



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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## The republic of BUREAUCRATS!

They're given the helm of state bodies while public representatives, professionals ignored; governance experts raise alarm



"Ministers have become too dependent on bureaucrats. All power has gone to the bureaucrats and they are controlling everything."

EMERITUS PROFESSOR SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY



"The way the bureaucrats are being appointed in different government or statutory bodies, it seems there has been a change in the government policy."

AWAMI LEAGUE LAWMAKER SABER HOSSAIN CHOWDHURY

PARITHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Over the years, the government has put present and former bureaucrats at the helm of almost all state bodies, some of which should be led by professionals with specific expertise.

This development, as seen by governance experts, is a kind of government's non-confidence in public representatives or professionals outside the civil service.

This, however, is not due to the dearth of qualified people beyond the bureaucracy but the lack of political commitment and lack of respect for competition and specialisation, they observed.

"During the British era, we were under colonial rule. During the Pakistani period, we were under military bureaucracy. Then we fought to have the country governed by elected representatives. But the bureaucratic system still prevails," Dhaka

University Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury told The Daily Star.

"There is a parliament but that is not effective. An elected government is there but elections are not transparent," he said.

"Ministers have become too dependent on bureaucrats. All power has gone to the bureaucrats and they are controlling everything."

Recently, the government appointed a retired bureaucrat as the treasurer of Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University, stirring criticism among the teachers.

They argued that a teacher is more suitable for the post since the budget and financial issues are related to academic activities of the university. They also termed the appointment "unethical" and "unacceptable".

Earlier, the government appointed two

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## Administering first-jab vaccine set to resume

Another 6 lakh doses arrive as gift from China

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The authorities are going to resume administering the first shot of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of this week, about a couple of months after its suspension due to a shortage of jabs.

Both the Chinese Sinopharm and Pfizer vaccine jabs will be given to people as the first shot, Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh has already received 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine shots from China as gift and 106,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine under the COVAX facility, a global vaccine-sharing initiative.

"Those who have already registered for vaccine will get the shots. Sinopharm

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## HC orders action against 6 Barishal policemen

POOR HANDLING OF CASE AGAINST 4 MINORS

Curtails criminal jurisdiction of a magistrate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to immediately suspend six police personnel and curtail the criminal jurisdiction of a senior judicial magistrate for acting beyond their authority while handling a rape case involving four children in Barishal.

The confinement of four children in connection with a rape case in October 2020 was illegal and unconstitutional, observed the HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah.

The court also ordered the suspension of a probation officer in Bakerganj for failing to

"They will continue violating the fundamental rights [of children], if stern action is not taken against them."

HC OBSERVES TURNING DOWN THE APOLOGY OFFERED BY THE COPS

discharge duties.

Delivering the verdict on a suo moto rule, the HC observed that Senior Judicial Magistrate Enayet Ullah demonstrated poor acumen about the Children Act 2013 while dealing with the case against the four children.

The bench said the children's court cannot refuse bail to a child accused under section 29 of the Children Act, 2013.

The HC also observed that Enayet Ullah did not have the jurisdiction to deal with the case and ordered the law ministry secretary to immediately withdraw the criminal jurisdiction of Enayet Ullah.

The unconditional apology offered by Enayet

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## Gruesome

Kushtia cop guns down woman, her son, a trader in broad daylight

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A police official was arrested after shooting to death a woman, her seven-year-old son, and a man in broad daylight in Kushtia town yesterday.

The incident took place in Customs Junction area around 11:45am. The victims are Asma Khatun, 27, her son Robin, and Shakil Khan, 34. All of them are from Naturia village of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila.

Shakil used to work in a Bkash agent's shop in the town. His father, Mesbah Rahman, filed a murder case with the Kushtia Model Police Station against assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police Shoumen Roy, said Officer-in-charge of the police station Shabbirul Alam.

Shoumen Roy, who was stationed in Khulna's Fultola



ASI Shoumen Roy

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

বিদেশি সিরামিক পণ্যের আহ্বাসন থেকে দেশীয় শিল্প রক্ষার্থে জাতীয় বাজেট পুনর্বিবেচনা করতে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর প্রতি আকুল আবেদন

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, জাতির জনকের আদর্শ দেশ গড়ার লক্ষ্যে আপনার সুযোগ্য দূরদর্শী নেতৃত্বে বাংলাদেশ আজ বিশ্ব মানচিত্রে উন্নয়নশীল রাষ্ট্র হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা পেয়েছে। আপনার নীতি সহায়তা পেয়ে দেশের সিরামিক শিল্পেও ব্যাপক প্রসার লাভ করেছে। দেশি-বিদেশি প্রায় ৯ হাজার কোটি টাকা বিনিয়োগে ৬৮টি সিরামিক টেলিউওয়ার, টাইলস ও স্যানিটারিওয়ার শিল্প-কারখানা প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি হয়েছে ৫ লক্ষাধিক লোকের। ৫০টিরও বেশি দেশে রপ্তানি করে বছরে ৪ শতাধিক কোটি টাকার বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা আয় এবং স্থানীয় বাজারে ৫ হাজার কোটি টাকার আমদানি বিকল্প পণ্য বিক্রির ফলে বৈদেশিক মুদ্রার সাহায্য হচ্ছে।

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরের প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটে দেশীয় শিল্পের স্বার্থ সংরক্ষণ ও মেইডইন বাংলাদেশ ত্র্যভিৎ প্রচেষ্টা এগিয়ে নিতে বেশ কিছু সুবিধা দেয়ায় আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি। কিন্তু বাজেটে সিরামিক শিল্প প্রতিরক্ষণের কোন প্রস্তাব প্রতিফলিত হয়নি। উপরন্তু বিদেশি টাইলস আমদানিকে উৎসাহিত করে স্থানীয় সিরামিক শিল্পের জন্য ক্ষতিকর সিদ্ধান্ত আরোপ করা হয়েছে। করোনায় পরিস্থিতিতে এমনিতেই যেখানে টিকে থাকতে হিমশিম খাচ্ছি, সেখানে এ পদক্ষেপে দেশীয় এ শিল্প সংকেতে পড়বে বলে আশংকা করছি। এটি সরকারের শিল্পবান্ধব নীতিকে প্রশ্নবিদ্ধ করবে। যা কাম্য নয়।

বিদ্যমান অবস্থা-১: বাজেটে বিগত বছরের মতো বিদেশি টাইলস আমদানিতে ট্যারিফ মূল্য প্রতি বর্গমিটারে ১ মার্কিন ডলার পর্যন্ত কমানো হয়েছে। ফলে বছরে প্রতি বর্গফুটে প্রায় ১২ টাকা করে মূল্য কমে পরপর দু'বছরে প্রতি বর্গফুটে প্রায় ২৪ টাকা ট্যারিফ মূল্য হ্রাস পাচ্ছে। ফলে স্থানীয় বাজারে আমদানিকৃত টাইলস-এর বিক্রিমূল্য দেশীয় টাইলস-এর চেয়ে কমে যাবে, যা আমদানিকে আরও উৎসাহিত করবে এবং সরাসরি দেশীয় পণ্যের বিকাশে অন্তরায় হবে।

যেখানে দেশীয় টাইলস-এর ওপর ১৫ শতাংশ সম্পূরক শুল্ক এবং ১৫ শতাংশ মূল্য সংযোজন কর আরোপ রয়েছে, সেখানে বিদেশি টাইলস আমদানি পর্যায়ে ট্যারিফ মূল্য হ্রাসের ফলে দেশীয় পণ্য অসম প্রতিযোগিতার সম্মুখীন হবে। ফলে সিরামিক খাতটি রপ্তা শিল্পখাত হিসেবে পরিণত হতে পারে। এতে আর্থিক বিনিয়োগ প্রতিষ্ঠান ও ব্যক্তি মারাত্মক বুকিত পড়বে।

আমাদের প্রস্তাবঃ বিদেশি টাইলস আমদানি পর্যায়ে ট্যারিফ মূল্য হ্রাস না করে আরো বাড়ানো হোক। এতে রাজস্বও বাড়বে।

বিদ্যমান অবস্থা-২: দেশীয় টাইলস-এ ১৫ শতাংশ এবং স্যানিটারি পণ্যে ১০ শতাংশ সম্পূরক শুল্ক আরোপিত রয়েছে। যদিও প্রস্তাবিত বাজেটে শুধুমাত্র দেশীয় স্যানিটারি লং প্যান থেকে ১০ শতাংশ সম্পূরক শুল্ক প্রত্যাহার করা হয়েছে।

আমাদের প্রস্তাবঃ দেশীয় টাইলস এবং স্যানিটারি পণ্যের ওপর থেকে সম্পূরক শুল্ক সম্পূর্ণ প্রত্যাহার করা হোক। এতে মূল্য কমে। ব্যবহারের মাত্রা ও বিক্রি বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে রাজস্বও বাড়বে।

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, প্রয়োজনীয় নীতি সহায়তা পাওয়া গেলে সিরামিক পণ্য রপ্তানির মাধ্যমে আগামী ৫ বছরের মধ্যে বার্ষিক ১০০ মিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলার বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা অর্জন করা সম্ভব হবে। পরিবর্তিত বিশ্ব ভূ-রাজনীতির সম্মুখীন হতে বিশ্ববাজারে বাংলাদেশী পণ্যের চাহিদা বাড়ায় বাংলাদেশ এশিয়ার মধ্যে সিরামিক হাব হওয়ারও সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে।

অতএব, দেশীয় সিরামিক শিল্পের স্বার্থ সংরক্ষণে এর প্রতিরক্ষণ নিশ্চিত ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বছরের জাতীয় বাজেটে বিদেশি টাইলস আমদানিতে ট্যারিফ মূল্য হ্রাস না করে আরো বৃদ্ধি এবং দেশীয় টাইলস ও স্যানিটারি পণ্যের ওপর আরোপিত সম্পূরক শুল্ক সম্পূর্ণ প্রত্যাহার করে সিরামিক শিল্পের ভিত মজবুত আপনার সদয় সহানুভূতি কামনা করছি।

বিনীত, মোঃ সিরাজুল ইসলাম মোস্তা (সাবেক সংসদ সদস্য), প্রেসিডেন্ট, বিসিএমএ।

Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers & Exporters Association

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বঙ্গবন্ধু কন্যা শেখ হাসিনা সমীপে ২০২১-২২ অর্থবছরের জাতীয় বাজেটে শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে করোনা মহামারীর কারণে সৃষ্ট ক্ষতি পুষিয়ে নেওয়া এবং ভবিষ্যৎ চাহিদা পূরণের জন্য সর্বনিম্ন আবেদন

SSC, HSC EXAMS Govt mulling alternatives

WALTON Smart Fridge MEGA EID FESTIVAL MILLIONAIRE

প্রচার ও সমন্বয় গণসংগঠন অফিস

সহযোগিতায় সকল সহযোগী সংগঠন

EDUCATIONOUTLOUD GPE



**BANGLADESH UPDATE**

**2,436**  
New cases in 24hrs

**8,26,922**  
Total cases

**13,118**  
Deaths

**7,66,266**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**3,816,628**  
Deaths

**176,607,388**  
Total cases

## COVID IN BORDER DISTRICTS

# Positivity rates remain high

Authorities struggle to enforce movement restrictions; 47 more die nationwide

### STAR REPORT

The numbers of Covid-19 deaths and confirmed cases continued to increase and the situation in the border districts kept on getting worse.

Yesterday, 47 more Covid patients died, which was the highest in more than a month, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

Fifty-eight people died from coronavirus on May 9.

In 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, 2,438 more people tested positive for the virus, up from the previous day's 1,637 cases.

The overall positivity rate was 12.99 percent against 18,749 tests.

As the transmission rate keeps rising, the health officials urged people to follow the health safety guidelines strictly.

"The transmission rate has continued rising this week [till Saturday]. We have to be more careful in maintaining the health safety guidelines," Nazmul Islam, spokesperson for the DGHS, said in yesterday's virtual bulletin.

With the latest figure, the number of confirmed cases reached 6,26,922 and the death toll 13,117.

### SITUATION IN BORDER DISTRICTS

Of yesterday's 47 deaths, the highest 15 were in Dhaka division followed by nine in Chattogram, while six were in Rajshahi, eight in Khulna, four in Rangpur, two each in Sylhet and Mymensingh and one was in Barisal.

Meanwhile, two patients breathed their last with Covid-19 symptoms in Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Yesterday, the highest positivity rate was 66.07 percent in Chuadanga followed by 64.19 percent in Satkhira. Besides, the positivity rate was 53.67 percent in Rajshahi, 45.13 percent in Jhenidah and 31.41 percent in Khulna.

To contain the virus transmission, administrations in Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Natore, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Kushtia have continued enforcing restriction on people's movement.

The administrations in several districts, however, struggling to refrain people from coming outside home.

"It is not possible to tackle the situation by increasing the hospital

bed only; strict lockdown is the only way. People do not want to abide by the restrictions," Hussain Safayat, civil surgeon of Satkhira, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The district administration has imposed movement restrictions in Satkhira from June 5.

Members of the law enforcement agencies have set up check points on roads that connect Satkhira with Jashore and Satkhira with Khulna to prevent people's movement.

SM Mostafa Kamal, deputy commissioner of Satkhira, told this paper, "We are conducting awareness campaign. But people find it tough to abide by the restrictions."

There were 112 Covid-19 patients in Satkhira Medical College Hospital against its capacity to treat 135 patients, while 38 patients were in Sadar Hospital against its 40-bed capacity.

The Khulna Medical College Hospital authorities were struggling with 143 Covid-19 patients against its capacity to treat 100 patients.

To cope up with rush of Covid-19 patients, the KMCH authorities decided to move the Covid-19 unit to the district hospital, said Mehedi Nawaz, vice-principal of Khulna Medical College, and convener of Corona Protocol Committee of Khulna district.

The transmission rate in Chapainawabganj keeps falling thanks to the ongoing lockdown that started from May 25.

Against 538 tests yesterday, the positivity rate was 10.59 percent. Two patients died in this border district yesterday.

In Natore, the local administration has kept Nature and Singra municipalities under lockdown.

Except emergency, no one is allowed to enter or go outside those municipalities via the main roads of the towns.

People, however, are coming outside using other roads.

The number of beds in the district hospital has been increased to 50 from 31 for Covid patients.

*[Our correspondents in Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jhenidah, Kushtia Natore, Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj contributed to this report.]*



The shipment of six lakh Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine doses arrives at the BAF Base Bangabandhu in the capital's Kurmitola yesterday from China.

PHOTO: PTD

## Administering first-job vaccine set to resume

### FROM PAGE 1

vaccine is already being administered to medical students as first shot. And by the end of this week, those will be administered to people across the country," the minister said.

If the authorities fail to start administering the jobs this week, they will begin it early next week, he said mentioning that the doses have to be transported to different districts from the capital.

Zahid also said they will not administer all the 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine doses as first dose like they did in case of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

"We do not want to face the same

problem again. We will administer five lakh vaccine jabs as first dose and the rest will be kept for second dose."

The second dose of Sinopharm vaccine will be administered three weeks after the first one.

On May 12, Bangladesh received five lakh Sinopharm vaccine jabs as gift from China.

The authorities have already started administering those to healthcare students on a priority basis.

Yesterday, two Bangladesh Air Force aircraft brought another six lakh Sinopharm vaccine shots from China.

Earlier on May 31, Bangladesh received 106,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine. The jabs will be administered

at four vaccination centres in the capital as those need to be kept at a very low temperature in storages that are not available outside the capital.

The Directorate General of Drug Administration approved the emergency use of Pfizer vaccine on May 27.

The government started nationwide mass inoculation against Covid on February 7 with a target of vaccinating all citizens aged 18 and above in phases.

But the authorities halted administering the first dose of vaccine on April 26 due to the shortage of jabs. More than a week later, the administration of the second dose

## Momen off to LDC, Myanmar crisis UN events

### DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday left for the US for a weeklong visit to attend two UN events – one on Myanmar crisis and the other on Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

During his tour, at the invitation of UN General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir, he will also try to hold a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington DC.

"Rohingya is a big issue. It is a chance for us to discuss the issue. We will demand quickest repatriation of the Rohingyas at the event on Myanmar crisis," Momen told reporters last week.

Momen will also address the LDC meeting where he will highlight issues related to Bangladesh's graduation to a developing nation.

During the events, he will demand quick delivery of Covid-19 vaccines by the developed countries and making vaccine a public good.

Momen is expected to return on June 22.

was also suspended at all the centres across the country.

The inoculation campaign stumbled after Serum Institute of India failed to provide the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine amid a surge in virus deaths and cases in that country.

As per an agreement, Bangladesh was supposed to receive three crore shots of the vaccine from Serum in six months.

Serum delivered 50 lakh doses in the first consignment in January, but shipped only 20 lakh shots the following month. The country has not received any shipment from the company since then.

## The republic of bureaucrats!

### FROM PAGE 1

former additional secretaries as treasurer and registrar of Islamic Arabic University and a government college teacher as treasurer of Jashore University of Science and Technology.

Legally, there is no bar to appointing a retired bureaucrat to the top post of a constitutional, statutory, or independent government body.

But the recent trend is an aberration in the standard practice of some specialised sectors where the guiding principle has been to appoint the most professionally qualified and experienced persons in that particular field.

For instance, renowned educationalist Dr AQM Bazlul Karim was the first chairman of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC), established on April 8, 1972. He won the Independence Award in 1999 for his contribution to education.

The trend of a renowned educationalist holding the top PSC post continued till 2007. The high-profile list included Mohiuddin Ahmed, M Moydul Islam, Faiz Uddin Ahmed, SM Al Hussaini, Iajuddin Ahmed, SMA Foyaz, Md Mustafa Chowdhury, and ZN Tahomida Begum.

Dr Sadat Hossain became the first retired government bureaucrat to hold the PSC chairman's post in November 2007. Since then it has been a show of retired government officials -- AT Ahmedul Huq Chowdhury, a retired police official, and retired bureaucrats Ikram Ahmed and Muhammad Sadique.

A similar deviating trend has also been prevalent in the Election Commission. A retired judge used to hold the post of the chief election commissioner from 1972 to 1996. The five out of six CEOs after that have been retired bureaucrats.

Dr Mizanur Rahman, a Dhaka University law professor, was the first chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), established in 2007. But his successor Reazul Hoque was a retired bureaucrat as are current chair Nasima Begum and her two associates -- Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed and Nomita Halder.

The Information Commission was set up in 2009 for the sole purpose of ensuring that the general public can demand information from the government.

The Commission's website states that its duty is "to issue directives for the preservation, management, publication, publicity of and access to information by authority" and to "oversee the Right to Information Act".

However, except for Golam Rahman, a former Dhaka University teacher, all the chairpersons of the Commission came from the bureaucracy.

Martuza Ahmed, current chief information commissioner, and two commissioners -- Suraiya Begum and Abdul Malek -- are from the civil service, a sector which the Commission is tasked with holding accountable.

The government formed the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund in 1990 to support the family members of

especially from the government, will be made more difficult when the body's heads are from the bureaucracy itself.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is also no exception though its first chairman was Justice Sultan Hossain. The incumbent chairman, Md Mainuddin Abdullah, and two of the three commissioners are retired public servants.

In 2018, the government added a clause in the Public Service Act that said no public servants could be arrested without the permission of the authorities concerned, a decision that various organisations including Transparency International Bangladesh opposed.

The ACC did not raise a voice against this though it makes their job more difficult. When the clause was included, retired bureaucrat Iqbal Mahmud was the ACC chairman.

The Bangladesh Bank governor post had been exclusive territory for economists, with the first five governors -- from 1972 to 1992 -- being renowned economists. Still, retired bureaucrats Fakruddin Ahmed, Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, and incumbent BB governor Fazle Kabir are examples of a break with tradition since.

The government had to pass a bill in parliament, extending the age limit for governor from 65 to 67 years, to accommodate Fazle Kabir in the post.

National flag carrier Bangladesh Biman has also seen retired bureaucrats holding top posts in recent times, after it was turned into a public limited company.

Although the CEO and MD of Biman had always been people with vast experience in the highly technical aviation sector, irrespective of Bangladeshi or foreign citizenship, the trend curiously changed in 2019.

That year, the Biman authorities published an ad for the post of its CEO and MD, asking people with 20 years' experience in the field to apply. Seventy aspirants, including 12 foreign nationals, applied for the hot seat.

However, the government appointed Mokabbir Hossain, then additional secretary of the Civil Aviation and Tourism ministry, as the Biman CEO and MD. His successor was also a bureaucrat, Abu Salah Mostafa, who took over in 2021.

The current chairman of the Biman executive board is also a retired public servant. Before him, two former Air Force chiefs -- Air Marshal (ret'd) Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Air Marshal (ret'd) Muhammad Enamul Bari -- held the post.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited, the authority implementing the metro rail project, and Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Ltd, which aims at providing low-cost, quick and improved public bus service, were established in 2013 with two retired bureaucrats as their chairmen. But experts opined that experienced engineers deserved to be at the wheel.

The government formed the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund in 1990 to support the family members of

destitute migrant workers.

The fund was built around contributions from the country's expatriate labour force. Surprisingly, the 16-member board that the government formed to take care of it has no less than 12 bureaucrats.

Top bureaucrats have also been recently empowered to dictate domains reserved for politicians as public representatives, such as relief operations.

Last year, the government formed committees headed by secretaries in 64 districts to oversee relief operations among the poor and jobless due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A government circular said the 64 secretaries will consult the lawmakers of the respective districts and others while conducting relief operations.

In the time of Covid, bureaucrats are doing the job of people's representatives, said Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon. "But at the end of the day, politicians have to face all the criticism."

He observed that everything is being controlled by civil bureaucrats when politics has become subordinate to the state machinery.

"Once we were under military rule and everything was run by military bureaucracy," the veteran politician said. "Now it has turned into a bureaucratic regime under political rule."

He, however, thinks the failure of politicians is also responsible for this.

In this context, Menon recalled Bangabandhu's remark that the administration should always be under political leadership to serve the people.

"When we are celebrating Bangabandhu's birth centenary, the country is run totally going against his ideology," he added.

Former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder told this correspondent that decay has taken place in all organs of the state. Lack of political commitment and qualified people not appointed to proper places are the major reasons behind this.

It is not wise to be fully dependent on bureaucracy, he said, but it is also true that professionals from other sectors are failing to deliver on many occasions.

Giving an example, "MA Aziz was a very qualified justice. We know what Aziz has done as the chief election commissioner of Bangladesh. On the other hand, ATM Shamsul Huda did well as the chief election commissioner. Shamsul Huda was a former bureaucrat," Imam said.

Dr Shantanu Majumder, professor of political science at Dhaka University, said it is frustrating that the present political government is relying on bureaucrats instead of their own people.

"Urban civil society will also have to take responsibility as they have singled out political leaders and labelled them as dirty. Political leaders have also been portrayed as incapable. There is a conception that there will be corruption under the political leaders," he told The Daily Star.

It has led to the young generation

hating politicians and growing apathy towards politics. Due to the trend of character assassination, politicians are ignored while distributing many responsibilities, observed Dr Shantanu.

Ruling Awami League lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury believes capable and experienced personnel should lead the institutions. "Our expectation will be limited if the right person is not in the right place," he told this newspaper yesterday.

He further said education and experience in the related field should be considered for appointing personnel -- being able to just follow the instructions should not be the criteria.

Competent people -- whether from the civil service or other sectors -- should be appointed to the right position, said Saber Hossain, also the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The way the bureaucrats are being appointed in different government or statutory bodies, it seems there has been a change in the government policy, he observed.

## Govt mulling

### FROM PAGE 1

occasion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Jail Release Day at the Jatiya Press Club.

She said the government was thinking of all options. She doubted if the exams could be held in border areas where Covid-19 infections were increasing.

The government could conduct the SSC exams just before closing all educational institutions on March 17 last year, but it was not possible to hold the HSC exams.

The HSC examinees were promoted based on the previous two public exams.

The closures of educational institutions were extended many times since then. Latest, the closure that was until June 13 was also extended until June 30.

While educational institutions in the urban areas held online classes, most schools in the rural areas remained closed -- a situation that worried the parents and students over the future of education.

Dipu Moni said there was no reason for the parents and students to worry. The government would not take any decision that causes gross harm to the students.

The damage being caused to the education of the students is true for all, globally, she added.

"Not having an exam for a year will not cause any huge damage," she said. "We have a plan on how to compensate the harm caused to education."

The education minister said the schools are holding online classes. Besides, the students are learning through assignments. "Please continue that."

"Please don't be confused, don't take wrong ways. Take care of your physical and mental health. Don't engage with anything bad," she told the SSC and HSC examinees.

## HC orders action against

### FROM PAGE 1

Ullah before this court is unacceptable, because he sent the children to custody although he had no jurisdiction to do that, the HC said.

The law secretary will withdraw Enayet Ullah's criminal jurisdiction and will provide him with only civil jurisdiction in consultation with the Supreme Court, the bench said.

The police personnel ordered to be suspended include Officer-in-charge Abul Kalam and Child Affairs Officer Sub-inspector Bashir Uddin Khan of Bakerganj Police Station. The court ordered departmental action against them for keeping the children confined and taking them to a child development centre.

The HC struck down the rape case filed against the four children, saying police have filed the case in violation of the fundamental rights enshrined under articles 27, 31 and 32 of the constitution and the relevant law.

The government has also been asked to suspend Abu Tahar, the probation officer in Bakerganj, for being negligent in his duty.

Turning down the unconditional apology offered by the police and probation officer, the HC said they would continue violating the fundamental rights if stern action was not taken against them.

The HC bench directed the home secretary to come up with a guideline for dealing with the detained or arrested children and circulate the guideline at every police station across the country.

Lawyer Md Abdul Halim, an intervener to the suo moto rule, told The Daily Star that the judicial magistrate has no jurisdiction to deal with the arrest of or proceeding against children or their bail.

The Children Act, 2013, reserves the task for the children's court, he said.

Lawyer Halim, another intervener of the rule, told The Daily Star that the HC did not mention the names of the four other policemen.

He said the police must determine the ages of children and contact their guardians immediately after they are brought to a police station, and police must grant bail to the accused children if they are arrested in the bailable allegations.

The child affairs police officer at the police station will convey the confinement of children to the probation officer under the social welfare ministry and then the probation officer will look into all affairs including legal issues as per the Children Act 2013, he said, adding that the probation officer of Bakerganj has not discharged his duties in this case.

Assistant Attorney General Golam Sarwar Payel told this correspondent that the HC has kept the suo moto rule as a continuous mandamus so that any aggrieved person involved with such matters can approach this court for necessary directives in future.

On October 7 last year, Barishal's Bakerganj police arrested four boys for raping a six-year-old child and brought them to the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Enayet Ullah. The magistrate rejected their bail petitions and ordered police to send them to a child development centre.

At 9:30pm on October 8, 2020, the two HC judges led by Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah virtually operated a bench and directed the Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Tribunal of Barishal to instantly grant bail to the four children and directed the authorities concerned to release the boys aged between 10 and 12 from the custody of a development centre at Pulerhat in Jashore on bail and hand them over to their guardians by that night.

The HC bench came up with the order after a TV channel reported on the arrest of the children and rejection of their bail prayers.

The Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Tribunal of Barishal granted bail to the children immediately after the HC order.

According to a complaint, the four boys raped a six-year-old girl on October 4. The victim disclosed the matter to her mother after fell sick on October 6. Her father filed the case the same day.

Bakerganj police arrested the boys the next day and produced them to the court of the senior judicial magistrate.

On October 9, after they were released, the boys were handed over to their parents.





Workers set up boundary pillars on Buriganga river land right beside a power plant owned by late Dhaka-14 lawmaker Aslamul Hoque in Basila. The National River Conservation Commission in a report, as per a High Court directive, recommended its eviction and the pillars were supposed to be set up after recovering the grabbed river land. However, work seems to be going on in full swing while authorities of the power plant have not only fenced the area but also planted trees on the river land. Meanwhile, a signboard beside the river says the land is entitled to a bank. The photos were taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## BIWTA pillars to 'legitimise' grabbed land on Buriganga

21 acres encroached by late MP not recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is erecting boundary pillars along the foreshore of river Buriganga in Basila without recovering the much-talked about 13 acres of river land and eight acres of foreshore that had been grabbed by a late lawmaker.

Once BIWTA completes the work, it would legitimise the river grabbing by the company of recently-deceased Dhaka-14 MP Aslamul Hoque for a power plant.

As per a High Court (HC) directive on October 22, 2019, National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) jointly prepared a report along with seven other government agencies that recommended the land be recovered and restored to its original state, as nearly 14km of the river is dying due to earth filling to construct a power plant.

However, within six months of the report, BIWTA is demarcating the river boundary, leaving around 500 yards of space from the water.

joint director of BIWTA. BIWTA is implementing the second phase of demarcation pillar installations along the Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhya river banks, spending Tk 848.55 crore since 2019.

While visiting the area on Saturday, it was seen the contractors were setting the pillars along the water line, which were ideally supposed to be set up after recovering the grabbed land.

Moreover, power plant authorities have already fenced the area and planted coconut trees on the grabbed land.

Asked about the eviction drive on grabbed land in the private economic zone, the joint director said they had sent a letter to the shipping ministry, but were yet to get any feedback.

"Now we are setting up pillars. But if the government decides to recover the land, we will conduct drives," he said.

Contacted, NRCC chairman Ali Kabir said if BIWTA violated the rule, they will be solely responsible for this.

Dr Mujibul Haq, its former chairman, was in charge of preparing the report that was submitted to the HC.

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CONTAINING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

## Guidelines thrown out the window in public transports of port city

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CIG

Public vehicles in Chattogram city are defying government instructions for movement during the pandemic in every way possible.

Not only are they boarding passengers up to full seating capacity, but also taking up standing passengers. On the contrary, they are realising double fare too, that the government set for vehicles boarding up to half of their capacity.

According to government instructions, public vehicles are supposed to board passengers only up to half of their sitting capacity. To cover up for the loss in revenue, the government also allowed to charge 60 percent additional fare.

In addition, no passenger would be allowed to board without face masks, while the seats have to be sanitised at the beginning of every trip, the guidelines say.

However, passengers in the port city have alleged that other than overcharging, none of the other guidelines are being followed. As a result, altercations between passengers and transport workers have become a common scene everyday.

According to health experts, if health guideline are not followed in public transports, the pandemic situation may further deteriorate in the city.

Epidemiologist Prof Dr Shakeel Ahmed, in-charge of Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases lab, told The Daily Star following health guideline should be ensured in public transports to contain the pandemic.

This correspondent saw passengers standing inside different public vehicles in Chawkbazar, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Sholohahar Gate No.2, Oxygen, and Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge areas. In addition, almost two-third of the passengers were seen without face masks.

Sources said around 1,000 mini buses and 2,000 human hauliers ply on 12 routes in the port city.

"Health guidelines are not being followed in the buses. Passengers are standing very close to each other, while most of them are without masks," passenger Debdulal Das told this correspondent.

He had boarded a minibus at Chawkbazar to go to his workplace yesterday.

"When I protested the additional passengers, the conductor misbehaved with me," he said.

Abdus Sattar Roni, general secretary of South Chattogram Passengers Welfare

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Public transports across the port city are overflowing with passengers, despite the government directive to carry no more than half capacity.

PHOTO: STAR

## 164 Bangladeshis rescued from Mediterranean

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Libyan coast guards have rescued and detained 439 migrants, including 164 Bangladeshis, from the Mediterranean Sea as they were trying to go to Europe.

Bangladesh mission in Libya confirmed the incident to The Daily Star yesterday.

The coast guards on two ships rescued the migrants from several boats in the sea on Thursday. All the migrants are African and Asian.

A Libyan navy spokesperson said they were taken to Tripoli Naval Base after rescue. Later they were handed over to the immigration authorities.

Currently, they are kept at a shelter camp.

Embassy of Bangladesh in Libya Chargé d'affaires Gazi Md Asaduzzaman Kabir said they were aware of the development.

Till May this year, the coast guards rescued 9,216 migrants who were trying to go to Europe through the sea. At the same time last year, 7,100 people were rescued by the coast guards.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Laws there, but not commitment

Speakers tell discussion on ecosystem restoration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to show its commitment in conserving the country's environment and restoring its ecosystem, speakers said at an online discussion yesterday.

Though there is a sufficient number of relevant laws, policies, and rules regarding environment conservation, they need to be enforced effectively, the speakers said.

The association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) along with The Daily Star organised the discussion on "Ecosystem Restoration: Necessary Laws and Policies in Bangladesh".

During her presentation, BELA Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan said Bangladesh is one of the top countries in terms of declining waterbodies.

There are 29 rivers which have been facing acute pollution, while in 48 districts there are 49,162 instances of forest land grabbing. Moreover, uncontrolled sand and stone lifting has also reached an alarming level, she said.

"Laws are not being implemented due to absence of commitment," she said, adding, there are some laws which required amendment.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Nasim's first anniversary of death observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first death anniversary of veteran Awami League leader and former minister Mohammed Nasim was observed yesterday with different programmes maintaining health guideline protocols for Covid-19.

The programmes included milad and doa mahfil, discussion, distribution of food and wheelchairs among the poor and physically challenged.

Family members of Nasim paid tributes to him by placing wreaths at his grave at Banani graveyard.

The former AL presidium member and spokesperson of AL-led 14-party alliance died while undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Specialized Hospital at Shyamoli on June 13 last year.

Nasim, son of son of Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali, one of the organisers of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



## EID-UL-AZHA AMID PANDEMIC Cattle markets, animal sacrifice in designated spots only: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday asked authorities concerned to take necessary steps and ensure that makeshift cattle markets are set up only in designated places maintaining health guidelines during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

"Makeshift cattle markets will be set up only at approved locations in the city corporations, municipalities, upazilas, and union parishads. Any unapproved cattle market will not be accepted," said the minister at an inter-ministerial meeting held at the conference room of the Local Government Division.

The meeting chaired by the minister was held to discuss the preparation of waste management during the upcoming Eid.

The minister said the delta variant of Covid-19 had wreaked havoc in India, and it has already been found in some bordering areas of Bangladesh.

"So, we have to set up makeshift cattle markets taking

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## 'Proposed budget makes tobacco more affordable'

Speakers say, demand raising tax on all products

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed budget for FY 2021-22, if passed, will make tobacco products even more affordable and increase its use among the youth and poor, said lawmakers, economists and public health experts at a virtual programme yesterday.

This would put public health under considerable threat and benefit only tobacco companies while making the government lose opportunities of earning additional revenues, they said.

The event was organised jointly by PROGGA (Knowledge for Progress) and Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA).

In its analysis of tobacco tax related measures in the proposed budget, PROGGA drew the attention to the fact that the proposed budget has kept the prices and taxes on the low and medium tier cigarettes unchanged which respectively constitute around 72 and 16 percent of Bangladeshi cigarette market.

The prices for 10 sticks of high and premium tier cigarettes have been raised by only Tk 5 and Tk 7 (5.5 percent hike),

setting the prices at Tk 102 and Tk 135 respectively.

The increase (5 percent) is very negligible compared to the increase in per capita income of the country (9 percent). Hence, the proposed budget would make all types of cigarettes even cheaper, they said.

It has also come up in the budget reaction that the existing faulty multi-tiered ad-valorem tax structure is also increasing the tendency to switch to cheaper cigarette brands. As a result, the government is losing the opportunity of earning a huge amount of revenue from price brands.

Speakers said implementation of budget proposals of anti-tobacco organisations, i.e. increasing prices of all tobacco products through imposing specific taxes will encourage 1.1 million people to quit smoking, prevent premature deaths of 390,000 current adults and 400,000 current youth, and earn Tk 3,400 crore in additional revenue from cigarettes as supplementary duty, health development surcharge and VAT.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Four killed, 17 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and 17 others injured in road accidents in places including Dhaka yesterday, according to our correspondents.

In the capital, pickup driver Abdul Jalil Molla was killed and several others were injured after a car hit the vehicle in Banani early yesterday.

At least 15 labourers from Mohakhali were heading towards Airport area on the pickup when the accident occurred around 12:45am.

The recklessly-driven car hit the pick-up, leaving at least seven injured, said Abdur Razzak, an auto-rickshaw driver, who witnessed the incident.

Critically injured Jalil was rushed to Kurmitola General Hospital and later to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said Razzak, who took Jalil to hospital.

Nur-e-Azam Mia, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, said they seized the car but its driver fled. The body was sent for autopsy, he said.

At Bangabandhu Bridge, two people were killed and 10 others injured as a bus hit a truck in the bridge's west zone.

The deceased are Mojinu Miah (33) and Md Nozrul Islam (35).

Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station OC Mosaddek Hossain said the accident took place at pillar-18 around 3am, killing both on spot.

Vehicular movement through the bridge remained halted for one hour, before police and fire fighters removed vehicles from the bridge, he said.

In Natore, a rice mill worker died on the spot as a truck ran her over at Garmatiarea in Baraigram. The deceased was identified as Hasna (47).

Bonpara Highway Police Station OC Shafiqul Islam said the accident occurred around 10am when she was crossing a road.

Police later arrested the truck driver Mohammad Shiplu but his assistant managed to escape.

Police sent the body to Natore Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

## In-person exams start at Cumilla University

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CUMILLA

The authorities of Cumilla University have started holding in-person examinations -- postponed due to Covid-19 situation -- from yesterday, maintaining health guidelines.

Confirming the development, Nurul Karim Chowdhury, deputy controller of examinations of the university, said students of different batches have started sitting for the final and mid-term exams yesterday.

The authorities earlier held classes online, he added.

Besides, starting from 9am, the administrative activities continued till 5pm.

Nurul Karim, also acting controller of examinations, said, "The final exams (semester final) of different departments -- management, marketing, accounting, statistics, ICT, English and public administration -- have started."

Four buses of the university have been running since yesterday morning

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Students of Cumilla University returned to their campus yesterday after over a year, as the authorities began conducting in-person exams maintaining health safety guidelines.

PHOTO: STAR



## Guidelines thrown

FROM PAGE 3

Association, told The Daily Star that though public vehicles were boarding standing passengers and defying the government's instructions, no action has been taken against them.

Belayet Hossain, president of Chattogram Metropolitan Paribahan Malik Group, said they instructed transport workers to board passengers maintaining the guidelines and not allow any passenger without a mask.

Asked about irregularities, he said, "We will strictly monitor whether the health rules are followed."

Talking to this correspondent, minibus conductor Md Hamid said they try to refuse passengers but they force their way in. "What can I do when this happens?" he asked. "If they don't wear masks, there is not much we can do either. It is the law enforcers' job."

When asked about realising double fares, he said they're only charging 60 percent additional fare, in line with the guidelines.

Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy commissioner (Traffic) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said traffic department was monitoring routes to ensure health guidelines are being followed. "We will have to be stricter," he said.



Sacked workers of Karim Jute Mill and Latif Bawani Jute Mill staged a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding modernisation of the nationalised jute mills, reopening of these mills, re-employment of fired workers, and payment of transferred workers' dues.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Preacher missing for three days: family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young Islamic preacher Abu Taw Haa Muhammad Adnan, his driver and two companions have been missing for three days, according to his family members.

"Adnan last spoke to his wife over phone at 2:37am on Friday and told her he reached the capital's Gabtoli. Since then he could not be communicated," said his brother-in-law Abu Hanif.

Hanif said they were coming to the capital from Adnan's Rangpur home in a car. Adnan's wife Sadekunnahar, however, around 9pm yesterday on Facebook live alleged that they went to Darussalam Police Station multiple times in the last two days and tried to file a GD but police did not cooperate with them.

Contacted, Mahtab Uddin, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Mirpur division), said Adnan's family verbally informed them of the matter and police inquired about it.

He said they have asked the family to go to the police station concerned and file a complaint, but they are yet to do so. "Possibly, they know where Adnan is and that's why they didn't do it," Mahtab told The Daily Star yesterday.

## Death anniv of Habibur Rahman Milon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Habibur Rahman Milon, former advisory editor of the daily Ittefaq.



A recipient of Ekushey Padak, the journalist was the chairman of Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) and former president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ).

Milon was born in 1935 in Brahmanbaria. He began his career with the daily Sangbad in 1963 and later worked for the daily Paygam and the daily Azad. He was a recipient of Jatiya Janak Award, Shaheed Suhrawardy Award, BFUJ Award and Bannister A Rasul Gold Medal.

## Nasim's first

FROM PAGE 3

the Liberation War of Bangladesh and a close associate of Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was elected member of parliament six times from Sirajganj-1.

Paying tribute to Nasim, AL joint general secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif said a leader like Mohammed Nasim is rare in recent political arena.

Awami League as well as the country faced an irreparable loss due to demise of Nasim, he added.

Mohammed Nasim Foundation organised a discussion at Nasim's birthplace, Kazipur Upazila under Sirajganj district on the occasion of his first death anniversary.

