



CONTROVERSIAL SECURITY LAW
 In a first, a Hong Kong court sentences former waiter for 9 years for 'terrorist activities'
SEE PAGE 5

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“... If in fact you are unvaccinated, you present a problem – to yourself, to your family, and to those with whom you work.”
 US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

“This is absolute nonsense. ... We do not have the capacity to have any more fighting within our borders, any terrorism within our country.”
 PAK PM IMRAN KHAN ON CLAIMS THAT PAKISTAN IS HELPING TALIBAN

“I see with growing unease that Iran is on the one hand delaying the resumption of nuclear negotiations in Vienna, and on the other moving ever further away from the core elements of the deal.”
 GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER HEIKO MAAS

SURGE IN COVID PATIENTS

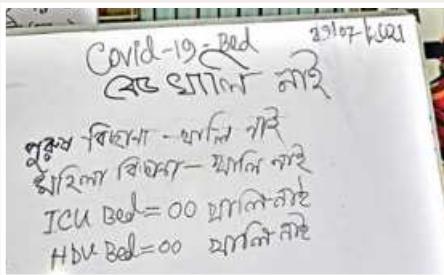
Hospitals in city overwhelmed

Many patients refused admission for lack of beds



Covid patient Habibur Rahman, 75, is being wheeled into Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The hospital had released him yesterday after providing treatment for about a week, but his relatives took him back to the DMCH as his health deteriorated on the way to his son's Mirpur home.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



- All major public hospitals already overcrowded
- Bed occupancy in private hospitals nearly 100%
- Sharp increase in patients coming from rural areas

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Wednesday was a nightmare for Shipra Baidya and her family.

While at home in Gopalganj, the woman in her mid-40s started having breathing difficulties early that day. She was whisked off to a public hospital in the capital dedicated to treating Covid-19 patients.

But she was turned away as no bed was available there. She was then taken to another government hospital in the city but was refused admission there as well.

Hoping that Shipra would be admitted

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), her son Shukhdeb Baidya waited outside the hospital gate for hours on Wednesday night. The entire time, Shipra had to suffer lying inside an ambulance outside the DMCH.

“My mother needed oxygen support and we had taken her to the capital on doctor’s advice. But all the hospitals there shut the door on us. Having no other options, we took her back to Gopalganj and got her admitted to a local hospital,” Shukhdeb said.

This is not an isolated case. Many like

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Infection rate rises in 42 dists

212 deaths, 13,862 new cases in 24 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid infection rate has increased in 42 districts in the fourth week of this month compared to the third week.

A total of 19 districts, including nine bordering ones, have seen a drop in infection rate during this period. However, the rate remained unchanged in the rest of the three districts, according to data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The infection rate rose in the three hill districts. The rate also increased in Dhaka and its four nearby districts – Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur and Manikganj.

In Dhaka, the positivity rate was 35 percent last week, up from 33 percent in the previous week.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Target 60 lakh jobs in 6 days

Aged citizens, rural people to get priority in special vaccination campaign from Aug 7

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has decided to inoculate at least 60 lakh people against Covid-19 in just six days starting from August 7, in what officials said would be a special campaign mainly targeting the elderly individuals in rural areas.

The plan is to vaccinate 10 lakh people each day in over 15,287 wards across the country, they added.

The ward councillors will coordinate the drive, making sure that people with little access to the registration process get inoculated even if they don’t have the national ID card.

During the six days, the regular vaccination centres will give the jobs only to the individuals who had previously taken the first shot, officials said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Targeted number of people:	1,34,42,000
Number of rural people:	1,10,40,000
Total vaccination centres:	15,287
Ward-based centres in rural areas:	13,800
Centres in city corp areas:	433
Centres in municipal areas:	1,054
Vaccine for rural areas:	Sinopharm
Vaccine for city corp areas:	Moderna

Export-oriented factories reopen from August 1

Experts fear infection rise

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Apparently giving in to pressure, the government has decided to allow export-oriented factories to reopen from August 1 amid the ongoing “strict lockdown” enforced to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The cabinet division in a circular issued yesterday said all export-oriented industries and factories will be out of the purview of restrictions from August 1 considering the “overall situation”.

The circular was issued a few hours after the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) disclosed that it recommends extending the current countrywide lockdown, considering the worsening Covid-19 situation.

“We have advised the public administration ministry to extend the lockdown. If the government reopens everything, infections will definitely rise,” Prof ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the DGHS, told reporters yesterday.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

ROHINGYAS IN BANGLADESH

No question of their integration with locals

Govt tells World Bank on suggestion for giving them privileges, says repatriation its only goal

PORIMOL PALMA and REJAUJUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh does not want any measures that promote integration of the Rohingyas into the local society.

This message was conveyed to the World Bank by the government after the former sought opinions on preparing a global Refugee Policy Review Framework.

“In a meeting with the World Bank and UN officials on Wednesday, we clearly stated that Rohingya repatriation is our only goal. We cannot allow freedom of movement or other privileges, including education and job, like those enjoyed by the Bangladeshis,” Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the World Bank has sent a letter attaching a document that spoke of Rohingyas’ freedom of movement, birth certificate, privileges of education and job, and infrastructure.

“This document is not Bangladesh-specific, but we said we won’t agree with these suggestions. We agreed to provide education to Rohingyas under Myanmar curriculum and language so that it becomes useful when they return to Myanmar. The World Bank and the UN have agreed.”

Momen said Bangladesh is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees and it defines Rohingyas as forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens, not refugees. Myanmar has committed crimes against the Rohingyas and Bangladesh being a victim of the situation extend help, he added.

Some one million Rohingyas currently live in Bangladesh. Most of them had fled a military crackdown in Myanmar’s Rakhine state in 2017. Repatriation has not been possible over the years as Rohingyas denied returning, saying conditions in Rakhine were not safe and they had no guarantee of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Former deputy speaker Ali Ashraf no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Md Ali Ashraf, a veteran lawmaker of the ruling Awami League, died at a city hospital yesterday.

He was 74.

“Prof Ashraf died around 3:50pm at the city’s Square Hospital,” his personal assistant Jashim Uddintold The Daily Star.

A freedom fighter, former deputy speaker of parliament and five-time MP, Prof Ashraf is survived by his wife, one son, four daughters and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He became a lawmaker for the first time from Cumilla-11 in the maiden Jatiya Sangsad election of Bangladesh in 1973.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



The pandemic has plunged the people from low-income families into financial despair. For Johura Begum, it has caused great hardship since she lost her job as domestic help last month. Her ailing husband cannot go out for work either. Holding her two-year-old son Bishal on her lap, Johura waits for alms from pedestrians in the capital’s Tejgaon area on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

RISE IN DENGUE CASES IN CITY

Key terminals, depots turn Aedes hotspots



HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Major terminals and depots in the capital have become ideal breeding grounds for Aedes mosquito, the carrier of dengue virus, thanks to puddles formed in discarded tyres and plastic containers.

Plastic barrels that are filled with rainwater and left untouched for days are also common around the terminals, giving the Aedes larvae ample spaces to grow and multiply. Meanwhile, more than 2,400 people have been infected with the dengue virus over the past few months.

In recent visits to bus terminals in Sayedabad, Gabtoli and Mohakhali, Tejgaon truck terminal, and BRTC bus

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

BANGLADESH UPDATE **13,862** New cases in 24hrs **12,40,115** Total cases **20,467** Deaths **10,64,195** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **4,218,907** Deaths **197,629,067** Total cases

Vast areas of coastal region inundated

Incessant rains trigger flash-flood; situation may deteriorate further in Barishal, Khulna

STAR REPORT

Flashfloods caused by incessant rain inundated vast areas in the country's coastal regions in the last couple of days.

The situation may further deteriorate today in Barishal and Khulna, read a bulletin of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

The report added that the heavy downpour may occur in the country's south-western region.

On the other side, the situation may improve in the Chattogram region, read the bulletin that was released at 9:00am yesterday.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on the flood situation.

In Cox's Bazar, some four lakh people in eight upazilas have been marooned due to the flood. Of them, two lakh are residents of Chakaria upazila, the worst flood-affected area.

The water levels of the Bakkhali and the Matamuhuri rivers in Cox's Bazar raised abnormally due to the rain and hilly water flow from upstream.

Households, farmlands, ponds, business institutions, toilets and tube-wells in Chakaria have been submerged.

Even, road communications collapsed. People were travelling from one village to another by boat.

Many portions of Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road, Eidgaon-Eidgor road and Ramu-Moriccha road have gone under water.

Flood-hit people have taken shelter at safe places. People are suffering from an acute shortage of drinking water and food.

Few flood protection dams in some places in Chakaria were breached due to excessive water flow from upstream hills, said officials of the Water Development Board (WDB).

"Now, we are afraid that our municipal protection dam may collapse any time," said Chakaria municipality Mayor Alamgir Chowdhury.

People are afraid of a landslide as incessant rain has been continuing since last Monday, said locals.

Lawmakers, government authorities and peoples' representatives of different local government bodies were distributing relief materials among the flood-hit people.

At least 24 people have so far died in a landslide, heavy rains and hilly water flow since Monday in Cox's Bazar.

In Barishal, low-lying areas of Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna districts have been inundated as the water levels of adjoining rivers have raised due to heavy rains, excessive flow of water from upstream, high tide and gusty wind.

"People of our area are passing hard days as our residents and farmlands have been submerged and fish enclosures have been washed away," said Ershad Machhi, a resident of Dhania area of Kukri-Mukri union under Char Fashion upazila of Bhola.

"The weather is so rough that we cannot go for fishing," said Alauddin Majhi, a fisherman of Tulatuli village in Bhola Sadar upazila.

In Satkhira, low-lying areas in three upazilas have been submerged due to flashflood. Crops and vegetables have been damaged while many fish enclosures were washed away.

"There were around 68,000 fish enclosures in our upazila. Some 70 to 80 percent of them have been washed away," said Moshir Rahman, the district fisheries officer.

"I cultivated Aman paddy in two bighas of land. But all of my paddies have been damaged by floodwater," said Drubojoti Sarker, a farmer of Munshiganj village in Shyamnagar upazila.

People of some areas are facing electricity outages due to damaged wire by the gusty wind.

Our correspondents from Cox's Bazar, Barishal and Satkhira contributed to this report.



A newly constructed boat shaped footbridge is ready to be opened to pedestrians in the capital's Dholaiapur area. The structure has been built on the Dhaka-Mawa highway under the supervision of Bangladesh Army to help people cross the road safely.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

2 killed in attack on Israel-linked oil tanker

AFP, London

Two crew members of an oil tanker managed by a company owned by a prominent Israeli businessman were killed in an attack off Oman, the vessel's London-based operator said yesterday.

Analysts said the attack bore all the hallmarks of tit-for-tat exchanges in the "shadow war" between Israel and Iran, in which vessels linked to each nation have been targeted in waters around the Gulf.

Zodiac Maritime, owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, said the incident on board the MT Mercer Street on Thursday left one Romanian and a UK national dead.

"We are not aware of harm to any other personnel," it said in a statement, adding that the Japanese-owned tanker was back under the control of its crew, and was steaming to an undisclosed "safe location" under US naval escort.

Infection rate rises

FROM PAGE 1

The positivity rate was 39 percent in Narayanganj, 44 percent in both Munshiganj and Gazipur and 45 percent in Manikganj last week. These four districts of Dhaka division are well known for industrial hubs.

This week, the infection rate has dropped by 3 to 20 percent in the four bordering districts -- Nilphamari, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Panchagarh.

According to DGHS data, the infection rates in Khagrachari, Bandarban and Rangamati rose by 12 to 46 percentage points in one week.

13,862 MORE INFECTED Meanwhile, 13,862 new Covid-19 infections were reported in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, taking the overall number of infections to 12,40,115 in the country, said a DGHS press release.

The current positivity rate is 30.77 percent and the total positivity rate is 16.08 percent.

A total of 45,044 samples were tested across the country during the 24-hour period.

The health authorities reported 212 deaths from the virus in the same period.

With this, the total number of Covid deaths in the country now stands at 20,467. The overall death rate is 1.65 percent.

Among the 212 deceased, 119 were men and 93 women.

Of them, one was aged between 11 and 20 years, five between 21 and 30, 15 between 31 and 40, 25 between 41 and 50, 48 between 51 and 60, 69 between 61 and 70, 32 within 71-80, 11 between 81 and 90 and six between 91 and 100 years, said the release.

At least 13,975 Covid patients have recovered during the 24 hours. The total number of recoveries now stands at 10,64,195 and the recovery rate is 85.81 percent.

Former deputy

FROM PAGE 1

Later, he was elected MP from Cumilla-7 (Chandina) in 1996 and subsequently re-elected in 2008, 2014 and 2018.

In 2001, he was elected deputy speaker of the seventh parliament.

According to the Jatiya Sangsad website, Prof Ashraf was involved in consultancy, insurance and agro-based business, apart from politics.

He was admitted to Square Hospitals on July 9 with gallbladder stone-related infections and shifted to the Intensive Care Unit on July 11 when his condition deteriorated.

The senior lawmaker had been kept on life support since July 23 following further deterioration in his health.

Prof Ashraf was born in Gollai village under Chandina upazila on November 17, 1947.

He was the chairman of the Committee on Government Assurances, Jatiya Sangsad. Besides, he was also a member of the Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure, Committee on Petitions, Standing Committee on Public Accounts Committee and Standing Committee on Ministry of Finance.

He attained his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from Dhaka University in 1967 and 1968 respectively, according to the biography of MPs of the ninth parliament published by the then Jatiya Sangsad.

Prof Ashraf was involved in teaching at different colleges.

After serving as the director in the foreign ministry of Mujibnagar Government in 1971, he was the central finance and planning secretary of AL and Cumilla North District AL president for a long time since 2002.

He was the author of several books in both English and Bengali, including "the ethical standard of parliamentarians" and "disbarments and human security".

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah, different ministers, state ministers, distinguished personalities, leaders of different political parties and organisations have expressed deep shock at the demise of the veteran MP.

In separate condolence messages, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said he had played an important and positive role in practising parliamentary democracy in the country.

"We have lost a patriotic people's leader and a soldier of the ideology of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the demise of Prof Ali Ashraf," the PM said in her condolence message.

Hospitals in city overwhelmed

FROM PAGE 1

Shipra are being refused admission to public hospitals in the capital as those are already overburdened with Covid patients.

As the number of Covid deaths and infections keep surging, the hospitals find themselves in a major crisis: most of those don't have any empty beds while many others are treating patients beyond their capacity.

And hundreds of patients arriving in the capital from different districts are suffering as they are denied admission to hospitals already stretched to their limits. They are left with no choice but to return home.

At present, there are 64 government and non-government hospitals in the capital for Covid patients, according to the dashboard of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of those, only seven hospitals, including public and private ones, had around 50 percent beds available till Thursday.

All the major government hospitals treating Covid patients, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Mugda Medical College Hospital, Kurmitola General Hospital, DMCH, Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital, and DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital have been overwhelmed over the past few days.

Most of these hospitals are taking new patients only when beds become vacant after admitted patients die or are discharged, said officials concerned.

There are 40 private hospitals in the city which are treating Covid patients. However, the bed occupancy rate in all of them was nearly 100 percent as of Thursday, according to the DGHS data.

Visiting different hospitals across the capital in the last couple of days, these correspondents saw long queues of patients and lines of ambulances outside the healthcare facilities. The patients, many of them in ambulances, were seeking admission, but there was hardly any space inside.

Tanjila Begum, a 22-year-old Covid patient from Shariatpur, is one of those who had to return home failing to get admission at the DMCH.

Her chest CT scan report showed that her lungs were infected. When she started having difficulties in breathing, her father Anwar Gain panicked.

"There is no hospital in Shariatpur where my daughter can get the oxygen support she needs. The nearby Faridpur Medical College Hospital is

overcrowded and does not have any ICU facility. So, we rushed to Dhaka," Anwar said.

He further said he first took his daughter to Mugda Medical College Hospital, only to find that all the beds there were already occupied.

"Then I brought her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and have been waiting here for around 24 hours," said an utterly frustrated Anwar with her daughter gasping for breath inside an ambulance.

Later, they headed back to Shariatpur. An official at the DMCH's admission department said they were struggling to handle the rush of coronavirus patients.

"We are currently taking new patients only when a seat becomes vacant..."

DMCH Director Brig Gen Nazmul Haque said, "We have a total of 705 dedicated beds for Covid patients, whereas we are accommodating more than 730 patients now. We exceeded our capacity much earlier."

"Now, we are treating patients at the outdoor department, and referring them to other hospitals. A new patient can get admitted only when an admitted patient dies or is discharged."

A notice hung at the entrance to the Mugda hospital yesterday said the hospital did not have any seats available for Covid patients, not even in the ICU.

Long queues of ambulances carrying critical patients were seen outside. The patients and their families were desperately hoping that a few seats would fall vacant.

One such patient was Pushpa Begum, a 50-year-old woman from Narayanganj, who tested positive for Covid four days ago.

She was taken to the 300-bed Narayanganj hospital. As her condition worsened, her family was advised to take her either to the DMCH or the Mugda hospital.

Pushpa was turned away by both the public hospitals. She was advised to take oxygen support at home.

Talking to The Daily Star on Thursday, Dr Asim Kumar Nath, director of the Mugda hospital, said, "All our beds have been occupied over the last two days. A new patient can be admitted only if a bed becomes vacant. We give priority to the extremely critical patients for admission."

