



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

ZILQAD 7, 1442 HIRI

12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



"There is a kind of verbal ceasefire. That's good but it's not enough."
FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN-YVES LE DRIAN ON FRANCE-TURKEY TIES AFTER MONTHS OF RANCOROUS EXCHANGES



"The first thing I need to say is sorry. It's (actions taken) not good enough. We've got to do a lot better."
UK JUSTICE SECRETARY ROBERT BUCKLAND APOLOGISES FOR FAILING RAPE VICTIMS



"Today's global displacement figures are an epic failure of humanity. ... Far more people are on the move today than anytime during World War II."
HEAD OF THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL JAN EGELAND

RMCH turns into a Covid hotspot

The top hospital in Rajshahi in untidy state, continues to struggle to cope with the situation

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Faced with the challenge of treating coronavirus patients as well as general ones under the same roof, Rajshahi Medical College Hospital has become a Covid-19 hotspot.

In the 11 days till yesterday, the hospital authorities transferred at least 251 patients to the Covid unit from different wards, according to the RMCH data.

Those patients were admitted to the hospital with various diseases, but subsequently tested positive for the virus and then transferred to the Covid unit, which also accommodates patients with coronavirus-like symptoms.

The data shows that in those 11 days, 23 patients on average were transferred to the Covid unit daily, with the highest 38 transferred on Thursday.

The figure is alarming.

Healthcare professionals at the RMCH said it happened because of the limited scope of screening and testing of patients upon arrival at the hospital, lack of awareness among patients and general disregard for the health rules by their attendants as well as hospital staffers.

- Patients transferred from other wards to Covid Unit in last 11 days - **251**
- Total Covid deaths at the hospital so far - **866**
- Covid deaths at the hospital in June - **193**
- Total beds at RMCH - **1,200**
- Beds in Covid Unit - **309**

Yousuf Ali, for example, was found infected with Covid on Wednesday night after receiving treatment at a nephrology ward for a week.

The 50-year-old was admitted with kidney and diabetic issues on June 10 and was shifted to the Covid unit on Thursday, his son-in-law Hazrat Ali told The Daily Star.

"His samples were tested [for Covid-19] when he developed fever and coughs after staying in the hospital for a week," Ali said.

Zahirul Islam, 35, was among the three patients at neurosurgery ward-8 who tested Covid-19 positive on Wednesday night.

His wife Happy Khatun said her husband

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Patients undergoing treatment in a Covid ward of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, with their attendants exposed to infection. As the number of Covid cases rise sharply in Rajshahi division, the hospital is struggling to provide patients with the care that they need. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

RESUMPTION OF FIRST-DOSE INOCULATION

Good news, but not for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After around two months, the administration of the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine resumes today on a limited scale with around 11 lakh Sinopharm jabs in hand.

Almost 15 lakh people have registered for the vaccination but haven't received their first shots yet, said health officials.

They also said the authorities were yet to decide on those who haven't got their second dose.

Besides, the authorities have 1,00,620 doses of Pfizer vaccine from Covax in stock. The decision on when to start administering them, however, has not been made yet, the officials added.

The first dose inoculation against Covid-19 resumes with the Sinopharm vaccine at a time when the country keeps witnessing a rise in coronavirus cases and deaths.

The positivity rate yesterday jumped to 18.59 percent -- the highest since April 19. Fifty-four people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The government suspended the countrywide administration of the first dose on April 26 due to a shortage of the AstraZeneca vaccine doses from the Serum Institute of India.

Bangladesh received the Sinopharm doses as gift from the Chinese government in two installments.

The jabs will be administered in 67 centres across the country, including

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Mass inoculation began

February 7

First-dose vaccination stopped

April 26

First dose recipients

58,20,015

Second dose recipients

42,64,362

VACCINES RECEIVED SO FAR

Covishield

70 lakh

(Purchased from Serum)

Covishield

32 lakh

(Gift from India)

Sinopharm

11 lakh

(Gift from China)

Pfizer

1,00,620

(From Covax)

Tk 3.77cr stolen from bank vault

2 officials of the pvt bank held, sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent two officials of Dhaka Bank to jail after they were handed over to police in connection with the theft of Tk 3.77 crore from the vault of the bank's Bangshal branch.

Rifatul Haque, 33, in-charge (cash), and Emran Ahmed, 46, manager (operations), were arrested on Thursday after the bank authorities handed them over to Bangshal Police Station and lodged a general diary.

Police took them to the court and requested it to send them to jail as there was a chance that they could go into hiding.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Masud-ur-Rahman fixed June 21 for hearing their bail petitions and sent them to jail.

Dhaka Bank Managing Director Emranul Huq said it was detected on Thursday during a routine audit that the money had gone missing from the vault.

"The accused individuals confessed to the audit team that they were involved in the matter," he said.

The audit team members said Rifatul wrote on a stamp that he stole the money at different times in 2018 and 2019 and spent it gambling.

The statement added that he used to replace Tk 500 bills with Tk 100 bills in bundles of Tk 500. But he used to keep the Tk 500 on the outside to avoid detection.

He further stated that he alone was involved in the crime.

Dhaka Bank officials said Emran, the other accused, was handed over to police for his failure in duties.

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Missing preacher reappears after eight days

STAR REPORT

Young Islamic preacher Abu Taw Haa Muhammad Adnan reappeared yesterday, eight days after he went missing reportedly on his way to Dhaka.

His two associates, who according to his family, were accompanying him and the driver of a car in which "they were heading to the capital" on June 10 were also found yesterday.

Around 12:30pm yesterday, a neighbour found Adnan entering the house of the parents of his first wife Abida Noor in Rangpur city's Masterpara.

The news of his return spread to the locality and a local informed police of the matter. On information, police raided his in-law's house around 2:00pm and found Adnan there.

He was then taken to Kotwali Police Station, said Officer-in-charge of the station Abdur Rashed.

Adnan was later brought to the office

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Toxic foam floats over the surface of a water body near the Turag river in Rupnagar area of the capital's Mirpur. Sewage and drainage water pumped from Rupnagar into the river causes serious pollution that endangers animal life in the river. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SAUDI-BOUND WORKERS

Uncertainty still hangs over them

Inoculation with Sinopharm won't help them avoid quarantine in KSA as China vaccine not on kingdom's priority list

JAMIL MAHMUD and RASHIDUL HASAN

The government's decision to vaccinate migrant workers with Sinopharm jabs will not resolve the problem being faced by the Saudi Arabia-bound workers as the vaccine is not yet on the kingdom's priority list, say recruiters.

As per a travel advisory of the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation, effective from last month, a Bangladeshi passenger travelling to the kingdom requires to be vaccinated with any of the Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-Astrazeneca, Moderna, or Johnson and Johnson vaccines.

Otherwise, the passenger has to undergo a seven-day institutional quarantine there at a cost of up to Tk 80,000. Workers say this is an additional financial burden on them amid the pandemic.

Yesterday, officials of different manpower recruiting agencies, who hire workers on behalf of Saudi employers, urged the government to immediately discuss the matter diplomatically with the Saudi authorities to reach a conclusive solution.

They proposed allocating Pfizer vaccine, now available in the country, for the expatriates.

The officials also suggested importing Johnson and Johnson vaccine for migrant workers since one dose of it will complete the course. They argued that it would save time for both the agencies and migrant workers.

Ahmed Munir Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry, said they have already informed the health ministry in writing that Sinopharm vaccine is not among the four approved by Saudi Arabia and some other Middle Eastern countries. So, appropriate vaccines should be administered to Saudi-bound workers whenever they are available, the

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BANGLADESH UPDATE

3,883
New cases in 24hrs

8,44,970
Total cases

13,399
Deaths

7,78,421
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

3,860,660
Deaths

178,340,963
Total cases

RMCH turns into a Covid

FROM PAGE 1

was admitted to the hospital three weeks ago with paralysis in the lower part of his body after falling from a mango tree in Chapainawabganj's Bholahat upazila.

The medicine wards witnessed the most transfers of patients to the Covid unit, said Prof Md Khalilur Rahman, head of the department.

"Most patients who come to our wards are asymptomatic. Sometimes, they come with diarrhoea or abdominal pain, and ultimately many of them are found to be infected with the virus."

He said the word "alarming" has ceased to have any meaning for them.

"We're already in an alarming situation," Associate Professor Md Rais Uddin, head of the cardiology department, said screening out infected patients at the point of entry into the hospital could have prevented such a situation.

The 1200-bed public hospital with 56 wards treat patients from eight districts of Rajshahi division and also from those of Khulna division.

Since the pandemic hit the country in March last year, the biggest healthcare facility of the northern region opened a Covid unit and gradually expanded it.

The RMCH Covid unit now has 309 beds in 11 wards to tackle the influx of coronavirus patients from the bordering districts. It has also dedicated its 20-bed ICU unit to treat critical Covid patients.

A RISING DEATH TREND

Since March last year, at least 866 patients -- 236 of whom Covid positive -- died at the hospital's coronavirus unit. Of the deaths, 111 occurred in July -- the highest in a month until May this year when 124 patients died.

That record has been broken as 193 patients died at the unit in the first 18 days of this month. Seventy-nine of them tested positive for the virus.

While visiting the hospital on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent found ambulances and three-wheelers carrying patients lined up in front of the gate of the emergency department.

Inside, general patients, Covid patients as well as the suspected ones and their attendants were crowding corridors.

There were intermittent announcements over the hospital's loudspeakers reminding them of the need to follow social distancing and health guidelines, but not many paid heed to that.

Seeking anonymity, a hospital official said, "No place in the hospital is safe anymore... Infected people are roaming at every corner in the hospital."

During a two-and-a-half hour visit on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent hardly saw any doctor or nurse attending patients in the Covid wards.

In front of the ICU unit, a nurse was seen going out on her shift change. And at ward 22, a male nurse was seen consulting with a doctor through a narrow gap of an almost shut door of the doctors' chamber.

The hospital authorities have dedicated the ground and top floors of a three-storey building for Covid patients. But with other wards for general patients in between and no separate entry or exit for Covid wards, chances of infection remain very high.

All the Covid wards were full and some were crammed with patients even occupying the veranda with oxygen concentrators or cylinders next to them.

Murshida Khatun, a nurse in the hospital, was taking care of her 35-year-old husband Md Ruhul Amin, who tested positive for Covid, in one of those verandas.

She was not even wearing a mask. Asked, she said, "I am infected too."

Most officials and staffers in the hospital said that with Covid patients overwhelming the facility, the virus has started spreading beyond the dedicated corona unit to other wards, turning the entire hospital into a

Covid hotspot.

Due to a lack of screening, infected patients and staffers with mild or no Covid symptoms are entering the hospital and infecting others, they said.

RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani said, "Both are happening. Knowingly or unknowingly, infected patients are getting admitted while admitted patients are being infected by staffers or other patients. It is unavoidable when you are managing all types of patients in the same hospital."

The emergency department has a system of triaging patients during their entry, but the system does not always work, he pointed out.

"When patients come [to the hospital], we ask those with fever, coughs and other symptoms of Covid to go to a separate room where separate doctors and nurses attend to them," Shamim told The Daily Star.

But many asymptomatic patients are not being segregated during triage.

Again, the other patients have to walk through the same corridor with Covid patients when they get admitted.

"We couldn't arrange separate corridors for Covid patients."

He said it would have been ideal if the hospital was declared a Covid-dedicated facility, considering the influx of patients from different districts.

"But it's not easy. What will happen to pregnant women needing a C-section or heart patients who need surgery, and patients needing dialysis? Where will we shift them? We can't abandon them."

Around 891 beds in 45 wards are used to treat patients of important departments such as gynaecology, surgery, burn, medicine cardiology, nephrology, and neurosurgery, he said.

"Already we are asking many critical patients to be cared for at home. In normal times, we would have asked them to get admitted to the hospital."

The RMCH director said during the first wave of the pandemic last year, the hospital saw mostly affluent people getting infected.

"But the Delta variant now has been infecting everyone -- rich and poor, old and young."

"We are seeing farmers, shopkeepers, labourers suffering and dying every day and it happened as they refused to care about maintaining the health rules," Yazdani said, adding that from primary assessment they found that 40 percent of patients were from low-income groups.

Admitting that testing all patients during entry to the hospital could have been the best practice, he said they are unable to do so because of limited testing facilities.

Two RT-PCR laboratories at the RMCH test nearly 600 samples a day -- a large number of those are from Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore and Chapainawabganj, according to data from the labs.

The RMCH director, however, said rapid antigen test can be initiated at the entry points, adding that around 400 patients are getting admitted to the hospital every day -- 40 of them to the corona unit.

About the haphazard setting up of corona wards, the hospital director said it was not possible for them to arrange the corona wards at certain corners of the hospital as they had to connect the wards with the central oxygen supply lines.

"Not all wards of the hospital needed oxygen supply lines before. We set up a corona ward where we could ensure a proper oxygen supply to the beds."

Coronavirus transmission among doctors, nurses and staff are low as they were vaccinated, he said.

Out of 85 doctors and 200 nurses working in the Covid unit, five doctors and 23 nurses became infected during the ongoing second wave of the pandemic, he added.

Tk 3.77cr stolen from bank vault

FROM PAGE 1

In his forwarding letter to the court, Sub-inspector Pradip Kumar Sarker wrote that the arrestees were entrusted with taking care of the vault and its keys were with them.

According to the complaint received by police, the audit team found Tk 3,77,66,000 missing from the vault and informed Abu Bakar Siddique, manager of the Bangshal branch, about it.

The duo confessed to misappropriating the amount, while Siddique interrogated them, the letter reads.

It mentions that the alleged crime was an offence under Section 409 of the Penal Code and that it is for the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate.

The ACC has been informed and

delivered the documents necessary to pursue legal actions in this regard, it added.

The officer also wrote that there was a chance that the accused could go into hiding and requested that they be kept in jail.

Earlier on Wednesday, the detective branch of police told a press briefing that a racket led by an IT officer of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited allegedly embezzled Tk 2.57 crore by manipulating the electronic journal of the bank's ATM machines.

This was also detected during an internal audit.

In January 2020, a bank official was held in Rajshahi on charges of stealing Tk 3.45 crore from Premier Bank's vault and using the money to gamble online.



Officials of Bangladesh embassy in Libya talk to Bangladeshi migrants who were rescued after a boat sank in the Mediterranean on May 18. The photo was taken at a hotel in Tunisia last month.

'We don't know whether he's alive'

Says wife of one of the 13 Bangladeshis missing for over a month after trawler carrying them sank off Tunisian coast

EZAZ MAHMUD

At least 13 Bangladeshi migrants have been missing since a boat capsized with them off the coast of Tunisia almost a month ago.

Tunisian Coast Guard, Red Crescent and migration authorities have yet to find them, according to officials at Bangladesh Embassy in Libya.

The chances that they are alive are slight, but their bodies have not been found yet, they added.

Meanwhile, desperate family members of the missing migrants have been contacting the embassy and other Bangladeshis who survived the accident in the hope of hearing about their loved ones.

In the early hours of May 18, a boat sank in the Mediterranean with 81 Bangladeshi migrants during a storm.

Sixty-eight of them were rescued alive, according to the embassy.

Two days after the accident, a delegation led by Gazi Md Asaduzzaman Kabir, the Charge d'Affaires of Bangladesh Embassy in Libya, visited Tunisia and learnt that 13 Bangladeshis were missing.

The embassy officials confirmed that those remaining missing include Sentu Mandal, Akhteruzzaman Ilias, Saiful Islam Hawlader, Rajan Chowkidar and Mohammad Nazim of Madaripur, and Mohammad Alam of Tangail.

The officials got two more names -- Mintu Hawlader of Madaripur and Al-Amin of

Barishal -- but their identities could not be confirmed.

They were hoping to enter Italy.

The Daily Star talked to several survivors, who were taken to a hotel in Tunisia. They informed that most of the migrants went to Libya via Dubai a few days before the Ramadan.

The boat went to Dubai through normal flights. Then, they went to Benghazi in Libya on a chartered flight.

The boat, crammed with passengers, left the Libyan port of Zuwara, located around 200 km off the capital Tripoli, on the night of May 16. The boat sank around 20 hours later.

Many of those onboard swam to a floating platform off the southern coast of Tunisia, and some were rescued by the Tunisian Navy and Coast Guard officials.

"The boat suddenly capsized after being hit by the storm... I couldn't see many of the passengers after we were rescued," said Wali Ullah Khan, who is from Muladi, Barishal.

"Nobody had a life jacket. I saw many people drowning," said Al-Amin of Madaripur.

Most of those who remain are aged between 18 and 44.

Some 14 people of Nayachar village of Madaripur Sadar were rescued.

Contacted, 44-year-old Sentu's wife Sathi Akhter said, "We don't even know whether he is alive."

Sentu's nephew Rony said, "We are sure that my uncle was on the boat... The embassy officials told us that they would inform us if my uncle is found."

Akhteruzzaman's wife Laila Akhter said, "My husband called me over the phone on the night of May 16. He told me that he was starting the boat journey. He has not been traced after the accident. One of his travel mates told me that my husband tried to survive by swimming."

Contacted, Gazi Md Asaduzzaman Kabir said, "We have kept communications with the departments concerned in Tunisia, Libya and other neighbouring countries to get the information."

Just a day before the accident, some 52 Bangladeshi aspiring migrants were rescued from the Mediterranean, while they were trying to go across the sea. Besides, 179 more Bangladeshis were rescued on May 27 and 28.

Of them, 221 Bangladeshis were kept in detention in five cities in Tunisia under the supervision of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Red Crescent.

Some 308 illegal attempts to enter Italy by using Tunisian coast were resisted this year.

A total of 4,376 people was rescued. Of them, 2,531 were Bangladeshis, according to the Office of Tunisian National Guard Directorate General.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

Missing preacher reappears

FROM PAGE 1

of the deputy commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch.

After Adnan went missing, his second wife Sabekunnahar claimed that her husband last spoke to her over phone at 2:37am on June 11 and told her that he reached the capital's Gabtoli. Since then he could not be contacted.

Teacher of a Mirpur madrasa, Sabekunnahar held a press conference and even submitted a letter to the Prime Minister's Office demanding safe return of Adnan. She also visited the offices of different law enforcement agencies, suspecting that her husband was picked up.

However, after interrogation, Rangpur police said Adnan went into hiding voluntarily due to some family and personal problems.

After he went missing, Azeda Begum, the mother of Taw Haa, 31, whose real name is Md Afsanul Adnan, lodged a general diary with Rangpur Kotwali Police Station on June 11.

Adnan and his first wife Abida

have a three-year-old daughter and a one-and-a-half-year old son. His first wife lives in Rangpur and the second one in Dhaka.

Earlier in the day, police detained Adnan's associates Abul Muhi from his home at Jaigirhat of Rangpur's Mithapukur, Firoz from Bogura's Shibganj and driver Amir Uddin from Rangpur city's Ashratpur (Chawkbazar) area.

Police were interrogating them.

BRIEFING BY POLICE
After interrogation, Abu Maruf Hossain, DC (crime) of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, told journalists that Adnan along with the associates and the driver left Dhaka's Gabtoli for Rangpur on the night of June 10. After reaching Trimohoni in Gaibandha, they went to the house of Adnan's friend Siam and stayed there, he said.

While there, everyone switched off their mobile phones and kept those with Adnan, the DC said. The police official said they went into hiding willingly due to various family and personal problems.

He added that they first went to Dhaka from Rangpur on June

10 afternoon. Adnan told his travelling companions that he had some personal problems. He then consulted with them and decided to go into hiding, the DC added.

DC Maruf said police would also look into whether they went into hiding as part of a conspiracy to embarrass the state or the government.

He added that Adnan shared some of his problems with police, which are being scrutinised.

In another development, Adnan and his two associates -- Muhi and Firoz -- were produced before a Rangpur court last night and the court freed them.

A top police official said he did not want to talk about Adnan's personal affairs. He also said the next step would be taken after investigation.

Despite repeated attempts to contact Sabekunnahar's two brothers and Adnan's mother for comments over the police version, none could be reached as their mobile phones were found switched off.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.]

UK Conservatives lose safe seat in major upset

AFP, London

Britain's ruling Conservative party suffered a major upset in a by-election result announced yesterday, losing a safe seat it had held for nearly 50 years.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party lost in the contest to elect an MP for Chesham and Amersham -- prosperous commuter towns in Buckinghamshire, northwest of London.

The centrist Liberal Democrat candidate, Sarah Green, won more than 56 percent in a constituency that had been held by the Tories since it was set up in its current form in 1974.

The Times newspaper said the defeat raised questions over the

Conservative strategy of focusing efforts on seizing seats from the main opposition Labour party, rather than on defending traditional Tory seats, known as the "Blue Wall" due to the party's logo colour.

Johnson's party in May won a by-election in the traditional Labour-voting Hartlepool, adding another parliamentary seat in northeast England to those they secured in the last general election in December 2019, when Brexit was the main issue.

The pro-European Lib Dems campaigned actively in Chesham and Amersham, tapping into local opposition to controversial projects in the area, with leader Ed Davey visiting 16 times, The Times

said.

The BBC said voters this time round focused on local issues: the controversial construction of a high-speed rail link through the constituency and plans to build more houses in rural areas.

Davey tweeted that the result "sent a shockwave through British politics" and proved the "blue wall can be smashed by @libdems".

The contest was triggered by the death in April of former government minister Cheryl Gillan, who had held the seat for 29 years.

Peter Fleet, a former motor industry executive who was bidding to replace her, called the result "very disappointing".

Good news

FROM PAGE 1

four in Dhaka city, according to government notice, issued to all civil surgeons and related health officials, signed by Dr Shamsul Haque, line director of the DGHS.

Only those registered with the centres, but have not got the first shots, will get priority, said the notice.

Frontline government health workers, police members, outgoing migrant workers (registered with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training), cleaners of Dhaka's two city corporations, and ward or municipality workers involved in funerals will also get priority for the vaccination.

Besides, students of all government, private medical, dental, nursing, midwifery MATS and IHT colleges, residential students of all public universities, employees of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, and the Chinese nationals in Bangladesh will also be eligible for the vaccination, the notice said.

There will be one centre in each district. The centre will either be at a medical college hospital, a district hospital or any other healthcare facility. It will be decided by the district's Covid-19 Vaccination Committee, led by the civil surgeon.

In Dhaka city, the Sinopharm vaccine will be administered at centres of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, Shaheed Shuhrawardy Medical College Hospital and Mugda Medical College Hospital.

There will be maximum of two vaccination booths in each centre, which will remain open from 8:00am to 3:00pm every day except Fridays and public holidays.

A vaccine recipient will get the second jab 28 days after the administration of the first dose.

Shamsul Haque yesterday told The Daily Star the government was yet to decide on when the 1,00,620 doses of Pfizer vaccine from Covax (Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access) would be given.

Earlier, the government decided to administer the Pfizer vaccine in Dhaka city.

According to DGHS data, so far 72,48,829 people have registered for vaccines on www.surokkha.gov.bd. Of them, 58,20,015 have received the first jab while 42,64,362 have received the second jab of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine.

Bangladesh has so far received 1.02 crore doses of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccines -- 70 lakh purchased and 32 lakh as gift from the Indian government. Besides, it got the 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine doses from China.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque on Wednesday said Bangladesh would receive 10 lakh doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine by August under the global arrangement, Covax.

The nationwide mass inoculation against Covid started on February 7 at around 1,000 centres across the country with a target to vaccinate all citizens aged 18 and above in phases.

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

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.

Meanwhile, the virus continued to sweep bordering districts, including Khulna and Rajshahi.

Besides, the highest deaths yesterday -- 15 -- was reported from Chattogram division. Twelve deaths each were reported from Dhaka and Rajshahi division, said DGHS.

In Khulna division, eight Covid patients died while four died in Barishal, two in Sylhet and one in Mymensingh division, according to the DGHS.

Of the yesterday's deceased, two died in homes and 52 in hospitals.

With this, the official death toll in the country rose to 13,399. The death rate stood at 1.59 percent.

In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 3,883 new infections were reported.

Former Japan justice minister jailed for vote-buying

AFP, Tokyo

A former Japanese justice minister received a three-year jail term yesterday for vote-buying in an attempt to get his wife elected to a national office, local media said.

Katsuyuki Kawai, 58, was found guilty of charges that he distributed 29 million yen (\$260,000 at today's rates) to about 100 people in 2019, to help secure an upper house seat for his wife Anri, national broadcaster NHK said.

He was fined 1.3 million yen (\$11,800) in addition to the jail term, local media added.

Officials at the Tokyo District Court could not immediately confirm the reports.

Katsuyuki, a close confidant of former prime minister Shinzo Abe, had reversed his earlier claims of innocence and broadly conceded the allegations against him.

বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১

সূত্র নং-বিসিবি/এজিএম-২০২১/৩৭ তারিখঃ ১৯শে জুন, ২০২১

বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১ নিম্নে উল্লেখিত তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হইবেঃ

দিন ও তারিখ : বুধবার, ০৭ই জুলাই, ২০২১ইং।

সময় : দুপুর ১২ঃ৩০ ঘটিকা।

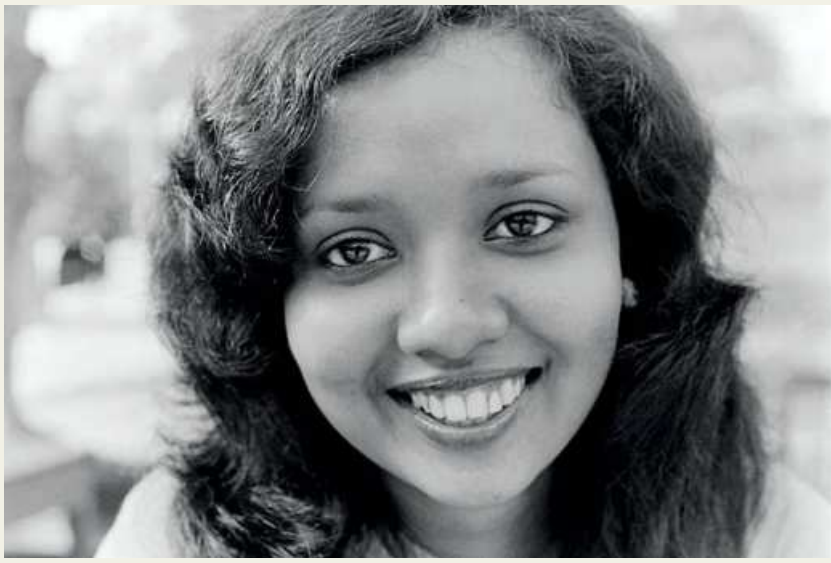
স্থান : গ্র্যান্ড বলরুম, রেডিসন ব্লু ঢাকা ওয়াটার গার্ডেন, এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, ঢাকা-১২০৬।

সাধারণ পরিষদের সকল সম্মানিত কাউন্সিলরবৃন্দকে বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাইতেছে।

পরিচালনা পরিষদের নির্দেশক্রমে -
প্রধান নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা
বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Luna, Chaklapunji Tea Garden, 1984.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

A Force of Nature

My cousin Dr. Luna Vishwanath (née Quader) passed away on June 6th. With her went a big part of my childhood. This is her story.

Born into an illuminated family (her father was founder principal of Central Law College; her maternal grandmother was the first Muslim woman politician of Bangladesh) Luna studied medicine at Dhaka Medical College before going to the United Kingdom for further studies.

She did her post graduate work in Scotland and became the first female Bangladeshi surgeon to pass all the examinations required to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Specializing in breast cancer surgery she became a sought after consultant surgeon in the UK. Eventually she and her husband, orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Mayasandra Vishwanath (Vish), chose to continue their work at Birmingham City Hospital.

At Birmingham Luna led her team to pioneer day case surgery for breast cancer patients. This enabled the patient to go home on the same day as the surgery. It ensured that patients received the best and most efficient care. The idea was so successful that it was adopted in hospitals across the UK. It also saved the National Health Service 22 million pounds annually.

In 2009 Luna was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension, a rare and deadly disease. Fighting it, she kept seeing patients and performed surgeries with the aid of oxygen. Following her ill-health retirement, she set up office at home and became her own best physician, meticulously tracking symptoms and test results and carefully choosing evidence based medicines and procedures. Her will-power and discipline enabled her to live much longer than the disease's life expectancy.

Through her darkest days she never stopped being anchor and guide for her family and her siblings. Illness could not rob her of her generosity.

She always responded to calls for help from anyone in her wide circle of relatives and friend.

Soon after her diagnosis, Luna and Vish made a list of countries to visit. In a few years they visited numerous countries, criss-crossing the globe from north to south and east to west. Travelling was not easy as she had to carry her oxygen supply. Nonetheless they made wonderful memories and shared them through photographs spanning Angkor Wat, Iguazu Falls, Mount Fuji, Kruger safari, Icelandic geyser, Amazonian forest and many other attractions.

Among my cousins, Luna was closest in age. When I was growing up in Sylhet she was the big-city connection in Dhaka. She kept me updated on the happening things: TV shows such as The Fugitive and Dangerman, Apollo 11 astronauts visiting Dhaka, bell-bottom pants and detective books. In my imagination she was glamorous and stylish but face to face she always turned out to be smiling, very approachable and unflinchingly direct.

These qualities held her in good stead later when, through her skills, talent and charisma, she impressed even the toughest old school British surgeons and broke into their male-dominated world.

My visits with Luna during her illness were filled with joyful reminiscing. Her cheerful demeanour and calm acceptance of her disease amazed me. During pauses in conversation I found myself wondering how the bubbly girl I once knew had miraculously transformed into this graceful yet formidable force of nature.

Luna is survived by her husband, daughter, mother, three siblings and countless admirers and grateful souls. (I acknowledge the help of Dr. Veena Vishwanath, Luna's daughter, in writing this article.)

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow "ihtishamkabir" on Instagram.

VACCINATION RESUMES IN CTG

Frontliners, CMCH registrants to get priority

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

It's good news for vaccine-seekers of Chattogram, as 91,200 doses of Sinopharm vaccine have reached the port city yesterday.

As a result, the Covid-19 vaccination programme is going to resume from today, according to the authorities concerned.

Dr Sheikh Fazle Rabbi, civil surgeon of Chattogram, received the vaccines from the government.

The vaccines were later taken to the EPI central store in the city.

Initially, the programme will be operated only from Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

On the flip side, not everyone will get the chance to get vaccinated right away, as doctors, nurses, healthcare staffers, and students of medical colleges, nursing colleges and medical technology will be prioritised, Dr Rabbi said.

In addition, those who registered for the second dose mentioning CMCH as their preferred centre, but are yet to receive their doses, will also get priority, the civil surgeon told The Daily Star yesterday.

Contacted, CMCH director Brig Gen SM Humayun Kabir said they have made a list of 26 medical students to be vaccinated on the first day.

This means that thousands of people who are yet to receive their second dose after registering at the 18 other centres in the city and 14 centres in upazilas will have to wait for their turn.

Naturally, the decision to favour priority groups did not make them happy.

Talking to this correspondent, they demanded that the authority change the decision so that vaccine-seekers across the district get equal opportunity.

vaccine aspirants.

"We have just received 91,200 doses this time around, whereas in the first phase, a total of 453,760 people were given the first dose," he said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED



The consignment of 91,200 doses of Sinopharm vaccines was stored at the EPI central storage system in the city.

"I registered for my first dose two months ago. I've been eagerly waiting for fresh vaccines to arrive, but now I get to know that I am not in the priority group simply because I've registered for Chattogram General Hospital centre," said Zakaria Imtiaz (60).

"I fail to understand how this is fair," he remarked.

Asked, Civil Surgeon Dr Rabbi said they had to make the decision as they received fewer vaccines relative to

"But vaccine-seekers should not be worried, as the government assured it will immediately send in more vaccines, allowing us to vaccinate all in phases," the official said.

Meanwhile, the positivity rate at the port city was 19.28 percent yesterday.

It was 14.44 percent on Thursday, 16.53 percent on Wednesday, 16.89 percent on Tuesday, and 24.59 percent on Monday, according to the officials.



Shahida Zahir passes away

CITY DESK

Shahida Zahir (Ratna) passed away on Sunday (June 13) at her residence.

She was buried at the Azimpur graveyard in the capital.

Shahida Zahir left behind her son, Shams Munir, and two sisters, Marina Rahman and Roxana Azam, as immediate family.

She was the wife of renowned Barrister late Dr Md Zahir and daughter of late Halimur Rahman and Tahera Khatun.

Shahida Zahir completed her Masters from Dhaka University in English literature and HSC from Holy Cross College. She was also an English teacher.

Family members have requested all to pray for the departed soul.



This pickup van turned sideways on the Dhaka-Aricha highway near Savar Bazar bus stand on Thursday night. Locals said the accident occurred due to there being no safety barriers around a road development works spot. Fortunately, no casualties have been reported, though risks persisted as of yesterday morning as the vehicle was left lying without any protection, leaving it prone to tumbling over.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

6 held with meth, yaba in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) claimed to have arrested six drug peddlers with crystal meth, also known as ice, from Dhaka's Uttara area yesterday.

Rab's Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin said they increased surveillance and initiated an investigation after learning from sources that a gang were trying to set up a "meth lab" to make adulterated ice and other drugs.

A team of Rab-3 conducted a drive from Thursday evening till dawn yesterday in Uttara and detained six drug peddlers including the alleged kingpin Md Tawfiq Hossain (35).

The other arrestees are Md Jamirul Chowdhury (37), Md Arafat Abedin (35), Md Rakib Basar Khan (30), Md Saiful Islam (28), and Md Khaled Iqbal (35), said Al Moin.

Rab also seized ice, yaba tablets, foreign alcohol, marijuana, 13 foreign weapons, replica weapons and large quantities of laboratory equipment from their possession, he said.

"The racket has been involved in yaba trading for nearly 10 years. They are now turning their focus on methamphetamine, ice and 'cocktail drug' which have high demand among youths of rich families," said the Rab official.

The meth lab was originally run with the help of arrested Arafat Abedin and some of his associates, said Rab in a press release.

The arrested accused are part of an organised syndicate. Tawfiq is the founder and coordinator of the business and there are 10-15 more people involved, according to Rab.

The Rab official said Tawfiq is the kingpin of the racket while Zubain and Khaled have been financing it. They have been running a yaba peddling ring for over 10 years and have started meth trading around two years ago.

According to Rab, Zubain came to the country after completing BBA from a private university in London.

Tawfiq and Khaled completed their BBA and MBA from private universities. Rudra, an HSC dropout, used to run the lab as a chemist.

During interrogation, they provided specific information about some more syndicates and the people involved, said the Rab official.

Rab will continue its operation to find other drug peddlers, added the press release.

Legal action is being taken against the arrestees, said Al Moin.

'We want more skilled workers from Bangladesh'

Says Saudi ambassador at meeting with Baira members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia has urged Bangladesh to send more skilled migrant workers to the Kingdom, as there are "ample job opportunities" for foreign workers in its various sectors.

Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Essa Yousef Essa Alduhailan said this in a meeting at his office in Dhaka with a three-member delegate of the immediate-past executive committee of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) on Thursday.

The ambassador also emphasised on importance of Bangladesh to the Kingdom, especially in the labour recruitment sector.

The ambassador paid special attention on labour recruitment from Bangladesh since it is an important area for both countries, said Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, former secretary general of Baira, who attended the meeting.

The issue of enlisting Bangladeshi recruiting agencies to send workers was also discussed, he said. Baira's immediate-past president Benjir Ahmed and vice president Mohammad Abdul Hye attended the meeting.

Luck drying up for dried fish traders

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Two months into the second wave of Covid-19 in the country, shutki (dried fish) traders and producers of Rangpur division are yet to recover from the losses they incurred during the first wave of the pandemic.

Since March last year, many of them have lost their investments, others have left the business altogether, and those who are still powering through are only doing so out of sheer will, with little to show for their efforts.

Rangpur is home to three large wholesale markets for dried fish. They are at Saidpur Bus terminal area of Nilphamari, Teesta Bazar in Lalmonirhat Sadar, and Ghagatparais in Rangpur city.

Shutki traders from these markets have reportedly suffered losses worth around Tk 4

crore since the virus first hit last year.

During a recent visit to Ghagatpara dried fish wholesale market in Rangpur's RK road, this correspondent found the once-busy market relatively quiet, with most of the shops shut and only a few buyers roaming around.

