



LEGALISING BLACK MONEY

Kamal drops hints of continuation

The finance minister says govt will be able to implement the budget, achieve 7.2pc GDP growth target



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The controversial move to legalise untaxed money with ease, which was absent in Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's proposed fiscal measures for the next financial year, might continue, after all.

"If [the step] is profitable, we will try to continue it. We will see one more month before taking any decision," Kamal said at a post-budget media briefing yesterday.

The option to legalise untaxed income was always present in some form but in

June last year, Kamal had expanded the ambit for it.

At present, black money can be whitened by investing it in any sector and without facing any questions on the source of the funds. This opening is due to close at the end of the current fiscal year on June 30.

On May 19, Kamal said the opportunity would be there as long as undeclared income exists, drawing flak from economists and anti-graft campaigners.

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16 die at RMCH Covid unit in 24hrs

Bordering districts see spike in deaths, cases

SIXTEEN people died at the Covid unit of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday. The surge in deaths and positive cases was also reported in other bordering districts.

Countrywide, 34 more people died from Covid-19 in the 24 hours, says a press release of Directorate General of Health Services.

Of the dead in Rajshahi, 10 were Covid positive and six suspected Covid cases. The death toll was the highest at RMCH in a day. Of the deceased, nine were from Chapainawabganj, six from Rajshahi and one was from Naogaon.

In the last 12 days, 93 people died at the RMCH Covid unit. Fifty-eight

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A budget that forgot new poor exists

Says the CPD in its analysis of the proposed outlay for fiscal 2021-22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expectations were high that the proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22 would address the hardships of the sizeable population of new poor created by the pandemic.

But it failed on that count, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

"We have not seen any measure that will have any direct impact on the new poor," said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, at a media briefing to disclose the think-tank's analysis of the Tk 603,680 crore budget announced by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on Thursday.

About 20.5 percent of the population was already living in poverty and the pandemic added another 1.60 crore to the group, according to an estimate of the CPD in April. In the same month, another survey by



"We have not seen any measure that will have any direct impact on the new poor."

PROF. MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, CPD

the Power and Participation Research Centre and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development showed that the ongoing economic shock pushed 2.45 crore people into poverty even before the second wave of the pandemic hit.

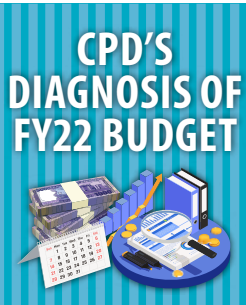
The World Bank also said Bangladesh's poverty rate jumped to 30 percent due to the pandemic.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics does not have the latest data on poverty; its most recent one dates back to 2019, when the poverty rate

was estimated to be 20.5 percent. "We have discussed a lot about the new poor and marginalised poor due to Covid-19 but their issues were not addressed in the budget," Rahman said at the briefing held at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.

The government has allocated Tk 107,610

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Failed to address the needs of new poor

Social safety net programme budget below average

No special fund for vaccine purchase

Not enough measures to create jobs lost

Education budget needed to be much bigger

Leading trade bodies welcome tax cuts

Say implementation is a major challenge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading business associations yesterday lauded the government's proposed budgetary measures, but pointed out that implementing those would be a major challenge.

The reaction came a day after Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal proposed the Tk 6,03,680 crore national budget, offering a cut of 2.5 percentage points in corporate taxes for listed and non-listed companies and tax exemptions for several sectors to stimulate investment in manufacturing.

In its reaction, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said the

proposed budget for the next fiscal year 2021-22 was courageous and forward-looking in many aspects, but its proper implementation would face major challenges.

The budget focuses on health, agriculture, human resources, rural development, job creation, and continuation of the stimulus packages, it said in a statement, adding that these steps were commendable.

However, the major challenges in proper implementation and ensuring the quality of public spending must be addressed if the nation is to obtain the full benefits of the proposed budgetary allocations and

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SINOPHARM VACCINE China voices annoyance at disclosure of sale price

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China has expressed annoyance over making public its offered selling price of Sinopharm vaccine to Bangladesh.

The two countries had signed a non-disclosure agreement guaranteeing that the selling price would not be disclosed.

"We have expressed

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The Louhajang river in Tangail's Khudirampur area is badly polluted due to discharge of untreated waste into the water body by local factories. Many rivers in the district have become highly polluted over the years. This pollution is causing serious damage to the life and livelihood of the local people. The photo was taken recently.

Tangail rivers in peril

Toxic industrial wastes polluting rivers, water bodies

MIRZA SHAKIL, TANGAIL

Several mills and factories with dyeing and printing units have long been polluting rivers and other water bodies in Tangail by dumping industrial waste into them.

The worst affected water bodies are the Bonshai river, the Jhenai river and the Sohagpara canal in Mirzapur upazila, and the Louhajang river in Sadar upazila.

As the rivers and canals became badly polluted by the untreated and harmful industrial wastes, aquatic life vanished from the water bodies.

The very rivers and water bodies that were supposed to be a blessing for the local people and the environment have become a curse.

According to the Tangail office of



Department of Environment (DoE), there are 14 mills and factories in Mirzapur upazila, including Gorai Industrial Area, with dyeing and printing units.

The mills and factories have Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs).

But locals allege that most of the mills and factories have not installed ETPs following rules and as per capacity and also that they do not run these properly.

Moreover, the ETPs were kept shut most of the time due to high costs.

Consequently, they dumped the untreated toxic industrial wastes into rivers and canals through pipelines.

"The installed ETPs are just an eye wash. The waters of the nearby rivers, canals and water bodies have been made poisonous due to dumping of untreated toxic industrial wastes," said Azad Rahman, a local rights activist and founder of Ideal Mirzapur, a social organisation.

"We have held various programmes protesting mindless river- and water pollution and also demanding action against the polluters but to no avail," Azad said.

Locals also allege that the polluters are influential and have managed to keep the authorities concerned at bay through bribes. The officials

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শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ
জীববৈচিত্র্যসমৃদ্ধ উন্নত পরিবেশ

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য ও প্রতিবেশ
সুরক্ষায় পরিপালনীয় বিধি-নিষেধ

বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিন সরকার ঘোষিত একটি প্রতিবেশগত সংকটাপন্ন এলাকা। অনিয়ন্ত্রিত পর্যটন এবং পর্যটকদের অসচেতনতা, দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীনতা, পরিবেশ এবং প্রতিবেশ বিরোধী আচরণের কারণে সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল প্রতিবেশ এবং জীববৈচিত্র্য এখন ধ্বংসের দ্বারপ্রান্তে উপনীত। দ্বীপের পরিবেশ, প্রতিবেশ ও বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য পুনরুদ্ধারসহ দ্বীপটিকে টিকিয়ে রাখার লক্ষ্যে পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ আইন ১৯৯৫ (সংশোধিত ২০১০)-এর ০৪ ধারার ক্ষমতাবলে এ দ্বীপে ভ্রমণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নলিখিত কার্যক্রমসমূহ নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করা হলোঃ

- ▶ দ্বীপের সৈকতে সাইকেল, মটর সাইকেল, রিক্সা, ভ্যানসহ সকল প্রকার যান্ত্রিক ও অযান্ত্রিক বাহন চালানো;
- ▶ দ্বীপের সৈকত, সমুদ্র এবং নাফ নদীতে প্লাস্টিকসহ সকল ধরনের বর্জ্য ফেলা;
- ▶ পশ্চিম পার্শ্বের সৈকতে কোনোপাড়ার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে এবং পূর্ব পার্শ্বের সৈকতে গলাচিপার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে পরিভ্রমণ;
- ▶ দ্বীপের চতুর্পার্শ্বে নৌ-ভ্রমণ করা;
- ▶ জোয়ার ভাটা এলাকায় পাথরের উপর হাঁটা;
- ▶ সামুদ্রিক কাছিমের ডিমপাড়ার স্থানে চলাফেরা, রাতে আলো জ্বালানো এবং ফ্ল্যাশ লাইট ব্যবহার করে ছবি তোলা;
- ▶ সৈকতে রাতের বেলা কোন প্রকার আলো বা আগুন জ্বালানো, আতশবাজি ও ফানুস উড়ানো;
- ▶ সৈকতে মাইক বাজানো, হে-চৈ এবং উচ্চস্বরে গান-বাজনা করা, বার-বি-কিউ পার্টি করা;
- ▶ ছেঁড়া দিয়া দ্বীপে স্পীড বোট, কান্ট্রি বোট, ট্রলার বা অন্যান্য জলযানে যাতায়াত এবং নোঙ্গর করা;
- ▶ সংরক্ষণের উদ্দেশ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক অধিগ্রহণকৃত ছেঁড়া দিয়া দ্বীপ ভ্রমণ;
- ▶ প্রবাল, শামুক, বিনুক, সামুদ্রিক কাছিম, পাখি, তারা মাছ, রাজকাঁকড়া, সামুদ্রিক ঘাস, সামুদ্রিক শৈবাল এবং কেয়া ফল সংগ্রহ ও ক্রয়-বিক্রয়;
- ▶ জাহাজ থেকে পাখিকে চিপস বা অন্য কোন খাবার খাওয়ানো;
- ▶ দ্বীপে সুপেয় ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি সীমিত বিধায় পানির অপচয় করা;
- ▶ সেন্টমার্টিন দ্বীপের প্রতিবেশের জন্য ক্ষতিকর যে কোন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা;

উল্লিখিত বিধি-নিষেধের লঙ্ঘন আইনত দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

আসুন বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিনকে সংরক্ষণ করি।
বর্তমান ও আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য টেকসই পরিবেশ গড়ি।

মহাপরিচালক
পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,887
New cases in 24hrs



8,07,867
Total cases



12,758
Deaths



7,47,758
Recoveries



3,721,251
Deaths



173,109,701
Total cases

AVIATION, TOURISM SECTOR

Budget blanks out recovery plan

Say stakeholders, lament absence of financial packages to bail them out amid pandemic

RASHIDUL HASAN

Aviation and tourism have been hit perhaps the hardest by the pandemic. Airlines went bankrupt and airlines were sent into early retirements or long storages. Flights got cancelled due to measures meant to contain the spread of the virus and planes that flew, flew nowhere near the full capacity.

Zoom became the substitute for business travellers and planned holidays got postponed in the hope one day things would be normal again.

Pristine sunny beaches remained devoid of tourists dealing a blow to the carriers and businesses that are absolutely dependent on tourism.

People have been laid off in thousands from this sector across the globe.

Yet, there was almost nothing in the proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22 about bailing out struggling businesses or even any hint of a direction the government was taking to bring back the glory days of this sector.

Leaders of the sector said they were utterly frustrated as the finance minister ignored tourism and aviation.

The allocation in the proposed budget

was Tk 364 crore more than that of the previous budget - Tk 3,426 crore.

He spoke about developing the tourism industry in Bangladesh and building a world class air transport system. He also mentioned projects to increase the capacity of airports in the country.

There was no word on the bailout. Biman lost Tk 1,300 crore since the pandemic hit and the losses incurred by two other carriers -- US Bangla and Novoair -- are in the several hundred crores, according to industry insiders.

For Biman, it is hard to imagine a worse time for the pandemic to hit.

Many of the 21 aircraft in its fleet, including Boeing 787s and De Havilland Canada DHC-8 (Dash-8), are quite new but they have been sitting on the tarmac more than they have been in the air.

Before the pandemic, Biman served 19 destinations. Now it serves 8.

Sources said the pandemic cost the tourism sector around Tk 20,000 crore. Tourism involves 40 lakh people.

Members of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (Toab) said they alone lost Tk 5,000 crore last year

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This temporary fruit market in Gor-e-Shaheed Maidan of Dinajpur town is bustling with activity as trading of litchi goes on. Production of this popular summer fruit is rather low this year due to unfavourable weather. A hundred pieces of litchi sells for Tk 400 to Tk 1,000 in the town, depending on size and variety. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Tangail rivers in peril

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got fat amounts during renewal of the environment certificates, they alleged.

The Louhajang river flowing through Tangail district town is all but dead due to pollution and illegal encroachment.

The dumping of a large amount of waste, particularly industrial waste from different local mills and factories, has turned the river into a toxic water body over the last two decades.

The natural environment of the river has been destroyed and aquatic life in it has disappeared.

The picture is especially sordid at Taratia, Gosai Bari Kumulli, Khudirampur, Karatia and Birpushia areas of Sadar upazila. Artificial colours used in the factories have bled into the river and can be seen in different layers.

"We cannot use the water of this river for bathing, farming or for any purposes. Drinking this polluted river water causes diarrhoea in cattle," said Abdur Rauf, a resident of Khudirampur area.

"Once upon a time, big boats plied this river. We swam in the river and fished. The farmers of the area irrigated the river. But now not even a single frog can be found in this water," he said.

Shamim Mia of Gosai Bari Kumulli said it was difficult to stay in the area because of the noxious smell coming from the water contaminated by untreated waste from factories. Contact with the rotten water of the river causes various diseases, including skin diseases.

According to locals, a BSCIC Industrial Area was established on 23 acres of land at Taratia of Sadar upazila along the Dhaka-Tangail highway in

1983.

Later, several mills and industries were opened there. After a few years, another textile mill was set up in nearby Khudirampur area.

Pollution in the rivers started as more and more industrial units were set up. The untreated toxic wastes dumped in the river is carried to other areas with the current during rainy season, while it remains stagnant during the dry season, they said.

The river has never regained its original appearance despite protests by locals for years and even fines levied on mills and factories by the DoE on a few occasions.

"What did we not do? Protests, rallies, human chains, complaints to the public representatives of the area, verbal and written appeals to the district and upazila administrations. How much more? But nothing happened," said Abdur Rashid of Gosai Bari Kumulli.

On the other hand, authorities of mills and factories have been claiming that the Louhajang is a dead river and they released the water into it after treating it with ETP.

Locals, however, allege that running ETP is expensive, so sometimes ETP is run to show people, but in the dark of night, all the untreated water is dumped directly into the river through pipelines.

Earlier, local DoE officials had inspected the factories at different times and found the allegations of the locals to be true.

They fined several mills and factories in the area for river pollution and also directed the local industries to increase

the efficiency of the ETPs and to become modernised.

However, the situation has not changed so far.

"What else can we do? Nothing has happened at all. The media focuses on the problem on many occasions. However, local public representatives, administrations, and also environment department could not free us from this curse," said Azahar Ali, a resident of the Gosai Bari Kumulli.

People living close to river banks are frustrated as they have not gotten any solution to the mindless river pollution and its effects in Sadar and Mirzapur upazilas for years, said Gautam Chandra Chanda, a senior research officer of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

Gautam, however, admitted that BELA did not file any lawsuit against the river pollution by the mills and factories. Asked about the matter, Mohammad Mujahidul Islam, deputy-director of the Tangail office of the environment department, told The Daily Star that several mills and factories were fined by the DoE on a few occasions for polluting the rivers.

"We could not do regular monitoring and take action against the industrial pollution due to lack of manpower," he said.

"We have also no water testing laboratory here. Water released from the mills and industries is tested in the laboratory in Dhaka every three months. If pollution is found, action is taken against the mills and factories concerned," he added.

Kamal drops hints

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"When I made the comments [two weeks ago], we had no information about the people who got the benefits. Some are in favour of it, and some are against it. Some have phoned me to say equitable justice can't be ensured in the society if the provision continues."

He said he was not sure yet if the undisclosed money was being used in the economy.

"If the money or income is disclosed, it will have a long-term multiplier impact on the economy. These people will invest the money in the economy. We have to do more work on this."

The finance minister defended the budget for the next fiscal year that proposed several measures to support domestic manufacturing industries and local business, but had hardly anything for the new poor, for social safety net protection, the health and education sectors.

Corporate taxes have been slashed, VAT exemptions have been expanded, minimum and advance taxes lowered, and the duty on raw material imports have been cut.

"Thanks to the tax measures, businesses will produce more and create more jobs. The tax measures will attract more investment. This will boost collection. We will be a winner. This will be a win-win situation."

The measures would help the economy hit its growth target of 7.2 percent, he said.

"All other economies have suffered. Our economy has never contracted. We are always advancing. If you look at the figures for all years, except for the pandemic-hit one, our GDP growth was higher than the previous year. We have achieved whatever we have said in the past."

But everything rests on how fast the fight against Covid-19 is won.

Stressing the role of the health sector in this regard, he said, "We have to manage it now effectively, efficiently and comprehensively."

In the proposed budget, Tk 14,200 crore has been allocated for procuring vaccines, and the amount can be raised by diverting funds from other sectors.

"We aim to bring all of the population under the vaccination programme. We are ready for that. We have allocated the resources. We will do whatever we need to do."

The government would have to bring changes to its plan for sourcing vaccines, instead of relying on only one source.

"We are already exploring alternative sources, and the vaccines will come from those sources," Kamal said.

At the briefing, Abdur Rouf Talukder, senior secretary of the finance division, said there was no problem with the allocation in the health sector as a portion of it remained unspent in the current fiscal year.

The full amount could not be spent because of problems in the procurement process and the inexperience of the project directors.

"We will address these two issues in the next fiscal year. We have already spoken to the health ministry about it, particularly about procurement."

The procurement in the health sector was supply-driven.

"We will make it demand-driven in the next fiscal year," he said.

The project directors in the health sector lacked experience in project management and procurement of this scale and urgency, according to Talukder. "They will be given a crash course," he added.

In the budget documents, Kamal could not provide the updated data on the poverty rate. Instead, he maintained the 2019 estimated poverty rate of 20.5 percent.

Yesterday, he said Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) will come up with the figure, and it is working on it.

Referring to a survey by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Kamal said the upper limit of the poverty rate stands at 26 percent.

"Our task is to help the poor. The prime minister's instruction is to find out all of the marginalised segments and integrate them in the mainstream economy."

He went on to cite the government's initiative to build homes for the poor as a case in point.

"This is an excellent initiative. The government is building homes with its own money... You will not find any such example in any other country. We will do this for all the homeless people. The work is going on in full swing."

The government had not explored fiscal measures when it came to unveiling stimulus packages, he said.

"We have so far relied on the monetary policy. Now, we are going to explore the support that fiscal measures can offer."

The finance minister went on to describe the budget for fiscal 2021-22 as expansionary.

"We were able to go for an expansionary budget because of our low debt to GDP ratio. Many countries don't have that scope."

Bangladesh's debt-to-GDP ratio stands at 40 percent.

"If we can use the money, we will be able to save both lives and livelihoods," Kamal said, adding that it would not take long to bring down the budget deficit.

Planning Minister MA Mannan said the government was using the same sources to finance the budget deficit.

"The credit market is good. Our repayment record is good," he noted.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir said the central bank would design the monetary policy in keeping with the expansionary budget.

About Tk 76,450 crore would be borrowed from the banking system to finance the budget deficit.

There was excess liquidity of Tk 200,000 crore in the banking system, which includes Tk 40,000 in cash liquidity. The rest are in the form of investment in bonds, Kabir added.

Talukder made mentions of the government's stimulus packages involving Tk 128,441 crore -- Tk 90,000 crore being channelled through the banking system and the remaining Tk 38,441 crore through budgetary allocations.

The government is providing from the budget Tk 4,500 crore as the interest subsidy every year for the loans provided by banks under the stimulus packages.

"So, the implementation of the stimulus packages has not been imposed on the banking system. The government is also sharing its fair share of the burden through the interest subsidy," Talukder said.

The 23 stimulus packages would continue until they are fully implemented. "The honourable prime minister has said she would come up with more stimulus packages, if needed," he added.

Shamsul Alam, a member of the General Economics Division, said there was nothing to be worried about the revenue generation.

Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razaque said the government plans to commercialise agriculture and support farm mechanisation so that the cost of production goes down.

"Because of the higher labour cost, the profit for the farmers is not much."

The commercialisation of agriculture would generate higher incomes and create jobs in the rural areas, he added.

Mashhur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, said the government did not have to present a budget in a challenging situation like the one the country was in now.

Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Munem, chairman of the NBR; Md Ashadul Islam, senior secretary of the Financial Institutions Division; and Fatima Yasmin, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, also attended the virtual briefing.

A budget that forgot new poor exists

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have much to offer in terms of concrete measures and innovative policies to combat the Covid-induced challenges, the CPD said.

The tax exemption, value-added tax and duty benefits proposed in the budget are expected to stimulate private investment, create jobs and indirectly benefit the economy, Rahman said.

"But private investment cannot be stimulated through tax benefits only. It also depends on the ease of doing business and competition in the market. So, the tax benefit can be termed as a necessary condition not sufficient," he added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD, went on to call for a second stimulus package for the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) as only reducing tax is not enough to resolve the existing problems of those businesses.

The government should allocate an additional fund of Tk 30,000 crore for the CMSMEs to take the total allocation to Tk 50,000 crore for revival of the affected CMSME units, which will help generate employment.

The higher allocation for mega projects in the incoming year was unnecessary in the face of rising poverty, he said.

For instance, the highest allocation was given to the Rooppur nuclear power plant, raising a question to this end, he said.

"The country does not require additional electricity due to the surplus production at this moment. But the situation is quite different for commoners. In the absence of help from the government, they cannot live their lives smoothly."

For instance, the people of Koyra have been struggling to build an embankment to save themselves from tidal surges, Moazzem added.

Given the magnitude of negative impact on various sectors due to Covid-19, the CPD had emphasised the need for a medium-term strategy for economic recovery.

The budget document does not

China voices annoyance at disclosure of sale price

FROM PAGE 1

regrets to the Chinese ambassador over the matter. But this has made our position very bad," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told private TV station Channel24 yesterday.

He said the government would not be able to buy the Sinopharm vaccine at this price in future.

The minister said Bangladesh now have to buy the vaccine at prices it was sold to other countries, which is almost double or triple the price offered to Bangladesh.

At a briefing on May 27, a Cabinet Division official told reporters that the government was purchasing the

vaccine at \$10 per dose.

The briefing was held after a cabinet committee meeting approved a proposal for buying 1.5 crore shots of Sinopharm's Covid-19 vaccine, paving the way for the final agreement.

As the news spread online through different media outlets, ministry officials contested the disclosure saying that the price was yet to be approved.

The Directorate General of Health Services has written a letter to the Chinese embassy in Dhaka, expressing regrets, said Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of DGHS.

"We said we did not make the price public intentionally, but it became public somehow. We wrote a letter to them, but they are yet to respond to it," he told Channel24.

Khurshid said China sold the vaccine to Sri Lanka for \$14 per dose and to Indonesia for \$17.

"After learning about the selling price to Bangladesh, those countries are pressing China to sell the vaccine at lower prices. They [China] became very much annoyed with us."

Despite several attempts, this newspaper could not reach the foreign minister over the phone for comments.

81 Rohingyas reach Indonesia after 113-day voyage

REUTERS, Dhaka

A boat carrying dozens of Rohingya refugees that set sail in February but had been adrift in the Andaman Sea with engine failure has landed on an Indonesian island after a voyage of more than 100 days, a human rights official said yesterday.

The vessel sailed on Feb. 11 from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh carrying 90 Rohingya refugees, most of them women and children, with the hope of reaching Malaysia.

But the boat's engine failed four days after leaving Cox's Bazar, where refugee camps house hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims who have fled neighbouring Myanmar.

"We have learnt that the 81 (refugees) were fine, they landed on Idaman Island in Aceh (Indonesia)," said Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, a group that monitors the Rohingya crisis.

"They are not 100% safe there yet. We hope they will not be pushed back," Lewa told Reuters.

Of the 90 people who set out on the voyage, eight were found dead by Indian Coast Guards who had tracked and later repaired the vessel in February.

Indian authorities provided food and essential supplies to survivors but refused to let them set foot on their shores. Bangladesh, too, denied re-entry to 81 survivors.

Over the last three months, international aid agencies and family members of those onboard have made repeated appeals to India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Malaysia for information about the fate of the survivors on the boat.

Dwi Prafitia, spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Indonesia, told Reuters that the refugees currently don't have a place to stay as it awaits coordination with the local government.

Authorities in Indonesia, including local police and immigration, were not immediately available for comment yesterday.

The Rohingyas are a minority group, most of whom are denied citizenship by Buddhist-majority Myanmar, which considers them illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Leading trade bodies

FROM PAGE 1

incentives, it said.

The MCCI said the upcoming fiscal year might be one of the most challenging years from the perspective of fiscal management due to the economic slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Revenue mobilisation will be a daunting task," said MCCI President Nihad Kabir in the statement.

Besides, the budget has not indicated any specific reform and restructuring of the tax policy and tax administration to enhance associated capacities and deliver the right kind of public services, which in turn will increase revenue collection without overburdening the compliant taxpayers.

The MCCI suggested adopting an interim evaluation system for the budget every three months for the next year so that, if required, it could be restructured and revised accordingly.

"As there are still so many unknowns to be dealt with regarding the pandemic and its ongoing effect on society and economy, the need of the hour is flexibility to deal with situations and requirements swiftly as they arise," she said.

The MCCI urged the government to utilise all available channels to pursue all the different lower-cost sources of funding being made available internationally in order to reduce the pressure on domestic resource mobilisation.

It, however, opposed the plan to increase the corporate tax rate for mobile financial service (MFS) providers, citing that the sector was at a nascent stage of development in Bangladesh.

Increasing their tax rate steeply during the pandemic will cause a slowdown of the growth of the MFS services and send a wrong signal to investors and users alike amidst all the positive signals of the budget, said the MCCI.

The Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) lauded the move to reduce corporate taxes and tax exemptions for agro processing and IT-related industries.

"The chamber also highly appreciates the government's plan to vaccinate 80 percent of the population in phases against the novel coronavirus," it said.

The FICCI, however, said it would have been happier had the government withdrawn the 2 percent minimum tax on telecom, 1 percent on tobacco, 0.25 percent on individuals and 0.6 percent on others.

The Bangladesh Chamber of Industries said the private sector would benefit from the tax reductions and exemptions.

It urged the government to continue reducing the corporate tax rate in the next three fiscal years.

Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) demanded a reduction of source tax on export of frozen shrimp and other fish to 0.25 percent from the present 0.50 percent.

The BFFEA also urged the government to increase the cash incentive on export of frozen shrimp to 20 percent from 10 percent and incentive on export of other fish to 10 percent from 5 percent.

In a separate statement, Business Initiative Leading Development said the budget seems to have done well in addressing the current situation and is forward-looking, considering the "Made in Bangladesh" concept.

This will not only help businesses to diversify but also pave the way for the country's graduation from least developed to a developing country, it said.

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR

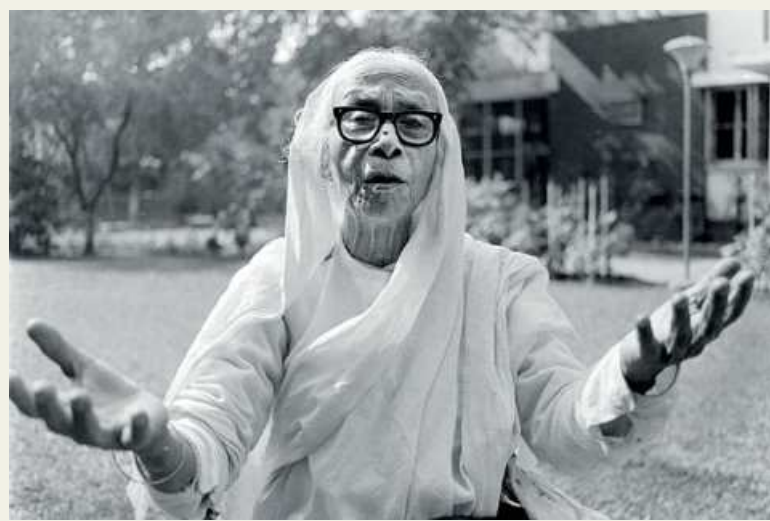
Old Photographs

I was thrilled when my cousin recently shared a photograph where my father poses with all his eight siblings. They were in their fifties and sixties when it was taken. A festive air permeates the photograph. They are basking in the winter sun, delighted to be with each other. Front-row center belongs to the eldest aunt and uncle; younger ones stand behind. While everyone else looks at the camera my eldest uncle is turned halfway towards his sister. Knowing them, an animated conversation had been interrupted by the photographer.

Six of these nine siblings have since departed. Four decades later I wonder: did they know that this 1/500 of a second, snatched from the jaws of time by a mechanical device, would be a precious witness to their entire big, close-knit, affectionate family for their descendants to look at with pride but also with sadness?

In 1984 I photographed Dadu, my paternal grandmother (Mrs. Zobeda Khatun), then towards the end of her life. In the photographs I can sense that she was posing for posterity, that she felt she would be remembered by these photographs. She looks serious and inspiring – as if she wants her lifetime of pioneering political struggle for Muslim women to be passed on through the photographs, like the baton in a relay race. Is that how we always pose – thinking “how will I be remembered”?

Through the old photograph we see ourselves growing up, becoming older and perhaps wiser. But does it also portend things to come? The astute look in the eye of a young cousin foreshadows her superlative accomplishments as a surgeon. Another cousin's astute expression during an office



Mrs. Zobeda Khatun, my grandmother, Dhaka, 1984.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

phone call predicts his success in business. And at the start of her political career, an aunt's demeanour parallels Dadu, her politician mother.

And so this is what an old photograph does: it runs away with our imagination. But in our cold hard reality old photographs pose an organizational challenge.

The album was the traditional way of organizing photographs. When you processed film at the lab they returned the photographs in a handy album which you could flip through. Bigger albums were stored with care. I remember when my parents and siblings would pull one out and gather around it, commenting on a pretty sari, a full head of hair, or the inevitable “(S)he looked so much thinner (or heavier) back then!”

Few maintain photo albums today. The organization and sharing of old photographs is all digital. Turning an old photograph into digital has become easy using

the phone camera. But a year or two later the scanned photograph is nowhere to be found unless it was organized properly.

Probably the easiest way to organize the photographs you scan with your phone is to upload them into a private album in Facebook, or a private account in Instagram or even Twitter. That way, you can access them easily even after upgrading your phone or laptop.

If you are more hands-on, you can use a content management system such as Lightroom to manage the photos on your computer or phone. This way the photographs are under your complete control. But every time you upgrade your computer or phone, there will be some hassle. Once organized, backing up in an external drive or the cloud will protect against catastrophes.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow “ihtishamkabar” on Instagram.

TIB raises concern over insufficient health allocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern for not having sufficient allocation in the next budget for critical sectors, including health, to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Similarly, it also raised concern over the lack of a clear roadmap to ensure transparency and prevention of corruption in the overall budget implementation.

The anti-graft body urged the government to ensure transparency and prevent corruption in implementation of the budget.

It, however, applauded the government's decision of not keeping any scope to whiten black money in the budget.

It seems like the government has gone through some sort of enlightenment as it has refrained from renewing the scope for whitening of black money, which was introduced amid severe criticism earlier, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said in a statement on Thursday.

He said they want to believe that the authorities will respect the prime minister's stance of “zero tolerance against corruption” and will not allow

this unethical benefit to continue in the end even if they face any legal scrutiny or pressure from any vested quarter.

He stressed the need for announcing a budget, which is participatory, can ensure welfare of the people and can save lives.



“In the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year, the allocation for the health sector has been increased to Tk 33,000 crore -- which is about 7 percent of the total budget -- but it is still much less than what is needed.”

“Again, due to persistent corruption and a lack of fair spending capacity, there is a strong risk that this allocation will not be spent properly, for which there is no clear roadmap in the budget, which is disappointing. However, there is no alternative to reorganising the health sector in recent years to curb the unimaginable and skyrocketing corruption.”

Although he applauded the government's investment in vaccination activities to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 in the country and the allocation of Tk 10,000 crore to fight the coronavirus, Iftekharuzzaman said, “This allocation is not enough to deal with coronavirus. In this case, the process of spending money should be done with transparency, and it should be ensured that corruption in the health sector should not take advantage of it in any way.”

Similarly, the government is expected to follow a transparent procurement process and prioritise the public interest in procuring vaccine for coronavirus, he added.

He also commented that tax exemption for 10 years -- to encourage private investors to establish hospitals outside the city -- is a timely decision. This will create opportunities to ensure quality healthcare in rural areas.

Expressing concern over the news of allocation of about 60 percent of the total proposed budget in the underdeveloped sector, Iftekharuzzaman said, “Considering the corona (Covid-19) reality, the government was expected to reduce

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DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Eminent citizens demand release of Jhumon Das

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 24 eminent citizens demanded the release of Jhumon Das Apon, who has been in jail for the last 80 days, after being accused in a Digital Security Act case filed over criticising Hefajat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque on Facebook.

They made the demand through a written statement yesterday. They said many of the accused in cases of vandalism and looting of traditional religious settlements got bail, but Jhumon did not.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Terming the proposed budget “pro-rich”, two workers' groups -- Bangladesh Textile Garments Sramik Federation and Bangladesh Motorjan Mechanic Sramik Federation -- demonstrated in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Symbolising their impoverished state, they stood with empty cooking pots in hand, protesting the budget's overlooking of workers' interests.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Battle for Green: UNDP and The Daily Star launch gamified platform marking World Environment Day



A joint initiative of
The Daily Star
UNDP

campaign.thedailystar.net/battleforgreen/

“Knowledge Meter”, which consists of several environmental questions. This segment is meant to enhance the participants' knowledge about different elements of the environment and build a deeper understanding of their surroundings. Whether the participants answer the questions correctly or not, they will get valuable information about the environment. After completing this step, the participants' sprouts will transform into “Saplings.”

Their next task will be to become a “Cleaning Master”, where they will be required to upload two pictures. One will be about an item that is dirty, and the next one will be a picture involving the participant cleaning that item. With this task, we aim to encourage participants to keep their surroundings clean and sanitised, and to take care of the environment. After completing this step, the participants' sapling will transform into “Seedlings”.

In the next part of the challenges, they will be required to perform small task with a time limit. This task will focus on environmental awareness and conservation. In this round, participants will be asked to turn off their room lights for two minutes to conserve energy and raise awareness regarding overused energy, which negatively impacts the environment. After completing this step, the participants' seedlings will transform into “Small Trees”.

Last but not the least, the final task for the participants will be to plant trees in their vicinity and upload pictures of each of their newly planted trees. This will encourage the participants to take a step to combat climate change and make our environment greener.

After completing this step, the partic-



ipants' small trees will transform into “Big Trees”.

After completing all the tasks, the participants of the games will be awarded digital certificates by The Daily Star and UNDP. You can also share the game, your tasks, and progress on social media and invite your friends to join as well, for which you will be rewarded with some extra points.

So what are you waiting for? Head over to <http://campaign.thedailystar.net/battleforgreen> and start taking on the challenges to “Reimagine, Recreate, Restore”.

As days go by, we are getting closer to environmental instability and rising temperatures causing climate change. In this fight against climate change, we need people of all ages, especially the youth, to safeguard and look after the environment we live in. What better way to introduce, enrich knowledge of, and commit to this important issue in today's technologically advanced age than by playing a simple game?

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The Daily Star have jointly launched an initiative, called “Battle for Green”, where people of all ages can take up some small challenges, earn some incentives while going through them, and pledge

to the cause of protecting and safeguarding the environment.

Start your journey through being a “Seed” and heading into the first challenge, “Pledge of Heart”. Here, you are required to fill in a pledge box, where you will take a pledge that you will protect and safeguard the environment from your point of view and space. This round is meant to drive up the responsibility in each person to give back something to the planet on their terms. After completing this step, the participants' seeds will turn into “Sprouts”.

Next, the participants will have to prove their knowledge of the environment by competing in a quiz, called

Bangladesh, UK join hands on climate change

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and the UK have agreed to exchange expertise, share technology and facilitate partnerships to tackle the impacts of climate change.

In a joint statement yesterday following a meeting between Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and COP26 President-Designate and UK MP Alok Sharma in Dhaka on June 2, they agreed to demonstrate sustained leadership to tackle the climate emergency bilaterally and globally.

Alok Sharma visited Bangladesh on June 2-4 after Vietnam and Indonesia aimed at drumming up climate ambitions ahead of the COP26 to be held in Glasgow in November.

Bangladesh and the UK expressed their resolve to work together to contribute to ensuring all countries meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement, and improve the resilience of those most vulnerable to climate change.

The progress is significant given that Bangladesh is one of the most climate vulnerable countries facing massive damages to crops, properties and even lives in flooding and cyclones almost every year.

Alok Sharma welcomed the prospect of Bangladesh transitioning away from coal to clean and renewable energy, which will create economic growth and sustainable jobs.

Foreign Minister Momen underscored the necessity of securing commitments from global leaders, to curb global emissions substantially, arrest global temperature at 1.5 degrees and secure maximal climate finance.

The two leaders hoped that a climate accord between the UK and Bangladesh would be signed before COP26, expressed optimism for a successful outcome of the COP26 and will consider a possible Climate Vulnerable Forum-COP26 event at Glasgow.

Mymensingh police launch bicycle patrols

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

As part of its beat policing activities, Mymensingh police administration has initiated a bicycle patrol in the city.

Harun Ar Rashid, deputy inspector general (DIG) of Mymensingh range of police, inaugurated the initiative at the auditorium of his office on Thursday.

For starters, 10 bicycles were distributed for 10 wards under the city corporation. Gradually, all 33 wards and other police stations of the district will be covered under the bicycle patrol network, said police sources.

"We have taken up this initiative with the aim to make life safer for people," said Mohammad Ahmar Uzzaman,

Mymensingh police superintendent. "The bicycles will be able to reach the nooks and crannies of the city that other police vehicles cannot reach easily."

To bring criminals to book, the bicycle patrols will be better equipped to access their clandestine hideouts, as police personnel will find it easier to traverse the narrow lanes and by-lanes of the city, the SP hoped.

During his speech, the DIG said during the British period, bicycle police was popular in this region, although this practice got lost to time. But even today, bicycle patrols are a staple across many countries, which shows their effectiveness has not diminished.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Beacon gives 5,000 masks to Shibganj people

CITY DESK

Beacon Pharmaceuticals Limited has handed over 5,000 masks and Hygienex Plus hand sanitiser to the people of Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj on June 3, according to a press release.

A week-long lockdown was underway in the bordering district as Covid-19 positive patients were being identified with the Indian variant of coronavirus.

The district administration has again declared a "special lockdown" in the entire district for a week from June 1 to June 6 as the Covid-19 situation has deteriorated.

Mohammad Ebadul Karim, managing director (MD) of Beacon Pharmaceuticals Limited and member of parliament from Brahmanbaria-5; and Syed Monirul Islam, mayor of Shibganj municipality, were present on the occasion, added the press release.

First National Tea Day observed

CITY DESK

National Tea Day was observed for the first time in the country yesterday.

This decision was taken at a cabinet meeting to commemorate the contribution of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the tea industry on the occasion of his birth centenary, said Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi at a virtual briefing from his office in secretariat on Wednesday.

On this day, Bangabandhu became the first Bengali chairman of the Tea Board and he served the board from June 4 in 1957 to October 23 in 1958, the minister said.

"So, the first National Tea Day is being celebrated on June 4," he added.

Yesterday morning, the commerce minister inaugurated the day at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital, said a press release. Through observing the day, the role of the tea industry in the overall economic development of the country is also being recognised, said the minister.

Among others, Expatriates Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad was also present at the event. A discussion and tea exhibition were also held there. Marking the day, different organisations held such exhibitions across the country.

Eminent citizens demand

FROM PAGE 3

"We are deeply concerned and outraged after seeing such cases being discriminatory towards minorities in Bangladesh as well as being unconstitutional," reads the statement.

"Hefajat-e-Islam is spreading communal poison and destroying social unity, while the victims are being deprived of justice, but the state is nonchalant in this regard," said the distinguished citizens.

Jhomon's Facebook post allegedly led to the mayhem in Noagaon village of Sunamganj's Shalla upazila on March 17, where Hefajat supporters vandalised and looted about 90 Hindu houses.

The signatories include Advocate Sultana Kamal, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Dr Sarwat Ali, Ramendu Majumder, Fauzia Moslem, Rana Dasgupta, Prof MM Akash, Advocate Ajudia Bari, Khushi Kabir, Rokeya Kabir and Robayet Ferdous.

ইন্টারন্যাশনাল মেডিকেল কলেজ
গুগুলিয়া, সাতাইশ, টঙ্গী, গাজীপুর
স্থাপিত - ২০০০ ইং

২০২০-২১ সেশনে ১ম বর্ষ এমবিবিএস ২২তম ব্যাচে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত এবং বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল ও ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক স্বীকৃতিপ্রাপ্ত, বাংলাদেশ ফিজিওসিয়ান এন্ড সার্জন্স (বিসিপিএস) কর্তৃক স্নাতকোত্তর প্রশিক্ষণের স্বীকৃতি প্রাপ্ত এবং ওয়ার্ল্ড ডাইরেটরী অব মেডিকেল স্কুল ও WHO প্রকাশিত IMED অধিভুক্ত।

ভর্তির যোগ্যতা ও তথ্য : ১. বাংলাদেশ সরকার কর্তৃক গৃহীত নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী ভর্তির জন্য লিখিত পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ৪০ নম্বর থাকতে হবে। ২. আগামী ০৫/০৬/২১ ইং হতে ফরম বিতরণ শুরু হবে এবং জমা দেওয়ার শেষ তারিখ ১৫/০৬/২১ ইং। প্রতিদিন (বন্ধের দিন সহ) সকাল ৮টা হতে বিকাল ৪ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত আবেদনপত্র (বিনিময় মূল্য ১০০০ টাকা মাত্র) বিতরণ ও গ্রহণ করা হবে। এছাড়া অন-লাইনেও আবেদন করা যাবে।

আবেদনপত্র সংগ্রহ ও জমাদানের স্থান সমূহ :
ক) কলেজ ক্যাম্পাস: গুগুলিয়া, সাতাইশ, টঙ্গী, গাজীপুর, মোবাইল:-০১৭৭০৭৮৭৫৭১, ০১৭২৮৭৬৮৪৪৪
খ) হেড অফিস: এফ-০৬, ৭ম তলা, রূপায়ন শপিং স্কয়ার, প্রট নং - সি-০২, ব্লক - জি, বসুন্ধরা, ঢাকা-১২২৯, মোবাইল:-০১৭৪৪৩৮৬৯২০
গ) **Online Application Link:** <http://imchbd.com/mbsadmission>

কলেজের বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্য সমূহ : ১. ২০০০ সালে প্রতিষ্ঠিত, ঢাকার নিকটবর্তী টঙ্গী এলাকায় নিজস্ব ২৫ বিঘা জমিতে প্রাকৃতিক পরিবেশে অবস্থিত মেডিকেল কলেজ, ৬৫০ শয্যা বিশিষ্ট হাসপাতাল ও ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের উন্নত হোস্টেল, ফ্রি-ট্রাঙ্গাপোর্ট, মানসম্মত ক্যান্টিন ও Wi-Fi সুবিধা সমৃদ্ধ প্রথম সারির একটি আধুনিক মেডিকেল শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান। ২. প্রখ্যাত শিক্ষকমণ্ডলী, শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রিত লেকচার গ্যালারী এবং সুবিশাল লাইব্রেরী, রাজনীতিমুক্ত ও কোলাহলমুক্ত পরিবেশ। ৩. শিক্ষা দানের ক্ষেত্রে অত্যাধুনিক E-Learning প্রযুক্তির ব্যবহার। ৪. প্রশিক্ষিত সিকিউরিটি গার্ড, CCTV মনিটরিং ও সার্বক্ষণিক বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহের মাধ্যমে নি:শব্দ নিরাপত্তার মধ্যে বিভিন্ন দেশের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের অধ্যয়ন। ৫. Indoor ও Outdoor খেলাধুলা, Gymnasium ও বিনোদনের সু-ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। ৬. ইংরেজী ভাষায় দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে USA এর KEAN University' র সহযোগিতায় বাধ্যতামূলক ESL (English as a Second Language) কোর্সের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে যা ইংরেজি ভাষায় মেডিকেল শিক্ষা সহায়ক। ৭. ICDDR,B এবং মালয়েশিয়ার AIMST বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এর সাথে শিক্ষা, গবেষণা ও প্রশিক্ষণ ক্ষেত্রে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সহযোগিতা কার্যক্রম অব্যাহত রয়েছে।

মে ২০১৬ ইং হতে অনুষ্ঠিত ২য় পেশাগত পরীক্ষায় অত্র কলেজের ছাত্রী ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সম্মিলিত মেধা তালিকায় ১ম স্থান অর্জন করে

গত ২০১৭-১৮ ইং শিক্ষাবর্ষে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত সরকারী-বেসরকারী মেডিকেল কলেজের মধ্যে ইন্টারন্যাশনাল মেডিকেল কলেজ এর শতকরা পাশের হার দ্বিতীয় সর্বোচ্চ ৮৪.৬৭% (সর্বোচ্চ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ৯৭তম বার্ষিক বিবরণী, পৃষ্ঠা-৮৪৯)।

মে ২০২০ইং ৩য় পেশাগত পরীক্ষায় অত্র কলেজের ২জন ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, মে ২০১৯ইং ১ম ও ২য় পেশাগত ২জন ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, মে ২০১৮ইং ১ম ও ২য় পেশাগত পরীক্ষায় ৪জন ছাত্র-ছাত্রী এবং মে ২০১৭ইং ১ম ও ৩য় পেশাগত পরীক্ষায় ২জন ছাত্রী অনার্স মার্ক অর্জন করেন।

মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, দরিদ্র-মেধাবী ও বিদেশী কোটাভুক্ত ভর্তির ক্ষেত্রে সরকারী নীতিমালা অনুসরণ করা হবে।

Website: www.imchbd.com, Email: admission@imchbd.com | imchbd.com অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান অধ্যক্ষ

TIB raises concern over

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unnecessary expenditure and make realistic allocations to the emergency services sector.

"But in terms of the total allocation, public administration received the fourth highest allocation (7.6 percent) and when defence expenditure was added with that, the amount exceeded about 14 percent. Although the allocation increased every year, the lack of effective strategies to ensure transparency and accountability as well as increase the efficiency of public administration is disappointing," he said.

Compliance Factory TO-LET

Eight Storied Compliance Factory Building on DEPZ-Chandra Main Road near BKSP, Zirani. Total floor Area 2,80,000 sft. will be Rented for reasonable price. Please Call: Aminul Islam: 01714640817

SALES OF USED MOTORCYCLES SANOFI

SANOFI Bangladesh Limited, 6/2/A Segun Bagicha, Dhaka-1000 is inviting sealed bids for used motorcycles "as is where is" basis. Terms and conditions details of Motorcycles inspection will be available at the reception of Head Office (6/2/A Segun Bagicha, Dhaka- 1000).
Inspection Time: 06 June 2021 to 10 June 2021, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM.
Last day of submission: 10 June 2021 by 03:00 PM.
N.B.
1. "No Mask No Service" and other COVID-19 guidelines will follow.
2. National Identification Number (NID) must be brought during Motorcycle Visit.

খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজ
এনায়েতপুর, উপজেলা : চৌহালী, জেলা: সিরাজগঞ্জ -৬৭৫১, বাংলাদেশ।
প্রতিষ্ঠাতা: ডা. এম এম আমজাদ হোসেন

১ম বর্ষ এমবিবিএস কোর্সে ১৭ তম ব্যাচে ছাত্র/ছাত্রী ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজে ২০২০-২০২১ইং শিক্ষাবর্ষে এমবিবিএস কোর্সে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তির জন্যে স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় ১০০ নম্বরের মধ্যে ন্যূনতম ৪০ নম্বর প্রাপ্ত বা তদূর্ধ্ব নম্বর পাইয়াছেন কেবলমাত্র তাহারা ই আবেদন করিতে পারিবেন।

খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজ সরকারী অনুমোদন প্রাপ্ত, ওয়ার্ল্ড হেলথ ডাইরেটরীর তে অর্ন্তভুক্ত, রাজশাহী মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধিভুক্ত, বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিব মেডিকেল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বিসিপিএস স্বীকৃত ট্রেনিং সমৃদ্ধ ও বিএমডিএস কোর্স-কারিকুলাম অনুযায়ী অভিজ্ঞ শিক্ষকমণ্ডলী দ্বারা পরিচালিত একটি অত্যাধুনিক পূর্ণাঙ্গ বেসরকারী মেডিকেল কলেজ। এই প্রতিষ্ঠানটি ট্রাণি বোর্ড কর্তৃক পরিচালিত একটি অলাভজনক সেবামূলক চিকিৎসা-শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান।

● অশুচল ও মেধাবী কোটায়ে ৫% ছাত্র/ছাত্রীকে বাংলাদেশ সরকারের স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের নিয়ম অনুযায়ী বিনা বেতনে ভর্তি ও পড়ার সুযোগ প্রদান করা হয়। তবে এই আসনে ভর্তির জন্য পৃথকভাবে নির্দিষ্ট ফরমে স্বাস্থ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণ সাপেক্ষে আবেদন (স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত ফরমে) করিতে হইবে।

● মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান/সন্ততিদের জন্য মেধার ভিত্তিতে ২% সংরক্ষিত আসনে ছাত্র/ছাত্রীকে ভর্তির সুযোগ দেওয়া হইবে। কেন্দ্রীয় পরীক্ষায় নির্বাচিতদের মধ্য হইতে পৃথকভাবে নির্দিষ্ট ফরমে আবেদন করিতে হইবে।

ভর্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা দান : ০৫-০৬-২০২১ইং তারিখ হইতে ১৫-০৬-২০২১ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত প্রত্যহ (ছুটির দিনসহ) সকাল ৯:০০ টা হইতে বিকাল ৪:০০ টা পর্যন্ত খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজ, এনায়েতপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জে অথবা ঢাকার তথ্য কেন্দ্র, খাজা এনায়েতপুরী (রঃ) টাওয়ার, ১৭, বীর উত্তম কে. এম. শফিউল্লাহ রোড (ত্রিণ রোড) ঢাকা -১২০৫ থেকে নগদ ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) পরিশোধ সাপেক্ষে প্রসপেক্টাস সহ ভর্তির ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা দেওয়া যাইবে। আবেদনকারীদের মধ্যে থেকে নির্বাচিতদের মেধাতালিকার ফলাফল প্রকাশ ১৯-০৬-২০২১ইং। ভর্তি শুরু ০১-০৭-২০২১ইং তারিখ। ভর্তি প্রক্রিয়ার শেষ তারিখ (অপেক্ষামান তালিকা সহ) ১৫-০৭-২০২১ইং তারিখ। ক্লাশ শুরু ০১-০৮-২০২১ইং তারিখ।

কলেজের বিশেষত্ব সমূহ :

- (১) ISO সনাদ প্রাপ্ত মেডিকেল কলেজ
- (২) বৃত্তিমূলক পরীক্ষায় মেধা তালিকায় স্থান প্রাপ্ত
- (৩) বিডিএস এবং এমডি (অনকোলজী) কোর্স সমৃদ্ধ
- (৪) মনোরম পরিবেশে বৃহৎ ক্যাম্পাস
- (৫) ক্যাম্পাসের অভ্যন্তরেই পূর্ণাঙ্গ আবাসিক সুবিধা
- (৬) বিদেশী ছাত্র/ছাত্রী ভর্তির সুযোগ আছে

অধ্যাপক ডা. মো. সাইফুল ইসলাম অধ্যক্ষ
খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজ
এনায়েতপুর, সিরাজগঞ্জ।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি) এর কার্যালয়
আরআরএফ, রংপুর

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/২০২১-২০২২

তারিখঃ ০৩/০৬/২০২১ইং

স্মারক নং-আরআরএফ, রংপুর/দরপত্র/রেশন/৬২০

তারিখঃ ০৩/০৬/২০২১ইং

"The Public Procurement Regulation-2008" এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনী মোতাবেক আরআরএফ, রংপুর পুলিশ রেশন স্টোরে ২০২১-২০২২ আর্থিক সালের ১ম ও ২য় কোয়ার্টারের (জুলাই/২০২১ হতে ডিসেম্বর/২০২১ পর্যন্ত) সময়ের জন্য নিম্নোক্ত পণ্য ও সেবা ক্রয়ের নির্দিষ্ট প্রকৃত মূল্যায়ন/সরবরাহকারী/মিল মালিক ও ক্রয়কারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১.	মহাশয়/বিভাগ	স্বর্গী মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
০২.	সহযোগী ও দরপত্র সম্পাদনাকারী প্রধান	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি), আরআরএফ, রংপুর।
০৩.	কি কারনে দরপত্র আহ্বান	রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়/কুলিস পরিবহন কাজ এবং পুরাতন বালি চট্টের বস্তা (৫০ ও ৩০ কেজি) ও পুরাতন প্রান্তিক বস্তা বিক্রয়।
০৪.	দরপত্র সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	স্মারক নং-আরআরএফ, রংপুর/দরপত্র/রেশন/৬২০, তারিখ ০৩/০৬/২০২১ইং।
০৫.	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
০৬.	অর্পণের উদ্দেশ্য বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	জিওবি (রায়শ্ব)।
০৭.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৫/০৬/২০২১ইং।
০৮.	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২৩/০৬/২০২১ইং বেলা ১৬.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৯.	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ	২৪/০৬/২০২১ইং ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০.	দরপত্র শেলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৬/২০২১ইং তারিখ ১৩.০০ ঘটিকা দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ থাকে)।
১১.	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	২৭/০৬/২০২১ইং তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১২.	দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত/সিডিউস বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	(ক) ডিআইবি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, রংপুর রেঞ্জ এর কার্যালয়, রংপুর (খ) কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি) এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ, রংপুর (গ) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, রংপুর।
	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী/অফিস	কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি) এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ, রংপুর এবং কমান্ড্যান্ট (ডিআইবি) এর কার্যালয়, পিটিসি, রংপুর।
	দরপত্র শেলার স্থান	কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি) এর কার্যালয়, আরআরএফ, রংপুর।
১৩.	দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা	নির্দেশিত বাংলাদেশ কাগজপত্রের ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে দাখিল করতে হবে, যৈখ লাইসেন্স, আয়ের সনদপত্র, ডাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, ব্যাংক সার্ভিস সনদপত্র (স্টেটমেন্টসহ), জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, ন্যায়নকৃত এগ্রিকালচার/মার্কেটিং লাইসেন্স, অজিতজা সনদপত্র, ০১ (এক) রুপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবিসহ মালিকানা সনদপত্র এবং লেটার অব অথরাইজেশন (গ্রন্থোক্ত ক্ষেত্রে), রংপুর সিটি কর্পোরেশন এলাকায় নিজস্ব মিল অথবা মিল মালিকের সংশ্লিষ্টনামা, দরপত্রদাতা কোনো তালিকাভুক্ত নয় মর্মে নিজস্ব প্যাতে যোগ্যপত্র।

ক্রমিক নং	বিস্তারিত	আইটেম	পরিমাণ টন/কেজি (আনুমানিক)	সিডিউসের মূল্য (অফারকৃতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ ব্যাংক ড্রাকট/পে-অর্ডার	মেয়াদকাল
ক	ডোজ স্যানিটর তেল (উন্নত ব্রান্ডের) (প্রান্তিক ক্যানের সরবরাহকৃত বিএসটিআই কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত এবং ডিআইবি 'এ' সমূহ)		১৬,০০০ লিটার	৭৫০/-	৭০,০০০/-	জুলাই হতে ডিসেম্বর/২০২১ এর মধ্যে চাহিদা অনুসারে
খ	ময়দ ভাল (দেশী উন্নতমানের)		২০,০০০ কেজি	৭৫০/-	৮০,০০০/-	ঐ
গ	গম পেয়াই		১০,০০০ কেজি	৭৫০/-	১৫,০০০/-	ঐ
ঘ	জ্বালানী (আম কাঠ) শুকনা চেহাটিকৃত		মাসিক চাহিদানুযায়ী	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	ঐ
ঙ	পোলাও চাল (চিনিভুক্ত/কাসোজিরা)		৮০০ কেজি	৪০০/-	৫,০০০/-	ঐ
চ	কুলিস পরিবহন কাজ (সে) চিনি পরিবহন (বাংলাদেশ চিনি ও খাদ্য শিল্প কর্পোরেশনের অনুমোদিত চিনি মিল হতে)		১,৫০,০০০ কেজি	৪০০/-	১০,০০০/-	ঐ
ছ	পুরাতন বালি চট্টের বস্তা (৫০ ও ৩০ কেজি) এবং পুরাতন প্রান্তিক বস্তা বিক্রয়।		মুদ্র অনুযায়ী	৪০০/-	৫,০০০/-	ঐ
১৫.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী			মুঃ মাসুদ রানা, কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি), আরআরএফ, রংপুর।		
১৬.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ও যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম			আরআরএফ, রংপুর। টেলিফোন- ০৫২১-৫৫৫২৩		
১৭.	বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ					

(ক) যুক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারী সীল ও স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাতে আবেদনপূর্বক অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) দরপত্র সিডিউস সজ্ঞহ করা যাবে।
(খ) দরপত্রের উন্মুক্ত যেকোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে এবং নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
(গ) উক্ত দরপত্রদাতাকে কাগজে প্রদানের পূর্বে কাজের মূল্য অনুসারে জামানতসহ ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকার নন জুর্ডিশিয়াল ট্রাস্টে চুক্তিপত্র স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে।
(ঘ) অত্র ইউনিটের চাহিদা অনুযায়ী খালিমাতে/সেবা প্রদান করতে হবে এবং সরকারী বরাদ্দ সাপেক্ষে বিল প্রদান করা হবে।
(ঙ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে দরপত্র ব্যতিরেকে ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণকরণ এবং সিডিউসে সংযুক্ত সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।
(চ) দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বনিম্নমূল্য গ্রহণে বাধ্য নহবে, দরপত্রের প্রদত্ত দর অবশ্যই বাজার দর বাচাই কমিটি ও জেলা মার্কেটিং অফিসার কর্তৃক বর্তমান বাজার দরের সাথে সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ হতে হবে।

মুঃ মাসুদ রানা
০৬/০৬/২০২১
বিসি-৭১০৩০২৭৮৪৯
কমান্ড্যান্ট (এসপি)
আরআরএফ, রংপুর
ফোন- ০৫২১-৫৫৫২৩, ফ্যাক্স-৫৫৫৫৩
E-mail: com.rfrang@police.gov.bd

জিডি-১১০২

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING DATA USE

EU, UK launch probe

AFP, Brussels

The EU and the UK launched parallel competition probes yesterday against Facebook, accused of using data from advertisers to unfairly dominate the online classifieds market.

