

COVID SUCCESS STORY
WITH DONATIONS,
BHUTAN VACCINATES
85% OF ITS POPULATION
SEE PAGE 6

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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"The Amnesty International's statement on the Digital Security Act in Bangladesh is motivated."
INFORMATION MINISTER HASAN MAHMUD

"Our role in Iraq will be ... to train, to assist, to help (Iraqi forces) and to deal with ISIS as it arises..."
JOE BIDEN ON ENDING US COMBAT MISSION IN IRAQ

"The security situation in Afghanistan remains deeply challenging, and requires a negotiated settlement."
NATO CHIEF JENS STOLTENBERG URGES 'NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT' IN AFGHANISTAN

Lockdown to get stricter

May also be extended; govt won't allow factories to run

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The government has turned down the plea from businesspeople, including garment manufacturers, for letting them resume operation of factories, fearing a further surge in Covid deaths and infections.

Moreover, it has decided to make stricter the ongoing lockdown till August 5 to stem the transmission of the virus that has left the health sector in disarray, said sources.

A primary decision has also been made to extend the lockdown beyond August 5 if Covid infections continue to surge.

If the infection rate starts to decline, the government will relax the restrictions for some sectors, the sources added.

The decisions came at an inter-ministerial meeting, chaired by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, at the Cabinet Division yesterday.

The government enforced the "strict" lockdown for 14 days from July 1. It, however, relaxed the lockdown for eight days for the Eid celebrations. The strict restrictions were again put in place on July 23 for two weeks to curb deaths and infections.

The high-level meeting was held at a time when the country logged the highest deaths. Yesterday, 258 deaths and 14,925

- Govt to act tough to enforce lockdown
- Union level vaccination to begin on Aug 7
- NID card holders to get vaccine without registration
- 100% mask wearing to be ensured

new infections were recorded.

The death toll was 247 on Monday when a record 15,192 virus cases were logged.

"The ongoing lockdown will continue till August 5. Though businesspeople and others have requested [to let them resume operation of factories], we could not accept it," Asaduzzaman told journalists after the meeting.

According to meeting sources, when the issue of reopening garment factories was raised, it was argued that a good number of people will rush to Dhaka which will further worsen the situation.

"The government doesn't want to take such a risk," said an official who attended the meeting.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



With the 14-day lockdown in force since Friday, more and more vehicles are appearing on city streets every day defying the restrictions. Many people are still returning to the capital after celebrating Eid outside Dhaka. The photo was taken on New Airport Road in front of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'No mercy for any misdeed'

PM warns civil servants



UNB, Dhaka

Issuing a stern warning to errant public servants, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no irregularities in their jobs would be tolerated.

"As you get rewarded for your good job, there is no mercy for any misdeed. You'll also have to face tough punishments for that [misdeed]," she said.

Hasina was addressing a programme marking the inauguration of the National Public Service Day and distribution of Public Administration Award at the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Another day, another Covid deaths record

Country logs highest daily tests, more than 50k

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid-19 situation continues to get grimmer as officials yesterday reported 258 deaths, shattering the previous day's record of 247 deaths.

In such a situation, physicians at hospitals, burdened with coronavirus patients, said ensuring a "community-based protocol" could ease the pressure off those hospitals to some extent.

"Increasing the hospitals' capacity is not a solution during such a public health crisis. The national Covid-19 treatment protocol should be amended by focusing on the community-based treatment strategy and community surveillance," Forhad Uddin Hasan Chowdhury Maruf, medicine and infectious disease specialist at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said if Covid-19 patients with mild and moderate symptoms could be treated at community clinics or under similar arrangements, tertiary hospitals could get some relief.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported a positivity rate of 28.82 percent after testing 52,478 samples in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday. It was the highest number of tests in a day.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

- Munshiganj district sees the highest positivity rate of 54%, Gazipur 53%
- Shariatpur, Rajbari, Narsingdi, Manikganj, Faridpur 30% and above
- Sylhet division's average positivity rate 40%, Barishal division 37%

Dengue cases keep rising

Mobile courts punish owners of Aedes breeding sites

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 143 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, the highest in a single day this year.

Meanwhile, the two city corporations in the capital operated mobile courts and fined Tk 7.47 lakh as they found Aedes mosquito larvae at different properties.

Owners of multiple under-construction buildings and markets, including a ward councillor, were fined as the courts found Aedes mosquito larvae at their properties.

Mobile courts in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) fined Tk 4.41 lakh and filed 15 cases against house owners for getting Aedes mosquito larvae on their first day of 10-day combing operation.

A mobile court of the DNCC fined Tk 1 lakh to an under-construction shopping centre at Rupnagar as they found Aedes mosquito larvae.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Landslides kill 7 in Cox's Bazar

Five of them Rohingyas

STAR REPORT

At least seven people, including five Rohingyas, died in landslides triggered by heavy rains in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The landslides hit blocks G-37 and 38 of the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya upazila at 10:00am.

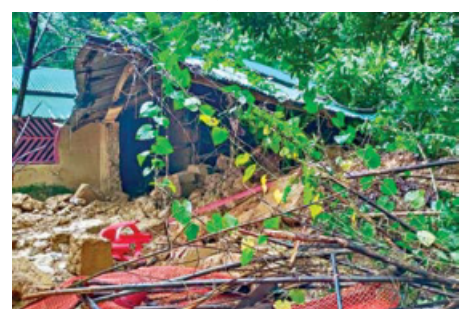
The dead were identified as Dilbahar, 42, and her son Shaiful Alam, 9, of block G-37, and Dilbahar, 25, Abdur Rahman, 25, and Ayesha Siddika, one-year old, of block G-38.

Shamsud Douza Nayan, additional commissioner of Cox's Bazar's Relief, Rehabilitation, Repatriation Commission (RRRC), told The Daily Star heavy rain caused the landslides in blocks G-37 and G-38 of camps 10 and 18, killing five people. One infant of camp-18, who could not be identified till the filing of this report, died due to floods caused by rain.

Apart from the deaths in the camps, two locals died in landslides at Moheshkhali and Teknaf upazilas.

Mahmudul Hasan, sub-inspector of Huyaikong police outpost under Teknaf police station, told The Daily Star that a local named Rakim Ali, 45, died when his makeshift home on a hill slope in Teknaf's Monirghona was devoured in a landslide at 11:00am yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Another O2 train to arrive soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another Oxygen Express train of Indian Railways has embarked on its journey to Bangladesh carrying 200 tonnes of oxygen to help the country deal with potential shortfall amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The train carrying Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) in 10 containers departed for Bangladesh from Tatanagar in India around 9:50am (local time) yesterday, according to a press release of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

This consignment will augment LMO reserves in Bangladesh.

With this, India has reaffirmed its commitment to continue to support Bangladesh in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Oxygen Express is a special train service in India that delivers supplies of oxygen.

Bangladesh on Sunday received the first consignment of 200 tonnes LMO from India by rail.



The mother and sisters cry beside the body of Rejubana, 25, in an ambulance as it leaves Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Rejubana, a resident of Old Dhaka's Satrawja, died of novel coronavirus at the hospital after undergoing treatment there for about a week.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EXPAT RETURNEES Cash assistance, counsel for them

REJAUIL KARIM BYRON and MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

The government is going to give Tk 13,500 and career counselling to 200,000 migrant workers who returned home amid the pandemic.

The amount will be handed in one go while the counselling will help them to find employment or to become an entrepreneur.

Under the new project, 23,500 selected skilled workers will be given certificates by reputed institutions so that they can have more opportunities at home and abroad.

"We will open offices in 30 districts and recruit consultants in collaboration with the World Bank. From these offices, we shall scrutinise the details about the workers and identify the ones eligible for the benefits," said A Khaleque Mullah, joint secretary (planning) at the expatriates' welfare ministry.

Migrant workers from all over the country can avail the benefits from those offices and services, he added.

"We will provide social, psychological and financial counselling to the workers. Sometimes, our workers go through traumatic experiences abroad. In these cases, they may need counselling. And some workers may need loans or large amounts of financial assistance after returning home. We can connect them to the places where they can get the loans or other assistances."

The new project will cost an estimated Tk 427 crore, of which the World Bank will provide Tk 425 crore and the government will provide the rest, according to project documents. A database of the workers who returned home amid the pandemic will also be developed under the project.

A proposal for the project will be placed today in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for final approval.

If approved, the Wage Earners Welfare Board of the ministry will implement the project from 2021-2023.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Uncertainty

FROM PAGE 3

and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lytton, during a hearing of a suomuto (voluntary) rule on November 12, 2019, formed the probe committee led by Dhaka District Judge Md Helal Chowdhury.

The committee was asked to identify the persons responsible for outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever and chikungunya in Dhaka.

The bench ordered the probe body to submit the inquiry report before it.

On March 10 last year, the judicial probe committee submitted the report to the HC bench through Deputy Attorney General Amit Dasgupta.

In the report, the committee said, "Based on experts' opinions and analysis of other information, it appears that Dhaka north and south city corporations were partially negligent over the dengue outbreak in 2019, but they cannot be held fully responsible for it.

Besides, nobody is solely responsible for the surge in dengue cases, it said.

The committee talked to experts and recommended that an integrated initiative was needed to prevent the spread of dengue and chikungunya.

Though it is the duty of city corporations to fight mosquitoes, it is not possible for them to do so alone; it has to be done in a coordinated way, the probe body said, suggesting taking up short-, mid- and long-term plans.

Contacted, DAG Amit Dasgupta told The Daily Star the report has been sent to the section concerned of the HC after the bench led by Justice Tariq ul Hakim was reconstituted following his promotion to the Appellate Division.

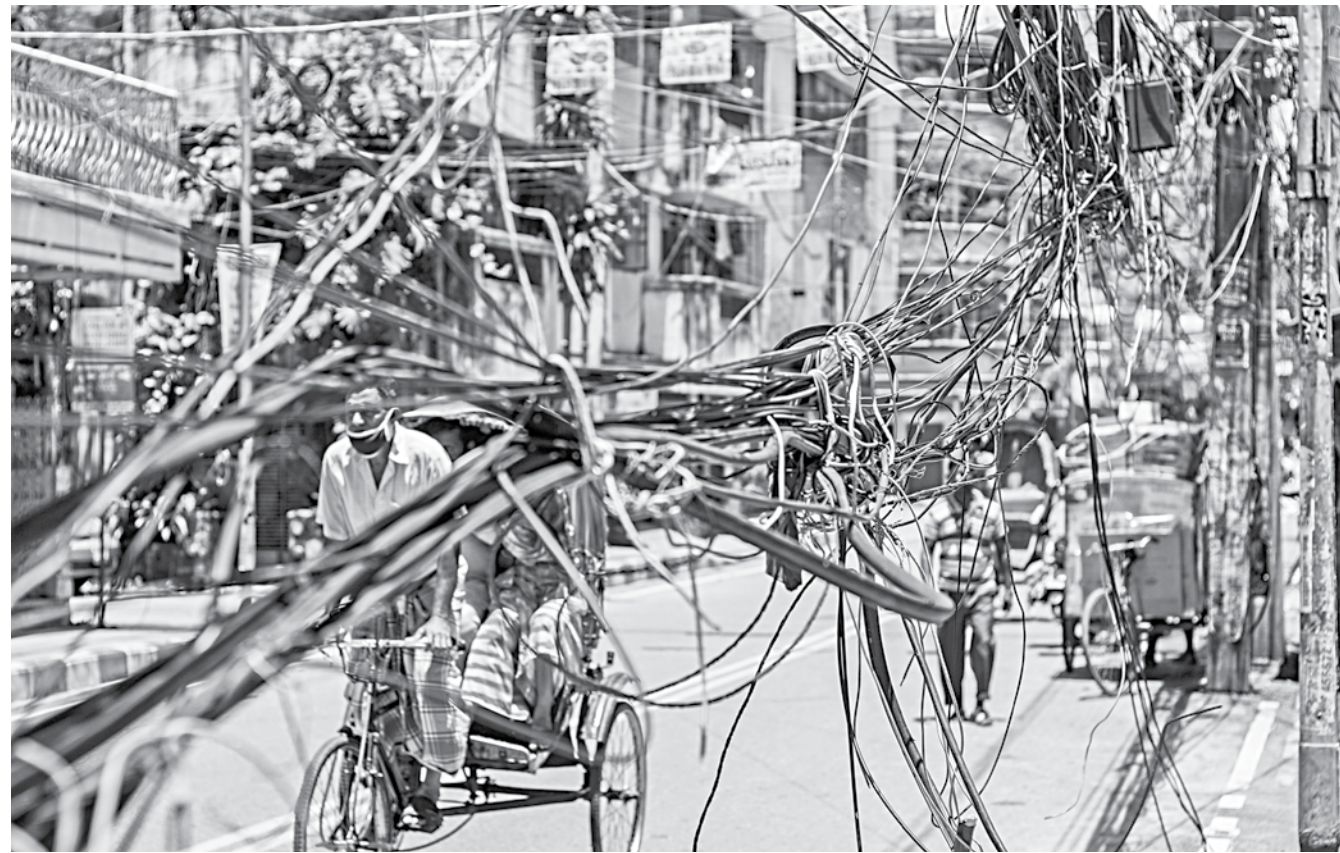
"Annual vacations of the court and closure of its functions due to the ongoing pandemic are delaying the hearing and the subsequent order on this matter," he said.

He said the settlement of the matter became uncertain as there is no petitioner or party of the case (suomuto rule).

If the state places the matter before the chief justice for assigning an HC bench, then it might be settled otherwise it will remain uncertain, he added.

When asked whether his office will take any initiative for the HC hearing and disposal of the suomuto rule, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star on July 27 that he does not know anything about the issue and he cannot make any comment.

"I have just heard from you about the High Court's suomuto rule over the dengue menace in 2019. I have to know the details and then I will take necessary steps," he added.



Cables dangling precariously between the utility poles have become a common sight in the capital. These webs of wires not just pose serious danger, but also remain an eyesore. The photo was taken from Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SC stays

FROM PAGE 3

officer of the case, brought him to his chamber in this connection.

After recording the statement, the magistrate sent Azam Khan to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

Azam reportedly told the magistrate that he along with some brokers used to lure girls, aged between 18 and 20, promising them lucrative jobs in Dubai. He said they offered the girls the trip to Dubai for free

and Tk 20,000 to 30,000 as advance. The brokers would also promise jobs paying up to Tk 50,000 per month and, Azam managed tourist visas for the girls and send them to Dubai, he added.

When they reached Dubai, the girls were first given jobs as receptionists or waitresses at three- or four-star hotels. Later, they were forced to work at dance clubs and then turned into sex workers. The girls were tortured with electric shocks if they refused

to do so, he told the magistrate.

Another accused Alamin Hossain alias Diamond also gave a confessional statement before the same magistrate saying he helped Azam find girls in exchange for Tk 10,000 for each. He was also sent to the same jail.

Earlier, two victims gave judicial statements before magistrates describing their traumatic experiences.



Even almost a week after Eid, those who left for their village homes right before the festival were still seen returning to the capital yesterday. Due to the lockdown, many had to walk long distances with luggage, as public transport remains unavailable. This photo was taken from Babubazar Bridge.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Ctg sees

FROM PAGE 3

city areas in the last two days, majority of people were seen without facemasks, while many had their masks on the chin until confronted by law enforcers.

The district administration conducted mobile courts, while law enforcers put check-posts to ensure instructions of the lockdown are being followed, but this could not raise awareness among people.

Residents were seen going outside,

citing different reasons.

The traffic department of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) filed 219 cases and took action against 250 vehicles in the port city for violating the lockdown on Monday, said Arafatul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CMP.

Mobile courts of Chattogram District Administration filed 218 cases and realised Tk 1.27 lakh as fine from people violating the lockdown on Monday, said sources.

Public health experts said awareness among people is necessary to curb the infection rate in the district.

Prof Dr Shakeel Ahmed, head of BITID laboratory, said awareness campaigns should spread from the city to rural areas to curb the infection rate.

Public representatives, and social, cultural, political and voluntary organisations should come forward in this regard.

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION						
This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of NRBC Bank Limited in its 124th Board Meeting held on 27.07.2021 commencing from 2.00 p.m. through digital platform has considered and approved the Second Quarter (Q2) un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the period ended on June 30, 2021 and also disclosed the following key financial indicators of the Bank in compliance with the guidelines of the respective Regulatory Authorities:						
Particulars	Consolidated			Solo		
	AS on 30 June, 2021	AS on 30 June, 2020	AS on 31 December, 2020	AS on 30 June, 2021	AS on 30 June, 2020	AS on 31 December, 2020
Net Asset Value (NAV) BDT in Crore	1,128.73	807.56	983.51	1,120.65	806.23	979.75
Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share in BDT	15.30	10.95	13.33	15.19	10.93	13.28
Particulars	Consolidated			Solo		
	January to June 2021	January to June 2020	April 01 to June 30, 2021	January to June 2021	January to June 2020	April 01 to June 30, 2021
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS) in BDT	(0.78)	1.27	9.05	4.33	(0.42)	2.03
Earnings per Share (EPS) in BDT	1.11	0.49	0.69	0.22	1.05	0.49

Note: The details of un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the Second Quarter (Q2) ended on June 30, 2021 will also be available in the website of the Bank at www.nrbccommercialbank.com

Date: Dhaka
27 July 2021

By order of the Board
Sd/-
Md. Mozammel Hossain
Company Secretary

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer DPHE
Natore District, Natore
E-mail: ee.natore@dphe.gov.bd

Invitation for Tender Notice

Memo No. 46.03.6900.061.18.001.20-51 Date: 26.07.2021

1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division.
2. Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
3. Project name	Bangladesh Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Project (30 Pourashavas).
4. Procurement nature	Works.
5. e-Tender ID	595473 & 595474
6. Description of work	Construction of RCC Drains at Bonpara & Baraigram Pourashava, Natore.
7. Tender closing date and time	26-Aug-2021 12:00

This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website www.eprocure.gov.bd.

Md. Alamgir Miah
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Natore District, Natore

GD-1377

None will

FROM PAGE 3

The premier said she has already given directives to vaccinate the helping hands of a family, including housemaids and drivers, so that all of a family can remain protected.

Hasina said the pandemic has caused massive problems for every sector, including the economy, education and social sectors.

She also urged all to follow the health guidelines strictly and asked the field-level administration to raise awareness about it among the people.

The prime minister said that 1.87 crore people have so far been vaccinated and all will be brought under the vaccination programme.

"No one will be left out... we're procuring vaccines for all. Our vaccination programme will go on," she said.

State minister for public administration ministry Farhad Hossain, cabinet secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam and public administration secretary KM Ali Azam also spoke at the programme.

Earlier, the prime minister distributed the Public Administration Medals for the years 2020 and 2021.

A total of 36 officials and organisations were awarded the medals for their outstanding performances in their respective fields.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq distributed the medals on behalf of the prime minister.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

ডাক, টেলিযোগাযোগ ও তথ্যপ্রযুক্তি মন্ত্রণালয়
তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি বিভাগ
তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি অধিদপ্তর
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তারিখঃ ১২ শ্রাবণ ১৪২৮ বঙ্গাব্দ
২৭ জুলাই ২০২১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়ঃ ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার ২০২১ এর জন্য মনোনয়ন/আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান।

তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি খাতে বিশেষ অবদান রাখার জন্য ব্যক্তি, দল ও প্রতিষ্ঠানকে অনুপ্রেরণা, উৎসাহ ও উদ্দীপনা যোগানো এবং স্বীকৃতি প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে বিভিন্ন ক্যাটাগরিতে শ্রেষ্ঠ ব্যক্তি, দল ও প্রতিষ্ঠানকে 'ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার ২০২১' প্রদানের নিমিত্ত মনোনয়ন/আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। মনোনয়ন/আবেদনপত্র দাখিল ও বাছাইয়ের তফসিল নিম্নরূপ-

পর্যায়	সময়সীমা
মনোনয়ন/আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান	২৭/০৭/২০২১
জেলা পর্যায়ের বাছাই কমিটি ও কেন্দ্রীয় বাছাই কমিটির নিকট আবেদন দাখিল	২৭/০৮/২০২১
জেলা পর্যায়ের বাছাই কমিটি ও কেন্দ্রীয় বাছাই কমিটি কর্তৃক আবেদন যাচাই-বাছাই	২০/০৯/২০২১
কেন্দ্রীয় বাছাই কমিটি কর্তৃক জেলা পর্যায়ের ও কেন্দ্রীয় পর্যায়ের প্রাপ্ত বাছাইকৃত আবেদনসমূহ হতে পুরস্কারের জন্য সুপারিশ	৩০/০৯/২০২১
সুপারিশকৃত আবেদনসমূহ 'জাতীয় পুরস্কার সংক্রান্ত মন্ত্রিসভা কমিটি'র নিকট প্রেরণ	১০/১০/২০২১
পুরস্কার প্রদান	১২/১২/২০২১

উল্লিখিত পর্যায় ও সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী ২০২০ (জানুয়ারি-ডিসেম্বর) সালের কর্মকান্ড বিবেচনাপূর্বক 'ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার ২০২১' প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে 'ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার নীতিমালা ২০২১' অনুসারে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তাবলী প্রতিপালন সাপেক্ষে প্রয়োজনীয় কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করার জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

শর্তাবলীঃ

(ক) 'ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার নীতিমালা ২০২১' অনুসারে মনোনয়ন প্রেরণ করতে হবে। বিশেষতঃ এ নীতিমালার ৮ ধারায় বর্ণিত মনোনয়ন প্রেরণ ও বাছাই প্রক্রিয়া সম্পর্কিত বিধান যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করতে হবে।

(খ) জেলা বাছাই কমিটি সাধারণ ও কারিগরি পৃথক ২টি ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি ও বেসরকারি পর্যায়ের আলাদাভাবে শ্রেষ্ঠ ব্যক্তি, শ্রেষ্ঠ দল ও শ্রেষ্ঠ প্রতিষ্ঠান-এ তিনটি শ্রেণিতে ১টি করে মোট ১২টি প্রস্তাব বাছাইয়ের স্বপক্ষে কারণ লিপিবদ্ধ করে সুপারিশসহ কেন্দ্রীয় বাছাই কমিটির নিকট নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে প্রেরণ করবে।

(গ) নীতিমালায় বর্ণিত মনোনয়ন ছক (সংযোজনী ক, খ ও গ) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করতে হবে। নীতিমালায় বর্ণিত মনোনয়ন ছক (সংযোজনী ক, খ ও গ) এবং ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশিত মনোনয়ন ছক ব্যতীত অন্য কোনো ছক-এ মনোনয়ন/আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

(ঘ) পূর্ণকৃত মনোনয়ন ছক ও বাছাই কমিটি সভার কার্যবিবরণীর হার্ডকপি পাশাপাশি সফটকপি word ও pdf ফাইলে ই-মেইল (dbd2021@doict.gov.bd)-এ প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

(ঙ) ডিজিটাল বাংলাদেশ পুরস্কার নীতিমালা ২০২১, মনোনয়ন ছক ও অনলাইনে আবেদন দাখিলের জন্য বিস্তারিত তথ্য জানতে www.ictd.gov.bd, www.doict.gov.bd এবং www.digitalbangladesh.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইট ভিজিট করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

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COVER STORY

STAYING OPTIMISTIC

The national film award-winning actor-director Shahiduzzaman Selim and actor Rosy Siddiqui has contributed immensely to our cultural arena. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, the couple shared their thoughts on the current pandemic situation and what they are doing to keep themselves healthy.

Rafi Hossain: Selim Bhai, how has the pandemic affected your work?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: It has affected everyone involved significantly. Eid is one of those times we stay very active since it is also thematically relevant to our plays. The scheduled lockdown starting on August 1 is when a lot of production goes into action and films are released. Regardless, we are trying to continue shooting on a smaller scale while maintaining government rules and regulations.

Rafi Hossain: Rosy Siddiqui, how have your days been during the pandemic?
Rosy Siddiqui: It has been difficult. I feel frustrated sitting at home all day even though I have to for the situation to become stable again. This would normally be the time when I would be busy with work, but the pandemic has not only hampered it, but it has also been causing a lot of mental stress. It has caused a lot of problems socially and economically as well. My daughter lives abroad, and neither of us can visit each other due to travel restrictions. The amount of trouble it has caused me is truly indescribable, and I am not sure when things will go back to normal. I pray to God that we are relieved of this situation soon. I think an online counselling system should be set up in each household because I am sure people like me are also under constant stress. I also feel better when I talk to other people over the phone. It is not necessarily that I feel sad about not being able to go outside, but the feeling of being trapped inside my own home, constantly hearing bad news, is unbearable.

Rafi Hossain: How do you think it has affected our arts and culture?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: We were going at a certain pace in our journey of artistic endeavours. Now that there is a roadblock in that journey it is hard to start all over. I think it depends on your psychological strength. To explore one's artistic mind and creativity, one needs a calm, peaceful environment. Art cannot be practised when there is constant anxiety and even a fear of death. With the experience we have been gaining for the last few years, we could have seen a lot of great artists being discovered. But again, this roadblock has likely stopped a lot of progress, and I think it is a huge burden on our culture. There are also economic problems caused by the pandemic. If there are no returns, a producer has no incentive to invest in a project. Moreover,

cinema halls are almost always empty nowadays. The producers that already started projects have to worry about when they can get back to them. But because this pace has been ruined, even if things go back to normal, I think it will not be the same.

Rafi Hossain: Do you think there is any way artists can utilize this time?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: I believe all aspects of art, whether it's acting or music or anything else, is about enriching yourself. Studying is incredibly important, and the pandemic has given us more than an adequate amount of time to do that. In the case of studying films, an artist could watch local and foreign films. However, it is not as easy as just saying that because with the pandemic comes mental, financial and social struggles, and one has to overcome those first.
Rosy Siddiqui: I agree with Selim. That is why I emphasized how important counselling can be, as counsellors can guide you through these negative times and bring out the positives in you as a person. It is good that I now have time to read, study, and give myself some time. However, our life and our economic situation have changed drastically. Artists require freedom, and I think the pandemic restricts this. Everyone also deals with it differently. Selim, for example, has bought several books throughout the pandemic, and I am glad he found a way to divert himself by reading. I, however, tried reading as



is interested in such projects, wouldn't you agree?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: Definitely! But it is difficult to provide greater preference to this industry as our country still struggles with providing other necessities. Especially in the past two years, the government had to struggle significantly due to the pandemic. After such issues are resolved and become manageable, the focus can be on improving the arts and culture.

Rafi Hossain: OTT platforms are becoming increasingly popular. What changes are you expecting to happen following this?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: I don't believe it is important, as to me acting is simply acting, no matter what platform it is being expressed on. For the television industry to do well, certain measures must be taken. For example, international channels should not be allowed to compete with our local ones. Additionally, the license provided to those involved with television projects often goes to people who are not involved with the industry whatsoever. Nowadays, it has become more about business and commercialisation than the art and its quality itself. If this is not improved, we will lose out audience, which is already happening. Here, BTV is succeeding in terms of viewership compared to other non-governmental channels as they cater to a wider variety of people by providing different kinds of shows. As the other television channels only focus on the news and television series, they lose views. It has only pushed the audience to go

well, but I could not get into the hobby because I constantly worry about the current situation and feel anxious. Everyone deals with it differently, and it is essential to help each other.

Rafi Hossain: What is the secret behind your lovely relationship?
Rosy Siddiqui: I believe in life there is not anything we can count on getting for certain. We have to look towards what is attainable, and if something is not, we have to learn to move on. Obsessing over certain things often causes sadness, frustration and depression. If you think something is attainable, you should try your level best at trying to earn it. If you fail, that is fine too, and you have to accept. I have followed this philosophy in the context of love, and it has worked out for me.

