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US calls on Asean to take action to end violence and restore democracy in the country
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Hospitals stretched to breaking point

With coronavirus patients rushing in, facilities running out of beds fast; ICU occupancy rate doubles in a month

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

As the Delta variant continues to spread and the number of critical coronavirus patients keeps rising in hospitals, the country faces the bleak prospect of running out of Covid-dedicated beds, especially those in ICUs.

Major hospitals have already become overburdened due to the rush of Covid patients, with around 81.65 percent out of 1,471 ICU beds, designated for treating the disease nationwide, remaining occupied as of yesterday noon.

The ICU occupancy rate has doubled in one month since June 14, according to the Covid-19 Dynamic Dashboard of the DGHS.

BEDS OCCUPANCY COUNTRYWIDE
ICU: **81.65%**
HDU: **82%**
HFNC: **65%**
General: **71%**

In the Covid-dedicated facilities, 71 percent of general beds, 82 percent of all beds in the high dependency unit (HDU), and 65 percent of all beds with high-flow nasal cannulas (HFNC) have been occupied in the meantime.

A month ago, the ICU occupancy rate was 37 percent, general beds 33 percent, HDU 24 percent and HFNC beds 37 percent, according to the dashboard data.

Health officials said ICU beds are filling up thick and fast as around 50 percent of the Covid patients are coming to the hospital in critical condition.

With new daily cases reported over

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Covid patient Alamgir Sikdar in an ambulance in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. The 40-year-old man from Munshiganj was admitted to the hospital with serious breathing problems.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

LOCKDOWN AFTER EID Govt mulls allowing RMG units to stay open

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDAHA

The government considers allowing garment factories to be open so that the biggest export-earning sector can continue production and keep their commitment with international buyers.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday talked about the plan amid concerns among garment owners that shipment will suffer seriously if they have to suspend operations during the 14-day lockdown beginning from July 23.

Entrepreneurs said the July-August period is the prime season for apparel manufacturers since sales rise at that time in the

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Jubo League man 'tortured in custody'

His family sniffs communalism over FB post on Mamunul FB post on Mamunul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police in Sunamganj arrested two people, including a Jubo League leader, on Tuesday in a case filed over assaulting a sub-inspector of Shalla Police Station.

However, family members of the Jubo League leader have alleged that the arrest was part of a communal agenda connected to his sharing an audio recording of former Hefajat-e-Islam leader Mamunul Haque on Facebook in April.

The family also alleged that the Jubo League leader has been tortured in custody.

The arrested Jubo League leader is Arindam Chowdhury Apu, 38, the former convener of Shalla Upazila unit Chhatra League and a resident of Ninda village of the upazila. The other arrestee is Ratan Roy, 28, a resident of Ghungiargaon village.

According to the statement of the case filed by Shalla Police Station Sub-inspector Shah Ali, the SI had visited Shahid Ali High School in the upazila soon after

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Covid may now spread even faster

Fear health officials citing easing of lockdown; deaths surpass 17,000-mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health officials have warned of a possible rise in Covid-19 transmission as the "strict lockdown" has been withdrawn for a week from today.

"We think there is a chance transmission will increase, as public transport services will resume and shopping malls will reopen from tomorrow [today] ahead of Eid-ul-Azha," Robed Amin, spokesperson of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said in a virtual briefing yesterday.

The warning came at a time when the country saw 210 deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

With this, the total number of Covid deaths in the country has reached 17,052.

In the past seven days alone, a total of 1,359 Covid patients died nationwide.

Bangladesh on July 7 logged 201 deaths -- the first time the daily death toll crossed the 200-mark.

Meanwhile, 12,383 people tested positive for the viral infection in the 24 hours, raising the total number of cases to 10,59,538.

As the government announced the ease of the lockdown from today, the DGHS also advised that health safety guidelines are maintained strictly on public transport, shopping malls, cattle markets, and other gathering places.

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- 1,359 deaths in last 7 days
- Total deaths now 17,052
- Daily deaths still over 200
- Total cases 10,59,538

Man to be free after 17 years in jail, death row

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Awal Khan, a trader from Gazipur's Kaliganj upazila, has been in jail and death row for the last 17 years for "killing his wife". But he is soon to be a free man as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday acquitted him of the murder charge.

A six-member full bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, delivered a verdict yesterday by majority decision,

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Methane caused Moghbazar blast

Finds a probe by Fire Service; gas accumulated from pipe lines and sewers

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The massive explosion that claimed 11 lives in the capital's Moghbazar late last month resulted from the accumulation of a huge amount of methane gas from a leaked gas pipeline and sewerage line inside the building, says a probe report of the fire service.

The accumulated gas came in contact with a spark either from an electric switch or an electric insect killer or a mobile phone, according to Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (BFSCD).

The fire originated from a meat-processing chill room on the ground

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Migrants wishing to go abroad crowd on the first floor of Shaheed Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday afternoon to get Pfizer shots. The quota for yesterday's shots had already been exhausted. Some of them were wearing masks but social distancing was absolutely ignored.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

China vaccine at 'lower price'

Proposal for purchasing 15m doses okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would purchase 1.5 crore doses of Sinopharm vaccine from China at a lower price than the one mentioned in the previous agreement.

According to a finance ministry statement, the Cabinet Committee, chaired by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, yesterday approved a proposal regarding government procurement.

The minister said that a total of 15 million doses of Sinopharm vaccine -- 13 million of the previous agreement and two million newly proposed -- would be purchased at a lower price.

"We got a lower price than the previous price," he said.

Asked about the price, he said, "If you [journalists] ask me the price, we may face

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Buy 20m doses of Sputnik V

Gonoshasthya urges govt, claims it's now the local distributor of the Russian vaccine

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Gonoshasthya Kendra (GSK) has asked the government to buy 20 million doses of Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine and said that the Gonoshasthya Nagar Hospital has been appointed the vaccine manufacturer's sole distributor in Bangladesh.

Each dose will cost \$8, according to a proposal submitted to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen during a meeting on June 6. Health Secretary Lokman Hossain Miah and DGHS Director General Prof ABM Khurshid Alam were also present in the meeting, said GSK sources.

On June 9, GSK wrote to the minister informing him about getting the distributorship of Sputnik V. Getting no response, it sent another letter to the Prime Minister's Office on June 15. It also sent a letter to Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus on June 24, the sources said.

Contacted, GSK founder and trustee Zafrullah Chowdhury said, "I don't have anything to tell you about this. We have informed the government in details in our letters. However, we did not get any response," he said.

Asked, he said, "We have given our proposal on purchasing the vaccine

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POWERING THROUGH PROGRESS

City Bank is proud to be the Lead Arranger, Account Bank, Facility Agent and Security Agent for facilitating a Long Term Debt Arrangement for Bangla Trac Power Unit 1 Limited. The arrangement is of BDT 3,240 million as local currency loan and USD 25 million as foreign currency loan for a 200 MW HSD Fired IPP at Daudkandi, Cumilla, Bangladesh.

We would like to thank all the participating lenders who made the transaction possible.

Borrower

Bangla Trac POWER

Local Currency Loan Facilitators

Foreign Currency Loan Facilitators

making sense of money



Century-old trees at CRB area, the designated site for constructing a new hospital and medical college, are the focus for those protesting the initiative. They are worried that the trees might be felled during construction. Inset, a sign stating details of the project has already been put up. The photos were taken on Tuesday.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

CHATTOGRAM CITY'S CRB AREA

Citizens resist hospital project on green space

They say construction would harm environment; railway staff protest displacement; legal notice served on BR

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The government initiative to build a hospital via public-private partnership (PPP) at Chattogram Railway Building (CRB) area is facing protests on grounds of potential environmental damage.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) signed an agreement with United Enterprise and Company Limited for a PPP project worth Tk 400 crore on March 18, 2020, under which the latter would build a medical college, a 500-bed hospital and a nursing institute, said sources in BR, east zone.

Although protesters said the project would have an adverse impact on the environment due to felling a number of century-old trees, BR officials said the environment will not be affected, claiming that none of the trees would have to be cut down for the project.

However, workers' organisations of BR have also been protesting the project in the area. They submitted a

memorandum to the prime minister recently, requesting for revision of the project site.

"We are not against building a hospital, but we are opposing the decision to build it at that location," said SK Bari, Chattogram divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Railway Shramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad.

"The area is a spot of natural beauty in the city. Apart from environmental hazards, the project would displace over a hundred families of railway workers living there."

At the spot yesterday, some 20 tin-roofed quarters of railway workers were found to be dismantled for the project. A signboard of the project was also found at the site.

"We formed a human chain and submitted a memorandum to the prime minister to revise the project site," he said. "There are acres of barren land under BR on the outskirts of the city, and any of the sites would

be excellent for the project."

CRB, the headquarters of Bangladesh Railway's east zone, is surrounded by hills, hillocks and valleys with a number of century-old trees. The area is considered the oxygen centre of the city. It is also a habitat for different species of birds and wild animals.

People go for morning and evening walks at the area; many others visit the place to take in fresh air.

The area's "Shirishotola" has become a centre for cultural activities. Apart from "Borsha Baron" programme and many other cultural events, celebration of Pahela Baishakh is also celebrated there.

Concerned citizens said the project would hinder cultural activities that were developed centring CRB.

The place also has historic importance. The present CRB was built by British rulers as the headquarters of Bengal and Assam Railway in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

RUPGANJ FACTORY FIRE 19-member citizens' probe body formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 19-member citizen's committee was formed yesterday to look into the causes of the fire that swept through Hashem Food's factory.

On July 8, the fire left dozens dead in Rugganj upazila of Narayanganj.

The committee was formed at a virtual meeting attended by prominent members of the civil society, said a press release.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua was made its convener, while Dhaka Labor Court lawyer Mahbubur Rahman Ismail was made member secretary of the committee, the press release said.

Apart from them, the 19-member committee also includes pProf Anu Mahummad, Dr Md Harunur Rasid, architect Mobasser Hossen, engineer Mosarraf Hossen, journalist-columnist Sohrab Hasan, Faruk Wasif, Prof CR Abrar, Prof Gouhar Nayem Wara, Prof Tanjim Uddin Khan, researcher-journalist Prical Raj, social activist Maha Mirza, artist and organiser Bithi Ghose, trustee of Bangladesh Labor Institute Golam Morshed, chief of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati Taslima Akther, president of Garment Sramik Mukti Sahidul Alam Sabuj, and researcher and human right activist Rejaur Rahman Lenin as its members.

FACTORY FIRE AFTERMATH HC slams business orgs' nonchalance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday came down hard on business organisations, including the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries, for not playing an effective role over the fire at a food processing factory in Narayanganj's Rugganj, that killed 52 people and injured many.

"A number of workers have been burnt to death and sustained injuries. But, business organisations including FBCCI have not even expressed any condolence. Any statement of their expressing shock was not found as if they have no responsibility. No representative from the business organisations was found to visit the spot and victims. They are found busy collecting stimulus facilities and bank loan remissions from the government," the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim said.

The bench said this while hearing an application filed by four rights organisations seeking its order on the authorities concerned to pay due salaries and Eid-ul-Azha bonus to workers of Hashem Food and Beverage factory at Narayanganj's Rugganj that was ravaged by a fire on July 8.

Justice Enayetur Rahim said, "I personally try to follow newspapers regularly. But unfortunately, I did not find business organisations playing their due roles in connection with the incident of fire. They need to oversee the weakness and deficiencies of the factories."

"A change has been brought in the readymade garments sector under the pressure from foreigners. Their positive role is not found until pressure is created on them."

"It should be looked into whether the supervising agencies carry out their responsibilities properly. I saw in a newspaper that factory inspectors go to inspect factories and come back with envelopes. Human rights organisations have scope to work in these places," the HC judge said.

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Strengthen laws to avoid tragedies like Rugganj

Speakers tell virtual press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To prevent the death of child workers, the government must eliminate hazardous child labour immediately, speakers at a virtual press conference yesterday urged.

They also asked for special attention for children who are employed in unsafe factories like Hashem Food And Beverage's.

The programme was jointly organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), Bangladesh Labour Foundation, INCIDIN Bangladesh, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Sacks of counterfeit products -- kept in five warehouses of the factory --- were seized during the drive, and later destroyed. The factory owner has been cheating farmers like this for the last four years, said officials.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fake pesticide, fertiliser worth Tk 150cr seized from Keraniganj factory

It used packaging of top brands to dupe farmers

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

In a two-day mobile court drive, authorities unearthed a fake fertiliser and pesticide factory at Dhaka's Keraniganj upazila, and seized counterfeit products worth Tk 150 crore.

A joint team of local administration, Department of Agricultural Extension and Bangladesh Crop Protection Association conducted the drive at Meghna Fertilizers Co Ltd.

Huge quantities of fertilisers and pesticides, with packaging emulating top brands, were destroyed after being seized.

The drive -- led by Iqbal Hasan, executive magistrate and assistant commissioner (land) in Keraniganj -- began on Tuesday morning and continued till yesterday evening at the factory set up on around 2.5 acres of land in Alipur area.

Iqbal yesterday told The Daily Star that acting on a tip-off that the factory has been producing substandard products,

authorities decided to conduct a mobile court drive.

"When we came to the factory on Tuesday morning, we found it locked from outside. Later, we entered by breaking the lock and found huge quantities of fertilisers and pesticides with packaging of top brands in the factory's five warehouses," he said.

The factory produced such products using soil and kerosene oil, and sold them in the market using packaging of companies like BADC and Syngenta, said the executive magistrate.

"We did not find any factory authorities during the drive, but we came to know that the owner's name is Saidur Rahman Khan. He set up the factory and has been making fake products like this since 2017," said Iqbal.

Asked whether any legal step was taken against the factory owner, the executive

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Outgoing migrants to get Moderna jabs

Stock of Pfizer vaccine being held back for second shot; workers protest at inoculation centre in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred expatriate migrant workers -- mostly from Saudi Arabia -- yesterday demonstrated for a few hours at the vaccination centre at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital (SSMCH), demanding they be administered the Pfizer vaccine.

The expatriates who went to the centre yesterday morning started chanting slogans when authorities stopped providing the Pfizer vaccine.

Though the authorities offered them to take Moderna vaccine, they refused it, saying they were registered for the Pfizer

vaccine and Saudi Arabian authorities will not allow them into the country with other vaccines, said some expatriates.

However, they again started taking the Moderna vaccine after around two hours, when authorities showed them documents from the Bangladesh consulate in Saudi Arabia. The documents said expatriates with four vaccines -- Pfizer, Oxford-AstraZeneca, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are eligible to enter Saudi Arabia.

The letter also read as per the direction of Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), anyone who has not taken one of

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Man sued under DSA arrested in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rab arrested a man, who was sued under the Digital Security Act (DSA), in Sylhet early yesterday.

Foysoil Kadir, who was on the run, was arrested in Pirebazar area, said ASP Samiul Alam of Rab-9.

Traffic sergeant Md Nurul Afsar Bhuiyan filed the case with Shahporan Police Station on July 11, a few days after Foysoil had gone live on Facebook during an altercation with a traffic sergeant in Sylhet's Surma Gate area.

According to the case, Foysoil tried to create chaos and deteriorate law and order via the social media platform.

It said police stopped a motorcycle carrying three people at a check-post in the area on Friday. As Foysoil failed to show his driving licence and bike registration documents, police seized the vehicle and lodged a case against him for not having the licence and documents, carrying two pillion passengers and riding the bike without wearing a helmet.

After an argument with the traffic sergeant, Foysoil went live on Facebook and said police were harassing an "on-duty journalist". On July 11, a case was filed, accusing Foysoil.

Brac to provide food support to 50,000 families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's leading development organisation Brac has come forward with an initiative to provide emergency food assistance to 50,000 families in distress, from salaries of its employees and the organisation's funds.

The largest non-government organisation in the world raised Tk 7.5 crore from its employees' one-day salary, and same amount has been provided by Brac itself to make it happen, a press release by Brac said.

Families of 19 districts which have been severely affected by Covid-19 will get priority in the campaign. The support includes food for two weeks and Tk 1,500 for buying other essentials.

The assistance will be handed over to the families from July 18.

Women, physically challenged, ultra-poor, breast-feeding mothers, elderly people will be prioritised for this assistance, the press release said.

Tasnim Jara, a public health expert popular for her instrumental videos on social media lend her hand to the initiative, calling upon others to join the cause titled "Dakche Abar Desh".

Asif Saleh, executive director of Brac, said, "The fight against Covid-19 is long-term. Without cooperation from all, it's not possible to win the war."

"Brac has been working relentlessly to raise awareness among people, provide masks and financial assistance with more than one lakh colleagues including field workers, health worker and volunteers," the press release quoted him as saying.

Saleh urged individuals as well as institutions to join the campaign, to make it a success.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

This is the second time Chattogram Zoo has released incubator-bred python hatchlings out into the deep forest. The current batch of 28 hatchlings are 22 days old. This photo was taken yesterday at Sitakunda Eco Park.

28 python hatchlings released in Ctg forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

28 python hatchlings, born through an incubator at the Chattogram Zoo, have been released in the deep forest area of Sitakunda Eco-park of Chattogram yesterday.

The hatchlings were released one by one in the presence of the Sitakunda UNO, Chattogram Zoo officials, and forest officials.

Chattogram Zoo's secretary of governing body Ruhul Amin told The Daily Star, "Twenty-eight pythons were born out of 31 eggs through incubator on June 22. Shahadat Hossain Shuvo, a veterinary surgeon and curator, took care of the incubator. As they are growing up, we have released them in the deep forest to help them adapt to the natural environment."

"Earlier in 2019, the zoo authority released another 25 python hatchlings in the forest after eggs were hatched through an incubator for the first time in the country," he added.

HC slams

FROM PAGE 3
Lawyers Sara Hossain and Aneek R Haque placed the application before the bench for necessary order. The HC bench, however, did not pass any order saying that it has been reported on the media that salaries are being given to workers and bonus will be given by tomorrow.

Necessary orders will be passed later on if the workers are not paid, the court said.

Earlier on July 11, the four rights organisations moved a writ petition before the HC bench of Justice Enayetur Rahim seeking necessary directives on the authorities concerned to give each deceased's family Tk 1 crore and injured victim Tk 35 lakh as compensation.

They also prayed to the court for an order for conducting inquiry into the incident and to prosecute and punish those who are responsible for the fire. The organisations are -- Ain o Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, and Safety and Rights Society.

On that day, the bench refused to pass any order over the compensation as the victims' bodies could not be identified. The court, however, ordered the authorities concerned to publish a list of the injured to ensure their proper treatment.

Strengthen

FROM PAGE 3
Street Women and Children Care.

BNWLA President advocate Salma Ali expressed concerns over the death of women and child workers in Hashem Food's Rugganj factory and urged the government to safeguard children from hazardous work.

"It is impossible to ensure the protection of children without strict enforcement and monitoring of the law," she said.

"A good number of Public Interest Litigations (PIL) were filed for similar incidences before, but none of them have received any verdict," she added.

Bangladesh Labour Foundation general secretary ZM Kamrun Anam also joined the conference, and talked about the irregularities that were found in the Rugganj factory.

"Officials from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments must be included in the case, because if they had inspected the factory thoroughly and reported accordingly the deaths could have been prevented," he said.

ZM Kamrun Anam also demanded compensation for the workers in accordance with the ILO convention c121 (Employment Injury Benefits Convention,

1964).

In her speech, BNWLA general secretary advocate Jobaida Parveen said it requires approval from 27 departments to establish a factory. How the Rugganj factory managed to get the approvals despite having safety flaws is a matter of concern, she said.

AKM Masud Ali, executive director of INCIDIN Bangladesh said eliminating child labour is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Employment alone. It also requires the co-ordination of other ministries, such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Lima Ferdous, president of Street Women and Children Care emphasised that a group of unscrupulous factory owners have been appointing children into hazardous labour, taking advantage of their poverty and helplessness to make money.

She asked for special attention to miscreants who provide fake age certificates to work-seeking children and asked the government to bring them under the purview of law and give exemplary punishment.

'Shahjahan Siraj will live on in people's memory'

Speakers at discussion pay tribute on veteran politician's death anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Shahjahan Siraj dedicated his life to serve his country, both in war and in politics, speakers said at a virtual session organised to mark the first death anniversary of Siraj, one of the key organisers of the Liberation War.

The discussion was hosted from his home district in Tangail, from Kalihati Shahjahan Siraj College established by him.

Rabeya Siraj, Shahjahan's widow, joined the meeting from Dhaka as the chief guest.

Siraj was a commander of Bangladesh Liberation Force. Following independence, Siraj served as the minister for environment and forest between 2001 and 2006. He was also a former vice-president of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The nation will remember his contribution to the Liberation War as well as his political achievements, speakers said.

Siraj, a veteran politician who read the manifesto of the country's independence in presence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, died last year from lung cancer.

Siraj was also known as one of the "four caliphs" -- Shajahan Siraj, ASM Abdur Rob, Abdul Kuddus Makhon and Nur-e-Alam Siddique -- of Liberation War.

19-member

FROM PAGE 3
The committee will look into possible causes of the fire and will prepare a list of dead and injured workers including those missing after the fire. It will also assess structural flaws of the building and working environment of the factory, the press release further said.

The committee will also analyse whether factory authorities abided by the labour law requirements, including proper recruitment procedure, working hours, working days, and payment of wages, as well as the liability of factory owners and authorities so that key figures behind the incident could be identified and held accountable.

The committee will prepare a set of recommendations to avert such tragedies in the future.

Fake pesticide

FROM PAGE 3
Magistrate replied in the negative, but said after investigation, steps would be taken against the owner and people involved with the factory.

M Sayeduzzaman, chairperson of Bangladesh Crop Protection Association, who was present during the drive, told The Daily Star that for a long time, they were getting complaints of products of top brands not working properly. "We started monitoring the market, conducted an investigation, tracked the factory's location, and informed higher authorities of Department of Agricultural Extension as well as the local administration."

Fertilisers and pesticides are in high demand in the market, so the fake products caused extensive damage to the country's farmers, said Sayeduzzaman, adding that strict action must be taken against the factory's owners.

Mizanur Rahman Khan, vice president of Bangladesh Crop Protection Association, claimed that the owner of the factory's land was a Deputy Inspector General-ranked police official, and Saidur used to run the establishment under his patronage.

He also claimed that two such drives were earlier conducted at the factory and legal steps were taken against Saidur, but he evaded the law.

This correspondent also talked to several locals, but they were reluctant to speak about the factory. They, however, assured that the land owner is a high-ranking police official.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the claims.

Contacted about it over phone last evening, Keraniganj Model Police Station officer-in-charge refused to discuss it over phone and asked this correspondent to visit the police station.

Anwar Hossain, chairman of Hazratpur Union Parishad under which the land falls, also said the high-ranked police official was the owner of the land, and that the factory owner did not take any trade license from him, as they were supposed to. "People like them do not need such documents," he said in a resigned tone when contacted.

This newspaper could not reach Saidur despite several phone calls.

Usually, the local agriculture office is supposed to monitor such factories, but the establishment has been running for four years right under the office's nose.

Shahidul Amin, upazila agriculture officer of Keraniganj, who was present at the spot, said, "We had come to visit the factory a month back but found it empty. During lockdown, the factory produced huge quantities of fake fertilisers and pesticides."

Outgoing migrants

FROM PAGE 3
Director of SSMCH Dr Md Khalilur Rahman said as there is a shortage of Pfizer vaccine, they are now offering Moderna vaccine as per the instruction of the government.

Those who have already taken the vaccine from Saudi government will remain out of it, it read.

"We wanted the Pfizer vaccine as this vaccine is available in Saudi Arabia. If I take Pfizer vaccine in Bangladesh then I will be able to take a second dose in Saudi Arabia if necessary, which will not be possible with Moderna," said Iqram Hossain, who came to the centre from Faridpur and was supposed to take the vaccine on July 15.

He said they will have to remain in quarantine for 14 days at their own cost if they do not take the vaccine properly.

Health directorate officials yesterday said migrant workers will get Moderna Covid-19 vaccine after the stock of Pfizer vaccine ends by today or tomorrow in seven Dhaka hospitals.

"We are preserving second doses of the Pfizer vaccine. When the stock of the vaccine's first doses runs out, migrant workers will get the Moderna vaccine and we have available stock for this," Dr Shamsul Alam, a line director of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said yesterday in a virtual briefing.

He said there is no reason to be concerned about the vaccination, as they have enough stock for now.

He said Moderna vaccines are being administered in all divisional cities and city corporation areas. "Those who have no urgency, please have patience [after registration]. You will get the vaccine without difficulties."

As many migrant workers who are supposed to fly out soon are facing difficulties, Dr Shamsul Alam said they were addressing the issue.

He said no one should come to the vaccination centres without a confirmation SMS.

Expatriate workers started receiving Pfizer and Sinopharm vaccines from July 8.

The government has been administering Covid-19 vaccines to migrant workers at seven centres in Dhaka as well as districts and upazilas across the country on a priority basis.

Senior Assistant Secretary of ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Sarwoer Alam said expatriates will have to go to the Saudi Arabia completing two doses of the vaccine.

Citizens protest

FROM PAGE 3
then undivided India in 1895. The anti-British youth revolutionaries of Chattogram conducted drives in the area to collect funds.

In a statement to media on Monday, 17 distinguished personalities of Chattogram, including writer Begum Mushtari Shafi, Premier University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Anupam Sen, East Delta University VC Prof Sekandar Khan, poet and journalist Abul Momen, and theatre and cultural personality Ahmed Iqbal Haider protested the decision.

They said the people of Chattogram need hospitals, but they should not be built by harming the environment, and urged the government to shift the project site to any other piece of BR land that would not adversely affect the environment.

Consumers' Association of Bangladesh in a statement on Monday also demanded the same.

Contacted, Md Jahangir Hossain, general manager of BR east zone, said the project would have no bad impact on the environment.

"We will not even cut down a single century-old tree," he said.

"The city needs modern hospitals to discourage patients from going abroad for treatment. Those who are protesting cannot understand this. We assure everyone that we will not do anything that would harm the environment."

The project was approved by the cabinet committee on economic affairs on August 14, 2013, said BR sources, adding that the prime minister approved it on February 23, 2020.

The company would operate the hospital, college and institute for 50 years and then hand it over to BR.

Under the agreement, the company would pay BR Tk 75 lakh annually on the third and fourth year and Tk 1.5 crore annually on the fifth and sixth year as fee, which would increase by 10 percent every year from then on.

Contacted, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon said, "The government policy is to initiate at least 30 percent of development projects through PPP."

"The PM's office oversees it directly. The land of railway has been left unused, and we have taken initiative to utilise it for the people's sake. We are going to build a hospital there, which is necessary for people."

About concerns of distinguished personalities of the city, he said he would talk to the political leaders of the city about the matter.

ORGANISATIONS ISSUE LEGAL NOTICE
Five organisations -- Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Association for Land Reform and Development, Nijera Kori, and Poribesh Bachao Andolon -- yesterday issued a legal notice to authorities concerned, demanding keeping CRB area an open space, and opposing construction of a hospital by cutting down trees and hills.

They also demanded protecting the century-old trees and biodiversity by declaring the place a "special biodiversity conservation area" under existing laws.

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the project Director Establishment of 100 Technical School and Colleges (TSC) in Upzilla Directorate of Technical Education Argaonga, Dhaka 1207.
Email: 100ts.pd@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM

Memo No. 37.03.0000.070.007.203.20-391 Date: July 14, 2021
Subject: Corrigendum of Package No. 100TSC Project / GD-71-F09, Tender/Proposal ID-582534: Supply and Installation of Furniture for Seven Technical School and College at Different Upzillas.

Sl. No.	Description	Amendment
01.	Correction of number of quantities of every items mentioned in Price and delivery schedule form PG3-A	Corrected number of quantities is mentioned in newly uploaded another price and delivery schedule form PG3-A.

All other terms & conditions in the tender documents shall remain unchanged.

Dr. Md. Serajul Islam, Project Director (Joint Secretary)
Establishment of 100 Technical School and Colleges (TSC) in Upzilla, Directorate of Technical Education

ER Eastern Refinery Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chattogram-4204
Bangladesh

Corrigendum Notice

Date: 13/07/2021

The following amendments have been made in the International Tenders Ref. No. ER/PUR/IT-45/2021 dated 25/05/2021:

Sl. No.	Reference Number	Title	Amendments
a)	ER/PUR/IT-45/2021	Low Pressure Osmosis Membrane	Tender document last selling date & time: 18 July 2021, 14:00 Hrs. Tender closing date & time: 19 July 2021, 11:15 Hrs. Tender opening date & time: 19 July 2021, 11:30 Hrs.

All other terms and conditions of the tenders will remain unchanged.
GD-1350

ARTICLE 19
Defending freedom of expression and information

দরপত্র আহ্বান

আটকেল নাইনটিন বাংলাদেশ এবং দক্ষিণ এশিয়া, চলমান প্রকল্পের কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নের উদ্দেশ্যে একটি বাংলা ওয়েবসাইটের ডিজাইন, ডেভেলপমেন্ট, হোস্টিং ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ জন্য অভিজ্ঞ এবং প্রতিষ্ঠিত পরিষেবা প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানের সন্ধান করছে। নিম্নলিখিত নির্দিষ্ট শর্তসাপেক্ষে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ পরিষেবা প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট ওয়েবসাইট ডেভেলপমেন্টের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

- আটকেল নাইনটিনের ব্র্যান্ডিং নির্দেশিকা বজায় রেখে প্রয়োজনীয়, মানসম্মত ও সহজে ব্যবহারযোগ্য একটি ওয়েবসাইট ডিজাইন ও ডেভেলপ করা।
- ওয়েবসাইটের হোম পেজ, এনালিটিক্স, ট্রেসিং ম্যাট্রিয়ালস, মিডিয়া, মোবাইল ইন্টারফেস, কনটেন্ট ম্যানেজমেন্ট সিস্টেম, অনলাইন চ্যাট, ব্লগ, ফ্যাট ডেপ, কোকিড-১৯ আপডেট-ম্যাপিং-কাউন্টার, সাবস্ক্রাইব বাটন থাকতে হবে। ওয়েব টেমপ্লেটটি আঞ্চলিক এবং ব্যবহারবান্ধব হতে হবে।
- ওয়েবসাইটে ডিজিটাল কন্টেন্ট, গুগল এনালিটিক্স, লাইভ, শেয়ার ও কমেন্টের অপশন থাকতে হবে। আটকেল নাইনটিনের সোশ্যাল মিডিয়া হাট বাটনস, যেমন ফেসবুক, ইনস্টাগ্রাম, টুইটার এবং ট্রেডিং নিউজ ফ্লোয়ের অপশন থাকতে হবে।
- চুক্তি-কালীন সময়ে ওয়েবসাইটের ভেটো সুবিধা, সাইটের রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ, প্রকৃতিগত, তথ্য-যোগাযোগ-প্রকৃতির সহায়তা নিশ্চিত করা এবং ওয়েবসাইটের কর্মক্ষমতার মান সর্বোচ্চ নিয়মিত রিপোর্ট জমা দিতে হবে।
- ওয়েবসাইট রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এবং বিষয়বস্তু আপডেটের জন্য আটকেল নাইনটিনের কর্মীদের প্রশিক্ষণ দিতে হবে।
- চুক্তির শেষে ওয়েবসাইটের সকল সোর্স কোড আটকেল নাইনটিনকে হস্তান্তর করতে হবে।
- ওয়েবসাইট ডেভেলপমেন্ট সম্পর্কিত আর্কাইভেশন, ব্যাকআপ/রিস্টোর প্র্যান, সফটওয়্যার, হার্ডওয়্যার এবং অন্যান্য বিষয়ে সুপারিশ করতে হবে।

চুক্তির সমন্বয়:
ওয়েবসাইট ডেভেলপমেন্ট সর্বোচ্চ কাজটি নির্ধারিত সময়সীমার মধ্যে সম্পূর্ণ হতে হবে। সমন্বয়কারী মেয়াদ ১ আগস্ট থেকে ১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১। তবে কাজের প্রয়োজনে ও চাহিদানুযায়ী চুক্তির মেয়াদ বাড়ানো হতে পারে।

আবশ্যিক যোগ্যতা:

- ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানের ওয়েবসাইট ডেভেলপমেন্টের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
- ওয়েবসাইট সুস্থতা এবং হোস্টিং পরিষেবার বিষয়ে দক্ষতা থাকতে হবে।

দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার নির্দিষ্ট শর্তাবলী:

- উপরে উল্লিখিত চাহিদানুযায়ী দরপত্র আবেদনের সময়ে ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব মেমো/লেটারহেডে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে।
- দরপত্রের সাথে আবেদনকারী পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ ট্রুই লাইসেন্স, ই-টিন সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট/বিন সার্টিফিকেটের ফটোকপি এবং পরামর্শকের ক্ষেত্রে দরপত্রের সাথে আবেদনকারীর ই-টিন সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট/বিন সার্টিফিকেট প্রদান করবে।
- আবেদনকারী ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানের অবশ্যই বাংলাদেশে ব্যাংক অ্যাকাউন্ট থাকতে হবে।
- সরকারি নিয়মানুযায়ী উৎস ভ্যাট/ট্যাক্স (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) কর্তব্য করা হবে এবং সরকারি কোষাগারে জমা দিলে পরিষেবা প্রদানকারী ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে সন্ধান প্রদান করা হবে।
- কার্যক্রম/Work Order পাওয়ার ১৫ দিনের মধ্যে ওয়েবসাইটের কাজ সম্পূর্ণ করতে হবে। উপরে উল্লিখিত ভুক্তমেস্ট্রোসহ কার্যক্রম বাস্তবায়নের পরিচালনার একটি টেকনিক্যাল ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাবনা ব্যক্তি (পরামর্শক)/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নিজে ইমেইলের মাধ্যমে আটকেল নাইনটিনকে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।
- Email Address: farzanashormi@article19.org
- ইমেইলের সাবজেক্ট লাইনে "Proposal for Developing Bangla Website" কথাটি অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- দরপত্র ইমেইলে জমা দেয়ার শেষ সময়সীমা ২৪ জুলাই, ২০২১। আবেদনকৃত দরপত্রসমূহ "আটকেল নাইনটিন বাংলাদেশ এবং দক্ষিণ এশিয়া"র তথ্য ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির উপস্থিতিতে প্রতিষ্ঠানের পণ্য তথ্য নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী বাছাই করে দরপত্রের ফলাফল ইমেইলের মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে।
- আটকেল নাইনটিনের ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে এই দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখে।
- আরও অধিক তথ্য যোগাযোগ করুন ফারজানা আহমেদ চৌধুরী (farzanashormi@article19.org), ইটিএন রিসোর্সেস & অ্যাডমিনিস্ট্রেশন অফিসার, আটকেল নাইনটিন, বাংলাদেশ ও দক্ষিণ এশিয়া।
- দরপত্র আবেদনের জন্য কোন খরচ/চার্জ প্রযোজ্য নয়।

পণ্য তথ্য কমিটি আহ্বায়ক
মরিয়ম শেখী
নির্দিষ্ট প্রকল্প কার্যক্রম কর্মকর্তা
আটকেল নাইনটিন, বাংলাদেশ এবং দক্ষিণ এশিয়া

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested Firm/Organization for Strengthening the capacities of trade unions and workers' representatives to conduct awareness campaign for Women migrant workers. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO Dhaka website under Procurement Notices at https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Aboutus/WCMS_811257/lang-en/index.htm

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Monday, August 02, 2021, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest Online Commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below:

- Notice Inviting Quotation for **02 (Two) Units of Hardware Security Module (HSM)** for integrating with PI banking at Data Center of Pubali Bank Limited.

Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/Tender.asp> for more details, Interested Parties may purchase their Tender document by **03-08-2021** duly filled up all requirements.

(Md. Helal Uddin)
GM & Division Head

পুবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড ICT Operation Division
PUBALI BANK LIMITED Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

Credit of 5.5% Stock Dividend, 6% Cash Dividend & Proceeds of Fractional Dividend

ONE Bank LIMITED

Corporate HQ
2/F HRC Bhaban, 46 Kawran Bazar C.A., Dhaka-1215

This is for information of our valued Shareholders that 5.5% Stock Dividend for the year 2020 as approved in the 22nd Annual General Meeting held on June 24, 2021 was credited to shareholders' respective BO Accounts on June 29, 2021 (except those who have not yet provided us with their BO Account Numbers). Shareholders who do not have BO Accounts yet are requested to open BO Accounts immediately and provide us with their BO Account numbers so that we can credit their Stock Dividends on the basis of their entitlement.

6% Cash Dividend and proceeds of Fractional Dividend have also been disbursed through Bangladesh Electronic Fund Transfer Network (BEFTN) system. Shareholders whose Bank Accounts are not connected with the above network will be issued Dividend Warrants which will be dispatched through courier.

John Sarkar
DMD & Company Secretary

Dhaka
July 15, 2021

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Vacancy Announcement

Closing date: 26 July 2021

The FAO Representation in Bangladesh is inviting applications from qualified national candidates to the following vacant position under the Emergency project at Cox's Bazar to be filled as soon as possible. The Incumbents will be recruited under service contract as National Project Personnel:

National Communications Specialist -SC8 (2101998)

Interested and qualified candidates will find the post descriptions from our website <http://www.fao.org/employment/recruitment-access/en/> then click **access Vacancies**; this gets you to **Jobs at FAO**. The VA is also available in Bdjobs.com. Ensure your profile has all the details as outlined in TALEO profile steps. Only applications received through online will be considered.

All recruitment to FAO posts are made on a competitive and transparent basis. Candidates are encouraged to apply directly to FAO and follow the instructions on the above-mentioned website. Please note that no intermediary is allowed to expedite or facilitate such process. All those who represent themselves as such are fraudulent and should be reported to FAO immediately.

Women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Archaeological site harmed to make homes

Wall of king Dharmapal's fort damaged

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

It was once part of the capital of the powerful Pala dynasty which ruled Bengal up till the 12th century. The earthen wall protecting the fort from invaders still stands in present-day Dharmapalgarh village of Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila.

The top of this wall has now been leveled and the land used to build multiple government housing projects for the poor over the years, despite the land being declared a reserved archaeological site 35 years ago.

The houses stand on the partially leveled wall and the raised land, so high that the jute fields beside them look quite short in comparison.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent observed that residents of the housing projects are also indiscriminately digging on the raised land to plant crops, posing further threat to the wall, raising concern among historians and villagers.

Retired schoolteacher and prominent local 75-year-old Khitish Chandra Roy said, "There was a 50-60 feet tall earthen wall stretching several kilometres surrounding the Pala-era capital. It was difficult even

for vigorous youths to climb."

Several other villagers expressed frustration saying that the site brought honour to their village and its damage shocked them.

Dharmapalgarh, declared reserved by the Department of Archaeology in 1987, is one of 524 such sites in the country.

In an excavation drive in Dharmapalgarh in 2016, the archaeology department unearthed a Buddhist temple along with other structures believed to be built in the 12th century -- only 50 metres away from the historical wall where the housing projects are situated.

Dharmapalgarh Union Parishad Chairman Zaminur Rahman said, "Two housing projects under Guchhagram and Ashrayan comprising a total 110 houses meant for the poor were built at Dharmapalgarh in 2019 and 2020." These were both implemented during his term as chairman.

The Ashrayan-2 project was started by the Prime Minister's Office to provide free housing to homeless and landless people across the country on the occasion of Mujib Borsho last year.

The Guchhagram-2 phase project,



An earthen wall built during the Pala dynasty was there but it has been flattened to make room for homes for the poor in Dharmapalgarh village of Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila.

PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

started by the land ministry in 2015, aims to rehabilitate landless poor affected by climate change, river erosion, and other natural disasters.

Before these, an earlier housing project of 40 houses had been implemented there in 2003, informed the UP chairman.

Historian and author of "History of Nilphamari" published by Bangla

Academy, Zahangir Alam Sarkar said, "It is an act of utter callousness as the authorities, instead of protecting the reserved archaeological site, damaged it."

"I urge the department concerned to repair the damage and protect the remaining part [of the wall]."

However, far from taking measures, the authorities concerned seem to have no idea of the state of the reserved

archaeological site.

Nahid Sultana, regional director of the archaeology department, said, "I've asked the custodian of the Rangpur museum to visit the reserved site at Dharmapalgarh and submit a report mentioning the present situation as it is difficult to conduct monitoring during the pandemic."

Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner

Hafizur Rahman Chowdhury said the department was yet to bring the matter to his knowledge.

"The site is now under the authority of the archaeology department and whenever they seek cooperation, we will render it," he said.

With regard to the historical and archaeological significance of the land, past Member of Parliament from the Nilphamari-3 constituency Golam Mostofa, said, "In the 10th Jatiya Sangsad session, I had requested the government to launch an extensive drive to find out the glorious past of the Pala dynasty at Dharmapalgarh."

They should work to protect the site, he added.

Assistant custodian of Rangpur Museum SM Hasnat quoted from widely accepted history book, "Bangladesher Protino Sampad" (archaeological assets of Bangladesh) to put emphasis on the archaeological importance of the area.

He said king Dharmapal, son of Horshopal of Kamrup empire, conquered a good part of northern Bengal and built a fort at Gar Dharmapal village, named after him 900 years ago.

Man to be free after 17 years in jail

FROM PAGE 1

overturning the High Court judgement that confirmed his death sentence.

The apex court bench did not disclose the names of the judges who did not want him to be acquitted. All the issues including the observations and reasons for acquittal of Awal will be known when the full text of the verdict will be released, Helal Uddin Mollah, state defence lawyer for Awal and Deputy Attorney General Bishwajit Debnath told The Daily Star.

They said Awal will be released from jail following the SC judgement. Helal said it has been proven that the trial court judgement that sentenced Awal to death and the HC verdict that upheld his death sentence were not "correct".

There is no provision in the laws of the country for getting any remedy from such "incorrect" verdicts, he said, adding that innocent Awal cannot seek any redress for his suffering.

Helal, a former deputy attorney general who moved the appeal pro bono, said Awal's family members

have stopped communicating with him after 2016.

Citing the case documents, he said police recovered the body of Awal's wife Nargis, who was hacked to death, from their home in Saiddia village under Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur on July 16, 2004.

Awal, who was in his shop near the village at the time, found the body, he said.

Nargis' father Ibrahim Dewan filed the murder case with Kaliganj Police Station but he did not mention any name in the case.

Kaliganj police arrested Awal in connection with the case the same day. The additional district and sessions judge's court of Gazipur on August 20, 2008, convicted and sentenced Awal to death.

He filed an appeal with the High Court challenging the trial court's verdict. After hearing his appeal and examining the death reference (trial court documents), the HC on February 25, 2018, upheld the death penalty of Awal.

The same year, Awal filed an appeal

with the Supreme Court through jail authorities, challenging the HC verdict, lawyer Helal added.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Deputy Attorney General Bishwajit Debnath represented the state.

Yesterday, the Appellate Division also commuted death sentences of two convicts to life imprisonment in two murder cases.

The convicts are: Md Kazimuddin from Kewa Purbokhondo village under Gazipur's Sreepur upazila and Abdur Razzak Mattabar from Barojamia village under Barishal's Hijla police stations.

Kazimuddin was sentenced to death for killing his ex-wife Khodeja Begum on August 10, 2002. Razzak was sentenced to death for killing his neighbor Manwara Begum on July 7, 2007.

They had lost their appeals before the HC.

The grounds on which the SC commuted their sentences yesterday would be known when the full texts of verdicts are released.

China vaccine at 'lower price'

FROM PAGE 1

problems. "These purchases are selective. For technical reasons, we could not tell you the details. I believe you will understand the situation and will express consensus with me."

He could not disclose the price because of strategic reasons, he said.

Asked about the time required for

the arrival of the vaccine, the minister said everything was done including vetting by the law ministry and the ministry concerned could tell the details.

Issuing a press release, the finance ministry said the approval was given to purchase more vaccines if needed more Chinese Sinopharm vaccine.

The cabinet purchase committee

on May 27 approved to purchase 1.5 crore doses of vaccine.

On July 1 and 2, Bangladesh received 20 lakh doses of Sinopharm vaccine from the procured 1.5 crore vaccines.

Apart from the procured vaccine, Bangladesh received 11 lakh doses of the same vaccine in two phases as a gift from China.

পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর		আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা		তারিখঃ ১৩ জুলাই ২০২১	
সূত্র নং-পিএভিডি/এলপি(এস-৩)রেকা/১২/২০/সে.সেক্টর/নার্স-০২/ডিআর-১২৫৪		তারিখঃ ১৩ জুলাই ২০২১	
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়।	
২	সংস্থা সংগ্রাহক সত্তার নাম ও ঠিকানা	বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন।	
৩	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।	
৪	বাজেট এবং অর্ধের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাজেট।	
৫	দরপত্র সিডিউল সংগ্রহের তারিখ ও সময়	প্রতিকার বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হইতে ৩১/০৭/২০২১ইং (সাপ্তাহিক ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত)।	
৬	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর (পিএভিডি অফিস) ও বুয়েট মেডিকেল সেন্টার, বুয়েট, ঢাকা।	
৭	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর (পিএভিডি অফিস) ও বুয়েট মেডিকেল সেন্টার, বুয়েট এর রক্ষিত বাগে ০১/০৮/২০২১ইং সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। রেজিঃ ডাকঘোশে/ফুরিয়ার সার্ভিসের মাধ্যমে পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর (পিএভিডি অফিস), বুয়েট, ঢাকা বরাবরে প্রেরিত দরপত্র নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে পৌঁছিয়ে তাহা গ্রহণ করা হইবে। কিন্তু নির্ধারিত সময়ের পরে পৌঁছিয়ে উহা গ্রহণ করা হইবে না।	
৮	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর (পিএভিডি অফিস), অফিস কক্ষ। তারিখঃ ০১/০৮/২০২১ইং, ১২.০০ ঘটিকায়।	
৯	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিসের ঠিকানা	পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর (পিএভিডি অফিস), বুয়েট, ঢাকা।	
১০	দরপত্র কাজের বিবরণী	আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে সেবা ক্রয়।	
১১	দরপত্র সিডিউল সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর, বুয়েট, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অফিসের তথ্য) নির্ধারিত ফরম ও কোড এ সোনালী ব্যাংক বুয়েট শাখায় জমা দেওয়ার পর জমার কপি জমা দিয়ে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে অত্র দপ্তর অথবা বুয়েট মেডিকেল সেন্টার হইতে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।	
১২	দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা	বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র দলিলে (সিডিউলে) উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে।	
১৩	কাজের সময়সীমা	কার্যাদেশ দানের তারিখ হতে ০৬ (ছয়) মাস পর্যন্ত, তবে কর্তৃপক্ষ ইচ্ছা করলে চুক্তির মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি করিতে পারিবে।	
১৪	দরপত্র নিরাপত্তা জামানতের পরিমাণ	নিরাপত্তা জামানতঃ নির্ধারিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের সাথে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের পূর্বে সরবরাহকৃত মোট জনবলের প্রদেয় বেতনের ১০% হারে নিরাপত্তা জামানত হিসাবে পেন্ডিং/অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফটের মাধ্যমে কম্পন্ট্রোলার, বুয়েট, ঢাকা এর অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে। চুক্তির মেয়াদ শেষে উক্ত জামানতে অর্থ ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে।	
১৫	সংরক্ষিত ক্ষমতা	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	
১৬	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	অধ্যাপক ডঃ জি. এম. তারেকুল ইসলাম।	
১৭	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী ও ঠিকানা	পরিচালক, পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর, বুয়েট, ঢাকা।	
সেবার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণঃ			
ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১	নার্স	০২	বিএসসি/ডিপ্লোমা পাস কমপক্ষে ০২ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ কোভিড-১৯ রোগীর চিকিৎসা সেবা প্রদানের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
অধ্যাপক ডঃ জি. এম. তারেকুল ইসলাম পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব) পরিকল্পনা ও উন্নয়ন পরিদপ্তর বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা			

Homemaker strangled to death in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A homemaker has been strangled to death at Bilharibari village of the upazila on yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Subarna Khatun, 18, daughter of Mohammad Hafizur Rahman of Kundail village in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj and wife of Sagar Ali, son of Mohammad Jamal Mollah of Bilharibari area.

Md Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Gurudaspur Police Station, said locals found the body and informed the police.

The police found marks of injuries on various parts of the body while recovering it. The body was sent to the morgue of Natore Sadar Hospital for autopsy.



Hafizur Rahman, father of Subarna, said, "My daughter got married to Sagar Ali two years ago. Since the marriage, her husband and her in-laws have been torturing her in various ways."

Even a few days ago, Subarna did not want to go to her husband's house, he said, adding that on Wednesday morning, he was informed that his daughter had been killed.

Hafizur said he saw blood stains on right shoulder of the body and there were signs of serious injuries on her neck. He alleged that his daughter was strangled to death Sagar and his family members.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban, Dhaka

Invitation for Bids (Re-Bid)
For
Procurement of Meter Gauge Wagon
Under ADB's Ordinary Capital Reserves (OCR) Fund
[15 July 2021]

Contract No. BR/ADB/MG Wagons
Procurement of 386 Meter Gauge Bogie Covered Wagons, 174 Meter Gauge Bogie Open Wagons and 20 Meter Gauge Bogie Brake Vans for Bangladesh Railway.

- This Invitation for Bid No. BR/ADB/MG Wagons (Re-Bid), date: 15.07.2021.
- The Bangladesh Railway has applied a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Procurement of 386 Meter Gauge Bogie Covered Wagons, 174 Meter Gauge Bogie Open Wagons and 20 Meter Gauge Bogie Brake Vans for Bangladesh Railway and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for Procurement of 386 Meter Gauge Bogie Covered Wagons, 174 Meter Gauge Bogie Open Wagons and 20 Meter Gauge Bogie Brake Vans for Bangladesh Railway, Contract No. BR/ADB/MG Wagons
"This contract will be jointly financed by Govt. of Bangladesh and ADB. Local currency portion will be financed by GOB and foreign currency portion will be financed by ADB. The eligibility rules and procedures of the ADB will govern the bidding process"
- The Bangladesh Railway represented by Project Director (General Manager/Project), Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project (Rolling Stock Procurement) now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for Procurement of 386 Meter Gauge Bogie Covered Wagons, 174 Meter Gauge Bogie Open Wagons and 20 Meter Gauge Bogie Brake Vans including Commissioning & trial run, study tour and training of Bangladesh Railway Engineers.
Contractual experience: (i) Overall experience of 7 (seven) years in supply of railway passenger and goods rolling stock and related services, (ii) Successful completion as main supplier to supply of railway passenger and goods rolling stock and related services for US\$125 (one hundred twenty-five) million within the last 7 (seven) years in 4 (four) contracts, comprising of at least one contract valued at minimum US\$ 35 (thirty-five) million. Years will count backward from the date of publication of IFB.
Technical experience: (i) A minimum of 10 (ten) years overall experience in manufacturing railway passenger and goods rolling stock, (ii) Specific experience of manufacturing minimum 2500 (two thousand and five hundred) number of new railway passenger and goods rolling stock of which 400 (four hundred) number of stainless steel (SS) railway passenger and goods rolling stock in the last 7 (seven) years. The manufacturer shall also have experience of export minimum 100 (one hundred) number of railway passenger and goods rolling stock to foreign Railways in the last 7 (seven) years.
Production capacity: The bidder or its manufacturer shall demonstrate that it can supply the type, size and quantity of the goods as required by the purchaser in accordance with the delivery and completion schedule.
Delivery period: Delivery to be started within 18 (eighteen) months and to be completed within 27 (twenty-seven) months and commissioning to be completed within 30 (thirty) months from effective date of contract (date of receipt of Commitment Letter from ADB by the beneficiary's bank will be the effective date of contract).
- International competitive bidding (ICB/OTM)** will be conducted in accordance with ADB's **Single Stage, Two-Envelope** procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Project Director (General Manager/Project), Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project (Rolling Stock Procurement) and inspect the Bidding Document at the address given below, from 10:00am to 04:30pm. Date of selling of bid document: up to 25.08.2021 till 04:00pm.
- The Bidding Document, in the English language, may be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of BDT 10,000.00 (Taka ten thousand). The Bidding Document can either be picked up at the address below, or upon request of the bidder the Bidding Document will be sent by surface mail or courier for overseas delivery by the Purchaser. The cost for overseas delivery will be paid by the bidder on an at cost basis, and should be paid at the same time when the Bidding Document is purchased. The method of payment will be in the form of Pay Order in favor of "Financial Advisor & Chief Accounts Officer/Project" Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka. No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery.

Project Director (General Manager/Project)
Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project (Rolling Stock Procurement)
Railbhaban (Room No. 721)
Bangladesh Railway
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Mobile: +88 01709999094
E-mail: pdrsp@railway.gov.bd

Bangladesh Railway will not accept any liability for loss or late delivery of the Bidding Document in the process. The Invitation for Bid is available in the following websites:

- Bangladesh Railway;
- ADB (Business Opportunities) and
- Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) of Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

- Bids must be delivered to the address below at on or before 11.00am, date 26.08.2021. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as described in the bidding document. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at 11.30am on 26.08.2021.
- Bangladesh Railway will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of Bids.
- In the comparison of Bids, ADB's Domestic Preference Scheme will not be applied.

Name of office: Project Director (General Manager/Project),
Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project (Rolling Stock Procurement).
Name of officer: Md. Mizanur Rahman
Postal address (for contact):
Room No. 721 (6th Floor), Railbhaban
Bangladesh Railway
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
Bangladesh

Venue for bid submission and opening for bids:
Room No. 411 (3rd Floor), Railbhaban
Bangladesh Railway
16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000
Bangladesh.

13.07.2021

Md. Mizanur Rahman
Project Director (General Manager/Project)
Rolling Stock Operations Improvement Project
(Rolling Stock Procurement)
Bangladesh Railway, Railbhaban, Dhaka

GD-1349

NEWS
IN brief

Biden decries Republicans' attacks on voting rights

President Joe Biden on Tuesday called it a "national imperative" to pass sweeping voting rights legislation that has stalled in Congress and attacked Republicans for their opposition. At least 17 states this year have enacted laws that restrict voting access, with more being considered. Critics say these restrictions are aimed at Black, Hispanic and younger voters. Many Republicans have justified new restrictions as a means to combat voter fraud. In a passionate speech in a city, Biden slammed the widespread voting fraud claims by Donald Trump and some Republicans. Republicans must "stand up, for God's sake," and oppose voting restrictions, Biden said, adding a challenge: "Have you no shame?"

Malaysia cabinet backs PM

Malaysian cabinet ministers yesterday unanimously pledged their support for Muhyiddin Yassin to continue as prime minister, amid a new round of political uncertainty after the premier lost the backing of the country's biggest party. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), a key ally in the ruling coalition, withdrew support for Muhyiddin last week and called on him to resign for failing to manage the country's Covid-19 crisis. Parliament is scheduled to hold a five-day special meeting from July 26. Muhyiddin has a slim two-seat parliamentary majority, with UMNO comprising 37 of its 113 lawmakers.

Cuba calm after protests

Cuba has restricted access to social media and messaging platforms including Facebook and WhatsApp, global internet monitoring firm NetBlocks said on Tuesday, in the wake of the biggest anti-government protests in decades. Thousands of Cubans joined demonstrations throughout the Communist-run country on Sunday to protest against a deep economic crisis that has seen shortages of basic goods and power outages. The protests, rare in a country where public dissent is tightly controlled, had largely ended by Sunday evening, as security forces took control of the situation. Activists say at least one person died and more than 100 people have been arrested.

China furious as blast kills 9 workers in Pakistan

Beijing said nine Chinese workers were among 12 people killed yesterday morning by a bomb attack on a bus in northwestern Pakistan and called for severe punishment, but Islamabad blamed the explosion on a "gas leak". The bus was carrying around 40 Chinese engineers, surveyors and mechanical staff to a hydropower dam construction site in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. China's foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian urged Pakistan to "severely punish" those responsible and "earnestly protect" Chinese nationals and projects. Around 28 people were also injured. Pakistan authorities said an investigation was under way.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Alpha jets from the French Air Force Patrouille de France fly past Carrousel du Louvre during the Bastille Day celebrations in Paris, France, yesterday. France's National Day commemorates the storming of the Bastille, the medieval fortress which represented royal authority, during the French Revolution.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Quotes of the day



“Afghan women and girls are going to suffer unspeakable harm. This is a mistake... They're just going to be left behind to be slaughtered by these very brutal people, and it breaks my heart.”

FORMER US PRESIDENT
GEORGE W BUSH



“The climate problem is one of the areas where Russia and the United States have common interests and similar approaches.”

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT
VLADIMIR PUTIN



“This risk is not worth taking. Allow me to be clear. If you take the sea, you will not come to the United States.”

US HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS WARNS HAITIANS, CUBANS



JULY 15
1961 - Spain accepts equal rights for men and women
2006 - Social media site Twitter launches.
2016 - Military coup attempt in Turkey.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Taliban back to old ways

Fears grow as insurgents impose harsh Sharia law in newly acquired territories

AGENCIES

Days after the Taliban captured a remote district in Afghanistan's north, they issued their first orders in the form of a letter to the local imam.

“It said women can't go to the bazaar without a male companion, and men should not shave their beards,” said Sefatullah, 25, a resident of Kalafgan district.

The Taliban are making huge advances across the country as they capitalise on the final withdrawal of foreign troops -- capturing districts, seizing key border crossings, and encircling provincial capitals.



bolster their ranks.

The crossing also gives the Taliban the opportunity to access Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi and its sprawling port on the Arabian Sea, which is considered a linchpin for Afghanistan's billion-dollar heroin trade that has provided a crucial source of revenue for the Taliban's war chest over the years.

In some areas they are again introducing the harsh interpretation of Islamic rule that earned them notoriety until being overthrown by the US-led invasion that followed the September 11 attacks.

Last month they took Shir Khan Bandar, a northern customs post that connected the country to Tajikistan over a US-funded bridge that spanned the Panj river.

“After Shir Khan Bandar fell, the Taliban ordered women not to step out of their homes,” said Sajeda, who told AFP she worked in a local factory at the time.

Taliban claim control of key border crossing with Pakistan
UK says may work with Taliban if they join Afghan govt
Russia tells Kabul to negotiate with Taliban

Yesterday, the Taliban said they had captured the strategic border crossing of Spin Boldak on the frontier with Pakistan.

The border crossing is one of the most strategically valuable for the Taliban. Kabul claimed the crossing remained under its control.

It provides direct access to Pakistan's Balochistan province -- where the insurgents' top leadership has been based for decades -- along with an unknown number of reserve fighters who regularly enter Afghanistan to help

SYSTEMIC RACISM

UN Rights Council orders global probe

AFP, Geneva

The UN Human Rights Council on Tuesday highlighted the global "scourge" of systemic racism and ordered an independent investigation into racially-fueled police violence around the world.

In a resolution brought by a group of African countries, the council harshly condemned "continuing racially discriminatory and violent practices perpetrated by many law enforcement officials against Africans and people of African descent."

The text, which was adopted without a vote, decried "systemic racism in the law enforcement and criminal justice systems," and highlighted the need to bring offenders to justice.

It ordered the creation of an "international independent expert mechanism" to "advance racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement in all parts of the world."

The resolution follows a damning report published last month by UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet calling for systemic racism against black people to be immediately dismantled.

In her report, Bachelet called on countries to confront colonial pasts and racially discriminatory policies and systems, and to seek "reparatory justice".



PROMISES BY MYANMAR'S ANTI-JUNTA COALITION

Rohingyas skeptical

AFP, Sittwe

A shadow government is breaking taboos in Buddhist-majority Myanmar by welcoming Rohingya into its anti-junta coalition, but many in the long-persecuted Muslim minority are wary after living through decades of discrimination and deadly violence.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the government of Aung San Suu Kyi was ousted in a February coup, sparking huge pro-democracy protests and a bloody military crackdown.

Dissident lawmakers from her party dominate a "National Unity Government" in exile, rallying support for the resistance among foreign governments and on international news broadcasts.

Last month they invited the Rohingya to "join hands" to end military rule, promising to repatriate those who fled to Bangladesh after a deadly 2017 military assault on their communities in western Rakhine state.

They also pledged to grant citizenship to the minority, which has long been stateless after decades of discriminatory policies.

The use of the word "Rohingya" was new -- wary of sentiment among the mostly Buddhist, ethnic Bamar-majority population, Suu Kyi's government had referred to the community as "Muslims living in Rakhine."

But suspicion lingers among those Rohingya still in Myanmar, where they are widely seen as interlopers from

Bangladesh and have been denied citizenship, rights and access to services.

“Giving a promise and then getting support from abroad -- it's like putting bait for fish,” said Wai Mar, who has been living in a displacement camp for almost a decade.

Reached by a bumpy, potholed road from the western city of Sittwe, the wooden huts of Thet Kay Pyin camp shelter Rohingya chased or burnt out of their homes during earlier clashes with ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in 2012.

“We're worried we exist only to be human shields or scapegoats,” Wai Mar added.

Mother of four San Yee, who struggles to provide for her children even with the remittances her husband sends from Malaysia, agrees.

“We can't put all our trust and expectations in them because we've been oppressed for so long.”

Despite the overtures, there are no Rohingya representatives among the National Unity Government's current 32-member cabinet.

The Myanmar public was largely unsympathetic to the Rohingya's plight, while activists and journalists reporting on the issues faced vitriolic abuse online.

For many in Thet Kay Pyin, after almost a decade of limbo, political allegiance comes second.

“If they will give our rights, we will cooperate with the military, NLD or NUG,” said Ko Tun Hla.

“If our rights will be given, we will cooperate with anyone.”

MYANMAR COUP

Take action to restore democracy

US urges Asean

REUTERS

About 100 opponents of military rule in Myanmar marched through the centre of its biggest city of Yangon yesterday, as the United States called on Southeast Asian nations to take action to restore democracy and end violence in their neighbour.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, but street protests have become rarer after they were suppressed by the army with the killing hundreds of people.

During a virtual meeting with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged its members to take joint action to help end violence, restore a democratic transition and release those "unjustly detained" in Myanmar, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

Blinken also urged Asean, which includes Myanmar, to hold the military accountable on what Asean called a five-point peace consensus, agreed in April, with Myanmar's military ruler.

Myanmar's security forces have killed more than 900 people since the coup and detained thousands, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, an activist group. The junta has previously disputed the death toll and said the army had also suffered casualties.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police
Police Staff College Bangladesh
Memo No. 44.01.0400.062.31.001.2021-1374 Date: 13/07/2021

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Agency	Police Staff College (PSC).
3. Procuring entity name	Rector, Police Staff College.
4. Expression of interest for selection of	Conduct Research and Publication of Book.
5. Eoi Ref. No.	44.01.0000.324.32.003.20.152
6. Date	06 July 2021.
KEY INFORMATION	
7. Procurement method	Quality and Cost Base Selection (QCBS) Method.
FUNDING INFORMATION	
8. Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget Research head.
9. Development partners (if applicable)	NA.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
10. Project/programme name (if applicable)	Title: 1. An Evaluation of Beat Policing Activities: A Case Study of Range Police Sylhet. 2. An Analysis of Using GIS in the Robbery & Dacoity Cases: A Study on Selective District of Bangladesh. 3. National Emergency Service 999: An Evaluation.
11. Eoi closing date and time	12 August 2021, Time: 12:30.
12. Eoi submission place	Police Staff College Bangladesh.
13. Eoi pre-submission meeting and place	05 August 2021, Conference Room 3rd Floor, PSC, 11:00am.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
14. Name of official inviting expression of interest	Mohammad Shahjahan, ppm (Bar), Ph.D.
15. Designation of official inviting expression of interest	Director, Research and Publication.
16. Address of official inviting expression of interest	Room Number 111, Admin Building, Police Staff College, Section 14, Mirpur, Dhaka-1206.
17. Contact details of official inviting expression of interest	01755975720, dc_shahjahan@yahoo.com
18. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Eois.	

Mohammad Shahjahan ppm (Bar), Ph.D
BP No. 7098043468
Director (Research & Publication)
Police Staff College Bangladesh
Mirpur-14, Dhaka-1206

GD-1348

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

A perennial philosophy:
Amitav Ghosh's 'Jungle Nama'

KAISER HAQ

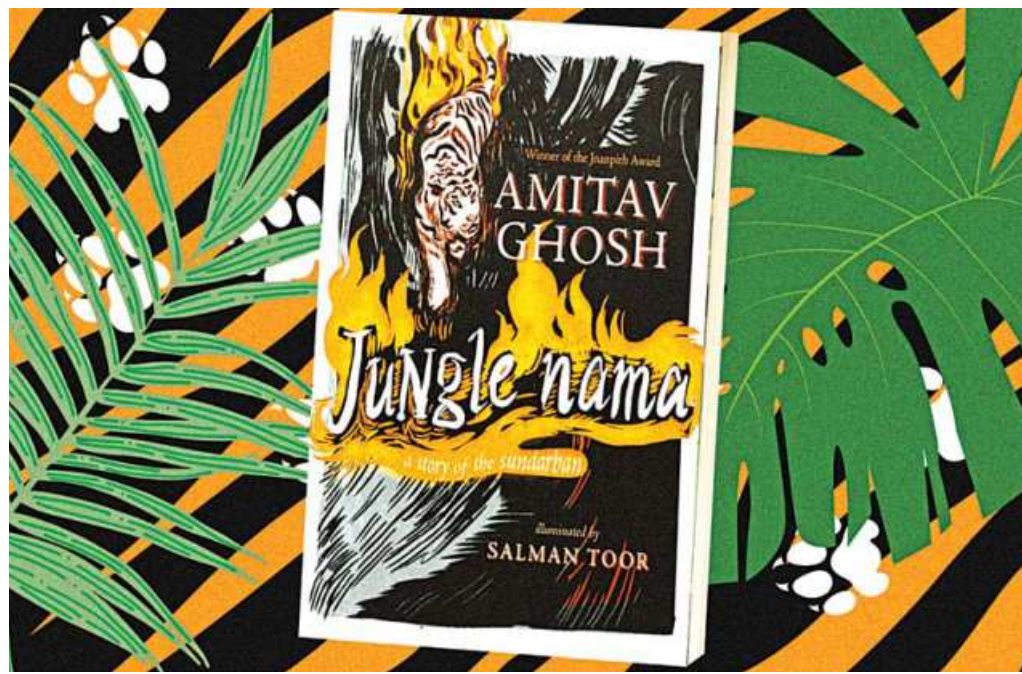
Amitav Ghosh's passionate engagement with the Sundarbans has brought out his best as a socially conscious fashioner of narrative in *The Hungry Tide* (HarperCollins, 2004) and *Gun Island* (John Murray, 2019); enriched his intervention in the discourse on ecology, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Penguin, 2016); and perhaps most felicitously, has brought to light the poet hiding behind his voluminous prose.

Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* (HarperCollins India, 2021) is a verse retelling of the core story of the central cultic folk narrative of the Sundarbans, the *Bon Bibi Johuranama*, available in two late 19th century versions, one by Munshi Muhammad Khatir, the other by Abdur Rahim Sahib. It is intertextually related to the 17th century *Raymangal* of Krishnaram. *Raymangal* introduces the tiger god Dokkhin Rai (King of the South), who is defeated by and makes peace with Gazi Khan and Gazi Kalu, agreeing to share human homage with them. This syncretism is incorporated into the Bon Bibi cult, a unique example amidst clashing fundamentalisms of interfaith solidarity in a shared, inhospitable environment.

Ghosh picks up the narrative at the point where Bon Bibi and her twin brother Shah Jongoli arrive in the forest and are challenged by Dokkhin Rai. They easily subdue their rival, set strict limits to his forest constituency, and assume guardianship of those who have to venture into it for their livelihood. Hence the practice among woodcutters, honey collectors, and fisherfolk of seeking Bon Bibi's blessings before entering the forest.

The stage is now set for a moving drama. Dhona, etymologically "the Rich One", is greedy for more wealth, unlike his brother Mona ("mon", significantly, means heart), who refuses to accompany him with a fleet of seven ships to ransack forest resources. The crew is one short, and Dhona cajoles a poor relation, Dukhey (literally "the Sad-Lad"), a widow's only child, to sign up. Having entered Dokkhin Rai's realm without going through propitiatory rites, they are utterly in his power, subject to fantasmagoric experiences, until Dhona strikes a deal with the tiger god: for shiploads of valuable wax he must leave Dukhey behind to be devoured.

Just in time Dukhey recalls his mother's advice to appeal to Bon Bibi in the verse form of the *Johur Nama*, for meter and rhyme lend magical power to words. Once more Dokkhin Rai is humbled by Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli, and is forced to yield enormous riches to his intended victim. Dukhey returns home to find his mother prostrated by grief. Calling her in the magical verse form revives her, and the joy of reunited mother and son is followed by his



happy wedding.

In an Afterword, Ghosh underscores the significance of the tale in the age of climate change. Bon Bibi propagates a perennial philosophy that humankind would do well to heed:

"All you need do, is be content with what you've got;

to be always craving more, is a demon's lot.

A world of endless appetite is a world possessed,

is what your munshi's learned, by way of this quest"

In a fine conceit, the discipline of verse comes to represent the sense of proportion that conduces to contentment; as Bon Bibi lectures Dokkhin Rai:

"Count your syllables, it'll help rein your appetites in,

the yoke of meter will give you discipline.

It's the chaos in your mind that unbridles your desires,

by measuring your thoughts you'll learn to quench those fires."

The most remarkable achievement of Ghosh's narrative is the verse he has fashioned as the equivalent of the quantitative meter of the original, the "poyar", defined as rhyming couplets with 14 units in each line, and a marked caesura after the eighth unit. These units ("matra") aren't simply syllables, for an "open" syllable like "Rai" will count as one unit; a "closed" syllable like "Bon" as two.

Ghosh has couplets of 12-syllable lines that do not conform to any of the accentual meters of English verse. In fact, read with "normal" English intonation, they sound like rhymed prose—quite dull—but belted out like rap, they work beautifully.

This prosodic innovation is characteristic of the "New Englishes", whose speakers outnumber native speakers five to one. David Crystal in his Youtube video "The Future of Englishes", explains that English has traditionally used "stress-timed rhythm", as in iambic verse, while the "New Englishes" follow "syllable-timed rhythm", as in rap. These syllabic rhythms are akin to the Bangla poyar. I recall the great Bengali folk singer Shah Abdul Karim declaring in an interview that rap or hip hop was nothing new, and was akin to our folk poetry, which he recited by way of illustration.

A discussion of this attractively produced book will be incomplete without an admiring mention of the artist Salman Toor, whose expressionistic black-and-white pictures have truly illuminated the text.

Amitav Ghosh's *Jungle Nama* (HarperCollins, 2020) is available for purchase at Omni Books, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. An extended version of this article will be available online.

Kaiser Haq is a poet, translator, essayist, critic, academic and freedom fighter. He currently serves as Professor of English at the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh (ULAB).

Illustration: Kazi Akib Bin Asad

BOOK REVIEW: GRAPHIC NOVEL

Revisiting the lost
Jewish communities
of Baghdad

ISRAR HASAN

Iraq once boasted one of the world's oldest Jewish communities, encompassing 2,600 years of rich cultural history punctuated with moments of benign tolerance, blatant discrimination, and outright intolerance and persecution. As the cradle of civilisation and a melting pot of different ethnicities and religions, one-third of Baghdad is said to have been Jewish, numbering 150,000 Jews, as recently as the 1950s. Yet there are four Jews remaining in modern day Iraq today. The Iraqi-Jewish diaspora, meanwhile, has gifted us luminaries such as the world renowned advertising executives, the Saatchi brothers; one of Singapore's founding fathers, David Marshall; as well as JFR Jacob, the Indian war hero of Bangladesh's Liberation War who authored *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation* (UIPL, 1997), descended from Baghdadi-Jewish stock.

testimonials attest to the changing of times from good to bad to worst. The imagery reaches across time periods, but the peculiar and perhaps most engaging aspect of the narrative is that it has no dialogue. This silence seems to signal the widening gulf in the Iraqi-Jewish diaspora of the time, between their memories of belonging and the crude reality of an Iraq that never was.

These memories reveal what happened to the community in the midst of the Judeocide raging in WWII Europe. European anti-semitism seeped into the Arab world, creating pogroms, lynchings, and wide-spread destruction of Jewish life, spelling its end. All departments were purged of Jewish officials, anything resembling Judaism was buried underground, and Iraqi music, a great legacy

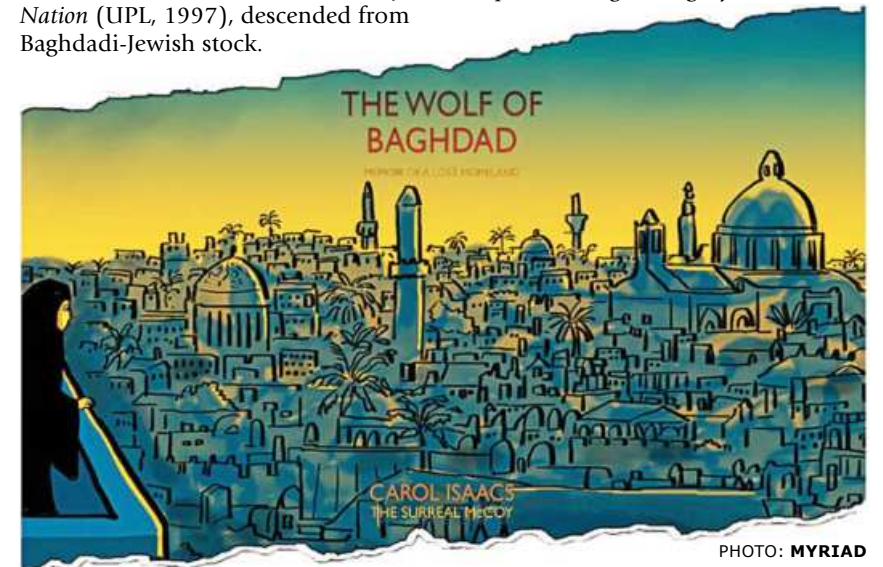


PHOTO: MYRIAD

Carol Isaacs's masterful graphic novel, *The Wolf of Baghdad: Memoir of a Lost Homeland* (Myriad, 2020), takes us back to a time in the 20th century when Jews were an intrinsic part of Iraqi society. Its title is based on an Iraqi-Jewish tale that believes in the power of wolves to protect from demons. In fact, as was tradition, the cribs of children had amulets made of wolf teeth fixed to them to sway away dark spirits.

Isaacs taps into the memories of her family and friends who passed on their memories to her. The novel showcases the changes in 20th century Iraq, and with those changes, the Jewish community evolved from tradition to modernity, all the while placing strong emphasis on being both Jewish and Iraqi—two identities which have sadly been appropriated for chauvinistic nationalism. Isaacs recovers this history under the guise of a black abaya, as was worn by her ancestors, walking in the narrow alleyways of Old Baghdad while evoking a strong sense of nostalgia and deep-rootedness with the land. The market places, mosques, synagogues, and buildings are all shown in thought provoking detail in the novel.

The pages are permeated by miniature portraits of the Isaacs and other Jewish families whose

that Carol Isaacs is the personification of, was systematically purged of its Jewish composers. Contrary to popular belief, it was the venom of European anti-semitism tinged with narrow-minded Arab nationalism that ended the vibrancy of Jewish life there.

A British author of Jewish Iraqi descent, Isaacs works as a cartoonist for *The New Yorker* under the name of The Surreal McCoy, and is an accomplished musician in her own right. She has never been to Iraq and like many refugees, the memories of her homeland linger in the music and stories passed down to her by the generation of yesteryears, the generation which saw the flourishing and destruction of one of the most conspicuously prosperous communities in the Middle East.

As history has always shown, hatred with one minority does not end with one; it amplifies and explodes. As Iraqi Christians and Yazidis flee and the Iraqi Sunni-Shia proxy war continues, the story of the Jews in Iraq remains a vital and important story of remembrance, of the reconciliation of memory and belonging.

Israr Hasan is a research assistant at BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health.

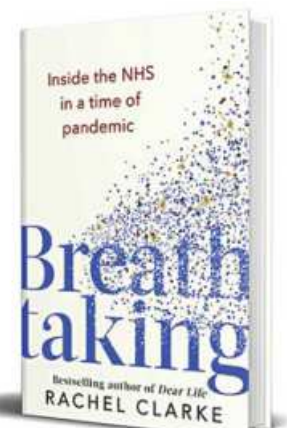
READ ONLINE: NONFICTION REVIEW

The quiet sacrifices of
the NHS

MD TANJIM HOSSAIN

Rachel Clarke reminds us of the intensity of the ongoing tragedy in her autobiographical *Breathtaking* (Little, Brown, 2021), told from the extraordinary perspective of a palliative care doctor. Amidst moments that push the world to the verge of collapse, Clarke holds the responsibility to look after wards of the most perilous patients in Oxfordshire. The book gives an impassioned description of the views from inside the National Health Service (NHS), many of them enough to freeze you in your tracks.

Read this article on *The Daily Star* website and on Daily Star Books' Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



MUSINGS

Friends who recommend books are special

SAMEIRAH NASRIN AHSAN

There is no better way to show someone that they are on your mind than to recommend a book you think they would love.

Friends who recommend books without being asked are special. Imagine this: they opened a book and strode right in, leaving their desk, their home, their city, their entire reality behind. They may have slipped on a ring and embarked on a precarious journey for Mordor alone; or hopped down Hogswag with new wizard friends to try the new Sticky Toffee Pudding; or walked down bustling streets of the coastal cities of Novyi Zem, wondering how peaceful it is compared to Ketterdam. They trekked through the lush forests of Bandarban and climbed its tallest peaks with Topon and his cousins in search of T-Rex. They doubled over with uncontrollable laughter when Himu shaved his eyebrows and inadvertently aided a young parent to discipline her child. They stood still on Daruchini Dip with aching hearts while Shubhro's vision slowly blurred into grey.

They trembled with anticipation, seethed with rage, shared the laughter and tears of the characters, fell in love with the landscape, mourned endings that did not deliver happiness, and rejoiced those that did. They finished reading their book, cover to cover, came out of the pages, and as they slowly reentered consciousness, they thought of you. Your phone beeped with a notification from your friend. It read, "I've JUST finished reading this amazing book and I think you will love it too!"

Typically, when readers finish a really good book, it takes a while for them to recover. They look up and realise that while they were lost within the pages, everyone else carried on with their lives. The reader sits there, pensive: sad and grateful, unable to tell whether they have gained or lost a piece of themselves. They have travelled with the author and the characters and lived each of their lives. They take a



PHOTO: SAMEIRAH NASRIN AHSAN

deep breath, heart heavy yet full, their mind a whirlwind of everything real and unreal, their catharsis slow and elusive.

All these feelings experienced by a reader are private because reading a good book can be a very intimate experience; finishing it can lead to an intense, albeit brief, metamorphosis. And during these fleeting moments of confused awareness, readers look for someone to complete them and they reach out to those they know can empathise. This is when they look for you: someone to fill the sudden void in their hearts, someone to understand and feel as they have understood and felt. Someone with whom they can share the ecstasy and the sorrow, explore the world within the book, meet the people in it and know their stories too.

People who recommend books without being asked give away pieces of themselves

without even realising it. When someone wishes for you to read a book that they loved, they are baring to you a part of their soul that transcends all temporal places, because it is within those strange paper-worlds where they are their deepest, truest selves. So the next time a book-loving friend gushes to you about a book that they love, and urges you to read it too, pay attention, because they are showing you what makes them feel, what makes them laugh, things that tear them apart, and the things that make them who they are. These are secrets given only to the best of friends.

Sameirah Nasrin Ahsan is a mechanical engineer and aspiring author based in Dhaka. For now, she is content with reading and sharing the stories that make her think beyond herself. Instagram: @booksnher.

Fresh round of relief for pandemic-hit groups

Authorities must ensure quick and effective disbursement

WE applaud the government decision to introduce relief packages worth Tk 3,200 crore to segments of the population who have been dealt a fresh blow by the latest round of lockdown to contain the current wave of Covid-19 in Bangladesh. Of this, Tk 450 crore will specifically target day labourers, transport workers, small traders and shipping workers with cash assistance; Tk 1,500 crore will be used to finance job creation activities in rural areas; and Tk 1,000 crore will provide low-interest loans for paying salaries to workers in the tourism sector. The government has also allocated Tk 100 crore for providing food assistance through the 333 hotline, and Tk 150 crore for operating 813 special open market sale (OMS) centres across the country.

While these are all commendable steps, quick and efficient disbursement is key to ensuring they are actually effective. And in order for them to be effective, there is an obvious need for these initiatives to be informed by data. However, last month, the finance minister dismissed the estimates of all non-government organisations regarding the new poor, and announced that the government will only accept poverty data from the BBS. So where exactly is this data? The Bangladesh Poverty Database has not been completed in more than seven years, and the data collected for it has already been rendered useless. As such, there still exist serious concerns about whether the government packages will actually reach those most affected by the pandemic. We have already seen previous attempts at cash disbursement go awry because of incomplete and incorrect lists of beneficiaries. What steps are the authorities taking to ensure this is not repeated?

Similarly, while there is clearly goodwill behind the initiative to ensure food assistance to those calling 333, we have previously witnessed how vulnerable citizens, made newly poor by the pandemic, have been punished for seeking help. The authorities must ensure that this does not happen again and take steps against government representatives engaging in this sort of abuse of power.

While experts have commended the latest round of relief packages, especially in terms of the OMS and a separate initiative to extend assistance to those with vulnerable group feeding cards, they have generally expressed concerns about effective targeting and duplication in beneficiary lists. The authorities must listen to their concerns, and take their recommendations on board if they truly want to help those most affected by the pandemic and the recent lockdowns.

Capital's cattle markets swarmed way ahead of opening date

So why should the govt's enforcement of health guidelines wait?

IT is quite disappointing that cattle markets around the capital—which are not set to open before July 17—are already seeing throngs of sellers and potential buyers, most of them not wearing masks, let alone practicing social distancing. Visiting reporters also noted the absence of hand-washing facilities, hand sanitisers, and thermal scanners to check visitors' body temperature prior to entry. If this is to be the scenario in all 20 cattle markets (between the two city corporations) until Eid—and the scenario may well be the same in other cattle markets across the country—we must prepare ourselves for an even grimmer Covid-19 situation after the holidays. Already, the daily death rate is in triple digits, while the number of positive cases crossed 12,000 between Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, sales seem to be going on full swing in these markets, with one trader at the Gabtali market (quoted in our report) having already sold three cows. This market was observed to be at the worst in terms of crowding, with buyers and visitors from outside Dhaka swarming it. Regarding the delay in setting up necessary health facilities, a leaseholder at this market—most likely unfamiliar with the rules of supply-and-demand and citizens' general tendency to not follow health guidelines unless strictly enforced—said they had not expected “people in droves would start to come to the market, for which we could not ensure those”. On the other hand, the DNCC mayor and the DSCC chief estate officer said that immediate action (including closing down the market) would be taken if health guidelines are violated, and that the 10 cattle markets under DNCC will each have a monitoring team. One can only guess that these “immediate actions” will be applicable after the official opening date of the cattle markets, since violations are still taking place freely as of now.

We understand the government's desire to appease religious sentiments as well as ensure the livelihood of cattle traders, but if such essential health guidelines are ignored when the markets become even more crowded in the coming days (thanks to the easing of lockdown till July 23), we will have to pay a steep price. Since there seems to be no stopping the buyers, visitors or traders, the least our two city corporations can do is immediately install hand-washing facilities and begin enforcing health guidelines. As mentioned before, buyers and visitors do not just belong to the capital, but those from outside are also coming to these markets to purchase and resell cattle in their own districts. Given our current sky-high rates of daily Covid-19 deaths and infections, our already exhausted health system and still-uncertain vaccine supply, we simply cannot afford such mishandling. It's high time the authorities took stern actions to prevent further spread of the virus.

Why are we seeing so many deaths in the third wave?

KHONDOKER MEHEDI AKRAM

THE third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic with the Delta variant has started almost simultaneously in Bangladesh and in the UK. The infection rate is similar in both countries. The viral reproduction rate in the UK is currently 1.43, and in Bangladesh it is 1.42. Although the rate of transmission is similar, there is a stark difference in the number of fatalities. Bangladesh is witnessing a record high number of deaths in the third wave of the pandemic.

In the UK, since the beginning of the third wave, five lakh and sixty thousand people have been infected; of them, around six hundred died with the lowest death rate of 0.10 percent. In Bangladesh, in that time, one lakh and eighty-seven thousand people have been infected; of them, three thousand and one hundred people died with a death rate of 1.7 percent. As such, the death rate in Bangladesh is currently 17 times higher than in the UK.

Before the beginning of its mass vaccination programme in December, the Covid mortality rate in the UK was 3 percent. To date, 67 percent of the population of the country have got one shot of vaccine and 50 percent got two shots. Some 85 percent of the country's adult population have now developed antibodies against coronavirus through natural infections and vaccines. Consequently, the death rate has dropped dramatically from 3 percent to 0.10 percent, meaning that vaccination has reduced fatality by 30 times.

The pandemic scenario of Bangladesh is quite the opposite. Both infections and deaths are increasing rapidly. To date, 3.5 percent of the country's population have received one dose of vaccine and only 2.7 percent got two doses. Currently, the government has 56 lakh shots in its stock, which are sufficient for 28 lakh people. But Bangladesh needs 20 crores of additional shots to fully inoculate the country's 70 percent of population.

A little over one crore shots have been delivered across the country in the last four months. If the vaccination programme continues at this pace, it will take six and a half years to reach the target! Apparently, the speed of vaccination must be increased manifold. If 5 lakh shots are delivered every day, it will take until December next year to reach the goal of national Covid-19 immunisation set by the government.

India, meanwhile, is eight and a half times larger than Bangladesh in terms of



Sabina Akter Joya and Tusher wail near the body of their mother Jahanara Begum, 58, in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on July 10, 2021. Jahanara was admitted to a hospital in Kakrail after she tested positive for Covid-19. After her condition worsened that morning, doctors referred her to the Intensive Care Unit of DMCH. She died on the way. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

population. But the country managed to vaccinate 22 percent of its population with one dose and 5 percent with two full doses within a short time. When Bangladesh is giving only a few thousand doses every day, India is giving 30 to 35 lakh doses daily. To date, India delivered 37 crores of vaccine shots.

A recent country-wide serosurveillance conducted by the World Health Organization revealed that 67 percent of adults in India developed antibodies against coronavirus. Amongst them, 79 percent people were from urban areas, and 63 percent from rural areas. They also found that the vaccinated people had 80 percent less chance of hospitalisation. It is a relief for India that a large portion of its population has developed immunity against Covid. This mass immunity will reduce mortality in the forthcoming pandemic wave in India which is going to occur in a few months.

What is the seroprevalence status of our country? Do we know how many people in the urban and rural areas have

developed immunity against Covid? An accurate answer is absent as there hasn't been any nation-wide serosurveillance conducted in our country to date. A vital piece of information is missing—one that is required for successful immunisation.

Vaccines save lives. In fact, mass vaccination has saved an estimated 27 thousand lives in England so far. If the elderly and those in the high-risk group in Bangladesh had been vaccinated on a priority basis in the last four months, the death toll from the third wave could have been greatly reduced.

Bangladesh must procure enough vaccines and speed up its mass vaccination drive. Currently, our vaccination drive is going on at a snail's pace. Vaccination at a slower rate reduces its ability to control the epidemic. If India can jab 35 lakh people every day, why can't we give at least 5 lakh doses daily?

The lack of essential healthcare services can also be attributed to higher deaths in the third wave. The last two waves were mainly Dhaka-centric. But the current wave

is affecting mostly the border districts, where lack of high-flow nasal cannula, oxygen supply and ICU facilities are evident. If the necessary actions were taken promptly, many lives could have been saved.

Moving forward, the government must take the following actions immediately to reduce further deaths from the forthcoming waves: (1) Accelerate the mass vaccination programme and inoculate 3-5 lakh people per day (vaccine should be offered first on a priority basis to all people in their sixties and high-risk groups); (2) Covid treatment facilities across the country must be increased by three folds; and (3) Country-wide serosurveillance should be conducted to assess the immunity status of the nation.

It is unfair to compare Bangladesh with a country like the UK. But isn't it true that we are also way behind India—with which we share many socioeconomic similarities—in terms of the above three points in managing the pandemic?

Dr Khondoker Mehedi Akram is a Senior Research Associate at the University of Sheffield, UK.

Only 'We, the People' can unleash the full potential of RTI law

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

BANGLADESH has long been known for the political activism of its citizens, ready to fight for their rights and defend their freedom. The creation of the country in 1971 is a testimony to that. Now—in an age when institutions of representative governance are in fast decline both globally and locally—is the time for us to seize what the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 offers as an alternative to continue that tradition.

Our first job is to convince the upper echelons of our society, who have largely ignored the law so far, that without their participation its full potential will remain untapped. Since its adoption 12 years ago, the law has been kept alive mainly by ordinary citizens. With the help of RTI enthusiasts and some committed NGOs, they have demonstrated, however sparsely, the power of the law to initiate positive change in governance. To go beyond and make higher gains, we need the participation and leadership of people who are more knowledgeable about the inner workings of the government and better equipped to understand the intricacies of the law and its use.

RTI law is globally acknowledged as the most effective instrument to promote participatory democracy, where people feel that they are no longer the “ruled” but the “rulers”. While it takes time to dismantle a deep-rooted culture of secretive and opaque governance, experience of other countries shows that it can be done. Hurdles faced in implementing the law can be ironed out over time.

To speed our progress, “We, the people” must rally together and spread the message about the power and promise of RTI law more vigorously. Here is how.

First, remember that the RTI Act is fundamentally different from all other laws because only citizens can initiate its use, not the government. While the government is the executor of other laws—which citizens must abide by—in case of the RTI law, citizens are the executor and the government the responder. The roles have reversed. This point cannot be over-emphasised.

Next, RTI law is aimed at empowering citizens vis-à-vis public authorities. Its primary objective is to promote participatory democracy. People participate in the governance of the country by seeking relevant information from public authorities, thereby reminding them that their work is being monitored. Their requests help to instil in the minds of

public servants that people are the real owners of state power. The law is well-titled as a *right* to know, not a *need* to know. Citizens do not have to justify their requests to public authorities. There should be no fear, therefore, for the people to use the law. The RTI Act not only recognises their right but also underscores a concurrent responsibility.

The RTI Act states clearly that people's right to information contributes to better governance by promoting transparency and accountability in the work of public authorities, increasing their efficiency, mitigating corruption and advancing good governance. People do so by obtaining relevant information on the work of

records and take certified copies.

A great deal of confusion exists on the definition of public authorities. As a general rule of thumb, the law permits citizens to seek information from all government and other public offices, including NGOs and private entities who benefit from public funds. Even those entities who use no public fund but have a reporting responsibility to the government under any regulatory law are covered indirectly. Private companies are, however, normally outside the purview of the law; but if we ensure strong use of the Act as it is now, there could be a basis for us to seek increase of its scope.

Another important area which



ILLUSTRATION: COLLECTED

public authorities which provide a basis to assess their work. They can then use the information to seek corrective measures from the government, if necessary. Through RTI requests, citizens also help to improve the capacity of public officials to deal with their requests, to change their bureaucratic mindset and attitudes, and bring them closer to the people.

As to what kind of information people can seek from the authorities: any information available with public authorities in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advice, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form, etc. They are also entitled to ask for inspection of work, documents,

deserves particular care from RTI users is the exemption clause of the RTI Act, which blocks citizens' access to certain types of information. These include information which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty, integrity, security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state, its relationship with foreign countries, or incite offence. Some other types of information, including personal information of citizens, are also exempted from disclosure. As many RTI requests are rejected on these grounds, citizens must comprehend the scope of different subsections of Section 7 of the RTI Act and be ready to challenge their misuse.

The law requires RTI requests to be submitted in forms specifically designed for this purpose and available from the

website of the Information Commission. Requests have to be addressed to the Designated Officer (DO) of the authority concerned, whose particulars should be available directly from the authority or its website. To avoid rejections, citizens must address their request to the right person and describe their requests precisely. Requests are often rejected on procedural grounds. Citizens must remain alert to any abuses and lobby for their mitigation.

RTI requests often go unanswered. The law requires applicants to appeal within 15 days after the expiry of a maximum of 30 working days within which the request should have been answered. If the appeal process is not complied with properly, the request simply “dies”. The public servant who did not reply to the original request is let off the hook. So, it is up to citizens to ensure that they follow the requirements of the law diligently.

The Information Commission plays the most critical role in the implementation of RTI in the country, *inter alia*, by resolving disputes between information-seeking citizens and information-providing public officials. The commission's decisions can either encourage or discourage users. Its decisions on whether or not to penalise derelict public officials for not abiding by the law can have a lasting impact on people's faith in it. Its decisions create precedence with long-lasting effects. Many users are dissatisfied with the commission's decisions but cannot afford to have their legality checked by the High Court through writ petitions. It is imperative for citizens' groups to bear these facts in mind if they want to see an effective RTI regime in the country.

The government too can reap important benefits from the RTI law. It is in the government's interest, therefore, to facilitate its operation. Among other things, it can reassure the Information Commission about its neutral and independent role, ensure impartial selection process of the Commissioners, and equally importantly, encourage public officials to abide by the provisions of the law without fear.

However, even if the government maintains a positive attitude towards the law, it is the people who must be its main custodian. They must remember that no government in the world likes to be controlled by their citizens. It is rare for them to go out of the way to boost RTI. Only people can do that.

Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are Chairman and RTI Coordinator respectively of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). Email: rib@ritech-bd.com

Fresh round of relief for pandemic-hit groups

Authorities must ensure quick and effective disbursement

WE applaud the government decision to introduce relief packages worth Tk 3,200 crore to segments of the population who have been dealt a fresh blow by the latest round of lockdown to contain the current wave of Covid-19 in Bangladesh. Of this, Tk 450 crore will specifically target day labourers, transport workers, small traders and shipping workers with cash assistance; Tk 1,500 crore will be used to finance job creation activities in rural areas; and Tk 1,000 crore will provide low-interest loans for paying salaries to workers in the tourism sector. The government has also allocated Tk 100 crore for providing food assistance through the 333 hotline, and Tk 150 crore for operating 813 special open market sale (OMS) centres across the country.

While these are all commendable steps, quick and efficient disbursement is key to ensuring they are actually effective. And in order for them to be effective, there is an obvious need for these initiatives to be informed by data. However, last month, the finance minister dismissed the estimates of all non-government organisations regarding the new poor, and announced that the government will only accept poverty data from the BBS. So where exactly is this data? The Bangladesh Poverty Database has not been completed in more than seven years, and the data collected for it has already been rendered useless. As such, there still exist serious concerns about whether the government packages will actually reach those most affected by the pandemic. We have already seen previous attempts at cash disbursement go awry because of incomplete and incorrect lists of beneficiaries. What steps are the authorities taking to ensure this is not repeated?

Similarly, while there is clearly goodwill behind the initiative to ensure food assistance to those calling 333, we have previously witnessed how vulnerable citizens, made newly poor by the pandemic, have been punished for seeking help. The authorities must ensure that this does not happen again and take steps against government representatives engaging in this sort of abuse of power.

While experts have commended the latest round of relief packages, especially in terms of the OMS and a separate initiative to extend assistance to those with vulnerable group feeding cards, they have generally expressed concerns about effective targeting and duplication in beneficiary lists. The authorities must listen to their concerns, and take their recommendations on board if they truly want to help those most affected by the pandemic and the recent lockdowns.

Capital's cattle markets swarmed way ahead of opening date

So why should the govt's enforcement of health guidelines wait?

IT is quite disappointing that cattle markets around the capital—which are not set to open before July 17—are already seeing throngs of sellers and potential buyers, most of them not wearing masks, let alone practicing social distancing. Visiting reporters also noted the absence of hand-washing facilities, hand sanitisers, and thermal scanners to check visitors' body temperature prior to entry. If this is to be the scenario in all 20 cattle markets (between the two city corporations) until Eid—and the scenario may well be the same in other cattle markets across the country—we must prepare ourselves for an even grimmer Covid-19 situation after the holidays. Already, the daily death rate is in triple digits, while the number of positive cases crossed 12,000 between Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, sales seem to be going on full swing in these markets, with one trader at the Gabtali market (quoted in our report) having already sold three cows. This market was observed to be at the worst in terms of crowding, with buyers and visitors from outside Dhaka swarming it. Regarding the delay in setting up necessary health facilities, a leaseholder at this market—most likely unfamiliar with the rules of supply-and-demand and citizens' general tendency to not follow health guidelines unless strictly enforced—said they had not expected “people in droves would start to come to the market, for which we could not ensure those”. On the other hand, the DNCC mayor and the DSCC chief estate officer said that immediate action (including closing down the market) would be taken if health guidelines are violated, and that the 10 cattle markets under DNCC will each have a monitoring team. One can only guess that these “immediate actions” will be applicable after the official opening date of the cattle markets, since violations are still taking place freely as of now.

We understand the government's desire to appease religious sentiments as well as ensure the livelihood of cattle traders, but if such essential health guidelines are ignored when the markets become even more crowded in the coming days (thanks to the easing of lockdown till July 23), we will have to pay a steep price. Since there seems to be no stopping the buyers, visitors or traders, the least our two city corporations can do is immediately install hand-washing facilities and begin enforcing health guidelines. As mentioned before, buyers and visitors do not just belong to the capital, but those from outside are also coming to these markets to purchase and resell cattle in their own districts. Given our current sky-high rates of daily Covid-19 deaths and infections, our already exhausted health system and still-uncertain vaccine supply, we simply cannot afford such mishandling. It's high time the authorities took stern actions to prevent further spread of the virus.

Why are we seeing so many deaths in the third wave?

KHONDOKER MEHEDI AKRAM

THE third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic with the Delta variant has started almost simultaneously in Bangladesh and in the UK. The infection rate is similar in both countries. The viral reproduction rate in the UK is currently 1.43, and in Bangladesh it is 1.42. Although the rate of transmission is similar, there is a stark difference in the number of fatalities. Bangladesh is witnessing a record high number of deaths in the third wave of the pandemic.

In the UK, since the beginning of the third wave, five lakh and sixty thousand people have been infected; of them, around six hundred died with the lowest death rate of 0.10 percent. In Bangladesh, in that time, one lakh and eighty-seven thousand people have been infected; of them, three thousand and one hundred people died with a death rate of 1.7 percent. As such, the death rate in Bangladesh is currently 17 times higher than in the UK.

Before the beginning of its mass vaccination programme in December, the Covid mortality rate in the UK was 3 percent. To date, 67 percent of the population of the country have got one shot of vaccine and 50 percent got two shots. Some 85 percent of the country's adult population have now developed antibodies against coronavirus through natural infections and vaccines. Consequently, the death rate has dropped dramatically from 3 percent to 0.10 percent, meaning that vaccination has reduced fatality by 30 times.

The pandemic scenario of Bangladesh is quite the opposite. Both infections and deaths are increasing rapidly. To date, 3.5 percent of the country's population have received one dose of vaccine and only 2.7 percent got two doses. Currently, the government has 56 lakh shots in its stock, which are sufficient for 28 lakh people. But Bangladesh needs 20 crores of additional shots to fully inoculate the country's 70 percent of population.

A little over one crore shots have been delivered across the country in the last four months. If the vaccination programme continues at this pace, it will take six and a half years to reach the target! Apparently, the speed of vaccination must be increased manifold. If 5 lakh shots are delivered every day, it will take until December next year to reach the goal of national Covid-19 immunisation set by the government.

India, meanwhile, is eight and a half times larger than Bangladesh in terms of



Sabina Akter Joya and Tusher wail near the body of their mother Jahanara Begum, 58, in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on July 10, 2021. Jahanara was admitted to a hospital in Kakrail after she tested positive for Covid-19. After her condition worsened that morning, doctors referred her to the Intensive Care Unit of DMCH. She died on the way. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

population. But the country managed to vaccinate 22 percent of its population with one dose and 5 percent with two full doses within a short time. When Bangladesh is giving only a few thousand doses every day, India is giving 30 to 35 lakh doses daily. To date, India delivered 37 crores of vaccine shots.

A recent country-wide serosurveillance conducted by the World Health Organization revealed that 67 percent of adults in India developed antibodies against coronavirus. Amongst them, 79 percent people were from urban areas, and 63 percent from rural areas. They also found that the vaccinated people had 80 percent less chance of hospitalisation. It is a relief for India that a large portion of its population has developed immunity against Covid. This mass immunity will reduce mortality in the forthcoming pandemic wave in India which is going to occur in a few months.

What is the seroprevalence status of our country? Do we know how many people in the urban and rural areas have

developed immunity against Covid? An accurate answer is absent as there hasn't been any nation-wide serosurveillance conducted in our country to date. A vital piece of information is missing—one that is required for successful immunisation.

Vaccines save lives. In fact, mass vaccination has saved an estimated 27 thousand lives in England so far. If the elderly and those in the high-risk group in Bangladesh had been vaccinated on a priority basis in the last four months, the death toll from the third wave could have been greatly reduced.

Bangladesh must procure enough vaccines and speed up its mass vaccination drive. Currently, our vaccination drive is going on at a snail's pace. Vaccination at a slower rate reduces its ability to control the epidemic. If India can jab 35 lakh people every day, why can't we give at least 5 lakh doses daily?

The lack of essential healthcare services can also be attributed to higher deaths in the third wave. The last two waves were mainly Dhaka-centric. But the current wave

is affecting mostly the border districts, where lack of high-flow nasal cannula, oxygen supply and ICU facilities are evident. If the necessary actions were taken promptly, many lives could have been saved.

Moving forward, the government must take the following actions immediately to reduce further deaths from the forthcoming waves: (1) Accelerate the mass vaccination programme and inoculate 3-5 lakh people per day (vaccine should be offered first on a priority basis to all people in their sixties and high-risk groups); (2) Covid treatment facilities across the country must be increased by three folds; and (3) Country-wide serosurveillance should be conducted to assess the immunity status of the nation.

It is unfair to compare Bangladesh with a country like the UK. But isn't it true that we are also way behind India—with which we share many socioeconomic similarities—in terms of the above three points in managing the pandemic?

Dr Khondoker Mehedi Akram is a Senior Research Associate at the University of Sheffield, UK.

Only 'We, the People' can unleash the full potential of RTI law

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

BANGLADESH has long been known for the political activism of its citizens, ready to fight for their rights and defend their freedom. The creation of the country in 1971 is a testimony to that. Now—in an age when institutions of representative governance are in fast decline both globally and locally—is the time for us to seize what the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 offers as an alternative to continue that tradition.

Our first job is to convince the upper echelons of our society, who have largely ignored the law so far, that without their participation its full potential will remain untapped. Since its adoption 12 years ago, the law has been kept alive mainly by ordinary citizens. With the help of RTI enthusiasts and some committed NGOs, they have demonstrated, however sparsely, the power of the law to initiate positive change in governance. To go beyond and make higher gains, we need the participation and leadership of people who are more knowledgeable about the inner workings of the government and better equipped to understand the intricacies of the law and its use.

RTI law is globally acknowledged as the most effective instrument to promote participatory democracy, where people feel that they are no longer the “ruled” but the “rulers”. While it takes time to dismantle a deep-rooted culture of secretive and opaque governance, experience of other countries shows that it can be done. Hurdles faced in implementing the law can be ironed out over time.

To speed our progress, “We, the people” must rally together and spread the message about the power and promise of RTI law more vigorously. Here is how.

First, remember that the RTI Act is fundamentally different from all other laws because only citizens can initiate its use, not the government. While the government is the executor of other laws—which citizens must abide by—in case of the RTI law, citizens are the executor and the government the responder. The roles have reversed. This point cannot be over-emphasised.

Next, RTI law is aimed at empowering citizens vis-à-vis public authorities. Its primary objective is to promote participatory democracy. People participate in the governance of the country by seeking relevant information from public authorities, thereby reminding them that their work is being monitored. Their requests help to instil in the minds of

public servants that people are the real owners of state power. The law is well-titled as a *right* to know, not a *need* to know. Citizens do not have to justify their requests to public authorities. There should be no fear, therefore, for the people to use the law. The RTI Act not only recognises their right but also underscores a concurrent responsibility.

The RTI Act states clearly that people's right to information contributes to better governance by promoting transparency and accountability in the work of public authorities, increasing their efficiency, mitigating corruption and advancing good governance. People do so by obtaining relevant information on the work of

records and take certified copies.

A great deal of confusion exists on the definition of public authorities. As a general rule of thumb, the law permits citizens to seek information from all government and other public offices, including NGOs and private entities who benefit from public funds. Even those entities who use no public fund but have a reporting responsibility to the government under any regulatory law are covered indirectly. Private companies are, however, normally outside the purview of the law; but if we ensure strong use of the Act as it is now, there could be a basis for us to seek increase of its scope.

Another important area which



ILLUSTRATION: COLLECTED

public authorities which provide a basis to assess their work. They can then use the information to seek corrective measures from the government, if necessary. Through RTI requests, citizens also help to improve the capacity of public officials to deal with their requests, to change their bureaucratic mindset and attitudes, and bring them closer to the people.

As to what kind of information people can seek from the authorities: any information available with public authorities in any form, including records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advice, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form, etc. They are also entitled to ask for inspection of work, documents,

deserves particular care from RTI users is the exemption clause of the RTI Act, which blocks citizens' access to certain types of information. These include information which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty, integrity, security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the state, its relationship with foreign countries, or incite offence. Some other types of information, including personal information of citizens, are also exempted from disclosure. As many RTI requests are rejected on these grounds, citizens must comprehend the scope of different subsections of Section 7 of the RTI Act and be ready to challenge their misuse.

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Rohingya man

FROM PAGE 12

Police recovered the body from the camp around 1:00am and sent it to Cox's Bazar District Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

Tarikul Islam, captain of Armed Police Battalion-16 in Cox's Bazar, said Shaker was killed over longstanding enmity with his rivals.

He said they arrested 10 people in connection with the killing.

Md Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said a relative of Shaker filed a murder case with the police station.

Later yesterday, a local court sent the arrestees to jail after they were produced before it, the OC added. The body was handed over to Shaker's relatives.

BSF shoots

FROM PAGE 12

According to a member of a local cow smuggling racket, around 12 Bangladeshi people intruded into India to fetch cows. On their way back, they encountered members of the Kaimari BSF camp in India's Cooch Behar district.

The BSF opened fire and shot both Subal and Saddam. Subal died on the spot whereas Saddam managed to flee the scene with a bullet wound, he added.

Contacted, Subedar Farid Hossain, commander of Lohakuchi camp of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion, said that one person was killed in the BSF firing but it was not yet confirmed whether the victim was Bangladeshi.

The incident took place at the Mahishtuli Baroghari border between the main pillars 920 and 921. The body was taken away by patrolling BSF members of Kaimari camp under Cooch Behar 75 BSF Battalion in India, he added.

"The BSF has not yet officially informed us. No one has claimed the body from us yet," he further said, adding, "Necessary steps will be taken only after the identity of the deceased is confirmed."

Jamiat Ulama

FROM PAGE 12

would not contest three by-elections.

Besides, the BNP secretary general recently said he does not believe in "Sharia law" which is not supported by Jamiat.

Jamiat also said BNP did not stage protests during the recent "nationwide oppression and arrest of Ulama".

The BNP also did not express sympathy following the death of Noor Hossain Kasemi, a top leader of Jamiat and the alliance. The BNP even did not participate in his namz-e-janaza, which caused anger among the Jamiat grassroots, the statement said.

"Therefore, Jamiat thinks that withdrawing support from the 20-party alliance is beneficial for the organisation," it added.

Jamiat vice presidents Ubaidullah Farooq and Abdul Basir, acting secretary general Bahauddin Zakaria, among others, were present at yesterday's meeting, with acting president Zia Uddin in the chair.

Sources at Jamiat told The Daily Star that the party was under pressure from the government to quit the 20-party alliance following the recent government crackdown on Hefajat-e-Islam leaders, many of whom are from Jamiat. Quitting the alliance was set as a pre-condition by the government for the release of Jamiat leaders and activists.

Yesterday, Jamiat also demanded the government withdraw all cases filed against its leaders and activists following the countrywide violent protests over Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh on March 25.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday alleged that Jamiat was forced to quit the 20-party combine following its recent meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

Nazrul was talking to the media about the exit of Jamiat from the alliance.

After holding a meeting with the minister on July 5, top Hefajat leaders demanded the government release its "innocent" leaders and activists arrested across the country since March 25.

The government took a tough stance against Hefajat following its three-day violent activities from March 25 over Modi's trip to Bangladesh. The violence left at least 17 people dead and many injured.

Hefajat, a Qawmi madrasa-based platform of different Islamist organisations, has been under huge pressure from the government to restructure its central committee since the March violence, sources said.

At least 154 cases were filed against Hefajat men and around 1,230 people, including more than 50 top Hefajat leaders, were arrested following the violence, according to Police Headquarters data.

After the recent crackdown on Hefajat, some of its leaders started trying to reach an understanding with the government to avoiding "arrest and harassment".

Hefajat's previous central committee was disbanded on April 25.

On June 8, Hefajat General Secretary Nurul Islam Jihadi named a 33-member new central committee of the organisation, a 16-member advisory committee and another committee called Majlish-e-Sura comprising nine members.

Buy 20m doses of Sputnik V

FROM PAGE 1

during the meeting with the foreign minister, the foreign secretary, and the director general of DGHS. That meeting was satisfactory. They had expressed interest in the proposal."

Contacted, DGHS DG Prof Khurshid Alam said, "I don't know about it. I don't have any information in this regard."

Zafrullah said Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) appointed LLC MEBTEX as the distributor of Sputnik V vaccine and the latter appointed Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital the sole distributor in Bangladesh.

"We have attached relevant documents along with our letters. We did not communicate with the Russian company for the partnership. They were the ones who approached us," said Zafrullah.

Asked why the Russian firm contacted GSK instead of the government, he said, "When RDIF wants to have a partnership with a country, they communicate with the

country's government through a non-government agent. This is why they contacted GSK. But I do not know why they particularly contacted me."

He said RDIF had also contacted him for research collaboration a year ago. "At that time, I did not see any interest from the relevant ministries and departments of the government. So, I suggested they contact the government directly. Recently, they have communicated with us again after the Sputnik V vaccine was approved in Bangladesh."

The GSK founder said on the basis of his long-time connection with the Russian Communist Party, RDIF perhaps researched GSK and thought that GSK would be a reliable partner.

"Perhaps, they also know about our work. That is why they reached out to me. I've notified the government about the communication as Bangladesh desperately needs vaccines at this moment."

Asked how long it will take to get the vaccines if a contract is signed, he said they would be able to deliver 10

million doses of vaccine within two to three weeks.

Another 10 million doses will be delivered within a month. Every day half a million doses of vaccine will reach Bangladesh in chartered flights, he added.

Zafrullah said although each dose would cost \$8, it is possible to negotiate the price in the future. "If our government takes a quick decision, Russia will also be interested in assisting Bangladesh in vaccine production. However, if the government takes time, it will be difficult to get the vaccine at this rate due to increasing demands of vaccines all over the world.

"Also, it will not be possible to ensure quick delivery of vaccines," he stated further.

Queried about GSK's profit from being the distributor, he said, "I do not have any personal gains here. Gonoshasthaya Kendra will have some monetary profits. And if Gonoshasthaya Kendra can make some profit it will also be beneficial

Explore 'Bengal Tiger' market!

FROM PAGE 12

and diversified, both within the sector and by looking at other trade opportunities. Take agriculture -- seventy percent of Bangladesh's economy is agriculture. In terms of upgrading value chains in agriculture, we're mapping certain Bangladeshi and Dutch companies and bringing them together so they can build strong partnerships. We focus on "niche" high-end quality in poultry, horticulture, dairy and food processing -- sectors where there is a lot of trade potential.

There's a lot to encourage in our bilateral relationship. Improving quality and food safety are essential for international trade. High potential sectors include pharmaceuticals, digital economy and ICT. We're keen on cooperating in "moving up the value chain", not only for your largest export market, the EU, but also for the rapidly expanding domestic market. The Netherlands seeks to advance in the maritime sector. Exporting high-end ships, dredgers, but also inland transport ships and assistance in port development are fields where we're able to offer innovative, quality solutions.

DS: What potential do you see in Bangladesh's maritime sector?

Harry: Bangladesh is in a highly relevant geo-strategic position. It could develop further as a regional transit hub by expanding the Chattogram, Payra and Matarbari ports. And don't forget inland waterways -- that's where I hope the Netherlands could expand its investments. Look at the Rotterdam port; it's Europe's most significant goods transit hub. Bangladesh can also transport goods to that scale. There is scope for that sort of development, including railways and inland waterways. Presently, almost all transport from Chattogram to Dhaka happens by road, which is costly and causes traffic congestion. This can be reversed by developing environmentally friendly, cheaper, more efficient transportation. Seaports

and waterways can connect the whole region, including India, Nepal and Bhutan. It could change the face of the region.

Right now, Bangladesh's business climate doesn't yet attract large numbers of European and Dutch companies. The key for Dutch success in Bangladesh is having a fully trusted partner here for Dutch companies. If found, it will be a strong indicator for smooth operations and success. A number of joint ventures have already been operational here for a long time. We're trying to expand the maritime industry in Bangladesh and seeking similar joint ventures with Bangladeshi entities. Some of our companies are eyeing government contracts for dredging and ship-building.

DS: What challenges do you see from Dutch companies' perspectives?

Harry: Honestly, people don't know much about this country. My motto on our bilateral relationship was: expand, brand and stand! Branding Bangladesh in Europe was what I considered one of my major roles. Regrettably, Bangladesh is in the lower strata of the 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, so low that you almost cannot believe it. If you come in as a foreign company, it takes, a long time to register your company. It can be difficult to repatriate profits. I don't have answers, but I do observe that the government is working hard to change these conditions. Institutions and agencies need to work faster and be more accommodating to foreign trade and investment. I'm happy that branding Bangladesh is being taken up more professionally. With swift reforms to the business climate, better branding will help improve Bangladesh's position in the indexes. I'd say look to other countries, like Vietnam and Turkey, as examples.

Education is important. Young professionals and academics will need to meet local and global demand in the labour market. Further skills development is called for. I've been

privileged to meet a huge number of talented, entrepreneurial and energetic young Bangladeshis. They'll be inspirational figures to help improve the country's marketplace, image, and economy.

DS: What would you tell Dutch companies about Bangladesh at this stage?

Harry: Explore this growing "Bengal Tiger" market! Come to Bangladesh, find your place here, interact with its entrepreneurs, meet the youth and learn what's great about this country. Transition is taking place, as the middle class is rapidly expanding and the economy is growing. I'm positive about the economic opportunities Bangladesh offers. There is usually a good return on investment and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. That's what we, the Dutch, like. The time to move is now. Bangladesh will soon leave the LDC-group, so early movers will have an advantage.

DS: The Netherlands helped formulate the Delta Plan for Bangladesh. Tell us about this.

Harry: The Bangladesh Delta Plan is key in our cooperation. We're working extensively with Bangladesh to advance implementation not only in concrete projects and investments but also in knowledge gaps and financing modalities. Bangladesh is on the verge of starting true implementation of a \$40 billion investment plan that accompanies the Delta Plan. We are supporting a large Jamuna River engineering project where we'll be contributing \$18 million.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a strong supporter of the plan. Collectively, the Netherlands thinks that its implementation is an important way forward to protect the country and its people, and will increase climate resilience and enhance livelihoods. It's not only about infrastructure, but complex management and integration -- a combination of agriculture, business, infrastructure and innovation.

We're organizing the first Delta

Conference with the Bangladesh government this year.

DS: What can we expect from the Delta Conference?

Harry: Major stakeholders from Bangladeshi ministries, universities, and civil society groups will come together with development partners like the World Bank, ADB, IMF and JICA. Investment priorities will be discussed related to hot spots like rivers, coastal zones, and urban areas. Strategies will be set out to materialise priorities in the coming decade. Regarding financing infrastructure investments, it's important to involve the private sector since 20% of the Delta Plan investments is expected to come from there. The Delta Plan is holistic, focusing on agriculture, transport, livelihoods, water, and economics. Approaching these issues in an integrated way is a challenge we continue to discuss with the government.

DS: What memories do you carry home as you leave Bangladesh?

Harry: There are too many warm memories to mention but I'd like to underline Bangladesh's cultural aspects. It's an unexplored part of this wonderful society in Europe. I've seen examples like the Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation supporting an artist in residency at the Amsterdam Rijksakademie art school. That's great. People will learn more about Bangladesh culture. The festivals like kite flying, Dhaka Lit Fest, the Dhaka Art Summit are such engaging events that I've experienced. I've been to many art and music festivals. Private investments in the arts by Square Group, the Samdani Art Foundation, Edge Gallery and many others, have an important impact on expanding Bangladeshi culture abroad. Music, Tagore poetry, literature, visual arts, are so ingrained in Bangladesh's culture, which I found extremely appealing and has amazed us continuously. It's been a warm, welcoming and a cultural experience that my wife Akkie and I will carry.

Teen raped

FROM PAGE 12

was not plying due to the countywide lockdown. When she was looking for a bus ticket, the accused were following her. Later, the accused told her that if she wanted to go to Dhaka, she could go in a microbus.

Before starting the journey, the accused asked her to finish her toilet. The accused then took her to an abandoned house and Lal Mia raped her. Later, locals rescued the girl after hearing her screams and sent her home, the police officer added.

Medical tests of the victim were completed yesterday, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Gaibandha Sadar Police Station, adding that they were trying to arrest the accused.

S'pore unveils

FROM PAGE 12

The prosperous financial hub has turned to setting up plants off its coasts and in reservoirs, and aims to quadruple solar energy production by 2025.

The new farm can produce up to 60 megawatts of electricity, and will lead to carbon emissions reductions equivalent to removing 7,000 cars from roads, according to Sembcorp Industries and national water agency PUB.

Sembcorp built the project, which covers about 45 hectares (110 acres), with backing from the agency.

"Solar energy is plentiful, clean and green, and is key to reducing PUB's and also Singapore's carbon footprint," said the water agency's chief executive Ng Joo Hee.

Singapore has also built a solar farm in the Johor Strait, which separates the island state from Malaysia, as well as plants on land.

The government in February unveiled a "green plan" that included steps such as planting trees, reducing waste sent to landfills and building more charging points to encourage electric car use.

Singapore has pledged to achieve net-zero emissions "as soon as viable" in the second half of the century.

Pilots say

FROM PAGE 12

problem by July 30 and if the lockdown is relaxed from July 15, all pilots will be consulted and from July 30, 2021, they will operate the flight only in accordance with the bilateral agreement between Biman and Bapa," he added.

The committee, however, said pilots will always be ready to carry any medical equipment, medicine and vaccine during this pandemic time.

The Biman authorities decided to cut the salaries of pilots to reduce the cost of Biman during the pandemic, which irked the pilots.

The Bapa, an organisation of pilots of the national flag carrier, sent a letter to Biman's director of flight operations on Monday.

Mahbubur said the decision to reduce the salaries of others Biman employees to minimise the cost during the pandemic time has been overturned.

In the letter, the Bapa said since the pandemic broke out, the pilots have done their duties with utmost sincerity and dedication like any other time.

"We have operated shuttle flights to many destinations. We have performed our duties beyond our working hours. Sadly, there was no recognition at all," the Bapa said in the letter.

The pilot's organisation added that instead of getting appreciation, they learnt that the Biman management had backtracked on its decision of cutting the salaries of all employees, except the pilots.

"The pilot community of Biman is utterly shocked and frustrated hearing this, as we, being the frontliners in Biman, worked relentlessly during the pandemic amidst fear of being infected and infecting our family members ...," reads the letter.

The Bapa president said in the last one year, 25 pilots were infected. Several pilots are still in hospitals with Covid. Entire families of eight pilots contracted coronavirus.

The Biman administration on Tuesday withdrew the decision to reduce (by 10 percent) the salaries of all officers and employees of Biman, which will come into effect from July.

But cockpit crew (pilots) with 5 years or less in service would get 15 percent pay cut. Those five-10 years in the job would 20 percent cut and those above 10 years a 40 percent pay cut.

Several pilots told The Daily Star that there are examples in Biman that salaries of some officials have increased during the pandemic.

"This is injustice, discriminatory and humiliating," said a senior pilot.

The pilots said the authorities did not even bother to discuss before making such a decision.

Asked, Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, managing director and CEO of Biman, said the Bapa was yet to inform them about their decision.

A top official in Biman said Bapa cannot make any such decisions as their service has been declared emergency.

Wishing anonymity, he added that pilots who are operating aircraft during this pandemic will get outstation allowance as per the rules.

Sources said a senior pilot now gets Tk 3.48 lakh which was Tk 8.61 lakh before the pandemic.

Death toll in S Africa now 72

FROM PAGE 12

The violence appeared to have abated in some areas yesterday, but in others, there was renewed burning and looting.

Citizens armed with guns, many from South Africa's white minority, blocked off streets to prevent further plundering. Reuters TV footage showed. One man shouted at a group gathered at a street corner. "Go home and protect your homes".

Other residents crowded outside supermarkets waiting for them to open so they could stock up on essentials.

Some rich Durban residents chartered small planes and helicopters out of the city, a Reuters photographer reported. Others queued for food and fuel. Many roads out of the city were blocked either by people looting or vigilantes.

Military victory the only solution: Tajuddin

FROM PAGE 12

FOOD SITUATION IN EAST PAKISTAN

Joseph Farland, US ambassador to Pakistan, called on Pakistan President Yahya Khan today in Rawalpindi. He expressed serious concerns about possibility of a famine developing in East Pakistan.

Referring to USAID's estimates of rice production and food gap, the US ambassador stated that unless heroic efforts were made, famine conditions would likely prevail. He also pointed out that if famine conditions developed, people would sustain further widespread suffering, the Pakistan government would face

Earlier, several shops were being looted in the town of Hammarsdale, KwaZulu-Natal.

Plumes of black smoke rose from a burning warehouse in Durban, while nearby people loaded up with goods scattered on the roadside.

In Alexandra township in Johannesburg yesterday, one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods, a Reuters correspondent saw soldiers moving door to door to confiscate stolen items, with the help of civilians opposed to the looting.

In Soweto, eNCA television footage showed civilians alongside police protecting malls that were yet to be hit by rioters.

Overnight the chaos spread to two other provinces - Mpumalanga, just east of Gauteng, and Northern Cape, police said.

additional major public relations problem, and substantial new exodus of refugees might occur.

Farland emphasised that the Pakistan government had been reluctant to admit possibility of famine and consequently problems of food and transport had not been dealt with sufficient urgency.

Yahya said he had carefully studied the Ryan report (a survey of the East Pakistan port and shipping situation prepared in June 1971 by Joseph A Ryan of the US Department of Agriculture at the request of Pakistan), and from it and his own government's sources of information he was considerably

HOSPITALS DISRUPTED

The unrest also disrupted hospitals struggling to cope with a third wave of Covid-19.

The National Hospital Network (NHN), representing 241 public hospitals already under strain from Africa's worst Covid-19 epidemic, said it was running out of oxygen and drugs, most of which are imported through Durban, as well as food.

"The impact of the looting and destruction is having dire consequences on hospitals," the NHN said.

Staff in affected areas were unable to get to work, it said, worsening shortages caused by the pandemic.

The poverty and inequality fuelling the violence has been compounded by severe social and economic restrictions aimed at curbing

concerned by the problem presented by the food situation.

He said as a result of Farland's suggestion to him that a "food czar" should be appointed, a suggestion reflected in the Ryan report, he had as of yesterday appointed the former head of the Chittagong Port Authority, retired commodore Bajwa, as his personal representative with superior powers to act for alleviation of the problem.

Yahya further said as a result of his concern for East Pakistan and the multitude of issues that it presented, he would be going over to Dhaka within the next two weeks.

HOUSE GROUP BIDS HALT TO US

It added that an unspecified number of people linked to the hotel had been detained and an investigation into the cause of the disaster was under way.

The hotel opened in 2018 and had 54 guest rooms, according to its listing on the travel site Ctrip.

Suzhou, a city of more than 12

million people roughly 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Shanghai, is a popular destination for tourists drawn to its canals and centuries-old gardens.

Building collapses or accidents are not uncommon in China and are often blamed on lax construction standards or corruption.

Do-it-yourself medal ceremony at Tokyo

Olympic champions at the Tokyo Games starting next week can forget about having their medals hung around their necks as they stand on the podium, shaking hands with dignitaries and soaking up their success. Instead, the three medals will be presented on a tray to the athletes on the podium and they then have to hang them around their own neck in front of the empty stands. There will also be no handshakes or hugs. "The medals will not be given around the neck," IOC President Thomas Bach told a virtual media roundtable on Wednesday. "They will be presented to the athlete on a tray and the athlete will take the medal him or herself. It will be made sure the person who will put the medal on the tray will do it with disinfected gloves. Presenters and athletes will wear a mask. There will be no handshakes and no hugs during the ceremony." --- Reuters



Tamim and Tigers tune up well

Mushy flies back due to 'family reasons'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh had a good outing in the 50-over warm-up game yesterday, looking comfortable as they posted 296 for six against Zimbabwe Select XI ahead of the first ODI of the three-match series tomorrow.

More than the result, it was important for the Tigers to get into the limited-overs groove after winning a one-off Test by a comprehensive 220 runs to start the tour. Zimbabwe XI were on 185 for 7 with 10 overs left in the match.

Pacers Ebadot Hossain, Mosaddek Hossain and Mohammad Saifuddin bagged two wickets each while young left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam scalped one.

Another welcome sight for the visitors was ODI skipper Tamim

Iqbal spending a decent amount of time at the crease and scoring a 50 after Bangladesh won the toss and elected to bat. Tamim is still recovering from the knee pain that caused him to miss the lone Test and appeared to be in some discomfort later in the innings. He was dismissed for a 63-ball 66 that included eleven fours and a six, ending an 87-run opening stand with left-hander Mohammad Naim, who walked back soon after for a 52-ball 25.

Shakib Al Hasan, who has been struggling with the bat, faced 60 deliveries for his 37 before being caught at mid-on off the bowling of seamer Faraz Akram. Liton Das, who normally opens the innings in ODIs, came in at number four but could manage just two runs before becoming off-spinner Wesley Madhevere's second victim. However, Mohammad Mithun and Mosaddek Hossain utilised the opportunity and scored in the

thirties before retiring.

Young Afif Hossain also chipped in with 28 off 23 while wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan scored 18 off 12 and Mohammad Saifuddin remained not out on 12 to post a big total of 296 for six.

Although things went well in the game, Bangladesh faced a huge blow as news broke that the visitors would be without Mushfiqur Rahim for the rest of the series, the cricketer having returned home due to family reasons according to a BCB media release yesterday.

Mushfiqur was asked on Tuesday to stay back with the T20 squad after completion of the ODI series on July 20 due to the quarantine protocols for the Australia series at home. But it was learned that Mushfiqur's parents had both tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday and had travelled from Bogura to Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh will sorely miss the

service of their most consistent batsman, who has also been in terrific form in the 50-over format recently and had been named man of the series against Sri Lanka. The wicketkeeper-batsman hit two match-winning knocks of 84 and 125 in the first two games as the Tigers won the three match ODI series 2-1 in May.

In Mushfiqur's absence, the think-tank may opt for Liton at number four, leaving Mohammad Mithun and Mosaddek Hossain to fight for a place in the playing eleven. The three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe will be crucial for Tamim and the Tigers as it is part of the ICC Men's World Cup Super League. Bangladesh are currently in second place in the points table with five wins in nine games, but Tamim and his troops will be looking to grab as the maximum number of points from the series ahead of tougher assignments.

Ronaldo an 'imbecile', Mourinho 'abnormal'

AGENCIES



Real Madrid president Florentino Perez called Cristiano Ronaldo an "imbecile" and Jose Mourinho "abnormal" while he also said the two had "huge egos" in two audio recordings from 2012 that were leaked on Wednesday.

Both Portuguese stars were at Madrid during Perez's second tenure as club president. Audios of Perez attacking former players Iker Casillas and Raul Gonzalez as the "biggest frauds" in the club's history in an audio recording from 2006 had been leaked 24 hours earlier.

"He is mad," Perez had said of Ronaldo in one of the audios released by El Confidencial. "This chap is an imbecile, he is ill."

"Do you think this chap is normal? He is not normal, otherwise he wouldn't do the things he does. The last foolish thing he did, everyone around the world saw it."

"Why do you think he does that foolish thing?" It is unclear what Perez was referring to regarding the "foolish thing."

Perez also attacked super agent Jorge Mendes, who represents Mourinho and Ronaldo. "Mendes does not order him, nor does he order Mourinho whatsoever," Perez said. "Zero. Not even for the interviews. These are guys with huge egos, both of them spoiled."

"He and the coach don't see the reality because the two could earn a lot more money if they were different. They are

both abnormal because we are talking about a lot of money in image rights.

"Furthermore, with that face they have, with that defiant manner that they are disliked by everyone. ... Advertising is the opposite, it is the complete opposite."

The quotes had already appeared in a book by the journalist Jose Antonio Abellan "Assault on Real Madrid" published in 2015.

Perez complained in a statement released by Real on Tuesday that Abellan recorded the remarks secretly. Perez said the timing was a result of his role as an organiser of the Super League. "The quotes are from conversations clandestinely recorded by Jose Antonio Abellan, who has been trying to sell them for years without success," Perez said.

"They are loose phrases from conversations taken out of the broad context in which they occur," Perez said. "That they are being reproduced now, after so many years have passed, I understand that it is due to my participation as one of the promoters of the Super League."

Ronaldo, Madrid's all-time top scorer with 450 goals, joined the Spanish giants in June 2009, 11 days after Perez returned as Real Madrid president. Mourinho, now in charge of AS Roma, guided Madrid to the La Liga title, the Copa del Rey and the Supercopa Espana from 2010 until 2013 before returning to coach Chelsea.

Ronaldo left Madrid for Juventus in 2018 after a nine-year spell at Los Blancos following a reported rift with Perez over a new contract.



Chiellini 'cursed' Saka before penalty?

AGENCIES



Italy star Giorgio Chiellini has claimed that he put a "curse" on Bukayo Saka before the England teenager's decisive penalty miss in Sunday's Euro 2020 final.

Saka saw his spot kick saved by Gianluigi Donnarumma, handing Italy the European title after the two teams drew 1-1 over 120 minutes.

Just before Saka took the kick, Chiellini screamed "Kiricocho!" -- a word that's been used by footballers for decades to impart bad luck on the opposition.

Responding to a question from ESPN, Chiellini responded in Italian: "Hello Christian, I confirm everything! Kiricocho!"

A video from UEFA also clearly shows the



veteran defender shouting the word just prior to Donnarumma's title-winning save on Saka.

Juan Carlos 'Kiricocho', or Quiricocho according to some versions of the story, was a hardcore supporter of Argentinian club Estudiantes de La Plata during the 1980s. The fan even attended some of the club's training sessions, but Estudiantes head coach Carlos Bilardo began to notice that his players mysteriously seemed to get injured whenever Kiricocho was present.

Bilardo, as the legend goes, told Kiricocho to attend training sessions of Estudiantes' rivals, hoping to utilise his powers to help, rather than hurt his side.

"Kiricocho was a kid from La Plata who was always with us, and since that year we were champions [in 1982], we adopted him as our mascot," Bilardo once remarked.

"He was a good kid but then I didn't see him again. The last time I was coaching Estudiantes [in 2003-04] I asked after him and nobody knew anything."

The legend of Kiricocho has since spread throughout the footballing world, with players now routinely using the word when they want to put a curse on their opponents.



Pakistan captain Babar Azam hammered a record-breaking 158 but failed to help his side from suffering a 3-0 ODI whitewash against England at Edgbaston on Tuesday. Azam's highest score at this level saw him become the quickest player to 14 hundreds in men's ODIs as the 26-year-old reached the landmark in 81 innings -- three fewer than South Africa's Hashim Amla.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Olympics journey with a new dream'

SPORTS REPORTER



Participating in the Olympic Games has always been a token one for Bangladesh since its maiden appearance in the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984 but the Bangladesh officials this time, are thinking differently ahead of 2020 Tokyo Olympics by tagging a slogan -- Olympics journey with a new dream.

Yet to win any medal from the Olympics so far, Bangladesh had previously participated in all nine editions of Olympics till Rio Olympics with all wild cards entry except one for golfer Siddikur Rahman, who was the first athlete to represent Bangladesh in Olympics with his own capability. And this time around, archer Ruman Sana became the second Bangladeshi athlete to achieve the same feat.

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) yesterday had a media briefing as three out of six athletes will leave here for Japan tomorrow and BOA is dreaming on the back of those three athletes -- shooter Abdullah Hel Baki, archers Ruman and Diya Siddique while swimmers Ariful Islam, Junayna Ahmed and sprinter Jahir Rayhan are scheduled to leave from their

respective places on July 19 and 25.

"We are dreamers. Yes, Ruman made all of us dream after qualifying directly for the Olympics. That's what we wrote about the new dream. It is a big dream alright, but we believe in it, even though dreams often doesn't come true," said chef de mission of Bangladesh's 18-member contingent and BOA vice president Sheikh Bashar Ahmed at a city hotel yesterday where ITO Naoki, ambassador of Japan in Bangladesh, was present along with other BOA officials.

"This time the Olympic Games will be different due to the Covid-19 situation and there will be a lot of restrictions for both athletes and the officials but I guarantee you that we will hold a safe and secured Games with the athletes and officials travelling to Japan without any worries," said Naoki.

Referring to the discussion with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza said, "Honourable Prime Minister ensured us in providing all types of support for the betterment of the country's sports. She also instructed us to focus on direct participation in the Olympics in future and arrange better training for the athletes."

'Van Dijk looking really good'

AFP, London



Jürgen Klopp says Virgil Van Dijk is looking "really good" as the Liverpool defender returns from the knee injury that forced him to miss most of last season.

Liverpool surrendered the Premier League title to Manchester City after major injuries to Van Dijk and several other defenders.

Van Dijk's fellow centre-backs Joe Gomez and Joel Matip were sidelined for long spells, while Trent Alexander-Arnold was injured in the lead-up to Euro 2020.

Dutch star Van Dijk did not return after suffering a knee injury in a challenge with Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford at Goodison Park in October last year. Gomez was ruled out for the season with a knee problem a few weeks later.

The four players are currently working on their fitness at Liverpool's pre-season training camp in Austria. "Virg and Joe will not have double sessions now for the first few days with the team. They have a second session of the day but it's with the rehab department, physiotherapy -- these kinds of things," Klopp told Liverpool's website.

"That's for these two. They look really good. I don't know exactly when we can make the next steps but it will happen in the next four weeks. For sure, we will get a big step forward."

Matip did not feature again suffering ankle ligament damage in February.

Right-back Alexander-Arnold hit form late in the season to earn a place in England's Euro squad, but had to pull out after sustaining a thigh injury in a friendly against Austria. "Joel looks good, absolutely, he is the closest probably to normal training and then we will see when we get him started for playing," Klopp said.

"Trent was a serious enough injury but now not a major one, I would say. "He is close but for the moment, probably the next five or six days he has a special programme -- from time to time with the team, from time to time by himself."



BPL returns with a stalemate

SPORTS REPORTER

A major lack of team chemistry from both outfits, especially on the attacking front, left the Bangladesh Premier League encounter between Muktijoddha Sangsad and Sheikh Russel KC to a goalless draw at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The match was being played after a 12-day break due to the lockdown.

The stalemate on a fine pitch saw Sheikh Russel raise their points tally to 28 from 17 matches while Muktijoddha Sangsad, battling hard to avoid relegation, earned a valuable point to have 11 from 16 matches and more importantly, have six points more than Brothers Union.

Sheikh Russel KC could have moved up to the fourth position of the 13-team table with an outright win over Muktijoddha Sangsad, whom they handed 1-0 defeat in the first-leg meeting earlier,

What to WATCH

T SPORTS BPL
SHEIKH JAMAL VS SAIF SPORTING
LIVE FROM 4:00 PM

but the former champions never seemed to possess the necessary hunger during the game as the foreign recruits appeared reluctant to help each other upfront.

Like Sheikh Russel, Muktijoddha Sangsad also played without purpose though a triumph over Sheikh Russel was not impossible with the way they attacked but there was seemingly no clear understanding among the forwards, who either had hit the shot wide or straight at goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana despite getting him on one-on-one situations.

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Explore 'Bengal Tiger' market!

Outgoing Dutch ambassador to tell companies at his home

When Harry Verweij arrived as Dutch ambassador three years ago, he had little idea about Bangladesh's dynamism and thriving businesses. During his tenure, he discovered the immense potential the country holds. He shared thoughts on the future and challenges while talking to *The Daily Star* before he leaves Dhaka tomorrow.

PORIMOL PALMA

DS: Tell us about the evolution of the relationship between the two countries.

Harry: We've stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Bangladesh since its independence; we share a 50-year long diplomatic relationship. Our development-oriented partnership is fast evolving into one based on mutual trade and investment. Bangladesh currently exports mostly RMG products to the Netherlands, which was worth \$1.2 billion in 2020. Bangladesh imported a mere \$200 million that same year. There is significant potential for growth and diversification, which demands upgrading and equalising our trade relationship. What helps is what I'd call the "straight-forwardness" and open exchange among friends.

DS: Which areas can help boosting our economic partnership?

Harry: Bangladesh's focus on RMG exports needs to



SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



With the rise of water, the Jamuna has begun eating up shores in Tangail Sadar upazila. Over 50 houses and crop lands, including a hand-loom factory and mill, have already been eroded since the catastrophe began on Monday. The picture was taken at Char Pauli village of the upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam quits 20-party pact

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam, a component of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, has quit the opposition platform citing various reasons, including "not evaluating alliance members properly".

On January 7, 2016, another component of the combine, Islami Oikya Jote, had parted with the platform.

Issuing a statement yesterday after an emergency meeting at the party's Purana Paltan office in the capital, Jamiat said it had formed an electoral alliance with different political parties, including BNP, under special circumstances.

"In its continuity, Jamiat took part in several national elections unitedly under the alliance. But it is very sad to say that the coalition partners have not been evaluated properly."

The party said BNP recently announced unilaterally without taking the opinion of the 20-party alliance components that it

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

SALARY CUT IN BIMAN

Pilots say they won't do any extra work

RASHIDUL HASAN

Pilots of Biman Bangladesh Airlines have threatened that they would refrain from operating extra flights if the authorities do not withdraw the decision of cutting their salaries by July 30.

"Biman pilots will only 'fly by the book' if their demand is not met by July 30, meaning that they will not do any additional duty to operate flights," Capt Mahbubur Rahman, president of Bapa, told *The Daily Star*.

"... We are scheduled to fly 75 hours in a month. But many pilots are flying beyond their flying hours to keep Biman afloat," he added.

If the pilots do not operate aircraft, flights of the airline's most popular destinations, including Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dammam, and Dubai, might have to be cancelled, said sources in Biman.

"We will be forced to stop operation of aircraft if our demand is not realised finally," Capt Mahbubur warned.

"The Executive Committee of Bangladesh Airlines Pilots' Association (Bapa), today [yesterday] decided that if the Biman authorities do not solve the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Military victory the only solution: Tajuddin

JULY 15, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

ALL-OUT WAR TILL VICTORY

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Tajuddin Ahmed declared today that "military victory is the only solution to the situation in Bangladesh", reported *The People*, a pro-AL English-language weekly.

It also reported that Awami League members of the National and Provincial Assemblies at a meeting had taken an "oath of all-out war till victory".

The report said 110 members of the National Assembly and 200 members of the Provincial Assembly had attended the meeting, which was held somewhere in Bangladesh.

The oath read: "The enemy shall be engaged not only on land, but also in the air and on the sea if need be, and shall be defeated once and for all to safeguard the independence of the people of Bangladesh."

The meeting decided to rename the Mukti Fauj (liberation army) as "Mukti Bahini" (liberation forces) signifying the "advent of the air force and the navy".

The Mukti Fauj now has over 1,20,000 men, comprising about 40,000 troops of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles and about 80,000 volunteers. The Fauj was led by a large number of Bangalee officers of the Pakistan army who had defected and joined the freedom fighters.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



REFUGEE CAMP

Rohingya man beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was beaten to death at Noyapara refugee camp in Teknaf upazila early yesterday over longstanding enmity with his rivals.

The dead, Mohammad Shaker, 45, was a resident of the refugee camp.

Sources at the camp said Shaker, who was educated in a madrasa, used to work as a police source at the camp. He had a dispute with robber Jakir, who was killed in a "gunfight" with law enforcers a few months ago. He lived outside the camp for about one and a half years due to threat on his life.

Shaker returned to the camp after Jakir's death and started a small grocery store. Early yesterday, associates of Jakir swooped on Shaker at the store and beat him to death, the sources told *The Daily Star*.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

S'pore unveils floating solar farms



AFP, Singapore

Singapore yesterday unveiled one of the world's biggest floating solar power farms, covering an area the size of 45 football pitches, as part of the city-state's push to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The project is the country's most ambitious yet, comprising 122,000 panels on Tengoh Reservoir that will produce enough electricity to run its five water treatment plants.

Singapore is among the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in Asia and its land scarcity makes boosting renewable energy sources a challenge.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Teen raped at Gaibandha bus stop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A woman was raped in Balua Bazar bus stand area of Gaibandha Sadar upazila on Monday evening, said police, quoting the victim.

The 18-year-old filed a rape case with Gaibandha Sadar Police Station against two people on Tuesday night.

The accused are Lal Mia, 45, a butcher of Parbotipur village, and Bokul Prodhan, 48, who sells tickets at the bus stand, of Bhogabanpur village in Sadar upazila, said police.

Bokul is accused of abetting the rape, added police.

Citing the case statement, Inspector Rojib Ali, investigation officer of the case, told *The Daily Star* that the victim went to Balua bus stand on Monday evening to buy a bus ticket to Dhaka after an altercation with her mother. She did not know that the Dhaka-bound bus

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

BSF shoots a Bangladeshi youth dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi youth was shot dead by the members of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Mahishstuli Baroghari border in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Subal Chandra Roy alias Saddam, 30, of the upazila's Bhelabari union. BSF men took his body in their territory.

The victim's father Satish Chandra said that his son went to the border to fetch cows. Another youth Bharat Chandra Roy, 32, who accompanied him, went missing.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING JULY 15

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-15
JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The authorities of Kamalapur railway station disinfecting the platforms to make it safer for people to travel. However, there has been a lack of passengers, as online ticket services have been facing server issues. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

RIOTS OVER JAILING OF ZUMA

Death toll in S Africa now 72

Citizens arm themselves as crowds rampage; over 1,200 arrested

REUTERS, Johannesburg

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday he might order more troops onto the streets as the army and police struggled to quell days of looting and violence that has claimed 72 lives.

Some citizens armed themselves to protect their property and businesses from the rampage, the worst in South Africa for years. Food and fuel supplies are running short.

Triggered by the jailing of ex-president Jacob Zuma last week after he failed to appear at a corruption inquiry, it has widened into an orgy of looting and an outpouring of anger over the hardship and inequality that persist in South Africa 27 years after the end of apartheid.

Shopping malls and warehouses have been ransacked or set ablaze in several cities, mostly in Zuma's home in KwaZulu-Natal province, especially the Indian Ocean port city of Durban, and the financial and economic centre Johannesburg and surrounding Gauteng province.

Soldiers have been deployed to help outnumbered police contain the unrest. Security forces say they have arrested more than 1,200 rioters, but the government has held back from imposing a state of emergency.

Ramaphosa met with leaders of political parties yesterday to discuss ways to address the unrest.

"President Ramaphosa welcomed proposals made by political leaders and said expanded deployment of the South African National Defence Force was being addressed," a government statement said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2