The US social media behemoth sells classified advertising on its Marketplace service, but also gathers data from commercial advertising that may give it an unfair advantage.

Investigators will also probe whether Facebook's single user log-in allows it to unfairly use data gathered across its social media, dating app and advertising platforms.

The cases opened by the European Commission and Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) are separate, but the regulators are working closely together.

"Facebook collects vast troves of data on the activities of users of its social network and beyond," EU vice-president and competition chief Margrethe Vestager said.

"We will look in detail at whether this data gives Facebook an undue competitive advantage in particular on the online classified ads sector, where people buy and sell goods every day, and where Facebook also competes with companies from which it collects data," she said. "In today's digital economy, data should not be used in ways that distort competition."

The formal probe follows a preliminary investigation focused on Facebook's Marketplace classifieds service -- available to most of its three billion users. Companies advertising on Marketplace have to provide data to Facebook which the Commission said led to concerns that the internet giant may distort competition.

The European Commission noted in its statement that former EU member Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) also yesterday opened its own probe into the way Facebook uses data.



University students clean the "Pillar of Shame" statue at the University of Hong Kong on the 32nd anniversary of the crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, in Hong Kong, China, yesterday. Police blocked off a Hong Kong park to prevent people gathering to commemorate the anniversary and arrested the planned vigil's organiser.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Asean envoys in Myanmar

Envoys from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations arrived in Myanmar for talks with junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, as the coup-stricken nation enters its fifth month of crippling unrest. Myanmar has been in chaos and its economy paralysed since the February coup, with more than 800 people killed in a brutal military crackdown on dissent, according to a local monitoring group. Erywan Pehin Yusof, Brunei's second minister for foreign affairs, and Asean Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi arrived in the capital Naypyidaw late Thursday, a senior Myanmar official told AFP. The envoys were to meet Min Aung Hlaing yesterday. No details of the meeting was released. Asean leaders in April issued a "five-point consensus" statement that called for the "immediate cessation of violence" and a visit to Myanmar by a regional special envoy after meeting Min Aung Hlaing. But the general said in a later television interview that Myanmar was not ready to adopt the plan.

Japan births hit new low

The number of babies born in Japan hit a new record low last year, official data showed, highlighting concern over the pandemic's impact on one of the world's lowest fertility rates. In 2020, the greying country saw 840,832 births, according to data released Thursday by the health and labour ministry. Politicians have expressed concern that the population of the world's third-largest economy is shrinking faster than ever, with couples hesitant to reproduce as the pandemic fuels financial instability and fears over hospital trips. Japan's net decline in population, 531,816, was a record high while the birth rate -- the average number of children a woman has -- declined to 1.34, the data showed.

HK car space sells for \$1.3m

A single car parking space has been sold for a whopping HK\$10 million (\$1.3 million) at a luxury Hong Kong apartment complex, local media reported yesterday. The 12.5 square-metre (135 square-foot) spot is part of a development on The Peak, a swanky area that has attracted some of the city's richest residents since colonial times. Boasting breath-taking views over Victoria Harbour, the hilltop has eye-watering property prices -- including some of the world's most expensive real estate. While Hong Kong's wealthy think nothing of dropping millions of dollars for their homes, millions of the city's residents struggle to afford the rent on shoe-box apartments -- many smaller than the parking space. A 2019 study listed the average property price in Hong Kong at \$1.2 million.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Tribunal hears 'grave' allegations

Witnesses reveal China abuses including torture, gang-rape

AFP, London

A London panel investigating the plight of Uyghurs in China yesterday heard witness testimony of torture and gang rapes, in a process slammed by Beijing as a mendacious smear.

One witness described squalid conditions and brutality in camps in the northwestern Chinese region of Xinjiang, and said one woman had died after undergoing forced sterilisation.

The nine UK-based jurors of the "Uyghur Tribunal", including lawyers and human rights experts, convened the first of two evidence sessions and intend to publish a report in December on whether China is guilty of genocide.

"Allegations made against the PRC (People's Republic of China) are grave," tribunal chair Geoffrey Nice said at the

opening of the first four-day session, explaining they included numerous breaches of the UN declaration on human rights.

The body is not affiliated with any government, and China has refused to participate, branding it a "machine producing lies". It has slapped sanctions on Nice, a former UN war crimes prosecutor, and others involved.

ATROCITIES ON UYGHURS

It was set up at the request of the World Uyghur Congress, the largest group representing exiled Uyghurs, which lobbies the international community to take action against China over alleged abuses in Xinjiang.

Qelbinur Sidik, an ethnic-Uzbek teacher from Xinjiang's capital Urumqi,

said she was ordered by communist party bosses to teach Chinese in two fetid and crowded "re-education" camps, one male and one female, for Uyghurs.

The so-called students were made to wear shackles during hours-long classes, she told the tribunal.

Female prisoners were not only tortured but also raped, sometimes gang-raped, Sidik said.

Forced sterilisation of Uyghur women was common, she said.

Sidik said she was also subjected to forced sterilisation before she was given a visa to visit her daughter in the Netherlands, and fled China.

Rights groups say up to one million Uyghurs and people from other ethnic-Turkic minorities are detained in internment camps in Xinjiang.

AFP, London

Group of Seven finance ministers kicked off talks yesterday, with optimism growing that the world's wealthiest countries will support US-backed plans for a minimum global level of corporate tax.

British finance minister Rishi Sunak was hosting the meet -- held in person after an easing of Covid restrictions and attended by counterparts from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

The talks were preparing the ground for a broader summit of G7 leaders in Cornwall, England starting on June 11, which will include US President Biden who has called for a unified minimum corporate tax rate of 15 percent.

Momentum is building for a minimum level of corporate tax to prevent multinationals like tech giants from playing the system to boost profits.

Corporate tax is one of two pillars in efforts for global fiscal reforms, the other being a "digital tax" to allow countries to tax the profits of multinationals headquartered overseas.

According to a draft communique seen by AFP, the finance chiefs and central bankers of the world's seven richest nations will express "strong support" over a minimum global minimum corporate tax rate. Ministers also plan to commit to "sustain policy support", or stimulus, for "as long as necessary" to nurture economic recovery, while addressing climate change and inequalities in society, according to the document.

Corporate tax deal 'in sight' as G7 meets

MYSTERIOUS FLYING OBJECTS
US REPORT FAILS TO EXPLAIN MYSTERY

AFP, Washington

There is no evidence that unexplained aerial phenomena spotted in recent years by US military personnel are aliens, an upcoming government report quoted by The New York Times Thursday said, but officials still can't explain the mysterious aircraft.



The newspaper, which cited senior administration officials briefed on the findings of the highly anticipated report, said they were able to confirm the unusual vessels were not the product of secret Pentagon technology.

But the review of more than 120 incidents over the past two decades was unable to explain the mysterious movements of the craft, which include unusual acceleration, direction changes and the ability to rapidly submerge.

And while senior officials told the Times the lack of clear findings means that while there's no evidence of alien

technology behind the phenomena, it's also impossible to rule out.

One official briefed on the report said officials increasingly worry the phenomena could be China or Russia experimenting with newer technology.

The upcoming report -- expected to be released to Congress by June 25 -- will have a classified annex, which will likely fuel speculation that aliens are actually behind the encounters.

The Pentagon last year released videos taken by US Navy pilots showing in-flight encounters with the unusual aircraft.

Budget blanks out

FROM PAGE 2

and if things don't change they could lose Tk 6,800 crore by December.

Airlines Operator Association of Bangladesh (Aoab) urged the government to waive VAT and tax on jet fuel on domestic routes. Aoab also demanded withdrawal of 15 percent VAT on aeronautical and non-aeronautical charges, and reducing the corporate tax rate from 32.5 percent to 22.5 percent.

"We are surprised to see this budget. There was actually nothing in this budget for the aviation and tourism sector ... nothing on how to save these two worst effect industries," Kamrul Islam, spokesperson of US-Bangla Airlines, said.

Toab demanded stimulus package but the government did not pay heed to their demands.

The finance minister did mention that the government has formulated a standard operating procedure to keep domestic and international tourism going following health safety protocols.

Toab leaders said there was no mention of how and when it would be implemented.

Toab had asked for waiver of their annual trade licence renewal fees during the pandemic. This request too was ignored in the budget.

Talking to this correspondent, Toab President Rafeuzzaman said the government did not pay due focus on the tourism industry.

"Tourism sector is on the verge of collapse ... This sector will not survive without assistance from the government. But we didn't see anything in the budget," he added.

Toab leaders said tourism is now the third largest industry in the world. In 2019, tourism contributed 4.7 percent, or Tk 6,300 crore, to the GDP.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

PWD Division, Noakhali

Phone: 0321-61606, Fax: 0321-61606

Email: ee_noakh@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No.

Dated:

e-Tender Notice

An e-Tender has been invited for the following work through e-GP Portal and that will be visible from 03.06.2021 only the person/organization registered by e-GP portal can visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for clear observation.

Tender ID No	Package No	Name of works	Last Selling date & Time	Closing/Opening date & Time
584695	Noakhali/PWD/Rev/OTM-153 Police Line.	Supplying and Installation of 400 KVA Electrical Sub-Station for Noakhali, Police Line.	20.06.2021 16:00	21.06.2021 15:00

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

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

(Md. Kamrul Hassan)

Executive Engineer

Noakhali P.W.D. Division.

GD-1134

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Family Planning
Logistics & Supply Unit
6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215
Invitation for Tenders (Goods)

1	Ministry/Division	Medical Education & Family Welfare Division
2	Agency	Directorate General of Family Planning
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management)
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Procurement of Covered Van Truck (5 Ton)
7	Invitation Ref No	DGFP/L&S-2/Covered Van/2020-21/167/189
8	Date	03/06/2021
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)(NCT)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget
11	Development Partner (if applicable)	International Development Association (IDA)
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project/ Programme Code (if applicable)	224108300
13	Project/ Programme Name (if applicable)	4 th Health, Population & Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP)
14	Tender Package No.	PSSM/GD-02
15	Tender Package Name	Procurement of Covered Van Truck (5 Ton)
16	Tender Publication Date	04/06/2021
17	Tender Last Selling Date	23/06/2021
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	24/06/2021 12:00 PM
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	24/06/2021 12:30 PM.
20	Name & Address of the Office(s)	Address Office of the Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management), Logistics & Supply Unit (5 th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215 Contact No- 01741404804
Selling Tender Document (Others) Office of the Additional Director (Drugs & Stores) Central Warehouse, Directorate General of Family Planning, Nandipara (Uttargaon) Trimohoni, Union-Nasirabad, Thana-Khilgaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh.		
Receiving Tender Document Room No.-15, Logistics & Supply unit Directorate General of Family Planning		
Opening Tender Document 6, Kawran bazar, Dhaka-1215		

21	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	The Pre- Tender meeting shall be held at the Conference Room, Room No.-15, Logistics & Supply unit, Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawran bazar, Dhaka-1215 Date: 09/06/2021 & Time: 11.00 AM.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As mentioned in the tender document			
23	Brief Description of Goods	5 nos. Covered Van Truck (5 Ton)			
24	Brief Description of Related Services	Not Applicable			
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Taka 2000/- (Taka two thousand) only, non- refundable. Mode of payment should be made by Treasury Chalan from Bangladesh Bank/ Sonali Bank Code no: 1-7481-0000-2366 in favor of Director General, Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215.Original copy of the Treasury Chalan must be online verification/certified (CTR) by the concerned accounts' office.			
26	Lot No.	Identification of items	Location	Tender Security Amount	Completion Time in Weeks/Months
	Single Lot	5 nos. Covered Van Truck (5 Ton)	Central Warehouse (Rented), Directorate General Of Family Planning, Nandipara (Uttargaon), Union: Nasirabad, Thana:Khilgoan, Dhaka.	BDT. 5,00,000.00 (Taka Five Lakh)	12 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
27	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Ratna Talukder			
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (Logistics and Supply) and Line Director (Procurement, Storage and Supply Management)			
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Logistics & Supply Unit (5 th floor), Directorate General of Family Planning 6, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.			
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. & Fax No:88-02- 55012349 E-mail: dirlsdgfp@gmail.com			
31	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders. If the opening date fails on any office holiday, the first working day will be the last selling date of tender document and the next working day will be the opening date.				

03.06.2021
(Ratna Talukder)
Director (Logistics and Supply) &
Line Director (PSSM-FP)
Directorate General of Family Planning
Telephone:88-02-55012349

GD-1133

US to give Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12
Maldives, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and the Pacific Islands, the White House fact sheet published late on Thursday said.

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced that the US will allocate 75 percent -- nearly 1.9 crore of the first tranche of 2.5 crore doses -- of unused vaccines from its stockpile through the UN-backed COVAX global vaccine sharing programme to countries in South and Southeast Asia as well as Africa.

The first consignment of Covid-19 vaccines from the United States will reach India by the end of June, White House Chief Spokesperson Symone Sanders said on Thursday.

Sanders in a brief statement said US Vice President Kamala D Harris had spoken on the phone with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier that day.

In New Delhi, the statement issued by the Indian PMO said Harris informed Modi about US plans to make Covid-19 vaccines available to other countries, including India, under its "strategy for global vaccine

sharing".

However, there was no mention of a timeline in the Indian statement.

Harris also spoke with President Andres Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, President Alejandro Giammattei of Guatemala and Prime Minister Keith Rowley, Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in separate calls.

The vice-president conveyed to each of the leaders "that the Biden-Harris Administration will begin sharing the first 25 million doses of Covid vaccines to their respective countries and others, as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's framework for sharing at least 80 million vaccines globally by the end of June," Sanders said.

Harris "reiterated that the administration's efforts are focused on achieving broad global coverage, responding to surges and other urgent situations and public health needs and helping as many countries as possible who requested vaccines".

"The four leaders thanked the vice-president, and they agreed to continue working together to address Covid-19 and advance our mutual interests around the world," Sanders said.

A conversation with Yahya

FROM PAGE 12
that all bona fide refugees regardless of religious origin could and should return to their homes. Farland suggested that this type of pronouncement would be favourably received by the Indian government and should also have a salutary impact on world opinion.

Yahya's immediate answer was to the effect that his May 24 statement was all inclusive and that there was no differentiation between Muslims and Hindus. He added, however, that he had no objection whatsoever in making a statement as suggested, and that he would most certainly do so.

Farland went on to note that the flow of refugees continued and that this flow is symptomatic of the serious situation in East Pakistan. He pointed out that the embassy continued to receive reports of Hindu villages being attacked by the army, that fear was pervasive, and that until this situation changed the refugees will continue to cross over into India.

And Farland reiterated the US government's concern that at some point the Hindu exodus, if not checked, could lead to a military clash with India.

A DAY'S EARNINGS FOR BANGLADESH
The working people of Hungary contributed a day's earnings to a non-official fund launched in that country for relief of Bangladesh refugees

in India. Political and cultural organisations running the campaign hoped to send the first consignment of tents, blankets, medicines and foodstuff to India within six weeks to be followed by another in August.

CHOLERA TOLL REACHES 8,000
The death toll in the cholera epidemic sweeping through four million East Pakistani refugees in India's West Bengal state reached 8,000. Health ministry officials in New Delhi said the toll could be as high as that, but no precise statistics were available.

With a catastrophe on its hands, the Indian government continued its efforts to recruit international help and also to reassure the West Bengal government that it would not be left alone to face the problem.

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited West Bengal today for talks with the state government and said the central government in New Delhi had taken full responsibility for the care of refugees, who had fled from East Pakistan since the army began the attempt to crush the movement there.

UN CHILDRENS FUND TO SEND RELIEF SUPPLIES
The United Nations Children's Fund chartered a plane to fly 30 tonnes of relief supplies to refugees fleeing from East Pakistan to India, United Nations sources said.

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

Imposition of 15pc tax goes

FROM PAGE 12
University's Madhu's Canteen, Private university students yesterday placed six-point demand -- withdrawal of the proposed 15 percent tax on private universities, looking into the income and expenditure of private universities, introducing uniform tuition fee policy and uniform grading system at all private universities and increasing budget for research at the universities and stimulus package for the students so that they don't drop out due to the Covid-19.

"We are giving the government time to withdraw the proposal of 15 percent tax till June 10. If the government does not meet their demand, we will go for tougher movement," said Mukta Rezwana, a student of a private university, at the conference.

There are 107 approved private universities in Bangladesh with about 5 lakh students, the statement said.

The government in 2015 also imposed a 7.5 percent value added tax on tuition fees of private universities, medical and engineering colleges.

It, however, had to backtrack from its decision following several days of students' protest which almost brought the capital to a standstill.

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Myanmar's NUG to draft new charter

FROM PAGE 12
Revolution against military dictatorship in all possible ways," said a statement by the National Unity Government (NUG) Thursday.

The NUG, Myanmar's shadow government in exile, was formed by the ousted parliamentarians of National League of Democracy (NLD) in early April, more than two months after the military took control of the Southeast Asian country, alleging gross anomalies in the November 2020 elections. The NLD had won the election and was in the process of forming a government.

A national disobedience movement across Myanmar faced brutal military crackdown and it has left more than 800 people dead since February this year.

The NUG, meanwhile, is seeking international recognition. It is also taking into cognisance various ethnic rebel groups that have long been fighting the military junta-led governments for autonomy.

In the process, the NUG is committing to grant equal rights to Rohingyas who have been living in Myanmar for centuries but denied citizenship, ethnicity and many other fundamental rights since the 1970s.

Facing persecution, they fled to neighbouring countries. In the most brutal crackdown against them in Rakhine State in 2017, some 750,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh and joined some 300,000 others who had fled following the previous waves of violence since 1970s.

Myanmar now faces a genocide case

at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), while Rohingya repatriation has not been possible as conditions in Rakhine were not conducive.

Against this backdrop, the NUG in the statement uploaded to Twitter by its Minister for International Cooperation Sasa said in honour of human rights and human dignity and to eradicate the conflicts in Myanmar, the Unity Government intends to build a prosperous federal democratic union where all ethnic groups can live peacefully.

"All citizens who swear allegiance to the Union regardless of their ethnic origins are considered to have full enjoyment of citizens' rights. The National Unity Government will not tolerate any form of discrimination."

The NUG also invited all people of Myanmar to participate in the process of drafting a constitution. Promising amendment to the 1982 Citizenship Law, which denies Rohingya citizenship, it said the new act must base citizenship on birth in Myanmar or birth anywhere as a child of Myanmar citizens.

The NUG also committed to abolishing the process of issuing National Verification Card (NVC) that the military used against Rohingya and other ethnic groups coercively.

It also committed safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of Rohingyas following the agreements signed with the neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, and take up a special programme as soon as possible.

The NUG also pledged justice for Rohingyas and accountability of

16 die at RMCH Covid unit in 24hrs

FROM PAGE 1
of them were Covid-19 positive and the rest suspected cases.

RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani said he had requested the health authorities two weeks ago to impose a "complete lockdown" in four districts of Rajshahi region -- Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Naogaon and Natore.

However, the Chapainawabganj district administration enforced "lockdown" since May 24, while the district's Covid-19 detection rate was 54 percent.

Out of 152 tested in the district yesterday, at least 82 were found to be positive.

Restrictions imposed in Rajshahi and Naogaon have been relaxed for mango trade.

Meanwhile, no restrictions have been enforced in Natore yet.

The infection rate in the three districts was 30 percent.

In Cumilla, four Covid-19 patients, including a woman, breathed their last in the 24-hour period at Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

Cumilla Civil Surgeon Mir Mubarak Hossain said 439 people have died of the virus so far.

Out of 242 samples tested in the 24 hours, 21 (8.7 percent) tested positive.

Chudanga Civil Surgeon ASM Maruf Hasan yesterday said "lockdown" was enforced in bordering Karpashdanga area of Damurhuda upazila, while several other areas in Jibannagar upazila were "under observation".

Also, 34 people out of 116 tested positive in Kushtia and another 12 people out of 130 were found positive in Meherpur in the 24-hour period.

Kushtia Deputy Commissioner Saidul Islam said the district health authorities were identifying the risky areas where most Covid cases were found.

Further decisions will be made after getting the report.

In Sathkira, highest 53 percent Covid-19 detection rate was reported on Thursday.

With yesterday's nationwide 34 deaths, the death toll reached 12,758 and the death rate stands at 1.58 percent.

Among the deceased, 20 were men and 14 women.

Meanwhile, at least 1,887 new infections were recorded in the 24-hour period, taking the total number of infected people to 807,867, said the DGHS press release.

The current positivity rate is 10.40 percent and the total positivity rate 13.42 percent.

Around 18,151 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.

[Our correspondents in Rajshahi, Cumilla, Kushtia and Sathkira contributed to this report.]

Budget doesn't

FROM PAGE 12
Fakhrul said.

He added that the budget's tagline, "Bangladesh Towards a Resilient Future: Protecting Lives and Livelihoods", sounds good, but there is nothing specific for the poor people.

"Rather, we see an old-fashioned dependency on bank loans."

This budget has ignored the stimulus package for the poor that everyone expected.

There were so many discussions about the health sector, but allocation has been only around 1 percent of the GDP, he said, "It is painful. This allocation will not meet the demand of the health sector. The allocation should have been 5 percent of the GDP."

The government said 25 lakh vaccines will be administered each month. "But how this will be implemented is not mentioned in the proposed budget."

The small and medium entrepreneurs employ the largest number of people, but the incentives are for the industrialists, Fakrul said.

"The finance minister himself is a businessman. The middle class is frustrated but the business quarters are happy."

Bangladesh seeks

FROM PAGE 12
diagnostics and other medical equipment, should get licences as well as technology and technical know-how to produce the vaccines and other health technologies for Covid-19. Those items should be provided to other developing countries free of cost, it said.

Besides, the Bangladesh delegation highlighted the timely and swift actions taken by Bangladesh, including health measures and stimulus packages, to combat the socio-economic impacts posed by the pandemic.

This year, the assembly focused on the production, supply and equitable distribution of vaccines to address the Covid crisis. Bangladesh also highlighted the leading role of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as co-chair of the One Health Global Leaders' Group on Antimicrobial Resistance.

It also emphasised the need for raising global awareness on tackling antimicrobial resistance.

In addition, Bangladesh called for paying due attention to the need to promote mental health across the globe and ensure sustainable funding for a strong World Health Organization.

Mustafizur Rahman, permanent representative and ambassador of Bangladesh to the UN in Geneva, delivered two joint statements on mental health and antimicrobial resistance on behalf of WHO's Southeast Asian region consisting of 11 countries.

A total of 35 resolutions and decisions on various issues related to health were adopted by the WHA.

Initiatives underway to cover

FROM PAGE 12
with Bhutan and is working to ink similar agreements with 11 other countries, he added.

Although the minister talked about multiple initiatives to overcome the post-graduation challenges, he did not give any indication about the government's steps regarding removing corruption.

He said the government was working on improving Bangladesh's position in the Ease of Doing Business Index to increase foreign direct investment into the country.

Kamal said the government was implementing various mega projects, including Padma Bridge, which would help create new jobs and increase national income.

The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of the United Nations recommended taking Bangladesh out from the list of the least-developed countries (LDCs) in 2026. Bangladesh, before the advent of Covid-19, was set to exit the group in 2024.

In the 2021 review of CDP, Bangladesh stands strongly in all three criteria for the graduation, with a per capita income of \$1,827 (requirement \$1,222), Economic Vulnerability Index of 27 (requirement 32 or below), and human Asset Index of 75.4 (requirement 66 or above).

According to a government study conducted last year, Bangladesh's export earnings and the flow of cheaper foreign assistance and grants will decrease after the graduation from LDC status.

The projected loss of exports and grants and higher debt service costs would lead to higher current account deficit, said the study styled "Impact assessment and coping up strategies of graduation from LDC status for Bangladesh".

The report was prepared by the General Economics Division, a wing under the planning ministry.

The biggest blow will emerge in the form of the losing duty-free

market access. The projected export loss from garment products in the European Union and non-EU markets is estimated to be about 5 percent of the total exports in 2017-18 fiscal year, the study said.

This loss is estimated to be \$7 billion in FY27, which would steadily increase to \$13 billion by FY31.

Policy actions will be necessary to counter these projected losses, the study said, adding that the loss of concessional loans will lead to increased debt servicing costs.

The report, however, said the LDC graduation will open up the door for market-based borrowing by both the public and private sectors. Bangladesh will become more dependent on borrowing from relatively higher-cost sources. The private sector external debt will also see an increase.

The third important factor will be the loss of foreign grants, currently received by the public and private sectors.

The combined impact of these three types of losses will directly affect the balance of payment, and the current account deficit may swell to 0.9-1.4 percent of GDP in FY27.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said there should be a guideline for facing post-graduation challenges in 2026 as the export, soft loan, and trade benefit will decline.

"If the government take sudden decisions in 2027, it would not be wise. So, we should prepare from now to overcome the challenges," she said.

Fahmida said domestic resource mobilisation would be very important after the graduation and proper guidelines should be prepared in this regard.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, said policy issue is important as the country is going to graduate out of LDC status after 2026.

He stressed the need for planning on internal resources mobilisation.

'Delta' variant

FROM PAGE 12
Covax programme in June and July could undermine the efficiency of the roll-out.

Covax was set up to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, particularly to low-income countries, and has already delivered more than 80 million doses to 129 territories.

But that is "about 200 million doses behind where we want to be", Bruce Aylward, the WHO's Covax frontman, told reporters in Geneva.

So while wealthy countries had pledged to give some 150 million doses so far -- on top of the doses Covax procures with donated funds -- that would not resolve the problem.

"We are setting up for failure if we don't get early doses," Aylward said.

On Thursday, WHO's top vaccines expert has said that immunising children against Covid-19 is not a high priority from a WHO perspective, given the extremely limited global supply of doses.

"Children are at (a) very, very low risk of actually getting Covid disease," said Dr Kate O'Brien, a paediatrician and director of the WHO's vaccines department.

"When we're in this really difficult place, as we are right now, where the supply of vaccine is insufficient for everybody around the world, immunising kids is not a high priority right now."

Canada, the United States and the European Union have all recently given the green light to some COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 12 to 15 as they approach their vaccination targets for adults.

Britain's medicines regulator yesterday said it had extended approval of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech so it can be used on 12- to 15-year-olds.

Fewer than one percent of Covid-19 vaccines administered globally have been used in poor countries.

SpaceX carrying

FROM PAGE 12
Young specimens of the species Euprymna scolopes, known as bobtail squid, are on board for the trip, so scientists can study the effect of zero gravity on the interactions between bacteria and their host organisms.

Some of the squids will be exposed to bacteria once on board the ISS, while others will be left alone. After 12 hours, the specimens are preserved until their return to Earth, where they will be studied.

"Animals, including humans, rely on our microbes to maintain a healthy digestive and immune system," said Jamie Foster, the principal investigator in the experiment, in a statement.

"We do not fully understand how spaceflight alters these beneficial interactions."

The experiment could help scientists in the future to develop techniques to protect the health of astronauts participating in long-duration missions in space.

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Samina Husain Prema and Mohima Shwagota



Mohima Shwagota

Reflecting upon life through MANIPURI DANCE

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDA

Acclaimed Manipuri dancer Samina Husain Prema came across her student, Mohima Shwagota, nearly a decade ago. At the time, Prema had just started conducting dance lessons. Over the years, the two have grown together in their pursuit of classical Manipuri dance. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, Prema and her protégé Shwagota speak about their bond, and more.

"Shwagota was in kindergarten when she first came to my dance class," mentions Prema. "At the time, I had a small batch of five to six students, who are still very special to me. Shwagota has always been there for me in tough times."

Prema further adds that her students' sincerity and dedication inspired her to establish Bhabna, a school of Manipuri dance.

"My dance guru Prema is a perfectionist. Her dedication always makes me want to work twice as hard, even during the long and tiring rehearsal hours," adds Shwagota, a student of Viharunnisa Noon School & College. "Over time, I realised that she truly prepared my physicality for Manipuri dance, when others started praising my performances. Her strictness actually inspires me to be better."

Prema and Shwagota have performed on numerous occasions together. The dance dramas, "Bhanu Shingher Podaboli" and "Shakuntala" are two



Samina Husain Prema

of their favourite collaborations. More recently, they collaborated at the Mujib Shotoborsho programme. Shwagota also assists Prema with dance classes at Bhabna.

Over the years, the duo has grown to find comfort in each other's presence. "Usually, after I have finished choreographing a routine, I

ask Shwagota to work with my dance steps and help me perfect them on stage. Shwagota always goes with the natural demands of a song. I enjoy our compatibility," shares Prema.

On the other hand, Shwagota shares that Prema always shows faith in her students, and never hesitates to put in the extra effort to help them.

"When my students appeared for the exam conducted by Paschim Banga Rajya Sangeet Academy, they were highly appreciated by the visiting classical gurus, alongside my guru Smt Kalavati Devi. Based on their knowledge of classical Manipuri dance, my students presented themselves as graceful dancers. I was very proud as their guru that day," says Prema.

Speaking of her growth, Shwagota shares that under Prema's guidance, she overcame any form of jealousy or pettiness. "At Bhabna, we always work on each other's weaknesses and take on roles that contribute to the betterment of the routine that we are performing. There are no ego classes when we perform on stage as a troupe," she says.

Prema has dealt with her own struggles while pursuing professional training in dance. "I have tried to give my students the tutelage that I missed when I was a student myself," she shares. "Dance has not only given me grace and poise, but has also taught me to maintain a good work-life balance, and empowered me to help aspiring artists. Today, when I see Shwagota managing her academics and passion for dancing, I feel proud."

An introvert at heart, Shwagota shares that dancing brings her a sense of comfort and confidence. "I feel like a completely different person on the stage. Dancing makes me feel complete, and makes me forget about my anxieties," she concludes.

PHOTO: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED

BUBLY on her upcoming ventures

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Shabnom Bubby started her career as a television news presenter, making her silver screen debut with "Bossgiri" in 2016. The actor has recently started shooting for multiple projects, including "Leader: Amie Bangladesh" where she will share the screen with Shakib Khan. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the star speaks about her upcoming projects and more.

Tell us a bit about your upcoming film "Leader: Amie Bangladesh".

The film is directed by Topu Khan, and I will once again be seen opposite Shakib Khan. We have been working together for such a long time and the last release we had was "Bir". The story of this film is amazing and we are trying to wrap it up around Eid al-Adha. Times are tough and we are trying our best. The production will hit the theatres after the Covid-19 situation is under control.

What are your other upcoming projects?

I recently finished shooting for "Chokh". The film, directed by Jewel, casts Ziaul Roshan in lead alongside me. The audience will get to explore a new side of me through this film.

I had finished shooting for the film "Casino" prior to the coronavirus pandemic. I will be seen with Nirab Hossain in this Saikat Nasir directorial venture. The release was postponed due to the pandemic but I am hopeful that the audience will watch this production in theatre once the situation becomes better.

What are your upcoming plans? What kind of characters attracts you the most?

I don't intend to sign up for numerous projects, I would rather do a few that marks a milestone in my career. An actor has the opportunity to make the audience feel emotions on screen and respecting this privilege has always been my utmost priority. As an actor, I look to take up challenging roles and indulge myself in deep research before I face the camera.

What lesson has this pandemic left behind for you as an actor?

This pandemic has left behind a lot of lessons for people from all walks of life. We have lost many legends and living in a constant death threat. Living with dignity and honesty is what counts the most, that's what I have learned over the past months.



PHOTO: STAR

Painting during a pandemic

JAHANARA TARIQ

After more than a year into the coronavirus pandemic, we are still largely confined to the four walls of our homes. But for painters, by and large, this has always been the case. They have to negotiate with their mediums from their rooms or studios. Keeping this in mind, we caught up with distinguished artists from Bangladesh to know more about their journey with art during these trying times.

Eminent artist Kanak Chapa Chakma considers herself lucky to not have to face any personal loss, when so many people near and



Mohammad Eunus

dear to her have lost people they love. "I still remember the initial days of the pandemic when I would stay at home, hungrily observing the suddenly empty world from my terrace," she says. Even though the artist finished a few paintings in the first wave of the pandemic, quite a lot of them were developed much earlier. She fed street dogs and cats frequently, and donated paintings to organisations that sold them and distributed the money to artists and film production crew members who lost their livelihoods due to the coronavirus crisis.

Acclaimed artist Professor Jamal Uddin Ahmed is known for capturing the inner pains and joys

of life in his paintings. "Staying indoors does not physically make much of a difference to us. As artists, our work requires us to stay cooped up for long hours, observing colours," says the Ekushey Padak-winning artist. In the past, he hired models for his paintings, but due to the movement restrictions now, he had to minimise the practice and paint figures based on his own psyche.

He was among one hundred artists who participated in Art Against Corona, organised by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. He made a painting of a mother and her two children, separated by a huge block of glass in a hospital; both of them trying to touch the other without succeeding. Ahmed donated fifteen paintings to different organisations to support struggling artists.

Professor Mohammad Eunus says that he really lost the colours in his life when the pandemic began. The loss of lives weighed so heavily in his mind that he couldn't bring himself to add bright colours to his drawings. Instead, he resorted to black and white sketches on small



Farida Zaman



Jamal Uddin Ahmed

canvases.

He was finally able to paint in colours when he was invited to a virtual workshop, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, in June 2020. It made him realise that in order to get away from these trying times, he needed to paint large pictures in vibrant colours, some of which were about the coronavirus pandemic. It paved the way for him to meditate on the nature of

painting that he didn't consider otherwise in the past. "I truly got to understand the concept of art therapy during the pandemic. It nourishes your soul and feeds your optimism towards life. Every individual should dip their toes in art to battle with the rising turbulence in life," he asserts.

In conversation with Ekushey Padak-winning artist Farida Zaman, we got a taste of her meditative and contemplative nature. She spent almost a year and a half in Thailand, well into the pandemic. Even during her stay there, she was free from the noise of the city and had access to a quiet and nourishing atmosphere as well as all kinds of art materials. Yet, she missed drawing from the comfort of her studio. She had a lot of plans on what she would do after her return, but they had to be put aside for the time being. She is continuing to write, and hopes to start painting again soon.

The author is a postgrad student of English Literature and a freelance journalist. Email: jahanaratariq@outlook.com.



Kanak Chapa Chakma

A more pro-people budget expected

The authorities must ensure efficient implementation and a system of accountability

SINCE the pandemic hit Bangladesh in early 2020, the poverty rate has doubled—for every five people in Bangladesh, two are now living below the poverty line. There has been a 49 percent decline in salaried income, with daily wage labourers being hit particularly hard, and households have had to cut back on crucial spending on health, education and other necessities. In the run-up to the recent announcement of the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2021-22, there was hope that the latest budget would aggressively tackle these pandemic-induced inequalities and ensure that the affected are able to get back on their feet.

Although the two new safety net funds—Tk 7,300 crore for the pandemic-affected and Tk 5,000 crore for climate victims—are welcome news, an article in this daily yesterday detailed how the major issue will be with implementation, since the government still has no up-to-date dataset on vulnerable populations. And so far, the government stimulus packages to help the Covid-affected have mainly served the formal sector. If the government has any new plans to support the estimated 1.35 crore informal-sector workers who lost their jobs during last year's shutdown, we are yet to hear of them.

The budget also made very little provisions for the unemployed—a disappointment for the middle-class people who are struggling with a loss of work and yet are ineligible for social safety net programmes. In a similar vein, returnee migrant workers were left out of most considerations, with the focus being on increasing remittances instead. While we understand the government's emphasis on boosting the economic recovery, as reflected in a range of tax cuts and exemptions as well as efforts to increase investments, we are worried that the current policies do not sufficiently target the people who are unlikely to directly benefit from such economic policies.

In terms of pro-people policies, we are astonished to see that the allocation for education remained almost unchanged in terms of proportion of GDP, despite the very real fears of irreparable learning losses, made worse by the digital divide, which could hamper the future of students and have widespread ramifications on our economy and society. The public spending on healthcare also saw a minimal increase, despite expectations of a renewed focus on access to primary healthcare.

If anything, this shows the higher authorities' lack of faith in the proper execution of such budgetary allocations. However, this inability to act promptly during crisis periods and the overall lack of effectiveness are unacceptable in such fundamental public sectors of a soon-to-be middle-income nation. We hope the government will now focus all their energy on not just the efficient implementation of the budget, but also on building a system of transparency and accountability that ensures that public funds are no longer misused.

Trafficking of girls and women on the rise

Authorities must protect them and ensure strict legal action against the traffickers

A report in *The Daily Star* on June 3 highlighted the harrowing experiences of three trafficked victims who were lured to India under false promises of getting well-paying decent jobs. In reality, they were lured by members of a sex trafficking ring, sexually abused and forced into prostitution. Thousands of women and girls have already been trafficked from Bangladesh to India and other countries, and the trend seems to be increasing with the traffickers finding new ways to prey on vulnerable girls and women.

One of the victims, a 16-year-old girl, has filed a case against 12 suspected sex traffickers under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012. She was able to do so only after fleeing with two other women from Bangalore, India, where they had been forced into sex work for 77 days. It's a relief that three of the 12 suspects have already been apprehended. The Deputy Commissioner of Tejgaon zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said that another five suspects are inside Bangladesh right now. We hope that they will be arrested and brought to justice soon.

Among the three alleged culprits currently behind bars, two have already confessed. According to these statements, one of them trafficked 1,000 women to India in eight years, while another helped to traffic at least 500 women to India by crossing the border. Incidentally, the first arrests of this kind were made by the Indian police. A video clip of torture and sexual assault that had gone viral prompted the Indian police to arrest six Bangladeshis involved with this crime. On the other hand, Bangladeshi law enforcers have found information about an international human trafficking racket which consists of some Bangladeshi personnel. The good news is that Bangladesh Police has arrested four members of this racket, one of whom is the leader of this group, and placed them on a five-day remand.

We urge the government to strictly implement the human trafficking prevention act and also the courts to mete out exemplary punishment to the traffickers. The government deserves kudos for establishing seven special tribunals to ensure the trial of human trafficking cases proceeds in a speedy manner. All the investigative branches of the police now have to remain alert so that no more trafficking takes place, while the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has to remain vigilant on a continuous basis to prevent this crime. There is, moreover, a crying need for more support for those who are rescued from the grips of these traffickers so that they can return to their families and communities and be treated with compassion and dignity. Rehabilitation programmes for the trafficking victims have to be prioritised.

Students getting a slim slice of the budget pie



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

A preparatory meeting for ULAB's planned virtual convocation, I suggested that we use the iconic image of Keanu Reeves dodging many bullets in the *Matrix* trilogy as our promotional campaign. After all, our motto this year is "against all odds", which chimes with Reeves' ("Neo" in the movie) slo-mo tackling of a flurry of bullets. The pandemic has made us take shelter in a virtual world as we try to protect ourselves from the multifrontal attack of the ever-evolving virus. Everyone laughed, and my suggestion was nothing more than "a glitch in the system" just like *déjà vu* is a glitch in the "matrix"—the simulated reality that makes humanity unaware that artificial intelligence has actually taken over the world. Not everyone shares their likings of the same movies; unfortunately, thanks to a global crisis, we all share the same predicaments.

Going through the reports on the budgetary allocation for education, I had a *déjà vu*. There is not much difference from last year's facts and figures, both in terms of size and percentage. The finance minister in his budget speech proposed an allocation of Tk 36,486 crore for secondary and higher education under the national budget of Tk 603,681 crore. In FY 2020-2021, the allocation in these sectors was Tk 33,118 crore. For technical and madrasa education, the allocation shows a slight rise from last year's figure of Tk 8,345 crore to Tk 9,153 crore, while the figure for primary and mass education stands at Tk 26,314 crore against last year's Tk 24,937 crore. The total amount of Tk 71,951 crore—for the Primary and Mass Education Ministry, Secondary and Higher Education Division, and Technical and Madrasa Education Division combined—makes up 11.91 percent of the total outlay of the FY 2021-22 budget, and its share in the GDP stands at 2.08 percent.

Is the feeling that we have seen the same education budget last year a glitch in the system? There was hope that the budget for 2021-22 would bring some succour to the sector that is reeling with the Covid-19 pandemic adversely affecting it. Before the pandemic hit us, we met the criteria to move out of the list of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by 2024. The

revised schedule is 2026. The graduation requires considerable improvement in our human indexes. Yet a Wikilist showing government education expenditures of various countries in percentage of GDP places Bangladesh on the 183rd spot. Only ten other countries have less than our 2 percent allocation, and the percentage is significantly lower than the world's average of 4.5 (World Bank, 2019). The World Bank data claims that Bangladesh actually spent 1.3 percent of its GDP in 2019, whereas the two other neighbouring countries that have qualified for LDC graduation—Bhutan and Nepal—spent 6.9 percent and 5.1 percent respectively. The UNESCO advises a minimum 6 percent of the GDP for education for a country's sustainability.

What are the implications of a smaller slice of the budget pie for education? For one, it does not demonstrate any sincere desire or designated roadmap for a recovery from the pandemic-inflicted losses. The finance minister did mention the public TV and community radio initiatives. The efficacy of those projects is anybody's guess. Suffice to remind one of a viral BTV programme in which the teacher could not solve a simple addition. To add insult to injury, the internet data price and

whether to bring our students back to physical classrooms or continue teaching remotely for the rest of the year. Meanwhile, many countries around the world have adopted a hybrid model that combines on-campus classes with virtual classes. We are still on a thinking-what-to-think mode. The UGC has recently woken up from its proverbial slumber to ask us to discuss the issue at an academic council level and go for physical exams.



ILLUSTRATION: NAHFIA JAHAN MONNI

The myopic decision to increase tax on the private universities will brew tension in an already unstable system.

As an educator-cum-administrator, I know how many of our students have been traumatised by these virtual classes and social distancing, and how many of our faculty members are suffering from Zoom fatigue. The number of students dealing with mental stress, anxieties, and even suicidal thoughts is staggering. Experts agree that in the absence of proper incentives, many students will be forced to leave education and add to the tally of young offenders, child marriage, early pregnancy and child labour.

The only sector that has shown some resilience during this pandemic has been slapped with a 15 percent tax. Sheikh Kabir Hossain, president of the Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB), urged the government earlier saying: "During the Covid-19 situation, even as the private universities are facing a fund crisis, the imposition of a 15 percent income tax on them by the government will exacerbate the crisis even more."

To think that only the upper-middle class and the affluent class attend the private universities is a fallacy that we cannot afford. Dear Minister, please come and sit with us at a financial support or scholarship giving meeting. Listen to the

the price of mobile devices will also go up after this budget.

The proposal of using public education platforms or paraphernalia does not add up. At the sight of coronavirus, in March last year, we scrambled to our smartphones and computers to download Zoom, Google suite, or MS Teams. Under strict lockdown measures, we asked our students to decamp from closed campuses, and they spent the next indefinite period of time (14 months and counting) logging on to classes from their homes, using their own electronic devices and data.

With the vaccine drama still unfolding, we are still grappling with the idea of

We must work together to deliver on climate goals



ALOK SHARMA

THIS World Environment Day, I am reflecting on my recent visit to one of the most ecologically important countries in the world. Sadly, Bangladesh is also one of the most vulnerable to the destructive effects of climate change. More than 163 million people living here are only too well aware of this.

My visit to Bangladesh has come at a crucial time, with five months to go before the UK welcomes the countries of the world to Glasgow for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, COP26. This is our moment to get the world on track to address the enormous threat of climate change and build a cleaner, brighter future for us all.

We know what we need to do, because we've already agreed what we're aiming for. In 2015, the world signed the Paris Agreement, an international deal to tackle the climate crisis. That agreement commits us to limit global temperature rises to well below two degrees, aiming for 1.5 degrees, because the science tells us that would avoid the worst effects of climate change.

Every fraction of a degree makes a difference. An average global temperature rise of two degrees, compared to 1.5, would see hundreds of millions more people affected, and twice as many plant and three times as many insect species losing vast swathes of their habitat.

However, since the 1.5 degree target was set, the world has not done nearly enough and our planet is heating up. In my role as COP26 President Designate, I have witnessed the impact first hand: melting glaciers, crop degradation, villagers forced from their homes. Here in Bangladesh, I have heard how the catastrophic Cyclone Amphan in May 2020 was transformed into a "super cyclone" due to sea surface temperatures in the Bay of Bengal being 2C hotter than usual at that time of year; also, how sea level rise in the low-lying delta, drought in the north, and changing rainfall patterns across the country are forcing people into over-crowded urban areas; and how the natural defences of the Sundarbans mangrove forest can protect villages from high wind speeds and

storm surges—natural defences which are sadly being shrunk by the effects of industrialisation and our changing climate.

If we continue as we are, these effects will get worse, and fast.

The Climate Action Tracker estimates that if countries keep to their emissions reduction targets, we are now on course for average temperature rises of 2.4 degrees. This is progress on their estimates this time last year. But there is much further to go. To limit warming to 1.5 degrees, we must halve global emissions by 2030. So this is the decisive decade.

We must act now to launch a consistent and concerted effort to reduce emissions throughout the next ten years, and to use the Covid-19 recovery to reimagine our

we can work together to raise global ambition around these goals.

First, we must put the world on a path to driving down emissions until they reach net zero by the middle of this century. This is imperative to keep 1.5 degrees within reach. So we need countries to come forward with clear targets to reduce emissions. This means near-term 2030 emissions reduction targets consistent with net zero by the middle of the century. And these targets must be based on the science, so that net zero is not just a vague aspiration, but a concrete plan.

We also need to see action on the most polluting sectors. If we are serious about 1.5 degrees, Glasgow must be the COP that consigns coal power to



'Glasgow must be the COP that consigns coal power to history.'

COLLAGE: SUSHMITA S PREETHA

economies, building a better future—one with green jobs and cleaner air, and increasing prosperity—without harming the planet.

This is what makes the next United Nations climate conference in Glasgow, COP26, so critical. It must be the moment where every country, and every part of society, embraces their responsibility to protect our precious planet and keep the 1.5 degree target alive. And we have a clear plan to get there.

As COP26 President Designate, alongside the Prime Minister, fellow ministers and the whole of the UK's diplomatic network, I am pressing for action around four key goals. And I am pleased to have had a positive discussion with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other ministers this week about how

history, calls time on deforestation and signals the end of polluting vehicles. So we are working with governments and through international organisations to end international coal financing, a personal priority of mine. We are urging countries to abandon coal power, and we are working with developing countries to support their transition to clean energy.

We are seeing real progress. The G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' meeting, which I recently co-chaired, committed G7 nations to end all new direct government support for international coal power by the end of 2021. And ministers agreed to transition away from dirty coal domestically to an overwhelmingly decarbonised power system in the 2030s. I am encouraged that Bangladesh is also rethinking its energy

prayers of the students who are failing to pay the tuition fees as their parents have lost their jobs or business, or they themselves have lost their tuition. Dear Minister, please visit the FB pages run by the teachers who are half-fed or running away from creditors as their employers have either halved or stopped their salaries. Track the number of faculty and staff members who have lost their jobs during this pandemic. They do not have influential brokers to make their cases heard. There is no incentive package for them.

Not all private universities are profit-making machines or certificates-selling entities. Weed out the bad ones if needed, but do not throw the baby with the bathwater. There are universities that are trying to make a difference. Private universities are contributing to the national human capital. Students (public or private) are not commodities. Any additional tax will force the private institutions to increase their tuition fees. In the process, there will be more dropouts and student mobility. Those who can afford will look for opportunities abroad. These graduates will not be able to contribute to national growth because of a policy that fails to see the big picture. Meanwhile, "foreign" experts will keep on skimming billions from our job sector.

The myopic decision to increase tax on the private universities will brew tension in an already unstable system. One just needs to recall the No-VAT Movement in 2015 when students took to the streets chanting that they were not value-added commodities.

With the new taxation, the non-profit organisations will be compelled to retract their development activities. Without investing in cutting-edge technology, research, and scholarly publications, the institutions will not be able to provide the local students with the best practices. According to an ADB report, "universities that adopt quality online learning, forge significant partnerships, and demonstrate results in preparing students of all ages for work in a technology-driven economy, stand the best chance of thriving after the pandemic."

Have we made enough provisions to thrive in a post-pandemic world? This will require more than the computer animation applied to Neo to avoid the bullets that are heading our way.

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

trajectory, and reducing its pipeline of coal-fired power stations. I have confirmed that UK support is available for scaling up renewable energy.

Our second goal is to protect people and nature from the worst effects of climate change. The climate crisis is already with us and we must act on the very real need for flood defences, disaster management systems and other vital efforts to minimise, avert and address the loss and damage caused by climate change. As chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, Bangladesh is showing real leadership in this area, from early warning and evacuation systems saving lives to climate-resilient crops ensuring food sources are protected.

Our third goal is finance, without which the task ahead is near impossible. Developed countries must deliver the USD 100bn a year they promised to support developing countries. The UK is leading by example, having committed 11.6bn pounds between 2021 and 2025. And we need all developed countries to step up. It is a matter of trust.

We must also make finance easier to access and increase the sums available to protect people and nature. In March, I brought together ministers from 50 governments and international institutions to address these issues, and we are focused on delivering the commitments made at that meeting. I am pleased that Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr A.K. Abdul Momen joined that meeting and has confirmed Bangladesh's willingness to work with us on this.

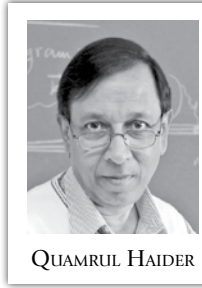
Fourth, we must work together to deliver on these goals. That includes building consensus among governments, so the negotiations in Glasgow are a success, as well as bringing businesses and civil society on board behind our COP26 goals and building up international collaboration in critical sectors. I heard from some of the many climate experts here in Bangladesh, from young leaders to private sector companies. Their message was clear: they want to create a cleaner, greener, and more secure future.

I call on all countries to step up efforts on these goals, because COP26 is our last hope of keeping 1.5 degrees alive, our best chance of building a brighter future. This is our moment—there are no second chances. Let's seize it together.

Alok Sharma is a British politician currently serving as President Designate for COP26, the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference. He visited Bangladesh from 2-3 June 2021.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Man, technology and the environment



QUAMRUL HAIDER

THE Homo sapiens, in their current evolved form, have been around on Earth for about 200,000 years. Many advances have taken place since then, with each advance seeming to have had a greater impact on our environment than the previous one. More recently, the use of technology that brought human society an unprecedented level of comfort and material well-being is threatening to destroy our planet, the only one that is in the Goldilocks zone of the solar system.

The negative impacts on the environment caused by our unbridled use of technologies are numerous. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail all the adverse side-effects. Instead, I will focus on perhaps the most significant one—climate change, followed closely by air pollution, water pollution and resource depletion, albeit not necessarily in the same order.

Our laptop or smart phone or iPad may not release any climate-altering greenhouse gases, but their production and subsequent use involves energy generated by fossil fuels that are responsible for global warming. The same is true for other high-tech devices and electronic implements that have become an integral part of our daily life. For example, using a cell phone for just an hour a day via massive server networks, which consume a huge amount of electricity, translates into more than a ton of carbon dioxide a year.

In the latest report of the World Meteorological Organization, projections of rising global temperatures due to unrestrained emissions of greenhouse gases, aided and abetted by technology, underscore that Earth's climate is moving to greater and greater extremes at an accelerated pace. Indeed, the fury unleashed by climate change is not just making us live in a radically transformed world, but also negatively impacting our health, economic infrastructure, supply chains, and will eventually induce widespread famine and mass migration. Anticipating a grim future for Earth, we are now exploring the possibility of colonising Mars by terraforming it into a habitable planet.

Is it possible to go far back in time to a period when the air was pure? If we think of pure air as we think of pure water, probably not. Long before man, dust storms, fires and volcanoes polluted the air with vast quantities of particles and impurities of various sorts. They threw very fine dust into the atmosphere that finally dispersed and settled on the ground. Our appearance, of course, compounded the picture. When we discovered that fossil fuels could generate more heat than wood, we said goodbye to a halcyon period when the air was relatively pure.

Today, some of the major pollutants in the atmosphere are by-products of technology, such as emissions from vehicles, industries and power plants using fossil fuels, brick fields, foundries, refineries and waste incineration facilities. The pollutants from these sources not only add significantly to local air pollution levels, they also interact with environmental components to form secondary pollutants, thereby making a bad situation worse. The primary pollutants together with the secondary ones are



Locals harvest their potatoes as Mount Sinabung spews volcanic ash in Karo, North Sumatra province, Indonesia, on August 10, 2020.

PHOTO: REUTERS

precursors to the formation of smog, the worst form of air pollution against which our body has very little defence.

There is no other environmental issue more important than safe and clean drinking water. A continuous supply of clean water is our inalienable right. As noted by the Anglo-American poet W. H. Auden, "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water."

How does technology contribute to groundwater pollution? The lifetime of new technologies is very short. They become obsolete after only a few years of use, which leads consumers to dispose of their old ones to buy the newest versions. It is estimated

that globally, we throw away roughly 50 million tonnes of electronic waste every year. More often than not, we throw them away as household trash that ends up in landfills. The toxic material they contain or are made of may eventually leach into the ground and make their way to the water table which is a major source of our drinking water.

Being a mineral intensive industry, technology contributes towards depletion of resources. Increased industrial activity to meet the demands of a digital society requires raw material, some toxic and carcinogenic, whose reserves are finite and are on the decline. Lest we forget, it takes minerals

and fossil fuels hundreds of millions of years to form, but only a few hundred years to use up all the reserves.

Mining itself comes with a high carbon cost. Even if factories reuse or recycle material, they still need space because high-tech industries are growing at a rapid rate. Making space for new facilities often involves deforestation, which in turn results in loss of habitat for the animals. Besides, in the long run, over-exploitation of resources ceases to be beneficial and becomes an environmental threat.

All told, at the end of a typical day, in view of our over-dependence on technology, the Earth's atmosphere becomes a little warmer, the water a

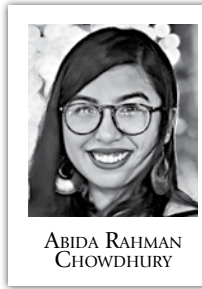
little more polluted, the soil a little more chemically altered, and natural resources a little more depleted. Crime-ridden and overcrowded cities become even more crowded, while the air in and around them, already choked with pollution, becomes a little more toxic. In sum, the web of life becomes a bit more torn. And tomorrow, it will start all over again.

Although these statistics are extremely depressing, my intention is not to discourage the readers but rather to make the point that we are on an unsustainable course. This is not to say that we and the rich biological world we live in are doomed. True, we cannot turn the clock back, but we still have a chance. We need to get our heads out of the sand, we have to get active, we have to be bold, we have to make profound changes to reverse the environmental mess of our own making, and soon.

A final thought on the World Environment Day 2021. It is possible to coexist with nature regardless of all the technological advances by finding sustainable solutions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the future. But they have to be affordable and equitable for all people and all nations. However, if we continue to ignore the modest demands that the environment makes upon our use of it, then all the technology we can devise will not suffice to put right the endless environmental traumas that we have created. On the contrary, it will only impoverish our future generations, who will have enough dilemmas to deal with. Let us give them at least a glimpse of how our planet once looked like.

Quamrul Haider is a Professor of Physics at Fordham University, New York.

Shrinking wild spaces and the growing conflict between humans and animals



ABIDA RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

LIKE writer-journalist Moon Moallem wrote in "Wild Ones", I too have been finding nature in the oddest of places. This, especially so

during this long-drawn-out pandemic, while I remained mostly holed up in one of the most nature-unfriendly cities in the world (if I may say so). Bears have appeared on my pyjamas, which I have refused to get out of as the pandemic stretched on and on. Tigers are seen on the tip of my toothbrush. Elephants and sloths roam the wild in the animated movie I keep playing in a loop because it's comforting. In terms of actual wildlife, though, I have seen the occasional Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker.

In the meantime, work has continued—mostly from home—and as a copy editor with a background in environmental science who receives stories from around the country, I could not help but note the sheer volume of human-animal conflict stories. I am beating myself up for not keeping an exact count, but a quick search on *The Daily Star's* website reveals that there are way too many stories of humans being trampled to death by elephants. Now, elephants in general are not human predators. They do not eat us for food and are considered gentle. But they can kill, when provoked, when we come in their way, when they are stressed, harassed or are looking for food and you happen to be in the way. In the hill districts, this seems to be happening way too often to be ignored. Which

brings me to the issue of growing human-wildlife conflict.

This is not a case that involves just elephants. In the hill districts of Bangladesh, namely Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachari and parts of Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, the cases of conflict happen to be more with elephants. This is because these areas are considered to be among the last habitats of the Asian elephant, a species that has been driven to near extinction thanks



Two wild elephants spotted in the south forest division of Cox's Bazar during an elephant census in May 2018.

PHOTO COURTESY: MA AZIZ/JU

to habitat destruction, degradation and indiscriminate hunting, among many of the myriad reasons. Most recently, the corridor used by Asian elephants for migration—something that is entrenched in their memory and cannot be just changed overnight—was slowly closed up by the Rohingya refugee camps. This meant that a part of the elephant population got stuck on the Bangladesh side of the forests

and the rest remained in the forests on the other side of the border, likely in India and Myanmar. For a species with a declining population, this meant further isolation, further restriction of genetic diversity and an overall immense distress to these gentle giants, who need a vast area for foraging, roaming, finding food, and mating.

While stories of conflict between elephants and humans kept coming from the south-eastern region of the country, other places in Bangladesh

immediately beat up the poor reptile. Maybe compassion is still alive. He cut up the nets, rescued the animal which he believed had slithered in from bordering India in search of food, and handed the nearly six-foot-long python to members of the forest department, who then released the animal into the wild.

The point here is, a python does not need rescuing. They are supposed to move long distances. Animals do that. Migration and movement, even in humans, was a common practice before we had somehow managed to climb up the food web very quickly and very decisively to change the course of nature entirely.

This can be explained by the alarming decline in forest cover. According to Global Forest Watch, from 2002 to 2020, Bangladesh lost 7.03 Kha (kilo hectare) of humid primary forest, making up 3.7 percent of its total tree cover loss in the same time period. The total area of humid primary forest in Bangladesh decreased by 7.3 percent in this time period. In 2010, Bangladesh had 2.22 Mha (mega hectare) of tree cover, extending over 16 percent of its land area, and by 2020, it lost 21.5 Kha of tree cover, equivalent to 11.6 metric tonnes of CO₂e (Carbon dioxide equivalent) of emissions.

Meanwhile, according to older reports, the per capita forest area in Bangladesh is less than 0.015 hectare (Islam 2013) against the world average of 0.6 hectare (FAO, 2010). And according to a recent TIB statement quoting the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the annual deforestation rate in Bangladesh is almost double the global average—2.6 percent.

Our monumental rise to the top has

removed nature's regular checks and balances. And that has spelled disaster for the order of the natural world. Never before have we faced extinction of so many species at so quick a rate.

Bangladesh, while being a tropical country, should be extremely rich in biodiversity, and on paper it is, but with shrinking natural habitats and a growing population constantly vying for resources, biodiversity has taken a hit. Bangladesh's most extensive database on biodiversity was conducted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's last animal Red List of Bangladesh (2015), which was funded by the World Bank. In that exercise, 160 biologists rigorously assessed 1,619 species of mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, freshwater fish, crustacea and butterflies. Alarming, about 24 percent of these species were found to be threatened.

Even the pandemic could not stop the rate of our destruction of the planet. According to the National Space Research Institute of Brazil, more than 1,200 square kilometres of the Amazon rainforest—an area that is ten times larger than Dhaka city—were destroyed from January to April in 2020 during the ongoing pandemic. This deforestation is 55 percent more than that during the same period of 2019. A recent Greenpeace report has already warned that the Amazon may become the source of the next zoonotic pandemic.

To explain the extent of the damage and the surreal picture of wildlife, I will have to go back to the wise words of Jon Mooallem in his seminal piece of work: "We are living in the eye of a great storm of extinction, on a planet haemorrhaging living things so fast that

half of its nine million species could be gone by the end of the century... As our own species has taken over, we've tried to retain space for at least some of the others being pushed aside, shoring up their chances of survival."

The only chance for the wild to survive and revert back from extinction happens to be with our intervention. In fact, J Michael Scott, an American government biologist, was quoted as saying in "Wild Ones": "Right now, nature is unable to stand on its own."

Unfortunately, the very species—aka us—responsible for driving so many animals towards extinction, plundering through vital ecosystems and continuously destroying and degrading habitats, also happen to be the ones that possibly can change the course of this tide and be responsible for conservation of nature.

Being cooped up in our homes and watching nature simply in fantastically shot documentaries or reading about it fails to drive home the point that our planet could very well go on without us. It is us who need biodiversity and wild spaces to continue to exist and flourish—for the mind and for the body.

Historian Joanna Bourke wrote it best in her reflections in the book "What It Means to Be Human": "Erasing the awe-inspiring variety of sentient life impoverishes all our lives."

We have brought the world to a stage where the plunderers, who need and rely so much on the natural world for food, shelter, sustenance and medication, will have to sow the seeds of rejuvenation. And it is not a choice anymore, because humans cannot afford to count yet another loss.

Abida R Chowdhury is a journalist at The Daily Star.

QUOTABLE Quote



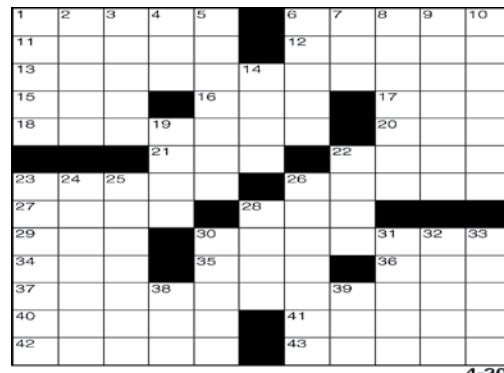
CICERO (106 BC-43 BC) Former Roman consul

In times of war, the law falls silent.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 30 Ran briskly | 6 Airport areas |
| 1 In the middle of | 34 Parrot or puppy | 7 Copying |
| 6 Strong winds | 35 Field judge | 8 Pushed (for) |
| 11 Toil away | 36 Saloon supply | 9 Blow up |
| 12 Without others | 37 Like some diseases | 10 Prephetic figure |
| 13 Decent | 40 Concur | 14 Brooklyn team |
| 15 "You there!" | 41 Eyeballed | 22 Pocket fuzz |
| 16 Wide shoe letters | 42 Prescription amounts | 23 Scouring aid |
| 17 Saloon | 43 hammer parts | 24 Experience |
| 18 Gives approval | | 25 Bothers |
| 20 Rage | | 26 Setting for an urban garden |
| 21 "You betcha!" | | 28 Small songbird |
| 22 Tripod trio | DOWN | 30 Forest makeup |
| 23 "Great!" | 1 Dominant | 31 Put aside |
| 26 Carnival attractions | 2 Foals' mothers | 32 TV's DeGeneres |
| 27 Bills in tills | 3 Follows orders | 33 Actions |
| 28 Took the title | 4 Simple denials | 38 Peace sign |
| 29 Commercials | 5 Less experienced | 39 Period |

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEETLE BAILEY



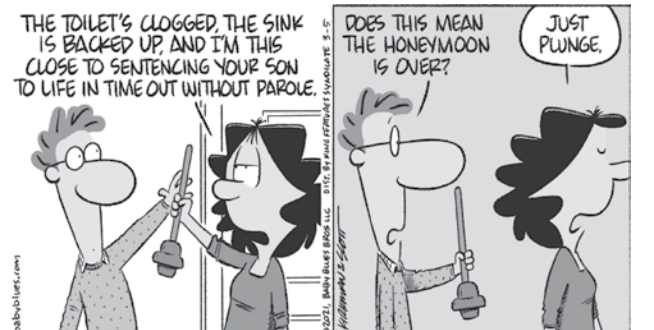
BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT





POETRY

elegy written in a redbrick house

to the memory of bashir bhai*

KAISER HAQ

the postman plods his weary way
eternal bag slung over shoulder
comes up to me at the unearthly hour
when evening azan brings dusk tumbling
down like playful children somersaulting
and i don't know what we're at –
if it's the end or beginning of something

no doubt stars are up there somewhere
too shy to twinkle in polluted air
and every now and then a super blood moon –
phrase redolent of nocturnal shoot-outs
in the wildest of wild west westerns –
appears on tv news and in astrology columns –
lucky for you to escape such sublunary concerns –

yours is the calm of contemplation and compassion
out of which you've sent us a beguiling parcel
the postman hands over ceremoniously –
the wrapping torn off flutters away like sparrows
and i am holding in my hand a shiny ceramic brick –
bemusement gives way to sudden illumination –
i ring your doorbell, call out names frantically –

baby rene partha chukku bachchi
and the friends i know are supposed to come too –
tipu all the way from chicago and kochi
and nausheen and ekram bhai from new york
already busy grilling katla fish –
i place the brick at the centre of the table –
at once your presence pervades our mindscape

now we know why the sight of redbrick houses
sent a pang every time we passed them by –
redbrick like signature or fingerprint is you –



at dessert i know exactly what to do –
smash the brick into numerous pieces
and pass them round one piece for each
to put in the mouth and suck –

earthy, sweetish or salty, smooth or deliciously rough –
fitting end to the meal you've graced –
we're no longer slaves to loss
now that you're in us
we and you are so to speak one
and real or imagined this oneness
is palpable in remembrance

*Bashirul Haq (1942-2020), architect, planner, teacher.

Kaiser Haq is a poet, translator, essayist, critic, academic
and freedom fighter. He is also Professor, Dept. of English &
Humanities, ULAB.

CARTOGRAPHY

MOHAMMAD SHAFIQUIL ISLAM

The map I dream drawing every day, Bangladesh, is yours.
I will never be weary of dreaming to see you progress from
The *bottomless basket* to a beautiful land of liberty and love.
You contain my universe, Bangladesh, where morning starts
With rose-coloured light of the sun like sparks we know
Human brains carry to enlighten the world, to cultivate the
Crops of happiness because your soil is fecund, your monsoon
Is moderate and in spring greens adorn you with the outfit
Of a damsel ready to tie the knot in a mood of merriments.
I can't stop dreaming the land where harmony among religions
Made the occupiers stare in disbelief, the land where both
City and country had bonds, connecting the populace with a
Lisle of amity and empathy, with no sign of bigotry or injustice.
I keep on dreaming the ground where organic viands grew
And kept men sturdy and women statuesque like Sultan's.
I dream of the dawn when country people awoke at the call of
Cockerels and city dwellers didn't burn the midnight oil hatching
Foxy cabals against the babes in the woods, against kids on laps.
I look back and recall the memories of playing in green fields,
Running in sports for an innocuous recognition sans acrimony,
Of seeing children grow up without depression and tension.
I still dream because I am not a nihilist piping a flute of anxiety
But my songs are in danger of extinction, my music in peril.
They toss around and smash sculptures, banning Lalan's lyrics.
Arts and letters beguile, poets spread lies—they shout loud.
Body language suggests they merely deal with fire and ashes,
Whereas the great lights uphold *Poetry is music of being human*.
Sometimes anguish seizes my mind, kinks thought process too
But I cannot cease to dream of rivers flowing gently to life
Because maybe what I see are just metaphors coming out of
A flask of hallucinations smudged for negligence for eons.
Sometimes I wish to take flight from dark clouds of the land
As the sky whose horizons stretch to eternity looks vaster
And then my skyward rotunda of memories puts me in a limbo.
Sounds from the asylum of silence induce me to sojourn
In the contemporary bailiwick of chaos, just to wait for a time
When words in verse and imagination will direct our dreams
Or dreams will lead us to where we always aspire to live forever.

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam is poet and translator; he teaches English at
Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet.

REVIEWS

THE TALE OF A FORGOTTEN AMBASSADOR: A rediscovery of the life of a patriot

N.S. Vinodh. *A Forgotten Ambassador in Cairo: The Life and Times of Syud Hossain*. Simon & Schuster India, 2020

REVIEWED BY SYUD MARGHUB MURSHED

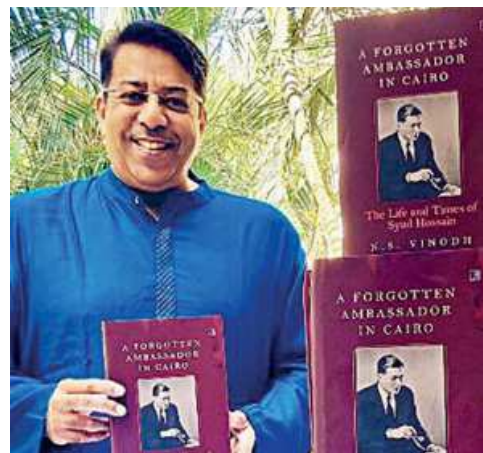
N. S. Vinodh's newly published book *A Forgotten Ambassador in Cairo* is the outcome of a fortuitous event. In March 2018, the author was taken for an unscheduled visit to the tomb of an Indian Ambassador, in Cairo's "City of the Dead." He was led to a marble mausoleum that had an imposing appearance, in spite of being in a dilapidated condition. The mortal remains of Syud Hossain, India's first ambassador to Egypt lay under this neglected marble edifice.

Like most 21st century Indians, Vinodh knew next to nothing about the ambassador whose tomb he had accidentally stumbled upon. The little that he did know was based on the scurrilous comments made by M. O. Mathai, the controversial private secretary to India's first Prime Minister, in his book *My Years with Nehru*. After his return to India Vinodh set out on a journey to discover more about the person, whose tomb he had visited in Cairo. His findings have taken shape in the form of a meticulously researched and highly readable historical biography.

Syud Hossain (1888-1949) was undoubtedly one of the most attractive and colourful public figures in the history of India in the 20th century. An exceptionally handsome man who epitomized everything the expression "a polished gentleman" connotes, scion of an illustrious family who kept company of the most distinguished persons of his time, an eloquent speaker who used his declamatory skills to advance the cause of India's independence, a formidable debater, a prolific writer who wielded a facile pen, a fearless journalist who exposed the hypocrisy of the claims of the British rulers of India and the injustice they inflicted on the Indians, a patriot whose secular nationalist credentials were impeccable and whose adherence to liberal democratic principles were well known, Syud Hossain is forgotten in the country he loved so dearly, the country he fought to free. What people do know about him is based on the disparaging piece on Syud Hossain in Mathai's *My Years with Nehru*, a book replete with scandalous stories. Vinodh's book on Syud Hossain fills the void in the historical literature of 20th century South Asia. This sympathetic account of Syud Hossain's life and career, sets the record straight about the historic role of an extraordinary individual.

Vinodh's story of his forgotten ambassador is highly informative. He shows an astonishing perceptivity in his observations of the major events in which Syud Hossain was involved.

Vinodh begins his Ambassador's story in Calcutta where Syud Hossain was born and the surroundings amidst which he grew up. The peregrinations of Syud Hossain, the wanderer, begin when he went to Aligarh in his teens, for higher studies. A stint in the civil service followed. When Syud Hossain resigned from government service, he moved from the rural interior of Bengal in Rajshahi, to London, in England, at that time the centre of the universe. The ostensible purpose of Syud Hossain's journey to England was to become a barrister-at-law. However, he was more interested in



the activities of journalists in London's Fleet Street. Syud Hossain left England in 1916, after spending six years there, without becoming a barrister. However, this English interlude in his life was an important part of the formative phase of the person he was to become. In London, Syud Hossain befriended Sarojini Naidu and Asaf Ali. It was in London that the suave and urbane Syud Hossain evolved and developed his eclectic liberal outlook and enlightened world view.

The India to which Syud Hossain returned was a country in ferment, transformed radically by the onset of World War I. The Indian National Congress (INC) was at that time spearheading India's movement towards independence. Syud Hossain became from

1916 onwards inextricably entangled in the activities of the INC. He joined the *Bombay Chronicle*, the mouthpiece of the INC as an apprentice to its editor B. C. Horniman. It was from his mentor Horniman, that Syud Hossain learnt his craft as a journalist. He soon made his mark in his new profession, and in the beginning of 1919, he was invited by Motilal Nehru, to become the editor of *The Independent* in Allahabad. He was given a princely salary of Rs 1,500 plus perks (for that period of time). *The Independent* attracted the attention of readers all over India, with its extensive coverage of the Jallianwala atrocity in Amritsar, in defiance of pressure from the powers that be. The dauntless editor of *The Independent*, however, could not continue his work in Allahabad. An incident took place that changed the course of Hossain's life.

The debonair 30 year old Syud Hossain, fell in love with, eloped and married Swarup Kumari alias Nan, the hauntingly beautiful daughter of his employer. When the patriarch of the Nehru family learnt about his daughter's runaway marriage, he was understandably furious. Gandhi was dismayed when he learnt about this clandestine marriage. As a result of the Mahatma's intercession, the marriage of Swarup Kumari and Syud Hossain was dissolved. Syud Hossain was instructed by Gandhi and Motilal Nehru to leave Allahabad, immediately and India soon. Syud Hossain, known to be an epicurean, accepted their verdict with stoic fortitude. He did not bear Gandhi any grudge, for terminating the romance of his life, and for banishing him from India. Swarup Kumari was taken to Gandhi's Ashram. After her marriage to Ranjit Pundit, she became known as Vijayalakshmi Pundit.

Syud Hossain left Allahabad at the end of 1919, proceeding to Bombay, from where he sailed to England. After a short stay in London, he sailed Westward, his destination this time was the United States of America. Towards the end of October 1921, Syud Hossain reached New York. The USA was at that time a "land of the free," only for its citizens of European extraction. The members of all coloured races were at the receiving end of racial prejudice. Syud Hossain was determined to improve the lot of the Asians living there and he did this with considerable success during the quarter century he lived in the US. His main objective,

however, was to represent India's freedom movement in America. To his credit, it can be asserted that he was indisputably the pre-eminent spokesperson for the interests of India in the US during the inter-war years. As a freelance writer, and the editor of the *New Orient*, as a professor in California, and as an advisor to the US War Department from 1942, he was able to persuade the federal authorities and the intelligentsia in the US that India's independence was imperative for world peace. He debunked the anti-Indian British propaganda in the US and convincingly rebutted arguments of British apologists in that country. He spoke continuously on the "falsification of India's history, and the vilification of Indians by British imperialists."

Before the outbreak of World War II, Syud Hossain revisited India for a few months. During this period he was able to spend time with his dearest friends Sarojini Naidu and Asaf Ali. He also met the indomitable Subhas Bose, another heroic son of Bengal.

In 1945, Vijayalakshmi Pundit had become a widow. She was invited to visit the US by President Roosevelt. During this visit Vijayalakshmi went on a coast to coast lecture tour of the US, addressing American audiences. These lectures marked the beginning of her distinguished diplomatic career. While Vijayalakshmi was in America, Syud Hossain was constantly by her side. Their intimacy irked a section of Indians in the US, who complained to Gandhi about the matter.

In 1946 Syud Hossain was back in India. Before leaving the US, an open letter addressed to the British Premier Churchill that he wrote was published in the *American Press*. The letter was a vitriolic indictment of the mismanagement of India under Churchill's watch.

The freedom of India that Syud Hossain and others like him had worked to approximate was approaching. When it came, it was an anti-climax that brought no joy to his heart. Bloodshed, savagery and a division of the country accompanied India's independence. Syud Hossain expressed his anguish in an article soon after August 15, 1947, the title of which was "A Pyrrhic Victory."

After independence, Vijayalakshmi was appointed India's ambassador to USSR. Before leaving for Moscow she would meet

Syud Hossain at the lobby of Delhi's Imperial Hotel. These meetings were not infrequent and noticed by many. Asaf Ali also left Delhi, having become India's first ambassador to Egypt, before he proceeded to Washington. Both he and Syud Hossain spent some time with Sarojini Naidu who had become governor of UP, at the governor's residence in Lucknow. This was the last time the three friends were together.

Gandhi's assassination in January 1948, before Syud Hossain's departure to Cairo, to become India's first ambassador to Egypt was for Syud Hossain, the unkindest cut of all. He never felt that he was wronged by Gandhi. While in the US, he wrote a hagiographical book on the Mahatma. Syud Hossain was happy to be in Cairo. He was interested in the history and culture of Egypt. Vijaylakshmi came to see him briefly in January 1949. On February 25, 1949, Syud Hossain felt unwell in his room in Cairo's famous Shepherd's Hotel. He died the following day, in hospital. His friend, patron and defender, Sarojini Naidu, died a month later.

In Vinodh's portrayal of Syud Hossain, and the vicissitudes of his career Syud Hossain emerges as a truly cultured, though perhaps an over refined person. He strikes the reader as a generous, humane, kind and loyal individual, to whom honor was all. Syud Hossain, the Indian nationalist and citizen of the world merits remembrance. The role this liberal democrat and secular nationalist writer played in South Asia's struggle against British imperialism, needs to be noted in history books. I wish to wind up my observations on *A Forgotten Ambassador in Cairo*, with a comment on its author N. S. Vinodh who has made a valuable addition to our corpus of knowledge of the history of 20th century South Asia. A major writer has appeared in the firmament of the literature of historical biography in the subcontinent. His erudite, "must read" book on Syud Hossain, has to be followed by other equally readable scholarly works. The first historical biography written by him I hope, will not be his last.

I have read it with deep interest and recommend it highly to readers of historical literature.

Syud Marghub Murshed is a former civil servant.

'Don't think we can attack from the start'

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite the difference between Bangladesh and Afghanistan being only 35 places in FIFA Ranking, Afghanistan's have always been considered a superior side than Bangladesh, solely because of their Europe-based players, but the men in red and green reached the levels of their technically and tactically superior opponents to snatch a valuable point in the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers on Thursday night in Doha.

Afghanistan's dominant performance in the reverse fixture in Dushanbe in 2019 was evidence of their technical and tactical supremacy and ahead of Thursday's match it was hard to find an optimistic person betting in favour of the boys in red and green in their second meeting against Afghanistan on a fast-paced pitch.

Jamie Day's usual defensive strategy had come under intense criticism, even by Bangladesh Football Federation higher-ups, but the British coach set his charges up for a show that every football supporter in Bangladesh wanted to see in all games even though the 41-year-old said that yesterday's game was going to be harder than the Dushanbe match.

"The boys played extremely well and I guess we got the tactics right," Jamie Day told The Daily Star, disagreeing that he had the option to attack Afghanistan from the start. "No, [it is] not possible, if we play open football against the better team, they will punish us. Instead of staying in the game like yesterday [Thursday] and getting a point, we would have lost. Let's be happy with the performance and result."

"I personally don't think we can attack better teams and players from the start although another coach may have a different approach. I think it is better to be in the game for 90 minutes than for the match to be over in 45 because we are two or three goals down," opined Jamie.

Ahead of Sunday's game against India, who are 79 places ahead of Bangladesh in the FIFA Rankings, Jamie is inspiring his



Topu Barman, who scored the match-saving goal against Afghanistan on Thursday, was the centre of attention as the Bangladesh players went through recovery sessions at the team hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

charges to repeat what they showed against Afghanistan.

"India have far better quality and showed it last night when they lost only 1-0 [to Qatar]. This is the simplest way I can put it. England and India have the same difference between them in the rankings. Would India beat England in a football match?" was the reply from Jamie, whose charges surrendered their lead in playing out a 1-1 draw in the reverse fixture against India in Kolkata in October, 2019. Before taking charge of Bangladesh, the boys in red and green also played out two draws against India despite taking the lead on both occasions.

"There are always one or two games where the other team can cause an upset but that's not consistent. They have better technical players than us," said Jamie.

Whatever was playing on Jamie's mind, goal-scorer Tapu Barman was dreaming of

getting some points and toppling India to book a direct ticket for the Asia Cup Qualifiers.

"We gave more than 100 per cent effort and that's why I could equalise in the last moment. Everyone gave their best from their respective positions and that was the most important thing; teamwork," Tapu said in a video message.

"We are looking forward to the matches against India and Oman. The India match is very important for us because we need to get points from this match to play the Asian Cup Qualifying round directly. This fact is on everyone's mind and our confidence has been boosted after the Afghanistan match. This confidence will help us in the India match," said the Bashundhara Kings centreback.

Meanwhile, midfielder Sohel Rana fractured his hand on Thursday night and was ruled out for the next two matches.

DPL yet to match its historical excitement

SPORTS REPORTER



The third round of the ongoing Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition has continued to lack competitiveness with low-scoring encounters the feature of the prestigious domestic tournament so far.

In the first game yesterday, Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity registered their first win, chasing down a modest 139-run target set by Legends of Rugganj with seven wickets in hand. Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Jahurul Islam struck fifties as Khelaghar reached the target in 19.3 overs.

Earlier, Rugganj made a slugging start after being sent in to bat, with national team's left-handed opener Shadman Islam facing 22 balls for eight runs before being bowled by Masum Khan.

Skipper Naem Islam was dismissed on a duck while the other opener, Azmir Ahmed, departed for 28 off 21 balls as lack of intent from the Rugganj top-order pushed them on the back foot right from the start.

Al Amin and Sabbir Rahman showed some positivity, adding 55 runs in quick time before the latter departed for 23 off 21 balls. Al Amin was dismissed for 51 off 42 balls and Jaker Ali scored a quick 19 as Rugganj posted 138 for five in 20 overs.

In the day's second game, Shinepukur Cricket Club successfully defended 137 to seal their first win of the league by 10 runs against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club.

Sheikh Jamal, a relatively experienced side with a bunch of former national players such

as Mohammad Ashraf, Nasir Hossain, Nurul Hasan and Sohrawardi Shuvo, were bundled out for 127 with former national cricketer Elias Sunny emerging with a top-score of 30.

Left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam was the pick of the bowlers for Shinepukur with three for eight runs in four overs. Pacer Hassan Murad bagged two wickets.

In the third match of the day, Prime Doleshwar SC defended 144 runs, beating Gazi Group Cricketers by 36 runs.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board and the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan had previously changed the 50-over format to T20 format keeping the preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup in mind.

It is also understood that there was huge demand from the players to resume the league -- the biggest source of income -- which was halted in March last year due to the pandemic. The board was also desperate to complete the league keeping the upcoming board election in mind.

But question remains over the quality of the Mirpur surface and overall standard of cricket, with lack of competitiveness undermining the historic intensity of the club-based competition.

The highest match aggregate so far was between Sheikh Jamal and Prime Bank SC, with a total of 315 runs scored in that game.

Sheikh Jamal's 166 for six against Khelaghar is the tournament's highest innings while only three out of 14 times teams have managed to post over 150 despite the presence of all national cricketers.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Still scaling heights at 98

AFP, Villeneuve

Marcel Remy is the grand old man of Swiss Alpinists, and with his sure and steady progress as he conquers a climbing wall, few would realise he is 98-years-old.

Week in, week out, every Monday morning, Remy drives his old Toyota to the indoor climbing centre in Villeneuve on the eastern shores of Lake Geneva, where he meets his son Claude to plot a path to the top.

The veteran slowly puts on his climbing shoes and harness and having picked out his ascent route, makes his way to the 16-metre (52-foot) high wall.

"It gives me a lot of pleasure because you have to work, think and surpass yourself; that's what suits me well," Remy told AFP, between his two morning climbs.

"I do it for my health -- that's the first thing. I carry on for my muscles, because I've noticed quite often that if I stop for two or three weeks, it's much harder to start again. It's better to keep coming often."

Remy said the secret to his continued success was pacing himself.

"It's the rhythm that you have to take -- for breathing, for the movements," he explained. "If I go beyond that, there's a price to pay afterwards. I can't tell you exactly what, but either the shoulders or the muscles. It's better to go calmly, without over-exertion -- and then it works."

Climbing has always been major part of Remy's life. Brought up on tales of the mountains, he never stopped going off to discover the great outdoors and the Alps became his playground.

Remy worked on the Swiss railways and spent all his free time in the mountains, taking his two sons with him.

"He was a tough dad. With him it was do or die, whatever the conditions," said his oldest son Claude, 68.

But despite his ruggedness, he knew how to pass on his passion for the Alps. Claude and his 65-year-old brother Yves have also become well-known in the climbing world.

In August 2020, the top French climbing magazine Grimper devoted 40-odd pages to their exploits and the most impressive climbs they have accomplished together.

Nowadays, the roles are reversed and it's Claude guiding his father as he makes his second ascent of the morning at the Villeneuve climbing hall, one of the biggest in Switzerland.

This time, Remy is the first one up the route, making it all the harder.

He scales the first few metres with no trouble at all but in the upper sections, he struggles for several minutes to find the breakthrough that will take him to the top.

It is only with an agile jump that he finally unlocks the path to the summit, nimbly springing off his left foot and instantly landing on the same toehold with his right.

"It's good!" he says, out of breath, before making his way down.

Back at the bottom, sitting on a bench for a well-earned rest, he clenches his fists and says to his son: "I'm happy."

Claude explained: "He's a tough character. He's very resistant to hardship."

"Even if it's a very difficult section on the wall, as we saw towards the end, he searches and finally works out how to resolve it because he's motivated."

"He inspires great admiration in all age groups, even among the very young," but even so, "he'll look at how young people climb and try to copy their movements".

Russian tennis player arrested

REUTERS, Paris

Russian player Yana Sizikova has been arrested at the French Open and has been placed in custody over match-fixing allegations, sources told Reuters on Friday.

A police source and the French tennis federation (FFT) said the player had been arrested but did not elaborate on the reasons.

A source with direct knowledge of the matter said the arrest was related to match-fixing allegations.

Last September, French prosecutors opened an investigation into alleged match fixing in a women's doubles match at the French Open.

The investigation into "fraud in an organised group" and "active and



passive corruption" was related to a doubles match between Romanian pair Andreea Mitu and Patricia Mari and Sizikova and American Madison Brengle.

Shamil Tarpishev, president of the Russian Tennis Federation, told the RIA news agency that he had been informed of Sizikova's detention. TASS news agency also reported that the Russian embassy in Paris had been informed of the situation.

"We have not received any documents (regarding the case), so it's difficult to make an assessment of what has happened," Tarpishev was quoted as saying.

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PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Imposition of 15pc tax goes against law

Says owners' association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed 15 percent income tax on private universities is unacceptable and contradictory to the Private University Act-2010, Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) said yesterday.

A group of private university students also protested the proposal and gave the government time until June 10 to withdraw the proposal; otherwise they would wage a strong movement against the move.

While placing the budget for 2021-22 fiscal at the parliament on Thursday, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal proposed 15 tax on private universities, and private medical, dental and engineering colleges, including the ones offering IT education, in the new fiscal year starting July 1.

This proposal has created concern among all stakeholders, including students and their guardians, APUB said in a statement.

The statement, issued by its Chairman Sheikh Kabir Hossain, said private universities are non-profit organisations and operating as trust in line with the Private University Act-2010.

Kabar said imposing 15 percent tax on non-profitable private universities like the same rate tax on profitable private medical and engineering

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Mitali giving her five-year-old son some lessons while sitting on the pavement along the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Her husband abandoned her after their son was born and she has been making ends meet by charging pedestrians for the use of her weight machine. An SSC graduate, Mitali spends her spare time educating her son.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ROHINGYA CITIZENSHIP

Myanmar's NUG to draft new charter to ensure it

PORIMOL PALMA

In a significant development, Myanmar's National Unity Government has announced drafting a new constitution and committed to ensuring citizenship and fundamental rights of all ethnic groups, including the Rohingyas.

It also pledged to repatriate Rohingyas from Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries, revoke the controversial 1982 Citizenship Law and National Verification Card, and invite them to join the shadow government in overthrowing the military junta.

"We invite Rohingyas to join hands with us and with others to participate in this Spring

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Budget doesn't reflect people's aspirations

Says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the proposed budget completely failed to address how people's lives and livelihood can be protected amid the pandemic.

Since the government is not accountable to the people of the country, the people's welfare was ignored in the budget, he said while presenting BNP's formal reaction to the budget at the party chairperson's Gulshan office.

Fakhrul, who was once an economics teacher, said only an elected government could come up with a budget that reflects the people's hopes and aspirations.

"There is no direction on how people will be protected during the pandemic,"

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

A conversation with Yahya Khan

JUNE 5, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZZA SAJEN

US AMBASSADOR CALLS ON YAHYA KHAN

In a telegram sent to the US State Department on June 5, 1971, US Ambassador in Pakistan Joseph Farland provided a detailed account of his conversation with Pakistan President Yahya Khan. The meeting was held on the same day.

During the 50-minute conversation they discussed, among other subjects, the general refugee situation and the multitudinous problems which it presented.

Farland introduced the subject by underscoring President Nixon's satisfaction with the May 24 statement of Yahya. Noting that Washington was encouraged by the Government of Pakistan's plan to set up refugee reception centres in East Pakistan, he expressed the hope that these centers would quickly be activated.

Farland pointed out that it would be most helpful if Yahya would specifically indicate that Hindus would also be welcomed back, suggesting that this could be done by emphasising publicly

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



VACCINES THRU' COVAX

US to give Bangladesh, 15 countries 7m doses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh and 15 other Asian countries will receive approximately 70 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine out of nearly 1.9 crore doses that will be shared by the US through COVAX, according to a White House fact sheet.

Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu said India will be a "significant recipient" of US Covid-19 vaccines.

The other countries to get these vaccines from the US are Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

SpaceX carrying research squids to ISS



AFP, Washington

A SpaceX rocket took off Thursday for the International Space Station carrying supplies for scientific experiments, including some surprising passengers -- squids and virtually indestructible microorganisms called tardigrades.

The rocket, leased by Nasa, launched from Florida at 1:29 pm local time (1729 GMT). The Dragon capsule detached from the Falcon 9 rocket about 12 minutes after take-off and is scheduled to dock at the ISS today.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

VACCINE PRODUCTION

Bangladesh seeks waiver of TRIPS obligations

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has made a strong call for a temporary waiver from certain TRIPS obligations for the production of vaccines, medicines and health technologies to effectively respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

The call was made at the 74th session of the World Health Assembly (WHA) held on May 24-June 1 in Geneva virtually.

A Bangladesh delegation, led by Health Minister Zahid Maleque and in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva, attended the assembly.

TRIPS stands for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

The Bangladesh delegation, in a statement, said the pharmaceutical industries across the developing countries, including Bangladesh, capable of producing vaccines, therapeutics,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Children enjoying themselves as they bathe in the Buriganga river in the capital to get relief from the intense heat and the scorching sun. After a spell of rain that led to a brief drop in temperature, sweltering heat has once again become the norm around the country. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

TRANSITION TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY

Initiatives underway to cover potential losses

Finance minister lays out plans in budget

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The government is cautious about addressing the challenges the country would face after its transition to a developing country in 2026.

This was reflected in the finance minister's budget speech in parliament on Thursday.

"We have already incorporated the necessary strategies for this purpose in the 8th Five Year Plan and a detailed action plan is being prepared by the Economic Relations Division," said Finance Minister

AHM Mustafa Kamal.

Economists said the minister's statement regarding initiatives to deal with the challenges showed the seriousness of the government's intent to address the issue.

They, however, suggested timely implementation of the work plan.

Kamal in his budget speech said the government has already taken steps to avail the advantage of GSP+ in European Union countries after the graduation.

As part of its initiatives, Bangladesh has signed a preferential trade agreement

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05 12:45 5:00 6:45 8:15
JAMAAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:50 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Delta' variant highly infectious

Warns India, says it can infect people who have had Covid or partially vaccinated; WHO voices concern at Covax vaccine shortfall

AGENCIES

The coronavirus variant first identified in India is highly infectious and can be caught by people who have already had the disease or been only partially vaccinated, a panel of Indian government scientists said in a report published yesterday.

Dubbed the "delta variant" by the World Health Organization, it is estimated to be 50% more transmissible than the coronavirus variant first found in Britain, researchers at Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genetics Consortium and the National Centre for Disease Control said.

They warned that "prior infections ... and partial vaccination are insufficient impediments to its

spread, as seen in Delhi, and strong public health response will be needed globally for its containment."

The variant has spread to over 50 countries, including the Britain, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson has warned that its rapid spread could affect the reopening of the economy.

India's new cases have steadily declined in large cities over the past few weeks, but rural areas remain in the grip of a disastrous second wave of infections.

The country yesterday reported 132,364 new coronavirus infections over the last 24 hours, while deaths rose by 2,713 - the lowest in over a month.

The tally of infections stood at 28.6 million, the second highest in the world, and the death toll at 340,702,

the health ministry said.

Experts have warned that India needs to ramp up the pace of vaccinations to avoid future surges in infections among its population of more than 1.3 billion people.

In Nepal, the health ministry reported first death from mucormycosis or "black fungus", the highly deadly infection affecting thousands of coronavirus patients in India.

Ministry spokesman Krishna Prasad Poudel told AFP that there are now at least ten cases in Nepal, which like India has been hit by a huge Covid-19 surge.

The World Health Organization yesterday said a shortfall in Covid-19 vaccine doses going through the

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