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DOING BUSINESS WITHOUT PERMISSION Govt employees flouting rules

Such unlawful practices by many must be stopped, says ACC; Govt makes employees aware of rules; no action, probe

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Even though they are quite well paid and receive plenty of perks from the government, a "huge" number of civil servants own and run businesses on the side violating service rules, according to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

It said these government employees have either become contractors or opened businesses in their names or in the names of their dependents. They have accumulated a "huge" amount of wealth, the graft watchdog said in a letter.

The ACC said these employees do mention their wealth and their sources in the tax returns, but they do not have the government approval made mandatory in the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, said the letter sent to the cabinet secretary on March 29.

"The commission thinks such unlawful practices should be stopped immediately," reads the letter, a copy of which The Daily Star has obtained.

Section 17 (1) of the rules says: "Subject to the other provisions of this rule, no government servant shall, except with the previous sanction of government, engage in any trade or undertake any employment or work, other than his official duties."

Section 17 (3) of the rules says: "A government servant shall not, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A newly-built mosque on Khulna city's Khan Jahan Ali Road. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurated 50 such model mosques across the country yesterday from the Gono Bhaban, marking the Mujib Borsho. She hoped these mosques would help spread the essence of Islam. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Model mosques to help spread essence of Islam PM says as she inaugurates 50 govt-built mosques



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday hoped that model mosques would help spread the essence of Islam and its inspirational practices to all irrespective of their religions and castes.

"Through these model mosques, the culture and messages of Islam will draw the attention of all. The people of the country, irrespective of their religions and castes, will be able to comprehend the essence of Islam," she said. SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



Lt General SM Shafiuddin named new army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lt Gen SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, quartermaster general of Bangladesh Army, will be the chief of the force for the next three years.

"Bangladesh Army's BA-2496 Lieutenant General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, OSP, NDU, PSC, SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Health crisis deepens in border districts

Hospitals refusing treatment to Covid patients for lack of capacity; hard to find empty beds

STAR REPORT

Many hospitals in the districts along the border are at capacity as they are grappling with an increasing number of Covid-19 patients.

There is hardly any bed for new Covid patients in at least five hospitals in Satkhira, Khulna, Natore, Rajshahi and Panchagarh. These hospitals have been turning away patients for the past few days.

Besides, the number of daily new cases has increased across the country.

For the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, the Directorate General of Health Services reported 2,576 new cases, the highest daily cases since April 28. The DGHS said 40 people died in the same period, which was 36 the previous day. SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

US to provide AstraZeneca vaccine jabs

Says Momen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the US will provide AstraZeneca and other vaccines to Bangladesh.

The minister revealed the information after handing over essential medicines, donated by the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries, to Palestinian Ambassador Youssef SY Ramadan at the State Guest House Padma.

Momen said Bangladesh requested two million AstraZeneca vaccine doses from the US as soon as it learnt that the US had 60 SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

BASIC Bank, BDBL merger on cards

Says finance minister

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The troubled BASIC Bank is heading for a merger with the better-performing Bangladesh Development Bank Limited (BDBL) as part of the government's efforts to improve the overall health of the country's state banks, which have historically been sitting on a heavy pile of soured credit.

"They are both state banks, so the merger should not raise any objection from anyone," Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told The Daily Star in an interview this week.

Once a model for state-owned banks, BASIC Bank's fortune took a turn for the worst when the present government came to power in 2009 and appointed Abdul Hye Bacchu as its chairman. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Between 2010 and 2013, more than Tk 4,500 crore flew out, leaving the state bank in financial quicksand. The government had to keep pouring in funds to keep the bank standing.

In 2020, BASIC Bank's net loss widened to Tk 366 crore from Tk 326 crore in 2019, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

At the end of last year, as much as 51 percent of its outstanding loans were bad: Tk 7,502 crore. As of March, the bank has a capital shortfall of Tk 1,072 crore, down 28 percent from a quarter earlier.

BASIC Bank alone accounted for 17.7 percent of the default loans attributed to the state banks at the end of 2020.

As of last year, which is the latest SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BUSINESS

Relief for customers as BB lowers charges on deposits, loans

The central bank yesterday either lowered or eliminated charges on deposits and loans, bringing an end to the excessive fees and commissions that banks used to impose on customers.

STORY ON B1



A woman puts a wet piece of tissue on her husband's forehead as the man, who was suffering from fever for the past few days, sits on a chair outside the capital's Mugda Medical College and Hospital around 9:30am yesterday. The couple went to the hospital earlier in the day to have the man tested for Covid-19. They, however, did not know that they needed to book an appointment online. They had to go back home even after standing in a queue for around two hours. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Bearing the unbearable

A helpless father's ordeal after one son killed, another framed

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

While he was still reeling with shock from the loss of his eight-year-old younger son, Mohidul Islam had to see his elder son taken away by police.

Sourav, 12, was not only shown arrested in the case for murdering his brother Sohag but also forced to give a confessional statement, said the father, a day labourer by profession.

"Police took bribe from the murderers since they are influential people and forced my elder son Sourav Mia to confess to the killing of my younger son Md Sohag," Mohidul told The Daily Star on Wednesday. After recording Sourav's statement, police submitted a charge sheet naming him as the lone accused. But the father filed a no-confidence motion and the court handed over the investigation charge to the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) on July 11, 2017. After investigating the case for the last four years, PBI found Sourav to be innocent and managed to arrest two persons in connection with the murder, officials said. Md Mansur Ali, sub-inspector of PBI Bogura, also the present investigating officer of the case, said, "We did not find any involvement of Sourav. He was not even present near the spot at the time of occurrence." SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,576
New cases in 24hrs



8,20,395
Total cases



12,989
Deaths



7,59,630
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



3,783,017
Deaths



175,392,122
Total cases

EC postpones polls to 163 UPs due to Covid

By-election to three JS seats deferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has postponed polls to 163 union parishads in Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Noakhali, Chattogram and Cox's Bazar districts due to a surge in Covid-19 cases.

The election to the rest of 204 union parishads and by-polls to Laxmipur-2 constituency will be held as per schedule on June 21, EC Secretary Humayun Kabir Khandakar said.

He made the statement after a commission meeting yesterday.

The commission has also decided to withhold elections to nine municipalities, he said.

The by-polls to Dhaka-14, Cumilla-5 and Sylhet-3 constituencies have been rescheduled to July 28 from July 14.

After receiving reports from local administrations, regional election officials and recommendations of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), the EC has decided to postpone the elections, the EC secretary said.

Humayun Kabir Khandakar said they were going to hold the by-polls to parliamentary constituencies due to constitutional obligations.

He also said that they were going to hold elections to rest 204 union parishads as the Covid-19 transmission rate was low at the places.

Asked about how they defined low or high Covid-19 rates, he said they were not going to hold the election in 163 union parishads that were situated in the high transmission rate given by IEDCR.

Humayun, however, did not answer questions regarding who would

take responsibilities if the Covid-19 transmission rate increased in those voting areas.

On June 21, the EC decided to hold all postponed elections, including the by-polls to Laxmipur-2, the first phase of union parishad, and the sixth phase of municipality polls.

The same day the EC also announced the schedule for the by-polls to Sylhet-3, Dhaka-14, and Cumilla-5 constituencies, slating the voting date on July 14.

On March 3, the EC announced the schedule for by-polls to Laxmipur-2 constituency, polls to 371 union parishads and 11 municipalities, slating the election date on April 11.

On April 1, the commission postponed all the elections due to the Covid-19 situation.

According to the constitution, by-elections to fill the vacant seat of a member of parliament should be held within 90 days. Provided that in a case where, in the opinion of the CEC, it is not possible, for reasons of an act of God, to hold such election within 90 days period.

On February 22, the parliament secretariat issued a gazette notification announcing that Laxmipur-2 fell vacant because of Mohammad Shahid Islam, also known as Kazi Papul's moral turpitude.

The gazette has been in effect since January 28 when Papul was sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment by a Kuwait court.

Sylhet-3 seat fell vacant following Awami League MP Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury's death on March 11, Dhaka-14 following AL MP Aslamul Hoque's death on April 4, and Cumilla-5 fell vacant after AL MP Abdul Matin Khasru's death on April 14.



Police and railway employees remove a tree that fell on the locomotive of Parabat Express in Lawachhara of Moulvibazar around noon yesterday. The accident happened when the train was heading for Sylhet from Dhaka. This disrupted rail communication on the route for about an hour.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Bearing the unbearable

FROM PAGE 1

Asked how local police could submit the charge sheet, he said, "You better ask the local police about it."

"Towhid left the village after the killing and started working in Chattogram," Sub-Inspector Mansur told this newspaper on Wednesday.

Billal also vanished soon after the re-investigation began, he said, adding, "We managed to arrest the duo through digital surveillance."

Towhid, arrested in Chattogram, was produced before the Bogura court on October 24, 2019.

In his statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Towhid said he was annoyed with Sohag for ruining his son's education, according to sources.

"I shared this with my cousin Billal. He asked me to bring Sohag to the jute field to give the kid a lesson. In the evening, I told Sohag I need him to pick vegetables and he agreed," Towhid told the court.

"I took the boy to the field and handed him over to Billal and came back. Around 8:30pm, his body was found there."

The PBI team arrested Billal from Gazipur and produced him before the court on January 14 this year.

In his statement, Billal said Sohag's father owned a chili field. One day, Billal's goat ate up the plants there and this made Mohidul very angry.

and his cousin Billal Hossain, 40, were seen near the spot on the day of the incident.

"Mohidul even slapped me," he said. "On the day, learning about Towhid's anger, I asked him to bring Sohag to the field. He accordingly brought the kid. I held his two legs tight while Towhid strangled him and hacked him with a sickle," said Billal.

Akrumul Hossain, police super of PBI Bogura, said, "We did not find any involvement of Sourav in the case. We have almost completed the investigation and will file a fresh charge sheet soon."

ROLE OF LOCAL POLICE

Contacted, Nayan Kumar, former sub-inspector of Sariakandi Police Station, who submitted the first charge sheet, said, "We have a lot of work to do at the police station and PBI investigated it for four to five years. There can be new findings."

Nayan, now working as CID Inspector in Natore, added, "I have submitted the charge sheet based on my findings."

Replying to a query, he said it was the court which recorded Sourav's statement. "I did not take any favour from anyone for this."

Banaj Kumar Majumder, deputy inspector general of police and chief of PBI, said higher officials should be involved in the process before any recording of a child's confessional statement.

Sharpen focus on China

US defense chief tells Pentagon

AFP, Washington

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin directed the Pentagon on Wednesday to sharpen its focus on China, which the United States has tagged as its top strategic rival.

"Now, it is up to the Department to get to work," Austin said after issuing an internal directive to the giant Pentagon bureaucracy.

The directive, details of which are classified, comes after an assessment by a task force established by the new Biden administration in February to study the Defense Department's strategy towards China.

"The initiatives I am putting forward today are nested inside the larger US government approach to China and will help inform the development of the National Defense Strategy we are working on," Austin said.

A senior defense official said the task force had identified a "say-do" gap between the stated prioritization of China and what we saw in a number of areas related to attention and resources and processes.

"The directive today is really about

ensuring that the department lives up to that prioritization," the official said.

Austin said the directive will "improve the Department's ability to revitalize our network of allies and partners, bolster deterrence, and accelerate the development of new operational concepts, emerging capabilities, future force posture, and a modernized civilian and military workforce."

Pentagon operations over the past two decades have been focused largely on dealing with jihadist militants in the Middle East and not a modern army such as that of China.

The Pentagon's 2018 National Defense Strategy identified China as a major strategic competitor but the task force found that not much had been done to meet the challenges posed by Beijing.

The US military is currently seeking to expand its presence in the Pacific at a time when China has been increasingly belligerent towards Taiwan, which it considers part of its territory.

Govt employees

FROM PAGE 1

without the previous sanction of the government, permit any member of his family to engage in any trade in the area over which such government servant has jurisdiction."

The ACC said they discovered the "huge" number of government employees involved in this while enquiring into allegations of people accumulating wealth beyond their known sources of incomes.

Surprisingly, the graft watchdog only asked the cabinet secretary to make all public servants aware of the rules, but did not ask him for further probe or to take punitive actions against the rules violators.

The Cabinet Division, in response to the ACC's letter, on April 8 only asked secretaries to make sure that the public servants under their jurisdiction were aware of the rules.

Different ministries and divisions have issued directives in this regard, sources said.

Road Transport and Highways Division on June 1 asked all its agencies, including Roads and Highways Department and Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, to act according to the Cabinet Division's directives, they said.

Transparency International Bangladesh thinks only creating awareness is not enough. Departmental action should be taken to ensure accountability.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said it was praiseworthy that the ACC raised the issue before the Cabinet Division.

"But just drawing the attention of the government and requesting for creating awareness is not enough. Action must be taken to ensure accountability of those who are violating the rules."

He said this must be done not only through departmental action

but also by the ACC, whose job is to ensure accountability of anyone with unlawful income and wealth.

Former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder echoed Iftekharuzzaman.

He told The Daily Star yesterday that such activities were punishable. An offender could face departmental actions or even lose his or her job. "Such practices create problem for job discipline."

"Just making aware [of the rules] is not enough. Punitive action should be taken."

However, the former top bureaucrat said in some cases, some lower-ranking public servants can be seen engaged in small businesses to support their livelihood. "This is also in violation of rules and can't be supported. But the authorities can consider the ground reality."

"But if government officials run large businesses, actions should be taken...."

Earlier this month, the finance minister in his budget proposed the highest allocation -- 18.7 percent -- for salaries and other benefits of government employees.

Thanks to the restructured pay package in 2015, civil servants are getting regular salaries along with housing and transport facilities and a significant retirement benefit. They also get long-term housing and car loans at a subsidised rate.

The ACC's letter mentioned that the government employees were making a lot of money, but did not mention how much. It also did not mention how many government employees were involved.

This paper tried to contact ACC Secretary Anwar Hossain Howlader, who signed the letter, for comments yesterday evening, but his phone was apparently switched off.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam did not pick up phone calls of The Daily Star.

BASIC Bank, BDBL merger on cards

FROM PAGE 1

available data of the central bank, the total defaulted loans in the banking sector stood at Tk 88,734 crore -- and the six state-owned commercial banks accounted for 47.6 percent of the amount.

The BDBL, born out of the merger of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha and Bangladesh Shilpa Bank in 2010, is a rare instance of a sound state bank.

The bank has always been in the green, and last year, logged in a profit of Tk 4.5 crore.

At the end of last year, the bank had no provisioning shortfall and a capital surplus of Tk 605 crore. Its defaulted loans stood at Tk 595 crore, which is 34 percent of its total outstanding loans.

The law to allow the merger will be in place over the next six months, according to Kamal.

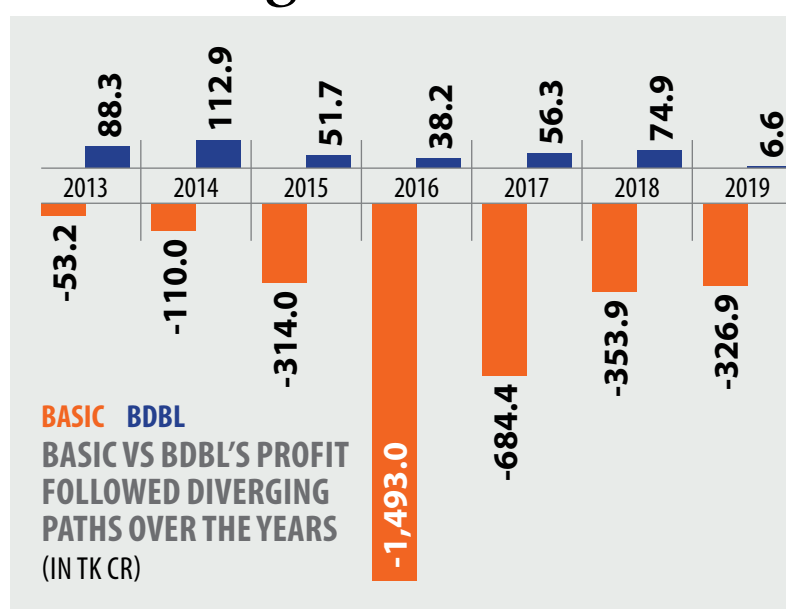
Last month, the cabinet has approved in principle the amendment to the Bank Company Act, which includes the provision to merge weak banks with strong ones as well as a clear outline of habitual defaulters and the actions that can be taken against them.

The draft law has now been sent to the law ministry for vetting, after which it will be returned to the cabinet. The cabinet will further scrutinise it before sending it to the parliament.

Banks that go from bad to worse to worst will be "forcibly merged" with the sounder ones, Kamal said.

The proposed merger of BASIC and BDBL has synergies.

For instance, BASIC Bank has branches and the BDBL does not.



The BDBL has management acumen and their expertise will be put to use to turn around the fortune of BASIC Bank, Kamal said.

The merger though is not final -- yet. "We have not scrutinised their financials and their equity structure yet. We are yet to seek the two banks' managements' opinion on the merger."

Kamal though is sanguine about the future of BASIC Bank.

"They are trying their best to recuperate -- it is a good sign. I think this bank will be able to get back on its feet."

Kamal also touched upon the habitual and wilful defaulters: they

will not be let off scot-free as per the provision of the draft Bank Company Act.

As is practice, once the banks file cases against the defaulters after exhausting all options to recover the funds.

But the defaulters tend to file writ petitions one after another to drag the case for years and to prevent them from being officially classified as defaulters.

Under the new rules Kamal has prepared, defaulters will not be able to file any writs without furnishing 20-25 percent of the amount owed to banks.

"It is not that we are not doing anything," he added.

UP member shot dead in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Union Parishad member was shot dead by a group of unidentified miscreants in Noakhali's Hatia upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Rabindra Chandra Das, 48, a member of Char Ishwar Ward-3 and the upazila unit Awami League's executive committee. He was also a candidate for UP election to be held on June 21.

Rabindra was attacked around 2:00am yesterday on the main road of Char Ishwar, said Al Amin, president of the upazila unit Sramik League.

Amin and Rabindra were riding a motorcycle when they were attacked there.

According to Amin, the unidentified group attacked both of them with sharp weapons. They then shot Rabindra.

Nazim Uddin, a doctor of Hatia Upazila Health Complex, said Rabindra succumbed after he was brought to the health complex around 3:10am.

Rashed Uddin, UP member of Char Ishwar Ward-6, said Rabindra had a conflict with the newly-elected Upazila Chairman Abdul Halim Azad.

A total of 11 UP members submitted a written complaint against the chairman recently, he added.

Since then, the chairman had been threatening Rabindra. He was murdered over the rivalry, Rashed claimed.

Contacted, Chairman Abdul Halim denied the allegation, saying that he was in Dhaka.

"My family, party and me are not involved in the murder," he said, adding that a vested quarter was trying to frame him in the case.

Abul Khayer, officer-in-charge of Hatia Police Station, confirmed the incident, saying that seven people including Rabindra on three motorcycles were returning from Bangabazar area when the incident occurred.

He, however, claimed that Rabindra's six companions fled the scene soon after the incident.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Noakhali General Hospital for autopsy, the OC said.

Mohammad Golam Faruk, senior assistant superintendent of police (Hatia circle), said they would take legal action after Rabindra's family submits a written complaint.

Meanwhile, Abul Khayer, officer-in-charge of Hatia Police Station, said they detained a person named Azad from Gamchakhali village in this connection.