Seasonal sales of the market used to stand around Tk 6 crore every year. But reaching that target remains a far cry in these trying times, said traders.

They said dried fish season begins every December and runs till August. This is when both production and business peak. But at the tail end of this year's season, the traders can only count their losses and hope the next one goes well.

Besides local demand, these nine months used to see a lot of demand from abroad.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Traders at Lalmonirhat Sadar's Teesta Bazar passing their times idly, sorting again dried fish that have been sorted before. Despite a good fishing season, they are still counting losses due to the lack of customers.

PHOTO: STAR

NEWS IN brief

Bangladesh nominated FAO member from Asia region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been nominated as the member of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) from the Asia region for three years from 2022.

The country has also been chosen as a member of the credential committee of FAO, according to a press release issued by the agricultural ministry yesterday.

The decisions were taken during the 42nd ongoing conference of FAO. The conference, being held virtually this year due to Covid-19 pandemic, began on June 14 and ended yesterday.

500 JCD activists sued in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Police yesterday filed two cases against some 500 leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) for their alleged attack on law enforcers centring a rally in Mymensingh city's Kalibari area on Thursday.

Marking the death anniversary of BNP president Ziaur Rahman, JCD organised the rally on the day.

Police, however, said JCD activists started throwing brick bats at law enforcers when a police team asked them to stop the meeting as it was organised defying health guidelines.

OC Firoz Talukder of Kotwali police said they arrested eight persons.

Meanwhile, BNP at a press conference said police attacked on their rally to foil the event and filed "false" cases against JCD activists.

SEE MORE ONLINE

Fossils

FROM PAGE 12
the Linxia Basin in Gansu Province, China, among deposits pertaining to the Late Oligocene period 34 to 23 million years ago.

They also found associated fossilised body parts of the rhino, including the atlas bone that connects the skull to the spine, as well as three vertebrae from another individual in the site at the northeastern border of the Tibetan Plateau.

Based on the analysis, the researchers found that the fossil remains belonged to an entirely new species different from other known giant rhinos.

Deeper assessment of the atlas bone and the axis bone, the second vertebra going down from the top of the spine, revealed clues that the rhino possessed a long and flexible neck.

The scientists also found evidence from genetic analysis of the samples that *Paraceratherium linxiaense* was related to another giant rhino species from western Pakistan, indicating that the genus was widespread across Asia, including in the Indian subcontinent.

Luck drying

FROM PAGE 3
However, ever since the pandemic started, export has completely dried up, traders said.

In Naogaon's Atrai upazila -- one of the largest sources of dried fish in the northern region, thanks to the Atrai river -- a large part of the population earns their living in the dried fish trade. But what used to be a good life has lucked out since the pandemic.

Mirat village's Rahim Uddin said dried fish cannot be stocked for more than six months. "You just wouldn't get that fresh taste anymore," he said. But without buyers, the six months rolled on before the traders can do anything about it.

Mominul Islam, of Bhar-Tetulia under Atrai upazila, said though the anglers of the upazila caught a massive volume of fish from the river, the lack of buyers meant they had to be sold at a peanut's price.

"Business has turned horrific over these months," said Mominul, a dried fish trader himself. "On one hand, we don't have enough buyers. On the other, big traders are cutting down price."

"The labour that goes in is the same, but the price it fetches has almost halved," lamented Mominul. Whereas each kg of smaller dried fish used to sell for Tk 300, the price has come down to Tk 150 to 200, he told this correspondent.

"It has become extremely difficult to even meet our day to day costs," said Sopan Kumar Das, a wholesale trader at Teestabazar in Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila. According to him, the market has 20 traders like him, who together employ around 100 staff.

"At this rate of sales, it's becoming impossible for us to pay our staffers' daily wages," he said.

The dried fish traders have urged the government to provide them with cash support, saying otherwise, the sector will not survive the pandemic.

Guterres sworn

FROM PAGE 12
Assembly re-appointed him for the 2022-2026 term.

This, Guterres added, would include promoting a "just, green and sustainable recovery" which shows the way forward "through increased and effective international cooperation to address global issues."

In office since 2017, Guterres promised to act independently of member states and organizations during the swearing-in ceremony attended by Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the first head of state to set foot in the United Nations building for more than a year because of the pandemic.

Guterres added that it would be essential to "make prevention and preparedness -- in the broad sense of the words -- a top priority in the international system."

Speaking at a press conference after the ceremony, Guterres reiterated that "from the many lessons that we learned, the most important lesson is that alone we can do nothing. The most important lesson is that we need to rebuild solidarity and trust."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Guterres saying his country looked forward to "continuing our strong and constructive relationship" with the secretary-general.

Global issues "require a collaborative, effective, and results-oriented leader in the United Nations secretariat, and we have that in Antonio Guterres," Blinken added.

The 193-member General Assembly had approved a resolution extending Guterres' five-year term, rather than taking a vote.

The UN Security Council, at a crucial stage in the nomination process, gave its blessing on June 8 to the reappointment of the 72-year-old, who had previously served as UN High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015.



A Palestinian man tries to leave Al-Aqsa mosque as Israeli security force members aim their weapons during clashes with Palestinians at the compound known to Muslims as Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as Temple Mount, in Jerusalem's Old City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

They defrauded

FROM PAGE 12
evidence against Ahsan and Mahbub's real name and address could not be confirmed.

The Daily Star has recently obtained a copy of the charge sheet.

Soon after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and Regent Hospital on March 21 last year, two teams of the hospital started preparing fake reports and supplying those to suspected Covid patients. They did the job as per instructions given by Shahed, the IO said in his probe report.

Four accused -- Sumon, Polash, Torikul Shibli and Amit Banik -- collected some 200 samples in a day

and 50 of those were sent to National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (Nipsom) for testing. About 150 fake reports were prepared against the rest of the samples, the charge sheet said.

Mahbub, Shimul Parvez and Saikat prepared fake reports, scanning the signatures of the technicians at Nipsom's pathology and lab, it added.

The investigator said the accused supplied Covid positive reports to those who showed symptoms of high body temperature, cold, cough and throat pain. However, Covid negative reports were issued to those who showed no such symptoms.

Although the MoU stressed treating patients for free, Shahed collected Tk 3,500-Tk 4,000 from each person.

Thus, the hospital chairman in collusion with other accused pocketed about Tk 3 to 4 crore defrauding some 6,000 patients, said the charge sheet.

On February 4 last year, Shahed appointed one Mizanur Rahman to Uttara branch of Regent Hospital. Mizanur and other accused, in line with Shahed's instructions, carried out illegal activities, causing harm to public health.

Shahed on June 1 last year filed an application with the DGHS, showing his free treatment expenditure of Tk 1.96 crore. He did not return various diagnostic instruments to the government, the charge sheet said.

The hospital chairman is a very cunning, greedy and cruel man. He did not bother about life and death

of patients when it came to pocketing money, the IO said.

In the charge sheet, 40 people have been named as prosecution witnesses.

On July 7 last year, the case was filed against Shahed and 15 others over issuing fake Covid test reports and charging people unfairly for testing and treatment.

Shahed was arrested in Satkhira on July 15 when he was trying to leave the country by a boat.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment in an arms case on September 28 last year.

On August 18, 2010, he was sentenced to six month's imprisonment and fined Tk 53 lakh by a court in absentia in a cheque dishonour case.

Six more lives lost to road crashes

FROM PAGE 12
Police seized the bus and arrested the driver, he added.

In a separate accident in Chattogram, two people were killed and at least 10 others were injured as two passenger buses collided heads on in the AJ Chowdhury College Bazar area of the city.

One of the dead is Nurul Afsar, 48, of Maliara village of Patiya upazila. The identity of another deceased, who is around 26-years old, could not be known immediately, said police.

All the dead and injured persons

were passengers of both the buses.

The accident occurred when a BRIC bus, heading towards Gachbaria of Chandanaish upazila, collided heads on with another bus heading towards the city at around 3:30pm, said Dulal Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station.

The collision took place after the BRIC bus driver lost his control over the steering to save a CNG-run autorickshaw, the OC said.

On information, police rushed to the spot, rescued the injured people,

and took them to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), he added.

Of them, two succumbed to their injuries around an hour later.

Jahirul Islam, in charge of CMCH Police Camp, said at least five of the injured persons were in a critical state.

Meanwhile, in Brahmanbaria, a police officer succumbed to his injuries early yesterday, after he was hit by a pick-up van on Cumilla-Sylhet highway in the district's Kasba upazila.

The dead is Gulam Mustafa, 57,

sub-inspector of Kasba Police Station. He hailed from Fulgazi upazila of Feni.

Police said Mustafa, along with some other policemen, set up a temporary check post in the area and were discharging duties.

Suddenly, a speedy pick-up van hit him and fled around 10:20am on Thursday.

Mohammad Alamgir Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Kasba Police Station, said Mustafa was rushed to a local health complex but succumbed to his injuries.

Dhaka calls for a long-term package

FROM PAGE 12
of the Republic of Malawi, and the chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs, also delivered a keynote speech at the event, says a press release of the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN.

Among the other high-level speakers were Achim Steiner, UNDP administrator; Liu Zhenmin, under-secretary-general, UNDESA; Felkitamoloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, under-secretary-general; Taffere Tesfachew, chair of the committee for Development Subgroup on LDCs, permanent representatives of Qatar and Nepal, and deputy permanent representative of Turkey.

Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Rabab Fatima made opening remarks while the

Canadian Permanent Representative Ambassador Robert Rae made closing remarks at the event.

They are the co-chairs of the Preparatory Committee of the 5th UN conference on LDCs.

Identifying political vision as the key to a LDC's development trajectory towards graduation, Momen said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led Bangladesh's graduation journey from the front, the release said.

He said the recommendation by the UN Committee for Development Policy for graduation of Bangladesh was a momentous occasion for the entire nation. It coincided with the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence and the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation. Highlighting the multidimensional challenges faced

by the graduating and graduated countries, the foreign minister identified access to safe and affordable Covid-19 vaccines as the top priority for the LDCs now.

He said the most effective solution of this issue will be to utilise TRIPS' (WTO agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) waiver to transfer technology and know-how to LDCs that have the capacity to produce vaccines, the release said.

He urged upon the development partners and vaccines manufacturers to extend support in this regard.

Momen said most of the LDCs have limited fiscal buffer and absence of ex-ante insurance schemes against shocks, which make their graduation trajectory highly challenging.

He underlined the importance of adequate financing and resources as critical means for LDCs to keep pace with graduation expectation.

In this regard, he emphasised that LDCs need enhanced financing support to mitigate critical deficits in physical and institutional infrastructure and capacity building, the release added.

Among other things, the foreign minister also underscored the importance of promoting export diversification in LDCs with a firm commitment to market access, enhancing South-South and trilateral cooperation, incentivising job creation, skills development, scaled up social protection of migrants, enhancing monitoring and support mechanism in the post-graduation phase etc.

India braces for Covid 3rd wave by Oct

FROM PAGE 12
be much less because more vaccinations would have been rolled out and there would be some degree of natural immunity from the second-wave," said Dr Randeep Guleria, director at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi yesterday said the country needs to be prepared to meet the future challenges of pandemic amidst the third wave reports, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Addressing the virtual launch of a crash course for preparing a one lakh-strong frontline workers, Modi said this launch is an important next

step in the fight against Covid-19, cautioning that "the virus is present and possibility of mutation is there."

So far, India has only fully vaccinated about 5% of its estimated 950 million eligible population, leaving many millions vulnerable to infections and deaths.

While a majority of healthcare

experts predicted the vaccination drive would pick up significantly this year, they cautioned against an early removal of restrictions, as some states have done.

When asked if children and those under 18 years would be most at risk in a potential third wave, nearly two-thirds of experts, or 26 of 40, said yes.

Uncertainty

FROM PAGE 1
secretary told The Daily Star.

As per a circular of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) issued on Thursday, outbound Bangladeshi migrant workers will get shots from today under the government's Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccination campaign.

The circular placed "prioritised" migrant workers in the third position on a list of group of people grouped as "targeted population" for the campaign. The prioritised migrant workers are those either approved by or registered under the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), reads the circular.

It says the campaign will start at the dedicated vaccine centres of the country's all government medical college hospitals, and general, district, and 250-bed hospitals.

For Bangladeshi workers, Saudi Arabia is the largest overseas job market. About 30,000 to 40,000 Bangladeshi workers are now arranging their travel to Saudi Arabia with new employment visas, according to Shammilita Shamannay Parishad, a platform of recruiting agencies.

Fakhrul Islam, a member of the platform, yesterday said as Sinopharm vaccine is not on KSA's priority list, vaccinating migrant workers with it will not resolve the existing problem.

The government needs to discuss with Saudi authorities whether they would accept workers who have taken Sinopharm shots, said Fakhrul, also the president of Recruiting Agencies Welfare Organisation of Bangladesh.

He suggested holding the discussion through the diplomatic channel.

Fakhrul said the government can either opt for allocating Pfizer vaccine for Saudi-bound workers or discuss the Chinese vaccine issue with the Saudi government, or allocate money from the wage earners' welfare fund to import Johnson and Johnson jabs for migrant workers.

Another concern is that the current age limit for Covid vaccination in Bangladesh is 40 years and above. But most of the migrant workers are aged below 40, he added.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, former secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said the government needs to be more proactive to ensure vaccinating migrant workers.

He said a non-vaccinated worker needs to spend up to \$1,000 to be in institutional quarantine in Saudi Arabia. Although the government decided to subsidise the cost by providing Tk 25,000 to each worker against the quarantine fee, the workers would still have to bear an additional financial burden, Shameem added.

M Tipu Sultan, president of Recruiting Agencies Oikya Parishad, said only the Saudi job market remained open for Bangladeshi workers amid the pandemic.

Although the government is trying to resolve the problem facing the Saudi-bound workers, no solution has been found yet, he said.

Tipu said vaccination would likely to be a key issue in sending migrant workers abroad in future.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, a top official of Saudi Arabian Airlines said the Saudi authorities have instructed them to exempt those outbound Bangladeshi passengers, who have taken the Covid vaccine of either of the four specific companies, from spending seven days in mandatory quarantine.

"Bangladeshi passengers who have received vaccines of other companies will not be exempted from staying in mandatory quarantine until we get further instructions from the Saudi authorities concerned," the official added. Contacted, BMET Director General Shahidul Alam yesterday said they were trying their level best to support migrant workers not only in vaccination, but also in all other services.

Mamata moves

FROM PAGE 12
The case was slated to be heard yesterday virtually by Justice Kausik Chanda this morning but Mamata's lawyer Soumendra Nath Mukherjee requested that the matter be deferred to next week.

The court accepted the request and listed the matter for next Thursday (June 24).

"Let the matter be listed next Thursday. In the meantime, the (High Court) Registrar shall file a report before this court as to whether the petition has been filed in conformity with the Representation of People Act (of 1951)," the Calcutta HC directed in its order yesterday.

Even though Mamata lost in Nandigram, she was sworn in as Chief Minister for a third consecutive term on May 5, three days after West Bengal poll results were declared.

Under Indian law, Mamata has to get elected to the state assembly within six months of her assumption of office of Chief Minister.

Mamata, in her petition, has sought that Suwendu Adhikari's election be set aside on three grounds --alleged corrupt practices, promotion of hatred and enmity, seeking votes on the basis of religion and booth capture and alleged discrepancies in the vote-counting procedure.

Mamata's petition also questioned the decision of the Election Commission to reject her plea for a recount of votes.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) returned to power in the recent assembly poll for a third consecutive five-year term but Mamata lost to her former aide Suwendu Adhikari, who is now the leader of the opposition in the state legislature, by a margin of 1,956 votes.

'Sovereign Bangla only political solution'

FROM PAGE 12
Rahman. Earlier, all five leaders had been tried by a special military court in Dhaka in absentia for failure to appear before the martial law authorities and were sentenced to 14 years rigorous imprisonment each and confiscation of 50 percent of their property. Under the new charge they could be sentenced to life imprisonment.

EAST PAKISTAN REOPENED TO NEWSMEN

The Pakistani government announced today that foreign newsmen, who had been barred from East Pakistan since March 25 except as participants in government-conducted tours, were to be readmitted without restrictions.

The announcement said "foreign correspondents can visit East Pakistan on their own completely unescorted

and unattended in view of the fact that the law and order situation is now fully under control in that wing".

On March 26, 1971 about 40 foreign newsmen covering non-cooperation movement in East Pakistan were expelled by martial law authorities. All their notes, film, manuscripts and personal papers were confiscated by authorities.

Since then, one group of six correspondents and another of 10 had been permitted five-day tours of East Pakistan accompanied by military authorities.

Two weeks ago, the government announced that all foreigners were to be permitted to travel in East Pakistan but that journalists remained barred. Travellers were required to sign affidavits that they are not journalists.

OCCUPATION OF EVACUEE PROPERTY IN BANGLADESH

The Government of India addressed a letter to the Pakistani high commissioner in New Delhi protesting the occupation of houses and destruction of land records of those of the evacuees of Bangladesh who had crossed over to Indian territory. India had pointed out that such acts by the Pakistanis in Bangladesh would be obstacles to the return of these evacuees from India to their homeland.

Secondly, once they found that their homes and lands were taken away, they would again turn their face to India, thereby creating another humanitarian problem of a vast dimension. Thus, the ensuing unrest and discontent were bound to have

repercussions on India's border states, the letter pointed out.

PAKISTAN CLAIMS SAUDI SUPPORT
Pakistan today claimed Saudi Arabia's support for its stand on the East Pakistan issue. Radio Pakistan in a broadcast said Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Pakistan Abdullah-el-Mutliq had said that the people of Pakistan could depend on the moral and material support of the Saudi Arabian people and the government to safeguard the integrity of the country. In a statement, in Islamabad, he said the happenings in East Pakistan were an internal affair of Pakistan and no foreign power had any right to interfere, the radio said.

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

NEWS
IN brief



Hardliner set to win Iran polls
Iranians voted yesterday in an election expected to hand the presidency to a hardline judge subject to US sanctions, though many are likely to ignore the ballot amid economic hardship and calls for a boycott by critics at home and abroad. Hardliner Ebrahim Raisi, 60, is the favourite to succeed Hassan Rouhani. A close Khamenei ally and like him a harsh critic of the West, Raisi is under US sanctions for alleged involvement in executions of political prisoners decades ago.



Biden gifts Putin pair of aviators
For his first meeting with Vladimir Putin in Geneva this week, President Joe Biden gifted his Russian counterpart a pair of American-made sunglasses in the US leader's signature aviator style. Specs of this style are often worn by the military -- the company has had a contract with the US armed forces since 1978, which buys some 25,000 pairs per month. A matte black polarized pair sells on the Randolph website for \$279.



Israel strikes Gaza again
Israeli jets launched air strikes on Gaza overnight Thursday to Friday after militants in the Palestinian territory again set off incendiary balloons into southern Israel, the army and AFP journalists said. The fire balloons and air strikes are the latest violence heaping pressure on a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers that came into place on May 21, ending 11 days of heavy fighting. Israeli army said they hit sites in both Gaza City and in Khan Yunis, in the south of Gaza. Soon after the strikes, Hamas militants opened fire with heavy machine guns towards the Jewish state, as Israeli warning air raid sirens rang out. No casualties were reported.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Rescue workers search for bodies after a boat with dozens of migrants from the Maghreb region capsized in the beach of Orzola, in the Canary Island of Lanzarote, Spain, yesterday. At least 4 migrants died in the tragedy. PHOTO: REUTERS

82.4m displaced globally

AFP, Geneva

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the number of people fleeing war and persecution continued rising last year, with global displacement climbing to over 82 million -- double the figure a decade ago, the UN said yesterday. A fresh report from the UN refugee agency showed global displacement figures swelled by around three million in 2020 after an already record-breaking year in 2019, leaving a full one percent of humanity uprooted and displaced. The report highlighted how drawn-out crises like those in Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen were continuing to force people to flee, while eruptions of violence in places like Ethiopia and Mozambique were causing surging displacement. The fact that the numbers rose for the ninth straight year was all the more devastating because Covid-19 restrictions had been expected to limit displacement. During the pandemic, "everything else has stopped, including the economies, but wars and conflict and violence and discrimination and persecution, all the factors that pushed these people to flee, have continued," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi told AFP. The UN agency found that by the end of 2020, a record 82.4 million people were living as refugees or asylum seekers, or in so-

called internal displacement within their own countries, up from some 40 million in 2011. "Today's global displacement figures are an epic failure of humanity," head of the Norwegian Refugee Council Jan Egeland said, pointing out that "far more people are on the move today than anytime during World War II." "Yet despite the staggering statistics, world leaders have been inept to resolve the greatest emergency of our generation." The UNHCR report highlighted that a full

- >> UNHCR report says conflicts, persecution, rights abuses doubled the numbers in a decade
- >> 42pc of them are girls, boys under age of 18

42 percent of the world's displaced are girls and boys under the age of 18. "The tragedy of so many children being born into exile should be reason enough to make far greater efforts to prevent and end conflict and violence," Grandi said. Some 26.4 million people were living as refugees at the end of 2020, including 5.7 million Palestinians. Some 3.9 million Venezuelans were also displaced beyond their borders without being

considered refugees, while 4.1 million people were registered worldwide as asylum seekers. In 2020, at least 164 countries closed their borders because of Covid-19, and more than half of them made no exceptions for asylum seekers and refugees fleeing for their lives. Last year, more than 11 million people were newly displaced, the report showed. They include Syria, which after more than a decade of war counts 13.5 million people displaced either inside or outside the country -- more than half of its population and a sixth of the global displacement total. More than two-thirds of the world's refugees meanwhile come from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. Turkey remained the host of the world's largest refugee population totalling some 3.7 million, followed by Colombia with 1.7 million, Pakistan and Uganda with 1.4 million each and Germany with 1.2 million. While needs are continuously rising, solutions for the displaced seemed to dwindle last year. Over the course of 2020, only around 3.2 million IDPs and just 251,000 refugees returned to their homes, marking drops of 40 and 21 percent respectively from 2019. And only 34,400 vulnerable refugees were resettled in third countries last year -- the lowest level in 20 years, the report said.

FOREIGN COUNTRY COLLUSION
Two newspaper executives charged in HK

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Hong Kong police charged the chief editor and chief executive of pro-democracy tabloid Apple Daily yesterday with collusion with a foreign country, a national security case that has sent chills through the city's media. On Thursday, 500 police raided the media outlet and officers were seen sitting in front of computers in the newsroom after the arrest of five Apple Daily executives at dawn on suspicion that dozens of its articles violated Hong Kong's new security law. Police said it charged two of the five on Friday, identified by Apple Daily as editor-in-chief Ryan Law and chief executive officer Cheung Kim-hung. The other three, Chief Operating Officer Chow Tat-kuen, Deputy Chief Editor Chan Puiman and Chief Executive Editor Cheung Chi-wai, were released from custody late yesterday. Police also said they would prosecute three companies related to Apple Daily for the same offence after freezing HK\$18 million (\$2.32 million) of their assets. The arrests have raised further alarm over media freedom in Hong Kong and have been criticised by Western governments and international rights groups and press associations.

Quotes of the day

Our greatest challenge -- and which is at the same time our greatest opportunity -- is to use this (Covid-19) crisis to turn the tide, pivot towards a world that learns lessons.

ANTONIO GUTERRES AFTER SWORN IN FOR A SECOND TERM AS UN CHIEF

We have a huge number of countries that have had to suspend their rollout of their second doses of vaccine... It's over 30 or 40 countries that could have been targeted for second doses of AstraZeneca vaccines, for example, who will not be able to do that.

BRUCE AYLWARD, WHO'S FRONTMAN FOR COVAX SCHEME



Yoga practitioners attend a class on the Edge Observation Deck, billed as the 'highest outdoor sky deck in the Western Hemisphere' at 1,131 feet (345 meters), and overlooking the Manhattan skyline, in New York, yesterday. Pandemic restrictions have been gradually lifted in the US with just over 52 percent of the US population, or 174 million people, having received at least one dose, according to health officials. PHOTO: AFP

Global death toll exceeds 4m

AGENCIES
Lack of vaccines forced many poorer countries to suspend their vaccination campaign, WHO said yesterday as coronavirus-related deaths worldwide passed a grim milestone of 4 million. While the number of new cases and deaths have abated in countries like the United States and Britain, several nations have vaccine shortages as the Delta variant becomes the dominant strain around the world. It took over a year for the Covid-19 death toll to hit 2 million, while the next 2 million were recorded in just 166 days, according to Reuters. WHO said the vaccine shortages often mean people who have received one dose of Covid-19 vaccine have to wait too long before they can get their second jab. "If I remember correctly, it's over 30 or 40 countries that could have been targeted for second doses of AstraZeneca vaccines, for example, who will not be able to do that," said Bruce Aylward, the WHO's frontman for the international Covax scheme

which provides vaccine doses to poorer countries. The countries affected by this problem are spread throughout the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, the WHO expert said. Countries around India, like Nepal and Sri Lanka, have been

far less than originally planned. Countries in Latin America are facing their worst outbreak since March, with 43 of every 100 infections in the world being reported in the region, according to a Reuters analysis. The top nine countries reporting the most deaths per capita over the last week were all in Latin America. In Moscow, new coronavirus infections hit a pandemic high yesterday, tripling in just weeks due to the Delta variant and forcing Russia's capital to close its Euro fan zone and extend other curbs. A total of 9,056 new cases were recorded in the megapolis of 12 million in the past 24 hours, with Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin saying that the highly infectious Delta variant first identified in India represented almost 90 percent of new cases. Israel yesterday said it will provide around one million doses of Covid-19 vaccine to the Palestinian Authority in a swap as their expiry date looms. They will receive the same amount of vaccines heading for the Palestinians in early next year.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

- >>> 90pc of Moscow cases Delta variant
- >>> Palestinians to get million vaccine doses in swap with Israel
- >>> Many poorer countries forced to suspend vaccine programme due to lack of doses: WHO

Cops summon Twitter's top official in India

AFP, New Delhi

Indian police have summoned Twitter's top local executive over a viral video on the site of a Muslim man being assaulted, with authorities accusing the US social media giant of stoking sectarian tensions. The order comes as a battle rages between foreign tech giants and the Indian government over new rules on removing and identifying the authors of online material deemed illegal or inflammatory. According to a notice served to Twitter on Thursday, managing director Manish Maheshwari must report to a police station and make a statement within a week. The platform "let content go viral that promoted enmity between various communities in the state and country", Uttar Pradesh police said in the notice, seen by AFP. Twitter declined to comment and the video was still available on the site yesterday. Last month Indian police visited

VIRAL ASSAULT VIDEO



Twitter's offices after the firm labelled tweets by the ruling BJP's national spokesman as "manipulated media". The video causing the furore shows an elderly Muslim man forcibly having his beard shaved off. Twitter users shared the footage and news reports that said the man was forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram" ("Hail Lord Ram"), a rallying cry for Hindu nationalists. Police have said the incident was not a hate crime but a personal dispute and that the man was assaulted by both Hindu and Muslim men. Earlier this week they filed a case against Twitter, three journalists, three members of the Congress party and the news website The Wire. The preliminary charges include promoting enmity among communities, being party to a "criminal conspiracy" and spreading fake news. Reporters Without Borders called on police to withdraw the "absurd" case, calling it "judicial harassment".

MYANMAR COUP
UN set to call for halt of arms to junta

REUTERS, New York

The United Nations General Assembly was yesterday set to call for a stop to the flow of arms to Myanmar and urge the military to respect November election results and release political detainees, including leader Aung San Suu Kyi, diplomats said. Western states have been pushing the 193-member body to consider a draft resolution, but it was postponed at the last minute in a bid to win more support, including from nine Southeast Asian nations. It was not immediately clear if any countries would call for a vote on the draft General Assembly resolution or if it would be adopted by consensus. Diplomats said the text had enough support to pass if put to a vote.

TENSIONS IN KOREAN PENINSULA

'Dialogue' or 'confrontation'

Kim signals willingness to talks with Biden amid food, Covid crises

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged preparation for both dialogue and confrontation with the United States, particularly the latter, state news agency KCNA said yesterday, in his first direct comment on US President Joe Biden's administration. Kim laid out "appropriate strategic and tactical counteraction" to deal with Washington in a detailed analysis of its North Korea policy at Thursday's plenary meeting of his ruling Workers' Party's central committee, KCNA said. "The general secretary stressed the need to get prepared for both dialogue and confrontation, especially to get fully prepared for confrontation, in order to protect the dignity of our state and its interests for independent development." Such moves would "reliably guarantee the peaceful environment



and the security of our state," it added. Kim also emphasized the need to create a "favourable external climate" for the North's own initiatives. The report gave no details of any course of action, however. Kim's remarks came two days before the newly appointed US envoy for North Korea, Sung Kim, is set to arrive in South Korea on his first visit since taking up the role last month. He will hold talks with South Korean and Japanese counterparts and meet other Seoul officials during

his stay until June 23, the State Department said on Thursday. Kim's comments continue a "wait and see" policy, while refraining from provoking the Biden administration, said Vipin Narang, a nuclear affairs expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States. "It seems to suggest that Pyongyang thinks the ball is in the US court at the moment, and it is waiting to see how the Biden administration outreach goes," he said. "Given reports of North Korea's food and Covid-19 situation, one presumes that Kim is also happy to avoid a near-term confrontation." Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said Kim appeared to be sending a message to US that he would be willing to return to talks at some point.



Green University of Bangladesh

4th CONVOCATION 2021

Nurture Togetherness, Serve Beyond the Boundary

19 June 2021



PRESIDENT
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH
BANGABHABAN, DHAKA
05 Ashar 1428
19 June 2021



It gives me immense pleasure to know that Green University of Bangladesh is going to celebrate its 4th Convocation on June 19, 2021. On this august occasion, I congratulate all the graduates, their parents, guardians, faculty members and the University authority.

In the age of 21st century, quality education is a must to cope with the global trend and development. The government of Bangladesh has initiated development programs and strategies to enhance the quality of higher education so that it can cope with continuous demand for national and global competitiveness. At present educational sector in Bangladesh, like the other nations around the world, is highly affected due to COVID-19 pandemic situation. The government is promoting digital learning (e-learning) using virtual platforms to face the challenges posed by the pandemic. I appreciate the initiative of Green University of Bangladesh to virtually organize the convocation amid COVID-19 pandemic situation. I hope all the universities, both public and private, will undertake appropriate initiatives to ensure uninterrupted and quality education in current pandemic situation.

Convocation is a milestone for a university as it reflects the achievements of the students, the teachers and the University authority. Education remains the driving engine for the comprehensive and all-embracing development of the country. It is believed that education can enlighten a person through exploring and exploiting the inner capabilities and make oneself a competent citizen. I hope the new graduates of Green University of Bangladesh will be able to meet global needs through their talents and skills and will come forward to serve the nation.

I wish the convocation a grand success.

Joi Bangla,
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid
Md. Abdul Hamid



MINISTER
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH
05 Ashar 1428, 19 June 2021



It is my pleasure to felicitate Green University of Bangladesh and the graduating students on the eve of its 4th Convocation to be held on June 19, 2021. On this great occasion, I would like to remember with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the 3 million martyrs of our War of Independence and hundreds of thousands of women who were violated by the Pakistani occupation army and their local collaborators in 1971. This year we are celebrating the 100th birth anniversary, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the 50th anniversary of our hard-earned independence.

Education over the years has undergone many transformations, especially in the twenty-first century with technological advancement and globalization. I am happy to see that the universities are adapting to these changes especially in their technological features. I am happy to know that Green University of Bangladesh has focused on adapting to these needs during this COVID-19 pandemic by offering programs in diversified fields.

Education is a lifelong pursuit, a pursuit that will always demand further enhancement. A good degree is a basis for access to broader career opportunities. What is taken away on this occasion is not just a piece of paper, but a reward for four years of hard work, a passport to the future and a recognition of being an aware and responsible citizen. This is not the end of your journey in pursuit of knowledge and skills, it is hopefully a new beginning for all of you in the realization of your individual dreams and those of your parents. I believe that all of you will contribute towards the building of a Sonar Bangla, The Golden Bangla, as dreamt by our Father of the Nation.

I wish the convocation ceremony a grand success and congratulate the graduates.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh live forever.

Dipu Moni
Dr. Dipu Moni, MP



CHAIRMAN
UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
OF BANGLADESH, DHAKA
05 Ashar 1428, 19 June 2021



It is indeed a great pleasure to know that the Green University of Bangladesh is holding its 4th Convocation ceremony. As everywhere, convocation is the outcome of hard work and the ultimate symbol of achievement of the students. It also bears a testimony to the accomplishment of the students, their parents, the faculty members and the management of the university as a whole.

Education enlightens us and promotes tolerance and democratic spirit. Private universities have emerged out of a pragmatic necessity of ensuring access to a large number of students in higher education for transforming them into efficient manpower for the socio-economic development of the country. I am glad to know that Green University of Bangladesh is providing quality education through engagement of qualified faculty members, modernised curriculum, classrooms, library, laboratory and IT infrastructure facilities. It is my sincere belief that the students of this university will make their mark in the overall development of our country.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and sincerest thanks to Green University of Bangladesh family on this promising occasion. May the onward march of the university for excellence in education continue forever.

I wish the teachers and students of the university all the best.

Kazi Shahidullah
Professor Kazi Shahidullah



VICE CHANCELLOR
GREEN UNIVERSITY OF BANGLADESH
05 ASHAR 1428, 19 JUNE 2021



With great pleasure, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the graduating students of Green University of Bangladesh on this auspicious occasion of the 4th Convocation on June 19, 2021. Along with the graduates, I offer my thanks to all parents, the faculty members, administrative and other staff for making the journey of the students smooth. Green University has demonstrated an impressive benchmark of educational and strategic activities at tough times. Even though the fatal COVID-19 pandemic halted many of the normal things in our life, Green University has not stopped the regular activities of the university. It is great to see that even in this devastating period, the university has achieved the 2nd position in conducting online teaching-learning activities using ZOOM platform. Our university has placed sincere honour to Mujib Borsho celebration and 50th birth anniversary of our motherland. We are respectful to our GUB family as we have demonstrated prolific unity at this crisis time.

Green University of Bangladesh is committed to producing graduates who are academically sound, ethically driven and socially responsive. The faculty members and administrative staff are devoted to building capacity and develop skilful work force to meet the needs of the challenging workplaces of the 21st century. I do believe our outgoing graduates are furnished with the intellectual attire achieved all these years through curricular and extra-curricular activities and they all would be the worthy flag-bearers of the university.

I wish all the graduates a progressive, productive and successful future ahead.

Allah Hafez

Allah Hafez
Professor Dr. Md. Golam Samdani Fakir

GREEN UNIVERSITY: AT A GLANCE

About the University

Green University of Bangladesh (GUB), one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh, was founded in 2003 under the Private University Act 1992 with a vision to Inspire Learning for Innovation and Transformation. GUB offers students from all walks of life the advantages of an affordable, personalized education of global standard. As a modern, dynamic, and innovative institution for undergraduate and graduate students, GUB lays stress on quality education imparted by a galaxy of highly qualified, dynamic, dedicated, and well-experienced faculty members with global exposure.

GUB's greatest resource in fulfilling its mission is its faculty of about 300 distinguished scholars and educators, whose scholarly research experiences and teaching skills enrich the students' classroom environment. To ensure quality education, GUB is equipped with modern infrastructural facilities, latest academic curricula, Internet with Wi-Fi facility, air-conditioned classrooms, and seminar halls supported with multi-media, rich libraries, most sophisticated laboratories, student cafeterias, standby generators, etc. The students of GUB, experience a vibrant university community with a diverse range of academic offerings and about 6,500 participating students.

Vision

Green University of Bangladesh envisions to be a top-ranking university in the world for transformative impact on the society through continuous innovation in education, research, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

Mission

The mission of GUB is to prepare competent, compassionate, ethically driven and socially responsive professionals, to educate students through research for intellectual as well as social transformation, and to enhance their lifelong learning capacity for creativity and adaptability to face the challenges of 21st century.

Facilities:

Faculty of Science and Engineering
Faculty of Business Studies
Faculty of Law
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Academic Programs

GUB offers four-year undergraduate programs, and one-/two-year graduate programs under different departments. All these programs help students lay the groundwork for a lifetime professional success. GUB offers the following programs approved by University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC): B.Sc in CSE, B.Sc in EEE, B.Sc in Textile Engineering, BBA, MBA, LLB (Hons), LLM, BA (Hons) in English, BSS (Hons) in Sociology and BSS (Hons) in Journalism and Media Communication.