Shahiduzzaman Selim: I think there is a lot to learn from the childhood tale of The Hare and The Tortoise. That is, like Rosy Siddiqui said, that we should never obsess over getting something immediately. If you love someone, you should not give all your love at once. Some of the love should be saved for the next day. We have been together for 28 years, and we hope to be together for the rest of our life. The "race" is long and involves pain, sadness and hardships. I think, by taking love slow and steady, one can win the race.

Rafi Hossain: Why do you think some partners struggle in their relationships?
Shahiduzzaman Selim: I cannot speak for them because everyone has different experiences with love. From my perspective, I think it is important to first love yourself the most before engaging in romantic relationships. Otherwise, it is not possible to love someone else. This advice has been passed down upon us by our elders, and there is a reason for that. Nowadays, a lot of couples may rush into marriage. It is important to make a lot of considerations before making such a huge commitment. People should

also not disregard others when there has been a relatively long gap in conversations. For example, when I talk to my close associates after a long time, we converse like we normally do. I think it is important to hold onto these meaningful relationships.

Rafi Hossain: It often seems like the friendships we build with people nowadays are never as strong as they used to be before. Why do you think that is so?

Shahiduzzaman Selim: When we were younger, we could put in the time and effort to form a better understanding between people. Later, it became increasingly difficult to put in the same amount of time and effort as before, which made it harder to form such real and unbreakable bonds.

Rafi Hossain: When we were younger, the theatre was thriving, and people would often go to watch plays. Why do you think that practice changed?

Shahiduzzaman Selim: Back then, there was a fight to make it in theatre as an actor. Over time, other factors added to it, such as the popularisation of television. We realised during our career that it was difficult to make a living in theatre, and many of us switched to television. That was because we had a love for acting, and while we would have loved to do so by performing in theatre, it became unfeasible for us. After that, newcomers became interested in television. They looked for a greater chance to become successful, make a living, and become a star. Unlike us, they did not seek a background in theatre and work in it for years. As a result, the theatre only gets mediocre performers, and their productions are unable to thrive. Without the presence of dedicated actors, it is impossible to get back to the previous standard. It can only make a comeback if the government provides adequate subsidies for arts and culture like other countries do. During the pandemic, I did a play in Dhaka Theatre that the government provided some financial support for, and the Shilpakala Academy let us perform it without any cost.

Rafi Hossain: So, it seems that the government

I think there is a lot to learn from the childhood tale of The Hare and The Tortoise.

towards international platforms. There needs to be a set of rules and regulations from the government. That is the only way to resolve this issue.

Rosy Siddiqui: I agree with Selim on this idea that the government needs to set up specific rules to monitor and promote higher quality local content. However, I also wonder if the government is receiving the complaints and solutions we have. I believe that there is a communication gap that we need to bridge. Moreover, journalists and the media also have a role to play here. Often, they praise artists after one small success without judging their skills over some time. I think it's important to promote those who have worked hard to be the best they can be. Only then can the quality we are hoping to see can be achieved.

Rafi Hossain: Do you have any message for our readers?

Shahiduzzaman Selim: I hope the discussion today will be fruitful and will reach people.
Rosy Siddiqui: While it is a hard time for us now, we need to find positivity. I hope we will learn from this and be able to utilise it in the future. I wish everyone all the best, and please keep us in your prayers.

Rakaat Sharif

PHOTO: STAR

GRAPE VINE

Porimoni back to shooting

Actor Porimoni will start shooting for the film, *Pritilata* on August 10, 2021. Directed by Rashid Palash and written by noted lyricist Golam Rabbani, the film will feature Pori Moni as the lead. Thirty-five per cent of the shooting has been completed. The latest release of Porimoni's ventures was Tauquir Ahmed's *Sphulingo*. She also finished shooting for the film, *Mukhosh*. Besides, this Eid-ul-Azha Porimoni sacrificed six cows in BFDC for the struggling artists.



SINGER TURNED MODEL

Singer Protic Hasan will show his acting prowess in the music video for Sabrina Bashir's new song, *Fu Dile Baje*. The music video is directed by Soumitra Ghosh. Regarding the song, Sabrina said, "The song name is unique as I kept the new generations thought process in mind. While listening, the audience will find a twist in it. I hope they will enjoy it." Protic said, "The song has a rock genre vibe in it. Sabrina did a wonderful job. Besides, this is the first time I am modelling for someone else's song."



PHOTO: COLLECTED



'Brishti Ele' by Mehreen

Pop singer Mehreen recently released a new song *Brishti Ele* under the banner of *Akhor Records*. The song has been written by Hashibur Reza Kallol and tuned by Muntasir Tushar. Jishan and Shomrat provided the musical arrangement. Taking on a new genre, this is the first time the singer sang besides pop songs. Besides the release, the singer performed for Bangladesh Television's (BTV) program. In tribute to Azam Khan, Mehreen with Alif Alauddin, Armeen Musa performed a five minutes medley. The medley includes the songs *Orey Shakela Orey Makela*, *Alal O Dulal*, and *Bangladesh*.

Cabinet rejects a shameful appeal by the public administration ministry

The law's provision invited the scope for such demands

IT is unimaginable that the public administration ministry—or anyone else for that matter—would seek any sort of immunity for retired public servants, who have been convicted of committing serious crimes or corruption. Yet that is exactly what the ministry did, according to a report by this newspaper on Tuesday. Fortunately, there was enough sense left for it to be turned down in a recent cabinet meeting. The fact that such exemption was sought, however, is a direct result of this government passing the Sarkari Chakori Ain 2018, which includes a provision that makes it mandatory for the Anti-Corruption Commission to take permission from the authorities concerned before arresting any public servant—or for a court to frame charges against them. This, of course, is in complete contradiction to Bangladesh's constitution, which states that all citizens are equal before the law.

While permission will not be required in case of taking action against ordinary citizens for similar offences, the ACC must take permission from the concerned ministry before arresting any public servant, according to section 41(1) of the Sarkari Chakori Ain 2018. In addition, the 2018 law also allows government servants to be convicted for less than a year, with little more than a slap on the wrist. Moreover, such public servants can be penalised with words of denunciation, temporary demotion or temporarily halting raises, while their jobs remain intact. According to various human rights groups, the 2018 law gave government employees a type of impunity and expanded the scope for misuse of power, while creating barriers to observe the professional duties of state institutions and forces involved in curbing crimes and corruption as well as upholding human rights.

Despite granting such unusual privileges to public servants, it seems that was not enough for the public administration ministry which had the audacity to ask for more. And while we are appalled by such a request, we aren't really surprised by it. By passing the 2018 law, the government created this opportunity. And, of course, someone was eventually going to try and take advantage of it and take it further.

While we are pleased that the cabinet had the good sense to turn down the proposal, we must ask again why the government passed a provision that discriminates so heavily in favour of public servants. What was it expecting would happen once such a law was passed? And why should public servants be granted such exemptions at the cost of the ACC's ability to fight corruption and the integrity of the constitution? We believe that there are no good reasons for it—and we have not been given one by the government either—and therefore the government should immediately scrap the provision in question.

Time to review the DSA

No law should be iniquitous

THE Digital Security Act, 2018 has proved to be even more contentious than the controversial Section 57 of the ICT Act, 2006 (as amended in 2013) it purportedly replaced, it being more draconian, illiberal, harsh and, more dangerously, a more randomly applied law. That such a law would not only be tolerated, let alone enacted, by the ruling party, with long credentials of struggle for freedom of speech and dissent, is unfathomable.

Concerns have once again been raised, justifiably so, by the international rights watchdogs, including Amnesty International, who have echoed the fears and reiterated the demands of the majority of the people of the country—revoke the law or incorporate wide ranging comprehensive changes in it. The law, as it is today, stands as an odious testimony of the ruling party's blatant disregard for the basic rights of the people. Sadly, it has been weaponised to stifle dissent. And even more dangerously, it has been applied against the media in the harshest manner for reporting facts. Reportedly, in the last year only, 75 journalists have been arrested/tried under this law. And in the four months between January and May this year, the Cyber Tribunal has received 199 cases under this Act. The most detestable aspect of the law is that defamation has been made a criminal offence, which allows little respite from immediate arrest or bail. And even more conflictive with the dreams of the founding fathers is the way the law has been used to silence the critics of the administration and those close to the corridors of power, as the cases of Ahmed Kabir Kishore and Mushtaq Ahmed expose.

No one can take issue with the need for ensuring cyber security. It is a matter of national security—we all agree. But too often, national security has been exploited to provide the administration with security against criticism, disapproval and reproach. The gross difference between the government and the state has been blurred to the extent that the two have become synonymous. It should not be lost upon the rulers that "in democracy, dissent is an act of faith" and to remain silent when one must express dissent is an unpatriotic act.

Delivery of health services technology in the developing world

A proposal



SYED M AHSAN

THE idea: In a webinar organised by the World University Network last month, the discussion focused on how to expedite the diffusion of evolving medical technology innovations in the delivery of healthcare in the developing world. While one may debate the viability of foregoing patents for new life saving therapies (e.g., the Covid-19 vaccines), I reasoned that the general sharing of information and advisories on technologies already on the shelf (but still subject to protection under patents and copyrights) with suitable developing country partners ("destination" countries, from hereon) may still be feasible and thereby hasten the delivery of critical healthcare in the developing world, in and out of pandemics. While the value of mutual knowledge sharing could be immense under emergency conditions, it would still promote public health under "normal" conditions.

To illustrate the point, take the case of an acute global shortage of basic supplies such as PPEs, medical-grade masks, oxygen concentrators and ventilators in the early phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. One can recall with horror the stories of doctors, nurses and health personnel using the same mask/PPE for days (even weeks). In a situation like this, the immediate value of knowledge sharing about what it takes to produce medical-grade PPEs and masks would have been enormous. Primarily, the partnership we have in

of readily improvising indigenous versions of such products? With innate innovations, the latter manufacturers may in due course succeed in turning out world class products themselves. Source country manufacturers should ideally encourage such eventualities prompting them to innovate even faster and, in due course, perhaps move on to specialising in technologically more challenging products instead (like defibrillators). This process may be likened to the Schumpeterian "creative destruction" idea in the modern endogenous growth literature in economics.

The collaboration cited above is independent of the formal process whereby the original inventors often license producers in destination countries to manufacture (say labelled 3M) products locally. The latter mechanism (like the Serum Institute of India and the AstraZeneca (UK) vaccine partnership), happens autonomously in the form

arrangement? We can briefly explore the contours of a possible architecture.

There are three primary participants to the proposed agreement, namely the manufacturers in the country of origin and the destination, and the destination country healthcare delivery institutions. While a one-on-one (say between manufacturers in the two locations) liaison may be feasible in some contexts, ideally it would be best if the entire process was mediated by a major non-profit health NGO, an academic institution, or a reputable public health entity in the private sector to both economise on bureaucracy and maximise transparency. Such a competent entity, based in the destination country, may be entrusted to serve as the "gatekeeper/facilitator" and remain accountable to a board of trustees, nominated by all stakeholders. The gatekeeper would identify both the prospective manufacturers in the country of origin

which the gatekeeper can also manage.

While the paragraphs above deal with the generic version of a tripartite agreement, the gatekeeper will also be required to guide the parties in question to produce a specific and unique version of the agreement on a product-by-product (or, service) basis. In terms of details, presumably a first order of business would be to draw up a tentative wish list of "technologies" of value to the healthcare delivery system in a particular public health context, and then identify major source country producers as well as a potential list of destination country manufacturers or knowledge centres who can potentially exploit such a technology with end-users in mind.

The Payoffs: The source country manufacturers may dedicate CSR resources to defray out-of-pocket costs, say in the form of time used in securing an agreement to its liking, consultation and managing the dialogue during the implementation and monitoring phases. The destination country manufacturers will have to invest resources to similarly implement the agreement and undertake production or service delivery to end-users by charging fees commensurate with its expenses. Depending on the context, the destination public health/budgetary authorities may come forward with financial assistance as the situation may demand (recall Operation Warp Speed, a public-private partnership initiated by the US government to facilitate and accelerate the development and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines). The regulatory process relevant for such activities would possibly be covered in most cases by existing provisions in the destination country. In cases, the relevant authorities may have to deliberate and develop new regulatory guidelines as to pricing and the like. Were the collaboration as envisaged here to lead to commercial exports to third countries, the source country provider/manufacturer may seek a share of the profit and in that case, the latter contingency may be envisioned in the original agreement or in subsequent amendments mutually agreed upon.

The care delivery system would access the benefits under the proposed knowledge sharing agreement and finance any out-of-pocket costs out of budgetary resources at their disposal in the usual manner. All that is new is that the likely tools at their disposal have expanded by the framework under review here. New funding will, however, be required to secure the services of what we have termed the gatekeeper/facilitator, which will have to continue on a longer-term basis as new agreements become feasible over time. For the sake of transparency and conflict of interest, it would be ideal if funding for such services came from third parties such as global charities.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

There are three primary participants to the proposed agreement, namely the manufacturers in the country of origin and the destination, and the destination country healthcare delivery institutions.

mind is *informal*, helping destination country manufacturers produce improvised devices and equipment that are functional. Why then should a partnership not be forged between leading manufacturers of quality products (say, Abbott or 3M) sharing knowledge, on a digital platform, with manufacturers, say in Bangladesh and India, capable

of "business as usual" when such a partnership appears both technologically feasible and commercially viable, and promises to be of mutual gain to both parties. Admittedly, both the formal and informal processes cited above would expedite the transfer of knowledge between source and destination countries, and would likely allow faster growth of output per capita, especially in the developing world. However, the formal technology transfer (via licensing, joint ventures, foreign direct investment and the like) is not under focus here for the simple reason that fostering such a mechanism would entail much advance planning. It would possibly be counter-productive to kickstart such an arrangement during a pandemic or a public health emergency while people are dying. The informal "transfer" may eventually blossom into a formal one, but that again is not the *raison d'être* of the proposal on the table here.

Modalities: Under what arrangements would the type of informal sharing of privileged knowledge envisaged above take place in the most effective manner, from the perspective of maximum benefit for care recipients in a destination country? Can patented drugs be brought under this

and in the destination country, as well as the care delivery authority and the latter's need, on an ongoing basis. It would draw up all documentation for mutual consent and thus monitor implementation thereof on an agreed-upon protocol. The articles of the "collaborative agreement" would clearly entail legal and technical aspects, which must be duly vetted at both ends. To the extent the knowledge sharing relates to physical devices and equipment, the primary international agreement will be limited to the producers in the two countries. Inclusion of patented drugs, even if the originator were to agree to knowledge sharing, would prove difficult on grounds of safety and medical ethics, unless fortuitously partnered with an existing destination country collaborator.

Possible export of products arising out of informal knowledge sharing to neighbouring countries may also be permissible if so spelled out under the agreement (with appropriate disclosures) between the two producers. The destination end-user only comes into the picture in terms of the logistics of how best the former can gain access to the object of collaboration in an equitable manner. The latter is a domestic issue,

Killing of the Boral River

What can we be doing to stop the endless encroachment of rivers?

BRIG GEN TUSHAR KANTI CHAKMA PSC, NDC (RETD)

I attended a training course at the US Army Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky in 1989 where I learnt something interesting about US Army engineers. Like the engineering corps of other armies, including Bangladesh's, they perform the traditional role of combat engineering, barring the enemy's movement while enhancing their own mobility. They were involved in the construction of many landmarks in the US, like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the Pentagon. But they also perform a different role which was not known to me—they are responsible for the inland waters of the US. The army engineering corps thus protect the nation's aquatic environments—oceans, rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, and wetlands.

Over the years, we are also seeing Bangladesh Army engineers being involved in large infrastructure projects like national highways and the Padma Bridge. The corps have gained public confidence in managing and successfully commissioning the projects. They are doing a praiseworthy job in handling these. I often hear my friends saying that the projects will surely be done since the army is involved. They also cite the projects that are lingering in development due to mismanagement.

An editorial in *The Daily Star* on July 24 titled "Killing of Boral River: Government's apathy to encroachment, pollution is the main factor" caught my attention. It describes how the Boral river in Natore is being destroyed through illegal encroachment and pollution, with the newspaper finding "an entire housing society that has occupied a large chunk of the Boral river—built under the noses of the local administration." I think it is not only the government's apathy; there is an apathy in all of us. We are all to be blamed for what is happening to the beautiful rivers we have.



PHOTO: STAR

The image of the Boral River that comes up when you search online is of a beautiful small river with clean blue water. Anyone seeing the picture will cry out, "Are we going to kill this river? Can we not do something about it?" We have all been reading about such encroachment and illegal constructions blocking the waterways of Lakhya River and others.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and other government agencies are responsible for checking illegal encroachment and pollution of our rivers. We saw that these agencies have surveyed and placed marker pillars but yielded no positive results with regard to these problems. Most of the perpetrators are in sociopolitical leadership positions

and have enough clout to take on government agencies. We saw some of such demonstrations of power over the Lakhya River by a late lawmaker. These are just the tip of the iceberg—if we look around, we see them displaying their signboards deep in the *khals*, *beels* and rivers.

Bangladesh Army engineers have a unique organisation of riverine engineers as well, or as we call them—RE Battalions. These were trained to guard riverine approaches into the country against any military incursion or invasion. Their organisation and equipment are drawn up in such a way that they are capable of defending any riverine approach. The battalions have small armed watercrafts besides large landing crafts for transporting tanks,

artillery guns, and logistics along the riverine routes. The cantonment at Postagola is the home of a few of these battalions, and two other battalions are located in the Jamuna and Padma Bridges. There is also a company in Kaptai that provides riverine support at Kaptai Lake.

I would like to propose that Bangladesh Army engineers be given the responsibility of protecting our rivers from these heartless, greedy, short-sighted grabbers immediately. I call upon none other than our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is also the Defence Minister, to look into the matter immediately and save our rivers, waters, and our future.

The author is a retired Brigadier General of the Bangladesh Army.

Delivery of climate finance will be the key to COP26



SALEEMUL HUQ

THE upcoming 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in November, with the United Kingdom as the host. The incoming COP26 President designate Alok Sharma has rightly said that the delivery of the "totemic 100 billion US Dollar" in climate finance from developed countries to developing ones to tackle climate change is going to be the key to whether COP26 succeeds or fails.

As with most things, the devil is always in the details. The first thing to note about the USD 100 billion figure is that it was first offered in COP16 in Copenhagen, Denmark back in 2010 by then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on behalf of all developed countries. It was again pledged at COP21 in Paris in 2015 and became enshrined as part of the Paris Agreement—a promise from the rich countries to provide USD 100 billion every year from 2020 onwards to help poorer countries tackle climate change, through both mitigation as well as adaptation activities.

However, the year 2020 has already come and gone but this amount was certainly not delivered. It is quite difficult to know how much was really delivered, as no one has the responsibility for keeping count.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The nearest to an official account is from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), comprised of Western donor countries, who collect and report data on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). They have recently added two "Rio Markers" to their list of ODA related items for climate change, one for mitigation and one for adaptation. According to the OECD, the total amount of climate finance was nearly USD 80 billion, which is well short of USD 100 billion.

However, the figures reported by the OECD are based entirely on what each developed country tells them has been spent on climate change and there is no scrutiny of these figures by the OECD itself. An independent evaluation of the thousands of projects in their database by Oxfam found that only USD 20 billion out of the USD 80 billion could be reliably counted as climate finance, which is different from ODA. Hence, the majority of the USD 80 billion claimed to have been given for climate change was, in fact, double counted as development assistance as well as climate change finance.

If the finance ministers of the developed countries fail to deliver the full USD 100 billion before COP26, then it would hardly be worth going to Glasgow for the vulnerable developing countries.

As with most things, the devil is always in the details. The first thing to note about the USD 100 billion figure is that it was first offered in COP16 in Copenhagen, Denmark back in 2010 by then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on behalf of all developed countries. It was again pledged at COP21 in Paris in 2015 and became enshrined as part of the Paris Agreement—a promise from the rich countries to provide USD 100 billion every year from 2020 onwards to help poorer countries tackle climate change, through both mitigation as well as adaptation activities.

However, the year 2020 has already come and gone but this amount was certainly not delivered. It is quite difficult to know how much was really delivered, as no one has the responsibility for keeping count.

The nearest to an official account is from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), comprised of Western donor countries, who collect and report data on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). They have recently added two "Rio Markers" to their list of ODA related items for climate change, one for mitigation and one for adaptation. According to the OECD, the total amount of climate finance was nearly USD 80 billion, which is well short of USD 100 billion.

However, the figures reported by the OECD are based entirely on what each developed country tells them has been spent on climate change and there is no scrutiny of these figures by the OECD itself. An independent evaluation of the thousands of projects in their database by Oxfam found that only USD 20 billion out of the USD 80 billion could be reliably counted as climate finance, which is different from ODA. Hence, the majority of the USD 80 billion claimed to have been given for climate change was, in fact, double counted as development assistance as well as climate change finance.

lost credibility going into COP26 in November. The main issue is not so much the amounts delivered, as even USD 100 billion is a trivial amount compared to actual needs. Rather, it is a question of whether developed countries can be deemed to be negotiating in good faith or bad. If it is the latter, then there is simply no point in going to Glasgow in November, only for the vulnerable developing countries to be given another round of empty promises. The onus is on the developed countries to actually deliver, not just promise again, the USD 100 billion that was due for 2020 and another USD 100 billion that is now also due for 2021.

In fact, the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) countries at their recent Climate

Finance Summit demanded that the developed countries provide details of how they plan to deliver the USD 500 billion over the next five years that they had previously pledged. An important point to clarify on this issue is that decisions on providing finance are not the domain of the environment ministers who will be attending the COP, but of finance ministers who control the purse-strings of nations and who meet at the annual G7 and G20 leaders' meetings every year. The G7 finance ministers met in the UK in June and failed to deliver enough, and the G20 finance ministers met in Italy in July and also failed to deliver. If the finance ministers of the developed countries fail to deliver the full USD 100 billion before COP26, then it would hardly be worth going to Glasgow for the vulnerable developing countries. So even though the COP26 President designate Alok Sharma has admitted this is a make or break issue for the success of COP26, he needs the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the UK, Rishi Sunak, to deliver the money, which he has not done. In fact, the Chancellor has actually cut the development assistance budget of the UK instead. So going into COP26, the UK government under Prime Minister Boris Johnson has a steep hill to climb if they are to keep their word. They have only a few months to deliver the money to regain any semblance of credibility.

Dr Saleemul Huq is Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development at the Independent University, Bangladesh.

Pegasus spyware row and Indian democracy



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

THE Pegasus spyware controversy has set off a political storm in India. Sustained anti-government protests by the opposition on the floor of the House paralysed

themselves: (1) the presence of a phone number in the leaked data does not reveal whether a device was infected with Pegasus or subject to an attempted hack, (2) without subjecting a phone to technical analysis, it is not possible to conclusively state whether it witnessed an attack attempt or was successfully compromised, (3) the report itself clarifies that presence of a number on the list does not amount to spying, and

attached to the IT ministry is enough to do the work. Across the world, intelligence-gathering has over the centuries been a key component of statecraft under all political systems of government, ranging from dictators to the most open democratic societies. There is no disputing the fact that governments in all countries use intelligence organisations for foreign policy and national security

two policemen in plainclothes were apprehended for allegedly keeping vigil outside Rajiv Gandhi's house. In 2011, when the Congress under the then PM Manmohan Singh was in power, a confidential letter written by then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee to Manmohan, that he suspected a bugging device was planted in his office, was leaked. Two years down the line, audio tapes—recorded allegedly at the behest of Amit Shah (now India's Home Minister) of Gujarat—of purported conversations of a female architect, were leaked.

against persons charged with terrorism and major economic offences, and certainly do not include anyone else. It is impractical and futile to expect complete transparency in the covert operations of the intelligence agencies like the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) or the Intelligence Bureau, particularly when it comes to national security because secrecy is the essence of their activities. But the suggestion that their oversight may be expanded from the bureaucracy to include a small legislative committee merits consideration. Such oversight mechanisms are in place in the US, Australia and Canada.

The Pegasus issue has once again brought to the fore the demand for bringing intelligence agencies under legislative or judicial oversight, something no political executive, irrespective of affiliation, has done so far.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Sustained anti-government protests by the opposition on the floor of the House paralysed almost the entire first week of the monsoon session of Parliament in India, pictured here.

almost the entire first week of the monsoon session of Parliament from July 19. Trinamool Congress member of the Rajya Sabha Shantanu Sen was suspended for the rest of the month-long session for snatching papers from the hands of India's IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who wanted to articulate the government's stand on the row, and flinging them in the air. A network of global media organisations, along with a consortium of global civil society organisations, came together to bring out a list of potential targets of Pegasus spyware—including Indian opposition politicians Rahul Gandhi, at least two serving federal ministers, a former Election Commissioner, journalists, business tycoons, and a Supreme Court judge—for surveillance worldwide last week. By most accounts, the list is only of potential targets as only a few devices have been subjected to forensic test and analysis, of which just some of them were found to be infected or hacked. No information is available about the source of the leaked list. Indian IT Minister Vaishnaw, in a statement in Parliament on July 22, said that "In the past, similar claims were made regarding the use of Pegasus on WhatsApp. Those reports had no factual basis and were categorically denied by all parties, including in the Supreme Court." On press reports on the Pegasus issue on July 18, he said these "also appear to be an attempt to malign the Indian democracy and its well established institutions". Countering the allegation that individuals linked to the Pegasus spyware row were being spied on, Vaishnaw pointed to four aspects contained in the press reports

(4) Pegasus services are openly available to anyone, anywhere and anytime and are commonly used by governmental agencies as well as by private companies worldwide. Questions have been raised if Pegasus has been procured by the government and deployed against Indian citizens. If not, then who procured and used the spyware? Only a fair probe can bring out the facts. Views are divided as to how the whole Pegasus episode will be probed. Should it be a Supreme Court-monitored investigation (a public interest litigation is already at the top court)? Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram pitched for a joint parliamentary committee probe but his party colleague Shashi Tharoor said there was no need for that and the parliamentary committee

objectives. Since the late 1980s, India has witnessed spying incidents from time to time that led to the resignation of Karnataka Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde and Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar. Hegde quit on "moral grounds" in 1988 after information came out of wire-taps on 50 individuals, including journalists and dissidents, within his ruling Janata Party. Subsequently, the fact that permission was given to the police for the phone-tapping was made public too, which made Hegde's continuance untenable. In 1991, the then Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's Samajwadi Janata Party government, backed by the Congress, had to go after Congress withdrew support when it emerged that

QUOTABLE Quote



VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882-1941) English writer

The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Tug-of-war need
- 5 Way out
- 9 Scholarship basis
- 10 Intolerant sort
- 12 Deal maker
- 13 Game with numbered cards
- 14 Catch stealing, say
- 16 Charged particle
- 17 Artery problem
- 18 Temporary break
- 21 Egg layer
- 22 Friend of Winnie-the-Pooh
- 23 Comic strip unit
- 24 Brewing vessel
- 26 Naughty
- 29 Bahamas capital
- 30 One or more
- 31 Fitting
- 32 Audition
- 34 Flies high
- 37 Get up
- 38 Cars
- 39 Worker with a pick
- 40 Circus structure
- 41 Hangs low
- DOWN**
- 1 Entertain lavishly
- 2 Mount Hood setting
- 3 Wine grape
- 4 Words from caesar
- 5 Flow out
- 6 Noon, on a clock
- 7 Set afire
- 8 Dress
- 9 Fire starter
- 11 Great weights
- 15 Become less dense
- 19 "— Around" (Beach Boys hit)
- 20 Completely
- 22 One of a bear trio
- 23 — de deux
- 24 Beat, as a rhythm
- 25 Subject of a will
- 26 Fan disapproval
- 27 Entertains
- 28 Hinder
- 29 "Apollo 13" org.
- 30 Mideast nation
- 33 Ewes' mates
- 35 Director Howard
- 36 Retired jet

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

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers and letters.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Answers for yesterday's crossword puzzle: ARREST, CHAIR, NAMED, LUNAR, THINE, AMAZE, ORG, SPY, JOE, NARNIA, DARN, HEIR, LOOMS, AIR, STREAM, JUNO, TASTES, ART, DEM, HAT, COUPE, PREGO, ORION, SINEW, BATTY, BARE.

BEEBLE BAILEY

Comic strip 'Beetle Bailey' by Mort Walker. Beetle Bailey asks for cookies from a post office worker. A reward is given for the rumor.

BABY BLUES

Comic strip 'Baby Blues' by Kirkman & Scott. Baby Blues asks if it's safe to eat a wren. A reward is given for the rumor.

SPORT

Ruman bows out in second round after last-shot thriller

ANISUR RAHMAN

After being eliminated from the second round of the men's individual recurve event at the Tokyo Olympics, Bangladesh's top archer Ruman Sana felt the urge to smash his bow shortly before returning to his senses and setting his sights on a gold medal at the 2028 Olympics.

Bangladesh's dream of winning an elusive medal at the Olympics this time hinged on Ruman, especially as the 26-year-old became the nation's second athlete to earn a direct ticket for the Olympics.

However, Ruman's journey ended in the second round as he suffered a 4-6 set points loss to Canada's Duenas Crispin, ranked 36th in the world.

Ruman, 25th in the world rankings, enjoyed a good start with a 7-3 set points win over Tom Hall of Great Britain in the first round, but the archer from Bangladesh Ansar crumbled in the second round despite getting off to a winning start.

He beat Crispin in the first set 26-25 before losing two straight sets to fall behind 2-4. The lad from Khulna bounced back to level things at 4-4 ahead of the fifth and final set, which went down to the final shot.

Ruman needed to hit the bullseye and score 10 to win the game and advance to the third round or square things up and force a tiebreaker by hitting a nine, but he could only manage eight and was eliminated.

"I can't forgive myself because I had a lot of opportunities to win the match. I felt like destroying my bows and arrows and leaving archery. I tried to put up my natural performance without any pressure but luck wasn't with me because the shots which hit 9s were supposed to hit 10," a frustrated Ruman told The Daily Star over the phone.

"There were many chances to win the match but I couldn't capitalise on any of them. I could have even taken the match into a tiebreak had I hit nine on the last shot, but I could only hit eight," said Ruman, who had targeted winning the first two rounds before possibly fighting it out against top-seed Kim Je Deok of South Korea, who was surprisingly beaten by 33rd-ranked Florian Unruh of Germany in the third round.

Before departing for Japan, Ruman had told The Daily Star that Bangladesh should not think of winning medals at the Olympics at the moment because even qualifying was a struggle. He added that when a lot of archers would qualify for the



Olympics directly, then the dream of winning a medal would come true.

Replying to a query, Ruman said: "The people of country might have dreamt of me winning a medal in the Olympics because they saw my ability to win silver and bronze medals in the World Archery Championships and World Cup. But it is really naïve to think of an Olympic medal because it is a really hard job."

He also lamented the drop in form brought about by the pandemic.

"If I could have finished among the 10 archers in the Ranking round on the back of the form that I had in 2019, then I could have done something at the Olympics. However, my target is gold in the 2028 Olympics, so I'm going to play for the 2024 Olympics. From now, I have to toil harder, play more international tournaments and Games and improve my ability to realise my target."

The 26-year-old also urged the concerned authorities to increase facilities and incentives for archers so that the next generation is attracted and delivers their best on big stages like the Olympics.



FERREIRA, MOORE SECURE HISTORIC GOLD MEDALS

Brazil's Italo Ferreira and American Carissa Moore overcame challenging conditions in brilliant style to win historic first Olympic surfing gold medals at the Tsurigasaki Surfing Beach on Tuesday. Ferreira, who learned to surf standing on the foam box his father sold fish from, beat Japan's Kanoa Igarashi in the final. Ferreira snapped his board on the first wave and had to wait in the sea for a replacement. But he recovered to score 15.14 to Igarashi's 6.60 at Tsurigasaki Beach, around 100km (60 miles) east of Tokyo. Moore out-classed South African outsider Briana Buitendag to secure victory in the women's event.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'I can feel his presence'

REUTERS, Tokyo

Kaylee McKeown powered to her first Olympic gold on Tuesday and a third win in three days for a triumphant Australian women's team, launching a thrilling fightback in the 100m backstroke to go within a fingertip of her own world record.

Canada's Kylie Masse took a good lead from the start and held it at the halfway mark but McKeown switched gears out of the turn and clawed back to win in 57.47, with Masse taking silver and American Reagan Smith the bronze.

McKeown's victory put Australia's swimmers on equal terms with the United States in the gold medal race with three



each, turning up the heat in the latest round of one of the most enduring Olympic rivalries.

The win comes during an impressive run in which McKeown ranked top in three Tokyo events, driven by the memory of her father, who died of cancer last year.

"One hundred percent I know it's stupid of me to say it but I can feel his presence, certain things pop up on my phone, only things he'd say to me," she said.

"He was with me that entire race not just last 10 metres so it's kind of a little superpower that I have within myself."

The win followed a similar gritty display on Monday from compatriot Ariarne Titmus, who came from behind to snatch gold from dominant American Katie Ledecky in the 400m freestyle. "I never thought I would be in Olympics let alone an Olympic final then to stand on the podium with a gold medal around my neck, it's something that a lot of people dream of," McKeown said. "I'm still soaking it all up."

The Olympics medal was also the second for the McKeown family following elder sister Taylor's medley relay silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics. "She'll push herself until she vomits. She's an absolute animal," Taylor told Australian television.



Teen divers Chen Yuxi and Zhang Jiaqi blew their opponents away in the women's 10 metre synchronised platform on Tuesday, extending China's winning streak in the event to six Olympic Games. Aged 15 and 17, the duo - who hugged each other at the podium after receiving their gold medals - were in a league of their own at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre. They finished on 363.78 points, more than 52 ahead of second-placed Jessica Parratto and Delaney Schnell of the United States. "We do have an advantage in our age. We are short and light, and this means that our (water) entry is better than the others," said Zhang.

PHOTO: REUTERS

No room for dysfunction against Australia

NABID YEASIN



A series sweep across the formats in Harare against Zimbabwe is what was expected of Bangladesh and the Tigers certainly lived up to their billing. With the collection of all 30 ICC ODI Super League Points from the three ODIs, the series was more than just a morale booster for a group on the back of a string of losses, especially while playing away from home.

However, aside from clear on-field dominance, barring a 23-run defeat in the second T20I which was the sole hitch along the way, one other thing that came to the fore vividly during this Zimbabwe tour was the lack of trust and communication between the players and team management.

Despite a convincing 220-run victory in the one-off Test, Mahmudullah Riyad's sudden retirement from the format hogged all the spotlight. The way this news broke -- with players giving Mahmudullah a guard of honour and writing farewell messages on social media but refusing to acknowledge anything in front of the media as there was no official

announcement -- only demonstrated the gap in communication between players and the management.

With the Mahmudullah issue being doused by a dominant showing in the three-match ODI series, another issue involving ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal emerged. Although the cricketer denied any such issue, there were reports that Tamim was on the verge of quitting his role as ODI captain after his dedication towards the team had been brought into question following his decision to opt out of the T20I series due to a knee injury.

Meanwhile, the epitome of miscommunication on the part of the management was when two sets of messages were relayed, one from chief selector Minhajul Abedin and another from cricket operations committee chairman Akram Khan, regarding Bangladesh opener Liton Das' availability for the upcoming series against Australia.

Only hours after initiating the confusion, the BCB issued a press release mentioning that Liton had been ruled out of the upcoming T20I series against Australia at home after the batsman left the team bubble in Zimbabwe to return to Bangladesh for a family emergency on Monday.

However, despite all these off-field issues, the severely injury-hit Bangladesh still managed to come out with trophies in all three formats. While it is the players' performance and determination that ensured off-field issues had no impact on their demeanor, it cannot be denied that the hurdle was easier to cross as it was against a low-ranked Zimbabwe side.

That will not be the case against the formidable Australians, who are slated to play five T20Is in the space of just seven days.

As much as the tight schedule will be an issue for a Bangladesh side who are already missing multiple key players like Tamim, Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das due to injury or personal tragedies, their ability will be put to a stern test against Aaron Finch's side in a format considered the Achilles heel of the Bangladesh men's cricket team.

The series is being considered as part of preparations for the upcoming T20 World Cup and only a fully coherent Bangladesh side -- with performance on the field resonating with sound off-field management -- can make a statement about how they will approach the upcoming T20 World Cup.



TOKYO WINDOW



Flora Duffy



Naomi Osaka

**Flora Duffy achieved instant national hero status when she won Bermuda's first Olympic gold medal on Tuesday after delivering a dominant run leg for an emphatic victory in the women's triathlon on a stormy Tokyo course.

**Taiwan's Kuo Hsing-Chun won the gold medal in the women's 59kg weightlifting event at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday, breaking Olympic records in all three categories. Kuo, who holds the world record with a total lift of 247kg, lifted 236kg to win gold on Tuesday, an Olympic record. Her lifts in the snatch -- 103kg -- and clean and jerk -- 133kg -- were also new Olympic marks.

**Weightlifter Polina Guryeva made history on Tuesday as Turkmenistan's first Olympic medallist and, as the shock sank in, began wondering how she might cope with the hero's welcome she is anticipating back home. A former gymnast and a first-time Olympian, Guryeva won silver in the -59kg class, behind her idol, Taiwan's Kuo Hsing-Chun, who broke Olympic records in all three of the event's categories.

** Japanese medal hopeful Naomi Osaka was eliminated from the women's event following a surprise defeat on Centre Court on Tuesday. The women's draw was thrown wide open after four-time Grand Slam champion and world number two Osaka was downed 6-1, 6-4 by Marketa Vondrousova in one of the biggest upsets of the Games. Men's world number four Stefanos Tsitsipas avenged his straight-sets loss to Frances Tiafoe at Wimbledon last month, taking out the American 6-3 6-4 to book a place in the third round.

What to WATCH

BTV
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 7:15 am, 8:15 am, 10:10 am, 12:20 pm, 3:10 pm & 5:35 pm

TEN 2, TEN 3 & SONY SIX
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 8:30 pm

Live from 8:00 pm & 4:00 am (Thursday)

T SPORTS, TEN 1, TEN 2 & SONY SIX
Sri Lanka vs India
Second T20I
Live from 8:30 pm

BUILD YOUR HOME FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS WITH THE TOUGHEST STEEL

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HIGHEST SELLING 15 CEMENT for more than years

SHAH CEMENT

Tunisia's biggest party urges polls

Warns against 'autocratic regime'

AFP, Tunis



President Kais Saied

Opponents of Tunisia's President Kais Saied, who sparked a crisis by ousting the premier and suspending parliament, yesterday challenged him to hold new elections instead of building an "autocratic regime".

The moderate Islamist Ennahdha party, which was the strongest group in the coalition government, has labelled Sunday's power grab a "coup d'etat" while the US, EU and other powers have also voiced strong concern.

Ennahdha yesterday challenged the president to call new legislative and presidential elections, warning against any delay that would be "a pretext to maintain an autocratic regime".

The party also accused Saied of having "worked with undemocratic forces to overturn the constitutional rights of elected officials, and replace them with members of his own chosen cabal".

After violent clashes Monday, it claimed "organised thugs" were being used to "provoke bloodshed and chaos", and urged its supporters "to go home in the interests of maintaining the peace and security of our nation".

The young North African democracy of 12 million people, the cradle of the Arab Spring uprisings a decade



Maintaining no physical distancing, people standing in long queues in front of Delduar Upazila Health Complex in Tangail to receive coronavirus vaccines. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Jamuna to inject up to Tk 1,000cr into Evaly

MAHMUDUL HASAN and KHONDOKER MD SHOYEB

Industrial giant Jamuna Group is going to invest up to Tk 1,000 crore in beleaguered e-commerce platform Evaly.

Initially, Jamuna will invest Tk 200 crore and the rest in phases, Evaly said in a statement yesterday.

"We, as a local venture, are really pleased to have another local company by our side," said Mohammad Russel, founder and CEO of Evaly.

Through this investment, Jamuna has become part of the ongoing investments coming into Evaly. The business group has the opportunity to invest in the next phase as well, he said.

The disclosure comes at a time when several agencies, including the Anti-Corruption Commission, have been carrying out investigations into the alleged embezzlement or transfer

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Humayun Ahmed's family serves legal notice on GP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer and director Humayun Ahmed's family members sent a legal notice to Grameenphone, the country's largest mobile phone operator, for infringing on intellectual property rights.

Grameenphone used four popular characters created by Humayun -- Baker Bhai from Kothao Keu Nei, Elachi Begum from Ayomoy, Sobhan Saheb from Bohubrihi and Taiyab Ali from Ure Jay Bok Pokkhi -- commercially without permission.

Barrister Hamidul Mizbah sent a legal notice to Grameenphone on behalf of Humayun's wife Meher Afroz Shaon, daughters Nova Ahmed, Sheela Ahmed and Bipasha Ahmed, son Nuhash Humayun, and brother Zafar Iqbal.

The mobile operator launched a series of promotional programmes in July 2020, under a campaign titled "Kemon Achen Tara", which was released on Grameenphone's official Facebook page and YouTube channel, for which no permission or licence was obtained from family members or heirs.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Yahya will commit suicide: Nixon

JULY 28, 1971 SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



CONVERSATION AMONG NIXON, KISSINGER AND FARLAND

American President Richard Nixon, his security adviser Henry Kissinger and the US Ambassador to Pakistan Joseph Farland held a discussion today on issues surrounding Bangladesh War.

Ambassador Farland presented a grim picture and said, "If we push [Pakistan President] Yahya [Khan] to the point where he reacts, the reaction will be such that the entire subcontinent will be [in turmoil]."

Nixon commented on this point, "He [Yahya] will commit suicide."

Kissinger added, "They [Indians] think that by, well, if they can undermine East Pakistan then in West Pakistan so many forces would be, will unloosen, will be turned loose that the whole Pakistan issue will disappear. The Indians and West Pakistanis they hate each other."

As to the future course of action, Nixon advised, "Let's not aggravate the problem; let's try to help on the problem -- East Pakistan. And the main thing ... let's not stir it up. It's stirred up too much. Inevitably it will be a bloodbath down there."

Ambassador Farland shared that since March 25, 1971 the US had sent over 2,200 rounds of .22 ammunition for survival rifles. He added that 40 to 50 percent of what is in the pipeline was for spare parts for trucks and for communication equipment without which the "starving refugees could not be fed."

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

NSO 'should be sanctioned'

4 US Democrats suggest action against Israeli cyberfirms over Pegasus revelations

AGENCIES

Four Democratic lawmakers in Washington on Monday suggested blacklisting or imposing sanctions against the Israeli firm NSO Group that licensed spyware used by governments to hack the smartphones of journalists, human rights activists and business executives.

They also said recent revelations of misuse reinforced their conviction that the "hacking-for-hire industry must be brought under control".

The Democrats' statement was in response to an investigation by The Washington Post and 16 media partners into a list of phone numbers that included surveillance targets and that appeared to be concentrated in countries thought to have been clients of the NSO Group.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Huge comet heading close enough to us to become visible



CNN ONLINE

Astronomers have discovered the largest known comet, and it's about a thousand times more massive than others.

Comet Bernardinelli-Bernstein, so named because it was found by University of Pennsylvania department of physics and astronomy graduate student Pedro Bernardinelli and Professor Gary Bernstein, is between 62 to 124 miles (100 to 200 kilometres) across.

The team announced the discovery in June. This unusual comet will make its closest approach to our sun in 2031, but you'll likely need a large amateur telescope to see it.

The giant comet, also known as C/2014

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

AI statement on DSA 'motivated'

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday rejected Amnesty International's statement over the Digital Security Act (DSA), saying that the statement was "motivated".

Talking to reporters at his residence in the capital, the minister also said Amnesty International has lost its acceptability.

"Amnesty International has been issuing statements against Bangladesh and its government one after another," said Hasan, also ruling Awami League joint general secretary.

In a statement on Sunday, the rights body said it has found a concerning pattern in which the Bangladeshi authorities are weaponising sections 25, 29 and 31 of the DSA to target and harass critical voices.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Low over the Bay triggers caution at ports

UNB, Dhaka

The maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three as a low pressure area has been formed over the north Bay and adjoining areas.

"Under its influence, deep convection is taking place and steep pressure gradient lies over the north Bay and adjoining areas," said a Met office bulletin yesterday.

Squally weather may affect the areas of the maritime ports, north Bay and adjoining coasts, it said.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3



The man being rescued had jumped into the Buriganga off the Babu Bazar Bridge in the capital after allegedly snatching a mobile phone from a pedestrian. Stuck in dense layer of water hyacinth, he floated on the water for around two hours. Rescuers later handed him over to police.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

WB to finance extra jobs for poorer nations

Indonesia records 2,069 deaths in a day

AGENCIES

A new World Bank financing mechanism will allow developing countries to purchase Covid-19 vaccines collectively through the Covax facility, it was announced Monday.

Covax was set up to ensure 92 developing territories could access coronavirus vaccines to fight the pandemic, with the cost covered by donors.

The new mechanism will allow those countries to buy additional doses on top of the subsidised ones they will already receive via Covax.

Using money from the World Bank and other development banks, the facility says it will make advanced purchases from vaccine manufacturers based on aggregated demand across countries.

The financing mechanism builds on the existing Covax cost-sharing arrangement which aims to provide 430 million additional doses, or enough doses to fully vaccinate 250 million people, for delivery between late 2021 and mid-2022 for the 92 countries.

Those doses could be purchased through new financing arrangement. Countries should also have some flexibility in selecting to buy particular vaccines that align with their preferences.

Covax is co-led by the World Health Organization

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

PRAYER TIMING JULY 28

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:50 8:15

JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 6:55 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION