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Put 8 districts on lockdown now

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Goodness of Gamma Oryzanol

DGHS recommends; infection rate there over 30pc for a week; IEDCR chief says community transmission of Indian variant on

MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

Health officials yesterday recommended immediate "strict lockdown" of eight districts that have witnessed an average of over 30 percent Covid-19 positivity rate for a week.

Chapainawabganj, In seven individuals, who have not travelled to India recently, tested positive for the Indian variant of the coronavirus, leading researchers to believe that the variant is being transmitted in the community.

The local administration in Chapainawabganj already enforced strict restrictions on mobility until Monday. The other districts recommended for "lockdown" are Naogaon, Rajshahi, Natore, Kushtia, Jashore, Khulna and Satkhira.

"Considering the latest situation, we recommended that the Cabinet Division enforce strict lockdown in the districts. The Directorate General of Health Services will send the recommendation to the Cabinet via the health ministry," Abu Jamil Faisal, member of the Epidemiology and Public Health Committee of the health directorate, told The Daily Star last night after the committee held a meeting.

Meanwhile, the chief of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) yesterday said the Indian variant of coronavirus has transmitted in the community as 13 new cases of the variant have been detected in several districts.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Your Right to Know JAISHTHA 16, 1428 BS

The Haily

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Farmers drying paddy on the concrete floor at a mill in Nimtoli area of Munshiganj before the husk and the bran layers are removed to produce the country's staple food, rice. Officials said the growers have been blessed with a remarkable harvest this year.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Will maintain friendship with all to move forward Says prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh has to maintain friendship with all as the government wants to turn the country into a developed and prosperous one.

"We want to build Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country. I think Bangladesh has to move forward maintaining friendship with all to this end," she said.

The premier was addressing a function at Shenakunja at Dhaka Cantonment SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Sri Lanka's economic plight a caution for Bangladesh

POSITIVITY RATES

Chapainawabganj 34%

YESTERDAY

Satkhira 66%

Khulna 17.8%

Rajshahi 22%

Kushtia 16.89%

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

That Bangladesh is in a position to bail out Sri Lanka, a middle-income country by the World Bank's classification since 1997, by extending up to \$500 million -- is a nice lift to the country's morale.

But this episode is also a cautionary tale for Bangladesh: if the government does not get its act together now, the country could very well be in Sri Lanka's position in a few years.

The Achilles heel of the two economies is the same: low tax base, overreliance on a single item for exports and insubstantial foreign direct investment.

What Bangladesh has on its side is time. It is still a least-developed country,

SRI LANKA'S EXTERNAL DEBT POSITION IS BECOMING OVERWHELMING (in % of GDP) 56 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 SOURCE: CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA

International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The loans have a protracted tenure of 25-40 years as well as a reasonable grace period and interest rate of less

civil war, Sri Lanka relied much on such foreign debt to build its infrastructure - an economical practice, for the most part.

But at the turn of the century, following its graduation to a lowermiddle-income country in 1997, Sri Lanka's access to such loans had dwindled, meaning it had to look elsewhere for funds.

In 2007, Sri Lanka issued its maiden international sovereign bond (ISB) -worth \$500 million -- and increasingly started to turn to this commercial borrowing channel.

The ISBs have a repayment period of 5-10 years, carry interest rates of upwards of 6 percent and no grace period.

compound mattere

GANG-RAPE ON BUS Cops arrest six after rescuing the victim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar A Dhaka court yesterday placed five men on remand, three-day each, in a case filed over gang-rape

of a woman on a running bus in Savar's Ashulia. Dhaka's Senior Judicial Magistrate Shahzadi

Tahmida passed the order after the investigation officer of the case Inspector Mohammad Ziaul Islam produced the five before the court with a five-day

remand prayer, according to court sources.

The accused rapists put

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO INDIA Young female TikTok users targeted

Muntakim Saad

Saima [not her real name], 15, led a regular teenage life of this generation, making videos on popular mobile app TikTok, before she was trafficked to India with the promise of a better job.

She was one of the victims of Rifatul Islam Ridoy, 26, popularly known as Ridoy Babo on TikTok, who lured her to the South Indian city Bengaluru promising her a well-paid job two months ago, along with four other girls, through Sathkhira border.

Saima, who used to work at a shopping mall in Bangladesh, thought that she would get a better job in India. After going there, however, she found that they were trafficked to India for sex work.

Engineer sued under DSA for FB post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested a diploma engineer from Chattogram's Banshkhali upazila in connection with a case filed under the Digital Security Act (DSA) after he made a Facebook post over "SS Power I Plant" at the upazila's Gandamara union.

The arrestee is Shahnewaz Chowdhury, 37, of the upazila, said police sources.

Humayun Kabir, assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of Anwara Circle police, told The Daily Star, "Shahnewaz vas held from his house after Faruk Ahmed, chief coordinator of the power plant, filed a case with Banskhali Police Station, accusing the engineer of tarnishing the power plant's image. According to the case statement, Shahnewaz, on Wednesday, wrote on his Facebook "[Deaths] SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

eaning it has access to conloans from multilateral and bilateral lenders like the World Bank, the

than 2 percent. A casualty of a quarter-century-long

are principal payments: the total SEE PAGE 2 COL 3 on remand are Mohammad

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Migrant workers eager to go to join their workplaces in Saudi Arabia waiting in front of the Saudia office at the capital's Sonargaon hotel. The government will pay up to Tk 25,000 for each of the workers' mandatory week-long quarantine in hotels of the Gulf country, which is some relief for the cash-

strapped workers.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

LSD mailed to Bangladesh

Detectives say syndicates used postal service to bring them in from the Netherlands for 4 yrs MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The hallucinogenic drug called lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) was being smuggled into Bangladesh from the Netherlands using the postal service for the last four years.

A drug syndicate used to smuggle LSD blotting paper by stashing those inside books as they look like stamp or colourful paper.

At least three syndicates are involved in selling the drug in Bangladesh.

Officials of the Detective Branch of police disclosed these to The Daily Star yesterday. They found this information during their probe into the death of Dhaka University student Hafizur Rahman.

Hafizur slit his throat himself after taking LSD on the campus on May 15, his friends told detectives during interrogation. SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Govt decides to share cost of hotel stay

Up to Tk 25k will be given to each worker from wage earners' welfare fund

MIGRANTS QUARANTINE IN SAUDI ARABIA

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

The government has decided to pay up to Tk 25,000 for each Bangladeshi worker's stay in hotel in Saudi Arabia for their sevenday on-arrival institutional quarantine.

"The money will be provided from the wage earners' welfare fund," Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Ahmed Munirus Saleheen told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

The lion's share of the fund comes from the Bangladeshis working in different countries across the world. The fund is looked after by a board of members from the expatriates' welfare ministry with the secretary in the chair.

Secretary Saleheen also said they were working to vaccinate all migrants leaving so that they no longer needed to stay in quarantine.

The development came nine days after Saudi Arabia issued a travel advisory on May 20 for non-restricted countries, including Bangladesh, making it mandatory for workers to stay in hotel quarantine for seven days.

The advisory caused huge sufferings to the migrant workers and casted uncertainty over their joining work in Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial meeting will be held today to discuss different issues, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

As they refused to be a part of the trade, the gang members tortured them and forced them into sex work.

After a month and half, three of them were able to flee the Indian state and return home recently.

After a video clip of a 22-year-old woman being tortured and sexually assaulted went viral on social media, Indian police on Thursday arrested Ridoy Babo, along with five other Bangladeshis from Bengaluru.

Bangladesh police then began investigation and found a transnational racket, involving some Bangladeshis, trafficking some young girls using TikTok and forcing them into sex work in India. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



For its development of Zero Carbon Source Technology Gree AC is esteemed at the Global Stage

For the development of Zero Carbon Source Technology in order to reduce the effect of Global Warming, world's leading AC and Home Appliance manufacturer 'Gree' is awarded Global Cooling Award 2021, defeating several industry-leading organizations! Because of this international recognition, Gree wishes, that every hour hold on the planet earth can be eco-friendly.



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BANSHKHALI POWER PLANT WORKERS

Stop their harassment

63 prominent citizens urge govt

UNB, Dhaka

Some 63 prominent citizens of the country urged the government to take steps to stop the harassment of the workers of the Banshkhali coal-fired power plant in connection with the incident in which six workers were killed in police firing on April 17 this year.

The joint statement was signed by advocate Sultana Kamal, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Khushi Kabir, Dr Hossain Zilllur Rahman, Badiul Alam Majumder, Prof Anu Mohammad, Syed Iftekharuzzaman, Syeda Rezwana Hasan and Dr Shahidul Alam, among others.

The statement alleged that the police, instead of conducting an impartial and independent inquiry to the incident, arrested Engineer

Chowdhury Shahnewaj from Gandamara area of Banshkhali on May 27 for his post on Facebook.

to speak against any corruption and irregularities of the coal-fired power project

Shahnewaj expressed his own opinion and urged the youths to play a role against the illegal activities and corruption which should not be deemed as a move to create anarchy or stability, said the statement.

on May 4 has ordered the authorities concerned to pay condensation of Tk 5 lakh to each of the victims and provide security and protection to the workers, families and locals of the Banshkhali power plant and not to harass them anyway.

As a result, it said, nobody will dare

this Facebook post, Through

It mentioned a High Court bench

A locally made three-wheeler carrying a load of freshly harvested paddy to a rice mill in Nimtoli area of Munshiganj yesterday.

Govt decides to share cost

FROM PAGE 1

including exorbitant airfare for Middle East-bound workers, and vaccination of migrants departing, a top official of the expatriates' welfare ministry said.

More than a thousand Saudibound workers have already missed their flights in the last five days as they failed to book hotels for the quarantine, alleged the workers.

Biman took nine days to comply with the advisory. It resumed flights to the kingdom yesterday after nine days of suspension.

The quarantine, however, is not mandatory for those who have already taken two doses of Covid-19 vaccine of Pfizer, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna and 14 days have passed since the administration of their second dose.

On Thursday, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said having realised the problems being faced by the Saudibound migrants, the prime minister has instructed the foreign ministry to take initiatives for arranging the hotel bookings.

About providing financial support to the workers, Saleheen yesterday said if a migrant worker needs Tk 40,000 for the hotel stay, the ministry will give them Tk 20,000 in cash assistance

The ministry will provide Tk 25,000 if anyone needs Tk 50,000 or more.

He said the financial assistance will also be provided to those who have already gone to Saudi Arabia after the travel advisory was issued.

In that case, the Bangladesh hand the cash assistance to the advisory, sources at the Biman said.

he added.

QUICK RESPONSE TEAM In a press release yesterday, the ministry said a "quick response team" was formed to resolve on a priority basis different problems being face by migrant workers.

Arif Ahmed Khan, director, Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), has been made convener of the sevenmember team, the release says.

Other members of the team are Senior Assistant Director Sarwar Alam of the ministry, Senior Statistical Officer Masud Rana of BMET, and WEWB's Deputy Director Zahid Anwar, Assistant Director Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Deputy Assistant Director Abdul Quader, and Office Assistant/ Computer Operator Mohammad Moniruzzaman.

BIMAN RESUMES KSA FLIGHTS Biman yesterday resumed its flight operation to Saudi Arabia in line with the new travel advisory issued by the Gulf country

A top official of the national flag carrier told The Daily Star that the first flight left the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Dammam at 3:30pm and second flight to Jeddah at 6:15pm. The third flight to Riyadh was scheduled to fly at 3:20am.

He also said Biman was assisting Saudi-bound migrant workers in booking hotels.

On May 19, Biman said it primarily suspended all flights to Saudi Arabia for five days starting from May 20.

Biman later extended the suspension period for four more days embassy in Saudi Arabia will verify as it failed to complete necessary the cost of their hotel stay and will measures to comply with the travel Biman currently operates flights to three destinations in Saudi Arabia. The destinations are Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah. The airline operates 19 flights a week to these destinations. Saudi Arabia is the largest destination for Bangladesh migrants. At least 26 lakh expatriates are currently working in different sectors in the country.

Put 8 districts on lockdown now

FROM PAGE 1

"Seven of the 13 new patients have not been to India recently. The Indian variant has certainly started transmitting among local people," IEDCR Director Prof Tahmina Shirin told The Daily Star vesterday.

One other locally transmitted case of the Indian variant was detected earlier in Jashore and the total number of people carrying the variant is now 20, according to the Global Initiative on Sharing all Influenza Data (GISAID).

Detecting the specific variant of a virus requires genome sequencing, a complicated and expensive process that takes 3-7 days to complete.

The weekly epidemiological analysis of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), meanwhile, showed that compared to the previous week, the nationwide transmission of coronavirus has increased by around 22 percent in the seven days preceding yesterday.

The latest weekly analysis identified over 30 districts as high-risk zones with 10 percent or higher positivity rates, up from 25 districts in the previous week.

The situation in Dhaka, Sylhet and 23 percent on April 1. On April 16, the Cox's Bazar is also concerning, Faisal said.

TRANSMISSION ON THE RISE

When around 80 lakh people reportedly travelled out of the capital and returned after the Eid holidays earlier this month, epidemiologists expressed concerns that the transmission rate might spike again.

On May 18, the national positivity rate rose to 8 percent and continued rising slowly and steadily, reaching 10 percent on Tuesday. Yesterday's positivity rate was 7.91 percent against 13,184 tests.

the weekly According to epidemiological analysis by the DGHŚ, 9,660 people, including 1,043 in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, tested positive in the past week.

The number of tests also increased by

remote district, it will be tough to tackle Since the second wave of coronavirus the situation with inadequate health facilities in those areas," he added.

A transnational gang, involving some followers on his TikTok account, in which he uploaded 696 videos.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

transmission started declining amid the

countrywide travel restrictions imposed

on April 5. The rate fell to the lowest,

"Although the transmission has not spiked after Eid, it has not declined the

way it was declining before Eid. Now

the Indian variant has spread to the

community level and the restrictions

have been lifted. Now all of a sudden,

we can see spikes in Covid-19 cases in

several districts," IEDCR Consultant

Mushtuq Hussain told The Daily Star

First detected in India last year, the

On May 8, the IEDCR detected the

"If Covid-19 cases rise suddenly in a

around 7 percent, on May 12.

resterday.

Bangladesh.

Members of the gang, all aged between 20 and 25, had trafficked several other women earlier.

Police said there are more people involved in the racket and that they are trying to arrest the main perpetrators.

Meanwhile, police brought in four of Ridoy's "associates" into custody for questioning.

"Some criminals from the southwestern region of Bangladesh and several Indian states are involved in

Israeli forces kill Palestinian in West Bank AFP, Nablus

Israeli forces on Friday shot dead a Palestinian man during clashes in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said.

Zakaria Hamayel, 28, was struck by a bullet to the chest in the village of Beita, south of Nablus, during a protest against Israeli settlement expansion on Palestinian land, the ministry said.

The Israeli army said it was investigating the incident.

"We are aware of reports regarding a killed Palestinian. The cause of the injury is still unknown," it said in a statement.

It said a "violent riot" took place near the "Givat Eviatar outpost" and that "troops responded with riot dispersal means".

On Tuesday, Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man during a raid in the Al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah.

Israeli forces have been carrying out arrests across the West Bank following violence that erupted around this month's 11-day conflict between Israel and Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas.

An Egypt-brokered truce between srael and Hamas came into effect a week ago.

More than 25 Palestinians have been killed in clashes since May 10 in the West Bank alone, where some 475,000 Israeli settlers live alongside around 2.8 million Palestinians.

The West Bank has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War.

US government seeks to dismiss suit against Trump **REUTERS**, Washington

The US Justice Department on Friday asked a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed against former President Donald Trump, former Attorney General William Barr and other officials over the forceful pushing back of peaceful protesters at a White House demonstration last year, the Washington Post reported.

Trump and other US officials should be considered immune from civil lawsuits over police actions taken to protect a president and to secure his movements, the Justice Department

lawyers said, according to the Post. The lawsuit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups over the treatment of protesters at a demonstration against racism and police brutality on June 1, 2020, in tĥe aftermath of the death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, in Minneapolis after a white police officer knelt on his neck for more than nine minutes.

Indian variant, known as B.1.617, is the fourth variant of concern which is more transmissible and has spread to 50 countries so far. The number was 7,930 in the previous week. first two cases of the Indian variant in

over 6 percent, reaching 1,09,651 from 1,03,121 the week before.

began in the second week of March, the daily positivity rate rose to the highest

Young female TikTok users targeted

FROM PAGE 1

Tejgaon police has interrogated a few India-returned victims. Yesterday, their families came to Hatirjheel Police Station to meet the girls, but failed despite several attempts.

A relative of Saima, wishing not to be named, told The Daily Star that Saima and the four girls were kept at a rented house in Bengaluru. A man controlled the trade over phone and sent the girls to clients.

"Before going to India in March, Saima had been missing for five days.

Bangladeshis, has been trafficking young girls using Tiktok and forcing them into sex work in India, Md Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Tejgaon Division), said at a press briefing at his

office yesterday. "School and college students, and sometimes young housewives are their targets.'

Police found a Facebook group administered by this racket.

Bangladeshis following verification, Ahmed Munirus Saleheen explained.

About vaccinating all migrant departing, Saleheen said they were working to figure out how this "huge task can be completed easily".

"We have asked the departing workers to apply for vaccination through the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training [BMET],"

Will maintain friendship

FROM PAGE 1

on the occasion of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers yesterday.

She joined the event from Gono Bhaban through videoconferencing.

Hasina said the prime task of the government is to improve the economic condition of the people of the country, remove poverty, and ensure education, healthcare and employment for the future generations.

theme of this year's The International Day of UN Peacekeepers is: "The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security"

The PM said keeping the theme of the Day in mind, the government wants to establish young and youth force as one of the agents for ensuring world peace.

"I believe that our young members of the armed forces and police force are ready to face the challenges of establishing world peace in the 21st century.

The PM said the government wants to prepare the future force to face these challenges to ensure peace. "The young generation has to learn that peace is the only way of development, security and welfare.'

Hasina said Bangladesh always stands ready to establish peace at any corner in the world under the UN Security Council.

asked peacekeepers of She Bangladesh Army, Navy, Air Force and Police to accomplish their responsibilities with professionalism, honesty, integrity and sincerity.

"Bangladesh has been playing a very important role in maintaining world peace and security as well as building culture of peace in the world. Bangladesh's peacekeepers are working at different UN peace missions risking their lives particularly in conflict-prone countries," the PM

said. She said steps have been taken to develop Bangladesh's peacekeepers as the most qualified through providing training to them with improved technology and equipment to face the new challenges.

Bangladeshi Highlighting peacekeepers' contributions in maintaining world peace, the premier said they have brightened the image of the country alongside upholding flag of the United Nations by demonstrating their efficiency.

"That's why Bangladesh has now become one of the highest number of peacekeeper providing countries in the world," she said.

The premier said some 6,742 peacekeepers are deployed in different UN missions right now and officials at the ranks of major general and brigadier are also there as deputy force commander and sector commander respectively.

She hoped that Bangladeshi peacekeepers would be able to establish the country as a strong peace building nation in the world alongside upholding dignity of the national flag.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Army Chief Gen Aziz Ahmed and UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo also spoke at the programme.

The PM also interacted with peacekeepers at various places across the globe through videoconferencing.

At the start of the programme, a minute's silence was observed to show respect to those peacekeepers who sacrificed their lives for establishing peace.

A short video documentary on Bangladesh's peacekeeping missions was played at the programme.

The foreign minister handed awards to the family members of the deceased and injured peacekeepers for their sacrifice and bravery.

We could not trace her. Then she called us from India and told us that Ridoy took her there... A few days later, she called again and said she was being tortured and wanted to come home at any cost.

Two of the girls who went along with her, fled the house first and waited for her near the border. After two days, Saima was also able to flee Bengaluru.

"We sent Tk 50,000 to the girls, who managed people for help at the border and then returned to Dhaka with Saima," said the relative of the girl.

He said a law enforcement agency picked up Saima from her Hatirjheel home on Thursday night, interrogated her and released her the next day. On Friday night, Hatirjheel police

took her into custody. **'RACKET TARGETS FEMALE**

TIKTOKERS'

When young girls and boys make videos on TikTok, they get acquainted to each other and join the Facebook group. An admin of the Facebook group was the main patroniser of the trafficking racket, police said.

"Around 700-800 TikTok users took part in a pool party last year at a resort in the suburbs of Dhaka city, organised by Ridoy Babo," the official said.

This correspondent also found a promotional video of the pool party where at least 10 young female TikTok users invited other users to join the party in mid-September last year.

Police said the gang members then targeted some female TikTok users and later trafficked them to India in the name of providing well-paid jobs there at shopping malls and beauty parlours. Police said Ridoy Babo coordinates

the international trafficking ring. Ridoy has more than 71,000

the gang. Its network is stretched out to Dubai, UAE and some other countries in the Middle East," the DC said at the briefing.

"This racket takes girls to India through illegal means. The main place of this racket is in Bengaluru's Anandapura. During their stay in India, the victims are tortured, sexually assaulted and then photographed and recorded by the culprits. They are later forced into sex work.

The gang members blackmail the victims, threatening to send the photos and videos to their families or leak those on social media, in case the victims try to escape.

Police are investigating those involved in the crime and trying to bring back those arrested in India. All the Bangladeshi arrestees went to India illegally, the Tejgaon DC said.

Cops arrest six FROM PAGE 1

Ariyan, 18, Mohammad Saju, 20, Monowar Hossain, 24, Sohag, 25, and Saiful Islam, 40.

The magistrate also recorded the confessional statements of another accused Sumon Mia in the case.

The six accused were arrested last night around 11:00pm after police rescued the victim from the bus, said Inspector Ziaul Islam.

A patrol team of police became suspicious as a bus sped past them on Ashulia bypass road. The police team chased the bus and intercepted it after crossing Jahangirnagar University, the inspector added

He further said that the police team rescued the victim and held all six accused then and there.

Later, the victim filed a rape case against the six yesterday morning, he further added.

Sri Lanka's economic plight a caution for Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

borrowed amount of an ISB is settled at the bond maturity date at once; the repayment is not spread across years, as is the case with concessionary loans.

So, when an ISB matures, there is a big hit to a country's foreign currency reserves.

At the end of 2020, up to 50 percent of Sri Lanka's outstanding external debt was tied to ISBs, according to its central bank data.

This would not have been a problem had the Sri Lankan government the means to pay back, had it addressed the structural weakness in its economy when it started leaning heavily on commercial borrowings.

In 2019, Sri Lanka's tax-GDP ratio stood at 12.2 percent, which is not too better off than Bangladesh's at around 10 percent

Its foreign direct investment figure hovers in the millions, whereas Bangladesh's is in the early billions.

Its \$88 billion-economy is heavily reliant on tourism and garment exports, aving it at the mercy of external factors. Bangladesh's solid foreign currency reserves are thanks to garment exports and remittance sent by unskilled workers, both heavily exposed to external shocks.

Sri Lanka has \$3.7 billion of foreign debt maturing this year and about \$4 billion of foreign currency reserves at the end of April, and hence the desperate scramble for dollars.

To make matters worse for Sri Lanka, global credit rating agencies unilaterally

downgraded its sovereign rating, so the option to issue more ISBs to service the ones maturing this year is off the table. Fitch downgraded Sri Lanka's

sovereign credit rating to "CCC" last year, indicating the country's chances of default "a real possibility". Rival rating agency Moody's

downgraded Sri Lanka to an equivalent level too.

"The problems that Sri Lanka and Pakistan are facing right now did not show up overnight," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, a private think-tank.

So Bangladesh should watch closely how the crisis has unfolded in the two countries and take lessons from those.

In fiscal 2018-19, which is the latest available data from the Economic Relations Division, Bangladesh's foreign debt to GDP ratio stood at 14.7 percent, up from 13.2 percent in fiscal 2015-16.

While the ratio is well within the threshold go 40 percent, Bangladesh's foreign loan is on the uptick.

"When a car loses control uphill, it descends at an accelerating pace and can't do anything about it. We are not in that stage yet," said Mansur, a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

Bangladesh is on course to becoming a middle-income country by 2024, so its window to concessionary funding will slam shut by 2027. This is another aspect the government needs to be mindful of.

As much as 84 percent of

Bangladesh's exports come from the shipment of garment items largely to developed nations in the west.

"We will be in trouble if we can't diversify our exports at the earliest. Just because of remittance our reserves are high and we are comfortable on the external front."

But remittance's spectacular current trend is not sustainable, Mansur said.

"Once people start to travel freely again, this trend will come crashing down and our foreign currency reserves will contract.

Bangladesh's domestic position is very uncomfortable: the government's debt servicing relative to revenue is high, according to Mansur, also the chairman of Brac Bank.

"Our capacity to pay cannot be assessed by way of GDP as the private sector is factored in that. Debt has to be paid by revenue and our revenue base is low. Our tax to GDP ratio is one of the worst in the world.

Mansur went on to urge the government not to borrow for every project.

"Save for very productive enterprises, the decision to borrow should be considered stringently. Borrowing does not make sense for each and every project," he said, while citing the Rooppur nuclear power plant as an example of a project that does not warrant borrowing.

But for projects like Padma bridge and Karnaphuli tunnel, borrowing is valid as those would be able to pay back their costs over their lifetime.

Engineer sued FROM PAGE 1

over an environment-destructing coal power plant. People of Banshkhali imagine that Gandamara has been upon the tide of development but today people have really seen that Gandamara's inhabitants are being submerged by the tidal surge.'

In the case statement, the engineer was accused of posing a security threat for the power plant by instigating locals and spreading propaganda and misinformation, sources said.

S Alam Group is installing the 1,224 megawatt coal-fired power plant - the SS Power I Plant -- at Pashchim Gandamara.

It is a joint venture of six companies of S Alam Group (holding 70 percent of the equity), SEPCOIII Electric Power Construction Corporation, China and HTG Development Group Co Ltd, China, according to the official website of S Alam group.

At least seven workers were killed and another 18 were injured after a clash broke out between police and oower plant workers on April 17.

After the incident police filed a case with Banshkhali Police Station accusing 2,500 unidentified people on charge of attacking law enforcers, while the power plant authorities lodged another case accusing 22 named and 1,040 unnamed people over setting vehicles on fire during the incident.

Experts urge alert after four mild tremors jolt Sylhet **D**woha Chowdhury, Sylhet

After repeated mild tremors in Sylhet yesterday, experts warned the possibility of a major earthquake at Dauki Fault Line

and urged all to stay alert. At 10:36am, people of Sylhet city experienced the first tremor. Before they could recover from the shock, another tremor -- stronger than the first one -jolted Sylhet at 10:50am and then the third one at 11:30am.

The residents of the country's northeastern city became panicked after experiencing the fourth one at 1:58pm. They also experienced several aftershocks.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) couldn't pinpoint the accurate location of the earthquakes as the seismic activities were recorded only in one seismic station in Sylhet as it needs data from three stations.

Sayeed Ahmed Chowdhury, meteorologist of BMD in Sylhet, said, "Among the earthquakes, the one at 10:50am was of the highest magnitude, 4.1 in Richter scale."

"We were able to measure aerial distance of the epicentre, toward the north SEE PAGE 4 COL 3 নগ্রহার্য আব্দোলনে স নি থেলেরে রোডম্যাপ তোম্বন থ্য -यर्ग्स् महातीसत प्रू हियग अमात यम्

Students under Pragatishil Chhatra Sangathan Samuha yesterday demonstrated in front of the capital's Raju Memorial Sculpture, demanding a roadmap for opening educational institutions, ensuring vaccination for students, teachers and staffers, and health insurance for them.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Situation worsened due to lockdown constraints

Finds research conducted by BIGD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although domestic violence was pervasive in Bangladesh even before the pandemic, the situation has worsened due to lockdown-induced constraints in access to justice for survivors of domestic violence, found latest research.

The pandemic is responsible for limiting survivors' access to formal institutions during the "lockdown". Movement restrictions and halt of public transport made it extremely difficult for women to travel outside their homes and reach out for help, the in-depth research mentioned.

It also pointed to courts being shut and NGOs providing legal aid having to close their physical spaces.

Although local authorities became burdened with relief distribution, and police were implementing lockdown measures, they were eventually able to respond to women seeking assistance, it said

The findings of the research titled 'Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence During Covid-19" was presented at a webinar yesterday, jointly organised by Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Brac University and the Rule of Law Programme of GIZ Bangladesh, and was supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The research was conducted by BIGD in collaboration with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Brac Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) and RDRS Bangladesh, and was commissioned by the Rule of Law Programme, which is supported by law ministry and home ministry.

According to the research, many and non-government government SEE PAGE 4 COL 3 COP26 chief Alok Sharma due in Dhaka next week

UK MP's visit to spotlight climate discussions ahead of UN summit DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK MP and COP26 president-designate Alok Sharma will be visiting Bangladesh next week. As part of his tour to Asia, Sharma will look to strengthen support for climate priorities ahead of the UN climate change summit in Glasgow this November.

Apart from Bangladesh, he will also visit Vietnam and Indonesia, said a statement of the UK Cabinet Office.

The visit is likely to take place on June 2 or 3, a diplomatic source said.

"Meetings with senior leaders will focus on climate ambition, including a clean energy transition and efforts to help communities deal with the worst effects of climate change," the cabinet office's statement said.

Alok Sharma's visit follows commitments from G7 nations to end all new finance for coal power by the end of 2021 and increase support for countries vulnerable to climate change. SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



University Professor Shantanu Mojumder said self-censorship has turned out to be the "new normal" for different entities like civil societies, journalists and rights

He reprimanded the role of politicians during the pandemic saying that the bureaucrats were in charge of all the pandemic management activities and official involvement of politicians weren't

'No pressure to reopen educational institutes'

Says Dipu Moni; students continue demands of resumption STAR REPORT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said there is no pressure from larger portion of students and guardians to re-open educational institutions.

She came up with the remark at a time when the demand for re-opening is getting louder.

There are some pressures from different quarters in this regard but not from the majority of students and guardians, said the minister while addressing a meeting commemorating the death of former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru at Jatiya Press Club.

"I get messages regularly over the issue. Most of the messages request not to open educational institutions right now. We have information that movements are going on at different places. But we cannot pose health risks on people. Campuses will be re-opened only when Covid-19 situation will be brought under control," she said.

Meanwhile, some progressive student bodies and Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday demanded immediate re-opening of educational institutions, maintaining proper health guidelines.

The student bodies announced the demand at a rally at the base of Raju Sculpture at Dhaka University in the afternoon.

They also demanded that the government declare a roadmap to reduce session jam and students' drop-out rate, which might be created due to the closure.

Their other demand was to ensure vaccination for all students.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation general secretary Zahid Sujon SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Democracy only in mind, not in action'

Speakers stress strong institutions, freedom of speech STAFF CORRESPONDENT there much.

Strong institutions are vital for ensuring economic development and carry forward the practice of democracy in the country, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

They also said suppressive acts like Digital Security Act-2018 should be scrapped to ensure freedom of speech, which is a fundamental element of democracy.

Centre for Governance Studies in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh organised the webinar titled "The Future of Liberal Democracy in Bangladesh after the Covid-19 Pandemic".

Presenting the keynote paper, Dhaka defenders in fear of arbitrary use of DSA.

and dysfunctional" and said political parties themselves do not practise democratic norms, which is an ominous sign for democracy. Eminent academic and historian Prof Dr Syed Anwar Husain said, "We have the

He also criticised the role of the

parliament terming its activities "rhetorical

democratic system in our mind, but we do not have the democratic spirit in our actions. Democracy doesn't mean being elected to power and remaining in power for some time."

He said in a democratic system there should be a government and a strong opposition party. However, there's only the government that actually play its part in Bangladesh.

"No university in Bangladesh functions as per democratic norms and rules, moreover, there's corruption. It permeates the whole fabric of society. Corruption and democracy can't go together," he added.

Questioning the role of democratic organisations like the Election Commission SEE PAGE 4 COL 1





While cyclone Yaas battered the coasts as it made landfall, it brought a much-needed respite for dwellers of the capital, with a cloud cover and gusts keeping the heat away. The scorching, humid weather has returned well and truly, as is evident from the rickshaw-puller's shirt entirely drenched in sweat. The photo was taken yesterday from Moghbazar area. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Three of a family suffer burns in city STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three of a family, including a child, sustained burn injuries in a fire at their tin-shed house in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area early vesterday.

The injured are Md Sohel (35), his wife Laboni Akter (25) and their son Morsalin (2).

They are undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. Their condition is critical

Neighbours rescued them after hearing their screams when the fire originated around 2:45am at Nobodoy Housing area. Fire officials suspected that the fire started from a burning mosquito coil in a room where gas accumulated from a leak.

Rupa Akter, a neighbor of the victims said, "As we rushed to the spot hearing their screams, we saw the couple on fire, trying to douse it, standing in front of the house

"They managed to come out of their room but their son was still inside. Fire officials later rescued him," she added. SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Oikya Parishad slams 'poor' allocation for religious minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterdav condemned and expressed serious discontent over the poor allocation for religious minorities in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the proposed budget of the upcoming fiscal.

Oikya Parishad, a representative body of the country's religious and ethnic minorities, issued a press statement terming the poor allocation as a continuation of stark discrimination against the community.

The religious affairs ministry received Tk 15,054.03 crore under the ADP for the next fiscal's budget, of which Tk 290.08 crore is allocated for the projects related to religious minorities, reads the statement.

Of the Tk 290.08 crore, Tk 200 crore was originally allocated in 2017 and each budget mentioned the figure with the fresh budget, as the works under project have not been completed yet.

In budget, special allocations for religious majority community were made for development of their religious establishments and institutions, but no such allocation is made for Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities, the organisation said.

They demanded Tk 5,000 crore allocation to eradicate the discrimination these minority communities are facing over the years. They also demanded of a separate ministry for religious minorities, similar to what exists in India and Pakistan.

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Two lives lost in Habiganj road crash

Two people were killed in a head-on collision between a CNG-run autorickshaw and a motorcycle on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bahubal upazila of Habiganj yesterday, our Moulvibazar correspondent reports

The deceased were identified as Jamir Uddin (40) and Shakil Ahmed Ramim (35), said Habiganj Sadar Model Police Station OC Masuk Ali.

Police were preparing to send the bodies to the 250-bed Modern District Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

Bahubal Model Police Station OC Kamruzzaman said a CNG-run autorickshaw coming from Sreemangal collided head-on with a motorcycle coming from Habiganj in new market area.

The motorcycle rider and pillion were both severely injured and taken to Habiganj Sadar Hospital, later the doctors declared them dead, he added.

TWO DIE AFTER BEING HIT BY TRAINS

Our correspondent from Chandpur reports, two people were killed and another was injured as trains hit them in the district over 24 hours till yesterday afternoon.

The deceased is Mehedi Hasan (28) from Sheikh Bazar in Chandpur while the injured is Zahirul Islam (55).

According to eyewitnesses and police, the Chandrika-bound Sagarika Express coming from Chattogram hit Mehedi's motorcycle at a level crossing in the town's Wireless area yesterday, leaving him dead on the spot. Pillion passenger Md Rajon Khan (30) was injured and was admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital. Mehedi Hasan's body was kept there for autopsy.

Earlier on Friday afternoon, Zahirul Islam, who was sitting on the rail line, was killed by Sagarika Express in Enayetpur area. On information from locals, railway police recovered his body, said Saleh Ahmed, an eyewitness.

Railway Police Station OC Murad Hossain said both the bodies were later sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Chandpur Railway Station Master Shohaibul Sikder said the rail crossing where Mehedi Hasan died was not approved by the railway authorities.

Democracy only

questioned the electoral process and challenged it in the

she said bureaucracies are state functionaries and public

functionaries but not government functionaries.

political parties, Rizwana Hasan added.

and sustainable economic growth.

monitoring it didn't happen.

Criticising the role of bureaucracy during the election,

However, they are acting like spokespersons for

"This merging identity of the state and the government

is getting difficult for entities like civil society and media

to criticise the government. Any criticism against the

government is interpreted as criticism against the state,"

BIDS senior research fellow Dr Nazneen Ahmed said

She said NBR needed an automation system and

The banking sector was responsible for disbursing loans

to all enterprises but they loaned the big enterprises more

instead of micro enterprises even after the government

could collect more money that could be used for social

safety programme but due to lack of transparency and

FROM PAGE 3

she said.

during last election.

judiciary, she said.

Experts urge that points to the Dauki Fault Line; but couldn't pinpoint accurately as the depth was less and the earthquakes were

not recorded in any other seismic centre," he said. Prof Dr Syed Humayun Akhter of the department of geology at Dhaka University and the director of Dhaka University Earth Observatory, said, "As per our finding, the location of the tremors were at the hilly terrain right in the upstream of Sari river in Jaintiapur upazila, which is the eastern part of Dauki Fault Line."

Dauki Fault Line, a 300km fault line, stretches south of the Shillong Plateau and right at the northern border of Mymensingh and Sylhet division.

On June 12, 1897, a magnitude 8 plus earthquake was triggered in the fault which almost destroyed every structures of Bangladesh's northeastern part and present day India's Meghalaya and Assam's all towns; and at least 1,542 persons died.

Dr Humayun said, "Dauki has huge strain energy stored that will be released at any time and can cause 7.5 to 8.5 magnitude earthquake."

"These mild tremors might be an alert for a major earthquake, which might take place in a couple of days or within couple of months."

"Moreover, the Chittagong-Tripura Fold Belt, right at the bordering stretch of Chattogram division, contains more strain energy that can trigger magnitude 8.5 or more earthquake," he said.

He said, "Science has not improved that much to forecast an earthquake surely. People need to be ready for a major earthquake soon. Awareness is important as we witnessed five people of Bangladesh died being panicked during the earthquake of Nepal in 2015. No one should panic.

Meanwhile, Sylhet City Corporation called an emergency response meeting with all authorities concerned at the Nagar Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they decided to form emergency teams including volunteers.

The city corporation officials also planned to keep all emergency services ready and launched a hotline

UN Peacekeepers branding Bangladesh as a peaceloving nation: Momen UNB, Dhaka

currently deployed in eight countries.

'Our peacekeepers are deployed in some the most challenging hotspots in the world, where they diligently work for peace, security and human rights of the local people and the protection of civilians along with performing other multi-faceted roles, he said.

Dr Momen recalled that he was personally involved in engaging valiant soldiers in a mission to restore democracy and voice of the people in Haiti in 1994, which subsequently helped them to engage with UN peacekeeping operations more actively.

"During my six-year tenure at the UN as Bangladesh's permanent representative, with the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, I could engage women peacekeepers for the first time, and many more police and naval forces in the UN peacekeeping missions," he said.

What could be a better way to fulfil Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream for a peaceful world, Dr Momen said.

promised to support the bank, she added. "And it happened due to lack of monitoring and integrity within the institutions," Dr Nazneen said.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said opposition parties have a role to play alongside the government to make democracy effective.

He called upon all to join in the struggle to uphold the spirit of democracy.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, New Age editor Nurul Kabir, Dhaka University Prof Dr Amena Mohsin, former state minister Abul Hasan Chowdhury and resident representative of | in order to meet the FES and Bangladesh Felix Kolbitz were present at the session, moderated by Jahangirnagar University Prof | to support developing Shahab Enam Khan.

months to go before and judiciary, BELA chief executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan COP26, he will meet said there was hardly any contest from the opposition with leaders from the government, business, The voter turnout was only 30 percent, and none

With less than six

and civil society to press his personal priority for a move to global clean power. According to some estimations, this is critical to limiting global

COP26 chief

temperature rise to 1.5C. Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Indonesia are all fast growing economies with significant renewable energy potential and Sharma's visit will highlight the three

economic inequality among rich and poor happens due to country's growing lack of good institutions, therefore strong institutions are leadership. needed for the people, and it's a vital part of democracy It will also discuss how

the UK Presidency will work with the countries to support workers and communities make the transition to green jobs.

The visit builds on the recent Climate and **Environment Ministerial** meeting where, under the UK's leadership, G7 nations agreed to end all new direct government support for international coal power and increase support for clean energy alternatives, like solar and wind.

The G7 nations also agreed to work to increase finance for climate action

\$100bn per annum target

will also discuss the

needs of countries most

vulnerable to climate

change, to ensure they

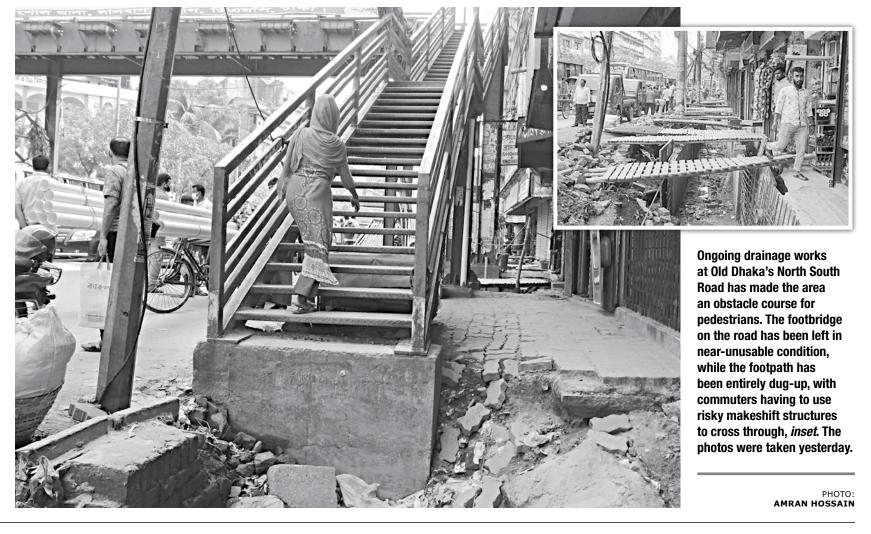
are equipped to deal with

its current and damaging

During the visit, Sharma

countries

effects.



"We will place the proposal shortly," said DUTA president Prof Rahmat Ullah.

Meanwhile, a section of teachers and students of DU will hold a rally today at the campus demanding immediate reopening of universities and student dormitories.

No pressure FROM PAGE $\frac{1}{3}$

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation general secretary Zahid Sujon announced the demands on behalf of nine student bodies. Earlier in the morning, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, a pro-BNP student

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has lauded the role of Bangladeshi peacekeepers as "ambassadors of peace", saying they are helping brand the country abroad as a peace-loving nation.

"Even during this global pandemic, our peacekeepers continue to serve in various peacekeeping missions, fearlessly rendering their responsibilities," he said on Friday.

Dr Momen felicitated all Bangladeshi peacekeepers for their dedicated service to humanity and hoped that their endeavours will help achieve sustainable peace for the international community. He made the remarks while inaugurating "Peacekeepers Day Rally: Run to Commemorate the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers-2021" in Dhaka.

Bangladesh remains a proud contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. It is currently the top contributor of military and police personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, with almost 6,500 peacekeepers

ইন্ডাষ্ট্ৰিয়াল জমি বিক্ৰয়

ঢাকা সিলেট মহা সড়ক হইতে ৪০০ ফিট ভিতরে বাউন্ডারী করা রুপসী, রুপগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ এ ১১ বিঘা ইন্ডাষ্ট্রিয়াল জমি বিক্রয় এবং মোহাম্মদপুরে ১২.৫ কাঠা জমি বিক্রয়। মোবাইল: ০১৯১২৮১৯৩৭৮, ০১৬১০২৮৭৩৫৬

মেডিক্যাল রেকর্ড ফাইল বিনষ্টকরণ সম্পর্কিত নোটিশ

এতদ্বারা সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, এভারকেয়ার হসপিটাল ঢাকা-র অভ্যন্তরীন নীতি অনুযায়ী সকল রোগীদের গোপনীয়তার স্বার্থে কর্তৃপক্ষ তাদের মেডিক্যাল ফাইল, যাবতীয় কাগজপত্র ও রিপোর্টসমূহ সংরক্ষণ করছেন। ২০১৩ সনে যাহারা চিকিৎসা সেবা নিয়েছেন, তাদের সংরক্ষিত ফাইল বিনষ্টকরণের সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছেন। তাই ঐ সময়ের চিকিৎসা সেবা গ্রহণকারীগণকে তাদের প্রয়োজনীয় রেকর্ড ৩০-০৬-২০২১ তারিখের মধ্যে সংগ্রহের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। উল্লেখ্য যে, সংশ্লিষ্ট মেডিক্যাল রেকর্ড কম্পিউটারে ডাটা আকারে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে।

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Tender No. NSU/20-21-03

North South University is inviting sealed offer from bona fide/ reputed organization/ distributors/ business partners/ agents for supplying various lab equipment of School of Health & Life Sciences for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all working days till June 15, 2021 by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit earnest money @ 2.5% of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on June 16, 2021 by 2.00 p.m. at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:15 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

> **Director, Internal Affairs** NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229 Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202 E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu

(01911249699) for residents in this regard. Meanwhile, an aftershock was felt in the city around

Three of FROM PAGE 3

8:45pm yesterday.

Mahfuz Riben, duty officer of Fire Service Control Room, said the fire was doused immediately before they reached the spot

"Initially, we came to know that gas accumulated in the house from a leak and the fire originated as the family tried to burn a mosquito coil at night," he said.

Investigation is needed to confirm the actual cause of the fire, he added.

Hospital sources said Sohel, a day labourer, had burns on 75 percent of his body, laboni had 30 percent while their son was fighting for life with 80 percent burn injuries.

Situation FROM PAGE 3

institutions adopted measures to provide services during the pandemic, such as district-level hotlines for providing psychosocial counselling and referral services.

Virtual courts were operational primarily for urgent matters such as bail hearings rather than for cases of domestic violence and family matters, it found

Speaking as chief guest, Zinat Ara, former judge of the Appellate Division, said, "We need to consider operation of courts as an emergency service, similar to other emergency services that are active during the pandemic."

Senior district and sessions judge Ummey Kulsum -- also joint secretary (opinion) at Law and Justice Division, and national project director at GIZ Bangladesh -- said, "The findings will provide directions for future strategies for the iudiciary and relevant institutions in ensuring access to justice for women and children, especially for victims of domestic violence, and for amending necessary laws and policies.'

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Fahrenholtz also joined the webinar and said, "We believe that women's and girls' recovery from the pandemic will need to be addressed as early as possible. I sincerely hope that both government and non-government actors will work together to find ways to better support women and girls in accessing justice.

Rule of Law Programme Head Promita Sengupta said, 'As Bangladesh attempts to recover its health and economy during Covid, all planning and actions toward relief, recovery, rebuilding and rehabilitation must therefore be modelled in such a way as to support and strengthen women's choices, safety, autonomy and development."

Dr Imran Matin, executive director of BIGD; Judith Herbertson, development director of FCDO Bangladesh; Jenefa Jabbar, director of Brac's HRLS, Social Compliance and Safeguarding; Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST; and Mazbahun Nahar, project coordinator of JPR Project and focal of Women's Rights Unit, RDRS Bangladesh, were present at the webinar.

The event was moderated by Barrister Manzoor Hasan, executive director of Brac University's Centre for Peace and Justice.

body, came up with the same demand at a rally at the base of Raju Sculpture.

"Students' academic lives are being severely hampered as educational institutions and campuses across the country have remained closed for over a year. Although the government offers online classes, there was no effective plan to implement it," said JCD president Fazlur Rahman Khokon.

So, educational institutions should be reopened immediately to bring students back to their regular life, said Khokon.

ICD's DU unit convener Rakibul Islam Rakib also spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) is planning to recommend the university vice-chancellor to initiate measures to take exams, ensuring students' physical presence.

Yesterday, students of Jagannath University also formed a human chain on the campus over the same demand.

Educational activities of around four crore students have been affected by the Covid-induced closure since March 17 last

It led to cancellation of exams and left the academic calendars in disarray.

School students were promoted to the next grade this year without any examinations.

The government has been broadcasting educational programmes on state-run TV channels for primary and secondary school students. Many schools, colleges and universities have been offering online classes. But many students, especially those in rural areas, were left out due to lack of access to digital devices.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer PWD Circle, Barisal Phone (Off): 0431-63845, Fax: 0431-62999 E-mail: se_bari@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No. 1122

Dated: 27/05/2021

Invitation for e-Tender

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

Toddreffield of following works given below.								
SI. No.	Tender ID	Project name	Name of works	Tender closing date & time				
01	581753		Establishment of 20 bed Isolation units and 10 bed ICU on vertical extension eight floor at Barguna 250 bed Sadar Hospital including Civil, Sanitary and Electrification works.					
02	582262	Covid-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness	Establishment of 20 bed Isolation units and 10 Supplying and Installation of 1000 kg, 8 (eight)-stop Passenger cum bed lift at Vertical extension 250 bed Barguna Sadar Hospital.	16-June-2021 13:00pm				
03	582263		Establishment of Medical Gas Pipeline System on vertical extension eight floor at Barguna 250 bed Sadar Hospital.					

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal То (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

291092020

Ahmed Anowarul Nazrul Superintending Engineer Barisal PWD, Circle, Barisal

GD-1084

Untimely rain, climate change hit mango growers hard in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Most of the mango trees have yielded much less than usual in several northern districts and the fruits have dropped before reaching maturity due to untimely rains this year. Consequently, mangoes have a thin presence in the local markets.

Narendra Nath Barman, 55, a farmer of Bhatibari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said that he has eight mango trees in his homestead but no tress has borne fruits this year. The mango trees began to bud but those fell off due to lack of rain.

"Last year, I sold mangoes for Tk 25,000 after the meeting the needs of my family and relatives," said the farmer.

"But this year I have to buy mangoes from the market for my family as my trees

fruitless mango season in his entire life. 'Not only my trees but also the trees of the entire village are fruitless this year," he said

The mango buds could not survive due to untimely rains and so there has been no yield this year, he added.

Nazrul Islam, 60, a farmer from Harishwar Taluk village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila, said the mangoes are falling off the tree before reaching maturity.

Delowar Hossain, 50, a farmer from Jatrapur village in Kurigram Sadar Upazila, said he has mango trees on three bighas of land. Although all the trees had buds, only 10 percent of the trees have borne fruits.

Ataur Rahman, 45, a fruit trader at College Road in Kurigram town, said that he used to sell local variety mangoes at this

Garbage is being dumped from a truck, with the name "Moulvibazar Municipality" inscribed on its front, while fires lit to burn plastic waste are spewing out clouds of smoke at different spots in Borshijora **Eco-Park near Moulvibazar** stadium.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

MINTU DESHWARA WITH FIROZ A MUZAHID

The destruction of Borshijora Eco-Park -- a protected forestland spread out on 326.07 hectares of land near Moulvibazar stadium -- by the hands of the town mayor has brought to light the question whether any forest or wildlife in the country are protected at all.

Although there are other landfills where solid waste of the town is being disposed of for long, the mayor recently started felling trees in a wide area of the forestland and constructing a road by razing parts of hillocks in the area, so that dump trucks can bring in garbage into the new landfill.

In a 'monthly law and order meeting' of Moulvibazar district, held on April 11 and presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mir Nahid Ahsan, the Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division (WMNCD) in Moulvibazar -- the conservator of the forest under the Forest Department -- demanded that the Moulvibazar municipality authorities stop all activities that are destroying the Borshijora Eco-Park and its ecology

DC Mir Nahid Ahsan during the meeting directed the Moulvibazar mayor to stop all destructive activities in the park.

The Forest Department also sent a letter in this regard to Mayor Fazlur Rahman, who is also the joint secretary of Awami League's Moulvibazar district unit.

However, ignoring all the directives and demands, the devastation of the forest continues unabated till date, said locals.

This correspondent during a recent visit to the open landfill in the park witnessed disposing of garbage, most of which are non-biodegradable plastics of different forms, from dump trucks

"শেখ হাসিনার বারতা

নারী-পুরুষ সমতা"

4 die from

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Four people, including

three of a family, died

from electrocution in

Kishoreganj's Sadar and

Bhairab upazilas on Friday.

The victims are Harun Mia, 48, his son Bablu

Mvmensingh

electrocution

belonging to Moulvibazar municipality. Signs of tree-felling and hill-cutting along the road to the landfill were evident as well.

A mayor's motive

Aside from a suffocating stench of decomposing waste, an overpowering smell of toxic fumes from burning plastic waste was apparent at numerous spots in the area.

A team of delegates from green organisations Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan (Bapa) executive committee; Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bapa's Sylhet unit; Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bapa's Habiganj unit; and ASM Saleh Sohel, coordinator of Bapa's Moulvibazar unit -- also witnessed similar destructive activities in the forest during their visit on May 23.

Burning of plastics has been causing severe air pollution, which poses health hazards to wildlife and humans alike while the dumping of nonbiodegradable waste is polluting the soil and groundwater. All these activities including the destruction of natural topography of the forest through the felling of trees and excavation of earth for the road are highly harmful for the flora and fauna of the protected forest, said officials at WMNCD in Moulvibazar.

Nurul Mohaimin Milton, general secretary of Bangladesh Environmental Journalists' Forum's Moulvibazar unit, said wild animals and birds may die from eating plastic pieces or decomposed food dumped in the eco-park.

While the felling of trees and cutting of hillocks for a road will jeopardise the existence of the forestry, the toxic fumes and smoke spewed out of the burning plastics may put residents of surrounding areas in harm's way, he added.

Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa executive committee, said disposal of a town's

waste in protected forests not only desecrates different laws of the land, but also undermines the government's commitment to addressing the challenges of climate change.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, divisional forest officer (DFO) of WMNCD in Moulvibazar, said all the illegal activities are being carried out to ultimately encroach on the forestland that WMNCD is entrusted to protect and preserve.

Aside from endangerment of wild animals and causing multifaceted environmental pollution, the open landfill will turn into a massive breeding ground of flies and mosquitoes and make nearby residential areas uninhabitable, he also said.

Denying felling of trees or razing of hillocks to build any road in Borshijora Eco-Park, Mayor Fazlur Rahman, however, claimed that the place near the stadium, where garbage of Moulvibazar town is being dumped, is in fact "an abandoned piece of land".

They started dumping waste at the site after finding out that no one in the locality has any claim on it, he also claimed, saying that they needed an alternative landfill as "other dumping stations of the municipality were out of commission for the next six months due to an ongoing renovation work".

Contacted, Moulvibazar DC Mir Nahid Ahsan said during the meeting on April 11, when objection was raised by the Forest Department against the dumping of garbage at the site, he had advised the Forest Department to demarcate the protected forestland by erecting barbed wire fence around it. At the same time, he also instructed the mayor of Moulvibazar to refrain from dumping garbage there.

While speaking with this correspondent, he also warned violators of legal consequences.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি,চট্টগ্রাম

A mango tree in a farmer's homestead at Harishwar Taluk village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila. PHOTO: STAR

According to Lalmonirhat DAE, most of the mango trees in the district did not bear fruits due to untimely rains caused by the effect of climate change.

time at this time, but this year there is no local mango.

"I have learned from the farmers that they have a very low yield of mangoes this year," he said adding that the mango market will depend on outside mangoes this year.