Fully Equipped Laboratories

GUB has consistently invested substantial resources in its physical and electronic infrastructure facilities. GUB has more than 40 well-equipped & sophisticated computer and engineering laboratories under the Faculty of Science and Engineering equipped with instruments from home and abroad. The Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has 17 laboratories, the Department of Computer Science and Engineering has 08 laboratories and the Department of Textile Engineering has 09 laboratories. The Department of English has an Audio-Visual laboratory for conducting language classes. The Department of FTDM has 05 Editing Panel Lab, Graphics Lab, Animation Lab and the Department of Law has also well-equipped Moot Court for preparing students. The IT section is equipped with the latest versions of hardware and software facilities having servers, more than 400 workstations in 04 state-of-the-art computer labs and offices.

Research and Publications

Centre for Research, Innovation and Transformation (CRIT) of Green University of Bangladesh is a unique center that emphasizes on scientific research and analysis, development and acquisition, and systems engineering and integration.

GUB has been consistent with the publication of its three academic journals; 'GUB Journal of Science and Engineering', 'Green University Review of Social Sciences' and 'Journal of Green Business School'.

In the year 2020, a total of 267 research articles have been published in indexed journals with high impact factors.

Scholastic Awards: Chancellor's Gold Medal

Undergraduate Programs		
Name of Graduates	Degree	CGPA
Reeti Jamil	BA (Hons) in English	3.99
Sara Binta Jafar	LLB (Hons)	3.98
Md. Masfiad-Al- Nahian	B.Sc in Textile Engineering	3.98
Nigar Sultana	BBA	3.98
Sakib Abdul Ahad	B.Sc in EEE (Weekend)	3.99

Post Graduate Program

Name of Graduates	Degree	CGPA
Farzana Rabeya Mery	MBA	4.00

Scholastic Awards: Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal

Undergraduate Programs		
Name of Graduates	Degree	CGPA
Md Maidul Islam	B.Sc in EEE	3.97
Anik Kha	BBA	3.97
Sadia Sultana	B.Sc in Textile Engineering	3.95
Md. Al-Amin	LLB (Hons)	3.95
Mahmuda Rahman	B.Sc in CSE	3.94
Farjana Yeasmin	BSS (Hons) in Sociology	3.93
Khandaker Omar Faruk	BA (Hons) in English	3.92
S. M. Shakhawat Hossain	BA (Hons) in FTDM	3.83
Md. Nahid Sazzad	B.Sc in EEE (Weekend)	3.96
Kaium Hossain	B.Sc in CSE (Weekend)	3.97
Khadiza Islam	B.Sc in Textile Engineering (Weekend)	3.93

Post Graduate Programs

Name of Graduates	Degree	CGPA
Tamanna Akter	MBA	4.00
Rabiya Boshri	LLM	4.00

Graduating Students of the 4th Convocation 2021

Faculty	Total
Faculty of Science and Engineering	679
Faculty of Business Studies	510
Faculty of Law	166
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	109
Grand Total	1464



PRIME MINISTER
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH
05 Ashar 1428
19 June 2021



I am delighted to know that the Green University of Bangladesh is holding its 4th convocation ceremony representing traditions of the centuries through digital platform. I appreciate the hard work of the graduates on achieving this momentous success and at the same time, I would like to congratulate all teachers, parents, and members of the administration.

The Greatest Bangali of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman paid the highest importance to the development of the education sector. Under his visionary leadership and guidance, our constitution proclaimed education as a basic right. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman constituted the National Education Commission popularly known as Dr. Kudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission in September 1972 with a view to formulating a development-centric state-of-the-art education policy. Unfortunately, it had not been implemented as the incumbent President, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman including all most all of his family members was brutally assassinated on 15th August in 1975.

The Awami League government has adopted a time befitting education policy with an emphasis on building educated and skilled human capital for both private and public sectors. We have taken necessary measures for modernizing higher education and also to establish Universities in every district. We passed the Private University Act in 2010 and enacted its provisions. During the last twelve and a half years, we have established several specialized universities in the field of aerospace, agriculture, engineering, medicine, textile, etc. At present, 49 public, 107 private, and 3 international universities are operating in the country.

It is my firm conviction that the Green University of Bangladesh has achieved profound success for its role of leadership in pioneering quality higher education in Bangladesh. I hope this university would strive to uphold the philosophy of the Father of the Nation and also the spirit of our liberation war for contributing effectively to build a humane and prosperous society through their fresh graduating students.

I wish the graduating students and Green University of Bangladesh endless success.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina



DEPUTY MINISTER
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH
05 Ashar 1428, 19 June 2021



It gives me an immense pleasure to congratulate the graduating students of Green University of Bangladesh as the university celebrates its 4th Convocation. On this august occasion, I would like to remember with fathomless reverence the 100th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the 50th anniversary of our invaluable independence.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Board of Trustees, University administration, faculty members, graduating students as well as the guardians on this grand occasion.

Green University of Bangladesh has been serving the nation with quality education since its inception. An institution becomes immensely successful when it practices its vision, mission, and core values, and imparts quality education to the students. We need our young generation to make every possible contribution to the development of our country. I believe that the graduates from Green University of Bangladesh will contribute significantly to the society with their valuable knowledge gained from their education. I sincerely believe that the graduates will bring glory to their parents, Green University of Bangladesh and our nation.

I congratulate the graduates again and wish the 4th Convocation a complete success.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu!
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury
Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, MP



CONVOCATION SPEAKER
CHAIRMAN
BANGLADESH ACCREDITATION
COUNCIL (BAC)
05 Ashar 1428, 19 June 2021



I am happy to know that Green University of Bangladesh is holding its 4th Convocation on June 19, 2021. This is indeed a special occasion not only for the new graduates, but also for Green University of Bangladesh. I am delighted that to share that the university has made substantial progresses towards academic excellence.

The new graduates have worked hard to reach a milestone in their lives and certainly deserve to be celebrated. With this ceremony, they begin stepping into the rungs of practical life and careers dedicated to the development of Bangladesh. In an era of globalization, this century will be built on knowledge-based industries, requiring strong emphasis on educational quality. Professional skills and innovation are essential to survival in this increasingly competitive world.

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. Bangladesh needs skilled and capable leaders to accelerate development and achieve its full potential. The universities of Bangladesh have a major role to play in improving the quality of higher education and contributing to sustainable and equitable economic development in Bangladesh.

I sincerely wish the new graduates of Green University of Bangladesh great success in pursuing their ambitions and goals.

Professor Dr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed
Professor Dr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed



CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
GREEN UNIVERSITY OF BANGLADESH
05 Ashar 1428, 19 June 2021



I feel extremely delighted that Green University of Bangladesh is celebrating its 4th Convocation on June 19, 2021. On this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students, proud parents, faculty members, management personnel, and the organizers. I offer special thanks to all for coping with the challenges emerging from COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating academic activities.

Green University of Bangladesh from its inception has been focused on striving for state-of-the-art education facilities, and is heading towards the goal of being a site of education of the highest standard. We have always stressed the need for producing quality graduates capable of making a space and leaving a mark in their future workplaces at home and abroad at an affordable cost. Our permanent campus embellished with required amenities in the lap of nature is one giant step forward to materialize our vision and mission.

I sincerely offer thanks to and appreciate the Government and the UGC for generous advice and cooperation.

I wish the best of you all as you step into the practical world.

Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mamun
Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mamun



PRO VICE CHANCELLOR
GREEN UNIVERSITY OF BANGLADESH
05 ASHAR 1428, 19 JUNE 2021



I am delighted to share that Green University of Bangladesh is celebrating its 4th Convocation on June 19, 2021. It is a proud moment for us. Our students are getting their cherished moment after finishing education. My delight knows no bound when I reflect that the convocation is being held in the year when the nation is celebrating its 50th anniversary of independence and also, the 100th birth anniversary of our great leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation. On this dignified moment, I congratulate all the graduates, the guardians and the faculty members.

Green University of Bangladesh has constantly followed excellence in producing graduates from various disciplines. The university provides the students with quality faculty members in order to inspire the intellectual ability of the young minds. I feel delighted to share that Green University of Bangladesh is one of the first universities of Bangladesh to develop an Outcome Based Education (OBE) curriculum and teaching methodology for all the offered degree programs. The goal of this new form of education is to produce graduates equipped with adequate knowledge, practical skills and attitudes making them ready for 21st century workplaces. I firmly believe that our graduates will effectively contribute to different sectors and will be assets who can face diverse types of challenges in their professional life.

I wish both the convocation and our graduates a grand success.

Allah Hafez

Allah Hafez
Prof. Dr. Md. Abdur Razaque



Snata Shahrin



Shibli Mohammad

PHOTO: STAR

An unwavering dedication TO DANCE

In conversation with Shibli Mohammad and Snata Shahrin

PRIVANKA CHOWDHURY

In Indian classical performance art, the *Guru-Shishya Parampara* plays an integral role. It is handed down from teachers to their disciples. Traditionally attributed to traveling bards in the North of Ancient India, called 'Kathakars' or storytellers, Kathak is a dance form that involves telling different stories through movements and extensive footwork, but most importantly, through facial expressions. In a recent chat with *The Daily Star*, Kathak exponent Shibli Mohammad and his disciple Snata Shahrin spoke about their bond, and more.

Snata's first meeting with Shibli Mohammad was in 1993, when her father Solaiman Khoka, an artiste himself, took his wife and daughter for a surprise visit with him. From that day, she considered the Kathak exponent as a parallel figure to her parents. "He is a wonderful person to be around. He goes out of his way to bring the best out of any students, if he sees their dedication," shared Snata. "Despite his stature, his politeness and kindness touch hearts. I have been fortunate to receive his blessings."

Snata has been an assistant to Shibli Mohammad at the dance company, Nriyanchal, for a long time. "You can call me a teacher's pet," she expressed. "I do not want to have an individual school. Rather, I want to train children under the shadow of my guru." Snata has not only excelled in Kathak, but also showcased her skills in contemporary dance.

Shibli Mohammad is one of the recipients of the Shilpakala Padak 2020. His teaching



Snata Shahrin and Shibli Mohammad.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

techniques vary from one student to another. "I treat all my students equally, because they are spending equal amounts of money for lessons. As far as the craft is concerned, I believe that *Bhakti te Mukti* - if you have absolute dedication to an art form, it is possible to reach the desired space," explained the Kathak exponent. He also stressed that

Snata is a patient and dedicated dancer.

Snata recalled her early learning of *Theat*, a composition in Kathak, during which her guru asked her to imagine a beautiful garden in front of her while looking at the audience, to bring the required facial expression. "If I have achieved anything today, it is only for the guidance of Shibli

Mohammad and my dedication to overcoming my challenges," Snata shared.

Shibli Mohammad, on the other hand, spoke about his gurus, who bestowed unconditional love and the passion for dance upon him. His first guru at Bhatkhande Music College in Lucknow was Smt Purnima Pandey. "I lived in her house for three months at one point. She treated me like her own child," he said.

Later, he was trained in Kathak by Pt Birju Maharaj at Kathak Kendra in New Delhi in 1981. "When *guruji* visited Dhaka, my students saw me treat him as my parent. That is the relationship they understood the relationship between *Guru-Shishya*," added Shibli Mohammad.

Snata received a gold *ghungroo* from her guru, which she made into a necklace for her wedding. "Only three of his students have been given this token of appreciation so far," she added. Similarly, Shibli Mohammad received a *panjabi* from his guru, Pt Birju Maharaj, which he treasures.

Shibli Mohammad explained that it is only when students are released from the tutelage of their gurus that they come up with their unique characteristics and add to the learning lineage. "I have confidence in all my students. Snata has immersed herself into my training. I can proudly say that she will carry my teachings forward in my absence," he concluded.

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Catching up with Siam

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Popular actor Siam Ahmed rose to fame with consecutive successful performances in a career spanning just a few years. The actor has been immensely busy with film projects lately intending to establish himself as a permanent face of the film industry. Currently working on several projects simultaneously, on a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, the actor shares details of his works and more.

You recently signed the first-ever cyber thriller film in Bangladesh, share some details with us.

The film is "Ontorjaal", directed by Dipankar Dipan. The shooting is scheduled to begin soon and currently, we are holding workshop sessions on the film. This is a new and different genre for a Bangladeshi film, the first-ever cyber-thriller of the country.

As an actor, we tend to look for different stories and diverse characters and this film offers both. The workshop is helping me to bring the character to life before we start the actual production.

The new web series 'Morichika' will be released soon, can you share your experiences on working in the series?

The web series, directed by Shihab Shaheen is currently awaiting release online. Shihab Shaheen has a particular fanbase, who are always excited to see his work. I also had the chance to work with Afran Nisho on this project. Nisho is an immensely talented actor and the overall experience of working on the series is great. The trailer was released recently, garnering much praise. Hope the series can meet the audience expectations.

You wrapped up shooting for another film, "Damaal" recently. Tell us about the film.

We started shooting for the film during the winter days of last year. Amid severe cold waves, we had to shoot for the film outside Dhaka. Bidya Sinha Mim is my co-star in the project. We recently finished the shooting in Dhaka, we're hoping this film will present the audience with a different kind of experience.

What are some of the other projects you have been working on?

I recently finished shooting for the film, "Operation Sundarban", though one song is yet to be completed. I also wrapped up shooting for "Adventure of Sundarban". The film, "Shaan" is yet to be released. The dubbing for the film, "Paap Punno" is completed, awaiting a release date.

I plan to continue working on different film productions. I expect to give my best to this industry, to gift memorable performances to the audience.

How is the experience of working in the time of a global pandemic?

We all came back to work with newfound inspiration. We are the lucky ones to yet survive this pandemic as many of our beloved ones left us due to COVID-19. I consider myself extremely lucky to still have the opportunity to live and work.

I love to keep myself busy with work, during the lockdown days I was getting bored staying at home with so much free time around. Now we are back to working and this means everything to me. In the free time we get nowadays, we share moments with each other, cherishing our loved ones.

Fellow actor Pori Moni recently spoke up about an incident claiming attempted rape and murder, any comments on this?

Pori Moni is a citizen of the country and she deserves to lead a safe life.

None of us want such unfortunate events for anyone. We have certain laws in place and I hope the real culprit is brought to justice. The truth must come out. I hope Pori Moni gets the rightful justice she deserves.



PHOTO: STAR

The case for origin movies of iconic villains

MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

"Cruella", starring Oscar-winning actor Emma Stone, is Disney's latest attempt to tell a compelling story about a villain, following the two "Maleficent" movies. While many see this as a low-stakes effort to profit off of long established franchises, "Cruella" poses itself as an elegant yet unhinged story about a fashion designer's rags-to-riches journey.



Joaquin Phoenix as 'Joker'.

Aided largely by Stone's brilliant performance, impeccable music, and outlandish costume design, it is a comprehensive showcase of proper utilisation of creative talents by one of the largest studios in the world. However, it comes at a time when movies about villains are nearly the norm. Many wonder whether these origin stories that generally break down the tragic events that led ordinary, well-intentioned characters to become criminals, take away from the mystery of antagonists, who are often the reason for powerful plots.

From a broader cultural context, there is some explanation for an advent in such films. Studios have nearly been saturated with stories about heroes, and fairy-tale endings. As a result, the audience has come to regard the "all's well that ends well" trope with a healthy amount of speculation and skepticism. More than ever before, young people these days are highly critical of established norms perpetuated by pop culture stereotypes. It is

apparent that when a traditional hero wins at the end of a movie, a large part of the picture is left out. In that sense, movies about villains are an effort by filmmakers to fill in the gaps.

As most of these films are traditionally widely consumed by children, they are one of the earliest gateways for young people to extend their creativity and imagination. It is important to feed children with a combination of different stories, which ensure that they start thinking more critically from a younger age. Children tend to have a black-and-white perspective on most things, and they take time to unlearn certain ideas.

Arguably, films are not bound to be aspirational. While the audience should not be infantilised by the assumption that they are motivated by the violence and aggression they see on screen, all entertainment fits into a complex system responsible for shaping the moral fabric of society. Memes with captions such as "As children we loved the heroes,

as adults, we understand the villains" are popular. It is particularly concerning when Joaquin Phoenix's Joker is viewed as an understandable villain. Films are an excellent medium to expose how the very society that sets the standards for success and moral righteousness is equally responsible for its contributions to making villainous monsters. Filmmakers have taken advantage of the fact that it has become increasingly easier for the public to applaud the criminals who break out of their cages, metaphorical or otherwise.

Perhaps what would be more aligned with the current cultural moment is new-age anti-heroes deconstructing oppressive systems and reimagining the status quo. In this regard, "Cruella" falls short as her success story is merely one of personal

are multiple times that movies did this really well. Magneto's backstory of being a Holocaust survivor and exploited by the Nazis for his superpowers substantially added to the character's merit in "X-Men: First Class". One of the reasons it works so well is that the movie (and its sequels) does not make the mistake of softening the character. In contrast, Angelina Jolie is brilliant at playing Maleficent, but the audience is made to sympathise with the character to an extent that seems strangely unnecessary.

Movies about villains fit into a genre of their own, and there is an art to making them powerfully. People look to films and TV shows for much more than entertainment. If done well, stories can leave lasting impressions, and many attest to having been permanently shaped by something they watched. This responsibility must be borne by storytellers and filmmakers, which is uniquely challenging since they are tasked with telling stories about wicked people as they are, not as how people wish they were.

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Fans have requested a standalone movie for Darth Vader.



Michael Fassbender as Magneto.

revenge, resulting in no change to the mass-accumulation of generational wealth. On the other hand, Marvel Studios' "Falcon and the Winter Soldier" makes a powerful case for misunderstood vigilantes by placing a responsibility on the lawmakers to do better.

When the makers of "Star Wars" told Darth Vader's story that led to him becoming one of the most beloved characters of all time, they set a precedent for what was to become a trend of over explaining the motives of the villain. However, there



Emma Stone as Cruella DeVill.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 19, 2021, ASHAR 5, 1428 B5

Tackling the Delta variant

Why are we still so lax about enforcing health guidelines?

THE icddr study that has found 68 percent of coronavirus cases in Dhaka city to be of the highly transmissible Delta variant is no great surprise. The rapid spread of infections from the border districts, where the variant was first detected, to other districts in the hinterland made it quite inevitable that it would soon spread to the cities as well. But what is surprising is the lack of foresight and planning for a crisis that we knew was coming ever since the variant wreaked havoc in India, and then Nepal, where hospitals were overwhelmed and thousands of people were dying every day. To think that we would not face a similar crisis, especially after the frightening experience of April in Dhaka and other cities, was naïve if not foolhardy.

Like a broken record we can talk about all the steps we didn't take to keep the Delta variant infections in check. But this will not take us back to the time when the rate of infections was coming down and there was virtually no sign of Covid in many rural areas. Now the scenario is changing even in villages, where more deaths are being reported of people with Covid-like symptoms.

Which brings us to another big problem that experts have been crying themselves hoarse about—the low number of testing for the virus and the antigens, which prevents us from getting a more accurate picture of how widely the infection has spread and due to which variant. Experts apprehend that there are many unreported deaths in areas where transmissions are high. The World Health Organization had announced at the very beginning of this pandemic the crucial need for testing, isolation and contact tracing—the most basic steps in the fight against the virus. So why have we kept our testing numbers so low?

While at present the Delta variant is dominating, other variants are also at work, including the South African, Nigerian and UK variants. The Delta variant is a cause for greater worry because of the way it has devastated India having a much faster transmission rate and leading to very serious health complications in a very short time.

While we know we have lost the valuable window of opportunity, we must now tackle the impending crisis judiciously. This means taking immediate measures that have worked in the past and taking them simultaneously. The government must ramp up testing (both for the virus and antigens), ensure free testing for the lower-income groups, and enforce health guidelines especially mask wearing and social distancing all over the country, especially in crowded areas. Going out on the streets of Dhaka, it seems as if there is no virus, with crowds in shopping areas, traffic jams and many people not bothering to wear masks. This must stop immediately, with strict restrictions on the gathering of large numbers of people. At the same time, the government must accelerate the procurement and administering of vaccines nationwide so that people can be protected from the severe conditions of the virus that can lead to death. Increasing ICU beds and high-flow nasal cannula and oxygen supply in hospitals have to be done on an urgent basis as the crisis is far from over.

Titas must be cleansed of corrupt elements

Govt. has to punish all those who are guilty

A report published by *The Daily Star* on June 17 has once again brought to light the allegations of illegal gas connections being provided in exchange for extra charges to customers by syndicates linked with former and current employees of the state-owned Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited. According to the report, the syndicates with the help of some Titas officials have taken part in defrauding a total of 500 customers.

According to the report, customers who did not have any gas connections could get old gas lines fixed or new lines installed allegedly with the help of the syndicate members. These individuals had also stolen documents of 500 customers from the Titas office, and started to charge extra fees from these people claiming themselves as Titas officials. Syndicate members have been illegally working with those Titas employees for the last seven years, and they even have machines to provide new gas connections, according to the Special Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). CID has also found identity cards of some Titas employees from these syndicate members.

Allegations of graft at Titas are nothing new. Titas is the largest gas provider in the country with 60 percent share of all gas connections. In a report published by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on April 17, 2019, the government body had found 22 sources of corruption inside Titas, among which providing illegal gas connections was on the top of the list.

Although three members of one of these syndicates have been arrested, this will not necessarily bring about any change in such illegal practices. Major reforms have to be undertaken to root out all the bad elements within the organisation. All the syndicate members have to be arrested and given exemplary punishment. The list of those inside Titas who helped these individuals to steal government data is already in the hands of the CID. Thus taking legal action against them should not be difficult. In the meantime, the organisational structure of Titas has to be changed too. The ACC, moreover, should be given the power to take immediate action against any official found guilty in its investigation. As long as there are insiders working for these syndicates, customers will continue to be victims of extortion and the government will continue to lose revenues stolen through illegal connections.

A press release that bares it all

BLACK, WHITE
AND GREY



ALI RIAZ

THE news that the Dhaka University authorities said they will take legal action if the university and/or its vice-chancellor, Prof Akhtaruzzaman, is mocked in social media is quite shocking. However, on second thoughts, it should not come as much of a surprise to anyone considering the sorry state of public universities in Bangladesh and particularly the previous behaviour of the VC in question. This stern warning was delivered in a press release issued by the university on Thursday.

The announcement came after *The Daily Star* published a cartoon along with a report about the university on June 15. Although the press release is worded as a "clarification" about the information in the report—which the university described as "misleading" and "fragmented" without directly mentioning the newspaper—the most intriguing part is that the university felt that it should send a chilling message to the public. This was a not-so-veiled threat. The university authorities have every right to offer clarification regarding any news report it deems misleading. In fact, it owed an explanation to the citizens about the allegations that it has not done enough as the premier institution of higher learning and research in the country during this pandemic, except for placing fences around the campus. The press release describes the university's efforts in continuing the testing of Covid-19, but falls short of providing its reasons for not emerging as the centre of research. "There is no denying that Dhaka University was not able to invent any testing kit, vaccine or medicine like Oxford University or Johns Hopkins University. But many know the reason behind it," the press release says. But to be candid, we don't really know. The university didn't explain it either.

The inadequacy of its "clarification"

Interestingly, what hundreds of cartoons could not have done has been achieved by one single press release—it has laid bare the true state of Dhaka University. For that, we must thank the university authorities.

pales in comparison to its rude posturing about legal actions to muzzle any criticism or "mocking". The decision, according to the university, has been taken to ensure that the image of the university is not tarnished in the national and international spheres. While I was reading this news, I couldn't help but recall that the centenary of Dhaka University is only a few days away. Perhaps this press release is an indication of where the university stands in its 100th year.

This announcement raises a simple question: If a university and its VC cannot tolerate mocking, how would it teach tolerance and the lessons of freedom of expression? If an autonomous public university cannot tolerate differences of opinion, what would it teach its students? A university—or any educational institution including primary schools for that matter—offers education not only within the four walls of classrooms but through creating a free environment there.

the military rulers.

But, alas, in 2021, criticism of the university has been criminalised, and mocking has become an offence. In a sense, what DU is trying to do is not unique. In the past years, many have been detained and charged under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for mocking someone in power. Last week, Ahmed Kabir Kishore was charged under the DSA for, among other things, sharing a cartoon in social media. Kishore's ordeal did not start there, rather it began in May last year. He was abducted from his home by plain-clothes members of law enforcing agencies, remained incommunicado for 69 hours while he was interrogated, endured torture, and spent the next 10 months in jail before being released on bail. Kishore and many others now know well that cartoon is no longer fun. As such, the DU reaction to the cartoon in question is consistent with the existing practices in the country, but most importantly, with the mindset of those in power. It is

asking them to refrain from sharing anything related to the department, as it may "cause damage to the image of the department".

While the DU is concerned about its image, it never considered what kind of an image the "mass rooms" in the student dormitories provide. Students are forced to live in these so-called "Gonoroom" in unhygienic and inhumane conditions. Those who live within these walls are forced by the ruling party's student organisation to participate in its programmes, and often tortured if anyone dares to refuse. There have been incidents of deaths of students living in these appalling conditions. By no means are these conditions amiable to academic endeavour.

The university is concerned about its image but is not bothered at all that its budget has an allocation of less than 5 percent for research. That too remains unused. In its 2019-20 budget, a total of Tk 40 crore was allocated for research,



'Dhaka University should not be concerned about its image—it is not its job to be in the business of image protection.'

PHOTO:
PRABIR DAS

This is far more important for a university. Hundreds of years of higher education and the emergence of universities around the world have taught us that academic freedom is an essential element of the functioning of any university. Besides, public universities are funded by the citizens, and so they have the right to criticise them. Let us not forget that these universities are called "public" for a reason.

Half of the 100 years of Dhaka University was spent under colonial rule when it had very little autonomy. The 1973 Ordinance, which provides autonomy to the university, was enacted to avoid the control of the government so that there are no hurdles in exercising academic freedom. This autonomy also made the university accountable to the citizens. Even in the dark days of the 1960s under the military rule of Ayub Khan, nobody had heard of such a threat coming from the university administration, perhaps not even from

fascinating that those who are in power think that they are invincible, yet a simple cartoon can make them worried.

The DU authorities are concerned about the university's "image", as if image is an abstract issue that has little to do with what is happening at the university. On the contrary, images are created by the behaviours of those who are responsible for leading the institution—and by the actions of the institution. This vague notion of "image" has become a catchphrase in recent years. If one must be vilified and harassed, it is enough to simply suggest that she/he has "tarnished the image" of individuals or the country. One of the crucial elements of the DSA is purportedly to protect the image of the country and individuals. The tendency to use this provision has reached a level that is nothing short of an obsession. Immediately before the DU's press release, the chairperson of the Political Science department of Chittagong University issued a notice to the students

but the university spent Tk 28 crore. This allocation was less than that of the previous year. These are the things that contribute to the "image" the university currently has, not a cartoon.

Dhaka University should not be concerned about its image—it is not its job to be in the business of image protection. The university's job is to independently generate knowledge, disseminate it, study it, ensure that the freedom of expression is ensured for everyone (students and teachers alike), and to administer the university free from external interferences. Interestingly, what hundreds of cartoons could not have done has been achieved by one single press release—it has laid bare the true state of Dhaka University. For that, we must thank the university authorities.

Ali Riaz is a Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the Illinois State University, a non-resident Senior Fellow of the Atlantic Council, and the President of the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS).

Asia needs bold action on climate change



MASATSUGU
ASAKAWA

AS the Asia-Pacific region confronts and recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, we must continue our pursuit of sustainable development and take action on global climate change, the existential challenge of our time.

Our region must take its place at the front lines of this effort. The region, which now accounts for 36 percent of global GDP, has made great progress in economic development and poverty reduction. But it is also responsible for around 80 percent of the world's coal consumption, and up to 60 percent of CO₂ emissions. Many countries have experienced the devastating consequences of climate change: floods, droughts, heat waves, and storms.

Now is the time for bold action. We must commit wholeheartedly to fighting climate change, including meeting the emission-reduction goals under the Paris Agreement, all the while promoting economic growth and putting the region's development on a green path.

This will require major changes in the energy sector. These include: avoiding the use of fossil fuels and switching to low-carbon fuels, deploying more renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, reducing final energy demand, and incentivising investment in low-carbon technologies.

A broad commitment across the region, along with tailored, country-level support from development partners, will be needed to meet the goal of limiting global warming to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

We need to get back on the path to low-carbon sustainable development. We have to balance climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. And we must ensure universal energy access, as more than 200 million people in the region still have no electricity.

In spite of the current situation, there is a path to addressing these challenges successfully.

Global action to achieve net zero emissions by around mid-century has gained momentum over the past year. Among the countries that have pledged carbon neutrality are China, Fiji, Japan, South Korea, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Singapore, and Timor-Leste.

This November, the 26th Conference

which means on average about USD 6.6 billion annually. This year, we are confident that we will be able to provide over USD 6 billion for climate mitigation and adaptation through measures including investing in clean energy.

ADB will contribute to the global effort envisioned by COP26 on multiple fronts. We will promote greater collaboration and cooperation; balanced climate mitigation and adaptation



The Asia-Pacific region is responsible for around 80 percent of the world's coal consumption, and up to 60 percent of CO₂ emissions.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

of the Parties (COP26) will convene in Glasgow. More countries are expected to submit more ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and to signify their commitment to carbon neutrality.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is ready to take on a leadership role in Asia and the Pacific in meeting these commitments. We aim at stepping up our climate finance and capacity-building efforts to help our developing member countries (DMCs) achieve their NDCs.

Under our Strategy 2030, our target is to focus 75 percent of ADB's operations on climate adaptation and mitigation. We will also provide at least USD 80 billion in climate financing from 2019 to 2030,

efforts; and a holistic approach that integrates the ecological, social, and financial aspects of resilience across our operations. We are aligning our operations to support the targets of the Paris Agreement.

We will also continue to utilise our private-sector operations to support this agenda. Private-sector finance will be pivotal to filling investment gaps and spearheading technological and business innovation in the pursuit of sustainable solutions.

The energy transition requires comprehensive long-term planning combined with effective innovations. ADB is committed to helping our DMCs formulate and implement technology

roadmaps to achieve their NDCs.

Our support is taking full advantage of major technological advances that have slashed the costs of producing renewable energy—by up to 80 percent in the case of solar photovoltaics. Emerging technologies like smart grids, energy storage, and hydrogen are making it easier to integrate renewable energy into power networks and distributed energy systems. Smart technologies have enhanced the flexibility and resilience of power networks. Digitalisation has boosted energy efficiencies on the demand side.

Innovative energy projects are leveraging the synergy between the public and private sectors and having cross-sectoral impacts. In Thailand, for example, ADB provided long-term financing for a 10-megawatt wind power project with an integrated 1.88 megawatt-hour pilot battery energy storage system. It is the first private-sector project in the country to integrate utility-scale wind power generation with battery energy storage.

In Mongolia, our USD 100 million loan for the first utility-scale energy storage project in the country will increase renewable energy use by providing a large energy reserve, load shifting capacity, and emergency back-up. This will support decarbonisation of Mongolia's heavily coal-dependent energy system.

We are now reviewing ADB's Energy Policy in light of the profound changes in the energy landscape. We have been consulting stakeholders since last year and plan to update our Energy Policy by the end of 2021.

We envision an Energy Policy that is aligned with global commitments under the Paris Agreement. A policy that is responsive to the needs of our DMCs as they build sustainable and resilient energy systems. And, while the final decision will have to be made by our Board, a policy that includes a formal withdrawal from financing new coal-fired power generation.

Masatsugu Asakawa is President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

A Canary in the Mine

"I heard there were fairies down in the garden
Behind the trees and down in the garden
Walking on tip toes, waving their wands
Sipping on fairy tea, singing their songs
Can you see them?"

—From a children's song by Peter Combe



SHAMSAD MORTUZA

BLOWN' IN THE WIND
NORMALLY, you and I would not see fairies or hear them singing. They exist in a world where we fear (or do not care) to tread (anymore). Even if we do, we will not admit it in public. For instance, you have not heard me saying that I secretly went to the airport to see the landing of the majestic Concorde in the mid-80s. Sure enough, no one with better things to do will go to the airport just to catch sight of an iconic plane, right? Well, I was proved wrong then, and I am proved wrong now!

When fairies sing, they cleave the audience into two: believers and non-believers. Agnostics like me do not count. As the saying goes, you cannot be half-pregnant. Yet, the media *tamasha* attracted me to the tale of a fairy child, Pori Moni—a *nom de plume*, a stage name adopted by one of the boldest silver screen figures in our country. Frankly, I have stopped reading mainstream news for some time now. I rather read the comments section where the real news is. They are like the canaries in a mine: they help you detect the available toxic elements that can hurt humans. They tell you about social

mobility—the rapid changes within or between the strata in a society where new categories are constantly being formed, reformed, and deformed.

Even people who can barely write are not afraid to express their opinions in public. Even people who see life with tunnel visions in public terrain. Some of them use the media to solidify their group ideologies or to become public pressure groups. It would be interesting to analyse the relationship between the way these groups adopt new technology and use mass media and the way they construct certain ideologies (often conservative, patriarchal, and extreme right/left-wing). Their group formation and growth through social interactions is equally significant. It seems that there is a verbal army deployed to wage a proxy war against mainstream liberalism. They are prompt to react.

Once a bitesize saga of the Pori Moni affairs started making the rounds on social media, there was an outpouring of comments and tags. One group started critiquing her nocturnal lifestyle while the other group focused on pointing out the overall social, moral and cultural decadence involving the new moneyed class. There was a third group who used the comments threads to draw traction to a missing Islamic public speaker. If you ask me, if a facility is legally operated with the provisions for individuals to enjoy its services, we should not make a judgement call based on gender. Then again, if anyone is making a public nuisance, immediate actions must be taken. A celebrity cannot expect preferential treatment while vandalising property. By the same token, influential owners of the facility cannot physically harass a client and take matters into their own hands. A

professional institution must have a protocol and mechanism in place to deal with rogue clients. I will not, of course, comment on an ongoing investigation. However, I shall highlight one of my concerns. Following the alleged abuse, Pori Moni called a press briefing at her place, where she hinted at something very alarming. She said that her life was



Actress Pori Moni (centre) talks to reporters after coming out from the DB office on June 15, 2021.

COURTESY: PROTHOM ALO

under threat, and she suspected that her murder would be staged as a suicide.

Pori Moni, thereby, sang a dirge that was reminiscent of a young girl who killed herself following a phone call with a very influential businessman. The death of that girl, Munia, is another symbolic death of a canary in the mine shaft. Munia, as is now known, was interred into the dark chambers of life. Remember the cartoon involving a canary and a cat. The story reminds

one of a cat that swallowed the canary, saying, "You'll be all right!" The news surfaced for a while before being buried alive. The comment threads mummified the dead woman as a "social climber" and "gold digger". In a media trial, the woman named after a small bird was marked as a fallen woman whereas the cat with his proverbial nine lives shifted

our cricket team. While playing for a club that has understandably fallen out of favour of the power centre, the sports sensation expressed his frustrations over some bad decisions of the field umpires. He acted like a bad manager fighting with his tools. He kicked at the stumps when a decision did not come in his favour; he obscenely placed the wicket before the legs of an umpire when a leg before wicket was not given; he verbally charged the umpires when they prematurely asked for the cover sheets to stop the play that would have handed the opponent a win under the D/L method.

Again, the comments were split. Some felt Shakib was the real hero stamping out the corruption corroding the cricket council (the pun on c, c, c, c is unintended), while others felt that as a senior player and role model, he should have been more responsible. Again, if you ask me, you can't soar like an eagle and crap like a canary. Shakib has taken our cricket to new heights—no question there. He has been the brand ambassador of our cricket, and the grateful country has reciprocated the gesture with love and admiration. He cannot spoil the gift by rubbing mud in the face of the people who love him. The people who have taken to social media in his defence mostly form a group that uses the instance to vent their frustrations with an over-controlling and overbearing system. Shakib is their canary in the coal mine.

The whistling of Shakib, by extension of Munia and Pori Moni, suggests how much oxygen is available in the shaft. The amount of toxicity suggests we must act fast to find the equilibrium.

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

After two decades of war, the US leaves an uncertain future for Afghans

Civilians are paying an exceptionally high price for this misadventure



SAYEEED AHMED

JUNE 2002. I was on my first visit to Kabul. People were trying to put together their lives with new hope. Kids seemed happy and curious. Some were walking to

whatever remained of the schools. Some were playing on the streets, while others were curiously watching the foreigners.

Fast forward to 2021. On June 15, armed men gunned down five polio vaccinators and injured several others in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province. On June 9, masked gunmen stormed into an office of HALO Trust, a charity engaged in mine clearing, and killed at least 10, injuring many others. On June 6, a roadside bomb killed 11 civilians traveling on a bus in western Afghanistan. Last month, Dasht-e-Barchi, a Hazara Shia Muslim neighbourhood in west Kabul, experienced a wave of Taliban violence—most of the 85 killed were school-going girls between the ages of 11 and 17. Such mindless violence has continued since the US signed the Doha Peace Agreement with the Taliban in February 2020. We have lost count of the casualties. Our senses have become numb.

What's more, the Taliban have warned neighbouring states against allowing any American military base in their territories. The Afghans, who, in the Taliban's view, had cooperated with the Americans—such as the interpreters—now fear for their safety after the withdrawal. In short, the Taliban are well on their way to returning as the definite victors while the American troops are slinking away.

If such is the outcome of two decades

of bloody war, why did the US launch the offensive in 2001? What has caused the withdrawal? And who pays the price for its colossal misadventure?

WHY THE 2001 OFFENSIVE?

The short answer is strategic positioning in the Eurasian "heartland" and Afghan mineral resources.

In 1904, English geographer Halford Mackinder, one of the founding fathers of geopolitics and geostrategy, published a paper titled "The Geographical Pivot of History" (republished in *The Geographical Journal* in December 2004). According to Mackinder, whoever controls the Eurasian continent or the "heartland" can exercise global dominance. This heartland comprises Central Asia and the Caspian basin—while Russia dominated it for many years, of late, Chinese influence is also increasing in this region. The other attraction for the US was Afghan minerals. Imperial Britain had conducted mineral assessments in Afghanistan till the 1919 Anglo-Afghan War. Subsequently, Russia (erstwhile Soviet Union) had continued such explorations until its departure in 1989. All these explorations suggested a lucrative reserve, including of several rare earth elements.

Thus, military strategy and the lure of minerals formed the background of America's ambitious 2001 offensive. Its official goal was to prevent terror groups from using Afghanistan as a safe haven. But in 2021, the number of such groups has risen from four to at least 20. Membership of Al Qaeda (including their offshoots) has increased from 400 to tens of thousands globally. The precarious security situation in the region has made mining almost impossible. Two decades of war have drained the US of trillions of dollars without making any discernible progress. Despite the high-sounding

goals, the 2001 offensive and the massive firepower it deployed ended up as a dismal failure.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Matthew Hoh, a senior fellow with the Center for International Policy and a Marine combat veteran, explained in a CNN opinion piece last month how the US misinterpreted the whole premise in Afghanistan. First, Washington's impression of the jihadists as the source of insurgency was utterly misplaced.

The Taliban are well on their way to returning as the definite victors while the American troops are slinking away.

Instead, most insurgents were only fighting foreign occupation forces. Second, several Afghan units resorted to atrocities, often against civilians, including women and children. By association, American troops were also implicated, strengthening the local population's resolve against their presence. Third, it was surprisingly easy for the Afghan insurgents to drain the American troops of their resources and patience. They lured them into frequent battles with minimal cost and effort. Eventually, the American policymakers realised that this was an endless war with no chances of winning it. Finally, Washington assumed that once Kabul came under control, the whole country

would follow. It ignored the fact that Afghanistan is a complex mosaic of many tribes. Further, it interpreted Islam as a monolithic and extremist faith which, in reality, it is not. Many Muslims follow progressive and inclusive Islamic thoughts.

The combination of all these incorrect assumptions and impressions, mishandling of public sentiment, atrocities, and the unfavourable terrain led to a catastrophic failure of the American mission. Unfortunately, history is replete with similar fates of many invading foreign powers. We may euphemistically call it a withdrawal. But, in reality, Washington is only joining the long line of empires conceding abysmal ends in this inhospitable terrain.

WHO PAYS FOR THIS MISADVENTURE?

Ordinary Afghan civilians caught up in the mindless conflicts between the different factions have already paid a steep price. A 2019 study by Brown University indicated that crossfire, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), assassinations, bombings, night raids of houses of suspected insurgents, and cluster bombs had killed civilians in disproportionate numbers. A rough estimate puts the total number of war deaths since 2001 at 157,000, of which more than 47,000 were civilians. In addition, around 2.7 million Afghans fled abroad and another four million were internally displaced in these two decades, according to a recent AP story. As the current trend of continued violence indicates, these numbers are likely to increase. Afghan women stand to lose everything they have achieved so far. In a Taliban-controlled regime, they will go back to restricted indoor lives, deprived of education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. A recent BBC documentary, "Killing Hope: Targeted Attacks in Afghanistan," shows how

young professionals, often women, are being murdered.

WHAT IS THE ENDGAME?

Although officially withdrawing, the Americans will keep at least a thousand troops and some CIA officers on the ground to supervise Afghan National Army operations and gather intel. We are yet to see how it will pursue mining



US soldiers load onto a Chinook helicopter to head out on a mission in Afghanistan.

FILE PHOTO: US ARMY HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

minerals or strategic objectives in the coming years. Aborting is not an option because too much is at stake in this far-flung, rugged, and hostile territory, historically known as the "graveyard of empires". Meanwhile, little kids like the ones I met on Kabul's streets will continue to become the innocent victims of a brutal power game.

Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and freelance writer. He has extensive experience in infrastructure project implementation in Bangladesh and abroad.

QUOTABLE Quote

ORHAN PAMUK
(1952-)
Turkish novelist

Happiness is holding someone in your arms and knowing you hold the whole world.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Prime minister Johnson
- 6 NFL pioneer George
- 11 Silly
- 12 Conjure up
- 13 Natural color
- 14 Bad kind of situation
- 15 A quantity of
- 17 Minimal change
- 18 Winter treat for birds
- 20 Bike part
- 22 Braying beast
- 23 Waits a moment
- 26 Stylishly quaint
- 28 Words to live by
- 29 Sticks
- 31 Stashed
- 32 Wax-coated

DOWN

- 1 Shirt protector
- 2 Low bill
- 3 Parties noisily
- 4 Silver bar
- 5 Appear
- 6 Blood watcher
- 7 Guacamole base
- 8 Deal a crushing

cheese

- 33 Disarray
- 34 Start of an idea
- 36 Do the decks
- 38 African lilies
- 40 Wed in haste
- 43 Wolf pack member
- 44 Bar seat
- 45 Southpaw
- 46 Packs down

punishment

- 9 Related
- 10 Dispatched
- 16 Sense of self
- 18 Poet Teasdale
- 19 Not new
- 21 Avenue liners
- 23 Circle dance
- 24 Singer Redding
- 25 Auction bids
- 27 Steak-house specialty
- 30 Print units
- 33 Island south of Sicily
- 34 Old France
- 35 Dresden's river
- 37 Sunset site
- 39 Pig's place
- 41 Catchy music
- 42 High trains

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

THURSDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BEETLE, GO GET ME A SANDWICH. WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT WAS IN IT FOR ME.

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

GUESS WHAT? OUR CLASS IS GOING TO MAKE A TIME CAPSULE! THAT SOUNDS FUN. YEAH, AND WE ALL GET TO CHOOSE ONE THING TO BURY IN IT FOR TEN YEARS! YOUR BROTHER WON'T FIT INSIDE. WE WON'T KNOW THAT UNTIL WE TRY.



FICTION

Late Night Calls

MARZIA RAHMAN



Late nights calls are risky, reckless. They look relatively naïve in the morning. And I went about my day, sweeping the house, peeling oranges, baking cookies, paying for a magazine I couldn't recall buying. It was in the evening that a strange unease would grow. I could no longer work or think or sit at ease. I'd go outside and watch darkness lurking in the shadows, scrambling in slowly but forcefully.

Akram likes to watch the news after dinner but he dozes off quickly. And when I urge him to go to bed, he complies like a sweet little boy. What's wrong with him today? Why was he still here? Eyes closed, he slumped on the couch, his bald head dangling like an over ripe bael fruit. I paced around the kitchen cum living room a couple of times; every time my gaze turned to the cordless phone on the wall between the two rooms. "Go to bed," I prodded him gently, trying hard to hide the irritation in my voice. The urgency.

At last, he stood up. I released a sigh of relief. "Aren't you coming?" he asked.

"I have work to do," I said, pointing to the dishes stacked in the sink.

"Turn off the TV," he said and headed towards the bedroom. I stood there for some time, with the TV remote in my hand. The television blared nonstop. A man in Honolulu did something unique, a woman in Madagascar did nothing unique, yet her smiling face flashed all over the screen. I pricked up my ears. He would brush his teeth, drink a glass of water or two. He would start snoring the moment he closed his eyes. I looked at the big clock on the wall. 10.30 pm. It was time. I went to the kitchen and turned on the tap water. I stared at the street bathed in moonlight. A dog barked somewhere, water filled the sink, the cold water numbed my fingers, my heart started beating faster, faster—the clock, too—tick tock—tick tock.

At precisely 10.40 pm, the telephone rang, shattering the unbearable monotony. I rushed

to pick up the receiver. I could feel the vibration, transmitted from the cord to my racing heart. To the veins of my body.

The sound of his voice soothed me. Made me crave a little more. How long would it go on? I wondered. Every story has a beginning, a middle and an ending. It's the end I feared most.

We talked in whispers. The dirty dishes stayed dirty. The night progressed gingerly outside. I asked him not to call me again. He knew I didn't mean it. So, he would call again. I would wait.

When I went to bed late at night, feeling happy but a little conflicted too, I found Akram awake. He looked at me and asked, "Who was it?"

My heart skipped. I tiptoed towards the bed. Should I say, *no one*? How much did he hear?

"Who were you talking to?" he asked again.

I sat on the bed, facing the wall, damp and dirty. I could hear the thumping in my chest. I bit my lips and mumbled, "Mira." I had no idea why this name popped into my head. I hadn't spoken to her for ages. I didn't even know where she lived.

"Who is Mira?"

"A friend," I said.

"Never heard of her."

"Do you have to know all my friends?" I snapped.

"Why are you getting upset?"

"I want to sleep," I muttered and lay down, my back towards him.

"Okay," he said and turned over.

I started counting seconds, minutes in my head. One, two, three ... sixty seconds or was it fifty-nine? Numbers can be treacherous. The wall seemed to be closing in, or was it the bed, dangerously close to the wall? If I stretched my hand forward, could I touch its rough surface or the cracks snaking here and there? He began to snore, while I tossed and turned a long time before I could finally fall asleep.

Marzia Rahman is a fiction writer and translator.



POETRY

My Two Worlds

TOHON

Now that I am old and have time,
I take stock of my life.
I crisscross as far back as my memory goes,
Along my chequered memory lane.

As I remember,
I have always been happy even without toys.
Happiness was my twin but, sadly,
Not without its dark shadow.

I would be saddened to see the suffering among the living –
The animals, insects, men and even plants.
I cried during my lonely hours;
I gave away my precious possessions; and
I even became one with them, sharing their pain.
And then I begged God again and again
For His mercy, but nothing changed.

All through my life
My happiness was burdened with sorrow.
It was like an ever-vigilant shadow of the light;
It was like a deep, dark abyss of the height.
All through my life
I remained a prisoner in my own solitary, dark cell.

Now, before I die, I want to break free from the chains.
I searched for so long, so deep in my soul,
Only to hear a whisper again and again:
'Thou shall know Truth and
Truth shall let you know that you are chained.'

Maybe I live in two worlds –
One of darkness and the other of light.
I am chained in one but free in the other;
I suffer in one but celebrate the other.
And when I die, I will be reborn in the other,
Without sorrow.

Tohon has been a regular contributor for the Star Literature page. Life's Invisible Battles is his recently published memoir.

REVIEWS

How Change Happens: A Review

Cass R. Sunstein. ISBN: 9780262039574 344. MIT Press, 2019

BY AFSANA TAZREEN

It can often feel hopeless to be an activist seeking social change on an issue where most people seem opposed or at best indifferent to it. However, according to a new book by Professor Cass Sunstein, we should not lose hope because significant social changes often come when we least expect it. Sunstein, a law professor at the Chicago Law School for 27 years and a Harvard Law Professor since 2012, was also an administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs during Obama's first term. In 2018, he was awarded the Holberg Prize for having "reshaped our understanding of the relationship between the modern regulatory state and constitutional law." Currently the most cited American legal scholar Sunstein has written on a diverse array of topics that include cloning, Wikipedia, animal rights, pornography, and even Bob Dylan's lyrics, despite his specialty being constitutional law.

How Change Happens (whose original title was *Why Societies Go Whoosh*) started 25 years ago with a draft of what is now chapter three. However, Sunstein hit a speed bump on the way in the 1990s and the 2000s, as he got distracted by other projects. The book is divided into three parts and sixteen chapters. In Sunstein's words, the chapters "do not make for a unitary narrative," but "they are connected by an effort to connect findings in behavioral science with enduring issues in law and policy, and by an effort to show how seemingly small perturbations can often produce big shifts."

The first three chapters explore the power of social norms, the importance of social cascades, the phenomenon of group polarization, and the expressive function of law. A general theme is the shift from the "unsayable" and even the unthinkable to the conventional wisdom and vice versa. Chapters 4 to 11 explore the uses and limits of "nudges" as tools for change. His question here is how public or private institutions might affect behavior and sometimes "unleash" it, through seemingly small steps. In these chapters, Sunstein raises the following questions in the fields of law, economics, and political philosophy. Chapters 12 to 16 explore issues at the intersection of public policy, behavioral science, and political philosophy. Sunstein argues that transparency is often crucial because it promotes accountability and also allows choosers to obtain information that they can use to increase overall public welfare.

So, what are the mechanisms through which such changes occur? How can a society that seemed to support the status quo bring about change in years, months, or even

weeks? Sunstein explores those mechanisms, identifies the triggers that lead to social change, and also does not fail to include the possibility of a backlash that sometimes occurs when a new social norm is promoted. Groups within the society reject those changes, refusing to let go of the existing norms.

For Sunstein, even the smallest of change can have significant impacts, particularly when it happens in an environment where the support for existing norms have declined, revealing hidden preferences that might have existed all along. Once the hidden preference begins to see daylight, the support for that existing norm begins to disappear, creating a tipping point as a result and ultimately a "cascade," after which the new norm finds a secure footing in the society.

The key to such changes appear to lie on the shoulders of "norm entrepreneurs" who step up and draw attention to the harmful consequences of existing norms. These people are alert to the existence of collective

While Sunstein's approach tells us a lot about how social change occurs, it is somewhat incomplete. Sunstein rightfully identifies the necessity of addressing social norms in order to change something in the society the role of social norm needs to be addressed. Change still needs norm entrepreneurs who can manipulate nudges in effective ways to unleash hidden public preferences to create norm cascades, but sometimes it is not enough.

action problems and often carry out this role by pressing a change in the public and private conduct by insisting that most people secretly oppose those norms as well and thus eliminating the pluralistic ignorance in the process.

The definition itself brings to mind two people who neatly fit the description of a norm entrepreneur, although standing from entirely different points of view: Greta Thunberg and Donald Trump. Greta took the

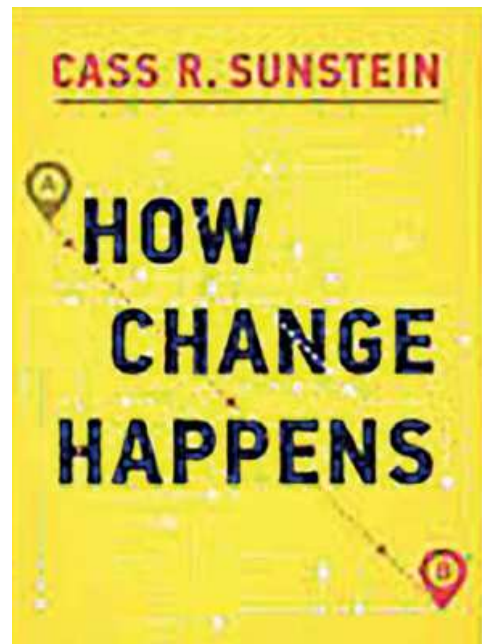


initiative to begin a movement that advocates protecting the environment by asking us to rethink our existing habits, practices and norms that create an adverse impact on our ecosystem and on the overall wellbeing of the planet.

On the dark side of the moon, Donald Trump as a norm entrepreneur, has broken every social norm that defines the role of a president-elect and later as the commander-in-chief of the United States by insisting on the existence latent opinions in his favor. He can be better defined by another term coined by Sunstein: *professional polarizer* or *polarization entrepreneurs*. These people have political agenda and intend to create spheres in which like-minded people can hear a particular point of view from one or more people and participate in a deliberate discussion in which certain point of view becomes entrenched or strengthened. Fitting the description, Trump succeeded in harnessing public sentiment and ultimately in creating cascades where he is discarding political correctness in exchange for normalizing hate-speech.

It would seem that Sunstein's unleashing thesis offers a reasonably accurate analysis of the forces at work in the resurgence of climate change movement as well as the rise of white nationalism in the US. We can thus see that Sunstein's theory of change appears to describe at least some forces that create social change.

Another phenomenon that affects social change that Sunstein discusses is what he



describes as "enclave deliberation," which is "deliberation within small or not-so-small groups of like-minded people." For Sunstein, this enclave deliberation "is, simultaneously, a potential danger to social stability, a source of social fragmentation, and a safeguard against social injustice and unreasonableness." (35) On the positive side, enclave deliberation, particularly in a heterogeneous community, tends to create clusters of like-minded people who may explore and press the boundaries of existing norms and ultimately create spaces in which those new norms can emerge and spread to other enclaves.

While Sunstein's approach tells us a lot about how social change occurs, it is somewhat incomplete. Sunstein rightfully identifies the necessity of addressing social norms in order to change something in the society the role of social norm needs to be addressed. Change still needs norm entrepreneurs who can manipulate nudges in effective ways to unleash hidden public preferences to create norm cascades, but sometimes it is not enough. Norm entrepreneurs also have venture outside the world of nudges and do more, such as organize other like-minded people, protest, sue, boycott, and engage in social media campaigns and other collective-action options. While nudges are certainly effective, as Sunstein has shown through a thorough empirical research, nudges cannot accomplish every social change on its own.

The first three chapters of the book are

undoubtedly its most thought-provoking and engaging part. Sunstein niftily conducts an archeological excavation on several historical and more recent events, connecting mazes and fitting the puzzle pieces, ensuring that the reader experiences a guided tour through a catacomb of opportunities and pitfalls that led to those events. For instance, he lays out the abrupt formation of the Communist Revolution in Russia and how its speed had even shocked Lenin. Other examples include the #MeToo movement, Arab Spring, legalization of gay marriage and the rising white supremacy in the United States, and more. However, I wish that Sunstein had spent more time elaborating on the concepts and terms introduced in the first part (i.e., the first three chapters) of the book. For instance, it would be interesting to know more about these aspects of change. For instance, how do we know if we are close to reaching a tipping point? What are the signs, and are there any ways to forecast them? Sunstein barely scratches the surface of "tipping points," whereas "nudge" (which is Sunstein's magic word), occupies more than half the book.

However, contrary to the common criticism of his work where he is accused of imposing a solution to every problem through "nudging," Sunstein admits that not all norms can be altered by these small, yet deliberate efforts and admits that sometimes when nudges fail and when the greater public welfare is at stake, more aggressive, and sometimes costly, efforts are called for.

Sunstein's *How Change Happens* is a timely contribution to the growing number of academic publications on scholarship on spurring social change. While most of that research offers retrospective analyses on how social change has come about through digging into the success stories of social movements, such as Lester Crutchfield's book of the same name, Sunstein offers more of a theoretical analysis of the potential triggers of social change. While some of Sunstein's solutions lean more towards the technocratic side and the most pressing problems of today will certainly not be solved by technocrats, Sunstein pitches important ideas to us that can help guide social changes, both large and small. Cass Sunstein's *How Change Happens* can indeed prove to be an instruction manual for the norm entrepreneurs who strive to discard banal norms, as they carry on their drive to unleash hidden preference, create norm cascades and embed new norms.

Afsana Tazreen writes from Canada.

WHAT TO WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1
WTC FINAL (DAY 2)
India vs New Zealand
Live from 4:00 pm
SONY SIX & TEN 2
EURO 2020
Hungary vs France
Live from 7:00 pm

Portugal vs Germany
Live from 10:00 pm
Spain vs Poland
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)
T SPORTS & GAZI TV
DHAKA PREMIER
DIVISION T20
Prime Dolleshwar vs Gazi

Group Cricketers
Live from 9:00 am
Prime Bank vs Sheikh Jamal
Live from 2:00 pm
Abahani Limited vs
Mohammedan Sporting
Live from 6:30 pm
T SPORTS & TEN 1

PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE
Quetta Gladiators vs Karachi Kings
Live from 7:00 pm
Multan Sultans vs Islamabad United
Live from 10:00 pm

EMOTIONAL NEYMAR closes in on Pele's record

REUTERS

Neymar scored his 68th goal for Brazil in the 4-0 victory over Peru on Thursday and with it surpassed former Real Madrid and Internazionale striker Ronaldo as Brazil's second top goalscorer behind Pele.

TOP 5 GOALSCORERS FOR BRAZIL

Player	Caps	Goals
Pele	92	77
Neymar	107	68
Ronaldo	98	62
Romario	70	55
Zico	71	48

TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL GOAL SCORERS

Player (Country)	Caps	Goals
Ali Daei (Iran)	149	109
C Ronaldo (Portugal)	176	106
Mokhtar Dahari (Malaysia)	142	89
Ferenc Puskas (Hungary)	85	84
Godfrey Chitalu (Zambia)	111	79

Neymar reached the 68 goals mark in 107 games after scoring the second in the Copa America clash in Rio de Janeiro. He is now just nine behind Pele, who scored 77 goals in 92 games. "It's obviously a great honour for me to be part of the Brazil team's history," a tearful Neymar said. "To be completely honest, my dream was always to play for Brazil, to wear this shirt. I never imagined I would reach these numbers." Goal tallies by Brazilian players are a source of debate among statisticians, with some counting only competitive goals and others including friendlies and unofficial

matches. Even the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) has produced contradictory numbers but after Thursday's game it said Neymar had surpassed Ronaldo once Ronaldo's unofficial goals were included. FIFA said on Twitter that Neymar's goal put him joint 20th on the list of all-time international scorers but it did not give a tally or say who was above him. Pele, though, gave his backing to a player who like him began his career at Santos. "Today, he took another step towards my goalscoring record for the (national team)," Pele wrote on Instagram. "And I'm

rooting for him to get there, with the same joy I've had since I saw him play for the first time."

Whatever the specifics of the count, the fact is that Neymar is on a rich run of international form, scoring four in his last four games and seven in his last five.

His superb performances come in spite of his continuing problems off the pitch.

He was accused of rape in May 2019 but later absolved and last month Nike said it had ended its commercial partnership with the player after he refused to cooperate in an investigation into sexual assault allegations levelled against him by a Nike employee.

"For me it's very emotional, I've gone through a lot of things these last two years, difficult and complicated things, and these numbers are nothing compared to the happiness that I get from representing my country and my family," Neymar said. "Today we're going through an unusual time, a very difficult time for the whole world and to be an example to anyone, to make anyone happy is a tremendous pleasure."



New Zealand players lounge inside the Hampshire Bowl as persistent rain washed out the entire day's play on the first day of the World Test Championship final against India on Friday.

PHOTO: NZC

Will the top six move up a gear?

SPORTS REPORTER



The off-field controversies may have hit the headlines more than the game itself during the first phase of the Bangladesh Dhaka Premier League T20 competition, all eyes will focus on the quality of cricket when the top six teams battle it out in the super league stage, starting from today.

There were hardly any competitive encounters in the group stage rather Shakib Al Hasan's awful behaviour over the umpire's decision along with Sabbir Rahman's racial abuse of Elias Sunny made headlines globally.

Prime Bank Cricket Club leads the table after finishing with 18 point from nine wins in eleven games, where the points will be carried forward to the super league stage. However, they will be missing the service of Tigers ODI captain Tamim Iqbal, who is still suffering from a knee injury.

Prime Dolleshwar Sporting Club and Mushfiqur Rahim's Abahani Limited are at number two and three respectively with 16 points. The rest -- Mahmudullah Riyad's Gazi Group Cricketers (14), Mohammedan Sporting Club (13) and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club (13) -- will have their work cut out to remain alive for the championship fight.

All the super league matches will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur with three games scheduled each day.

Prime Dolleshwar and Gazi Group feature in the day's first encounter, scheduled to begin at 9 am followed by

Prime Bank against Sheikh Jamal at 2 pm while at 6 pm under lights, Abahani and arch-rivals Mohammedan will lock horns.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) have decided to broadcast all the super league matches live on TV.

Mohammedan will be without their star all-rounder and skipper Shakib who played his last group stage game after completing the three-match suspension and is expected to leave for the United States to spend time with his family before the Zimbabwe tour.

The bottom three teams after the first

DPL POINTS TABLE

Team	Match	Win	Loss	Points	NRR
Prime Bank	11	9	2	18	0.943
Prime Dolleshwar	11	7	2	16	0.762
Abahani	11	8	3	16	0.573
Gazi Group	11	7	4	14	0.176
Mohammedan	11	6	4	13	0.077
Sheikh Jamal	11	6	4	13	0.030

leg -- Legends of Rugganj, Old DOHS and Partex Sporting Club -- will take part in the relegation league where the last two teams will be relegated to the first division.

Rugganj and Partex play in the first match of the relegation league today. Meanwhile, Rugganj officials have officially requested the CCDM to have ICC panel umpires and review system for their match against OLD DOHS on June 21 and to hold the match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur.

However, the CCDM is yet to respond to Rugganj's request, filed yesterday.

EURO 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Forsberg puts Sweden on brink of last 16



Sweden's Emil Forsberg slotted his penalty past Martin Dubravka to seal victory over Slovakia in Group E at Euro 2020.

PHOTO: TWITTER

AFP, SAINT PETERSBURG

Emil Forsberg's second-half penalty sealed Sweden a 1-0 win over Slovakia in Saint Petersburg on Friday as the Scandinavians moved top of Euro 2020 Group E.

Janne Andersson's men, who played out a goalless draw with Spain in their opener, now look set to reach the knockout stage for the first time since 2004.

A point in their final game against Poland at the Krestovsky Stadium on Wednesday would be enough to be sure of a top-two finish in the group.

Slovakia could have qualified with a game to spare with a win, but still have their fate in their own hands ahead of their final match against Spain in Seville.

It was Sweden who almost made the breakthrough twice before the hour mark, as Newcastle stopper Dubravka tipped away Ludwig Augustinsson's header and Marcus Danielson nodded over from the resulting corner. Sweden continued to press for the winner, as Alexander Isak's header looped onto the roof of the net. Isak then almost scored one of the great European Championship goals, weaving past four defenders before seeing a low strike saved by Dubravka at his near post.

Sweden finally forged ahead in the 77th minute, as RB Leipzig midfielder Forsberg beat Dubravka from the penalty spot after the 'keeper had brought down substitute Robin Quaison. Slovakia laid a late siege on their opponents' goal, but saw an optimistic late penalty appeal for handball turned down as Sweden held on.

'More to come from Netherlands'

AFP, AMSTERDAM

Netherlands coach Frank de Boer believes there is much more still to come from his team after they beat Austria 2-0 on Thursday to qualify for the last 16 of Euro 2020 with one group game to spare.

"It's nice to be already into the next round of the tournament so I'm very pleased with that but there are still a lot of things we can improve," said De Boer after an early Memphis Depay penalty and another goal from tournament revelation Denzel Dumfries secured

the victory in Amsterdam.

The result follows their 3-2 win over Ukraine in their Group C opener last weekend and the Netherlands are now certain to go through to the last 16 as group winners even before they face North Macedonia.

"We showed different qualities today. We were much better defensively than we were against Ukraine. We could have done better with the ball but overall it was a decent performance and it gives me confidence for the next games," De Boer said.

In their first major tournament since the 2014 World Cup, the Dutch now know they will play one of the best third-placed teams in Budapest in the last 16 on June 27.

De Boer is not looking any further than that.

"I don't want to talk about us being among the favourites," he said when the question was put to him.

"I know that we can beat anybody when we are at our best but I think other teams are thinking the same so let's go game by game and see where that takes us."



I'm only 29, said Eriksen after being resuscitated

AGENCIES

Jens Kleinfeld, the doctor who helped revive Christian Eriksen, described the moments after the Inter midfielder was brought back to life. "He woke up after the first electric shock."

Eriksen suffered a cardiac arrest during Denmark's Euro 2020 debut against Finland last week.

His friend and teammate Simon Kjær gave him first aid while doctors rushed on the pitch to restore his heartbeat through a defibrillator. Eriksen was stabilised on the pitch and taken to hospital, where he underwent further medical examinations.

The 29-year-old will now have an ICD, a heart starter, which is a "necessary device after a cardiac attack due to rhythm disturbances," Denmark announced.

Repubblica.it interviewed Jens Kleinfeld, the doctor that gave Eriksen CPR on the pitch.

"He woke up after the first shock, after not more than 30 seconds. It was a thrilling moment," the doctor said.

"I asked him: 'Are you here?' and he replied: 'Yes.' 'I will never forget the first thing he said after that 'yes,'" the doctor continued.

"He opened his eyes, looked at me and added: 'Damn, I am just 29.'"

"It was moving, but at the same time, it was very important because I understood that his brain was not damaged. After that, he just said: 'I am back with you.'"

"I don't think Eriksen's heart stopped for more than a minute or a minute and a half. Fortunately, the first electric shock that lasted around 30 seconds was enough to restart it. It's quite unusual to make it happen so quickly."

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They defrauded 6,000 patients

Pocketed Tk 3-4cr by making fake Covid report, says charge sheet against Shahed, his men

CHATANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

An organised crime gang, in line with the instructions from Regent Hospital Chairman Mohammad Shahed, played a role in spreading Covid-19 virus in the country by preparing fake test reports, a Rab probe has found.

Shahed had formed two teams for collecting samples for Covid testing and preparing fake reports without carrying out tests.

This was revealed in the charge sheet, filed with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on March 29, in a fraud case. Md Nazmul Haque, Rab-1 senior assistant superintendent of police and also the investigation officer of the case, filed the report.

Shahed has been named as the prime accused in the charge sheet. The other 13 charge-sheeted accused are: Masud Parvez, Torikul Islam Shibli, Ahsan Habib Majumdar, Hatem Ali, Rakibul Islam Sumon, Abdus Salam, Abdur Rashid Khan Jewel, Amit Banik Kajol, Mizanur Rahman, Shimul Parvez, Dipayon Basu, Shaykhul Islam Saikat, and Polash Ali, employees of Regent Hospital.

Of the 14, 10 are now behind bars. The names of two other accused, Ahsan Habib Hasan and Mahub Hossain Mollah, were not included in the charge sheet as the investigation officer did not find any



SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A bus pictured in a mangled state in Chattogram's Patiya Crossing yesterday afternoon. The bus was involved in a head-on collision with another bus on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway at noon. The accident left two dead and at least 10 others injured.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Six more lives lost to road crashes

Child, cop among them

STAR REPORT

At least six people, including a minor girl and a police officer, were killed and 10 others were injured yesterday in separate road accidents in Chattogram and Brahmanbaria.

In the port city, three pedestrians were crushed to death under the wheel of a passenger bus at Still Mill Bazar area under EPZ Police Station.

The dead are Arefa Begum, 45, her niece Ayesha Akhter Mim, 8, and another pedestrian Rezaul Karim, 24.

Arefa was taking her niece Mim to a doctor as she was suffering from fever. They were walking to the doctor's chamber around 12:30pm, said police, quoting locals.

At that time, the bus firstly hit a rickshaw. Then, the bus driver tried to flee the scene recklessly and crushed the three persons from the backside, said Sazed Kamal, inspector of EPZ Police Station.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

India braces for Covid 3rd wave by Oct

Say health experts; Modi urges all to stay alert, warns virus still can mutate

AGENCIES

A third wave of coronavirus infections is likely to hit India by October, and although it will be better controlled than the latest outbreak the pandemic will remain a public health threat for at least another year, according to a Reuters poll of medical experts.

The June 3-17 snap survey of 40 healthcare specialists, doctors, scientists, virologists, epidemiologists and professors from around the world showed a significant pickup in vaccinations will likely provide some cover to a fresh outbreak.

Of those who ventured a prediction, over 85% of respondents, or 21 of 24, said the next wave will hit by October, including three who forecast it as early as August and 12 in September. The remaining three said between November and February.

But over 70% of experts, or 24 of 34, said any new outbreak would be better controlled compared with the current one, which has been far more devastating - with shortage of vaccines, medicines, oxygen and hospital beds - than the smaller first surge in infections last year.

"It will be more controlled, as cases will

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A sculpture at the centre of an intersection in the capital's Kakrail is seen overrun with weeds and overgrowth. Installed for beautification, neglect of the sculpture has had the opposite effect. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

GRADUATION FROM LDC STATUS Dhaka calls for a long-term package

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has called for an incentive-based and long-term graduation package for the graduating and graduated countries from LDC status as they are at a high risk of sliding back - both due to the Covid-19 impacts and the loss of LDC support measures.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen made the call while addressing as the keynote speaker a high-level virtual event on "Building Resilience for Sustainable and Irreversible Graduation of the LDCs" hosted by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN in New York in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Canada and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States at the UN yesterday.

Eisenhower Mkaka, MP, minister of foreign affairs

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

NANDIGRAM SEAT Mamata moves HC against Suvendu's win

Hearing deferred to June 24

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Calcutta High Court yesterday deferred to June 24 the hearing on the petition filed by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee challenging her Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rival Suvendu Adhikari's win in Nandigram constituency in recent state assembly elections.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

'Sovereign Bangla only political solution'

JUNE 19, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

SETTLEMENT ON 6-POINT NO MORE POSSIBLE

Intellectuals and academicians of Bangladesh held that the only political solution with Pakistan was the emergence of a sovereign and an independent Bangladesh, according to Dr AR Mallick, founding vice-chancellor of Chittagong University.

"We support what our Bangladesh government had declared. We cannot today have a settlement on the six-point programme over the bodies of a million for the freedom of Bangladesh," he added.

As to the liberation forces, Dr Mallick said when the Pakistani army attacked in March, 1971 the resistance war had been spontaneous. But there had been no unified command. Now the Mukti Foj was fighting under a unified command and its organisation was being streamlined. Preparations were on for intensifying their activity. "If our Mukti Foj has sufficient arms and ammunition to match the enemy's firepower, we have reason to hope to open a counter offensive," he added.

TAJUDDIN, OTHERS TO BE TRIED IN ABSENTIA AGAIN

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad and four of his colleagues are to be tried again in absentia on charges of conspiracy against Islamabad.

The other four Bangladeshi leaders are Nazrul Islam, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Mannan and Abidur

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Guterres sworn in for 2nd term as UN chief

Vows to learn from Covid pandemic

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was sworn in yesterday for a second term as head of the world body, promising to draw on the lessons of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic.

"Our greatest challenge -- and which is at the same time our greatest opportunity -- is to use this crisis to turn the tide, pivot towards a world that learns lessons," the former Portuguese prime minister said as the General

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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 19

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Fossils of rhino 'taller than giraffe' found in China



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

In north-western China, scientists have discovered fossil evidence of a new species of giant rhinoceros, "taller than a giraffe" that lived 26.5 million years ago, making it one of the largest mammals to have ever roamed the planet.

According to the study, published in the journal Communications Biology, the rhino Paraceratherium linxiaense weighed 21 tonnes - the equivalent of four large African elephants - and could reach close to 7m to graze treetop leaves.

The scientists, including those from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, say the findings offer important clues about the distribution of this long extinct mammal across the Asian continent, shedding more light on the evolutionary lineage of modern-day rhinos.

In the research, the scientists analysed completely preserved skull and jawbone fossils recovered from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা)

বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ

জ্বালানি দক্ষ যন্ত্রপাতি স্থাপনে, ৫% হারে ঋণ গ্রহণ করুন।

জ্বালানি সাশ্রয়ের মাধ্যমে নিজে লাভবান হউন এবং দেশকে উপকৃত করুন।

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