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Md Murad Hassan participated at the discussion. He said Mohammed Nasim was one of the commanders to bring the Awami League to the power in Bangladesh in 1996 under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

The contribution of Mohammed Nasim was huge not only in Sirajganj or Kazipur but also to Bangladesh, he said.

## Laws there

FROM PAGE 3

ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda said powerful and influential people have been historically involved in the grabbing of rivers and forest land, but little can be done against them.

He also said relevant institutions for environmental conservation are not functioning accordingly. If they were, there would have been thousands of cases to deal with in the "environment court".

Shamsul said lack of responsibility in conserving the environment could be fatal and the future generations may have to pay the price.

Chakma Circle Chief Raja Devasish Roy said both the state actors and non-state actors have important roles to play in restoring the ecosystem, and there's a need for synergetic action between them.

He also said there is a huge gap between the age-old forest act and the relevant policies for its implementation.

"Conservation of forests will not see success if people dependent on forests for livelihood are not being included in the process," he added.

ALRD chairperson and coordinator of Nijera Kori Khushi Kabir said what is taken from the nature should be returned so that the nature can replenish and give back again. She stressed for ensuring accountability of relevant authorities in this regard.

Addressing as chief guest, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, lawmaker and chair of the Parliamentary Committee on the Ministry

of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, said forming a "rapid response cell" could be a way forward towards addressing violation of environment related laws.

Besides, conducting audits is a necessity for ensuring ecosystem restoration, he said. "If given enough time, nature can heal itself," he said.

Prof Manzoorul Kibria of Chattogram University said tobacco farming in upstream and establishing power plants near the river bank have caused harm to the unique ecosystem of the river Halda.

Scientific knowledge has to be applied to ensure ecosystem restoration, said Prof Dilip Kumar Datta of environmental science discipline at Khulna University.

Citizens have to be included for environment conservation since one party cannot do it alone, said IUCN Bangladesh Country Representative Raquibul Amin.

Shamim Alrazi, additional secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, said they have already identified the grabbers and amount of forest land grabbed.

Further work is underway in this regard, he said.

Ziaul Haque, director (Dhaka division), Department of Environment; Tuhin Wadud, associate professor at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur; Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum; journalist Hasibur Rahman; and Rafiqul Alam, executive director, Run, Barishal; among others, spoke at the discussion.

## Cattle

FROM PAGE 3

the highest care to maintain health guidelines. The cattle markets and animal sacrifices will have to be within designated places provided by the authorities concerned," the minister said.

Authorities in city corporations, municipalities, upazilas, and union parishads will select the suitable places, he said.

Although the authorities concerned do not provide lease to set up cattle markets on rail lines and roads, it is still being done, he said.

"This will have to be stopped by joint efforts of the Roads and Highways Department and public representatives of the areas," the minister said.

Like last year, he said they will arrange awareness campaigns through print and electronic media to maintain health guidelines and social distancing at cattle markets.

## BIWTA pillars

FROM PAGE 3

"It was prepared with the joint recommendation of eight government agencies as the HC asked for the report on October 22, 2020 following a writ petition filed by the late lawmaker," he said.

NRCC led the report preparation along with representatives from Dhaka deputy commissioner, joint director of BIWTA, director general of Land Record and Survey Directorate, director general of Bangladesh Water Development Board, chairman of Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority, AC land (Keraniganj circle), AC land (Savar circle) and chairman of Rajuk.

It was prepared following a HC directive of using modern technology to measure river areas based on the CS record. BIWTA was also a part of the report, he said.

"So it was not a report of the river commission. The government should have conducted a drive and recovered the land before setting up pillars there," he added.

As per the NRCC report, late Aslamul Haque started filling up portion of Buriganga and its adjoining wetland in 2010. He filled up 54 acres of land there and constructed power plant and factories.

Out of that 54 acres, at least 12.78 acres were part of the Buriganga, according to the oldest land record available, known as the Cadastral Survey (CS) record map of 1940.

He also filled up eight acres of foreshore. The rest of the 54 acres was wetland along the river and marked as flood-flow

zone in the detailed area plan (DAP) of Dhaka city. It is also illegal to fill up wetland as per the Bangladesh Water Act-2013.

The late lawmaker filed a writ petition with the HC on September 2, 2020 after BIWTA on August 23 last year asked him to remove within seven days the structures built for his power plant and Arisha Private Economic Zone in the area.

On December 10 last year, the HC cleared the way for the government to recover the river land from the possession of three companies of Maisha group owned by the late lawmaker.

Earlier, The Daily Star obtained multiple satellite images taken in 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2019 which clearly showed that the land along the Basila bridge was part of the Buriganga.

Contacted, Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the HC gave a special order and engaged NRCC to demarcate the river area in that particular location but they did not do so properly.

"Ignoring that demarcation, BIWTA continued to violate the court verdict and put up demarcation pillars to legalise occupation of a power plant there," he said.

"This is a nexus of corrupt people comprising politicians, administration and business community. The only remedy to this is exemplary punishment," he added.

**ফ্র্যাট বিক্রয়**  
ধাননিচি কপার রুটে দক্ষিণ পূর্ব দি মাঠ ও লেক ডিউ, ৪৮৯৫ বর্গফুট সার্বভৌম ইনস্ট্রুমেন্ট, সপট গার্ডেন জিম, সুইমিংপুল, সার্কল আধুনিক সুবিধাসহ ডুপ্লেক্স ফ্র্যাট বিক্রয়।  
যোগাযোগ: ০১৭৫০-০৪৪৫৪, ০১৭৫০-১১১৫৬৭

## In-person exams

FROM PAGE 3

for students and teachers, said Emdadul Haque, public relations officer of the university. "The number of buses will be increased, if needed," he said.

The university has been closed since March 17 last year due to coronavirus pandemic. Though the authorities started to take exams on December 20 last year, the university administration again stopped exams on February 23 following a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases.

On June 3, Cumilla University decided to hold in-person exams, two days after University Grants Commission instructed public universities to do so.

## 164 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 3

Libyan Interior Minister Khaled Tijani Mazen shared this at a meeting with European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson.

On Thursday, Mazen at another meeting with UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said around 700,000 undocumented migrants from different countries have been staying in Libya.

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data, 11,000 migrants from different countries reached Libya illegally through the sea from January to April this year.

Besides, more than 700 migrants died from January to May 21 when they tried to cross the sea. Last year, 1,400 people died while they tried to do so.

On May 18, Tunisian navy rescued 68 Bangladeshis when a boat carrying them capsized in the sea. Thirteen Bangladeshis are still missing since the incident occurred.

The boat capsized in the sea when all of them were trying to go to Italy from Libya.

## Announcement of Tender

1. The brief introduction of the project and the scope of tendering:  
The project is Dhaka Bypass expressway from Gazipur to Madanpur The total length is 48km.

2. The subject matter of this invitation of tender is crushed stone chip required by Dhaka Bypass Expressway project for reinforced concrete and pavement work at various locations of the entire alignment. The following description demonstrates basic requirements and quantity:  
**Material Description: Crushed Stone Chip (5-10mm)- 58,000 Ton & Crushed Stone Chip (10-20mm)-1,74,000 Ton. Total 2,32,000 Ton. The final quantity shall be subjected to the actual demand of the Purchaser and can vary.**

3. For those who are willing to submit tender, please come to House 15, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka, Bangladesh with the original copy and duplicate of the trade license, authorization letter and the representative's ID Card to buy the Tender Documents from June 14, 2021 to June 28, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Bangladesh Time. The Tender Documents can be sold by E-mail, but scanned PDF copies of the above documents by the Tenderer must be provided. Hard copies can be mailed out by the Purchaser. However, price of the Tender Documents must be reached to DBEDC before requesting the tender documents for purchase. The price of Tender Documents is BDT 30,000 and the Tender Documents will not be sold over again this time and once sold cannot be returned.

4. The name and address of the Purchaser:  
**Purchaser : Dhaka Bypass Expressway Development Company Limited**  
**Address : House 15, Road 6, Baridhara, Dhaka, Bangladesh**  
**Contacts : Zhang Cheng Phone: + 88 01314908116**  
**Contacts : Nasim Aman, Phone: + 88 01718165860**  
**E-mail : dhakabypass.med@gmail.com**

**সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
ইনফরমেশন টেকনোলজি ডিভিশন  
(আইটি প্রকিউরমেন্ট এন্ড মেইনটেন্যান্স)  
প্রধান কার্যালয়, মতিঝিল, ঢাকা

**Legal Scanner সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**  
(উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি)

কাজের নামঃ Procurement of Legal Scanner for Sonali Bank Limited

টেন্ডার রেফারেন্সঃ 2021/27 Date: 10/06/2021

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের Website [www.sonali.com.bd](http://www.sonali.com.bd) এর Tender Board দেখুন।

যোগাযোগঃ ইনফরমেশন টেকনোলজি ডিভিশন (আইটি প্রকিউরমেন্ট এন্ড মেইনটেন্যান্স), সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

ফোনঃ ০২২২৩৩৮৪১৬৭, মোবাইলঃ ০১৭৯৪০৮২৪৯২

ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার

## Proposed

FROM PAGE 3

It would also expedite the realisation of the vision of a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040, as declared by the prime minister, they said.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, said, "The low and medium tier of cigarettes need to be merged and brought under specific taxation in the final budget of this year. We are working to save lives and we are not ready to get defeated by tobacco companies."

He said tobacco claims 10 to 15 times more lives than Covid-19 has done in one year. "So why shouldn't we be worried about tobacco?" Economist and convener of the National Anti-Tobacco Platform Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad said, "We called for increasing prices for all tobacco products. We called for the introduction of specific taxes. The proposed budget does not reflect any of these demands."

Among others, economist Dr Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow of BIDS; Dr Mahfuz Kabir, research director of BIIS; Dr Syed Mahfuzul Huq, national professional officer of WHO; Md Mostafizur Rahman, lead policy advisor of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Bangladesh; and Dr Sohel Reza Choudhury, spoke at the programme.

**EDCL ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED**  
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area  
Dhaka- 1208

**CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL) is a 100% state owned Pharmaceutical Industry will recruit the following positions for EDCL, Dhaka Office.

Sl. No	Post	Qualification	Experience & Other Qualification
01.	Dy. Manager, Engineering (Mechanical) Post-01	Candidate should be post graduate/graduation degree in Mechanical Engineering from any public university. Candidate having MBA with Production Engineering Degree shall be preferred.  Computer literacy of the candidate is essential.	01 At least 10 years working experience in repair & maintenance works of which 05 years in pharmaceutical industries. Experience may be relaxed depending on academic and professional record. 02 Conversant with the latest Engineering and technological development in the relevant field. 03 Minimum age limit 38 years.
02.	Dy. Manager, Engineering (Electrical) Post-01	Candidate should be post graduate/graduation degree in Electrical Engineering from any public university. Candidate having MBA with Production Engineering Degree shall be preferred.  Computer literacy of the candidate is essential.	01 At least 10 years working experience in Electrical works of which 05 years in pharmaceutical industries. Experience may be relaxed depending on academic and professional record. 02 Conversant with the latest Engineering and technological development in the relevant field. 03 Minimum age limit 38 years.
03.	Dy. Manager, Engineering (Civil) Post-01	Candidate should be post graduate/graduation degree in Civil Engineering from any public university. Candidate having MBA with Production Engineering Degree shall be preferred.  Computer literacy of the candidate is essential.	01 At least 10 years working experience in Construction & maintenance works of which 05 years in pharmaceutical industries. Experience may be relaxed depending on academic and professional record. 02 Conversant with the latest Engineering and technological development in the relevant field. 03 Minimum age limit 38 years.

Candidates are requested to send the applications to the following address with complete CV, copies of attested relevant certificates and 03 copies of recent passport size coloured photograph on or before 24 June, 2021 from the date of publication of the advertisement.

Only short listed candidates will be invited for selection process.

**GM, Administration & HRM**  
Essential Drugs Company Limited  
395-397, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208.





SM Shahzada, lawmaker from Patuakhali-3 constituency, on Thursday inaugurates the first line of electrification by lighting electric bulbs at a function at Charbishwas K Ali College field in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

## Patuakhali remote island finally gets power

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

About 23,000 consumers of Charkajal and Charbiswas in Rangabali upazila, an isolated island in Patuakhali, are elated to have finally gotten electricity in their homes, 50 years after Bangladesh gained independence.

From Char Fashion Upazila of Bhola, 22,006 consumers of 45 villages of the two unions were brought under electrification through submarine cable through the river.

SM Shahzada, lawmaker from Patuakhali-3 constituency, inaugurated the first line of electrification by lighting electric bulbs at the inaugural function held at the grounds of Charbishwas K Ali College field at 11:00am on Thursday while Chairman of Charbiswas Union Parishad Tofazzal Hossain Babul Munshi was in the chair.

Chairman of Galachipa Upazila Parishad Md Sahin, GM of Bhola Palli Bidyut Samiti

in charge of electrification in Charkajal and Charbiswas Unions Abul Basar, Galachipa Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ashish Kumar, Upazila Awami League President Santosh Kumar Dey and General Secretary Golam Mostafa, among others were present at the programme.

GM of Bhola Palli Bidyut Samity Abul Basar, who is in-charge of electrification in Charkajal and Charbiswas Unions, said the power line has been laid at a cost of Tk 165 crore through a submarine cable at the bottom of the river, which is the longest submarine cable line in the country.

A power substation has been set up in Charnujib area and transmission lines have been provided to Charkajal, Charbiswas, Charborhan of Dashmina upazila, Charhadi of Ward 9 of Charmini and Charmontaj of Rangabali upazila in Patuakhali district. There is a 792-km-long transmission line from Bhola via the submarine cable.

Asiya Begum, 65, of Chhotashiba village in Charkajal Union, said, "I used to see electric lights in the city and electric fans. I thought how happy the people of the city were amid bright lights and electric fans when the earthen lamp would light our house. Now, we will also live in luminous house after dusk."

Sabiha Shila, an SSC examinee from Charbishwas Janata Secondary School, said, "We used to study by lighting the earthen lamp. Solar lights were also in place for several years. But it could not meet our need. This time, electricity will revolutionise the ICT, education, agriculture and healthcare sectors in this neglected island area."

"We have computers in our school," said Lamia Akhter, a ninth-grader student at the same school.

"We could not take part in computer training due to lack of electricity. Now we will be able to learn computer," she added.

DIGGING HOLES BY HIGHWAY

## Natore court issues suo moto rule

PP says contractor deliberately damaged highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The Natore Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court of Abu Sayeed has ordered a suo moto action to launch an inquiry into the reports published on print and electronic media regarding a breach of contract in the digging of holes beside the Natore-Bogra highway (N-502).

Advocate Sirajul Islam, public prosecutor (PP) at the Natore Judge's Court, quoted the court as saying that after analysing two news items, it became clear to the court that the contractor was digging holes beside the highway, causing long-term damage to government roads. The offense is punishable under Section 431 of the Penal Code.

Moreover, by violating terms of work order, the contractors have committed criminal breach of trust and fraud with the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and other government institutions including the government itself. The

offence is punishable under Sections 406 and 420 of the Penal Code.

The court directed the special superintendent of police (SSP) of the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) in Natore to investigate into the case.

The court in its preliminary investigation identified the accused, took statements of witnesses, prepared draft map of the site, seized all the documents related to the project and obtained measurements of the total amount of soil (in cubic feet) removed from the side of the government road and an estimation of the extent of the damage.

In this light, the court ordered the investigation officer to conduct a detailed investigation in this regard and obtain statements from representatives concerned at the daily Prothom Alo and Ekattor Television.

The court also directed the executive engineer of RHD in Natore to provide all-out cooperation in the investigation.

## Parliamentary body suggests

FROM PAGE 12

a freedom fighter where the UNO concerned is female."

The member said usually women do not take part in namaz-e-janaza. Many in society raise questions about this. Therefore, in case of giving the guard of honour to a freedom fighter in jurisdictions where the UNO is female, it is necessary to give the charge to a male officer.

In that case, assistant commissioner (land), upazila education officer, upazila agriculture officer or any such officer could be kept as alternative persons for the job.

Shajahan Khan, chief of parliamentary body, said ruling AL MP Rafiqul Islam also raised the matter of not giving the guard of honour at night.

"For this reason, the committee has recommended giving the guard of honor during the day. UNOs usually do the job," he added.

He also said religious issues are also involved with namaz-e-janaza. It is forbidden for women to participate in janaza.

The committee then made the recommendations, meeting sources said.

Shajahan said the committee has asked the ministry to make a decision in this regard in line with the rules and regulations.

Asked, Salma Ali, president of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association, told The Daily Star that the decision of finding alternative persons to give the guard of honour instead by female UNOs should be taken following necessary discussions and in line with the norms and customs.

In the meeting, the parliamentary body also suggested collecting definitions of freedom fighters from different countries of the world. International rules should be followed in case of giving government jobs to the next generation of identified Razakars, it said.

The meeting also decided to send a summary to the Cabinet Division to resolve the incidents related to hoisting the national flag by anti-Liberation elements on different days in some places.

Committee members Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq, Razi Uddin Ahmed, Kazi Firoz Rashid, Waresat Hossain Belal, and Moslem Uddin Ahmed, among others, attended the meeting.

## Djokovic

FROM PAGE 12

Tsitsipas recovered from a break down to win the opening set in a tiebreak before he raced through the second set.

But Djokovic was determined to ensure that all the effort he put in to beat 13-time Roland Garros champion Nadal in the semifinals did not go to waste and he started to assert his authority to win the third set.

Before the start of the fourth set, the 22-year-old Greek requested the trainer to come on court to manipulate and massage his lower back.

But that intervention failed to revive Tsitsipas' fortunes and Djokovic was virtually unchallenged in the fourth set.

The Serb broke decisively for a 2-1 lead in the decider before securing the win in four hours and 11 minutes that made him the first man since tennis turned professional in 1968 to win all four Grand Slams titles at least twice.

## Netanyahu

FROM PAGE 12

only underecords its likely fragility.

Addressing parliament before Bennett was sworn in, a combative Netanyahu said: "If we are destined to go into the opposition, we will do so with our heads held high until we can topple it."

That will happen, 71-year-old Netanyahu added, "sooner than people think."

The new government, formed after an inconclusive March 23 election, plans largely to avoid sweeping moves on hot-button international issues such as policy toward the Palestinians, and to focus on domestic reforms.

Palestinians were unmoved by the change of administration, predicting that Bennett, a former defence chief who advocates annexing parts of the occupied West Bank, would pursue the same right-wing agenda as Likud party leader Netanyahu.

Israel's longest-serving leader, Netanyahu was prime minister since 2009, after a first term from 1996 to 1999.

## HC asks for documents

FROM PAGE 12

malign and undermine the solemnity of the National Mourning Day of August 15 should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of home affairs and health and family planning, inspector general of police, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station are respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir came up with the order and rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md Mamun-or-Rashid challenging the legality of celebrating birthday by Khaleda Zia on August 15.

In the petition, the SC lawyer said it is a matter of great distress for the nation that Khaleda Zia has mentioned her date of birth as being August 15, 1946 in her present passport with the ulterior motive and mala fide intention of maligning the National Mourning Day when Father of

the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were brutally killed in 1975.

The petitioner said Khaleda Zia's birthday is recorded as: September 5, 1946 in her SSC certificate; August 4, 1944 in her marriage registration; August 5, 1946 in her machine readable passport issued in 2001; and May 8, 1946 in her Covid-19 test report released on May 8, 2021.

Lawyer Nahid Sultana Juthi appeared for the writ petitioner while Deputy Attorney Generals Arobinda Kumar Roy and Bipul Bagmar supported the writ petition.

BNP Joint Secretary General and former Supreme Court Bar Association Secretary AM Mahubb Uddin Khokon opposed the writ petition saying the writ petitioner has filed the petition in order to achieve a political gain.

Thousands of people, including Khaleda Zia, were born on August 15, he said, adding it is not for the HC to deal with matters like birthdays.

## Two pro-AL contractors

FROM PAGE 12

In the footage, a group of contractors carrying firearms was seen arriving at the facility. Among them were Hazi Faruk, science and technology affairs secretary of Pabna Sadar AL; AR Khan Mamun, organising secretary of Pabna Municipality AL; and local Jubo League leader Sheikh Lalu.

"Mamun and Lalu submitted two shotguns to Pabna Police Station. Both guns have proper licenses but no one can brandish firearms to create panic among the people," Masud Alom, additional superintendent of police in Pabna, told the Daily Star.

He added that police were investigating the incident.

Contacted, Anwarul Azim, executive engineer at Pabna PWD, said, "They [the armed contractors] might have done it by mistake. They did not harm anybody or

damage anything in the office. So, we didn't file any case."

AL leader Hazi Faruk told The Daily Star that the contractors had "no bad intentions and it was nothing but a mistake."

Meanwhile, the arms showdown at the government office sparked widespread criticism in the district.

Talking to this correspondent, acting president of Pabna AL Rejaur Rahim Lal said, "We don't support such unruly activities. This was not a political incident."

TIB in a statement said this was another example of how the ruling party men have been ruining the competitive tender procedure in development works.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said corruption in the procurement process could cause a loss of 8.5 to 27 percent of the total procurement funds. He demanded exemplary punishment of those involved.

## RMG workers take to street

FROM PAGE 12

Lenny Apparels Ltd blocked the Nabinagar-Chandra highway in front of the EPZ around 7:30am and started demanding their arrears.

The protestors alleged that the two factories announced the closure of their businesses in January without paying dues to their workers. Amid repeated demonstrations, the authorities paid no heed to it.

According to police, they had to use tear gas and water cannon against the demonstrators as they caused over an 8km-long tailback on both sides of the highway.

SP Asaduzzaman said they repeatedly tried to talk to the protestors and free the busy highway but the demonstrators did not listen to them.

At one stage, after around 45 minutes of road blockade, police fired tear gas and water cannon and brought the situation under control, he added.

At least 10 readymade garment workers were injured during the police attack, said

protestors.

Contacted, Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Contacted, DEPZ's General Manager Abdus Sobhan told The Daily Star that there were about 6,000 workers in the two factories.

Authorities closed the factories last January. The workers of the two factories have already been paid arrears of Tk 45 crore, he said.

Attempts are being made to pay the remaining arrears by selling the two factories. Factories owner and BEPZA are trying together to sell the factories, he added.

There was no due payment date yesterday. Workers gathered in front of the DEPZ this morning by posting on Facebook. They blocked the road, he further added.

"I went in front of them and tried to convince them but the workers continued to protest. Police later removed the workers from the road," he added.

## Yahya

FROM PAGE 12

front in Bangladesh as the Pakistani troops continued their atrocities on unarmed civilians. In Chaudhagram, Comilla, a group of freedom fighters under the command of Khaled Mosharruf ambushed Pakistani forces. Pakistan army suffered heavy losses and had to retreat. There were also incidents of encounters between the two forces in various parts of Bangladesh, including Kasba, Fakirhat and Khulna.

On the night of June 14, guerrillas of the Hemayat Bahini attacked a Pakistan army base at Kotlipara. The number of casualties on the Pakistan side was 50. Freedom fighter Ibrahim embraced martyrdom in this operation.

YAHYA ADMITS 'HARSH, SWIFT' ARMY ACTION

Jill Knight, a British Conservative member of parliament said that Pakistan President Yahya had admitted to her that his army had acted "harshly and swiftly" in East Pakistan, reported Reuters. Knight in a dispatch to the British Conservative newspaper The Daily Telegraph said she and two other MPs -- James Kilfedder and James Tinn -- had talked with the president for one and a half hours on June 12 night.

She further informed that Yahya had stated that he did not want to become known as the man who destroyed Pakistan.

CHINA WILL GIVE PAKISTAN AID WORTH \$70M

China agreed to extend \$70 million worth of commodity assistance immediately to help Pakistan meet some of her urgent import requirements.

SADAT SUPPORTS PAK INTEGRITY

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat today reiterated his country's support to the integrity of Pakistan. Recalling his two earlier meetings with Yahya Khan, Sadat said he looked forward to continued cooperation between the two countries.

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

## Snare of Bigo Live runs deep

FROM PAGE 12

group, administered by Bigo Live officials in Bangladesh.

CID said Saif was the Bangladeshi admin of Bigo Live, Arif used to recruit young girls and have them join in the live streaming, and Nazmul is one of the top agents who sold "Bigo Live Diamonds", a virtual currency, to users. Asma served as the head of admins.

In his LinkedIn profile, Jie Yao introduced himself as the country manager of Bigo Live in Bangladesh. Saif and Asma also introduced themselves as Bigo employees.

Bigo Live is a live streaming platform and Likee is a short video-making and sharing app. Both the apps are owned by Singapore-based BIGO Technology, which was founded in 2014 by David Li and Jason Hu.

CID officials said that young Bangladeshis and expats are targeted by these agents. To gain more followers and subsequently, more cash, a lot of broadcasters get a little raunchy. The Bangladeshi agents recruit five to seven young girls to "go live and lure men" during live streaming.

To join the live streams, its users have to top up "Bigo Live Diamonds" from their Bangladesh based agents. These "diamonds" are digital currency that local agents buy from foreign admins through banks, MFS or hundi, they added.

The broadcaster can earn money after encashing the virtual gifts. If someone is

a popular streamer, the followers send her virtual gifts. The streamers, in turn, can stock up these gifts, which can be transformed into "beans".

The more popular the streamer, the more beans they earn. These beans can be encashed for real money, which the app deposits in the streamers' accounts. The current "bean" exchange rate is 210 beans for US \$1.

Besides, someone can work on Bigo Live as an official host or recruiter and earn a decent commission on top of the virtual currency.

During the drive, law enforcers seized eight mobile phones, four laptops, seven credit cards, six cheque books, and Tk 50,460 in cash.

The CID official said a case was filed against the arrestees and 50-60 unnamed others under the Digital Security Act and Pornography Act with Paltan Police Station. After investigation, another case may be filed under the Money Laundering Act.

Meanwhile in a statement yesterday, BIGO Technology, which has operations in 20 countries, including Bangladesh, said that they are conducting a thorough review on this case and will work with relevant law enforcement agencies in this regard.

They further said that they will cooperate closely with the law enforcement agencies and the government for upholding regional and national laws and values.

## Govt finally moves to set limits

FROM PAGE 12

"We may have to hold one more meeting to finalise it [fixing the service life of commercial vehicles]," he said.

In March 2019, a committee, led by transport sector leader Shajahan Khan, made 111 recommendations to curb road accidents and bring discipline in the sector.

Later, the government formed a taskforce headed by the home minister to implement the recommendations.

In its report, the committee, which included transport experts, called for fixing the economic service life of buses, trucks, covered vans and human haulers and stopping operation of over 20-year-old buses and over 25-year-old trucks.

Identifying the plying of old vehicles as a key reason for road accidents, it said on the one hand, such vehicles, specially outdated buses and trucks, go out of order on roads, leading to traffic congestion. And on the other hand, these cause accidents and loss of lives.

The report also pointed out that neighbouring India already fixed the service life of commercial vehicles.

Seeking anonymity, a BRTA official said the government in 2010 issued a circular banning over 20-year-old buses and over 25-year-old trucks in the capital.

Following the decision, most of such vehicles were removed from the city roads and put into service on district and inter-district roads, the official pointed out.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, claimed that no over 20-year-old bus runs in the capital.

"But I am not sure whether any truck [used for more than 25 years] operates or not [in the capital]," he told this newspaper

yesterday.

"A meeting has been called and I hope the service life of commercial vehicles will be fixed."

Replying to a query, he said, "I think there should be fixed service life for vehicles. There was no opposition from transport owners in setting service life of vehicles... This issue did not come to the fore in the past."

Prof Md Hadiuzzaman, director of Accident Research Institute at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said upon expiry of service life, chassis, brake system and axle of such vehicles weaken and pose risk of road accident.

Besides, such vehicles cause environmental pollution as those emit harmful gases, including carbon dioxide.

Referring to a recent study, he said emission of harmful gases from outdated vehicles is responsible for 15 percent air pollution in the capital.

He further said the authorities should not fix the economic service life of vehicles only on the basis of years of service because the service life of vehicles varies depending on their manufacturers. Mileage of a vehicle should also be considered.

He also opposed setting the service life of buses at 20 years as that of buses manufactured by renowned companies usually remains between 10 and 12 years given that those are operated on good roads.

A total of 46.49 lakh vehicles were registered with the BRTA across the country till February this year. Of those, 16.52 lakh were registered in the capital.

However, many unregistered vehicles are in operation all over the country, said people involved in the transport sector.



NEWS IN  
brief**Gas pipe explosion  
kills 12 in China**

A gas pipe explosion in a residential community in a central Chinese city killed 12 people and injured 138, state media CCTV reported yesterday. One hundred-fifty people were evacuated following the deadly accident in the city of Shiyan in Hubei province, it said, of which 37 are critically injured. The explosion caused a food market building to collapse at 6:30 am, local media reported. Footage from CCTV shows wreckage and shattered glass covering the first floor of the collapsed building, where people were having breakfast and buying groceries when explosion happened.

**13 killed as artillery  
hits Syria hospital**

At least 13 people were killed and several wounded in two separate artillery attacks on the northern Syrian town of Afrin on Saturday, local medical sources and Turkey's government said. The first attack struck a residential area, while the second hit a hospital shortly afterwards, civil defence sources said. Ankara condemned the missile attack it said was launched by the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, though the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the US-backed militia force spearheaded by the Kurdish YPG, said it was not responsible.

**Iran nuke talks resume**

Indirect talks between Tehran and Washington on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal resumed in Vienna as the European Union said negotiations were "intense" and Germany called for rapid progress. The sixth round of talks began as usual with a meeting of remaining parties to the deal - Iran, Russia, China, France, Britain, Germany and the European Union - in the basement of a luxury hotel. The talks' chief coordinator, EU foreign policy official Enrique Mora, who is leading the shuttle diplomacy between Iran and the United States, has said he expects a deal in this round of talks. Other envoys, however, are more cautious, saying many difficult issues are yet to be resolved.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP

# G7 unites to confront China

## Demands answers on key issues; Beijing says 'small' groups don't rule the world

AGENCIES

Group of Seven leaders yesterday scolded China over human rights in Xinjiang, called for Hong Kong to keep a high degree of autonomy and demanded a full and thorough investigation of the origins of the novel coronavirus in China.

After discussing how to come up with a unified position on China, leaders issued a highly critical final communique that delved into what are for China some of the most sensitive issues, including also Taiwan.

The re-emergence of China as a leading global power is considered to be one of the most significant geopolitical events of recent times, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union that ended the Cold War.

China's rise has also unnerved the United States: President Joe Biden casts China as the main strategic competitor and has vowed to confront China's "economic abuses" and push back against human rights violations.

"We will promote our values, including by calling on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in relation to Xinjiang and those rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration," the G7 said.

"We also call for a timely, transparent, expert-led, and science-based WHO-convened Phase 2 Covid-19 Origins study including, as recommended by the experts' report, in China," the G7 said.

The G7 also said they underscored "the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues."

"We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly oppose any



Extinction Rebellion environmental activists with masks of G7 leaders protest on the beach in St Ives, Cornwall during the G7 summit, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions," they said.

The G7 also said it was concerned about forced labour in global supply chains including in the agricultural, solar, and garment sectors.

China denies all accusations of forced labour or abuse. Before the G7 criticism emerged, China pointedly cautioned G7 leaders that the days when "small" groups of countries decided the fate of the world was long gone.

"The days when global decisions were dictated by a small group of countries are long gone," a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in London said.

The G7 on Saturday offered developing nations an infrastructure scheme -- "Build Back Better World" (B3W) project -- that could rival China's Belt and Road initiative. President Xi Jinping launched the BRI in 2013 to significantly expand China's economic and political influence, with many of the infrastructure plans seen as helping deliver its goods globally.

**G7 ON CHINA**

Demands Covid origins investigation

Tells China to respect rights in Xinjiang

Urges China to allow Hong Kong freedoms; calls for peace in Taiwan Strait

Expresses concerns over situation in East and South China Seas

Expresses concerns about forced labour in global supply chains

## G7 vows action on vaccines, climate change

AFP, Carbis Bay

G7 leaders yesterday vowed to start delivering one billion doses of Covid vaccines and to step up action on climate change.

In a final communique issued at their first physical summit in nearly two years, the leaders of the elite club largely heeded to US President Joe Biden's push to regain the West's cohesion after Donald Trump's tumultuous tenure.

"We will harness the power of democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights to answer the biggest questions and overcome the greatest challenges," Biden and his colleagues from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan said.

But the pledge on vaccines for poorer nations fell far short of the 11 billion doses that campaigners say are needed to end a pandemic that has claimed nearly four million lives.

Likewise, the G7's pledges to deliver more aid for countries at the sharp end of climate change, and to phase out fossil fuel investments, were decried as too little, too late ahead of a UN summit in November.

India and South Africa, who took part as guests, had pressed for the gathering to waive intellectual property rights on Western vaccines. But Britain and Germany were notable holdouts.

Campaigners also complained the G7 had failed to flesh out how it will pay for a newly agreed "Nature Compact" -- aimed to protect 30 percent of the world's land and oceans from despoliation by 2030.

**CYBERCRIMES AND CHEMICAL WEAPON USE**

## G7 demands action from Russia

REUTERS

The Group of Seven (G7) wealthy nations yesterday demanded Russia take action against those conducting cyber attacks and using ransomware from within its borders.

The rebuke came in a communique issued after a three-day summit of G7 leaders in Britain that also called on Moscow to "stop its destabilising behaviour and malign activities" and conduct an investigation into the use of chemical weapons on Russian soil.

The communique said Russia must "hold to account those within its borders who conduct ransomware attacks, abuse

virtual currency to launder ransoms, and other cybercrimes".

The issue is in the spotlight after a cyber attack on Colonial Pipeline, the largest fuel pipeline in the United States, and another that disrupted the North American and Australian operations of meatpacker JBS USA.

Britain has previously said Russia is a leading proponent of cyber attacks. The G7 statement called for wider action against ransomware attacks, describing the practice of encrypting victims' data and demanding payment for its return as an "escalating shared threat".



A young Rohingya refugee looks for his belongings amid the charred remains of his camp following a fire incident that broke out earlier yesterday in New Delhi, India. At least 57 shanties of Rohingyas staying for over two years, gutted in the fire that broke out at Kalindi Kunj area of southeast Delhi at midnight. No one was injured.

PHOTO: AFP

## Trip to space with Bezos sells for \$28 million

AFP, Washington

A mystery bidder paid \$28 million at auction Saturday for a seat alongside Jeff Bezos on board the first crewed spaceflight of the billionaire's company Blue Origin next month.

The Amazon founder revealed this week that both he and his brother Mark would take seats on board the company's New Shepard launch vehicle on July 20, to fly to the edge of space and back.

The Bezos brothers will be joined by the winner of Saturday's charity auction, whose identity remains unknown, and by a fourth, as yet unnamed space tourist.

Saturday's successful bidder beat out some 20 rivals in an auction launched on May 19 and wrapped up with a 10-minute, livecast frenzy.

The proceeds -- aside from a six percent auctioneer's commission -- will go to Blue Origin's foundation, Club for the Future, which aims to inspire future generations to pursue careers in STEM -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Taking off from a desert in western Texas, the New Shepard trip will last 10 minutes, four of which passengers will spend above the Karman line that marks the recognized boundary



between Earth's atmosphere and space.

After lift-off, the capsule separates from its booster, then spends four minutes at an altitude exceeding 100 kilometers, during which time those on board experience weightlessness and can observe the curvature of Earth.

The booster lands autonomously on a pad two miles from the launch site, and the capsule floats back to the surface with three large parachutes that slow it down to about a mile per hour when it lands.

Blue Origin's New Shepard has successfully carried out more than a dozen uncrewed test runs from its facility in Texas' Guadalupe Mountains.

The automated capsules with no pilot have six seats with horizontal backrests placed next to large portholes, in a futuristic cabin with swish lighting. Multiple cameras help immortalize the few minutes the space.

**ASTRAZENECA JOB**

## Abandon it if alternatives are available

Says top EMA official

AFP, Rome

A top official in the European Medicines Agency said it might be worth abandoning AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine for all age groups where alternatives are available, in an interview published yesterday.

Marco Cavaleri, the EMA's head of vaccine strategy, also told Italy's La Stampa newspaper that the Johnson & Johnson job should be preferentially used for the over 60s.

Both so-called viral vector vaccines are authorised for everyone over 18 but have been dogged by reports of rare blood clots.

Asked if it would not be better to ban AstraZeneca including for the over 60s, Cavaleri said: "Yes, and it is an option that many countries are considering in the light of the increased availability of mRNA jabs."

## Gruesome

FROM PAGE 1

Police Station, was arrested immediately after the incident.

Asma's family members said Shoumen had married Asma a few years ago, but police said they would share and confirm details after interrogating the accused.

Asked, Mostafizur Rahman, additional superintendent of police in Kushtia, said police were interrogating Shoumen and details would be known after the interrogation.

Khulna's Superintendent of Police (SP) Mohammad Mahbub Hasan said Shoumen already has a wife and child who live in Asba village of Magura's Sadar upazila, the ASI's village home.

Shoumen has been suspended, he said.

The SP said Shoumen left his work station to go to Kushtia without permission, and carried firearms without permission. So, two probe bodies, one under the Deputy Inspector General of Khulna range Mohid Uddin and the other under the Khulna SP, were formed to investigate the matter.

Witnesses said Asma had gone to the spot with her child around 10:30am yesterday. Shakil arrived soon afterwards and they were seen talking near a roadside shop.

Then Shoumen went there and started quarrelling with Asma and Shakil, shouting and brandishing a firearm.

At one stage, he shot Asma in the head, leaving her dead on the spot. Then, he shot Shakil.

Frightened, seven-year-old Robin fled to a nearby mosque. But Shoumen dragged him out and shot him too, leaving him dead on the spot, said multiple witnesses.

Shoumen tried to flee as the locals gathered. They chased him and the ASI took shelter in a nearby building. The crowd surrounded the building until police arrived, said police and locals.

Police went to the spot and arrested Shoumen, said OC Sabbirul Alam.

Shakil was declared dead after locals took him to a nearby hospital.

Talking to The Daily Star, Asma's family members said she married around eight years ago, but divorced her husband around four years ago. The couple had one child, Robin.

After the divorce, Asma lived with her son at her father's residence in Naturia village.

Family members said Asma married Shoumen a few years ago but added that they did not have any marriage document.

Kushtia town and started living there.

Her brother Hasan Ali said Shoumen used to pay the rent and alleged that Shoumen used to torture Asma.

The Daily Star correspondent talked to Asma's mother Hasina Banu at Kushtia General Hospital yesterday.

"In the morning, my daughter along with her son left the house, saying that Shoumen will take them to Khulna," said Hasina Banu.

## India holds vaccination drive for people with disabilities

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

Authorities in an Indian city have organised a special drive-through vaccination camp for disabled people in a bid to address low vaccination rates, especially among more vulnerable members of society.

Organisers of the weekend campaign in Ahmedabad, the biggest city in Gujarat state, aim to vaccinate 500 disabled people, who often struggle to book slots and get access to vaccination centres.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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- Act as the focal point for clientele supervision, MIS and relevant activities for green portfolio management.
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- Meet the organizational deliverables for different multilateral stakeholders and donor agencies.
- Ensure organizational capacity by arranging training/capacity development session in terms of environmental & social issues
- Rollout the environmental and social risks projects, policies within the organization and act under the guidance of the Sustainable Finance Department, Bangladesh Bank
- Formulate relevant policy/strategies, develop plans to mobilize resources to attain the organizational goal in terms of environmental and social risks.
- Assist the CSR team to support regulatory reporting and ensure proper implementation of regulatory directives.

**KEY QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Graduate from a well-recognized institution preferably in a relevant subject
- Minimum 5 years of supervisory experience in the relevant field is mandatory
- Ability to lead a dynamic team
- Expert in customer centricity, ownership & delivering results, integrity, collaboration and developing others

### Associate Manager, Sustainable Finance Unit

**Employment Type: Full Time; Job Grade: SO - PO; Job Location: Dhaka**

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Assist the focal point for clientele supervision, MIS and relevant activities for green portfolio management.
- Coordinate with different department of the bank to achieve the organizational goal for sustainability
- Meet the organizational deliverables for different multilateral stakeholders and donor agencies.
- Assist the SFU team and ensure organizational capacity by arranging training/capacity development session in terms of environmental & social issues
- The rollout of sustainability mission/vision among the various departments of the bank.
- Regulatory reporting, DFI reporting, E&S reporting, E&S part of annual reporting etc.

**KEY QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Graduate from a well-recognized institution preferably in a relevant subject
- Minimum 5 years of relevant working experience is required
- Ability to work in a team and capability to meet deadlines
- Proficient in customer centricity, ownership & delivering results, integrity, collaboration and developing others

Only short-listed candidates will be invited for the interview as per the recruitment process. BRAC Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason whatsoever.

