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BUDGET FY2021-22 Lives and livelihood disregarded

ZINA TASREEN

He set off to save lives and livelihoods in his third budget as the finance minister and his second amid the global coronavirus pandemic, and along the way, went astray.

In the end, AHM Mustafa Kamal's proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22 came across as not of its time: in the throes of a public health crisis that is unravelling some of the progress made over the last 50 years.

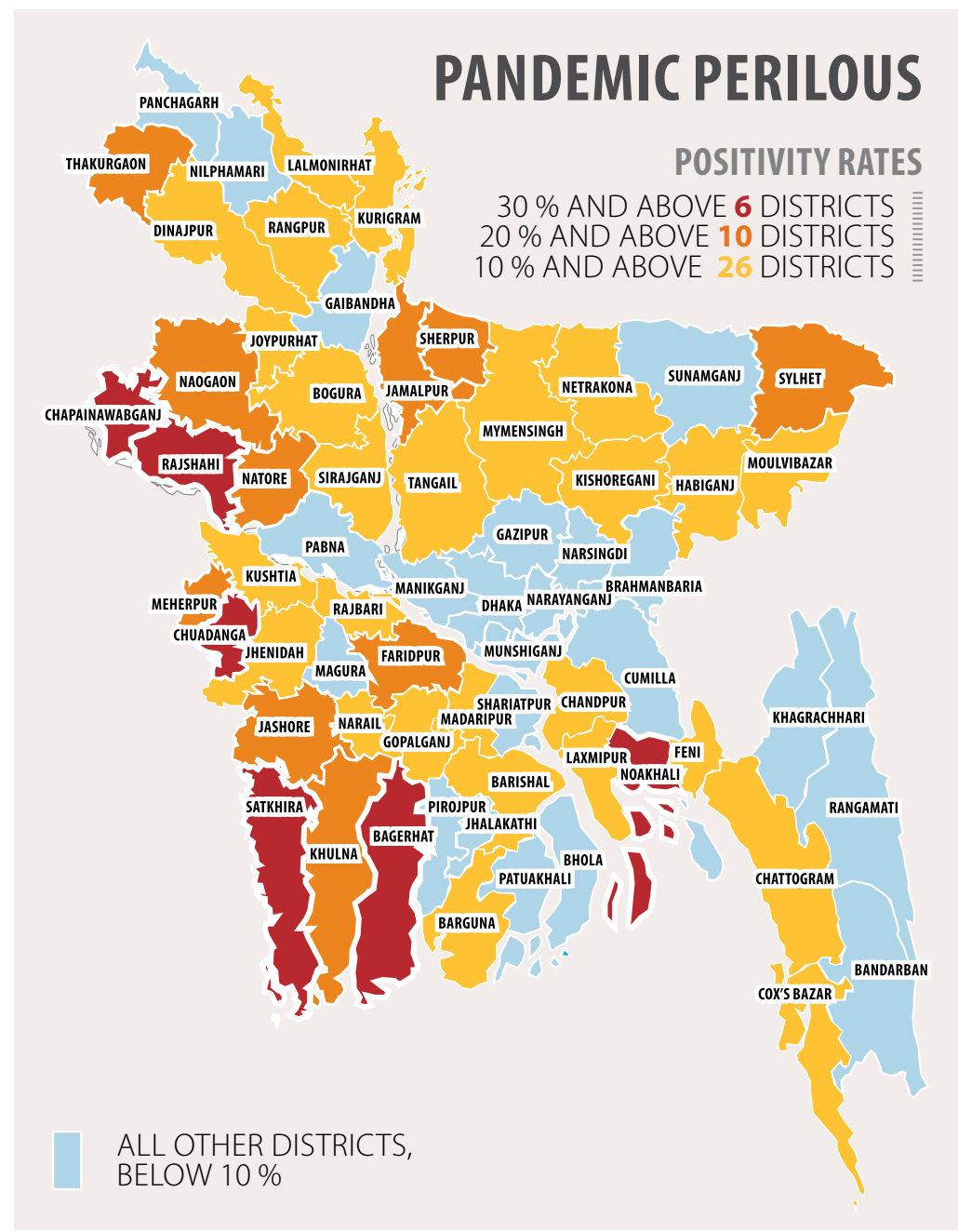
Bangladesh has been a development marvel, one which global commentators are acknowledging left, right and centre -- of late. And the cornerstone of the success has been its poverty reduction flight path and a spiralling trend of social and human indicators.

But the global coronavirus pandemic, which gripped Bangladesh in March last year like the rest of the world, has created a sea of poor -- and it is this populace that Kamal, who projects himself as a man of the people, seemed to have passed over in his intellectual callisthenics while drawing up the outlay for the incoming fiscal year.

About 20.5 percent of the population was already living in poverty and the pandemic raised the ratio to 30 percent, according to the World Bank.

Some 1.60 crore of new poor was created by the pandemic, according to an estimate of the Centre for Policy Dialogue in April, while another survey around the same time by the Power and Participation Research Centre and the Brac Institute of Governance and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



COVID-19 SURGE It may soon hit the heartland

42 districts at high risk; hospitals in border dists grapple with rush of patients

MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

On Thursday, the authorities of Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital increased the number of beds for Covid-19 patients to 30 from 20 to tackle the rush of patients.

As it was not enough, the number of beds had to be raised to 50 yesterday. All the beds, however, were occupied by evening, said Ahnaf Shahriar, a physician at the hospital's coronavirus unit.

"We've more patients coming," he told The Daily Star last night.

Hospitals in five other districts -- Satkhira, Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Noakhali, and Bagerhat -- were also struggling to accommodate an increasing number of coronavirus patients, said sources at the hospitals.

Except Bagerhat and Noakhali, the four other districts have borders with India.

Health experts and officials believe the situation arose due to the community transmission of the Indian variant (Delta) of the Covid-19 and slack measures to curb the spread of the virus.

The Indian variant has been held responsible recently for the massive surge in Covid-19 cases in India.

According to the weekly analysis of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), these six districts witnessed positivity rates of 30 percent and above from last week until Thursday.

It means every 30 or above number of samples tested came positive there.

The situation in Bagerhat, Noakhali, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Positivity rate goes over 11 percent

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 11.03 percent daily positivity rate of Covid-19 tests, the highest in the last 33 days.

The rate fell below 11 percent after May 3 when the rate was 13 percent, according to statistics of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

The country logged 43 more deaths in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total number of fatalities to 12,801. The mortality rate is 1.58 percent.

Besides, 1,447 new cases were registered during the 24-hour period. With this, the country's caseload went up to 809,314, said a handout of the Directorate General of Health Services.

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Budget reflects no concern for environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed budget, placed before parliament just two days before World Environment Day, shows the government is hardly concerned about the country's environmental degradation.

In last year's budget, the allocation for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was Tk 1,246 crore. This year, the government reduced the amount by Tk 25 crore, and this year's allocation is set at Tk 1,221 crore.

While this year, the theme for World Environment Day is "Ecosystem Restoration", Bangladeshi environmentalists believe the government's negligence in the sector is affecting the country's overall environmental health.

Bangladesh is one of the most climate-vulnerable country and was ranked at 162 out of 180 countries in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), which evaluates the environmental health of the countries and the vitality of their ecosystems.

Upon analysing the climate relevant allocation for environment, forest and climate change ministry, a significant decline between 2017-18 and 2021-22 was noticed.

The amount for the climate relevant allocation was Tk 419.92 crore in 2017-18, which dropped to Tk 379.21 crore in 2021-22.

In the proposed budget, the government allocated 25.8 percent of the SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

LEGALISING BLACK MONEY TIB slams hint at continuing the scope

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday categorically objected to the finance minister's suggestion that the option to legalise black money with ease as in the current fiscal year might roll over into fiscal 2021-22.

There was "careful applause" and temporary relief among the honest taxpayers after seeing no announcement on legalising black money in the proposed budget, the TIB said in a press statement. "But the relief has turned into anxiety within a day following the finance minister's speech in the post-budget media briefing," said the local chapter of the global anti-graft watchdog.

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 SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

মুজিব বর্ষের অঙ্গীকার
বীমা হোক সবার

মেঘনা লাইফের সাফল্যের

২৫ বছর

- প্রায় ২৬,০০০ জনকে মৃত্যুদাবী এবং ৯,০০,০০০ জনকে মেয়াদোত্তীর্ণ দাবী খাতে ২,৬০০ কোটি টাকা পরিশোধ করা হয়েছে।
- লাইফ ফান্ড ১,৮৮৭ কোটি টাকা।
- পরিসম্পদ ২,০২০ কোটি টাকা।

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,447
New cases in 24hrs



8,09,370
Total cases



12,801
Deaths



7,49,725
Recoveries



3,732,688
Deaths



173,552,775
Total cases

PM calls for massive tree plantation to save environment

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to go for massive plantation of trees to protect the country from the adverse impacts of climate change.

She was inaugurating the National Tree Plantation Campaign-2021 marking the World Environment Day.

"We will have to protect the environment. This country is ours. If we want to protect the country from the adverse impacts of climate changes, we will have to promote greenery further in this green Bengal [Sabuj Bangla]," the PM said.

Hasina launched the campaign by planting saplings at the Gono Bhaban.

Noting that she planted saplings, the premier called upon the people to plant trees in whatever places available there.

"Plant at least one sapling. But it would be best if you can plant three saplings. I want you to plant three saplings -- one for fruit, one for timber and one herbal."

Environment, Forest and Climate



Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin and Deputy Minister Habibun Nahar were present on the occasion.

This year, the National Tree Plantation Campaign is being observed with the theme "Mujib Borshe Angikar Kori, Sonar Bangla Sabuj Kori" aimed at motivating the people to make Bangladesh even greener in the Mujib Year.

The World Environment Day was observed across the world yesterday, with the theme "Ecosystem Restoration".

Hasina said Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in afforestation as it has increased forest coverage to 22 percent, thanks to different measures taken by the government.

She mentioned that trees not only protect the environment, but also provide financial solvency and other benefits to the people.

The PM also called upon the people to take proper care of trees. "Only planting saplings is not enough. You'll have to take care of these as well."

China blasts US and EU consulates in Hong Kong for Tiananmen candles

AFP, Hong Kong

China yesterday berated the US and EU consulates in Hong Kong for displaying candles to commemorate the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown, slamming it as a "clumsy practical show" to destabilise the city.

Candles were seen lit in the windows of the US consulate building, which is next to the residence of Hong Kong's Beijing-appointed leader Carrie Lam, and the European Union's office on Friday night.

The missions also posted

photographs of their candlelit Tiananmen memorials on social media.

"Any attempt to exploit Hong Kong to carry out infiltration or sabotage activities against the mainland crosses the red line... is absolutely intolerable," a spokesperson for the Hong Kong office of China's foreign ministry said.

"We again urge the organs of relevant countries in Hong Kong to immediately stop meddling with Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs at large, and avoid playing with fire."

TIB slams hints at continuing the scope

FROM PAGE 1

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.

"We want to believe that the budget is a financial document of integrated thinking made under the direction of the top level of the government including the finance minister and the ministry," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB.

But the finance minister's scepticism about one of its budget decisions just a day after it was placed in the parliament is surprising.

Though the minister in his post-budget briefing claimed that the decision has been taken not to continue the opportunity of legalising black money on the basis of justice and fairness, he could not clearly tell under whose pressure or which group's interest he cannot stand firm on that decision.

TIB hopes that the minister would move away from such a reckless decision and show good sense and would give a strict message to the corrupts by not continuing such corruption-friendly, discriminatory and unconstitutional offer, the statement said.

Iftekharuzzaman went on to criticise Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's defence of lack of information for his earlier statement on continued amnesty as long as undeclared wealth exists.

"Such explanation is not expected from a responsible person like the minister."

From the beginning, there was an attempt to show off record legalisation of more than Tk 14,000 crore in the first ten months of the fiscal for the added leniency to black money holders, Iftekharuzzaman said.

"The fear is that he is now trying to use that shield in favour of the unjust advantage, which cannot be expected. But it is not being considered about how much revenue loss the government has incurred through this."

The scope to legalising black money without raising any question from any authority is not only questioning the government's 'zero-tolerance against corruption' position but also contributing to creating a corruption-friendly environment, he said.

He also urged the government to nullify the other existing scope of legalising black money under income tax ordinance.

Budget reflects no concern

FROM PAGE 1

development budget for transport and communication, 11.5 for energy and power, 15.1 percent for local government and rural development, 19.7 percent for education and technology, 5.6 percent for agriculture, 6.6 percent for health, 6.4 percent for public administration and three percent for social security.

The government, for the fifth time now, has prepared a separate climate budget report, which shows that a lot of the government-allocated money went to 25 ministries that conduct different development programmes.

It said the cumulative budget allocation of these 25 ministries accounts for 57.33 percent of the total national budget of FY2021-22.

Of that, 7.26 percent is climate relevant.

While World Environmental Day was observed just yesterday, two days after the proposed budget was announced, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal did not seem to mention the ecosystem or the restoration of our degraded environment in his speech delivered on Thursday.

He only said that 16 round-the-clock air monitoring centres are being set up around the country out of concern over air pollution.

determine the air quality for the air quality index, which is published on a daily basis, he said.

Dhaka has consistently been listed as one of the countries with the worst air for years.

Besides, the minister talked about use of hollow block to reduce the air pollution.

Regarding noise pollution, he said, "The Bangladesh Secretariat area has been declared a horn-free zone."

Sharif Jamil, secretary general, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said, "The government generally ignores whenever environmentalists demand anything to protect the environment."

He added that it should take measures to curb water and air pollution and to save forests and wildlife.

"We do not see any visible government measures in this regard."

Asked Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told The Daily Star the government should focus on protection of the environment and the restoration of the ecosystem, as it is now linked also with foreign trade.

"Bangladesh is now graduating from LDC. Other countries will want to know whether products made in Bangladesh were produced in a sustainable environment or not."

The European Union has already raised questions about pollution caused by the tannery industry.



Firefighters at work after a fire broke out at Rupayan Karim Tower in the capital's Kakrail area around 3:00pm yesterday. It took six fire engines and nearly half an hour to douse the fire.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

2 Rohingyas killed in landslides

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingyas were killed in two incidents of landslides in refugee camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas yesterday.

The deceased are Rafique Allah, 32, a resident of Moynarghona camp-12 of Ukhiya, and Noor Hasina, 20, who lived in camp-21 in Whykong union of Teknaf upazila.

A portion of hill collapsed on Noor Hasina around 10:00am in the morning following heavy downpour in the Chakmarkool Rohingya Camp.

On information, members of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) rescued her and took her to a nearby hospital, where on-duty doctors declared her dead.

Rafique went to dig soil in a nearby hill around 1:00pm when there was heavy rain. At that time, he was buried alive as a portion of the hill fell on him.

On information, APBn members rushed to the spot and recovered the body, said Khandaker Ashfaquzzaman, additional superintendent of APBn-8 in Cox's Bazar.

Contacted, Mohammad Naimul Haque, superintendent of APBn-14, said the bodies would be handed to the relatives after completion of formalities.

It may soon hit the heartland

FROM PAGE 1

and Chuadanga were not that serious the previous week, shows the weekly analysis.

The situation in 36 other districts is also alarming as the positivity rate in each district is 10 percent or above.

Under these circumstances, experts have warned that the Covid situation in those districts might worsen further after a week or two as public movement have increased following the resumption of inter-district vehicle movement on May 24.

They warned that the surge in infection will reach the heartland of the country soon.

The fear stemmed from the fact that the overall positivity rate across the country was 11.03 percent yesterday. It was the highest in the last 33 days.

According to the DGHS analysis, the positivity rate was between 20 and 29 percent in 10 districts throughout last week until Thursday. The rate was between 10 and 19 percent in 26 and below 10 in 22 districts, including Dhaka.

Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) says districts with positive rates of 10 percent and above are considered "high risk" zones, while those with 5-9 percent "medium risk" zones and those below five percent "low risk" zones.

HOSPITALS OVERBURDENED
The number of patients in hospitals in the six districts -- Chapainawabganj, Satkhira, Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Noakhali, and Bagerhat -- has been on the rise.

With no or limited capacity to treat critical Covid-19 patients, the hospital authorities in the border districts referred such patients to medical college hospitals in Rajshahi, Khulna and Satkhira.

In the 250-bed Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital, the Covid unit has no ICU facility. It can't treat patients requiring oxygen more than 20 litres per minute.

So, the hospital authorities every day have to refer one or two critical patients to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital 70km away, said doctors there.

Chapainawabganj reported 55 percent positivity rate on Friday.

In the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 43 Covid-19 patients died. Of those, the highest 12 were in Rajshahi division while five were in Khulna, shows DGHS data.

The number of deaths in Rajshahi and Khulna has been on the rise for last two weeks.

In the past 13 days, 101 patients died in the Covid-19 unit of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said hospital sources.

The RMCH authorities have added another ward to the 232-bed Covid-19 unit to tackle the high number of patients coming in.

Noakhali Civil Surgeon Masum Iftekhar said they arranged a makeshift hospital in a stadium in the Noakhali municipality area for coronavirus patients as their number was going up.

"Ten days ago, we had 20 patients daily on an average. The number has now gone up to 30. If the transmission continues, people from nearby districts might come here seeking treatment," he said.

To put the brakes on increasing number of Covid cases, the Noakhali district administration has put the municipality areas and six nearby unions under lockdown from 6:00am yesterday to 12:00pm on June 12.

"TRANSMISSION MAY SPIKE"
Experts have warned of another spike

in Covid cases after a week or two due to the withdrawal of movement restriction and people's reluctance to adhere to the health safety guidelines.

"It seems that after a week the condition of the entire country will turn the same as that of the border districts. It is worrisome. We should activate movement restrictions immediately. Otherwise, we might lose many lives," Mahbuba Zamil, head of virology at the Institute of Public Health, told The Daily Star yesterday.

She said the previous spike in April and May was tamed after restrictions were imposed on inter-district transport for a month since April 5.

"People left and returned Dhaka over the Eid. So the transmission continued. Since there is no restrictions in place now, the transmission rates are likely to go up again," she said.

She also said the transmission rate in Dhaka was now stable, but it may spike soon.

Echoing her statement, Mushtuq Hussain, a consultant of the IEDCR, said the Delta variant may be responsible for the recent spike in cases.