For Covid patients and their families, such a situation can be frustrating

No question of their integration

FROM PAGE 1

citizenship in Myanmar.

"We asked the World Bank and the United Nations to create conditions in Rakhine so that Rohingyas can return at the earliest," the foreign minister said.

Asked about the proposed Refugee Policy Review Framework, Mercy Tembon, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, said it is supporting Bangladesh with \$590 million grant financing to address the needs of Rohingyas until their safe and voluntary return to Myanmar, and to minimize the impact on the host communities.

In an email reply, she said the Refugee Policy Review Framework aims at evaluating the effectiveness of the World Bank's support to refugee hosting countries across the world in their efforts to strengthen relevant policies and institutions to best manage the situation.

"The review for Bangladesh summarises the existing policies, practices and implementation," Tembon said.

A finance ministry official said the WB wrote a letter to the Economic Relations Division early June and copies of it were sent to several ministries, including foreign affairs and disaster management, for opinions.

"We are collating the opinions and

will send those to the World Bank," he said, adding that the last date for submitting opinions was July 31, but it was extended by a few days.

According to the WB, it reviews the refugee policy framework every three years before mobilising fund under International Development Assistance (IDA) window, which provides grants for the refugee hosting countries. Presently, 16 refugee hosting countries are provided grant under this window.

Different countries have different policies on refugee management, but the global lender only looks at how effectively the fund is being used.

For example, Pakistan provides mobile SIM cards to refugees to track them. Some countries allow freedom of movement and some others don't. That is the policy of particular countries, officials said.

They said the World Bank also in its review policy framework wrote that the fund is used not only for the refugees but also for the local host communities.

Foreign Minister Momen said the international community had recommended giving Rohingyas freedom of movement, scope for jobs and other privileges.

"We cannot do it. We call upon the world leaders, and the UN to ensure quick repatriation of the Rohingyas. We already have enough burden to bear," he said.

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Human Resources Division
 Head Office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

Target 60 lakh jobs in 6 days

FROM PAGE 1

Inoculating the elderly people in the rural areas will be a challenge because there is no database on the target population, experts said.

"We can vaccinate one crore or more people in a month if the doses are available. We will try to vaccinate as many people as possible within a short time," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the NID is required to register for inoculation. "But those who don't have the NID will also get the job. There will be a special arrangement for them."

According to Election Commission officials, there are around 11 crore NID holders in the country. Bangladesh has recorded 12,40,115 cases of Covid-19 and 20,467 deaths from the disease as of yesterday. Over 79 percent of those who died were aged over 50.

The country has so far inoculated 1.18 crore people, which is just over four percent of the population. And only 43 lakh of them got both the first and second shots. According to the World Health Organization, at least 80 percent of the population has to be inoculated to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The government will vaccinate people with 1 crore 34 lakh and 42 thousand doses from August 7. Of the doses, 1 crore 10 lakh 40 thousand will be administered in rural areas.

"The 60 lakh doses to be administered in six days are meant for those who have yet to get the first shot. The second dose will be administered in the same fashion," said a health official familiar with the development.

China's Sinopharm vaccine will be administered in the rural areas and district towns while the Moderna vaccine will be administered in the city corporation areas, he said.

The government has 55 lakh doses of the Moderna

and 51 lakh doses of Sinopharm in stock.

A total of 1.10 crore doses will be administered in 13,800 rural wards, 15.58 lakh doses in 433 wards in the cities, and over 43,000 thousand doses in 1,054 wards in the municipalities.

In every ward of the city corporation, there will be one permanent and two temporary centres, while in the municipality areas, there will be a vaccination team in each ward. The team will inoculate people four days a week.

Ward councillors will decide where to inoculate the residents of their respective area.

Officials will keep an account of the individuals who get the shots, and the information will be used to update the national database.

CHALLENGES APLENTY

At an inter-ministerial meeting, chaired by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, at the Cabinet Division held on Tuesday, it was decided that local government representatives will be engaged in implementing the plan.

"The ministries will issue circulars and the Press Information Department (PID) has been asked to launch a mass campaign," the health minister said.

Renowned virologist and former VC of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital Prof Dr Nazrul Islam said community engagement is the key to make the drive a success.

"The local public representatives should create awareness in every village, so that people voluntarily come to the centres," he said.

Public health expert Be-Nazir Ahmed said the main challenge would be to inoculate the elderly ones.

"Who is there to see if they don't come for the vaccine?" he asked.

Before embarking on this special drive, the government should have prepared a database of those who are being prioritised.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Coppersmith Barbet, National Botanical Garden, Dhaka.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

BARBET

It was hypnotic: a persistent *tunk-tunk-tunk* sound with a muted texture, like a blacksmith tapping a metal pot with a hammer, its rhythm precise as a metronome. I became aware of this sound outside on a morning several years ago. It was soft enough to blend into the city's background noise but once my ear latched on to it, I couldn't shake it off. Standing in the balcony I tried to pinpoint its location. It was emanating from the grizzled old *Koroi* tree that stood across the street. I eventually spotted the source: a strikingly colourful sparrow-sized green bird perched on a branch. It had a crimson forehead, yellow and red throat, and bright yellow patches above and below its eyes.

At that time I was just entering the world of birds so it took me a while to identify it: a Coppersmith Barbet. It lives on plant matter, most notably figs of banyan trees, but it will also take moths or flying termites. Excavating nest holes as deep as thirty inches inside trunks, it lays 2-4 eggs. Breeding takes place between November and June. The bird is found in wooded areas, parks, deciduous forests and urban gardens.

Barbets comprise eighty-two species of birds spread over parts of Asia, Africa and South America. They get their name from the bristles that grow around their beak and chin. These colourful birds are related to toucans of South America. The Coppersmith Barbet I saw is one of five barbet species seen in Bangladesh all year. The others are Lineated, Blue-throated, Blue-eared, and Great Barbet.

I have seen the Lineated Barbet in rural areas around Dhaka – for example, Purbachol and Keraniganj – as well as

in our protected forests. Its neck and head are covered by brown and white stripes; the rest of its body is plain green. Bulbous eyes with yellow circles around them and a disproportionately large pink beak give it a goofy, comical appearance.

The Blue-throated Barbet, on the other hand, is elegant with a blue face and neck and red patches on top of its head. I have seen it in our forests, but never in urban areas. The tower at Satchori National Park is a good location to watch for it. Most of the time, its green colour allows it to camouflage effortlessly in the trees, but in spring, it becomes more conspicuous as it looks for a mate.

Our other two barbets are less common. The Blue-eared Barbet, which I saw once in Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, looks a bit more exotic than the Blue-throated Barbet, with a blue throat and three distinct red patches surrounding the ear which is covered by a circle of blue. The Great Barbet, which happens to be the largest barbet in the world, is a multi-coloured bird the size of a crow. It is very rare in Bangladesh and seen only in higher altitude forests of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Like other fruit-eating birds, barbets help the environment by spreading seeds in the forest. While our barbets are not particularly endangered, they do face loss of habitation as trees and forests are cut down. If you have one or more large trees – particularly banyan or *Koroi* – nearby. You might keep an eye out for these pretty birds.

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

WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Let victims' voices lead the way

IOM calls for joint action against trafficking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh yesterday called for a joint effort to battle the heinous crime in trafficking in persons so that it can be eradicated from Bangladesh and beyond.

On the occasion of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2021, IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri said the day is a reminder of risks faced by an estimated 7,00,000 Bangladeshis who choose to migrate abroad every year.

Vulnerable migrants are often the target of traffickers and find themselves in situations that can result in debt bondage, forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced marriages and other forms of modern slavery, Gigauri said in a message on the day.

"The Covid-19 situation has further exacerbated these problems," he said, adding that migrants have become even

We must listen to the survivors of trafficking to hear about their experiences, their stories, and not only learn from them but use that knowledge to improve our interventions and our response to stop trafficking

IOM BANGLADESH CHIEF OF MISSION GIORGI GIGAUURI

more vulnerable as some have lost their jobs while some are more desperate, looking for new jobs and new opportunities to feed their families.

Mentioning that trafficking affects people on an individual level, on a family level, and the level of society, he said the UN

migration agency in Bangladesh has been working closely with the government to address the challenges.

"We are redoubling our efforts and looking at not only the whole of government but the whole of society approach," he said.

"As the Bangladesh UN Network on Migration (BDUNNM), we are also bringing together civil society and UN agencies to do our utmost to assist these migrants in need," he further said.

On the theme of this year's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons -- "Victims' Voices Lead the Way", he said, "We must listen to the people who have been affected so that we can assist them better."

"We must listen to the survivors of trafficking to hear about their experiences, their stories, and not only learn from them but use that knowledge to improve our interventions and our response to stop trafficking," he added.

D-30 DISABILITY IMPACT LIST

Vashkar Bhattacharjee honoured

CITY DESK

Vashkar Bhattacharjee, national consultant for accessibility of a2i, has been selected as an honouree for the 2021 D-30 Disability Impact List.

The D-30 Disability Impact List, through a nomination and selection process, honours unique accomplishments of the most impactful community members around the world, said a press release.

Born with a disability, Bhattacharjee also serves as programme manager of Young Power in Social Action.

Bhattacharjee is a devoted social worker for challenges surrounding disability and, in particular, accessibility and inclusion.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Monsoon proper is sweeping across the country. In the last couple of days, the weather has been really conducive for kite-flying, and this youngster from Motijheel's Railway Colony field didn't want to miss out. With his elegantly designed bird-kite, he set out to indulge in another afternoon of pale blue light and flock of clouds yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

295 killed in accidents during 15-day Eid rush

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 273 people were killed and 447 injured in 240 road crashes in 15 days during the rush for the last Eid-ul-Azha, said a Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity report yesterday.

Besides, 11 were killed and five injured in nine rail-related accidents while 11 died, 36 sustained injuries and 21 went missing in 13 waterway accidents from July 14 to 28, it said.

The passenger welfare platform prepared the report following media reports and revealed it during a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

While presenting it, Samity secretary general Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury said seven of the 15 days, during which they compiled the data, were under "lockdown".

As the government relaxed lockdown for eight days centring Eid, numerous private cars, motorcycles and three-wheelers took to the streets along with public transports like bus and minibus.

As a result, the number of road accidents and deaths were relatively high compared to the previous occasions, said Mozammel. However, the number of accidents came down after the lockdown resumed from

ACCIDENTS	NUMBER	KILLED	INJURED
Road	240	273	447
Rail	9	11	5
Waterway	13	11	36

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Training for drivers
- Lanes for slow vehicles
- Applying road transport act
- Sufficient lighting on highways

July 23, he added.

Like previous occasions, the number of motorcycle accidents was the highest. At least 91 people were killed and 59 injured in 87 accidents during this time, which is 36.25 percent of the total accidents and 34.06 percent of total deaths, said Mozammel.

Of the victims, 106 were drivers, 19 were transport workers and 64 pedestrians, he said.

Total 25.83 percent accidents took place in head-on collision while in 44.25 percent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVE

Bakery in Old Dhaka fined Tk 50,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday fined a bakery in Old Dhaka Tk 50,000 after finding Aedes mosquito larvae at the site.

The mobile court, led by DSCC executive magistrate Tanzila Kabir Trapa, also filed a case against the authority of the bakery -- Jahan Toast Special Biscuit Factory -- of Mim Food at Debidas Ghat Lane.

The mobile courts also conducted awareness campaigns in Dhaka south areas, said DSCC Zone-3 Executive Officer Babor Ali Meer.

10 Bangladeshis return after serving jail term in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Ten Bangladeshi men and women returned to the country through Benapole check-post on Thursday night after serving three years in jail for entering India illegally.

Indian police handed them over to Benapole immigration police.

"They fell victim to brokers at different times and went to Bangalore to find better jobs, where Indian police arrested them. Later, they were sentenced to three years in prison for trespassing," said Tawfiq Hossain, field officer of Rights NGO in Jashore.

"After staying in India for a year and a half upon completing their jail term, they returned to the country through a special travel permit," said OC Ahsan Habib of Benapole check post.

A relatively quiet Dhaka

STAR REPORT

Compared to other days, roads of the capital were relatively quiet yesterday, the eighth day of the countrywide "strict lockdown", as it was a weekend.

This correspondent visited Asad Gate, Farmgate, Panthapath, Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Ring Road, Adabor, and Dhanmondi areas and witnessed the scenario.

Police, Rapid Action Battalion, Border Guard Bangladesh and army personnel were seen checking vehicles by setting up check-posts at important points. But there was lax monitoring at some check-posts, where there were no law enforcers.

Police in Dhaka yesterday detained 381 individuals for being outdoors without valid reason. Mobile courts fined 108 individuals and shops Tk 67,940, while Dhaka Metropolitan Police's traffic division fined 321 motorists Tk 8.17 lakh.

RUSH AT HIGHWAYS, WATERWAYS

Meanwhile, despite the lockdown, people, especially employees and workers, who went to their village homes during Eid, are coming back to the capital, using different modes

of transport.

Such inter-district travelling, defying health-safety protocols and lockdown rules, could worsen the Covid-19 situation in the country, expert fear.

The country has been witnessing nearly 200 deaths a day for the past two weeks, and new records of daily cases and deaths are being made almost every other day.

Amid the situation, hundreds of people travelled across the Padma river on ferries running on Daulatdia-Paturia and Bangla Bazar-Shimulia routes, despite the gloomy weather.

Crowds of Dhaka-bound passengers and vehicles flocked to Bangla Bazar ferry terminal in Madaripur since yesterday morning. Physical distancing could not be maintained on the crowded ferries, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Out of 17 ferries, nine were operating on the route.

A similar situation prevailed on Daulatdia-Paturia ferry route.

The government's decision to reopen export-oriented establishments from Sunday may have been the reason, said officials.

As public transport has been kept

off roads, passengers were seen taking detours, changing vehicles multiple times to go to their destinations by road. A rush of travellers was observed on Dhaka-Tangail, Dhaka-Aricha, Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Chattogram highways, as people were boarding whatever vehicle was available.

Roads and highways in Manikganj were crowded with Dhaka-bound passengers, as they were returning on pickup vans, motorcycles, rickshaws, and in private cars and minibuses, paying exorbitant fares.

At least several hundred women, men and children were seen waiting for vehicles on the highway in front of Water Development Board in Manikganj Bus-stand area around 3:30pm, reports our Manikganj correspondent. People were stumbling to board vehicles as soon as they arrived.

At least 20-22 passengers were being carried on a pickup van going from Manikganj to Nabinagar in Savar, with a single person's fare being Tk 400. A motorcycle was carrying two passengers, taking Tk 300-400 from each, and a rickshaw-van was carrying 12 people, taking Tk 250 per person.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Six die in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

At least six people were killed and two injured in two road accidents in Gaibandha's Palashbari and Gobindaganj upazilas yesterday.

In Palashbari, four people were killed and two injured when a goods-laden truck ran over a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Bogura-Rangpur highway in Gidarpur area around 5:30pm, said fire service and police officials.

The CNG-run auto-rickshaw and truck were trying to overtake each other which may have caused the accident, said Sayed Md Emran, station officer of Palashbari Fire Service and Civil Defence Station.

The auto-rickshaw driver and two passengers including a woman died on the spot and three others sustained injuries, the official said.

Another person succumbed to his injuries while being taken to a hospital,

said Masud Rana, officer-in-charge of Palashbari Police Station.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Palashbari Upazila Health Complex. The truck fled the scene after the accident, said the OC.

Identities of the victims could not be known immediately, he added.

In Gobindaganj, two persons died in a motorcycle accident on Rajabir-Gobindaganj road around 10am, said police.

Ful Mia (23) and his friend Abdus Salam (21) were killed on the spot, said police.

They were on a motorcycle on their way to Pirapur village from Hathatpara. The rider hit a roadside tree as he lost control over the vehicle near Panditpur village while taking a U-turn, said Milon Chatterjee, inspector of Boiraghat Police Investigation Centre under Gobindaganj upazila.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, ANISUR RAHMAN

Despite the lockdown, roads of the capital witnessed heavy traffic and public movement in the last week, but there were fewer vehicles and pedestrians yesterday, mainly due to it being a weekly holiday. Meanwhile, authorities were busy questioning those who were out on the roads, and even fined many for violating rules. The photos were taken from Khilgaon flyover, Nayabazar and Paltan areas.

Uncertainty over payment of dues goes

FROM PAGE 12

and without a salary for two months. Nothing can be more frustrating than this," the officer told The Daily Star.

"Some of my batchmates are in financial hardship; they are struggling to provide for their families. They could not sacrifice animals on Eid," said another SP.

Enraged, he said they were now seemingly out of service without doing any mischief. "It is a serious administrative failure," he added.

Only nine of them were internally posted on July 1 to various Rab battalions. Another SP among those posted in Rab was earlier suspended by the home ministry after his conversation with a police officer demeaning Rab was leaked.

Although Rab sources said the police officers could not be posted in Rab as there were only nine vacant deputy director posts, in an order on May 23, Rab Director General Abdullah Al-Mamun posted 32 Major or equivalent post officers of the armed forces to deputy director posts in Rab.

PHQ is now working to create new posts in various police units to ensure the postings of these officers in the quickest possible time, said PHQ officials.

They said the 48 SPs were posted in Rab against a 44 percent quota allocated by the home ministry for police during Rab's formation in 2004.

In the office order issued by the ministry on August 21, 2004, it was determined that 44 percent of Rab's manpower would be drawn from the Armed Forces Division, 44 percent from the police, six percent from the Border Guards Bangladesh, four

percent from the Ansar and Village Defense Party, and one percent each from the Coast Guard and civil administration on deputation.

The order also said this quota would remain allocated for the respective division, force, or organisation. If there was any shortage of officers in one or more posts, those would be filled by officers from another division, force, or organisation, but would not hamper the quota allocation.

But complications arose after Rab informed the home ministry that as per the Rab organogram, only nine SP-ranked officers can be posted as deputy director or company commander.

Rab officials said the SPs have all along been showing unwillingness to join Rab, which is why the deputy director posts were filled up by Majors or equivalent rank officers of the armed forces on deputation and as per government orders issued from time to time -- decreasing the quota of police in deputy director posts.

"Immediately after the posting of 48 SPs, a series of high-level meetings involving the home minister, a senior secretary at the ministry, IGP [inspector general of police], director general of Rab and others concerned were held to resolve the issue, but failed to settle it," an official said, requesting anonymity. Officials from the Prime Minister's Office also took part in one of the meetings, he added.

Rab, which started its journey with five battalions and 5,521 posts, now has 15 battalions with 11,700 posts. Total manpower of the elite force now stands at 9,520.

There are 108 posts for deputy director or company commander in

Rab -- with 97 officers from the armed forces, nine from the police, and one each from the civil administration and Ansar posted on deputation, said the Rab official.

Against such a backdrop, PHQ transferred 50 officials of the rank of additional SP and assistant SP on May 27 from Rab to various police units.

Signed by Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed, the transfer order asked the officials to hand over charge by June 3, else they will be considered stand-released the following day.

Finally, the government decided that PHQ would create new SP, additional deputy inspector general (additional DIG), and DIG posts to accommodate 38 SPs, said a top police official. Following the decision, Rab posted nine of the SPs.

The post for SPs and Majors or equivalent rank officers of the Air Force and Navy in Rab is deputy director or company commander. But since the formation of Rab, SP-ranked officers have shown unwillingness to work in these posts at Rab.

Explaining the reason for this unwillingness, an SP said it takes them many years to work up to that rank as they enter police service after completing their graduation while it takes much less time for an army, navy or air force officer to become a Major or equivalent ranked officer as they enter the service after passing the HSC or equivalent degree.

Contacted, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director (legal and media wing) of Rab, said nine SPs have already been posted and they will take measures upon the government decision regarding the others.

A relatively

FROM PAGE 3

Alif Hossain of Manikganj's Shibayala upazila, who works for a private company in Savar, said, "My employer wants me to come to office, or I won't have a job... Now, I'm standing here, waiting for a vehicle."

Amid rising cases of Covid-19, the government announced another lockdown, which banned operation of trains, domestic flights, passenger vessels, and personal vehicles, from July 23, after an eight-day break for Eid. There is, however, no restrictions on freight services.

The lockdown will end on August 5 midnight.

Vashkar

FROM PAGE 3

For the last 15 years, he has been working for persons with disabilities through policy formulation, advocacy, and innovating assistive and accessible technologies.

He was awarded the Unesco/Emir Jaber al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for successfully developing Bangladesh's first accessible dictionary.

While working to transform Chittagong University into an inclusive institution, Bhattacharjee converted over 200,000 pages of reading material to accessible formats and trained over 500 persons with disabilities on ICT skills and assistive technologies.

He also supports government initiatives to make information and services accessible for persons with disabilities during the pandemic.

Speaking about the honour, Bhattacharjee said receiving any recognition is a matter of great pleasure.

Bhattacharjee has also received other international and national recognitions for his contributions, such as Bangladesh Prime Minister's Award 2016, Henry Viscardi Award 2017, and International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing.

295 killed

FROM PAGE 3

cases, vehicles hit pedestrians from behind and 18.33 percent occurred while vehicles skidded off roads.

Among the accidents, 33.33 percent occurred on national highways while 43.33 percent on regional highways and 18.33 percent on feeder roads.

The organisation also gave eight recommendations -- including providing drivers with necessary training, constructing separate lane for slow-moving vehicles, clear road signs and sufficient lights on highways and applying the Road Transport Act properly to reduce road crashes.

Schoolgirl

FROM PAGE 12

picnic spot was shut due to ongoing lockdown. Thus, they started roaming around adjacent areas.

As they reached a nearby hillock, the trio raped the girl, he said.

Hearing the victim's scream, locals rushed to the spot and caught the trio red-handed. Two of the locals even demanded extortion from the alleged rapists, the police official said.

The victim also filed an extortion case against the two locals -- Hitler, 48, and Azad, 50 -- on the same day, he added.

Hitler and Azad were arrested and sent to jail via court, he said, adding that the victim was sent to Jamalpur General Hospital for medical tests.

Sponge

FROM PAGE 12

fossilised sponge bodies from this period, known as the early Neoproterozoic era.

Elizabeth Turner, a professor at Canada's Laurentian University's Harquail School of Earth Sciences, looked for evidence of sponges in 890-million-year-old reefs that were constructed by a type of bacteria that deposited calcium carbonate.

China

FROM PAGE 12

The Delta variant is more transmissible than the pathogens that cause SARS, Ebola and smallpox, and as easily spread as chickenpox, according to an internal US Centers for Disease Control presentation reported by The Washington Post and The New York Times.

It has driven recent surges around the world, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

India reported 44,230 new cases yesterday, the most in three weeks, the latest evidence of a worrying trend of rising cases that has forced one state to lock down amid fears of another wave of infections.

UN to send team

FROM PAGE 12

United States pressure.

PAK DIPLOMAT MUHITH DEFECTS
Abul Maal Abdul Muhih, who had been serving as economic

counsellor at the Pakistan embassy in Washington, disassociated himself from the Pakistan government and predicted that up to 15 million people might die of starvation in Bangladesh within the next three months. He would publicly announce his move on the NBC news television programme, "Commentator". A transcript of the programme released today quoted Muhih as saying, "Since May 25 I have been deferring this decision in the hope that President Yahya Khan would make a proper move for peaceful settlement of the crisis. No ground exists for such a hope anymore and so it becomes impossible to go on working for a self-destructive government."

"PAKISTAN IN A STATE OF SIEGE"

"Entire Pakistan is now in a state of siege," said J Saqi, a popular peasant and youth leader of Sind. In a statement he said along with East Pakistan at least two provinces of West

Pakistan -- Frontier and Baluchistan -- have been protesting against the tactics and conspiracies of the military junta.

"The Military Junta," he added, "is sowing seeds of hatred among different communities and is giving the world the impression that the two wings of the country are confronting each other."

MCCARTHY ASKS RECOGNITION
OF INDEPENDENT BANGLADESH
Eugene McCarthy, former senator from Minnesota, declared support today for an independent state of Bangladesh and reproved the United States government for being "unresponsive" to the urgency of the Pakistan crisis. He said repressive measures in East Pakistan came "very close to genocide", and it was "a pity" that the United States was still sending aid to West Pakistan. McCarthy said the United States should grant recognition to Bangladesh regime established by the autonomy movement.

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

Sinha murder trial halted

FROM PAGE 12

for his YouTube channel at the village of Marisshbunia right before he was shot. He had been residing in the area for a month for filming.

On August 5, Sinha's elder sister Sharmin Shahriar Ferdous filed a murder case accusing nine people, including Pradeep Kumar Das, then officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, Liaquat Ali, an inspector of the same police station, SI Nandadul Rakshit and several others with Teknaf Senior Judicial Magistrate Court.

Later, the Rapid Action Battalion was tasked with the investigation.

On December 13 last year, the Rab investigators submitted a charge sheet of the case to a Cox's Bazar court accusing 15 people. They found that the murder was pre-planned.

On June 27, the court framed charges against 15 accused, including former OC Pradeep and suspended inspector Liaquat, under section 302, 201, 109, 114, 120-B and 34 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The court then set July 26 to 28 for recording statements of the witnesses. According to court sources, the first 10 witnesses in the murder case were scheduled to testify on the consecutive days.

All the 15 accused are in jail now.

Faridul Alam, public prosecutor of Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court, told The Daily Star that no witnesses' statements were recorded on the scheduled dates.

"Eighty-three people were named in the charge sheet as witnesses. Once the normal proceedings of the court begin, other judicial proceedings, including recording of witness

statement, in the case will continue as usual," he said.

After the incident, Teknaf police claimed that they tried to search the vehicle of Sinha, but the former army official aimed his pistol at them, prompting them to shoot in self-defence.

They also claimed that they recovered drugs from the vehicle.

However, witnesses gave different accounts of the incident. They said Sinha got down from his car, put his hands over his head, and then the police members shot him.

Sinha's family termed the incident a cold-blooded murder and launched the legal battle seeking justice.

Sinha's associates Shipra Debnath and Shahedul Islam Sifat were acquitted of the narcotics cases filed against them by the police following Sinha's killing.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission has submitted a charge sheet to a Chattogram court in a case filed against former OC Pradeep and his wife Chumki Karon for reportedly amassing wealth of about Tk 2.36 crore from unknown sources and hiding information about their wealth of about Tk 59.59 lakh.

ACC's Assistant Director Riaz Uddin, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the court of Chattogram Senior Metropolitan Sessions Judge Sheikh Ashfaqur Rahaman on Monday, said ACC prosecutor Mahmudul Hoque Mahmud.

However, no date has been fixed for the hearing on the charge sheet as the court proceedings are suspended due to the lockdown, the prosecutor added.

India SC to hear plea

FROM PAGE 12

attempt by agencies and organisations to muzzle and chill the exercise of free speech and expression of dissent in India.

Mentioning the Pegasus matter before the bench yesterday morning, Sibal, also a senior Congress leader, said the issue "is an urgent matter that is making waves not just in India but internationally."

An international media consortium has reported that over 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers were on a list of potential targets for surveillance using Israeli firm NSO's Pegasus spyware.

The petition by Ram and Kumar said "such mass surveillance using a military-grade spyware abridges several fundamental rights and appears to represent an attempt to infiltrate, attack and destabilise independent institutions that act as critical pillars of our democratic set-up."

"Respondents (Home, Information Technology and Communications ministries) have not categorically ruled out obtaining Pegasus licences to conduct surveillance in their response, and have taken no steps to ensure a credible and independent investigation into these extremely serious allegations," the petition said.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)



International Labour Organization (ILO) invites proposals from interested Firm/Organization for Development of e-learning courses for Care Giving (Level-2) and Graphic Design in line with Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). The bidding documents can be downloaded from the UNGM website at: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/135631>

The deadline for submission of proposal is Tuesday, August 24, 2021, by 02:00 PM (BST time).

Fire guts

FROM PAGE 12

He said the fire might have originated from an electric short circuit.

María Hassan, civil surgeon in Barguna, said the fire gutted the freezers which used to preserve vaccines in the new building. There were no vaccine jabs in the damaged freezers, he added.

He added that the cause of the fire would be further investigated and the loss caused by the fire would be estimated.

NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY BANGLADESH CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Position	Requirements
Asst. Prof. of English (Literature)	At least CGPA 3.5 in BA in English (Hons) and at least 3.5 in MA in English (major in English Literature) from a reputed university, and minimum GPA 4.5, both in SSC & HSC. PhD degree holders along with university teaching experience will be given priority.
Asst. Prof. of English (Linguistics)	At least CGPA 3.5 in BA in English (Hons) and at least 3.5 in MA in English (major in Applied Linguistics) from a reputed university, and minimum GPA 4.5, both in SSC & HSC. PhD degree holders along with university teaching experience will be given priority.
IT Specialist	B.Sc. & M.Sc. in Computer Science or equivalent with a strong working knowledge on software management. Responsibility: Overseeing all NDUB Network Operating Systems corresponding to the strategies set by the university. Experience: Senior IT specialist for minimum 5 to 6 years in a reputed educational institution or a multinational corporation.

N.B.: (1) Every candidate is required to submit (a) a cover letter, (b) CV, (c) attested copies of Academic Certificates and Transcripts, (d) two copies of photographs (1 passport size and 1 stamp size). Write name of the desired position on the envelope. Only the shortlisted candidates will be called for written test and interview.

(2) All applications should reach: "The Registrar, Notre Dame University Bangladesh, P.O. Box 7, 2/A Arambagh, Motijheel, Dhaka 1000" by Monday, 16 August 2021.

Bangladesh Lamps Limited

House # 22, Road # 4, Block # F, Banani, Dhaka- 1213

NOTICE TO THE SHAREHOLDERS/ INVESTORS

[Transfer of Unpaid/Unclaimed Dividend to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund]

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) Directive No. BSEC/CMRRCD/2021-386/03 dated 14 January 2021 and the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (Capital Market Stabilization Fund) Rules, 2021, cash dividend, which remains unpaid or unclaimed or unsettled or undistributed for a period of 3 (three) years from the date of declaration or approval or record date or date of subscription or refund, as the case may be, are required to be transferred by the Company to the Capital Market Stabilization Fund (CMSF).

The concerned Shareholders/Investors are requested to claim the unpaid/unclaimed dividend amount on or before 27 August 2021 with proper supporting documents at the Share Office of the Company.

Pursuant to the said BSEC Rules, the details of the concerned Shareholders/Investors whose dividend amount are subject to transfer to CMSF have already been published on the Company's website: www.bll.com.bd

The Shareholders/Investors are requested to note that in case the Company does not receive any valid claim by 27 August 2021, the Company shall with a view to comply with the requirements of the said BSEC Directive and Rules, initiate the necessary actions to transfer the said dividend to the CMSF within 30 August 2021.

For Bangladesh Lamps Limited

Dhaka
30-07-2021

Mohammad Ruhan Miah
Company Secretary

TRANSTEC

BORDER CLASHES

Assam issues travel advisory for Mizoram

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian state of Assam has advised its residents to avoid travelling to neighbouring Mizoram after six policemen were shot dead in a rare border clash between the two regions.

India's northeast has been a hotbed of ethnic tensions since independence in 1947 and borders between its seven states are not clearly defined.

Assam and Mizoram have been wrangling over their frontier for decades, but tensions erupted on Monday with six police shot dead and more than 60 injured.

"Given the critical situation, the people of Assam are advised not to travel to Mizoram," the travel advisory issued Thursday said. It recommended those already there "exercise utmost caution".

Both states have blamed each other for the violence. K. Vanlalvena, a Mizoram politician in India's upper house, stoked tensions on Wednesday when he was quoted by media as saying his state was ready for more violence.

"More than 200 policemen entered our territory and they pushed back our policemen from our own posts and they gave firing orders first, before we fired," Vanlalvena reportedly said. "They are lucky that we didn't kill them all. If they come again, we shall kill them all."



Relatives of Shawkat Awad, who was killed by Israeli troops during clashes, according to the Palestinian health ministry, mourn during his funeral near Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. He was killed when Israeli troops clashed with protesters on Thursday during the funeral of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy who was shot dead by soldiers a day earlier, the Palestinian health ministry said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

FIRST JAILING IN HONG KONG UNDER CONTROVERSIAL SECURITY LAW

Waiter gets 9 yrs in jail

REUTERS, Hong Kong

The first person convicted under Hong Kong's national security law was jailed for nine years yesterday for terrorist activities and inciting secession, judges said, in a watershed ruling with long-term implications for the city's judicial landscape.

Former waiter Tong Ying-kit, 24, was accused of driving his motorcycle into three riot police last year while carrying a flag with the protest slogan "Liberate Hong Kong. Revolution of our times."

Tong's lawyer, Clive Grossman, told reporters outside the court the defence would appeal both the verdict and the sentence. He made no further comment.

Judges Esther Toh, Anthea Pang and Wilson Chan - picked by city leader Carrie Lam to hear national security cases - ruled on Tuesday that the slogan was "capable of inciting others to commit secession".

Yesterday, the judges sentenced Tong to 6.5 years for inciting secession and 8 years for terrorist activities. Of these, 2.5 years will run consecutively, resulting in a total term of 9 years.

In their reasons for sentencing, the judges wrote: "whoever carries

out terrorist activities with a view to intimidating the public in order to pursue political agenda, whatever that is, should be condemned and punished.

"But when the political agenda is secessionist in nature, it is our view that there is an added criminality



in that such an agenda is seeking to undermine national unification."

Human rights groups have criticised Tong's conviction, saying it imposes new limits on free speech, as well as the precedents set by the trial, which they say contrast with Hong Kong's common law traditions.

"The sentencing of Tong Ying-kit to nine years confirms fears that the national security law is not merely a tool to instil terror into government critics in Hong Kong; it is a weapon

that will be used to incarcerate them," Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Regional Director Yamini Mishra said in a statement.

The Hong Kong government did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the accusations but Secretary for Security Chris Tang told reporters he welcomed the sentence.

"The court has ruled that the slogan connotes Hong Kong independence," Tang said. "If you say this slogan, you need to bear the consequences."

Tong was denied bail in line with a provision of the national security law that puts the onus on the defendant to prove they would not be a security threat if released. Tong also did not get a trial by jury because of "a perceived risk of the personal safety of jurors and their family members or that due administration of justice might be impaired".

Hong Kong and Chinese authorities have repeatedly said that all the rights and freedoms promised to the former British colony upon its return to Chinese rule in 1997 were intact, but that national security was a red line. All cases have been handled in accordance with the law, both governments have said.

CDC: Delta variant as contagious as chickenpox

Warns strain causes more severe infection

REUTERS

The Delta variant of the coronavirus is as contagious as chickenpox and could cause severe illness, according to an internal document at the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The New York Times reported.

The variant was also more likely to break through protections afforded by the vaccines, the report said, adding that CDC's decision to reverse course on masking guidelines for fully vaccinated citizens on Tuesday is based on the document.

The agency had previously said the vaccinated did not need to wear masks indoors.

Still, the CDC's figures show that the vaccines are highly effective in preventing serious illness, hospitalisation and death in vaccinated people, according to experts quoted by the newspaper.

The Delta variant is more transmissible than the viruses that cause MERS, SARS, Ebola, the common cold, the seasonal flu and smallpox, the report said.

The immediate next step for the agency is to "acknowledge the war has changed", the report cited the document as saying before adding that the CDC is expected to publish additional data on the variant on Friday.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky told the Times that new research showed the vaccinated people infected with the Delta variant carried tremendous amounts of the virus in the nose and throat.

Washington has resorted to increasingly blunt methods to encourage the remaining citizens to be vaccinated, including requiring federal employees to get the job or be subject to mandatory testing and other restrictions. On Thursday, the Biden administration called on state and local governments to offer \$100 payments for newly vaccinated Americans, funded by \$350bn in aid granted under the American Rescue Plan Act.

NEWS
IN brief

Tunisia president promises democracy to US's Blinken

Tunisia's President Kais Saied on Thursday appointed a former national security adviser as interior minister, days after grabbing power in what his opponents labelled a "coup". The new appointee, Ridha Gharssalaoui, is also a top ranking former police official, local media reported. Tunisians are waiting for the appointment of a new prime minister and the announcement of a road map to emerge from the crisis. While the president's actions fuelled political turmoil, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday that Saied had promised him he was committed to democracy. But Blinken also urged action, including the restoration of parliament, which the Tunisian president suspended on Sunday for 30 days as he seized all executive powers. The young democracy had often been cited as the sole success story of the Arab Spring.

Lanka ends work-from-home option for civil servants

Sri Lanka yesterday announced it was ending its work-from-home option for civil servants, ordering all 1.2 million back to the office from Monday despite a surge in coronavirus infections. The island's top bureaucrat, PB Jayasundera, said there was no need for officials to work from home since "the majority... have been vaccinated". The move came even as Sri Lanka recorded a doubling in daily Covid-19 cases to around 2,000 compared to early July, with hospitals struggling to cope. Government figures show that 9.17 million people, or 43 percent of the population, have had one vaccine dose, and more than two million people have received two shots. Sri Lanka has recorded at least 4,300 coronavirus deaths and almost 305,000 infections in total, according to official data seen widely as an underestimate.



Philippines restores key US military deal

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has walked back on a decision to end a key military deal with the United States, his defence secretary said yesterday during a visit by Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin. Duterte told the United States in February last year he planned to axe the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) after Washington cancelled the visa of a close ally who led his internationally condemned war on drugs. The 1998 VFA provides the legal framework for the US to hold joint military exercises and operations in the Philippines and is a key component of their decades-long alliance. It is also seen as a bulwark against China's growing clout in the region.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

3 Americans create enough emissions to kill one: study

The lifestyles of around three average Americans will create enough planet-heating emissions to kill one person, and the emissions from a single coal-fired power plant are likely to result in more than 900 deaths, according to the first analysis to calculate the mortal cost of carbon emissions. The analysis draws upon several public health studies to conclude that for every 4,434 metric tons of CO2 pumped into the atmosphere beyond the 2020 rate of emissions, one person globally will die prematurely from the increased temperature. This additional CO2 is equivalent to the current lifetime emissions of 3.5 Americans. The research, published in Nature Communications,



illustrates the vast disparities in the emissions generated by people's consumption in different countries around the world. While it takes just 3.5 Americans to create enough emissions in a lifetime to kill one person, it would take 25 Brazilians or 146 Nigerians to do the same, the paper found.

Half of Myanmar may get infected by Covid in 2 weeks!

Britain warned the United Nations Security Council Thursday that half of coup-wracked Myanmar's population of 54 million could become infected with Covid-19 within the next two weeks. The UK convened the meeting in response to what it called the "dire" coronavirus situation in Myanmar, which has "spiralled" since the military seized control in February. Britain urged the Council to ensure resolution 2565, which demands ceasefires in conflict zones to allow the safe delivery of coronavirus vaccines, is respected in Myanmar. The impoverished nation has been in turmoil since the junta took power, with many hospitals ill-

equipped to cope with a surging caseload after many medical staff walked out in protest at the coup. The UN estimates that only 40 percent of the Myanmar's health care facilities are still able to function. The world body also estimates that junta forces have carried out at least 260 attacks against medical personnel and facilities, detaining at least 67 medical officials. "With the new wave of COVID-19 spreading like wildfire across the country, it is unfortunate that more lives will be lost as the Myanmar military weaponizes COVID-19 against the people," said national unity government spokesperson Susanna Hla Hla Soe.

Russian space module mishap knocks ISS out of position

Flight controllers have regained control of the International Space Station (ISS) after it was knocked off course by a newly arrived Russian research module. Thursday's mishap saw the jet thrusters of the multipurpose Nauka module inadvertently fire about three hours after it had latched on to the orbiting outpost, briefly throwing it out of control, officials with the United States space agency NASA said. The module's jets inexplicably restarted, causing the entire ISS to pitch out of its normal flight position some 400km (250 miles) above the Earth. Flight teams on the ground managed to restore the ISS's orientation by activating thrusters on another module of the orbiting



platform, NASA officials said. The malfunction prompted NASA to postpone until at least August 3 its planned launch of Boeing's new CST-100 Starliner capsule on a highly anticipated uncrewed test flight to the space station.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS, THE NEWS TODAY



JULY 31

1658 - Aurangzeb appoints himself Mongol emperor

1792 - Cornerstone laid for 1st US government building: US Mint in Philadelphia

1954 - Mount Godwin-Austen (K2) in the Himalayas was first climbed by an Italian expedition led by Ardito Desio.

1971 - Apollo 15 astronauts take 6½ hour electric car ride on Moon.

1991 - Russia and US sign long range nuclear weapons reduction pact.

2006 - Cuba's President Fidel Castro undergoes surgery, delegates government functions to brother Raul.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Export-oriented factories reopen

FROM PAGE 1

There is pressure to reopen the factories, the DG said, adding, "But if the infections increase, we will not be able to accommodate patients at the hospitals."

After an inter-ministerial meeting three days ago, officials told reporters that the government turned down the plea from businesspeople, including garment factory owners, to reopen the factories.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal chaired the meeting.

The government enforced the "strict lockdown" for 14 days from July 1. It relaxed the lockdown for eight days around Eid. The strict restrictions were again put in place on July 23 for two weeks. This time, the government also put restrictions on factories.

Amid bans on public transport, people have been rushing towards Dhaka in congested pickups or rickshaw vans even before the restrictions on factories were lifted yesterday.

Experts fear the move will increase new cases of Covid-19 as it will force a large number of workers, who went home during the Eid vacation, to return immediately.

Issuing a circular, the cabinet division yesterday said taking the overall situation into consideration, all the export-oriented industries and factories will be kept out of the purview of restrictions from August 1.

The circular signed by Rezaul Islam, deputy secretary, of the Cabinet Division, requested the authorities concerned to take necessary measures.

On Thursday, leaders of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry met Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at the latter's office at the Secretariat.

They requested the government to allow them to reopen all factories, including the export-oriented ones, citing that export might suffer severely from the continued restrictions.

Leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association and Bangladesh Textiles Mills Association were present among others at the meeting.

The cabinet secretary assured them of placing the issue to the government high-ups.

According to DGHS data, the infection rate increased in Dhaka and its adjacent districts Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur and Manikganj last week.

On an average, the positivity rate in Dhaka in the third week of July was 33 percent. Last week, that number went up to 35 percent.

The positivity rate was 39 percent in Narayanganj, 44 percent in Munshiganj and Gazipur and 45 percent in Manikganj last week. These four districts are well known as industrial and transport hubs.

Be-Nazir Ahmed, a former director of the DGHS, said there is no indication that the number of new cases are falling and this decision will do nothing but deteriorate the situation.

"Now, people will start coming from different parts of the country to their workplaces in Tongi, Gazipur and Savar areas and the infection will spread," he said.

Mohammad Shahidullah, chairman of the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, said, "Science says a two-week strict lockdown can break the chain of transmission. But the latest decision of the government will surely increase the risks."

Key terminals

FROM PAGE 1

depot in Gabtoli, these correspondents saw mosquito larvae in puddles in numerous discarded objects.

"Discarded tyres are one of the main places where the Aedes breeds," Prof Kabirul Bashar, entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, told this newspaper.

In a survey on the capital's terminals in June, a team from the university found Aedes larvae in 50 percent of the tyres that contained water.

Discarded tyres should not be left in places where those can get filled with clearwater.

At Sayedabad terminal, where mosquito larvae could be seen in the tyres left in the open, a bus driver said transport company employees dump tyres wherever they wish.

Noor Mohammad, owner of a garage, said he saw at least seven discarded tyres containing rainwater beside his garage after the lockdown began. The staffers of a tyre shop beside his garage had dumped those.

These correspondents also saw larvae in discarded tyres near the gate of a mosque at Tejgaon Truck Terminal.

In the Gabtoli area, discarded tyres can be found not only at the terminal but also near different shops selling automotive products and on the Flood Protection Embankment.

On the terminal premises alone, at least 60 barrels with stagnant rainwater were

left out in the open.

Rahmat, an employee of the owner of the barrels, said those were lying around because of the lockdown.

In response to a query, he said he had no idea that the dengue-spreading mosquito breeds in clear stagnant water.

Around 20 discarded tyres with rainwater were seen at Mohakhali terminal.

At BRTC bus depot, around 40 buses lying idle for several years can also be a good source of the Aedes.

Last week, both the Dhaka city corporations started conducting mobile courts to find Aedes mosquito larvae at houses, construction sites and other places. The courts fine owners of properties where Aedes larvae are spotted.

Meanwhile, at least 170 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals in the capital in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. Only six of them are from outside Dhaka.

With them, a total of 2,462 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, only 67 are from outside Dhaka.

In July alone, at least 1,896 people were diagnosed with the virus. Last month, 272 cases were detected while 43 were detected in May.

At present, 709 patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 30 elsewhere, according to the DGHS.

Aruna Biswas on her illustrious 30-year career, current projects

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Having been a part of numerous hit films in the span of her career, Aruna Biswas is a celebrated name in the world of cinema. Apart from acting in films and tele-fictions, Aruna has also directed television shows and commercials. On a candid chat with The Daily Star, the actor talks about her recent projects.

You are currently working on a new film, can you tell us about it?

I am currently directing a government-funded film, "Oshombhob". While directing a film, there are many aspects a director has to carefully consider, starting from the selection of the cast and crew. The preparations for a film are undoubtedly the most important part and I am working diligently.

I wish to present the audience with a story that they can enjoy with their family. This family drama will highlight several special features including some aspects from the world of Jatra.

How was the transition from an actor to a director?



I have been involved with acting for more than 30 years. I am still constantly learning, building myself. Previously, I directed a short-length film and a television drama. I prepared myself for the role of a director for a long time. I hope with everyone's love and support, this transition will turn into a successful one.

How did you start your journey as a film actor?

My debut film was "Chanpa Dangar Bou", directed by Nayak Raj Razzak. To start my journey, under the guidance of Nayak Raj was a big stepping stone in my life. Afterward, I worked on a film directed by Khan Ataur Rahman, "Parash Pathar". The beginning of my journey, under the guidance of two maestros of

film has been a powerful experience.

Since then, the journey had been a long one, full of love and achievement.

How is the experience of being a prestigious member of the censor board?

Due to the ongoing lockdown, the screening of films is currently postponed. I am extremely proud to be a member of the censor board. As part of our responsibility, we watch many films regularly and we are all very positive about our film industry. Once upon a time, we had the golden era of cinema in our country and we hope there will come a time when we can again get back to our golden days.

Moutushi Biswas makes a comeback with 'Spotlight'

Moutushi Biswas in 'Spotlight'.

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Since her first on-screen appearance in 2003, Moutushi Biswas garnered her career with well-known television fictions, reality shows, and movies. However, she was away from the limelight for one and a half years. Recently, she made a comeback with a strong role in "Spotlight", one of the three stories of the Bioscope original anthology series, "Bou Diaries".

Although she jumped into acting without any institutional background, she was inspired by eminent actors. At one point, she felt that television projects restricted her as an artist in many ways. She wanted to explore other opportunities.

"I decided to have a much-needed break from my busy schedule. With the ongoing pandemic, I didn't have a choice either. I took virtual acting courses and master classes at home. I also found joy in reading," she says.

Moutushi describes herself as a book collector. From literature to mythology, her shelf has books of different genres. She took part in acting workshops with Prachyanat and Bottola before the pandemic hit.

"There are certain methods of acting



that need practice. We can't really acquire them just by reading scripts. I used to work quite intuitively, but now, I have a better understanding of the purpose of acting," she explains.

In "Spotlight", written by Matia Banu Shuku and directed by Sameer Ahmed, she plays Nabila, a middle-aged actor who deals with a media crisis. "I was elated to play Nabila not just because she was the protagonist of the story,

but also because being in her shoes was a joyful experience," expresses Moutushi. "I think our middle-age years are graceful and beautiful. There was a time when female actors were thought to have a shelf life, but I think things are changing for the better with characters like Nabila." Renowned actor Ahmed Rubel stars opposite Moutushi in "Spotlight".

"I had a wonderful experience with my co-actors, and the director was really supportive," says Moutushi. The subtlety with which she played Nabila in "Spotlight" is noteworthy.

A lesser known fact about her is that she is trained in martial arts and classical dance. "My father thought that martial arts were not for girls. I had some primary training, but I did not continue," she explains. "My daughter Arya, on the other hand, is an orange belt. When the pandemic subsides, I might start martial arts training again. I am indebted to Shampa apa (Shampa Reza), who always inspires me to learn new things." Moutushi also enjoys reading and cycling with her daughter. She expressed that she is ready to play more challenging characters, moving forward.

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From 'Bachelor Point' to 'YouTumor'

Ziaul Hoque Polash reflects on his journey

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Popular actor-director Ziaul Hoque Polash made his name in showbiz with the role of Kaabila in Kajal Arefin Ome's comedy-drama series, "Bachelor Point". He has made a mark in the industry with his down-to-earth characters and impeccable comic timing in a short span of time.

His recent release, "YouTumor", a Chorki original film directed by Adnan Al Rajeev, has received wide appreciation. In a candid chat with The Daily Star, he talks about his journey, his achievements, and more.

Polash started out as an assistant director to filmmakers like Mostofa Sarwar Farooki and Ishtiaque Ahmed. Interestingly, he got the role of Kaabila when he was assisting Kajal Arefin Ome. While shooting for "Bachelor Point", he often had to wait between shots. "One day, the director just asked me to say a few lines in front of the camera," mentions Polash.

When the first season of "Bachelor Point" was released, his performance was a hit amongst the audience. As an actor, he has television shows such as "Tattoo", "Ex-Girlfriend", "Family Crisis", "Me & U", "Stadium", "Plural No 3rd Person", and "College Bunk" to his credit. His Eid special horror-comedy "Odbhoot" and family drama "Apon" were widely praised by the audience.

However, Polash's heart lies in directing. "I enjoy designing characters rather than playing them myself. I never aspired to be an actor," he explains.

Polash reunited with the team of "Bachelor Point" for Kajal Arefin Ome's Zee5 original "Thanda", which is about the lives of four bachelors living in Dhaka.

On the other hand, "YouTumor", starring Polash and Pritom Hasan in the lead roles, narrates the story of two friends, Don and Monty, who run a YouTube channel named 'Donty'. Polash gave a crowd-pleasing performance as the carefree, ambitious, and blue-haired Monty.

Polash appeared for his final master's exams while shooting for "YouTumor".

"Every day, I had to run to the set after finishing my exams. One day, I had to shoot a particularly difficult scene. It was freezing cold at night, and I had to be in a river for several hours. It was the experience of a lifetime," he asserts.

"I had the scope to experiment with my appearance for this role. I was adamant about colouring my hair, but now I am dealing with severe hair fall!" laughs Polash. "Jokes apart, Monty is a very flamboyant and colourful character, which needed to be reflected on the screen, especially through his fashion choices. His preferences are completely different from mine."

Coming from a humble household, Polash has always enjoyed interacting with people. "From being a nobody to people asking me for selfies and autographs, the journey was not easy. However, the transition from Kaabila to Monty has been amazing. I love getting to know my fans," he shares.

As of now, Polash is looking forward to his directorial venture "Revenge", starring Afran Nisho and Tasnia Farin.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Painting stories from the hills



Jayatu Chakma's artwork.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Jayatu Chakma from Rangamati portrays the struggles, insecurities, and uniqueness of the Jumma people through his art. His fascination towards art traces back to his childhood, as he started drawing as an extracurricular activity, and slowly fell in love with it. Jayatu completed his graduation and post-graduation in Fine Arts from the University of Chittagong and pursued a second master's from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

He usually works with acrylic paints, watercolours, and oil paints. Recently, he experimented with installations, mixed media, and sculptures.

"I pick subjects for my art from my surroundings. Nature is one of my biggest influences," he shared. "Through my work, I want



Jayatu Chakma



Jayatu Chakma's artworks.



PHOTO: COURTESY

to emphasise on the fact that we should work together to rebuild the confidence of marginalised groups, who are our national assets."

He also conveyed his concern regarding tourism and structural development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. "Development has an exchange policy with the society and environment. In order to establish balance, development should be practiced while ensuring that it does not threaten someone's existence," he asserted.

His recent virtual exhibition "Story of the Hill", arranged by EMK Center, featured 36 artworks that highlighted the struggles and realities of Bangladesh's indigenous people.

The figurative language in his art is based on the symbolic depiction of his own beliefs. Along with realistic portrayals of indigenous people, his paintings have symbolic representations of many local birds and animals, as well as other

artifacts used in their everyday lives.

He has been working on social issues like migration and human trafficking for a while. He portrays the ill-effects of migration through his paintings. "My concept of migration includes the changes in lifestyle and culture of an indigenous community. I want to show how changes in the national economic strategy of tourism affect indigenous people's professions and passions," says Jayatu, who uses his art as a form of protest.

Additionally, his artworks intend to illustrate the impact of building the Kaptai dam on the history of indigenous communities.

"Although being an artist often comes with financial difficulties and social stigma, I am determined to continue my artistic pursuits," he concluded.

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Post-Covid riches: CEOs hit record numbers paying employees pandemic-era salaries

DISGRUNTLED CORRESPONDENT

Business owners and CEOs in Chapasthan have started dominating the Forbes Richest list after the end of the Covid-22 pandemic, and it has largely been because no one but the one-percenters know that the pandemic has ended.

CEOs, or bosses in general, realised the untapped potential for riches during the first wave of economic recovery during the pandemic.

"When the pandemic started and the country went into shutdown mode, most of our employees were just happy to have jobs," a CEO of a telecom giant said under condition of anonymity.

"We cut their festival bonuses by half, reduced their salaries, and also realised we did not need as many workers to function," he or she said.

But when the economy started recovering even with the pandemic going on, which involved the poorer people risking their lives by venturing out of home and earning their daily bread, the bosses realised that they could continue skimming on wages and bonuses.

"So, even when we were raking in the profits, we did not take salaries up to pre-pandemic levels. We continued paying festival bonuses that were a fraction of what we paid before," said the CEO.

"That, combined with the reduced

workforce, meant much more for us. Essentially, we employ fewer people and pay them even less," chuckled the CEO.

But this rosy state of affairs was threatened when the pandemic started to end. That would mean the excuse of economic slowdown would no longer work on workers waiting for the tide to turn so that they could finally resume their former lives. That is where the Chapasthan government stepped in.

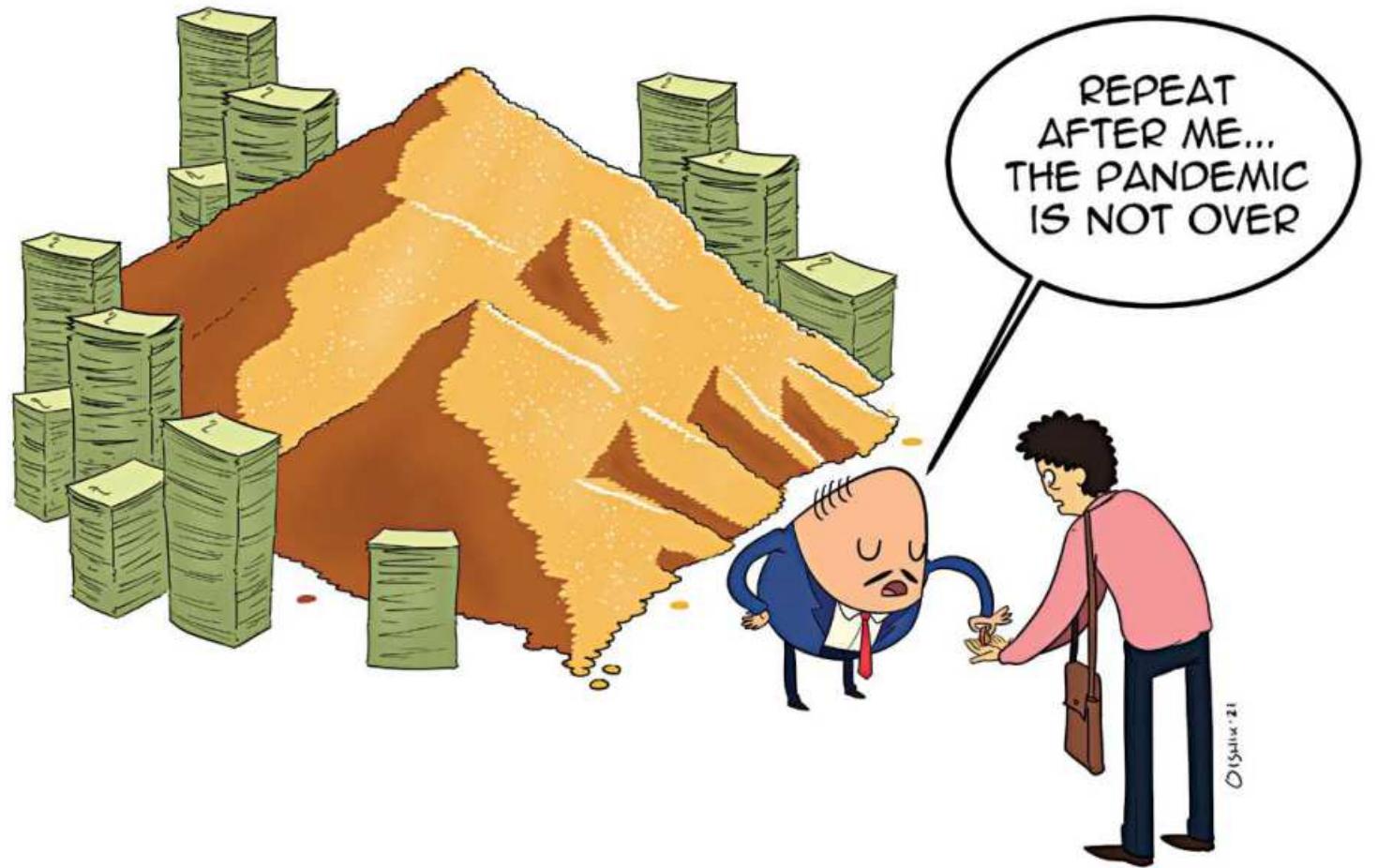
They started announcing new variants of the disease, even as the rest of the world were rejoicing in the end of the pandemic.

News organisations played their part too. Big companies started running advertorials and sponsored content on news outlets saying how bad the pandemic was and how the economy may never recover. Soon, the CEOs stopped paying bonuses.

The news outlets, meanwhile, were pleased with the revenue and happier still that they could continue paying their employees less.

A government official said the ruse was for the wider good.

"Look, if our CEOs and businesspeople are making waves around the world and entering top lists, it just translates to a good image for the country. That will invite foreign investment, and then maybe we will finally see the economy recover," said an anonymous official.



DHAKA DIARIES

Ultra-elite friend group at upscale eatery constantly apologising for privilege

STAR ALWAYS-SALTY REPORTER

A dying industry means constantly looking for new ways to ensure survival. And in that attempt, we here at Satireday have decided to send our very angry, quite salty reporter in search of human interest stories that do not inspire, or invoke awe in any way.

While I personally constantly strive for the good life, I can hardly afford the good life due to my profession and its limitations. But that does not stop me from trying. So for this first take on Dhaka diaries, I decided to draw up a hefty bill by going to Goley restaurant's bOro Cafe located in the heart of Gulshan. This is where the elite of Dhaka city roam around. Where they cruise their Porsches and cannot so much as open the car door themselves. That task, my friends, is reserved for the lowly driver.

I have tried multiple times to teach my Starlet driver to show me the same respect and hold the door open for me every time I get in or out, but alas the middle class can only ask for so much. And get just somewhat enough, I mean. Not abundant like having a Porsche, neither so little that they can complain openly about their lack of means.

I have been digressing. Anyway, as yours truly slowly made my way into the bOro cafe, I took in the decor and the crowd in one sweeping glance. And chose to sit next to a crowd of young women and a few men. The women are dressed snazzily in high-waisted pants and loose yet somehow fitted shirts, the men in tailored shorts and Hawaii shirts.

The group ordered generously with not a thought given to the hefty prices. And in between the courses arriving, I eavesdropped and learned that one of them was leaving Dhaka to work with underprivileged people. One of them is an artist who hates being associated with the rich and elite because his art is all about questioning the status quo.

"I cannot believe he is friends with a guy whose money comes from exploiting the poor. They have factories, you know where people toil day and night to make sure these guys have such cushy lives," said one group member.

"Mmm... this goat cheese and beetroot is really good. I would totally pay twice the exorbitant price I am paying now. Ugh! Self-awareness is a curse," said another.

As I watched in awe at the perfect balance of self-awareness and lack thereof I too found myself caught in their ways. Why, of course, I would sell my kidney for their risotto, and



This is a representational image from The Daily Star's Lifestyle's archive and has no resemblance/connection (fictional or otherwise) with the story

also shame myself for doing so but continue to do so.

Busy activity on the other table brought my attention back to the table in question.

I noticed the artist was angry. He was ready to complain. And nothing would stop him from doing so. Turns out the broth in his ramen "was not even a broth. They didn't use the right combination of ingredients. They didn't simmer it down for a long time as well. I mean the waiter has to answer for this. I am going to give him an earful for this behavior.

"Actually Bangladesh doesn't have any concept of a service industry, they will just open a store anywhere and think that's it, their job is done. Well their job is not done. I paid for this ramen and I should have gotten it. Not this sorry excuse. The prawns in the soup are overdone as well," said the visibly livid artist.

I unfortunately have to wrap up this diary way before I should have, because the food is here and I had to focus all my energy on how to appear like I can use the cutlery and behave appropriately at fancy restaurants.

Country plans to hold its own Olympics to win medals

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

After every 4 years, Chapasthan wallows in the sorrow of not being able to win an Olympic medal despite partaking in the Games since 1984.

In those previous editions, the country successfully failed to win a medal, believing that participation is better than winning.

However, that attitude is hard on the ego.

So, Chapasthan decided to organise its own Olympic to win homemade medals and hold its head high in the international arena.

In keeping with the homemade nature of the Chapalymphics, there will be some new events such as, corruption, bribery, fraudulence, Chapabaji (a fully original Chapasthani event), and so on.

When asked about those exceptional and unprecedented events, the president of the Chapasthan Olympic Committee for Snatching Medals said, "Our target is to win medals. That's why we introduced those events at which we are good. Our players are confident

In keeping with the homemade nature of the Chapalymphics, there will be some new events such as, corruption, bribery, fraudulence, Chapabaji

enough to win all medals as they believe that no country will do better than them in those events. Let the show begin and let us show our latent talents!"

To choose participating nations, Chapasthan will refer to the report of Transparency International. "We checked multiple TI reports and found that a good number of countries has the ability and courage to participate in Chapalymphics. The nations with the highest corruption scores will gain automatic entry," he said.



Authorities should stop ignoring life-saving inventions

There is absolutely no excuse for this!

DURING the pandemic, many brilliant minds in our country have come up with prototypes of various life-saving devices. Their urgency was bolstered keeping in mind the fate of their fellow citizens, who had been suffering greatly during the pandemic, especially due to the shortage of ventilators, high-flow nasal cannulas and the likes. Disappointingly, a lack of investment, industry support and government red tape have forced the majority of these innovations to be shelved, putting what could have been life-saving inventions onto the backburner.

Their examples range from domestically produced ventilators that cost a fraction of the price of regular ventilators, to high powered air-purifying respirators that could protect healthcare workers from contamination, and disinfection chambers that use ultraviolet rays to sterilise medical gear. Some of these inventions never saw the light of day due to government restrictions, which in normal circumstances could be understandable. However, given the lack of life-saving facilities available in the country's hospitals, and particularly in government hospitals, that the health officials could not find the time to approve their use nor make special exemptions during the pandemic, allowing them to be produced at greater scale, is shameful. What were they so busy doing?

During the entire pandemic, the government's health system has performed woefully—being riddled in one incident of corruption after another and with health officials making one disastrous decision after the other. This seems to be just another disaster of their own making. At a time when the government hospital system has only 1,225 ventilators and 13,000 patients currently hospitalised with Covid-19, just imagine how much of a relief some of these cheaper ventilators could have provided. And the same applies for all the other devices. Though it is disappointing that the pharmaceutical industry did not show any interest in investing in these devices, the government could easily have funded their production using the Tk 100 crore that has been allocated to finance health research for the current fiscal year—or by saving up on one of its many wasteful spendings that have been exposed over the past couple of years by various media outlets.

We call on the authorities to change their ways—to give innovators the proper shot they deserve to showcase their inventions and prove that they are worthy of being produced on a larger scale. They must invest in them, as well as provide whatever support is necessary for these creations to be brought to market so that lives can be saved.

Patuakhali hospital needs urgent equipment and manpower

Hospital's authorities and govt departments must wake up and work together

WE are shocked to find that the residents of Patuakhali and Barguna—around 28 lakh people—do not have access to crucial healthcare to treat critical Covid-19 patients and have to go all the way to Barisal for treatment. A recent report in this daily has revealed that there are no such services available in the 250-bed Patuakhali Medical College and Hospital. The ICU beds at this hospital are remaining idle without the supply of other necessary equipment. Not only that—the hospital also doesn't have any RT-PCR labs for Covid-19 testing, nor do they have a central oxygen supply. Weeks into the new surge of Covid-19 infections caused by the Delta variant, it is appalling that the only public hospital in the area would be so ill-equipped to deal with this crisis.

It is unfathomable why five ICU beds were kept unpacked in the Patuakhali hospital's ICU unit for months, and even after they were brought out, they were of no use because of the dearth of other accessory equipment needed for the ICU beds to function. The report also found that two ventilators sent by the health directorate a year ago have been gathering dust because there is no oxygen supply. Why this pathetic state of affairs? Why haven't the hospital's higher authorities done anything to get the ICU unit functioning at a time when people are dying because of a lack of ICU beds?

The hospital is also acutely short-staffed. Its authorities have written to the Health Services Division under the health and family welfare ministry seeking urgent appointment of 79 trained employees at the ICU unit of the 250-bed hospital in Patuakhali, but the request is yet to be fulfilled.

According to official data, 3,558 people tested positive for Covid-19, 2,560 recovered and 74 died of the disease in Patuakhali on Sunday. Against this backdrop, the Patuakhali hospital and the related government departments must join hands and work together to deal with the Covid-19 treatment crisis in Patuakhali. RT-PCR labs for testing Covid-19 patients have to be installed for early detection of the deadly virus. Five ICU beds and two ventilators are grossly inadequate for 2.8 million people. The number of ICU beds and ventilators have to be increased too, along with the building of a central oxygen supply system. Quick supply of both medical equipment and skilled healthcare professionals are needed to save the lives of people from Patuakhali and nearby districts.



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND
SHAMSAD MORTUZA

WHILE staying with a host family in Pennsylvania during a weekend trip in the late 1990s, I found a statement knifed in the bed's headboard: "Here a battle was won by the Man of the house [date]". The next day at the breakfast table, I expressed my curiosity, and the mother laughed recalling that her son wrote it after he had earned his father's consent for his love marriage. I chuckled remembering a similar parley while convincing my family, who felt I was too young, without any solid grip on my career, to make such a personal commitment. One sardonic comment of an ageing family member—"you can't wait for having 25 maunds of ghee to make Radha dance"—has still stuck with me to this day. This adage, as I later discovered, implied that the chandeliers in the royal courthouse needed a huge amount of

The Millennials, as the social media influencer Simon Sinek succinctly put it, are known for being entitled and narcissistic, probably through no fault of their own. They are the products of bad parenting (we, the Gen-X, have constantly told them that they are special and gave them that whatever they asked for), technology (overexposure to social media affecting their self-esteem; creating individual bubbles, failing to develop deep meaningful relationships and turning to digital devices than actual humans when in stressful situations), impatience (seeking instant gratification in life and not finding any fulfilment or joy), and work environment (a corporate culture where they are treated as numbers for short-term benefits without any vision of long-term gains). During this pandemic, another generation (Generation Z), born since 2000, has started appearing in the real world, literally with their masks on—and we are yet to learn how they will be accommodated in a workplace that is veering between the actual and virtual worlds.

Already, discussions on how the inter-

idea added to the perception that the old ones are weak and in need of protection. While in a country like ours, we still have some semblance of reverence left for the elders, in many countries in the West, the lockdown is seen as restrictions on mobility to protect a particular age group. Two British newspapers recently made headlines over the age card. The *Daily Express* warns of a "Backlash against 'Ageist' over-50s Virus Plan" and the *Daily Mail* maintains, "Make the young socially distance before locking down over-50s, Boris is warned."

As a university administrator, I receive periodic messages from parents asking when the vaccines will be made available to their wards. The vaccine barometer has finally dropped down to 25+ age categories, and we are waiting for our young ones to be inoculated before being brought to campuses. We need the conditional "ghee" for the academic "dance" to happen.

The delay is causing repercussions and frustrations. Often, the intergenerational disparities are translated to mutual blaming. Older adults, for example, are more likely to follow health guidelines,

large over the completion of studies of the new generations and their graduation for the market. The delay is going to impact the social fabric as many life decisions, including jobs, marriages and getting on the property ladder, will be delayed due to this slowdown. To make matters worse, many young employees who are in the early stages of their careers have been forced to get into a debt trap simply to keep themselves afloat.

Adapting to technology is another area

The millennials and Generation Z, who are in the early phase of their careers, are finding it difficult to get suitable jobs in a volatile market.



Uncertainties looming large over the completion of studies of the new generations and their graduation for the market has led to demonstrations like the one pictured here, where students of seven DU-affiliated college demanded continuation of their ongoing exams and reopening of dormitories on February 24, 2021.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

oil to fully light up so that Radha could perform.

As members of Generation X (born between 1966 and 1980), the nuptial decision of my future wife and I depended on the previous generation, the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1965). However, during my daughter's recent wedding, as one of the Millennials (born between 1981 and 2000), she made sure to have her own "25 maunds of ghee": the make-up artists, the videographers, the décor—well, the entire wedding planning. My wife and I shared a private joke: ours is a generation that gets thrashed by the ones both before and after.

generational divide will pan out during this pandemic are being conducted. All social indicators suggest that different age categories are affected differently by the coronavirus. While Covid-19 has upended everyone's life worldwide, countries with an ageing population have been hit hard the most; the virus has blitzed through a generation. Pictures of the dead appear regularly on the news portals to announce the latest victims of the virus—and the majority of them are above 50. The older adults are more vulnerable than the younger ones; hence, the first batch of vaccines was made available exclusively to the older generation. This

whereas people in their 20s and 30s are known to be slack in their compliance. The millennials and Generation Z, who are in the early phase of their careers, are finding it difficult to get suitable jobs in a volatile market. They had to cut down their spending more than the people in their 50s and above. While the senior management can work from home, most early career jobs require face-to-face interactions, customer services or physical office presence. By the same token, the older generation has a relatively stable financial cushion than their young counterparts. Then again, there are many uncertainties looming

Building healthcare resiliency during the Covid-19 pandemic



SHAGUFA ANWAR

IF the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the healthcare system and related organisations must build resiliency to withstand the shocks that may come their way, and be in a position to

pursue the opportunities that rapid and significant change can create.

Every hospital or health system will face a multitude of risks; hence, a healthcare organisation would primarily need to identify and assess credible potential scenarios on its horizon and model the impact these scenarios could have on its current strategic and financial plan if they become reality. Thereafter, it needs to determine alternative pathways that the organisation could follow to maintain or advance its strategic and financial position.

The macro-market scenarios of the pandemic that are foreseeable should be the focus of this planning effort, as these would have a material operational or financial impact—either positive or negative—on the organisation, and many of these would be beyond the organisation's direct control. Modelling the potential timing and impacts of a macro-market scenario would help organisational leaders understand the magnitude of risk, the resources that will be needed to hedge any downside impacts, and the amount of time the organisation will have to adjust to the impacts.

Once key scenarios are identified and their potential impact is defined, leadership should be able to find the

trigger points that indicate change is coming and a response is required. Leadership should also identify and, if necessary, pursue alternative paths forward that will help the organisation maximise upside opportunities or minimise downside risk.

Among the macro-market scenarios of the Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh, the infection rate, the number of daily identified cases, the progress of the

terms of resource availability (e.g. bed, manpower, oxygen, high flow nasal cannula, disinfectant, PPE and other safety gear, etc).

The Covid-19 pandemic will likely have lasting impacts on healthcare. The consumer-driven changes in the pandemic also need to be taken up on our journey to sustainability. Having experienced the convenience of tele-health, for example, we have seen consumers become much

preparing for new competition from tech companies entering the healthcare market.

Gearing resources from hospitals to customers (home/office/neighbourhood) should be a major way to expand the healthcare horizon. Creating efficient and trained tech-savvy manpower—mostly in the form of nurses, patient care attendants, lab technologists and even enabling volunteers by training them for basic health check-ups and monitoring—could be the key to achieve a sustainable healthcare service delivery model to cater to the increasing load of Covid-19 patients of different severity. Starting from home sample collection to home health monitoring to home medicine delivery, all will encompass an efficient home care service model pertinent for such times. Establishing e-clinics at local chemist shops, educational institution campuses, priority banking lounges or shopping malls to impart tele-health could contribute towards setting up the new-normal culture in healthcare.

Along with vaccination initiatives taken by the government, mass scale availability of cheaper Covid-19 testing facilities with simpler sample collection methods and faster turnaround time can promise a return to a more stable operating environment in the country. The financial stresses that healthcare organisations, and the economy as a whole, have experienced during the pandemic is expected to heighten the trend towards pursuing new value-based models that bring greater affordability of care.

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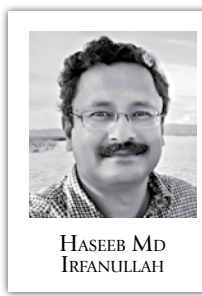
The Covid-19 pandemic will likely have lasting impacts on healthcare.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

vaccination drive and the availability of vaccines indicate the necessity of imposing lockdowns in the near future, which in turn leads to an assumption of probable lessened patient footfall for cold non-Covid cases. Again, the same scenarios indicate the spike in Covid-19 cases, thereby putting organisations on their toes for Covid-19 preparedness in

more accustomed to digital health visits because of Covid-19 restrictions on in-person visits, making patients less inclined to travel to a doctor's chamber in a hospital for routine care needs. New investments that enhance a health system's digital health platform (tele-health and tele-rehab) could help build customer loyalty to the system, while

What will the next phase of floating agriculture look like?



HASEEB MD IRFANULLAH

If we track the history of floating agriculture in Bangladesh, we may find six major phases. It is difficult to pinpoint when floating cultivation began in Bangladesh—the current reckoning goes up to 400 years ago. Although water

hyacinth is now the base material to make floating beds to grow crops on them, this was not possible a couple of centuries ago as this South American aquatic plant was introduced to Bengal only in the 1890s.

In his 2009 article in *Environment and History*, Iftekhar Iqbal reused a map from 1922 that showed the wild spread of water hyacinth in Bengal. Since the “very seriously affected” areas included the greater Faridpur and Barishal regions—the centre of origin of floating farming in this delta—we may assume that a water hyacinth-based agro-system might have started a century ago.

However, there exists an alternative story. After harvesting, paddy stub traditionally used to be left on the field in heaps, which floated as flood water entered into the wetlands. Farmers used these floating rafts to raise seedlings and grow vegetables on them by adding a layer of soil or other organic matter. An archaeo-botanical study in south-central Bangladesh may confirm the true origin of this traditional practice.

Nevertheless, if we consider the second story of origin, the first phase of floating agriculture spans from its origin till the 1960s, when we started cultivating high-yielding rice varieties. After that, the second phase began. These new rice strains had shorter straw that decomposed quickly, thus, it was not fit for floating beds. In the search for an alternative material, water hyacinth was an obvious choice due to its aggressive abundance. In the early 1990s, Shykh Seraj featured the floating agriculture of the Barishal region in his popular series *Maati o Manush* on Bangladesh Television.

The third phase of this agro-practice

started at the turn of this century when NGOs embraced it. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) promoted this practice in Gopalganj under a community-based natural resource management project under the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP, 1998–2005) of the Government of Bangladesh and UNDP.

Soon, floating farming became a part

in the haor region. In 2010, Rangamati Hill District Council introduced this practice to the Chittagong Hill Tracts by supporting 244 floating beds along the shores of the Kaptai Lake.

NGOs exclusively worked with extreme poor families, and trained and supported them to adopt floating farming. Their projects essentially considered it as a source of household nutrition or as a means of disaster risk reduction (by raising rice seedlings on

waterlogged areas of the south-western region. From then on, floating agriculture is, as I often say, “a local lad becoming a climate celebrity”.

Soon, Bangladesh’s climate documents picked up floating farming—the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA, 2005, updated in 2009) and the second (2012) and third (2018) national communications submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sufficiently discussed this agro-practice.

Global recognition of floating agriculture took a leap during 2014–2015. In 2014, the UNFCCC’s Technology Executive Committee featured this practice as a useful adaptation technology, while the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) landmark Fifth Assessment Report discussed its potential weaknesses under a changing climate. In 2015, under the leadership of Bangladesh’s Ministry of Agriculture, 2,500 hectares of land in Barishal, Gopalganj and Pirojpur were designated by FAO as one of 62 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in the world.

The government of Bangladesh’s promotion of floating agriculture through well-funded projects can be considered to be the fifth phase. In the second phase of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP II, 2010–2015), the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) trained and engaged 565 farmers in this practice in historically floating agriculture areas (Gopalganj, Madaripur and Pirojpur), haor regions (Habiganj, Netrokona and Sunamganj), and other flood-prone areas (Gaibandha and Manikganj).

In 2012, the DAE began implementing Extension of Floating Vegetable and Spices Cultivation Technologies as a Climate Change Adaptation Technology for Flood and Waterlogged areas of Bangladesh—the first-ever government project dedicated to floating gardening. Although the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP, 2009) did not mention floating agriculture, the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) funded this project to work with

12,000 farmers in 40 sub-districts of eight districts.

The DAE is currently implementing a much larger follow-up project (2017–2022) in 46 sub-districts of 24 districts. Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) has also conducted research to make floating cultivation more efficient, and the ongoing DAE project has adopted those innovations. Among others, the Department of Women Affairs has been supporting marginalised women to raise rice seedlings and cultivate vegetables on floating beds as well. Along with actions on the ground, it is crucial to capture the experiences of the DAE and other agencies in floating farming and make them publicly available for wider awareness.

Over the past five years, scientific research on floating agriculture has gained momentum. Bangladeshi researchers have been looking into this practice as a whole, measuring yield performance of crops, analysing benefits and costs, identifying constraints farmers face, and so on. To me, such interest in knowledge creation, together with technological innovations, defines the sixth phase of floating cultivation.

Aquaponics is a different form of floating agriculture, where a floating structure is made with bamboo or iron frames and plastic floats, pots with soil are kept on the frame to grow vegetables, and a net cage is placed under the floating structure to culture small fish. WorldFish and its partners first tried this integrated system in Barishal in 2013; Practical Action piloted it in Satkhira. Shidhulai, an NGO, further added a duck-rearing component to this system and promoted it in the Chalan Beel wetland in northern Bangladesh.

In 2005, I was fascinated to see floating gardens in Gopalganj, but I never thought this practice would last this long. The way global temperatures are rising, floods and storms are getting wilder, and seawater is invading our shores, I wonder how the next phase of floating agriculture will be written.

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Farmers prepping floating beds for vegetable farming in Barishal's Banaripara upazila in 2019.

PHOTO: STAR

of community development projects in Bangladesh. Around 2005, Practical Action took it to northern Bangladesh, starting with Gaibandha. Over the next 10 years, it was scaled up in several flood-prone districts of Rangpur division. Over the same period, IUCN and CARE introduced and promoted floating cultivation in the wetlands of haor regions, greater Mymensingh and northern Bangladesh under two phases of the USAID-funded SHOUHARDO programme. Other agencies, like Helvetas, also joined the efforts

the beds), rather than a business opportunity, as was seen in south-central Bangladesh. As a result, those families mostly did not continue this innovation once the project support stopped.

The fourth phase began when a climate change dimension was added to floating agriculture. The Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change (RVCC) project of CARE (2002–2005)—apparently the first adaptation project in Bangladesh—promoted floating cultivation as an adaptation option in the

PROJECT SYNDICATE

How to strengthen anti-poverty efforts



SHAMERAN ABED

FROM 1990 to 2019, the number of people living in extreme poverty (according to the World Bank threshold of USD 1.90 per day) plummeted, from 1.9 billion to 648 million. Covid-19 has reversed much of this progress. By the

end of 2021, the pandemic will have pushed approximately 150 million people back into extreme poverty.

Even before Covid-19, however, the world was not on track to end extreme poverty in the next decade. Progress on poverty reduction had been slowing long before the pandemic hit, with global poverty rates falling by less than half a percentage point per year between 2015 and 2019. At that pace, even without Covid-19, 537 million people would have still been living in extreme poverty in 2030, implying failure to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 1.

At BRAC, the world’s largest Global South-led NGO, decades of designing, implementing, advising on and adapting poverty reduction interventions have given us insights into how to make anti-poverty programmes and policies more effective.

First, programmes need to reach people in the most extreme states of poverty. People living in extreme poverty face hurdles to accessing social programmes and services. They are less likely to have bank accounts, permanent addresses or formal identification—all of which may be required for registration. They also face social stigma associated with receiving public services, and

often lack sufficient information about the programmes for which they are eligible.

In low-income countries, 79 percent of the bottom quintile of earners receive no social assistance whatsoever. To ensure that help reaches those most in need, governments and their partners must design policies and programmes that overcome the barriers people living in extreme poverty face and integrate them into existing social safety nets.

Second, programmes must empower people living in extreme poverty to build long-term resilience. Governments and their partners must do more than improve the provision of basic needs. They must also invest in enabling people in extreme poverty to acquire the skills and resources they need to avoid falling back into the poverty trap. This approach is crucial in times of crisis, as our team at BRAC found when advising the Philippine government, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, on a recent anti-poverty intervention.

During the pandemic, the programme connected participants to cash assistance from the national government and food assistance from their local government. Meanwhile, it provided the resources and training they needed to establish multiple sources of income. As a result, 76 percent of participants were able to continue earning income even during strict lockdowns.

Third, programmes need to treat poverty as multifaceted and context-specific. Extreme poverty is multidimensional. An accurate definition must account for the many areas of deprivation people living in extreme poverty face, from lack of clean water and electricity to malnutrition and social exclusion. These deprivations and the interventions needed to overcome them vary across populations and geographies. Based on an assessment



By the end of 2021, the pandemic will have pushed approximately 150 million people back into extreme poverty.

PHOTO: REUTERS

of factors related to specific locations and socioeconomic contexts, governments and their partners need to create more holistic interventions that empower poor people to face their unique challenges.

Fourth, these programmes must engage local communities and governments, whose active participation can help anti-poverty interventions better reflect the realities of people’s daily lives and gain local buy-in. Bringing civil society into the process can also play an important role in holding government accountable and sustaining

demand for more effective programmes and policies. And local governments can help national governments and their partners identify marginalised households and support their social inclusion.

Fifth, governments and their partners must learn what is working and what is not, then adapt programming accordingly. To maximise the impact of anti-poverty interventions at scale, governments and their partners must commit to monitoring, evaluating, and learning from programmes as they are implemented, then revise them as needed.

Such evaluations should begin by identifying the principles driving programmes’ design. Programme components must then be tweaked and tested with those principles in mind, and the outcomes carefully monitored. Only through evidence-based adaptation can governments and their partners ensure that the programmes they implement have a long-lasting impact and adjust to meet the unique and evolving needs of their people.

This must be a collaborative effort. If the international community adopts these steps, anti-poverty programmes and policies can become more inclusive, adaptive and comprehensive. Beyond engaging civil society and academia, governments need development actors, including multilateral institutions and donor countries, to help close resource gaps until they can independently mobilise sufficient domestic resources. Many low- and middle-income countries simply lack the fiscal space and state capacity to pursue large-scale poverty reduction measures on their own.

SDG 1 is deeply connected to the other SDGs, from ensuring gender equality to advancing sustainability to improving nutrition. Covid-19 has reversed decades of progress in these areas, and we need cross-cutting interventions that support multiple areas of development simultaneously if we are to recover. The only way to prevent leaving many people behind is to ensure that anti-poverty interventions are better funded, more holistic, and more effective at scale.

Shameran Abed is Senior Director of Microfinance and Ultra-Poor Graduation Programs at BRAC. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021. www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

QUOTABLE Quote

TONI MORRISON
(1931–2019)
American novelist

The function of freedom is to free someone else.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Neeson of “Taken”
- 5 Blockheads
- 10 Make up lines
- 12 Incline
- 13 Light wood
- 14 Scout’s rider
- 15 Cry of discovery
- 16 Weightlifter’s aide
- 18 Cad
- 20 “Roses – red”
- 21 Resting on
- 23 Homer’s neighbor
- 24 Eat in style
- 26 Map line
- 28 Marsh
- 29 Artless person
- 31 Drama division
- 32 Noted Hogwarts student
- 36 Desk item
- 39 Hoppy brew
- 40 “See ya!”
- 41 Restaurant unit
- 43 DVR option
- 44 Orchestra members
- 45 Shoulder muscles
- 46 Volcano shape

DOWN

- 1 Toil away
- 2 Sun Valley setting
- 3 Portion out
- 4 Sue Grafton’s “– for Malice”
- 5 Regarding
- 6 Piggy bank part
- 7 Guitar great Carlos
- 8 Came in
- 9 Put away
- 11 We count in it
- 17 Old hand
- 19 Sandy color
- 22 Before
- 24 Affirm
- 25 All things considered
- 27 Many a time
- 28 Legendary
- 30 Clumsy one
- 33 Off limits
- 34 TV talk star
- 35 Oscar winner
- Witherspoon
- 37 Try out
- 38 “–bien!”
- 42 Jackson 5 hit

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

YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

REGAIN PLUM
OVERDO RIFE
NATION AGOG
SLEIGH
FATE OUTDO
ELI POWERUP
WIG INNA ACE
EHELON IAN
RETRO ANTS
RATHER
WOES AXIOMS
ERIE HEALER
BEND ASSETS

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

I OUGHTA PULVERIZE YOU, BEETLE!

WHY DIDN'T YOU?

MY SHOULDER IS STILL SORE FROM YESTERDAY'S PULVERIZING

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

OKAY FROM NOW ON, ANY LIFE SHALL I PASS ALONG WILL INVOLVE ALL OF YOU.

TODAY'S LESSON IS TOILET SCRUBBING!

CLASS DISMISSED, I GUESS.

NICE TRY.

OKAY. GOOD.

ZIP!

BOOKS REVIEW

A Postcolonial Take on Literature in English and English Studies in Bangladesh

Fakrul Alam. Reading Literature in English and English Studies in Bangladesh

Postcolonial Perspectives. writers.ink, 2021.

REVIEWED BY AHMED AHSANUZZAMAN

In *Metaphor*, David Punter reads Chinua Achebe's postcolonial novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) which draws upon Yeats's "The Second Coming" (1921) for its title, arguing that the centre is "responsible for the very social, political and cultural problems now being encountered in Africa, and perhaps globally" (117). While in Yeats the centre is synonymous with "innocence," Achebe's position as the colonised reconceptualises it to be the root of

all plights. The shift in perspective caused by colonial experience endows the postcolonial writer with a weapon to rework. It also alters and indeed subverts the ideologically coded colonial network of images and metaphors to write back to the centre. Theorised as "contrapuntal reading" by Edward Said, it is "a form of 'reading back' from the perspective of the colonised to show how submerged but crucial presence of the empire emerges in canonical texts" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, *Edward Said* 8). Martinique-Francophone poet Aimé Césaire's postcolonial take on *The Tempest* in his play *Une Tempête* (1969) is a good way of understanding how a creative writer can read back the canonical texts and destabilise canonicity and thus produce powerful narratives. Postcolonial standpoint then enables a writer or a critic to unsettle the "colonial straitjacket" (Dalrymple, 2005) which privileges the imperialist and colonialist gaze to exoticise and orientalise the colony and the colonised.

Reading Literature in English and English Studies in Bangladesh: Postcolonial Perspectives (hereafter *RLE*) by Fakrul Alam reveals the author's deep-seated interest in themes and issues with postcolonial overtone. Consisting of more than 500 pages, the recently published book includes an illuminating introduction which lays the perspective, as well as 25 essays, papers and reviews the author presented in conferences and wrote for journals or books. It addresses issues such as South Asian Literature, postcoloniality, transnationalism and the state of English language teaching in Bangladesh. The paperback collection dedicated to Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury, "a mentor for all seasons," builds on Alam's *Imperial Entanglements and Literatures in English* published in 2007 which negotiated the creative writing in English in the erstwhile colonies as well as discussed the literary outcome of Britain's colonial ventures and how they impacted the writing in English over the centuries (xv). *RLE* critiques the state of English language teaching in Bangladesh in the age of neo-globalization and

English as the language of "power" in "our apparently decolonized world" which continues to use it as "a valuable commodity" (xv).

The book is divided into four parts, each of them exploring particular postcolonial concerns. Part 1 entitled "Reading Literature Postcolonially" comprises eight essays including articles on Defoe, and his Crusoe, who Alam views as "a prototypical colonizer," and *A Passage to India*. Included in this part is a review "A Primer for Postcolonialism" (126-34) which discusses the significance of *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (1998) by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in the study of postcoloniality. Alam finds *Key Concepts* enormously important because it first traced the origins of some of the key ideas in the works of Fanon and emphasised the seminal role played by Said and later theorists like Bhabha and Spivak in stimulating postcolonial studies (7). In "Imagining South Asian Writing in English from Bangladesh" (135-51), the author negotiates the limitations that labels such as "Commonwealth writing," "Third World Literature," and "New Writings in English" pose. He opts for "South Asian Writing in English" as the umbrella term for creative writing produced in the geo-political region known as South characterised by a "shared history" based on "shared historical location" and "shared traditions and practices that regularly defy the diktat of national boundaries" (Sayantan Dasgupta qtd in Alam, 147). With a view to providing directions for the South Asian Writing in English, Alam refers to the works and scholarship of Bangladesh's foremost poet in the English language, Kaiser Haq, who is rooted in Bangladesh, but simultaneously takes part in trans-Indian subcontinent phenomenon, "a movement vitally involved with world literature for sustenance and growth" (148).

Part 2 entitled "Essays on a Few Major Writers" includes articles on R K Narayan, Achebe, Said, Joseph Conrad, as well as issues such as exile, cosmopolitanism, diasporic intellectual,

global intellectual and transnationalism, confronting Empire, and reading South Asian Fiction in English to-day. Alam is deeply indebted to Said and he puts it on record how the Palestinian-American scholar has been an "influence" on him, and how his works such as *Beginnings*, *Orientalism*, *The World, the Text and the Critic* and *Culture and Imperialism* continue to fascinate and provoke him. He shows how Said's "contrapuntal reading" is a powerful tool to resist the authority of the "Great Tradition" as signposted by F R Leavis (11). Said is important because he implied that students of culture and imperialism must juxtapose the canonical works of the western tradition with the works by writers from the colonies "to make them yield meaning pertinent to their world" (224).

In the chapter entitled "Confronting Empire Now" (297-99) Alam stresses how imperialism in its different manifestations is a living reality for the non-western world. He believes that postcolonial criticism can play a pivotal role in exposing and challenging neo-imperialist projects from the western powers, which are always on the lookout for cementing their strength "and fulfilling their appetites for markets." Alam draws readers' attention to several cases in the recent past to reveal how Bangladesh is vulnerable to imperial projects. He refers to the tactics deployed by the British Council to sell "British educational and linguistic interests" in the country, as well as the Rana Plaza tragedy of 2013 the roots of which were laid "in the insatiable appetite for cheap textiles in the western world." This is where our civil society can draw inspiration from Said and activists like Arundhati Roy whose "stance exposes graphically the network of interests that sustains empire and propels imperial interests perpetually" (299).

Part 3 "English Studies in Bangladesh in the age of Globalization" and Part 4 "Reading Some Great Writers Postcolonially" respectively include four and three essays. The main focus of Part 3 is a diagnosis of the contemporary pathetic state of English studies in

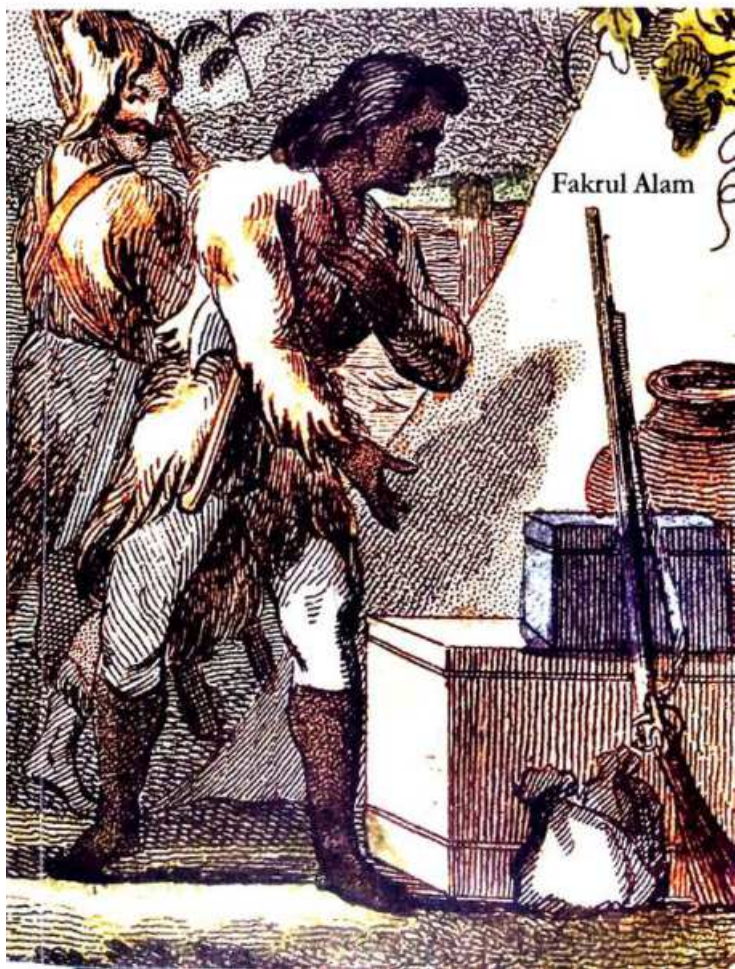
Bangladesh caused by the onslaught of "communicative language teaching" which literally drove away the age-old "grammar-translation method" from school curricula. Alam suggests an introduction of "appropriate English language pedagogy" for redressing the damage done over the years. "Shakespeare's Political World and Ours" (447-65) and "The Continuing Relevance of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*" (488-505) in Part 4 discuss how reading of the plays by the two most influential dramatists of the world from the perspective of Bangladesh's own history of power politics (25) can add new meanings to the plays. Thus *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar* appear in a new light to one familiar with the topsy-turvy history of the country — its glorious birth in 1971, the brutal killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, coups and counter coups to capture power — making its citizens anxious and uncertain about the country's future. (455). And Alam argues that Ibsen's play makes sense to Bangladesh in its unveiling of the unholy nexus of corrupt politicians and businessmen who can go to any extent to amass power and money. One may also add that extremely cunning political leaders like Peter Stockmann are to be found everywhere in Bangladesh and that encroachment of rivers and grabbing of forests and wetlands by the powerful is a contemporary reality.

RLE merits special significance not only because it offers a contrapuntal reading of complex postcolonial issues but also because it is scholarly without ever becoming pedantic. Alam's deep engagement with the subject and his lucid style make it an absorbing read. The book will be an invaluable source of reference for students, academics, researchers and general readers interested in postcolonial studies.

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READING LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH STUDIES IN BANGLADESH POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES



A Brief History of Silence: A Delicate Relationship between Risk and Beauty

Manu Dash. ISBN: 978-8194085799. Dhauli Books, 2019

REVIEWED BY MANOJ KUMAR PANDA

A Brief History of Silence (by Manu Dash) was an enjoyable read on my silent rooftop spanning a silent week. But as I sat on the silent table for a review, I sat amazed and brooding. The poet must have had a frightful toil, and it's not easy to write a poem on his silence by shifting, correcting, combining, constructing, expurgating, expunging and tasting words, phrases, images as well as the empty spaces between them to pen his dreams and intellect. And I wonder what is left for me to write more on it!

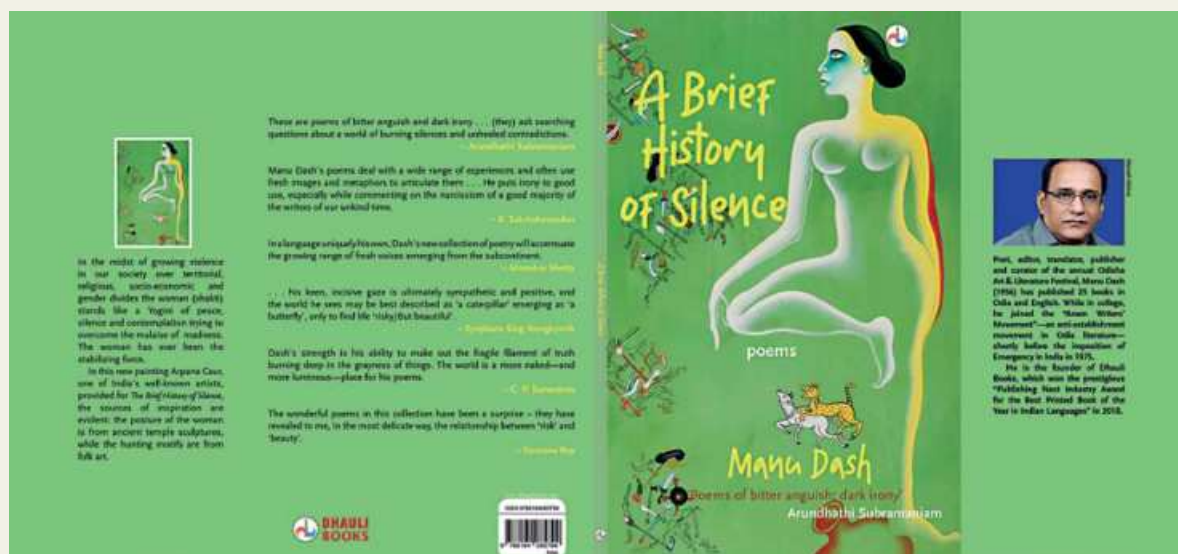
It is enough when one finds every single poem in this anthology is a vortex one has to pass through and return to it always; it is enough that poems are presented rather than described; enough that they appeal directly to the senses, more particularly to the sense of sight with the use of concrete visual images.

A poem by poem, though a few of them, citation is what it all needed here.

In his poem "Words," where "Words/Flap their wings/Before nesting/On her lips"; where "The beauty of words revealed less and concealed more "like the breast of a lady"; where "Words come and leave/Sleep and dance/Hurry on her lips./She is my aphasic daughter." Exquisitely sad, the poem crafted with magical intimacy of words and silences. One wonders if the poet presents here the dance of "Words"

or the dance of "Silences." Another very delicately crafted poem is "Diwali in a Cancer Ward," where a father waits haplessly "For the biopsy report/To arrive from Mumbai,/As an innocent victim craves/The verdict of the apex court." Elsewhere, the much publicised, legendary *Dana Majhi* is presented as "the cheerleader of grief," who has spread hunger into the world like "arabesque scroll"; and whose "tall daughter/Walking through the Tyburn scaffold." We may look at the poem, "Walking with a Corpse" as well. Quite a common scene in Odisha's village roads, where "He trudges mile after mile/Like King Vikramaditya,/Betel heavy on his shoulders," on "The camouflaged road ahead/Appears stubborn and cruel." Sad and introspective, yet without scruple, the poet "makes" poems straight out of a post mortem report. A splendid attempt to free oneself from the despair of time, that offers a clear vindication for life on Earth, a la in Odisha.

As we go further to "Folklore" we find childhood was free from demons and ghost when a "Grand mother died of diarrhea/Before father's marriage" and "Nights have turned into asylums." Dreams and nightmares, tinged with surrealism, defy interpretation many a time in Dash's poems. In "Alphabet of Silence" the silence is clearly heard in contemporary literary meets, where "The number of speakers/Was half



that of the listeners"; and where "The speakers clapped./The listeners sat/In stony silence." And still another, "For an ISO-Certified Poet' who has taken 'all the air, colour and space," would someday be questioned by posterity. "Why were these (his) books/Devoured by white ants?" We meet with bitter sarcasm when the poet's cousin, "a born liar," got "Sahitya Academi Puraskar/ For an acclaimed travelogue/ On places he has never visited." Or in "Postcard," a rare commodity now, "Words are faded bell-bottom/Peeping through/ An old wardrobe." Some artistically motivated

deviation in putting words and phrases as "foreground" to a poem are seen in ample. See, the poet asking his beloved to meet him at the terrace garden for black coffee, with no moon overhead, only to see her as an absolute "assassin." So also some deflative use of words at places adds surplus beauty to his poems. For example: "Like the arrival of the first monsoon/Or menstruation/Banks have opened to the clients/After demonization." Or, for that matter, cyclone is "an unclaimed industry" in Odisha, that "breeds swarms of stories." The parallel use of "selling a kiss for a

price" in "Kiss" has a foregrounding effect as synonymical or antonymical relation of meaning between the expressions. Such phonological features one may bump at many a time in the anthology.

When a poet publishes his maiden venture at a later age, he is bound to be responsible and discreet. The range of subjects he could write with richness of details and with refined medium. The poet's perception of the pastness of the past and the presentness of the past could form a new combination out of variegated diverse experiences. His impersonality in art is visibly seen,

when he writes on the silent suffering and solitude of the oppressed, with sarcasm and empathy. Surrendering personal emotion to the emotion of art he writes passionately, where the poetic mind transmutes poems into a new artistic whole.

Barring some inconsequential adjectives and adverbials, and too many "Likes" (35 of them), many rich images and metaphors are at their splendid perfection, synthesized and assimilated in this anthology. A rousing collection of poems for our young poets and for posterity. Each poem bears the indelible thumb impression mark of the poet quite impressively, and to put in the words of poet K S Nongkynrih, "The world he sees may be best described as 'a caterpillar' emerging as 'a butterfly' only to find life 'risky/But beautiful'."

As you quote Pablo Neruda, "Let me speak to you as well with your syllables of silence," you need not, dear poet, look askance, for posterity have all the trust in your "unquiet dreams."

A word of absolute praise for Arpana Caur for the beautiful cover page art that depicts a sculpture like "Yogini of Peace" along with some folk materials.

A recipient of prestigious Sarala Puraskar, Manoj Kumar Panda was an acclaimed short story writer in Odia.

SPORT

What to WATCH

BTV
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 7:15 am, 8:15 am,
10:35 am & 1:05 pm
TEN 1, TEN 2, TEN 3 & SONY SIX
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 8:00 pm & 4:00 am (Sunday)

THE HUNDRED
WOMENS
Welsch vs Manchester, Live from 4:00 pm
MENS
Welsch vs Manchester, Live from 7:30 pm
Northern vs Oval
Live from 11:30 pm



BAREGA STRIKES GOLD as athletics underway

AFP, Tokyo

Ethiopian distance runner Selemon Barega stormed to a brilliant 10,000m victory to claim the first gold medal of a spectator-less Olympic athletics competition at the Tokyo Games on Friday.

Barega, 21, ran a superb tactical race to hold off world champion Joshua Cheptegei and Ugandan compatriot Jacob Kiplimo to win in 27min 43.22sec. Cheptegei took silver, with Kiplimo third.

It completed a subdued start to the 10-day track and field competition, which got under way in a mostly empty 68,000-capacity Olympic Stadium with spectators barred due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Barega's upset win was a rare blip on a first day that largely followed the form book as athletes adjusted to the unique surroundings of this year's pandemic-delayed competition.

Unrelenting high-tempo music,

an echoing public address tannoy, screeching cicadas and the odd cry of encouragement provided the soundtrack at the sparsely populated arena.

But the ghostly atmosphere did not faze Jamaica's history-chasing Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who safely negotiated the first round of the 100m.

The Netherlands' long-distance star Sifan Hassan also advanced in the 5,000m, while Venezuela's triple jump world champion Yulimar Rojas eased into Sunday's final.

However there was an upset in the 4x400 relay, an event making its Olympic debut, when the powerful United States' quartet was disqualified for an illegal changeover.

American teenager Athing Mu -- a gold medal hope in the 800m -- played down the lack of fans after a composed win in her morning heat.

"I've never been to an Olympics so I don't know how the stadium would be if it was packed with

people," she told AFP.

"But then again I've run a couple of meets in the collegiate season where we didn't have spectators allowed so it was kind of the same."

And Australian high jumper Brandon Starc said he was unconcerned by the empty rows in the cavernous stadium.

"I don't really worry about it," said the Commonwealth champion. "I can't do anything about it, so why focus on that?"

But Qatar's 400m hurdler Abderrahman Samba said it was "really, really difficult. I really missed the crowd."

Yet the lack of fans provided no hindrance to Jamaica sprint queen Fraser-Pryce, who would become the oldest women's 100m champion in history if she wins Saturday's final.

The 34-year-old is also aiming to become the first woman to win a single individual Olympic athletics event three times, to add to the 100m victories she claimed in 2008 and 2012.

Fraser-Pryce sailed through to

the semi-finals in 10.84 seconds, easing up well before the finish line.

The Jamaican veteran is the fastest woman over 100m this year, clocking 10.63sec in June. Fraser-Pryce believes she can go faster in Tokyo.

"If you notice the heats, there's some really quick running," she said. "It's definitely a fast track."

Her compatriot Elaine Thompson-Herah is the defending champion in both the 100 and 200m, and surged through her heat in temperatures of 34 degrees Celsius (93 Fahrenheit).

It was a similar tale for Britain's Dina Asher-Smith, world 200m champion and silver medallist in the 100m in Doha in 2019, and Ivory Coast's Marie-Josee Ta Lou, the latter in an African record 10.78sec.

One of the headline events of the Olympic track events is the men's 400m hurdles, trumpeted as a battle royale between two-time world champion Karsten Warholm of Norway and American rival Rai Benjamin.

'Djokovic can't win everything'

REUTERS, Tokyo



Novak Djokovic "can't have everything" summed up Alexander Zverev on Friday after he stopped the Serbian's bid to become the first man to complete the

Golden Slam.

World number one Djokovic had been the overwhelming favourite to win the singles gold medal at the Olympics after he arrived in Tokyo having won the season's first three majors -- the Australian and French Opens as well as Wimbledon.

Djokovic needed to win a maiden Olympic singles gold and the U.S. Open in September to complete the feat of capturing the four slams and the Olympic gold in the same year.

But Friday's unexpected defeat to Zverev abruptly ended those lofty ambitions.

With Djokovic already owning 20 Grand Slam titles, a men's record he shares with Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal, and 36 Masters 1000 titles, Zverev said the Serb already had more than enough.

"I feel sorry for Novak but at the end of the day, he's won 20 Grand Slams, he's won 550 (sic) Masters series or whatever it is, so you can't have everything," Zverev, who came from a set and a break down to win the semi-final 1-6, 6-3, 6-1, told reporters.

"As I said, he is the greatest player of all time and he will win the most Grand Slams out of anybody on tour. But I am also happy I am in

the finals, so what more can I say."

The 24-year-old Zverev sobbed for several minutes courtside following his win over the Serbian, who had beaten him in five consecutive meetings dating back to 2018 and appeared set to extend the streak before the German fought back. "Obviously, yeah, it's an amazing feeling knowing that you're going to bring the medal back to your house, back home to Germany," Zverev said.

"It's incredible beating the best player in the world undoubtedly right now and in this season."

"It seemed it was impossible to beat him at this event, so I'm very happy right now. But yet there's still one match to go."

The fifth-ranked German will meet Karen Khachanov of the Russian Olympic Committee in the gold-medal contest. The 25th-ranked Khachanov outgunned Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3, 6-3 with his trademark power-hitting.

Khachanov, who made the Wimbledon quarter-finals earlier this month, described the match as a highlight of a memorable summer.

"I play tennis for those moments, I practise for these kind of matches and when you get there, when it's paying off, it's just a pure pleasure to be here..." he said. "(It's) the kind of memories that will stay forever."



DRESSEL, MCKEON fire up the pool

AFP, Tokyo



Sprint machine Caeleb Dressel blasted a 21.32 seconds 50m freestyle heat in his bid to earn the world's fastest swimmer title Friday, while 100m champion Emma McKeon set a new Olympic record to top the women's timesheets.

The explosive Dressel has been untouchable over the splash and dash for the past two seasons and is overwhelming favourite in Tokyo, with Brazilian Cesar Cielo's 2009 world mark of 20.91 within reach.

The 6ft 3ins American has won two gold in Japan and will go for a third in the 100m butterfly on Saturday, with the 50 final on the last day of competition Sunday.

"You certainly can't let off the gas too much," he said. "I knew where I was in that race, I didn't want to expend more energy than I needed to. It's about managing your energy mentally and physically."

Dressel didn't suit up for the 4x100m medley relay heats that followed, but could still swim the final on Sunday.

He is also in with a chance to compete in the 4x100 mixed medley relay decider on Saturday, leaving a possible six gold medals on the table if he chooses to do so.

Dressel admitted it had been hard to put the emotion of winning 100m freestyle gold on Thursday behind.

"I had to recoup pretty fast, there's a lot of emotional energy that goes into these meets physically, but emotionally it'll drain you quicker than the physical," he said.

"I tried to have a nap (today) but couldn't so emotions are still high." Just three men have won the Olympic 50m title twice -- Alexander Popov, Anthony Ervin and Gary Hall Jr -- and France's Florent Manaudou is the only one in Tokyo with a

chance to join them.

But he hasn't been under 21.50 since the 2016 Olympics, where he came second to Ervin and then retired and switched to a handball career. He came back to the sport in 2019 and clocked 21.65 to be second behind Dressel, with Greek Kristian Gkolomeev third.

McKeon returned to the pool after storming to win the 100m crown in the morning session, carrying her electric form into the evening.

She backed up with 24.02 in her heat, a new Olympic record.

McKeon, team-mate Cate Campbell and Dutch 2012 Olympic champion Ranomi Kromowidjojo are the only women to crack 24 seconds this year, making them top contenders.

Campbell, who won the 100m bronze, was third fastest into the semi-finals in 24.15, with defending champion Pernille Blume of Denmark second best in 24.12.

World record holder Sarah Sjostrom came fourth with Kromowidjojo eighth.

Blume denied she was feeling any pressure as the title holder.

"No, that's five years ago. It doesn't matter what you have done or haven't done. We are all here on an equal basis," she said.

Distance star Gregorio Paltrinieri would ordinarily be a favourite in the men's 1500m as defending champion and second fastest ever behind China's Sun Yang.

But the Italian was struck down with glandular fever in June, hampering his built-up.

He qualified only third in his heat and fourth overall, behind Ukrainian Mykhailo Romanchuk (14:45.99), American Robert Finke, the 800m champion, and Germany's Florian Wellbrock.

After China upset them in world record time to win the 4x200m freestyle relay, Australia and the United States were keen to make amends in the women's 4x100m medley heats.



Ariful, Junayna register their personal bests

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh swimmers Ariful Islam and Junayna Ahmed managed to put their best performances in their respective 50m freestyle heat events at the Tokyo Olympics yesterday. However, their individual best timings were not enough for them to qualify for the next round.

Ariful finished 51st among 73 competitors after clocking 24.92 seconds, having bettered his previous best of 28.81 made in 2019 World Championships. However, his score was far behind that of Pawal Juraszek, who secured the final spot to qualify for the 16-swimmer semifinal with a time of 21.97 seconds.

England-born swimmer Junayna also suffered the same fate in women's 50m freestyle heat event after finishing 68th among 81 competitors. The teenage swimmer crossed the distance with a time of 29.78 seconds, some 5.01 seconds more than Dutch swimmer Femke Heemskerk, who was the last one to enter the 16-swimmer semifinal with a time of 24.77 seconds.

The 18-year-old swimmer, however, improved on 30.96 seconds, the timing she had clocked during the 2019 World Championships in Korea.



OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
China	19	10	11	40
Japan	17	4	7	28
USA	14	16	11	41
ROC	10	14	10	34
Australia	9	2	11	22

Potential injuries from tight schedule concern Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national team are about to venture into a hectic schedule of international fixtures as they prepare to participate in the five-match T20I series against Australia in the span of only eight days, starting from August 3.

Previously the Tigers travelled to Zimbabwe in the first week of July, right after taking part in the month-long Dhaka Premier League T20 competition, amid few injury concerns in the team.

During the Zimbabwe tour, the Tigers played seven international games -- a Test match followed by a three-match ODI and a three-match T20I series -- in just 17 days.

ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal had to miss the Test match as he had been struggling with his knee injury. Although Tamim managed to take part in the ODI series despite tackling pain, the left-hander eventually had to return home ahead of the T20I series and was prescribed to rest for at least two months. This meant that he had to be ruled out for the upcoming Australia series along with the New Zealand and England series as well.

Left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman also suffered an ankle injury during the warm-up game ahead of the Test series against Zimbabwe which led to the pacer missing out a majority of the matches in tour.

Liton Das, who is also ruled out for the upcoming Australia series, opted himself out after the series due to personal reasons before which, he suffered a thigh injury during the first T20I in Zimbabwe.

It is bound to be a daunting task for the Tigers to remain fit and also juggle with the workload keeping the compressed schedule ahead. Moreover, New Zealand are expected to arrive in early September to play five T20Is before England travel for three T20Is and three ODIs.

A Bangladesh Cricket Board official, requesting anonymity, said, "Obviously it's a huge challenge for the cricketers and to make things even tougher, the prolonged stay inside the closed environment of the bio-secure bubble makes it difficult to avoid fatigue and maintain focus, both mentally and physically."

"In any sport, injuries are part of the game and we don't want to overthink in this regard. But yes, we are trying to manage everyone's workload keeping the tight schedule in mind and the players are also aware of it. This is another reason behind our attempt to create a bigger pool of cricketers so that we can rotate them accordingly."

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SALARY, EID BONUS OF 38 SPS Uncertainty over payment of dues goes

Now they've been attached to PHQ; their posting to Rab led to complications

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Thirty-eight SPS, who had gone without Eid bonuses or any salary for the last two months due to complications over their posting in Rab, will finally get their salaries as they were attached to Police Headquarters last week.

The home ministry issued a circular on July 25 which said the 38 officers of BCS police cadres have been attached to the PHQ, cancelling their postings as deputy directors in Rab so that they can finally withdraw salaries and allowances.

They were among 48 superintendents of police (SPs) who were posted to the Rapid Action Battalion through a home ministry order issued on May 16. They joined the elite force on May 18, but 38 of them did not get an internal posting order in Rab, causing frustration among them.

"The home ministry transferred us to Rab with the president's order, but we are yet to be posted," said one of the officers recently, requesting anonymity.

"In my 13-year service life, I have made many sacrifices for my duty. I hardly get any leave. But now I am sitting idle

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Trains which in normal times would have been ferrying passengers all across the country lie idle at the Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital. After eight days of activity surrounding the Eid rush, passenger rail services have been suspended due to a nationwide lockdown from July 23 to August 5. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Sinha murder trial halted due to Covid lockdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The trial proceedings in the Maj (retd) Sinha Rashed Khan



murder case remain halted due to the pandemic-induced lockdown.

The witnesses in the case were scheduled to testify on July 26, 27 and 28. But due to the lockdown restrictions, judicial proceedings in the Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court like other courts across the country have been suspended. That is why, no witnesses' statements were recorded in the case on the scheduled dates, said public prosecutor of the court.

On this day, on July 31, last year, Sinha Md Rashed Khan died in police firing at an APBn check point on the Cox's-Teknaf highway. He was shooting videos

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Helena placed on remand in case under DSA

Rab says the sacked AL leader spread propaganda on digital platforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Helena Jahangir, who was recently sacked as member of an Awami League subcommittee, was "spreading propaganda and misleading information" on digital platforms to defame important personalities and create panic and confusion in the public mind, Rab said yesterday.



The elite force brought the allegations against Helena at a press briefing hours after arresting her from her Gulshan home on Thursday night.

The 49-year-old businesswoman recently drew criticism from different quarters after announcing the launch of "Bangladesh Awami Chakriji League".

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court last night placed Helena on three-day remand in connection with a case filed with Gulshan Police Station under the Digital Security Act.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

UN to send team to East Pakistan

JULY 31, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

UN AID EXPERTS TO BE POSTED IN EAST PAKISTAN

The United States, working behind the scenes, won the agreement of both Pakistan and the United Nations to station an international group of 153 civilian relief and rehabilitation experts in East Pakistan under United Nations sponsorship, officials said today.

Moreover, they said, the United States had notified U Thant, secretary general of the United Nations, that it would contribute \$1 million as an initial payment to help the group organise and fly necessary equipment to Dhaka.

Among the United Nations staffers will be 73 monitors who will be stationed at four area offices in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna and at 69 other locations. Each monitor would be linked by radio with a United Nations headquarters in Dhaka, qualified informants said.

"The presence of 73 UN monitors, each reporting on conditions in his area, may cool off passions and damp down military reprisals," one informant said. "It's not the UN function to do this—but it will be an important side effect."

One official today described the agreement of Thant and of Pakistan President Yahya Khan to the proposals for a United Nations group in East Pakistan as "the only ray of sunshine in an otherwise gloomy situation".

Pakistan's agreement to the United Nations force was said to have been inspired largely by unremitting, but unpublicised,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PEGASUS SCAM

India SC to hear plea seeking probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday agreed to hear next week the plea of senior journalist N Ram seeking a probe by a sitting or a retired judge into the Pegasus snooping matter.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana, took note of the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Ram and another veteran journalist Sashi Kumar, that the petition has been filed and numbered and needed to be heard in view of the huge ramifications of the alleged snooping.

"We will list it sometime in next week," Justice Ramana said.

The plea by Ram and Kumar said the alleged snooping represented an

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Sponge structures may be Earth's oldest animal life



AFP, Paris

Fossilised structures discovered in northwestern Canada may be from sponges that lived in oceans as long as 890 million years ago, making them the earliest known animal life on Earth, research showed on Wednesday.

The findings also challenge the long-held idea that animals did not arise on Earth until after a major infusion of oxygen into the atmosphere and oceans.

Sponges are simple animals with an ancient history. Genetic evidence gathered from modern sponges has shown they likely emerged between 1 billion and 500 million years ago.

But until now there has been no evidence of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Schoolgirl raped in Jamalpur

Three arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Jamalpur court yesterday sent three men to jail for their alleged involvement in the rape of a schoolgirl in the district's Bakshiganj upazila on Thursday.

The accused are Hossain Shanto, 21, Mohammad Aminul, 21, and Angur Alam, 23, of Kurigram's Roumari upazila, said police.

Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bakshiganj Police Station, said the 17-year-old victim filed a rape case against the trio with the police station early yesterday.

According to the case statement, the police official said, the victim, along with her five neighbouring youths, went to visit Lauchapra Picnic Spot in Bakshiganj on Thursday.

Reaching the spot, they discovered that the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Fire guts 2 freezers for storing Covid vaccine jabs

No shots were inside

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A fire gutted two deep freezers which used to preserve Covid vaccines at the civil surgeon's office in Barguna yesterday morning.

There were no vaccine shots in the refrigerators.

Md Khorshed Alam, station officer of Barguna fire service, said when a pedestrian called the firefighters after he saw smoke coming out of the window of the civil surgeon's office, firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Ferry passengers walking on the highway in Paturia after crossing the Padma river. With no public transport available amid the nationwide lockdown, they will try to reach Dhaka by hitching rides on pickups and other vehicles. Inset, a family on a rickshaw van crossing a checkpost in the capital's Nayabazar.



PHOTO: STAR, ANISUR RAHMAN

SPREAD OF DELTA VARIANT China battles worst outbreak in months

India sees highest cases in 3 weeks; US ramps up vaccine push; Japan extends emergency

AGENCIES

Hundreds of thousands of people in China were in coronavirus lockdown yesterday as the country battled its worst outbreak in months, while India reported most new cases in three weeks and US intensified vaccination efforts in the face of a Delta variant-fueled surge.

The World Health Organization has warned that the highly transmissible strain, first detected in India, could unleash more outbreaks in a high-risk area from Morocco to Pakistan where vaccination rates are low.

In China, a cluster of infections in Nanjing city linked to airport workers who cleaned a plane from Russia earlier this month had reached the capital Beijing and five provinces by yesterday.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been locked down in Jiangsu province, of which Nanjing is the capital, while 41,000 came under stay-at-home orders in Beijing's Changping district.

At least 206 infections across China have been linked to the cluster, and the outbreak is geographically the largest in several months.

It challenges Beijing's aggressive containment efforts which have relied on mass testing, lockdowns and swift contact tracing.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING JULY 31

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