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Memorial plaque on the premises of Satkhira deputy commissioner's office



Bangladesh Mukti Foj at Jessore. April 4, 1971



Bir Bikram Mahub Uddin Ahmad was in charge of presenting the guard of honour to the acting president of the expatriate government of Bangladesh at the oath taking ceremony on 17 April, 1971.

# Remembering the Battle of Bhomra

**MAHUB UDDIN AHMED BIR BIKRAM**

Hell had broken loose. The sky above the Bhomra bund of Satkhira suddenly turned bright, thunderous colours going in all directions. The large contingent of soldiers was in slumber, half asleep, half awake – all voluntary members of the Mukti Bahini who had travelled many miles to confront the brutality of the Pakistani soldiers. The innocent people of Satkhira were being savagely killed and raped by the Pakistan Army.

The Mukti Bahini command post was at the root of a large Shimul tree. Past afternoon, one air bomb from the enemy fire had destroyed the top branch where I was present along with my co-soldiers. Captain Salahuddin of the East Bengal Regiment was in charge of the company. He tumbled up from his drowse, recognising the early dawn attack, and cried out to us: "The enemy is trying to locate our position. Get into trenches and be ready to fire back. Let's teach the heinous Pakistanis a lesson. Joy Bangla."

The plan was to stay camouflaged and probe the space in front so that, when striking was required, it could be achieved smoothly. The area was reverberating with the sound of long-range artillery and cannon shells bursting over our heads.

In the meantime, Captain Salahuddin called out for me, his second in command. I was posted out from the South-western command of the Mukti Bahini after the withdrawal from Jhenaidah after its fall. My large group of combat soldiers ranging from all walks of life had trailed me through a circuitous way: moving from Jhenaidah through Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia, via Betai and Benapole onto Gojadanga via the Indian state of Nadia, Kolkata etc. to land on the other side of the Bhomra border. The border outpost of India called Gojadanga finally offered me a space to align my

for guerrilla warfare in the country. I had encouraged the local Sangram committees to get ready for arms training. I had instructed the Ansar and Mujahid Battalions of Jhenaidah to impart training to young students and juveniles. I opened up my Jhenaidah police station ground for training any person willing to take it. KC College in the locality was the training ground for another large contingent. We started training as early as March 18, 1971 and used dummy rifles and bamboo sticks. Our fight started just before the clock struck 23 hours on March 25, 1971. By that hour on that fateful night, the Pakistani 27 Baluch S and T Regiment was already on its way to Kushtia. Unfortunately for them, the route they chose to enter Kushtia was via my area, Jhenaidah. It became a fateful event in Pakistan's history of the war but, for us, the most incredible. Jhenaidah was the venue of my insurrection against Pakistan, where the enemy lost their initial attempt to destroy the Mukti Bahini, and all of them got killed. Within a couple of days of their passing over my territory, I had converted Jhenaidah into a fortress, creating trenches, cooking up traps, piling resources to mobilise in strength, and entrenching soldiers in the Mukti Bahini imbued with only one spirit, to fight the marauders. Such collective spirit of mind and heart, such enthusiasm and valour of ordinary folks, have never been observed anywhere else in the world. In the meantime, I had grown into prominence when I had the opportunity to award the Guard of Honour to the first Acting President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at Baidyanathata, now called Mujibnagar. This honour heightened my glory to the apex among the Mukti Bahini. This was who I was when, on a summer morning, I fell fast asleep in Gojadanga with my large contingent of responsibility.

We had established a listening post on a high tree at a distance of nearly 800 yards looking eastward to observe enemy movement in the vicinity. One of my original Mukti Bahini members, Kamaluzzaman from Jhenaidah, was on the post when the first light was thrown up. He abandoned his post, as was instructed to avoid peril. He came back running and said, "There is heavy enemy movement."

Nearly 40 members of the Jhenaidah Mukti Bahini accompanied me as a solid block of fighters. Others joined from places in Satkhira, Khulna and even Faridpur. Gun trotting Mukti Bahini members from Madhukhali and Madaripur joined with their own bands. A large contingent of EPR had joined me from Jhenaidah and continued at my beck and call under the leadership of Subedar Major Khairul Bashar, Subedar Jabbar, Lance Naik, later promoted to Naib Subedar Jahangir, and Sepoy Dudu Mia. The total strength was well into a few hundreds, a formidable fighting band to discern the advancing troops of 25 Baluch Regiment pitted against Salahuddin and me. With overwhelming firepower, alongside long and short-range artillery and guns, the early dawn attack was put into action. A part of 55 FF joined in with the Baluch to win a heyday. However, a wetland with swamp and quagmire was waiting for them in the jute and paddy fields of Satkhira.

By the time the Pakistani early dawn attack had infested the sky with untamed lights agog with sound and fury, they had lost two valuable hours. It was already dawn. We were dug in a higher ground along a two-kilometre-high bund. Now the counter forces were in full view of each other in the clear morning light. With a stretch of canal meandering behind us as the no man's land connected to India by a small culvert for offline rear movement, we were in no hurry to react. More so when the command was to be frugal with bullets, as we had a limited stock. It felt like a theatrical stage with attacks and counterattacks for the next two fatal hours to take one another down.

On May 29, 1971, the Pakistani Army drew up a well-orchestrated plan to uproot Mukti Bahini from its Bhomra

position. 55 FF and 25 Baluch hatched the arrangement with the full-fledged support of Brigadier Durrani of the Jashore Brigade. The agenda was to wipe out the Bangalee Bhomra stronghold completely. However, they failed to realise their objective. At the end of 16 continuous hours of firing, cannon mongering and bomb blasting, they lost and had to leave in ignominy, with significant casualty and destruction. The loss was so complete that the entire regiment was disbanded and sent back to Pakistan.

The three thrusts of the Pakistan

After a few minutes of exuberance and celebrating our victories, we settled back into our positions; we also discussed and reviewed our following execution plans. I was walking back when I was left dumbfounded by a high-pitched explosion next to me. In less than a second, I found two men lying next to me in a pool of blood, limp and motionless. A split-second mistake in handling a grenade took away two of my Mukti Bahini members.

**Bhomra Thrust Two:**

After the terrifying defeat in their early dawn attack, there appeared to be little

inform the enemy's intention to continue. However, the number of shelling was few and far between.

We regrouped, took some downtime and returned to our positions – some of us in trenches, others behind our lines under the sky's protection. I discussed the possibility of taking ammo from 13 Dogra Battalion to increase our firepower, so we could hold back the advancing enemy when the time came. I rushed straight into the field office of Colonel Nair. He ordered twenty thousand small arms bullets, a few thousand machine gun (MG) rounds and a considerable lot of high explosive (HE) grenades.

Amid the intermittent drop of bombs and artillery blasts, our head was held low to keep a safe composure. Finally, their movement was visible along the road to Bhomra towards our direction. This time they were mobilised in a one by one continuous fashion, zigzagging along the two sides of the road.

During this third and final thrust from our enemy along the Bhomra rib, they made a ferocious attempt to take over our position at the tip of the Satkhira Bhomra road leading up to the bund. I pulled up Dudu with a grenade thrower. I then took position at the back of the culvert, behind a mud wall, hardly 20 feet away from my forward trench, on the divide along the border. I asked Dudu to throw hand grenades. These grenades burst on the advancing enemy's front line, and they were forced to put their heads down. At that exact moment, all my boys in the trench who had grenades started throwing them on the enemy ranks who were trying to crawl ahead. The few grenades had a singular effect on the enemy again, and they stopped any further forward moves. This emboldened my trench men, and they continued shooting ahead while Dudu and I ran back to take our post in the trench.

As the enemy reached the vicinity of our range, the commander ordered targeted fire. Upon closer inspection, the number of Pakistani soldiers appeared dwindled, and their movement's pace seemed to have slowed down. It took another half an hour for us to maul the enemy heavily while they were trying to move towards our position at Bhomra. Approaching nearer, they stopped their backyard long-range support to avoid self-infliction and continued their tirade with powerful automatic weaponry. We replied with greater intensity. This continued for another thirty minutes when the enemy approach was very near. They were almost on us. It was time for a fistfight to stop them. In a few minutes, the big guys ran away into the woods or far behind, as far as they could, leaving behind the dead and wounded. They regrouped and continued firing on our boys from a reasonable distance, but they were still exposed in the open, making it easy for us to spot them.

Reporters came from as far as Kolkata to cover the news of the Mukti Bahini victory at Gojadanga, Bhomra sector of Satkhira. The Mukti Bahini ruled over the modernised army of Pakistan, a remarkable feat indeed.

We had suffered four casualties: Subedar Jabbar, Subedar Shamsul Huq, Abul Kashem, a member of Mujahid Bahini and Sepoy Abdul Mannan. Abdul Mannan and Kashem died in a trench waiting beside me when a grenade blasted due to improper handling of the pin. Subedar Shamsul Huq was killed in action on May 29, 1971, when the third wave of attack ensued. His memorial plaque stands high in a pool of bright light in front of the DC Satkhira office, honouring his high standard of training, discipline and bravery.

Mahub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram was the Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Jhenaidah during the Liberation War. He was in charge of presenting the guard of honour to the Acting President of the expatriate government of Bangladesh, Syed Nazrul Islam, at the oath taking ceremony on 17 April, 1971.



Mahub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram

Army at the Battle of Bhomra are described below.

**Bhomra Thrust One:**

After two hours of tracer rounds crisscrossing the sky, the ground below was clearly visible, and the enemy could see the movement of the Mukti Bahini. They continued their errand in slow motion. We mobilised between flashes of the artificial lights and the darkness of the night. As a result, our real movement remained unknown. In these two hours of respite-less free shooting, they lost millions of bullets, and an unlimited number of mortar shells, bombs, crackers, long-distance and short distance.

We were within two kilometres of their target. I took my dependable companions, including police officers and EPR stalwarts and made a few rounds around the length of the trenches, where our boys were earnestly waiting to receive firing order against the enemy. The morning was bright, providing clear visibility. We were positioned at the right of our trenches, overlooking a pool of rice and paddy fields. The plants had thick stalks of rice and long stems of jute, which would allow the enemy to advance stealthily. However, I was sure the enemy did not know that they were walking onto an extensive swampy lowland.

Once they approached the vicinity of our firing range, with their heads down to avoid eye contact, all the trees and crops stood against their line of vision. Slowly but surely, they drew themselves into the wetland and got bogged down in perilous soft soil. Now they could neither go forward nor fall backwards. The most powerful, trained army of the time found itself slowed down with weapons thoroughly soaked in water. In this lull of enemy activity, our boys chanted "Joy Bangla" and started firing. A pathetic morning fell on the invaders who were now looking to retreat. But our boys' tirade continued to kill, maim or wound them in numbers they never thought possible. The firing continued unabated from our side for nearly an hour until all enemy movement fell into total silence.

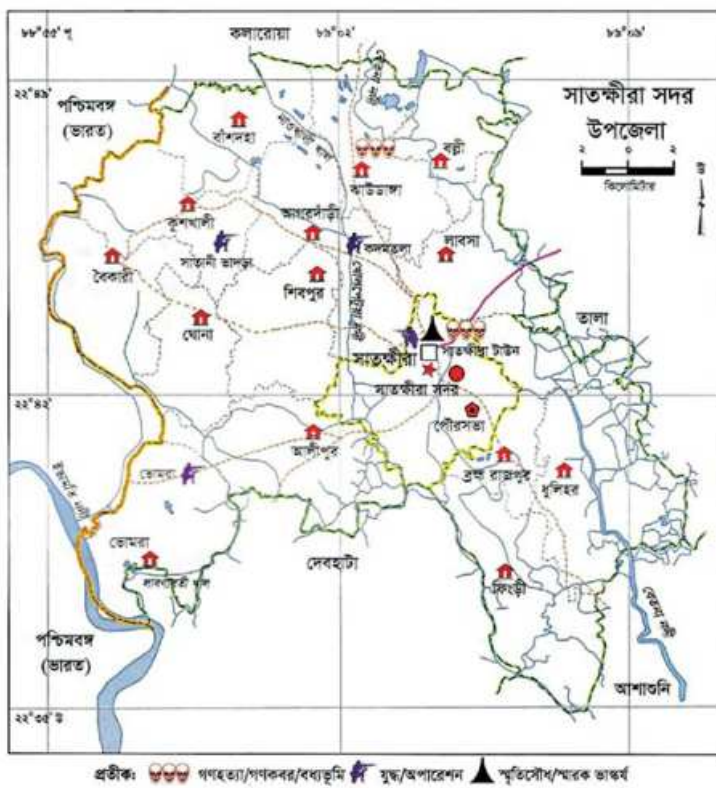
to no activity in the enemy ranks. I observed some movement along the road falling in my plain of vision. These enemy soldiers appeared to have been moving to achieve a specific target. They were using an expansive date garden with robust trees that was very strongly built. The garden allowed them nearly free movement. A level playing field was thus created between us on high ground. When their entire column fully entered the garden, they started shooting to keep our heads down. It was almost midday when Naib Subedar Jahangir came running from his trench to inform me that the enemy was leading a vigorous attack through the date garden. The only way to extricate them would be through the narrow canal right behind our dugout trenches.

Within our circumference, there were some abandoned mud houses. I realised that these structures could act as stone walls against any advancing high-power bullets or bombs, so I directed a few of my men and myself into these houses – this would become our protection.

I called for Dudu Mia, Sepoy of EPR, my dear mortar man, with a few rounds of 1.5-inch mortar. Dudu and I moved effectively within ten yards of our hind lines, commanded by Jahangir in the trenches under him. When we took up position behind a thick wall, counter firing was already razing like hell. It was an exchange of fire between modern automatics and outdated single shots and semi-automatics. I alerted the LMG men accompanying me and Dudu to prepare to fire. It was impossible to see the other side due to the obstruction of the heavyset trees. However, in a few minutes, all the noise from the enemy side ceased. They were completely diminished. Everyone standing in the mud hut areas and the trenches started screaming, "Joy Bangla!"

**Bhomra Thrust Three:**

The third thrust occurred at the central road leading from the Pakistani advance post to Bhomra high bund. Long-range artillery and guns continued defiling the sky and land in no uncertain terms to



Liberation War map of Satkhira

troop for the upcoming struggles.

At the time, my title was Captain Mahub. I am originally from Jhenaidah and served as the Chief of Police in the subdivision of Jashore District of East Pakistan. I was well known as SDPO Jhenaidah. I organised the resistance in Jhenaidah with my police officers and constables serving in all the six small police stations of the subdivision. I distributed 400 rifles of 0.303 origins from my armoury amongst all from the ordinary rank and file of the local citizenry and my close political friends of the Awami League. I took enthusiasm from their trust upon me to stand against the Pakistani atrocity let loose in Rajarbagh Police Line, Dhaka, Pilkhana of East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), Iqbal Hall of Dhaka University and so on. Bangabandhu's call for independence created the base



## Continued closure of educational institutions

But what's the plan?

GOING back on its plan to reopen schools and colleges partially, the government has once again extended the closure of schools and colleges to June 30. Earlier the education minister had announced that all educational institutions would open from June 12. Understandably, the Covid situation with a new surge in infections has led to such a decision. However, it is rather incongruous to see life running at a normal level in every sector despite the lockdowns, except in the education sector. It is also a fact that the country has been hit by the second wave, but that has affected the border areas more than the hinterlands.

Classes have been suspended since March last year, and the adverse consequences of such a long hiatus from classroom has had its effect on the students in lesser or greater degree which cannot be lost upon our planners. Pushing back plans constantly to reopen educational institutions is frustrating for the students, teachers and parents. Thus, such a situation demands a well deliberated action plan for all the educational institutions all over the country.

The idea of wide-scale remote or distant or online learning is impracticable in Bangladesh. And this too has been limited to the affluent and mainly to the upscale schools and colleges in the Capital. How many students can afford the facilities to participate in online classes? What about the students of the outlying districts whose access to IT facilities is very limited if at all? And what about the primary schools? It does not need an expert to suggest that the so-called auto promotion is self-defeating.

The idea of not opening the universities till every student has been vaccinated defies logic. We ask if the government needs to wait for the infection rate to come down to 5 percent all over the country. Why do all the education institutions have to open at the same time all over the country? Why can't those areas with less than 5 percent positivity rate at present, and there are a few, open without further ado? Why can't safety measures be enforced in all schools and colleges? To start with, can't the schools and colleges run in shifts, and can't students attend school for three instead of five or six days? There are rafts of alternatives, which those who are capable of thinking and offering practicable alternatives can offer. All we can assume from the way the education sector has been handled during the pandemic is that very little thought has been given to devise ways and means to tide over the situation in a manner that would ensure safety of the students as well as disrupt their education as little as possible. We believe that the government should not rely entirely on bureaucrats but fall back on experts for their suggestions, some of which have already appeared in the print media. The education minister should seek their ideas.

## Are we doing anything about the latest spike in Covid infections?

Hospitals are again underprepared

HEALTH experts had warned earlier that if the Indian variant of Covid-19 (also known as Delta variant) can make its way into areas other than the bordering ones, Bangladesh will likely witness more than 20,000 covid-19 cases a day in early July. It seems that this prediction is becoming real, given the rise in Covid-19 cases all around the country. According to a DS report published yesterday, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) told that the Covid-19 transmission rate has increased by 27.2 percent this week, which is the highest in the last three weeks. DGHS is considering the Delta/Indian variant of Covid-19 as the possible reason behind this sudden spike in infections.

Two districts, namely Khulna and Rajshahi, are bearing the brunt of this increased rate of the infection the most. As Khulna borders with Satkhira which in turn borders India, all the Covid-19 patients of the Indian variant are gathering at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) as there aren't any proper facilities for Covid-19 treatment in Satkhira's hospitals. Same goes for Rajshahi, which borders Chapainawabganj, which in turn borders India. The positivity rate, the number of new cases and the number of deaths emanating from Covid-19- all are showing an upward trajectory across the nation. KMCH even had to stop admitting new patients as it didn't have enough capacity to tackle the huge number. Out of the 100-bed capacity, there are 131 Covid-19 patients who are undergoing treatment at KMCH right now. There is also the possibility of the Delta variant reaching other areas in the mainland including Dhaka which may be underprepared according to experts.

Putting the bordering districts and districts near to the bordering ones into strict and complete lockdown is the first thing that the government has to do to combat the emergence of a new variant of the deadly Covid-19 epidemic. Inter-district transport system has to be stopped too. Hospitals in the bordering areas need to be given sufficient equipment and manpower so that all the burden doesn't fall on a few hospitals. It goes without saying these hospitals are in urgent need of increasing capacity—more ICU beds, testing capacity and uninterrupted oxygen supply. Although these basic requirements should have been fulfilled weeks ago, now there is no time to waste as lives are being lost because of lack of essential facilities in these hospitals.

# Recovery from the pandemic will depend on data-driven policy-making

MACRO MIRROR



FAHMIDA KHATUN

THE finance minister has recently rejected the survey findings of multiple organisations on the number of "new poor" created due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of think tanks including the non-government ones have undertaken representative household surveys on the employment and income loss due to the pandemic. Numbers vary across organisations. However, each of them has shown that the pandemic has eroded income of the poor and low-income families as they lost employment. This has pushed them into poverty. So, the number of the poor has increased compared to the pre-Covid period.

Surprisingly, the recently announced national budget for fiscal year (FY) 2022 has not mentioned anything about the new poor. Hence, there has not been any fiscal measures for them. The absence of the new poor in an important government document such as the national budget is equivalent to non-recognition of this hard-hit population. The minister is said to have mentioned that survey data by the non-government think tanks on the Covid-induced poor are not acceptable to him.

Unfortunately, despite having more financial and human resource capacity than the think tanks, no survey has been undertaken by the official data supplying organisation—Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Even after about 16 months since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country, BBS did not feel the urge to conduct a survey to have a thorough understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the economy and society. In the absence of such an initiative, several think tanks conducted both online and field-level surveys to estimate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on various sections of the people.

These surveys are crucial not only for researchers but also for the government. Researchers analyse data and suggest policies. The government has to take decisions based on the data and analysis. The Centre for Policy Dialogue has been urging for timely, up-to-date and credible data for sound and effective decision making by the government for long. In view of the current debate on the poverty numbers suggested by the think tanks, a few data related problems are reiterated here.

**First, there is a lack of adequate and timely data in Bangladesh.** A number of important surveys are conducted by BBS after a certain time gap. BBS conducts important surveys such as the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) once in every five years, and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) once in every three years. Then the release of the survey results takes a while. So, researchers have to use this dated data for their analyses and policy recommendations. The government takes decisions based on these data for a couple of years. These surveys are conducted at large scale as these have to be representative. Therefore,

these are expensive. But to address the data gap and make data relevant, BBS can conduct a smaller survey biennially to complement the larger surveys. This, of course, is not a full-proof method, but at least these can provide some idea on the trend of major indicators. In the absence of current surveys, when the Ministry of Finance (MoF) uses data to prepare the national budget, it cannot reflect the real situation.

**Second, lack of disaggregated data hampers effective policy measures.** Aggregate data on many socio-economic indicators cannot provide much information. Therefore, disaggregated data at the sub-district and union levels are essential. Such information is useful not only for robust analysis but also for designing emergency response at times of crisis. The availability of such disaggregated data could have helped in better targeting of social safety measures for the affected people during the

case of data on Annual Development Programme, information provided by the MoF are sometimes different from the ones supplied by the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Planning Commission. Also, at times, budget deficit and financing data vary between the MoF and Bangladesh Bank. Numbers are also found to be different at times for similar types of data from various sources. For example, information generated by a few surveys such as Sample Vital Registration System, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey sometimes indicate different figures for the same type of information. The estimate on the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) is widely discussed since the numbers often do not correspond with supporting indicators, such as private investment and employment generation. The solution to such incoherence requires harmonisation of data collected from

discontinued following analysis of those data by experts.

**Fifth, BBS must initiate data collection in order to set realistic goals during the pandemic.** In the absence of official nationally representative data, several non-government think tanks have collected some critical socio-economic data. Some are still collecting such data. To ensure consistency, credibility and representativeness of data collected by non-government think tanks, BBS should extend cooperation to those institutions by sharing its survey methodologies.

**Sixth, there is no alternative to a strong government institution such as BBS for data collection.** The organisation needs to enhance its capacity by recruiting more statisticians. It should also reinvigorate its technical committees by engaging more experts. More financial resources are also needed to conduct surveys annually. Additionally, BBS should be more independent and transparent in data



ongoing pandemic. For better targeting and selection of beneficiaries under social safety net programmes, BBS has been preparing a National Household Database. This is long overdue since this was to be completed by 2017. Needless to say, this could have been extremely useful for distribution of the cash support by the government during the ongoing pandemic. To help the pandemic-affected poor people, the government had announced to distribute Tk 2,500 among 50 lakh poor households in 2020. However, the support could be distributed among 35 lakh households only due to lack of proper listing of the poor beneficiaries. This has been an example of how data limitation can constrain government efforts to implement its decision.

**Third, the quality of available data is poor due to lack of reliability, standardisation and consistency.** We often find two different numbers in case of revenue data from the MoF and from the National Board of Revenue. In

different surveys through better inter-agency coordination.

**Fourth, data are also inaccessible at times.** Since we have to rely on government sources for data, access to data is becoming difficult day by day. Sharing of data online is yet to be practiced widely in Bangladesh. Often it takes a long time to receive data from the organisations we request data from. At times, some organisations do not reply to our requests at all. Some would even decline on your face to provide data. Such non-cooperation could be due to fear among officials. There could be political pressure on them. Some officials would tell us that their data are confidential. It is difficult to understand what confidentiality would be there in publishing and sharing those data which are publicly available in other countries. The hesitation to face public scrutiny probably hinders the responsible organisations from publishing data. We recall, BBS published quarterly LFS data a couple of years ago. But this was

generation and their dissemination to improve its credibility. The institution, as the prime source of official data, should have regular consultations with major users of data including the planning commission, think tanks, the private sector and non-government organisations.

Finally, the recovery from the pandemic will depend on the policy measures by the government. The effectiveness of these measures will depend on proper understanding of the state of the economy based on field-level data on key indicators including investment, production, employment, poverty and inequality. Authentic data on health indicators are also required. There has been an indifference towards the importance of quality data. It is time that the policymakers not only ensure the availability of reliable data but also use these data for effective decision making at this crucial juncture of history.

Dr Fahmida Khatun is the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this article are personal.

## Our industry is digitising rapidly, are we ready?

RMG NOTES



MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

WE all knew the global pandemic would change the business world in some way but, until recently, it has been difficult to pinpoint precisely how. For many of us,

the past 16 months have been a fight to remain competitive above all else. Indeed, for some, it has been a fight for survival.

As the dust begins to settle, however, and normal trading begins to properly resume in many of Bangladesh's largest export markets, one trend is presenting itself loud and clear: the shift to online, e-commerce sales.

I have followed with interest the financial results of the leading fashion brands and retailers these past few months. In the financial statements of all, online sales are growing rapidly—by 30, 40 and 50 percent or more in many cases. On the contrary, in-store sales are flatlining and even shrinking in a lot of instances. Shops are being closed as retailers look to save money on costly rents in buildings where footfall is shrinking fast.

The chief executives of many brands have already stated quite publicly that the online shift is here to stay—beyond the pandemic. The move to e-commerce is permanent, and will likely continue to gather pace.

This has potentially profound implications for Bangladesh if we wish to remain a valued partner of major western brands. There are numerous issues we need to consider around government policy, the existing digital infrastructure and the regulatory environment. Will they all be fit for purpose in an environment which is increasingly digital? I believe there are several things we

need to do to remain relevant as a trading partner.

Number one is having a resilient and cyber secure digital infrastructure to build trust and tell our trading partners Bangladesh is a country that can be relied upon. Therefore I was so pleased last year when the World Bank announced it was funding a four-year project in Bangladesh to improve cybersecurity, build resiliency during future crises, and



enable the government to operate virtually to deliver critical public services to citizens and businesses. As well as reducing vulnerabilities from the pandemic, this work will also help us prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, helping to digitise small and medium enterprises and strategic industries.

The next thing I believe we need to consider is training and education. We already have a world class ready-made garment (RMG) industry. But running in parallel to this we need the brightest, most agile digital minds. Experts in software development, coding, website development, online marketing—and a whole-range of other areas in between.

Digital skills shortages will hold our economy back; they will hold our garment sector back.

We should also be in no doubt that our competitors are already pressing ahead in this area, including the likes of India, Pakistan and, of course, China. There is no time to waste.

The third area I believe we need to consider is tie-ups and partnerships with existing digital platforms. In a development we should all be taking note of, Pakistan recently announced its participation on the Amazon seller list—a move which will open up huge business opportunities for small to medium sized enterprises in that country.

Some experts believe Pakistan's participation on Amazon could generate up to one billion dollars' worth of exports and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Bangladesh needs to be considering fully its options for Amazon, ebay and the many other selling platforms which have proliferated globally in recent years. Indeed, I firmly believe our government should be looking to prepare training and development programmes to ensure our businesses can take full advantage from new opportunities offered by such platforms.

**Bangladesh needs to be considering fully its options for Amazon, ebay and the many other selling platforms which have proliferated globally in recent years.**

Such training, to be developed in conjunction with digital experts, including our universities, would support our business owners to improve quality and packaging of their products to the standards of Amazon and other platforms.

As indicated, it is not just Amazon. There are other selling platforms around the world, many of them specific to markets such as China (a huge export opportunity). Do we have the international trade experts within government to enable us to tap into these markets and understand how these platforms work? Often selling into new markets, even digitally, requires an understanding of cultural nuance as well different laws around issues such as customs, product packaging and legal regulations.

Finally, I believe the most important thing we must all be doing as exporters right now is talking to our customers—fashion brands and retailers. This sounds like an obvious point to make but it's surprising how many suppliers forget to do this regularly enough. It is also important to state that, as indicated, the past 12-months have seen a whirlwind of change, and this is ongoing. This change is having a huge impact on brands in terms of their logistics—their warehousing, their inventory levels, their requirements in terms of order sizes (smaller is increasingly popular) and so on.

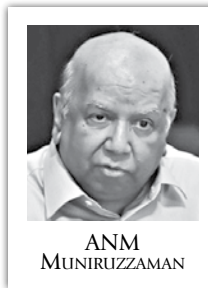
Are we, as a supplier base, enabling them to better operate in this shifting environment? What can we do on a digital front to make their life easier, what kind of software do we need to invest in—in short, what do we need to do to become a trusted supplier and support them on their own digital journey?

Our rivals abroad will be asking these same questions and, as they say, the early bird catches the worm.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) and Bangladesh Denim Expo.



# Quad: Quo Vadis?



**T**HE increasing influence of China's activity, particularly in the South China Sea and Indo-Pacific region, has raised many eyebrows among western nations and members of the Asia-Pacific region itself. As a reactionary measure to compete and off-set the meteoric rise of the Asian superpower, America and its friends from the region, namely Australia, Japan and India, have used its platform—the Quad—to give the world an insight of what the future of competition against China might look like. Although China was not mentioned exclusively in the recent deliberations of the Quad leader's summit, the joint statement released by the White House stating, "... cooperation on the critical technologies of the future to ensure that innovation is consistent with a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific" and "... meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas," clearly hint at the push-back against Chinese influence. However, the initial function of the Quad was far from the current state of affairs in the region and its scope of operations has undergone several mutations in the last decade.

When Japanese Prime Minister at the time Shinzo Abe first proposed the Quad in 2007, he called for a "quadrilateral strategic dialogue" among the nations. However, this was not the first time these nations have come together for a mutual cause. The Quad members have worked before during 2004-05 in coordinating response to the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean as a the "Tsunami Core Group". So, at the very beginning, the scope of operation between the nations was not for security. But fast-forward to the fall of 2007, after Abe's announcement, the Quad and Singapore conducted their first maritime exercise, expanding the scope of its operations. Just like now, the exercise left a notion of political ambiguity around what all of it would mean: would this be a simple exercise for cooperation? Or ultimately some

form of defence treaty?

A major obstacle came the way of the Quad as Australia opted out with the Australian foreign minister declaring in a joint statement that "they would not be proposing to have such a dialogue again." This marked the end of the quadrilateral security dialogue for quite some time. It was not until the November of 2017 that the group resurfaced again and since then, it has met regularly and worked at ministerial levels. The nations of the Quad each laid out its vision for a "free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific" in the form of comprehensive and separate official documents discussing their way forward.

With all things considered, and with Australia returning to the crux, all eyes are on the future trajectory of the Quad. Many analysts argue that it will evolve into a defence treaty—possibly a more structured NATO of Asia. A growing fear of militarisation of the region could see the light of day considering India, Japan and US have already been participating in the Malabar joint naval exercises with the recent addition of Australia. The Quad members have also been taking part in each other's multilateral exercises; most notable of which is the Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC)—the world's largest naval exercise—which is clearly an attempt to further deepen their defence ties.

The Quad may also look to expand its membership and reach out to other nations to form a more comprehensive collaboration regarding security. This can be seen to happen in two stages. Firstly, they would seek to acquire participation from major nations in the Indo-Pacific region. They have already exemplified this interest through naval interactions with South Korea in the form of exercise "Pacific Vanguard". New Zealand would also be a great addition as the nation already engages in security dialogues with its neighbours through the "Five Power Defence Arrangements" and the "Five Eyes" intelligence sharing mechanism, and this will only add value to the Quad's existing cooperation measures. Secondly, the Quad may look to include more allies in the west with influence in the Indo-Pacific. In this regard, France and UK would be suitable

options as they have major stakes in the region. France has extensive interests in the Indo-Pacific in French territories in the region. The French Republic is also a member of the FRANZ Arrangement with Australia and New Zealand and is a member of the Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group with Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The UK, on the other hand, has undertaken what experts describe as a "tilt" of focus towards the Indo-Pacific and their ties with members of

from south and south-east Asia into the clusters due to their strategic relevance.

The scope of operation of the Quad has not expanded to just include security. The "Quad Leader's Joint Statement" also displayed the four nation's commitment to tackling climate change. A more notable area of cooperation that the summit highlighted was equitable access for the Covid-19 vaccine in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad is not just confining themselves to conventional



International Navy ships assemble off the coast of Hawaii during the Rim of Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) on July 26, 2018.

PHOTO: AFP

the Commonwealth within the region make a considerable asset for the Quad.

Instead of directly evolving membership, the Quad may also opt to take a "plus process" approach—QUAD plus three, etc., to collaborate with other major member states at various levels. This could be similar to how ASEAN conducts its ASEAN+3 cooperation. The Quad can also expand to work with and support smaller nations. These nations can act as "support clusters" to assist the operations and be a part of QUAD based activities and cooperation. It would be in the best interest of the Quad to lobby members

diplomacy but also exploring the new avenues of post-Covid-19 multilateralism. Many developing nations were left astray as they could not meet the demands for vaccines required to help fight the spread of Covid. It was initially China and Russia that came to their rescue as they shipped millions of jabs to these destitute nations. This not only strengthens bilateral ties but also bolsters their strategic influence. The Quad is perhaps looking to form its own vaccine distribution project to off-set the influence of that of China and Russia. However, this exhibition of "vaccine diplomacy" combined with the

Quad's expansion into regional security can prompt severe implications.

The Quad's attempts at countering Chinese influence in the region can cause a stiff rise in strategic tension based on strategic competition. Many have regarded China's quadrilateral discussion with Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan—otherwise known as the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network—as a "Himalayan Quad" formed as a counter, even though Beijing has stated that this cooperation is solely for mutual economic interests. Although a major reactionary measure is yet to have been taken from Beijing, it is likely that the Asian superpower may look to enter discussions with the Russian Federation for future deliberations on the region. China will also look to its companions in South and South-East Asia to not have direct involvement with the Quad if they are to ensure relations with Beijing do not turn sour. Bangladesh has been the latest recipient of this as the Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh stated that should Dhaka join the "club", it would substantially damage bilateral relations between the countries, even though there was no formal invitation from any members of the Quad for Bangladesh. The remark gives us an idea of the important strategic role Bangladesh has in terms of future deliberations of the Quad and a glimpse of what a militarised future in the Indo-Pacific might look like—either you are against the Quad or against China.

Conclusively, going forward, Bangladesh and countries alike must tread very carefully regarding matters involving Quad operations. We must find innovative ways to manoeuvre diplomatically and use a "hedge-and-engage" approach whenever necessary. However, this is not to say that Dhaka should engage in any form of direct action or alignment. The best course of action would be to exercise all elements of strategic neutrality so that a bi-polar geo-political situation, like the Cold War era, does not arise in the region. However, such a future seems to be more plausible as days go by.

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## 'Moddhorater Ossharohi' vice chancellors



**T**HE subject matter of this write-up is the ranking of the world's best universities. But I would like to start on a different note, quoting from legendary journalist Foyez Ahmad's book "Moddhorater Ossharohi" (roughly translated as "Midnight Horseman").

Foyez Ahmad and a few of his friends who worked in different newspapers used to live in a shared mess in Bhooter Goli, Narinda. Work at the newspaper offices usually took till 2-3am, with some spreading out newspapers on the table and sleeping there for the rest of the night while others like Foyez returned home.

That year, a major flood occurred. During the day, they could use small boats to reach the office but at night, with no boats available, everyone returned home wet from the waist down. Except for Foyez, Mohammadullah, assistant editor of *Ittefaq*, even caught a cold from constantly getting drenched on the way home. The "mystery" of how Foyez stayed dry was on everyone's lips.

One night at 2:00am, Mohammadullah told his friend Foyez, "I will go with you tonight. I want to see how you go home without getting wet." Foyez's work ended at 3:00am and the two friends left the *Ittefaq* office. In Hatkhola, close to the *Ittefaq* office, was a Christian graveyard which could be reached by crossing the rail line beside the Hordeo glass factory. Opposite the graveyard was the Baldha Garden and beside it, the road which led to Narinda. Many horses could be seen there, eating grass at the graveyard. After driving horse carriages throughout the day, the coachmen would leave their horses to graze at night.

Foyez had made friends with one such horse and would ride it across the flooded streets every night to the mess. That particular night, the horse rebelled at having to take two riders and Mohammadullah at

the back fell into the water. Foyez, however, still managed to reach home dry in the middle of the night.

The tradition of newspaper offices working till late no longer exists—reporters are not required to return home in the middle of the night. So what? These days, we are seeing university vice chancellors working till the late hours of the night. Professor Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, vice chancellor of Rangpur's Begum Rokeya University, is well ahead of others in this aspect—he works till midnight or even later at night. A few days ago, Kalimullah mentioned that he works 20-22 hours a day—meaning he only sleeps for a couple of hours. The vice chancellor who was present on campus for only 240 of the last 1,447 days—or who was absent for 1,207 days—most probably thought no one believed him. So, on the eve of his departure, he took a class at 3:30am at night.

It's actually difficult to not talk about the VC's antics. He was in the habit of taking a morning flight to Rangpur and returning home by evening. On one such occasion, he was at his campus residence when teachers and staff members gathered outside the bungalow with several demands. The next day, newspaper headlines read "Vice Chancellor Kalimullah left through the back door to flee to Dhaka".

He has literally acted in a Bangla motion picture. He even told *Bangladesh Protidin* that he is willing to take up the role of a male lead if approached. There are several serious allegations of corruption, including for teacher recruitment, against the VC. For example, he appointed his own mother as a member of the recruitment board. The University Grants Commission (UGC) recommended taking action against him after finding proof of corruption. However, the ministry remained indifferent and Kalimullah finished out his tenure.

Before coming to the discussion of university rankings, let us get better acquainted with several other vice chancellors.

Recently, in the middle of the night, several Chhatra League leaders demanding

jobs took position in front of outgoing Rajshahi University Vice Chancellor Professor M Abdus Sobhan's house. He assured them that he would give them jobs. The day before his tenure ended, he not only gave them, but also a hundred others, jobs. Here, too, the middle of the night came into play, as he must have spent the whole night readying the paperwork for these new jobs. The allegation soon came that he had accepted bribes in exchange for these jobs.

In protest that the VC could commit such an act, RU teachers locked the registrar's building. However, Sobhan's son-in-law broke in and brought out the paperwork in the middle of the night. This was ironic because his daughter and son-in-law did not have the necessary qualifications yet the vice chancellor modified the rules in order to appoint them as teachers. It has come to light that Sobhan also appointed a student who only passed class two and another who failed in one subject, as teachers.

Another vice chancellor has been accused of corruption as well as having affairs. Yet another had been using a university-owned car and took croses from university funds to buy another car for his son. It has been alleged that another vice chancellor shared the construction work commission with her husband and children. In a telephone conversation with student leaders, subsequently reported in the media, we learnt she bribed the ruling party's student wing leaders, with Tk 1-1.5 crore. The VC complained that the student leaders had demanded Tk 1 crore from her. The meeting with these student leaders took place at the VC's residence late at night, according to media reports. Based on the VC's complaint, these student leaders were removed from their posts. However, the vice chancellor is still reigning with splendour. As the time of her departure neared, she too followed the path of the RU VC—actively recruiting new teachers and staff even when they were not required, busily working on recruitment online. When students brought some legitimate demands to another vice chancellor, he called in the ruling party

student wing leaders and cadres to beat his students. He lamented that his students were militants, saying that tea, *singara* and samosa worth Tk 10 exemplifies the university's heritage.

Let us return to the issue of the best university rankings. The UK-based organisation QS publishes the list of the world's top 1,000 universities. In this year's list, no Bangladeshi university ranked in the top 800. The University of Dhaka and Buet are listed in the 800-1,000 rank. In 2012 and 2014, DU ranked 601 and 701 respectively. This means the quality of education at the university has deteriorated by 2021. In contrast, the 355th, 373th and 454th ranks in this year's list are occupied by three Pakistani universities.

In any case, the budget allocated for education is comparatively less in Bangladesh. This year's budget for DU is Tk 869 crore 56 lakh and the research budget is Tk 40 crore 91 lakh—which in terms of percentage is less than last year. Moreover, a large part of that research budget will be spent on the development of 56 laboratories in DU and for procuring equipment. The budget for actual research is minuscule. About 70 percent of the total DU budget is spent on wages and salaries. The situation in other public universities is worse. Teachers are also more active in participating in party politics instead of teaching or conducting research. Undoubtedly, these issues play a key role in declining standards and absence in top rankings.

However, the main reasons are the vice chancellors of these universities. For a university, the vice chancellor is iconic [I would use crucial]. He is responsible for the overall operation of the university. The activities of only a few VCs who have been appointed in recent years are mentioned above. Many other such incidents remain unknown. People accused of corruption are becoming VCs and getting entangled in financial and other scams while in charge of running the universities. A couple have been accused of scandalous affairs but none of them have been removed. The protests

carried out by students and teachers went in vain. The UGC ran investigations and recommended punishments based on their findings, but no action has been taken so far.