He said many returned from India with the variant and managed to go to different districts dodging law enforcers' surveillance.

"If strict measures are not taken, the situation in other districts, including the capital, might turn the same as in the border districts. It may happen in a week or two," he said.

IS DELTA VARIANT RESPONSIBLE?

A study published by the IEDCR on Thursday suggested that the Delta variant, popularly known as the Indian variant, was spreading at the community level.

Since the first case of the Indian variant was detected in the country on

May 8, the IEDCR and the Institute for Developing Science and Health Initiatives (ideSHi) have completed genome sequencing of 50 samples of coronavirus.

Among the Delta variant infected patients, 14 had not gone abroad and did not come in contact with people with travel history, which indicates that the community transmission of Delta variant exists in Bangladesh.

Mahbuba Zamil said, "After we had the UK variant, we imposed restrictions on movement and the transmission came down. The Indian variant is a threat, but it can also be checked if some measures are taken."

Mushtuq Hussain said the same.

The country reported the second wave of Covid in the second week of March. After the government imposed movement restrictions from April 5, the transmission started going down steadily. The positivity rate reached the lowest -- seven percent -- in mid-May.

With restrictions eased, the transmission started rising again from the third week of May.

Positivity rate

FROM PAGE 1

The new cases were detected after testing 13,115 samples.

In the 24 hours, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions saw the highest fatalities with 12 deaths each while Chattogram division witnessed eight deaths, Khulna five, Rangpur three, Mymensingh two and Sylhet one.

However, 749,425 patients have recovered so far, keeping the country's recovery rate at 92.60 percent.

Bangladesh reported its first Covid cases on March 8 last year and the first death on the 18th of that month.

Lives and livelihood disregarded

FROM PAGE 1

Development showed that 2.45 crore fell into poverty even before the second wave of the pandemic hit.

It is quite a sizeable figure by all accounts, and yet in his budget speech in the parliament on Thursday, Kamal maintained "the poverty situation in Bangladesh did not worsen to a scale of catastrophe during the pandemic".

While he did state that the government was taking effective and conscious steps to address the potential impact of the recent second wave of coronavirus cases on the country's poverty situation, the absence of any details was glaring.

There was neither a big jump in allocation for social safety net allocation nor a separate fund for the new poor, as in this fiscal year -- when the government very much had the means to do more.

Social safety net schemes got Tk 107,610 crore in the upcoming fiscal year, which is up 12 percent year-on-year but lower than the average 17.7 percent growth of allocation between fiscals 2009-10 and 2020-21.

Fiscal 2021-22's safety net allocation is 3.1 percent of GDP, up from 3 percent this year. Paltry, by all measures.

Other than the ongoing safety net schemes, there has been a one-off transfer of Tk 2,500 to 35 lakh low-income households during the first wave of the pandemic last year. That transfer took place this year, too, ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Pray, tell how much of a help is Tk 2,500 in this day and age to a family battling a loss of livelihood and savings? Not much.

And yet, the government is expecting the poverty rate would come down to 12.3 percent and the extreme poverty rate to 4.5 percent by 2023-2024, as Kamal indicated in his budget speech, which seemed divorced from the tribulations of people from the hinterlands.

Most of the new poor used to draw their livelihoods from the informal economy, which is the undeniable

casualty of the draconian measures enforced whenever the test positivity rate went up.

The only way to ensure no further lockdowns are needed is by ramping up the vaccination programme, and here too Kamal's assured stride was not seen.

"We will be able to overcome the ongoing crisis of the second wave through mass vaccination," he said in his budget speech.

He mentions that there is a plan to vaccinate 80 percent of the people in phases. But, by when? The only clue he gives is: 25 lakh vaccines a month, meaning the country would continue to be under the shadow of Covid-19 for the foreseeable future.

In other words, he is not safeguarding the livelihood for the demographic into the near future.

Besides, save for the odd projects here and there to construct upazila complex buildings or village roads, there was nothing in the budget document to suggest he gave much thought to save or create jobs -- at present.

While his offers of tax holiday under the 'Made in Bangladesh' initiative and exemption of value-added tax at the local manufacturing stage for certain home and kitchen appliances and light engineering products are laudable, none of it would create jobs now -- which is the need of the hour.

Nor was there any incentive for businesses for retaining jobs, as was the case in much of the Western world.

By and large, Kamal came across as a neoconservative enthusiast, crossing his fingers and hoping the private sector would take care of the problem -- in return for the crumbs of tax cuts he threw its way.

However, history and Keynesian economics suggest it is by spending that one can get out of a recession.

The logic goes that in a recession, income declines because spending declines, and spending declines because income declines. It is a vicious

circle that needs to be broken.

One option might be tax cuts to increase business spending, and another is to have government spending make up the slack.

Most recently, Japan was able to come out of its 20-year-long recession thanks to the massive spending needed to rebuild its coastal towns in the aftermath of the tsunami in 2011.

If ever there was a time to toss fiscal responsibility aside and implement a plan to "spend, spend, spend", this was it.

And given the deft macroeconomic management under the Awami League government, Bangladesh's conservative debt-GDP ratio and eagerness of development partners to come forward with funds, the government certainly has the wherewithal to go all out.

But Kamal held back and came up with a budget that was neither here nor there.

At around 17.5 percent of the GDP, the budget for fiscal 2021-22 was even lower than its South Asian neighbours, who are not in as comfortable a position as Bangladesh is from a fiscal viewpoint.

"Our focus will be on increasing consumption and investment to stimulate domestic demand," he said.

How is he going to increase consumption when he has kept the income tax structure unchanged in the incoming fiscal year?

The corporate tax cut of 2.5 percentage points, while a longstanding demand of the private sector, is unlikely to spur job creation of the scale needed.

In the absence of any improvement in the ease of doing business, it is unlikely that investment will spring to the level Kamal is expecting.

While he has come short on saving livelihoods, he has also disappointed on the saving lives front.

The health budget increased 12 percent year-on-year, which is lower than the allocation growth of 14

percent between fiscals 2010-11 and 2020-21.

In other words, in the thick of the pandemic, the government did not feel the need to raise its spending on this neglected but crucial sector.

This is particularly concerning given that the Indian variant, which poses a higher risk of hospitalisation and transmission, is very much in Bangladesh.

Were it to run amok as it did in the neighbouring country, whose health infrastructure is a notch above Bangladesh's, the country can be brought down to its knees.

Education was another sector Kamal earmarked as a priority sector in his speech. But once again, his actions failed to live up to his lofty proclamations.

Seeing that about 4 crore students would not be getting back to the classrooms anytime soon, the education budget needed to increase by more than the 8.7 percent he has managed for the incoming fiscal year.

Many still cannot attend the virtual lessons for want of equipment and are subsequently dropping out the system. And even if classes start physically, there need to be more sessions to give the same lesson to maintain the social distancing rule.

In short, massive investment is needed, but the government's expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP continues to hover around the 2 percent-mark for more than a decade now.

This is woeful for a country where about 45 percent of the population is below the age of 24.

And it is particularly unexpected in a budget that felt was designed for too far into the future and not for addressing the needs of the present.

"The main impetus of our economic activities is our people," he said.

Alas, he seems to have placed them on the curbside during his budget exercise.

'Affordable housing for all should be the goal'

Experts skeptic of govt plan to construct 68,400 new flats in Purbachal, Uttara

HELEMI ALAM

After the finance minister in his budget speech revealed the government's plan to construct up to 60,000 flats in Purbachal New Town and 8,400 in Uttara Sector-18 to resolve the housing problem, experts have cast doubt on the plan, pointing to examples of previous initiatives like this, which had flaws in implementation.

Alongside building the flats, as promised by the prime minister, steps have been taken to build four satellite cities in the vicinity of Dhaka, considering its growth. Moreover, there are plans to build Bangabandhu Satellite City at both ends of the Padma Multi-purpose Bridge, said Mustafa Kamal.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said they welcome the initiative to construct satellite towns, but the housing problem will not be resolved by constructing apartments by the government.

Habib said the government has failed to provide apartments in Uttara third phase at affordable prices, rather, they have become expensive apartments, as prices do not remain in control under government management.

Echoing Habib, Adil Mohammad Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said prices of flats constructed by the government were almost similar to market prices, and as a result, low-income people cannot afford those.

Adil said there is a shortage of housing facilities across the country, and in some projects, flats were constructed in an unplanned way.

Giving an example, he said 6,636 flats in Uttara Sector-18 have already been constructed. "Though the project was implemented targeting lower-

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During BIWTA's drive to remove illegal structures from the banks of river Buriganga, hawkers in the area in Dhaka's Kamrangirchar were forced to move away due to all the demolitions. But after authorities left, many have returned to set up their stalls amid the rubble of bricks and cement. This photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Six carjackers arrested with stolen microbus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police's detective branch (DB) yesterday claimed to have arrested six members of a gang, involved in stealing microbuses for a long time.

In a special drive in Narsingdi and Cumilla on Friday, a team of DB police Mirpur division arrested them, said AKM Hafiz Akter, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The arrestees are Mizan Mia, Habib Mia, Md Faruq, Kamal Mia, Al Amin and Mubarak.

Police seized a stolen microbus from them.

According to the case statement, on April 21, an unidentified person hired a microbus from Kishoreganj to receive his relative from Dhaka airport.

The next day, the driver, Md Abul Bashar, started his journey towards Dhaka with him. But in the middle of the journey that person picked up four more people and when the microbus reached near Abdullahpur, they hijacked the vehicle, reads the case statement.

A case was filed with Uttara East Police Station on April 27.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Reform needed in banking sector to prevent money laundering: NGOs

Budgetary steps to help people struggling amid the pandemic inadequate, says alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reforms in the banking sector is needed to stop money laundering, according to speakers at a virtual press conference yesterday.

They also said the strategy to collect revenue in the proposed budget is traditional and steps to help people struggling to survive amid the pandemic are inadequate.

Equity BD, an alliance of several NGOs and CSOs, organised the event.

Presenting the keynote paper, Ahsanul Karim, a member of Equity BD, said the government has proposed to collect Tk 3,30,000 crore revenue through NBR and extended the purview of taxes to rural areas.

"Due to the ongoing pandemic, income of many middle, lower-middle, and lower-group people has decreased

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

DHAKA AIRPORT THIRD TERMINAL Work progress ahead of target

Says state minister Mahub Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction work of the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) is ahead of target, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahub Ali said yesterday.

In June 2021, 14.5 percent of the work of the terminal was supposed to be completed, but till yesterday, 17 percent work has been completed, he said while visiting progress of the construction work.

Mahub Ali said the size of the terminal would be more than double that of the current airport. The terminal will be connected through a tunnel with Ashkona Hajj Camp. This will allow pilgrims to enter the airport directly from the Hajj camp.

The state minister said construction work of the terminal did not stop even for a day when the whole world was at a standstill due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The terminal is expected to be completed in June 2023.

"However, we hope that the work will

be completed ahead of schedule," he said, adding that the metro rail will be connected to this terminal that will be fully automated.

"A separate (metro rail) station will also be created. Through this, passengers coming to Bangladesh will be able to go to their destination by metro rail without leaving the airport. Apart from this, anyone will be able to go directly to the departure area of the airport from any station in Dhaka by metro rail," Mahub also said.

Secretary to the civil aviation ministry Mokammel Hossain; Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman; Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Dr Abu Saleh Md Mostafa Kamal and other senior officials were present.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in December 2019 inaugurated the construction works of Terminal 3, designed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

We need coastal embankments for climate mitigation

Says foreign minister at event marking Environment Day

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said Bangladesh needs to build embankments with renewable energy facilities along the coastal belt as part of "climate mitigation" to save its people from becoming climate migrants due to the rising sea level.

"To protect our people from getting inundated by the rising sea level and river erosion, and from becoming climate migrants, we need to create embankments high and wide enough to sustain in times of natural disasters," he said.

Dr Momen said mangrove forestation around these embankments would work both as buffers during natural calamities like cyclones and surges, while also working as carbon sinks.

"We can also use the space on the embankments for installing solar panels and wind turbines to produce electricity for the nearby off-grid areas, and the national grid," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Sundarbans acts as a carbon sink'

COP26 chief Alok Sharma says

UNB, Dhaka

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma has highlighted the importance of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, saying that it plays a significant role as a carbon sink.

During his recent visit to Bangladesh, Sharma travelled to Sundarbans and saw how natural defenses of the mangrove forest protect villages from wind speed and storm surges.

"I learnt more about how this vital carbon sink protects local communities from cyclones and storm surges. Nature is the key to keep 1.5C in reach. Preserving it must be a priority for all," he said.

Sharma welcomed Bangladesh's climate leadership and ambition ahead of COP26.

Bangladesh signaled a transition from coal and submitted an ambitious plan during the COP26 president's visit.

"The next decade will be 'make or break' for our planet, and effective global collaboration will be vital to tackling the pressing challenges the world faces. So I am delighted to have witnessed the UK-Bangladesh climate partnership in action, and heard such positive ambition from my Bangladeshi friends," he said.

"I am inspired by the innovative work I have seen here to address some of the worst effects of climate change, and hope that Bangladesh will continue to lead by example ahead of COP26, which is our best hope of building a brighter future."

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY DISCUSSION

Experts urge govt to rein in unbridled construction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts yesterday called upon the government to rein in unbridled infrastructural development to protect the country from environmental pollution, a growing risk factor for lives.

They also suggested opting for eco-friendly construction materials instead of bricks, as the production of bricks has detrimental impact on the environment.

They said this at a webinar titled "Green Construction - The Future of the Industry", jointly organised by The Daily Star and KSRM, marking World Environment Day.

SM Khorshed Alam, president of Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry, said, "Dhaka's concrete density is high, and there is insufficient number of trees. The more we're developing Dhaka, the more we're polluting it."

"We're endangering our lives to enjoy our development benefits," he said, adding that the environment ministry should monitor the impact of growing infrastructural

development of the country.

Emphasising the use of alternative materials and technology, Khorshed said, "We are building thousands of kilometres of roads, bridges and flyovers. And to build these mega structures, we are manufacturing millions of bricks by burning clay."

"To manufacture such a huge number of bricks, we are damaging our soil, cutting down forests, and polluting our air and water as well. Whereas, we have alternative technologies such as concrete blocks and stones, which are not yet popular in Bangladesh," he said.

Pointing out the adverse effects of using concrete and cement in huge volume, Dr Md Tarek Uddin, professor of Islamic University of Technology's civil engineering department, said, "If we continue to use concrete in such volume, our next generation might not get materials, resources and energy for living and making their infrastructures. That's why we need to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Separate expatriate investors' authority required: speakers

Centre for NRB urges govt to start pensions for returnee migrants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should create a separate authority in the country to oversee investments made by the expatriates, demanded Centre for NRB, a non-profit organisation for non-resident Bangladeshis, yesterday.

During a press meet at a city hotel, the organisation said such authority was required to bring small-scale expatriate investors on a collective platform, stressing the need for investment-friendly policy and long term plan in this regard.

An investment authority for expatriates will help ensure injection of more "white money" in the country's economy, said MS Shekil Chowdhury, chairperson of the centre, stressing the need for eliminating flow of "black money" in economy.

Shekil said under the investment authority, opportunities for small-scale expatriate investors could be created in the country's capital market, bond market and industrialisation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Choosing a photo storage service: Finding alternatives to Google Photos

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

Last November, Google announced that as of June 1st, its unlimited photo storage service was being changed to up to 15GB on the user's Google account. This implied that while photo and video storage once did not count against the user's total of 15 free gigs on a Google account, it does now, along with the Gmail, Google Drive files, and other stored data. Once a user reaches the 15GB limit, it would be imperative to buy into the Google One service to increase the storage capacity. For those who might want to start looking for alternatives to Google Photos, here are some options to consider.

FLICKR

Flickr has a free plan as well, but it's limited to 1,000 photos with certain guidelines. Photo files have to be limited to 200MB and video files to 1GB. For unlimited storage without ads, the users have to pay either \$6.99 a month or \$59.99 annually, excluding tax. Other advantages to a paid annual membership include stats about which of your photos are trending and a variety of discounts from several companies, including Adobe and SmugMug, which is now part of Flickr.

500PX

500px is a Canadian service that caters more to professional photographers. It offers them a place to store, exhibit, and license their work.

Among the two paid plans that the site offers, the first one, named Awesome, offers unlimited uploads, priority support, no ads, a history of "liked" photos, gallery slideshows, and a profile badge for \$59.88 a year or \$4.99 monthly.

The Pro plan adds a way to display the services and organisation tools for \$119.88 a year or \$9.99 monthly. And if the users want to make a bit of money, they can submit their photos to be licensed for stock usage through 500px. After signing up, the user gets a two-week trial period before committing to the Pro plan.

PHOTOBUCKET

Photobucket offers a limited free plan, allowing the user to upload up to 250 photos for free. After the trial period, the users can start with the Beginner plan at \$5.99 per month or \$64.68 annually, which gives them 25GB of storage, along with no ads, password-protected album sharing, and an image editor. For \$7.99 per month or \$86.28 annually, the Intermediate plan provides 250GB of storage and unlimited image hosting. The Expert plan offers unlimited storage and no image compression, among other extras or \$12.99 per month or \$140.28 annually.



A large banner attached to the main gate notifies all coming into Institute of Child and Mother Health in the capital's Matuail that due to no supply of Covid-19 vaccine, vaccination service at the facility will remain suspended until further notice.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Two killed in Naogaon road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Two persons were killed when a motorcycle they were riding was hit by an unknown vehicle in Manda upazila of Naogaon on Friday night.

The deceased were identified as Apel Mahmud and Poncha Islam from Badalghat village in the upazila.

According to locals, an unidentified vehicle hit the motorcycle on Naogaon-Rajshahi highway at Bijoypur around 8:30pm while the two were returning home from the upazila's Kusumba area, said police.

Shahinur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Manda Police Station, said they are investigating the matter.

The bodies were handed over to their families, said the OC.

A LIFE MARKED BY DISPLACEMENT

Jamuna's lifelong struggle with erosion, cyclone

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

In many ways, Jamuna Mondal's life has been shaped by river erosion and climate change.

When the 75-year-old married Sridhar Mondal at a tender age around sixty years ago, she became part of a well-to-do family. After half-a-century of upheavals, she now finds herself and her 10-member family toiling in the lines of destitution.

