



The Daily Star

THIRD EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

ZILQAD 21, 1442 HURI

12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



CRITICAL PATIENTS AT HOSPITALS IN 2 DIVS In dire need of oxygen support

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Medical oxygen supply to public hospitals in at least two divisions has come under severe strain as its demand doubled amid a surge in Covid patients requiring the life-saving gas over the past few weeks.

The crisis of high-flow oxygen support has turned grave at many hospitals in Khulna and Rajshahi divisions. Deaths of patients due to a lack of oxygen support were reported yesterday for the second consecutive day.

At least 13 patients died at two hospitals in Bogura in 24 hours till yesterday noon because of the shortage of high-flow oxygen support provided through a device called high-flow nasal cannula (HFNC).

The devices are meant for the patients whose oxygen saturation levels are very low. But many hospitals in the two divisions don't have enough devices to treat the rising number of such patients infected with the virus.

Of the 13 dead, seven died at Mohammad Ali Hospital and the rest at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH), reports our

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- 13 die in Bogura in 24hrs due to shortage of high-flow oxygen support
- Demand for oxygen at public hospitals rises to 200 tonnes per day
- Hospitals struggling to treat critical patients who need high-flow oxygen



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Covid patient Josna Begum, 65, lies in an ambulance in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Josna's daughter is on a video call with her brother, an expatriate in Qatar, to show him the condition of their ailing mother. A resident of Narsingdi, Josna was admitted to the hospital with breathing problems.

A quiet 2nd day of strict lockdown

328 held for violating stay-at-home order

STAR REPORT

Streets in the capital and elsewhere remained almost empty yesterday, the second day of the "strict lockdown" the government enforced amid rising cases of Covid-19.

People mostly left home to say the Jumma prayer or to go to the kitchen markets.

On the roads, there were check posts manned by teams of the army, BGB, Rab and police. There were executive magistrates at some of the check posts. They stopped traffic and those who failed to explain why they ventured outdoors were detained or fined.

At many check posts in the capital, the officers did not have much to do as the streets remained almost empty. No law enforcers were seen at some of the check posts.

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COST OF FOREIGN TOURS OF GOVT OFFICIALS

Pandemic saves Tk 2,500cr

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON and DWAIPIYAN BARUA

Every cloud has a silver lining and so has the Covid-19 pandemic. It saved the government and taxpayers around Tk 2,500 crore since March last year.

In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the government had allocated Tk 2,200 crore as expenses for foreign tours of its officials; this figure was around Tk 70 crore more than the allocation made in the previous

fiscal year.

But as the pandemic prompted suspension or postponement of global events like meetings, seminars, trainings and workshops amid cancellations of international flights since early January last year, more than Tk 2,000 crore of last fiscal year's allocation remained unspent, according to finance ministry officials.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, around Tk 500 crore of the allocation was unspent, they said.

The allocation for foreign tours, made under the revenue and development budget, has been on the rise every year due to growing keenness among officials to travel. But the pandemic led to a significant dip in spending on foreign trips.

Bangladesh reported the first cases of Covid-19 on March 8 last year.

On Thursday, the finance ministry issued a circular, suspending 50 percent of this fiscal

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Zoom meeting from hospital prison cell!

4 jail guards suspended after Destiny Group MD's video leaked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"It's the fifth meeting since I created the group and this meeting will continue regularly," Destiny Group Managing Director Md Rafiqul Amin was seen in a video telling the participants of a Zoom meeting.

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BANGLADESH'S PROMISING BOURSE

Cash-flush Americans can now invest easily

ZINA TASREEN

A hidden gem is what British banking giant HSBC dubbed Bangladesh's bourse earlier last month.

But the problem is, access to this market is rather difficult for global investors who are flush with cash but not lucrative investment options.

Foreign investors need to open a special cash account with a custodian bank as well as a foreign currency account for remittances inside and outside the country and a beneficiary owner's account -- steps not very straightforward for someone not residing in Bangladesh.

But Bangladesh's stock market could do with the liquidity for vibrancy, further development and most importantly, for economic growth.

Many profitable investments require a long-term commitment of capital, but investors are often unwilling to give up control of their savings

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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8,483 New cases in 24hrs



9,30,042 Total cases



14,778 Deaths



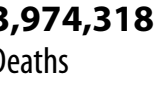
8,25,422 Recoveries



3,974,318 Deaths



183,593,402 Total cases



183,593,402 Total cases

Bringing smile to two young faces

Two children with special needs awarded Tk 1 lakh each for their paintings used in PM's greeting cards

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPLI, Pabna

Two students of Supro Sikha Protibondhi Vidhyalaya, a school for children with special needs, have become a source of pride for Bera upazila as well as Pabna because their paintings earned a place in the prime minister's Eid greeting cards.

The two students are going to be awarded Tk 1 lakh each from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for their work.



Rupa Khatun



Hridoy Miah

They are class-III students Hridoy Miah, 14, son of Sayeed Miah of Ratanganj village, and Rupa Khatun, 12, daughter of Alamin Khan of Mashumdia village.

Talking to The Daily Star, Bera Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Sobur Ali said according to a circular from the PMO, four children of the school had submitted their paintings to the PMO before Eid-ul-Fitr.

In dire need of oxygen

FROM PAGE 1 Bogura correspondent.

Besides, at least 10 patients have been battling for their lives at Mohammad Ali Hospital where around 223 Covid patients were under treatment against its capacity of 250 beds.

The hospital has only two high-flow nasal cannula devices, according to Dr ATM Nuruzzaman Sonchay, superintendent of the hospital.

"There are many patients requiring high-flow oxygen support. We are using over a hundred non-rebreather masks. But the elderly patients are suffering due to the shortage of high flow oxygen support," Nuruzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

A non-rebreather mask is a medical device that helps provide a patient with oxygen in emergencies.

Abdul Wadud, deputy director at the SZMCH, said there were only 12 high-flow nasal cannulas at the hospital where 102 Covid patients were receiving treatment as of yesterday.

A day before, five Covid patients lost their lives at Sathkura Medical College Hospital following a disruption in oxygen supply. The supplier failed to refill the oxygen tank on time, causing a dip in gas pressure.

The surge in Covid infections and deaths over the past few weeks has overwhelmed the healthcare system in several divisions, draining supplies of medical oxygen, vital for critically ill patients.

Health officials said they do not have the capacity to treat every patient in dire need of high-flow oxygen support even if the number of nasal cannulas is increased, as the country is now facing a shortage of medical oxygen.

Officials at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said the oxygen supply at government hospitals rose to around 200 tonnes a day amid the rise in patients.

Around 100 tonnes of oxygen are required every day to ensure uninterrupted supply at all the government hospitals during normal time, but it shot up to 210 tonnes on Thursday, they said.

Ninety percent of the supply comes from Linde Bangladesh Ltd, a multinational company, while the rest is supplied by Islam Oxygen Ltd and Spectra Oxygen Ltd, they added.

"Till now, we have been able to meet the demand for oxygen. But the way the number of patients requiring oxygen is increasing every day, we will not be able to meet the demand," Dr Farid Hossain Miah, director of hospitals and clinics at the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We have already sent six high-flow nasal cannulas to Bogura," he added.

Contacted, Saiqa Mazed, spokesperson for Linde Bangladesh, said, "We are now supplying around 90-100 tonnes of liquid oxygen to the hospitals a day. This is our highest capacity."

Fuelled by the contagious variant of Sars-Cov-2, known as the Delta variant, the Covid-19 crisis started deepening around two weeks ago. The number of infections and deaths kept rising.

According to a DGHS press release, 132 people died from Covid in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the death toll to 14,778.

At least 8,483 new infections were recorded during the period.

The total number of infections stood at 930,042, added the release. The Covid positivity rate was 28.27 percent yesterday while the overall positivity rate stood at 13.94 percent.

said. "According to a letter from the Prime Minister's Office issued by the prime minister's assignment officer Afroza Binte Mansur (Gazi Lipi), it is confirmed that the two students will get Tk 2 lakh. Each of them will get Tk 1 lakh as the honorarium of their brilliant work," Bera UNO said.

Speaking to journalists, Miroz Hossain, Mashumdia union parishad chairman and also the founder of Supro Sikha Protibondhi Vidhyalaya, "It is a great opportunity that the paintings of the two students of the school have been used in the prime minister's Eid greeting cards. We will go to the prime minister's office along with the students and their parents for receiving the money."

The school, which was founded in 2007, now has 280 students.

Fathers of the two students have thanked the prime minister for awarding their children.

"When my son grew as a mentally challenged boy, as a father I was frustrated. But my mentally challenged boy now brings pride for us and the people of Pabna," said Hridoy's father Sayeed Miah.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Flouting health safety guidelines, outbound Bangladeshi workers through Probashi Kallyan Bhaban in the capital's Eskaton Garden yesterday to get their names registered through "Surokkha" app for Covid-19 vaccination. They went to the District Employment and Manpower Office in the building and filled in forms with necessary information. Officials briefed the workers about the registration and vaccination process.

COVID VACCINE Migrants face hassles in registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many migrant workers waiting for Covid-19 vaccine jabs in the capital and elsewhere yesterday could not register their names with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training allegedly for failing to make their payments online.

The government on Thursday announced that the outbound workers have to register with the BMET first to have access to "Surokkha" app for Covid vaccination.

Yesterday, migrant workers went to different district employment and manpower offices (DEMOs) across the country.

In the capital, several hundred workers gathered at the Probashi Kalyan Bhaban where the Dhaka DEMO is located.

Shamim Sheikh, a Dubai-based migrant worker, said he tried to pay Tk 200 as fees for the BMET registration through a mobile financial service (MFS) platform in Munshiganj.

But his payment was not accepted despite several attempts and subsequently he failed to complete the registration, he said.

Many other migrant workers went to the local DEMO office in Munshiganj, but could not register their names due to the similar problem, he told this newspaper over phone.

M Tipu Sultan, president of Recruiting Agency Oikya Parishad, said several migrant workers contacted them and described the difficulties they faced to make payments to BMET through MFS platforms. They alleged that their payments were not accepted, Tipu said.

Besides, many migrant workers, especially those from rural areas, had hassles to travel from one place to another amid the "strict lockdown", he added.

He urged the government to address the migrant workers' problems with sincerity.

Debabrata Ghosh, assistant director at Cumilla DEMO, said about 500 to 600 migrant workers yesterday returned from the local DEMO office without completing their registration.

Zoom meeting

FROM PAGE 1

The leaked video clip allegedly of his recent meeting with Destiny officials and business partners went viral on social media. He joined the meeting from the prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Rafiqul has been in jail since 2012 when he was arrested in cases filed over embezzling and laundering Tk 4,200 crore.

Meanwhile, four chief prison guards were suspended and departmental cases were filed against 13 others, including seven assistant chief prison guards, yesterday in connection with the incident, said jail sources.

Two prison guards guard Rafiqul's hospital cabin round the clock in shifts.

He is among several high-profile prisoners who had hit the headlines on several occasions for "managing" to go to hospitals from prisons on the excuse of ailments, staying in hospital cabins for long and living a comfortable life.

Once the media reported on Rafiqul's comfortable life, he was taken back to prison. But he again managed to return to a hospital and allegedly started running his business from there.

A couple of years ago, a correspondent of The Daily Star visited the cabin of Rafiqul in BIRDEM General Hospital where he stayed for around a year. The correspondent found that the "patient" moved freely around the cell area, had home-made meals, and met family members and others linked to his business to carry out necessary activities.

The leaked video clip shows Rafiqul discussing the business of another multi-level marketing (MLM) company like the one owned by him -- Destiny 2000. He also discussed appointing 1,300 marketing agents.

Speaking to a private TV channel recently, a number of participants of the meeting admitted joining it.

One of them said the meeting used to start at 1:00am and continue till 3:00am to 3:30am. Rafiqul's profile picture in the Zoom application was named "R".

Jail officials said Rafiqul, as a prisoner, is not supposed to have access to any mobile phone or other devices or internet facilities.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Md Mominur Rahman Mamun yesterday said a three-member inquiry committee, headed by Deputy Inspector (prisons) Towhidul Islam, was formed on Thursday to investigate the incident.

The committee was asked to submit its report in seven working days, he added.

"After receiving the report, we will take punitive actions against those found involved in the incident," Mominur told The Daily Star.

Asked whether Rafiqul would be taken back to prison, he said it depends on doctors' advice.

Rafiqul was admitted to the BSMMU in April on doctors' advice following complaints of his urology problem and diabetes, the IG (prisons) said.

Pandemic saves Tk 2,500cr

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year's allocation and asking for abandoning of all routine tours.

The money can only be spent for emergency purposes and considering unavoidable circumstances, stated the circular.

In another austerity measure in the aftermath of the pandemic, the finance ministry issued another circular on Thursday, limiting ministries and departments' expenses on purchasing cars by 50 percent of the allocation.

Officials of different ministries and projects make foreign trips every year to take part in trainings, meetings, and seminars on taxpayers' money. Ministers are also keen on making trips abroad.

In some cases, project implementing agencies create provisions for foreign tours and include officials from ministries and departments who have nothing to do with the projects.

There has been criticism over such frequent foreign tours of government officials as many such trips at public expense yield no results. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also spoke against such frequent trips earlier.

The pandemic was able to rein in expenses for such trips over the last year.

Overseas travels of public servants started declining in January last year and virtually came to a halt in March, when the country reported the first cases of Covid-19. These trips remain suspended till date.

"Excepting one or two ministries, there was virtually no expense this time," said an official of the finance ministry, regarding foreign tours.

The official said the finance minister did not receive files on foreign tours by ministry officials since March last year.

Usually, files on foreign tours by ministry officials up to the level of joint secretary are signed by the minister concerned. Files for anyone above

that rank require the prime minister's signature.

Only a couple of files were sent to the finance minister on visits to India by a few government bank officials for treatment on their own funds, after the neighbouring country resumed medical visa services in October last year, said the official.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said he did not have to sign files on foreign tours, except one made by the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

"I went abroad for treatment three times. But I bore all my expenses," he also said.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen also travelled abroad one or two times.

A planning ministry official said government officials are now unwilling to embark on foreign tours because of the hassle of doing Covid-19 tests and additional expenses for mandatory quarantine on reaching the destination country.

However, there is a possibility of some foreign tours, especially to the US, by government high-ups this year with regard to Bangladesh's upgradation from LDC (Least Developed Country) status, he said.

The official added that he believes government officials need to attend programmes overseas so that they can acquire knowledge about best practices abroad.

Due to the pandemic, both the annual and spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank last year were held virtually. The meetings bring central bankers, finance ministers and others worldwide together twice a year.

Meetings of different ministries in the country itself were also held virtually all year around.

The Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) in a

Cash-flush Americans can now invest easily

FROM PAGE 1

for long periods.

Liquid stock markets make investments less risky and more attractive because they allow savers to acquire an asset in the form of stock (equity) and to sell it promptly and reasonably if they need access to their savings or want to alter their portfolios.

At the same time, companies enjoy constant access to capital through equity rights issues.

By facilitating longer-term and more profitable investments, liquid stock markets improve the allocation of scarce resources, that is capital, and the promotion of production of goods and services as well as employment and therefore enhance prospects for long-term economic growth.

Additionally, by lowering enterprise risks and increasing profitability, stock market liquidity can direct more investment and contribute to increased prosperity.

Empirical studies have established that stock market liquidity affects economic growth by and large, and there is a diminishing return to liquidity as a country progresses toward development.

In other words, Bangladesh is in the right stage of development to benefit from a liquid stock market.