While such vice chancellors run our universities, we are lamenting that none of these universities appear in top rankings! If someone accused of corruption runs an organisation, you may find it in the corruption rankings, but it is highly unlikely that the organisation will be placed among the best of such organisations.

We talk about excelling in terms of various indices, ahead of our neighbouring countries. This is not untrue. However, the fact that we are lagging behind in terms of human resource development cannot be hidden by any means. We are only constructing buildings for primary, secondary, and higher secondary educational institutes. We have not improved the quality of our teachers/teaching.

Constructing buildings, roads, bridges and flyovers are essential for development. However, these do not translate to development on their own—they are simply supplemental to the process of actual development. Development mainly stems from human resource development. We have not given much attention to this, and the little focus we had is also shifting to other areas. If we look at the DU and JU buildings, we can see that wherever there was empty space, new buildings are being constructed. No efforts are being made for improving the quality of education, improving the students' living conditions and lifestyles, along with enhancing their studying capabilities. Even during this coronavirus pandemic, no noticeable efforts have been taken. We have abandoned the main development process and spent more time on its accessories instead. As a result, the iconic characters, the vice chancellors are now giving away jobs in exchange for money and stand accused of immoral charges. The worsening state of education and the educational institutes is slowly but surely apparent.

Translated from Bangla by Mohammed Ishiaque Khan

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**JOHN STEINBECK**  
(1902-1968)  
American author

*Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Mature
- 5 Turkish bigwig
- 10 Gin mixer
- 12 According to
- 13 Eventually
- 15 Maui souvenir
- 16 Conditions
- 17 Bear's lair
- 18 Straying
- 20 Suvari of film
- 21 Suit material
- 22 Historic times
- 23 Baseball's Yogi
- 25 Analogy words
- 28 Comedian
- 31 Mix up
- 32 Punctual
- 34 With 27-Down,

**DOWN**

- 1 "— of Two Cities"
- 2 Errand runners
- 3 Whole
- 4 Game cube
- 5 Hound's hands
- 6 Fireplace bit
- 7 Web spinner
- 8 Montana capital
- 9 Sports spots
- 11 Cower
- 14 Book finish
- 19 Shady spot
- 20 Intended
- 24 Unpleasant-tasting
- 25 Jordan
- 26 Suppress
- 27 34-Across
- 29 Mickey's company
- 30 Current unit
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**BEETLE BAILEY**

**BY MORT WALKER**

ARE WE ALMOST THERE?  
I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM  
I'M BORED  
I FEEL SICK  
AND YOU WONDER WHY I DON'T WANT KIDS

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS**

DEAF IMAGES  
URDU RAMONE  
GALL RAMEA  
USELESS TEA  
PERMITS RUT  
ORS FIVE  
TAHOE DUPED  
IVAN TILERS  
TAN HURLERS  
LID ONESTEP  
ELAPSE TUNA  
SEXIER ODER  
DEEDS PEEK

**BABY BLUES**

**BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT**

WHERE DOES THE DECIMAL POINT GO? HERE?? HERE??  
WHY NOT HERE? OR HERE? HERE? HERE? HERE? ...  
I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE STORY BEHIND THIS.  
YOU'RE NEXT, FRACTIONS!



# GREEN CONSTRUCTION - FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

The Daily Star and KSRM jointly organised an online discussion titled "Green Construction - The Future of the Industry" on June 5, 2021. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



**DR MD TAREK UDDIN,**  
PEng., Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

We are always surrounded by concrete because it is the most common building material. Even now, all of us are sitting on and are surrounded by concrete. The main ingredient for making concrete is cement. Every tonne of cement produces a tonne of carbon dioxide. Seeing that globally we use four billion tonnes of cement annually just gives you an idea of the scale of pollution from concrete production alone. That is 10 percent of the global carbon dioxide emission.

In Bangladesh, our consumption of cement is much lower than the global average. But we still have to do better. Green construction requires two things primarily: more efficient use of energy in construction work and more sustainable and environmentally friendly building materials. Water efficiency and waste management are also very important. Going forward, we have to think about all these factors. Ensuring that our construction work and buildings become more sustainable also plays into the sustainable development goals that we are targeting as a country. We need to ensure the future generations can continue to enjoy life as we were able to once, and the only way to do that is by becoming more environmentally conscious in all aspects of our lives.



**ENGINEER S M KHORSHED ALAM,**  
President, Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI)

Historically, a consequence of development has been the deterioration of the environment and the surrounding ecology. The more our lives flourish, the more the environment suffers as a consequence. This is why Dhaka is one of the most polluted cities in the world because a consequence of its fast development has been the negative effects on the environment.

There are a lot of roads in the country

that have been built based on the plans and geometric estimations from over 100 years back. We have continued to widen these roads instead of rethinking their overall construction. There are certain roads that are over 200 kilometres in length, but in the current landscape, they perhaps should not be more than 180 kilometres.

We need to use alternatives to bricks in the construction of buildings and roads such as Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks (CSEB), Interlocking CSEB, Concrete Hollow Block (CHB), Thermal Block (TB), and Aerated Concrete and Ferro-cement Sandwich Panel (ACFSP).



**MD ABU SADEQUE,**  
PEng., Executive Director, HBRC

The main idea behind green construction is sustainability. Firstly, construction must take environmental issues into consideration so that the next generation does not suffer due to our actions. Secondly, structures have to be durable. Even if the environmental impact of a less durable structure is low, it can't be considered sustainable. Thirdly, construction projects have to be affordable. And lastly, the use of construction materials has to be minimised.

If we want to boost green construction, we must adopt the concept of life-cycle analysis. According to life-cycle analysis, structures with a longer life are considered cheaper even if their monetary cost is slightly higher. The total maintenance cost throughout the life of a structure is included in the life-cycle costs. The concept of social cost analysis also has to be incorporated into the cost analysis of construction products. The environmental load of a construction product is added to the commodity value to give us the social cost. We are set to fail in achieving the relevant sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030 because we have yet to incorporate life-cycle and social cost analysis concepts into green construction.

Bangladesh's carbon emission is about 100 million tonnes per year. If the construction sector is responsible for one-third of this emission, it means it emits 33 million tonnes. Of this, brick production alone contributes 20 million tonnes. Bangladesh has a commitment under the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 21, to reduce carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2030. If we stop using bricks as construction materials, we can reduce carbon emission by close to 20 percent. 300 grams of carbon emission are produced per kilogram of brick. But, concrete blocks only emit 100 grams of carbon per kilogram. Therefore, by shifting from bricks to concrete blocks, the entire sector can reduce two-thirds of the current carbon emissions.

One kilogram of cement is responsible for one kilogram of carbon emission. One kilogram of rod produces half a kilogram of carbon emission. Therefore, cement and

rod consumption has to be reduced. We also have to reduce carbon emissions in the cement and rod production process by using advanced technology.

Stone aggregate, which is coarse aggregate, is a mandatory construction material that is fully imported. Green construction encourages the usage of local materials. Since there are no alternatives to stone aggregate, its use has to be decreased to be sustainable.

Ferro-cement technology can help reduce building material consumption and carbon emissions and increase affordability and structure durability.



**A F M SAIFUL AMIN,**  
Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, BUET

The world is constantly growing through new technology and research. By the time we make decisions about the planning for green construction, construction practices will have changed yet again. We have entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the construction industry will change drastically over the next five to 10 years. We are expecting to move towards mechanised and automated construction involving 3D-printed buildings and bridges. Highly skilled workers will manage and drive the robotic arms of these 3D printers, which may result in low-skilled workers losing their jobs. Therefore, many unskilled workers will have to develop skills to sustain themselves economically.

The overall result of these new initiatives will be that these durably constructed facilities will be delivered at a faster pace for the people. Our future infrastructure will be interconnected, with an obvious blending of civil engineering, IT infrastructure and communication networks. We need to demonstrate the effectiveness of this connectivity at the operational level. To achieve this goal, appropriate thoughts should be present during planning and designing, as well as when construction is started, to help Bangladesh remain on par with the rest of the world.

Quite a bit of research in Bangladesh has explored the benefits of recycling construction materials, but this topic has not yet been firmly included in our national construction policies and guidelines. We have a great deal of country-specific research, and we must put the findings into practice through entrepreneurship development. Gradually, many recycling industries will develop and will work with recycling technologies. Gradually, many startup businesses will emerge and prosper around these new industries. Then, perhaps, recycling industries will be established to recycle polymers, steel, bricks, and concrete and to help grow recycling-based startups. These businesses will transform the construction sector by reducing its carbon footprint. Ultimately, we will be able to advance in the field of green construction. We must come forward in support of this idea and work dedicatedly to

implement such policies.

We must reduce the need for maintenance efforts, life-cycle costs and carbon footprints in all construction processes. We also need to think about how waste will be managed after demolition. The design stage must have plans for all of these aspects. Country-specific research outcomes concerning innovations in new materials, construction, operation and maintenance science should be included comprehensively in textbooks and curriculum. The findings of such studies should be implemented through entrepreneurship development. The industry must come to the door of the academics and students, or vice versa. Industry advisory panels at higher learning institutions for engineering must be active and effective.

Life cycle management is a crucial part of a project. Every developed country has a policy for life cycle management of projects. We need to minimise the cost of a project by maximising its service life.

**DR MD. TAREK UDDIN,**  
PEng., Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

Life cycle management is a crucial part of a project. Every developed country has a policy for life cycle management of projects. We need to minimise the cost of a project by maximising its service life. The initial cost might be higher but it will benefit us in the long term. So, we need a good policy for the assessment of a building's life cycle.

Material efficiency is another major part of a project. We need to think carefully about the usage of material, for example, ordinary cement. It produces a huge amount of carbon dioxide. We can reduce the emission of carbon dioxide by using mineral-based cement instead. But the concept is not very popular in Bangladesh at present. We need to provide guidelines in our academic courses about the benefits of using mineral-based cement and also make it more cost-efficient.

Historically, a consequence of development has been the deterioration of the environment and the surrounding ecology.

The more our lives flourish, the more the environment suffers as a consequence. This is why Dhaka is one of the most polluted cities in the world because a consequence of its fast development has been the negative effects on the environment.

**ENGINEER S M KHORSHED ALAM,**  
President, Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI)

An important aspect of green construction is sustainable construction. Two major parameters that have been addressed to achieve the SDGs are recycling and renewable energy. But the main focus should be how much we can implement at the policy level. We need to use renewable energy in our construction process and make sure we are reusing the materials from construction. We need to ensure the implementation of it at the government level. In this way, a large

industry will develop around this and it will leave a noticeable impact on our economy.

We have a lot of country-specific research and we must put the findings into practice through entrepreneurship development. Gradually, many recycling industries will develop and will work with recycling.

**A F M SAIFUL AMIN,**  
Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, BUET

The term "carbon footprint" is internationally recognised. The systematic measurement of the carbon footprint of a person, organization or state, for use in carbon emissions trading, is termed a "carbon audit." Each company must have a carbon audit system, which can be a basis for identifying eligible companies and establishing them as benchmarks. Such systems will be used to audit the rates of carbon emissions and absorption to estimate the net carbon footprint. All building has a carbon footprint, and the construction industry must aim to reduce this footprint from the very onset of planning. By taking small steps, we will be able to minimise our country's industrial carbon footprint, create spaces for our vital agro-economy and reach internationally accepted levels. The government can provide incentives for pioneering companies, if necessary. All will go toward reducing our long-term environmental costs. If we keep damaging our environment, and if it takes an irreversible turn, we will be unable to save it. Therefore, we must cultivate awareness before it is too late. In this regard, our policymakers, engineers, construction industry leaders, environmentalists and designers must come together and work in unison.

If we want to boost green construction, we must adopt the concept of life-cycle analysis. According to life-cycle analysis, structures with a longer life are considered cheaper even if their monetary cost is slightly higher.

**MD ABU SADEQUE,**  
PEng., Executive Director, HBRC

If we consider a building, 80 percent of its carbon emission comes from embodied energy. Embodied energy is the carbon emission rate while constructing building materials. The rest of the 20 percent is operating energy. Using renewable energy is part of operating energy. If we focus on brick construction, it accounts for around 58 percent of the total pollution of Dhaka city, which is a kind of embodied energy. If we use concrete blocks instead of bricks, we will be able to minimise carbon emission along with the cost. So it is clear that we must focus on embodied energy.

We import 100 percent of stones whereas we can produce artificial stones in the country using our resources. Some countries are using sand from their riverbeds. We also studied this process and it is possible. We can produce artificial blocks from sand that can withstand 8000 pounds per square inch of pressure. Then we can break these blocks to create artificial stones. This will help reduce the cost of importing and therefore pave the path towards more affordable and sustainable buildings.



প্রকৃতির ছায়ায় হোক  
আমাদের প্রকৃত উন্নয়ন

আধুনিক ও যুগোপযোগী কিছু পদক্ষেপ হতে পারে পরিবেশবান্ধব, আর তাই কেএসআরএম-এর রয়েছে

- ক্রোজ সার্কিট রিসাইক্লিং কুলিং সিস্টেম যা পানিকে পুনরায় ব্যবহারযোগ্য করে অপচয় ও পরিবেশের ক্ষতি রোধ করে
- পরিবেশবান্ধব বর্জ্য নিষ্কাশন ব্যবস্থা
- বায়ু দূষণ নিয়ন্ত্রক



## MSC keep rolling sans Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the resolution of the Shakib Al Hasan saga that went on for the past two days after the star cricketer once again made headlines for all the wrong reasons, the eighth round of the Dhaka Premier League T20 competition hit the field yesterday and, despite the rain halting a majority of matches yesterday, things eventually seemed to return to normal.

Shakib was suspended for three matches and fined Tk 5 lakh for kicking down the stumps near the umpire Imran Parvez in rage after being denied LBW appeal in the fifth over of their game against Abahani on Friday. Shakib was also seen threatening the umpire before again blowing his top and uprooting the stumps and slamming them in a fit of rage when the umpires called for covers to be brought on due to rain in the same over.

Mohammedan officials have appealed to the CCDM to minimise Shakib's suspension and there was talk that Shakib may fly to the USA within the next couple of days to spend time with his family.

However, even without Shakib, Mohammedan continued their winning run and registered a fifth win in eight games with a five-run win (D/L method) over Old DOHS Sports Club.

Irfan Shukkur top-scored with an unbeaten 42-ball 64 and helped Mohammedan post 154 for five. In reply, DOHS ended up on 115 for 4 after 16 overs as rain forced a stop to the game. DOHS eventually lost the game by D/L method.

Abahani returned to winning ways after defeat in their previous



Prime Bank players congratulate Abahani opener Munim Shahriar for his blistering 92-run knock, which helped his side to secure a 30-run victory in the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

eventful battle against archival Mohammedan as Mushfiqur Rahim's side registered a comfortable 30-run win over Prime Bank Cricket Club by D/L method in another rain-affected encounter.

Abahani rode on young opener Munim Shahriar's blistering unbeaten 92 off just 50 balls, which included five sixes and nine fours, to post a big total of 183 for 3. Prime Bank ended on 143 for six in 19 overs after rain forced a premature end to the game. Skipper Tamim Iqbal's 55 was the top score for Prime Bank while Mohammad Mithun added

34. Pacer Tanzid Hasan picked up two wickets for Abahani.

Despite the defeat, Prime Bank are still on top of the points table with six wins from eight games while Abahani, also with six wins from eight games, are in the second spot due to an inferior run rate.

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 50 helped Gazi Group chase down a 139-run target with five wickets against Khelaghar SKS.

Mahmudullah steadied the ship after Gazi lost a few early wickets in chase and the experienced right-hander remained unbeaten on 58 off 48 balls, which featured two sixes and three fours, to guide

his side to a fifth win.

Interestingly, there was some dissatisfaction over poor umpiring in yesterday's matches. Legends of Rugganj batsman Sabbir Rahman was not happy after he was given caught behind. The cricketer tried to protest the decision and stood his ground for a while before walking back to the dressing room. Rugganj lost the game by seven runs in the D/L method.

In the other two matches of the day, Prime Doleswar SC sealed their fifth win by beating Partex Sporting by five wickets while Brothers Union defeated Shinepukur Cricket Club by one run in by D/L method.

## 'I feel as if I'm about to go training now'

AGENCIES



First there was shock, then came despair, and, after an agonising wait, joyous relief. There is no sight in football more shocking than a player falling to the ground under no challenge and seemingly with no injury.

A famous Finland victory in their first game at the finals of a major tournament was eclipsed by near-tragedy when Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen, who remained in hospital and was in stable condition, collapsed during their Euro 2020 match.

He suffered a cardiac arrest when he collapsed, his team's doctor confirmed on Sunday, but the reason remained unclear.

"He was gone; we did cardiac resuscitation, it was a cardiac arrest. We got him back after one defib (defibrillation)," Morten Boesen told a news conference, adding that Eriksen remained in hospital for further tests after his collapse on Saturday.

"The exams that have been done so far look fine," Boesen added. "We don't have an explanation to why it happened."

His former cardiologist Dr. Sanjay Sharma of St. George's University of London earlier said Eriksen had no prior heart issues during his time with Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur.

The Danish players had been in contact with Eriksen via a video conference, said Peter Moller, director of Danish football association DBU.

Coach Kasper Hjulmand said Eriksen had told him he did not remember much from Saturday's collapse and that he was eager to get back on to the pitch.

Hjulmand quoted the midfielder as saying: "I think you are feeling worse than I am. I feel as if I'm about to go training now, boys." "Christian is in good spirits and it's a huge relief for the players after all this uncertainty," Hjulmand said. "There is no doubt that we have been on the ropes."

Finland skipper Tim Sparv described the contest as an emotional roller-coaster.

"Our thoughts are with Christian Eriksen and his loved ones during these difficult times," Sparv tweeted. "Football is so insignificant when something like this happens. Life is precious. Take care of each other."



People write get well messages on a wall at a fanzone in Copenhagen after Denmark's Christian Eriksen collapsed on the pitch during his side's Euro 2020 match against Finland on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Sterling gives England prefect start

REUTERS, LONDON

Raheem Sterling finally found his tournament touch when his goal gave England a deserved 1-0 win over Croatia at Wembley on Sunday as they began a European Championship with a victory for the first time in nine attempts.

Sterling, something of a surprise starter after a flat end to the domestic season but a favourite of manager Gareth Southgate, slid home a 61st-minute shot after great work by Kalvin Phillips to end an individual drought that had run through England's three previous major tournaments.

On a boiling hot day England started strongly, lost their way for a while but regained control as Croatia barely managed a shot, giving the home side the early advantage in Group D that also includes Scotland and the Czech Republic. The game lacked the drama and jeopardy of the teams' 2018 World Cup semi-final, won by Croatia, and losing on Sunday was no disaster for them given the way the draw pans out, but it was a morale-boosting victory for England as they set off once again in search of their first title since 1966.

Roared on by a noisy 22,500 crowd -- a quarter of Wembley's capacity -- England started full of bright intentions and put huge pressure on the visitors, pinning them deep in their own half. Phil Foden, his bleached hair channelling Paul Gascoigne from Euro 96, almost gave them a dream start when he cut in from the right and



England's Raheem Sterling celebrates his all-important goal against Croatia in their Euro 2020 Group D opener in front of around 20,000 fans in the sun-drenched Wembley Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

curled a low shot beyond Dominik Livakovic but agonisingly saw it come back off the post after the slightest of deflections from the toe of Josko Gvardiol.

Phillips, impressive all afternoon, had a 25-yard shot blocked but, instead of riding the early momentum, England lost their way. Croatia's classy midfield trio of Mateo Kovacic, Luka Modric and Marcelo Brozovic began to stroke the ball around and, with the sun beating down, the pace and energy seeped out of the game. England eventually shook themselves out of the torpor and struck when Phillips drove through the retreating

defence, rode two tackles and played the ball expertly into the path of the darting Sterling who, under pressure, just got enough on the ball to steer it home.

Sterling had looked lively all day and celebrated his first major tournament goal with gusto, though he should have added a second 13 minutes later but blazed wildly over the bar.

Croatia were then forced to show a bit more ambition and threw on their attacking subs but though England's defence looked a little shaky at times there were few chances for an equalizer.

## 'Hope to represent Bangladesh as far as my career goes'

Finland-born Tariq Raihan Kazi is the second expatriate footballer after Jamal Bhuiyan to represent Bangladesh at international football. Tariq, who once played for Finland U-17, U-18 and U-19 national teams, made his debut for the men in red and green against Afghanistan in the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers on June 3 before playing his second match against India in Qatar. The 20-year-old earned plenty of praise for showcasing brilliant performances as right-back in both games. From Doha, Tariq answered to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman's queries -- about his journey to Bangladesh, participation in domestic league and future plans.

DS: Finally your dream to play for Bangladesh came true, so how did you feel after wearing the red and green jersey?

TRK: I feel delighted and proud to represent this wonderful nation.

DS: You have already featured in two matches -- one draw followed by a defeat. What was the experience on the ground, in those two matches?

TRK: The experience was great regardless of the results. Matches were of high quality and played at a high tempo and moreover, it has also been nice to compare my level to other international players.

DS: You were initially selected for the Three Nation Cup in Nepal but forced to leave due to injury. It must have been frustrating. How did you motivate yourself to be selected again?

TRK: Of course it was disheartening to get injured but over time I turned the frustration into motivation and just pushed myself to work harder to achieve my goals.

DS: You had come a long way to play in Bangladesh's domestic competitions from 2020 before being selected for national team eventually. How challenging was it for you, especially after playing over at Finland?

TRK: Indeed it has been a tremendous challenge -- coming to a new country with different climate for instance, but day-by-day I am adjusting and improving.

DS: You played at different age-groups for Finland and consequently had a good opportunity to feature for Finland's senior side but what inspired you to come to Bangladesh?

TRK: Everything I learned over at Finland, in football as well as in life, I cherish fondly. But my key inspiration behind switching national teams was the pride of playing for my father's country which feels exceptionally meaningful.



DS: How long do you want to represent Bangladesh, now that you are only 20?

TRK: I hope I stay fit, healthy and keep learning to become a better player with each passing day so that I can represent the country as far as my career goes, so at least 15 more years, I hope.

DS: As you have experienced top-flight football in Finland and participated in Europa League, what are the obstacles in the way of Bangladesh football's development?

TRK: Well, off the top of my head are the facilities where we work at -- gyms, training pitches and stadiums.

DS: With a lot of players missing the next match of the World Cup Qualifiers, how do you think a young Bangladesh team may perform against Oman?

TRK: This match will be a glorious opportunity for us. Everyone who ends up playing will obviously give his fearless best on the pitch. We are nothing but optimistic about this match and we will do the things the way we have been working at trainings for the best result possible.

## New Zealand humble England

REUTERS, BIRMINGHAM

New Zealand crushed hosts England by eight wickets in the second and final Test on Sunday to seal a 1-0 series win after chasing down a target of 38 runs on the fourth day at Edgbaston.

The result meant New Zealand, who thoroughly outplayed the hosts in the match, secured a first test series win in England since 1999 and only their third overall in the country.

England had been reduced to 122-9 at stumps on day three with a slender lead of 37 runs and Olly Stone was caught behind off Trent Boult on the first ball of the day on Sunday, leaving the visitors on the verge of a famous victory.

Latham praised the squad's depth after they came into the contest having made six changes from the drawn first test at Lord's.

"It's great to have that performance under the belt. We were outstanding over the four days, everyone who came in did their roles," Latham said.

"England have a fantastic bowling attack and we played them really well. We adapted well and put good numbers on the board."

England skipper Joe Root said his team had "massively underperformed".

"It hasn't been our best week, has it? Credit to New Zealand they have outperformed us throughout the game," Root said.

New Zealand will enjoy an extra day's rest before they take on India in the ICC World Test Championship Final starting in Southampton on Friday.



Barbora Krejickikova (R) became the first player to win both the women's singles and doubles title in Paris since Frenchwoman Mary Pierce completed the feat in 2000. Krejickikova and Katerina Siniakova beat Iga Swiatek and Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-4, 6-2. The 25-year-old Krejickikova, who will climb to 15th in singles following her maiden Grand Slam singles title on Saturday, will return as the world number one doubles player when the rankings are updated today.

PHOTO: REUTERS





SM Shahzada, lawmaker from Patuakhali-3 constituency, on Thursday inaugurates the first line of electrification by lighting electric bulbs at a function at Charbishwas K Ali College field in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

## Patuakhali remote island finally gets power

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

About 23,000 consumers of Charkajal and Charbiswas in Rangabali upazila, an isolated island in Patuakhali, are elated to have finally gotten electricity in their homes, 50 years after Bangladesh gained independence.

From Char Fashion Upazila of Bhola, 22,006 consumers of 45 villages of the two unions were brought under electrification through submarine cable through the river.

SM Shahzada, lawmaker from Patuakhali-3 constituency, inaugurated the first line of electrification by lighting electric bulbs at the inaugural function held at the grounds of Charbishwas K Ali College field at 11:00am on Thursday while Chairman of Charbiswas Union Parishad Tofazzal Hossain Babul Munshi was in the chair.

Chairman of Galachipa Upazila Parishad Md Sahin, GM of Bhola Palli Bidyut Samiti

in charge of electrification in Charkajal and Charbiswas Unions Abul Basar, Galachipa Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ashish Kumar, Upazila Awami League President Santosh Kumar Dey and General Secretary Golam Mostafa, among others were present at the programme.

GM of Bhola Palli Bidyut Samity Abul Basar, who is in-charge of electrification in Charkajal and Charbiswas Unions, said the power line has been laid at a cost of Tk 165 crore through a submarine cable at the bottom of the river, which is the longest submarine cable line in the country.

A power substation has been set up in Charnujib area and transmission lines have been provided to Charkajal, Charbiswas, Charborhan of Dashmina upazila, Charhadi of Ward 9 of Charmini and Charmontaj of Rangabali upazila in Patuakhali district. There is a 792-km-long transmission line from Bhola via the submarine cable.

Asiya Begum, 65, of Chhotashiba village in Charkajal Union, said, "I used to see electric lights in the city and electric fans. I thought how happy the people of the city were amid bright lights and electric fans when the earthen lamp would light our house. Now, we will also live in luminous house after dusk."

Sabiha Shila, an SSC examinee from Charbishwas Janata Secondary School, said, "We used to study by lighting the earthen lamp. Solar lights were also in place for several years. But it could not meet our need. This time, electricity will revolutionise the ICT, education, agriculture and healthcare sectors in this neglected island area."

"We have computers in our school," said Lamia Akhter, a ninth-grader student at the same school.

"We could not take part in computer training due to lack of electricity. Now we will be able to learn computer," she added.

DIGGING HOLES BY HIGHWAY

## Natore court issues suo moto rule

PP says contractor deliberately damaged highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The Natore Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court of Abu Sayeed has ordered a suo moto action to launch an inquiry into the reports published on print and electronic media regarding a breach of contract in the digging of holes beside the Natore-Bogra highway (N-502).

Advocate Sirajul Islam, public prosecutor (PP) at the Natore Judge's Court, quoted the court as saying that after analysing two news items, it became clear to the court that the contractor was digging holes beside the highway, causing long-term damage to government roads. The offense is punishable under Section 431 of the Penal Code.

Moreover, by violating terms of work order, the contractors have committed criminal breach of trust and fraud with the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and other government institutions including the government itself. The

offence is punishable under Sections 406 and 420 of the Penal Code.

The court directed the special superintendent of police (SSP) of the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) in Natore to investigate into the case.

The court in its preliminary investigation identified the accused, took statements of witnesses, prepared draft map of the site, seized all the documents related to the project and obtained measurements of the total amount of soil (in cubic feet) removed from the side of the government road and an estimation of the extent of the damage.

In this light, the court ordered the investigation officer to conduct a detailed investigation in this regard and obtain statements from representatives concerned at the daily Prothom Alo and Ekattor Television.

The court also directed the executive engineer of RHD in Natore to provide all-out cooperation in the investigation.

## Parliamentary body suggests

FROM PAGE 12

a freedom fighter where the UNO concerned is female."

The member said usually women do not take part in namaz-e-janaza. Many in society raise questions about this. Therefore, in case of giving the guard of honour to a freedom fighter in jurisdictions where the UNO is female, it is necessary to give the charge to a male officer.

In that case, assistant commissioner (land), upazila education officer, upazila agriculture officer or any such officer could be kept as alternative persons for the job.

Shajahan Khan, chief of parliamentary body, said ruling AL MP Rafiqul Islam also raised the matter of not giving the guard of honour at night.

"For this reason, the committee has recommended giving the guard of honor during the day. UNOs usually do the job," he added.

He also said religious issues are also involved with namaz-e-janaza. It is forbidden for women to participate in janaza.

The committee then made the recommendations, meeting sources said.

Shajahan said the committee has asked the ministry to make a decision in this regard in line with the rules and regulations.

Asked, Salma Ali, president of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association, told The Daily Star that the decision of finding alternative persons to give the guard of honour instead by female UNOs should be taken following necessary discussions and in line with the norms and customs.

In the meeting, the parliamentary body also suggested collecting definitions of freedom fighters from different countries of the world. International rules should be followed in case of giving government jobs to the next generation of identified Razakars, it said.

The meeting also decided to send a summary to the Cabinet Division to resolve the incidents related to hoisting the national flag by anti-Liberation elements on different days in some places.

Committee members Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq, Razi Uddin Ahmed, Kazi Firoz Rashid, Waresat Hossain Belal, and Moslem Uddin Ahmed, among others, attended the meeting.

## Djokovic

FROM PAGE 12

Tsitsipas recovered from a break down to win the opening set in a tiebreak before he raced through the second set.

But Djokovic was determined to ensure that all the effort he put in to beat 13-time Roland Garros champion Nadal in the semifinals did not go to waste and he started to assert his authority to win the third set.

Before the start of the fourth set, the 22-year-old Greek requested the trainer to come on court to manipulate and massage his lower back.

But that intervention failed to revive Tsitsipas' fortunes and Djokovic was virtually unchallenged in the fourth set.

The Serb broke decisively for a 2-1 lead in the decider before securing the win in four hours and 11 minutes that made him the first man since tennis turned professional in 1968 to win all four Grand Slams titles at least twice.

## Netanyahu

FROM PAGE 12

only underecords its likely fragility.

Addressing parliament before Bennett was sworn in, a combative Netanyahu said: "If we are destined to go into the opposition, we will do so with our heads held high until we can topple it."

That will happen, 71-year-old Netanyahu added, "sooner than people think".

The new government, formed after an inconclusive March 23 election, plans largely to avoid sweeping moves on hot-button international issues such as policy toward the Palestinians, and to focus on domestic reforms.

Palestinians were unmoved by the change of administration, predicting that Bennett, a former defence chief who advocates annexing parts of the occupied West Bank, would pursue the same right-wing agenda as Likud party leader Netanyahu.

Israel's longest-serving leader, Netanyahu was prime minister since 2009, after a first term from 1996 to 1999.

## HC asks for documents

FROM PAGE 12

malign and undermine the solemnity of the National Mourning Day of August 15 should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of home affairs and health and family planning, inspector general of police, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station are respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir came up with the order and rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md Mamun-or-Rashid challenging the legality of celebrating birthday by Khaleda Zia on August 15.

In the petition, the SC lawyer said it is a matter of great distress for the nation that Khaleda Zia has mentioned her date of birth as being August 15, 1946 in her present passport with the ulterior motive and mala fide intention of maligning the National Mourning Day when Father of

the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were brutally killed in 1975.

The petitioner said Khaleda Zia's birthday is recorded as: September 5, 1946 in her SSC certificate; August 4, 1944 in her marriage registration; August 5, 1946 in her machine readable passport issued in 2001; and May 8, 1946 in her Covid-19 test report released on May 8, 2021.

Lawyer Nahid Sultana Juthi appeared for the writ petitioner while Deputy Attorney Generals Arobinda Kumar Roy and Bipul Bagmar supported the writ petition.

BNP Joint Secretary General and former Supreme Court Bar Association Secretary AM Mahubb Uddin Khokon opposed the writ petition saying the writ petitioner has filed the petition in order to achieve a political gain.

Thousands of people, including Khaleda Zia, were born on August 15, he said, adding it is not for the HC to deal with matters like birthdays.

## Two pro-AL contractors

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In the footage, a group of contractors carrying firearms was seen arriving at the facility. Among them were Hazi Faruk, science and technology affairs secretary of Pabna Sadar AL; AR Khan Mamun, organising secretary of Pabna Municipality AL; and local Jubo League leader Sheikh Lalu.

"Mamun and Lalu submitted two shotguns to Pabna Police Station. Both guns have proper licenses but no one can brandish firearms to create panic among the people," Masud Alom, additional superintendent of police in Pabna, told the Daily Star.

He added that police were investigating the incident.

Contacted, Anwarul Azim, executive engineer at Pabna PWD, said, "They [the armed contractors] might have done it by mistake. They did not harm anybody or

damage anything in the office. So, we didn't file any case."

AL leader Hazi Faruk told The Daily Star that the contractors had "no bad intentions and it was nothing but a mistake".

Meanwhile, the arms showdown at the government office sparked widespread criticism in the district.

Talking to this correspondent, acting president of Pabna AL Rejaur Rahim Lal said, "We don't support such unruly activities. This was not a political incident."

TIB in a statement said this was another example of how the ruling party men have been ruining the competitive tender procedure in development works.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said corruption in the procurement process could cause a loss of 8.5 to 27 percent of the total procurement funds. He demanded exemplary punishment of those involved.

## RMG workers take to street

FROM PAGE 12

Lenny Apparels Ltd blocked the Nabinagar-Chandra highway in front of the EPZ around 7:30am and started demanding their arrears.

The protestors alleged that the two factories announced the closure of their businesses in January without paying dues to their workers. Amid repeated demonstrations, the authorities paid no heed to it.

According to police, they had to use tear gas and water cannon against the demonstrators as they caused over an 8km-long tailback on both sides of the highway.

SP Asaduzzaman said they repeatedly tried to talk to the protestors and free the busy highway but the demonstrators did not listen to them.

At one stage, after around 45 minutes of road blockade, police fired tear gas and water cannon and brought the situation under control, he added.

At least 10 readymade garment workers were injured during the police attack, said

protestors.

Contacted, Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Contacted, DEPZ's General Manager Abdus Sobhan told The Daily Star that there were about 6,000 workers in the two factories.

Authorities closed the factories last January. The workers of the two factories have already been paid arrears of Tk 45 crore, he said.

Attempts are being made to pay the remaining arrears by selling the two factories. Factories owner and BEPZA are trying together to sell the factories, he added.

There was no due payment date yesterday. Workers gathered in front of the DEPZ this morning by posting on Facebook. They blocked the road, he further added.

"I went in front of them and tried to convince them but the workers continued to protest. Police later removed the workers from the road," he added.

## Yahya

FROM PAGE 12

front in Bangladesh as the Pakistani troops continued their atrocities on unarmed civilians. In Chaudhagram, Comilla, a group of freedom fighters under the command of Khaled Mosharruf ambushed Pakistani forces. Pakistan army suffered heavy losses and had to retreat. There were also incidents of encounters between the two forces in various parts of Bangladesh, including Kasba, Fakirhat and Khulna.

On the night of June 14, guerrillas of the Hemayat Bahini attacked a Pakistan army base at Kotlipara. The number of casualties on the Pakistan side was 50. Freedom fighter Ibrahim embraced martyrdom in this operation.

**YAHYA ADMITS 'HARSH, SWIFT' ARMY ACTION**

Jill Knight, a British Conservative member of parliament said that Pakistan President Yahya had admitted to her that his army had acted "harshly and swiftly" in East Pakistan, reported Reuters. Knight in a dispatch to the British Conservative newspaper The Daily Telegraph said she and two other MPs -- James Kilfedder and James Tinn -- had talked with the president for one and a half hours on June 12 night.

She further informed that Yahya had stated that he did not want to become known as the man who destroyed Pakistan.

**CHINA WILL GIVE PAKISTAN AID WORTH \$70M**

China agreed to extend \$70 million worth of commodity assistance immediately to help Pakistan meet some of her urgent import requirements.

**SADAT SUPPORTS PAK INTEGRITY**

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat today reiterated his country's support to the integrity of Pakistan. Recalling his two earlier meetings with Yahya Khan, Sadat said he looked forward to continued cooperation between the two countries.

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

## Snare of Bigo Live runs deep

FROM PAGE 12

group, administered by Bigo Live officials in Bangladesh.

CID said Saif was the Bangladeshi admin of Bigo Live, Arif used to recruit young girls and have them join in the live streaming, and Nazmul is one of the top agents who sold "Bigo Live Diamonds", a virtual currency, to users. Asma served as the head of admins.

In his LinkedIn profile, Jie Yao introduced himself as the country manager of Bigo Live in Bangladesh. Saif and Asma also introduced themselves as Bigo employees.

Bigo Live is a live streaming platform and Likee is a short video-making and sharing app. Both the apps are owned by Singapore-based BIGO Technology, which was founded in 2014 by David Li and Jason Hu.

CID officials said that young Bangladeshis and expats are targeted by these agents. To gain more followers and subsequently, more cash, a lot of broadcasters get a little raunchy. The Bangladeshi agents recruit five to seven young girls to "go live and lure men" during live streaming.

To join the live streams, its users have to top up "Bigo Live Diamonds" from their Bangladesh based agents. These "diamonds" are digital currency that local agents buy from foreign admins through banks, MFS or hundi, they added.

The broadcaster can earn money after encashing the virtual gifts. If someone is

a popular streamer, the followers send her virtual gifts. The streamers, in turn, can stock up these gifts, which can be transformed into "beans".

The more popular the streamer, the more beans they earn. These beans can be encashed for real money, which the app deposits in the streamers' accounts. The current "bean" exchange rate is 210 beans for US \$1.

Besides, someone can work on Bigo Live as an official host or recruiter and earn a decent commission on top of the virtual currency.

During the drive, law enforcers seized eight mobile phones, four laptops, seven credit cards, six cheque books, and Tk 50,460 in cash.

The CID official said a case was filed against the arrestees and 50-60 unnamed others under the Digital Security Act and Pornography Act with Paltan Police Station.

After investigation, another case may be filed under the Money Laundering Act. Meanwhile in a statement yesterday, BIGO Technology, which has operations in 20 countries, including Bangladesh, said that they are conducting a thorough review on this case and will work with relevant law enforcement agencies in this regard.

They further said that they will cooperate closely with the law enforcement agencies and the government for upholding regional and national laws and values.

## Govt finally moves to set limits

FROM PAGE 12

"We may have to hold one more meeting to finalise it [fixing the service life of commercial vehicles]," he said.

In March 2019, a committee, led by transport sector leader Shajahan Khan, made 111 recommendations to curb road accidents and bring discipline in the sector.

Later, the government formed a taskforce headed by the home minister to implement the recommendations.

In its report, the committee, which included transport experts, called for fixing the economic service life of buses, trucks, covered vans and human haulers and stopping operation of over 20-year-old buses and over 25-year-old trucks.

Identifying the plying of old vehicles as a key reason for road accidents, it said on the one hand, such vehicles, specially outdated buses and trucks, go out of order on roads, leading to traffic congestion. And on the other hand, these cause accidents and loss of lives.

The report also pointed out that neighbouring India already fixed the service life of commercial vehicles.

Seeking anonymity, a BRTA official said the government in 2010 issued a circular banning over 20-year-old buses and over 25-year-old trucks in the capital.

Following the decision, most of such vehicles were removed from the city roads and put into service on district and inter-district roads, the official pointed out.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, claimed that no over 20-year-old bus runs in the capital.

"But I am not sure whether any truck [used for more than 25 years] operates or not [in the capital]," he told this newspaper

yesterday.

"A meeting has been called and I hope the service life of commercial vehicles will be fixed."

Replying to a query, he said, "I think there should be fixed service life for vehicles. There was no opposition from transport owners in setting service life of vehicles... This issue did not come to the fore in the past."

Prof Md Hadiuzzaman, director of Accident Research Institute at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said upon expiry of service life, chassis, brake system and axle of such vehicles weaken and pose risk of road accident.

Besides, such vehicles cause environmental pollution as those emit harmful gases, including carbon dioxide.

Referring to a recent study, he said emission of harmful gases from outdated vehicles is responsible for 15 percent air pollution in the capital.

He further said the authorities should not fix the economic service life of vehicles only on the basis of years of service because the service life of vehicles varies depending on their manufacturers. Mileage of a vehicle should also be considered.

He also opposed setting the service life of buses at 20 years as that of buses manufactured by renowned companies usually remains between 10 and 12 years given that those are operated on good roads.

A total of 46.49 lakh vehicles were registered with the BRTA across the country till February this year. Of those, 16.52 lakh were registered in the capital.

However, many unregistered vehicles are in operation all over the country, said people involved in the transport sector.