Police are conducting raids to nab others involved in this incident, he added.

Belgium ready to accept Afghans who worked with troops

AFP, Brussels

Belgium's defence minister said yesterday the country could take in around 30 Afghans who had worked with its military during the Nato mission, as the alliance wraps up a two-decade deployment.

Minister Ludivine Dedonder said decisions would be taken on a "case-by-case" basis and one man considered to be at risk was already being moved to Belgium with his family.

"His arrival will of necessity be rapid since there is a danger to this person. It will happen around the same time as our troops, with his partner and his child," Dedonder told broadcaster RTBF.

Lt General

FROM PAGE 1

quartermaster general, has been appointed the new chief of Bangladesh Army from June 24 afternoon," a defence ministry gazette said.

He will also be promoted to the rank of general that day, said the gazette, signed by a deputy secretary.

Shafiquddin was born in Khulna. He was commissioned into the army in the 9th Bangladesh Military Academy Long Course on December 23, 1983 in the infantry corps.

In 2012, he became the general officer commanding of the 19th Infantry Division.

In December last year, Ahmed was appointed as the quartermaster general after he served as the GOC of the Army Training and Doctrine Command.

In his long and illustrious career, Lt Gen Shafiquddin has also served as a director general of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and a senior directing staff member of the National Defence College. He has also played a key role in UN peacekeeping missions as deputy force commander in the Central African Republic.

He will replace current army chief Gen Aziz Ahmed.

Gen Aziz took over the command of Bangladesh Army as the 16th Chief of Army Staff on June 25, 2018.

Health crisis deepens in border districts

FROM PAGE 1

stopped admitting patients in its 100-bed Covid-19 unit, reported our correspondent in the city.

As of yesterday afternoon, 126 patients were admitted there.

"We're at capacity. There is no empty bed and that's why we stopped taking in new patients," said Resident Medical Officer Suhash Ranjan Halder of the Covid-19 unit at KMCH.

"Doctors and nurses are always struggling to handle the rush of critical patients. If we admit any more patients, we won't be able to properly treat the critical ones," he said.

Our correspondent from Natore reported that the district hospital was in a similar situation.

Besides, the hospital does not have a central oxygen supply system to provide high flow oxygen to patients, who have been gasping for oxygen.

Yesterday afternoon, there were 43 Covid-19 patients against 30 beds in this hospital, which was struggling with an inadequate number of physicians and technicians, said Assistant Director Paritosh Kumar.

Our correspondent from Chapainawabganj reported that the 250-bed district hospital had 55 Covid patients admitted yesterday afternoon against its capacity to treat 50.

As the number of patients was increasing, the hospital authorities were thinking about raising the bed number to 70, said Dr Ahnaf Shahriar,

focal person of the Covid-19 unit of the hospital.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent reported the district hospital, with a 50-bed Covid unit, cannot provide ventilator support to critical patients.

"We have a limited capacity to treat patients. So we are advising patients to follow our treatment protocols at home," Dr Rokibul Alam, resident medical officer at the hospital, told the Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the administrations of Khulna, Chapainawabganj, Satkhira, Bagerhat and Noakhali districts continued enforcing strict restrictions on movement to curb the virus transmission.



Finding no vacant beds at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, many patients can be seen lying on the floor with oxygen cylinders beside them.

PHOTO COURTESY: RAZU AHAMED

'Painful to watch patients gasp for air'

A nurse's account of dire situation at RMCH

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

"They groan and cry out just to get some oxygen. Most of them can do nothing but wait for a patient to get better and be released from the hospital, freeing up a bed. Watching the patients gasping and struggling to breathe is painful. Unfortunately, we can do nothing but watch them suffer."

This is how Dulal Hossain, a senior staff nurse at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH), described the hospital's grim scenario. The quiver in his voice was evident over phone.

While Covid-19 patients keep surging, beds with oxygen supply are becoming scarce at RMCH, officials said.

Critical patients who are coming to the hospital with low oxygen saturation levels have no other option but to wait for an empty bed, they said.

Dulal, who has been stationed at the Covid-19 unit, detailed the situation when The Daily Star interviewed him on Monday afternoon.

"It hurts to see a Covid-19 patient waiting for a bed," Dulal said while sharing his experiences at the workstation in the unit's ward 29 and 30.



Dulal Hossain

The wards where Dulal works have 48 beds. The hospital's entire Covid-19 unit was treating 291 patients till yesterday, 20 more than its bed capacity of 271.

The Covid-19 unit's 271 beds were supported by the hospital's central oxygen supply line. However, authorities could manage only 55 nasal cannulas to ensure high-flow oxygen, and 18 ventilators at RMCH's intensive care unit (ICU).

RMCH is one of the country's major hospitals, and the number of deaths and infected patients skyrocketed since May 24.

Yesterday, at least 12 patients died; seven of them were Covid-19 positive, and the rest were suspected of being infected, raising the death toll to 271, since May 24.

For the 48 beds at Dulal's wards, there are only 17 nasal cannulas.

"None of the nasal cannulas at his wards remain idle," he said. "Most patients come in critical condition, needing high-flow oxygen."

After getting his degrees from Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council in 2011, Dulal served at different

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Do they matter? Should you care?

FAISAL BIN IQBAL

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings for 2022 were unveiled on June 8. Like the previous edition (2021) of the rankings, University of Dhaka (DU) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) failed to climb into the top 800 positions, as both institutions were placed in the 801-1,000 bracket again. Two private institutions, Brac University (BracU) and North South University (NSU), were placed in the 1,001-1,200 bracket.

The metrics echo the state of performance of these universities. To make matters worse, Bangladesh has more than 150 universities (public and private) that are nowhere near the rankings, let alone a position in the top 500 or 1,000.

QS evaluates universities based on six unique metrics: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, citations per

faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio.

Among the four Bangladeshi universities, NSU has the highest scores in international faculty ratio, international student ratio, and employer reputation. BracU scored highest in terms of faculty-student ratio. DU has the highest academic reputation, whereas Buet has more citations per faculty.

But do these rankings matter to the students? And do they care about such rankings at all?

"I believe rankings are just a general idea of where that university falls in comparison to all other universities," says Abdullah, a final-year student at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at BracU. "Universities with more funds will have better facilities and are also most likely to have a higher number of publications. But a rank

is not necessarily reflective of the education quality in the institute."

Although it is an easy way to determine which university is generally doing better than the rest, Abdullah believes that one must also evaluate certain other factors before choosing a university. He adds, "A student should not take admission decisions with rank in mind. Instead, they

should look at the programmes and course structures the universities offer, their alumni history, facilities that students can enjoy, faculty members and their qualifications, and so on."

However, recent graduate and software engineering intern Afia Fahmida Rahman from BracU argues, "In my opinion, it may matter when it comes to getting recognised by international universities or organisations. For a company that has not heard about

my locally high-ranked university at all, looking at the QS rankings may give them a rough idea of how the university actually is and how it might have nurtured me to become a potential employee for them."

For a higher rank, universities need to invest in certain areas, especially those that impact rankings. Institutional research is a major area that requires attention as well as funding. And a lot depends on the research output by these universities.

"I think research output at our university is quite good," comments Samin Rahman Khan, a fourth-year engineering student at Buet. "Recently, we are working on solutions for significant real-world problems in our labs, which makes our research very impactful. Aiming for a more thriving research culture is evident from our citations score."

The question now is whether universities should concentrate on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

The brawl over Ivermectin

Health authorities, experts worldwide divided over use of antiparasitic in Covid-19 treatment

ZYNA ISLAM

As Covid-19 cases are on the rise in the country, doctors are once again mulling over Ivermectin as a possible answer. However, controversy continues to follow this drug.

Ivermectin is a pocket-friendly anti-parasitic drug that has for decades been used to treat head lice and river blindness in humans and heartworms in animals.

The drug first came to notice with regards to Covid-19 treatment on April 3, 2020 when laboratory experiments done by researchers at Monash University of Australia found that ivermectin in vitro [performed outside of a living organism] had an inhibitory action on SARS-CoV-2, reducing the load of viral RNA by 5,000 times in 48 hours.

The ivermectin dose used in the study was 5 microgrammes (mcg) and the research was published in the journal Antiviral Research.

On Tuesday, the Indian government's Union Health Ministry dropped Ivermectin from the list of medications approved for the treatment of Covid-19, in its revised guideline.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health in



Dr Tarek Alam



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

Malaysia started an Ivermectin trial for high risk Covid-19 patients five days ago

On the other hand, American Journal of Therapeutics published a meta-analysis of 18 ivermectin-related studies in their May/June 2021 issue, which concluded that the 18 studies found "large, statistically significant reductions in mortality, time to clinical recovery, and time to viral clearance."

The research was conducted by physicians from University of Wisconsin Health University Hospital and University of Texas Health Science Center, among others.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

8 killed, 8 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Eight people were killed and eight others injured in road accidents across the country during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

A five-year-old girl was run over by a speeding bus on Panchagarh-Atwary road in Atwary upazila of Panchagarh yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mitu Akhter, daughter of Nuruzzaman.

Atwary Police Station Inspector Dulal Uddin said the accident occurred while the girl was crossing the road to go to her mother, who was harvesting maize nearby.

Meanwhile, a pickup and a covered van collided on Panchagarh-Banglabandha highway in Tentulia on Wednesday, leaving two people dead and another injured.

Pickup driver Md Rubel (20) died on the spot, said police, adding that Swapan (18) succumbed to his injuries at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

Tentulia Highway Police Station OC Rabiul Azam said Sujon (19), who was critically injured, was undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Police seized both vehicles but the van driver and his helper fled, said the OC.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

INSTALLING ILLEGAL GAS LINES

ACC arrests Karnaphuli GM, manager

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday arrested Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Limited (KGDCL)'s general manager (GM), and its manager in a case filed on charges of installing illegal gas connection to residences and changing gas connections' holder name to another, violating government directions.

GM Md Sarwar Hossain of the organisation's Engineer Service Division, and Mojibur Rahman, the manager (load dispatch), were arrested from port city's Agrabad area, said sources.

Earlier, Deputy Assistant Director Sharif Uddin of ACC, Chattogram office, filed the case, accusing five, including four officials of KGDCL.

The two other accused are KGDCL's former general manager (sales) Mohammed Ali Chowdhury and technician Didarul. Apart from that, ACC sued Mujibur Rahman -- managing director of Sanowara Group and son of Nurul Islam, former minister for expatriates' welfare and overseas employment.

The others have not been arrested yet.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

MIGRANT WORKERS

Empower them with technology: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Proper steps should be taken to end exploitation and torture of Bangladeshi migrant workers at both home and abroad, said speakers in an online discussion yesterday.

They said introducing technology-based know-hows such as mobile-based applications on labour migration could be a way forward to build awareness among migrant workers to ensure their due rights.

The online discussion was part of launching of the app "SafeStep", and was organised by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

RMMRU with support from Winrock International, Elevate Hong Kong Holdings Limited and Diginex Solutions has developed the app, which aims to promote awareness on basic information of safe and orderly labour migration, and fair, ethical, and responsible overseas recruitment.

Addressing the discussion, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, full-time member of National Human Rights Commission, said Bangladeshi migrant workers have been contributing to build big structures in host countries, but they are deprived of due rights.

"It is shocking," he said, adding, in reality, they face torture and exploitation often. Bangladesh needs to speak loud against torturous incidents against its migrant workers.

Referring to a reported incident in which a Bangladeshi woman migrant worker returned home with a five-month-old baby from abroad recently, Kamal said they will take steps for filing a case over the incident.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

ABUSED IN SAUDI ARABIA

Gross violation of migrant workers' rights, says MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday expressed grave concerns and anger over the return of female migrant workers from Saudi Arabia after being abused physically and mentally.

The organisation, in a written statement, termed these incidents "gross violations of the human rights of female migrant workers."

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "The government should consider the remittances sent by the female migrant workers and give priority to their lives, livelihood, dignity, and security."

"At the same time, the government must ensure punishment for those involved in such criminal offense," she added.

MJF further said the embassy of Bangladesh should have taken legal action to find out the details of the employers, and ensure compensation for the abused women.

However, in most cases, the labour attaché does not opt for filing a lawsuit, or if filed, the cases become inactive since the abused women return to the country, it said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

HARASSING PATIENTS

24 'brokers' at DMCH jailed by mobile court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court assisted by Rab yesterday jailed 24 "brokers" for harassing and deceiving patients at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The convicts -- including staffers of private hospitals, diagnostic centres and people carrying patients on trolleys and ambulances -- were sentenced to highest one month in prison.

"People from across the country come to this important hospital for treatment. But these brokers prevent them from receiving healthcare services and take them to different private and unauthorised hospitals, promising them of good service," said Palash Kumar Bosu, executive magistrate who led the drive.

Many patients are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A bus driver takes the wheel with a lit cigarette between his lips, violating not only a ban on smoking in public vehicles but also in blatant defiance of mask-wearing directives to contain the spread of Covid-19. The photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Kamalapur area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MINI BYTES



Microsoft Excel is now an e-sport, watch out for the Excel World Cup

ZARIF FAIAZ

The e-sport arena has a new unlikely contender. It's Microsoft Excel. For the first time ever, Microsoft Excel, the software used for crunching numbers around the globe, is being considered an e-sport and Microsoft is even organising a Microsoft Excel Financial Modeling World Cup. The global competition is currently underway, starting June 8, featuring 8 participating countries: India, Malaysia, Canada, Poland, Australia, South Africa, the USA and the UK. 8 champions are representing the 8 countries in the Multiplayer Battle Tournament, called '888 Battle', which is being streamed live on the official YouTube channel of the Financial Modeling World Cup.

"We are back with another live financial modeling battle! This time, 8 top modelers from 8 different countries will be competing against each other. You have the opportunity to sit in the front-row seat and watch how they build the models that have earned them the top-ranking positions. After the battle, we will make sure to share the financial models with the viewers. Use this opportunity to learn some tricks used by some of the greatest minds in financial modeling," said Microsoft in a statement.

While financial modeling competitions have been held before,

it is the first time that the competition is being labeled as an 'e-sport'. A financial model is essentially a strategic tool created using Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet softwares where data is arranged in a manner that is used later on to predict the financial performance of a business. Creation of the model requires in-depth understanding of the software that is being used, in this case, Microsoft Excel.

"The competition consists of case studies consisting of a range of real-life problem-solving questions solvable through the use of Financial Modeling. Each stage will normally include 2 to 5 cases, with the possibility of additional cases or alternative relevant activities," says the Financial Modeling World Cup Website.

In the competition, the participants are given 40 minutes to create a Microsoft Excel model to solve a given financial problem. Then follows the judges' question-answer session. While a prize of USD 20,000 is being split into various categories, the final winner will receive USD 5000 as the champion.

Registration for this year's Financial Modeling is closed and the competition is already underway. However, the competition is open for everyone and anyone in the world can register and participate in the next iteration of the event.

5 held for attacking MP's car in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Police arrested five people in Barishal on Wednesday night on the charge of attacking the car of an Awami League lawmaker.

The arrestees were identified as Mosharrif Hossain, Syed Manjur Morshed, Mahim Deoan, Md Oliuddin and Helal Sikder, said police.

The arrest was made hours after Ibrahim Sardar, general secretary of Hijla Upazila Sramik League, had filed a case with Hijla Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Asim Kumar Sarkar.

The car of Pankaj Nath, a lawmaker of Barishal-4 constituency, came under the attack during a clash between his supporters and rivals at Hijla ferry terminal area on Tuesday.

The glass of MP's car was shattered during the incident, said Ibrahim, adding that the car's driver and several others were also injured.

24 'brokers'

FROM PAGE 3

deceived by them as they do not get quality service after going to those hospitals and clinics, he said, adding that the convicts admitted their crime.

"The brokers were hampering the activities of the doctors and other staffers of the hospitals... We seized patients' prescriptions and test reports from many of them," he said.

The magistrate said they carried out the raid, in association with hospital authorities, following complaints from patients and their family members.

Dr Ashraf Alam, assistant director of DMCH, said, "Many patients from villages come to this hospital for treatment. We are working to serve the patients. We do not want them to be harassed."

Asked whether hospital staffers are involved in the racket, Ashraf said they will take action if anyone provides specific allegation against any staffer.

Painful to

FROM PAGE 3

private hospitals, before becoming a government senior staff nurse at RMCH in 2016.

During a visit to the Covid-19 unit on Monday, this correspondent noticed many patients put on oxygen using cylinders. Some of them and their attendants said patients suffer during the brief period when cylinders become empty and get swapped with new ones every two hours.

Dulal said most patients had to influence doctors, officials and local government representatives to get a bed.

On Sunday, this correspondent saw a woman from Chapainawabganj gasping, sitting on a veranda near the Covid-19 unit. Her attendants said she was denied admission, as patients more critical than her were in plenty.

She was, however, admitted to the unit later that day, when journalists drew the hospital authority's attention.

Dulal has been serving Covid-19 patients since RMCH authority opened the Covid-19 unit in March last year.

"We could serve patients well in the beginning, when they came in low numbers," he said.

But the situation changed in the last week of May, when numbers started soaring.

"Initially, most patients were coming from only Chapainawabganj," he said. "A week later, we started receiving patients from Godagari and Tanore upazilas of Rajshahi."

"Currently, patients from different areas of Rajshahi city are predominantly filling beds," Dulal said.

"Patients come with oxygen saturation level between 70 and 80 percent, and we have to work hard to treat them. Many don't feel better even with high-flow oxygen, so doctors send them to the ICU," he continued.

"The moment a patient is released after getting well, attendants of more than three patients continue to lobby for securing the bed for their patients. This competition is increasing daily," he shared.

Dulal said the best moments at his workstation is when he sees patients getting well. "It happens between 8:30am and 1:30pm, when specialised doctors go around the wards and release patients who they consider to have gotten better."

"When they get well and prepare to return home to join their family, we feel overjoyed," he said.

Dulal and his colleagues used to work for six hours at a stretch, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), alternating among themselves every 15 days.

"It's difficult working for six hours in PPE, but we forget the trouble after observing patients suffering from breathing issues," he shared.

Dulal said the most troublesome job for him was returning home after a day's duty. "My fear is that I might spread the virus among my family. I've been living alone in a room at my home -- separated from family members -- for more than a year. How long can you remain away from your family?"

Dulal said initially, hospital authorities had arranged a hostel for nurses to spend two weeks after ending 15 days of work, but there is no such provision now.

"When I complete my duties, I take a bath before returning home. But the fear hangs over my head," he said.

Scenes from the Covid-19 wards haunt him sometimes. "I get nightmares," he added.

No measure was taken for the staff's mental health. They were not even given special training for dealing with Covid-19 patients.

"We learned everything during our duties. We feared our job before, but now, those fears have been buried under our responsibilities," Dulal said.

Contacted, RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani acknowledged the struggle to provide beds and oxygen.

They will add 32 more beds at the Covid-19 unit soon to overcome the mounting pressure, and have also stored some 450 oxygen cylinders for emergency situations, he informed.

He said they already started using the cylinders for 22 additional patients at the unit.

"Central oxygen is connected with beds only, but there are more patients than beds," the director said.

They would also hold discussions over staff's mental health, he added.

The brawl

FROM PAGE 3

It is against this backdrop that Prof Dr Md Tarek Alam, head of department of medicine at Bangladesh Medical College and Hospital (BMCH), recommends that Ivermectin not be taken out of the race.