But Bangladesh's capital market is rather illiquid compared with its peers. For instance, the daily trading value, a metric for liquidity, is around \$81 million in contrast to Vietnam's \$714 million.

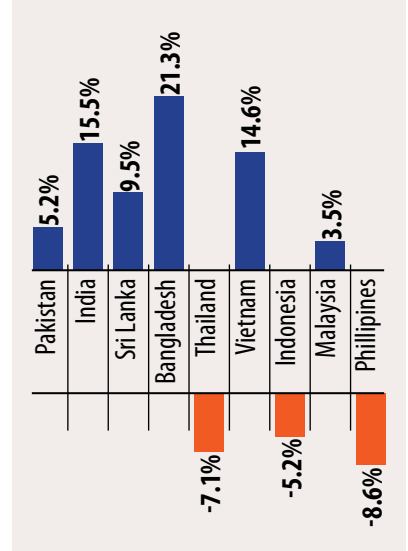
And solving the problem is Dawn Global, a London-based boutique investment firm.

Last month, it launched an exchange-traded fund (ETF) that provided easy entry to global investors, particularly American ones, to the bourses of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam -- five large and fast-growing but historically difficult-to-access markets.

An ETF is a basket of securities that tracks an index, sector, commodity or other assets, but which can be

BANGLADESH'S BOURSE SAW THE HIGHEST RETURNS IN 2020 AMONG PEERS

SOURCE: LANKABANGLA SECURITIES



purchased or sold on a stock exchange the same as a regular stock.

Investors who purchase shares of an ETF can gain exposure to a basket of equities and limit company-specific risk associated with single stocks.

Called the Asian Growth Cubs ETF, Dawn Global's investment vehicle is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

By way of the Cubs ETF, American investors, for the first time, can get a slice of Bangladesh's stock market -- which yielded the highest return of 21.3 percent amongst its Asian peers in 2020 -- without going through the hassle needed to invest directly.

As much as 17 percent of the Cubs ETF is dedicated to Bangladesh.

At present, the Cubs ETF has positions in eight Bangladesh stocks: Brac Bank, Grameenphone, Square Pharmaceuticals, Renata Pharmaceuticals, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Summit Power, Marico and Beacon Pharmaceuticals.

report on implementation of the 2019-20 budget also highlighted the matter of allocation for foreign tours.

It said several ministries, divisions and departments including the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Cabinet Division, Planning Division, Bank and Financial Institutions Division, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, and the Science and Technology Division spent less of its respective allocations for foreign tours.

One of the major reasons was the cancellation of prescheduled trainings, workshops, and seminars abroad, said the report submitted in the National Economic Council meeting last week.

To provide travel expenses, destination countries are divided into three categories and government high-ups and officials get allowances with respect to their designations.

Group one includes countries from North and South America and Europe, group two includes Middle Eastern and African countries, while group three constitutes Asian countries.

According to a finance division circular issued last year, officials with "special status" including speaker of the parliament, ministers, secretaries, lawmakers, and ambassadors in Bangladesh missions are provided daily hotel allowances ranging from \$230 to \$560, as per their designations.

They also get an allowance for food, tips, and conveyance between \$87 and \$127 per day.

Officials of general status get daily hotel allowances ranging from \$116 to \$280 and get another allowance between \$64 and \$101.

Cabinet ministers can spend \$700 on entertainment purposes, state and deputy ministers \$600, while the cabinet secretary, chief secretary, senior secretary, secretary, and armed forces' officers with equivalent positions are allowed to spend \$500.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Chestnut Munia, Keraniganj

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

OUR MUNIAS

I was disappointed when I saw my first munia some years ago.

That's because I had believed a story I had read as a child. Our Creator had created all the birds and was colouring them by splashing paint on them. Except the munias; they were away playing. When they finally showed up only drops of different colours remained. So He splashed these drops on the munias, making them beautifully multi-coloured.

But the Chestnut Munia I saw was brown with a black head. Some others around it were reddish brown with a scaly pattern on the breast. Some had a white patch on the breast. None was spectacularly colourful like the munias in the story.

It did not take long for my disappointment to turn to joy, however. The playful nature of the birds was on full display. On the grassy field, they flitted from stalk to grass stalk, cleaning out the tiny seeds with their thick bills, sharing them, kissing each other on the beak, and playing an avian merry-go-round competing for desirable perches. It was impossible not to love them.

We have six species of munias in Bangladesh: Chestnut, Tricoloured, Scaly-breasted, Indian Silverbill, White-rumped and Red Munia.

Of these the first four are easiest to see. They can be found in open grasslands all year round, playing and feeding on grass seeds, sometimes in large flocks flying like shimmering ripples through the fields. The White-rumped Munia, harder to find, is seen in forests of Sylhet and Chittagong; I have also seen it in shorn paddyfields in those areas.

The Red Munia (also known as

the Red Avadavat or the Strawberry Finch) is the hardest to spot. It is rare here and seen in grasslands in autumn. An extraordinarily pretty red bird with spots of white, it is the bird that my childhood story must have referred to. When it is spotted in one or two places around Dhaka, word gets around quickly and flocks of bird photographers show up.

In spring, munias in the fields build nests among thickets of tall grass. Sometimes they re-use old nests of Baya Weavers. Come monsoon, the chicks have started to fly and need constant feeding. They clamour with open beaks wherever their mother goes. The mother cleans out seeds from grass stalks with her beak and patiently feeds her babies taking turns.

There are around 31 species of munias spread over the Old World, all belonging to the Estrildidae family of birds – a family that includes some of the prettiest small birds including the Gouldian Finch. The Chestnut Munia readily seen in our grasslands was the national bird of the Philippines until 1995 when President Ramos decided that as a national symbol it was too small and docile. He changed the national bird to Philippines Eagle.

If you are unable to get outside the city to open fields, various munias can be found in the city parks. I have occasionally seen Indian Silverbill Munias on the rooftop garden of our high-rise in Dhaka. The friendly demeanour and playful antics of these birds make them a delight for lovers of nature.

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

Autobiography of Bangabandhu translated to Korean

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The autobiography of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- "The Unfinished Memoirs" -- has been translated into Korean language as part of celebrating his birth centenary.

Lee Dong-heon has translated the book and Korean publisher "Moraeal LLC" will make this publication available both in the local book stores in Korea and online platforms, said Bangladesh Embassy in Korea that initiated the translation.

The book was launched at a ceremony in Seoul on Thursday. In a video message, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said Bangabandhu's political vision as well as his unremitting support for humanism and world peace are reflected in his autobiography.

Sul Hoon, member of Korea's National Assembly; Lee Sangryol, director-general of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, were present on the occasion.

Ambassador Abida Islam awarded a crest to Dong-heon, acknowledging his contribution in translating the book. She also acknowledged Sheuli Fateha, lecturer, Korean Language Program, Institute of Modern Languages at Dhaka University, who validated the translation work.

Nazrul Islam Khan, curator of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum, also sent a video message on the occasion.

RAPE, MURDER OF O-LEVEL STUDENT IN DHAKA

No progress in probe in six months

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Investigation into the rape and murder of an O-level student in Dhaka's Kalabagan is yet to be completed even over six months after the incident that sparked a huge public outcry.

The investigators said they have not got the victim's post-mortem and DNA reports, two crucial elements of the case, as of now. They could not say for sure how long it will take to complete the probe.

Present Investigation Officer (IO) of the case and PBI Inspector Khaled Saifullah appealed to a Dhaka court on Sunday seeking a remand for lone accused Fardin Iftakhar Dihan for interrogation.

The court did not grant the remand as the accused has already made confessional statement. It, however, asked the IO to interrogate the accused at the jail gate. "We will interrogate the accused shortly as per the court directive in a suitable time," the IO told The Daily Star.

He also said they have already

Investigators said they have not got the victim's post-mortem and DNA reports, two crucial elements of the case. They could not say for sure how long it will take to complete probe.

soon as possible.

"After receiving the post-mortem and other forensic reports we have some procedures to complete..." he said.

Father of the victim recently told The Daily Star that though six months have elapsed since the incident, they are happy as the charge of investigation was given to PBI.

"We always wanted an extensive investigation. We strongly believe that at least three people were involved in the incident and hope PBI will find out all the culprits since they have specialisation in case investigation," said the father, who is a businessman in Old Dhaka.

Kalabagan police investigated the case for around five months, but failed to complete the probe.

The father alleged that the police investigation was mainly focused on Dihan.

After the rape and murder, father of the 17-year-old victim filed the case with Kalabagan Police Station on January 7 against Dihan (18) under the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

communicated with the DNA lab of Criminal Investigation Department for the complete DNA report and Dhaka Medical College for post-mortem report.

"I hope it will not take much time to receive those," he added.

Inspector Khaled said they have received a part of the DNA report. He said they are trying to complete the investigation as

Cattle smuggling on amid concerns of Delta variant

UNB, Kurigram

Residents of Kurigram district's border areas are worried about the highly contagious Delta variant of Covid-19, as smuggling of Indian cattle has reportedly increased ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Cattle smuggling has become rampant through the district's porous frontier, alleged locals. They said smugglers bring in cattle at night, using both land and river routes.

In local haats (markets), Indian cattle are available, and traders from different districts through there, as demand has spiked because of the upcoming Eid.

Abdul Hakim, a villager of Sadar upazila's Jatrapur union, said the haats get set up on Saturday and Tuesday, and Indian cattle are sold.

Mozammel Haque, a resident of Nageshwari upazila's Narayanpur union, said there is a fear that coronavirus, especially the Delta variant, may spread because of this illegal movement across the border.

However, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) claimed that their members are on high-alert to prevent the spread of Covid-19 along bordering areas.

Meanwhile, the local administration and police also have strengthened monitoring to tackle any illegal trading of cattle.

On condition of anonymity, a local resident said, "It's beyond my imagination why the government is not taking

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Hilsa netting in sea continues despite ban

Barishal fish going to other regions due to low demand

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Many fishers in Barishal are netting hilsa despite the ongoing ban on sea-fishing.

They are catching the fish, particularly during the night to hide from the drives by authorities concerned.

The Department of Fisheries enforced the 65-day ban on netting hilsa till July 23, to protect the mother fish till spawning.

However, local traders said the fish were being netted and sent from the southern region, including Mahipur, Kuakata and Bhola.

Asked, fishers said they have no other option but to net the fish in order to survive amid the pandemic and lockdown. They also said the government food support they receive is not enough.

Each of the around 3.63 lakh fishers is supposed to get 40kg rice per month in compensation.

Meanwhile, as the lockdown has brought down the demand for fish in Barishal, hilsa caught from rivers and seas are being sent to different markets of the country, including those of Dhaka.

They are going to markets in Dhaka,



Maunds of hilsa being loaded onto trucks, to be transported to markets across the country. This photo was taken on Thursday from Barishal Port Road. PHOTO: TITU DAS

Rajshahi and Khulna, as the number of local buyers has decreased due to the lockdown.

After visiting Barishal Port Road wholesale fish market, it was found that about 300 maunds of hilsa were being loaded in three trucks going to markets in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna.

Shaheen, owner of the Khulna-bound truck, said most of the fish came from sea-going fishing boats.

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CAGED, DROWNED

Man fined Tk 2,000 for killing Asian palm civet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

He along with his friends not only caged and drowned an Asian palm civet to death, but also recorded and shared the incident on Facebook.

As the reason, the man claimed that the civet preyed on 20 of his pigeons.

The incident took place at Doulatpur village in Boroutan union of Karnaphuli upazila in Chattogram on Thursday.

After the incident became known, a mobile court yesterday fined one Sayed Mursalin Tk 2,000 for killing the animal.

Sukanta Saha, assistant commissioner (land) of Karnaphuli upazila, fined him after a team of forest department detained him from his home at Doulatpur village.

Due to his ignorance of the law, he killed the animal as it preyed on his pigeons, he said. "We fined and released him as he expressed regret for his deed," he added.

The official said the youth could also claim compensation for the damage afflicted by the wildlife as per wildlife conservation act.

The Asian palm civet is considered a species of Least Concern on the IUCN Red List and it occupies a broad range of area stretching across much of Southern Asia. Yet declining habitats have forced the animal to venture out of its home range and look for available food sources.

LOCKDOWN OUTSIDE DHAKA

Authorities strict on 2nd day too

STAR REPORT

The second day of the countrywide lockdown was in full-swing yesterday, as government agencies concerned were strict in enforcement.

Many were fined for violating the lockdown, while most thoroughfares in different districts were almost empty.

Army, Border Guard Bangladesh and Ansar members along with law enforcement agencies were seen patrolling streets amid incessant rain in many areas.

In Chattogram, six teams of army and six of BGB, along with police and 12 mobile courts, were deployed at different points.

Shopping malls and most shops were shut, but many small shops by the road were open. Rickshaws dominated the roads, while some motorbikes were also seen.

Those who went out had to face questions

from police and other law enforcers.

In Cumilla, authorities filed 296 cases over violations and fined people a total of Tk 3,17,950 in the city and 17 upazilas.

In Khulna, mobile courts fined 38 people Tk 18,650 for going out without valid reason. Many who went out for emergency had to travel on rickshaws and auto-rickshaws. Some had to walk for a long time due to scarcity of rickshaws.

In Barishal, the city's major streets were almost empty all day, while most shops were closed. Even kitchen markets could not draw much crowd. Vehicles carrying goods and ambulances were seen on roads. Authorities fined 11 people around Tk 11,000.

In Rajshahi, the city streets were also quite empty, though public presence was noticed in kitchen markets. People came out travelling on motorbikes, bicycles, rickshaws and in private cars, while many were seen

walking. Many also locked into altercation with law enforcers who intercepted them. Mobile courts fined some 16 people Tk 12,900.

In Rangpur, the city's busiest streets were almost deserted, but public presence was noticed in alleys. Few bakery shops were found open at various places.

In Munshiganj, very few people were seen on streets. A total of 30 mobile courts were deployed, and they fined people around Tk 15,000. One of the major ferry routes of the country, Shimulia-Banglabazar, saw hardly any passengers. Only goods-carrying vehicles and ambulances were seen boarding ferries, said police.

In Tangail, a total of 800 members of police, Ansar, BGB and army, along with 29 mobile courts, were deployed. Check-posts were set up in 113 places.



On the second day of the lockdown, the streets around the major cities remained mostly empty, only sparsely populated by some vehicles and pedestrians here and there. Even amidst this, some lower-income people felt compelled to get out -- risking rain, health and penalty in the hands of law enforcers, army and BGB, who were out in droves. Many said they've been having a hard time ever since the first lockdown last year, and can't help but come out in search of work, even if customers are few and far between. These photos were taken from Sylhet, Khulna, Dhaka, and Dhaka-Aricha highway.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR, HABIBUR RAHMAN, PRABIR DAS AND PALASH KHAN



NEWS

IN brief

Man found dead in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A man was found dead in Ashulia's Bhadail area of Savar early yesterday.

Joyal Abedin (60), from Rangpur, was a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver, said police.

Hasib Mia, sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station, said they recovered the body around 3am from a rented room of one Rubel (25), a neighbour.

The SI said, "We are trying to detain Rubel who is on the run." Police suspect that he was strangled to death, as there were injury marks on his neck.

Hungary to give full scholarships to 130 Bangladeshi students

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Hungary have signed a MoU that secured Hungarian Governments' full scholarships under the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme for a yearly intake of 130 Bangladeshi students at undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate levels for the next three years.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovenia Muhammad Abdul Muhith and Hungarian State Secretary Dr Orsolya Pacsay-Tomassich signed the MoU at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary in Budapest on June 30, according to a statement yesterday.

Man held with gold worth Tk 1.6cr at Dhaka airport

UNB, Dhaka

A passenger was detained by customs officials at Dhaka airport early yesterday for allegedly attempting to smuggle in two gold bars worth Tk 1.6 crore.

The detainee is Jashim Mia, a resident of Narsingdi district. A team from Dhaka Customs House intercepted Jashim at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport upon his arrival from Jeddah around 2:45am.

"The two gold bars weighing about 1.6kg were recovered from a flower pot he was carrying," said Deputy Commissioner of the Dhaka Customs House (preventive team) Mohammad Abdus Sadek.

The gold bars worth Tk 1.6 crore were submitted to the national reserve, while the passenger was handed over to the police. "A criminal case has been filed against the accused at the local police station."

SEE MORE ONLINE

Greens worried as new safari park planned

FROM PAGE 12
 "Lathitila forest is a habitat of wildlife. The government should focus on preserving whatever forestland we have," said Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmed, former chief conservator of forest who also served as country representative of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

"We urge the government to exclude our homes and use other open land," he said. Other villagers said the Forest Department did not inform them about the plan and officials are not confirming what will happen to them. "We will be very happy to have a safari park in Bangabandhu's name, but without removing us from where we have lived for three generations," said Fokhor Uddin, an elderly villager of Lalchhara.

Earlier, on April 12, villagers organised a human chain at Lalchhara demanding protection of their homes and fruit gardens from eviction. **WHY THIS SITE?** Lathitila is located in remote Juri upazila. The distance from Moulvibazar town to Juri Forest Office is around 50km with Google Maps showing an estimated travel time of between an hour and a half and two hours. And it is another 15km from Juri Forest Office to Lathitila.

Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) in Sylhet, said, "Lathitila is part of a very deep forest and it is in a remote area. It will not be a good idea to select the site for a safari park, considering all aspects, including nature conservation."

He added, "It would be wise to plan a safari park in parts of the forest that is easily accessible, like Barshijora Eco Park in Moulvibazar town. But no matter where they plan it, nature conservation must be given priority over constructing structures. "And it would be unfair if villagers are evicted."

The ministry concerned, however, maintains that the government will surely consider wildlife conservation and environmental issues. "Compared to Lathitila, Barshijora is very small and impossible to expand. Lathitila is a suitable location as Hakaluki Haor and Madhabkunda waterfall are in close proximity so that tourists can visit three sites on a day's trip," said Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Md Shahab Uddin.

"But we'll decide based on the feasibility study," he went on. "To the best of my knowledge, a vast floristic area can be suggested to retain as a biodiversity conservation zone there. So, nature and the existing landscape will not be changed at all," said Shahab Uddin, also the lawmaker of Moulvibazar-1 constituency where all these sites are located.

He added, "There is no intention to evict the villagers, who were really appointed by the Forest Department as forest villagers. If this place is finalised, some might be relocated within the forest beat."

Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, the divisional forest officer (Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division) in Sylhet, told this newspaper in May, "if it's feasible to establish a safari park in Lathitila, we'll go for designing the master plan."

Also the project director, Rezaul added the firm conducting the feasibility study will also consider Barshijora Eco Park.

Joly Paul, an environmental activist in Moulvibazar, said, "In the name of a safari park, they [authorities] will start construction in the forest, which will eventually destroy the environment. Two existing safari parks have already proved that this will not bring anything good for the forest and environment and that's why we're protesting the decision."

Dr Mohammed Abu Sayed Arfin Khan, associate professor of forestry and environmental science at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said, "If a safari park seeks to protect the existing and threatened biodiversity of a certain territory, it serves the environment effectively. But the practice of establishing and managing safari parks in Bangladesh is not good."

"As we see, the key objective of a safari park here is to bring in exotic wildlife from other habitats and promote tourism which is destructive for biodiversity and the environment. They [authorities] focus on establishment rather than management and that's why the purpose of safari parks failed in Bangladesh."

The professor further said a safari park can be effective only when the authorities focus on the protection of biodiversity, uses it for education and awareness towards nature conservation, and manages it properly along with controlled ecotourism.

Prof Monirul H Khan of Jahangirnagar University observed that in Bangladesh, both safari parks and zoos primarily serve the purpose of amusement. And the visits of a large number of people, together with necessary services, pollute the entire ecosystem.

"Therefore, areas that have rich biodiversity should always be avoided while establishing a safari park. Instead, those areas, like Lathitila forest, should be declared wildlife sanctuaries."

India's Covid

FROM PAGE 12
 Daily inoculation rates have since slowed again, however, averaging just over four million per day over the past week, according to government figures.

Meanwhile, Johnson and Johnson on Thursday said its single-shot Covid-19 vaccine is effective against the Delta variant, with an immune response lasting at least eight months.

22.50 lakh Covid

FROM PAGE 12
 Serum delivered the first consignment of 50 lakh doses in January, but shipped only 20 lakh the following month. No shipment has been made since.

Besides, India sent 3.3 million doses as gift to Bangladesh.

Amid a fast depleting vaccine stock, Bangladesh suspended administering the first dose of the vaccine on April 26. The registration process for vaccination was suspended nine days later.

Walt Disney

FROM PAGE 12
 - Rana Plaza building collapse in April 2013 and Tazreen Fashion fire incident in November 2012. Disney left Bangladesh in 2013, citing poor workplace safety and compliance.

Before leaving Bangladesh, the company used to purchase garment products worth \$500million a year. The products included sports items, jerseys, T-shirts, leggings and joggings, Faruque said.

Disney later sourced garment items from India, Vietnam and Myanmar, he added.

The Walt Disney Company has considered to include Bangladesh in its Permitted Sourcing Country list with ILS (International Labour Standard) audits, BGMEA said in a statement yesterday.

"The information came from a trusted source and the official notification from Disney is yet to be published," the statement read.

Factories participating in the ILO's Better Work Bangladesh programme will be entitled to become a vendor. They will also need to participate in the Nirapon or RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) along with specific remediation fulfillment criteria.

Over the past years, the Bangladesh garment industry has made unprecedented efforts and investment to ensure safety covering fire, electrical and structural integrity, a robust follow up of factory remediation, to create a culture of safety while promoting wellbeing of the workers, BGMEA said.

The entire safety transformation programme was supported and facilitated by the Bangladesh government, ILO, international brands, manufacturers and the global unions in a transparent manner.

"While we commit ourselves to maintain the social and safety standards, we have aligned with global pledges like reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emission by 30 percent till 2030," Faruque said.

Through these actions and transformation, Bangladesh has well positioned itself as the preferred sourcing partner for conscious brand like Disney, which is committed to fostering safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces in its manufacturing facilities worldwide, he added.

Bangladesh still in tier 2

FROM PAGE 12
 A country remaining on the watch list for three consecutive years automatically downgrades to Tier 3 unless the government makes significant efforts to combat human trafficking.

The report said Bangladesh government does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so.

The annual report ranks governments based on their perceived efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking.

Bangladesh had been on the Tier 2 Watch List from 2017 to 2019. In 2020 and this year, Bangladesh has been ranked among the countries in Tier 2.

As per the US law, countries on Tier 3 could trigger severe restrictions and even full curtailment of non-humanitarian and non-trade-related assistance.

The latest report said Bangladesh government efforts to combat human trafficking included initiating more prosecutions, particularly of labour traffickers; beginning to operate its trafficking tribunals; and collaborating with foreign governments on a transnational trafficking case.

The government also opened an investigation into -- and parliament revoked the seat of -- a member of parliament involved in bribing a Kuwaiti official to fraudulently send more than 20,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers to Kuwait, said the report.

However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas, it mentioned.

The number of convictions decreased, while law enforcement continued to deny credible reports of official complicity in trafficking, it added.

Also, the government continued to allow recruiting agencies to charge high recruitment fees to migrant workers and did not consistently address illegally operating recruitment sub-agents, leaving workers vulnerable to traffickers.

According to the report, Bangladesh investigated 348 cases under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2012, including 138 investigations continued from previous years, compared with the investigation of 403 cases including 29 ongoing investigations during the previous reporting period.

The government prosecuted 517 suspects (184 for sex trafficking and 333 for forced labor) -- an increase from the 312 individuals the government prosecuted the previous reporting period, of which 56 were for forced labor.

The government convicted seven traffickers, including one for sex trafficking, two for labour trafficking, and four for undefined trafficking crimes, but acquitted 14 defendants.

This was a significant decrease from courts convicting 25 traffickers the previous reporting year.

The government reported more than 4,000 trafficking cases remained pending investigation or prosecution as of December 2020.

The report recommended increasing prosecutions and convictions for trafficking offences.

Italy, Spain

FROM PAGE 12
 Earlier in the day, Spain squeezed past Switzerland 3-1 in a penalty shootout to reach the last four after their battling opponents clung to a 1-1 draw after extra time despite going down to 10 men.

Spain took an early lead when Jordi Alba's shot from outside the box was deflected into his own net by Denis Zakaria. But Xherdan

Shaqiri profited from a defensive error to level the score at 1-1, before the Swiss lost midfielder Remo Freuler to a straight red card on 77 minutes.

Spain dominated extra time and created a host of chances as Switzerland played for spot-kicks, perhaps mindful that their opponents had missed their last five penalties.

Some districts likely

FROM PAGE 12
 Meanwhile, our Lalmonirhat correspondent reported that the low-lying and island areas in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram have been inundated due to the rise of river water level.

However, the water of all the rivers in the two districts, including the Brahmaputra, the Teesta and the Dharla, were flowing below the danger level since Friday morning.

Locals in the districts said they were facing trouble in movements as the roads were submerged in knee-deep water. Alongside, houses and croplands were also submerged.

Mizanur Rahman, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Lalmonirhat, said they have prepared to evacuate the people living in the risky villages along the riverside and protect the flood control dykes.

Our Feni correspondent reported that the flood situation has improved slightly in Fulgazi and Parshuram

upazilas of the district while some seedbeds of vegetables and mangoes have gone under water.

Some village roads are also damaged and fishes of some ponds washed out.

Breaking of flood protection embankments on Muhuri and Kahuwa rivers at three points is the main reason for the flood at the two upazilas, according to locals.

Seven hundred families of the upazilas are marooned with floodwater due to the damage of the embankment.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Fulgazi Union Ferdousi Begum said authorities concerned are working to measure the amount of the damage and distributing relief to the victims.

Executive engineer of Water Development Board Zahir Uddin said they have taken initiative to repair the damaged portions of the embankment.

Freedom fighters will lead our future army

FROM PAGE 12
 a government formed abroad, and freed their motherland from imperialism".

He further said, "The basis for the future army of the country will be you. Those who shall excel in the freedom fight, those who will prove themselves to be the finest fighters, they will give the leadership to our future army."

PAKISTAN SEEKS US BOMBERS DESPITE EMBARGO
 Pakistan President Mohammad Yahya Khan asked the United States to sell Pakistan seven B57 reconnaissance bombers on June 9, three months after the government imposed a ban on all military sales to his country, diplomatic sources said today.

Even though Pakistan was near bankruptcy because of the war that erupted in East Pakistan in late March,

Yahya apparently was willing to pay the \$1.25 million that each of the sophisticated jet planes would cost, or a total of \$8.75 million.

US state department officials, acknowledging Yahya's request, said it was being held in abeyance while the United States reviewed its entire military assistance programme to Pakistan.

OUTSIDE HELP NEXT TO NOTHING: INDIRA
 India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today regretted that though the Bangladesh issue was an international problem, no major help was coming from the international community. She said the help from outside was practically "next to nothing". But India was determined to face the problem with courage and confidence, she added.

BATTLE OF MOGUL HAT

Fifty guerrillas today crossed the Dharla River and attacked a Pakistani CAMP at Mogulhat, Lalmonirhat. The Pakistani army was caught unawares and lost 12 of their soldiers. Three Bangladesh guerrillas embraced martyrdom in the operation.

PAKISTAN SEVERES TIES WITH COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
 Pakistan declared today to sever ties with London's Royal Commonwealth Society temporarily. The Pakistani spokesperson criticised the Society for allowing the platform to be used against the interest of Pakistan. It may be mentioned here that earlier Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, in a speech given at the Society, urged the world to stop the genocide in Bangladesh.

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

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2021-9168217

Request for Proposal (RFP): LRPS-9168217: To conduct Alternative Care Study to understand the situation and demographics of children in institutional care arrangements in Bangladesh.

UNICEF-Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong record and credibility of providing the above required service. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to ["supplybangladesh@unicef.org"](mailto:supplybangladesh@unicef.org)

Pre-bid Meeting Date: **Please see the schedule mentioned in the RFP**

The deadline to submit the proposal is **Sunday, 18 July 2021; Time: 11:00 Hrs**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org.bd



শাখা স্থানান্তর

সম্মানিত গ্রাহকদের অধিকতর সেবার লক্ষ্যে

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড, সাগরদী বাজার শাখা, বরিশাল

৩০ জুন ২০২১ ইং বুধবার থেকে

নতুন ঠিকানায় ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম শুরু করছে।

পুরাতন ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড, সাগরদী বাজার শাখা, জেএল নং-৫১, মেজা-সাগরদী, হোল্ডিং নং-১১৯৪, সাগরদী বাজার, ডাকঘর-বরিশাল, থানা-বরিশাল, জেলা-বরিশাল।

নতুন ঠিকানা

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড, সাগরদী বাজার শাখা, ওয়াহেদ প্রাজা (২য় তলা) হোল্ডিং-১১৯৮, মেজা-সাগরদী, জেএল নং-৫১, ওয়ার্ড নং-২৩, সাগরদী বাজার, ডাক-বরিশাল, থানা-বরিশাল, জেলা-বরিশাল।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক এবং শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম সম্পাদনের জন্য নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগের অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

রূপালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
 উত্তম সেবার নিশ্চয়তা
www.rupalibank.org

Hilsa netting in sea

FROM PAGE 3
 Year Siktar, a local trader, said local fish, each weighing one kilogramme, generally go for Tk 60,000 per maund. However, most of the fish that were being sent were caught from the sea, and so, the one-kg fish were being sold for Tk, 27,000 per maund.

"Even though there's a 65-day ban on sea-fishing in place, many are catching fish, violating the law," he said. Traders also said fish from the sea cannot be sold for that much, and are different in taste from river fish.

Kalam Majhi of Bhola's Charfasson upazila said fish caught in the last few days were brought to Barishal Port Road in fishing trawlers, as there was less demand in the local market.

Nirab Hossain Tutul -- president of Matsya Aratdar Samitee, Port Road wholesale fish market -- said some hilsa are being caught in Bhola and Kuakata now. Apart from this, fish are also coming from the sea. On Thursday, at least a thousand maunds of fish came in three fishing boats.

Bimal Chandra Das -- district fisheries officer (hilsa) -- said these days it is raining heavily, and so, it has created a favourable environment for hilsa fishing. As a result, some fish are being caught.

He said he did not know that sea-going fishing boats were bringing in fish. "We will look into it," he added.

Cattle smuggling on amid

FROM PAGE 3
 effective measures yet to stop cattle smuggling through bordering area to curb Covid-19."

Contacted, Lt Jamal Uddin, commanding officer of Kurigram BGB, said, "We have already launched a programme to create awareness among people about Covid-19, and if anyone notices illegal intruders, then they will be asked to inform BGB."

Although BGB is on high-alert, it is possible to smuggle two or three cattle after dodging the local administration, he said.

Asked, Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Rezaul Karim said, "Everyone should be aware of the deadly virus. All kinds of directives have been given to stop cattle smuggling, and action will be taken if negligence is found."

He also assured of taking necessary steps, after consulting with BGB and UNO.

A total of 1,697 people have been found infected with the virus, while 29 have died of Covid-19 in the district till Monday.

No progress in probe

FROM PAGE 3
 Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

According to the case statement, Dihan tricked the victim into going to his flat when his family members were away from home and raped her. The victim bled profusely and fell unconscious. Dihan then took her to a hospital to deflect blame, the complainant alleged.

On January 8, Dihan gave his confessional statement before a Dhaka court. Dihan, who recently passed A-levels, is now behind bars.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Department of Public Health Engineering
 Office of the Executive Engineer
 Manikganj District, Manikganj.

Memo No- 1101

Invitation for e-Tender notice
 e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

SL no	e-Tender ID	Work Name	Closing Date & Time
1	587402, 587398, 587394, 587392, 587409, 587430, 587454.	Installation of Deep Tube well 100X38mm with Submersible Pump at Sadar Upazila in Manikganj District under Safe Water Supply Through Out The Country Project of Department of Public Health Engineering.	18-Jul-2021 14:30:00

This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submitted e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and form e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Gazi Fatima Ferdous)
 Executive Engineer
 Department of Public Health Engineering
 Manikganj District, Manikganj.

GD-1307

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
 Road Zone, Boyra, Khulna
 Phone: 041-761378
 Email-acekhu@rhd.gov.bd

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

Tender Notice & ID No.	Name of work	Last selling, closing, opening & security submission date & time
e-GP/22/ADP/ACE Khu/2020-21 (WP-10) (ID No-588084)	Construction of 3 Nos PC/RC Girder Bridge in place of existing Narrow & Damaged Concrete Bridge/Baily Bridge on Highways in Jhenaidah Road Division under Sarak Zone, Khulna.	Last selling date & time: 01-08-2021, Up to 5:00pm Closing, opening date & time: 02-08-2021 At 12:30pm
e-GP/23/ADP/ACE Khu/2020-21 (WP-11) (ID No-588085)	Construction of 6 Nos PC/RC Girder Bridge in place of existing Narrow & Damaged Concrete Bridge/Baily Bridge on Highways in Kushtia Road Division under Sarak Zone, Khulna.	Security submission date & time: 02-08-2021 Up to 12:00pm

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd). The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branches up to above mentioned date & time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Shohtul Islam
 ID No. 602026
 Assistant Engineer, RHD Road Zone, Khulna

Syed Aslam Ali
 ID No. 001049
 Additional Chief Engineer, RHD Road Zone, Khulna

GD-1306

US REPORT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Covid has created 'ideal environment'

AFP, Washington
The United States said that the coronavirus pandemic has created an "ideal environment" for human trafficking to thrive as governments divert resources to the health crisis and traffickers take advantage of vulnerable people.

The State Department's "2021 Trafficking in Persons Report" released Thursday also downgraded several countries and upgraded others for their efforts to combat the scourge of human trafficking.

Releasing the annual report, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said nearly 25 million people worldwide are estimated to be victims of human trafficking.

"Many are compelled into commercial sex work," Blinken said. "Many are forced to work in factories or fields or to join armed groups. 'It's a global crisis,' he said. 'It's an enormous source of human suffering.'

The report ranks countries around the world based on their compliance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000.

Six countries were downgraded from Tier 1 -- the highest ranking -- to Tier 2: Cyprus, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and Switzerland.

Tier 2 countries do not "fully meet" the TVPA's minimum standards "but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance."

Two nations -- Guinea-Bissau and Malaysia -- were added to the Tier 3 list of worst offenders, a list that already included Afghanistan, Algeria, China, the Comoros, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, North Korea, Russia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

Four countries -- Belarus, Burundi, Lesotho and Papua New Guinea -- were removed from Tier 3.

The United States may restrict foreign assistance to Tier 3 nations subject to presidential approval.



A man reacts as he attends an impromptu vigil at an event titled "No Pride in Genocide" in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on Thursday. Canada's national holiday Thursday was marked by a grim reckoning over its colonial history, after more than 1,000 unmarked graves were found near former boarding schools for indigenous children. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN brief

Six killed in J&K unrest

Five suspected rebels and a soldier were killed yesterday in the latest of a series of clashes in Indian Kashmir that have left 17 dead in two weeks, police said. The six died in a gunfight in the Rajpora area of the Kashmir valley that started Thursday night. Police said the five militants were members of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba group. The military said on Thursday that 61 suspected rebels have been killed this year so far. India has also been on the alert since the first known drone attack in Kashmir damaged a small building and injured two personnel at an air base inside the main airport at the southern city of Jammu.

China's new ICBM silo report 'concerning' US

The United States expressed concern on Thursday over a report that China is building more than 100 new silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Washington Post, citing a study of commercial satellite images by a California-based group, reported on Thursday that the silos were being built in a desert near the northwestern city of Yumen. "This buildup, it is concerning," State Department spokesman Ned Price said when asked about the report. "It raises questions about the PRC's intent."



Tycoons' space race

Call it a space race for billionaires: British mogul Richard Branson one-upped rival Jeff Bezos on Thursday, announcing that he too will blast beyond Earth's atmosphere -- as many as nine days ahead of the Amazon founder. The announcement follows Bezo's proclamation in early June that he and his brother would be part of the crew on the first manned flight aboard his company Blue Origin's New Shepard launch vehicle. Virgin Galactic announced Branson would be aboard the SpaceShipTwo Unity, which will go to space as early as July 11, "pending weather and technical checks." Bezos said he would travel to space on July 20.

'Lone wolf' stabs HK cop

A 50-year-old man who died after stabbing a Hong Kong police officer was a "lone wolf" attacker who had been politically "radicalised", the city's security chief said yesterday. Footage of Thursday evening's attack was caught by a local journalist's livestream. It showed a man in a dark t-shirt stabbing an officer in the back. Police said the man -- who has not been publicly identified by authorities -- then stabbed himself in the chest and later died of his wounds.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Quotes of the day



"I'll hand over the presidential sash to whoever wins the election cleanly, not with fraud."

FORMER US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



"We can't allow the pandemic to rob children of their education and development."

HANS KLUGE, WHO'S EUROPE DIRECTOR



"Eventually the public pressure was too much. So you (leaders) started to act (on climate). But acting as in role-playing."

GRETA THUNBERG

War looms as US quits Bagram base

US close to end its longest war in Afghanistan amid fierce Taliban offensive

REUTERS, Kabul

American troops pulled out of their main military base in Afghanistan yesterday, leaving behind a piece of the World Trade Center they buried 20 years ago in a country that the top US commander has warned may descend into civil war without them.

"All American soldiers and members of Nato forces have left the Bagram air base," said a senior U.S. security official on condition of anonymity.

Though a few more troops have yet to withdraw from another base in the capital Kabul, the Bagram pullout brings an effective end to the longest war in American history.

The base, an hour's drive north of Kabul, was where the US military has coordinated its air war and logistical support for its entire Afghan mission. The Taliban thanked them for leaving.

"We consider this withdrawal a positive step. Afghans can get closer to stability and peace with the full withdrawal of foreign forces," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters.

Other Afghans were more circumspect: "The Americans must leave Afghanistan and there should be peace in this country," said Kabul resident Javed Arman. "We are in a difficult situation. Most people have fled their districts and some districts have fallen. Seven districts in Paktia province have fallen and are



now under Taliban control."

It was at Bagram, by a bullet-ridden Soviet-built air strip on a plain hemmed in by the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, that New York City firefighters and police were flown to bury a piece of the World Trade Center in December, 2001, days after the Taliban were toppled for harbouring Osama bin Laden.

It was also here that the CIA ran a "black site" detention centre for terrorism suspects and subjected them to abuse that President Barack Obama subsequently acknowledged as torture.

Later it swelled into a sprawling fortified city for a huge international military force, with fast food joints, gyms and a cafe serving something called "the mother of all coffees". Two runways perpetually roared. Presidents flew in and gave speeches; celebrities came

and told jokes.

An Afghan official said the base would be officially handed over to the government at a ceremony today.

The US defence official said General Austin Miller, the top US commander in Afghanistan "still retains all the capabilities and authorities to protect the force" stationed in the capital, Kabul.

Earlier this week, Miller told journalists in Kabul that civil war for Afghanistan was "certainly a path that can be visualised", with Taliban fighters sweeping into districts around the country in recent weeks as foreign troops flew home.

Two other US security officials said this week the majority of US military personnel would most likely be gone by July 4, with a residual force remaining to protect the embassy. That would be more than two months ahead of the timetable set by Biden, who had promised they would be home by Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of the attack that brought them here.

Washington agreed to withdraw in a deal negotiated last year with the Taliban under Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, and Biden rejected advice from generals to hang on until a political agreement could be reached between the insurgents and the US-backed Kabul government. In exchange for the US withdrawal, the Taliban have promised not to allow international terrorists to operate from Afghan soil.



A boat in distress tries to escape from the Libyan Coast Guard in the Maltese search and rescue zone on Wednesday. Since 2014, more than 20,000 migrants and refugees have died at sea while trying to reach Europe from Africa. More than 17,000 of those have been on the Central Mediterranean which is described by the UN as the most dangerous migration route in the world.

PHOTO: AFP

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A quiet 2nd day of strict

FROM PAGE 1
The fact that it was a rainy weekend was also the reason why people mostly stayed indoors.

Fewer people were penalised for violating the rules yesterday than the day before.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police detained 320 people. Seven others were detained in Barishal and one in Rajshahi, according to Police Headquarters.

At least 550 individuals were detained by police the day before yesterday.

The detainees failed to give acceptable reasons as to why they defied the stay-at-home order.

Police also fined 208 individuals. At least 219 motorists were fined Tk 5.45 lakh.

Officials said police accompanied 1,891 mobile courts across the country. At least 248 vehicles were seized and Tk 27.78 lakh was fined.

Rab teams conducted 166 patrols and set up 145 check posts across the country, said another statement.

Fifty-nine mobile courts accompanied by Rab fined 213 people a total of Tk 2.15 lakh.

Very few cars and some rickshaws were seen around Farmgate, Green Road, Tejgaon, Gulshan, Badda, Banani, Mohakhali, Paltan, Matsya Bhaban, Gulistan, Motijheel and on Dhaka-Aricha highway.

But the picture was different inside neighbourhoods, especially in Old Dhaka. Many residents went to mosques where maintaining social distance is a challenge.

At Karwan Bazar, private company employee Ratan Sarker said, "I didn't find some essential items in any other market. That's why I had to come here."

Most of the shops and markets on the thoroughfares were closed.

Traffic Sergeant Rafiqul Islam, who was at Jahangir Gate, said when the rain stopped

for a few hours, the pressure of traffic slightly increased.

"Some of the people we stopped said they were going to the airport, others said they were going to hospitals," he told The Daily Star.

Several rickshaw-pullers in Farmgate said there were not enough passengers.

"I got only two passengers between 10:00am and 1:00pm," said rickshaw-puller Nazib Ullah in Farmgate.

Outside Dhaka, law enforcers were seen on roads and highways in and around the cities and towns.

In Rajshahi on Thursday, an assistant commissioner (land) in Bagmara upazila broke the arm of a college teacher by beating him with a stick during a mobile court, reports our staff correspondent.

The teacher's wife said the officer later visited her house and apologised yesterday.

Contacted, Assistant Commissioner Mahmudul Hasan said it was a misunderstanding.

The main streets in Rajshahi city were almost empty yesterday, but people were seen in the alleys and at the kitchen markets in the morning.

In Rangpur and Dinajpur, the main roads were almost empty, but there were crowds at kitchen markets.

In Barishal, the metropolitan police organised a Coronavirus Awareness Vehicle procession around noon, reports our correspondent.

Traffic was very thin on Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Tangail highways.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reports that there were hardly any travellers at Shimulia-Banglabazar ferry terminals. Only trucks and ambulances were crossing the Padma.

The "strict lockdown" will end at midnight on July 7.



JULY 03

1904 - Theodor Herzl, Hungarian-born Zionist leader, died. In 1897 he became first president of the World Zionist Organisation.

1928 - John Logie Baird transmitted the world's first colour television pictures in London.

1962 - President de Gaulle of France declared Algeria independent.

1971 - Jim Morrison, lead singer with the American rock group The Doors, died in Paris.

1988 - The American warship Vincennes shot down an Iranian Airbus A300 over the Gulf in the last weeks of the Iran-Iraq war, killing all 290 aboard.

2013 - Egyptian president Mohamed Mursi is overthrown by military.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Sonali Bank Limited
Information Technology Division
(IT Procurement & Maintenance)
Head Office, Dhaka

Memo No. HO/ITD (IT P&M)/purchase/ Date: 29/06/2021

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Name of tender	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	588121	Procurement of Laptop for Sonali Bank Limited.	15/07/2021 3.00pm	15/07/2021 3.15pm
2.	578643	Procurement of Offline-UPS for Sonali Bank Limited.	15/07/2021 12.00pm	15/07/2021 12.15pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to respective time schedule.

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

Areef Md. Taher
Deputy General Manager
Information Technology Division
(IT Procurement & Maintenance)
Sonali Bank Limited
Head Office, Dhaka

GD-1305

Tasnia Farin on “Ladies and Gentlemen”

ASHLEY SHOFTORSHI SAMADDAR

Tasnia Farin is known for hits like “Pocketmar” (2019) and “Valobasa Tarpor” (2020), among others. The talented actor will be seen playing the lead in Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s debut web series “Ladies and Gentlemen”. In a candid chat with The Daily Star, Tasnia Farin talks about her OTT debut, experiences, and upcoming ventures.

How was your experience of working with Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, that too in his web series debut?

I have worked with Mostofa Sarwar Farooki before in advertisements, but this is the first time we have worked together on a proper story. He is a very hard working person, and collaborating with him has left me with a unique experience. He has the ability to transform any script into reality, and while shooting for “Ladies and Gentlemen”, I felt like this is my reality. Thus, I never had to worry too much about acting, as everything came naturally to me.

Tell us a bit about your role. What challenges did you face while projecting this character on screen?

I play the character of Sabila Hossain. I would not call it a proto-feminist story, as there are a lot of other characters that revolve around Sabila’s

being. “Ladies and Gentlemen” projects a lot of social issues that we seldom talk about, but such issues need to be addressed immediately. Sabila is a strong and bold woman and getting into her psychology has been the most difficult part for me while playing her.

The star cast of this production is very unique. How was your shooting experience?

I had never worked with these stars before, but for me, it worked in my favour. As I did not know them personally before, I got to know them through their characters. This helped me relate to my character and the plot in a more realistic way.

Tell us a bit about your most memorable scene from this production. Picking up a scene is difficult as each scene pick different volumes. However, I would pick the climax if I had to pick one. Shooting for the climax was thrilling and exciting at the same time, and I am excited for the audience to watch this.

What are your future projects?

I am currently working with Mizanur Rahman Aryan for his upcoming telefiction “Networker Baire”, which will air on Chorki. I have also been busy with television productions for Eid ul-Adha.



PHOTO: STAR



Mostafizur Noor Imran in “Mohanagar”.