"I have faced at least 10 separate instances of forced displacement from my homestead," Jamuna said while netting shrimp fry from Shakbaria river, amid the high tide and storm of cyclone Yaas on Wednesday noon.

On the day, the weather didn't even favour going out, let alone fish in the river. But the widowed septuagenarian simply does not have an option.

Her two sons Haripada Mondal and Nirapada were also netting shrimp with their aged mother when this correspondent spoke to them near their residence at Borobari village under Koyra upazila.

Once a self-sustaining family, the relentless uprooting means the family now has to buy everything from the market, and there's only one resource they can rely on to make the money.

"We have no alternative but to fish for a living," Jamuna said. "Where we used to

grow our grains and crops is lost to river erosion and tidal surge."

Around a decade ago, the family lived right beside the Shakbaria river. "But when Aila came, it took everything from us," a melancholic Jamuna said.

But the misfortunes showed no signs of stopping. "Then a year ago, Amphan took away whatever we had built up since Aila. We're basically destitute now," she said.

All of these must have been traumatic for the family, but it struck this correspondent as odd that the family was out fishing on the eve of another cyclone. "Don't you fear this cyclone?" he asked.

"We've travelled so deep into fear that I don't feel it anymore," Jamuna replied, with a mirthless smile.

Jamuna ended up netting 178 shrimp fry for the day, while her son Haripada caught another 280. They took the haul to nearby Kasaribari Bazar and sorted them together. Jamuna sold hers for Tk 162.

"This is what life is like right now. We don't know what our destiny is, we don't know where we're headed," Jamuna said while her eyes veered off elsewhere.

Over the next day, their destiny manifested in another round of tragedy. After the cyclone hit, the embankment at Shakbaria river broke, submerging 34 villages in Koyra upazila alone.



Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam administers a Vitamin-A capsule to a child in Mirpur's Radda MCH-FP Centre. The nationwide campaign, aiming to boost immune system of children in the country, began yesterday and is set to continue till June 19.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fourth death anniv of Justice Latifur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fourth death anniversary of former Chief Justice Latifur Rahman, who led the 2001 caretaker government.

To mark the day, family members organised a doa and milad mehil and distributed food across orphanages in his village at Jashore.

Born in Jashore in 1936, Latifur completed his LLB in Law from Dhaka University in 1956, before getting membership at the Dhaka High Court in 1960.

He took oath as a permanent judge in 1981 and later became an Appellate Division judge in 1991. He went on to become the chief justice on January 1, 2001, before going on retirement on February 28 of the same year.

On July 2001, he took oath as chief of the caretaker government and carried out the duty till October.

An author by the side, he wrote a book titled "Tottabadhyak Sarkarer Dingulo O Amar Katha" (The Days of Caretaker Government and My Words).



PHOTO: STAR

Women play critical roles in food security: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women play critical roles in ensuring food security and proper nutrition of families. But despite their contribution, women are common victims to malnutrition, unhealthy food consumption, and lack of accessibility to necessary healthcare services, experts at a virtual dialogue said on Thursday.

It is therefore essential to recognise the position and challenges of women and formulate action plans to ensure a sustainable and inclusive food system for society, said a press release.

The event was organised by CARE Bangladesh in association with Brac, UNFPA, UN Women, and Wave Foundation.

The event was attended by government officials, development practitioners, academicians, experts, and media professionals.

Speakers at the session stressed on the

importance of women's access to agricultural input and services, ownership, and control over assets and products to improve the current status of women in the food system.

In his welcome remarks, Ramesh Singh, country director of CARE Bangladesh, noted that more than 90 percent of family farms are dependent on their family members' labour -- both men and women.

Khaja Abdul Hannan, additional secretary of the food ministry, said, "The government has undertaken policies and programmes to ensure food and income security to women."

AKM Monirul Alam, director at the Department of Agricultural Extension; Dr Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS); and Dr Mohammad Mainul Islam, faculty of population sciences at Dhaka University also attended the discussion as key speakers.



Braving the cyclone, Jamuna managed to catch 178 shrimp fry, while her son Haripada caught 280. She sold hers at the nearby Kasaribari Bazar for a meagre Tk 162. That one has to risk their life to earn such paltry sums bears testament to the level of poverty they live in.

PHOTO: STAR

Six carjackers

FROM PAGE 3

While addressing a briefing at DMP media centre yesterday, the DB chief said Habib was arrested in a car snatching case earlier. He was released on bail and got involved in carjacking again.

Habib used to drive the stolen microbus in Chandina bus stand area of Cumilla, said police.

He sold the vehicle to Mizan for Tk 1.30 lakh, who made fake number plates and papers and sold it.

Members of the gang used SIM cards registered to others' name to avoid surveillance, he said.

During preliminary interrogation, the gang members said they mostly sold the stolen vehicles in Sylhet as many expatriates used to visit the district, he said.

These expatriates wanted to buy vehicles at low prices and the gang members took advantage of that, said the DB chief.

Experts urge

FROM PAGE 3

think about a sustainable method."

"During construction of a building using traditional materials and technology, people do not consider the excessive use of energy and water, or the negative impact on the environment," he said.

The application of green technology for construction would save energy, water and the environment, he opined.

He suggested redesigning the textbook curriculum to popularise green technology among the new generations.

AFM Saiful Amin, professor civil engineering at Buet, urged the government to promote green construction to save public money spent on pollution control.

"The government has been spending billions of taka to control environmental pollution. If green construction can be promoted and ensured, the government will be able to save huge amounts of funds created to control pollution," he said.

He called upon the government to

give incentives to companies or projects that promote as well as use eco-friendly construction materials.

Md Abu Sadeque, executive director of Centre for Housing and Building Research, recommended the use of alternative bricks, as brick kilns are responsible for huge carbon emission.

Quoting a survey of the Department of Environment, he said, "Brick kilns are responsible for 58 percent of air pollution, and the social cost of manufacturing a concrete block is Tk 44, whereas it is Tk 60 for a brick."

Saying that use of concrete and hollow blocks reduces the use of rods, cement and other construction materials, he said, "We can produce high quality stone blocks by processing river sand. Many countries have adopted this technology."

Tanjim Ferdous, national consultant of Communication and Campaign Management, United Nations, moderated the webinar.

We need

FROM PAGE 3

The foreign minister made the remarks while virtually inaugurating a two-day "Climate Camp 2021" organised by a local non-government organisation named Earth Society, marking World Environment Day.

British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson, convener of the Climate Parliament Bangladesh Nahim Razaq MP, special envoy of CVF Presidency of Bangladesh Abul Kalam Azad, resident representative, UNDP, Bangladesh Sudipto Mukerjee and Country Lead European

Climate Foundation Monower Mostafa also spoke at the inaugural session.

Noting that the Bangladesh government is doing its best to tackle the climate challenges, the foreign minister said the national parliament declared it a "Planetary Emergency".

Bangladesh is a victim of effects of global pollution without being a polluter, Momen said, adding that every year Bangladesh is spending about 5 billion dollars, an average 2.5 percent of its GDP, on climate adaptation and resilience-building.

Work progress

FROM PAGE 3

by celebrated architect Rohani Baharin who has a number of major airport terminals in his portfolio.

The three-storied terminal building, which will be 2.30 lakh square metres, will be built by Mitsubishi and Fujita of Japan and Samsung of Korea.

The estimated cost of the terminal stands at Tk 20,598 crore. Seventy percent of the funding is coming from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica).

Around two crore passengers will be able to use the HSA following construction of the third terminal. In its current form, HSA can handle eight million passengers a year. But the number of passengers is expected to reach 14 million by 2025 and 24.8 million by 2035, so the timing of Terminal 3 could not be more crucial.

Around 130 domestic and international flights -- including 26 foreign airlines' -- carrying 25,000-30,000 passengers used the HSA every day before Covid-19 hit the country in March 2020.

Reform

FROM PAGE 3

but their livelihood expenditure increased. However, there is no plan or strategy to address that," he said.

The government should withdraw or lessen the pressure of vat from the daily essentials considering their situation, he added.

Campaign for Good Governance Chairperson Abdul Awal said the budget plan and development plan are not reaching to the ultra-poor properly.

"In the budget, the rich involved with money laundering and tax evasion usually get the benefit. Therefore, steps should be taken to stop tax evasion first," he added.

Equity BD chief moderator Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said this proposed budget does not specifically say anything about steps against money laundering.

"If money laundering could be stopped, it could have been one of the sources to collect revenue," Rezaul Karim added.

Syed Aminul Haque of Coast Trust and Coastal Livelihood and Environment Action Network chief facilitator Mehedi Hasan also spoke at the event.

Separate

FROM PAGE 3

The organisation held the press meet on the proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2021-2022, remittance and the investment sector.

It demanded that the government launch pension scheme for migrant workers who return home permanently and ensure Covid-19 vaccination of migrants at home and abroad.

Besides, it demanded at least 3 percent cash incentive for sending remittance and launch of health insurance for returnee migrants.

Furthermore, the organisation demanded special allocation of Tk 1,000 crore in the national budget to support expatriates in emergency, and cheap airfare for migrant workers for their return to workplaces.

The organisation urged Biman Bangladesh Airlines to carry bodies of migrant workers home at free of cost and the authorities concerned to ease the process for expatriates to get passports and national identity (NID) cards.

It demanded for special budgetary allocation for exploring new labour markets.

The press meet was also attended by members of the organisation Shoab Chowdhury, Mahabub Anam, and ABM Mustak Hossain.

Affordable

FROM PAGE 3

middle and middle-class people, it became an apartment project for the upper class."

The government will have to take up housing projects that will be affordable for all, and flats will have to be constructed in different sizes. Although authorities are constructing some housing projects for the lower-income people, it's not enough when compared to the demand, he added.

Contacted, Ujjwal Mallick, chief engineer of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk), said three types of flats will be constructed in the Purbachal apartment project for limited-, middle- and high-income people.

The size of flats will be from 1,500 to 3,500 square feet. Besides, 400-500 square feet flats will also be constructed for low-income people. All buildings will be between 20-storey and 30-storey high, he said.

Habib recommended the government create land banks instead of constructing apartments, and provide flats through a competitive management system, involving private developers, so that people can get apartments in different categories at affordable prices.

In rural areas, the government will have to provide loans at low interest, so people can construct buildings by their own, taking land from the land bank, he said.

Lack of land bank is the main crisis, and the government can solve this issue, he said. When someone builds their own house, they will get ownership and be able to maintain construction quality at an affordable cost.

Suggesting authorities should intervene in the land sector, Adil said the government should have taken initiatives to increase its land supply.

"Our housing policy mentions ensuring social housing. In developed countries, there are many such projects. The government does not have the capacity to start a social housing project in a larger scale, but they can do it through a private-public partnership model," he said.

Also, authorities will have to take steps

to curb the monopoly of big housing companies, which are hiking the price of plots. They should also limit ownership capacity of such housing companies, so that they cannot take ownership of huge amounts of land, he added.

Besides, authorities will have to take initiative for housing projects outside Dhaka, Adil said. Instead of initiating projects in only a few major cities, such housing plans should be taken in all the district cities.

"The government is taking up mega projects, but it will have to prioritise projects that are building housing for the poor, who are affected by natural disasters," he added.

Both Habib and Adil criticised the quality of government-constructed flats.

Habib said many buildings are being made across the country under the government's initiative, but their quality is not up to mark.

Adil said the Ashrayan project is a good initiative, but poor quality of the buildings should be looked into.

To modernise major cities of the country and ensure their planned growth, master plans of various duration are being prepared, Mustafa Kamal said. For example, the preparation of Detailed Area Plan by Rajuk for the period of 2016-2035, and of Chattogram Metropolitan Master Plan by Chattogram Development Authority for the period of 2020-2041 are underway.

Similar master plans will be prepared for other major cities, the minister said in his budget speech.

Following directives of the prime minister, the government is formulating and implementing projects to increase housing facilities of government officials and employees, from 8 percent of facilities to 40 percent, he said.

Rajuk has so far constructed 6,636 apartments in 379 high-rise buildings in Uttara Sector-18 and 380 apartments in nine high-rises on abandoned lands in Gulshan, Dhanmondi, Lalmatia and Mohammadpur, said officials.

পুট বিক্রয়
উত্তরা তৃতীয় ব্লকে সেক্টর ১৭/বি ব্লক ৩ কটা ৬০'x৬০' কনার, প্রতি কটা ৯৫ লাখ ও ৩০'x৬০' কনার, প্রতি কটা ৯০ লাখ ও ১৭/এফ ব্লকে ১০০'x৩০' কনার, প্রতি কটা ১ কোটি ২০ লাখ। যোগাযোগ: ০১৯১১০১৭০৪৫, ০১৭৫৭২১২২৫৫

Notice for AGM
It is for kind notice of all members of Bangladesh Endocrine Society (BES) that a special Annual General Meeting (AGM) is going to be held on 11th June, 2021 at 5pm on virtual platform via Zoom. All members of BES are requested to be present in AGM. The meeting link will be sent to all from BES office soon.

Prof Md Faruque Pathan
President, BES

Prof Md Hafizur Rahman
General Secretary, BES

PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON DHAKA
The Oasis of Luxurious Hospitality and Tranquility
Invitation for Tender

Sealed tenders are invited from bona-fide contractors/manufacturers/dealers/distributors/suppliers for supply of the following items. The detail Specifications, terms and conditions are mentioned in the Tender Schedule.

SL No.	Name of the Items	Quantity	Schedule Price (Non-refundable)
1	Electronic Door Lock	01 Lot	Tk.5000
2	80 TR Air Handling Unit	02 Set	Tk.3000
3	Vacuum Dry Machine	01 No	Tk.1000
4	50 TR AHU Cooling Coil	01 Set	Tk.1000
5	Display Chiller (Re-tender)	01 No	Tk.1000
6	Replacement of PFI unit including accessories (Re-tender)	01 No	Tk.1000
7	Well Pump Motor (Re-tender)	01 No	Tk.1000
8	Fan Coil Unit (Re-tender)	04 Nos	Tk.1000

Interested bidders may obtain Tender Schedule from the Purchasing Department on submission of a letter on their respective letterhead up to **June 28, 2021** during office hours. Tender will be received up to **02:30 pm on June 29, 2021** and will be opened on the same day at **03:00 pm** in presence of bidders, if any.

Tender must be supported by a fixed earnest money (as mentioned in the tender schedule) for SL No. 01 and 5% of quoted price for SL No. 2 to 8 in the form of Bank Draft / Pay Order from any Scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favor of Sonargaon Hotel.

Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel authority reserves the right to accept/reject any tender in part or in full or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Purchase Manager, Tel (880) 2 9128008, Extn: 4164

Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University
Khulshi, Chattogram-4225

Memo No. CVASU/OCE/REV/Goods/Works/IFT-21
Date: 03/06/2021

e-Tender Notice
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods as follows:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Package name	Tender closing date	Tender notice publication date
584920	OCE/Rev/PRTC/PGD-14/20-21	Procurement of Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometer/Mass Spectrometer (LC-MS/MS) for the PRTC of CVASU.	04-Jul-2021 15:00	06-Jun-2021 16:00
584943	OCE/Rev/PRTC/PGD-15/20-21	Procurement of Supporting Equipment for Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometer/Mass Spectrometer (LC-MS/MS) for the PRTC of CVASU.	04-Jul-2021 15:30	

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

The fees for **last downloading** the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to date & time **(04-Jul-2021 12:30 for Tender ID 584920, 584943)**.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd-
Chief Engineer
Office of the Chief Engineer
Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University

GD-1137



The Borakhali Bridge that collapsed on May 26. It was built over Borakhali canal in 2017-2018 fiscal year.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Gone in three days

Three relatively new bridges built for Tk 1.32 crore collapse in Gafargaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Thousands of inhabitants of around 20 villages in Gafargaon and surrounding upazilas are facing a sudden breakdown in communications after three bridges, built between 2014 and 2018, collapsed in a span of only three days.

The Department of Disaster Management in Mymensingh constructed the bridges on Borakhali canal, a tributary of the Brahmaputra river.

The three bridges that broke down between May 26 and May 28 are Borakhali Bridge, constructed at a cost of Tk 31 lakh in 2017-2018 fiscal year; Char Mashlanda (Kuratolipara) Bridge, built at a cost of Tk 47 lakh in 2013-2014 fiscal year; and Purbo Tekirchar (Muchharbari) Bridge, built at a cost of Tk 54 lakh in 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Rezaul Karim, project implementation officer (PIO) in Gafargaon, said the Char Mashlanda

(Kuratolipara) Bridge and the Purba Tekirchar (Muchharbari) Bridge were constructed during his tenure while the Borakhali Bridge was constructed during the tenure of Abdul Ali, who is now the PIO in neighbouring upazila of Nandail.

The bridges connected some 20 villages in Gafargaon, Nandail and Hossainpur upazilas, serving about eight thousand people daily, said locals.

Demanding proper investigation into the incident, they alleged that the use of substandard construction materials and negligence and lax monitoring by the authorities concerned might be the cause behind such a disaster.

Abdur Razzaq, a farmer from Hotorkhali village in neighbouring Hossainpur upazila of Kishoreganj, said thousands in surrounding areas had their hopes up when the bridges were constructed.

"To the delight of the villagers, the new bridges helped invigorate rural economy on both sides of

the bridges. The bridges enabled the farmers send their agricultural goods to nearby towns at affordable transport costs. But their hopes are now dashed," said Siraj Uddin Ahmed, a resident of Borakhali village in Gafargaon.

Rezaul Karim, the PIO in Gafargaon, however denied the allegation of using low-grade materials in the construction of the collapsed bridges.

He said unplanned digging of canals beside the bridges caused those to collapse. "We wrote to the department concerned regarding the issue before, but our concern was ignored."

Mymensingh sub-divisional engineer, Yunus Ali, said they had been carrying out excavation in the Borakhali canal and building embankments on its sides to ensure natural flow of water in the canal round the year.

They were also constructing four regulators and 10 box culverts along the embankments under the

project.

"While excavating earth, we've been maintaining a distance of 10 metres from the bridges and there's no chance of affecting the bridges," he said, claiming that proper design was not followed while building the bridges and existing water level in the canal was not taken into consideration.

Contacted, Gafargaon Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tajul Islam said he already visited the spot and it primarily appeared to them that landslides might have collapsed the bridges.

Mohammad Sanwar Hossain, district relief and rehabilitation officer in Mymensingh, said a five-member probe committee, headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Md Jahangir Alam, was formed on Tuesday to investigate into the collapse of the three bridges. The committee is due to submit its report within seven working days, he also said.

Teesta turns furious in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Erosion of the Teesta river has taken a serious turn devouring roads, educational and religious establishments, homesteads and cultivable lands at 10 points in four unions of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

Many people in erosion-hit areas are busy shifting their houses, assets to safer places. The erosion victims took shelter on nearby highlands and many have migrated to other areas.

According to Kurigram and Lalmonirhat Water Development Board (WDB) sources, onrush of water from upstream has intensified erosion in Bajra union of Ullipur upazila and Gharialdanga union of Rajarhat upazila in Kurigram and Gokunda union of Lalmonirhat Sadar and Mahishkhocha union of Aditumari upazila in Lalmonirhat along the Teesta basin.

Rezaul Karim Amin, the chairman of Bajra Union Parishad (UP) in Ullipur upazila, said that 50 homesteads, more than 100 bighas of cultivable land, part of a road, a government primary

school, a madrasa and a mosque have been devoured by the Teesta River in his union in the last two days. As the erosion by Teesta River continuing, many more homesteads, farmlands and infrastructures are under threat, he said.

"The water of the river Teesta has suddenly risen in the upstream. As the water receded, the erosion has intensified at four places in the union. People in the erosion-hit areas shifting their belongings to safer places," he added.

Ullipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nur-a-Jannat Rumi said she had visited the erosion affected areas and she is closely observing the situation.

A list of the affected families and lost assets is being prepared. The government will provide assistance to the erosion victims, she said.

Mizanur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in Lalmonirhat, said they were visiting the eroded areas. They will start work to prevent erosion through temporary work in the most vulnerable areas, he said.



Roads, educational institutions, religious institutions, dwellings and cultivable lands are being devoured by the Teesta River at Bajra Union of Ullipur upazila in Kurigram.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

JAP president, 21 others indigenous sued

Panic in community; JAP Dinajpur unit protests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bringing a paddy pillage allegation, a man of Parbatipur Upazila of Dinajpur has filed a case accusing 22 people of the Indigenous community, including the president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP) and his son.

JAP is a rights watchdog of ethnic minority in the country.

The incident triggered a wave of panic among the ethnic minority people.

Rabindranath Soren, 60, the President of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP) has been made the prime accused in the case while his only son Manik Soren 35, has also been sued in the case.

Mahubur Rahman 55, son of late Abdul Zabbar of Barachandipur village under Parbatipur Upazila of Dinajpur, filed the case with a Senior Judicial Magistrate Court in Dinajpur on May 5.

All the accused in the case are from the Adivasi community.

In the case, the plaintiff has sued them under section 143/447/323/324/354/379/506(2)/114.

He mentioned that these 22 people of Adivasi community led by Rabindranath Soren pillaged 65 maunds of paddy worth Tk 45,000 from his leased land on April 26 morning.

A clash was also taken place at the spot on that day.

Protesting the case, including the president of JAP, the leaders of Dinajpur based Jatiya Adivasi Parishad at a press conference strongly condemned it. Terming the plaintiff as an influential landgrabber, the leaders claimed that the land grabber filed the case intentionally for harassing and humiliating the top leader of JAP like Rabindranath Soren, who has been fighting for the rights of flatland ethnic people in the country.

It is a matter of concern to the leaders, they said.

Shital Mardi, president of Dinajpur unit of JAP readout the written statement at the press conference held at Dinajpur Press Club on Wednesday noon, in presence of other leaders.

So far, Mahubur Rahman has filed 3 cases against the indigenous people since they started a move to recover one acre and 25 decimals of land from his occupation.

Besides, two cases have been filed against Mahubur Rahman.

The disputed land belonged to Suki Mardi. Later, their heir Niren Mardi has been living on the land, which is located at Barokonain Parbatipur Upazila of Dinajpur, an Adivasi dominated area in the

upazila.

Since then Mahubur Rahman, allegedly started conspiring to take the land into his possession since he realised that the land has been included in the land record as an abandoned property.

Finally, he succeeded to get 95 decimals of land as a lease.

When Niren Mardi came to know the matter, he filed applications to different relevant departments seeking help to cancel the lease in July last year, which angered Mahubur Rahman.

As Rabindranath Soren, president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, had been involved with the incident as the people of his village were suffering, Mahubur Rahman sued him in a bid to harass him, socially and mentally, alleged the leaders of JAP in Dinajpur.

At the press conference, the leaders of JAP pressed the government 5-charter demands, including cancellation of the lease, withdrawal of case against the indigenous people and punishment of the land grabber Mahubur Rahman.

Besides, the land problem of Indigenous people in the country has to be solved by forming a separate land commission in the country.

Talking with The Daily Star,

Rabindranath Soren, the president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, said it was beyond his understanding why he and his son Manik Soren had been sued in the case.

"I have a right to fight for the people of my community," he said.

Contacted, the plaintiff, Mahubur Rahman, alleged that Rabindranath Soren is a land grabber and said the land has been in his possession for the last 40 years.

They are claiming ownership of the land based on false documents.

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নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী কর্তৃক পরিচালিত ডকইয়ার্ড এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ওয়ার্কস লিঃ, সোনাকান্দা, নারায়ণগঞ্জ এ নিম্নলিখিত পদে চুক্তিভিত্তিক জনবল (প্রজেক্টের অধীনে) নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রঃ নং	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাপত্ন যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	বয়স	বেতন	যে সকল জেলার প্রার্থী আবেদন করতে পারবেন
১।	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (নৌ স্থপতি)	০২ (দুই)	ক। বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ইন নেভাল আর্কিটেকচার। খ। সিজিপিএ ন্যূনতম ৩.০০। গ। যে কোন স্বীকৃত শিপইয়ার্ড/ডকইয়ার্ডে জাহাজ নির্মাণ/মেরামত কাজে ০৩ (তিন) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা ও শিপবিল্ডিং সংক্রান্ত সফটওয়্যার Maxsurf, Rhina-তে পারদর্শী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হবে।	অনুর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর। বিশেষ যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে শিথিলযোগ্য।	অত্র প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব চুক্তিভিত্তিক জনবলের বেতন কাঠামো অনুযায়ী	সকল জেলা

২। মূল বেতনের সাথে অন্যান্য ভাতাদি প্রতিষ্ঠানের বেতন কাঠামো, নিয়োগ নীতিমালা ও প্রচলিত নিয়মানুযায়ী প্রদান করা হবে।
৩। অত্র প্রতিষ্ঠানের মেডিক্যাল সেকশন কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত মেডিক্যাল ফিটনেস সার্টিফিকেট সন্তোষজনক প্রতিপাদিত হলে চাকরিতে নিয়োগ প্রদান করা হবে।
৪। আশ্রয়ী প্রার্থীদেরকে পূর্ণাঙ্গ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, সদ্য তোলা ০৪ (চার) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, স্থানীয় ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/স্পোরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মেয়র/কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাপরিকৃত/জাতীয়তা সনদপত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, জন্মনিবন্ধন (যদি থাকে), শিক্ষাপত্ন যোগ্যতা ও সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সংক্রান্ত সকল সনদসমূহের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক বরাবর আবেদনপত্র "ডকইয়ার্ড এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ওয়ার্কস লিঃ, বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, সোনাকান্দা, বন্দর, নারায়ণগঞ্জ" এর ঠিকানায় আগামী ২০ জুন ২০২১ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।
৫। প্রার্থীদেরকে বাছাই কমিটি কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে।
৬। লিখিত/মৌখিক/ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রার্থীকে কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ দেওয়া হবে না।
৭। পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি হতে পারে।
৮। অসম্পূর্ণ এবং ত্রুটিপূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
৯। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।

জিডি-১১৩৬ পক্ষে ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক

'If we lose: North Korea' Myanmar poets square off against junta's war on words

AFP, Bangkok

Before he was killed, Khet Thi's poems railed eloquently against Myanmar's sudden coup, joining a deluge of protest verse celebrating democracy demonstrators and defying the military's brutal war on words.

As soldiers unleashed a violent crackdown on resistance to the army takeover, he implored the public to stand firm against what he saw as an existential threat to the country's future.

"We have to fight to win this battle," he wrote. "If we lose: North Korea. If we win: South Korea."

Last month, scores of police and soldiers surrounded the home he shared with his wife and family in the central city of Shwebo.

They accused the poet -- who baked cakes and made ice cream to support his family -- of planning a series of bomb blasts, and demanded he give himself up.

The next day his wife Chaw Su was summoned to a hospital in Monywa around 80 kilometres away.

"I thought I would be able to (bring) him some clothes," she told AFP. But there was no need, according to a police officer, who told Chaw Su her husband was dead.

"I got only the dead body back," she told AFP.

Myanmar has been in uproar since the February coup ended a 10-year experiment with democracy that had loosened the fetters of censorship and allowed for greater self-expression.

As some protesters picked up hunting rifles and slingshots, poets like Khet Thi joined a fight against the coup staged by a population unwilling to surrender hard-won democratic freedoms.

Along with violence in the streets, the junta has tried to stifle dissent with internet blackouts and by rounding up celebrities and civil servants who have called for rebellion.

A video uploaded to Facebook soon in the weeks after the putsch showed a collage of defiant protesters reciting poems against the military.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2021

Samsudin, a storyteller holds paper cutouts of animals, as he performs fairy tales for the local children to commemorate World Environment Day at a beach in Indramayu, West Java Province, Indonesia, yesterday. The theme for World Environment Day 2021 is 'Ecosystem Restoration'. It will kick off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the sea.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

US to restore endangered species protections

The administration of President Joe Biden on Friday announced it would restore protections under the Endangered Species Act, a law credited with saving iconic animals like the gray wolf and bald eagle, which were loosened by his predecessor Donald Trump. Conservation groups welcomed the move but said they were concerned about how long the reversal might take. "The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is committed to working with diverse federal, Tribal, state and industry partners to not only protect and recover America's imperiled wildlife but to ensure cornerstone laws like the Endangered Species Act are helping us meet 21st century challenges," said the agency's Martha Williams. The FWS now proposes to undo those changes, saying it would formulate new rules in the coming months.

Nigeria 'indefinitely' suspends Twitter

Nigeria's government said on Friday it was suspending Twitter's operations indefinitely, two days after the social media giant deleted a tweet from President Muhammadu Buhari's account for violating its rules. Twitter was still working in Africa's most populous country soon after Friday's statement, which triggered immediate criticism from rights groups and analysts about freedom of expression. The information ministry announced the suspension on its own Twitter account though it gave no details on when the decision would take effect or what form the suspension would take. Buhari in his tweet criticised a segment of people for unrest in the country's southeast. The 78-year-old president, a former general, referred to those "misbehaving" in recent violence in the southeast, where officials blame separatists for attacks on police and election offices. Minister of Information Lai Mohammed on Wednesday accused Twitter of ignoring violent messages from a separatist leader and also referred to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's support for the #EndSARS protests last year in Nigeria against police brutality.

US judge overturns California assault weapons ban

A US judge overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons Friday in a move swiftly condemned by the state's governor Gavin Newsom as gun-related homicides surge across America. In a 94-page decision, federal Judge Roger T Benitez described California's assault weapons ban -- in place in 1989 -- as unconstitutional and defended the right of Americans to own semi-automatic rifles. "Like the Swiss Army Knife, the popular AR-15 rifle is a perfect combination of home defense weapon and homeland defense equipment," he wrote. Benitez said he would give the state 30 days to appeal the decision, which Governor Newsom said posed a "direct threat to public safety" and which he vowed to challenge. The decision comes as gun violence surges across the United States. Mass shootings have taken place in Florida, Indiana, California, Colorado and Georgia, in a surge in violence that President Joe Biden has branded an "epidemic."

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

At least 20 killed by Junta forces

Say media reports as clashes with rebels intensify; junta leader meets Asean envoys

REUTERS

At least 20 people were killed by Myanmar's security forces in the Ayeyarwady river delta region yesterday after villagers armed with catapults and crossbows fought back against troops searching for weapons, local media and residents said.

That would make it the heaviest civilian death toll in nearly two months. Some 845 people had previously been killed by the army and police since the Feb. 1 coup, according to an activist group. The junta has disputed that figure.

Reuters was unable to reach a junta spokesman yesterday for comment on the violence at Hlayswe village in Kyonpyaw township in the Ayeyarwady Region. Reuters could not independently verify the reports.

The army has struggled to impose control since it overthrew elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi after a decade of democratic reforms had opened up the once isolated Southeast Asian state.

Clashes broke out before dawn yesterday at Hlayswe, some 150 km northwest of the main city of Yangon, when soldiers said they

had come to search for weapons, at least four local media outlets and a resident said.

"The people in the village only have crossbows and there are a lot of casualties on the people's side," said the resident, who asked not to be identified.

Khit Thit Media and the Delta News Agency said 20 civilians had been killed and more wounded.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

It was some of the worst violence since the coup in the Ayeyarwady region, an important rice growing area that has large populations of both the Bamar majority ethnic group, from which much of the army is drawn, and the Karen minority.

Since the coup, conflicts have flared in the borderlands where some two dozen ethnic armies have been waging insurgencies for decades. The junta has also been faced by daily protests and paralyzing strikes.

The anti-junta Shwegu People's Defence Force said it had attacked a police station in northern Shwegu late on Friday together with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

In eastern Myanmar, the MBPDF (Moby People's Defence Force) said it had clashed with the army on Friday and four "terrorist soldiers" had been killed.

Despite the turmoil, Myanmar's army has shown little sign of heeding calls from its opponents to restore democracy. This week the junta received its first high-profile foreign visitors - the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross and envoys from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing met on Friday with the two Asean envoys.

The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, a group of independent international experts, said it was crucial that the Asean envoys also meet protest leaders, members of a parallel opposition government, elected lawmakers and Suu Kyi's party.

"Failure to meet with all relevant parties risks lending legitimacy to the junta and undermines the enormous effort and sacrifice made by the people of Myanmar to resist the junta's violent and unlawful attempt to seize power," it said.



"With what conscience can you go to work while everyone goes out and protests?" asked one man, referring to a mass strike campaign launched to pressure the junta.

Poetry played a prominent role in Burma's struggle for independence against colonial power Britain and the decades of military rule that followed, when scores of writers were locked up as political prisoners.

UK-based poet Ko Ko Thett believes the medium has struck a chord with ordinary people "overwhelmed with rage, disbelief and grief" at the junta's takeover.

He put his own writing on the back burner in order to concentrate on translating works by fellow poets writing from post-coup Myanmar -- some of whom, like Khet Thi, have since been killed.

Many have mobilised online in their battle against the junta, including an underground collective of 30 bars from across the country spreading their verse on Facebook. "There is so much crime against humanity (in Myanmar). Poets in such situations live with tears in every single breath," one poet, who asked to remain anonymous for security concerns, told AFP.

"Our poems are hordes of screaming children."



AN explosives expert of Hamas lays out unexploded projectiles from the aftermath of the May 2021 conflict with Israel, at a local police precinct in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. Eleven days of conflict between Israel and Hamas erupted on May 10. More than 250 Palestinians were killed in hundreds of Israeli air strikes in Gaza. Rockets fired by Gaza militants killed 13 people in Israel.

PHOTO: AFP

Jihadist attack kills dozens in Burkina Faso

AFP, Ouagadougou

Around 100 civilians were killed overnight in the deadliest attack in Burkina Faso since jihadist violence erupted in the country in 2015, security and local sources said Saturday.

The attack occurred during the night of Friday to Saturday when "armed individuals staged an incursion" into the northern town of Solhan, a security source said.

"The toll, which is still provisional, is about 100 dead, men and woman of different ages", the source said.

The government confirmed the attack and the death toll.

Assailants struck around 2:00 am (0200 GMT) against a position of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Motherland (VDP), an anti-jihadist civilian defence force which backs the national army, before attacking homes and carrying out "executions," a local source said.

The VDP was set up in December 2019 to help Burkina's poorly-equipped military fight jihadists but it has suffered more than 200 fatalities, according to an AFP tally.

The volunteers are given two weeks'

military training, and then work alongside the security forces, typically carrying out surveillance, information-gathering or escort duties.

"In addition to the heavy human toll, the worst recorded to date, homes and the market were set on fire," another security source said, voicing concern that the "still temporary toll of a hundred dead may increase."

The authorities have declared three days of national mourning, ending Monday night at 11:59 pm.

The massive attack by suspected jihadists came hours after another attack Friday evening on Tadayat village in the same region, where at least 14 people were killed.

Since 2015 Burkina Faso has struggled to fight back against increasingly frequent and deadly jihadist attacks from groups including the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (EIGS).

The attacks first started in the north near the Mali border, but have since spread to other regions, particularly in the east.

Around 1,300 people have died and more than a million have fled their homes.



Facebook bans Trump for 2 years

Revises rules for politicians

AFP, San Francisco

Facebook on Friday banned former US president Donald Trump for two years, saying he deserved the maximum punishment for violating platform rules over a deadly attack by his supporters on the US Capitol.

The punishment will be effective from January 7, when Trump was booted off the social media giant, and comes after Facebook's independent oversight board said the indefinite ban imposed initially should be reviewed.

"Given the gravity of the circumstances that led to Mr. Trump's suspension, we believe his actions constituted a severe violation of our rules which merit the highest penalty available under the new enforcement protocols," Facebook vice president of global affairs Nick Clegg said in a post.

In updating its policies, Facebook also said it will no longer give politicians blanket immunity for deceptive or abusive content based on their comments being newsworthy.

At the end of Trump's two-year ban, Facebook will enlist experts to assess whether his activity on the platform still threatens public safety.

Trump said in a statement the ban was an "insult" to voters, renewing his false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him.

"They shouldn't be allowed to get away with this censoring and silencing," Trump said.

Bomb-sniffing rat hero retires

AFP, Phnom Penh

A giant African pouched rat called Magawa who spent years sniffing out landmines in the Cambodian countryside has stopped working and will enjoy a well-earned retirement eating bananas and peanuts, his employers told AFP.

