migrate. Two percent paid more than Tk 1 lakh. Nearly 43 percent of the

returnees said the agents and subagents had "intentionally abused their lack of knowledge about the migration process" and provided "disinformation" about wages, the employers' family, and the amount of work.

Sixty percent, or 156 returnees reported they often faced physical torture; around 16 percent of all surveyed reported they were sexually abused and exploited.

Just over half the returnees, 133 women, said they had to work around 14 to 18 hours a day, and around 36 percent of returnees had wages of at least one month due when they left their workplace.

Besides, nearly 18 percent of the women were sent abroad using fake medical certificates despite being screened as "unfit" in the first medical test, the report added.

RECRUITMENT MALPRACTICE **GOES UNPUNISHED**

followed the arbitration Okup cases of 123 female returnees who filed complaints with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in 2019. These were mostly to recover unpaid wages

and compensation for forced labour, torture and abuse, and medical treatment costs. Only around 31 percent of the complaints were resolved

December 2019, with the remaining unresolved as of the time Okup's research was completed. Penalties

against recruitment practices should be brought to the fore while ensuring justice for migrant workers, said Okup's Shakirul recently

Issues such as the extent to which unethical recruitment practices are responsible for a migrant worker's return after exploitation should be discussed whenever access to justice is discussed or analysed, he said

"Our research says such malpractice is responsible [for untimely return]. So, they must take the responsibility, he added.

Shakirul suggested establishing a neutral arbitral tribunal to deal with such cases, arguing the existing BMET arbitration could create a "conflict of interest" since BMET is involved in the recruitment process. Contacted recently, Shamsul Alam,

director general of BMET, said they regularly take action against recruiting agencies upon finding them guilty. Recruiting agencies are summoned

complaints are filed against them, the DG told The Daily Star.

If they are found noncompliant with a job contract, then they have to pay compensation. Besides, recommendations are issued to suspend the license of guilty agents, he added.

Migrant workers' woes rise further

Several thousand workers, who failed to travel to Saudi Arabia due to the suspension of Biman flights, said they are fearing that visas would expire if they fail to return to their workplaces The fresh suspension of flights

will create an uncertainty over several Bangladesh workers' thousand return to Saudi Arabia, said sources at the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) and the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB).

Biman currently operates flights to three destinations in Saudi Arabia --Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah.

The airline operates 18 flights a week to these destinations. THE TRAVEL ADVISORY

As per the Saudi Arabia General Authority Civil Aviation (GACA) circular, the Saudi government requires those who intend to travel to the gulf country from non-restricted countries should have medical insurance that covers the risk of Covid-19 and still be in institutional quarantine.

According to the new advisory, all travellers must obtain medical insurance to cover their treatment for Covid-19.

"The insurance should cover the

including institutional quarantine for a period of up to 14 days," it says.

Saudi citizens and accompanies are exempted from institutional quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated or passed 14 days after taking the first dose, or recovered from Covid-19. Otherwise, they have to complete a seven-day home quarantine.

The exemption also applies to passengers who have passed 14 days after receiving two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, two doses of the Oxford-Astrazeneca vaccine or two doses of the Moderna vaccine and one dose of the Johnson&Johnson vaccine and possess a vaccination certificate. The vaccination certificate must be certified by the health authorities from the country of vaccination.

Saudi Arabia also demanded that the airline submit a passenger list to the country's authorities four days before departure.

SUFFERINGS & UNCERTAINTY

Harun Mia, a Saudi-bound worker, told this correspondent that he came to Dhaka Airport on Friday to catch his flight scheduled in the evening.

"After knowing that I need to book a hotel for institutional quarantine, I rushed to the Saudia office. There, I cost of treatment in any outpatient found several hundred others waiting

clinic, emergencies and hospitals, to resolve the same problem," he

Another migrant worker Anisur Rahman said Saudi officials did not cooperate properly for them to resolve their problems regarding the new travel advisory.

"My visa will expire on May 24 [tomorrow]. I will be not be able to return to my work place if I fail to go there before the expiry," said Kabir Liton Mia, a sibling of migrant

worker Abul Kalam, said his brother had to pay about Tk 65,600 to book a hotel for seven days of institutional quarantine upon entry to the Gulf country.

The booking money was paid to the respective airlines that arranged the quarantine facility. Kalam's company already paid the airfare, Liton told this newspaper by phone.

Mahfuzul Haque, secretary general of the Recruiting Agencies Welfare Association of Bangladesh (Rawab), said the Saudi government's latest health advisory will create new challenges as it will increase the cost in sending Bangladeshi migrant workers to the Gulf country.

He said some tour and travel agencies in Bangladesh have been charging between 1,000 riyal (Saudi currency) and 2,000 riyal to just

arrange seven days of institutional quarantine in Saudi Arabia.

Besides, airfare for the Gulf country has already increased amid the pandemic and reached to more than Tk 70,000 per ticket, while quarantine facilities and tickets were not even available at present.

Mahfuzul said many Bangladeshi migrant workers were not able to get both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine and this was another major area of

Around 50,000 employment visas of Saudi Arabia are currently pending at different stages, said the Rawab leader. WHATS BIMAN SAYS

A top Biman official said we have informed our concerned offices about the conditions given to us by the Saudi government.

"Our officials there are trying to manage the hotels [for quarantine] We are trying to figure out how to book these hotels at a low cost, which will take some time. Apart from this, there is a condition to give the passenger list four days before departure. That is also a reason for temporarily suspending flights to Saudi Arabia," he added.

Saudi Arabia is the largest expatriate income market for Bangladesh. At least 26 lakh expatriates are working in different sectors in the country.

Weather

DHAKA **SUNDAY MAY 23, 2021, JAISHTHA 9, 1428 BS**

Fishermen have been advised not to go into the deep sea. Those who are already there should return to the coast by today, says a special bulletin of the Met department.

According to the regular bulletin Bangladesh Meteorological Department, a low pressure area is very likely to form over the North Andaman Sea and the adjoining eastcentral Bay of Bengal in the next 24

A trough of westerly low lies over West Bengal and adjoining areas, extending up to North Bay, it said.

thundershowers Rain or accompanied by temporary gusty winds are likely to hit some places in Rangpur, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and one or two areas in Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions, as well as the regions of Jashore, Kushtia, Cumilla and Noakhali.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere in the country.

Bangladesh's several including Dhaka, Khulna and Barishal divisions, are currently witnessing a mild to moderate heat wave and it may continue, according to the weather department.

Day and night temperatures are likely to remain unchanged in the country.

Indira urges Sadat

FROM PAGE 12

its consequent repercussion on the Indian sub-continent. It was believed that Indira Gandhi had appealed to Sadat to use his good offices to persuade Pakistan President Yahya Khan to stop the bloodshed in Bangladesh and assure security to its people.

RESISTANCE CONTINUES

Bangladesh Liberation Forces seized a passenger steamer, Rocket, and sentenced 17 non-Bengalee on board to death following a the verdict of people's court, reported Associated Press (AP). This indicated resistance was continuing in East Pakistan despite Pakistan Army's claims of crushing it, AP added. The vessel was operated by a private Pakistani river service. It was further reported that such incidents maintained a "climate of terror" preventing politicians from collaborating with the regime and frightening West Pakistani civil servants who had been assigned to work in East Pakistan. The Liberation Forces were also seizing barges and burning cargoes of jute on their way to market towns.

BHUTTO'S SOLUTION

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, leader of West Pakistan's majority party, warned today that Pakistan was in danger of disintegration unless a quick political solution was found for the crisis in East Pakistan.

"If the situation in Pakistan continues to deteriorate, and events are moving fast," Bhutto told a group of newsmen, "We cannot guess what will happen. The economic crisis in Pakistan was alarming even before the events in East Pakistan. The solution is urgent and it can only be found by the leaders and representatives of the people."

"To insist here that the elected representatives of the people are power hungry in wanting to assume office is like calling President Nixon power hungry for wanting to occupy the White House after he was elected, Bhutto said.

"On Dec 7 the people made their choices and the result was three forces in the country--the government, the Pakistan People's Party and the Awami League. Now the Awami League is banned so there are only two forces.

We must accept that political reality." Bhutto called for a moratorium on foreign debt repayment.

There is a food crisis. There is labour unrest. There is total loss of confidence on the part of the peasantry. There is a fall in production with no immediate likelihood of improvement. We speak a lot in this country about the hostile foreign press. Well, if we want a better press we must have a nation which is not a graveyard in the community of

nations," said Bhutto Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

China's Mars

FROM PAGE 12

The Mars probe and rover are expected to spend around three months taking photos, harvesting geographical data, and collecting and analysing rock samples.

The six-wheeled, solar-powered, (530-pound) 240-kilogramme Zhurong is named after a Chinese mythical fire god. China has now sent astronauts into

space, powered probes to the Moon and landed a rover on Mars -- the most prestigious of all prizes in the competition for dominion of space. The United States and Russia are

the only other countries to have reached Mars, and only the former has operated a rover on the surface. Several US, Russian and European

attempts to land rovers on Mars have failed in the past, most recently in 2016 with the crash-landing of the Schiaparelli joint Russian-European spacecraft. The latest successful arrival came in

February, when US space agency NASA landed its rover Perseverance, which has since been exploring the planet.

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 English Premier League Arsenal vs Brighton Live from 9:00 pm T SPORTS **English Premier League** Manchester City vs Everton Live from 9:00 pm

STAR SPORTS 3 English Premier League Leicester City vs Tottenham Hotspur Live from 9:00 pm TEN 2 Serie A Inter Milan vs Udinese

Live from 7:00 pm



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.

'We want to get the basics right'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh be eager to banish their 10-game losing formats as a busy schedule home 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 Mushfigur 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 Soumva 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

The will play a vital role 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.

Switzerland. Before going to 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 Matthews 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

"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



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-hewon'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



This has been a remarkable season in Serie A as Inter Milan became the team to finally put an end to Juventus' dominance in the Italian League. Even though Inter have already been crowned champions of Italy, there is still much at stake in the final fixture of this Serie

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

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 Biaconeri 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

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 tenthplaced 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



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 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



Chelsea head 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 fivegoal 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.





PROUD CONSTRUCTION **PARTNER OF** PADMA BRIDGE

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

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

"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

could be made because of the continuous waste dumping and deposition of slit. The photo was taken from Amanat Shah Bridge yesterday afternoon.

It's been years since the dredging started in the Karnaphuli in Chattogram. However, very little improvement

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 ior 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 SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

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 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



Biden insists on twostate solution for ending hostilities

ceasefire holds

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

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.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

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

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

China's Mars rover starts roaming



AFP, Shanghai

China's Mars rover drove from its landing platform and began exploring the surface yesterday, staterun 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.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Weather over Andaman Sea 'may hit Bangladesh'

Unb, Dhaka

RAJIB RAIHAN

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 north-westwards and reach the Odisha-West Bengal-Khulna coast around Wednesday, according to the weather department.



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 Protidin MAS SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



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.

AMRAN HOSSAIN

Covid spreads to rural India

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

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

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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