‘Mohanagar’ brings Mostafizur Noor Imran into the limelight

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Hailing from Bagerhat, Mostafizur Noor Imran has a master’s in Drama and Dramatics from Jahangirnagar University. The actor got his start on the theatre stage. He has been a part of the industry for more than 14 years. Yet, it is only recently that he has come into the limelight. Starting from a six-second role in the film, “Guerilla”, Imran made significant appearances in “Alpha”, “Shimantar Choruibhati”, and “Extra” (Iti, Tomari Dhaka), among many other films and television ventures. He also won the award for Best Supporting Actor in North Carolina Film Festival in the USA for Ashraf Shishir’s 2014 film, “Gariwala”. OTT platforms came as a blessing for him. After portraying key roles in web series like “Money Honey” and “Ekattor”, his performance in Hoichoi’s original web series “Mohanagar” as Sub-Inspector Moloy Kumar, has won over the audience. In a conversation with The Daily Star, Imran, known for his method acting skills, spoke about portraying this character, and more.

You are the grandson of renowned Jatra artiste Ali Mansur Pike. Was he an anchor and inspiration for you to enter the world of entertainment?

Perhaps. It is ironic that I never saw him. His death and my birth were around the same time. Although he was an accomplished performer, you would not find any picture of him. But apparently, I look a lot like him. Growing up, I heard many stories of his realistic acting for which he was often either attacked or adored by his audience.

You have been acting for more than 14 years. However, recognition started coming your way only recently. How do you perceive that?

(Laughs) I have worked in close to 28 films altogether, including shorts and full-length features. Most of them did not see the light of day. Actors in our country barely get their deserved recognition. It did bother me initially, but then, I got an



PHOTO: COURTESY

award as best supporting actor, which was honestly inspiring. Currently, I am more focused on quality work, but audience response is still very important. In recent times, OTT platforms have welcomed new forms of storytelling, which makes me hopeful.

Let’s talk about your recent web series, ‘Mohanagar’. How was it working with director and writer Ashfaque Nipun, and the rest of the team?

Ashfaque Nipun, the captain of the ship as I call him, always knew what he wanted. He’d give me his briefing, and I only tried to put forward his vision on screen. I can only hope I did justice to the character and could realise the

director’s vision.

The storyline of ‘Mohanagar’ is confined majorly in a police station. During the shoot, the cast and crew also remained in one space. Did that help your preparation? Fortunately, most of my working experiences have been similar. When the cast and crew remain in close proximity, it definitely adds fineness to the production. Especially as some of us were working with each other for the first time. The fact that Moloy Kumar and other characters that I played recently have stood out amongst star casts is a blessing, wouldn’t you agree?

You have played similar roles in your last few projects. Are you looking for more versatile roles moving forward?

When a certain character gets a lot of appreciation, the actor usually ends up being cast in similar roles in other projects. I personally enjoy experimenting and would only take up a role if it excites me.

You created a repertory theatre group in Bagerhat. Can you tell us a bit about that? I like getting back to my roots. I was fortunate enough to receive education from a reputed institution, but there are many gifted people around the county, who may not get such chances. Talent does not need to be centralised to the capital. Survival is a struggle for many artistes, but I want to see them flourish even from a small town. It would be fantastic if in any way opportunities could reach them through the theatre group.

The author is an art researcher and writer in the making. Email: priyanka.chowdhury@gmail.com.

Reshaping life through Manipuri Dance

ASHLEY SHOFTORSHI SAMADDAR

Manipuri exponent Warda Rihab is one of the most prominent classical dancers globally. While working towards her dream of becoming a dancer, she came across Sony Chowdhury nearly twelve years ago, who dreamt of becoming a Bharatanatyam dancer, just like she once wanted to. In a candid chat with The Daily Star, Warda and her protégé Sony share their how they have grown together over the years.

Despite being a business graduate, Warda chose to travel all the way to Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, with a scholarship of just Rs 6000 when her friends were building their careers in the corporate sector. “During the five years that I spent there under the guidance of my guru ma Kalavati Devi and my teacher Bimbavati Devi, a passion towards dance was instilled in my heart,” she shares. “Without any further delay, I decided to take a leap of faith towards dancing.”

Unlike Warda, Sony hails from the suburbs of Bangladesh. “Under the influence of media, I developed a misconception of glamour being more important than dance for a performer on stage,” says Sony, who first started formal dance training at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology. “However, this perception was fully altered when I joined the institute Dhriti Nartanalaya, spearheaded by Warda. She made me realise how the story behind the

routine is what matters, more than gorgeous clothes or exquisite makeup.”

Warda and Sony have worked together in numerous local and international projects. Sony left for Rabindra Bharati University to seek tutelage from the same gurus who once were guiding lights to Warda. After completing his master’s, Sony decided to return to his roots and establish a stronger ground for Manipuri



Warda Rihab

dancers in South Asia.

Bearing this in mind, the duo started choreographing and performing dance recitals, such as “Alor Pothojathi”, “Shyama”, “Mayar Khela” and “Hajar Bochorer Bangali”, which emerged as some of the most prominent dance dramas in recent times. “We have performed in close to 8 countries together, including America, Bangkok, Turkey, and Australia, besides our homeland. Be it costume designing, choreography or script, Sony has always been around for me,” says Warda.

Over the years, Warda and Sony learned a lot from each other. “I still look up to Sony’s makeup skills as I am not as good at makeup as him, despite several attempts,” laughs Warda.

Sony, who now assists Warda in running Dhriti Nartanalaya, has learned how Manipuri, even its simplest form, must radiate the essence

of literature. He aims to revive the culture and tradition of the Indian subcontinent, presented in the form of dance. “I have been working with Warda for over a decade now and during all this time, I have known how each aspect, starting from the lyrics of the song to the hand gestures, choreography, formation, and costume, have to be in harmony, echoing the same message. Without her help and guidance, I would never have been able to be selected for my fully funded programme under Rabindra Bharati University,” adds Sony.

Over the years, both Warda and Sony have faced their own struggles. “As choreographers, we do not always get the budgeting we expect, but we still do the job from a point of love and respect for dancing. Nevertheless, contemporary dancers have been more inclined towards making dance as their source of income, rather than mastering the dance form they wish to pursue,” mentions Warda. “Due to such trends, coming across well-trained dancers with good postures and techniques have become a rarity.”

On the other hand, Sony has always been subjected to certain stereotypical misconceptions that a male dancer has to endure, especially in South Asian society. “Parents often feel unsafe to allow their children to train with male teachers and we can’t blame them as today, the media is flooded with negative news,” says Sony, who has received the Nriyakumodi Award, India. “I also think people’s sense of punctuality and determination to achieve perfection in dance has lessened over time.”

Warda and Sony have been working actively to keep their shows and Dhriti Nartanalaya running. Alongside online classes, their troupe performed recently at the Mujib Shotoborsho Programme. “We have grown together and now it’s time for us to lead other birds towards the nest of Manipuri dancing,” concludes Warda.



The mentor and student share a picture together.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Sony Chowdhury



Words don't matter: Linguist concludes after researching 'restriction', 'lockdown', 'shutdown' and 'holiday'

STAR TALK-THE-TALK CORRESPONDENT

Loam Chomchom, a local linguist, recently published a peer-reviewed article in an international language-sciences journal following months of research during the pandemic.

The research was based on language and its myriad applications used by policymakers in Chapasthan during the Covid-22 pandemic.

Chapasthan had previously earned worldwide linguistic paradox fame following an opposition party's months-long blockade and "hartal", during which life went on as usual.

This correspondent got hold of Loam Chomchom after two months of repeated emails and phone calls for just a five-minute interview because yours truly is bad at math and could not calculate exactly what 14:30 meant.

"It was not until the pandemic had continued for a year and policymakers were enforcing public holidays -- which really meant everyone should stay at home -- or strict restrictions, or shutdowns where markets were open but schools were shut, that the idea struck me: to really look at the nature of these words and what it meant to the public," said Chomchom, visibly annoyed that I was over an hour late.

He calmed down when I told him an on-time Chapasthani was right up his alley of linguistic paradoxes.

"The Chapasthan policy-makers first imposed a public holiday when the Covid-22 virus was very new and people were terrified, so they actually did not celebrate no holiday but stayed at home. But by the end some people caught on to it and rushed to the beachside town to observe the public holiday. Here is what one of my respondents had to say when I asked him why he took his entire family for a vacation in the middle of a pandemic: 'God will protect us, we have left the matter up to

God and I have read that the virus does not spread much outdoors, plus our very own government, who we trust so much, did call this a public holiday. What does one do during a holiday?'"

The real confusion started when the pandemic rolled on to another year and people starved for entertainment were put under what the government called "strict restrictions on movement". For the first week, everything looked serious, everything was closed but soon enough the government opened up malls because Chapasthan's biggest festival was around the corner.

So, people were confused yet again. "Do they go shopping? Do they now go shopping while maintaining strict restrictions? And how do they go? Public transport was closed. Did these restrictions apply to only those who were poor and needed buses because those with private cars were zooming by?" asked Chomchom.

The restrictions then gave way to a "shutdown". That continued for a while, always with a window in between for people to rush out of the city. With days to go before the shutdown ended, the government then imposed a "strict lockdown". But to bridge the gap between the shutdown and the strict lockdown, they imposed an "interim lockdown" during which people could shop for toothpastes and shower gel, but not for shoes and mobile phones.

"What do these terms mean?" asked a confused Chomchom, who had made it his life's work to explore the relationship between signifiers and signified.

When the "strict lockdown" eventually went into effect, people were detained for going out because some thought it would be similar to a previous "lockdown" and others thought it was a "holiday" and wanted to see how it was going, because they did not have other sources of entertainment.

"It is my conclusion, after a lifetime of research, that words do not matter," said Chomchom, and thanked me for being so punctual.



Chattogram, Sylhet at war after mother with heritage from both places wins Ms Dhaka award

GLOBAL CITIZEN CORRESPONDENT

The internet has been up in arms after a stay-at-home mom decided to show the world who the real champion is.

Most people have been applauding her boldness and courage for showcasing mom-power to the wider world.

Everything she has done so far has won applause and moms around the country have been rallying around her achievements. They appreciate how much she has done to elevate the image of stay-at-home-mums in the eyes of the world.

The internet however was torn, when her mom-identity was stolen by a certain

media house in Sylhet, which claimed that her parenting techniques and her heritage and style were uniquely Sylheti, thus putting Sylhet on the global map.

One of the leading dailies of Sylhet published an article titled "Sylheti Contestant's brainy play-time idea had top judges on the fence, but internet was all praises".

Chattogram-bashis would have none of this. Their news portals immediately picked up on this fatal fault and were quick to claim how she is an actual Chatgaiya and her children are growing up with the wonderful value system only a Chatgaiya could instil.

In a recent episode of MasterMom Dhaka, Mishwar prepared a brainy

playtime idea where she let her child play out in the rain and make sandcastles with the dirt outside. Now the judges going by the norm in the country could not quite stomach the idea. They questioned how she would protect her child from the imminent fever and runny nose as all other contestants went the traditional route of covering their and their child's heads with their hands and running for safety.

Netizens rushed to her rescue and defended her saying children must learn to be resilient and this was indeed a fun play-time idea.

Mishwar herself identifies as a Dhaka-born mother of three, with heritage from both Sylhet and Chattogram.

There lie multiple hidden treasures under every street: WASHA

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Some of us heard of the story of the old farmer telling his sons to dig up their field to find hidden treasure.

While his sons, and most of us, did not take the farmer's words seriously, the Water and Sewage Hoarding Authority (WASHA) evidently took the moral of the story to heart.

Or at least what they thought was the moral of the story.

Since its inception, WASHA has believed there must be some hidden treasures underneath every street. Whenever a new street is constructed, WASHA comes to take care of it with some spades, shovels and whatever digs well.

"A newly constructed road is like a newly born baby to us. Just like the baby is a treasure to its parents, the road is a treasure to us, which must be found. We believe, there lie great treasures under every public street, which people trample every day. Should it go undiscovered?" a WASHA official asked.

But the people walking, driving and rickshaw-riding on those very streets have not taken too kindly to WASHA activities.

"We want WASHA to stop this gold digging, I mean street digging. People and vehicles cannot move, water gets stuck and sometimes passers-by plummet straight to the centre of the earth," said a local resident who lives next to a road that has been under WASHA's observation for a potential treasure hunt.

"Also, why do they always do this when it rains?" asked the indignant inhabitant.

WASHA however is reluctant to stop their never-ending treasure hunt.

A single street being dug multiple times shows the immense perseverance of WASHA.

"Maybe we haven't found the treasure yet, but we will definitely find it one day. Every street is of the same importance to us, be it in the farthest corner of the city. The world's biggest companies dig soil to find gold, diamond and other expensive materials. We are trying to reach their level. People's hardships are temporary; our efforts are permanent!" said another WASHA official.

"It has public benefits. If we dig up the treasure, we can invest it in the city's waterlogging problem. If we stop, how will the problem be solved? You can't spell waterlogging without WASHA."

When asked about why the digging is done almost exclusively during the rainy season, he said, "It's science. When there is a lot of rain, the treasure may float to the top, like other material we are supposed to deal with."



2 LOCK 2 DOWN

SHUT DOWN EDITION ONLY IN DHAKA

Oxygen supply disruptions kill patients in Satkhira

Authorities must investigate the failures that caused this to prevent any recurrence

We are shocked and saddened to hear of the deaths of at least five Covid-19 patients in Satkhira Medical College Hospital after disruptions to their oxygen supply on Wednesday night. According to hospital employees, there was a dip in gas pressure in the evening since the vendor had failed to deliver the oxygen on time. An official of the vendor has affirmed that the delay was caused at the Benapole Port, through which the company imports oxygen to Bangladesh from India. We are yet to receive any information on what caused this delay.

A report in this daily suggests that on average, the hospital needs around 6,000 litres a day. Hospital officials said they have a 20,000-litre oxygen reservoir, but they informed the supplier on Wednesday morning when the reserve came down to 2,400 litres. Why did they not make attempts to refill the reservoir before it became so critically low? Given the current situation in Satkhira, where the positivity rate was still as high as 42 percent on June 30, why were prior arrangements not made to ensure that the hospital has a continuous and adequate store of oxygen supply?

The civil surgeon of Satkhira has suggested that the dip in oxygen cannot be the reason behind the deaths of patients since necessary oxygen cylinders were added to ensure uninterrupted supply and the pressure went down for only 15-20 minutes. However, a patient's son told *The Daily Star* that his father died from breathing difficulties soon after the supply was interrupted. These families have suffered a devastating loss, and their concerns should not be dismissed. The death of even one person from a lack of oxygen supply should be treated with the utmost gravity.

Unfortunately, in the face of burgeoning Covid-19 infections, such incidents are becoming increasingly common. The news of the Satkhira incident was quickly followed by another report, on Friday, saying that seven patients had died of coronavirus within 13 hours at Bogura's specialised Government Mohammad Ali Hospital. Relatives have complained that patients died due to a lack of adequate oxygen support.

We urge the authorities to conduct immediate investigations into the causes of deaths of these patients and ensure that such failures do not occur again. It is clear that we are now smack in the middle of the second wave of Covid-19 in Bangladesh. Within the past week or so, we have seen the highest number of daily Covid-19 cases in the country, as well as the highest daily death toll. Given the severity of the situation, smooth operations at hospitals across the country, especially in the districts most affected, should be the government's number one priority. Now is the time for the authorities to put all their weight behind our overburdened health sector and ensure that the hospitals are able to operate at capacity and beyond.

Woman wrongfully jailed for 24 years!

Accused uncle, policeman must be punished and the legal system must be freed of such manipulations

We are relieved to know that Piara Akhter, a woman who languished in jail for 24 years despite having committed no crimes, has been finally released from jail. She was in fifth grade when she was arrested and convicted for a crime she didn't commit. Trying a child before a regular court instead of a juvenile court is illegal, as is coercing a child into making a false confession. Falsifying her birth date in the case documents was the last nail in the coffin. All of these crimes have been committed by officials involved in Piara's case.

According to our report, she was only 12 years old when a policeman came to her school one day, took her to the police station, and made her give a false statement saying that she had killed her cousin. At the time of the incident, Piara had no guardians to speak on her behalf as her father was dead and her brother was working in Dhaka. Next thing she knew, she was behind the bars with convicted criminals.

This incident highlights how easily both the legal system and the law enforcement process can be manipulated in our country, leading to such a harrowing tale of wrongful conviction. The main culprit in Piara's case was her uncle, who allegedly had a land dispute with her family. Blaming Piara for murdering his child and taking away over two decades of her life, with the assistance of a corrupt policeman, was the consequence of a personal vendetta.

We urge the authorities to ensure that the accused uncle and policeman are tried soon and given proper punishment for their crimes. Besides, the legal system and the police department have to find out how laws are so easily defied in our country and remove the legal loopholes so that no one else has to go through the trauma that Piara has. We laud the local administration's decision to provide Piara with a house to live in and a job to earn her livelihood. But these things won't bring significant change in her plight if society at large doesn't help her overcome the trauma and hopelessness she suffered all these years. We hope Piara will get all the support she needs to restart her life with dignity.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Unity can save us

The crisis we have been facing for nearly one year and a half due to the coronavirus has been really unprecedented—a situation greatly affecting our financial and mental health conditions. However, to prevent a further cataclysmic impact of the virus, what we all—both the authorities and civilians—badly need is to act wisely and in unison instead of blaming each other. Otherwise, we may have to experience the same harsh conditions that India has been facing for some time now.

Md. Rasel Sheikh, Uttara

100 YEARS OF DHAKA UNIVERSITY

Mother of All Bangladeshi Universities



BLOWN' IN THE WIND

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

THE institution that one attends for education is often attributed with the honorific title *alma mater*, literally meaning "generous or nourishing mother". The phrase "*alma mater studiorum*" (nourishing mother of studies) was first used in 1088 as a motto by the oldest university in the Western world, the University of Bologna. *Alma* (nourishing/nurturing), a traditional adjective used for several goddesses in classical mythology, was appropriated to symbolise the Virgin Mary in Christianity by the Catholic monks responsible for the creation of the university. Universities ever since have been considered mother figures, and the "one who is nourished"—i.e. a graduate—is, therefore, referred to as an *alumnus*.

The University of Dhaka (DU), now celebrating its centenary, is not my *alma mater*. I joined there as a faculty member in 2011, after serving 17 years at another public university, Jahangirnagar University (JU). At the time of my recruitment, the then vice-chancellor told me that I was the first non-DU student to be recruited by the English department in its 90 years' history. While there are reasons to be proud of such an appointment, it is indicative of a very exclusive and insular nature of the university, which is far from ideal. At a personal level, I had every reason to be proud though, especially because almost all my teachers at JU were from the university I joined. The *alma mater* of those who instilled in me the passion for higher education is DU. In that sense, DU is my grand *alma mater*. To a great extent, DU remains a mother institution for all other institutions in Bangladesh. Behind the exponential growth in the number of universities, the signature of the oldest university is paramount. That's the historical prerogative of being the first university in the country.

The mother metaphor is further apt for Dhaka University as it has been the site that nourished the birth of a nation-state. The glorious role of student protest, intellectual support in creating national consciousness, and the ultimate

sacrifice made by the teachers and students alike made Dhaka University the epicentre of the tremor that ushered in the independence of the country in 1971. A similar upsurge in the 90s ended the autocratic regime that was choking our national freedom. There has been a recent tendency, however, to divide the history of the university in pre- and post-independence categories. The rumination over the first 50 years of the university inevitably leads to the slighting

exile. The lack of ownership is a worrying sign—and that, for me, is the greatest weakness of the university.

All the great universities of the world thrive because of their strong alumni support network. They bring in their industry support to enhance research collaboration, funding and internship opportunities for students, and scholarly inputs for the growth of a university. I am sure this is being done in many informal channels through departmental initiatives

surrounding the past of a university through citing the names of some celebrity professors who were part of its early days, the demand now is to make sure that the university redefines its purpose. I remember the prime minister in her inaugural speech marking the hundred-year celebrations of Dhaka University urged the authorities to come up with a strategic vision. I know that a dedicated team is working on that strategy paper. There is a national accreditation council that has drafted a national quality framework under the umbrella of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

These strategies are set to be adopted to benchmark the universities against global standards. The challenge, however, is to ensure a local and indigenous flavour of education. The models agreed upon are very West-leaning, keeping the international parameters prescribed by overseas consultants. The uniqueness of Dhaka University must be highlighted by the stakeholders concerned. These include present and former students, faculty members, administration, and employers. All of them must come together to decide what is good for the institution. Dhaka University must become a model institution for others the way it was envisioned by its founders.

It needs to promote and celebrate excellence not only for itself, but also for the benefit of society. Dhaka University's benefits so far have been measured in socio-cultural and political units. The real impact of the university will be felt once the university realigns its curricula to integrate teaching and learning with the needs of employers; its impact will be felt when it dedicates its research units to knowledge production and promotion for posterity and sustainability; its real impact will be felt when the taxpayers are assured that the money that they are contributing to develop human capital is well-spent—that the graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skill-sets necessary to advance the university, the community, and the country forward. With such a vision in mind, the alumni of the university need to critically engage with the university to prepare it for its journey ahead and secure its reputation as their *alma mater*.

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



ILLUSTRATION: THE DAILY STAR

of the university in its second phase. The relegation in world ranking, the lack of vision in leadership, callous remarks by individuals in significant leadership positions, the news of teachers engaged in unethical activities, including plagiarism and corruption, may be cited as examples to suggest the downward slide. As a member of the fraternity, I cannot shy away from my responsibility of not doing enough to prove these accusations wrong.

What ails me, however, is the overarching, overgeneralised claims to dismiss the site of national pride! This is often done by people who have been nourished by this very university before embarking upon distinguished careers elsewhere. I find it distasteful when critics resort to lampooning in place of constructive criticism. If you have an ageing mother who needs support, our culture demands that we take care of her—not send her to an old home or

of Dhaka University. There has not been any formal process to involve the views of the stakeholders, however. One may mention the quota of registered graduates in the University Senate; however, the politicisation of the senate has reduced the body to a mere stamping agency during the budget meeting in a fiscal year and a VC-nominating agency in every leap year.

To think that the evils lie only in the second half of the university's existence is a fallacy. A 1929 report by the Hartog Committee, chaired by the university's first vice-chancellor Philip Joseph Hartog (1920-25), mentions the "waste and ineffectiveness" of the educational system that was initially trying to separate its needs along religious lines. Professor A.G. Stock's memoir talks about the abysmal standard of English and points out various oddities in the admission and examination processes.

While there is a charm in myth-making

Why China and India are wooing Bangladesh



SYED MUNIR KHASRU

BEHIND the dark, post-liberation period, its economy is weathering the pandemic well. The International Monetary Fund has projected a 4 percent rise in gross domestic product for 2022, whereas India's could decline by 10.3 percent. Bangladesh's annual growth is 8 percent and per capita income stands at USD 2,227 in the 2020-21 financial year—12 percent higher than India. Add to this a giant market of 164.69 million people, growing manufacturing prowess, and availability of cheap labour, it is no wonder that the country is attracting renewed attention.

But geopolitics also plays a part here. Friction between emerging global superpower China and regional superpower India is elevating Bangladesh's regional importance. Located at the head of the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is in a key strategic position, with both Asian powers eyeing to build ports in the country to boost their presence in the Indian Ocean region.

Chinese aid, Indian historical ties India-Bangladesh relations have had their fair share of ups and downs. Since the government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to power in 2009, ties with India have greatly improved, with Bangladesh now India's largest trading partner in the sub-continent, with bilateral trade pegged at USD 9.5 billion in 2019-20.

Both governments have undertaken initiatives for boosting connectivity, while cooperation in the power sector has resulted in private Indian companies investing USD 9 billion in Bangladesh. Ms Hasina has also rooted out cross-border anti-India insurgency activities from Bangladesh and strengthened defence cooperation.

However, unresolved water-sharing issues, India's border killings of Bangladeshi nationals, controversial laws on Muslims in India and expulsion

of alleged illegal Bangladeshi migrants remain sources of friction.

Meanwhile, China is considered an "all-weather friend" by many in Bangladesh. A Chinese move to exempt tariffs for 97 percent of Bangladesh products is a welcome boost in Covid-stricken times for bilateral trade, which stood at USD 18 billion in 2019. Bangladesh now accounts for 20 percent of China's arms sales. Bangladesh is also the recipient of billions in loans and other assistance under

is being replicated in other parts of South Asia—a source of concern for India.

Earlier last month, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena amid Delhi's growing concerns over the proposed Chinese-funded Colombo Port City project. Despite India's support for Bhutan against China over a still-unresolved border dispute, it has not stilled rumblings about reducing Bhutan's dependence on India in

whose economy is heavily dependent on energy exports shipped from the Middle East, is driven by its need to ensure it has friendly relations with littoral states around the Indian ocean.

From India's perspective, the building of Chinese relationships—and the ports and other facilities that come with it—with key countries along the maritime route is a threat, with the likes of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives being part of a strategic "string of pearls" to encircle India and choke its power projection.

Seen in this light, China's BRI is a tool to augment its foothold in South Asia by creating economic dependence, as it did in Sri Lanka. Chinese support for Bangladesh under the BRI framework, it is argued, is part of the same game to undermine India's security and strategic interests.

India too has been wooing Bangladesh in line with its "Act East" policy. Among other things, Delhi is trying to get Dhaka to join the Indo-Pacific "Quad", an informal strategic alliance involving the United States, India, Japan, and Australia. This has elicited a strong reaction from Beijing, with the Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe on a recent visit to Dhaka calling for joint efforts to resist "powers from outside the region setting up a military alliance in South Asia".

Dealing with two giants Bangladesh has been deftly balancing its relations with the two Asian giants, making it clear that it would not be choosing between the two. While trying to address India's geopolitical concerns, Bangladesh has steadfastly maintained its right to maintain economic cooperation as well as close defence ties with China.

While China has strengthened its economic ties with Bangladesh by bankrolling development projects, India has the benefit of a shared history, values, culture and connectivity with Bangladesh.

The onus is now on the two giants to prove whose strategic objectives are more aligned with the long-term interests of Bangladesh. For now, the country can enjoy the attention it gets from the two rivals. By playing its cards wisely, South Asia's stellar performer can safeguard its economic and strategic interests.

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Friction between China and India is elevating Bangladesh's regional importance.

PHOTO: AFP

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

It is building its third largest Payra deep-sea port with Chinese assistance while opening up Mongla and Chattogram ports to the Chinese, after access was granted to India. A USD 250 million contract to build an airport terminal in Sylhet city was awarded to China over Indian competitors.

And as India drags its feet on water-sharing negotiations for the Teesta River, the lifeline to north-western Bangladesh, the "Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project" was inked last year with support from China for a USD 1 billion engineering scheme. That said, moves by Bangladesh to assert cost control on some Chinese-backed rail projects have led to friction.

Sino-India tug of war in South Asia China's growing influence in Bangladesh

the Himalayan kingdom. In the Maldives, although there has been a renewal of an "India First" policy, China's expanding footprint there, such as the USD 200 million China-Maldives Friendship Bridge, has ensured its position in the country.

With the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, the stakes for both India and China's regional security concerns have increased. Though India enjoys cordial relations with the current Afghan regime, China has the advantage of deeper pockets and good ties with Pakistan, a key player in Afghan geopolitics. While Beijing has diplomatic ties with Kabul, it has also been hedging its bets by building up contacts with the Afghan Taliban.

Politics of self-interest

The wooing of Bangladesh by China and India is part of a bigger tussle over regional and maritime security. China,

Farewell, My Friend

A tribute to Mohiuddin Ahmed



NIAZ ZAMAN

MY first meeting with Mohiuddin Ahmed was in 1956, at a dinner in his brother's house. His brother, Kabir Ahmed, was what in Bangla we call the "bhaira bhai" of SAM Khan, my father's colleague in the civil service, and the friendship of the two families extended to include him. It was not really a family dinner and I still do not know why I was invited and not my brother, who was closer in age to Mohiuddin. Among all the grown-ups, I felt quite out of place. And then this strapping came up to me and asked whether I would like to see his brother's art collection.

There were no paintings in our house, and my brother's interest in art—nurtured by Munni aunty, who later became Mohiuddin's bhairi—was frowned upon by my stern mother.

I was not interested in seeing paintings, but it was a relief to leave the grown-ups so I took up the offer and went off to see the paintings—some of them by his bhairi. I do not remember the names of the artists or even the paintings that I saw. Through the home education that my brother and I had got before we went to Viqarunnisa and St Gregory's, we had been introduced to many European artists as part of an art appreciation course. But these paintings were nothing like the ones I had seen in our books.

When I left that evening, little did I know that the thin teenager would, in later years, become my friend, publisher, and mentor. And little did he know either that evening that he would become one of Bangladesh's most respected publishers, publishing quality books in different genres.

My second meeting with Mohiuddin—I never got to call him by his pet name Moin, which his friends Ameena Saiyid and Urvasi Butalia, who had worked with him at the

Oxford University Press (OUP), did—was in Karachi, 1971. It was again at a dinner. The late Ejazul Huq, better known as Emran to his friends, suggested one evening that if I was free, I might want to meet some friends of his at the house of Martin Pick, who was working at OUP. There would be other Bengalis as well. In 1971, surrounded by family who did not quite understand the reality of what was happening in East Pakistan, it would be a relief to meet Bengalis.

One of the Bengalis there was Mohiuddin Ahmed, at the time Martin's colleague at OUP, Karachi. I do not remember what else we talked about, but I still remember that he showed me an alphabet book by Dr Seuss. "Try to write something like this," he said. No, I never tried to write like Dr Seuss, but I did try to get Dr Seuss's wild and crazy books for my sons.

I returned to East Pakistan in October and lost touch with Mohiuddin. And then, one day, shortly after Bangladesh had become independent, he contacted me. He had started University Press and needed some help with a manuscript he was interested in. What was I supposed to do? Be a reader. Check content errors, make sure there were no discrepancies, and correct language mistakes. Comment on the overall quality of the book. "But I know nothing about law," I said, on seeing the manuscript. And though I had by that time had an article published in "Dacca University Studies", I had no idea what proofreading entailed. He showed me the most common marks I needed to know and I was off. Slightly familiar with footnotes and endnotes, I had no idea that the discipline of law had a different system of documentation.

Mohiuddin passed on many manuscripts to me to review and edit. Apart from content and language errors, he also asked me to check if there was anything libellous in a manuscript, anything for which a publisher might get into trouble. He often went over a passage with me, not wanting to distort what the writer had said but trying to rephrase the passage so that neither writer nor publisher



PHOTO: LATIF HOSSAIN

Mohiuddin Ahmed (1944-2021).

would get into trouble.

In 1993, Mohiuddin Ahmed became my publisher when he published the revised edition of "The Art of Kantha Embroidery". The next year, the University Press Limited (UPL) brought out "Princess Kalabati and Other Tales". "It would be nice," I told him casually one day, "if the book were illustrated by a young person." He took me seriously and got his daughter Shamarukh to illustrate the book, which she did beautifully. He went on to publish several of my books: a book on Partition novels, another on rickshaws and rickshawallahs, anthologies of translated Bangladeshi writings, and even a culinary book (he was just in the process of accepting an edition of Siddika Kabir's book in English). As a writer, I learned how particular

he was about sending annual accounts to his writers of books sold, followed by a royalty cheque a few months later (Bangla Academy pays a lump sum after a book is published, but many other publishers—some quite renowned in Bangladesh—do not provide any account of books sold, let alone royalty). As an editor, I learned the absolute necessity of getting copyright clearance from authors and translators.

Did Mohiuddin publish everything I offered him? No. There was a book of political essays he rejected outright. The rejection made no difference in our relationship. I respected his judgment. The essays were never published as a book. But another book which he rejected—Syed Waliullah's "Tree Without Roots", which had been out of print for decades—did not get discarded.

Mohiuddin had often suggested to Firdous Azim and me that we start an imprint like Kali for Women. He would assist us, even distribute the books for us. Though Firdous and I had even had the name of the imprint and did bring out one book together under that name, we never got to start a women's publication house. Persuaded by Syed Waliullah's cousin, who looked after his literary interests in Bangladesh, and accepting the offer that Mohiuddin had earlier made to Firdous and me, I took up the task of publishing the book—as well as other books by Syed Waliullah and others. And he did give me all the help he could.

He explained to me how to calculate the retail price of a book. He taught me what a page should look like, using a scale to make things clear. He told me about the importance of "white space". And, true to his promise, UPL distributed my publications. Afterwards, he told me that he regretted my becoming a publisher, as I had no time to read manuscripts for him.

Mohiuddin had become a publisher after undergoing rigorous training at the OUP at Oxford. He had been set to work at the press, and so had both theoretical and practical

knowledge of putting a book together. How I wish that he had written a book to guide other publishers!

The onset of Parkinson's about 20 years ago gradually slowed him down. He would still be found visiting the Ekushey Boi Mela in his wheelchair, at the occasional seminar and conference, at a book launch. But he stopped going to the old office at Motijheel where his friends or writers would gather at about lunch time. He always had enough lunch to share with two others—a simple lunch of vegetables, daal, and chapatis of brown atta. If more people dropped in than he had food for, he would immediately order naan and tikka from a nearby café.

The last few years, he had to spend more and more time at home. The commute to Motijheel was too long. The new office on Pragati Sarani—which his daughter Shamarukh Mohiuddin had set up so that he could have his office there—had been badly damaged by a fire and became unusable. He also had to devote a lot of time to physiotherapy. Busy with other things, I could only visit him occasionally, always remembering to pick up lemon tarts which we enjoyed together with tea and other snacks that had been prepared at home.

In March last year, Covid put an end to those occasional visits. I missed those visits. I wondered how he was coping. Then I learned that he had developed Covid. I was worried, but he returned home. However, this last time, when he went to the hospital, he did not return. When he passed away on June 22, I could not go to see him. I myself was unwell. All I could do was sit at home and remember a friend whom I had known for 65 years, a friend who had become my publisher and a publisher to the nation, who had been honoured by the community of publishers as "Publisher Emeritus"—a great man who had by his willpower and determination tried to make Bangladeshi publishing professional and ethical. Rest in peace, my friend.

Niaz Zaman is an academic, writer and publisher.

50 Years of Bangladesh Constitution: Intentions, Institutions and Implementations



ASIF NAZRUL

THE beginning of our constitutional discourse was promising. The 1972 Constituent Assembly (CA) of the newly-liberated Bangladesh produced the constitution in only nine months, a much shorter period

compared to other countries except a few like the United States.

It's undeniable that a number of factors helped in that process. For example, the CA was entrusted with only framing the constitution (unlike some others such as the Indian CA of 1946, which had a concurrent function of making laws), and there were few scopes of dissent thanks to the near-absence of opposition members in the CA (3 out of 403). But the real success of the CA was the quality of the 1972 constitution.

The 1972 or original constitution had progressive provisions such as inclusion of secularism among the fundamental principles of state policy at a time when no other South Asian country had such provisions. It also had provisions that were ambitious (i.e. Article 77 on the office of Ombudsman), efficient (Article 44 on the right to enforcement of fundamental rights) and promising (Article 8 requiring interpretation of the constitution and other laws in light of the fundamental principles including socio-economic rights)—such provisions were absent in the majority of contemporary constitutions.

These do not mean that the 1972 constitution was perfect. In particular, it contained a few provisions inconsistent with the spirit of good governance such as concentration of too much power in the Prime Minister (Article 48, 55) and denial

of free exercise of voting in the parliament (Article 70). It, however, made provisions for its amendment (Article 142) which offered windows of opportunity for addressing its deficiencies or modifying it to reflect later developments.

Many constitutions in the world, in fact, have progressed through their amendments in later periods. Such amendments include provisions for protection of human rights (First 10 amendments to US constitution, Right to Information in Belgium, Mexico, Norway, etc.); strengthening of good governance (18th amendment to Pakistan constitution); decentralisation of power and ensuring people's participation (108-112 amendments to Indian constitution); enforceability of social and economic rights (1996 South African constitution, right to water in some countries such as Ecuador and Costa Rica); and contemporising of the constitution (1990 Zaire vs. 1998 DR of Congo constitution).

There are also a few examples of regression by substitution of a constitution with an inferior one or weakening it by later amendments, which is a known feature of some African constitutions.

It is, however, generally agreed that the purpose of constitutional reform should not be to raze, destroy or weaken its foundation, but to modify and strengthen it to reflect new circumstances and correct the deficiencies in the past and also to adapt to the needs of various times.

In terms of a constitutional journey, Bangladesh, unfortunately, falls into the wrong category of countries. Despite its promising beginning, it has regressed on many accounts in the last 50 years. As outlined below, it has also largely failed to reflect contemporary advances and to realise institutional development as inspired or instructed in the 1972 constitution.

Regressive amendments

Out of the 17 amendments done so far, only a few—like the 1st amendments (made to ensure justice for victims of international crimes) and the 12th amendment (which reinstated parliamentary democracy)—aimed at achieving pro-people reforms, while others were mostly self-serving efforts undermining the fundamental constitutional principles. For example, the 4th amendment was made to establish a one-party autocratic regime, and the 5th and 7th amendments were orchestrated to legalise Martial Law rules. Other amendments included insertion of Islam as a state religion resulting in its awkward co-existence with secularism (8th amendment), denying safeguards to arrest in cases of preventive detention (2nd amendment), repealing of the provisions for non-party caretaker government for conducting free and fair election (15th amendment).

Failure to reflect contemporary developments

Among other things, the 15th amendment to Bangladesh constitution has added a provision for protection of environment and biodiversity (Article 18A). This is a rare example where Bangladesh has taken account of emerging constitutional norms of global relevance. In the majority of other cases, however, the discussions and debates on constitutional reforms ignore contemporary constitutionalism on issues such as enforceability of economic rights like right to food and water, environmental obligations and essentials of good governance like objective appointment in the constitutional bodies, and ensuring individual accountability of the members of the cabinet.

To illustrate it, let's consider that since the entry into force of the constitution of South Africa in 1996, a growing consensus has developed over the desirability of judicial

enforcement of economic rights in a good number of countries in Latin America, East Europe as well as in India. There are genuine progresses as well; for example, right to education is now judicially enforceable in India and Pakistan, which is not the case in Bangladesh.

Omissions

Bangladesh constitution has delegated to parliament the task of furthering its objectives by making laws on a number of important issues, including for empowering the subordinate courts to enforce fundamental rights (44), elaborating qualifications for the appointment of judges in higher judiciary (95), strengthening the parliamentary committees (76) and appointment in the election commission (118). None of this has been complied with in the last 50 years.

Apart from parliamentary efforts, constitutional provisions may be advanced and strengthened through a progressive interpretation of the provisions. Among others, the judiciaries of India and Pakistan have taken such steps, not only for strengthening their independence, but also for expansion of human rights and development of democratic institutions.

In this respect as well, our success is limited. In constitutional cases, our apex court generally appeared to be more keen on invalidating the Martial Law regimes from decades ago than on scrutinising the apparent constitutional violations by the incumbents. In doing so, they sometimes arrive at such decisions that lack judicial insight and objectivity.

For example, the much-hyped 5th amendment judgment declared the legalisation of martial law regime by the 5th amendment as invalid, but at that same time, it retained some of the provisions of martial law, including those that benefit the higher judiciary judges themselves. The 5th

and 7th amendment judgments also did little to enhance and beef up our democratic institutions.

As Sir Ivor Jennings remarked in "Law and Constitution": the constitution consists of institutions and not of papers that describe them. No one could disagree with him and therefore, in my view, the most serious failure in our constitutional discourse of the last half-century is the failure to build institutions of accountability on the basis of the constitutional mandate.

Successive governments of Bangladesh have rather tried to dismantle the institutions such as higher judiciary, the election commission, the cabinet and the parliamentary committees for self-serving reasons. For example, they have strengthened their grip on higher judiciary by exploiting the lack of legal provisions on adequate qualification for appointment in the higher judiciary, criterion on elevation of High Court judges to the Appellate Division, or appointment requirements of the Chief Justice.

It is difficult to be optimistic at the end of this discussion. But, in deeper observations, we may find some reasons to believe that better days of constitutionalism would arrive soon.

Our Constitution has survived 50 years of onslaught and its basic foundations—i.e. the high morals of the liberation war—are still there. Moreover, the aspirations and resolve of the people to build an egalitarian and welfare state have kept on solidifying for years.

In achieving all these, the 1972 constitution will undoubtedly continue to inspire, enlighten, and embolden the present and future generations of Bangladesh.

Dr Asif Nazrul is Professor and Chairman, Department of Law, University of Dhaka.

QUOTABLE Quote

EMILY DICKINSON
(1830–1886)
American poet

A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Bull's counterpart
- 5 Stationery store stack
- 9 Latin land
- 10 Saucer pilot
- 12 Merchandise
- 13 As of
- 14 Stuck
- 16 Forest female
- 17 Tom Collins base
- 18 Stuck
- 20 Banquette's cousin
- 22 Annual race, for short
- 23 Hunter of myth
- 25 Timber wolf
- 28 Finland

neighbor

- 32 Tangled
- 34 Some magazine pages
- 35 Feel bad
- 36 Peeved
- 38 Blue egg tender
- 40 Croc's kin
- 41 Night sound
- 42 Sonneteer's Muse
- 43 Talks and talks
- 44 Lip

DOWN

- 1 Frosh topper
- 2 Fallible
- 3 Battling god
- 4 More coarse
- 5 Some elbows
- 6 Boxing legend
- 7 Meal, in slang
- 8 Brief time
- 9 Sticks
- 11 Impoverished
- 15 Cleek
- 19 Storage sites
- 21 Captured
- 24 Power failures
- 25 Deceitful bunch
- 26 Like some soups
- 27 Panama explorer
- 29 Seasonal store employees
- 30 Dolts
- 31 Cartoon dog
- 33 Low cards in pinochle
- 37 Mystery writer
- Woods
- 39 Nettle

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

R O M A T E M E T S
 E L A T E E R A T O
 P I K E S A I K E N
 E V E C O N C E R T
 L E S S O N S S E A
 S T O R E S T O P
 H A T D U H
 S T E P S O L E S
 T A G T R O U P E S
 A B R A H A M R I P
 L L A M A E L I Z A
 L E D O N D O Z E N S
 D E S K B E S

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

ROCKY IS OUR BEST HITTER

BUT HE NEVER MAKES IT OUT OF THE FIRST INNING

YOU'RE #0*#* BLIND, UMP!

YOU'RE OUT OF THE GAME, CHUMP!

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

WELL, "GOOD OL' STAN" HAVN'T CHANGED A BIT.

COME ON, WANIDA, GIVE HIM A CHANCE!

NONE OF US ARE THE SAME PANCHUHEADS TODAY THAT WE WERE IN COLLEGE.

WEDGIE!!

GLAD TO HEAR IT.

ENGLAND EXPECT but Ukraine believe

REUTERS, Manchester



Whereas Gareth Southgate's team went into their last-16 tie with Germany amid relentless reminders of historic failures against their old rivals and the fear of yet another, they are simply expected to beat Ukraine in Rome on Saturday.

It is not only the media and fans in England, buoyed by Tuesday's victory at Wembley, that makes the Three Lions clear favourites -- any objective analysis of the two teams would reach the same conclusion.

England are ranked third in the world while Ukraine are 24th.

The average player value of the England team is 57.8 million euros -- while Ukraine's is 6.6 million euros.

England's captain Harry Kane is valued at over 100 million euros and Ukraine's top player Oleksandr Zinchenko is worth less than a quarter of that amount.

In the group stage of the tournament, England were unbeaten and finished top of their group while Ukraine lost twice and finished third, the only team with three points to make it to the knockout stage. This is their first Euro quarter-final match while it will be England's sixth.

Ukraine have conceded six goals

in their four matches while England have let in none and in seven meetings between the two nations, England have won four times and Ukraine just once.

"It's pretty clear [that England are favourites] -- you've seen them, the players they have, and the level they play at," said Ukraine defender Mykola Matviyenko.

"So, yes, it will be difficult but I'll say it again: anything is possible at this stage, and we believe," he added.

While Southgate's men go into this game still buzzing from the electric atmosphere at Wembley, Ukraine are also on a high after Artem Dovbyk's header at the end of extra-time gave them a 2-1 win over Sweden.

The pressure is all on England for whom defeat would mean the tournament is viewed as a failure and they will leave their home turf for the Stadio Olimpico where the crowd will be smaller but probably backing their underdog opponents.

"This is a big challenge for us. We've got to go away from Wembley, to somewhere where there might not be many fans, it's quite hot, and play an opponent where not many of their players are known to us," Southgate said.

"And then there is this perception now that all we've got to do is turn up and we're on our way. So there is total focus now on Saturday, we need to prepare the right way, and our mentality will be critical," he added.



Spain scrape into semis

AFP, Saint Petersburg



Goalkeeper Unai Simon was the hero as Spain edged past 10-man Switzerland 3-1 on penalties on Friday to set up a Euro 2020 semi-final against either Belgium or Italy.

After a 1-1 draw in Saint Petersburg which saw the Swiss play for 43 minutes a man down, Simon made two saves in the shoot-out to help keep Spain's bid for a record fourth European crown alive.

It was heartbreak for Switzerland, who were bidding for reach the semi-finals of a major tournament for the first time in their history.

Spain forged ahead early on when Denis Zakaria put through his own net, but Switzerland were the better side for long periods and Xherdan Shaqiri, standing in for the suspended Granit Xhaka as captain, equalised in the 68th

minute.

The Swiss were reduced to 10 men with 13 minutes remaining, though, when midfielder Remo Freuler was controversially dismissed for a tackle on Gerard Moreno.

Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer, the hero of the penalty shoot-out win over world champions France in the last 16, made a string of fine saves in extra time.

But Simon saved from Fabian Schär and Manuel Akanji, while Ruben Vargas blazed over in a tense finale as Spain snuck through, with Mikel Oyarzabal smashing home the winning spot-kick.

The 2008 and 2012 winners had made a dream start to this quarter-final, taking the lead in fortunate circumstances in only the eighth minute.

A corner was cleared only as far as Jordi Alba, whose left-footed volley was diverted past Sommer by Switzerland

midfielder Zakaria, only playing in place of Xhaka.

It was the 10th own goal of Euro 2020, more than the other 15 editions combined.

Alvaro Morata wasted an excellent opportunity by heading too close to Sommer when unmarked, but then Switzerland started to grow into the game.

Silvan Widmer headed off target from a corner, before Steven Zuber thought he had won a penalty only to be flagged offside.

Zakaria came agonisingly close to making up for his earlier own goal when his header span narrowly wide.