"I think all adults should take a preventive dose of 12 mg of Ivermectin -- one tablet every ten days -- until we can test our antibodies," said Dr Alam.

His appeal comes from a study that physicians of BMCH did last year that was published in the European Journal of Medical and Health Sciences. The study involved 118 healthy individuals working as healthcare providers in Covid-19 isolation wards in BMCH.

"The individuals were distributed into two groups (experimental and control) -- 60 subjects in control group and 58 subjects in experimental group," said the study, adding that the experimental group received 12 mg of Ivermectin every four weeks for four months.

"Seventy-three point three percent (44 out of 60) subjects in the control group were positive for Covid-19, whereas only 6.9 percent (four out of 58) of the experimental group were diagnosed with Covid-19," said the study.

Dr Alam said, "In May, we applied to the Bangladesh Medical Research Council for a trial but they gave us permission in August. By that time, Ivermectin was being used so extensively that we were not able to find 200 people who had never been exposed to the drug. We only got 35-40 individuals who never took Ivermectin."

On December 7, 2020, icddr,b published results of a clinical trial that said "Ivermectin shows promise against Covid-19."

Some 68 patients hospitalised with Covid-19 were divided into three groups and administered Ivermectin, Ivermectin in combination with doxycycline, and a placebo.

"The study demonstrated that patients in the five-day ivermectin group were 77 percent more likely to have early viral clearance on day 14, compared to those who received ivermectin and doxycycline (61 percent) and placebo (39 percent)," said the icddr,b study.

The findings were published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases (IJID) on 2 December 2020.

A different scenario was perceived in Barcelona, Spain -- according to a study published in the Lancet on January 19, 2021.

The study by ISGlobal and Barcelona Institute for Global Health received a single dose of Ivermectin of 400 mcg per kilogramme of weight, within 72 hours of a patient developing fever or cough.

"There was no difference in the proportion of PCR positives," found the study. "There was however a marked reduction of cough and a tendency to lower viral loads and lower IgG titers which warrants assessment in larger trials." They concluded that "there is limited evidence to support its clinical use in Covid-19 patients."

Dr Alam said that Ivermectin's strength lies in symptom management. "The virus can stay in the body as long as it is not active. Hospital beds can be emptied faster."

The government gave permission to ten more pharmaceuticals to make Ivermectin, he pointed out. "The main resistance is from World Health Organisation, who says that there are not enough large-scale studies to support its use," he added.

"The current evidence on the use of ivermectin to treat Covid-19 patients is inconclusive. Until more data is available, WHO recommends that the drug only be used within clinical trials," said a statement by WHO released on March 31, 2021.

The US Federal Drug Administration also does not approve of the use of Ivermectin for Covid-19.

"FDA has not approved ivermectin for use in treating or preventing COVID-19 in humans. Taking large doses of this drug is dangerous and can cause serious harm," states the FDA on its website.

Even as the Indian health ministry omitted Ivermectin as a cure, the drug has been used in states like Delhi where the curve has gone down -- with the caveat that correlation is not the causation.

"Certain provincial governments have been administering Ivermectin, while others have not. Delhi for example started administering Ivermectin. Health clinics were giving Ivermectin to outpatients and the crisis we were seeing two weeks back is not as acute," said Dr Tarek Alam.

"The pandemic is like a war. Scientific discoveries are so rapidly changing. There is a huge chaos where the WHO is changing its stance all the time. There is nothing called an international standard or a gold standard," said Dr Rubaiul Murshed, the chairperson of Shomman Foundation.

"They were giving this to everyone in Uttar Pradesh before removing it from the guideline. If we are trying to go after the nitty-gritties, which direction will you go?" he said.

"Standard hospitals across the city are all giving out this drug. When there is no cure yet, we are drowning, we are clutching at straws," said Dr Murshed.

As of yet, there is not a clear solution to whether Ivermectin is the silver bullet or not -- but with more questions being asked, more answers are emerging.

ACC arrests

FROM PAGE 3

Advocate Kazi Sanwar Hossain Lavlu, a lawyer of ACC, said, "The arrestees were produced before the court of Chattogram Session Judge Ashfaqur Rahman, which sent the duo to jail after hearing."

ACC sources said Sharif filed the case, after the anti-graft watchdog found truth to an allegation of shifting gas line connections to another name and installing new connections.

According to the case statement, the accused in collaboration with each other, shifted 12 gas connections (double-burner), issued in the name of one MA Salam in Halishahar area, to Mujibur Rahman of Sanowara Residential Area, although there is no scope of changing the user's name.

The accused also installed 10 new connections to Sanowara Residential Area, despite a ban on installing new gas connections since February 28, 2016.

Despite repeated attempts, Mujibur's phone was found switched off.

8 killed

FROM PAGE 3

In Jhenidah, a bus ran over a motorbike on Jhenidah-Chuadanga road in Sadar upazila yesterday, killing a motorcyclist and injuring his pillion.

The deceased was identified as Jahangir Hossain (30). Injured Jamirul Islam was taken to Sadar Hospital, said Sadar Police Station OC Mizanur Rahman.

Police seized the bus but the driver fled.

In Dinajpur, a farmer was killed after a speeding bus hit him in Birganj upazila yesterday.

Mozibar Rahman (65) died instantly, said police.

In Mymensingh, three passengers of a battery-run auto-rickshaw were killed and six others injured when a Mymensingh-bound bus collided head-on with the auto-rickshaw on Mymensingh-Tangail road on Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Aminul Islam (35), driver of the auto-rickshaw; Rita Akter (21), and her eight-year-old nephew Tanvir Ahmed, said Muktagacha Police Station OC Md Dulal Akanda.

Aminul, Rita and Tanvir succumbed to their injuries at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said the police officer.

Police sent the bodies to MMCH morgue for autopsy. A case was filed in connection with the accident.

Do they matter

FROM PAGE 3

improving their rankings, and how.

"I feel like there are more pressing matters for the universities to handle before getting worked up about rankings," states Syeda Afrin Tarannum, a third-year economics student at NSU. "Maintaining proper protocol regarding classes and ensuring students' mental health go beyond sending YouTube recommendations and vague surveys. Once that is taken care of, maybe they can try for a higher ranking."

"Students should not be bothered about the number one position," says Anika Anjum, a second-year student at the Department of Sociology, DU, matching Afrin's views. "They should be concerned about whether necessary requirements and experiences are being met. Students carry these experiences both in academic as well as their professional fields."

She, however, says, "When we see the rankings, as students, we realise how much we are falling behind in opportunities."

In the 2022 index of the QS Rankings, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, secured the top position, followed by University of Oxford, Stanford University, University of Cambridge, and Harvard University.

A total of 26 Asian universities made it to the top 100 list. Besides, the 2022 index saw eight Indian and three Pakistani institutes rank in the top 500. Given how things are progressing, everyone might have to wait a long while to see a Bangladeshi university among those ranks.

Sangbadpatra Hawkers' Samity gets new committee

STAR REPORT

M o h a m m a d Abdul Mannan and Md Jahangir Alam were elected president and secretary of Dhaka Sangbadpatra Hawkers' Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity Ltd respectively.



The election for the 12-member management committee was held on Wednesday at the Samity's central office in the capital, said a press release.

ABM Belal Hossain Khan was elected vice-president. Shah Alam Patwari, Joynal Abedin, AKM Monir Hossain Bhuiyan, Nurul Islam, Delwar Hossain Talukder, Hafizur Rahman, Nurur Jaman, Sirajul Haque and Abu Hanif were elected directors.

Gross

FROM PAGE 3

In such incidents, the Bangladesh embassy should strictly monitor the matter so that the labour attaché takes necessary initiatives to ensure justice for the abused women and demands compensation from the employers, MJF said.

According to a recent Brac report, there have been 12 such incidents in recent times, and at least 10,000 women have returned from Saudi Arabia in the last five years, suffering from abuse.

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Empower

FROM PAGE 3

Nurul Islam, former director of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, said one of the main obstacles in labour migration is presence of middlemen in between the recruiting agencies and migrant workers, which needs to be addressed.

The role of middlemen should be abolished to reduce huge migration cost, he said. He stressed the need for trial run of the app launched yesterday.

Farida Yeasmin, a Supreme Court lawyer and migrant rights activist, said women migrant workers lack knowledge and skill to use technology. They should be prioritised while piloting the app.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, former secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, said price of plane tickets is quite high now. In some cases, the price of a \$300 ticket went up to \$1,200.

Barrister Shameem Haider Patwari, chairperson of Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development, said due to lack of knowledge and education, many women migrant workers are at high risk of exploitation, which needs to be minimised.

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Principal

World Health Organization Bangladesh
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World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following positions under following contractual modalities:
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AB Bank
PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION
The shareholders of AB Bank Limited in the 39th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on June 10, 2021 (Thursday) at 04:00 p.m. through digital platform approved below mentioned decision:
"The issuance of Non-convertible, Unsecured and Floating Rated Perpetual Bonds of BDT 600 crore in two segments- BDT 60 crore through Public issue and BDT 540 crore through Private Placement to be used for Enhancement of Additional Tier-I Capital of the Bank is hereby approved subject to the approval of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) and other Regulatory Authorities".
Dated: Dhaka, June 10, 2021 By Order of the Board
AB Bank Limited Sd/-
The Skymark, 18 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1 Dhaka **Md. Jasim Uddin, ACS**
www.abbl.com Company Secretary (In-charge)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Public Health Engineering
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bandarban.
ee.bandarban@dph.gov.bd
Memo No: 46.03.0300.07.001.20-1638 Date: 08.06.2021
e-GP: Tender Notice
e-Tender is invited in the e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works. Details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Description of works	Type, Method	Tender Documents Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01.	580180	Construction of water supply through G.F.S System at Thong Thong Para Source - Remacri Jhiri at Remacri Prongsha UP in Ruma Upazilla Bandarban District.	NCT, OTM	23-Jun-2021 16:35	24-Jun-2021 16:30	24-Jun-2021 16:30
02.	580187	Construction of water supply through G.F.S System at Thalking Para Source-Thalking Jhiri in Remari UP in Thanchi Upazilla Bandarban District.	NCT, OTM	23-Jun-2021 16:45	24-Jun-2021 16:45	24-Jun-2021 16:45
03.	580979	Construction of water supply through G.F.S System at Jadipai Natun Para Source - Long Mon Jhiri at Remacri Prongsha UP in Ruma Upazilla Bandarban District.	NCT, OTM	17-Jun-2021 16:15	20-Jun-2021 16:20	20-Jun-2021 16:20
04.	585167	Installation of Ring well at PTI with RO filter Bandarban of Bandarban districts.	NCT, OTM	20-Jun-2021 15:45	21-Jun-2021 15:50	21-Jun-2021 15:50

The interested persons/firm of may visit the website. www.eprocurement.gov.bd to get the details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP system portal is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk, (helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd).
Executive Engineer
DPHE, Bandarban Division
Bandarban
GD-1185



Bamboo fence in Barguna's Amtali ferry ghat area disrupts movement of vessels.

PHOTO: STAR

Bamboo fencing in Payra causing accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Dredging was done in the beginning of this year to improve navigability in the Payra river near Barguna's Amtali upazila town. At that time, bamboo fencing was erected in the middle of the river. Because of this fence, hundreds of vessels now have to navigate around it every day. At least 50 accidents have been recorded in the last six months.

Originating from the Bay of Bengal, the Payra river is connected to the waterways of Barishal and Dhaka. Hundreds of water vehicles, including passenger launches, fishing trawlers, and cargo ships ply the route.

To alleviate the navigability crisis, the dredging department of BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) started dredging here in mid-December last year. At this time, the excavated sand of the river was thrown into the river on a bamboo mat. The bamboos are now standing

and the water vehicles plying on this route often get stuck in those bamboos. Accidents are often caused by bamboos submerged in water, especially at night and during high tide.

During a visit in the area on Friday, it was seen that bamboo and mat fences have been erected along the river in a stretch of about 1 km in a triangular shape. During low tide, the bamboo fence stands about one and a half to two feet above the water. Due to these bamboo and mat fences, ferries, fishing trawlers, small and medium-sized boats, cargo vessels have to travel around one to one-and-a-half-kilometer alternative route. It also wastes the time and increases the fuel costs of the fishermen and other sailors to navigate the river many times over.

Ferdous Mia, a trawler driver on the ferry ghat, said "The sand had been dumped into the river with a bamboo and mat fence. Previously we could traverse the stretch during

high tide. But now due to the bamboo fence, collisions with the bamboos at night and at high tide cause damage to the boat."

Abdus Salam Khan, the ferry's lessee, said the authorities have been dredging the river for the last three years. There is no benefit in that. Late last year, the sand of the river was dumped in the river with a bamboo fence. This did not help improve the navigability; it was just a wastage of money.

Mamun Ar-Rashid, port officer for Barguna BIWTA said the excavated sand had been dumped in the river without finding a place on the ground. So, the river was fenced with bamboo and mats.

Abu Bakar Siddique, Barishal division executive engineer for BIWTA, said there was no chance of removing the mats and bamboo fences along the Payra river at the time of excavation. The matter will be considered during the next excavation.



The present condition of Bamondanga river after partial recovery by BWDB. The photo was taken in Sarkerpara area of Nilphamari municipality recently.

PHOTO: STAR

BAMONDANGA RIVER

Once Nilphamari's lifeblood, now personal property

BWDB moves to recover river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The 150-year-old Nilphamari township in the northern region was developed on the bank of Bamondanga river but the river has now no physical existence.

Crop fields, brick built structures can be found on the trail of the river now and the younger generation hardly knows about the once lifeblood of the district.

The existence of the river even can't be found in government land department's map in which most of the river bed has been shown as individual property and khas land possessed by some institutions.

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has taken an initiative to revive the lost river's main course partially through tough task lies ahead to bring back the river in its original shape.

According to 'Nilphamarir Itihas' (History of Nilphamari), written by local historian Nasiruddin Ahmed, famous 'Sakha macha' bazar of northern region was once situated on Bamondanga river surrounding which Nilphamari township developed gradually.

Aminur Rahman, sub-divisional engineer (SDE) of BWDB's Nilphamari division said in line with government directive for excavating small rivers, canals and water bodies, they undertook the project in 2019-2020 fiscal year to excavate 6.90 km part of Bamondanga.

"When we started the work, we faced strong opposition from some people who claimed the land of the river bed is their personal property and in the district administration's co-ordination committee meeting, few participants criticised us saying that the river had no existence," he said.

"We handled the situation as the trail of Bamondanga is clearly indicated in BWDB index and also in the map of Survey of Bangladesh though it was missing in land department's mouja map," he added.

That vested quarter attempted to foil river excavation either by showing aggression or creating scenes lying in front of excavators and also tried to get support of influential political parties but they failed as the civil society and local municipality were beside the BWDB.

In this context, the deputy commissioner's office formed a committee to de-mark river's area and BWDB also submitted a list of more than 150 people who were in possession of the river bed.

On contact, Nilphamari municipality mayor and also the president of district Awami League Dewan Kamal Ahmed said, "Bamondanga river should be fully recovered as it is vital for the environment and passage of flood water."

Social worker Mohammad Ali said, "Few dishonest land officials helped the vested quarter to make document to turn the river as private property which should be cancelled as per relevant river law."

ADC (revenue) of district collectorate Khondokar Md Nahid Hasan said that some people had land documents and the matter should be dealt legally to recover Bamondanga.

"We have been able to recover the river's 37% area and it is just the beginning and due to difficulties, in most places the width of the river is only 8-10 feet instead of 25 feet as per our plan and we will submit proposal soon to do rest of the work," said Abdullah Al Mamun executive engineer of BWDB.

NEWS IN brief

First death sentence execution in Dinajpur jail

Death sentence of a convict was executed in Dinajpur Jail yesterday -- a first in the history of the 167-year-old prison.

Jail officials said the execution of Abdul Haque, 55, of Bhaktipur village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur, was completed at 12:01am. Abdul Haque was convicted for killing his wife in a case filed in 2002 under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. On March 5, 2007, the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 in Rangpur sentenced Abdul Haque to death by hanging. The convict had been imprisoned in different jails since he was arrested on August 28, 2002.

Boy beaten up by his teachers

A case was filed against the chairman and another teacher of Yusufia Rashidia Hafizia Nurani Madrasa, in Uttar Taktambunia village of Barguna's Amtali upazila, for physically assaulting a 12-year-old student of the madrasa. Father of the student filed the case against madrasa Chairman Abul Chowkidar and teacher Mahub Alam with Amtali Police Station on Wednesday night. According to the case statement, Abul Chowkidar, with the help of Mahub Alam, beat up the boy with a bamboo sliver after another student complained against the boy. The child is now undergoing treatment at Amtali Upazila Health Complex. Amtali police is investigating the case.

SOURCE: OUR CORRESPONDENTS IN DINAJPUR AND PATUAKHALI

বাংলাদেশ ইম্পাত ও প্রকৌশল কর্পোরেশন

বিএসইসি ভবন

১০২, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১২১৫।

সূত্র নম্বর: ৩৬.৯৩.০০০০.০৩১.৯৯.০০২.২০-১০১৮

তারিখ: ০৭/০৬/২০২১

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক্র. নং	বিভাগ	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	বেতন স্কেল ও গ্রেড	সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১।	কারিগরি	মহাব্যবস্থাপক	০৪ (চার) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/- গ্রেড নং-০৩	অনূর্ধ্ব ৪৫ বৎসর (বিশেষ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০ বৎসর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য)	১৮ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রী অথবা ২০ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ ডিপ্লোমা ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং।
২।	হিসাব	প্রধান হিসাবরক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা	০৩ (তিন) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/- গ্রেড নং-০৩	অনূর্ধ্ব ৪৫ বৎসর (বিশেষ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০ বৎসর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য)	সিএ/আইসিএমএ ডিগ্রীসহ ৬ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা অথবা স্নাতক ডিগ্রীসহ ১৮ বৎসরের বা তার বেশি অভিজ্ঞতা।
৩।	জেনারেল	মহাব্যবস্থাপক	০৩ (তিন) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/- গ্রেড নং-০৩	অনূর্ধ্ব ৪৫ বৎসর (বিশেষ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৫০ বৎসর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য)	স্নাতক ডিগ্রীসহ শিল্প ব্যবস্থাপনায় ১৮ বৎসরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা।
৪।		উপ-প্রধান চিকিৎসা কর্মকর্তা	০১ (এক) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ৪৩০০০-৬৯৮৫০/- গ্রেড নং-০৫	৩৭ বৎসর (বিশেষ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৪০ বৎসর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য)	১০ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এমবিবিএস ডিগ্রী অথবা ১৩ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এলএমএফ।
৫।	কারিগরি	কারিগরি ক্যাডার	০২ (দুই) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/- গ্রেড নং-০৬	৩২ বৎসর (বিশেষ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৩৫ বৎসর পর্যন্ত শিথিলযোগ্য)	৫ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এমবিবিএস ডিগ্রী অথবা ১০ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ এলএমএফ।
৬।		সহকারী চিকিৎসা কর্মকর্তা	০১ (এক) জন	বেতন স্কেল টা: ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- গ্রেড নং-০৯	৩০ বৎসর	এমবিবিএস ডিগ্রী।

বিশেষ দৃষ্টব্যঃ বর্ণিত পদগুলোতে আবেদনের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা জীবনের কোনো স্তরে ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণী গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। ২.০ এছাড়া আবেদনপত্র পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী অত্যাবশ্যিকীয়ভাবে অনুসরণীয়ঃ

১। ১নং হতে ৬নং ক্রমিকের পদসমূহের জন্য কলাম-৬ এ উল্লিখিত বয়সসীমা প্রযোজ্য হবে। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে এসএসসি সনদের জন্ম তারিখ গণ্য করা হবে। বয়স সর্বোচ্চ কোনো এক্ষেত্রে ডিউট গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

২। নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে বিএসইসি'র প্রবিধানমালা ও সরকারের বিদ্যমান এবং পরিবর্তিত ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য বিধি-বিধান অনুসরণ করা হবে।

৩। কোনো প্রার্থীর নিয়োগ লাভের পর তার প্রদত্ত কোনো তথ্য মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে নিয়োগ বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

৪। নিয়োগের ব্যাপারে কোন প্রকার সুপারিশ বা তদবির প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা বলে গণ্য হবে।

৫। পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবেনা।

৬। বিএসইসি কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে এই নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন/বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে এবং কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোনো দরখাস্ত/সকল দরখাস্ত বা নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া বাতিলের ক্ষমতা রাখে। আবেদনপত্র বাছাই ও নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে বিএসইসি কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

৭। পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীগণকে <http://bsec.teletalk.com.bd> -এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে হবে।

৮। যদি কোন প্রার্থী বিদেশী নাগরিককে বিবাহ করে থাকেন অথবা বিবাহ করার জন্য অঙ্গীকার করার জন্য অঙ্গীকারক্রম হয়ে থাকেন, সেক্ষেত্রে তার আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।

৯। অনলাইনে (Online) আবেদনের সময়সীমা ও পদ্ধতি নিম্নরূপ
(ক) ১৩-০৬-২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে আবেদনপত্র দাখিল এবং পরীক্ষার ফি জমাদান শুরু হবে।
(খ) ৩০-০৬-২০২১ তারিখ বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র জমাদান অবশ্যই শেষ করতে হবে।
(গ) উক্ত সময় সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online এ আবেদনপত্র Submit এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৭২ ঘন্টা SMS এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।

(ঘ) আবেদন ফরম পূরণের সময় প্রার্থী অবশ্যই কোন বিভাগে (কারিগরি/হিসাব/জেনারেল) আবেদন করতে ইচ্ছুক তা পূরণ করবেন।

(ঙ) Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তাঁর স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৮০) Pixel, File size maximum 60 kb ও রঙিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৩০০) Pixel, File size maximum 100 kb এ স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন।

(চ) Online আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে সেহেতু Online এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।

(ছ) SMS পাঠানোর নিয়মাবলি ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদানঃ অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি ও স্বাক্ষর Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's Copy পাবে। উক্ত Applicant's Copy প্রার্থীকে প্রিন্ট অথবা Download করে সংরক্ষণ করতে হবে। Applicant's Copy-তে একটি User ID নম্বর দেওয়া থাকবে এবং এ User ID ব্যবহার করে Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd. কর্তৃক SMS এর মাধ্যমে প্রদত্ত নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk Pre-Paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে SMS করে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ক্রমিক নং ১-৩ পর্যন্ত ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য), ক্রমিক নং ৪-৫ পর্যন্ত ৮০০/- (আটশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) এবং ক্রমিক নং ৬ এর জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা দিতে হবে।

প্রথম SMS : BSEC<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে ১৬২২২ নম্বরে।
দ্বিতীয় SMS : BSEC<space>Yes<space><PIN> লিখে Send করতে হবে ১৬২২২ নম্বরে।

"বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য, পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই গ্রহণ করা হবে না।"

(জ) প্রবেশপত্র (Admit Card)ঃ প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি <http://bsec.teletalk.com.bd> অথবা বাংলাদেশ ইম্পাত ও প্রকৌশল কর্পোরেশন (বিএসইসি) এর Web-address <http://bsec.gov.bd>-এ এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধু যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS Read করা এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়। SMS-এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও ভেন্যুর নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক Print (সম্ভব হলে রঙিন) করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই Admit Card টি লিখিত পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।

(ঝ) শুধু টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID, Serial এবং PIN পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।

i) User ID জানা থাকলে BSEC<space>Help<space>User ID & Send to 16222.
Example : BSEC HELP USER ABCDEF

ii) PIN Number জানা থাকলে BSEC<space>Help<space>PIN<space>PIN No & Send to 16222.
Example : BSEC HELP PIN 12345678

(ঞ) অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে সমস্যা হলে যে কোনো টেলিটক নাম্বার থেকে ফোন করুন ১২১ অথবা মেইল করুন vas.query@teletalk.com.bd

১০। ক্রমিক নম্বর ১-৫ এ বর্ণিত পদের প্রার্থীদের পরবর্তীতে SMS এর মাধ্যমে নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদন ফরমে উল্লিখিত তথ্যের স্বপক্ষে যাবতীয় সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি ও পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রঙিন ছবি (তিন সেট) ডাকযোগে প্রধান ব্যক্তিপ্রশাসন কর্মকর্তা (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), ১০২ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ ঢাকা-১২১৫ বরাবর পাঠাতে হবে। আবেদনপত্র কোনো ভুল তথ্য পরিবেশন করলে অথবা চাহিদা কৃত কাগজপত্র সঠিক ও সম্পূর্ণরূপে সংযোজন করা না হলে এবং নির্ধারিত সময়ের পর পাওয়া গেলে আবেদনপত্রটি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

১১। মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্ন লিখিত কাগজপত্র উপস্থাপন করতে হবেঃ
(ক) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার সকল মূল সার্টিফিকেট প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
(খ) সরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রথম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সার্টিফিকেট।
(গ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ এর চেয়ারম্যান, পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর মেয়র বা ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রার্থীর নিজ জেলা উল্লেখপূর্বক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সার্টিফিকেট।

(ঘ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের মূল কপি ও সত্যায়িত কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
(ঙ) উপজাতীয় প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট জেলা প্রশাসক/স্থানীয় সরকার কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত উপজাতীয় পরিচয় বিষয়ক সনদপত্র।
(চ) সকল সার্টিফিকেট/রেকর্ডপত্র সরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্রথম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে।
(ছ) বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অর্জিত ডিগ্রির ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন (UGC) হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalent Certificate) মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে।

(জ) সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সংস্থায় চাকুরিত প্রার্থীদেরকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের নো অবজেকশন সার্টিফিকেট (এনওসি)/অনাপত্তি পত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

(শাহীরা পারভীন)
প্রধান ব্যক্তিপ্রশাসন কর্মকর্তা (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

Despite pandemic, Asia's illegal drug trade thriving

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

Experts tracking the illicit drug trade in Asia have, for some time, likened it to a tsunami - and it is not stopping.

In fact, while the Covid-19 pandemic cut deep into the regular economy across the region, organised crime thrived, producing and distributing synthetic drugs in record quantities.

A new report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) confirms that production and trafficking of synthetic drugs - overwhelmingly methamphetamine - surged last year.

Available quarterly data from East and South-east Asia showed a drop in seizures in the second quarter of 2020 during the height of the pandemic, the report said.

But "seizures quickly rebounded from the third quarter, demonstrating the flexibility of organised crime groups to adapt to change and take advantage of porous borders in the region".

Seizures of methamphetamine in the region amounted to approximately 170 tonnes last year, a 19 per cent increase over the 142 tonnes seized in 2019.

This was primarily driven by increases in five lower Mekong countries - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam - which accounted for 71 per cent of total seizures.

The meth trade saw continued growth in East and South-east Asia last year, with a concentration of supply and seizures in the Mekong region. No new figures were given on the regional meth market value, but the last estimate two years ago, which included Australia and New Zealand, put the value at US\$61 billion (S\$81 billion).

The report also notes a continuous flow of methamphetamine tablets from Myanmar to South Asia. Last year, 36.4 million methamphetamine tablets were seized in Bangladesh.

The supply surge has fed rising usage.

"Thailand has reported a tenfold increase in the number of crystal methamphetamine users between 2016 and 2019, and price data reported by Cambodia and Malaysia showed decreases from 2019 to 2020," the report says.

The continuing methamphetamine market expansion is not the only worrying development. "The emergence of potentially harmful new psychoactive substances, including synthetic cannabis and designer benzodiazepines, has added to the complexity of the situation," the report added.

Jeremy Douglas, UNODC's regional representative for South-east Asia and the Pacific, told The Straits Times: "There is no getting around the fact that the Mekong has a very serious organised crime problem - and the Golden Triangle remains the heart of the problem."



Israeli security forces detain a Palestinian demonstrator outside the Israeli Central Court in east Jerusalem yesterday, during a protest over Israel's planned evictions of Palestinian families from homes in the eastern sector's Silwan district. Three Palestinians were killed early Thursday by Israeli special forces who were on a mission to arrest suspected "terrorists" in the occupied West Bank, sources on both sides said. Two of those killed were members of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, and the Palestinian presidency condemned their deaths as a "dangerous escalation."

PHOTO: AFP

UK, US to sign new 'Atlantic Charter'

Aim to boost ties, pandemic recovery; Biden, EU warn Britain on N Irish peace

AGENCIES

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and US President Joe Biden were expected to agree a new version of the "Atlantic Charter" aimed at leading the world's pandemic recovery and bolstering ties.

The agreement comes as the leaders hold their first face-to-face talks on Biden's first overseas trip of his presidency.

The new pact, modelled on the 1941 accord signed by Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, aims to emulate the original accord, which shaped the post-war world order by promoting democracy, free trade and opportunity.

The 2021 charter will cover everything from global defence and security to rebuilding from coronavirus and curbing climate change, according to Johnson's Downing Street office.

In remarks released ahead of the meeting, Johnson said close cooperation between London and Washington "will be crucial for the future of the world's stability and prosperity".

Johnson greeted Biden yesterday in the English seaside resort of Carbis Bay, ahead of the G7 summit. The US president touched down in



Britain late Wednesday ahead of the three-day gathering.

"It's gorgeous, I don't want to go home," Biden said of the seaside view as he walked with First Lady Jill Biden, Johnson and Johnson's wife Carrie.

The two leaders will hold talks before the summit begins today.

The new Atlantic Charter will outline eight areas where the transatlantic allies resolve to work together based around their "enduring values", Downing Street said.

They include addressing threats posed by cyberattacks, climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as scaling up joint pandemic recovery

work such, including genomic sequencing and variant assessments.

The two leaders are also set to agree several new policy priorities to underpin the charter, spanning travel, trade, post-Brexit issues in Northern Ireland and defence.

Analysts say Europe's bitter dispute with Britain over post-Brexit trade rules for Northern Ireland will haunt Johnson's G7 summit.

Ahead of the meet with Johnson, Biden camp warned Britain for imperilling the delicate peace in Northern Ireland.

"President Biden has been crystal clear about his rock-solid belief in the Good Friday Agreement as the foundation for peaceful co-existence in Northern Ireland," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters aboard Air Force One.

"Any steps that imperil it or undermine it would not be welcomed by the United States," said Sullivan, who declined to characterise Johnson's actions as imperilling the peace.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen confirmed yesterday that she would bring up the row when she and fellow EU chief Charles Michel meet Johnson.

UN REPORT ON CHILD LABOUR Numbers on rise after 2 decades

AFP, Geneva

The world has marked the first rise in child labour in two decades and the coronavirus crisis threatens to push millions more youngsters toward the same fate, the United Nations said yesterday.

In a joint report, the International Labour Organization and the UN children's agency UNICEF said the number in child labour stood at 160 million at the start of 2020 -- an increase of 8.4 million in four years.

The hike began before the pandemic hit and marks a dramatic reversal of a downward trend that had seen child labour numbers shrink by 94 million between year 2000 and 2016, it said.

Just as the Covid-19 crisis was beginning to pick up steam, nearly one in 10 children globally were stuck in child labour, with sub-Saharan Africa the worst affected.

The report warned that unless urgent action is taken to help ballooning numbers of families plunging into poverty, nearly 50 million more kids could be forced into child labour over the next two years.

"We are losing ground in the fight to end child labour," UNICEF chief Henrietta Fore told reporters, stressing that "the Covid-19 crisis is making a bad situation even worse."

"Now, well into a second year of global lockdowns, school closures, economic disruptions, and shrinking national budgets, families are forced to make heart-breaking choices."

A full 79 million children were considered to be doing hazardous work at the start of 2020, up 6.5 million from four years earlier, the report showed.

The study revealed that most child labour is concentrated in the agriculture sector, which accounts for 70 per cent of the global total, or 112 million children. Some 20 per cent of child labour meanwhile happens in the service sector and around 10 per cent in industry, it found.

BUILDING COLLAPSE At least 11 killed in Mumbai

AFP, Mumbai

At least 11 people, including eight children, were killed yesterday when heavy monsoon rains caused a residential building to collapse in a Mumbai slum, Indian authorities said.

Mumbai city authorities confirmed that seven other residents were injured in the incident late Wednesday even as search and rescue operations continued for several others feared missing. One source said at least 3 people are still missing.

Residents have been evacuated from nearby structures considered to be in a dangerous condition.

Of the injured, six were in stable condition, with one 30-year-old woman admitted to hospital in critical condition.

Collapses of poorly constructed buildings are common during the monsoon, which officially hit India's financial capital on Wednesday bringing widespread flooding and traffic chaos.

New era of robot war may be underway unnoticed

REUTERS, London

In March 2020, as Covid-19 locked down the world, what may have been the first autonomous drone attacks in history were taking place on a largely unwatched battlefield in Libya.

According to a UN report published in March this year, Libyan forces loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) used Turkish-made STM Kargu-2 drones to hunt down units loyal to former Libyan Field Marshall Khalifa Haftar.

The report stated that the four-rotor drones were programmed in "autonomous mode" to attack fleeing logistics convoys and other vehicles automatically, without further human intervention.

If correct, that would represent the first documented such incident on a battlefield - a development that has long been predicted and feared by military and

human rights experts alike. While drones have been a feature of the battlefield for years, they have still required a human being to operate the "kill switch".

That such a step may have taken place unheralded and largely unnoticed, however, should not be a surprise. The last two decades have seen a mass proliferation, downsizing and democratisation of technology once the preserve of the most powerful states.

Innovation is now much cheaper, and those willing to bend rules can find advantage.

Some campaigners have long called for a prohibition on autonomous killer drones. They had argued this should be done before such technology became a reality, but it may already be too late. Whether or not the March 2020 Libya strike was the first autonomous drone attack, it is unlikely to last - and there may well have been more since then.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Global plastics production falls

Global plastics production declined in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, only the third time since World War II that output has fallen, an industry body said yesterday. Output has fallen only twice previously, as a result of the oil crisis in 1973 and during the financial crisis in 2008. Worldwide output slipped to 367 million tonnes last year from 368 million in 2019, a 0.3 per cent decline, according to the industry federation PlasticsEurope. But output in China - which currently accounts for a third of global plastics production -- continued to grow by 1.0 per cent. In Europe, production of new plastics was down 5.1 per cent at 55 million tonnes last year. The 27-nation EU now accounts for just 15 per cent of worldwide plastics production, down from 21 per cent in 2010. The United States produces around 19 per cent of the world's plastics, compared with 20 per cent 10 years ago.

Russia calls Navalny US 'agent'

Russia yesterday suggested that Washington was quick to condemn the designation of Alexei Navalny's groups as extremist because the jailed Kremlin critic was in fact working for the United States. A Moscow court late on Wednesday ruled to designate Navalny's regional offices and his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) as "extremist", barring them from working in Russia. The US State Department called the action "particularly disturbing" and said it was part of a pattern of restricting fundamental rights in Russia. Prosecutors in April had requested that Navalny's organisations be hit with the "extremist" label, saying the group was plotting an uprising with support from the West.

Facebook to allow remote work

Facebook on Wednesday said it will give employees the option of sticking with remote work for the long term, even offering to help some interested in moving to other countries. Beginning on June 15, Facebook will let any employee whose job can be done remotely ask to work that way permanently, the internet giant told AFP. "We believe how we work is more important than where we work," Facebook said while sharing an update to its remote work policy. Facebook and other Silicon Valley firms shifted to remote work early in the pandemic, relying on the internet tools they create to get jobs done. Facebook said work schedules for those returning to offices will be flexible, but its guidance is for people to be on-site at least half the time.

JBS pays \$11m to hackers

JBS, one of the world's biggest meat processors, has paid bitcoin worth \$11 million in ransom to hackers to prevent any further disruption after a paralyzing cyberattack believed to have originated in Russia. This was the second multi-million-dollar payment to hackers in recent weeks, drawing attention to the broader threat posed by ransomware to essential infrastructure, services and businesses. Hackers had targeted the computer systems of Brazil-based JBS last week, impacting operations in the United States, Australia and Canada. A cyberattack in May forced the temporary shutdown of the huge Colonial fuel pipeline network in the eastern United States, and sparked panic buying in some states. Colonial paid \$4.4 million in ransom to regain control and restore operations.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation
Works Division
Plot No-E-5-C/1, West Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Administrative Area
Dhaka-1207.
Website: www.parjatan.gov.bd

File No. 30.32.0000.060.14.003.2021 Date: 08-06-2021

e-Tender Notice No-02/2020-2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works. Details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of work	Procurement method	Closing date & time
1	565444	Supplying, Installation, testing and commissioning of 750-800kg capacity passenger Lift at NHTTI & Hotel Abakash Building, BPC, Mohakhali, Dhaka.	OTM (NCT)	23.06.2021 15:30PM

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 portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 13:00 on the IFT mentioned date.

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

Engr. Md. Mahmud Kabir
General Manager (Works)
Deputy Secretary

GD-1183

facebook

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SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)
প্রধান কার্যালয়
মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০
বাংলাদেশ

তারিখঃ ১০/০৬/২০২১

উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত ৩টি প্রতিষ্ঠান (সোনালী ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১৮টি, জনতা ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১০টি ও রূপালী ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১৯টি) ২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/এসিস্ট্যান্ট হার্ডওয়্যার মেইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ার/সিনিয়র অফিসার (এসিস্ট্যান্ট হার্ডওয়্যার ইঞ্জিনিয়ার)' এর ৪৭টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রার্থীদের MCQ Test ও লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্বাচনের জন্য ই-টেন্ডার বিজ্ঞপ্তি।

ক্রম	শিরোনাম	বিবরণ
১	কাজের নাম	ব্যাংকার সিলেকশন কমিটির সদস্যভুক্ত ৩টি প্রতিষ্ঠান (সোনালী ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১৮টি, জনতা ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১০টি ও রূপালী ব্যাংক লি.-এ ১৯টি) ২০১৯ সাল ভিত্তিক 'এসিস্ট্যান্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার (আইটি)/এসিস্ট্যান্ট হার্ডওয়্যার মেইনটেন্যান্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ার/সিনিয়র অফিসার (এসিস্ট্যান্ট হার্ডওয়্যার ইঞ্জিনিয়ার)' এর ৪৭টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে প্রার্থিকভাবে যোগ্য ৪৬৩১ জন প্রার্থীর অভিন্ন প্রশ্ন সম্বলিত একাধিকসেটে ১ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী ১০০ নম্বরের MCQ Test এবং MCQ Test এর ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে ভিন্ন একটি তারিখে কম/বেশি ৫০০ জন প্রার্থীর ০২ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী ২০০ নম্বরের লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ এবং এর ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে মেধা ও রোলওয়ারী তালিকা (হার্ড কপি ও সফট কপি) প্রণয়ন ও প্রদান।
২	যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত উচ্চ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান/প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট/কনসাল্টিং ফার্ম যাদের বিগত ৫(পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে টেন্ডার দাখিলের তারিখ হতে) এক বা একাধিক কার্মদেশ/ছাত্র/আগতায় একক আয়োজনে সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সংস্থা/ব্যাংক বা আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে কমপক্ষে ১০০০ (এক হাজার) জন প্রার্থীর নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ ও ফলাফল তৈরীর অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে এরূপ প্রতিষ্ঠান।
৩	নির্দেশিকা ও সিডিউল	বিজ্ঞপ্তির নির্দেশনা ও শর্তাবলী সম্বলিত দরপত্র সিডিউল বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েব সাইট www.bb.org.bd এর e-Tender-এ পাওয়া যাবে।
৪	অংশগ্রহণ কার্যক্রম	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ই-টেন্ডারিং-এ অংশগ্রহণে আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহকে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েব সাইটে (www.bb.org.bd) রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্নকরতে নিজ নিজ ক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশ করে আর্থিক প্রস্তাবের নির্ধারিত ফর্ম পূরণপূর্বক যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও সংশ্লিষ্ট যাবতীয় কাগজপত্রাদির সত্যায়িত কপি আপলোড করতে হবে। দরপত্র সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রমাপক যাবতীয় কাগজপত্রাদি ব্যাংকার সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ে রক্ষিত নির্দিষ্ট টেন্ডার বক্সে দাখিল করতে হবে।
৫	দাখিলের শেষ সময়	২৭/০৬/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.৪৫টা পর্যন্ত।
৬	খোলার সময়	২৭/০৬/২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১১.০০টায়ে দরদাতাগণ অথবা তাদের প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্রসমূহ ব্যাংকার সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ে অনলাইনে খোলা হবে।
৭	অন্যান্য শর্ত	ক) পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে পরীক্ষার্থীর ধারণ ক্ষমতা ও অন্যান্য বিষয়ে বিএসসিএস এর সাথে আলোচনারূপে কেন্দ্র চূড়ান্ত করতে হবে। খ) অসম্পূর্ণ ও ত্রুটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র বিবেচনা করা হবে না। গ) কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বশেষ দরপত্র গ্রহণে বাধ্য নয় এবং কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

ডিসিপি: ৪৮/২০২১-১৮৪২
তারিখ: ১০.০৬.২০২১

"মুজিববর্ষের অঙ্গীকার
দেশী পণ্যের ব্যবহার"

আরিফ হোসেন খান
মহাব্যবস্থাপক, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক
ও
সদস্য-সচিব, বিএসসি

জিডি-১১৮৪

THE DAILY STAR CAMPUS STARS

ULAB looks to promote creative skills

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

"The Daily Star Campus Stars" is a show that highlights promising individuals who have excelled in their academics and extracurricular activities, alongside securing success in their professional paths. The second episode of the show took place on June 1, 2021, featuring panelists from University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

The online event was hosted by Shuvashish Roy, Head of Business, *The Daily Star*. The speakers included Professor Imran Rahman, Dean, School of Business, ULAB, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, Department of English and Humanities, ULAB, and Dr Samiya Ahmed Selim, Director, Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD), ULAB.

ULAB alumnus Ghulam Sumdany Don, Corporate Trainer and Chief Inspirational Officer, Don Sumdany Facilitation, and Soudatun Nahar Abony, a student of BBA, School of Business, ULAB, were also present.

ULAB strives to incorporate values of liberal arts and sustainability in their curriculum. According to the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking 2021, the institution is

placed at 156 in SDG 17 among 1115 global universities.

"Liberal arts teach people to think critically and question assumptions," shared Shuvashish Roy. Manzoorul Islam regarded ULAB as the pioneer of liberal arts education in Bangladesh.

Imran Rahman emphasised on the importance of students having co-ownership in the learning process. "The pandemic has shown how students are taking charge of their learning. At ULAB, we promote this culture by making them passionate about active learning," he asserted.

Looking back at his university days, Don Sumdany appreciated the role ULAB played in making him what he is today. "ULAB's robust curriculum allowed me to major in Media Studies and Journalism. I also earned a minor degree in Business Studies. It introduced me to a range of extracurricular activities and made me explore my hidden skills," he added.

Soudatun Nahar said that the institution has a welcoming atmosphere, as the teachers support students in all their endeavours. She is the current Vice President of ULAB Chess



Club and is actively involved with several other clubs. "I have dealt with unprecedented circumstances by gaining real-life experiences. These things go beyond classroom learning and enhance our life skills," he further said.

ULAB also promotes sustainability in

their courses as they integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the educational curriculum. "We have introduced a minor course in sustainable development, thereby linking it to various other courses. Furthermore, we have mapped the SDGs to all our courses," shared Dr Samiya Ahmed.

Recently, ULAB collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for building youth capacity in online communications for the SDGs. "We are going beyond classroom learning, using creative skills to achieve these goals. Through active involvement of students, we wish to incorporate these skills into their lifestyles," added Dr Samiya Ahmed.

ULAB encourages real-life learning amongst students, and supports many of them by providing financial assistance. To ensure the mental well-being of their students, they collaborated with Moner Bondhu, from where students can avail confidential one-to-one counselling.

"Individuals need to chase their passions to excel in life," shared Manzoorul Islam. "Teachers must motivate students to work outside the class curriculum. At ULAB, we help students find their passions, and identify their strengths and assets."

The author is a freelance journalist who likes reading, planning, and scribbling. Email: mislammonamee@gmail.com.



NURTURING DREAMS

The orchard of hope: Brothers change family fortune

MIRZA SHAKIL, FROM TANGAIL

As the household's only bread earner, Abdur Razzak, a rickshaw puller by profession, could not bear the educational costs of his kids, besides looking after a five-member family. His sons, Jewel, 24, and Alamgir, 22, worked in brick kilns and crop fields as day labourers to continue their studies. They are from Ratan Borish village in Tangail.

Jewel is a master's student of Economics at Rajshahi University, while Alamgir is a second-year student of Government and Politics at Jahangirnagar University. The siblings also run multiple online businesses.

"Our father stayed in a mess with other rickshaw pullers in Dhaka. He sacrificed a lot for educating and looking after us. I was determined to earn money on my own to support my family," shares Jewel.

However, after getting into university, Jewel's education took a hit due to financial constraints. Fortunately, he received a scholarship for two years from the non-profit organisation, Manush Manusher Jonno, USA.

During their summer vacation in 2018, Jewel and Alamgir started collecting mangoes from orchards in Rajshahi, and selling them online. They invested their savings from tutoring jobs into the business.

They also opened an online store for *Qurbani* animals, in preparation for Eid-ul-Azha.



Currently, Jewel and Alamgir are working from a mango orchard at Baneshwar village in Rajshahi.

PHOTOS: STAR

More recently, when their universities were closed in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, they started an online business for date syrup and natural honey from Rajshahi.

Furthermore, Jewel and Alamgir took their father back home from Dhaka, and set up a cattle farm near their house. During the Eid-ul-Azha season, Jewel released that the cattle-rearing business is quite profitable. "We did not want our father to be a rickshaw puller in Dhaka anymore, as it is a strenuous job, and he was unwell. For the last few months, he has been taking care of the cows at our farm," he says.

Currently, Jewel and Alamgir are working from a mango orchard at Baneshwar village in Rajshahi. They take orders under the banner of their virtual market, Fruits Hunt.

"When we started out, we supplied close to 30,000 kilograms of different mangoes across the country. This year, we aim to sell 50 tons of mangoes," Alamgir says.

Jewel and Alamgir's father shares that no matter what his sons do, he wants them to be honest human beings.

In the future, the siblings plan to create employment opportunities in agriculture for people in their village.

SPOTLIGHT

Beginning 'campus life' virtually

TIASHA IDRAK AND RUBAIYA CHOWDHURY

With educational institutions in Bangladesh shifting their activities to virtual platforms in the wake of Covid-19, we caught up with some first-year undergraduates to find out about their experiences with distance learning, and their expectations once campuses reopen.

Azra Humaira, a Mass Communication and Journalism student from Dhaka University (DU), finds it difficult to retain information while being confined to her home. She, however, enjoys bonding with her fellow classmates over their mutual disdain for online classes. She also added that her teachers are immensely understating.

Fardeen Azwad, a student of English at ULAB, was looking forward to the social aspect of university life - on-campus events, and face to face interactions with his teachers and peers. "But online classes and flexible deadlines mean that I can work on my own time and the process feels a lot more personal than a dictated style of teaching," he added.

Being in front of a screen for six to seven hours a day is nerve-wrecking and led to eye problems for Ayat Subah Alam who studies Electrical, Electronic, and Communication Engineering at Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST). Samia Nawsheen, a Mechanical Engineering student from the same university, often finds it difficult to concentrate during online classes.

Many students are still struggling to adjust to online classes due to poor network connections and financial constraints. "We have been accustomed to learning in classrooms for a long time. So, the concept of online learning is completely new," said Faria Fatema Sneho, a Mass Communication and Journalism student at



ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

DU. Session jams are also causing distress amongst public university students.

"Even though we are losing years to session jams, the loss of lives in case any students get infected, will be irreplaceable," asserted Sneho. As most of the students explained, vaccinations take precedence over in-person academic activities.

With daily life being shaped by the "new normal", these first-year students hope to live their university days to the fullest once these turbulent times are over. From co-curricular club activities and hangouts to resolving session jams, wishes pile up as they continue their learning online, for now.

The authors are freelance journalists. Write to them at corvixcorux97@gmail.com and rubaiyatasm8@gmail.com, respectively.



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 11, 2021, JAISHTHA 28, 1428 BS

Making Dhaka liveable again is challenging but not impossible

Revitalise basic civic amenities, create satellite cities

THE latest Economist Intelligence Unit's ranking of liveable cities has placed Dhaka as the fourth least liveable city in the world. While we already know the challenges brought about by the pandemic that has affected every city in the globe, Dhaka included, there is little reason for us to hide behind the "pandemic" excuse. We already know that Dhaka, with a density of 47,800 people per square kilometre, is bursting at the seams. The categories for the ranking are healthcare (our score is 16.7), culture and environment (a whopping 30), education (33.3) and infrastructure (26.8).

There is hardly any dispute that overpopulation of the city, caused by everything being Dhaka-centric, has resulted in the capital becoming more and more unliveable. We have a population of about 21,741,000 in this city, with the same length of road network but thousands of more vehicles (mostly private cars) being added every year. Are we surprised that, on normal days, we spend an average of one to two hours just to get from point A to point B? Suffocating gridlocks, inadequate public transport and disregard for traffic rules make travelling hellish for the majority of people. The same problem of too-many-people-for-too-little-resources is applicable in everything that relates to liveability. Although housing has not been included in the EIU's categories, this is a huge problem in Dhaka, with most residential areas being concrete jungles, having very little greenery, no parks for children to play in, poor drainage systems, inadequate waste disposal systems and broken, dilapidated roads that become unusable during heavy rains. With house rent depleting the lion's share of people's incomes, there is a large proportion of the urban population living in slums—should we talk about the liveability in these shanties? With unabated, unplanned construction over the decades, how can Dhaka city even breathe?

Our mayors have said they have master plans to improve the city. We sincerely hope they will have the resources, grit and backing of the government in carrying them out. But we cannot help but ask why, over the decades, this city has been allowed to deteriorate in this way. Decentralisation is the ultimate solution although there is practically no move in that direction so far. Decent jobs, good schools and universities, good hospitals—basic civic services—have to be available in other districts besides Dhaka so that people do not have to rush to the capital to live in subhuman conditions. Satellite cities could also take off much of the pressure.

But even if we leave aside the problem of overpopulation, the government must improve existing conditions and civic amenities. This would require a drastic reduction in private cars on the roads, increase in safe, efficient public transport, strict enforcement of the transport law and basic traffic rules, freeing rivers and water bodies from encroachers, a vigorous drive to clean the cities with heavy penalties for littering, installing an efficient garbage disposal system, increasing the sewerage networks, repairing broken roads and initiating low-cost housing projects for lower-income groups. Physical safety, with special emphasis on women's security, has to be a priority for the government as this is also a basic criterion of liveability of a city.

These are some basic prerequisites of a modern city and entail revitalising and revamping existing systems. Rooting out corruption, however, from agencies and bodies responsible for providing public services, is key to making any city liveable again.

Baffling remarks by the finance minister

Based on what information is he rejecting the data on new poor?

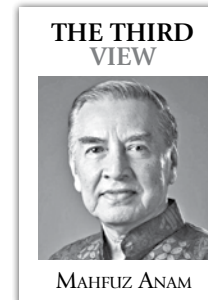
WE are befuddled at the finance minister's refusal to accept data on the new poor, released earlier through surveys conducted by private research organisations to measure the effects of the pandemic-induced income losses. The surveys were done by researchers working at some of the most reputed institutions of our country, and the data was collected through not one but multiple surveys, thus increasing the sample size. The finance minister's refusal to accept their findings, in our books, is quite disappointing.

The minister said he was only willing to accept data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. But the last time the BBS updated its poverty-related data was in 2019. What have the authorities been doing since then? Wasn't a national health crisis that would have inevitable economic consequences enough reason to conduct a survey on the number of poor in the country? If the finance minister is unwilling to accept anyone else's data, then why didn't he get the BBS to collect and publish its own data for the last few years? Why have they been sitting on their hands? Are people who are poor and suffering supposed to sit around and wait for them to update their data before succumbing to their miseries? With such a large manpower base, the BBS has no excuse for its inaction. And Covid cannot be an excuse either because the authorities could have easily conducted its own surveys with the help of technology.

What is worse is that the finance minister didn't even say that he was going to get the latest data on this or what he was planning. He simply refused to acknowledge the statistics on the new poor published by several organisations and that's it—giving the impression that he doesn't want to pursue this topic, lest he be asked to increase the budgetary allocation for the new poor or questioned why the budget does not take this most urgent matter into enough consideration.

This denial syndrome must stop, along with this attitude that people are not owed an explanation by their representatives. If the minister is unwilling to accept everyone else's data, the least he can do is explain on what basis he is rejecting the information and share his own with the rest of us, instead of refusing to even discuss the matter. Such refusal gives the impression that he does not want to acknowledge the extent to which the number of new poor has increased in the country. There is little logic to doubt the findings of these research institutes; instead the minister should find ways to alleviate the pandemic-induced economic hardship faced by the poor, old and new.

Pandemic's biggest lesson: Restructure the health sector to handle current and future pandemics



THE THIRD VIEW

MAHFUZ ANAM

SIMPLICISTICALLY put, it is a "procedure vs patient" issue—meaning a "bureaucracy vs ultimate beneficiary" tussle. We, of course, need procedures to work within, otherwise systems would collapse. But of the two, there should not be any doubt as to which should get priority, especially during a pandemic. "Patients" should have been at the centre of the focus but the focus went to "procedure"—meaning bureaucratic control—and that explains why only 24 percent of the development budget for the health sector was spent in the first ten months of the last fiscal year (2020-2021). While most of the block allocation of Tk 10,000 crore for Covid-19 emergencies in the previous fiscal was unspent, patients died due to lack of emergency health services. Tragedy after tragedy occurred when the health ministry was sitting on a Tk 29,247 crore budget allocation. While there were unbelievable sufferings endured by patients all over the country, especially in the big cities including Dhaka, the ministry could not find ways to spend taxpayers' money to provide emergency services to the sick.

The above was well-reflected in the planning minister Abdul Mannan's remarks on Sunday, June 6th, at an AmCham webinar that bureaucrats, despite being well-educated, are not smart enough to implement budget in a timely manner, for which this perennial difficulty may persist. "We have to carry out more reforms in the bureaucracy." We recall how, when the whole country was groping in the dark for ways to fight this unknown virus that crippled the world and us, Tk 100 crore for research lay untouched because bureaucrats could not agree on its methodology—another example of procedure getting the better of the goal.

A public service focused institution like the health ministry cannot be run solely by the same bureaucratic principles and practices as in other ministries that do not deal with human lives. In fact, Covid has revealed, like never before, that a ministry like health must be headed and manned to a significant extent by health professionals who understand the nature of the problems better and have spent their lifetime perfecting ways of serving the people. Of course, there will have to be bureaucratic structures and procedures entwined with this ministry's work, but these should not have the dominance in decision making as they do now.

At present, the whole system is so structured that professionals are always at the periphery of the decision-making process. A good example of it is the working of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, consisting mainly of health experts and professionals. It was set up in April 2020 and, through most of its tenure, its recommendations fell by the wayside. Only recently, some of its suggestions have been reaching the higher levels of the government, proving the failure of the bureaucratic leadership. It is our view that if the health ministry was driven by health professionals instead of bureaucrats, the resultant performance of the ministry would have been dramatically

lack qualified human resources like doctors, nurses and medical technicians as well as proper equipment. For decades, these formidable health facilities have remained heavily underutilised due to lack of proper management and accountability.

Some basic statistics will reveal the challenging situation we are in. According to the official "Health Bulletin", 2019, there are 6.73 registered physicians per 10,000 people. Directly in the government employ, there are only 1.55 doctors, 0.88 nurses and 0.60 medical technicians per 10,000 individuals. Prof. Nezamuddin Ahmed of BSSMU commented in 2019 that Bangladesh's health sector is like a "cart before the horse—a huge infrastructure with a huge shortage of human resource." We can easily imagine the quality and effectiveness of the health services provided with such a population-medical personnel ratio. If we add to this the fact of absenteeism, the picture becomes truly grim.

To bring about a dramatic change in this situation, we need to start at the bottom. If we just take the Community Clinics and transform them into functioning, albeit small, healthcare facilities, then we will have revolutionised our health services. At the moment, the CCs exist more in name rather than in

better. There was a time when health professionals used to be appointed in senior positions in the ministry. But those days are long gone. Our suggestion is not a restoration of the old but a complete overhaul and new orientation with the ultimate beneficiaries—the people—at the centre of its thinking.

Ironically, Bangladesh has one of the most elaborate healthcare infrastructures in the developing world. There are about 13,500 Community Clinics (CC) at the union level, followed by 421 Upazila Health Complexes (UHC) along with 1,312 union sub-centres that UHCs also run at the upazila level, followed by 62 district-based hospitals and specialised facilities with the tertiary level at the centre. This four-tier structure—community, primary, secondary and tertiary—gives us a solid public infrastructure to base our health services on. In addition, there are 5,321 public hospitals and clinics and 9,529 registered diagnostic centres.

But as we have reported numerous times in the past, government facilities

any effective and functional manner. It is run by a Community Healthcare provider whose professional qualifications are better left unsaid. These personnel are of a rudimentary level, their knowledge base is very basic and mostly relates to pregnancy-related issues, and cannot really respond to any other medical need. We can start by investing here first.

The Upazila Health Complex—the next level—which is run by a health and family planning officer, has an annual budget of Tk 1 crore. Ironically, though not surprisingly, they lack the capacity to spend this money. A UHC has digital X-ray machines, ultrasound machines and so on. But due to lack of technical staff and the frequent absence of doctors and nurses, people are deprived of services that they are entitled to from these facilities. Again, the biggest challenge is the absence of qualified medical personnel. Here is another scope to invest.

Considering the above, how can the health ministry justify spending only a small portion of its allocated fund of Tk

ministry which, he claimed, is mainly responsible for big-time corruption in the ministry. No investigation was done about the allegations he made. There was a time when it was customary for such allegations to be investigated. Not anymore. Because there is no accountability.

We recall the scandal connected with the Regent Hospital and JKG Healthcare company and the high-powered connections that those scandals revealed. We also have not forgotten the case of driver Abdul Malek, who had property worth Tk 100 crore and whose main source of income was influence-peddling as he was the driver of the health secretary. Nothing much came out following his arrest by RAB. We also recall that no action followed a report by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of January 2019 that identified sources of graft in the health sector, especially related to purchase of machines, surgical equipment, medicine, etc. Later, when instances of corruption surfaced again, the ACC chairman said, "Had the health ministry followed the ACC's recommendations made last year, unbridled corruption in the health sector could have been reined in."

Bigger allocation and bigger spending by the health sector must be accompanied by a substantial reform of the health sector, especially of the ministry in which strict methods of transparency and accountability have to be installed, particularly in the areas of purchase where the maximum scope for corruption exists.

We are in the throes of the second wave of coronavirus. We did well in the first, although we are not sure how. We may not be so lucky the second time around. Thus, quick reforms in the health sector are a must. As an immediate task, a greater number of health professionals must be brought into the decision-making structure of the health ministry.

The existing Technical Advisory body should be allowed greater involvement and given more power. Immediate steps should be taken to enlarge the services of the Community Clinics and Upazila Health Complexes. The ministry should revisit the recommendations made by the ACC in 2019 and implement the most important ones forthwith. This is important because as the ministry spends more money—and we want them to—the more it will have to check the scope for corruption and waste. As it exists now, the DGHS is too powerful, too big, has too many people, and handles too much money. It should be broken up into more specialised sectors which should be led by health experts and not bureaucrats.

The pandemic is a crisis of a yet-unknown nature. The virus is mutating regularly and posing ever newer threats to the world and to us. We need to be prepared not only for the present but also for what new shape this virus takes, as well as for the newer pandemics that wait in the dark. Global health experts and the WHO are repeatedly warning us about an uncertain future. To tackle the ever-mutating virus and the unknown future health threats, we need to undertake fundamental reforms in our health sector and make it more efficient, science-based, professionally-led and pro-people.

The failure to rise up to the occasion will be a failure whose consequences is totally unknown to us. We have no right to throw our future generation into such uncertainties.

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Mahfuz Anam is Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star.



File photo of a patient giving her sample for Covid-19 test at the Mugda Medical College and Hospital in the capital. Hospitals have been overwhelmed by the recent surge in Covid-19 infections in the country.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

29,247 crore? For the coming fiscal year, an allocation of another Tk 32,731 crore has been proposed, with Tk 10,000 crore specifically given for the Covid crisis as before. Are we not looking at a similar performance in the coming year without any reform of any kind in the health sector? In a webinar organised by BIDS on Wednesday, June 9th, Abdur Rouf Talukder, senior secretary of the finance division, expressed his shock saying, "I watched with surprise that the health ministry could not spend a major portion of the funds we gave them amid the pandemic."

In the new budget proposal, there are no hints of any health-sector reform nor any significant changes at the CC and UHC levels.

Let us not have the illusion that a spending rise will automatically lead to better health services. It may lead to greater corruption, as we have seen in the recent past. Even during the pandemic, irregularities in procurement of lifesaving accessories were frequent. Take, for example, the Tk 350 crore scandal against which doctors protested resulting in the removal of the head of the Central Medical Stores Depot. Interestingly, the disgraced director wrote a letter alleging that a powerful "syndicate" was operating in the health

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Why we should restrict the use of plastic bags

QUAZI SALEH MUSTANZIR

OVER the last couple of weeks, while the residents of Dhaka city, blistered by the scorching heat, were pining for rainfall, the subsequent heavy downpour inundating many parts of the city with knee-deep water could not eventually please its dwellers. Each year, the city witnesses such a scenario largely due to plastic bags that stand in the way of our sewerage channel and block the passage of storm water. The wholesale use of plastic bags is no longer a local problem now. Rather, it has become a major concern for the environmentalists and policy makers around the world.

Every day, plastic shopping bags in huge quantities are being thrown away by the shoppers just after single use. These bags are very thin, and having aerodynamic properties they fly in the air, get entangled in trees or find their ways in water. The bags, thus getting out of the recycling process, are posing a serious threat to our environment. They obstruct the storm water drains, clog the sewerage system and cause floods.

Plastic is a petroleum product. Both the production and recycling process of plastic consume a significant amount of non-renewable fossil fuel such as oil, gas, etc. and emit a huge quantity of carbon in the atmosphere. It is estimated that 8 percent of oil production in the world is utilised to produce plastic.

Plastics, once released in the environment, do not biodegrade. It takes

Every day, plastic shopping bags in huge quantities are being thrown away by the shoppers just after single use. These bags are very thin, and having aerodynamic properties they fly in the air, get entangled in trees or find their ways in water. The bags, thus getting out of the recycling process, are posing a serious threat to our environment.

1000 years for those just to photodegrade, i.e. to break down into smaller pieces. Since they do not rot and turn into compost, they decrease the fertility of the soil resulting in less production of crops.

As many of us may know, oceans cover about 72 percent of the Earth's surface. The human-generated garbage that finds their way into the seas via rivers, canals, harbours, etc. constitutes enormous patches known as "gyres". The most famous of such patches is the Great Pacific garbage patch—a whirlpool in the Pacific that draws trash to an area as big as the size of Texas. A major portion of the trash is made up of leftover plastics. The North Pacific Gyre is one of the six gyres in the world; the others are located in the South Pacific Ocean, the North and South Atlantic, and the Indian Ocean. These gyres together represent 40 percent of the sea and plastics constitute 90 percent of their garbage.

It goes without saying that these accumulated plastics have a very harmful

effect on marine life. They break into pieces after photodegradation and find their ways into the stomachs of marine animals which ingest them, mistaking them for jellyfish, a favourite food item for them. The ingestion of plastic can cause death to the sea creatures. In 2007, a whale with four hundred pounds of plastic in its stomach was found dead off the coast of California.

Likewise, a lot of dead seabirds were found with their stomachs filled with plastic materials. Researchers found almost every kind of fish examined in the central Pacific region with their guts having some fragments of plastic. The plastic obstructs, chokes, clogs or stops the passage of food of marine animals. Not only does the physical obstruction by plastic products account for their death but chemical toxicities too can contribute to their death. Around 100,000 million marine animals die each year swallowing plastic. The ocean water getting mixed with particles of plastic

turns into a "global microplastic soup" or "plastic soup" that is very poisonous and intoxicates the marine animals, which in turn enters our food chain and becomes a menace to our health.

Plastic is responsible for many disorders in the human body. BPA, one of the components of plastic, causes harm to our reproductive system and gender neutrality among babies. BPA causes breast cancer, prostate cancer, early puberty, miscarriage, obesity, type 2 diabetes, ADHD and autism. Polyvinyl chloride causes rhinitis, asthma, eczema, allergies, premature birth, obesity, thyroid dysfunction, insulin resistance, etc. Researchers say that plastic releases harmful dioxin into the air, and people who work in the plastic industries run the risk of contracting cancer and other diseases. Moreover, coloured plastic bags containing chromium and copper can cause allergies in the human body.

Given the harmful effects of plastic on the environment and human health, we should urgently find a way to restrict the use of plastic shopping bags. However, in doing so, we must make sure that alternative options—such as jute bags or paper bags, which are eco-friendly—are available in the market and easily accessible for the common people. There is a misconception that plastic bags brought comfort to our life. Just look back to our grandparents' way of life. They did not use plastic shopping bags, but that did not make them less happy.

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Quazi Saleh Mustanzir is Deputy Secretary, Planning Commission, Dhaka.

Will G7 and COP26 herald a new era?

Climate action groups gear up for a busy 2021



AN OPEN DIALOGUE
ABDULLAH SHIBLI

As the world strives to fast-forward the economy in an attempt to recover from the pandemic, climate change has rightly emerged as a major concern in all international forums. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warned in its "Net Zero By 2050" report released last month that our current reliance on fossil fuels must drop fast, and that drastic measures are necessary if climate disasters are to be averted. Fortunately, policy leaders across the globe are not unaware of these issues, and activists have not allowed the immediate cause—i.e. fighting the pandemic—to overshadow the long-term goal: an urgent need to address the threat of climate change.

An important contributor to this conversation is the group Climate Action Pathways (CAP) that has organised 20 virtual conferences over the previous year in anticipation of the three-day G7 summit, which starts today, and COP26 in November. I attended the 18th session of CAP on May 19 with Quamrul Chowdhury, Lead CAP & LDCCS Lead Climate Negotiator, moderating the discussion. Several experts from around the globe also participated in it.

For those who need a reminder, COP26 is the next annual UN climate change conference. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and it will be attended by countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—a treaty that came into force in 1994.

This is the 26th session of COP and will be hosted in partnership between the UK and Italy. The conference will be held in Glasgow from November 1-12, 2021—a year later than planned due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Climate Channel based in Toronto, Canada has brought together negotiators, academics, policymakers, and climate activists to create a better awareness of the challenges we face in implementing

the Paris Agreement to limit emissions to control global warming and to find innovative and effective adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Pushing for more ambitious goals
COP26 will be the biggest summit the UK has ever hosted, with around 30,000 attendees expected if it goes ahead as a fully physical event. Many people see it as the most significant climate event since the 2015 Paris Agreement, when all the signatories to the UNFCCC agreed to keep temperatures well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

COP26 is critical because it's the first moment when countries must set out more ambitious goals for ending their contribution to climate change under the Paris Agreement. In this context, the IEA's recent report on the state of policy actions to combat global warming is worth noting, given the fact that the influential agency is not an environmental group but an international organisation that advises world capitals on energy policy. "Nations around the world would need to immediately stop approving new coal-fired power plants and new oil and gas fields and quickly phase out gasoline-powered vehicles if they want to avert the most catastrophic effects of climate change," warned IEA.

Climate Action Pathway on Climate Channel

CAP's recent virtual conference was participated, among others, by Felipe Diaz of Chile; Raju Pandit Chhetri and Manjeet Dhakal, climate negotiators from Nepal; Prof. Alan Miller, an internationally recognised authority on climate finance and policy from the USA; and Prof. Jacqueline Klopp of the Earth Institute of Columbia University. Quamrul Chowdhury kicked off the discussions with a call to nations to prioritise the task of setting a course to reach a net-zero emission in the future and limiting the temperature rise to 1.5-degree Celsius.

One of the participants mentioned that last year was already 1.2 degrees Celsius hotter than pre-industrial times—dangerously close to the 1.5-degree limit



Climate advocates are anxiously looking forward to the tone of the three-day G7 summit which starts today in the scenic Carbis Bay, Cornwall, UK.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

set by the scientific community. Under current commitments, including the recent ones, we are still heading for a disastrous temperature rise of 2.4 degrees by the end of the century.

Prof. Alan Miller, quoting from a recently published World Bank report, praised the efforts undertaken by the government of Bangladesh to promote its Solar Home Systems project. Miller, who played an important role during the negotiations for the Montreal Protocol (on CFC), encouraged future climate negotiators to address other climate pollutants, including CO2 and methane, in smaller groups. We need "more actions and not just talk", he cautioned.

G7 summit in the UK

Various climate advocates are anxiously looking forward to the tone of the G7 summit to be held in the scenic Carbis Bay, Cornwall. The host, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office has announced that he will use the UK's G7 Presidency to unite leading democracies to help the world fight and then build back better from the coronavirus, and also create a greener, more prosperous future. The UK has invited Australia, India, South Korea

and South Africa as guest countries to this year's G7.

In addition to addressing geo-political issues and "championing our shared values", the summit can be expected to take measures to lead global recovery from the coronavirus while strengthening resilience against future pandemics. Other relevant areas to be tackled include promoting our future prosperity by championing free and fair trade, tackling climate change, and preserving the planet's biodiversity.

All the participants at the CAP online forum recognised that many world leaders have not yet come to grips with the extraordinary transformation of the global energy system that is required to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Fatih Birol, IEA's executive director, said in an interview that, "The sheer magnitude of changes needed to get to net-zero emissions by 2050 is still not fully understood by many governments and investors." Net-zero emissions don't mean countries would stop emitting carbon dioxide altogether. Instead, they would need to sharply reduce most of the carbon dioxide generated by power plants, factories and vehicles.

Any emissions that could not be fully erased would be offset, such as by forests or artificial technologies that can pull carbon dioxide directly out of the atmosphere.

One of the major concerns that I shared with the CAP meeting is that once the ravages of coronavirus are mitigated, developing and developed countries could go back to their prior posture where each side blames the other for the failure to address the major outstanding gaps in funding, carbon reduction goals, and mitigation and adaptation. The USA has been pointing the finger at India and China for their reliance on coal-powered plants, while the developing countries are asking the richer countries to own up to their role in providing financial support to compensate for the "loss and damage".

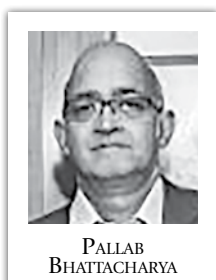
President Biden's pledge to cut US greenhouse gases at least 50 percent below 2005 levels by the end of this decade faces significant political obstacles. Nonetheless, at a virtual summit of 40 world leaders that Biden hosted last month, Japan, Canada, and Britain joined the European Union in committing to steeper cuts while China, India, and Russia did not.

Need for an urgent plan of action

The IEA advocates that if the world's governments want to change course quickly, they need to pay attention to some important benchmarks in the coming decades. In 2021, nations should stop approving new coal plants unless they are outfitted with carbon-capture technology to trap and bury their emissions underground. By 2025, governments worldwide would start banning the sale of new oil and gas furnaces to heat buildings, shifting instead to cleaner electric heat pumps. By 2035, automakers would stop selling new gasoline- or diesel-fuelled passenger vehicles. By 2050, virtually all cars on the roads worldwide would either run on batteries or hydrogen. A very bold and laudable plan, and a tall order, indeed.

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist, currently serving as a Senior Research Fellow at the International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI), a think-tank based in Boston, USA.

Assam's NRC: Through the prism of a migrants' descendant



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

MUCH has been written about the flawed and controversial National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the northeastern

Indian state of Assam and the mammoth humanitarian crisis that has triggered. But what makes young award-winning journalist Abhishek Saha's book "No Land's People: The Untold Story of Assam's NRC Crisis" stand out easily is that the author has woven the struggles of his family and ancestors, who came to Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan two years after the 1947 Partition, with the predicament of lakhs of those who now find themselves excluded from the NRC and their desperate efforts to get included in it with whatever documents they can get hold of. The book poignantly brings out the hardship of the people running from pillar to post to get the documents to prove their citizenship, many of them ending up in detention centres.

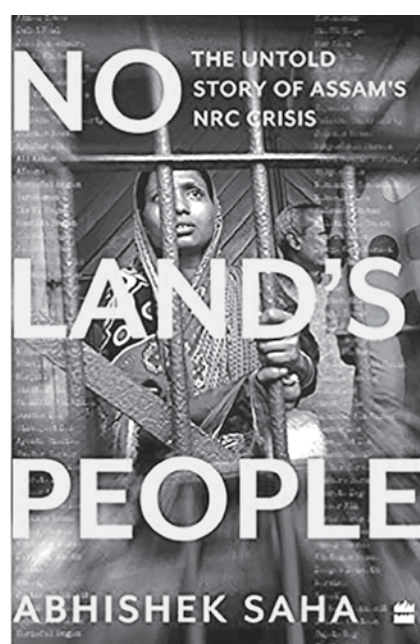
Published by Harper Collins, India, the 303-page book—as the author makes it clear in his note—is based primarily on his reportage for *The Indian Express* newspaper, and divided into four parts and 22 chapters. Almost every chapter is splattered

with several anecdotes of the plight of his own family and ancestors and other immigrants, the humiliation and trauma they went through, the frantic search for documents in the run up to the finalisation of the NRC and the exercise to prove their citizenship. As Saha says: "Assam citizenship imbroglio is a deeply personal story for me; it strikes at the core of my being."

The trials and tribulations faced by his family being from the then East Pakistan have left scars on the psyche of not only Saha but also many other migrants. One particularly traumatic incident Saha recalls is how his father, pursuing higher studies in Guwahati in 1979 when the movement against "foreigners" had begun in Assam, was "gheraoed by a group of Assamese seniors" as he was coming out of his class at the Guwahati Medical College and forced to write on a piece of paper "that he was a Bangladeshi and had obtained a permanent residence certificate" from the Barepta district administration by bribing officials.

He adds: "Baba remembers the incident as the worst day of his college life. Never had he ever been humiliated like that." The exercise of writing the book from the perspective of a Bengali migrant family could have easily run the risk of being seen as biased in dealing with this sensitive issue in Assam. But Saha has succeeded in taking a dispassionate view of the NRC crisis.

As the book tells its readers, Assam



"No Land's People", by Abhishek Saha.

is a cauldron of "large-scale migrations. Its tea plantations, oilfields and coalfields attracted migrant workers from eastern and central India." Tracing the trajectory of migrations into Assam over the years, the book reminds how "Hindu Bengalis, fluent in English, came to avail themselves of fresh opportunities that colonial rule opened up, leading to allegations of their hegemony over the Assamese; landless Muslim peasants from East

Bengal came to cultivate fertile land, encouraged by colonial policies and some Muslim leaders; Marwaris from Rajasthan arrived to trade, Nepalis came as soldiers and cattle-herders; and refugees from East Pakistan came in batches after Partition."

An important piece of statistics in the book quoting the 2011 language census in Assam is that the population of Assamese speakers stands at 48.38 percent, as against the 28.91 percent of Bengali speakers in the state.

Two messages coming out of the book are: (1) the ethnic and linguistic fault lines in Assam had existed much before the Partition of India; and (2) denial of the fact that "migration is an undeniable human reality." The book quotes a report written by CS Mullan, a colonial officer of the then Indian Civil Service, in 1931 which pointed to the threats posed by in-migration in Assam to the land and culture of "native Assamese people." The book's author says that Mullan's report remains a reference point even today in Assam. Saha argues that "much of the political foundation of contemporary Assam" was shaped by the illegal migrant issue and it was against this backdrop that the 1951 NRC in Assam was prepared.

Having extensively chronicled the problem of cross-border immigration in Assam and the failure to draw up a correct NRC, the author maintains in the epilogue to the book that "it can be argued that only a reliable list of citizens—separating out non-citizens

living illegally in the state—can put the historical anxieties of Assam to rest..." With this, Saha appears to tread into a grey and debatable area: who will certify a "reliable" NRC? That apart, the 2019 NRC was conducted by a bureaucracy susceptible to manipulation and corruption. What is the guarantee that a similar exercise by the same administration would produce the desired result? This is, however, not to say that there is no need for a documentation culture in India. The challenge is to make NRC as widely acceptable as possible.

"No Land's People" leaves the readers with a sense of scepticism. The debate over who belongs to Assam and who does not remains unresolved. Secondly, the linguistic, ethnic and religious divides in Assam always lurk behind the façade of "syncretic and inclusive" culture in the state. The author admits this in the "Introduction" (page xvii) to the book.

And he ends the book on that theme by pointing to a collaborative musical composition by two cultural legends, Hemanga Biswas and Bhupen Hazarika, to propagate the message of Bengali-Assamese unity during the riots in Assam over Bengali language in 1960. However hard Saha would like to believe in the message of the Biswas-Hazarika composition, he himself dismisses "all wishful thinking (as) the realist in me begs to differ."

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent of *The Daily Star*. He writes from New Delhi, India.

QUOTABLE Quote

MACKLEMORE
(1983-)
American rapper

A life lived for art is never a life wasted.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Summer music?
- 6 Gives a hoot
- 11 Knight wear
- 12 German sub
- 13 Nary a soul
- 14 Be eco-friendly
- 15 First numero
- 16 Fourth-yr. students
- 18 "Aw, shucks!"
- 19 Particle
- 20 Casual top
- 21 1963 Paul Newman film
- 22 Reverbed
- 24 Livens (up)
- 25 Convent group
- 27 Diner buy
- 29 "The Joy Luck Club" author

DOWN

- 1 Vienna's river
- 2 Like O. Henry tales
- 3 Easy progress
- 4 Take in
- 5 Electra's brother
- 6 Use foul language
- 7 Homer's pop
- 8 Bit of guesswork
- 9 Slacken
- 10 Spirited horses
- 17 Bureaucratic nuisance
- 23 Motor need
- 24 Be a snoop
- 26 Drained
- 27 Some Louvre paintings
- 28 Clarke of "Game of Thrones"
- 30 Made amends
- 31 New parents, e.g.
- 33 Church areas
- 39 Wisdom bringer
- 41 Dir. opposite SSW

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

G	E	S	E	B	L	O	A	T		
A	G	A	I	N	L	E	D	G	E	
P	O	R	T	S	I	N	D	E	X	
T	E	N	A	N	T					
A	S	H	A	U	K	E	T	E		
M	O	W	E	R	S	B	A	I	T	
P	L	A	N	E	T	E	A	R	T	H
L	O	R	E	R	A	T	T	L	E	
E	N	D	F	I	T	H	E	R		
C	A	N	I	T	R	H	O	N	E	
A	M	A	Z	E	O	N	R	Y	E	
T	Y	P	E	S	W	O	M	E	N	

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT GETTING MARRIED

DON'T YOU WANT TO GET MARRIED?

ACTUALLY, I'D LIKE TO JUST SKIPTO BEING A RICH DIVORCEE

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

GO, HAMMIE, GO!

RUN, BUDDY!!

HUSTLE! HUSTLE!

YOU CAN MAKE IT!!

GOOD THING THE BATHROOM IS CLOSE.

WE SHOULD CUT BACK ON THE GATORADE.

US to provide AstraZeneca

FROM PAGE 1

to 80 million AstraZeneca shots in stock.

The US has been making a list of the countries to supply vaccines, but Bangladesh was not listed among the countries that would be the first to receive the doses, because infections and deaths are low here.

"We then said that we are in crisis because some 1.5 million people, who had got the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, have yet to get the second dose. This has created a crisis for us. If they don't get the second dose, the first dose will be ineffective," Momen said.

He said Bangladesh then reached out to the White House. Bangladeshi diaspora community -- over 1,600 doctors and other professionals in the US -- also petitioned the White House, seeking the AstraZeneca vaccine doses.

"Finally, we have been informed that they [the US] will give us AstraZeneca and other vaccines through COVAX. The number [of shots] has yet to be known."

He also said that six lakh Chinese vaccines are also arriving on June 13. Besides, the Chinese Communist Party will provide one lakh medical equipment.

Asked if the issue regarding the price of the Chinese vaccine has been settled, the foreign minister said, "In business, there is secrecy. We had signed a non-disclosure deal. We should abide by the law. We said it [revealing of the price] was an inadvertent mistake. They have understood it."

A cabinet division official last week told reporters that the price of each dose of the Chinese vaccine would be \$10. A health ministry official later said the Chinese government was annoyed about the matter and Bangladesh government regretted the unintentional public disclosure.

Momen yesterday said the government will soon make a formal announcement on vaccine co-

production in Bangladesh since there has been progress in an ongoing negotiation.

It is up to the vaccine-manufacturing countries to choose local pharmaceutical companies for vaccine co-production in Bangladesh, he added.

Bangladesh has been in talks with Russia and China over co-production of vaccines.

The foreign minister regretted that the rich countries are procuring 99.7 percent of the global vaccines despite the calls for making Covid-19 vaccines a public good as the poor countries are suffering from shortages of the doses.

He said for 25 million people in Australia, there are 93.8 million doses of vaccines.

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES FOR PALESTINE

Momen thanked Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries for donating some 1,400kg of essential medicines to Palestine, saying that Bangladesh has deep relations with Palestinians who have been persecuted for decades.

"Until an independent Palestine is established, we will continue to support them. We don't accept the occupation army of Israel. Israel repeatedly approached us [for establishing diplomatic relationships]. We did not agree," he said.

Bangladesh has helped China, Europe, US, UK, Kuwait, Maldives, India, Nepal, and Bhutan by supplying medicines, PPE and even sent doctors to some countries, but any help for Palestine has a different dimension.

The common people of Bangladesh came forward and donated money for the Palestinians. The prime minister also donated \$50,000 for Palestine.

Palestinian Ambassador Yousef Ramadan thanked the Bangladesh government, general public and also the pharmaceutical companies for the support.



Health workers brief people about precaution after receiving a dose of the Covaxin against the Covid-19 coronavirus at a health centre in New Delhi, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Model mosques to help spread essence

FROM PAGE 1

The PM made the remarks while addressing the inaugural function of 50 luminous model mosques newly constructed across the country, fulfilling one of her election pledges.

She opened the 50 model mosques virtually from the Gono Bhaban on the occasion of the Mujib Borsho.

The mosques have been built as part of the government's move to set up 560 such mosques/centres of excellence at district and upazila levels, aiming to spread Islamic fraternity, real Islamic values and practices, conduct research, create strong infrastructures for prayers for both men and women, provide religious teaching and training and enhance public awareness against social diseases.

Hasina said Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country. "So, it's essential that Islamic rituals and values are practised here properly in addition to promotion of Islamic culture."

"We've already completed the construction of 50 mosques, out of 560, so that Bangladesh can also substantially contribute to preaching and spreading of our holy religion -- Islam -- in the future," she said.

The PM noted that it was delightful and glorious that Bangladesh emerged as a developing country following the footsteps of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had served a lot for Islam and set up the Islamic Foundation.

She called upon all to be more conscious and mindful to keep the society free from the curses of child marriage, dowry, violence against women, and drugs. "You'll have to create awareness against these [social menaces]. We've built these model mosques in that way."

Hasina urged Islamic scholars (Ulema), teachers and guardians to make efforts to keep the young generation away from the path of militancy as it tarnishes the image of Islam.

She said militancy has been allowed to grow in the name of Islam. "Killing

people and unleashing militancy in the name of Islam were seen not only in Bangladesh but also elsewhere in the world."

Mentioning that the militants believe that they will go to the heaven by killing people, Hasina said, "Can anyone say who has made his or her way into the heaven by killing people? No one can say that. But they [militants] have badly damaged the image of the holy Islam."

Stressing that Islam is the best religion in the world, she said the most unfortunate matter is that a handful of people has given a bad name to the holy religion by creating militancy, killing people and blasting bombs. "It not only undermines the sanctity of our religion but also tarnishes its image throughout the country," she added.

The PM said Islam is the most tolerant religion as it allows all to enjoy their rights and teaches treating all people as human beings.

Referring to the glorious history of Muslims in knowledge and science, she said the Muslims had once been the progressive community in the practice of knowledge in every sector. "But why're the Muslims lagging behind today?" she said.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan chaired the inaugural function, joining it from Osmani Memorial Auditorium here.

Later, Hasina heard speeches from devotees virtually from model mosques in Khulna, Rangpur and Sylhet.

On April 5, 2018, Hasina laid the foundation stone for the construction of Model Mosques and Islamic Cultural Centres involving Tk 8,722 crore.

The government is implementing the project with its own fund to fulfill the pledge Hasina made in the election manifesto before the 2014 national election to build a model mosque in every district and upazila of the country.

Besides, 100 more model mosques will be opened in the second and

third phases by 2021, marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, according to officials of the project.

Each model mosque is being constructed on a 40-decimal plot under three categories.

Sixty-nine four-storey mosques are being constructed in district towns and city corporation areas under Category-A, while 475 three-storey ones in upazilas under Category-B and 16 four-storey ones in coastal areas.

Each Category-A mosque has 2360.09-sq feet floor, while B or C-category mosques have 1680.16-sq feet floors each.

A district model mosque has enough space for some 1,200 devotees to simultaneously offer prayers. The upazila-level mosques can accommodate 900 devotees at a time.

Each spectacular mosque is costing Tk 15.62 crore in district town or city area, while Tk 13.52 crore in upazila areas and Tk 13.61 crore in coastal areas.

In a model mosque cum-Islamic cultural centre, there are separate prayer halls and ablution places for men and women.

The centres have Islamic libraries, Islamic book sale corners, training centres and pre-registration for hajj aspirants and Imams; Hifzkhana (where the holy Quran is taught and memorised by students) and the offices of Islamic Foundation.

Another significant addition to the mosques is autism corners and guest rooms for tourists (both local and foreign). They also have arrangements for Islamic research and religious activities and funeral activities. Besides, facilities are there for educating children and the mass people.

The mosques also offer housing facilities for Imams and Muezzins and offices for its staffers. One of the most interesting additions is the toilet facilities for the physically-challenged devotees.

Aviation sector faces rough

FROM PAGE 12

The BPC decision, put in effect on June 8, has increased the price of each litre of jet fuel by Tk 3. A litre of the fuel now costs Tk 63.

In October, the price was Tk 46, meaning the BPC has increased the price by 37 percent in the last eight months.

In December, the price of a litre of jet fuel was Tk 48, in January, it was Tk 53, in February Tk 55, in March Tk 60, and in April it was Tk 61. Then in May, the price was lowered by Tk 1.

Mofizur Rahman, secretary general of Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star that there was no rationale behind the price hike at a time when prices were stable in the international market.

"The country's aviation industry is on the verge of collapse due to the first and second wave of the pandemic. The increased jet fuel cost will be an additional burden. The BPC's monopoly and whimsical decisions should come to an end," said Mofizur, also the managing director of Novoir.

"At a time when we need the government's support on an emergency basis, the BPC has illogically increased the jet fuel price," he added.

"Our survival is at the stake now."

Kamrul Islam, general manager (public relations) at the US-Bangla Airlines, said, "Aviation is one of the worst-hit sectors by the pandemic. Operations on many international routes have been suspended since March last year. The number of flyers is also low.

"The increase of jet fuel prices is a severe blow to the local airlines.

"We will have no choice but to increase airfare."

He also said 40 to 46 percent of operational expenditure of an airlines is fuel.

"We will be bankrupt and the aviation industry will collapse if we don't raise the airfare in accordance with the fuel price," he said, adding that tourism and hotel businesses were related to the aviation industry.

"If the aviation industry does not sustain, tourism and hotel businesses will be affected."

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam, who is the editor of travel magazine Weekly Monitor, said different countries were looking into how they could support their aviation industry.

"But our government has so far done nothing in this regard. Instead, it has increased the jet fuel price although oil prices have not increased in the international market.

"I can't find any reason that warrants the jet fuel price hike. Survival of the country's airlines industry is at stake. Due to the repeated hikes in fuel price, it will become a big challenge for the local airlines to compete with foreign airlines."

Syed Mehdi Hasan, director (operations and planning) at the BPC, yesterday said the local price of jet fuel corresponded to the international market.

Mehdi, head of a committee that decides jet fuel prices, also said jet fuel still costs less in Bangladesh than in India and other neighboring countries.

BPC had not hiked the price to make profits. "We did it to keep up with the international market."

Spike in guerilla attacks

FROM PAGE 12

threatened "exemplary punishment" to those who threw the grenades. The authorities also said persons providing useful information about the activities of miscreants would be duly rewarded.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN JHA AND KISSINGER

In a lunch conversation with Indian Ambassador Jha, Henry Kissinger, the US President's assistant for national security affairs, said if India took unilateral military action, it would have to mean the end of any assistance on the US's part. It would turn the issue into an international problem involving China, the Soviet Union and other great powers, in which the Bengal problem would soon be submerged, he added.

The Indian ambassador made a very eloquent defence of the Indian position. He said six million refugees had already entered India. They were in the most heavily populated states, in the states with extreme radical elements. They could shift the voting balance in Bengal, for example, entirely in the direction of the Communists. It was a matter in India of its internal stability -- there was nothing that the government wanted to do less than to go to war, but something had to be done, he added.

When Kissinger asked Jha for a solution he replied that it wasn't enough to offer the refugees to come back while new refugees were being created all the time. What was

needed was a political conversation and a political solution, which he personally believed were unlikely except on the basis of independence for East Pakistan. He thought the US could stop economic aid to Pakistan or suspend it as an interim measure.

Kissinger asked for four or five months to work on the matters. He told the Indian representative that to show goodwill the US government would immediately review the aid request to see whether they could substantially increase the refugee aid.

AID TO BE DISTRIBUTED

An official of the United Nations who just returned from Pakistan said today that Yahya Khan's government would distribute United Nations relief supplies in East Pakistan. Ismat Kittani, an assistant secretary general, said he did not yet know how assurances could be obtained that the aid would actually reach the East Pakistanis but indicated that he was counting for verification on foreign officials and on the United Nations staff workers who are returning to jobs here.

On the other hand, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced today that 3 million extra doses of cholera vaccine would be flown into India to protect the Indian population as refugees were moved further inside the country to new camps.

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

Buddhadeb Dasgupta no more

FROM PAGE 12

renowned films are Neem Annappurna (1979), Grihajuddha (1982), Andhi Gali (1984), Bagh Bahadur (1989), Tahader Katha (1992), Charachar (1993), Lal Darja (1997), Mondo Meyer Upakhyan (2002), Swapner Din (2004), Kaalpurush (2008) and Janala (2009). Urojajah (2018) is his last film.

He received accolades in the country and abroad for directing films. He won National Film Awards for movies such as 'Kaalpurush', 'Lal Darja', 'Charachar' and 'Bagh Bahadur'. He also received awards at the Madrid International Film Festival and Athens International Film Festival. He also taught at the University of Burdwan in India. Artistes from Bangladesh also condoled his death.

Noted actor Champa worked with the director in the film 'Lal Darja'. Dasgupta was impressed after seeing Champa's work at a festival in Delhi. He called her afterwards to approach her for a role in his film.

"He was one of the wisest directors I ever met," said Champa. "I feel very lucky that I had the opportunity to learn so much from him. 'Lal Darja' is one of the best films of my career. It helped me to see myself as an actor in a new light."

Dasgupta studied economics at Scottish Church College. He was the third child amongst his nine siblings. His mother was from Dhaka, and his maternal grandfather a registrar at Dhaka University.

Dasgupta started his career with a documentary in 1968, "The Continent of Love". His first film was Dooratwa (1978). Some of his most

renowned films are Neem Annappurna (1979), Grihajuddha (1982), Andhi Gali (1984), Bagh Bahadur (1989), Tahader Katha (1992), Charachar (1993), Lal Darja (1997), Mondo Meyer Upakhyan (2002), Swapner Din (2004), Kaalpurush (2008) and Janala (2009). Urojajah (2018) is his last film.

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Junta hits Suu Kyi with graft charges

FROM PAGE 12

Democracy (NLD) party. CHARGES 'ABSURD'

Her lawyer, Khin Maung Zaw, dismissed the corruption charges as "absurd". "There is an undeniable political background to keep her out of the scene of the country and to smear her prestige," he told AFP, saying she could face long prison terms on the secrecy and corruption charges.

"That's one of the reasons to charge her -- to keep her out of the scene." Suu Kyi spent more than 15 years under house arrest during the previous military rule before her 2010 release.

The junta has previously said it would hold fresh elections within two years but has also threatened to dissolve the NLD.

Junta leader Min Aung Hlaing has justified his power grab by citing alleged electoral fraud in the November poll, which Suu Kyi's NLD won in a landslide.

Elsewhere in Myanmar yesterday, twelve people were killed when a military plane carrying a senior monk and several donors to a religious event crashed in a central region of the country.

Lack of research

FROM PAGE 12

on Wednesday, "Ranking is not our focus. We are working on improving the quality of education and basic research. If we can continue it, we will achieve a better ranking soon."

DU, which was in the 601-plus bracket in 2012, slipped to the 701-plus bracket in 2014 and slid further in 2019.

Contacted, retired professor of Dhaka University Syed Manzoorul Islam said, "We are far behind in all the criteria that are set for ranking. If we look at the state of our research, library facilities, the number of foreign students, the administration system, transparency in teacher selection process, etc., we will know the causes."

"We have publications but they do not have international acceptability," said Manzoorul Islam, who is now a professor in University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

"It is important to be well-ranked in terms of the amount of researches that are being cited in other studies. Several universities in India, China and Singapore are moving forward. If we look at them, we can understand our shortcomings."

"Every stage of education -- from primary to higher education -- is interconnected. But not a lot of planning goes into our education. We had an education policy which was inactive; we had a strategic plan [2017-2030] but that is also in deep freeze."

"Our budget for education is very poor. We should have allocated 25 percent of our national budget or six percent of GDP for education to improve its quality. All in all, we need a political will for it [to improve]," he added.

Anu Muhammad, an eminent professor of Jahangirnagar University, said most of the research in Bangladeshi universities was conducted by researchers on their own; institutions are not usually involved in it and do not even record those work. Rankings are related to the accessibility of information on the universities' websites.

"We have a lack of qualified teachers and quality research. When we look into our teacher recruitment process, we don't see any better situation in the future. The government does not want universities to improve; it thinks of the institutions as their own to do with them as it pleases."

"The government doesn't like people who come forward with competent and independent initiatives in education and research. This attitude is a threat for students," he added.

Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan of DU international relations department said rankings have some criteria which are not suitable for Bangladeshi universities, such as foreign teachers and foreign students.

"We had some international students before 2012; now it's decreasing. We have reduced focus on the research sector, where the institutional effort is most important. While teachers are doing well, they don't have any good platform to exhibit it," he said.

"A website is the identity of a university, but we have been quite inattentive about it. In addition, our provided PhD and Mphil are not up to standard. Most of our teachers go abroad to get an advanced degree. We have some advanced research in science-related faculties, but the scenario of other faculties is poor."

Tanzimuddin aims to focus on publications, academic environment and teacher recruitment process to improve the rankings.

On the other hand, Salim Reza Newton, a Rajshahi University professor, said criteria of such rankings hurt the university's main spirit.

"We have to decide for ourselves what kind of universities we want. I don't think our universities are running well. We have lots of opportunities to develop our institutions, but it should be discussed among ourselves. If we decide to let rankings dictate to us, it will not be auspicious for us," he said.

Bangladeshi universities have no "systematic effort" to improve themselves, he opined.

The Daily Star tried to contact BUET VC Satya Prasad Majumder but failed to reach him over phone.

Twenty-six Asian universities were named in the global top 100 in the latest ranking like the previous year, the highest number from this continent till date.

In Asia, the top two universities are the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, also in Singapore, at 11th and 12th spots in the global rankings respectively.

Eight Indian and three Pakistani institutes have made it to the top 500 in the latest rankings.

India sees record

FROM PAGE 12

times, many experts believe India's death toll is several times higher than the official number, meaning it could be over a million -- which would make it the world's highest.

As crematoriums struggled to handle the wave of deaths over the past two months, many families placed bodies in the holy Ganges river or buried them in shallow graves on its sandbanks.

Those people would likely not have been registered as Covid victims.

"Under-reporting is a widespread problem, not necessarily deliberate, often because of inadequacies," Rajib Dasgupta, head of the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, told Reuters.

Ambitious Italy face talented Turkey in curtain raiser



For the first time in history, Video Assistant Referee (VAR) will be used in the European championship.

Wembley Stadium will host the semi-final and final for the second time within 25 years.

The opening phase will feature six groups of four teams, with the top two in each progressing to the knockout stage. The four best third-place finishers will also qualify for the last 16, with all of the knockout rounds being played as one-off matches.

If a match cannot start or cannot be played in full, it is, as a rule, played or completed on the next day, if possible at the same venue.

If two teams facing each other in their last group game are dead level, and draw, their position in the group is determined by a penalty shoot-out.

Each team has a maximum of 18 people allowed on the substitutes' bench, including a team doctor.

Goalkeepers can be replaced during the tournament in the event of physical incapacity, even if one or two in the squad are still available.

AGENCIES



Euro 2020 finally kicks off tonight as Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal prepare to defend their title and world champions France seek a rare double a year after the tournament was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

France's fearsome forward line makes them favourites to win a third European crown at the pan-continental event, while top-ranked Belgium and a youthful England side will be major threats.

Five years on from their last major tournament appearance, Italy take centre stage once more when they welcome Group A rivals Turkey to Rome's Stadio Olimpico for the opening game of Euro 2020 tonight.

The Azzurri's failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup was a



national sporting tragedy for the four-time world champions.

But manager Roberto Mancini has since built an attractive, exuberant side that comes into the tournament with ambitions of reaching the London final, five years on from the heartbreak of a penalty shoot-out defeat to Germany in the quarter-finals of Euro 2016.

Having three home games in front of around 16,000 fans will be a boost to Italian hopes, which are high inside and outside the training camp.

"This Italy team has more quality than the 2016 team, but we have to prove that," said defender Alessandro Florenzi.

However, the Azzurri face a tough opening day task against a

resilient and talented Turkey side that impressed during qualifying stages and has a penchant for performing in big games.

Turkey took four points from two games against world champions France in Euros qualifying and has since beaten the Netherlands 4-2 in a World Cup qualifier and earned 3-3 scoreline draws with Germany and Croatia in international friendlies.

History is on the hosts' side, though. Italy have never lost to Turkey in 10 previous meetings in all competitions, winning seven and drawing three.

Meanwhile, state-of-the-art technology will bring Martin Garrix, Bono and The Edge together with fans across Europe through virtual performances for a celebratory curtain-raiser prior to the opening match of UEFA Euro 2020 in the Stadio Olimpico in Rome.



Mohammad Naim.....70

DPL T20 kicks into top gear

SPORTS REPORTER



A five-wicket haul, the highest total, a flurry of sixes in the final over and the highest individual score of the tournament were all witnessed in the sixth round of the Dhaka Premier League T20 yesterday.

Abahani Limited rode on a blistering opening stand between Mohammad Naim and Afif Hossain to post 183 for five in 20 overs, the highest total in the league this season, as they clinched a 25-run win over Shinepukur Cricket Club.

After being asked to bat, Naim and Afif laid the foundation by adding 111 runs for the opening stand before the latter departed for a 42-ball 54 that included four sixes and three fours. At the other end, Naim went on to reach his fifty off just 35 balls before he was dismissed for 70 off fifty balls with four sixes and four boundaries.

Following a break due to rain, Shinepukur were set a revised target of 149 runs from 17 overs and ended on 123 for five. Pacer Saifuddin bagged three wickets for the bowling side, who, with five wins in six games, now sit on top of the points table.

Young Mahmudul Hasan Joy scored an unbeaten 85, which was the highest individual score of the league so far, but even his magnificent knock was not enough for Old DOHS as they were on the receiving end of a six-wicket defeat to Gazi Group. Mahmudul hit seven sixes and three fours. DOHS, however, posted 136 for seven in 20 overs.

In reply, Gazi were bolstered by a collective approach from their batsmen and chased down the target for the loss of four wickets with an over to spare to register their third win from six games.

Elsewhere, an enthralling encounter between Prime Doleshwar and Prime Bank Cricket Club went down to the wire before Doleshwar fell four runs short and sustained their first defeat in the league.

Needing 31 runs off the last over with a wicket in hand in chase of 152 runs, Doleshwar tail-ender Kamrul Islam struck four sixes to pacer Rubel Hossain, leaving Doleshwar needing a boundary to tie and a six to win off the final ball. But after his heroics, Kamrul could manage only one run, much to Prime Bank and Rubel's relief.

Earlier, Prime Bank posted 151 for seven in 20 overs riding on Mohammad Mithun's 55. In reply, Doleshwar were in a spot of bother right from the start before Kamrul, who also bagged two wickets, changed the complexion of the game with a 12-ball 38.

Meanwhile, pacer Salauddin Shakil's maiden five-wicket haul guided Sheikh Jamal to a comfortable six-wicket win over Partex SC. The left-arm seamer ended with figures of five for 16 from 3.3 overs as Partex folded for 104. In reply, Sheikh Jamal reached the target with six wickets and 16 balls to spare.

Shakib Al Hasan and Mohammedan continued their poor run as they faced a third consecutive defeat, being thrashed by nine wickets by Legends of Rugganj.

For the second time in six games, Shakib was dismissed for a duck as Mohammedan struggled right from the start. Shuvagata Hom's half-century enabled them to post 113 for nine, a target Rugganj chased down for the loss of just one wicket on the back of an unbeaten fifty from Pinak Ghosh.

In the other match of the day, Khelaghar SKS registered five-run win over Brothers Union (D/L method).

PLAYERS TO WATCH

From Kylian Mbappe to Cristiano Ronaldo, Harry Kane to Robert Lewandowski and Gareth Bale to Kevin de Bruyne, established stars are set to shine across Europe this summer. It will also be the perfect opportunity for young players to showcase their talents as fans get the chance to savour some of the best players on the planet. There will be some unfamiliar faces hoping that this is their breakout tournament in the way the 2018 World Cup was for France's Kylian Mbappe. There is plenty of talent on show among the 24 teams involved and players like -- Alexander Isak (Sweden), Phil Foden (England), Jamal Musiala (Germany), Pedri (Spain), Joao Felix (Portugal), Jeremy Doku (Belgium), Jules Kounde (France), Gianluigi Donnarumma (Italy), Dominik Szoboszlai (Hungary), Nuno Mendes (Portugal), Eric Garcia (Spain), Donyell Malen (The Netherlands), Ilya Zabarnyi (Ukraine) and Marcus Thuram (France) -- could make a huge impact at the tournament.



PHIL FODEN



JOAO FELIX



ALEXANDER ISAK

Djokovic and Nadal set for another epic duel

AGENCIES



World No. 1 Novak Djokovic and No. 3 Rafael Nadal, the two goliaths of the game, are headed for yet another collision in one of the French Open semi-finals tonight.

The winner will meet the survivor in today's first semi-final between No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas and No. 6 Sascha Zverev in Sunday's Roland Garros final.

There is no clear favourite whenever these two maestros play against each other. However, one has to give Nadal the upper hand given the match is being played on the Parisian Clay.

Djokovic will be looking for some good old-fashioned revenge against Nadal, who won last year's final for the loss of just seven games. Djokovic was simply pulverized by Nadal in that meeting, and had no answer for the Spaniard's heavy groundstrokes.

Needless to say, he will be hoping for a different outcome this time around. But to do that



Djokovic will need to open up the court with angled cross-court shots and use the drop shot to get Nadal off the baseline. The Serb's first serve, which has earned him a lot of free points this tournament, will also need to be on point if he is to upstage the "King of Clay" at his favourite hunting ground.

Djokovic predicted a "great battle" when he continues tennis's most prolific rivalry in today's semi-final.

"It's not like any other match. Let's face it, it's the biggest challenge that you can have playing on clay



against Nadal on this court. It doesn't get bigger than that.

"There's that extra tension and expectations. The vibes are different walking on the court with him. But that's why our rivalry has been historic I think for this sport.

"I'm confident. I believe I can win, otherwise I wouldn't be here. Let's have a great battle."

Rather unusually, they are meeting in a semi-final than a final, courtesy of Spaniard Nadal having dropped down to world number three and being placed in the same

half of the draw as top-seeded Djokovic.

Should Djokovic manage to get the better of Nadal on Friday he will be the favourite to take only his second French Open title having won it in 2016 when Nadal abandoned the tournament due to a wrist injury.

Since then, Nadal has been unbeatable, extending his record title haul to a jaw-dropping 13.

"Obviously it's a well-anticipated semi-final," said Djokovic, who has 18 Grand Slam titles, two behind the men's record shared by Nadal and Roger Federer.

The pair have faced off 57 times, with Djokovic holding a marginal 29-28 lead but Nadal outdistances the Serb 10-6 in Grand Slam events, including a sweeping 7-1 record at Roland Garros.

The upcoming match will be their first semi-final meeting since Wimbledon 2018.

Nadal won their last match in the Italian Open final in May this year and has not lost to Djokovic on clay in five years.



BURNS CONTINUES GOOD FORM

England opener Rory Burns, who rescued his side out of trouble in the first Test with a 132-run knock at Lord's, raises his bat after making half-century during the first day of the second Test against New Zealand at Edgbaston yesterday. The left-handed batsman hit 81 as England reached 185 for 6 in 63 overs. Earlier, England captain Joe Root won the toss and elected to bat as James Anderson became the hosts' most-capped player of all time. Anderson, already Test cricket's leading all-time paceman with 616 wickets, was making his 162nd appearance, surpassing the English and record he had shared with retired former captain Alastair Cook.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BFF to introduce salary structure

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is contemplating the introduction of a salary structure for the national footballers in hope that it will enhance the performance of the national football team.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin met five national players -- Ashrafat Islam Rana, Bishwanath Ghosh, Saad Uddin, Mahbubur Rahman Sufil and Tutul Hossain Badsha -- who could not be part of team for the World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers due to injuries and disclosed his plan at an informal meeting at the BFF House yesterday.

"It will be selected by a technical committee comprising foreign and local staff. I want the players to be in a win-win situation. There will be three categories in the salary structure, which I believe will bring competition among the players because contracts will be reviewed on the basis of performance."

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UNIV'S POOR SHOW IN GLOBAL RANKINGS

Lack of research, quality publications key reasons

Say noted educationists



"Several universities in India, China and Singapore are moving forward. If we look at them, we can understand our shortcomings."

RETIREE DHAKA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR
SYED MANZOORUL ISLAM



"The government doesn't like people who come forward with competent and independent initiatives in education and research."

JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR
ANU MUHAMMAD

MUNIR MOMTAJ AND ASIFUR RAHMAN

Lack of support for research and a dearth of quality publications are the main reasons for Bangladeshi universities lagging behind in most of the world rankings, said educationists. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, four eminent teachers of three different universities said not recruiting qualified teachers, non-participation of foreign teachers

and students and the unavailability of latest information on university websites are among the causes. On Wednesday, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) published the world university rankings for 2022, in which Dhaka University (DU) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) failed to make any progress. QS evaluates 1,300 universities across the world according to six

metrics: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, and international student ratio. Like the previous year, both universities were placed in the 801-1,000 bracket. DU Vice-chancellor Prof Md Akhteruzzaman told The Daily Star

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3



Illegal structures on both sides of a railway lines have been removed for constructing an elevated expressway from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kutubkhali on Dhaka-Chattogram highway. This photo was captured from the capital's Mohakhali rail crossing area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Spike in guerilla attacks

JUNE 11, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

GUERRILLA ATTACKS CONTINUE

Mukti Foj guerillas made a series of attacks on Pakistani positions in Cumilla sector in the last few days, killing at least 28 Pakistani soldiers, according to Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Twenty soldiers were killed when guerillas ambushed a Pakistani army column near Fakirhat on June 10, 1971.

Eight more were killed in the Miabazar area. The freedom fighters also threw grenades at the branch offices of Pakistan National Bank, Muslim Commercial Bank, Habib Bank, Town Hall and the Judge Court in Cumilla town.

Road communications in Kasba area of the same sector were disrupted and the power station of Brahmanbaria was damaged in a grenade attack.

Guerillas also launched fresh offensive in Sylhet sector where there were battles at Teliapara and Mirzapur. Recent reports from Dhaka also confirmed that guerillas were active in the East Pakistan capital.

Country-made grenades were thrown at several important buildings in Dhaka. Martial Law authorities in East Pakistan had

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Aviation sector faces rough ride

Jet fuel prices hiked; domestic air travel to get pricier

RASHIDUL HASAN

Air travel within the country is going to get costlier as Padma Oil Company, the only source of jet fuel in the country, has once again increased the price of the fuel. This is the seventh time in eight months that Padma, a subsidiary of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, has increased jet fuel prices, dealing a another blow to local carriers that have yet to recover from the sharp decline in business due to the pandemic. Aviation industry insiders told The Daily Star that the local airlines that operate international flights will lose their competitiveness. Air travel will inevitably get costlier and it is the passengers who will have to spend more, they added.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

India sees record deaths

South Asian countries turn to China, Russia for Covid vaccine help

AGENCIES

India yesterday recorded a global record of more than 6,000 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours after one state dramatically revised upwards its data, stoking suspicions that the country's toll is much higher than reported. According to health ministry figures, 6,148 people died in the previous 24 hours, taking total fatalities to almost 360,000, the world's third highest. The previous world record according to

an AFP tally was 5,527 in the United States on February 12, although this was also due to an upwards revision of earlier deaths. On Wednesday the eastern state of Bihar hiked its death toll by around 4,000 to almost 9,500 after reviewing death records, officials said. Bihar's High Court in Patna demanded an audit of the figures after allegations that the local government was hiding the scale of infections and deaths. With record-keeping poor even in normal

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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 11

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-30 5-00 6-50 8-15
JAMAAT 3-57 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

NATURE QUEST

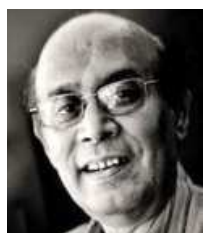
A black-naped monarch, also known as black-naped blue flycatcher, recently spotted in the Satchhari National Park in Habiganj's Chunarughat. This bird generally feeds on insects and is found mostly in southern and south-eastern Asia.

Buddhadeb Dasgupta no more

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Noted Bengali filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta passed away at his Kolkata residence yesterday. He was 77, and had been suffering from kidney-related diseases. He is survived by his wife Sohini Dasgupta, also a filmmaker, and two daughters. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her condolences over his death. "Saddened at the passing away of eminent filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta. Through his works, he infused lyricism into the language of cinema. His death

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POST-COUP MYANMAR

Junta hits Suu Kyi with graft charges

AFP, Yangon

The Myanmar junta has hit deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi with corruption charges over claims she accepted illegal payments of gold and more than half a million dollars in cash, state media reported yesterday. The country has been in turmoil since the generals ousted Suu Kyi on February 1, with more than 850 civilians killed in a brutal crackdown by security forces on near-daily protests against the coup. The 75-year-old Nobel laureate, who has been in custody since the putsch, is facing a raft of wide-ranging criminal charges, including sedition and breaching a colonial-

era secrecy law. The latest charges relate to allegations by the former Yangon region chief minister that Suu Kyi illegally accepted \$600,000 in cash from him along with around 11 kilograms of gold. The Anti-Corruption Commission found evidence that Suu Kyi had committed "corruption using her rank", according to the Global New Light of Myanmar, a state-run newspaper. "So she was charged under Anti-Corruption Law section 55." She is also accused of abusing her authority when renting two areas of land for her charitable foundation. After weeks of legal wrangling,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

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SHARMIN GROUP is one of the fast growing 100% export oriented Woven Garments Manufacturing Companies specialized in Men's, Ladies and Children's casual trousers, shorts, shirts, skirts & jackets with in-house embroidery, printing & washing facilities in Bangladesh. As part of expansion of our business & present set up, the Group is looking for qualified Bangladeshi or Foreign Nationals for the following vacant positions:

Sl	Position	Qualification	Experience
01	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to foreign degree	Minimum 20 years experience in the similar field
Marketing & Merchandising			
02	Executive Director (Marketing & Merchandising)	Graduate/Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to Textile & Apparel background	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
03	General Manager (Marketing & Merchandising)	Graduate/Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to Textile & Apparel background	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
04	Manager (Merchandising)	Graduate in any discipline. Preference will be given to Textile & Apparel background	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
HR & Administration			
05	Executive Director (HR)	MBA in Human Resource Management	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
06	General Manager (HR)	MBA in Human Resource Management	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
Compliance			
07	Manager (Environment)	B. Sc in Environmental Science	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field
Planning			
08	Director (Production Planning)	Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to IE background	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
09	General Manager (Production Planning)	Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to IE background	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Industrial Engineering			
10	General Manager (IE)	B. Sc in Textile Engineering	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
11	Assistant General Manager (IE)	B. Sc in Textile Engineering	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field
Production			
12	Production Director	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
13	General Manager (Production)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
Quality			
14	General Manager (Quality)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
15	Assistant General Manager (Quality)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Embroidery & Printing			
16	Manager (Embroidery & Printing)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field
17	In-Charge (Embroidery & Printing)	SSC/HSC	Minimum 06 years experience in the similar field
Accounts & Finance			
18	Director (Finance)	FCA	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Audit			
19	Director (Audit)	FCA	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
20	General Manager (Audit)	ACA	Minimum 05 years experience in the similar field
Commercial			
21	Director (Commercial)	Masters in any discipline	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
22	General Manager (Commercial)	Masters in any discipline	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
23	Asstt. General Manager (Commercial)	Masters in any discipline	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
24	Manager (Commercial)	Masters in any discipline	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field
Design & Product Development			
25	General Manager (Design)	Graduate in Fashion Design	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Store			
26	Director (Store)	Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to supply chain management	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
27	General Manager (Store)	Masters in any discipline. Preference will be given to supply chain management	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Maintenance			
28	General Manager (Maintenance)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
29	Asstt. General Manager (Maintenance)	Graduate in any discipline	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field
Construction			
30	Project Director (Construction)	B. Sc in Civil Engineering	Minimum 15 years experience in the similar field
31	General Manager (Construction)	B. Sc in Civil Engineering	Minimum 10 years experience in the similar field
Information Technology			
32	General Manager (IT)	B. Sc in Computer Science	Minimum 12 years experience in the similar field
33	Manager (IT)	B. Sc in Computer Science	Minimum 08 years experience in the similar field

Job Location: Ashulia/Rajendrapur/Valuka.

Application Procedure: Candidates willing to take challenges and meet the above requirements are encouraged to apply along with updated resume and recent 2 copies of passport size photographs to the **Managing Director, Sharmin Group, Narashingapur, P.O. Zirabo, Ashulia, Dhaka-1341** or email your application along with scanned photograph and resume to admin.sg@sharmingroup.com

Application Deadline: 30 June 2021

Persuasion in any manner will disqualify the candidature. The Management reserves the right to accept or reject any or all application without assigning any reason.