Manjurul Haque, deputy director of the Kurigram Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said that most of the mango trees did not bear fruits due to untimely rains. He mentioned that it is the effect of climate change.

Deputy Director of DAF in Lalmonirhat

did not bear any fruits," he also said.

Shahidul Islam, 64, a farmer from Mahendranagar village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he has never seen such

Shamim Ashraf also said the same. He added that local people are seeing mango crisis in this region for the first time. There are mango and jackfruit trees in every farmer's homestead in this region.

Mia, 15, and nephew Abu Sayeed, 10, of Jalia village ইস্টার্ণ রিফাইনারী লিমিটেড ER in Sadar upazila, and Sajib Mia, 27, of Bhairab upazila. ম্ডিম্ Eastern Refinery Limited Quoting locals, Officer in Charge of Sadar Police (A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, North Patenga, Chattogram-4000) Station Abu Bakar Siddiq Invitation for National Tender said Saveed died when 1 Ministry/Division Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources/Energy and he came in contact with a Mineral Resources Division. snapped live electric wire 2 Agency Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation while riding bicycle in front 3 Procuring entity name of his house on Friday Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL). 4 Procuring entity district Chattogram. noon. Hearing the scrams, his Renovation of Centeen Kitchen & Surrounding Verandah Invitation for & Invitation Ref. No. 5 cousin Bablu rushed to the Ref. No. ER/Civil-24/2019-2020 (Re-Tender) spot to rescue Sayeed, got **KEY INFORMATION** electrocuted and died. 6 Procurement method National One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method. Later, Harun rushed FUNDING INFORMATION there to save his son and Eastern Refinery Limited. 7 Budget and source of funds nephew but he also died PARTICULAR INFORMATION from electrocution. ER/TN/C-19/2020-2021 8 Tender package No. Meanwhile, Sajib, a 9 Tender publication date 30 May 2021 factory worker, died from 13 June 2021, 12:00 Hrs. 10 Tender last selling date electrocution when he 14 June 2021, 14:50 Hrs. 11 Tender closing date and time came in contact with a live 12 Name & address of the office(s): electric wire while plucking Manager (Accounts), ERL, North Patenga, Chattogram-4000, Selling tender document (principal) mango from a tree in Bangladesh Bhairab municipality. Office of the Asst. General Manager (C&P), Eastern Refinery Receiving tender document Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram. Office of the Deputy General Manager (Development)/ERL Board Opening tender document One held for Room, Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram INFORMATION FOR TENDERER raping 8th First class experienced Civil contractor and successfully 13 Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer completed large construction works within the last (05) years in grader govt/semi govt./autonomous organization, with a single w/o value of at least Tk 13,00,000.00 (thirteen lac) & as per tender data **OUR CORRESPONDENT,** Dinajput sheet (Section-2) (Year will be calculated from tender publication date to backward) Police on Friday night Tender opening date and time 14 Brief description of works Price of tender document arrested a teenage boy in 14 June 2021, 15:00 Hrs 1) Renovation of Canteen Kitchen & Tk 1000 (one thousand) only connection with a case for Surrounding Verandah, Ref. No. (non-refundable) raping a 14-year-old girl in ER/Civil-24/2019-2020 (Re-Tender) Rangpur city. 15 SI. Identification of Tender security Completion time in days/ The arrestee, a resident No. tender weeks/months of Chawkbazar Ashratpur 01 ER/C-24/2019-Inside ERL Tk 50,000,000 (fifty thousand) 120 (one hundred twenty) area, is a Class X student at days from the date of getting in the form of Bank Draft/Pay 2020 a vocational institute in the Order issued by any scheduled Hot/Cold permission from city. safety dept. of ERL bank of Bangladesh Earlier, father of the PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS victim girl, a Class VIII 16 Name of official inviting tender Ahmad Fazle Rabbi student, filed a case with 17 Designation of official inviting tender AGM (C&P) Tajhat Police Station. Address of official inviting tender 18 Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram According to the case Bangladesh. statement, the accused, 19 Contact details of official inviting Tele No. 88-031-2501261-67, Ext-440, Fax: 88-031-2501269. secretly took some obscene tender E-mail: md-office@erl.com.bd, website: www.erl.gov.bd, images of the girl around www.erl.com.bd two years ago, and had 20 a) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings. been raping the victim b) If it not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances since then, threating her to the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue. Contact: upload the photos on the 01715427633/01675255742 GD-1086 internet.



2	মন্ত্রণ	লয় / বিভাগ	: মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক	মন্ত্রণালয়।						
2		হক সত্তার নাম	: জেলা প্রশাসক, চট্টগ্রায							
9	1	হক সন্থার জেলার নাম	: চউগ্রাম।							
8		াজের দরপত্র	শিশু বিকাশ কেন্দ্রের বি	২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরে বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি পরিচালিত চট্টগ্রাম জেলার শিশু বিকাশ কেন্দ্রের নিবাসীদের জন্য খাদ্য, খাদ্য আনুসাংগিক ও শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী এবং বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।						
¢	দরপ	ত্র নং ও তারিখ		বিএসএ/চট্টগ্রাম/২০২১-৭৭, তারিখ: ২৪ মে ২০২১						
৬	সংগ্ৰ	হ পদ্ধতি	: উনুক্ত বাজেট (ও,টি,এম)							
٩	বাজে	ট এবং তহবিল উৎস	: উন্নয়ন বাজেট		-					
ዮ	দরপ	ত্র প্যাকেজ সংখ্যা	: ০৩ টি।							
ጽ	দরপ	গ্র প্যাকেজ নাম	 ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরে বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি পরিচালিত চট্টগ্রাম জেলার শিশু বিকাশ কেন্দ্রের নিবাসীদের "ক' গ্রুপ-খাদ্য ও আনুসাংগিক (পচনশীল ও অপচনশীল), "খ' গ্রুপ- শিক্ষা,স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য, "গ' গ্রুপ- বিবিধ আনুষাঙ্গিক মালামাল সরবরাহ। 							
30	দরপ	ত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	: ১০/০৬/২০২১ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।							
22										
১২	দরপ	ত্র দাখিল/গ্রহণ			ইসিটি), জেলা প্রশাসকের	কাৰ্যালয় চট্টগ্ৰাম				
20		ত্র বিক্রয় কার্যালয়ের নাম	 অতিরিক্ত জেলা প্রশাসক(শিক্ষা ও আইসিটি), জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম। বাংলাদেশ শিশু একাডেমি, ৯৩৯, ও. আর. নিজাম রোড, চট্টগ্রাম ফোন: ০৩১-৬৫৬১৬০ 							
\$8	দরপ	র দাতার যোগ্যতা	 বৈধ সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সিডিউল ক্রয়ের মূল্য নগদে পরিশোধ করতে হবে 							
36	গ্ৰুপ	সংক্ষিৎ	ট বিবর ণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটির পরিমাণ	মন্তব্য				
	ক	খাদ্য ও খাদ্য আনুষাঙ্গিক	(পচনশীল ও অপচনশীল)	@00/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	বাংলাদেশ শিশু				
	খ	শিক্ষা,স্বাস্থ্য,প্রসাধনী ও অ	মন্যান্য	@00/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	একাডেমি,				
	গ	বিবিধ মালামাল		800/-	সিডিউল মোতাবেক	চউগ্রাম				
72	দরপত ঠিকান্	র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার াা	: জেলা প্রশাসক, চউহ	and the second se						

ক) পিপিএ ২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর-২০০৮(সংশোধিতসহ) এ প্রদত্ত ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত পদ্ধতি যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।

খ) দরপত্র দাতা দরপত্র দাখিলের সময় দাখিলকৃত মূল্যের জামানত হিসেবে 'ক' গ্রুপে ৭৮,০০০/- টাকা, 'খ' গ্রুপে ১৫,০০০/- টাকা এবং 'গ' গ্রুপে ২৪,০০০/- টাকার পে-অর্ডার 'জেলা শিশু বিষয়ক কর্মকর্তা, চট্টগ্রাম' এর অনুকুলে দাখিল করতে হবে।

গৃহীত দরদাতার নিকট হতে উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% পারফরমেঙ্গ সিকিউরিটির অর্থ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে। গ)

- 'গ' গ্রুপের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে। য)
- কর্ত্রপক্ষ কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলেের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। હ)
- দরপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ হতে দরপত্র খোলার তারিখের নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে। চ)
- ছ) বিশেষ নির্দেশনা: বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত আছে।

ala 1012 মোহাম্মদ মমিনুর অহমান জেলা প্রশাসক চউগ্রাম

GD-1085

INTERNATIONAL

CoronaVac 'reduces mortality by 97pc'

The CoronaVac vaccine reduces coronavirus mortality by 97 percent, according to early results of the immunization campaign in Uruguay, which relies heavily on the Chinese jab.

In people who had received two doses, it reduced infection with the coronavirus by 57 percent and intensive care admissions by 95 percent, said a report by the health ministry of the South American nation.

Compared to other vaccines in use, there have been few scientific publications on the efficacy of CoronaVac, produced by Chinese firm Sinovac, and widely divergent reported results.

Coronavac is nevertheless widely used in China and in some two dozen other countries.

Chile reported last month that early results from its immunization campaign showed CoronaVac to be 67 percent effective at preventing symptomatic Covid-19 and 80 percent at preventing death.

Trial results with CoronaVac in Brazil showed efficacy of about 50 percent in preventing symptomatic infection, while Turkish data said it was more than 80 percent effective.

Uruguay, which started vaccinating on March 1, has used CoronaVac in more than 80 percent of cases

It has reserved the Pfizer-BioNTech jab for older people, health workers, and people other illnesses.

The Pfizer shot, the results showed, was 75 percent effective at preventing infection, 99 percent effective at preventing illness requiring ICU admission, and 80 percent effective at preventing death.

CoronaVac is a traditional type of vaccine, using inactivated virus to trigger immunity, while Pfizer uses RNA messenger technology.



A demonstrator gestures as motorcycles that are are impounded for violating traffic regulations are seen on fire at the municipal yards, in Popayan, Colombia, on Friday. Colombia will begin "the maximum deployment" of military personnel in the western province of Valle del Cauca and its capital, Cali, President Ivan Duque said on Friday, after four people died in protests to mark a month of anti-government demonstrations. The protests started on April 28 to oppose tax reform but have since expanded to include wide-ranging demands.

PHOTO: REUTERS

POST-COUP CRISIS IN MYANMAR NUG to 'demolish' junta

Signs agreement with Chin rebels, parades new armed force

AGENCIES

A shadow government in Myanmar seeking to reverse the February 1 coup has joined forces with a rebel group to "demolish" junta rule, it said Saturday.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military overthrew Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy government and launched a brutal crackdown on dissent.

A group of ousted lawmakers later set up a shadow "National Unity Government" which has sought to bring anti-coup dissidents together with Myanmar's myriad ethnic rebel fighters to form a federal army to challenge the junta.

On Saturday, the rebel Chin National Front signed an agreement to "demolish the dictatorship and to implement a federal democratic system" in Myanmar, the NUG said in a statement.

They pledged "mutual recognition" and to "partner equally" the statement added, without giving further details. A CNF spokesperson could not immediately be reached for comment.

The group -- which represents the mainly Christian Chin minority in and even training to dissidents who western Myanmar -- signed a ceasefire flee into their territories.

with the country's military, also known as Tatmadaw, in 2015. In recent years its fighters have dwindled.

"The CNF has no real military strength, so this move is symbolic," Richard Horsey, senior advisor on Myanmar to the International Crisis Group, told AFP.



"But [it is] nevertheless significant as CNF has been quite prominent in the peace process, due to its well respected political leaders in exile."

Several of Myanmar's rebel armed groups have condemned the military coup and the use of violence against unarmed civilians

Some are also providing shelter

But the more than 20 outfits have long distrusted the ethnic Bamar majority -- including lawmakers affiliated with Suu Kyi's government.

On Friday, the NUG released a video it said showed the first batch of fighters from its "People's Defence Force", formed to protect civilians, completing their training.

Around a hundred recruits were shown marching across flat ground surrounded by jungle. None appeared to be carrying weapons.

"Let all Burmese people be freed from military slavery," the recruits were heard shouting together.

More than 800 people have been killed by the military, according to a local monitoring group, though the coup leader has given a much lower civilian toll.

The junta has classified the NUG and the People's Defence Force as 'terrorists", meaning anyone speaking to them -- including journalists -- can be subjected to charges under counterterrorism laws.

Coup leader Min Aung Hlaing has justified his February 1 power grab by claiming electoral fraud in November elections won by Suu Kyi's NLD party.

US nuclear secrets exposed in Europe

AFP, Washington

US troops charged with guarding nuclear weapons in Europe used popular education websites to create flash cards, exposing their exact locations and top-secret security protocols, according to the investigative site Bellingcat Friday.

To familiarize themselves with things like which shelters in various locations had "hot" vaults with live nuclear bombs, with security patrol schedules, and with identification badge details, the soldiers created digital flash card sets on apps like Chegg Prep, Quizlet and Cram.

"By simply searching online for terms publicly known to be associated with nuclear weapons, Bellingcat was able to discover cards used by military personnel serving at all six European military bases reported to store nuclear devices," wrote Foeke Postma, the author of the Bellingcat article.

They found one set of 70 flashcards on Chegg, entitled "Study!", which noted the exact shelters containing nuclear weapons at Volkel Air Base in the Netherlands.

"How many WS3 vaults are there on Volkel ab," said the question side of one virtual flash card, referring to the military term for weapons storage and security systems. "eleven (11)" it read on the answer side.

Another card from the same set indicated that five of the eleven vaults were "hot" with nuclear bombs while the other 6 were "cold," and specified which vaults.

A set of 80 cards on the Cram flashcard site detailed hot and cold vaults at Aviano Air Base in Italy, and revealed how a soldier should respond in activating them based on the different level of alarms they receive.

Other cards exposed secrets at bases in Turkey, Belgium and Germany. Some detailed the location of security cameras; others gave the secret 'duress words" that a soldier, perhaps seized by attackers, would say over a phone to indicate he had been taken prisoner.

The flashcards Bellingcat discovered were publicly available as far back as 2013, and some were being used as recently as April 2021.

Bellingcat said those it had viewed appeared to have been removed after it contacted NATO and the US military for comment before it published its article.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Roadside bomb kills three Afghan university teachers

A roadside bomb hit a bus carrying university staff in northern Afghanistan yesterday, killing three teachers and wounding 15 others, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in Charikar, the provincial capital of Parwan. The bus was carrying teachers from Al-Biruni university, said a spokesman for the provincial police. Some of the wounded teachers were in critical condition, said an official. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.

Republicans block probe of US Capitol riot

Republicans in the US Senate on Friday derailed a bipartisan inquiry into the deadly assault on the Capitol by Donald Trump's supporters, despite a torrent of criticism the lawmakers were playing down the violence. Democrats and some moderate Republicans had called for a commission to probe the events up to and including Jan. 6, when hundreds of supporters of Trump stormed the Capitol, fighting with police, urging violence against lawmakers and delaying the formal certification of Biden's election victory. The violence left five dead including a cop. The measure mustered a 54-35 vote which fell short of the 60 votes needed to advance the legislation in the 100-member Senate. The 35 no votes were all Republicans. Six Republicans voted in favor of the commission.



Covid storm engulfs Everest

Mount Everest guide Buddhi Bahadur Lama has spent days isolated in a tent after testing positive for coronavirus, as an outbreak that climbers say is putting lives at risk sweeps base camp. He is one of four in his expedition team thought to have contracted Covid-19 at the foot of the world's highest mountain, along with a growing number of others. Dozens of suspected Covid cases have been flown out of the area and at least two companies have cancelled

expeditions after team members tested positive. However authorities in Nepal have yet to acknowledge a single case at the mountain, with the stakes high for the country's tourism industry. The country is reporting an average of 8,000 cases a day and the health system has been overwhelmed.

Lanka faces marine disaster

Sri Lanka faces an unprecedented pollution crisis as waves of plastic waste from a

burning container ship hit the coast and threaten to devastate the local environment, a top environment official warned yesterday. Thousands of navy ratings using mechanical diggers scooped tonnes of tiny plastic granules

on the beaches that had come from the Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl that has been smouldering on the horizon for ten days. Sri Lanka's Marine Protection Authority (MEPA) said the microplastic pollution could cause years of ecological damage to the Indian Ocean island. The ship, said to be carrying 278 tonnes of bunker oil and 50 tonnes of gasoil,

SEARCHING FOR LEADERS Deputy Managing Director

Pubali Bank Limited is a leading largest private commercial bank with 482 online branches, 17 Islamic windows and 27 sub-branches with a diverse and motivated workforce is seeking highly qualified and experienced candidates for the following roles to guide the banks to its next phase of innovation and growth.

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

For planning, developing, implementing and monitoring the overall marketing strategy that includes market research, brand development, product development & marketing, overall marketing communications and advertising management.

CHIEF OF HUMAN RESOURCES

For developing and executing human resources strategy in support of the overall business plan and strategic direction of the organization, specifically in the areas of talent management including recruitment, retainment and development and succession planning.

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

For updating, developing and establishing new technological vision to lead the bank to new heights and leading and overseeing all technical aspects and technical resources of the Bank.

These are high profile appointments to manage, develop and deliver bank's strategic goals and business that will make a tangible difference in achieving results and scope to lead from the front while broadening one's career horizons.

COMPETENCIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Creates an environment and culture that focuses on fulfilling the company's mission and vision, and creating brand values.
- Competency in planning, organizing and controlling day-to-day activities of the bank and coordinates inter-departmental functional activities.
- Strong technical background and sound knowledge for establishing operational excellence.
- Ability to develop and implement banking operations, risk/security management and governance strategies to meet organizational goals and establish a high quality performance standard and ensuring ROI.
- Excellent knowledge of regulatory requirements.
- Thorough knowledge about budgeting, planning and financial administration.
- High degree of leadership qualities and management skills to drive a cross functional team to deliver results.
- Must be well connected in the banking, technology and business sector.
- We are looking for candidates who have the ability to adopt and work in different culture and thrive in changing work environment.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Minimum 20 years experience in banking or in large MNCs/Telecom Industries with minimum 03 years experience in the senior position as General Manager/Senior Executive Vice President / Director (MNCs/Telecom) or equivalent in the applied role.
- Masters degree. Preference will be given of having role related academic and professional degrees/certificates.
- Age not exceeding 55 years as on 30 June 2021.

Age limit / academic requirement may be relaxed for highly deserving candidate.

COMPENSATION PACKAGE: NEGOTIABLE

Interested candidates, who meet the requirements of the position, are encouraged to apply with their CV, clearly mentioning the role in cover letter and recent passport size photograph to the General Manager, Human Resources Division, Pubali Bank Limited, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka -1000. The deadline for receiving applications is 30 June 2021.

Only short-listed candidates will be called for the interview.

The Bank reserves the rights to accept/ reject any application(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.





HEALTH A tale of pandemics: when and how do they end?

KAZI MD SHAIMUL REZA

The end of pandemics in recorded history has seldom been a singular point; it has been a gradually progressing, complicated and chaotic process to say the least.

When we say "end", we do not necessarily mean "eradicate", which entails permanently bringing the global incidence of the said infection to zero. The sole disease we eradicated is smallpox, a bygone menace with a whopping 30% mortality rate. Multiple factors contributed to this exceptional success. The disease's innate nature to produce obvious symptoms led to earlier detection and isolation of cases. The intensive worldwide vaccination campaign by the World Health Organisation (WHO) using a vaccine conferring lifelong protection substantially tilted the scales in our favour. So did the absence of an animal reservoir transmitting the virus.

When the deadliest pandemic in history, the horrendous 1918 influenza pandemic, the misnamed Spanish Flu, swept through the globe, it infected nearly 500 million and killed between 20-50 million. In four separate waves, it ravaged the world till 1920.



As time wore on, the virus mutated to become less lethal and morphed into the relatively benign seasonal flu. As it circulated worldwide and infected nearly one-third of the then global population, people eventually grew immune. And at one point, the virus ran out of enough susceptible hosts that it could infect to create a pandemiclevel impact. Restrictions like social distancing, mask-wearing were put in place even back then to decelerate transmission.

The H1N1 influenza A virus, which caused this pandemic, persisted and kept making comebacks; its descendants went on to cause newer pandemics. Of them, the (H1N1) 2009

pandemic, informally labelled as Swine Flu, is one of the recent past. Being a novel flu virus with genetic materials from humans, birds and pigs in unique combinations, it briskly spread because people did not have preexisting immunity to it. While most infections were mild, they still caused around 100,000-400,000 deaths in 2009.

Winding back centuries, we were outright helpless in the throes of the three plague pandemics; the Black Death of the fourteenth century causing over 50 million deaths in Europe is one spine-chilling history. Caused by a bacterium named Yersinia pestis, it spread by the bite of rat fleas and

respiratory droplets of infected humans. While easily treatable with antibiotics today, Congo, Madagascar and Peru continue to be the most endemic countries for the plague.

Experts opine this pandemic will end gradually. While the eradication of the virus is unlikely, its transmission can be controlled to the point it no longer poses a pandemiclevel threat and instead, settles down to an endemic disease with sustained, baseline-level transmissions or seasonable outbreaks. It is the stage when the catastrophe being unleashed now becomes far less disruptive. Of course, different countries will reach this milestone at a different

This is the first coronavirus pandemic ever, that too caused by a novel virus. Unlike the influenza viruses causing the previous pandemics of this century, coronaviruses spread more easily, make people stay contagious for longer and cause more serious infections and deaths.

The immune landscape of the world population will be a cardinal determinant. As more people become immune, the collective defence against the virus rises and the virus runs out of susceptible hosts and slows down. The bright side is that we have several available effective vaccines, which will immensely help us in actualising this goal eventually. But without their equitable distribution globally, prospects of optimism are bleak; while countries like the United Kingdom have vaccinated around 60% of their population with at least one dose, most African countries could only vaccinate less than 1% of theirs so far.

We have so much to do in terms of fostering the political goodwill that tackles vaccine nationalism. We also have to innovatively resist the variants that could evade immunity.

Kazi Md Shaimul Reza is a medical student. E-mail: shaimul.rd@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW?



The Bally Star 7

Long working hours increasing deaths from heart disease and stroke

STAR HEALTH DESK

Long working hours led to 745,000 deaths from stroke and ischaemic heart disease in 2016, a 29% increase since 2000, according to the latest estimates by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) published in Environment International recently.

In a first global analysis of the loss of life and health associated with working long hours, WHO and ILO estimate that, in 2016, 398,000 people died from a stroke and 347,000 from heart disease as a result of having worked at least 55 hours a week. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of deaths from heart disease due to working long hours increased by 42%, and from stroke by 19%

The study concludes that working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week.

Governments, employers and workers can take the following actions to protect workers' health:

• Governments can introduce, implement and enforce laws, regulations and policies that ban mandatory overtime and ensure maximum limits on working time;

• Bipartite or collective bargaining agreements between employers and workers' associations can arrange working time to be more flexible, while at the same time agreeing on a maximum number of working hours;

• Employees could share working hours to ensure that numbers of hours worked do not climb above 55 or more per week.



Successful brain tumour removal in



H E A L T H bulletin



Latest global data estimates nearly 8 million deaths from smoking in 2019

The most comprehensive data on global trends in smoking highlight its enormous global health toll. I'he number of smokers worldwide has increased to 1.1 billion in 2019, with tobacco smoking causing 7.7 million deaths - including 1 in 5 deaths in males worldwide, published in The Lancet recently. Of particular concern are the persistently high rates of smoking among young people, with over half of countries worldwide showing no progress in reducing smoking among 15-24-year-olds. 89% of new smokers become addicted by age 25. Protecting young people from nicotine addiction during this critical window will be crucial to eliminate tobacco use among the next generation. In half of countries, reductions in prevalence have not kept pace with population growth, and the number of current smokers has increased. The ten countries with the largest number of tobacco smokers in 2019, together comprising nearly two-thirds of the global tobacco smoking population, are China, India, Indonesia, the USA, Russia, Bangladesh, Japan, Turkey, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Published ahead of World No Tobacco Day (31st May), the authors call on all countries to urgently adopt and enforce a comprehensive package of evidence-based policies to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and prevent initiation, particularly among adolescents and young adults.

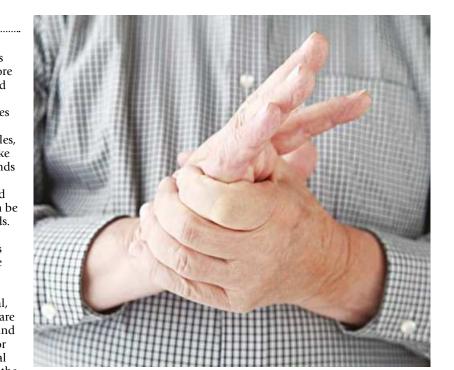
Pins and needles: an uncomfortable experience

DR OPURBO CHOWDHURY

Pins and needles, called paraesthesia in medical science, is an uncomfortable experience. More or less, everyone endures this kind of situation. It happens if nerve sensation in the blood vessels does not function correctly.

When you have pins and needles, some parts of the body pinned like thorns, sometimes the legs or hands are numb or tingling. It appears when a part of the body is pressed somewhere for a long time. It can be for a few minutes or a few seconds. The feeling goes away when the blood supply to the blood vessels and the nerves' sensation become

normal Even if such a momentary



occurrence in the body is not fatal, it must be understood that there are severe problems in the body behind it, if it has happened repeatedly or for a long time. Then it is essential to find out the reason more than the experience of pinned irritation. It is more on hands and feet. Sometimes it can happen on the back, thighs, buttocks, even on the neck, shoulders.

Pins and needles are caused by diabetes, Raynaud's phenomenon, sciatica, multiple sclerosis, radiation, medicines, chemotherapy, etc. It can emerge if there is pressure anywhere in the spinal cord. It is more developed in arthritis. Taking many antibiotics and seizure drugs can result in pins and needles. Autoimmunity can also raise pins and needles.

There are thousands of blood vessels all over the body to supply blood to the body. There are two types of blood vessels: the artery and the veins. There are many nerves in the blood vessels to control blood flow. The function of the nerves is to regulate the constriction and relaxation of the blood vessels.

If you are sitting on the body part for a while, obstructing the nerves and blood vessels to conduct its function. On the one hand, the blood vessels cannot deliver proper oxygen; on the other hand, the blood vessels are staved off from sending sensations. After a while, when the pressure shifts, the oxygen supply to the blood vessels of that part suddenly rises, the nerve comes out of its sensation barrier and signals the brain. The brain suddenly stops and mistakes the sudden return sensation and gives feelings

like pin or thorn. And what we feel in that is the pins and needles.

Consult a doctor if the phenomenon repeatedly takes place, even if there is no risk of death for pins and needles. It refers to underlying problems that are happening in your body. The doctor will initially confirm by the description of the problem, history, and physical examination. MRI, X-ray and blood tests are done if it repeatedly happens in any part of the body for a long time.

Pins and needles go away on their own. The only treatment is to find out the reason why it is frequently happening.

The writer is a physician in the UK. E-mail: opurbo.chowdhury@gmail.c

Providing insight on the patient's ailment, Dr Md Anisul Islam Khan, Senior Consultant and Coordinator, Neurosurgery Department at Evercare Hospital Chattogram, said, "Since the patient had been suffering from the effects of the tumour and the accompanying complications for quite some time, it was the best-case scenario to conduct the high-risk surgery to remove it.'

Evercare Hospital Chattogram is the largest and first-ever state-of-the-art tertiary care multidisciplinary hospital in the port city, claimed the hospital authority. Since its inauguration, the hospital is redefining healthcare in Chattogram and achieved some remarkable milestones for the healthcare services in the city.



More than 5 crore population of our country suffer from some kind of thyroid disorders, of which 3 crore are not even aware of it!

Mother-Baby-lodine: The Importance of Iodine on the Woman and her Baby

Thyroid disorders can cause infertility, abortion or miscarriage in women, or they can give birth to mentally or growth retarded babies. The extent and consequences of iodine deficiency disorders on women of reproductive age, especially pregnant and lactating mothers, are known to affect children during their first 1000 days of life from conception.

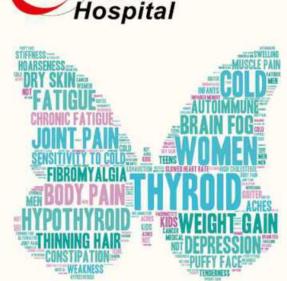


World Thyroid Day 25 May 2021 International Thyroid **Awareness Week** 25-31 May 2021

Plot 15 Road 71 Gulshan Dhaka 1212

Appointment 02 22 22 62 466 10666





The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located in front of the lower neck, known as the master gland regulating body metabolism

Evercare Hospital Chattogram

Evercare Hospital Chattogram had successful

woman in the port city, says a press release.

neurosurgery for a brain tumour of a 42-year-old

EDITORIAL



FOUNDER EDITOR LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 30, 2021, JAISHTHA 16, 1428 BS

Enforced disappearance can no longer be ignored by the state

It is against all democratic norms and the spirit of our Liberation War

HE picture of forlorn children holding pictures of their fathers forcibly disappeared for six or eight years or more, as was published yesterday, are heartbreaking reminders of this abhorrent practice that has only resulted in unease and lack of public trust towards the government. According to Human Rights Watch, from January 2009 to July 2020 at least 572 people have been forcibly disappeared by security forces and law enforcement agencies. The victims included members of opposition parties, journalists and bloggers. How is this acceptable in a free, independent country whose constitution guarantees every citizen's protection? How can such total lack of accountability of state agencies be acceptable in a democracy?

The number of victims and the way these incidents take place are similar in nature and indicates a systemic practice rather than sporadic acts of individual state actors. This makes it all the more frightening.

In most cases family members have alleged that the victims were picked up from their homes or the streets by plain-clothed members of the police or other law enforcing agencies such as RAB. When the family members asked about them at the offices of these agencies, officials have denied having them in custody. There have been cases of law enforcers refusing to take the case. In such circumstances what are family members supposed to do? Who will they go to?

Those who are lucky are "returned" though these victims usually say very little, if at all anything, regarding what happened to them during the days they were missing. Photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol was "found" near the Indian border in the middle of the night, 53 days after his disappearance. Since then he has been slapped with many cases including one under the draconian Digital Security Act.

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has expressed its desire to visit Bangladesh in relation to two cases of enforced disappearances and mentioned that it is aware that such cases have been reported for the last several years. The group has been examining such disappearances in various countries and how the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, can be implemented.

But we do not need international bodies to tell us how contradictory this phenomenon is to the spirit of our Liberation War and to democracy. Even the Supreme Court in February this year, referring to those who have disappeared and remain missing, demanded to know: "who will take responsibility for the incidents?"

The culture of complete impunity of the law enforcement agencies involved, the blatant inaction of the state, even denial that such incidents are taking place, have left ordinary citizens living in fear and despair. It is reminiscent of Chile's repressive regime of Augusto Pinochet, infamous for such enforced disappearances of those perceived as a threat. Is that what we want our country to be compared to? The government can no longer shy away from its responsibility to investigate these disappearances and hold the concerned agencies



announced on its front page, "COVID Vaccines. One Lakh Pfizer Shots to Arrive Next Month" (May 19, 2021). This news obviously comes at a good time for

newspaper

recently

Bangladesh as it struggles to find more vaccines for the nation of 160 million

people. As is well-known, Bangladesh and Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd had signed a deal last year with the Serum Institute of India (SII) to procure 30 million shots of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, but SII halted delivery of these doses after providing only 10.2 million units, because of its high domestic demand amid severe Covid-19 infections in India.

A legitimate question to ask: Why couldn't have Bangladesh procured millions more of these life-saving jabs from other countries or in the open market to meet its growing demand? A related question is, if Bangladesh, India, South Africa and other developing nations have installed but idle pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities, what is preventing them from mass-producing vaccines created by Pfizer, Moderna, or AstraZeneca, and why do they have to wait for months to get a response from COVAX on this matter?

The answer to these questions is complex, but the simplest way of looking at it is: Covid vaccines are private goods and are sold to the highest bidder or only to those who can pay the going price. More on that in a minute.

It has been known for some time that many third-world companies, including pharmaceuticals in Bangladesh, are already locally making vaccines against hepatitis, flu, meningitis, rabies, tetanus, and measles. Abdul Muktadir the MD of Incepta said he fully appreciates the extraordinary scientific achievement involved in the creation of Covid vaccines this year but wants the rest of the world to be able to share it and is willing to pay a "fair price" for the blueprints and technical know-how.

Like Muktadir a few others around the globe, including the WHO, have been asking pharmaceutical companies to voluntarily share or pool the knowledge that they gained to facilitate universal and speedy access to vaccines.

WHO director-general, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebrevesus, told the health ministers from its 194 member states on May 24 that more than 75 percent of all vaccines had been administered in just 10 countries. At the current rate of vaccination, only 30 of the world's population would have been inoculated

HE Daily Star by the end of 2021. He warned no country should assume that it's "out of the woods", as long as the virus and its variants spread elsewhere. WHO data shows that high- and upper-income countries with 53 percent of the world's population have secured 83 percent of the world's supply of vaccines. Low- and lower-income countries, meanwhile, make up 47 percent of the population and have received just 17 percent of the vaccine supply.

So, the 64 Billion Dollar question is: how to accelerate vaccination in the face of a global shortage of vaccines? If we have idle vaccine-making plants all around the globe, what stands in the way of greater production and supply? The shortest answer, as stated earlier, is that vaccines are private commodities. One could next ask, why can't vaccine be considered a "global public good"? A public good is one like air and national



Should vaccines be considered

'global public goods'?

one consumer's usage does not preclude the use of another. "Nonexcludability",

on the other hand, means that the cost

of keeping nonpayers of the good from

prohibitive. A good example of a public

At first glance, Covid vaccines developed

by Moderna, Pfizer, or AstraZeneca are not

public goods since each of these vendors

are making these products for commercial

gains and billions of people are excluded

Therefore, they are not public goods in

the sense Samuelson or other modern

economists use this concept. However,

current pandemic situation, vaccines can

be categorised as "global" public goods,

since vaccination benefits everyone and

the social cost of exclusion is very high. In

addition, vaccine exclusion could be costly

and mean the difference between life and

one could make the case that in the

since there aren't enough supplies.

enjoying the benefit of the good is

good is sunshine.

defence which allows each of us-often within a geographical boundary-to enjoy the product free and without excluding anyone else.

UNESCO first called for COVID-19 vaccines to be considered a global public good (GPG) last year in February 2020. Earlier, in 2006, the International Task Force on Global Public Goods came up with a list of six possible GPG candidates but did not include vaccines. In contrast, Ursula Von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, used the phrase "global common good" to describe the vaccines.

The technical conditions for "public goods" were first formulated by the Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Samuelson who in the 1950s clearly enunciated two necessary conditions. First, consumption of the item is non-rivalrous, and second, it is nonexcludable. Let me elucidate. Non-rivalrous consumption implies that

death

The concept of GPG focuses on goods that are public in the most general sense of the term. A GPG used by a person in Bangladesh does not reduce the amount that someone else in the USA can consume, or the positive externalities are so extensive that private firms could not expect to capture or receive all of the social benefits. Here are some examples of global public goods that have been discussed in the literature: Biodiversity and the natural environment

For Covid-19, it would be a stretch to consider a biomedical innovation such as a diagnostic test, drug or vaccine as a GPG. As a practical matter and in the context of this pandemic, there is a strong case to create policies to facilitate a diversity of manufacturers and provide for open licensing of intellectual property rights for drugs and vaccines effective against the virus, since the "world has an

overwhelming interest in ensuring these will be universally and cheaply available."

The obstacles that stand in the way of implementing a policy that considers vaccines as GPGs are many but two of them stand out: i) the patent or intellectual property (IP) rights of vaccine developers; and ii) lack of technical know-how for the production and distribution of vaccines. Vaccines and all Covid-related medicines and technologies are protected under the WTO agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). A patent waiver was proposed jointly by India and South Africa at the WTO meeting in October last year for a temporary waiver of TRIPS, and the objections were fast and furious. Pfizer's partner BioNTech is a German firm, and Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, said, "The protection of intellectual property is a source of innovation and it must remain so in the future."

In addition, ensuring adequate raw materials and supplies is essential for scaling up vaccine production, but global Covid-19 vaccine supply chains are complex and fragile, and have experienced shortages as production has scaled up. The US has invoked the Defence Production Act over a dozen times in the last year to increase access to raw materials and capacity for domestic manufacturing purposes.

India and South Africa both are large producers of generic drugs, but they have less expertise and capacity to make complex biologics like mRNA vaccines. A recent incident at a US plant in Baltimore raised the alarm about the potential hazard of licensing vaccine manufacturing facilities in an unregulated environment. "And above everything, patient safety must always come first," an AstraZeneca spokesperson said.

Governments and health experts have offered two potential solutions to the vaccine shortage: One, supported by WHO, is a patent pool modelled after a platform set up for HIV, tuberculosis, and hepatitis treatments for voluntary sharing of technology, intellectual property and data. But no company has offered to share its data

Another proposal that has not gained currency yet, is to ask President Biden to move toward a government purchase of patent rights under "eminent domain" after which the US, as owner, would coordinate worldwide distribution.

In the meantime, some countries and companies plan to do their own bilateral vaccine donations, bypassing COVAX. "These bilateral arrangements run the risk of fanning the flames of vaccine inequity," said WHO's director-general.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and works in information technology. He is also Senior Research Fellow. International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-thank based in Boston, USA.

accountable for every one of them. The state must do everything in its power to find those who remain missing from forced disappearance whether recently or for years. It cannot continue to deny that people have been forcibly taken by members of the law enforcement agencies. This practice of enforced disappearance must come to an end, once and for all.

KSA-bound workers to get vaccines, aid for hotel quarantine

A good decision that could have come sooner

[•] E commend the expatriates' welfare ministry's decision to provide Tk 20,000-25,000 as aid for unvaccinated migrant workers who have to quarantine at hotels upon their arrival in Saudi Arabia. It is also reassuring to know that the vaccination of our remittance workers will get more priority than before, so that they may avoid the expensive institutional quarantine required by KSA and other countries.

According to a new travel advisory by the Kingdom (effective since May 20), Bangladeshi migrant workers will have to quarantine themselves in hotels upon arrival, for a week and at their own expense. Such a length of hotel stay would cost each worker Tk 65,000. For 40,000 such workers, the total cost would be around Tk 260 crores, as per the former vice president of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira). Needless to say, the ministry's decision to provide financial aid to these workers (and to compensate those who have already flown to KSA and are paying for the hotel quarantine themselves) could not have come at a better time.

While we appreciate this prompt move by the authorities, we also believe any sufferings of the migrant workers could have been avoided had the government put them on its priority list of Covid-19 vaccine recipients beforehand. As per the current travel advisory from Saudi Arabia, those who have been fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior their arrival would not be required to quarantine at a hotel. Baira itself had urged the government to prioritise the vaccination of migrant workers as they were set to fly there for their jobs. Due to this lack of foresight in planning the vaccine priority list, at least 1,000 migrant workers had failed to book hotels in KSA and missed their flights between May 25-28. Though it is refreshing to see the authorities trying to right this wrong, we would urge them to have more foresight in the future when it comes to protecting the country's migrant workers. It is often disheartening to see the government praising remittance workers' enormous contributions to our economy and simultaneously displaying their disregard for these workers when it comes to serious issues such as vaccination against Covid-19. From here on, we hope to see the authorities be prompt in their responses to such crises, so that our valuable remittance workers can be prioritised and protected, not just compensated.



about a different disease-leprosy-and a resolution that was adopted at the WHA exactly 30 years ago.

This resolution called for the elimination of leprosy as a public health problem at the global level by the year 2000, with elimination defined as a prevalence rate of less than 1 case per 10,000 population. It was a landmark resolution for the time.

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacillus Mycobacterium leprae. It mainly affects the skin and peripheral nerves and is said to be one of the oldest diseases in human history.

Today an effective treatment exists in the form of multidrug therapy (MDT) and with early detection and treatment, the disease is completely curable. But if treatment is delayed, leprosy can cause impairments to the skin, nerves, face, hands and feet, and lead to permanent disability. Together with deep-seated fears and misperceptions about the disease, this has subjected persons affected by leprosy as well as their family members to severe discrimination, which regrettably continues to this day.

And, amid the coronavirus pandemic, we can see parallels between the discrimination and hostility toward Covid-19 patients, their families and health personnel that has been reported in different parts of the world and society's attitudes toward leprosy.

Following the 1991 WHA resolution, elimination of leprosy as a public health problem was successfully achieved at the global level by the end of 2000, and almost all countries, including Bangladesh, have replicated that success at the national level. Unfortunately, this does not mean

Leprosy must not be forgotten amid the Covid-19 pandemic

that leprosy has disappeared.

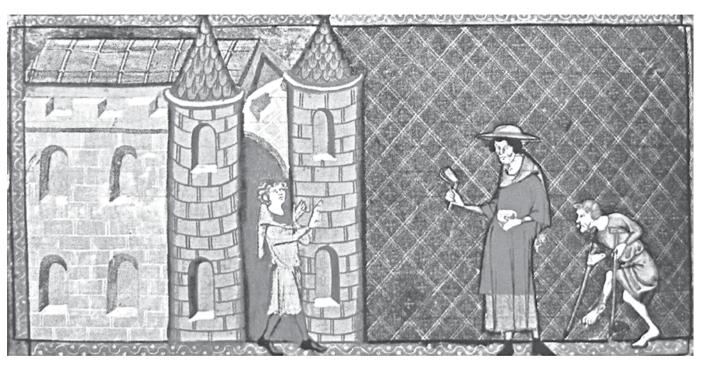
Each year, around 200,000 new cases of leprosy are reported to the WHO, with Bangladesh accounting for over 3,600 cases in 2019, the fifth highest total.

There are still endemic areas and scattered hot spots of leprosy in many countries and there are some 3-4 million people living with visible impairments or deformities due to leprosy. Meanwhile, the persistence of stigma and discrimination

As regards the front wheel, the WHO recently published its new Global Leprosy Strategy 2021-2030, which includes the ambitious targets of zero leprosy patients in 120 countries and a 70 percent decrease in new cases detected globally by 2030. In order to achieve these targets, there will need to be commitments and financial support from governments; this is not something the WHO can achieve on its own.

the resolution are fully implemented. Over the past half-century, the

dedication of a great many people has brought us a step closer to a world without leprosy, but our work is not yet done. In Bangladesh, the government has committed to achieving zero disability, zero discrimination and zero disease due to leprosy by 2030, following a National Leprosy Conference held in 2019, attended by Prime Minister Sheikh



A 14th century painting depicts two leprosy patients denied entrance to town.

can inhibit people from seeking treatment.

Since becoming the World Health Organization (WHO) Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination in 2001, I have visited some 120 countries and observed the situation on the ground for myself. This has led me to think of leprosy in terms of a motorcycle: the front wheel symbolises curing the disease, and the back wheel represents eliminating discrimination. Unless both wheels are turning together, we will not reach our ultimate goal of zero leprosy.

Concerning the rear wheel, I have worked hard to have leprosy recognised internationally as a human rights issue since the early 2000s when I first approached the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. One result has been the resolution on elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010. But the real measure of success will be when principles and guidelines accompanying

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

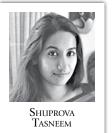
Hasina.

Especially now, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important that we do not lose sight of leprosy and that we continue to build on the progress we have made. Recalling how countries decided 30 years ago to unite in a fight against leprosy, let's redouble our efforts to vanquish a disease that has been a common enemy of humankind for millennia.

Yohei Sasakawa, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Flimination

Our students deserve better policies

What exactly is our long-term plan for recovering learning losses?



■ HE prolonged school closures in Bangladesh has put us at the top of yet another unpalatable list—according to UNICEF, we have had one of the world's longest full closure of educational institutions due to the pandemic.

Its data also suggests that, after Brazil, Bangladesh has the most number of students who have missed almost all classroom instruction time since March 2020. We are one of the few countries in the world that have not even partially opened schools during the course of the pandemic, for over an entire year. Research suggests that 5.92 million primary and secondary students in the country are facing learning losses as a result. An Education Watch report also detailed how almost 70 percent of students are not participating in distance learning.

Against this backdrop, one had hoped that the joint press conference by the two education ministers, held on Wednesday, would give the country's students some muchneeded relief by providing a concrete roadmap to the resumption of education in Bangladesh. Their announcements, however, were at best confusing, and at worst—incoherent, out of touch and devoid of any empathy for the students of Bangladesh. After 14 long months of school closures, our students deserved better than the confused plans that have been put forward

Let us start with the conflicting statements. It was suggested at the press conference that educational institutions might open on June 13 and in fact, current school closures have been extended to June 12 only. So will schools be opening then? Unlikely, since the education minister also said the ministry will be relying on the suggestions of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, which has recommended reopening educational institutions once the infection rate drops below five percent, which has again been on the rise for the last several days.

This also begs the question—if the ministry has been relying on the committee's recommendations, why did they not start planning to open schools when the positivity

UELLED by

legal measures

draconian

and administrative

rate started nearing five percent in January this year? Government data suggests that on January 12, the positivity rate was at exactly five percent. By January 19, the seven-day rolling average positivity rate was also five percent-meaning that by then, the average positivity rate had been at five percent for a week. It wasn't until late March that the positivity rate started climbing again. So why then, were students not given the opportunity to go back to school, at least for a month or two? For children who are at high risk of being pushed into child labour and/or child marriages, especially due to the economic

crisis that the poorest families are facing

of Secondary and Higher Education recently published guidelines on the health and safety measures that will be followed in this scenario, which includes measures to physically distance, the division of classes into smaller groups and the use of masks by all. As commendable as these suggestions are, how feasible are they, especially since, according to the Obhibhabok Oikya Forum (a platform of guardians), there can be more than 80 children in one classroom? Will temporary classrooms be set up elsewhere? Will teachers' capacity be improved, will teaching assistants be hired? No information has been shared on how these plans are actually going to be



Nayeem, a student of class-III, smiles as he carries his basket of cigarettes and betel leaves on the streets of the capital's Mugda. With his school closed since the start of the outbreak, the eight-year-old has been selling his wares on the streets to contribute to his family's income. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

during the pandemic, any opportunity to make up for learning losses (and access the school meals initiative) would have been a welcome change.

This brings us to the next suggestion put forward in the press briefing regarding the plan for reopening schools. According to a report in this daily, if/when schools do re-open, students of class five will attend classes six days a week whereas students of class one to four will go to school once a week. The Directorate

implemented.

If you are worried that not enough concern is being shown for our primary/secondary students, the ministry's plans for SSC and HSC students almost beggars belief. After over a year of being kept out of classrooms, the plan is that SSC and HSC students will attend 60 and 84 days of class respectively, six days a week, and then be given two weeks to study for their exams (with shortened syllabuses). So we still don't know when these classes will actually

resume, but when they do, SSC students will attend around 360 hours of schooling over 10 weeks, and HSC students will attend around 500 hours of the same over 14 weeks, and then they will get exactly 336 hours to absorb this information (assuming they don't take time to eat, sleep or relax over the two weeks of preparation time), after which they will sit for the most important exams of their adolescence, on which hinges their chances of getting into universities, following their ambitions and keeping their families happy/ solvent.

I wonder if the officials who came up with this plan went through such intensive and continuous work hours while formulating it. Perhaps they might have come up with a better plan if they did. However, given the very real impacts the pandemic is having on the mental health of young people-coupled with the report from a youth organisation in March this year suggesting that suicide rates have gone up by a staggering 44 percent in Bangladesh in 2020 when compared to 2019—one feels a little more time should have been spent on making provisions that actually take the wellbeing of students into account.

What is truly disappointing is that nothing was said in the press conference that we haven't already heard before. The authorities have had a year to think about how to safely reopen educational institutions, and this is the best that they could come up with, despite experts putting forward multiple short- and long-term recommendations regarding the situation. The most obvious of these has been the idea of opening schools in different districts in phases, depending on the local coronavirus situation

According to regional data from the IEDCR, 41 percent of all Covid-19 cases are in Dhaka (given the population density of this area, this isn't a surprise). The worst district after Dhaka is Chattogram, with around six percent of cases, followed by Cumilla and Narayanganj (both at 1.9 percent). This means that every other district in the country holds less than two percent of total cases, and if you compare it to data from December 2020, you'll find that the situation really didn't change much in terms of district-wise distribution of Covid-19. Given this scenario, it is absolutely baffling why children across the country-especially those in remote/rural areas who are most

affected by the digital divide-are being held hostage simply because we are unable to get the coronavirus under control in the urban centres

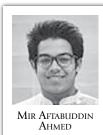
It is clear that there is a pressing need for decentralisation of education policy. The two ministries must end this one-size-fits-all approach and involve relevant stakeholdersschools, educators, local administration, NGOs, policy experts and most importantly, students and their families-to come up with a coherent learning recovery programme that goes beyond the bare minimum and actually comes up with approaches tailored to different localities and their contexts. At present, the government has no idea what the learning levels of SSC/HSC examinees even are. It is folly to come up with examination schedules without actually getting them back into classrooms first.

And beyond exams and learning recoveries, we must devise methods to get children who have already been lost to child marriage and employment during the pandemic, back into school. It is extremely concerning that, despite economic inequalities being further entrenched during the pandemic (CPD estimates over 16 million people have been further pushed into poverty), we are not seeing any real effort from the authorities to ensure this is not reflected in soaring rates of school dropouts.

When the health and safety restrictions were eased around August last year, most of our usual activities resumed. It was not just offices and markets that opened upweddings were attended, holidays were planned, and life went back to relative normalcy for most adults. So why then, did we shut our children out of their classrooms? What does this say about the value we place on education in this country? Through our desire to protect our children during the pandemic, have we inflicted greater long-lasting damage on their intellectual development and psychological well-being? As the main government bodies in charge of the education of our younger generations, we hope the two education ministries are pondering these questions as seriously as they ought to.

Shuprova Tasneem is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is @shuprovatasneem

Self-censorship and the media: Where are we heading?



harassment against seasoned Prothom Alo correspondent Rozina Islam, the journalistic community is fuming at the humiliating and

hasty actions of the health ministry—and by definition, frustrated at the supposed inaction of the government and the judiciary to address what in reality, is nothing less than an embarrassing move to stop a journalist from doing her professional duty. Senior newspaper editors have penned columns terming the arrest of Rozina Islam as a direct attack on the media—we unitedly share their concerns. Citizens have taken to social media to remind each other of the corruption unearthed by investigative reporters like Rozina during the pandemic. With the health ministry being at the centre of these graft scandals, questions naturally arise regarding the intention behind prosecuting Rozina—we share these apprehensions unanimously as well. The question which arises as a result is this: is Bangladesh drafting its eulogy of a free media? Rozina Islam is out on bail-yet she is in no way a free citizen. Across television talk shows, media forums and international organisations, one central concern is increasingly being expressed—the increasing usage of legal architectures that stem from the colonial era and a parallel environment of suppressing press freedom, which is widespread in Bangladesh. Whenever issues of concern are raised through the media, the state has developed a tendency to crush vocal opposition—usually citing national security concerns. The Digital Security Act for example, has been this government's primary Achilles Heel over the past couple of years—receiving

criticism even from its most ardent supporters. In the first five months of 2020, 400 cases were filed and 353 arrests made under the purview of this legal instrument.

Rozina Islam's employer Prothom Alo performed an in-depth analysis of 197 such cases and reported that a high majority of these were filed based on certain vague accusationsspecifically for making adverse remarks, defamation, sharing distorted images, spreading rumours and conspiring against the state. In a recent column for The Daily Star, academic CR Abrar cited the Prothom Alo report and stated that "in 80 percent of instances, the plaintiff was either leaders or activists of the ruling party or police". Abrar further pointed out that of "the 197 cases, 88 were filed by Awami League MPs, union council chairs and activists of youth, student and volunteer wings of the ruling party, and 70 more were filed by the police"-so either there is an egregious misuse of political power taking place, or if we are to believe the government, there are widespread anti-state activities being carried out against what is perhaps the strongest political regime this country has ever seen. I leave it up to the readers to decide which is true. The current circumstances with Rozina Islam in my opinion, is symbolic of the systematic degradation of press freedom and journalism in Bangladesh—and as a result, while we condemn her detention, harassment and persecution by state authorities, we are reminded of the sobering fact that her situation is but part of a wider state mobilised censorship of the press. From the highest level of the government, to ministers, ruling party MPs to civil servants running the bureaucracy, there is a tacit message given towards nonstate actors-if you cannot be with us, do not condemn us. If you cannot support us, do not criticise us. In a nutshell, the state has promoted self-censorship on part of the media by perpetuating an environment of judicial harassment and allowing for security forces as

well as grassroots Awami League activists, to tap into oppressive legal tools to nullify civic opposition. This perhaps has been expressed most aptly, by the harassment carried forth by health ministry officials against Rozina Islam.

Perhaps it is a good idea to take a step back, and define what the role of free media is in developing the foundations of a thriving democracy. The press and news media is often referred to as the Fourth Estate-through indirect social influences, the Fourth Estate has the unequivocal capacity of advocacy and the inherent ability to frame political Checks and balances are political system to ensure equal distribution of power, opportunity, information and wealth—and the media acts as a guardian to ensure accountability from those wielding authority on behalf of the people. If you have an absence or deficiency in sustainable democratic exercises between political parties and in the wider public system in a society for whatever reason, the media steps in to don the role of a de facto challenger which ensures that the government of the day does not become tyrannical or dictatorial-guaranteeing that the mandate and consent of voters are considered in policymaking. Therefore in no way, should the media be an ally of either this government or of any other regimes in principle—that simply is not their role. Yes they support, yes they remind, yes they stand with you during periods of national crisis-but they are not your unwavering and unquestioning friend. And they should not be punished for not being so. In the recent past, there has been an inclination by sycophants of the ruling party to invalidate accusations made against the government, by suggesting that the media should not put their energy in solely criticising the government—but should simultaneously market the successes of this regime. I disagree-the party in power has its army of marketing strategists who have

successfully and to the fullest of their abilities, been able to promote the developmental agendas and achievements of the government. They have done so in a relatively protected digital and political space, free from political harassment and state persecution-on the other end however, with each passing day one sees a smaller space for formal dissent to take place. It is here where today's media should ideally step in—and remind the government of their failures. And failures

In the recent past, there

political rivals-neither is it accurate to suggest that media personalities are fully immune from having their own skeletons. However, a cautious media which is being harassed using this country's judicial system, is practicing self-censorship in its publications-this, no editor, senior reporter or average citizen will deny. That should be our primary concern as readers and supporters of a free press. It is not a matter of national pride to see Bangladesh being ranked 152nd out of 180 countries in the 2021 World Press Freedom Index—neither is it acceptable to see a senior female journalist who has championed transparency, accountability and the concept of open government, be harassed for doing her professional job. Rumours have circulated regarding the socalled sensitive information that Rozina Islam supposedly acquired on her phone prior to being arrested. I end this piece by asking a series of questions in this regard—if this document was so confidential, why was it left unprotected in the room of a mid-level health ministry official? On the basis of what law was Rozina kept in a confined space by health ministry officials for close to six hours and harassed by civil servants? Who gave who the right to seize Rozina's cell-phone? What message is the state giving to Bangladeshis during their Golden Jubilee celebrations by tapping into the Official Secrets Act for the first time in the country's independent history, to make a reactionary case against a journalist? And of courseshould Rozina Islam be provided monetary compensation for being harassed by the very officials that she is trying to hold accountable, at a time when corruption in the health ministry is rampant? If the contexts centring around Sagor-Runi, Mushtaq Ahmed, Kajol and most recently Rozina, does not concern us as citizens, what will?

has been an inclination by sycophants of the ruling party to invalidate accusations made against the government, by suggesting that the media should not put their energy in solely criticising the government—but should simultaneously market the successes of this regime.

will continue to be present-we are not a utopian wonderland and Rozina Islam's investigative pieces on Prothom Alo and the kind of journalism she represents, provides the country and its government to mend what is wrong and progress. And therefore the space and opportunity for free thinking and dissent, cannot and must not be side-lined by any political regime.

No political expert in Bangladesh will suggest that the media in its totality, is acting as a vessel on behalf of Awami League's

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really does count.)

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THURSDAY'S ANSWERS

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City

NEWS

Doctor dies

FROM PAGE 12

in the port city early yesterday. He was 69, said Mujibul Haque Khan, president of BMA, Chattogram chapter.

Harun was a student of 15th batch of MBBS at Chattogram Medical College, he said, adding, he was president of Chattogram chapter of Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (DAB), a pro-BNP doctors' organisation. He was also an advisor of Chattogram city unit BNP.

Harun tested positive for Covid-19 on May 12 and recovered from it on May 22, but had been suffering from post Covid-19 complications, said Mujibul, adding, as his condition deteriorated, he was taken to life support at a private hospital in the city where he breathed his last around 3:00am.

He was also the founding managing director of Chevron Clinical Laboratory in Chattogram.

500 meters

FROM PAGE 12 in Kalapara upazila, have been damaged.

Three kilometre banks of different rivers were devoured by the sea while 1.5 km of the river bank protection has been destroyed, he said.

The higher authorities have been informed about the damages and necessary measures will be taken if a fund is allocated for the repair, he added.

Rangabali upazila, an isolated island, has no embankment for protecting its several chars including Char Anda, Chalitabunia and Nayar Char. As a result, these coastal areas are always inundated by tidal water.

Due to the effect of cyclone Yaas, the tidal water gushed in these areas and flooded the croplands, houses and roads, causing suffering to six lakh residents.

A hotel, built on the beach on the west side of Zero Point, has also collapsed. At least 20 fishermen's houses on the west side of the hotel have been flooded due to the tidal surge, said fisherman Sumon Sheikh.

At least 200 temporary shops in the Zero Point area have disappeared following the impact of "Yass".

In this regard, Mayor of Kuakata municipality Anwar Hossain said, the impact of cyclone "Yaas" was more than last year's cyclone Ampan.

Motaleb Sharif, general secretary of the Kuakata Hotel-Motel Owners Association, said the cyclone had damaged Kuakata tourist area.

Permanent barricades need to be built on an emergency basis to protect Kuakata from tidal surges, he said.

If it's damaged further, domestic and foreign tourists may lose their interest in visiting the spot, he added.

Patuakhali-4 lawmaker Mahibbur Rahman visited the devastated area of Kuakata yesterday afternoon. He said permanent measures were being taken to protect Kuakata from natural disasters.





A person holds a sign as demonstrators participate in an anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine protest, amid the spread of the covid-19, in London, Britain, yesterday.

Vietnam detects

FROM PAGE 12

discovered a new variant that is a mix of India and UK ones," Nguyen Thanh Long was quoted as saying.

"More specifically, it is an Indian variant with mutations that originally belong to the UK variant," he said. VnExpress quoted Long as saying Vietnam would announce the newly discovered variant to the world soon.

Vietnam had previously reported seven virus variants: B.1.222, B.1.619, D614G, B.1.1.7 (the UK variant), B.1.351, A.23.1 and B.1.617.2 (the Indian variant).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified four variants of SARS-CoV-2 of global concern. These include variants that emerged first in India, in Britain, in South Africa and in Brazil.

Officials at the WHO did not immediately respond to a request for comment regarding the new variant identified in Vietnam.

Laboratory cultures of the new variant, which is much more transmissable than the previously known types, revealed that the virus replicated itself very quickly, explaining why so many new cases appeared in different locations in a short period, Long was quoted as saying.

The Southeast Asian country has registered 6,396 coronavirus cases so far, with 47 deaths.

6 AL activists FROM PAGE 12

PHOTO: REUTERS

Justice

followers brought out a procession at Ward 9 under Bashurhat municipality, a chase and counter-chase ensued between them and the followers of AL's Bashurhat upazila unit Organising Secretary Mizanur Rahman Badal, police said, quoting locals as saying.

At one stage, both groups clashed and shots were reportedly fired, police said. No one from Badal's group was injured, added police.

Mir Jahedul Haque, officer-incharge of Companyganj Police Station, said one of the six activists was sent to Dhaka as his condition was critical while the rest were undergoing treatment at Companyganj Upazila Health Complex.

Both groups blamed each other for the violence.

Covid origin

FROM PAGE 12

emergencies chief Michael Ryan told reporters.

"This whole process is being poisoned by politics," he warned.

US President Joe Biden this week ordered the US intelligence community to investigate whether the Covid-19 virus first emerged in China from an animal source or from a laboratory accident.

The move hints at growing impatience with waiting for a conclusive WHO investigation into how the pandemic that has killed more than 3.5 million people worldwide began.

During an ongoing meeting of WHO member states, European

Transcript of Dhaka massacre

FROM PAGE 12 88: I believe only in one thing - 300 killed. Over.

Control: Yes, I agree with you. That's much easier. Nothing asked nothing done. You don't have to explain anything. Once again, well done. Once again I would like to give you shabash to all the boys..

77: Latest from 88 - that he is making progress. But there are so many buildings that he has to reduce each one in turn. He has so far suffered no casualties but there is firing against him. He is using everything he has got. Over.

Control: Tell him that his big brothers (artillery support) will also be coming shortly, I hope. So those can be utilised for knocking down the buildings. Now on the other side. I think Liaqat and Iqbal (students' dormitory) is now quiet....

(the Control: From Imam

Now, with the burdensome legal

drugs trade to stay afloat.

FROM PAGE 12

commanding officer) regarding all Bangladesh flags or black flags. Owners of buildings flying these must be warned to remove them at once otherwise they will be persecuted. Road blocks anywhere will be a criminal offence. Anyone seen indulging in these must be shot at sight. Houses and buildings on either side will be demolished.

88: Wilco. Anything else? Over.

Control: Imam is now with Imam 26. If you need further assistance in any matter you can let him know. Regarding the Buxer (demolition squad) elements. They have started from their base position and will be able to help you immediately after first light to help demolish all the obstacles in front of you. Over.

Control: What about the People's Daily (the Daily People newspaper)? Over

1,61,323 accused in 2018.

expenses of three cases and growing next year, till November 2019, was

"Burdened with debt and to meet to be named, said they have been

debt, he chose to continue in the 1,21,257, data showed.

26: Blasted. I say again, blasted.

The number of cases recorded the

Our two men seriously wounded have March fighting. been evacuated. Control: Any approximation of the

other side's casualties? Over. 26: No, it's difficult to judge at the moment. Places are on fire or have been completely destroyed.

Control: Have you done away with police lines also? Over. 26: Police lines are on fire. Over.

Control: Good show. Out. JUSTICE ABU SAYEED CHOWDHURY AT UN

The Pakistan government notified the United Nations in the previous week that it wanted Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury taken off the prestigious Human Rights Commission where he had been named before the crisis. and talked to delegates in their offices and told them his version of the

Range, which has 17 districts including Dhaka and Gazipur, shows the period of time an accused spent in jail varied widely within the districts under its

A police official, preferring not jurisdiction.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist

He said during an interview that

he would fight to keep his seat on the

commission with one aim in mind:

"I want to be able to in the United

Nations forum tell the world how the

Pakistani government of President

Yahya Khan committed atrocities

unparalleled in history against the

Chowdhury declared. He argued that

since the council had confirmed his

designation, the council would have

'I still consider myself a member

people of East Pakistan.

sajen1986@gmail.com

of the commission."

For instance, the accused who were offence. "I can practically see genuine

legal procedures should be more stringent, he added.

The Narcotics Control Act 2018, for instance, did not make the possession and sale of narcotics a non-bailable

Vicious cycle on with drug cases rising

to decide on his removal and that he was entitled to a hearing. Justice Chowdhury had been active in Britain to rally support for the cause

among the 100,000 Bangalees living In due course, the government said it would offer a successor. However, there. Justice Chowdhury turned up at UN and researcher. He can be contacted at

FROM PAGE 12

The BNP said all programmes will be arranged maintaining health safety rules due to the pandemic situation.

Zia, who founded Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1978, was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army officers at Chattogram Circuit House on May 30, 1981.

In observance of the day, black flags will be hoisted atop the offices of BNP and its associated bodies at 6:00am today. Besides, party flags will be flown at half mast.

Senior BNP leaders will place wreaths at Zia's grave at the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the morning. Yesterday, the party organised a

virtual discussion marking the day. BNP Secretary General Mirza

Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and standing committee members will distribute food among the destitute at 80 spots of the capital today and tomorrow. The programmes will be arranged by Dhaka North and South units of BNP.

The party's all district, city and thana units is observing the day holding various programmes, including virtual discussions.

Einstein's

FROM PAGE 12

an intense bidding war, they said, which lasted for five days before the letter sold for three times the expected price to an anonymous collector.

The equation – energy equals mass times the speed of light squared - revolutionised physics by demonstrating that time is not absolute and that mass and energy are equivalent.

Although he first published the equation in 1905 after developing his theories on special and general relativity, Einstein included it in his letter to Polish American physicist Ludwik Silberstein, a critic and challenger of some of his work, in October 1946.

He wrote: "Your question can be answered from the E = mc2 formula, without any erudition," in the letter written on Princeton University letterhead, according to a translation from the original German provided by RR Auction.

The page-long letter remained in Silberstein's personal archives until they were sold by his descendants and acquired by RR Auction.

regular lawyer's fees at each hearing date of these cases, I chose the easy way to earn money -- that is by drug peddling," he said.

This, however, only led to more cases -- trapping him in a vicious cycle of jail, debt, and return to peddling drugs.

He said he has to appear before court on an average five days a month, to fight the eight pending cases against him.

RISE IN NARCOTICS CASES

Kamal is one of many petty drug peddlers tied up in these narcoticsrelated cases, which have been rising in the country this past decade.

During a virtual meeting of the Narcotics Control National Advisory Committee on December 28 last year, the director general of the narcotics control department said over four lakh narcotics-related cases were pending.

Although the Covid-induced shutdown last year saw a drop in most other crimes, there was little improvement in the situation of narcotics-related crimes, according to law enforcement data.

Over 80 percent of cases filed with 50 police stations under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in March this year were related to drugs recovery.

According to the combined data of the law enforcement agencies, 29,662 narcotics cases were filed against 37,508 accused in 2010. In comparison, these figures are around four times higher eight years later -- with 1,19,878 yearly cases and

struggling with rising cases as most narcotics traders they capture get bail within a short period of time and reenter the drugs trade.

Another petty drug peddler, also in his 30s like Kamal, requesting anonymity, said once a person gets involved in the narcotics trade, it is not easy for him/her to quit as big drug dealers depend on peddlers.

Investigators too said big drug dealers who remain out of the police net initially spend their own money for legal expenses if their trusted peddlers are arrested.

"Once they [petty drug peddlers] come out of jail, they are again compelled to re-engage in the trade to pay back the money," said an officer--charge of a Dhaka police station.

"It's like a vicious cycle. If anyone tries to get back to normal life, they have no options," he said, requesting anonymity.

Contacted, Director General of Department of Narcotics Control Muhammed Ahsanul Jabbar said they are planning to start a project for the rehabilitation of petty drug sellers, in cooperation with the Department of Youth Development and the Department of Social Services, to help them re-integrate into mainstream society.

ILL-EQUIPPED LEGAL SYSTEM Experts and law enforcers said the age-old criminal justice system is insufficiently equipped to tackle the rise of narcotics-related crimes.

A recent police study of Dhaka

caught with 10 or less vaba pills in 18 cases filed in Narayanganj, spent an average five days in jail, while the accused in 20 similar cases filed in Shariatpur spent an average 8.94 days

in jail. The Dhaka Range conducted an analysis of 6,443 yaba-related cases filed in 13 districts between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020 to assess the average period of time the accused in these cases were in jail.

The cases were classified in eight categories based on the amount of seized yaba. Cases filed for the seizure of less than 10 yaba pills fall under the first category while cases lodged for the recovery of 1,000 or more pills fall under the eighth category.

Sociologist Dr M Khurshed Alam, said many of the country's laws were not enacted considering the overall damage done by a crime.

"The laws needed to be updated considering how much damage a particular offence is causing to society, life and property," said Khurshed, also the chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of Social Research Trust.

"Say, for example, 10 yaba pills are recovered from one peddler which he or she is distributing to 10 people and will continue to do that every day. It has a long-lasting and multiplier effect," he said.

Drugs are not consumed alone, he said, with the user forming a group and this leading to the creation of other groups. So, the legal steps and

offenders coming out on bail some days after [their] arrest," he said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu said courts usually order two days in jails for each yaba pill recovered.

"It varies from court to court. For small cases like the seizure of 10 pieces, courts grant bail in five to eight days," he added.

"There are no set rules. It is completely the court's jurisdiction."

Deputy Inspector General of Dhaka Range Habibur Rahman said it is up to the judiciary whether to grant bail or not. "When anyone commits a crime, we bring them under the law," he added.

The government enacted the Narcotics Control Act 2018 which was passed in parliament on October 27, 2018 with a provision of either the death sentence or life imprisonment as punishment for producing, trading, and using 200g or more of yaba, or more than 25g of heroin and cocaine.

According to the new law, the punishment for transporting, trading, storing, producing, processing, applying, and using 200 grams of yaba, or its principal ingredient amphetamine, is the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Yaba and amphetamines, which were not mentioned in the Narcotics Control Act 1990, were included in the list of Category A narcotics in the new law, which came into effect on December 27, 2018.

LSD mailed to Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

Law enforcers arrested Sadman Sakib Rupol, Ashab Wadud Turjo and Adib Ashraf -- members of an LSD selling syndicate -- from the capital's Dhanmondi and Lalmatia on Wednesday night with 200 pieces of LSD blotting paper.

The three are now behind bars.

Police said they were looking for the syndicate's fourth member who first came in contact with one "Team" in the Netherlands. The syndicate used to collect LSD from the European country.

After buying LSD blotting papers for Tk 800-1,000 each from the Netherlands, the syndicate used to sell those in Bangladesh for Tk 3,000 to Tk 5,000 each, according to detectives.

Mishu Biswas, additional deputy commissioner of the DB's Ramna DB official added.

division, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have some information about the syndicate and we are now analysing it." Requesting anonymity, a high official of DB said they have some information about two other syndicates involved in LSD trade in Bangladesh and that they kept those under surveillance in order to bring them to book.

Asked if there was any link between the three syndicates, the official said, "We have come to know that the person named "Team" used to smuggle and sell LSD blotting papers to two syndicates."

The syndicates used to pay "Team" through PayPal.

"But we are yet to find any internal link between the three syndicates," the

HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

According to officials, the DB has of the users.

to receive orders through a Facebook

About taking actions against the LSD users, DB ADC Mishu Biswas said

they were yet to identify any regular user of the drug.

Many users had taken the drug earlier, but they don't use it now, he said. "We are analysing their activities and once the analysis is complete, we may be able to clearly say about the users."

The seizure of 200 pieces of LSD blotting paper on Wednesday is not the first instance of seizure of the drug in Bangladesh. On July 15, 2019, Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) had seized 46 pieces of LSD blotting paper and arrested two people from the capital's Kafrul.

A case was filed with Kafrul Police Station regarding the incident. The DNC submitted the charge sheet in the case on February 5, 2020.

The case is now under trial, said DNC officials.

Union countries and a range of others also pressed for clarity on the next steps in the organisation's efforts to solve the mystery, seen as vital to averting future pandemics.

But the UN health agency said earlier Friday it was still waiting for recommendations from a team of WHO technical experts on how to move forward.

The WHO managed to send a team of independent, international experts to Wuhan in January, more than a year after Covid-19 first surfaced there in late 2019, to help probe the pandemic origins.

in their long-delayed But eport published in late March, the international team and their Chinese counterparts drew no firm conclusions, instead ranking a number of hypotheses according to how likely they believed they were.

The report said the virus jumping from bats to humans via an intermediate animal was the most probable scenario, while a theory involving the virus leaking from a laboratory was "extremely unlikely".

Long dismissed as a right-wing conspiracy theory, and vehemently rejected by Beijing, the idea that Covid-19 emerged from a lab leak in Wuhan in China has been gaining increasing momentum in the United States.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 3,524,960 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1000 GMT yesterday.

INDIA POSTS LOWEST DAILY CASES IN 45 DAYS

On Friday, 12,237 new deaths and 524,350 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were India with 3,617 new deaths, followed by Brazil with 2,371 and United States with 774.

India yesterday reported 173,790 new coronavirus infections during the previous 24 hours, its lowest daily cases in 45 days, while 3,617 deaths were reported.

The South Asian nation's tally of infections now stands at 27.7 million, with the death toll at 322,512, health ministry data showed.

Malaysia reported 9,020 new coronavirus cases yesterday, the highest daily toll since the start of the pandemic and the fifth straight day of record new infections. 98 death were reported in the last 24 hours, also a new record.

Upon receiving an order for LSD either through social media or an online messaging application, narcotics dealers used to deliver the drug to the buyers' addresses. They received cash

on delivery. so far found around 650 users who used to collect LSD from the arrestees. Detectives have already prepared a list

The syndicates always used to carry LSD blotting papers inside books or magazines to dodge the law enforcers, the officials added.

The four-member syndicate used group and a messaging app.

e-mail: sports@thedailystar.net DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 30, 2021, JAISHTHA 16, 1428 BS

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2 French Open 2021 **First Round** Live from 3:50 pm

TEN 2 International Friendly Switzerland vs USA Live from 12:15 am (Monday)

NADAL, DJOKOVIC chase history

AFP, Paris



history at the French Open as Roland Garros embraces a new but eerily empty era of night time tennis

Rafael Nadal and

Novak Djokovic will

set their sights on

more Grand Slam

A 14th title in Paris for Nadal would take him to a record-setting 21st major, surpassing the mark he shares with Roger Federer who has already written off his hopes of adding to his lone success in the French capital back in 2009.

Djokovic, the champion in 2016, can move to 19 Grand Slam titles with victory.

That would make the world number one the first man in over half a century to win all four majors on multiple occasions.

Only one of the sport's 'Big Three' will make the June 13 final after the draw placed top seed Djokovic, third seed Nadal and eighth-seeded Federer in the same half of the draw.

Djokovic That means is scheduled to face Federer in the



quarterfinals before a potential semifinal blockbuster with Nadal.

"I see it as completely normal. I'm not worried about it. I have a a potential match versus Djokovic,"

-- Roy Emerson and Rod Laver of lot of work in front of me to play Australia. Laver's achievement came back in 1969. Djokovic tackles 66th-ranked



Men's champion Rafael Nadal wears a broad grin as he stands next to his own statue at the Roland Garros ahead of the French Open while his great rival Novak Djokovic (bottom) happily obliges to be in a selfie with Federico Coria after vanquishing the Argentine in a preparatory tournament. (R) Meanwhile, women's champion Iga Swiatek was in jolly mood during a training session.

clay court titles this season in Barcelona and Rome. At last year's delayed Roland

Garros, Nadal swept past Djokovic

It was Nadal's 100th win at the

Nadal, who defeated Djokovic in

Giving Djokovic hope, however,

the knowledge that he was

He is also a four-time runner-

responsible for one of Nadal's losses

in Paris, in the 2015 quarterfinals.

up although three of those defeats

in the championship match came

managed to win all four of the

Slams on more than one occasion

Only two men have previously

ournament against just two losses

since his 2005 title-winning debut.

the Rome final, starts his campaign

against Alexei Popyrin of Australia,

in straight sets in the final.

the world number 62.

against the Spaniard.

Tennys Sandgren of the United States in his first round match while Federer, playing the tournament for the first time since 2019, begins against a qualifier. Federer, with his 40th birthday

fast approaching, remains the sentimental favourite but his priority will be an assault on Wimbledon where he has been champion eight times.

"I'm not so sure in the last 50 years of the French Open, somebody just rocks up at nearly 40 years old, being out for a year and a half, and wins everything straight," said Federer after losing his only clay court match this year in Geneva last week.

Of the chasing pack, two-time runner-up Dominic Thiem is low on form and confidence. A run to the Madrid semifinals

was followed by a straight sets defeat to Cameron Norrie in his Lyon opener.

Medvedev has yet to win a match at Roland Garros in four attempts.

In Rome, he fell at the first hurdle and half-jokingly pleaded with the referee to disqualify him such is his dislike for clay.

World number five Stefanos Tsitsipas is the most likely man to upset the odds of Nadal or Djokovic again taking the title.

The 22-year-old Greek won the prestigious Monte Carlo clay court title in April, had match point before losing the Barcelona final to Nadal and then lifted the Lyon trophy.

He has beaten Nadal on clay in Madrid in 2019 and stretched Djokovic to five sets in the 2020 French Open semifinals.

This year's Roland Garros will be the second taking place under the shadow of the coronavirus.

Just over 5,000 fans a day will be allowed on site until June 9 when

Swiatek serene as questions linger over rivals

Afp, Paris

Iga Swiatek heads into the French Open trying to become the first player since Serena Williams at Wimbledon in

2016 to successfully defend women's Grand Slam singles title, with injuries and poor clay form clouding the hopes of several of her chief rivals.

Following her victory in Rome, culminating in a ruthless 46-minute takedown of Karolina Pliskova, Poland's first Grand Slam singles champion returns to Roland Garros just seven months on with a far greater weight of expectation.

Swiatek, who turns 20 next week, was the lowest-ranked woman, then 54th in the world, to win the French Open, shifted from its traditional May-June slot last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like Jelena Ostapenko in 2017, it was her first title at tour level. Unlike the Latvian, who has struggled to reproduce her best tennis regularly, Swiatek appears better equipped to stay at the top.

She entered the top 10 for the first time last week, but has to face close friend Kaja Juvan of Slovenia in her opener in Paris.

"We are friends, but on court everybody is equal. I'm actually good at forgetting that I'm playing against my best friend," Swiatek said Friday.

In theory, this French Open could be the chance for Naomi Osaka to step up on clay. However, all seven of her career titles, including her four majors, have come on hard surfaces.

The Japanese star was knocked out early in both Madrid and Rome. Her best performance at Roland Garros in four attempts is the third round.

preparations Her have been overshadowed by her decision to boycott all press conferences at the tournament, fearing their effects on her mental health.

The 23-year-old's gesture was lambasted as a "phenomenal mistake" by French tennis chief Gilles Moretton.

Osaka begins against Romania's 63rdranked Patricia Maria Tig. Ashleigh Barty vacated her Roland Garros

title after skipping much of the 2020 season citing health and travel risks.

The world number one has won three titles this year and reached the Madrid final, but an arm injury at the Italian Open forced her out of the guarterfinals and cast doubt over her fitness in Paris.

"I think coming back to the site here at Roland Garros is obviously pretty special, pretty cool," said Barty who tackles Bernarda Pera of the United States in the first round.

"A lot of it I also don't remember and feels like it was such a long time ago. It's certainly a clean slate for us this week.

As for Serena Williams, now 39, she has won just one of three matches on clay this month having returned after nearly three months away following the Australian Open.

The American remains on 23 Grand Slam titles, one behind Margaret Court's all-time record, and has not gone beyond the last 16 in Paris since losing the 2016 final to Garbine Muguruza



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



There are no big or small teams in this format'

upcoming

SPORTS REPORTER



tomorrow, star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who will lead Mohammedan Sporting Club this season, is willing to shift focus fully from international cricket to the domestic T20 competition.

With

the

edition of Dhaka Premier

League set to begin from

The star all-rounder has also chosen to skip the Pakistan Super League despite being snapped up by Lahore Qalandars in last month's auction.

"Obviously our first target will be to gain momentum from the first game and then gradually move forward match by match because it's a long tournament. It will be very important to win the first game because T20 cricket is all about momentum. There are no big or small teams in this format. Whoever plays better cricket will win," Shakib said during the unveiling of Mohammedan's jersey at a city hotel yesterday.

Among others featuring for Mohammedan this season are Taskin Ahmed, Shamsur Rahman, Abu Hider, Abu Jayed and Shuvagata Hom.

rivalries, Shakib was asked whether he is looking forward to the big match against Abahani.

"I am sure all the club officials and fans, not just me, are waiting for the clash against Abahani. We are all excited. But our main goal is to get those two points from each game regardless of the opponent we play," he said.

Shakib also addressed his below-par performances with the bat in the threematch ODI series against Sri Lanka, with the left-hander scoring just 19 runs in three games and picking up three wickets.

"You have all witnessed what I did in the series. Obviously it did not go the way I expected but it can happen in cricket. I have to make sure that I don't repeat that again."

The star all-rounder also believed a maiden ODI series win against Sri Lanka was something the Tigers could be proud

"It feels good to win a first-ever series against Sri Lanka but it would have been great if we could have won the series 3-0. Having said that, if Sri Lanka also played their best cricket the result would have gone the other way. But overall we all should be proud of the result and should In the context of historic sporting move forward from there," he added.

A mixed but encouraging bag

SPORTS REPORTER



The 2-1 ODI series win over Sri Lanka not only was Bangladesh's maiden bilateral ODI series

win against the nation, but also managed to vault the Tigers to the top of the ICC ODI Super League. The Tigers' think-tank was seeking improvement in quite a few areas before the start of the series but despite the result, there are still aspects which Bangladesh will really want to work on. Here, the Daily Star tries to assess the Tigers' performance in all three departments in the just-concluded series against Sri Lanka.

OPENING FAILURE

As in the past, the Tigers' batting department remained the biggest cause for concern in all three games against Sri Lanka. The openers are yet to add a 50-plus partnership in their last nine games, including the series against Sri Lanka when they put on 5, 15, and 2. Bangladesh are also yet to find a settled opening partner for Tamim Iqbal, with Liton Das continuing his poor run in the series series with scores of 0 and 25 MAJESTIĆ MUSHFIQUR before being dropped for the third Mushfiqur Rahim was the anchor

game. Naim Sheikh, who replaced of Bangladesh's batting department that Bangladesh could post enough Liton for the third ODL also failed to utilise the opportunity and scored just one.

OFF-COLOR SHAKIB

A lot was expected of Shakib Al Hasan, who returned to his usual number three position against

TOP THREE RUN-GETTERS FOR BANGLADESH										
Player	Match	Runs	HS	Avg	100	50				
Mushfiqur Rahim	3	237	125	79.00	1	1				
Mahmudullah Riyad	3	148	54	49.33	0	2				
Tamim Iqbal	3	82	52	27.33	0	1				
TOP THREE WICKET-TAKERS FOR BANGLADESH										
Player	Match	Overs	Wkts	BBI	Avg	Eco				
Mehedi Hasan Miraz	3	30	7	4/30	15.14	3.5				
Mustafizur Rahman	3	25	6	3/16	16.16	3.8				

Sri Lanka after a phenomenal performance in the 2019 ICC World Cup. But the star cricketer failed to live up to the billing, scoring 15, 0 was economical with the ball, he managed to pick just three wickets in as many games.

across the three games. In fact, the wicketkeeper-batsman waged a lone battle to secure the series victory. The right-hander was the top rungetter in the series with 237, which included one hundred and a fifty.

Mushfigur rescued the Tigers twice

Match	Runs	HS	Avg	100	50
}	237	125	79.00	1	1
}	148	54	49.33	0	2
3	82	52	27.33	0	1
	VET_TAU		BANGLA	חבכח	
	CREI-IAN	IENS FUN	DANGLA	ЛЕЭП	
Natch	Overs	Wkts	RRI	Ava	Fcon

Player	Match	Overs	Wkts	BRI	Avg	Econ
Mehedi Hasan Miraz	3	30	7	4/30	15.14	3.53
Mustafizur Rahman	3	25	6	3/16	16.16	3.88
Taskin Ahmed	3	26	4	4/46	33.75	5.19

alongside Mahmudullah Riyad, when Bangladesh were struggling on 99 for four and 77 for four in the first two ODIs respectively. In and 4. Although the star cricketer the first game, Mushfigur scored 84 off 87 balls before registering his eighth ODI hundred in the second game. Mushfiqur was the last batsman to be dismissed for the Tigers but not before he ensured

also played his part and scored two fifties in three games. FIELDING WORRIES CONTINUE Prior to the start of the series, skipper Tamim stated that they wanted to improve fielding and catching, which have been below-

par over the past few series. Although the fielding was decent in he first two games, the Tigers were gain guilty of dropping catches in he third and final ODI. Fielders ropped three chances to send back ankan skipper Kusal Perera, who vent on to register a century and in his side the game.

runs on the board. Mahmudullah

BOWLERS JOIN THE PARTY

Bangladesh's bowling department has remained the most consistent area of the team throughout the series, successfully defending scores of 257 and 246. Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz was the most successful bowler for Bangladesh with seven wickets and he jumped to second position in the ICC's ODI Bowlers Rankings. Apart from Miraz, pacers like Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed showed good skill alongside young Shoriful Islam, who made his ODI debut in this series



BOOTERS BEGIN TRAINING IN QATAR

All 23 members of the national football team along with the coaching staff tested negative in Covid tests yesterday, following their arrival in Qatar on Friday. The team had a gym session at the hotel in the morning before getting to the university ground for a practice session. The booters, who are currently bottom of their group, will play their three remaining World Cup qualifying matches on June 3, 7 and 15 against Afghanistan, India and Oman respectively.

The Daily Star



City

Vicious cycle on with drug cases rising

Petty peddlers keep returning to the trade

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Twelve years ago, a case was first filed against Kamal after he was arrested with 10 yaba pills.

Since then, the resident of Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, a notorious drug hotspot in the capital, has been charged with a total of 18 narcotics cases.

A habitual drug peddler, Kamal (whose real name has been withheld) claimed that the system leaves little scope for rehabilitation.

For that first case, Kamal's impoverished family had to borrow Tk 10,000 from a local lender at a high interest rate to pay the lawyer's fees and other expenses to bail him out of jail.

"I had decided to give up yaba peddling after coming out on bail in the first case and worked hard to pay back the loan," he told The Daily Star recently.

But, around nine months later, a police officer put 20 yaba pills in his pocket and arrested him, he alleged.

Another case was filed against him and again his family borrowed money to get him out of jail. He was able to obtain bail after one month of his arrest.

Five days after getting out of jail the second time, Kamal said he was arrested again with 15 yaba pills in his possession.

He said he first entered the illegal trade after losing his job as a sales assistant at a fish shop in Mohammadpur. SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



The DND canal in Narayanganj's Shiddhirganj has been turned into a landfill, blocking the canal entirely. Local influential people have built shops and other structures on the almost 1.5km long stretch. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Today Zia's 40th death anniversary Unв, Dhaka

The BNP is observing the

40th death anniversary of its founder and former president Ziaur Rahman across the country today.

The party and its associated bodies have drawn up a 15-day programme to observe the death anniversary with due reverence.

The programmes began yesterday and will end on June 12.

The include events arranging virtual holding discussions, photo exhibitions and free medical camps, wearing black badges, publishing posters and supplements in newspapers and distributing food among the destitute.

Doctor dies

of post-Covid

complications

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

500 meters of Kuakata beach goes into sea

Yaas damages 56km of embankment in Patuakhali STAR REPORT

About 500 metres of Patuakhali's Kuakata beach, the lone tourist attraction of the district, was washed away due to the tidal surge caused by recent Cyclone Yaas.

Around 56 kilometres of the district's different flood control dykes have also been damaged. Water Development Board (WDB) said it would need Tk 53 crore to repair these dams.

Water was flowing 74 cm above the

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY Transcript of Dhaka massacre

MAY 30, 1971

Shamsuddoza Sajen

EVIDENCE OF TERROR ATTACK ON DHAKA Evidence became available which appeared to confirm that the Pakistan Army's operations in Dhaka on

March 25 were part of a well-organised plan devised to terrorise the inhabitants into submission. The evidence was a transcript of monitored radio messages passed between army units during the early hours of the attack. The transcript was now in the hands of the provisional government of Bangladesh, and copies were to be sent to the secretary general of the United Nations and all heads of government.

Here are some extracts from messages exchanged between

6 AL activists shot during infighting OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

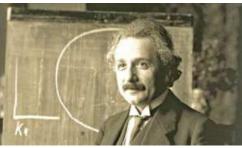
At least six Awami League

activists got shot yesterday evening in a reported clash between factions of the party in Companyganj, Noakhali. Police said Sabuj, 40,

Jisan, 23, Sani, 27, Delwar Hossain Suman, 27, Didar, 35, and Kanchan, 50, who are Quader Mirza's men, sustained bullet injuries and were taken to different hospitals.

According to police, Bashurhat Municipality

Einstein's E=mc2 letter fetches \$1.2*m*



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A handwritten letter penned by Albert Einstein



Association (BMA), Chattogram chapter, died of post Covid-19 complications at a hospital SEE PAGE 10 COL 1





danger level in the main rivers like Andhar Manik, Ramnabat and Payra rivers on May 26. But the water started to recede, our Patuakhali correspondent said.

Mohammad Halim Salehee, executive engineer, Patuakhali WDB, said 56 km of different embankments, including seven km of the most vulnerable dam in Laluar

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

control, the headquarters of General Tikka Khan, the military governor, and army units.

Control: Well done. What do you think would be the

approximate number of casualties at the university? 88: Wait. Approximately 300. Over.

Control: Well done. Three hundred killed? Anybody wounded or captured? Sitrep (situation report). Over.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Mayor Abdul Quader Mirza's men were marching in processions at different unions in Companyganj and Bashurhat municipalities around 7:00pm. "When Quader Mirza's SEE PAGE 10 COL 6 which includes his famous E = mc2 equation has fetched more than \$1.2m (£850,000) at auction.

The letter is one of only four known documents containing the equation in Einstein's own hand and the only one in a private collection, according to Boston-based auctioneers RR Auction.

The rarity of the handwritten calculation set off SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



People living in **Muradpur intersection** area of Chattogram city have to cross this dangerous trench by walking on planks, A lengthy work on the drainage there has forced the people of the neighbourhood take the risk every day. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Vietnam detects hybrid variant

Says the new Covid strain, a mix of Indian and UK variants, can spread faster by air Agencies

Vietnam health minister Nguyen Thanh Long yesterday said the country has detected a new variant of the coronavirus, a mix of the Indian and UK Covid-19 variants that spreads quickly by air, online newspaper VnExpress reported.

After successfully containing the coronavirus for most of last year, Vietnam is now battling an outbreak that is spreading more quickly.

Nearly 3,600 people have been infected in 31 of its 63 cities and provinces since late April, accounting for more than half of the country's total infections

"After running gene sequencing on newly detected patients, we have SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Covid origin search 'being poisoned by politics': WHO

Agencies

The World Health Organization has warned that efforts to uncover the Covid-19 pandemic's origins were being hampered by politics, insisting scientists needed space to work on solving the mystery.

"We would ask that we separate the science from the politics, and let us get on with finding the answers that we need in a proper, positive atmosphere," WHO SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



আমরা অতীব দুঃখের সাথে জানাচ্ছি যে, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রনালয়ের মাননীয় মন্ত্রী, ইডিসিএল পরিচালনা পর্ষদের মাননীয় চেয়ারম্যান জনাব জাহিদ মালেক, এমপি মহোদয়ের মাতা বেগম ফৌজিয়া মালেক, বয়সঃ ৮৬ গত ২৭-০৫-২০২১ইং তারিখ বৃহস্পতিবার একটি হাসপাতালে বার্ধক্যজনিত কারণে ইন্তেকাল করেন (ইন্না লিল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। আমরা **এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানি লিঃ** পরিবার মরহুমার মৃত্যুতে গভীরভাবে শোকাহত। পরম করুনাময় মহান আল্লাহর কাছে মরহুমার বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফিরাত কামনা করছি।

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