Magawa, originally from Tanzania, was trained by the Belgian charity APOPO which says the rodent helped clear mines from 225,000 square metres of land in his five-year career, the equivalent of 42 football pitches.

But after detecting 71 landmines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance "he is getting a bit tired", Michael Heiman, the charity's programme manager in Cambodia, told AFP on Saturday.

"The best thing to do is to retire him." Millions of landmines were laid in Cambodia between 1975 and 1998, causing tens of thousands of casualties.

APOPO trained Magawa in his native Tanzania to detect the chemical compound within explosives by rewarding him with tasty treats -- his favourites being bananas and peanuts.

He alerts de-miners by scratching the earth. Magawa can scurry across an area the size of a tennis court in just 30 minutes,



something that would take four days using a conventional metal detector.

He is big enough to be attached to a leash as he goes about his business but light enough not to set off mines.

In September last year the rodent won the animal equivalent of Britain's highest civilian honour for bravery because of his uncanny knack for uncovering landmines and unexploded ordnance. Magawa was the first rat to receive a PDSA medal in the 77 years of the awards, joining an illustrious band of brave canines and felines -- and even a pigeon.

The group says 20 newly trained rats that recently arrived in Cambodia have just received their accreditation from the authorities to start landmine detection work.

But it will be a tough challenge following in Magawa's footsteps. Magawa is a "very exceptional rat", Heiman said.

Turning trash into treasure

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

At a time when the world is grappling with staggering amounts of plastic waste and its environmental ramifications, a woman in India's northeastern state of Assam has hit upon a novel idea to address the problem while also helping poor women earn a livelihood from it.

Rupiyoti Saikia Gogoi, 47, lives in the vicinity of Kaziranga National Park, a major tourist attraction in Assam and home to the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceros, besides thousands of elephants, tigers, panthers, bears and exotic bird species.

In 1985, the national park was inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Gogi and women from her collective, called Village Weaves, gather the waste -- plastic bottles, packets of chips and water bottles -- left behind by the tourists, wash and dry it manually and create handloom products like handbags, doormats, table mats, wall hangings, coasters, table covers, tea cosies, runners and other items from it.

Launched in 2004, the enterprise

has helped empower more than 2,300 women across 35 villages in Assam so far while also whittling down plastic pollution around the national park.

"Kaziranga is visited by millions of tourists each year, many of who leave behind heaps of garbage," says Gogoi.

"Despite a ban on littering, there are plastic bags everywhere which are not



only an eyesore but also hazardous for animals who choke on them."

Gogoi's husband Binod works for a local wildlife conservation non-profit and shares her concern about the threat of plastic waste to the environment and animals. The couple say they discussed the problem and "came up with a solution that was three-pronged -- to tackle the waste, recycle it in an eco-friendly manner

and empower local women."

Gogoi says she experimented for months before she stumbled upon a workable plan to use the waste creatively.

"At first, I tried using just plastic to make different objects from it. But it didn't work. I then experimented with other types of materials. Finally, it was only after I mixed plastic with cotton threads that I was able to create a durable and pliant fabric that was ideal for creating craft products," she says.

Gogoi says she followed simple handloom techniques she had learnt from her mother.

"Handloom weaving is a very common skill among Assamese women, especially in villages. We are trained in this craft from the age of six-seven and most households have a loom made by the ladies," she explains.

Once the technique was perfected, the self-taught artisan started sharing her knowledge with other women in Bocha Gaon village in the Golaghat district. Word spread and soon hundreds of women joined her network, making it a vibrant, statewide operation within a year.

Overcoming the pandemic: Do we need a far-reaching plan?

DR MUHAMMAD TOREQUL ISLAM

The Spanish flu infected about 500 million people in 26 months. Its four-phased outbreaks killed at least 50 million people in the world. Looking at the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not possible to estimate exactly how many waves we have and the total number of deaths. The thing is that standing on the beach, we are counting the waves crashing at our feet.

The SARS-CoV-2 has a proofreading mechanism, which results in a low mutation rate compared to influenza. Recently, it has been reported that the SARS-CoV-2 has been mutating at a rate of about 1-2 mutations per month. Some recent emerging variants, however, have accumulated significantly more mutations in short periods, causing concern around the globe.

Multiple mutations that spread persistently give rise to a new 'variant' of the virus are called 'lineages'. Scientists predict that these mutant lineages of the SARS-CoV-2 strain will not be the only concerning variants that emerge, as the continued uncontrolled transmission of this virus in many parts of the world and selective pressures, such as vaccines, are creating ideal conditions for additional, significant virus evolution.

Multiple variants have recently made headlines, including a UK



variant known as 501Y.V1, VOC 202012/01, or B.1.1.7 lineage, a South African variant known as 501Y.V2 or B.1.351 lineage, a Brazilian variant known as 501Y.V3 or P.1 lineage and many others. Some emerging variants are believed to be more transmissible and therefore have the potential to increase hospitalisations and deaths, especially in areas with already at-capacity healthcare systems.

The Indian experts have theorised that the new wave of infections is driven by the 'double mutant' variant discovered in the country, the B.1.617. Some

of the SARS-CoV-2 variants carry mutations that can escape detection by the immune system and neutralising antibodies, or spread faster, or infect more, causing severe disease, or a combination of these three behaviours.

The B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 variants have been associated with higher viral loads compared with existing variants in preliminary analyses, resulting in lower cycle threshold (CT) values for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing. Detection rates with antigen tests may increase due to an increase in

the concentration of antigen in the samples. Some variants have been associated with higher transmission rates compared with others and existing variants. Furthermore, shared mutations with some variants may increase the transmissibility of this virus.

The type of coronavirus is such that the more movement a COVID-19 patient has, the worse the physical condition will be and the greater the prevalence of the infection. Meanwhile, the fact that the strict lockdown approach does not apply to Bangladesh at all is already understood. None of the COVID-19 vaccines

discovered so far have been 100% successful. In other words, it is not known when our waiting hours will end for a successful COVID-19 treatment modality.

Due to lax management, the infection has increased again in many countries. It carries a message that the pandemic is not leaving us easily. At present, COVID-19 patients as well as their families are suffering a lot.

When someone in the family is COVID-19 positive, the sky seems to be falling on everyone's head. People are fighting to arrange a bed or isolated care unit in the hospital routinely. In that case, it should be our main concern now to deal with the current situation and successfully deal with the upcoming wave of the pandemic.

It is better to use a separate community-based health care system rather than the hospital management system assigned for the non-COVID-19 patients in the country to control the current situation. In this way, COVID-19 patients will get service at hand in an isolated way. On the other hand, increased infections and mortality rates due to the rotation complications will be somewhat reduced.

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DIABETES DIET



Diabetes diet lowers blood pressure & reduces need for medication

New research has shown that if people achieve and maintain substantial weight loss to manage their type 2 diabetes, many can also effectively control their high blood pressure and stop or cut down on their anti-hypertensive medication.

A weight management programme, developed by researchers at the Universities of Glasgow and Newcastle for the Diabetes UK-funded Diabetes REmission Clinical Trial (DIRECT), has proved effective at lowering blood pressure and reducing the need for anti-hypertensive medications, as well as bringing remission of type 2 diabetes.

The programme involves an initial 12 weeks on a nutritionally complete formula diet (low calorie soups and shakes) which will induce weight loss of over 15 kg if followed fully. Diabetes and blood pressure drugs were stopped at the start, and only re-started if blood sugar or blood pressure rose.

The weight loss phase is followed by support to choose foods and eat wisely for weight loss maintenance. Maintaining the 15 kg weight loss allowed 8 out of 10 people to become free from type 2 diabetes, without the need for diabetes medications for at least 2 years.

The researchers found that, overall, average blood pressure fell steadily as people lost weight. And blood pressure remained lower after the formula diet period finished.

HEALTH bulletin



SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity is not associated with low vitamin D levels

Several studies, generally small and poorly controlled have suggested that patients with low levels of vitamin D have excess risk for infection with SARS-CoV-2. This prospective cohort study involved 18,000 participants whose vitamin D levels were assessed both a few months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and in the middle of the pandemic (August–November 2020). SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity was assessed through November 2020; clinical illness was not assessed.

Nine hundred participants (5%) became SARS-CoV-2-positive during the study. On univariate analysis, positivity was associated with low vitamin D levels and with various sociodemographic parameters. However, on multivariate analysis and with other methods of adjustment, seropositivity was not associated with 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels of 20 ng/mL or 30 ng/mL.

These results add to the now generally accepted belief that vitamin D levels are not associated with risk for SARS-CoV-2 infection. This fact, of course, renders moot any discussion of whether supplementation would lower risk.

When should screening start for prostate cancer?

STAR HEALTH DESK

A nationwide study in Sweden estimates the elevated risk of advanced or fatal prostate cancer among relatives of men with the disease, providing new data that could help refine guidelines for the age at which screening should begin. Mahdi Fallah and Elham Kharazmi of the German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ) in Heidelberg, Germany, and colleagues presented these new findings in the open-access journal *PLOS Medicine*.

Clinical guidelines for the age to start prostate cancer screening aim to ensure that the benefits of identifying the disease early outweigh the risks of diagnosing and treating cancer that will not harm the patient. Current guidelines note that men with a family history of prostate cancer have a greater risk and should begin screening early. However, due to the lack of sufficient data, the age at which early screening should begin has been unclear.

To address this problem, Fallah and colleagues conducted an analysis of all male residents of Sweden born after 1931, as well as their fathers. Between 1958 to 2015, 88,999 out of a total of 6,343,727 men were diagnosed with advanced stage (III or IV) prostate cancer, or died from the disease.

The researchers used these data to calculate the age at which men who had a father, brother, or son diagnosed with prostate cancer reached the "screening risk

threshold," i.e., the same level of prostate cancer risk as at the age of 50 years across the entire population. (Many guidelines recommend that screening begin at 50 years.)

The researchers found that men with a family history of prostate cancer reached the screening risk threshold up to 12 years earlier. However, different men reached this threshold at different ages, depending on how many of their first-degree relatives had prostate cancer and the age at which the relatives were diagnosed.

By comparing their calculations with various guidelines, the researchers determined that men with a family history of prostate cancer reach a high enough risk to start screening anywhere from 2 to 11 years earlier than currently recommended.

These findings could lead to greater personalisation of screening

guidelines. Further research could help validate these results in populations of different ethnicity, while also accounting for genetics and lifestyle.

"The one-size-fits-all policy in medicine belongs to the past; more and more risk-adapted approaches are needed instead to optimize the use of restricted resources in health care", said Dr. Kharazmi, co-leader of this study.

"The aim of our group is to fill this gap (a personalised approach in screening) for various cancers, such as prostate, breast, and colorectal cancer, using long-standing high-quality large-scale register-based data, to provide robust evidence to support screening guidelines", Mahdi Fallah, professor of Medicine (Epidemiology) in the University of Bergen, Norway, and leader of Risk-Adapted Cancer Prevention Group, DKFZ, Germany.



Ways to stop smoking

If you want to stop smoking, you can make small changes to your lifestyle that may help you resist the temptation to light up. Here are a few tips that may help you to resist the urge to smoke or use tobacco when a tobacco craving strikes.

Sip and eat: Sipping cold water through a straw can help replace the act of sucking on a cigarette. It also releases dopamine, a brain chemical that can help ease bad moods. Eating small meals can also help you get past the urge to smoke. Choose lean, healthy foods to avoid weight gain.

Brush your teeth: One of the instant perks of quitting is that your mouth tastes better and your breath smells better. Brush often. That way, you will be less inclined to light up a cigarette and foul that clean, fresh mouth.

Be active every day: Exercise offers a powerful distraction from cravings. When you are active, your body sends out natural chemicals that help your mood and ease your stress. Walking is one of the simplest options.

Limit caffeine: Caffeine helps some people get going in the morning and stay alert when they are tired. But it makes others feel tense, jittery and stressed. Breaking your nicotine addiction can boost those effects. If caffeine makes you jumpy or anxious, cut back on it.

Source: WebMD



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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

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Waterbodies in Tangail on their deathbed

Govt must take emergency measures to stop this

IT is heart-breaking to learn of the near death of three rivers and one canal in Tangail due to the dumping of polluted elements by some mills and factories in the given area, according to a DS report yesterday which was World Environment Day. While many people have been badly affected by the degradation of these waterbodies aquatic life of the area has been completely extinguished.

According to the Tangail office of the Department of Environment (DoE), there are 14 such polluting mills and factories along with an industrial zone that throw toxic wastes into these waterbodies. The DoE had fined these factories several times in the past, but this did not stop them from dumping the chemicals untreated. Local people can no longer use the water of these rivers for bathing or farming. Even cattle of this area suffer from diarrhoea after drinking water from these waterbodies. The noxious smell from these rivers and canals are also making it hard for the local people to live there.

It is beyond our comprehension why these factories are not using the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) that lessens the amount of toxic elements from industrial waste. Although most of the above-mentioned factories have this technology, locals allege that these machines remain shut most of the time to lessen operational costs. The locals have also alleged that the owners of these factories are connected to influential figures and large kickbacks are given so that the factory owners can run their businesses as they wish—without treating the chemical wastes that they dump into the water.

On July 1, 2020, the High Court published its 17-point directive to save our waterbodies from further encroachment and pollution. Also, the High Court order declared the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) as the sole guardian of our waterbodies. The court has given this commission such authoritative power that any government agency has to take permission from NRCC first to do anything related to our rivers, canals and so on.

As NRCC is a government body, it has to carry out its work without any interference. NRCC must take emergency steps to save the rivers and canals of Tangail. The commission has to punish those who are polluting the rivers, find out if allegations against those who have let these factories run for such a long time in exchange of bribes are true and if so, punish them according to the laws of the land. The practice of treating the chemicals through the ETP must be enforced—and industries must be heavily penalised if they don't. Whatever fines they paid have obviously not been enough to deter them from breaking the law so far.

Merely having laws on paper and a commission in name only will not bring the desired results. If the government is committed to saving the rivers of our country that are the lifelines of the people and home to thousands of species of aquatic life, it has to ensure unbiased enforcement of environmental laws.

The new poor left in the lurch

Rectify the allocation inefficiency to cater to them

WHILE generally the FY21-22 budget is business friendly, the same regrettably cannot be said about its provisions for the poor, particularly those who have been newly thrust below the poverty line due to reasons induced by the pandemic. It is deeply disappointing that the government, presenting the second budget of the pandemic, has not taken into account the economic effect of the pandemic on the poor and the marginalised.

The figures about the new poor vary. According to an estimate of the Centre for Policy Dialogue in April, the pandemic has forced another 16 million people to join the nearly 20.5 percent of the population already living in poverty. However, another survey in the same month by the Power and Participation Research Centre and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development showed that the number of people affected by the pandemic is a good deal higher, by about 10 million. And this had happened even before the second wave of the pandemic hit. The World Bank figure of a 30 percent poverty rate jump due to the pandemic is even bleaker.

This means that the government has to brace itself for the prospect of more people going below the poverty line, but it won't know the exact number unless the BBS updates its 2019 estimate of poverty rate. Regrettably, the allocation in the relevant heads, do not indicate that the government is committed to helping the people already in poverty and the ones that have joined them newly. We believe that the social protection allocation needs to be beefed up. As it is, of the present outlay, more than a quarter has been set aside for pension for retired public employees. This is not only higher than the allocation of the last fiscal year; it outshoots the allocation for the social safety net schemes. What is disappointing is that allocation for such programmes as Work for Money and the Skills and Employment Programme has been slashed also—as has been done in the case of several programmes that address the needs of the marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, allocation for government spending and investment, that would create jobs, has not been increased either. No nation can claim to achieve economic equity with a third of its population in poverty. If a budget is meant to reduce the rich-poor gap, this budget does not. The finance minister should rethink and put right the glaring allocational inefficiency in the budget, to cater for the people in poverty, including the new poor.

Budget FY2022 addresses pandemic priorities only partially



MACRO MIRROR
FAHMIDA KHATUN

IN the year of Bangladesh's golden jubilee, the finance minister has presented the 50th budget of Bangladesh for fiscal year (FY) 2022. This is probably the most challenging budget in the history of Bangladesh. This is also the second budget since the Covid-19 pandemic erupted in Bangladesh in March 2020. The budget comes at a time when the country is also being swept away by the second wave of the pandemic. Thus, before the economy could move towards the recovery phase it has fallen into health, economic and social risks afresh. Hence this budget has been prepared in the context of an unprecedented situation as the economy is mired in multiple challenges which Bangladesh has never observed in the past.

A well-formulated budget and its effective implementation would be an important mechanism to mitigate these challenges. To what extent the budget for FY2022 is going to do so is examined here by looking into a few important aspects in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Allocation for priority sectors and their utilisation capacity

The budget for FY2022 has made allocative priorities in a business-as-usual manner where the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has not been taken into consideration. In terms of sectoral allocation, the priority sectors during the pandemic are clearly health, social safety net and employment generation. However, resources are not sufficient for these sectors. To start with, though allocation for health sector as a share of the total budget has increased from 5.15 percent in FY2021 to 5.42 percent in FY2022, in terms of its share in GDP there is no change. It is 0.95 percent of GDP in FY2022, as it was in FY2021. The logic behind low allocation for the health sector at a critical time is mentioned to be the inability of the health ministry to utilise its allocation. In fact, actual expenditure as a percentage of revised budget allocation has worsened significantly over the past decade. Besides, utilisation of nondevelopment budget has been consistently higher than development budget utilisation for the last several years.

The other important sector, social safety net (SSN) programmes have undergone a few changes which are not encouraging. The overall SSN budget as a percentage of total budget increased from

17.75 percent in FY2021 to 17.83 percent in FY2022. SSN budget as a percentage of GDP saw an insignificant increase—from 3.10 percent in FY2021 to 3.11 percent in FY2022 budget. A major component of the SSN budget is pension for the retired government employees and their families. Hence, the share of SSN budget excluding pension declined from 2.35 percent of GDP in FY2021 to 2.34 percent of GDP in FY2022 budget. Allocation for pension has increased from Tka 23,000 crore in FY2021 to taka 26,690 crore in budget for FY2022. This increase is 16 percent which is higher than the rate of increase of overall social protection.

Surprisingly, SSN budget excluding pension as a percentage of budget decreased from 13.49 percent in FY2021 to 13.41 percent in FY2022 budget. There are also some deductions in allocation for a number of programmes. For example, allocation has been

reduced for programmes protecting livelihoods, such as Work For Money and Skills and Employment Programme in Bangladesh. Allocation for three types of education stipends have been reduced in FY2022. Also, allocation for several programmes which address the needs of the marginalised, vulnerable, and left behind communities has been slashed in the FY2022 budget. As it is, there is insufficient allocation for SSN, the lowering of allocations for these programmes is not reasonable. These should be reinstated urgently.

Investment and employment

The estimated growth of GDP for FY2021 is 6.1 percent. In anticipation of a back to normal scenario, the GDP growth target for FY2022 has been set at 7.2 percent. To achieve this growth, a lot of investment will be needed. Private investment is expected to be the major driver of this investment. In FY2022, public investment-GDP ratio is projected to be 8.1 percent compared to 8.2

percent in FY21. And private investment is estimated to be 25 percent of GDP in FY2022. This implies that an additional Taka 117,000 crore will be needed to achieve this growth. Given that private investment has been stagnant at about 23 percent of GDP for the last couple of years, how private investment will improve in a pandemic year is unclear. Of course, one can expect that the private sector would be encouraged to invest since the government has offered several incentives through tax exemptions and reductions. However, higher investment is not only a function of low tax. Several factors, such as less bureaucratic hassles, infrastructural facilities, corruption free environment and skilled human resources are also important preconditions for higher investment.

Support to the poor and low-income group

While businesses, particularly the large ones, have been provided with so much support through fiscal measures, the government forgot about the poor and low-income groups. The pandemic has created new poor and eroded incomes of the informal sector employees. Moreover, the threshold of tax-free income of the small earners has not been raised. This could help the people in the low-income group as they would have more disposable income. The government could also earn indirect tax through their purchases.

Besides, the cottage, micro and small businesses should be provided more support as they have used all their savings by now and many could not avail the loan under the stimulus packages. Structural problems in accessing finance from commercial banks are one of the reasons. But their apprehension for not being able to pay back the instalment also deterred them from taking bank loans. There is no indication of any second stimulus package for them.

Trickle down approach

The policymakers seem to believe that if the large businesses flourish it will automatically benefit the poor, low income and middle-income groups. Sure, private businesses will create employment for many, but it does not guarantee reduction of inequality. It is the government which has to intervene and take targeted measures to reduce inequality of all forms. Budgetary measures are one such mechanism for government intervention. The government can incentivise some sections through fiscal measures such as tax cut, tax exemptions, tax holiday and subsidies. Through progressive taxation and redistributive measures, the government can also extend some respite to those who have less or no resources.

The budget for FY2022 aimed to protect lives and livelihoods. But this has not been supported by mindful measures and adequate resource allocation.

If businesses pick up in FY2022 it will help create employment which is



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Low investment on human capital is not only reflected through low health budget, but also low allocation for the education sector. Total allocation for education sector in FY2022 budget increased by only 8.68 percent compared to FY2021. However, the revised education budget as a share of GDP decreased to 2.08 percent in FY2022 from 2.14 percent

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Getting to the Net Zero Olympics



AS the rich countries get their vaccination numbers up, whilst poorer countries are still struggling, there is some hope that we are getting to grips with the pandemic. On the climate change front, there has been some remarkable achievements in the last two months.

First, US President Biden's Climate Summit in April got 40 top leaders to commit towards working together on climate change. Even though several countries did not commit to anything new, notably Australia, just getting the US back into the Paris Agreement was a big deal. With China, Russia and all of G20 emerging markets aboard, this was a sign that enemies and rivals can cooperate where it is important for mankind.

Second, the International Energy Agency (IEA) just published their Net Zero by 2050 report. Since the energy sector accounts for three-quarters of greenhouse carbon emissions, its views on whether Net Zero by 2050 counts. The main message was that "all technologies needed to achieve the necessary deep cuts in global emissions by 2030 already exist, and the policies that can drive their deployment are already proven." In other words, science and industry think that the Net Zero is technically achievable. Net Zero means that the carbon dioxide emissions are balanced globally by removal of carbon dioxide through capture or storage, such as reforestation.

Third, the leading oil and gas firms are facing major pressure to change to low carbon strategies. In May, activist investors forced ExxonMobil to pay attention by replacing two existing board members so as to drive a greener carbon strategy. Chevron also buckled to investor pressure. In addition, the Dutch courts forced Shell to cut its carbon emissions by 45 percent in the next decade.

Fourth, the world's central banks are ramping up pressure on the financial system to manage their climate risks. A Green Swan Conference is on this week, hosted by the Bank for International Settlements, Bank of France, the IMF and Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS), to see how the financial sector can take immediate action in practice on climate risks.

All these suggest that following Greta Thunberg's wake-up call, both the public and private sector are gearing up for UN COP26 (Annual UN Conference of the Parties on climate change), which will be held in Glasgow this November. The UK hosts hope that COP26 will deliver concrete commitments to reduce carbon emissions this year.

Former Bank of England Governor Mark Carney, in his role as UN Special Envoy for Climate Finance, was

financial firms.

Will all these new energy and efforts work?

If the technical solutions are there, and finance seems readily available, why is progress on reduction of carbon emissions still slow? The fundamental barriers are politics and very basic issues on how to put these complex ideas into practice.

First, the controversial politics of climate change has always been about



The Olympic rings are pictured in front of the International Olympic Committee headquarters, in Lausanne, Switzerland, March 24, 2020. PHOTO: REUTERS

instrumental in establishing the Network of Central Banks and Supervisors for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) launched at the Paris One Planet Summit in 2017. This indirectly used the financial system to push the real sector (corporations, households and governments) to up the ante on climate action.

Working with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD), chaired by Michael Bloomberg, the NGFS aims to improve climate related metrics and targets, risk management, strategy on climate-risks and governance measures on the broad climate action by

who was responsible for the bulk of carbon emissions, and who should pay for the cleaning up. The rich countries today are still the big emitters, but they feel that newcomers like China and emerging markets should now play a bigger role in helping to limit carbon emissions. China-bashers argue that since the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, half of the increase in CO2 emissions is due to China, with China still building more coal burning power stations.

Second, the scale of zero carbon transformation is so deep and complex that it requires huge coordination between whole-of-government and

whole-of-society to make the necessary changes. The slow response to carbon action was fundamentally due to economists' bias for market-based solutions, thinking that carbon pricing would help create carbon-trading markets so those who "save" on carbon emission are rewarded or paid by offenders who are carbon emitters. Carbon markets have not been successful because of the lack of good rules, enforcement and efficient pricing of carbon.

It has taken a long time for the public and climate activists to realise that climate action needs BOTH market and state, since pollution and resource depletion are essentially market failures. Thus, the current race to the top on climate action between the US and China is the best thing that can happen for the planet.

Let's see who can implement the commitments to Net Zero by 2050 faster, better and more comprehensively.

Each government will have to design very comprehensive road maps and timelines to achieve their Net Zero carbon targets. This requires very detailed government-market working together to design and implement very specific but practical plans, projects and programmes, so that individual consumers, households, corporations and different levels of government will be incentivised (or punished) to meet these targets. This is truly about mass mobilisation, not about elite wishful thinking.

To contribute to Net Zero, rich cities like Hong Kong must lay out very clear programmes and projects that will cut carbon emissions, energy and resource wastages at household and firm levels. This means that Net Zero strategy must fit into the Smart City with Smart Green Living that is also market and people-friendly. Net Zero is like the 2050 Olympics for every city or country to demonstrate that they can win on behalf of not just their community, but for the whole world.

Greta Thunberg is right: "we are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth."

The Net Zero Olympics is on, and may the best city or economy win.

Andrew Sheng is an honorary adviser with the CIMB Asean Research Institute and a distinguished fellow with the Asia Global Institute at the University of Hong Kong. He comments on global affairs from an Asian perspective for the Asia News Network (ANN), an alliance of 24 news media titles across the region, which includes The Daily Star. The views expressed are his own.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS to disasters in the Indian Ocean region



AK ABDUL MOMEN

IN March last year, Cyclone Amphan, said to be the first super cyclone to form in the Bay of Bengal since 1999, devastated the state of West Bengal, killing more than a hundred people. At least 140,000 people died and two million people were displaced when Cyclone Nargis struck the Irrawaddy Delta in Burma (Myanmar) in May 2008. It seemed as if a bucket of water had been sloshed across an ink drawing; the carefully marked lines of the delta's waterways had been erased and the paper beneath was buckled and distorted.

The last super cyclone to hit India occurred in 1999 and caused nearly 10,000 deaths in Orissa (Odisha) state. In 2019, Cyclone Fani, which formed in the Bay of Bengal, hit Orissa, causing immense damage to life and property. "The north coast of the Bay of Bengal is more prone to catastrophic surges than anywhere else on Earth," Bob Henson, meteorologist and writer with Weather Underground had told the BBC. He said that the Bay of Bengal is a "textbook example" of the worst kind of places for storm-surges to develop—shallow, concave bays where water is pushed by the strong winds of a tropical cyclone. This gets concentrated as the storm moves up the bay. Meteorologists say that the worst places for storm-surges tend to be shallow, concave bays where water, pushed by the strong winds of a tropical cyclone, gets concentrated or funnelled as the storm moves up the bay.

What makes matters worse is the high sea surface temperatures in the Bay of Bengal, which can trigger extremely strong cyclones. "It is a very warm sea," says M Mohapatra, head of India's meteorological department. There are other coastlines around the world which are vulnerable to surging storms—the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, for example—but the "north coast of the Bay of Bengal is more prone to catastrophic surges than anywhere on Earth", says Henson. The highly populous coastline also exacerbates the threat: one in four people in the world live in a country that borders the bay. Meteorologists say that high sea temperatures in the "warm" Bay of Bengal are also a major reason for strong cyclones.

Our Indian Ocean Region, tagged as "World's Hazard Belt", is always at the forefront of vulnerability to natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis. The intensity of natural hazards have increased by about 470 percent since 1970.

I cannot agree more with the statement of Tadateru Konoé, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), who said: "The devastating humanitarian and economic impact of natural disasters in the Indian Ocean countries will only worsen with time, unless we double down on investments in resilience and preparedness."

Only on May 25, 2021, I discussed these issue in a workshop organised by Australia, Bangladesh and IORA about how can we use nature-based solutions for reducing the impacts of disasters and climate impacts. These so-called "nature-based solutions" are important pieces in the puzzle in building the resilience of coastal areas, mangroves, seagrasses, tidal marshes, and communities to an ever-increasing number of disaster events around the world, especially in the Indian Ocean region. Nature-based solutions are relevant to everyone, and we can all benefit from seeing them applied.

It is important to learn how to apply nature-based solutions in enhancing resilience to disasters and climate change, whether you are a youth leader, practitioner, policymaker, engineer or business owner; how human activities are interlinked with ecological systems, main tools and approaches for applying nature-based solutions to reducing disaster and climate risks; how policymakers and practitioners are applying nature-based solutions for reducing risks of natural hazards

by investing in restoration and protection.

These extreme events and disasters such as floods, cyclones, tsunamis, and tidal surges are known to be exacerbated by environmental changes including climate change, land-use changes, and natural resource degradation lead to substantial loss of life, livelihoods, and community assets, which not only threaten the pace of socio-economic development, but also undo hard-earned gains. Increasing climate variability and multi-dimensional vulnerabilities have severely affected the social, ecological, and economic capacities of the people in the coastal regions who economically have the least capacity to adapt. Climatic and other environmental hazards and anthropogenic risks, coupled with weak and wavering capacities, severely impact the ecosystems and Nature's Contributions to People (NCP) and, thereby, to human well-being. Long-term resilience building through disaster risk reduction and integrated adaptive climate planning, therefore, have become key priorities for scientists and policymakers alike. Nature-based solutions are cost-effective approaches that utilise ecosystem and biodiversity services for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, while also providing a range of co-benefits like sustainable livelihoods and food, water and energy security.

Nature-based solutions are both science and art—and can be applied to develop healthy and resilient ecosystems locally, nationally,

regionally and globally. We all should take serious note of nature-based solutions, applications and challenges, research trends and future insights that have wider regional and global relevance. The aspects covered are likely to include: landscape restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation, ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction, ecological restoration, and ecosystem-based protected areas management, nature-friendly infrastructure development in various ecosystem types, agro-climatic zones and watersheds. Experts should highlight to offer insights into understanding the sustainable development goals (SDGs) at the grass roots level and can help indigenous and local communities harness ecosystem services to help achieve them. It should offer a unique, essential resource for researchers, students, corporations, administrators, and policymakers working in the fields of the environment, geography, development, policy planning, the natural sciences, life sciences, agriculture, health, climate change and disaster studies.

Bangladesh has established coastal afforestation schemes since 1961 along the coastal areas of the country with a view to protecting the coastal people from cyclones and tidal surges, stabilise lands in the coast, conserve and support the fishery biodiversity, increase forest and tree cover, sequester carbon to reduce the climate change impacts at the global scale. Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) report to the UNFCCC showed that about 61 percent of removals (-247,749t) of carbon dioxide is due to plantation/afforestation/reforestation activity in the coastal areas. Bangladesh has implemented many projects since then to establish green belt along the coast and now it is time to widen and intensify it.

Recently, about 19,395 ha of plantation have been completed under an on-going "Afforestation in Coastal Region including the Newly Accreted Chars of Bay of Bengal (2018-2022)" project in four coastal districts. About 9,720 ha of plantation was completed under the "Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (2018-2023)" project in the coastal districts. Currently, a feasibility study project is under implementation to develop a "Climate Resilient Sustainable Coastal Forestry in Bangladesh" project with a view to reducing forest degradation and increase forest coverage through participatory planning/monitoring to contribute in building the long-term climate resilience of selected communities in coastal areas of Bangladesh with funds from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The project will establish

about 25,000 ha plantation in newly accreted low-lying lands in the coastal areas.

Bangladesh is not only conducting the coastal afforestation but also establishing plantations in homesteads, embankments, polders through engaging the local community to improve the micro climate, biodiversity and livelihoods which will ultimately develop resilience of the community to climate change in the coastal region. Our government is playing an especially important structural role for sustainable development in coastal areas as well as sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. There are a number of national policies to support the blue economy concept in the context of mangrove forest conservation. Coastal Development Strategy sets a number of strategic priorities for the coastal zone of Bangladesh. Environmental conservation is one of the strategic priorities that ensure conservation of the coastal critical ecosystems including Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs), heritage sites including the Sundarbans mangrove forest and marine reserves.

In pursuit of the reality of climate change, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has established the Climate Change Trust Fund for climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction where the government has allocated nearly USD 443 million from its own resources. Bangladesh is spending USD 2 billion every year for climate change sensitive projects and USD 3 billion for adaptation measures. Moreover, Bangladesh is facing adverse climate impact because of 1.1 million forcefully displaced Rohingyas. Bangladesh is going to implement the "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan" to achieve low carbon economic growth for prosperity and partnership. We are the host of the South Asian office of Global Centre on Adaptation and are promoting locally led adaptation in this region. The parliament of Bangladesh has adopted a "Planetary Emergency Resolution" to save the planet. Furthermore, nature-based solution for coastal risk reduction would be a sustainable approach to combat the uncertainties of climate change. Bangladesh's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan seeks to build a medium- to long-term programme for enhancing resilience to climate shocks and facilitating low-carbon, sustainable growth, including blue growth as linked to coastal ecosystems such as mangrove conservation and coastal resilience. It also suggests expansion of the "greenbelt" coastal afforestation programme to include mangrove afforestation along the shoreline.

Dr AK Abdul Momen is the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh.

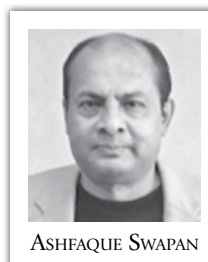


PHOTO: GMB AKASH

Our Indian Ocean Region, tagged as 'World's Hazard Belt', is always at the forefront of vulnerability to natural disasters, including cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis.

Sobering lessons 100 years after the massacre of African Americans

Struggle for truth and justice remains an uphill battle



ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

RACISM is America's original sin. Its manifestations are myriad, and notwithstanding occasional spurts of progress, the struggle for justice continues to be an uphill battle.

First, there is the vicious history of the unspeakable depredations against African Americans. Then there is something which is almost equally risible—a continuous history of denial and obfuscation of America's dark past.

Take the massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921.

On May 31, 1921, white citizens, aided by local law enforcement officials and National Guard troops, destroyed the segregated African American affluent Greenwood community, known as the "Black Wall Street" and home to an estimated 10,000 African American residents. The trigger was a false rumour of an assault of a white girl by a young African American man. White goons looted and set more than 1,250 homes ablaze, according to an official government

report commissioned almost 80 years later. An estimated 300 residents were killed.

A subsequent cover-up and denial meant history books are silent about the massacre.

"For the better part of a century, Tulsa did little to remember the victims of the massacre. There was no memorial, no yearly commemoration, and even many Tulsa residents knew little about it. Residents began marking the day with modest ceremonies in 1996," the *New York Times* reports.

Tulsa is by no means alone. Many other massacres are not taught in schools. Here's a select list from *The Washington Post*:

In Colfax, Louisiana, in 1873, an estimated 62 to 81 African Americans were killed in an attack on newly enfranchised African Americans during Reconstruction. Whites contested the result of the 1872 election (sound familiar?). African American men gathered around the county courthouse to protect the local government. A white mob surrounded them, set the courthouse on fire and shot everyone who came out.

In Wilmington, North Carolina in 1898, white supremacists overthrew the result of a local election and killed dozens of African Americans, burning down Wilmington's prosperous African American neighbourhood. Among dozens of racist attacks and

massacres across the United States in the "Red Summer" in 1919, one of the worst was in Elaine, Arkansas. At least 200 African American farmers and their families were slaughtered after they had unionised and planned to bypass sharecropping.

It is in this context that US President Joe Biden's trip to Tulsa to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the massacre is so heartening.

"For much too long, the history of what took place here was told in silence," Biden said. "While darkness can hide much, it erases nothing."

"My fellow Americans, this was not a riot," he said, as people in the crowd rose to their feet. "This was a massacre."

Biden's visit suggests that the police murder of George Floyd, an African American just over a year ago, triggering a global mass movement against racism, has brought a change in the public mood.

It also underscores the fact that elections have consequences. It cannot be coincidental that Biden's robust defence of civil rights follows his presidential campaign essentially brought back from the death by African American Democratic Party primary voters.

Biden is the first US president to visit the site, and that in itself is a mainstream public

acknowledgement that is significant.

But beyond the symbolism, substantive measures that address this injustice remain elusive.

Three known survivors of the 1921 Tulsa massacres, all centenarians, recently appeared before a congressional subcommittee.

Viola Ford Fletcher, 107; Hughes Van Ellis, her 100-year-old younger brother; and Lessie Benningfield Randle, 106 (who joined remotely) argued that justice was overdue.

"I have lived through the massacre every day," Fletcher said. "Our country may forget this history, but I cannot," Fletcher said. She was 7 at that time.

Ellis said the survivors had been made to feel that they were "unworthy of justice, that we were less valued than whites."

"We aren't just black-and-white pictures on a screen," he said. "We are flesh and blood. I was there when it happened. I'm still here."

"People in positions of power, many just like you, have told us to wait," Randle said. "Others have told us it's too late. It seems that justice in America is always so slow, or not possible for Black people. And we are made to feel crazy just for asking for things to be made right."

All of the House Judiciary subcommittee members—Democrats and Republicans—rose

for standing ovations after the survivors spoke.

Survivors accused the city of turning what remains of Greenwood, now just half a block, into a tourist destination, and using their stories to enrich others but not the victims themselves. In 2005, the Supreme Court declined to hear a case brought by the massacre survivors.

Hollywood film star Tom Hanks has joined a growing call on schools to acknowledge and teach about America's dark past.

"Should our schools now teach the truth about Tulsa? Yes, and they should also stop the battle to whitewash curriculums to avoid discomfort for students. America's history is messy but knowing that makes us a wiser and stronger people. 1921 is the truth, a portal to our shared, paradoxical history. An American African American Wall Street was not allowed to exist, was burned to ashes; more than 20 years later, World War II was won despite institutionalised racial segregation; more than 20 years after that, the Apollo missions put 12 men on the moon while others were struggling to vote," Hanks wrote in a guest essay in the *New York Times*.

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

QUOTABLE Quote

SAADI SHIRAZI
Persian poet (1210—1283)

Whatever makes an impression on the heart seems lovely in the eye.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Third letter
- 6 Forest growth
- 10 Some messages
- 11 Custom
- 12 Jessica of "Tootsie"
- 13 Unaided
- 14 Totals
- 15 Turkey neighbor
- 16 Brewed beverage
- 17 Fuming
- 18 Fall mo.
- 19 Has more stamina than
- 22 Spotted
- 23 Gorillas and gibbons
- 26 Pariahs
- 29 Dry_bone
- 32 Arctic diver

DOWN

- 1 Frozen dessert
- 2 Best Picture of 1984
- 3 Court order
- 4 Soviet fliers
- 5 Brewpub order
- 6 Like bulls
- 7 Some woodwinds
- 8 Following
- 9 Like cliffs
- 11 Saltless biscuit
- 15 Empty talk
- 17 By hand
- 20 Zodiac cat
- 21 Mud bath site
- 24 Gets away
- 25 Gets away
- 25 Endurance
- 27 Chiding sound
- 28 Inclines
- 29 Treat badly
- 30 Blitzen's boss
- 31 Silent film star
- Mary
- 35 Melodies
- 36 Chess turn
- 38 Skirt part

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

AMONG GALE S
LABOR ALONE
PRESENTABLE
HEY EEE BARE
ASSENTS IRE
SUPER RIDES
ONES WON
ADS TROT TED
PET REF ALE
PREVENTABLE
AGREE OGLE D
DOSES PEENS

BETLE BAILEY

WHY'S THE CHOPPER HERE?
THEY'RE DROPPING IN EXTRA SUPPLIES.

BY MORT WALKER

MARSHMALLOWS?
MORE S'MORES!

BABY BLUES

DID YOU GET THE TOILET FIXED?
TOO EARLY TO TELL.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A 'NO'.
NOT NECESSARILY...
SOMETIMES THESE THINGS HEAL THEMSELVES.
THAT'S YOUR PLAN? HOPEING FOR A TOILET MIRACLE?

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

DID YOU GET THE TOILET FIXED?
TOO EARLY TO TELL.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A 'NO'.
NOT NECESSARILY...
SOMETIMES THESE THINGS HEAL THEMSELVES.
THAT'S YOUR PLAN? HOPEING FOR A TOILET MIRACLE?

Launch now aimed

FROM PAGE 12

Once complete, the metro rail -- with 16 stations -- will be able to carry 60,000 people an hour, reducing travel time between Uttara and Motijheel to around 40 minutes. It now takes about two hours to travel the distance on a regular day.

The original implementation period of the project was 2012-2024. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later directed that metro services from Uttara to Agargaon be made operational by 2019, and from Agargaon to Motijheel by 2020.

Failing to meet the deadline, the authorities in May 2019 said the project would be launched on December 16 this year when the country would be celebrating the golden jubilee of its independence.

But, physical work remained suspended for over two months last year due to coronavirus restrictions. The project authorities are still struggling to pick up the pace amid the second wave of the pandemic.

Despite these, two metro trains have reached Dhaka. At a programme on May 11, when first set of metro train rolled on the tracks on a test run, Road Transport and Highway Division Secretary Nazrul Islam said that they would fail to meet the December 2021

deadline.

After the programme, MAN Siddique had told this correspondent that the DMTCCL began the performance test and would continue it inside the depot and later on the tracks.

Citing examples from different countries, he said it takes from six months to a year, if not longer in some cases, to do the tests. After successfully completing the tests, the DMTCCL would hold trial runs for up to 10 weeks before formally launching the service, he said.

"Even in this situation, we are hopeful about starting installation of the rail tracks on the second phase, between Agargaon and Motijheel, from next month," he said.

The overall progress of the project was 64.91 percent in May. The first phase saw 85.74 percent progress and the second phase 62.52 percent. The installation of tracks and other equipment and procurement of cars saw 56.04 percent progress, according to the project's monthly progress report.

As per the time-bound action plan, the government would build a 128.74km metro rail network comprising six elevated and underground lines in Dhaka and its adjacent areas within 2030.



Farmers shout slogans before burning the copies of recent agricultural reforms bill (not in the picture) during a demonstration against the central government outside the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office in Punjab's Amritsar, India, Yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

G7 strikes deal to tax

FROM PAGE 12

years to agree a way to raise more revenue from large multinationals such as Google, Amazon and Facebook, which often book profits in jurisdictions where they pay little or no tax.

US President Joe Biden's administration gave the stalled talks fresh impetus by proposing a minimum global corporation tax rate of 15 percent, above the level in countries such as Ireland but below the lowest level in the G7.

Germany and France also welcomed the agreement, although French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said he would fight for a higher global minimum corporate tax rate than 15 percent, which he described as a "starting point".

German finance minister Olaf Scholz said the deal was "bad news for tax havens around the world".

"Companies will no longer be in a position to dodge their tax obligations by booking their profits in the lowest-tax countries," he added.

Irish finance minister Paschal Donohoe, whose country is potentially a big loser with its 12.5% tax rate, said any global deal also needed to take account of smaller nations.

Sunak said the deal was a "huge prize" for taxpayers, but it was too soon to know how much money it would raise for Britain.

The agreement does not make clear exactly which businesses will be covered by the rules, referring only to "the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises".

European countries have feared that a business such as Amazon could slip through the net as it reports lower profit margins than most other well-known technology companies.

Assange fiancee seeks safe haven for jailed WikiLeaks founder

AFP, Geneva

Julian Assange's fiancee joined forces Friday with the mayor of Geneva and the UN's torture expert to seek the WikiLeaks founder's immediate release from a British jail and safe haven in another country.

In January, an English judge refused to allow Assange's extradition to the United States to face charges for leaking secret documents.

The 49-year-old remains in custody in a London jail awaiting a US appeal against the decision.

Assange's fiancee Stella Moris teamed up in Geneva with Nils Melzer, the UN special rapporteur on torture, and Geneva mayor Frederique Perler to call for his release and the scrapping of extradition proceedings.

They urged international organisations based in the Swiss city to help free Assange, and called on Switzerland and other democratic nations to offer the Australian former computer hacker a refuge from potential further prosecution moves.

"My hope is that it will end today, it's being going on for too long, it's an absolute aberration that Julian is in prison at all," Moris, who has two children with Assange, told AFP.

"He won his case of extradition at the lowest level in January and he is still in prison, and he is prosecuted for journalistic activities."

The lawyer said her fiance was struggling in the "grim environment" of Belmarsh prison, the top-security jail in southeast London.

"He is surrounded by dangerous criminals, his interactions are with criminals or with prison guards. He is isolated a lot of the time, his health

is deteriorating and he hasn't seen his children since October."

Moris said she had not seen Assange since his January 6 court appearance.

Judge Vanessa Baraitser blocked his extradition to the United States for mental health reasons, but said that if released from custody pending the US appeal, there were substantial grounds to suspect that he might abscond.

If convicted in the United States, he faces a maximum sentence of 175 years in jail.

"Mr Assange still has an incentive to abscond from these as yet unresolved proceedings," said Baraitser.

Whilst on bail in 2012, Assange sought sanctuary in Ecuador's embassy in London, after Sweden issued an arrest warrant in connection with sexual assault allegations, which were later dropped.

He spent seven years inside the embassy until Quito revoked his citizenship in 2019. British police dragged him out and arrested him for jumping bail.

Assange is wanted in Washington to face 18 charges relating to the 2010 release by WikiLeaks of 500,000 secret files detailing aspects of military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Melzer told reporters in Geneva that Assange's case was "probably one of the biggest judicial scandals in history".

"He's told the truth about misconduct of powerful states, of powerful corporations, he has challenged the powerful who do their business in the shadows," said the special rapporteur, who does not speak for the UN but reports his findings to the global body.

Mamunul sent

FROM PAGE 12

information during his remand. The information is being scrutinized. Details would be shared with the media through a press conference today (Sunday).

Earlier on April 3 afternoon, some ruling Awami League (AL) men kept Mamunul confined in a room where he went with a woman.

When the chaos was going on Mamunul claimed that the woman was his second wife, though AL men were not satisfied with the claim and alleged that Mamunul had an extramarital affair with her.

As the news of Mamunul's confinement spread, several hundreds of Hefajat men unleashed violence there and took Mamunul away. A total of five cases were filed against Mamunul and other Hefajat men in connection with the violence.

Later on April 30, the woman, whom Mamunul claimed as his second wife, filed a rape case against Mamunul with Sonargaon Police Station.

In the case statement, she alleged that Mamunul raped her over the last two years luring her to marry.

Besides, Hefajat men launched vandalism and arson attack on vehicles at Narayanganj's Shimrail area on Dhaka-Chattogram highway during a daylong hartal (shutdown) on March 28.

Later, police filed five separate cases with Siddhirganj Police Station and RAB filed another case in connection with the violence.

Mamunul and other Hefajat men were also made accused in these cases.

Police arrested Mamunul on April 18 from Jamia Rahmania Arabia Madrasa in Dhaka's Mohammadpur. Later on May 18, he was brought to Narayanganj from central jail for interrogation.

Turkish drone strike kills 3 civilians in Iraq refugee camp

AFP, ARBIL

Three civilians were killed yesterday in a Turkish drone attack on a refugee camp in northern Iraq in an area Turkish President recently threatened to "clean up", a Kurdish lawmaker said.

Rashad Galali, a Kurdish MP from Makhmur, told AFP the strike targeted "a kindergarten near a school" in the UN-supported camp that houses Kurdish refugees from Turkey.

"Three civilians were killed and two wounded," he said.

Earlier this week Erdogan compared Makhmur to the Mount Qandil region along Iraq's eastern frontier, where Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has rear bases.

Delhi, Mumbai ease

FROM PAGE 12

back on track now that the Covid-19 situation improving. We pray that the situation remains the same."

The government of Maharashtra state, which includes India's economic powerhouse Mumbai, announced a five-level plan to ease restrictions depending on infection rates and hospital bed occupancy.

In level-one areas -- with infection rates below five percent and hospital bed occupancy below 25 percent -- all shops, restaurants and malls will be allowed to reopen.

But level-five districts -- with infection rates over 20 percent -- will remain under severe movement restrictions.

Daily infections reported across India have dropped to about 120,000 from more than 400,000 in May, according to official statistics.

Deaths have also fallen, with 3,380 reported in the previous 24 hours, although this is widely seen as a major underestimate.

At least 344,082 people in the country have lost their lives to the coronavirus, which is now surging in parts of rural India.

Delhi reported about 400 new infections yesterday, down from about 25,000 daily cases when the lockdown

was announced seven weeks earlier.

The devastating surge was blamed on new virus variants and the government having allowed most activity to return to normal including mass religious and political gatherings.

India's vaccination programme meanwhile is making slow progress due to shortages, confusion and squabbling between the central government and state authorities.

So far about 180 million people, only 14 percent of the population, have received one dose, and 45 million, or 3.4 percent, two shots.

Globally, the coronavirus has killed at least 3,714,923 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1000 GMT yesterday.

The United States is the worst-affected country with 597,001 deaths. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 470,842 deaths, India with 344,082 deaths, Mexico with 228,568 deaths, and Peru with 185,813 deaths.

The World Health Organization estimates that the pandemic's overall toll could be two to three times higher than official records, due to the excess mortality that is directly and indirectly linked to Covid-19.

Pakistan is dead: Syed Nazrul

FROM PAGE 12

Pakistan, they would be grossly mistaken. "Pakistan is dead and she cannot be revived. Free Bangladesh is now a reality. On behalf of the Bangladesh Government, I want to make it amply clear that the 75 million people of Bangladesh will not accept any hotchpotch political settlement. We had wanted a settlement but after the horrifying night of March 25 the question of a settlement does not rise," said the acting President.

COMMANDOS KILL 250 TROOPS IN BANGLADESH

Commandos of the Mukti Foj kept up their guerrilla activities on almost all fronts in Bangladesh and killed 250 Pak troops during the last few days according to the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. The freedom fighters killed 45 Pakistani troops in two encounters in the West Dinajpur sector today. At Teliapara, a number of Army vehicles were destroyed in explosion of mines laid by the Mukti Foj on the road. More than 24 troops were killed in the explosion. The West Pakistani Army had started frenzied operations in Dhaka to check guerrilla activities. During curfew hours, the soldiers cordoned off a particular area and conducted house to house searches. A large number of checkpoints had been set up by the Pakistani Army throughout Dhaka city. Pedestrians

were thoroughly searched at these posts and vehicles were also not spared. Most of the streets remained deserted. Curfew was still in force in Dhaka.

AMERICA, BRITAIN WITHDRAWING DIPLOMATS FROM E. PAKISTAN

The United States and Britain were withdrawing senior diplomats from Dhaka, foreign diplomatic sources said today.

American Consul General Archer K. Blood left for Washington June 3, 1971 and would not return, they said. Britain's deputy high commissioner, Frank Sargent would leave for London a week later they said. Neither had completed a normal tour of duty.

British sources would make no comment on the move of Sargent, who took up his post in Dhaka late last year. Blood was thrown into controversy following the Pakistan army's March 25 crackdown of the Bangladesh movement.

INDIA APPEALS IN MOSCOW

India's Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh, arrived in Moscow today, his first stop on a six nation tour to tell the world that India cannot cope with the influx of four million East Pakistanis fleeing across her borders.

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

2nd shipment of 6 lakh

FROM PAGE 12

for vaccines from different sources after India halted AstraZeneca vaccine export in March amid a massive rise in Covid-19 infections.

Bangladesh is in the process of signing an agreement with China to buy 1.5 crore Sinopharm vaccines. It is also negotiating with Russia to buy Sputnik V vaccines.

"It's sincerely hoped that our Bangladeshi brothers and sisters will get the most needed vaccines at an earlier date," Hualong wrote in another post on Facebook.

Meanwhile, the government is putting in its best efforts through diplomatic channels to "make things normal" and procure 15 million doses of Sinopharm vaccine from China as planned though the scenario looks "different" to some extent following price disclosure, reported UNB.

On May 27, the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase approved a proposal for buying 15 million doses of Sinopharm's Covid-19 vaccine.

After the meeting, a Cabinet Division official told journalists that they would purchase the vaccine at

USD 10 per dose.

"The scenario looks different to some extent after the incident. We are doing our best to make things normal," a senior government official said.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen had a meeting with the Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh, Li Jiming, and discussed the issue, among other things, explaining the whole scenario.

"Our ambassador in Beijing is trying desperately with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He remains engaged," another official told UNB, mentioning that the price disclosure has given a lot of "inconvenience" to the Chinese company.

Revealing the contract price of the vaccine doses is against the "confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement" and the price for Bangladesh by Sinopharm is among the lowest in all countries, a diplomatic source said adding that the price also depends on who is procuring when.

Bangladesh has also written to relevant parties in China mentioning that it was an "unintentional" mistake to reveal the price of vaccine per dose.

3 electrocuted

FROM PAGE 12

Rahman.

The victims were pronounced dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 2:45pm.

Pakhi's mother Kulsum Akhter said her daughter was in class IV.

Sub-inspector Shariful Islam of Hatirjheel Police Station confirmed the incident.

'Harmful' apps

FROM PAGE 12

to endure by said traffickers in India's Bengaluru. A video footage of the incident went viral on social media through TikTok.

Three girls had managed to escape from the human trafficking racket and return to Bangladesh. They have informed police that many other Bangladeshi girls are currently suffering in India.

Law enforcers have already identified Rifatul Islam Ridoy, known as "Ridoy Babu" on TikTok, who allegedly trafficked over 50 girls to India using the social networking application.

The Rab DG said, "A list of those involved in crimes using social media is being prepared."

"In this tech-savvy society, we need to use technology in a positive, responsible way..." he said while addressing a debate competition as the chief guest.

Debate for Democracy organised the debate titled "Misuse of Social Media to Increase Juvenile Crime" at the National Film Development Corporation.

"Law enforcement agencies have the capacity to crack down on such crimes," he said.

Addressing the programme, Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Teigaon Division Police, said no one will be allowed to commit crimes through social media.

"Those who misuse the mobile apps will not be spared. We will recommend closing down the apps [in Bangladesh]," he said.

On December 30 last year, a writ was filed with the High Court to shut down the applications named Bigo Live, TikTok, Likee for the safety and security of the young generation.

The writ petition asked why these apps should not be declared illegal and not be instructed to close operation.

The secretaries to the home ministry, and posts, telecommunications and information technology ministry, chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), and the inspector general of police were made defendants.

Rezaul Masud, special superintendent (Cyber Intelligence and Risk Management) of the CID, told The Daily Star yesterday that they have a continuous monitoring process to check which applications are harmful for our society and are violating the law.

PHQ then sends a list of suspected social media applications to the home ministry. The list is then sent to the BTRC, requesting further action and the shutting down of the mentioned apps.

As TikTok has recently come to the fore as an app that is widely abused, police are now working to take action against such apps, he said, adding they have also sent a list to ban some games, including PUBG and FREEFIRE.

Third Eye created

FROM PAGE 12

foreheads so they can browse injury-free on the go.

The device opens its translucent eyelid whenever it senses the user's head has been lowered to look at a smartphone. When the user comes within one to two metres of an obstacle, the device beeps to warn of the impending danger.

"This is the look of future mankind with three eyes," Paeng, a postgraduate in innovation design engineering at the Royal College of Art and Imperial College London, told Reuters as he demonstrated use of The Third Eye around Seoul.

"As we cannot take our eyes off from smartphones, the extra eye will be needed in future."

Paeng's invention uses a gyro sensor to measure the oblique angle of the user's neck and an ultrasonic sensor to calculate the distance between the robotic eye and any obstacles. Both sensors are linked to an open-source single-board microcontroller, with battery pack.

Paeng's demonstration of the device in Seoul this week garnered attention from passersby.

"I thought he looked like an alien with an eye on his forehead," Seoul resident Lee Ok-jo said. "These days many young people can get into accidents while using their mobile phone. This would be good for them."

Paeng said The Third Eye was meant as a warning, not a real solution for smartphone addicts who won't pay attention to where they are going.

"By presenting this satirical solution, I hope people would recognize the severity of their gadget addiction and look back at themselves," he said.



Coach Jamie Day (L) shows a thing or two to his charges during a practice session at the Qatar University Ground in Doha yesterday as Bangladesh build up for Monday's World Cup qualifying fixture against India. PHOTO: BFF

Resolve strengthened by defensive solidity

ASHFAQ UL MUSHFIQ

After an 84th minute equaliser earned Bangladesh a draw against Afghanistan in the World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers on Thursday, the men in red and green's compact defence and their desire to chase the game till the final whistle were widely appreciated by coaches and football lovers all over the country.

Despite Tapu Barman's leveler being the biggest talking point of the match, the discipline of Bangladesh's defence did not go unnoticed.

In the absence of some key players, the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha saw debuts handed to bright prospects like Finland-born defender Tariq Raihan Kazi, Chittagong Abahani's Manik Hossain Molla and Rimon Hossain of Bashundhara Kings. All three impressed by exceeding expectations.

Former national footballer and experienced coach Saiful Bari Titu expressed contentment about the team's performance.

"Bangladesh defended really well throughout the match. We didn't concede any goals in the first half

despite Afghanistan dominating in the attacking third. We maintained a solid defensive line and didn't let the opposition cause much damage," he said.

"Although the team looked a bit messy after conceding the goal, [Bangladesh coach] Jamie [Day] made some smart changes by introducing Manik Molla, Rimon Hossain and the others who helped to wrest back control of the game."

Manik Hossain Molla was introduced nine minutes after Bangladesh conceded and Titu acknowledged the midfielder's performance in defensive midfield, a position similar to the one Titu played.

"Manik Molla has been playing really well in the league. He has tremendous ball control and knows where to play the ball. He has a great ability to intercept balls and can snatch it back from the opposition. That was evident during the match as well."

Debutant Tariq Kazi also had a decent performance, making seven clearances including a couple of crucial headers against the towering Afghan strikers.

Tariq and Manik Molla also took

bookings for the team, but it was a collective effort by the defence that thwarted over 15 attacks from Afghanistan.

Titu emphasised that the play when in transition will be equally as important as a compact defence against India, whom Bangladesh face tomorrow.

"India have a stronger defence than Afghanistan. To do well against them, we need to keep possession well during transitions. We failed to do that against Afghanistan, but it can cost us against India."

The local coach sounded optimistic ahead of the match, saying: "India and Afghanistan are the closest to ours in terms of quality in this group. Anything can happen in the match. But similar to our match against Afghanistan, we have to go with the confidence that we can come back from a difficult situation."

Bangladesh Defender Rahmat Mia also shone a spotlight on defensive duties ahead of the next match, saying: "Usually the defensive challenge is very stern against big teams. We have to concentrate on not making silly mistakes or we may end up conceding goals. We have to stay compact throughout."

Abahani continue winning streak

SPORTS REPORTER



Yet another set of rain-affected curtailed matches was witnessed on the third round of the ongoing Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Yesterday's second game between Abahani Limited and Brothers Union, shortened to mere 11-overs, saw Mushfiqur Rahim lead from the front once again to carry on the winning streak for his side.

The first innings saw Brothers post 101 for 5, courtesy of Alauddin Babu and

balls to spare. Naim remained not out on 37 off 26 balls while Mushfiqur was not out on 37 off just 21 balls which included six fours.

With three wins on the trot, Abahani sits pretty at the top of the points table while Brothers are struggling with one win in three matches.

Earlier in the day, the first game between Partex Sporting and Club and Old DOHS Cricket Club was reduced to 15 overs due to heavy rain but there was hardly any competitiveness in the game.

The Partex batters, after being sent to bat, lacked intent as they added just 28 runs in the first seven overs, and ended up with a small total of 77 for 5. Opener Abbas Musa faced 21 balls for his 17, skipper Tasamul

BCB set to resolve major issues

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) elections slated later this year, the board officials are all set for an immediate meeting to finalise the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and resolve a few other major issues.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan's term is set to end in September this year and according to the constitution, the board must arrange the election within the next 45 days.

Among the major agendas-- finalising the still unannounced central contract of the cricketers as well as discussing the recent performance of the national team, will be on the table. It was learned that the board may also discuss the appointment of a new batting and a spin bowling coach for the national team.

"With the upcoming election in mind, we will discuss the probable date for the AGM along with a few routine approvals, and the budget as well. Obviously, we will settle the central contract of the cricketers and discuss the Tigers' recent performances, in between proceedings," BCB director and chairman of the media committee Jalal Yunus told The Daily Star yesterday.

Currently, a total of 17 cricketers are under the national central contract in both red and white-ball formats. Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is expected to return to the new central contract, having had served his ban by the ICC.

According to the existing five categories, cricketers approximately get, a monthly salary of \$5000, \$3750, \$2500, \$1875 and \$1250 for A+, A, B, C and D respectively.



Prime Bank's Mustafizur Rahman returned figures of 5 for 22 but his effort was not enough for his side to avoid a 27-run defeat against Mohammedan in the day's last match of the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Zahiduzzaman's fiery unbeaten twenties in tandem in the end, despite following a series of hiccups, where they lost 5 wickets in a span of 13 runs. Zahiduzzaman's 25 off ten balls saw two sixes and two fours while Babu's 10-ball 24 had three sixes and a four.

Abahani had the fitting reply, with openers Mohammad Naim and Munim Shahriar adding 38 for the opening stand, setting things in motion. Shahriar was dismissed on 25 off 12 balls but Naim along with skipper Mushfiqur made sure Abahani see off the target easily with seven

Haque played 25 balls for his 18 and Nazmul Hossain scored 17 off 23 balls, in a sluggish batting display.

DOHS in reply, smoothly rode on the unbeaten opening stand of Anisul Islam Emon and Rakin Ahmed to reach the target in 11.3 overs and sealed off a comprehensive ten wicket win.

Rakin's 43 off 36 balls and Anisul's run-a-ball 33 registered the first win for DOHS in three games while Partex remains at the bottom of the table, having lost all the three games so far.

Dias wins player of season award

REUTERS

Manchester City defender Ruben Dias was named the Premier League Player of the Season on Saturday, becoming the second Portuguese to receive the honour after former Manchester United forward Cristiano Ronaldo.

City boss Pep Guardiola was named Manager of the Season for a third time.

Centre back Dias was named England's Footballer of the Year in the annual vote of the Football Writers' Association last month following a superb debut campaign after his move from Benfica last year.



Dias played a key role in delivering City's third Premier League title in four years as well as the League Cup, and helped his side the Champions League final.

The 24-year-old was also named in the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Team of the Year.

Dias is the fourth defender to be voted Player of the Season by the public, the captains of the 20 Premier League clubs and a panel of experts after Manchester United's Nemanja Vidic, former City captain Vincent Kompany and Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk.

Burns rescues stuttering England



New Zealand fast bowler Tim Southee celebrates after taking the wicket of James Bracey during the fourth day of the first Test against England at Lord's yesterday. PHOTO: TWITTER

AGENCIES



Rory Burns hit 132 as England managed 275 runs in their first innings on the fourth day of the first Test against England at Lord's yesterday.

Burns played an innings that will satisfy him no end as he batted right through the innings, had phases where things weren't at all going well for both England or him, took some body blows and still came out of all of that with a century.

And finally he dragged the deficit down to 103, and that is surely that means safety for England at the very least. Tim Southee finished with six for 43 while Kyle Jamieson took three wickets.

English wickets tumbled early on day four leaving the home side on 164-6 at lunch, 214 runs behind New Zealand after fast bowlers Tim Southee and Kyle Jamieson tore through their middle order.

England had resumed their first innings on 111-2 after rain washed out day three, and Jamieson gave New Zealand the perfect start when he dismissed Joe Root with the first delivery of the day.

He forced the England skipper into a defensive shot, and the ball flew off a thick outside edge into the hands of Ross Taylor in the slips.



Djokovic marches into fourth round

REUTERS



World number one Novak Djokovic booked his spot in the second week of the French Open with a dominant 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 third-round win over 93rd-ranked Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis on Saturday.

The 34-year-old Serbian came into the match with a 3-0 head-to-head record against Berankis, who had never won a set in their previous meetings, and put in a clinical show on Philippe Chatrier court to stay on course for a 19th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic broke his opponent's serve six times in the match and such was his domination that he did not face a single breakpoint on his own on the way to the fourth round at Roland Garros for the 12th consecutive year.

The 2016 champion, who hit 30 winners against 18 unforced errors, is yet to lose a set in his three matches and will next face teenager Lorenzo Musetti, who defeated fellow Italian Marco Cecchinato 3-6, 6-4 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Meanwhile, Italian prospect Jannik Sinner charged into the French Open fourth round with a 6-1 7-5 6-3 victory over Sweden's Mikael Ymer on Saturday to set up a potential clash with claycourt king Rafael Nadal.

Sinner, seeded 18th, had too much poise and power for Ymer as he joined fellow Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti in the last 16.



Juventus and Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo had a frustrating night on his first game in Madrid since leaving Real in 2018 as he came close to scoring twice during a goalless draw against Spain in a friendly warm up for the European Championships on Friday. Ronaldo's every move and touch was also booed and whistled by the spectators. Alvaro Morata also missed two clear chances and hit the bar in stoppage time. PHOTO: REUTERS



Brazil star Neymar (R) celebrates with teammate Lucas Paqueta after scoring a penalty during a 2-0 win against Ecuador in a World Cup qualifying match. Neymar, who has so far 10 goals and 12 assists in 17 World Cup Qualifiers games, led the way with his one goal and one assist to Richarlison to maintain their perfect record and stay top of the South American qualifying group. PHOTO: TWITTER

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UTTARA-AGARGAON METRO RAIL Launch now aimed at Dec 2022

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Realising their imminent failure to meet the deadline for early commissioning, the authorities are planning to launch the Uttara-Agargaon metro rail service by December next year.

Until recently, the plan was to launch the country's first metro rail service in December this year. But physical work was delayed by the pandemic.

"It is of note that activities are underway through DMTCL [Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd] to start passenger transport in the Uttara-Agargaon section of MRT [Mass Rapid Transit] Line-6 by December 2022," Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told parliament in his budget speech on Thursday.

DMTCL, the implementing agency of the fast-track project, said the government, not the DMTCL, would fix the date to launch metro rail services.

"We believe that it's possible to achieve what the [finance] minister said [in his budget speech] unless the pandemic causes severe deterioration of the situation. We are trying our best," MAN Siddique, managing director at DMTCL, told The Daily Star yesterday.

MRT Line-6, the country's first metro rail system, is being built between the capital's Uttara and Motijheel at a cost of Tk 22,000 crore. Uttara to Agargaon is its first phase.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



A child taking shrimp fries in a bowl from her father who is catching them in the Baleshwar river in Barguna's Patharghata upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Mamunul sent to jail after 18-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court sent Hefajat-e-Islam's former joint secretary general Mamunul Haque to Kashimpur Central Jail yesterday on completion of his 18-day remand in six cases filed over rape and violence.

Narayanganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Kausar Alam passed the order after the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) produced Mamunul before the court.

The district police, PBI, and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) interrogated Mamunul during his remand, said Asaduzzaman, inspector of Narayanganj Court Police.

Contacted, Zayedul Alam, superintendent of Narayanganj police, said Mamunul gave significant

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

'Harmful' apps, games to be banned

Say law enforcers; TikTok one of them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Worried over their widespread abuse, law enforcers have moved to crack down on some online games and social media applications, including "TikTok".

Rapid Action Battalion Director General Abdullah Al Mamun yesterday said, "There has been a rise in criminal activity with the use of several digital apps, including TikTok... A high committee is reviewing how to shut down such apps."

A racket was recently found using TikTok as a means to traffic young women from Bangladesh to India.

Law enforcers came to know about the use of the application while investigating an incident of sexual abuse a girl had

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistan is dead: Syed Nazrul

JUNE 6, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

PRECONDITIONS FOR SETTLEMENT

Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of Bangladesh, today spelt out four preconditions for a political settlement of the Bangladesh issue. In a 45-minute broadcast from the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, Syed Nazrul Islam said that the conditions were: 1) unconditional release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 2) withdrawal of the invading West Pakistani Army from the soil of Bangladesh, 3) recognition of the Sovereign Republic of Bangladesh, 4) compensation for the losses suffered by the people during the two and half months of barbarous atrocities by the West Pakistan Army.

Syed Nazrul Islam said that many countries -- big and small -- had talked about a political settlement in Bangladesh. But nobody had specifically stated their formulae. On behalf of the Bangladesh Government, he made it clear to these countries that if they had thought of a settlement within the framework of the so-called

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



3 electrocuted as lightning strikes pole

Two of the dead are children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two children and a 65-year-old man were killed after they were electrocuted by a live wire that fell from an electric pole because of a lightning strike in the capital's Malibagh Chowdhury Para.

Sabina Pakhi, 10, daughter of Mohsin Ali, and Jhuma, 14, daughter of Javed Ali, were playing in the rain by the street, and Abul Hossain, a security guard, was near them when the live wire broke and electrocuted them around 2:00pm, said their neighbour Habibur

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

'Third Eye' created for 'smartphone zombies'



REUTERS, Seoul

A South Korean industrial designer has come up with a satirical solution for "smartphone zombies" who can't take their eyes away from their screen long enough to stop themselves walking into a wall or other obstacle.

Paeng Min-wook, 28, has developed a robotic eyeball he has dubbed "The Third Eye", which obsessive mobile phone users can strap to their

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

SINOPHARM SHOTS 2nd shipment of 6 lakh to arrive by June 13

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China will deliver the second consignment of Covid-19 vaccines as gifts to Bangladesh by June 13, said the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

Deputy Chief of Mission at the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka Hualong Yan, on his Facebook page, wrote, "600,000 vaccines as gifts by the Chinese government is ready for delivery by 13th of June."

Earlier Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star that Chinese officials had informed Bangladesh about the arrival of the vaccines in seven to 10 days.

On May 12, Bangladesh received a gift of five lakh Sinopharm vaccine doses from China. The government has already started administering those doses to medical students on a priority basis.

The Chinese vaccine arrives in Bangladesh when it is desperately looking

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



City dwellers trying to go about with their daily lives on a flooded street in the capital's Tejgurbazar area after several hours of downpour yesterday afternoon. Locals say poor drainage have been causing waterlogging in the area for at least two years.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Delhi, Mumbai ease lockdown

Infections fall in major Indian cities after weeks of restrictions

AFP, New Delhi

Markets and shopping malls in New Delhi will be allowed to reopen from tomorrow in a further easing of the Covid-19 lockdown, the chief minister said as infections fall in major Indian cities after weeks of restrictions.

Delhi Metro will also resume services at 50 percent capacity, the city's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said yesterday.

Markets and malls will operate on alternate days, with half of them open on

any given day.

Offices can also reopen at half capacity but Kejriwal urged people to still try to work from home.

The easing comes after Delhi allowed construction sites and factories to reopen last week.

"They have been open for a week but the Covid-19 situation is still under control, and we have less than 500 fresh cases in the last 24 hours," Kejriwal said.

"It is important to bring the economy

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 6

Fajr 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

G7 strikes deal to tax big companies

Agrees minimum corporate tax of at least 15pc, backs making climate risk disclosure mandatory

REUTERS, London

The United States, Britain and other leading nations reached a landmark deal yesterday to pursue higher global taxation on multinational businesses such as Google, Apple and Amazon.

In a move that could raise hundreds of billions of dollars to help them cope with the aftermath of Covid-19, the Group of Seven large advanced economies agreed to back a minimum global corporate rate of at least 15 percent and for companies to pay more tax in the markets where they sell goods and services.

"G7 finance ministers have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age," British finance minister Rishi Sunak said after chairing a two-day meeting in London.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the "significant, unprecedented commitment" would end what she called a race to the bottom on global taxation.

The deal, which was years in the making, also promises to end national digital services taxes levied by Britain and other European countries which the United States said unfairly targeted

US technology giants.

However, the measures will first need to find broader agreement at a meeting of the G20 - which includes a number of emerging economies - due to take place next month in Venice.

"It's complicated and this is a first step," Sunak said.

The ministers also agreed to move towards making companies declare their environmental impact in a more standard way so investors can decide more easily whether to fund them, a key goal for Britain.

Rich nations have struggled for

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

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