Switzerland had an even better chance for a leveller in the 64th minute, as Shaqiri sparked a quick counter-attack which ended with Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon reacting well to keep out Zuber's stabbed effort at his near post.

Denmark dreaming of 1992 encore

AFP, Baku



Denmark will be dreaming of following in the footsteps of the side who claimed a shock European title in 1992, but standing in their way of a semifinal place at Euro 2020 on Saturday are the Czech Republic, who have sent them packing before.

The Danes were in danger of an early exit after group-stage losses to Finland and Belgium, the first of which was overshadowed by star player Christian Eriksen suffering a cardiac arrest on the pitch. But, roared on by a raucous Copenhagen crowd, they thrashed Russia 4-1 to finish second in Group B, before travelling to Amsterdam to thump Wales 4-0 in the last 16.

Denmark have not reached a major tournament semi-final since lifting the trophy 29 years ago, when they initially failed to qualify but were late replacements for Yugoslavia.

"It's a chance that we might never have again," coach Kasper Hjulmand said ahead of Saturday's last-eight match against the Czechs in Baku.

"It's many years' work for lots of people. We want to make the most of this chance."



The Scandinavians have gone from strength to strength in the tournament and know victory in Azerbaijan would set up a last-four meeting with either England or Ukraine at Wembley.

On the other hand, the Czechs produced an excellent display to beat the 10-man Netherlands 2-0 in Budapest last time out.

Jaroslav Silhavy's men have reached the last eight at a major championship for the first time since 2004, when they lost to Greece in the semis, by conceding only two goals in four games while relying on in-form striker Patrik Schick.

The Bayer Leverkusen man has netted four times already, including one of the all-time great Euro goals against Scotland, to sit just one behind Cristiano Ronaldo in the race for the Golden Boot.

COPA AMERICA 2021

ARGENTINA V ECUADOR

Argentina's 1-1 draw with Chile in the Copa opener made it three draws in a row; just like in the recent World Cup qualifiers, Argentina had taken the lead, looked bright but were pushed back and forced to share the points. Since then, though, it has been all wins, usually with fast starts and early leads. They lie second in World Cup qualification and are looking like a better, more consistent team than at any time since the 2016 edition of the Copa.

Ecuador put together three fine wins late last year in World Cup qualification. But their



form in June was not good, with two defeats in the qualifiers (they stay third in the table) followed by four games in the Copa without a win. Three draws were enough to get them into the quarter-finals.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

It is impossible to look beyond Lionel Messi for Argentina. Now their most capped player, he is in superb form, and in the last two years he seems



to be emotionally integrated into the side as never before, turning himself into a vocal leader. At the other end, Emiliano Martinez is shaping up as Argentina's best keeper for ages, and Cristian Romero has quickly established himself as the first-choice centre-back.

Ecuador are sweating on the fitness of some of their key players -- Jhegson Mendez and Moises Caicedo, who will need to fight to win the midfield battle, and senior striker Enner Valencia, whose power and intelligence might trouble the Argentina defence. There could be a role for the great hope Gonzalo Plata, an awesomely strong winger who cuts in from the right onto his left foot.

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

Argentina have won 21 times, lost five times and drawn 10 times against Ecuador. The last meeting was a 1-0 win for the Albiceleste in October last year.

URUGUAY V COLOMBIA

Uruguay are currently fourth in World Cup qualification, and overcame a minor crisis during the Copa America 2021. The opening game, a 1-0 loss to Argentina, was their fourth

consecutive match without scoring, a very disappointing statistic from a squad with some firepower. They broke the run



with a 1-1 draw against Chile, won their next two games and seem to be moving in the right direction.

Colombia are fifth in World Cup qualification, behind Uruguay on goal difference. They began the Copa with a tight win over Ecuador, confirming a bright start to the reign of new coach Reinaldo Rueda. Subsequent results, though, have not been impressive. The defeat to Brazil was controversial, while the loss to Peru and the draw with Venezuela were plain disappointing.

They are simply not the same creative force in the absence of James Rodriguez.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

Uruguay, of course, are spearheaded by the old attacking firm of Atletico Madrid's Luis Suarez and Manchester United's Edinson Cavani. The future, though, belongs to Real Madrid's Federico Valverde, the motor of the side with his lung power and range of passing from midfield.

Aside from James' absence, Colombia will be missing another key player. Juan Cuadrado is suspended, and will be hard to replace. His absence makes a tight game all the more likely, in which Colombia hope that Wilmar Barrios can be as effective as he was against Brazil in his defensive midfield role.

HEAD-TO-HEAD:

Uruguay have won 20 matches, lost 13 and drawn nine matches in 42 times they met Colombia. The last meeting ended in a 3-0 win for Uruguay in November last year.



BCB's AGM postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

With the growing coronavirus threat and following a nationwide lockdown, the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) scheduled for July 7 has been postponed for indefinite period.

The chairman of the BCB's media committee, Jalal Yunus, yesterday informed that the BCB will fix the new date for the AGM depending on the improvement of the current pandemic scenario.

"The AGM is not going to take place on July 7. We had almost finalised everything but as the coronavirus situation changed recently, we have to wait until things improve so that we can discuss this again," Jalal told media.

The board was set to announce the date for the upcoming BCB elections at the AGM.

BPL, BCL suspended

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has temporarily suspended the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) due to inclement weather.

Earlier, the BFF had convinced authorities to continue the leagues at two venues during the 'strict lockdown' in the greater interest of clubs and players. But now they are utterly incapable of holding BPL matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS), which turned unplayable following incessant rain.

"Considering the weather forecast and maintenance, it may take three to four days to resume the league," professional league manager Zaber Bin Taher Ansari said, adding that they needed to take care of the rain-affected astro-turf of Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium where BCL matches took place.

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Greens worried as new safari park planned

Forest villagers also concerned over site selection in Moulvibazar

MINTU DESHWARA and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

A proposal to build the country's third safari park in Lathitila forest of Moulvibazar has raised concerns among environmentalists as the construction of roads and structures will threaten the biodiversity of the forest area. Besides, villagers who have been living and farming there for generations also question the move, fearing eviction.

However, the authorities claim environmental issues will be addressed and no one will be evicted -- while some might have to be relocated within the forest area, the safari park will open up new opportunities for them all.

Safari parks are commercial tourist attractions where animals roam freely and visitors can drive through to observe the wildlife.

The country's first safari park was established in Dulahazara of Cox's Bazar in 1999 and the second in Gazipur in 2013 -- both named after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- as will be this newly proposed one.

Lathitila, a 5,141-acre forest beat of Juri Forest Range under Patharia Hill Reserve, is mostly hilly with only some plain land.

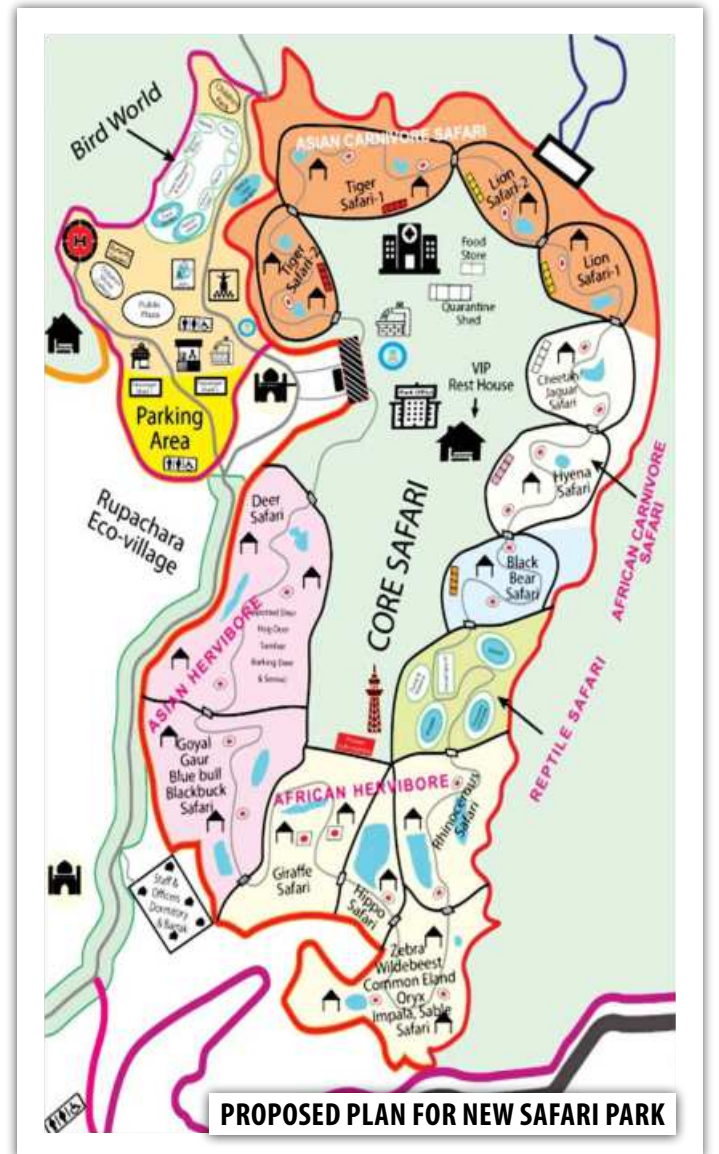
The proposal to convert this forest to a safari park comes at a time when the country's hill forest areas are shrinking fast.

According to the Forest Sector Master Plan prepared by the Forest Department, natural hill forests occupied 128,630 hectares in 1990, which declined to 79,160 hectares in 2015.



A man operating a surveying instrument as part of the feasibility study and master plan preparation for the country's third safari park at Lathitila forest in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila. The proposed safari park has concerned environmentalists, who think that it will threaten biodiversity in the area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA



Italy, Spain in final four

AGENCIES

Italy set up a Euro 2020 semifinal clash against Spain after first half goals from Nicolo Barella and Lorenzo Insigne led the Azzurri to a 2-1 win over Belgium on Friday.

Italy -- who will face the Spaniards on Tuesday in London -- opened the scoring in the 31st minute when Barella picked up the ball, forced his way past defenders in the area and fired home.

Insigne doubled the lead in the 44th minute after collecting the ball on the left and skipping beyond a defender before unleashing a long-range shot that flew past Thibaut Courtois.

Romelu Lukaku clawed a goal back for Belgium from the penalty spot just before the break after Giovanni Di Lorenzo put an arm on Jeremy Doku and pushed him to the ground.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

22.50 lakh Covid vaccine jabs arrive from two sources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has received 22.5 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccines from two sources last night and early today.

At 11:22pm yesterday, 12.5 lakh doses of Moderna vaccine arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport from the US under the Covax facility, the global vaccine alliance.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller and other senior officials received the vaccine.

An Emirates flight carrying the vaccine consignment arrived at the airport at 11:22pm, said health officials.

At 12:35am today, the country received 10 lakh doses of Sinopharm vaccine purchased from China.

The 22.5 lakh doses are part of around 45 lakh doses -- 25 lakh of Moderna and around 20 lakh of Sinopharm -- that are supposed to reach the country by today.

Bangladesh procured 1.5 crore doses of Sinopharm vaccine and is supposed to get it in three months.

The government has already resumed vaccination in all district hospitals and 40 centres across the capital with 11 lakh doses of the Sinopharm vaccine gifted by the Chinese government.

The country has so far inoculated less than three percent of its population. Its vaccination campaign, which started on February 7, stumbled due to suspension of vaccine supply by the Serum Institute of India amid a surge in cases and deaths in that country.

Bangladesh and Serum had an agreement that the latter would ship three crore shots of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to Bangladesh in phases between January and June.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

GARMENT ITEMS Walt Disney to source those again from Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

America's Walt Disney Company is returning to Bangladesh after eight years to source high-end value-added garment items from the country as it improved working conditions and compliance in the garment sector, according to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

"Yes, Walt Disney is coming back to Bangladesh as we have improved our working conditions, workplace safety and compliance. A senior official of the Walt Disney Company has confirmed it to me over the phone Thursday night," BGMEA President Faruque Hassan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh saw two major industrial disasters

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Freedom fighters will lead our future army: Kamaruzzaman

JULY 3, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

KAMARUZZAMAN'S SPEECH AT TEKERHAT

Home Minister of the exiled Government of Bangladesh AHM Kamaruzzaman today visited the youth training camp at Tekerhat, Sunamganj. He addressed the young trainees and said, "If any of you have any doubt about the victorious outcome of this war with the modern well-equipped Pakistan army, I am telling you to always keep in mind that seven and a half crore of Bangladesh are with you in this fight."

"We must remember nobody ever makes a gift to you of your freedom; you have to earn it. If we think somebody else will win our freedom for us, we shall commit utter folly. We must continue the fight for freedom. Maybe many will come forward to help. But the fight will have to be yours and mine," he added.

Referring to the struggle of Vietnam, the home minister said, "Written in blood before our eyes today is small Vietnam. She is not insignificant anymore, commanding infinite power she has inflicted the worst crisis on American imperialism with all its modern arms and equipment. The victory of Vietnam is certain; there will be no exception for us."

He inspired the young freedom fighters with the tale of heroic struggle of the Algerians who, said Kamaruzzaman, "under extreme ... difficulty built up their strong liberation force through

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Some districts likely to be hit by flashflood

Forecasts Met office, says torrential rain to continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some parts of the country may face flash floods while the situation in the already-flooded districts may worsen in the next three days as the ongoing torrential rain may continue.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the highest 50-millimeter rainfall was recorded in Bogura and Tentulia each while Dhaka faced 30-metre rainfall in six hours till 3:00pm yesterday.

According to BMD, the northern, north-eastern, and south-eastern regions of the country may have rainfall in the next 72 hours.

As a result, the water of the Teesta, the Dharla, the Dudhkumar, and the Brahmaputra may rise rapidly. Other major rivers of the upper Meghna basin and south-eastern hill basin may also rise, BMD said.

Contacted, Bazlur Rashid, a petrologist of BMD, said the country faces the highest rainfall in July every year.

The monsoon here is now active, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

HUMAN TRAFFICKING Bangladesh still in tier 2 in US report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh retained its position on "Tier 2" in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report for the second year, showing signs of progress after being on the "Tier 2 Watch List" for the three previous years.

"The [Bangladesh] government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Bangladesh remained on Tier 2," said the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report released yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



A man pulls his rickshaw through knee-deep rainwater on the waterlogged Haji Osmani Goni Road in the capital's Alubazar. A combination of heavy rain and poor drainage has caused similar hardships to Dhaka residents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's Covid death toll tops 400,000

Vaccination drive falters in Asia; J&J's says its vaccine effectively combats Delta variant

AGENCIES

India became the third country to pass 400,000 Covid-19 deaths, official data showed yesterday, as the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus surged through Asia this week, prompting some countries to tighten curbs and others to hasten vaccination.

India said its total deaths are now 400,312 -- behind only the United States and Brazil -- with total cases almost 30.5 million.

Many experts suspect India's true death toll is more than a million, after a devastating spike in cases in April and May that overwhelmed hospitals.

The surge was blamed on the Delta variant and government complacency after Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared victory over the virus in January.

Daily case numbers have since decreased significantly and many restrictions on activity have been lifted, raising fears of a new spike in coming months.

The government aims to vaccinate all of the country's 1.1 billion adults this year. But because of shortages, administrative confusion and hesitancy, only around five percent have had two doses so far.

On June 21 the government tried to jumpstart the drive by making vaccines free for all adults, leading to a surge in demand with more than nine million shots being given in a day.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING JULY 3

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-30 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION