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Your Right to Know

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Iraq PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi says his country no longer requires American combat troops to fight extremists
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"The number of Covid cases has increased five to six times following Eid holidays."
HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE



"The living standards of about 15 percent of the country's people, or about 2.45 crore, have fallen below the poverty line during the one year of the Covid pandemic."
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER



"In terms of whether or not it will stop the Taliban, I think the first thing to do is to make sure that they [Afghan forces] can slow the momentum."
US DEFENSE SECRETARY LLOYD AUSTIN ON AFGHAN CONFLICT

Hospitals stare at tougher time

Govt wary of full-blown medical crisis in coming weeks as Covid infections, deaths remain high despite lockdown

ZYMA ISLAM and MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The Covid pandemic has entered a phase where hospitals across the country are being pushed to their limits.

General beds are scarce, while it requires days of queues and lobbying to get critical care beds.

With more and more Covid patients needing hospital admission, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said the healthcare system is overwhelmed.

"There will be no space in hospitals for patients if the novel coronavirus infections continue to rise," he told journalists.

Yesterday, three out of every 10 samples tested positive for Covid.

About one-third of the hospitals providing Covid treatment had bed occupancy rate of more than 75 percent over

ICU BED SITUATION

GOVT HOSPITALS IN DHAKA
40 vacant out of 393

PVT HOSPITALS IN DHAKA
89 vacant out of 505

HOSPITALS IN DHAKA
129 vacant out of 898

COUNTRYWIDE
232 vacant out of 1,321

the past week, according to government data.

There are 336 Covid-dedicated hospitals in the country, and 24 of those are at full capacity with no empty bed, shows data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The intensive care units (ICUs) in almost all of these hospitals are filled to capacity.

The ICU bed occupancy rate at hospitals across the country was 87 percent

yesterday.

Talking to journalists, Zahid said, "To bring down the number of Covid patients, we have to reduce infections."

Everyone has to abide by the restrictions during the ongoing lockdown to reduce Covid cases, he noted.

Mentioning that virus infections have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Tanker trucks are being filled with oxygen from the special train, Oxygen Express, on the western side of the Bangabandhu Bridge in Sirajganj yesterday. This is the first time railways have been used to import oxygen from India.

PHOTO: STAR

FERRY RAMS BRIDGE Probe body asks for terminals to be moved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A probe committee of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) has recommended shifting the current locations of the ferry terminals on the Shimulia-Banglabazar route to avoid further collision between the vessels and the Padma bridge.

The four-member panel, which was formed after a ferry rammed into a pillar of the long-cherished bridge on Friday, found the acting master and the helmsman of the vessel responsible for the incident.

The master gives directions to the helmsman, who holds the wheel of the ferry.

The duo did not take the velocity of the current and wind into consideration when they attempted to cross the Padma river en route to Shimulia of Munshiganj from Banglabazar of Madaripur through the gap between the 16th and 17th pillar of the bridge.

Strong current made the vessel named

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Govt wakes up to oxygen crunch

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has asked providers to boost oxygen supplies and made plans to reign in excessive wastage of the life-saving gas in hospitals and install Pressure Swing Absorption oxygen generators in facilities with no central oxygen system.

The health ministry has also opened a central dashboard for officials to constantly monitor the state of oxygen supplies across the country.

The moves come amid runaway infections of coronavirus and the ever increasing number of hospitalisations with Covid-19. This has also caused a spike in the demand for oxygen at the hospitals.

On Saturday, the demand for liquid oxygen was 230 tonnes. The average daily demand for liquid medical oxygen was between 210 and 220 before the Eid holidays, according to DGHS data.

The numbers indicate that experts were right in fearing that the lifting of coronavirus restrictions around the Eid would bump up new cases of Covid-19 which would eventually result in increased demand for medical oxygen.

"Apprehending a possible surge in cases, we told oxygen producers and suppliers that we will

- ➔ Oxygen suppliers asked to ramp up their capacity
- ➔ Wastage of oxygen in hospitals to be minimised
- ➔ Central dashboard opened to monitor supply situation
- ➔ Govt to encourage local oxygen production

provide the support they need for ensuring proper oxygen supply," ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

DGHS officials held a meeting with the oxygen suppliers before Eid and requested them to ramp up the production and supplies.

Besides, a committee headed by DGHS Director Samiul Islam has been formed to coordinate the supply in government and private Covid-19 dedicated hospitals.

On the newly launched dashboard, officials will be able to have live updates on the situation

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Dengue may add to health crisis

Says health minister; govt mulling designated treatment facilities; record 105 in hospital in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque fears that the country may face a new health crisis as the number of dengue patients continues to rise along with Covid cases.

The government is planning to designate hospitals for dengue treatment, considering the current situation, he told journalists yesterday after visiting a field hospital at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

His comments came as at least 105 people with dengue got admitted to hospitals across the country in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday -- the highest in a single day this year. At least 104 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals in the previous 24 hours.

A total of 1,679 people have so far been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, 1,307 cases were recorded in July, indicating a fast-rising trend in dengue infections. In June, 272 cases were recorded and the number was 43 in May.

The viral disease, spread by Aedes mosquitoes, seems to be largely concentrated in the capital as only 47 cases were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BUSINESS INCENTIVE BONUS State banks ignore BB objection

Four state-owned commercial banks (SCBs) have disbursed hefty amount of incentive bonuses to their employees, ignoring the Bangladesh Bank's recommendations. The central bank requested the finance ministry on June 20, to bar the SCBs -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali Bank -- from paying incentive bonuses given their poor financial health. Sonali provided four incentive bonuses while Agrani gave three and a quarter and Rupali and Janata disbursed three bonuses to every employee. Every incentive bonus is equaled to the basic salary of the employees.

STORY ON B1

Soumya guides Tigers to series win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh registered their second-highest successful run chase in the shortest format of the game to stamp their dominance on their tour of Zimbabwe, beating the hosts by five wickets in the series-deciding third T20I in Harare yesterday.

Soumya Sarkar's all-rounder performance -- two wickets with the ball and a second fifty of the series -- along with young all-rounder Shamim Hossain's big-hitting (31 not out off 15 balls) helped Bangladesh chase down a 194-run target with four balls to spare.

With this victory, Bangladesh clinched all three titles on their tour, having earlier won the lone Test and inflicting a 3-0 whitewash of the hosts in the ODI series.

It was also Bangladesh's fourth win in a bilateral

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Long queues of people waiting to be inoculated against coronavirus in front of Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital yesterday morning. The resumption of mass vaccination has been a relief to people and those willing to travel abroad constitute a major part of the queue.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

LPG CYLINDERS Consumers suffer as govt fails to enforce prices



AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

People are having to pay higher than the prices fixed by the regulator for buying Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) because of non-compliance by sellers.

For a 12kg cylinder, retailers are charging Tk 1,050-1,100, which is Tk 150-200, around 23 percent, higher than the price set by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), many consumers said.

On June 30, the commission set Tk 891 as the retail price for a 12kg LPG cylinder for the month of July to ensure a win-win situation for both consumers and marketers, as the demand for the fuel has been growing over the last decade.

Currently, LPG use stands at over 12 lakh tonnes, up from 47,000 tonnes in 2009, said industry stakeholders.

At the moment, more than four lakh consumers use LPG by buying from the market. And until recently, consumers

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

CEC served legal notice to postpone by-polls to Sylhet-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five Supreme Court lawyers yesterday served a legal notice on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda, requesting him to postpone the by-election to Sylhet-3 constituency scheduled to be held on July 28, due to the ongoing pandemic.

Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir sent the notice on behalf of the lawyers to the CEC through email, saying that holding the by-election on July 28 is contradictory to the ongoing lockdown, which has been enforced by the government.

In the legal notice, the lawyers said there is no constitutional obligation for the election commission to hold the by-election on July 28. They said if the CEC does not postpone it, they will move to the High Court for necessary directives to this effect.

Citing the legal notice, lawyer Shishir Manir said the CEC has reportedly said on Saturday that the by-polls to Sylhet-3 will not be postponed due to constitutional and legal obligations, which is not a correct statement.

The deadline for the by-election is September 7 this year according to article 123 (4) of the constitution.

The article says an election to fill the seat of a member of Parliament which falls vacant otherwise than by reason of the dissolution of Parliament shall be held within ninety days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

Provided that in a case where, in the opinion of the CEC, it is not possible, for reasons of an act of God, to hold such election within the period specified in this clause, such election shall be held within ninety days following next after the last day of such period.

Shishir Manir said holding the by-election to Sylhet-3

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Firefighters spray jets of water inside a burning bus at a garage at Gopibagh's Sadek Khan road in the capital. The fire originated at the garage and spread to five other garages, and gutted two air-conditioned buses and a private car.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Mysterious fires gut buses, car in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four buses and a private car were gutted in two separate fires in the capital's Motijheel and Kamalapur areas on Saturday and yesterday.

Two of the buses and the car were burnt when a garage behind Motijheel's Modhumita Cinema caught fire at 11:05am yesterday, said Ershad Hossain, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defense headquarters.

After around 45 minutes of efforts, six fire fighting units doused the fire, he added.

He also said an investigation was initiated to determine the cause of the fire.

Earlier on Saturday, another fire had damaged two buses of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) parked at its Kamalapur depot at 6:28pm.

One of the buses was burnt completely, while the other was partially damaged before four fire units doused the fire at

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Bastuhara canal on deathbed

Locals blame waste dumping, encroachment



For long stretches of the canal, water has been replaced by hyacinths, bushes, and grass. Locals said they use the grass to feed their cattle. The same locals rue the chance to use the canal as a pathway to important destinations within Khulna city.

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Once a 4km long waterbody flowing through Khulna city, today the Bastuhara canal is headed towards virtual extinction, thanks to years of indiscriminate garbage dumping and illegal occupation.

Most of this dumping comes in the form of untreated industrial waste and chemicals from the Khalishpur industrial area, said locals. In the meantime, the negligence of the authorities concerned has made way for another major menace -- encroachment, they added.

"Lack of proper maintenance and mindless dumping of garbage is gradually filling up the canal and polluting its water," said Tapon Kumar Das, a resident of Pabla under ward-6 of Khulna City Corporation.

"Besides, influential people have built illegal establishments occupying land on both sides of the Bastuhara canal," he added.

"I used to go to my paddy field at Paschim Bilpabla using the canal. But in the last ten to twelve years, the canal has turned into a garbage dump," said Abdur Rob, a resident of nearby Bastuhara colony.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Ensure food for poor: GM Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday urged the government to ensure food security of poor and jobless people during this lockdown, by making an unbiased list of them.

"Families of unemployed people are going through serious ordeal amid coronavirus," he said in a statement.

Referring to a recent study by PPRC and Brac, the Jatiya Party chief said living standards of about 15 percent of the country's people -- or about 2.45 crore -- have fallen below the poverty line anew during the one year of the Covid pandemic.

He said there are now nearly 3.5 crore poor people in the country with the new ones.

GM Quader, also the deputy opposition leader in parliament, said the number of poor people in the country will increase further due to the lockdown enforced by the government to tackle the second wave of the coronavirus.

He said many people have lost their sources of income due to the lockdown. "There's no food at the homes of those who live from hand to mouth."

Quader said many families of unemployed poor are

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LINKS TO 'CHAKRIJIBI LEAGUE'

Helena Jahangir loses AL post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businessperson turned politician, Helena Jahangir, has been relieved from ruling Awami League's subcommittee on women's affairs over her activities in social media.

"She [Helena] has been relieved from her membership of the Awami League's subcommittee on women's affairs as her recent activities in social media are against the organisation's policy," said a press release signed by AL's women affairs secretary Meher Afroz Chumki yesterday.

Helena, the founder and CEO of Jayayatra Television, became a member of the AL's Central Sub-committee on Women affairs on January 18.

Earlier, she became a member of the advisory council of Cumilla (north) unit of AL.

Helena recently came into discussion after an announcement on a Facebook



post to form "Awami Chakriji League" and claiming herself as the organisation's president.

She also announced that presidents and general secretaries will be appointed in the district, upazila and overseas units of the organisation in her post that

went viral on social media.

Mentioning the issue, AL general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said, "As per the constitutional provision of Awami League, it has associate bodies and sub-committees. Apart from recognised bodies, there is no scope for any organisation to get engaged with the party by adding words like 'League' or 'Awami' with its name."

In his regular press briefing, Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said when a party stays in power, different groups of opportunists and "cuckoos of spring" make such evil attempts to engage with the party and different "parasites" also get engaged, reports BSS.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

PALLABI TRADER MURDER

Accused placed on three-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed an accused on a three-day remand in a case filed over murder of trader Shahinuddin in the capital's Pallabi.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol passed the order after Syed Iftekhar Hossain, inspector of Detective Branch of police and also investigation officer of the case, produced Babu Hasan with a five-day remand prayer, court sources said.

The IO said Babu is an FIR-named accused and he admitted his involvement. He was directly involved with the murder, so he needed to be remanded to get further information.

A team of Pallabi police on July 24 arrested Babu, 22, from Pallabi area and handed him over to DB police.

On May 16, a group of miscreants led

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

A university office that keeps missing deadlines

Delay in issuing documents frustrates students at JU

MD ASADUZZAMAN

Mohammad Selim (not his real name), a student of economics department at Jahangirnagar University (JU), desperately needed a temporary certificate of his examinations to apply for a scholarship.

On March 7, he came to the university's Office of the Controller of Examinations to collect the certificate but was told that it would take at least 21 days, if he wanted it through the regular process, which would cost Tk 200.

Selim did not have much time, as the application deadline was March 28. To his relief, he was informed that there was an "emergency" service by which certificates are provided in seven days at the cost of Tk 400.

Selim went for it, depositing the required money to the bank that day, and kept waiting.

Meanwhile, deadline for submission of the scholarship application was extended till April 15. However, he did not get the certificate even a month

after availing the so-called emergency service.

In the end, Selim could not apply.

"It's utterly frustrating," he said.

Selim's case is not an isolated one, as the office of examination controller takes an unnecessarily long time to provide certificates and other necessary documents to students, depriving them of many opportunities.

A number of students expressed frustration over the delay, alleging that university authorities charge an additional Tk 200 for "emergency" service but hardly ever meet the deadline.

They said the controller office takes a long time to even provide students' grade sheets or transcripts. Authorities claimed that they cannot issue certificates until the syndicate allows it.

Sources, however, said one of the reasons for the delay is lack of manpower and absence of automation, which makes the job dependent on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Facebook post prompts action from cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have re-opened a mobile repairing shop that was shut down allegedly by extortionists in Chattogram, following a Facebook video post by the shop owner.

Ershad, a physically-challenged youth from Hathazari posted the video, saying his shop was shut down by miscreants over extortion, said a press release signed by AIG Sohel Rana yesterday.

Hathazari police were assigned to verify the incident and take action.

The incident occurred on June 23 at Hathazari's Burma Colony. That day, the youth at a press conference in Chattogram Press Club said extortionists demanded Tk 20,000 from him. When he refused to pay, they ransacked and closed the shop.

The press release said police opened the shop in the presence of local UP chairman and others concerned, and warned to take action if there is any further allegation.



Shutters down, gates locked, there's no one at most of the capital's markets these days. But this also means there's an increased chance of break-ins and theft, and to thwart them, security personnel are on their toes, tirelessly guarding their spots all day. Of course, until the fatigue kicks in and one falls back on their chair in slumber. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Patuatuli area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Campaign against trafficking launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh UN Network on Migration has launched an eight-day social media campaign from Saturday to promote activities against and increase awareness on human trafficking through online platforms, marking the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021.

For this, an event page "Observing World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021" has been created on Facebook. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh is the secretariate and coordinating body of BDUNNM.

According to details of the event page, its activities aim to promote the content and message of the day and promote content against human trafficking and on safe migration.

It stressed need for comprehensive awareness campaign using social media in fight against human trafficking.

As part of the campaign, a webinar to commemorate the day and organised by the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Technical Working Group (CTPTWG) under BDUNNM is scheduled to take place on Wednesday.

Different civil society and migrant rights groups have also been part of the campaign which will continue till July 31.

Alongside Facebook, activities of the awareness campaign will be promoted and shared on other social media platforms including twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

According to details of the event page, Bangladesh is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and child victims of human trafficking while the Covid-19 pandemic has had a variety of effects on people's vulnerability to human trafficking.

The theme for the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021 is "Victims' Voices Lead the Way".

BDUNNM was launched on July 7, 2019 to ensure coordinated, effective, and timely support to Bangladesh government in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).



Intraco Solar Power Limited, a private company, is setting up a plant to generate 30 megawatts of solar power on the Teesta river bed at Char Sholmari village in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Running ramshod across the river

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Flouting rules, a private company is constructing a road on the Teesta river bed in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila, posing a risk of severe floods and river erosion upstream.

Although the illegal road construction on river land has been going on in full swing on the occupied river land, the administration is only now saying they will investigate the matter.

The company, Intraco Solar Power Limited, is setting up a plant to generate 30 megawatts of solar power on 110 acres of land at Kaliganj's Char Sholmari village. It aims to start operations by December this year or early next year, said company officials.

In order to connect the project area with the main road, the company is constructing a

1.7-kilometre-long and 4.5-metre-wide road, which include 18 culverts and two steel bridges, at an estimated cost of around Tk 4 crore, they said.

But the construction has evoked outrage among villagers as they fear the road may cause severe floods and river erosion upstream which, in turn, may potentially harm their homes and land.

"The flow of water will be disrupted if the road is constructed. As a result, severe floods and erosion may occur upstream," said Soleman Ali, a farmer in Sholmari Char.

If river erosion takes a severe turn, many families in the area will lose their homesteads, he added.

However, the project's adviser Ashikur Chowdhury claimed that they are constructing the road to facilitate movement of the

villagers.

The 18 culverts and two steel bridges will be constructed on the road so that water flow is not obstructed, he said, also claiming that the construction works do not require permission from the Water Development Board (WDB) because they are not taking place "in the river".

Lalmonirhat WDB Executive Engineer Mizanur Rahman however dismissed this claim, saying the construction of any structures on the river or the river bed requires permission from WDB. The company does not have any permission in this matter, he stated.

Termining the construction "illegal", he also echoed the villagers' worries over severe floods and river erosion upstream if the road is constructed.

However, he said, the WDB does not have any jurisdiction to take legal action which falls under the purview of the local administration.

"We have visited the spot and already submitted a report to the deputy commissioner's office with recommendations to take action," he told the Daily Star earlier this month.

Contacted, the district's DC Abu Jafor said he had received the WDB report and subsequently, formed a five-member probe body to investigate the matter.

"But the investigation now remains halted due to the lockdown. We have verbally asked the company to stop the road construction works."

Further steps will be taken after investigation, the DC added.

Tangail hospital fire: Burned ICU yet to be restored after eight days

Probe body submits report, blames non-stop use of high flow canula behind the fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Tangail General Hospital, damaged after catching fire, has yet to resume functioning eight days into the incident.

As a result, critical corona patients have been shifted to other places since the day.

On the other hand, as the ICU is yet to become operational, tension was prevailing among the corona infected patients, their relatives and district residents.

Asked about the matter, Dr Abul Fazal Mohammad Shahabuddin, civil surgeon in Tangail, said that the workers of the Public Works Department have already completed the repairing works of the electrical wiring of the damaged ICU unit.

"Later, a technical team from National Electro Medical Equipment Maintenance, Workshop, and Training Center in Dhaka came to the hospital a day before the Eid and worked on other issues including oxygen supply. It will be possible to reopen the ICU after a team of experts from there comes by tomorrow (Saturday) and gives the green signal after checking everything," he added.

Dozens of patients were whisked off Tangail General Hospital by their panic-stricken relatives on July 15 after a fire broke out at the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The patients had to take shelter beside a road near the hospital. Some critical Covid patients gasped for air without adequate oxygen support.

One of them died after suffering a cardiac arrest.

The next day, one of the patients, discharged from the ICU, died and five were sent to other hospitals. On the same day, a five-member committee headed by Additional District Magistrate Sohona Nasrin was formed to probe the fire incident and directed to submit the report within three days. The committee investigated the incident and submitted a report to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) within the period.

DC Dr Ataul Gani said that the investigation report stated as a standard protocol a high flow cannula needs break to function normally but it was used non-stop, got overheated and caught fire.

To avoid such accidents, the probe committee made a number of recommendations, including engaging skilled and trained manpower to run the ICU. "We have already sent the investigation report and recommendations to the concerned departments, including the Ministry of Health," he added.

Dr Khandakar Sadequr Rahman, assistant director of Tangail General Hospital, said that as per the recommendation of the investigation committee, he and several other doctors and staffers of the hospital have already been taking the training.

Notably, the prime minister on April last year directed to set up 10-bed ICU at all district hospitals and later the ICU unit was inaugurated at the hospital on May 2 this year.



FILE PHOTO



Construction work of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project, the country's first nuclear power plant, is going on in full swing and expected to be completed within the schedule time.

PHOTO: STAR

40pc of Rooppur Nuke Power Plant project completed

No work suspension amid pandemic

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic is showing no sign of stopping, there has been remarkable progress in the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project, with nearly 40 percent of its construction work being completed.

A reactor is likely to be set up in the first unit building by September 16, Yafes Osman, minister of Science and Technology, told The Daily Star.

During the pandemic over the last one year, the power plant project has seen a remarkable progress as per the schedule, the minister said while visiting the site recently.

Alongside the first unit, work on the second unit is also progressing smoothly, the minister said.

The reactor pressure vessel, complete with a nuclear reactor and steam generator -- the key components of the first unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant -- had arrived on October 20 last year.

"Since the start of the pandemic, Rooppur nuke plant's work has been running following health

guidelines... We have taken steps to bring all of the employees of the project under vaccination programme," said Yafes Osman.

The Russians working at the project are getting Russian vaccine "Sputnik V" while its Bangladeshi officials and engineers are also getting the same vaccine with the help of Russia, the minister said.

Talking to this newspaper, Dr Shawkat Akber, project director of Rooppur nuclear power plant, said over 30,000 workers -- including over 25,000 locals -- are working for the project everyday. The project authority is strictly following hygiene rules for all of them.

"For workers' safety, we have opened observation and isolation centres at the project site," said the project director.

"We are regularly monitoring every worker's health twice a day. If anybody is infected or found with any symptom, they and those around them are taken to the centres. They are also provided with necessary

medical support," he added.

Dr Shawkat said they are not pausing the project even as the pandemic worsens. "We have already completed 38 to 40 percent of the country's biggest development project and are expecting to complete the work as per schedule."

Two units of 1,200 MWe VVER each are to be built at Rooppur under the Russian design, giving priority to the highest safety measures. Unit-1 is scheduled to be commissioned in 2023 while commissioning of the second unit is slated for 2024 to produce 2,400mw of electricity from the two units.

In February, 2011, Rosatom, the state atomic energy corporation of Russian Federation, signed an agreement with the Bangladesh government to build the nuke plant at Rooppur in Pabna's Ishwardi. It will be the country's first nuclear power plant.

The initial contract for the project worth of \$12.65 billion was inked in December, 2015.



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka- 1208

Local Re-Press Tender Notice



Tender ref.: EDCL (KELP)/PUR/LT/DTW/2021/272

Dated 25/07/2021

EDCL invites sealed tenders from the WASA Enlisted Experienced Contractors / well experienced Contractors enlisted with Deptt. of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) for supply & Installation of Deep Tube Well at Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP) which as details below:-

Name of Work	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
Supply & Installation of Deep Tube Well System with Submersible Pump at Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP). (Details as per BOQ, Drawing & Time/Work Schedule).	@2.5% of total Quoted Amount.	Tk. 1000.00/set Non-refundable	Closing :24/08/2021 at 12.00 PM Opening :26/08/2021 at 12.15PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited(EDCL), Dhaka and Khulna Essential Latex Plant(KELP), Mattomdanga, Gilatola, Khulna on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favor of "Essential Drugs Co. Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

The interested bidders may drop their offer along with relevant papers to the tender box kept at the purchase Department of EDCL, Dhaka & KELP, Khulna till 12.00PM on 24/08/2021, which will be opened on 26/08/2021 at Dhaka office at 12.15PM (Subject to receive of offers from KELP) in presence of the bidders/their representative (if any).

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For : Managing Director

Size- 5 x 4 col.

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স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.১৫৪১.৪০৮.১৪(২).০০১.২১-৩০৭০

তারিখঃ ২৫/০৭/২০২১খ্রিঃ

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, চট্টগ্রাম সড়ক বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে প্রতিক্ষেত্রে ৫০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ) লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, চট্টগ্রাম সড়ক বিভাগ কার্যালয় অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম/সীতাকুন্ড/ফকিটছড়ি/১ম সারি কারখানা উপ-বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম এর কার্যালয় হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, চট্টগ্রাম সড়ক বিভাগ এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিট মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধকরতঃ অত্রই ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ২৩ আগস্ট ২০২১খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা করতে হবে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি-৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহ্বান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

পিন্টু চাকমা

পরিচিতি নং-৬০২২১৯

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ

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জিডি-১৩৬৮

Iraq doesn't need US combat troops: PM

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Iraq's prime minister has said his country no longer requires American combat troops to fight ISIL, but a formal timeframe for their redeployment will depend on the outcome of talks with US officials this week.

Mustafa al-Kadhimi said in an interview with The Associated Press news agency that Iraq will still ask for US training and military intelligence gathering, but will seek a timeline for the withdrawal of combat troops, which was announced in April amid ongoing talks between Washington and Baghdad.

"There is no need for any foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil," he said in the interview published yesterday before a planned trip to Washington, where he is slated to meet President Joe Biden on



Monday for a fourth round of strategic talks.

Al-Kadhimi will visit the White House amid growing pressure, particularly from Shia political groups, for a reduced US role in the country.

Meanwhile, the threat of an ISIL resurgence remains ever-present in Iraq, with al-Kadhimi careful to stress Baghdad is not seeking a full withdrawal.

"What we want from the US presence in Iraq is to support our forces in training and developing their efficiency and capabilities, and in security cooperation," al-Kadhimi said.

Previously, former President Barack Obama had withdrawn US forces from Iraq in 2011, creating a security vacuum that aided the rise of ISIL. US troops were redeployed in 2014.



A firetruck is seen on the foreground of a wildfire in Douglas County, Nevada, US, in this screen grab obtained from a social media video recorded on July 23. As greenhouse emissions accelerate, heatwave-caused wildfires flared recently across the globe destroying forests vital to prevent global warming.

Four nations threat to climate goal

Warn scientists as 51 nations meet in UK ahead of crucial Cop26

AGENCIES

Ahead of a key climate meet in London, scientists have warned that only four leading G20 nations' climate targets would lead to disastrous global warming.

The warning comes as Britain yesterday hosted climate and environment ministers from 51 countries for "critical" climate talks ahead of November's Cop26 summit in Glasgow.

British minister Alok Sharma, President of COP26, will lead the two-day meeting, which London said will address "key issues that require resolution" at the summit.

Environment and climate ministers from the US, India and China will be among those taking part in the closed-door meeting, which will include both virtual and in-person attendance.

According to The Guardian, the scientist said that China, Russia, Brazil and Australia all have energy policies associated with 5C rises in atmospheric temperatures, a heating hike that would bring devastation to much of the planet.

The analysis, by the peer-reviewed group Paris Equity Check, raises serious worries about the prospects of key climate agreements being achieved at the Cop26 summit in Glasgow in three months. The conference - rated as one of the most important climate summits ever staged - will attempt to hammer out policies to hold global heating to 1.5C by agreeing on a global policy for ending net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050.

The EU and UK have outlined emission pledges that could bring the world close to these

aspirations. However, those of China, Russia, Brazil and Australia - which remain reliant on continued fossil-fuel burning - would trigger temperature rises of 5C if followed by the rest of the world. This dramatic discrepancy reveals a deep division over the energy and environment policies of the world's richest nations.



"Without more ambition from China, Brazil, Russia and Australia, Cop26 will fail to deliver the future our planet needs," warned Tanya Steele, chief executive at WWF.

The stark difference between the climate plans of different G20 nations - who together are responsible for 85% of all global carbon emissions - was underlined last week in Naples, when a meeting of member states' energy and environment ministers ended with the group failing to agree on a package of commitments to tackle climate change.

"The G20 is failing to deliver," said the online activist network Avaaz.

A world that would be 5C hotter than it was

before the Industrial Revolution, when fossil-fuel burning began in earnest, would be one in which a quarter of the global population would face extreme drought for at least one month a year; rainforests would be destroyed; and melting ice sheets would result in dangerous sea-level rises.

In addition, loss of reflective ice from the poles could cause oceans to absorb more solar radiation, while melting permafrost in Siberia and other regions would release plumes of methane, another pernicious greenhouse gas. Inevitably, temperatures would soar even further.

By contrast, scientists say that if temperature rises can be kept below 1.5C, then the worst impacts of climate change could be prevented - though they also point out that temperatures have already risen 1.2C, leaving the world facing very tight margins to avoid the worst impacts of global warming over the next 30 years.

The extent of the climate crisis has also been highlighted this month with extreme weather events causing devastation across the world: deadly floods have swept through Germany, Belgium and China, while massive wildfires have gripped the US and Siberia. Global warming has been implicated in every case.

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, nearly 200 countries committed to submit new climate plans every five years with a goal to limit global warming to well below 2C, aiming at 1.5C, compared to pre-industrial levels. However, earlier this year, the United Nations issued a "red alert" over current climate plans, warning they were "nowhere close" to meeting the Paris goals.

NEWS

IN brief

Landslide kills nine in northern Indian state

Nine people were killed by a landslide in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh yesterday as boulders fell and hit the vehicle they were travelling in, news agency ANI reported. The vehicle was carrying 11 people and the two others, as well as a passer-by, were injured, ANI, a partner of Reuters, said, citing Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). ITBP teams rushed to the spot near Badseri village in the Kinnaur district of hilly Himachal Pradesh state to conduct a rescue operation, ANI reported. In the western state of Maharashtra, at least 125 people died in the last two days after torrential monsoon rains sparked major landslides and flooding there.

Seventh presidential hopeful arrested in Nicaragua

Another presidential candidate was arrested in Nicaragua on Saturday, police said - the seventh potential contender detained by Daniel Ortega's government in the lead-up to elections on November 7. Noel Vidaurrue was put under house arrest, accused of "undermining the sovereignty" of the country, police said, in the latest of a series of arrests condemned by the United States and European Union. Nicaragua's long-term leader Ortega will seek a fourth consecutive presidential term at the November 7 elections, a senior ally said last week.



60 Cubans prosecuted so far over protests: official

About 60 Cubans have been prosecuted so far for participating in unprecedented demonstrations against the government earlier this month, a senior official said Saturday. The cases were over minor charges, and the total number of people detained has not been released amid complaints from relatives seeking information about loved ones. On July 11 and 12, thousands of Cubans took to the streets, shouting "Freedom," "Down with the dictatorship" and "We're hungry" in the biggest protests since the revolution that brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959. Hundreds of people were arrested and many face charges of contempt, public disorder, vandalism and propagation of the coronavirus epidemic for allegedly marching without face masks.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Demonstrators hold up placards, one of which reads 'Freedom - No to the pass' during a protest against the vaccination and the compulsory health pass called for by the French government, in Toulouse, France, on Saturday. Despite the protests, lawmakers from France's upper and lower houses of parliament were yesterday seeking to agree a deal to allow the adoption of legislation making vaccine passports vital for French daily life.

Macron pushes for Israeli probe into spyware concerns

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Emmanuel Macron has reportedly spoken to the Israeli prime minister, Naftali Bennett, to ensure that the Israeli government is "properly investigating" allegations that the French president could have been targeted with Israeli-made spyware by Morocco's security services.

In a phone call, Macron expressed concern that his phone and those of most of his cabinet could have been infected with Pegasus, hacking software developed by the Israeli surveillance firm NSO Group, which enables operators of the tool to extract messages, photos and emails, record calls and secretly activate microphones from infected devices.

The leaked database at the heart of the Pegasus project includes Macron's mobile phone number.

NSO has said Macron was not a "target" of any of its customers, meaning the company denies he was selected for surveillance using Pegasus. The company says that the fact that a number appeared on the list was in no way indicative of whether that number was selected for surveillance using Pegasus.

The Pegasus project could not examine the mobile phones of the leaders and diplomats, and could therefore not confirm whether there had been any attempt to install malware on their phones.

The Pegasus project - a consortium of 17 media outlets, including the Guardian - revealed last week that government clients around the world have used the hacking software sold by NSO to target human rights activists, journalists and lawyers.

The investigation has been based on forensic analysis of phones and analysis of a leaked database of 50,000 numbers, including that of Macron and those of heads of state and senior government, diplomatic and military officials, in 34 countries.

As the mammoth impact of the disclosures has become clearer, the diplomatic pressure on Israel is mounting. On Thursday, Israeli MP Ram Ben-Barak - a former deputy head of the Mossad spy agency - confirmed that the Israeli defence establishment had "appointed a review commission made up of a number of groups" to examine whether policy changes were needed regarding sensitive cyber exports.

THE PEGASUS PROJECT

Slow Taliban's momentum

Suggests Pentagon chief as thousands of Afghan families flee fighting in Kandahar

AGENCIES

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has suggested that the Afghan security forces' first job was to make sure they could slow the Taliban's momentum before attempting to retake territory, as Afghan forces plan to consolidate forces around strategically important parts of the country.

Reuters reported that Afghanistan's military is overhauling its war strategy against the Taliban to concentrate forces around the most critical areas like Kabul and other cities, border crossings and vital infrastructure.

"They are consolidating their forces around the key population centers," Austin told reporters during a visit to Alaska.

"In terms of whether or not it will stop the Taliban, I think the first thing to do is to make sure that they can slow the momentum," Austin said, speaking as the U.S. military is set to end its mission in Afghanistan on Aug. 31, on orders from President Joe Biden.

Austin added that he believed the Afghans had the capability and the capacity

to make progress, but "we'll see what happens."

The politically perilous strategy appears to be a military necessity as over-stretched Afghan troops try to prevent the loss of provincial capitals, which could deeply fracture the country.

Taliban insurgents are gaining control of more and more territory, which the Pentagon estimated on Wednesday now extends to over half of half Afghanistan's district centers.

On the ground, more than 22,000 Afghan families have fled from their homes to escape fighting in the former Taliban bastion of Kandahar, officials said yesterday, as authorities arrested four suspected insurgents over this week's rocket attack on Kabul.

Local authorities had set up four camps for the displaced people who are estimated to be about 154,000.

Kandahar, with its 650,000 inhabitants, is the second-largest city in Afghanistan after Kabul. The southern province was the epicentre of the Taliban's regime when they ruled Afghanistan between 1996 to 2001.



Typhoon drenches flood-hit China

AFP, Ningbo

Typhoon In-Fa uprooted trees and drenched communities in knee-deep water in parts of eastern China, but there were no reports of major damage as it made landfall yesterday.

Sea, air and rail traffic had been shut down across a swathe of the coast centered on the major shipping port of Ningbo, where the weakening typhoon rumbled ashore around midday packing winds of up to 38 metres per second, according to the China Meteorological Administration.

Response teams in Ningbo cleared away fallen trees in the city centre, while residents in some neighbourhoods waded through floodwaters and merchants piled up sandbags in front of their businesses to keep out water.

The typhoon hit as the central province of Henan was still cleaning up after torrential downpours dumped a year's worth of rain in just three days last week. Government officials yesterday added another five dead to the toll from the freak flooding in Henan, raising the total to 63.

In-Fa's effects were also felt in the metropolis of Shanghai, China's largest city, with strong gusts of wind and steady but not heavy rainfall. All inbound and outbound flights were cancelled yesterday for the city's two international airports, as were dozens of scheduled trains, while activity at the ports of Shanghai and Ningbo - two of the world's largest - was also shut down.

The meteorological administration said that after landfall In-Fa would weaken but continue to hover over a wide expanse of eastern China for days, ringing itself out and bringing heavy rainfall.

DECADES OF NUKE TESTING IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

Macron urged to apologise

AFP, Papeete

French President Emmanuel Macron faced pressure to apologise for the devastating impact of decades of nuclear testing as he kicked off his first official trip to French Polynesia.

During his four-day visit, Macron plans to address the legacy of nuclear testing from 1966 to 1996 as France developed atomic weapons, as well as discuss the South Pacific territory's strategic role and the existential risk of rising seas posed by global warming.

Residents in the sprawling archipelago of more than 100 islands located midway between Mexico and Australia are hoping Macron apologise and confirms compensation for radiation victims.

The tests remain a source of deep resentment, seen as evidence of racist colonial attitudes that disregarded the lives of islanders.

French officials denied any cover-up of radiation exposure at a meeting earlier this month with delegates from the semi-autonomous territory led by President Edouard Fritch.

The meeting came after French investigative website Disclose reported in March that the impact from the fallout was



far more extensive than authorities had acknowledged, citing declassified French military documents on the 193 tests.

Only 63 Polynesian civilians have been compensated for radiation exposure since the tests ended in 1996. Disclose said, estimating that more than 100,000 people may have been contaminated in total, with leukaemia, lymphoma and other cancers rife.

"We're expecting an apology from the president," said Auguste Uebe-Carlson, head of the 193 Association of victims of nuclear tests.

Patrick Galenon, the former chairman of the territory's CPS social security system, said female Polynesians aged 40 to 50 "have the highest thyroid cancer rates in the world."

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



JULY 26

1945 - Britain, China and the United States issued the Potsdam Declaration threatening Japan with "prompt and utter destruction" if it did not surrender unconditionally to end World War Two.

1965 - The Maldives Islands in the Indian Ocean became independent after 78 years as a British protectorate.

2016 - Hillary Clinton becomes first female nominee for President of the United States.

2016 - Solar Impulse plane completes first fuel-free flight around the globe.

SOURCE: REUTERS

The Dhaka Muslin Industry

J.C. SINHA

The subject of this paper is the old muslin industry of Dacca [Dhaka] and its neighborhood. I shall not deal in this article with the Muslins produced here with British yarn. Comparatively speaking, these are coarser stuffs and their problems are somewhat different. Though well-known muslin is rather difficult to define scientifically. The distinction between it and ordinary cotton goods called 'calico' has never been accurately stated. The difference between the two is a matter of degree only as regards the fineness of texture. ...

The etymology of the word does not help us in this matter. 'Muslin', as is well known is derived from Mosul, a town in Mesopotamia where clothes of gold and silver were called Mosolins. The term had therefore originally a quite different meaning from what it has now.

The industry at Dacca came into prominence when this town became the capital of Bengal at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Before this period Dacca does not appear to have been a place of any political or commercial importance and naturally, we do not come across any reference to the muslin industry of this place prior to the reign of Jehangir. But the muslin of Eastern Bengal in general, dates from remote antiquity, at least two thousand years from today.

remonstrated in her justification that she had seven jamahs or suits on; and another, that in Nabob Allaverdy Khawn's time a weaver was chastised and turned out of the city of Dacca for his neglect, in not preventing his cow from eating up a piece of *abroan* which he had spread and carelessly left on the ground."

What were the causes of this excellence of the Dacca muslins? According to some writers, it was due to the superior quality of the Dacca cotton. ...

Some writers like Sir Chalres D'oyly have remarked that muslin cotton grew on the low lands subject to annual inundation. But the majority of writers are of opinion that the land selected for this cotton was "high and dry". With regard to the tract where it grew there is also difference of opinion. Mr. [Joseph] Bebb, the East India Company's Commercial Resident at Dacca, says that the finest was grown to the north and east of Dacca. [Illegible] and that the cotton grown to the south were considered inferior. Mr. Taylor the author of the Topography and Statistics of Dacca also writes that "The northern division of the district produced the best cotton and, in the situation, specially the portion of it bordering upon the Megna and Berhampooter, in Sunergong, Capasia, Toke and Junglebaree in which this article was chiefly cultivated in former times."

But in his paper, "On the supply of Cotton



A woman in fine Bengali muslin; Dhaka, 18th-century

that of any other variety of Indian cotton. But it was certainly inferior to American cotton as regards the length of the staple and the fineness of fibre. The staple of the Sea Island cotton has more than double the length of the best Dacca cotton and the filaments of the latter were considerably thicker. The shortness of the staple of the Dacca cotton, though quite suitable for spinning the most delicate handspun yarn, was unsuitable for machine spinning. The Dacca spinners, on the other hand, failed to spin yarn out of the best American cotton. In 1811, the Commercial Resident sent a certain quantity of the Sea Island cotton to the different manufacturing stations connected with the Dacca factory. But the spinners could not work it into thread and claimed that the local fibre was superior for that purpose. This appears to have been due to the greater elasticity of the fibres of the Dacca cotton, which was capable of receiving more twists or turns in the process of spinning than the American cotton. One special quality attributed to the Dacca cotton by Mr. Bebb was that the thread made from it, did not swell after bleaching. But this was due more to the quality of the water used in bleaching, rather than to any special property of the cotton. The yarn spun at Dumroy [Dhamrai] which was reported by Mr. Bebb in 1788 to swell very much was in Taylor's days found to swell the least, if bleached at Dacca, "but the reverse if the water of Dumroy" was used in the process. In fact, the excellence of the Dacca muslins was due not so much to the special qualities of the cotton used as to the superiority in spinning and weaving.

The process of spinning was somewhat different from that followed in the case of ordinary handspun thread. In the case of cotton to be spun to muslin yarn, the *dallun cathee* and not the *cherkee* or gin, was used for separating the seeds from the wool. The former instrument was simply an iron rod rolled upon a [flat] wooden board. It was said to injure the fibre less than the gin. The next step as to tease the cotton with a small bamboo [bow] with a string made of catgut or mooga [silk]. The cotton used for the finest thread was carded with the dried jaw-bone of the Boal fist before it was teased. After these processes of carding and teasing, the cotton was spread upon the smooth surface of the dried skin of Cheetul or Cuchia fish and rolled up into a small cylindrical case. This was held in hand during the process of spinning.

Coarser yarns were spun on the spinning wheel or Charka as they are done now but fine yarns from 100 counts and above were spun on the tukua or spindle. The tukua was not thicker than a stout needle, from ten to fourteen inches in length. There was attached near its lower point a small ball of unbaked clay to give it sufficient weight in turning. A certain degree of moisture, combined with a temperature of about 82 degrees, was the condition of the atmosphere best suited for the carrying on this operation. The spinners generally worked from early dawn to 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning and from 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon till half an hour before sunset. The finest yarn was spun early in the morning before the rising sun dissipated the dew on the grass. When the air was unusually dry, it was spun over a shallow vessel of water. The evaporation from the water imported the necessary moisture to the cotton to enable the spinner to form it into thread.

The spinning of the finest yarn required such a delicacy of touch that it was confined to the women of a few families of Dacca and its neighbourhood. These female spinners had acquired skill through the hereditary continuance of this particular occupation for generations. About fifty years ago, the finest thread was made at Dhamrai. Mr. Wise wrote in 1883 that the few *katanis* or female spinners of muslin yarn in East Bengal, were to be found at that time only at Dhamrai. Fifteen years later, Mr. N. N. Banerjee remarked in his Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Bengal, "it is reported, though not with certainty that there are only two

persons at Dhamrai still living who can spin fine thread which was formerly used in the manufacture of muslins." I have made recent enquiries and it appears that the generation of women who spun the yarn of the finest fabrics has passed away.

About the fineness of the Dacca yarn, it is sufficient to say that a skein measured in the presence of Mr. Taylor in 1846 was upwards of 250 miles to the pound of cotton, i.e., the yard was of more than 520 counts. Even as late as 1883, as reported by Mr. Wise, 1 rati or 2 grains of the finest thread spun at Dhamrai measured 70 yards. Thus, the yarn was of 290 counts. It may be observed that the yarn used in an ordinary *dhotee* of 5 yds X 44 inches, manufactured in the Bombay mills, the retail price of which would now be about Rs. 2-8 as is from 20 to 24 counts only. Dacca yarn was at least 20 to 25 times finer.

It is often believed that our handspun yarn was finer than any ever produced by machinery even in England. This however is controverted by many who base their objection merely on the number of counts. The finest Dacca yarn did not exceed 550 counts but the machine-spun yarn of a piece of power-loom-woven muslin which was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862, was stated to have been of 700 counts. The manufacturer of this piece however admitted that his yarn "was too imperfect for any purpose, except to fix the limits of fineness at which" machine-spun yarn could

The lack of uniformity of thickness of the handspun thread was however not wholly a disadvantage as the transparency of the Dacca muslins was ascribed to this factor. In fact, the real disadvantage of the handspun yarn was that it was so costly and involved so much trouble in procuring the thread of a certain quality. Taylor writes that two-thirds of the time occupied in preparing fine muslins, were spent in searching for suitable thread in the different parts of the district. Considering the time and skill required in spinning very fine yarn, it is but natural that it was so costly. According to Taylor the maximum quantity of very fine yarn which a spinner could make in one month, devoting the whole morning to the spindle, was only 1/8 a tola or 90 grains (troy). This gives a daily output of 3 grains only. In spite of the rude appliances used, this infinite patience taken and the delicacy of touch were the real causes of the excellence of the Dacca yarn which machine-spun thread has failed to attain even to this day with the same quality of raw material.

The same causes were responsible, in addition to the fine quality of the yarn used, for the fame of the "wind-woven" fabrics of Dacca. Contrary to what is generally supposed, the actual processes of weaving the Dacca muslins and the appliances used were much the same as those used in the case of the fine handloom products of today. In the manufacture of fine muslins, the shuttle used was however considerably lighter. Not far off from the Nawabpur Road in this town, I found the weavers carrying out practically all the processes of weaving described by Taylor more than seventy year ago. It is not therefore necessary to describe all these processes. There is only one point that deserves mention, viz., that a certain degree of atmospheric moisture was necessary for weaving fine muslins. When it rained heavily and the air was very moist, a slow fire was kept under the loom. In very dry and hot weather, it was sometimes necessary during the operation of weaving, to place beneath the extended yarns of the warp of the loom, a few shallow vessels of water. The evaporation imparted the necessary moisture to the yarn and prevented them from breaking. This practice gave rise to the erroneous notion that Dacca muslin was sometime woven under water. ...

It is true that there were many subsidiary causes, both external and internal, which affected adversely the muslin industry of Dacca. The British tariffs of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the outbreak of the French Revolution, the Milan and Berlin decrees of Napoleon, the Industrial Revolution in England, the general insecurity of this country after the death of Aurangzib, the oppression on the weavers and monopolistic control under early British



Advantages of wearing Muslin Dresses! — dedicated to the serious attention of the Fashionable Ladies of Great Britain Js. Gillray, 1802

The earliest apparent reference is in Kautilya's Arthashastra which alludes to the fine cotton fabrics of Vanga or Eastern Bengal. The muslin called Gangitiki in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, an anonymous publication of the 1st century A.D. most probably came from East Bengal. Sulaiman, the Arab traveller who visited India in the ninth century, seems also to refer to the fine muslins of Eastern Bengal when he remarks that "cotton fabrics made in the Kingdom of Rahmi (which has been identified with East Bengal) are so fine and delicate that a dress made of it, may pass through a signet ring". In Marco Polo's days (A. D. 1294-95), the chief centres of cotton weaving in India were Gujrat, Cambay, Telengana, Malabar and Bengal. Ralph Fitch the English traveller who visited India three centuries ago (1583) describes Sonargaon, which about 13 miles south-east from Dacca "as a town where there is the best and finest cloth made in all India". About the same time, Abul Fazl writes "the Sarkar of Sonargaon produces a species of muslin very fine and in great quantity".

But the muslins of this part of Bengal did not yet attained the world-wide celebrity which they later on enjoyed. Their subsequent development was mainly due to the patronage of the Imperial and Vice-regal courts and the increased demand for them by the European traders. ...

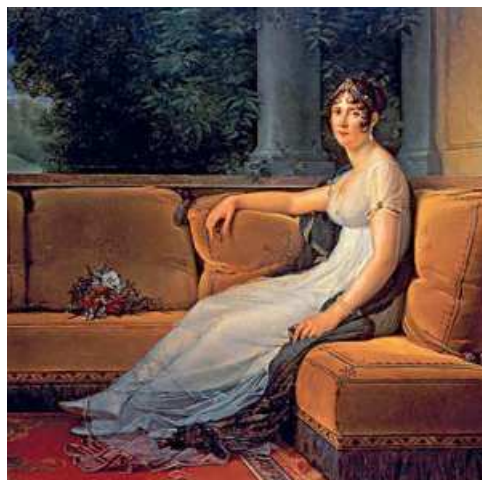
The English first exported the Dacca muslins in England about the year 1666 and by the year 1675 the fashion of wearing these fine stuffs, whether the costlier fabrics of Dacca or the cheaper muslins from other parts of the country became pretty general in England. We learn from the *Diaries of Strensham Master (1675-1680)* that besides Dacca, muslin was produced at that time at Santipur, Maldah and Hughli. But this industry was not confined to the province of Bengal alone. Even at the beginning of the seventeenth century, very fine cotton goods were produced at Agra, at Sironj in Malwa, at Broach, Baroda and Navsari in Gujrat.

But the finest and best muslins were certainly produced at Dacca which received such poetic names as *ab-e-rawan* or running water (because if placed in a stream it could scarcely be seen), *baft hawa* or woven air (because if thrown in the air it would fly like a cloud) and *shabnam* or evening dew which took its name from the fact that when spread on the ground it could scarcely be distinguished from the dew on the grass. ...

"The Hindoos" writes Bolts (in his *Considerations on India Affairs, 1772 A. D.*) "amuse us with two stories as instances of the fineness of this muslin i.e. *ab-i-rawan*. One, that Emperor Aurangzeb was angry with his daughter for showing her skin through her clothes whereupon the young princess

from British India (1827)," Mr. George Tucker remarks that the favourite site of the muslin cotton "seems to be high banks of the Ganges and its tributary stream." In the midst of such conflicting evidence it is difficult to point out the exact region where Muslin cotton grew, but in any case, it was certain that it was entirely the produce of the Dacca District.

Even the vernacular name of this cotton it well-nigh forgotten. Mr. George Tucker and a host of other writers have spoken of the finest

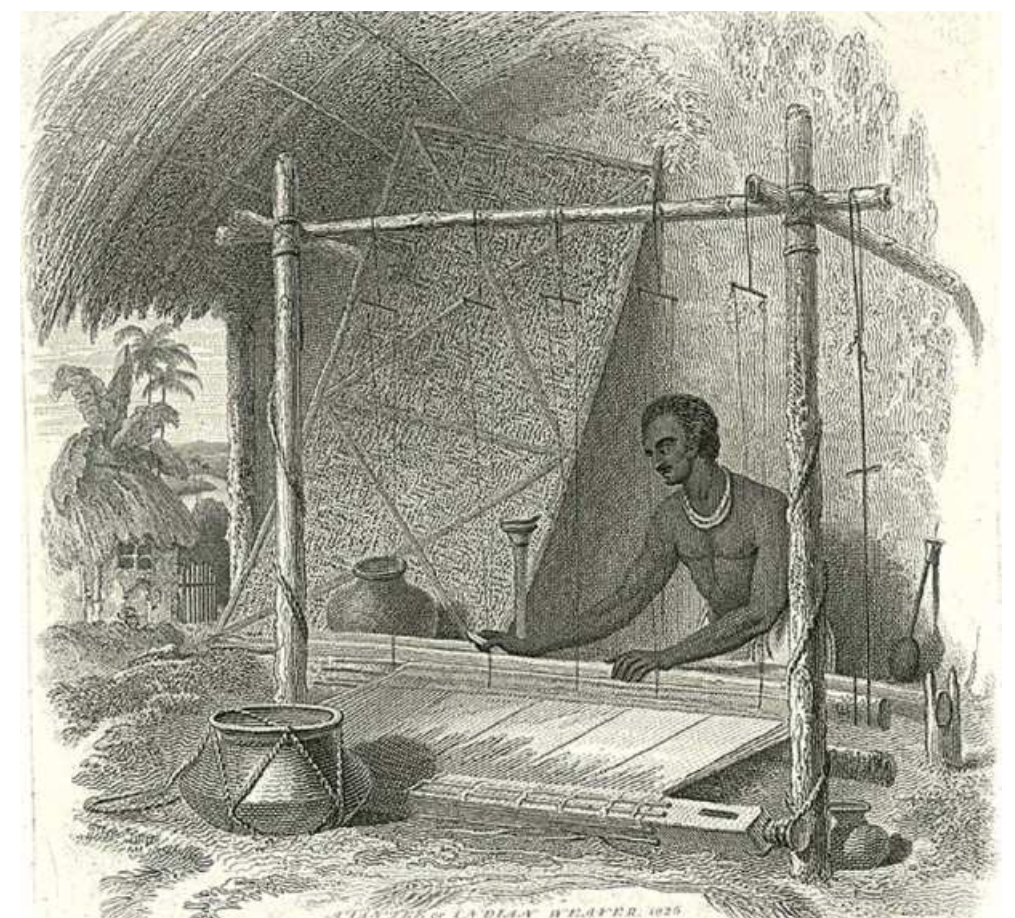


Portrait de Joséphine (ca. 1801) by Baron François Gérard. Dhaka muslin was a favourite of Joséphine Bonaparte, the first wife of Napoleon.

of Dacca cotton as *bairati kapas*, but Mr. Bebb calls it *photee*. Mr. Krishna Kumar Basak, now an old man of eighty [1925], of Lalchand Mukim's Lane, Nawabpur, Dacca who himself wove muslin in his younger days told me that *photee* was the name of muslin cotton. ...

We learn further from the letter of the Commercial Resident of Dacca dated the 30th November, 1800 that this cotton plant was an annual one and that two crops were raised, one in April-May and the other in September-October. The former yielded the finest produce. The seeds of the cotton were kept with the wool on them during the rainy season and in order to preserve them from damp, they were put into an earthen jar, smeared inside with ghee or oil. This vessel, with its mouth closed up, was generally hung from the roof over the spot where the fire was kindled. All authoritative evidence is against the view that Dacca cotton was a long-stapled tree cotton. In fact, all the early writers like Buchanan-Hamilton, Bebb, Tucker, Roxburgh and Taylor allude to the Muslin cotton as a short-stapled annual plant. One of its special characteristics was that the wool adhered "most tenaciously to the seed." ...

Wherein lay the superiority of the Dacca cotton? As might be expected, its staple was in fact longer and its fibre finer and silkier than



A Tantee or Indian weaver (1827). This etching was taken from plate 16 of Charles D'Oyly's "Antiquities of Dacca".

be woven by the power-loom. Regarding another such specimen of machine-made muslin of 440 counts, Forbes Watson remarked that a comparison of this with a piece of Dacca muslin of which the yarn was calculated to have been of 406 counts only, it was clear, though it may sound paradoxical, that the Dacca piece was finer. The average diameter of the yarn of the former piece was .00222 inch while that of the latter was .001526 part of an inch. This must have been due to the fact that the Dacca threads spun by hand, received more twists in the process of spinning and was more compressed than machine-spun yarn. The greater number of twists received per inch of yarn explains also the superior durability of the Dacca muslins.

It has also been said by many writers that handspun yarn had another special quality, viz., that it became stronger and finer after bleaching, whereas the reverse was the case with regard to machine-made yarn. But the latter had two advantages. It was cheapest and of more uniform thickness.

J.C. Sinha was the Chairman of the Economics Department at the University of Dhaka from 1925 to 1935.

This is an abridged version of an article with the same title published in *Modern Review* (April, 1925). It was the transcript of a public lecture delivered by J.C. Sinha at the Dhaka University on February 26, 1925.

A good initiative goes awry

A case of haste makes waste

PICTURES of newly built tin shed low-cost houses, crumbling pathetically so soon after construction is an extremely good example of extraordinary bad planning and unnecessary haste. The houses were constructed to put in effect the prime minister's laudable objective of giving low-cost houses to the poor, about 70,000 by January this year in the first phase and another 50,000 by June 20, as a Mujib Borsho gift to the indigents. But the praiseworthy intention has, unfortunately, suffered a blemish. Nothing can be more embarrassing for the administration than to see systemic inefficiency so blatantly exposed.

Everything with the project that had to go wrong went wrong, everything that one must avoid, every limitation in terms of location, land and environment, that should have been corrected and removed, was left unaddressed. Even the costing, was flawed. Every brick house which consisted of two rooms, a kitchen and a toilet and a running porch were allocated Tk 1.7-1.9 lakh. That amount, by even the most conservative estimate seems to be woefully inadequate. And this is not from one single location. As of now, complaints have been received from 22 upazilas in 24 districts where the project was undertaken.

It seems that haste has played the most dominant factor in this very embarrassing debacle. And the blame must go directly on the shoulders of the planners as well as the project implementation committee (PIC). We wonder what was the hurry to finish construction in such quick time. Even the most incorrigible ignoramus would know that construction of a building requires a particular period of time. There is no point in the government engineers saying now that there was mishap at every step. Was there no engineer in the planning committee? By whom, we ask, was the PIC made up of? We cannot believe that there was no one in that committee who could tell the PMO that the nature of the soil would levy more time in construction than initially planned. What should we make of the statement of the chairman of the PIC that the houses were built on shifting soil? Our question is, if this was a known fact, why was the construction allowed to proceed?

Our gut feeling is, money was allotted first and then the rest of the actions followed. The coat was cut according to the cloth provided. And the cloth was not enough. The result was that hopes and dreams of the poor recipients have been dashed. We would hope that the investigation by the PMO would not only be able to identify the flaws, but also those responsible for the embarrassment. After all, the money belongs to the people and no one should be allowed to play around with it. Those in the administration who care little for public money should be taught a good lesson that tinkering with poor people's money comes at a cost.

Help stranded migrant workers to re-migrate

Govt must make special provisions to quicken the process

A report published by Brac Migration Programme last April shows that among 417 migrant workers who had returned home amid the coronavirus epidemic, 72 percent want to re-migrate. Among them, 89 percent are from rural areas, 84 percent are young people in their 20s and 47 percent have no income source right now. According to the head of Brac Migration Programme, most of the respondents in the survey without an income source put re-migration as their "first choice". Also, many who came home on vacation and were subsequently stuck here amid the pandemic or came home after losing their jobs, were contacted by their previous employers. So, they want to re-migrate now. As we have reiterated many times before, the government must help these migrant workers go back overseas in a legal way so that they do not fall victim to unscrupulous agents.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) provided some reasons why people migrate in its report published in August, 2020. They include absence of job opportunities, particularly in the formal sector; insufficient income, financial problems, and a lack of social services and limited social protection systems. The report found if there were better job opportunities in Bangladesh, 99 percent of potential migrants would choose to stay in the country. Bangladesh is the sixth largest origin country for international migrants in the world, with 7.8 million Bangladeshi migrants living abroad as of 2019. Over 2.2 million young adults join the labour force every year, but the domestic labour market is unable to absorb all these job seekers. As per Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (Bmet) data, 1.95 lakh Bangladeshis took up new overseas employment this year.

Remittances from migrant workers are one of the two biggest drivers of economic development, and hence the government must make the process of migration legal, easy and quick. The government has to make getting passports, visas, air tickets etc. easier for migrant workers who are stuck here due to Covid-19. Vaccinating them before anyone else must be the top priority of the government. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment must take effective steps to make sure that those migrant workers who have been left stranded because of the pandemic are able to go back as quickly as possible. The reality of thousands of young people who can neither go back to their overseas jobs nor get any employment at home will ultimately take an economic and social toll on the country.

Addressing the accountability challenge of e-commerce



MACRO MIRROR
FAHMIDA KHATUN

IN recent years, Bangladesh has seen a rise in electronic commerce along with other countries around the world. Many young entrepreneurs have come up with various digital products and services for customers. The availability of the internet and convenience in terms of saving time spent in traffic have helped this growth. However, the sector is yet to reach its full potential. Several challenges hinder its further expansion. Given the significance of the sector both in terms of business potential, employment generation and customer service, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a webinar on Digital Platform Economy in Bangladesh recently. The keynote presentation and experts highlighted how the e-commerce sector can be expanded to serve more customers and also detailed which policy supports are needed for it to become an efficient sector.

A couple of days before the CPD webinar, the e-commerce sector in Bangladesh came to the limelight in connection with a huge scam of certain e-commerce ventures. Customers paid advances but the companies failed to deliver their products and refund their payments. Even before this revelation, there were red flags regarding the integrity of some online businesses which have been conducting e-commerce. The quality and price of products, delay in delivery of products to customers, difficulty in returning products, risk of not getting refunds, and overall quality of customer service have been the common complaints against a number of companies. The most talked-about company among the lot seemed to have performed every trick to cheat its customers and siphoned off a large amount of money by not refunding customers' advance payments, even though they failed to deliver goods for a long time.

This whole episode of huge fraud by a widely promoted e-commerce platform even by some of the country's respected media has shaken not only the integrity of the company itself, but also of those which have been advertising the services of the company. Of course, in a welcome move, a reputed financial transaction company has immediately disassociated itself with this fraudulent e-commerce platform.

At a time when there is a growing demand for e-commerce in Bangladesh, such irregular practice has destroyed the

trust of consumers greatly. E-commerce is performed between businesses and customers based solely on trust as there is no face-to-face interaction between them. Customers rely on the e-commerce entities and pay for whatever product is displayed on the screen. Once the trust is gone, the sector will lose its customers. Retrieving the trust will require a lot of hard work and dedication. Even many large global e-commerce establishments have failed to survive once their reputation was at stake.

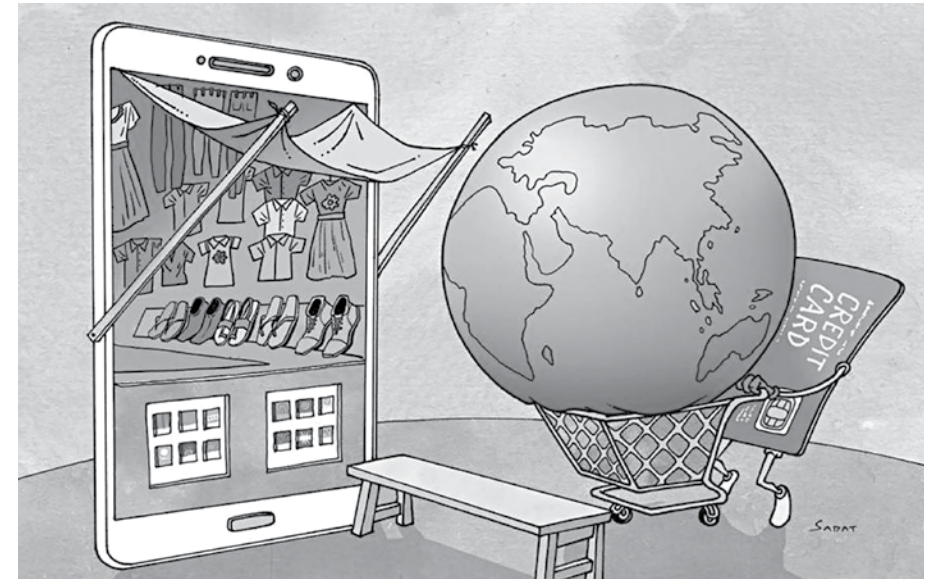
Of course, in our country there is a section of people who wants to thrive using only unfair means. Unfortunately, this number is increasing every day and not just in the e-commerce sector. The financial sector is another example where incidences of even bigger irregularities are unearthed regularly. The number of wilful bank defaulters is increasing. Additionally, dealing with occurrences when people are taking out money from banks and non-bank financial institutions through deceitful ways is also a major challenge for the financial sector. One of the reasons for irregularities with public money is that wrongdoers are rarely punished as they have connections with powerful people. Besides, these new rich with ill-gotten money are adored by society. A section of our society appreciates their wealth, gives them special attention and tries to follow their path in order to earn a luxurious lifestyle just like them. The definition of success to them is to possess wealth by any means and to flaunt the illegal wealth shamelessly.

The case of e-commerce is of course different from other established sectors. This is a new sector in Bangladesh. Regardless, during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the e-commerce sector has flourished significantly. Sales through digital platforms increased by 70 percent in 2020 compared to the previous year, according to the e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh. But the size of the sector is still small. Besides, if one goes by the strict definition of "e-commerce", many businesses will not qualify to be e-commerce entities at all. It is not only about having a license to operate the business. The e-commerce company should also have proper policies about shipping, delivery, returns and refunds. Full disclosure on the product and also on the company about its assets and liabilities is a must. Besides, privacy policy on customer information is also an essential requirement for conducting e-commerce. Since many e-commerce companies do not fulfil these pre-conditions, the customers are being deprived of having value for their money and even being cheated by not receiving either the product or a refund.

The absence of a regulatory framework for the e-commerce sector has helped dishonest people to take the opportunity and commit fraud. Many digital commerce operators do not have license or a Tax Identification Number. Recently, the Ministry of Commerce has launched Digital Commerce Operations Guidelines 2021. The guideline instructs that the maximum number of days for the delivery of products will be five days once an advance payment is made by the customer. There are also details on when a company would hand over the ordered product for delivery and what will be the penalty if products are not delivered on time. It also instructs companies to inform customers about order updates through mobile text messages, emails or telephone calls. In case of failure

to work on e-commerce policies further to remove their limitations. Without a holistic e-commerce framework that ensures highest governance practices, the confidence of consumers cannot be regained easily.

The other requirement is the improvement of digital and physical infrastructure and skills. Though the number of digital commerce operators is increasing fast, the demand for e-commerce is growing faster since the population is large in Bangladesh. The existing infrastructure is not capable of meeting consumer demand. Acceleration of internet access and faster internet speed will be useful for enhancing the services. Besides, small and new e-commerce companies need financial and fiscal incentives. Companies also



to comply with the guidelines, the government can close down the company. Consumers can also lodge complaints with the Consumer Rights Protection Department and relevant courts.

Though experts have pointed out that the guidelines should have more details on consumer rights and business policies for the sector, the commerce minister reassured that this would be amended and improved if needed. In fact, this guideline is a first step towards formal measures by policymakers. If these guidelines are implemented, it will help improve the transparency and accountability of the mushrooming e-commerce operators by a large extent. But policies and guidelines cannot be static, their implementation has to be a dynamic process. With an evolving scenario, policies have to be changed and modified. So, this is a starting point and while applying these policies, the loopholes will become evident. Policymakers should have an open mind

lack adequately skilled human resources. Complying with workers' rights is also an issue in case of e-commerce.

Increasing customer literacy on digital business is also very important. Due to lack of awareness, customers fall prey to the businesses' tricks which ultimately leave them in distress. Consumer rights associations and media can help such consumers by providing regular information on which companies they should be careful of and how to protect themselves from being cheated.

Finally, we will certainly see further acceleration of digital commerce in the future. It will have impact on governments, industries and consumers as it will unleash new ways of conducting business and providing services. How much we can benefit from this transformation will depend on how we prepare ourselves for its challenges.

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

Involve men in caregiving to achieve gender equality



LAILA KHONDKAR

DURING the Covid-19 lockdowns, men have been performing more care work than any other time in recent history. This was confirmed through surveys with women and men in 47 countries across various regions, and highlighted in the fourth "State of the World's Fathers" report (launched on June 15, 2021). The report was produced by Promundo, co-coordinator of MenCare: A Global Fatherhood Campaign (active in over 55 countries) and includes data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey, the ILO, UNICEF, and UN Women.

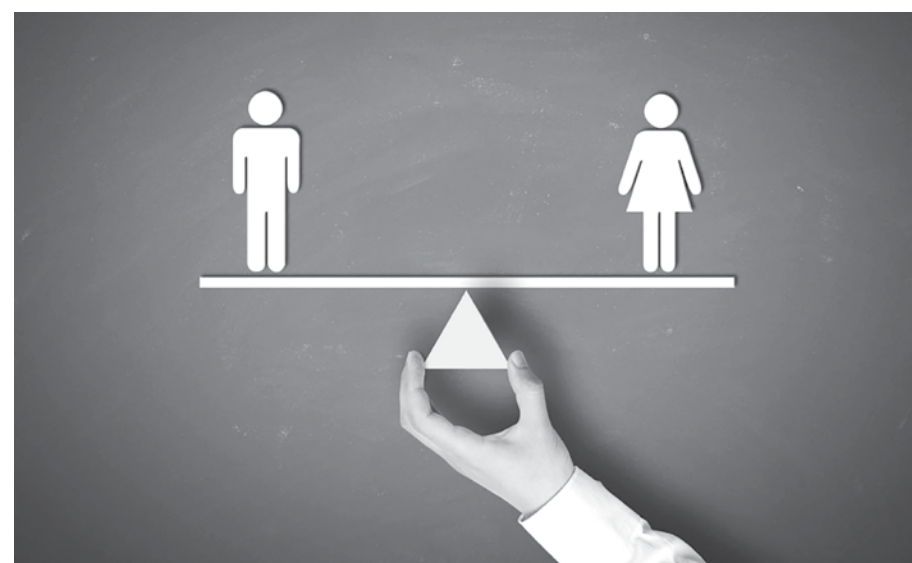
According to the report, despite men's increased participation at home during the global pandemic, the world is at least 92 years away from achieving equality in unpaid care work between men and women. Moreover, no country in the world has achieved equality in unpaid care, and no country has a policy or target date to achieve it.

Societies will not be able to function if women stop performing caregiving responsibilities. Still, this work is seriously undervalued. Even when many women perform all the responsibilities of domestic life—raising children, taking care of sick family members—there is a perception that they are not "working"! Don't all of us know some Bangladeshi woman who could not enter the job market or had to leave their job after getting married and having children? Many women cannot pursue higher education or professional development opportunities due to their role as caregivers, which means they are not able to realise their full potential.

When fathers take on their fair share of unpaid care work, it can alter the nature of the relationships between men and women and children. Both fathers and mothers will have more time for their children, women are released from some

of their "double burden", and fathers get to experience the joys, satisfactions, and stresses of caring for their children. Performing the role of caregiver also offers men the opportunity to begin to break free from the narrow concepts of manhood and fatherhood, which provides their sons and daughters with positive role models and higher hopes for the future. In addition, fathers with close connections to their children live longer,

labour force participation or income generation is viewed as men's work. This has been reinforced by centuries of policies, workplace norms, the media, and educational curricula. This has not changed even when women are increasingly part of the paid labour force. Due to these inequitable norms and power dynamics, governments and families prioritise men's incomes and paid work at the expense of women's



have fewer health problems, and are more productive and generally happier. Men's equitable participation in caregiving bring benefits to men themselves, to their partners, their children, and to societies.

The Helping Dads Care data featured in the "State of the World's Fathers" 2019 report showed that on average, across seven middle- and higher-income countries, 85 percent of men said they would "do whatever it takes to be very involved" in the early stages of caring for a newborn or adopted child.

Why is it not possible for men to take care of their children and participate fully in domestic work? Economics and economic policies value financial growth and profit over equality and undermine the importance of care work. Unpaid care work is mostly known as women's and girls' responsibility and

participation in the labour force and undermine all forms of care work.

Well-designed leave policies for fathers have the potential to transform gender relations and benefit all concerned. A study from Sweden showed that every month that fathers took paternity leave increased the mother's income by 6.7 percent, as measured four years later, which was more than she lost by taking parental leave herself.

The recent "State of the World's Fathers" report provides seven recommendations—(1) Put in place national care policies and campaigns that recognise, reduce, and redistribute care work equally between men and women; (2) Provide equal, job-protected, fully paid parental leave for all parents as a national policy; (3) Design and expand social protection programmes

to redistribute care equally between women and men; (4) Transform health sector institutions to promote fathers' involvement from the prenatal period through birth and childhood and men's involvement as caregivers; (5) Promote an ethic of male care in schools, media, and other key institutions in which social norms are created and reinforced; (6) Change workplace conditions, culture, and policies to support workers' caregiving and mandate those changes in national legislation; and (7) Hold male political leaders accountable for their support of care policies, while advocating for women's equality in political leadership.

Even though the survey did not include data from Bangladesh, the recommendations of the report are relevant for the country. We must address the current lack of men's and boys' equitable participation in caregiving. The Bangladesh government should adopt and implement policies that specifically encourage and support fathers' involvement in early childhood development, care, and education. Employers will have to ensure that workplace policies enable both men and women to perform their caregiving responsibilities. Policy decisions will have to be supported by campaigns to bring changes in social attitudes. The media can play an important role in this regard by not disseminating gender stereotypes, promoting messages/images that show both men and women in caregiving roles, and celebrating women's academic and professional achievements. Parents should raise boys and girls equally so that they do not feel confined by societal expectations, and can grow up to realise their full potential.

Covid-19 has given us an opportunity to reimagine a more caring, gender equitable, environmentally sustainable, liveable, and economically just world. Let us be brave and achieve true gender equality by revolutionising the lives of men and boys, which includes their full participation in domestic life.

Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

100 years of Dhaka University

Achievements of the past and challenges of the future

FAKHRUL ISLAM

DHAKA University was born out of a struggle by the people of Bengal for asserting their regional identity. It reached its apotheosis through its leading role in the struggle for Bangladesh's nationhood. The year 2021 is significant for both Bangladesh and the University of Dhaka as both the entities will turn 50 and 100, respectively.

The proud history of Dhaka University's various political movements is intertwined with the history of opposing oppressors. The role of the university in 1952, 1969, 1971 and 1990 are examples of that. During these years, Dhaka University rarely departed from its commitment to scholastic standards, where advancement remained merit based. But now, most of its student bodies are dancing to the tune of the ruling party.

We have to understand that a university is a place of pursuing academic excellence. It is a place that is supposed to create new knowledge, store that knowledge and disseminate it. As proud students of the country's premier university, its students cannot stay insulated from the national agenda or politics, but over-politicisation has surely created many impediments when it comes to nurturing talent. It is now a common phenomenon for most university students to become obsessed with government administrative jobs. They now start studying for the BCS and other competitive exams from their university years. This is because the incentives of government service have increased manifold in the last few decades. In earlier years, students used to aim for academic excellence and try to excel in their respective subjects. The number of academic disciplines has increased, but the question remains whether their curricula have been updated.

The fact is that students of DU are not getting familiarised with the most up-to-date knowledge. Most employers in the competitive private sector are saying that they are not getting DU graduates with appropriate skills for the job market. A large chunk of people from the surrounding countries of Bangladesh are now capturing lucrative positions in Bangladesh's private sector.

The result is pretty evident, as we have seen Dhaka University rank very poorly in various World University rankings: i.e., QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) World University Ranking, THE (Times Higher Education) Ranking, CWUR (Centre for World University Ranking). In economics, there is a theory called Gresham's Law. It states that "bad money drives out the good money". Similarly, it means, if a system allows something bad to grow, then eventually it will drive out the good from the system. Dhaka University is suffering from something very much like that. But the university still produces a number of meritorious students—although the university



A university is a place of pursuing academic excellence. It is a place that is supposed to create new knowledge, store that knowledge and disseminate it.

PHOTO: STAR

itself perhaps no longer playing a big role in that.

Dhaka University—once an embodiment of Bangladesh's dream—a hundred years after its emergence is a mere shadow of its glorious past. If we look at the history of Dhaka University, we will notice that every few years it produces at least a few teachers of international calibre. Even today, there are very good scholars who are coming out from DU and publishing in the best journals and university presses and taking part in state of the art research. Of course, teachers could do better in terms of publishing their work internationally. And a committee should immediately be set up to find out why the more qualified teachers from DU are currently underperforming.

Certainly, many Dhaka University students are still in high demand. IBA graduates are doing exceptionally well both in our country and abroad. Many students from English, Economics, Sociology, Microbiology, Molecular Biology and Genetic Engineering departments are also doing fairly well. Students from various departments of the biosciences, the applied sciences and pharmacy faculties are also working both at home and abroad. So, there are quite a lot of success stories as far as employment goes.

Dhaka University's most significant contribution in the last 50 years or so has been to accept students who cannot afford to pay even a fraction of the tuition fees charged by private universities. Dhaka University

and the other public universities are doing a fantastic work in educating people who would otherwise not have been able to pursue higher studies. Many of these students go on to have successful careers and hold high-level positions. People who criticise Dhaka University most often ignore this point. However, there are valid arguments for tuition fees to be raised slowly over time and marginally. But what we have seen in the past is that every time the tuition fee is raised, the move tends to attract the wrath of the students, resulting in the administration often having to withdraw their decision to raise fees.

People have high expectations from Dhaka University, and rightly so. It has always strove to provide the best possible service to the country. It has also played an important role at key junctures of the country's history. But it must continue to do so and not compromise as far as quality is concerned. At the end of the day, quantity without quality is a sure prescription for disaster.

Nevertheless, we cannot simply dwell on the past. DU has come a long way in the last 100 years, but much more needs to be done if it is to live up to its reputation as "the Oxford of the East". The university has to evaluate its own performance on a regular basis and make changes when and as they become necessary in order to stay on top and become a much better university in the future.

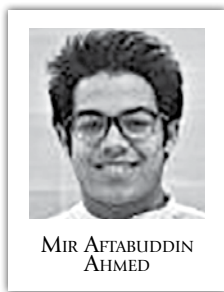
With the Fourth Industrial Revolution right around the corner, it is time for DU to once again play a pivotal role in leading the country when it comes to state of the art technologies and subject areas. In order to achieve vision 2041, we have no other option but to adopt the latest technologies that are out there, and DU must play a key role in leading the country in that department.

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As proud students of the country's premier university, its students cannot stay insulated from the national agenda or politics, but over-politicisation has surely created many impediments when it comes to nurturing talent.

Storytelling through food

Kishwar's rendezvous with Bengali cuisine



MIR AFTABUDDIN AHMED

BENGALI cuisine in its most primitive form is perhaps a paradoxical phenomenon worthy of deeper socio-cultural research. On one end, our food traditions have inherent roots ensuing

from everyday social activities such as the *neighborhood adda*—defined through punchy, subtle, tangy and spicy finger foods that complement that elusive cup of *chai*. On the other end of the spectrum, the *khandani* rich textures present across Mughal food represents the yesteryears of an elite class of individuals and their historical ties with *Nawabi* rule. The kind of food we eat often depicts the tale of the people who cook and consume it, in the case of Bengalis, it comprises of a history of survival, subsistence and simply buckling up and getting on with it—especially for the likes of labourers, farmers, fishermen or street vendors, versus another parallel history of the privileged *Zamindars*, landowners or a minority of educated professionals of a very different era. So how important is reflecting on this history when it comes to discussing our cuisine? The answer is pretty obvious—well of course it is important!

The convergence of these two strands of history has resulted in the development of a niche combination of flavour, spice, subtlety and richness—creating a unique but highly undervalued Bengali cuisine. Aficionados of different cuisines attest to this notion. Mobilising a conversation around this cuisine and its subsequent promotion by Bangladeshi diasporas internationally, is therefore a necessary step needed to truly pay testament to the idea of "Brand Bangladesh". MasterChef Australia finalist Kishwar Chowdhury has donned the role of doing exactly that—and for this, she deserves nothing but our unwavering gratitude. Some have argued across social media that the non-resident Ms Chowdhury tried to leverage

patriotism and emotion to drive her food to the very top of the ladder—well, I say good for her. As a society, are we seriously going to criticise a lady for tapping into the one sentiment that we as Bengalis have a history of misusing? But there is a bigger tale here—each of the dishes Ms Chowdhury presented in coherence with her personality, represented an itemised tale of the holistic Bangladesh story. And for specifically making this effort to be a narrator through her food, she won

that it was. Whether it be *Paanta Bhaat* or *Paan*, these are items which one is likely to see (albeit in a more rustic form) across villages and households that are often struggling to make ends meet—by giving power to the value that such individuals bring to the Bengali story, she presented these dishes in what is surely one of the most coveted culinary competitions in the world. Her other dishes such as *Jao Bhaat* and Mutton *Rezala* brought to light crucial strands

of our cuisine, and in fact the foundations of all things that make us Bangladeshi, we need to reconcile ourselves with the indigenous populations of our country and pay tributes to their history. Their story is often untold and shamelessly sidelined—both by the state and citizens alike. Kishwar's *Rangamati Barramundi Curry* was an informed chef's homage to the capital of the Bangladeshi Hill tracks and home to the indigenous people of Bangladesh. How wonderful it was to see netizens have a genuine conversation in reaction to this dish, regarding the culture of indigenous groups in the country and what they bring to our story?

Residing in Canada I have often tried to seek inspiration from Bangladeshi immigrants who are making a credible impact and truly representing Brand Bangladesh here—there is little doubt that expats owe an immense gratitude to their motherland. And yes, when I see pockets of restaurants opening up in Toronto such as "Gharo" or "ADDA Bengali Kitchen & Catering" and proudly labelling themselves as promoting Bangladeshi food, I perhaps feel the same sense of pride which the owners and chefs do—but in more ways than one, a deeper sense of comfort perhaps. Comfort in knowing that if I miss home cooked food, I can always run over and feel at home. Comfort in knowing that if I want to give my non-Bangladeshi friends a glimpse of our local delicacies, I can take them there. For decades, Bangladeshi expats have been restaurateurs in immigrant hubs such as London, New York and Toronto—yet there was a seeming sense of discomfort in labelling their food as Bangladeshi.

We preferred to market our restaurants as Indian or Pakistani—in a way this was perhaps a manifestation of how we undervalued ourselves as a society or a reflection of the hesitancy to respect our achievements. Or perhaps, it was simply a way to avoid explaining to the average person where and what Bangladesh is. Today, our country can and should be proud of where it is—and I think it gives leverage to our citizens to be bolder and brighter in wearing that badge of pride more adeptly. Do not get

me wrong, our governments of the past and the present have been quick to jump on the development bandwagon and take credit for the modern image of Bangladesh as a thriving middle-income economy. Nevertheless, they forget to shine appropriate light on the daily achievements of regular citizens and expats alike—the true carriers of the story of Bangladesh. What Kishwar Chowdhury has done and the traction she has received during her time at MasterChef Australia, does in my opinion, provide a segue for us as a society to celebrate the successes of civic power and regular citizens—and in turn, inspire others, and importantly mothers and home cooks, to take ownership of playing their role in building Brand Bangladesh investing in their skills.

The *New York Times* carried a report way back in 2000 titled "The Star of Bangladesh; In New York, Don't Take Indian Food Too Literally"—indicating that around 85 to 90 percent of Indian restaurants in New York were in fact Bangladeshi. More recently in 2019, the BBC ran several reports stating that 87 percent of Indian restaurants in the UK were run and owned by British-Bangladeshis. So, when it comes to entrepreneurship and the culinary arts, Bangladeshi expats have invested time, money and effort in different communities across the aisle. With Kishwar Chowdhury's success, one hopes that Bengali cuisine gets further limelight internationally and is depicted as a vessel for telling the story of a history of a people, whose roots are as diverse as is their food. Soft power via civic power is often more impactful than political power—and in the Golden Jubilee year of our independence, Kishwar Chowdhury may just have nudged our cuisine in a direction where it can cumulatively play the role of being a platform to promote Bangladesh globally, while staying true to our roots. We wish her the best and hope to read her cookbook soon! You do not have to be in Bangladesh to be an ambassador of Bangladesh—and this principle I take to heart deeply. And I hope Kishwar does too.

Mir Aftabuddin Ahmed is Toronto-based banking professional and a contributor for *The Daily Star*. Email: aftab.ahmed@alum.utoronto.ca



The kind of food we eat often depicts the tale of the people who cook and consume it, in the case of Bengalis, it comprises of a history of survival, subsistence and simply buckling up and getting on with it.

my heart.

The *Panta Bhaat* and *Aloo Bharta* dish was bound to hit the core of our sentiments—such a simple yet heartwarming representation of the very fundamentals of Bengali cuisine! The story behind the history of this dish—that of poverty, struggle, oppression and famine is one that needs to be expressed. Kishwar's take on *Mishi Paan* on the other hand, resulted in the judges deeming it her *love letter to Bangladesh*—and

in examining the thesis of our cuisine—and she made it a point to elaborate on the story behind each item to the judges, for which she deserves applause.

There was one dish in particular however which truly blew me away. In our collective quest to celebrate the independence struggle of 1971 and the spirit of freedom, we often fail to reminisce, recollect and reflect on the fragile journey of the ethnic populations of our country. To comprehend the roots of our

QUOTABLE Quote



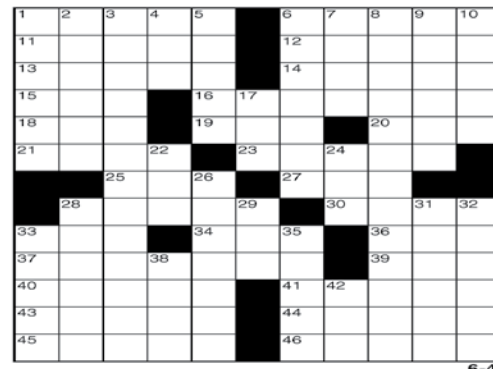
ZOHRA SEHGAL
(27 April 1912 -10 July 2014)
Indian actress

Life becomes drudgery if you don't have a sense of humour. A good sense of humour makes you see the funny side of a tragedy.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| ACROSS | 30 Leafy vegetable | 6 County separators |
| 1 TV grouch | 33 Clinic cost | 7 Phone button letters |
| 6 Titus Welliver series | 34 Joplin piece | 8 Baseball position |
| 11 Flower girl, often short | 36 Boston team, for 37 Blow up | 9 Friday finder |
| 12 Met work | 39 Ram's mate | 10 Reviled |
| 13 "John Brown's Body" poet | 40 Crest | 17 Work unit |
| 14 Do further editing work | 41 Oven feature | 22 Family |
| 15 Gallery fill | 43 Staggering | 24 Penguin's cuisine |
| 16 Token of love | 44 Defeatist's words | 26 OPEC units |
| 18 Rage | 45 Parliament members | 28 "Raging Bull" star |
| 19 Smelter supply | 46 Looks after | 29 Crone |
| 20 Signal of approval | | 31 Cheap |
| 21 Escapade | DOWN | 32 Brings to bear |
| 23 A+, for one | 1 Out during trial | 33 Wild |
| 25 Little lie | 2 Rugged range | 35 "Under stand?" |
| 27 Long lunch | 3 Baseball position | 38 Like some cheeses |
| 28 Alice's cat | 4 Top pitcher | 42 Bar rocks |
| | 5 Fashionably dated | |

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



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	P	A	N			C	A	S	T	E
L	I	R	A			M	O	V	E	I
A	C	A	I			E	L	O	P	E
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				G	L	A	S	S	J	A
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BETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
The Hundred
Women's
Trent Rockets vs
Northern Superchargers

Live from 8:00 pm
Men's
Trent Rockets vs
Northern Superchargers
Live from 11:30 pm

TEN 2 & SONY SIX
Tokyo 2020 Olympic
Games
Live from 8:30 pm & 3:30
am (Tuesday)



Bangladesh opener Soumya Sarkar whacks one during his 68-run knock in their third and final T20I against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday. PHOTO: TWITTER

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE
193 for 5 in 20 overs
(Marumani 27, Madhevere 54, Chakabva 48, Myers 23, Burl 31 not out, extras 9; Saifuddin 1-50, Shoriful 1-27, Shakib 1-24, Soumya 2-19)

BANGLADESH
194 for 5 in 19.2 overs
(Soumya 68, Shakib 25, Mahmudullah 34, Shamim 31 not out, extras 18; Muzarabani 2-27, Jongwe 2-42)
Result: Bangladesh won by five wickets.
Man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series: Soumya Sarkar



Tigers clinch T20I series to stay perfect

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh maintained a stranglehold over Zimbabwe, getting the perfect finish in the T20I series to ensure that they scooped all three trophies on the tour by chasing their second-highest target, a formidable 194 posted by the hosts in third and final T20I in Harare yesterday.

Left-handed opener Soumya Sarkar struck his second fifty of the series and top-scored with 68 off 49 balls with nine fours and a six as Bangladesh won by five wickets. Young left-hander Shamim Hossain also showed his ability as a finisher once again, remaining unbeaten on a 15-ball 31, having smashed six fours.

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad played a crucial innings of 34 from 28 balls to keep the Tigers in the hunt after losing a few wickets in the middle. The T20I skipper also believed that the series win in Zimbabwe would help the Tigers ahead of a tough upcoming home

assignment against Australia. "The boys showed character, everybody contributed. In the end, Shamim played a crucial knock and all in all it was a good show by the batting unit. When you chase these big totals, you need partnerships to keep the score ticking over, and



at least a boundary every over," Mahmudullah said after the win. "I think Soumya is a useful all-rounder. When I gave him the ball, he got me two wickets and when the team needed him to stand up with the bat, he did it," Riyad said, adding with a laugh: "Looking

forward to the next bubble and the next series." With a win in the T20I series, Bangladesh completed their fine run across the formats, having previously won the lone Test and securing a whitewash in the three-match ODI series.



Earlier, Zimbabwe posted their second-highest total in the shortest format by putting 193 for five on the scoreboard. Openers Tadiwanashe Manumari and Wesseley Madhevere gave the hosts a flying start, adding 63 runs in the first six overs. Marumari was

dismissed on 27 off 20 balls after hitting two sixes and two fours but Madhevere was in terrific touch, striking five consecutive boundaries off pacer Taskin Ahmed to take 20 runs in the fourth over.

The right-hander, who struck his fourth T20I fifty off 31 balls, was eventually dismissed by Shakib Al Hasan after scoring 54 off 36 balls with six fours.

Regis Chakabva then took charge, striking three sixes in an over off left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed which cost 21 runs. Nasum gave away 37 runs from his three overs and remained wicketless on comeback.

Soumya Sarkar provided the breakthrough with the ball in the form of a double-blow, first dismissing Chakabva for 48, which saw Naim Sheikh and Shamim take a brilliant relay catch at the boundary line. Zimbabwean skipper Sikandar Raza was then bowled for a duck as Bangladesh made inroads.

Left-hander Ryan Burl also played a part, remaining unbeaten on a 15-ball 31 while Dion Myers added 23.

BAKI'S PERFORMANCE leaves a lot to be desired

SPORTS REPORTER



American and Chinese shooters have thoroughly amazed everyone with their improved skilful display by grabbing all three medals in the 10m Air Rifle event of Tokyo Olympics. However, Bangladesh's experienced shooter Abdullah Hel Baki failed to live up to the expectations of the shooting fraternity and ended up finishing 41st among 47 shooters at Asaka Shooting Range yesterday.

20-year-old William Shaner of the United States, who played only seven international tournaments at senior level from 2018 to 2021, bagged the gold with an Olympic record score of 251.6 out of 261.6 in the final round. The silver medal was won by 16-year-old Lihao Sheng of China with a score of 250.9 in his first ever international appearance through the Olympics. Haoran Yang of China secured bronze with a score of 229.4 after breaking the Olympic record in qualification round with a score of 630.2 out of 654.

Interestingly, Yang had underperformed in the Rio Olympic Games with a 31st finish among 50 shooters whereas Baki had stood in 25th position with a score of 621.2 but this time the 31-year-old could not match neither the position nor the score of Rio Olympics.

Before leaving the country, Baki had expressed his desire of displaying his own performance by transforming his practice session scores into the competition as he had been scoring in between 625 to 627 and often going beyond 630-mark.

However, the double silver medalist of Commonwealth Games, who already has the vast experience of playing more than 20 international tournaments, broke down once again at the international stage. When it comes to big occasions, his questionable mental strength has been a recurring theme of his career so far.

"Actually I have nothing to say about his performance in Tokyo because he got off to a fine start in every series but failed to carry the momentum in the latter parts and during which he scored below 10 in



almost twice in every series. So, it was not possible to recover from those low scores in the end," coach Golam Shafiqul Shiplu told The Daily Star from Japan.

"I asked Baki about those shots and he had no explanation after having scored well in yesterday's training to make 52.5 and 52.5 in every five shots," Shiplu added.

"I wanted him to replicate his own performance but it didn't happen. Whatever he scored in the training doesn't matter if he can't carry it into the competition and today's performance showed he hasn't improved."



Gold medalist William Shaner of the United States celebrates with silver medalist Sheng Lihao of China and bronze medalist Yang Haoran of China after the 10m Air Rifle events yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

IPL to resume on Sept 19

REUTERS

The remaining matches of the Indian Premier League (IPL), which was suspended in May due to COVID-19, will resume from September 19 in the United Arab Emirates, the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) said on Sunday.

The IPL was suspended on May 4 with 31 matches left to play after several players and backroom staff tested positive for the coronavirus amid a devastating second wave of COVID-19 in India.

The BCCI announced in May that the remaining matches of the popular Twenty20 tournament would be held in the UAE in September and October.

The IPL will resume with the Chennai Super Kings playing the Mumbai Indians on Sept. 19 in Dubai, before the Kolkata Knight Riders face Royal Challengers Bangalore in Abu Dhabi the following day.

Sharjah will host its first game on Sept. 24 when Bangalore face Chennai.

The first qualifier is scheduled for Oct. 10 in Dubai, while the eliminator (Oct. 11) and second qualifier (Oct. 13) will be played in Sharjah.

Dubai will also host the final, which is due to be played on Oct. 15.

The eight-team IPL, with an estimated brand value of \$6.8 billion, is the richest Twenty20 league and attracts many of the best players from around the world to cricket-crazy India.



Austrian Anna Kiesenhofer caused one of the biggest shocks in Olympic road racing history with an audacious solo victory in the women's race as a quartet of Dutch champions paid for an apparent communications meltdown on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

A claimed a as the host rush on a day on Sunday. The saw 18 gold medals up for grabs, including the first ever in skateboarding, one of several new sports introduced in Tokyo as part of an International Olympic Committee drive to attract younger fans. A perfectly scripted final saw Japanese world champion Yuta Horigome strike gold in a tense street competition. The 22-year-old, who grew up just a stone's throw from the Olympic venue, landed three huge tricks in a row to eclipse American favourite Njah Huston, who finished seventh

No matter how many times Olympic athletes are told they should be proud of their silver medals, for many of them, second best can never be good enough. American Chase Kalisz knew he could do better than his silver in the 400m medley at Rio but he had to wait five years for the chance to prove it. On Sunday, he did just that. The 27-year-old took the gold on the opening day of the medal events at the Tokyo Aquatic Centre with a swim of 4:09.42, leading an American one-two with Jay Litherland collecting silver.

Australia won the 4x100 women's freestyle relay Olympic gold for the third time in a row, beating their

own world record and helping take the sting out of a disappointing first day of finals in the pool. The quartet of sisters Bronte and Cate Campbell, Meg Harris and Emma McKeon took 0.36 seconds off their previous best of 3:30.05 set in April 2018, with a world record of 3:29.69. Canada took silver, 3:09 seconds behind the winners while the United States came in third for the bronze medal.

South Korea won a ninth consecutive gold medal in the women's team archery event at the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday, tying the record for the longest gold medal streak in Olympic history.

Singapore was eliminated from the equestrian dressage qualifiers on Sunday after Caroline Chew's horse Tribiani was found to be bleeding from the mouth, bringing an abrupt end to the country's first foray into the sport at the Olympics.

Japan's Naomi Osaka powered through her opening match at the Tokyo Games on Sunday as world number one Ash Barty stumbled out of the tournament after a lacklustre, error-strewn performance.

Japanese judoka Uta Abe triumphed in the women's 52kg category in Tokyo on Sunday, hours before her brother Hifumi took gold in the men's 66kg final, making history as the first siblings to win gold medals on the same day.

TOKYO WINDOW

'It's a dream and it became true'

AGENCIES

Tunisia's Ahmed Hafnaoui was so shocked to see his name in the gold medal position for the 400m freestyle on Sunday he did not believe his eyes but after letting his stunning win at the Tokyo Olympics sink in he said he hoped to have made his family proud.

The 18-year-old, who finished ahead of Australia's Jack McLoughlin and U.S. swimmer Kieran Smith, said he was surprised even to be in the final, where he swam in the outside lane after being the slowest in qualifying.

Michael Phelps hailed Ahmed Hafnaoui for his "unbelievable swim", saying the 18-year-old Tunisian's shock victory was a great example of how swimming at the Tokyo Games is likely to have a series of wide open races.

Hafnaoui was the slowest qualifier but, from lane eight, held off fancied Australian Jack McLoughlin and American Kieran Smith for a huge upset.

"Unbelievable swim. I think he knocked almost five seconds off his pb (personal best), Phelps told reporters in Tokyo. "The difference between



these Olympics and the past, in my opinion, is that every single person in the final has a chance of winning gold - it doesn't matter if you are in lane one, eight or four, everyone is close." "I believe it when I touched the wall ... I was so surprised I didn't accept that," Hafnaoui told a news conference. "I dedicate (the gold) to all my family, my mum, my dad, my sisters, I wish they are proud of me."

His gold medal is only the fifth won by a Tunisian athlete at the Olympics, but their third in swimming.

Letting out a scream when he realised he had won, he pumped his first and pointed at the electronic score board. "I just can't believe it. It's a dream and it became true. It was great. It was my best race ever," he said.

Hafnaoui will race in the 800m freestyle on Tuesday.



France staged a remarkable comeback and got their Olympic campaign back on track as Teji Savanier netted a stoppage-time winner in their 4-3 victory over South Africa. Meanwhile, hosts Japan moved within touching distance of qualifying for the men's soccer knockout stages with a 2-1 win over Mexico while defending champions Brazil were held to a goalless draw by Ivory Coast. Argentina responded to a shock 2-0 loss to Australia in their opener with a 1-0 victory over Egypt.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DEALING WITH PANDEMIC FALLOUT

Over 17 lakh get govt cash support

REJAUl KARIM BYRON and HELEMUL ALAM

The government recently distributed cash support worth Tk 450 crore to around 17.24 lakh day labourers, transport workers, and small traders, as part of its recent announcement of a Tk 3,200 crore relief package for the ultra-poor and destitute. It also increased allocations for OMS in urban areas and for food assistance in rural areas through the district administration offices.

On July 13, the government announced the relief package to provide financial support and food assistance for these segments that were dealt a fresh blow by the latest round of strict lockdown to contain Covid-19 cases.

Finance ministry officials said they have already disbursed Tk 2,500 each to 14.37 lakh day labourers, 2.35 lakh transport workers, around 50,000 small traders, and 1,603 transport workers two days before Eid.

As the country entered another two weeks of strict lockdown from July 23, the latest package will provide some relief to the poor who were hit the hardest by the pandemic, they said.

Earlier in April, the government provided cash assistance to nearly 35 lakh poor families facing income losses and hardship amid the nationwide lockdown. This was the second time these families received this cash support of Tk 2,500 after one transfer last year. The list of beneficiaries was initially around 50 lakh but was whittled down to 35

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Hundreds of people wait for transport near Jatrabari Bus Terminal in the capital. Yesterday was the first weekday during this spell of lockdown enforced after Eid holidays to stem the spread of Covid-19. There were more people and vehicles on the street than the previous two days.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

LOCKDOWN: 3RD DAY

Dhaka streets see more cars and crowds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public and vehicular movement increased on the streets of Dhaka and elsewhere yesterday on the first weekday after the Eid-ul-Azha holidays and the third day of the countrywide lockdown.

Banks, stock exchange and several emergency services reopened yesterday amid the 14-day strict lockdown.

Many people went to offices on rickshaws, motorbikes and private cars, while many walked long distances to reach their destinations.

In the capital, this correspondent visited Farmgate, Gabtoli, Mirpur, Shahbagh, Panthapath, Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Ring Road, Adabor and Dhanmondi and found that the number of pedestrians, rickshaws and private cars increased on the roads compared to the first two days of the lockdown.

"People are giving various excuses for being out.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

COLLAGE STUDENT'S DEATH

We're concerned and outraged

Say 51 eminent citizens about Bashundhara MD being cleared of charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-one eminent personalities yesterday expressed resentment and concern over the exemption of Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir from the charges of abetting the death of college student by suicide in a Gulshan flat in April.

The distinguished personalities in a joint statement demanded re-investigation into the case.

"Recently... Bashundhara Group's accused Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir was acquitted and the police submitted a final report to the court. We express our concern and outrage at this," reads the statement.

"We do not have any information that police took him to a police station for interrogation, let alone arresting him after filing of the case," it adds.

On the contrary, it seemed that the obstruction of a citizen's gathering seeking justice, and the dissemination of misleading information about the victim,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Dhaka residents asked to evacuate



Bangladesh postage stamps being shown to newsmen by Hossain Ali, chief of Bangladesh mission in Kolkata, on July 26, 1971.

JULY 26, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

GUERRILLAS ASK PEOPLE TO FLEE DHAKA

Handbills prepared by Bangalee guerrillas were distributed in Dhaka asking the population to begin evacuation of the city in preparation for a campaign against the Pakistan Army, reported The New York Times.

The handbills appeared in the Moghbazar neighbourhood of the city. The warning, signed by the Mukti Bahini, advised residents to move out by 6:00pm.

The public was also warned that traffic, including taxis and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

Suspended for class-IV to -XII

2021 SSC, HSC examinees have to do it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities have suspended all assignment activities for students from grade VI to grade IX and candidates of SSC and HSC of 2022.

As the government imposed stricter lockdown to curb further spread of coronavirus, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) issued separate circulars regarding this, said DSHE Director Belal Hossain yesterday.

In line with the restrictions announced by the Cabinet Division, the weekly assignments for students would remain suspended until further notice, read a circular.

The circular also asked regional deputy directors, district education officers, upazila- and thana-level education officers and headmasters to take necessary measures.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Ancient 'sunken city' discovered in Egypt



CNN ONLINE

Divers have discovered rare remains of a military vessel in the ancient sunken city of Thonis-Heracleion -- once Egypt's largest port on the Mediterranean -- and a funerary complex illustrating the presence of Greek merchants.

The city, which controlled the entrance to Egypt at the mouth of a western branch of the Nile, dominated the area for centuries before the foundation of Alexandria nearby by Alexander the Great in 331 BC.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

BANSHKHALI MAYHEM

Power plant tells HC it paid families of deceased

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SS Power I Ltd, a concern of S Alam Group, at Banshkhali in Chattogram, has provided Tk 5 lakh to each of the families of the seven victims killed in police firing on April 17 this year.

The company informed the HC bench led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim of this through submitting an affidavit a few weeks back, its lawyer Mohammad Arshadur Rouf told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING JULY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-17
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-57 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PEGASUS SPYWARE

CPM seeks SC-monitored SIT probe in India

NDTV ONLINE

Snooping is against the fundamental rights of citizens and runs foul of the privacy judgment, the CPM said, seeking immediate Supreme Court-monitored probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into the Israeli-made Pegasus spyware after reports of its use in India emerged this week.

More than 300 phone numbers in India appeared on the list as potential targets of Israeli spyware Pegasus, which is sold only to governments.

Evidence of attempted hacking has been found on the phones of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, poll strategist Prashant Kishor, two sitting union ministers, a former election commissioner, family members of Mehbooba Mufti, Delhi-based Kashmiri journalists, among others.

The report into the spying scandal is based on a leaked database accessed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Relatives of Abul Hossain are in tears as his body is being put into an ambulance in front of the Covid unit of DMCH yesterday. The 48-year-old Covid patient was admitted to the hospital on Eid day with chest pains and breathing difficulties.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Indonesia readies more ICUs

Extends Covid curbs by a week; big protests mark global anger at virus restrictions

AGENCIES

Indonesia is preparing more intensive care units after logging several days of record-high Covid-19 deaths last week, while President Joko Widodo yesterday announced an extension of restrictions by a week to August 2 to try to curb infections.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

আমরা শোকাহত

শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা আপন করছি



হাসেম ফুডস লিমিটেডের রূপগঞ্জ কারখানায় অগ্নি দুর্ঘটনায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত অধিকাংশ পরিবারকে ইতোমধ্যে আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ প্রদান করা হয়েছে।

আর্থিক ক্ষতিপূরণ এখনো পায়নি এমন পরিবারের সদস্যদের নিম্নোক্ত নম্বরে যোগাযোগের জন্য বিনীত ভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছেঃ

৩ ০১৭১১২৯৮৯১৮

হাসেম ফুডস লিমিটেড