

AFGHAN CONFLICT
Govt forces battle to thwart Taliban assaults on key cities
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BANGLADESHI WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

Pandemic puts them in trouble

No job, no income for thousands

PORIMOL PALMA

Abdul Kader Parash lost his income three months ago due to sheer lack of clients at the motor garage he worked for in Kuala Lumpur.

Besides, the workshop has been shuttered since June because of coronavirus restrictions.

"There is nothing to do except whiling away in my room with my roommates. I am worried about my future and that of my two younger brothers and elderly father back home in Bangladesh," he told this correspondent over the phone from Jalan Ipoh area of the Malaysian capital.

About a week ago, his recruitment agent provided some food for him and his four roommates. But the supplies will run out soon. Besides unemployment, he also fears detention by law enforcers cracking down on undocumented workers.

"People from whom I could have borrowed some money are facing similar crises," he said.

"I feel the worst when my brothers call me and asks me if I could send them some money."

Parash, 29, who is from Chaudhagram, Cumilla, doesn't have valid documents to stay in Malaysia.

Malaysia, home to an estimated 8 lakh Bangladeshis, saw the Covid-19 infections cross the one-million-mark last week.

In fiscal 2018-19, Bangladesh received \$1.19 billion in remittance from Malaysia, which was 7.25 percent of entire amount sent home by migrant

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People who lost their livelihood due to the lockdown wait for food near Ramna Police Station in the capital. Officers at the police station said they have been handing out packs of food to almost 1,000 people every day since the lockdown began.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Conspirators of Aug 15 will be exposed one day

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the names of conspirators behind Bangabandhu's assassination will come out one day, mentioning that there was a link between Khondaker Mostaq and Ziaur Rahman.

"The trial of the killing has been held but the conspiracy has not yet been unearthed. It'll come out one day for sure," she said. The prime minister

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FACTORY REOPENING

A mess-up hard to afford

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has made a complete mess of the reopening of export-oriented factories amid "strict lockdown" enforced to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

On Friday night, it announced the decision to reopen the factories, giving the workers only a day to get back to their workplaces mostly in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur.

The authorities didn't think even for once how the workers, who went to their village homes to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha, would return to their workplaces with operation of all public transports suspended.

On Saturday morning, tens of thousands of workers from different parts of the country started for their workplaces and endured untold sufferings on roads because of a lack of transports.

It was in the evening that the policymakers seemed to have realised the plight of the workers. Hours later, they announced allowing public transports for 16 hours till noon yesterday.

But by that time, tens of thousands of workers had already reached their

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Workers keep toiling on way back to city

STAR REPORT

As export-oriented factories reopened yesterday with less than a 48-hour notice, workers had to travel miles on foot to reach Dhaka for a second consecutive day.

Even though the government allowed public conveyance to resume on the streets on Saturday evening – a whole day after declaring that factories can be reopened – the move came as little respite to incoming factory workers, because enough transport just wasn't enough transport available.

In this mad dash, a 22-year-old garment worker named Md Abu Hasan died while trying to catch a moving bus.

The incident occurred on Bogura Sadar's Dhaka-Rangpur highway.

Hasan, a sewing operator at Mawna Fashion Limited, hailed from Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat.

Upon hearing that factories are reopening, Hasan had started for the capital on foot on Saturday afternoon. By nightfall he had only managed to reach

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This rush will only worsen Covid surge

Warns the health minister; 231 more people die, 14,844 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the health directorate reporting 14,844 new cases of Covid-19 yesterday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said the infections will spread even more as garment factory workers rush to the capital from across the country.

"Workers from different parts of the country have joined their workplaces as garment factories reopened today [Sunday]. They did not follow the health safety rules. As a result, the coronavirus infections will rise further," he told reporters after an event in the capital.

Echoing him, Obaidul Quader, road transport and bridges minister and also Awami League general secretary, said the business leaders did not keep their promise as the garment workers had to join work en masse.

"This was not the promise [that the business leaders made] to the government. For this, the coronavirus infections will turn disastrous and the infections and death rates will rise further," Quader told journalists at his residence in the capital.

The country is struggling to break the transmission chain of the Delta variant of coronavirus.

In the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, officials reported 231 deaths from Covid-19 across the country, raising the number of fatalities to 20,916, says a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

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ASTRAZENECA VACCINES

Second dose administration resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will resume administering the AstraZeneca vaccine against Covid-19 in Dhaka division from today to those who have been waiting for their second dose of the vaccine.

Dr Shamsul Haque, line director of the Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health (MNC&AH) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said this during the health bulletin yesterday.

People in other divisions will get the second dose from August 7, he added.

He said a text will be sent to people who had earlier received the first AstraZeneca dose. However, those who had earlier received the text for the second dose but did not get the shot will not need an SMS to get the second dose.

The development came as the country on Saturday received 7.81 lakh doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from Japan under

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

ক্রিপ্টোকারেন্সি প্রসঙ্গে সংবাদমাধ্যমে প্রকাশিত রিপোর্টের প্রেক্ষিতে স্পষ্টীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্প্রতি কয়েকটি সংবাদমাধ্যমে ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রা/ক্রিপ্টোকারেন্সি বিষয়ে প্রকাশিত রিপোর্ট বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নজরে এসেছে। একটি নির্দিষ্ট মামলার তদন্তকারী কর্মকর্তার গোপনীয় ব্যবহারের জন্য বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক হতে পত্রের মাধ্যমে প্রেরিত মতামতের অংশ বিশেষ কোন পত্রিকায় খতিভাতাবে উপস্থাপিত হয়েছে যা কোনক্রমেই সাধারণভাবে প্রচারযোগ্য নয়। উল্লেখ্য, সকলের সচেতনতার লক্ষ্যে ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রার লেনদেন হতে বিরত থাকার বিষয়ে ডিসেম্বর ২৪, ২০১৭ তারিখে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃক গণমাধ্যমে ও বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে নিম্নরূপ একটি সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রচার করা হয়:

"সম্প্রতি বিভিন্ন সংবাদ মাধ্যম এবং ইন্টারনেট হতে প্রাপ্ত তথ্য থেকে জানা যায় যে, অনলাইন ভিত্তিক ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রা বা crypto currency যথা Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple, Litecoin ইত্যাদি বিবিধ বিনিময় প্ল্যাটফর্মে (exchange platform) লেনদেন হচ্ছে। এসব ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রা কোন দেশের বৈধ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত বৈধ মুদ্রা (legal tender) নয় বিধায় এর বিপরীতে কোন আর্থিক দাবীর (financial claim) স্বীকৃতিও থাকেনা। এসব মুদ্রার লেনদেন বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক বা অন্য কোন নিয়ন্ত্রক সংস্থা কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নয় বিধায় এসব ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রার ব্যবহার বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ১৯৪৭; সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী আইন, ২০০৯ এবং মানি লন্ডারিং প্রতিরোধ আইন, ২০১২ এর দ্বারা সমর্থিত হয় না। অনলাইনে নামবিহীন/ছদ্মনামিক প্রতিলিপীর সাথে ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রায় লেনদেনের দ্বারা অনিচ্ছাকৃতভাবে মানি লন্ডারিং ও সন্ত্রাসে অর্থায়ন প্রতিরোধ সম্পর্কিত আইনের লঙ্ঘন হতে পারে। মূলতঃ অনলাইন ভিত্তিক নেটওয়ার্কের মাধ্যমে ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রায় অর্থমূল্য পরিচালনা ও নিষ্পত্তি সংঘটিত হয় এবং এটি কোন কেন্দ্রীয় কর্তৃপক্ষ/সিস্টেম সিস্টেম নিয়ন্ত্রণ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত না হওয়ায় গ্রাহকগণ ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রার সম্ভাব্য আর্থিক ও আইনগত ঝুঁকিসহ বিভিন্ন ঝুঁকির সম্মুখীন হতে পারেন। এমতাবস্থায়, সম্ভাব্য আর্থিক ও আইনগত ঝুঁকি এড়ানোর লক্ষ্যে বিটকয়েনের ন্যায় ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রায় লেনদেন বা এসব লেনদেনে সহায়তা প্রদান ও এর প্রচার হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য সর্বসাধারণকে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।"

উক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি এখনও বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে প্রদর্শিত হচ্ছে এবং এ বিষয়ে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের অবস্থান অপরিবর্তিত রয়েছে। এ প্রসঙ্গে সর্বসাধারণের জ্ঞাতার্থে পুনরায় জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কোন ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রা/ক্রিপ্টোকারেন্সি বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নয়। সম্ভাব্য আর্থিক ও আইনগত ঝুঁকি এড়ানোর লক্ষ্যে যে কোন ধরনের ক্রিপ্টোকারেন্সি বা ভার্চুয়াল মুদ্রায় (যেমন বিটকয়েন, ইথারিয়াম, রিপল ইত্যাদি) লেনদেন অথবা এরূপ কার্যে সহায়তা প্রদান ও এতদসংক্রান্ত প্রচারণা হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য সকল ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠানকে পুনরায় অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

জনস্বার্থে এ সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করা হল।

সূত্র: একইপিডি(এফইএমপি)/০১/২০২১-৩৭৬৪ তারিখ: জুলাই ২৯, ২০২১

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Make policies for collective fight

Eminent citizens ask govt

- Govt, NGO should coordinate work for dealing with pandemic
- Govt should issue specific instructions for collective efforts
- Awareness must be increased
- Coordinated efforts of public, private sectors needed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stressing on the need for specific instructions for joint efforts to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, eminent citizens have called upon the government to formulate policies to fight it collectively.

They also called for strengthening the public health infrastructure and ensuring vaccine access for all.

The eminent citizens said this at a virtual dialogue on "Civil Society and Community-based Initiative to Address the Pandemic" organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, and The Hunger Project yesterday.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, and distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said there is no alternative to civil society and community-based initiatives to tackle Covid-19.

He also stated that there is a lack of coordination between efforts by the government and non-government initiatives.

Dr Debapriya said the government has not provided specific instructions for a collective effort to tackle the pandemic and suggested outlining policies in this regard.

Professor Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow at CPD, highlighted the lack of coordination at the local level.

She also called for increased awareness and recommended collective and coordinated efforts of public and private sectors.

Professor Rehman Sobhan, chairman, CPD, said there

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MR. KHORSHED ALAM

DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

UAP family mourns the death of Mr. Khorshed Alam, Member, Board of Trustees of UAP, former Chairman of the Board, Acting Vice-Chancellor of UAP, Secretary to GoB, Governor of Bangladesh Bank and Ambassador.

UNIVERSITY OF ASIA PACIFIC

74/A Green Road (Farmgate), Dhaka 1205, www.uap-bd.edu

10TH DAY OF STRICT LOCKDOWN

All-too-familiar Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With crowds of factory workers thronging the city, Dhaka wore almost a normal look yesterday as public buses, private cars, CNG-run autorickshaws and motorcycles all rolled out on the streets.

This happened even though shopping malls and markets remained closed. The day began with factory workers pouring in to the city to join work, increasing public movement on the road.

Although public transports were allowed to operate till noon, some buses were seen plying Dhaka streets after 12pm.

This correspondent visited Asad Gate, Farmgate, Panthapath, Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Ring Road, Adabor, Mirpur, and Dhanmondi areas and witnessed similar scenarios.

A traffic inspector of Mirpur area confirmed that vehicular movement was higher yesterday compared to the previous few days.

"Some buses were plying the street till noon. In some areas, traffic control was needed due to the pressure," he said.

Like other days, the alleyways remained crowded. Visiting the by-lanes in Mohammadpur, Kalabagan, Green Road, and Farmgate areas, this correspondent found some shops and tea stalls open, while many were seen gossiping by the roadside and moving around without wearing masks.

In some areas, shops were open with their shutters half down. "Every time a lockdown is imposed, we become the sufferers. I am already drowning in loan from paying my shop and house rent. How long can we go like this?" said Ashraf Uddin, who has a bedding store in Kalabagan area.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association yesterday demanded reopening of markets and shopping malls after August 5 as they have been incurring heavy losses.

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They would have wanted to reach Dhaka by Saturday night, but failing to find space in any transport due to the huge onrush of people into the city, Dhaka-bound factory workers' journeys got pushed back by so much, they reached the capital in the morning. Bus and launch terminals overflowed as people scammed to reach work. The photos were taken yesterday from Jagannath University and Sadarghat areas. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



RISING DENGUE CASES

237 people hospitalised in a single day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time this year, the number of dengue-infected patients who were hospitalised across the country in a single day crossed the 200 mark.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 237 people with dengue fever were admitted to hospitals in the country in 24 hours till 8am yesterday, of which only 19 are from outside Dhaka.

With them, a total of 2,895 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the DGHS.

Of the total infected, only 94 are from outside Dhaka.

A total of two hundred and seventy-two were infected in the entire month of June, while 43 were infected in May.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 862 of them were undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 34 outside the capital as of yesterday, according to DGHS data.

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AL begins observance of month of mourning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

August, a tragic month in Bangladesh's history, started yesterday by recalling the brutal assassination of country's founding father and his family members, with renewed pledge to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

On 15 August, 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated by a group of conspiring army officers. Bangabandhu's wife, sons, daughters-in-law and other relatives were also killed in the massacre, one of the most heinous in world history.

Bangabandhu's daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana survived as they were abroad at the time.

Ruling party Awami League and its front and associate bodies observe the month as month of mourning to recall the brutal assassination.

Awami Swachhasebak League, the volunteers' wing of AL, on Saturday midnight observed the month of National Mourning Day with a torch procession on Dhaka streets, marching towards Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi.

Party leaders, workers, supporters and people from different professions and different socio-cultural organisations yesterday placed wreaths at the portrait of

Father of the Nation at Dhanmondi 32.

AL general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the perpetrators of August 15 carnage and August 21 grenade attacks (on Sheikh Hasina) still remain active, as they don't want development, peace and comfort in the country.

"They (conspirators) feel jealous of Bangladesh's march forward towards prosperity under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They want to see Bangladesh as a conflict-ridden bloody land. They don't want a Bangladesh of development, peace and comfort," he said, reports BSS.

At a press conference at his official residence, Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said those who perpetrated the August 15 carnage had to suffer unnatural deaths as the history didn't forgive anyone. The trials of those who had staged the brutal August carnage and who were beneficiaries have been completed in the court of nature, he said.

He said the November 3 jail killing (in 1975) was actually carried out to make the nation and AL leaderless.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) organised a candle light vigil on the premises of Shikha Chirantan at Suharwardi Udyan in the capital yesterday.

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Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote holds a candlelight vigil at the capital's Suharwardi Udyan yesterday, marking the first day of the mourning month of August.

'Govt suffering from dependency syndrome'

Says Zafrullah Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

The country's health system has collapsed due to the "wrong" policy of the government as it is suffering from "dependency syndrome," said Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday.

"The Covid death rate has increased in the country because of the government's wrong policy. The government has been walking on a wrong path for which the health system has completely collapsed," he said.

Speaking at a press conference at Gonoshasthaya Kendra in Dhaka, Zafrullah said, "We don't want to increase the capacity of the country. We would like to import various things, including oxygen, and widen the dependence on India. It's called dependency syndrome."

He said the government should take steps to set up oxygen plants in 64 districts to save people's lives.

"The cost of the most advanced technology capable of producing 50 tonnes of oxygen per month is only Tk 6 crore. There's many business institutions that can do this. If



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Reopening factories a 'suicidal' decision: BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday termed the government decision to allow export-oriented factories to resume operation amid the ongoing strict lockdown "suicidal".

"A horrible situation has been prevailing in these decisions. The government earlier declared that the factories would remain shut till August 5. Suddenly, it announced that the factories would be reopened without taking any steps to allow the workers to return. They again decided at night that public transport would operate till 12pm," said party secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

He said, "I see nothing but insanity in these decisions. The BNP standing committee feels that the government has taken a suicidal decision due to its incompetence and lack of sincerity."

Fakhru made the remarks at a press conference at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office while unveiling decisions of a virtual meeting of the party standing committee held on Saturday.

Referring to media reports, he said it is freightening the way workers in droves were desperately trying to return to their workplaces.

"They are returning from rural areas where now the coronavirus transmission is very high. They're coming back with this (virus). So, we can understand what's going to happen in Dhaka. We think the government should resign shouldering all the responsibilities for its failure to deal with the Covid situation," Fakhru observed.

The BNP leader said health experts also opposed the government's decision and they described it as a farce since Dhaka residents will be vulnerable to the Delta variant with the arrival of workers from outside the capital.

Export-oriented industries resumed operation today, the 10th day of the ongoing strict lockdown, amid warnings against Covid surge as workers started returning to their workplaces without maintaining health protocols.

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Traffic cop run over in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic police personnel was fatally run over by a microbus in the capital's Mirpur Road yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Helal Uddin (50), a constable of Tejgaon Traffic Division.

The incident took place when Helal signaled the microbus -- coming from Gabtoli -- to stop around 11am.

The driver first slowed his vehicle but later tried to speed away, hitting the policeman. As he collapsed on the road, the microbus ran him over, leaving him critically injured, said Shahed Al Masud, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Traffic Division Police. Helal was taken to nearby

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RU professor files GD over death threat

Says he mentioned Natore-2 MP's father as razakar in book; lawmaker snubs claim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

A professor of Rajshahi University (RU) has allegedly been receiving death threats for mentioning Natore-2 lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul's father as a razakar in his book on Liberation War.

Prof Sarkar Sujit Kumar, chairman of Bangla department at RU, filed a general diary (GD) with Boalia Model Police in this regard on Thursday, said Sub-inspector Nadim of the police station.

Prof Kumar published the book -- History-Tradition and Liberation War of Natore District -- in 2009 while another edition came out this year. In the GD, Prof Kumar said in his book, he wrote Hasan Ali Sardar (father of lawmaker Shimul) was a razakar in page 600 (number 21 in the list) of his book.

The professor alleged that alongside giving death threats, those close to the MP have been spreading false information against him. In the GD, he also said there has been an ongoing conflict centring formation of the district committee of Natore Swachhasebak League.

While discussing about MP Shimul, his father's activity during the Liberation War came up. Some local leaders used his book as a reference for the lawmaker's father's anti-Liberation War activities, said the professor.

Contacted, Prof Kumar said, "I compiled lists of freedom fighters,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

RMCH resumes Covid-related pathology tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The authorities of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday resumed all essential pathology services for Covid-19 patients.

Many of the services remained suspended for a long time due to a lack of skilled employees and mechanical faults, said the hospital officials.

They said from now on Covid-19 patients would not have to go outside the hospital compound for tests. The initiative would also reduce transmission of the deadly virus as movement of the infected people would remain within the hospital compound.

"Patients will be our VIPs. We have asked all our doctors and staff members to treat them as VIPs. The patients will not have to go to private pathology centres for tests," said RMCH director Shamim Yazdani.

The RMCH director was briefing journalists at the hospital's conference

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

NEWS IN brief

21,056 pass BCS preliminary test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 21,056 candidates have passed the 41st Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) preliminary examination.

The results were announced in a notice signed by Public Service Commission (PSC) Examination Controller (Cadre) Nur Ahmed.

The written test for those who have passed the preliminary exam could be held in November this year, and the announcement would be made through a press release from the official website, read the notice. On March 19, this year, preliminary exams were held in eight divisional cities.

68 return from Thailand by spl flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Embassy in Bangkok has facilitated repatriation of 68 Bangladeshi, Indian and Thai nationals from Thailand to Bangladesh by a special Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight.

The flight was arranged on a self-payment basis in line with Bangladesh government's commitment to extend all possible assistance and support to stranded Bangladeshis abroad.

The flight arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Saturday, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Thailand Mohammed Abdul Hye thanked the Thai government for extending their cooperation. Since the Covid-19 outbreak last year, the Bangladesh embassy has so far facilitated 16 special flights from Bangkok to Dhaka.



Some see monsoon as the season of gloom, its grey skies and dark clouds only speaking melancholy for them. For many others, it's the season of fresh air and spontaneous showers. And of course, of Rabindra Sangeet and ilish-khichuri, and the magic of raindrops setting in and clinging on to the creases and corners of every living leaf. This photo was taken from the capital's Agargaon. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Actor Eka sent to jail for torturing house help

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent film actress Semon Hasan Eka to jail after rejecting both the remand and bail petitions filed against her in two cases for torturing her house help and possessing narcotics.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim passed the order after Hatirjheel police produced her before it with a three-day remand in each case, court sources said.

In the remand prayers, the investigation officer said Eka attacked her house help and was found to be in possession of drugs.

On the other hand, the defense lawyer submitted two petitions seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayers, citing the client's illness.

Claiming herself innocent, Eka told the court that she was ill during the incident. She also claimed she was implicated as part

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Abu Sayeed Chowdhury's 33rd death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the 33rd death anniversary of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, former president and a Liberation War organiser, says a press release.

Marking the occasion, Qurankhwani will be held at Nagbari Jame Mosque in Tangail.

Justice Chowdhury resigned as Dhaka University vice chancellor on March 15, 1971 in protest of killing of two students on the campus by the Pakistani army.

In 1985, he was unanimously elected chairman of UIN Human Rights Commission.

He authored four books -- "Probashe Muktiyuddher Dinguli", "Manobadhikar", "Muslim family Law in the English Courts" and "Human Rights in the twentieth Century". He donated a large amount of his property to religious and academic institutions.



This goods-laden pick-up truck lost control and drove up the road divider at the capital's Bijoy Shoroni at some point on Saturday night, spilling the cylinders it was carrying, inset, all over the street. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Woman held on fraud charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested Dr Ishrat Rafique Eshita along with her associate from the capital's Mirpur area on charges of fraudulence.

Rab claimed that Eshita (34) allegedly forged her identity as member of various international and local organisations to deceive people.

The other arrestee is -- Shahidul Islam Didar (29), who claimed himself to be founder and ambassador of various organisations, said Rab.

The elite force also claimed to have seized 300 yaba pills, five bottles of foreign liquor, fake seals and certificates, passports, laptops and mobiles from their possessions.

Addressing a briefing at its media centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday, Rab director (legal and media wing) commander Khandaker Al Moïn said Eshita is a doctor by profession who falsely identifies herself as a medical scientist, researcher, PhD graduate, rights activist, organiser, brigadier general, and member of various international organisations.

Rab said Eshita completed MBBS in 2013 (Session 2005-2006) from a private medical college in Mymensingh. In June 2014, she joined a private hospital in Mirpur as a doctor.

The same year, she was hired as a doctor in a government hospital.

After working there for four months, she was dismissed due to disciplinary reasons, said Rab.

18th death anniversary of Suraiya Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 18th death anniversary of Suraiya Begum, an associate professor of Information Science and Library Management at Dhaka University, says a press release.



She was wife of late Tawfiq Aziz Khan, who was executive editor of The Daily Star and a renowned sports writer and commentator.

She was a life member of Bangla Academy, Institute of Library Information and Management, and the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

She was also member of the Inner Wheel Club of Dhaka North West, an executive committee member of the Community Development Library and student adviser at the university department.

Relatives and friends are requested to pray for salvation of her departed soul.

Abdus Salam's 111th birth anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 111th birth anniversary of Abdus Salam, Language Movement veteran and former editor of now-defunct Bangladesh Observer (formerly Pakistan Observer).



He was one of the founders of Jatiya Press Club and Press Institute and also a member of East Pakistan Law Council.

Abdus Salam Smrity Sangsad and his family members will visit his grave at Banani; hold milad mahfil and will distribute foods among orphans, says a press release.

A virtual memorial meeting will be held by Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists at 4pm.

Abdus Salam was a recipient of Ekushey Padak for his contributions to journalism.

Salam was editor of The Pakistan Observer from 1949 to 1972.

Reopening

FROM PAGE 3

A record surge in the number of Covid cases and fatalities in recent days prompted the government to enforce a nationwide strict lockdown from July, suspending all outdoor activities unless there's an emergency.

Fakhrul alleged that the country's poor and low-income people are suffering due to the "unplanned" lockdown.

He said their party repeatedly cautioned the government that the lockdown would never work without food aid and financial support for the low-income and marginalised people.

"We also urged the government to provide these people with a one-time grant of Tk 15,000. But the government has decided to pay Tk 2,500 to its own party men. The real victims are not getting this support," the BNP leader alleged.

'DECEPTION OVER VACCINE' Fakhrul alleged that the government is

trying to deceive people by giving them wrong information about vaccines.

"The government has said it'll make arrangements to provide 60 lakh doses of vaccines every week. But it couldn't give 60 lakh jobs over the last seven months.

"They've also announced to give one crore doses of vaccines every month without any guarantee of receiving the jobs. This is nothing but a trickery."

He alleged that the health minister has been making "ridiculous and hollow" remarks about vaccinating the country's 80 percent population without collecting the necessary vaccine doses.

"The BNP standing committee meeting has urged the government to immediately present a specific roadmap on vaccine collection, storage and distribution."

Fakhrul also accused the government of deliberately giving people "false information" about the daily coronavirus cases and fatalities.

Actor Eka

FROM PAGE 3

of a conspiracy to harass her.

Upon hearing both sides, the magistrate turned down the defense's pleas and sent her to jail.

On Saturday, Hatirheel police arrested Eka from her residence in the city's Ulon area on charge of torturing her house help. Earlier, locals had called 999 and complained of her torturing the house help.

Police also rescued house help Hazera Begum (30) and sent her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

During the drive, police seized five yaba pills, some cannabis, and half a bottle of liquor from Eka's house.

Later, two cases -- one for torture and the other for possessing narcotics -- were filed against her with Hatirheel Police Station.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that Eka hit Hazera with a solid object as she refused to do extra work. This caused injuries to her head and left hand.

All too

FROM PAGE 3

Shop owners have lost millions of taka in the 270 days of market closure due to the lockdown, said Md Helal Uddin, president of the association.

Meanwhile, police, Rapid Action Battalion, Border Guard Bangladesh, and army personnel were seen checking vehicles by setting up check-posts at important points yesterday.

But this was contrasted by lax monitoring at some check-posts, where no law enforcers could be seen.

The current phase of the lockdown will end on August 5 midnight.

AL begins

FROM PAGE 3

Attending the programme, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud said the torch of independence lit by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will remain lit forever.

The minister said a commission should be constituted to unmask the masterminds behind the assassination of Bangabandhu.

RMCH resumes

FROM PAGE 3

room yesterday about the relaunch of all pathology tests.

He said several one-stop service points would be created for collecting samples for tests. Besides, there will be separate pathology services for cardiology patients.

He said the hospital had only 11 laboratory technologists. Recently, the health authorities have approved a proposal for hiring skilled staff through outsourcing.

RU professor

FROM PAGE 3

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Lost
My following materials lost: SSC-Certificate, MBBS-Marksheet, MS (CVTS)-Certificate. And others, those I can't remember. Romna Model Thana - GD No. 31, Date: 01/08/2021.
Dr. Md. Shahidul Islam
01819241130 (M)

Govt suffering

FROM PAGE 3

we could have 64 oxygen production centres in 64 districts, no one would die from lack of oxygen."

Zafrullah alleged that the government is not providing people with true information about the vaccines. "It's [the government] not saying how many doses are in its hands and how much money was spent on buying the vaccines. We know the Russian government wants to provide each dose of vaccine for eight dollars. The government should tell people the truth about vaccines."

He said the government itself is not abiding by the lockdown, which was enforced to control the Covid infection. "But poor people are being suppressed to comply with the lockdown."

Zafrullah said the government considers people as its subjects and does not feel necessary to be accountable to them. "Now, there's no politics in the country while businesspersons and bureaucrats are ruling the country..." he said.

Traffic cop

FROM PAGE 3

Suhrawardy Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police detained microbus owner Shamim Khan (45) and seized the vehicle from near Suhrawardy hospital.

The detainee told reporters at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station his microbus was hired by National Academy of Education Management to transport its project director.

Microbus driver Billah fled the scene, said police Inspector Abul Kalam Azad.

237 people

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, mobile courts of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday fined Tk 22.58 lakh to authorities of different under-construction buildings, houses and other establishments after finding Aedes mosquitoes larvae.

The mobile courts also conducted an awareness campaign to destroy breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes.

Meanwhile, DNCC mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday directed chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) to take necessary steps to destroy all breeding sources adjoining their buildings at Diabari under Uttara Sector-18.

The mayor, while visiting different places to observe DNCC's combing operation and as part of an awareness programme in Uttara found breeding sources adjoining the buildings of Rajuk.

He urged every city dweller to come forward to clean their homes and yards to control Aedes mosquitoes.

He also urged them to visit their construction sites on a regular basis where water can remain stagnant at different places of the buildings, and said they will take legal action if they find any breeding ground in any building of government or private organisations.

unesco
UNESCO Dhaka Office

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is seeking applications from Bangladeshi Nationals for the position of **Administrative and Logistics Assistant (SB2)** under Service Contract modality.

Detailed information, including Job Description, are available at UNESCO's Career Page (<https://careers.unesco.org/job/Dhaka-Administrative-and-Logistics-Assistant/731800702/>). Eligible Bangladeshi nationals interested to apply will need to submit on-line application on or before **15 August 2021**.

Applicants are required to provide complete and accurate information. No modifications can be made to the application once submitted.

Applications received ONLY through UNESCO Careers will be taken into consideration for next step(s).
UNESCO does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process.

Request for proposal (RFP) for hiring sub-awardee (engagement of TV and other media) under the "USAID's Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh Activity" of icddr,b

Tender Ref. icddr/b/G&F/OTM/2021/003 **Date : 02 August 2021**

icddr,b leads the four-year TB implementation project titled "USAID's Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh Activity". icddr,b is now inviting sealed proposals from any interested private organisations, private media house/agency, non-government organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), who fulfil the criteria mentioned in the RFP for selection of sub-recipients. The RFP document contains all the necessary information for interested offerors. With most proficient offeror, icddr,b will sign an agreement for currently established scope.

Interested participants can download the RFP documents from the web address below: <http://www.icddr.org/work-with-us/tender-notices>

Pre-bid meeting will be held on **10 August 2021** at 11:30 AM BST on Microsoft Teams. Please see the bid documents for details of location and contact.

Offerors shall submit their offers through hard copy in designated place as mentioned in the RFP document. Offers must be received no later than **23 August 2021** at 2:30 PM BST. Please note that bid opening session will not be conducted as a public opening.

icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject all/part proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever. This RFP invitation will also form a part of the contract and will be binding upon the tenderer.

icddr,b Senior Manager, Grants & Compliance

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Divisional Passport & Visa Office
E-7 Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
www.dip.gov.bd
Invitation for Enlistment

Sl No.	Description	Detail
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
2.	Agency	Department of Immigration & Passports (DIP)
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
4.	Procuring Entity Code	N/A
5.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh
6.	Invitation for	Enlistment of Firm for the supply of Furniture, Electronics, stationary items & goods, Stamp & Seals and related service.
7.	Invitation Ref No.	58.01.00000.601.74.001.20-6478
8.	Date	01/08/2021
KEY INFORMATION		
9.	Procurement Method	Limited Tendering Method/ Request For Quotation.
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10.	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh (GOB)
11.	Development Partners	None
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12.	Office Code	N/A
13.	Office Name	Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
14.	Application Closing Date and Time	17/08/2021 at 01:00 pm (BST)
15.	Name & Address	
	Application Form Availability	MD. MEHEDI HASAN, Assistant Director, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka. Room No-603. Telephone No-02-58156425
	Receiving Application Form	MD. MONIRUZZAMAN, Assistant Director, Room No-608, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka. Telephone No-02-58156425
INFORMATION FOR APPLICATION		
16.	Eligibility of Application	a) Vat Registration and TIN Certificate of the Suppliers. b) Up-to-date Trade License of Local Agent from City Corporation. c) Proprietorship/Partnership/Limited Company ie. Concerned Commercial Documents (Photocopy) of the Tenders. d) Money Receipt of purchase of Tender Documents. e) Proof of Solvency. f) Must confirm that has legal Capacity to enter into a contract under the authority with valid Power of Attorney. g) At least 3 years' experience certificate for the Supply of similar goods and related service.
17.	Brief Description of Goods or Works	a) Supply of Stationary items, b) Supply of office furniture. c) Supply of Electronics goods and miscellaneous items.
SL No. Description Detail		
18.	Brief Description of Related or Physical Services	N/A
19.	Price of Application Form	2000.00 BDT
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
20.	Name of Official Inviting Application	Director
21.	Designation of Official Inviting Application	Director
22.	Address of Official Inviting Application	Director, Divisional Passport & Visa Office, Agargaon, Dhaka.
23.	Contact details of Official Inviting Application	Telephone No-02-58156425,
The procuring entity reserves the right to reject any or all the Tenders without assigning any reason.		

1. 8. 21.
 (Md. Mehedi Hasan)
 Assistant Director
 For Director

GD-1401



Volunteers from five villages in Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila working to make a new bamboo bridge on the Dhum river at Golmunda point. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Villagers build makeshift bridge on turbulent river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

After a makeshift wood bridge on the Dhum river at Golmunda point in Jaldhaka upazila was washed away last month, residents of five villages had to build a bamboo bridge at the site with their own funds.

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) last year carried out an extensive excavation work on the river.

School teacher Mominur Rahman, a resident of the area, said as there has been no permanent bridge over the river, villagers on both sides had long been relying

on a wood bridge to cross the river.

But the bridge was swept away last month by strong current in the river, causing immense sufferings to the villagers, he also said.

Locals said that about ten thousand residents of five villages need a bridge at the location to transport patients to and from upazila health complex and to communicate with various offices including that of the upazila nirbahi officer, police station and land registration in the upazila headquarters.

With the wood bridge washed away, they had been risking their lives while crossing the turbulent

river on rafts made of bamboo or other materials.

The authorities concerned had informed of the situation, but to no avail, the locals also said.

Several villagers this correspondent spoke with said local youths raised funds from community members to buy bamboo and other necessary components and volunteers worked for several days to build a new 40-meter-long bridge at the site of the old bridge.

Alimuddin Mia, a senior citizen from the area, said, "The praiseworthy initiative of the youths has given us respite from

the suffering."

"Construction of a permanent bridge [on the river] is a crying need and I informed BWDB and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of the matter," said Golmunda Union Parishad Chairman Tofazzal Hossain.

Contacted, BWDB Sub-divisional Engineer Abdul Hannan Prodhan said the BWDB does not build bridges unless it is required under an irrigation project.

Engineer Abdur Rouf of LGED in Jaldhaka upazila, said they would soon visit the area to assess the situation.

Conspirators of Aug 15 will

FROM PAGE 1

said this while opening a voluntary blood, plasma donation and food distribution programme arranged by the Bangladesh Krishak League in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi-32.

She inaugurated and addressed the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Krishak League arranged the voluntary programme and discussion as part of a month-long programme of Awami League and its associate organisations marking the National Mourning Day commemorating the martyrdom of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina, also the chief of ruling Awami League, said her prime task was to put the killers, involved directly, under trial and materialise the dreams of the Father of the Nation regarding the country and its people.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, said she did not go to the path of digging out who was behind the conspiracy. "My first priority was to change the fate of poor and hungry people, and improve their livelihoods."

The prime minister mentioned that there is nothing beyond her desire except materialising the dreams of her father.

"I want to see smiles on the faces of the people of Bangladesh, and change their fate. I want Bangladesh to prosper as a developed country getting free from hunger and poverty, and for its people to move in the world arena with their heads high as a victorious nation," she said.

Hasina said if the Covid-19 pandemic had not hit Bangladesh the country would have been able to continue its development pace towards prosperity uninterrupted. "This pandemic hit the whole

world but we've been able to run our economy for which we greatly focused on agriculture."

The prime minister briefly described the various steps taken for the betterment of agriculture during the pandemic and before it.

Regarding the killing of August 15, she said that anti-liberation forces had captured state power after the August 15 carnage.

"Their level and nature of thought were aligned with Pakistanis who had assumed Bangladesh would never be able to raise its head. That's why they killed the Father of the Nation, and I wonder how our people got involved in this!" she said.

Hasina mentioned that Bangabandhu had enough trust in the people of Bangladesh and these people gave a huge blow to his trust by killing him brutally.

She said it is clear that there was a link between Khondaker Mostaf

and Ziaur Rahman.

"Through the killing of Bangabandhu, Bangladesh had totally deviated from the ideals and spirit of the Liberation War," she said, adding that the only aim of the killing was to destroy the emergence of Bangladesh and its victory.

Awami League presidium members Matia Chowdhury and Jahangir Kabir Nanak, AL agriculture and cooperatives secretary Faridun Nahar Laily, office secretary and PM's special assistant Barrister Biplob Barua, Krishak League president agriculturist Samir Chanda and general secretary advocate Umme Kulsum Smriti also spoke at the event.

A one-minute silence was observed in the beginning of the programme to show respect to the martyrs of August 15, and munajat was offered seeking divine blessings for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

Italy's Jacobs wins stunning 100m gold

FROM PAGE 12

lane four, the Anguilla-born Briton not even bothering to question his disqualification.

Dressed in light blue singlet and lycra shorts, the US-born Jacobs, in lane three, made a good start, held his nerve through the drive phase and powered through to the line.

Jacobs joyously ran into the arms of Italian teammate Gianmarco Tamberi, who had just shared gold in the men's high jump and was waiting at the finish line.

The race, run in stifling temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius (84 Fahrenheit), had a distinctly

underwhelming build-up and feel to it as hot favourite Trayvon Bromell bombed out of the semi-finals in which China's Su Bingtian and Jacobs unexpectedly set Asian and European records respectively.

The Tokyo Olympics are the first since Athens in 2004 to take place without Bolt, who went on to win three consecutive Olympic 100m titles in Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro, as well as three straight 200m crowns.

And for the first time since the 2000 Sydney Games, there was no Jamaican in the final, Bolt's long-time former teammate Yohan Blake failing to qualify from his semi-final

of sprinting hopes. Many have been lauded as the athlete to fill Bolt's spikes, but no one has yet lived up to the considerable weight of expectation.

Added to that, the 68,000-capacity Olympic Stadium in Tokyo had no cheering fans because of coronavirus restrictions in the Japanese capital.

Instead there were sparse pockets of athletes and team officials who did their best to create something of an atmosphere at what is normally one of the most widely anticipated events of the entire Games, commanding a huge worldwide television audience.

Drives on to arrest gangs

FROM PAGE 12

and lorries and take away the cargoes goods at gunpoint. The highway police will have to play a more assured role in checking such cases, he said.

Since such incidents are considered mere theft, the transport workers, even if they are caught, commit similar offences after coming out on bail in less than six months, he said, while calling for amending the law to ensure harsher punishment.

Against this backdrop, on July 12, leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the sector's apex trade body, met with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and requested beefing up security measures and police surveillance to prevent robbery of the export consignments.

Mostafa Kamal Uddin, senior secretary to the public security division of the ministry; Benazir Ahmed, inspector general of Police; Shafiqul Islam, additional inspector general of Industrial Police; Mallick Faqurul Islam, additional inspector general of Highway Police; AKM Hafiz Akhtar, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch; and other high officials of law enforcement agencies attended the

meeting. When buyers discover rags and other materials filled by thieves in cargoes instead of finished garments, it taints the image of Bangladesh, said BGMEA President Faruque Hassan.

In response, Khan directed the law enforcement agencies to be stricter and assured that the Dhaka-Chattogram highway would be brought under closed-circuit television surveillance.

Following the meeting, the government formed a team, headed by Islam to find ways to stop the theft of export goods on the highway.

The committee also held its first meeting, according to Md Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the BGMEA.

"The law against theft is weak and that is why perpetrators get away even after being arrested," he added.

Whether Mollah, who was nabbed by detectives two weeks after the incident along with two accomplices from Gazipur and Dhaka's Uttara, gets away easily remains to be seen.

The police recovered 90 clothing rolls, said Harun or Rashid, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch, at a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday.

"We got information from some

others of this robbery gang," he said, adding that drives will continue to arrest such groups.

Bangladesh, India

FROM PAGE 12

transported 36.9 lakh tonnes of goods from India, which is more than double that from a year earlier. Subsequently, the railway's income from the cross-border trade hit a record Tk 167.7 crore, up 120 percent year-on-year.

The rail route can open a new horizon of regional trading: Bangladesh can export goods to Nepal through it, said Siddiqui Alam, executive member of Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce.

After the partition in 1947, seven rail links were operational between India and the then East Pakistan up to 1965. Bangladesh and India have committed to reviving all the pre-1965 railway links between the two countries.

The Haldibari-Chilahati rail link will strengthen India-Bangladesh rail connectivity and bilateral trade and enhance rail network access to the main ports and dry ports to support the growth in regional trade and to encourage economic and social development of the region, said the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

Ropa Aman farmers eye better yield, fair price in Jhenidah

1,04171 hectares of land in the district to be brought under Ropa Aman cultivation



Farmers of Raghunathpur village under Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah planting Ropa Aman paddy at a field.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Hundreds of farmers in the district have started planting Ropa Aman paddy with the hope of getting fair prices. The growers are eager to start Aman farming earlier to get high yield.

In the last Boro season, the growers got good prices. Due to this, farmers have started planting Ropa Aman earlier this year to get fair prices.

In the last season, the farmers sold per maund of rice at Tk 1200-1300, they said.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Jhenidah, 1,04171 hectares of land in six upazilas of the district will be brought under Ropa Aman cultivation in 2021-2022 which was 99,956 in 2020-2021.

In 2021-2022, the target of Aman cultivation in Sadar upazila is 25680 hectares, 22340 hectares in Shailakupa, 11026 hectares in Harinakundo, 18650 hectares in Moheshpur, 6980 hectares in Kotchandpur and 19495 hectares in Kaliganj upazila.

Jalal Uddin of Kaliganj upazila said that he cultivated two bighas Ropa Aman in the last season 2020-21 and got 30 mounds of paddy. He sold per mound at Tk 1000 to 1100 this season. And in the last boro season of 2020-21 he sold per mound at Tk 1200 to 1300. In the hope of getting better price he has cultivated four bighas of Ropa Aman this year.

Another farmer Sujit Kumar of Belegat village under Shailakupa upazila said that Ropa Aman farming costs little because they do not need any irrigation. After planting seedlings it grows in rain water. "We apply little amount of fertiliser and can harvest bumper production," he added.

Deputy Director (DD) Md Asgar Ali of Jhenidah DAE SAID that farmers got better price by selling boro paddy in the last season.

As a result, they are bringing more land Boro cultivation hoping a good yield.

He added that the target of seedbed of Ropa Aman was 4975 hectares but 5247 hectares of land have been used as seedbed this season. So, the yield of Ropa Aman might exceed the target.



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Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-2)
Soydabad, Sirajganj.

Ref: 27.28.8878.201.07.001.21.148

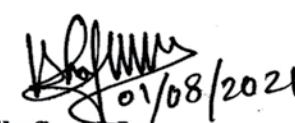
Date: 01/08/2021

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	594234	Supply of General Tools & Equipment	29-Jul-2021	25-Aug-2021 03:30 PM	26-Aug-2021
2	595611	Supply of Cooling Tower Dosing Chemical (through Framework Contract)	1-Aug-2021	22-Aug-2021 03:30 PM	23-Aug-2021

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


01/08/2021
Shafiqul Islam

Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW CCPP (Unit-2)
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

GD-1400

NEWS IN brief

India takes over UNSC presidency for August

India yesterday assumed the rotating Presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of August. It has several important items on its agenda for the world body's functioning under this period, especially those focusing on areas of its core interests. This is India's tenth tenure. "During our Presidency in August, India is organising three high-level signature meetings, focusing on our priority areas: maritime security, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism," India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador TS Tirumurti, said in a video message straight from the Security Council.

Nazi guard, 100, to go on trial in Germany

A 100-year-old former guard at the Sachsenhausen Nazi concentration camp near Berlin will face trial in the autumn, 76 years after the end of the Second World War, German weekly Welt am Sonntag reported. The district court of Neuruppin admitted the charges of accessory to murder in 3,500 cases, and the trial is slated to start in October. The defendant should be able to stand trial for 2 to 2-1/2 hours a day, a court spokesman told the paper. The accused, who was not named in accordance with German media laws concerning suspects, was said to have worked as a camp guard from 1942 to 1945 in Sachsenhausen, where around 200,000 people were imprisoned and 20,000 murdered.

More evacuations as some wildfires rage on in Turkey

Firefighters in Turkey battled yesterday to control wildfires still raging in the resort towns of Manavgat and Marmaris, and some tourists were evacuated from Bodrum on the Aegean coast. Some 107 of the 112 fires that broke out in the past five days in Turkey had been contained as of yesterday morning, according to Forestry Ministry data. However, fires were still blazing in Manavgat in the south and Marmaris in the west, fanned by sweltering heat and winds, Forestry Minister Bekir Pakdemirli said. Since Wednesday six people have died.

US urges Tunisia to return to 'democratic path'

Tunisia should swiftly return to its "democratic path", a top White House official on Saturday told President Kais Saied, days after his shock power grab that included suspending parliament. In an hour-long call with Saied, President Joe Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan noted support for "Tunisian democracy based on fundamental rights, strong institutions and a commitment to the rule of law", according to a White House statement. Saied on July 25 sacked premier Hichem Mechichi and suspended parliament for 30 days. He ordered a graft crackdown targeting 460 businessmen and an investigation into alleged illegal funding of political parties.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS, NDTV



A crew member from the German NGO migrant rescue ship Sea-Watch 3 distributes life jackets to migrants on an overcrowded wooden boat during a rescue operation in international waters off the coast of Tunisia, in the western Mediterranean Sea, early yesterday. *Inset*, A migrant who jumped off the boat cries for help. Two humanitarian rescue ships yesterday rescued 394 migrants, mostly from Morocco, Bangladesh, Egypt and Syria, from the Mediterranean. It was not clear if there were any deaths or injuries among the migrants.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Clashes rage in Afghanistan

Taliban rockets hit Kandahar airport; govt forces battle to thwart insurgents' assaults on key cities

AFP, Kandahar

Afghan government forces struggled against Taliban assaults on several major cities yesterday as the insurgents stepped up a nationwide offensive that saw a key airport in the south come under rocket fire overnight.

Hundreds of commandos were deployed to the western city of Herat while authorities in the southern city of Lashkar Gah called for more troops to rein in the assaults.

Fighting has surged across the country since early May when US-led foreign forces began a final withdrawal from Afghanistan that is now almost complete.

After seizing large tracts of rural territory and capturing key border crossings, the Taliban have started assaulting provincial capitals with gruelling onslaughts.

Flights out of Kandahar, Afghanistan's second-largest city

and the former stronghold for the insurgents, were halted after rockets struck the airport before dawn.



Airport chief Massoud Pashtun said two rockets had hit the runway and repairs were underway with planes likely to resume service later yesterday.

The facility is vital to maintaining the logistics and air support needed to keep the Taliban from overrunning the city, while also providing aerial cover for large tracts of southern Afghanistan.

The attack came as the Taliban inched closer to overwhelming at

least two other provincial capitals, including nearby Lashkar Gah in Helmand province.

Afghan security forces have increasingly relied on air strikes to push the militants back from cities even as they run the risk of hitting civilians in heavily populated areas.

Further west in Herat, fighting continued on the city's outskirts overnight with air strikes targeting Taliban positions, following another day of dramatic clashes between the insurgents and Afghan security forces bolstered by local militia fighters.

Herat provincial governor's spokesman Jailani Farhad said around 100 militant fighters had been killed in the attacks.

The government has repeatedly dismissed the militants' steady gains over the summer as lacking strategic value but has largely failed to reverse their momentum on the battlefield.

Greenland experienced 'massive' ice melt this week

REUTERS, Brussels

With climate change fueling high temperatures across the Arctic, Greenland lost a massive amount of ice on Wednesday with enough melting to cover the US state of Florida in 2 inches (5.1 cm) of water, scientists said.

It was the third-biggest ice loss for Greenland in a single day since 1950. The other two records, also within the last decade, happened in 2012 and 2019. The rapid melt followed warm air being trapped over the Arctic island by a change in atmospheric circulation patterns, scientists said, noting that there could be more ice lost.

On Wednesday alone, some 22 gigatonnes of ice melted - with 12 gigatonnes flowing to the ocean and 10 gigatonnes absorbed by the snowpack where it can refreeze, said Xavier Fettweis, a climate scientist at the University of Liege in Belgium.

Polar Portal, a group of Danish Arctic research institutions, described it in a tweet as a "massive melting event." While that volume was less than the record single-day ice melt in 2019, this week's event covered a larger area, the group said.

Such events can create feedback loops that drive further warming and melting in Greenland, said Marco Tedesco, a climate scientist at Columbia University. As snow melts, it exposes darker ice or ground beneath, which absorbs more sunlight rather than reflecting it back out of the atmosphere.

"It really positions Greenland to be more vulnerable to the rest of the melting season," said Tedesco, research professor at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

Scientists have estimated that melting from Greenland's ice sheet - the second-biggest on Earth after Antarctica's - has caused around 25% of global sea level rise seen over the last few decades.



A firefighter extinguishes a burning tree trunk as a wildfire continues near the village of Labiri, near Patras, Greece, yesterday. Around a dozen homes were destroyed and five people were hospitalised with breathing problems as authorities evacuate people from five villages in the region.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Baseless accusations'

Iran denies involvement in attack on Israeli-managed tanker; Israeli PM says he has evidence

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday rejected Israel's "baseless accusations" of being behind a deadly tanker attack off Oman, vowing to defend its interests after its arch-foe pushed for UN action against Tehran.

The MT Mercer Street, managed by prominent Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, was struck Thursday off the coast of Oman, in an incident Israel has blamed on Iran.

Two crew members were killed, a British security guard and a Romanian crew member, in what the US military and the vessel's operator Zodiac Maritime said appeared to be a drone strike.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett yesterday said Israel was privy to "evidence" proving Iran was behind the deadly tanker attack off Oman.

"The intelligence evidence for this exists and we expect the international community will make it clear to the Iranian regime that they have made a serious mistake," the Israeli premier said at the weekly cabinet meeting in remarks conveyed by his office.

"In any case, we know how to send a

message to Iran in our own way."

On Friday, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said he had ordered the nation's diplomats to push for UN action against "Iranian terrorism".

But Iran dismissed the claims. "The Zionist regime ... must stop such baseless accusations -- and it is not their first time to direct such accusations at Iran," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters in a televised press conference.

On Saturday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to Lapid and agreed to work with other allies "to investigate the facts, provide support, and consider the appropriate next steps," according to a State Department statement.

Maritime industry analysts Dryad Global said the attack was the fifth against a ship connected to Israel since February.

In recent months, there have been several reported attacks on Iran's shipping fleet that Tehran has linked to Israel. Iran has also accused Israel of being behind sabotage attacks against its nuclear sites, and assassinating a number of its scientists.

1970S IMMIGRATION RAIDS ON PACIFIC COMMUNITY New Zealand PM apologises

REUTERS, Melbourne

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern issued a sombre state apology yesterday to the Pacific community for racially targeted immigration raids in the 1970s that resulted in deportations and prosecutions.

The "Dawn Raids", which often occurred early in the morning, took place from 1974 to 1976 when New Zealand's economy was in a downturn and the government clamped down on immigrant workers from the Pacific who overstayed their work visas.

Addressing hundreds of people in attendance for the formal apology, Ardern said members of the Pacific communities continue to "suffer and carry the scars" of the raids in which they were specifically targeted and racially profiled.

"Today, I stand on behalf of the New Zealand government to offer a formal and unreserved apology to Pacific communities for the discriminatory implementation of the immigration laws of the 1970s that led to the

events of the Dawn Raids," Ardern said.

"The government expresses its sorrow, remorse, and regret that the Dawn Raids and random police checks occurred and that these actions were ever considered appropriate."

As part of its formal apology, Ardern said her government will provide NZ\$2.1 million (\$1.5 million) in academic and vocational scholarships for Pacific communities and \$1 million in leadership scholarships for young people from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Tuvalu, among others.

Sunday's event included an ifoga, a traditional Samoan ceremony in which people ask for forgiveness or receive forgiveness, where some ministers and members of parliament draped a mat over Ardern, which was then removed by members of the Pacific community.

"There were no reported raids on any homes of people who were not Pacific; no raids or random stops were exacted towards European people," Ardern said during her apology.

New curbs imposed across Asia

AGENCIES

China and a number of Asian countries ramped up Covid-19 curbs yesterday as Delta variant cases surged and tens of thousands rallied in France against restrictions designed to stop the pandemic.

Chinese cities rolled out mass testing of millions of people and imposed fresh travel restrictions as health authorities battled to contain the country's most widespread coronavirus outbreak in months.

China yesterday reported 75 new coronavirus cases with 53 local transmissions, with a cluster linked to an eastern airport now reported to have spread to over 20 cities and more than a dozen provinces.

The outbreak is geographically the largest to hit China in several months after the country's successes in largely snuffing out the pandemic within its borders last year.

Authorities have now conducted three rounds of testing on the city's 9.2 million residents and placed hundreds of thousands under lockdown, in an effort to curb an outbreak Beijing has blamed on the highly contagious Delta variant and the peak tourist season.

They are also scrambling to track more than 5,000 people nationwide who attended a theatre



SURGE OF COVID DELTA VARIANT

Chinese cities test millions as virus cases surge

Thailand extends pandemic measures, expands lockdown areas

Australia's east coast battles rising cases

festival in Zhangjiajie, a tourist city in Hunan province which has locked down all 1.5 million residents and shut all tourist attractions after four visitors tested positive.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 4.22 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP. The United States is the worst-affected country with 613,157 deaths,

followed by Brazil with 556,370 deaths and India with 424,351.

Meanwhile, many Asian countries and cities yesterday extended or imposed new curbs facing surging cases mostly driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant of the disease.

Thailand yesterday extended tighter containment measures in the capital and 16 more high-risk provinces probably until the end of August in a bid to slow the spread of Covid-19 as the country deals with its biggest outbreak to date. Thailand reported 18,027 infections and 133 deaths yesterday.

Meanwhile, Vietnam will from Monday extend strict curbs on movement in its business hub Ho Chi Minh City and another 18 cities and provinces throughout its south for another two weeks to help combat its worst Covid-19 outbreak, the government said.

In Australia's east coast, New South Wales and Queensland faced an escalating battle against the Delta variant yesterday, with millions under strict lockdown and authorities urging more testing and vaccinations to rein in the outbreaks.

Sydney and its surroundings reported 239 new locally acquired cases of the highly infectious Delta strain.

Quotes of the day



"The intelligence evidence for this (Iranian involvement in attack on Israeli tanker) exists and ... they have made a serious mistake."

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER
NAFTALI BENNETT



"We will accomplish the provisions of the state of emergency by August 2023. I guarantee the establishment of a union based on democracy and federalism."

MYANMAR'S MILITARY RULER
MIN AUNG HLAING VOWS
POLLS IN TWO YEARS



AUGUST 2

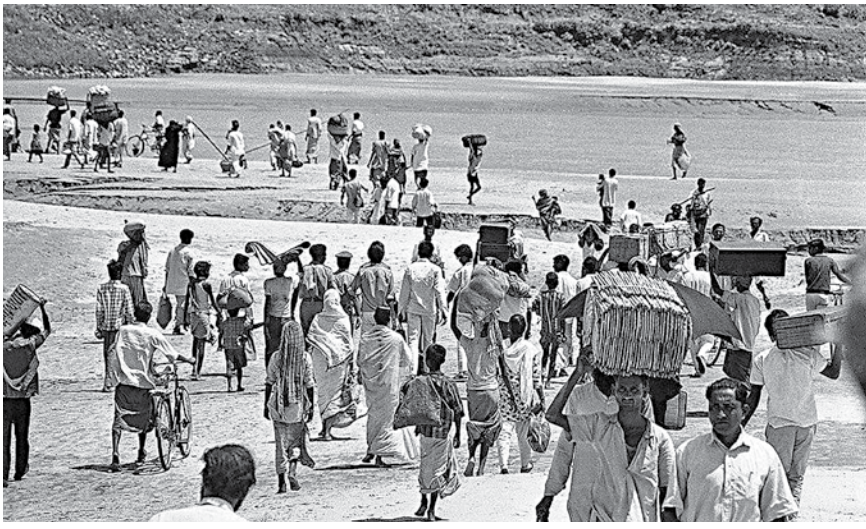
1858 - Government of India transferred from East India Company to the British Crown.

1939 - Albert Einstein, concerned that German scientists were working on powerful bombs using uranium, wrote to US President Franklin D Roosevelt urging him to start an atomic project.

1990 - Iraq invades, occupies Kuwait, Emir flees to Saudi Arabia.

1999 - The Awadh-Assam Express train collided head-on with the Brahmaputra Mail in eastern India, killing 285 people and injuring nearly 300.

SOURCE: REUTERS



(AP PHOTO/MICHEL LAURENT)



COURTESY: MUKTIJUDHO E-ARCHIVE



COURTESY: MUKTIJUDHO E-ARCHIVE

(L) Refugees stream across the River Ganges Delta at Kushtia, fleeing the violence during the ongoing West Pakistani military campaign called Operation Searchlight. (M) Slain Bengalis in front of Jessore City College. Jessore, Bangladesh, December, 1971. (R) The field in front of Jessore Degree College was used as killing ground by Pakistani military during Liberation War. Jessore, Bangladesh, 1971.

A WITNESS TO BANGLADESH GENOCIDE 'It was like the morning after a nuclear attack'

HENDRICK VON DER HEIFDEN

The following is the field report on trip to Jessore, Khulna, Chalna and Kushtia submitted by Hendrik Van der Heijden, Economist, Pakistan Division, the World Bank, dated June 23, 1971.

The visit to the western area of East Pakistan which took place from June 3 to June 6, 1971, centred around three major cities there: Jessore, Khulna, and Kushtia. In addition, I visited Chalna anchorage and the adjoining service city of Mangla. As I left in the early morning of June 3, 1971 for Jessore—by regular PIA commercial flight—it already became apparent at the Dacca airport that the Military Law Authorities (MLA) were still keeping in force elaborate security precautions: all luggage was carefully searched, none was allowed into the airplane, passengers were carefully searched and double checked by Army Security officers. Before entering the plane, another check took place: this time to ensure that cigarette lighter and matches were not carried into the plane. To top it all, armed soldiers entered the cabin and flew as escorts, demanding that all passengers remained seated during the entire flight. The plane was fully loaded: government officials, army personnel and some civilians, including some women and children.

Approaching Jessore, it became clear that this was the area where the Army punitive action had been very severe; from the air, totally destroyed villages were clearly visible, a building was still on fire, and to the eastern side of the runway a good many houses had been destroyed.

The airport was heavily guarded by Armed Forces who also controlled access to the airport. Upon landing, soldiers moved forward to the aircraft and took position around it. A heavy military presence around the passenger terminal was noted. The car from the Khulna District

and butter), only three out of fifteen gasoline stations have survived, and only 5-10 percent of the shops that are there have opened. Schools remain closed for all practical purposes: about half of the teachers report for duty, but less than ten percent of the children attend. Jessore is now a male city, with most women and children having been sent to the country-side.

Damage to housing in Jessore District is so severe that the authorities estimate that some 450,000 people have been affected out of a total District population of 2.5 million. Half a million people have fled to India. Virtually all economic activity has come to a halt in Jessore city which in the afternoon looks like a ghost town. In the evening, no one besides Army personnel ventures into the streets. The sugar and cotton mill remain closed, the cigarette factory operates at 5 percent of its normal capacity, all public works programs have come to halt, stocks of brick factories are very high (indicating the loss of one entire construction

trucks, buses and cars were noticed. An army patrol moved south and whenever they were in sight, people fled as fast as they could.

Halfway to Khulna I visited the Jessore Jute Industry, a firm that in normal times employed some 2,400 workers and operated on a three-shift basis. The firm has 300 hessian looms, 100 sacking looms and 50 broad looms for the production of carpet backing. The firm now operates (with 900 workers) one shift of the conventional looms and two shifts of the broadlooms, although only partially; it operates 40 narrow looms and 38 broadlooms. Consequently, production is at less than 10 percent of original capacity, for the most part occasioned by the skill-imbalance of the returning workers: there is an acute shortage of weavers who have fled to their native villages in the Noakhali, Barisal and Faridpur areas.

Khulna city has been substantially damaged in the center town, the approaches to it. Very heavy destruction was observed in the areas alongside the

buses on the road. Spare parts are a problem. In addition, most of the buses are being used by the Army. River traffic is negligible: less than 5 percent of what it used to be. As a result, there are pockets of scarcity: shortages of kerosene, edible oil and diesel oil exist in the villages.

VISIT TO PLATINUM JUBILEE JUTE MILL

The area surrounding the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill has undergone very substantial damage. In fact, the destruction of pucca houses and buildings reminds of Arnhem in 1944. Also, many workers' houses were destroyed. The area is deserted now. Less than 7 percent of the mill's permanent labor force had returned to the job, but local unskilled people were hired bringing attendance up to 30 percent of the labor force which originally amounted to 4,500. The firm now operates at about 25 percent of capacity. Of the 875 narrow looms originally in operation in 2 shifts, only 420 are working on a one-shift basis. The broadlooms (32) run on a two-shift basis. The firm has started to employ women (very abnormal in East Pakistan) who have become widows in the past few months.

VISIT TO KHULNA NEWSPRINT FACTORY

This factory which produces newsprint mainly for despatch to West Pakistan was restarted at the end of April and produces now 1,500 tons per month as compared to originally 4,200 tons per month. The firm has a shortage of skilled workers, as only 20 percent of the labor force has come back to the mill: of an original labor force of 2,100 some 380 have returned, with the remaining 600 having been recruited locally. The industry forms part of the EPIDC industrial complex, and, obviously, is running at very heavy losses.

VISIT TO EPWAPDA'S 60 MW KHULNA THERMAL POWER STATION

This thermal station was supposed to have been completed by mid-1971. However, there is now a 'six months' delay in commissioning the plant: the Czech consultants have left as have the Czech erection supervisory staff. Forty-five percent of the staff has not yet returned to the job.

VISIT TO CHALNA ANCHORAGE

A two-hour trip by launch took me to Chalna Anchorage where ships started getting in since May 12. A total of 5 ships was anchored, some having waited for two weeks to receive cargo. Traffic on the river is down to 5-10 percent of what it used to be. The project to construct a permanent port at Chalna has indefinitely delayed: all of the workers have fled, as have the Yugoslav consultants.

The city of Mangla, the town where the labor of Chalna Anchorage live, has been virtually obliterated by naval shelling. The population, therefore is down from 22,000 to 1,000 and the business routine there has been completely disrupted.

Damage was extreme: houses, the market place, the telephone exchange, power distribution lines, etc. are all totally destroyed. All construction work, of course, has come to a standstill, and there is no more an economic base for the population there. The 1,000 workers suffice to unload and load the ships' contents into barges. Some port officers have fled, one tug disappeared and two of the four pilots have disappeared. When I was there, M.S. Shams arrived carrying 1,500-2,000 soldiers from West Pakistan.

VISIT TO KHULNA SHIPYARD

Works pretty close to normal. Eighty percent of the staff is on the job, probably forced. I noticed that one coaster had been requisitioned by the Navy and was being outfitted for naval duties. This was also the case with a fishing boat.

VISIT TO THE PHULTALA THANA, KHULNA

Perhaps the most impressive visit I made was the one to this Thana office. Fifty



Bangladesh Mukti Foj at Jessore. April 4, 1971

season), and while the Government administration is formally functioning (some 80 percent of the employees have reported for work), in practical terms it does not operate: people have ceased to come to Government offices. Since the Army action no one has come to apply for licenses, and while there normally would be heavy activity at the Justice Department (settlement of land disputes, etc.), no one is coming now. The collection of revenues had barely started. Some banks were open, but very few transactions took place.

ADBP's office was open but had not made any loans nor had it received any payments. Transport has been badly affected by the disturbances: 50 percent of the stock of trucks have gone out of commission (more than 100 out of 200) with more trucks having gone to India. Many buses have been requisitioned by the Army, are now in India or are being hidden to prevent requisitioning. Train service has been partially restored: the signalling system is out of commission, but the tracks are all right. On the whole, intercity traffic is at less than 5 percent of normal. As a result of the dislocation of the transportation system, there are shortages of salt, tea, washing soap and kerosene.

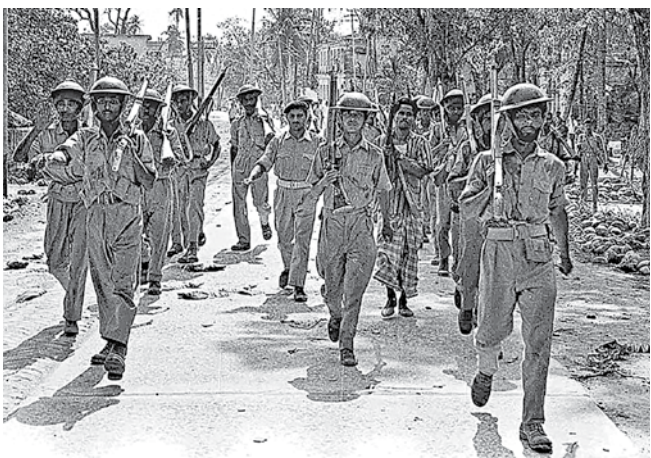
An important aspect of the situation in the Jessore area is that the area is by no means secure. Government officers cannot any more easily enter the villages as they run the risk of being shot by the "miscreants." A number of these incidents took place in the week before I arrived, and the Army is reacting to these incidents by burning down the villages from which these shots are being fired. Generally, the Army terrorizes the population, particularly aiming at the Hindus and suspected members of the Awami League.

TRIP TO KHULNA

On the way to Khulna just a handful of

road and along the river leading up to the Newsprint Factory and the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill. As a result of the disturbances, the destruction of houses and the continuing uncertainty regarding life and property, a large segment of the population has fled from the city: in fact, the population of Greater Khulna is down from 400,000 to 150,000. It is, as Jessore, a male city. People do not venture after dark. The area is not hundred percent secure: all through my stay in Khulna 6 police en armed with rifles accompanied me. At night which I spent at the Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill's guest house, the guards were strengthened to protect from possible hazards from the river which generally unsafe (The week before our arrival a passenger boat, the Rocket, had been seized by the insurgents, as were some barges carrying raw jute and manufacturers).

The Administration of Khulna District was back to 80 percent of its original strength. There are serious police shortages, but the situation is improving. Some senior police officers have been recruited from West Pakistan. The road to Jessore and Kushtia is generally unsafe, particularly at night, and there have been frequent doubts about my proposed trip to Kushtia. Schools are open, but attendance is very poor. The Polytechnic Institute, as well as colleges, however, have not yet started. The main problems affecting Khulna is communications: the telephone system works all right, but mail service is very irregular. There is only marginal truck traffic on the roads: less than 5 percent of normal. In fact, the road to Jessore is normally a heavily congested road. Now it carried only a handful of vehicles. The Army has requisitioned many vehicles and launches, including government vehicles, and many have been taken to India. As regards rail transportation, service is off by 50 percent. There are also very few



Troops of the Bangladesh resistance force march off to fight against Pakistan army, near Jessore on April 2, 1971. PHOTO: AP

Commissioner was there to take me to Jessore first, when I saw the Deputy Commissioner of Jessore, the ADC, the police commissioner and the secretary of the Peace Committee.

Jessore has suffered badly from the disturbances. When the Army moved out of the Cantonment area on April 5 (from March 25 until April 5 Jessore was held by the "miscreants"); it reportedly met little in the way of strong resistance from the East Pakistan forces, and most of the very heavy damage in Jessore was the result, reportedly, of the Army punitive action. The authorities estimate that the population of Jessore itself is down from 80,000 to 15-20,000. Some 20,000 people were killed in Jessore town.

The city's center has been destroyed: commerce, obviously, has come to a standstill. More than 50 percent of the shops have been destroyed, all of the city's bakeries have been burned (so that bread is unavailable there, as is coffee

percent of the population of this Thana has fled (some 20,000 out of a total of 42,000), mostly Hindus, leaving behind unattended plots of land, houses, etc. Everything had been disrupted there: the livestock officer had been killed, the whole administration was in chaos. The people bewildered. The whole works program had come to a stop: no laborers and no construction materials. Agriculture was in a shamble, the people demoralized. It is doubtful whether any government can effectively deal with these people in the near future. It is the Thana level where the shock waves of the Army Action hit the hardest: it was at this level where the hope for agricultural development was. It has been set back by at least five years.

TRIP TO KUSHTIA

Five times the trip to Kushtia was off. Only in the late hours of Friday, June 4, was there a decision from the Governor that I could make the trip from Khulna to Kushtia. Most of the officials were extremely nervous and all the top officials (DC, Chief of Police, etc.) accompanied me to Jessore where there were final deliberations with the DC Jessore.

An hour's drive north of Jessore was Jhenaidah, a small town of some 20,000-30,000 inhabitants. The Army was omnipresent there, and all the approaches to the city were heavily guarded. The Army was dug in and on the alert. We were met by an Army officer who told us that there was only one way to travel to Kushtia: by road, but with an Army protection party. On we went: in the front the DC Jessore's Mercedes used by my counterpart and myself, a jeep with rifle armed Policemen (8), and a truckload of heavily armed soldiers. In convoy we drove to Kushtia.

It was only on April 15 (some 20 days after the Army moved into Dacca), that the Army moved North from Jenidah and into Kushtia.

There must have been very strong resistance from the EP Rifles as some buildings clearly showed. When the insurgents withdrew, the Army's punitive action started. It lasted 12 days and left Kushtia virtually deserted and destroyed. The population was down from 40,000 to 5,000. Ninety percent of the houses, shops, banks and other buildings were totally destroyed. The city looked like a WWII German town having undergone strategic bombing attacks. People were sitting around dazed. When we moved around, everyone fled. It was like the morning after a nuclear attack. I was the first foreigner to come to Kushtia after the Army moved in. The people were terrified and still shocked.

I met the Administration officials who were still shocked and dazed. The DC at first did not answer any of my questions. Nor did anyone else who was there. After fifteen minutes I called the meeting to a halt and went on another trip through Kushtia. It lasted an hour and a half. I asked them to show me a shop where food was being sold: it was in that ninety minutes impossible to find one. Kushtia, as someone told me, is the My Lai of the West Pakistan Army. There was only one reaction: to confirm that impression.

The DC had been killed, as had so many other Government officials. The schools are open but nobody is attending. Even the hospital was practically deserted. The permanent staff was not there, and there was just a handful of new staff. The Army was requisitioning a part of the building. Everything, but everything, was dislocated in Kushtia. ADBP, ADC and other activities, ADC had not recalled any of the pumps it had in the field.

The farmers are not coming to the cities, and nobody goes out. Thousands of farmers have fled. Everything is abnormal there, and it was a shattering experience.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA MONDAY AUGUST 2, 2021, SRABAN 18, 1428 BS

Pregnant women seemingly at greater risk from Delta variant

Prioritise their immunisation urgently

A disturbing trend of more pregnant women passing away from Covid-19 has been observed recently. A week ago, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital had 30 confirmed and 20 suspected Covid-19 patients who were pregnant. The day after, Mugda Medical College Hospital had 45 pregnant Covid-19 patients. According to the director of DMCH, 14 pregnant women died of the virus in the hospital between July 1 and July 25.

Although there are not yet any official statistics to prove that the Delta variant of Covid-19 is responsible for the higher death rate amongst pregnant patients, a July 25 paper compiled by the UK Obstetric Surveillance System (based on national data) "found that the proportion of pregnant women admitted to hospital with moderate to severe infection rose 'significantly' after the Delta variant became dominant in May". What is more concerning is that, not only are pregnant women more vulnerable to the virus (given a weakened immune system and lower lung capacity during the later stages of pregnancy), but most of them are also apprehensive of receiving the vaccine as they believe it might harm their babies.

This is despite the fact that the World Health Organization (WHO) had determined in February this year that the benefits of vaccinating pregnant women against Covid-19 outweighs the potential risks. The interim recommendation was made keeping in mind the high-risk category that severely infected pregnant women fall under, and also because data from animal studies and post-introduction surveillance data had not shown harmful effects of the vaccine during pregnancy. The vaccine's effectiveness was also found to be quite comparable to that in non-pregnant women. The government has recently made known that passports and birth certificates can also be used for registering for the Covid-19 vaccine soon, alongside National Identity (NID) cards. The details of this are set to be announced on August 6 by the health minister. While this is certainly a laudable and long-awaited decision, we would like to echo rights organisation Law and Life Foundation's July 29 legal notice, which requested the government to take urgent and necessary steps to vaccinate pregnant women on a priority basis. We would also urge authorities to raise awareness about the need for pregnant women to get vaccinated and to assure them that it will not harm them or their babies. The compromised immune systems of pregnant women and the safety of their babies need to be recognised so that they can be protected accordingly, saving more than one life at once.

Woes of Bhabadah

Pumping out water is not the answer

WATERLOGGING has now become a permanent problem plaguing three upazillas of Jashore and two upazillas of Khulna since the early 80s. But the measures taken to mitigate, if not cure the problem, does not seem to be in accord with suggestions of most of the experts in this field. The Water Development Board (WDB) has been trying to pump out stagnant water from the Bhabadah region using 20 pumps since the beginning of the year. But this has brought insignificant results, and the current measures will not do. The gains claimed by the executive engineer of WDB Jashore—that the water level has reduced by at least one metre compared to the previous year—is only notional. The reduction could be because the area has received less rainfall than last year. What the experts suggest is perhaps less expensive and more efficacious, which is Tidal River Management (TRM) method.

What is needed in Bhabadah and indeed the rest of the southwestern part of Bangladesh, which remains waterlogged for a good part of the year, and some areas among them for the entire year, is a sustainable programme for long term management of the river basins. About 10 to 15 lakh people in the south-west coastal region have to endure the problem year after year. The problem can be addressed realistically only through the effective management of the tidal rivers. In fact, at one point in time, TRM was employed in several areas of the region but was stopped. In fact, up until 2012 water logging was reduced due to TRM, which was stopped for some inexplicable reason.

Although TRM is the ideal natural solution, and it requires less infrastructure and costs less, there are certain impediments that militate against implementation of the measure, one of which is that it requires land, which people are not willing to give up easily. TRM also disrupts fish farming, and that is why the local people are not inclined towards it. We believe that solving waterlogging requires a multi-pronged approach, and there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution for the entire region. TRM may not be effective for the entire southwestern part of Bangladesh. But it should be used where the method can be more effective, like in Bhabadah. Pumping out water can be a temporary measure, but in the long run, it will drain out the public coffers needlessly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Inflation has gone out of control

The pandemic has caused massive economic suffering for the people. Additionally, prices of essentials have gone up. Some say the inflation is cyclical, while others say it is a result of poor financial management of the past—especially in regards to the banking sector, leading to massive money printing. Whatever the case, it is increasing people's suffering even more.

Sayeed Mansur, Dhaka

Monetary policy during the pandemic



MACRO MIRROR

FAHMIDA KHATUN

THE world is passing through unusual times, with the Covid-19 pandemic forcing countries to adopt policies which would otherwise not be adopted. The pandemic has shrunk economic activities resulting in loss of employment and income, and rise in poverty and inequality. Lack of income has reduced people's purchasing power and consumption demand. Businesses, irrespective of size, have been affected severely. There have been production and supply chain disruptions. The combination of demand and supply-side shocks have prompted governments to initiate various fiscal and monetary measures. They have announced stimulus packages for the affected sectors and people in an attempt to save their economies and people's lives. These include relief packages and credit support from commercial banks. In addressing economic shocks of this type and scale, expansionary fiscal policy has been supported by economists. This has worked in addressing several economic shocks in the past. The objective of such expansionary policies is to inject more money in the economy so that economic activities are revived, employment is generated, and people have money in hand to spend to meet their demand.

In addition to fiscal policy, the importance of monetary policy cannot be undermined during the pandemic. Monetarism has been found to be effective in addressing economic contraction and recession. The assumption in such measures is that the money supply determines the level of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Higher level of money supply in the economy will reduce interest rates, which in turn will encourage higher investment—this will then lead to employment creation.

As soon as the pandemic broke out in Bangladesh in March 2020, the government announced stimulus packages. As of today, the total stimulus package amounts to about 4.4 percent of Bangladesh's GDP. Following the start of the pandemic, the central bank had embarked on an expansionary monetary policy and created additional money for the economy by slashing the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Repo rates. It reduced the CRR of banks by 1.5 percentage point and the Repo rate by 0.5 percentage point. Bangladesh Bank also increased the Advance-Deposit Ratio for

all conventional banks by two percent. This increased the amount of loanable funds for commercial banks.

The need for additional money arose since about 80 percent of the stimulus package of Bangladesh is loan support at a subsidised interest rate. The government was to share a part of the interest of the loans to be disbursed to the enterprises. The objective is to support affected businesses through less costly loans so that they can revive their activities and keep people engaged in those activities. This is expected to bring the production and supply chain back to normalcy and boost aggregate demand during the pandemic.

On July 29 this year, Bangladesh Bank announced the Monetary Policy Statement for fiscal year (FY) 2021-22. As was the case last year, the policy

not avail loans allocated for them due to various complexities.

Another welcome move in the Monetary Policy Statement is to bring the education sector under the refinancing scheme. The education sector has been hugely affected by the pandemic—not only keeping millions of students stuck at home, it could also create high inequality in education during and after the pandemic, which could lead to inter-generational inequality. This refinancing scheme has been designed to help teachers and students in accessing loans to purchase electronic equipment and devices needed to continue online education. In order to make this initiative meaningful, information about such a facility should reach needy teachers and students. Previously, the loan facility for the CMSMEs was not known

middle of 2022 as all eligible people are not going to be vaccinated by then. So, the revival of investment may take longer and excess liquidity will be absorbed a bit slowly. Unless the population of Bangladesh is fully vaccinated, hesitation among investors will persist.

In the face of already existing excess liquidity which has reportedly reached Tk 2.31 trillion, an expansionary monetary policy may pose challenges such as pressure on the prices of commodities, leading to higher inflation. This will further affect the common people who are already living in distress. It may be mentioned that inflation went above the government's target of 5.4 percent and reached about 5.6 percent in FY2021 as food prices increased. Besides, the asset market could see price hikes and market distortion due to this policy stance. The central bank has, of course, pointed out that it would take appropriate measures in case of such a situation. Indeed, the central bank will have to be vigilant in maintaining the stability of the financial market in such unusual circumstances to avoid any price bubble.

The other challenge of the central bank is the perennial issue of loan default. How much of the stimulus package will be returned in time is a concern given the trend of high non-performing loans (NPLs) in banks. More concerning is the wilful defaulters who may take this opportunity to keep the money to themselves and never return it. Already, news of investing the stimulus money in the capital market has appeared in the media. How banks which have a reputation for poor loan management will ensure the return of the public money lent to so-called affected businesses is worrisome. A database on the repayment status of the stimulus packages should be made public.

There are questions about the adequacy of the proposed Monetary Policy Statement for FY2022, since there is a need for more targeted policy measures for the affected people. The two core objectives of the central bank—to keep inflation under control and help achieve the growth targets—require specific measures focusing on sectors and sub-sectors of the economy. While there is always more room for a further comprehensive Monetary Policy Statement, the implementation of the proposed measures effectively will help tackle the negative impact of the pandemic on the economy to a large extent.

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



File photo of women carrying relief supplies provided by the authorities amid the coronavirus in Dhaka.

PHOTO: REUTERS

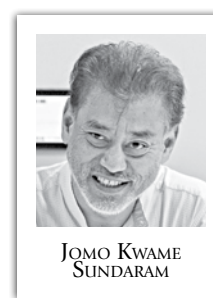
continues the expansionary monetary policy stance to support investments and employment generation. At the same time, it will also follow an accommodative monetary policy stance for FY 2022 in order to take measures as the situation arises.

Bangladesh Bank has announced four types of policy support to businesses. These include the continuation of ongoing refinancing schemes and full operationalisation of the credit guarantee scheme to accelerate the disbursements of loans to cottage, micro, small, and medium enterprises (CMSMEs). These are expected to help the businesses which suffered losses due to the pandemic. However, rapid and smooth access to funds by the CMSMEs has to be ensured through proactive measures. In 2020, the allocation for the CMSMEs were not disbursed fully, and many CMSMEs could

to many small entrepreneurs. Many women reported this to us during a study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on access to stimulus packages by female entrepreneurs. Therefore, this information on loans for educational equipment should be publicised widely with the help of the media.

The Monetary Policy Statement has projected the growth of private sector credit to be 14.8 percent for 2022 as opposed to actual growth of 8.4 percent in FY2021. In FY2020, this growth was 8.6 percent. Because of the pandemic, investment is not picking up despite the low interest rate. In periods of unpredictability, private investment is unlikely to grow. It is uncertain how long the pandemic is going to stay with us. One does not really see any radical change in terms of tackling the health risk of the pandemic in Bangladesh by the

Beware UN food systems summit trojan horse



JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM

Nations World Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) must be consistent with UN-led multilateralism.

For the first time ever, the World Economic Forum (WEF), a partnership of some of the world's most powerful corporations, is partnering the UN in launching the Summit, now scheduled for September.

Food insecurity is primarily due to inequalities and deprivations as victims lack the means to obtain the food they need. The UN should not serve those who cynically use hunger, starvation and deprivation to advance private commercial interests.

UN-led multilateralism threatened
The collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War and seemingly unchallenged US dominance in the 1990s posed new threats to UN-led multilateralism. The World Trade Organization was set up in 1995 outside the UN system. Later, "recalcitrant" Secretary-General (SG) Boutros-Ghali was blocked from a second term.

The four UN Development Decades from the 1960s ended with the lofty, Secretariat-drafted Millennium Declaration, bypassing Member State involvement. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were then elaborated by the UN Development Programme with scant Member State consultation.

Growing corporate sway in the UN system got a big boost with the UN Global Compact. Such influences have affected governance of UN agencies.

Difficult negotiations followed growing developing country disappointment with the MDGs, not delivering on climate finance as promised in 2009, and failure to better address the 2008 global financial crisis and its aftermath.

Hence, the negotiated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) compromise enjoys greater legitimacy than the MDGs. However, achieving Agenda 2030 was undermined from the outset as rich countries blocked needed funding at the third UN Financing for Development summit in mid-2015.

Summit bypasses UN processes

In the last dozen years after the 2008 world food price spike, the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has become an inclusive forum for civil society and corporate interests to debate how best to advance food security. Unsurprisingly, CFS has long addressed food systems.

CFS's High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) is widely acknowledged as competent, having prepared balanced and comprehensive reports on matters of current and likely future concern. In the UN system, CFS is now seen as a "multistakeholder" engagement model for emulation. Yet, the Summit bypassed CFS from the outset.

Nominally answering to the UNSG, Summit processes have been largely set by a small, largely unaccountable coterie. UNFSS organisers initially moved ahead without representative stakeholder participation until his intervention led to some consultative processes.

Mainly funded by the WEF and some major partners, they remain mindful of who pays the piper. Hence, they mainly promote supposedly "game-changing", "scalable" and investment-inducing solutions claiming to offer technological fixes.

Agroecology innovation

An HLPE report has approvingly considered agroecology or "nature-based solutions". Many scientists have been working with food producers for decades to increase food productivity, output, diversity and resilience through better agroecological practices, thus cutting costs and enhancing sustainability.

The evidence is unambiguous that agroecology has delivered far better results than "Green Revolution" innovations. A survey of almost 300 large ecological agriculture projects in more than 50 poor countries reported rising farmer incomes due to lower costs and a 79 percent

average productivity increase.

This contrasts with the record of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) launched in 2006. With funding from the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations, it promised to double yields and incomes for 30 million smallholder farm households by 2020. Despite much government spending, yields hardly rose as rural poverty grew.

Agroecological innovations have proved effective against infestations. Thus, safer, more effective biopesticides that do not kill useful insects and microbes, and non-toxic alternatives to agrochemical pesticides have been created.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) hosted its first International Agroecology Symposium in 2014, before committing to "Scaling Up Agroecology". But for Kip Tom, President Trump's representative, FAO was no longer "science-based".

Demonsing agroecology

The Gates Foundation has been funding the Cornell Alliance for Science, ostensibly to "depolarise the GMO debates" by providing training in "advanced agricultural biotechnology communications". Why traditional agricultural practices can't transform African agriculture is only one instance of such sponsored propaganda masquerading as science.

Well-resourced lobbyists are using the UNFSS to secure support and legitimacy for commercial agendas. With abundant means, their advocacy routinely invokes "public-private partnerships" and "science, technology and innovation" rhetoric.

Forced to be more inclusive, Summit organisers are now using "solution clusters" for advocacy. They then build broad "multi-stakeholder" coalitions to advance purported solutions with the UNFSS mark of approval.

With strong and growing evidence of agroecology's progress and potential, propaganda against it has grown in recent years. Agroecology advocates are caricatured as "Luddite eco-imperialists", "Keeping Africa on the Brink of Starvation", and condemning farmers to "poverty, malnutrition and death".

A public relations consultant has accused agroecology advocates of being

"the face of a 'green' neocolonialism", "idealising peasant labour and retrograde subsistence farming" and denying "the Green Revolution's successes".

Agroecology solutions are the main, if not only ones consistent with the UN's overarching commitment to sustainable development. But the propagandists portray them as uninformed barriers to agricultural and social progress. Such deliberate deceptions block needed food system reforms.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Michael Fakhri alerted UNFSS Special Envoy Agnes Kalibata that agroecology is being dismissed as backward when it should be central to the Summit. Concurrently President of AGRA, with its particular commitment to needed food system reform, is in an impossible position.

Best Summit money can buy?

Investing in the Summit is securing legitimacy and more resources from governments, the UN system, private philanthropy and others to further their commercial agendas. Meanwhile, many are working in good faith to make the most of the UN Summit.

Nevertheless, it is setting a dangerous precedent for the UN system. It has rashly opened a back door, allowing corporate-led "multi-stakeholderism" to undermine well-tested, inclusive "multi-stakeholder" arrangements developed over decades under multilateral Member State oversight.

UNFSS Science Days on July 8 and 9 indicated the Summit is being used to push for a new food science panel. This will undercut the HLPE, and ultimately, the CFS. Hence, the UNFSS seems like a Trojan Horse to advance particular corporate interests, inadvertently undermining what UN-led multilateralism has come to mean.

As both CFS and HLPE are successful UN institutions, the Summit will inevitably undermine its own achievements. Hence, for many Member States and civil society, UNFSS represents a step backward, rather than forward.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a former economics professor and United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, received the Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought in 2007.

Is covid-19 vaccine safe for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers?

KHONDOKER M AKRAM

PREGNANT women and lactating mothers have not been included in the Covid mass vaccination programme in Bangladesh since the beginning, and the rule is still in force. Earlier in this year, when Covid vaccination was initiated in various countries, including the United Kingdom, pregnant women were excluded from the programme due to lack of safety information. During the clinical trials of major Covid vaccines, pregnant women were not included in the studies.

Currently, the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RCOG) in the UK and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States recommend Covid vaccines for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. They assured the safety of Covid vaccines during pregnancy. For this reason, many experts have demanded an amendment in the vaccination policy during pregnancy in Bangladesh.

The question is, is Covid vaccine necessary for pregnant women? If yes, then at which stage of pregnancy should a vaccine be given? Is it in the first trimester, second trimester or in the last trimester? There are varieties of Covid vaccines available. Which type of vaccine is safer to be received during pregnancy? Is it the Oxford-AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna or Sinopharm vaccine? What is the basis for these vaccines being called safe? Have there been any recent clinical trials of Covid vaccines on pregnant women?

Firstly, during pregnancy, the body's immune system becomes suppressed to retain the baby inside the womb until delivery. This is why pregnant women are more likely to get infected by pathogens. Even ordinary influenza virus infection can be severe and life threatening during pregnancy.

A large UK study, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* on May 21, 2021, found that more than half of pregnant women infected with the coronavirus may remain asymptomatic. However, in



Small bottles labelled with a 'Vaccine COVID-19' sticker and a medical syringe are seen in this picture taken on April 10, 2020.

PHOTO: REUTERS

some cases infection turns into severe Covid and can cause life threatening complications in pregnancy and for the foetus. Covid during pregnancy increases the chances of premature births and stillborn babies by two-folds. Development of Covid just before labour can cause pre-eclampsia. In Bangladesh, Covid significantly increases maternal and perinatal deaths, as shown in a study conducted in Mugda Hospital.

For these reasons, it is necessary to vaccinate pregnant women. According to the RCOG, pregnant women are clinically vulnerable to Covid. Vaccination will reduce the risk of severe Covid during pregnancy and thus reduce maternal and newborn mortality.

Now, the question is, how do we know that Covid vaccines are safe during pregnancy? The CDC, FDA, RCOG and JCVI have all said that Covid vaccines are safe during pregnancy. This safety

information came from the V-Safe Pregnancy Registry, run by the CDC. It is an apps-based post-vaccination clinical data collection registry. Pregnant women in the US who have received the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine can enrol in the V-Safe registry and record all the side effects of the vaccine.

As of July 19, 2021, 1 lakh 36 thousand pregnant women who received Covid vaccines had registered in this V-Safe registry. A preliminary data analysis of the first 35,000 registered women's responses had been completed and the results were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on June 18. The results showed that the Covid vaccines did not increase the chances of spontaneous abortions and foetal or neonatal deaths than normal. In addition, other side effects of the vaccines were similar to those who were non-pregnant vaccine recipients. So, it

indicates that the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) do not cause any serious harmful effects on pregnancy and newborns.

One aspect of this study should be noted carefully. Most of the participants in this analysis were vaccinated in the second or third trimester of pregnancies. Therefore, there is still a lack of information on how the Covid vaccines affect the foetus or the pregnancy outcome if the shot is given in the first trimester (first 12 weeks) of pregnancy or just before conception. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have previously been tested on rats which did not show any detrimental effects on the foetus, pregnancy or fertility. Moreover, in the US, during the clinical trials of vaccines, nearly a thousand volunteers became pregnant, but their pregnancy outcomes were uneventful. In Scotland 4,000 pregnant women were also vaccinated

against Covid and none of them showed any detrimental side effects of the vaccine.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain any chemicals that could harm the foetus. However, since the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have mostly been tested on pregnant women till date, the JCVI, CDC and FDA have advised that these two vaccines should be given to pregnant women, and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine could be the second option.

The next question is, at what stage of pregnancy is the vaccine safer? The first trimester of pregnancy is a crucial time for foetal development. Extra precaution is needed to administer any drugs during this period. In addition, studies showed that Covid in the third trimester of pregnancy is more likely to turn into severe Covid increasing the risk of maternal and neonatal deaths. Considering these facts, the JCVI and CDC rationalised administration of Covid vaccine in the second or third trimesters of pregnancy.

The Covid vaccine is also safe for lactating mothers. Studies have shown that vaccine-generated antibodies can be released into breast milk. But, none of the studies detected any other components of vaccines (spike protein or virus) in breast milk. This is why the JCVI and CDC recommend Covid vaccines to the breastfeeding mothers.

So, the following conclusions can be drawn from the above evidence: (1) Although there is no clinical trial data, according to the real-world evidence, the Covid vaccine is safe for pregnant women and unborn babies; (2) Covid vaccine is safer to give in the second or third trimester of pregnancy; (3) Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are the safer options in pregnancy and lactation, as other vaccines lack safety information; (4) Pregnant health workers or those with comorbidities must be vaccinated on a priority basis and; (5) Covid vaccines are safe for lactating mothers and they should also be included in the mass vaccination programme.

Dr Khondoker M Akram is a contributor-doctor based in London.

The question is, is Covid vaccine necessary for pregnant women? If yes, then at which stage of pregnancy should a vaccine be given? Is it in the first trimester, second trimester or in the last trimester?

We need safety net for garment workers



AFTER all the talk of "bouncing back better" in our industry during the past 18-months, we are still failing the people who make our clothes.

Garment workers have been described by one human rights organisation as the "weakest link" in the fashion supply chain. When the pandemic hit, they were the first to be hit, and they continue to suffer.

My concern is that we have not learned our lessons and that garment workers will continue to bear the brunt of economic shocks in our sector in future, unless we introduce fundamental, binding changes.

The underlying issue here is that there is a lack of social security system for the workers employed in the Bangladesh apparel industry. Unlike in other countries, there is no government furlough for months on end, no large redundancy pay-outs, and no guarantee of long-term social security payments. This means that when an economic shock hits, the only thing workers often have left to rely on is their (usually meagre) savings.

Most garment workers will be lucky if they have enough money put aside to pay their rent and other bills for a month. It has been no surprise to see thousands of workers returning to their

families in the villages when job losses/lay-offs have begun to stack up in the garment hubs during the pandemic.

Has there been any help for garment workers? At the moment, there is the Workers Welfare Fund in Bangladesh. This is a scheme whereby apparel exporting factories contribute 0.03 percent of their export value (which is about USD 10 million per year and will increase with the increase of the country's apparel export volumes) and from this fund apparel workers are paid for injury or death coverage.

As the problems of the past 18 months have shown us, this scheme is clearly not enough to provide the safety net which our garment workers need for their broader financial needs. First of all, amount such USD 10 million is not enough; because there are about 4 million garment workers in Bangladesh, and thus in a time of crisis when everyone will be affected, this will mean only USD 2.5 per worker. Moreover, the current Workers Welfare Fund only covers injury or death schemes. But the safety net will also include support for the workers such as income support during crises/lockdowns, unemployment benefits, severance, etc.

The government in consultation with the manufacturers, buyers and labour leaders can form the safety net for the workers. In agreement with all the stakeholders, the government may allocate around 0.5 percent of total export value to this safety net fund. Such a move would put the amount of money raised to billions of dollars rather than millions and might realistically mean



The underlying issue here is that there is a lack of social security system for the workers employed in the Bangladesh apparel industry.

PHOTO: AFP

that garment workers were adequately protected from economic shocks.

This money could be completely ring-fenced by the manufacturers where invoicing is concerned so that it was earmarked specifically for garment workers' protection. That way, the money would be completely protected. I believe most ethical fashion brands would get behind such a safety net, provided it was transparently implemented and monitored with accountability. Moreover, if done properly, it could be sold as a major reason why brands should source from Bangladesh compared to other locations. Brands would also be able to satisfy themselves that they were doing something

meaningful and tangible to support garment workers.

Are there any alternatives? In the past year we have seen the ILO establish an initiative which was intended to support garment workers. However, this "call to action" has so far, after 12-months of being launched, failed to achieve anything significant.

We have also had proposals from NGOs for brands to negotiate enforceable agreements to support stronger social protections for workers related to unemployment and severance benefits, in line with relevant ILO conventions, through the establishment of a "Severance Guarantee Fund".

The purpose of such a fund, we

are told, would be to pay severance and outstanding wages in cases where employers have gone insolvent, or otherwise have terminated workers and can't be compelled to pay. The Severance Guarantee Fund would also mitigate the devastating consequences of unemployment for workers in the future by financially supplementing or strengthening government social protection programmes for unemployment or severance benefits.

In fact, there are many crossovers between the proposals for such a fund and the idea I am suggesting. In both cases, there would be binding agreements between brands and their suppliers to ensure that workers were never left destitute and without receiving wages and payments owed.

Long-term, we need to give much more thought to how we can implement systems and processes which guarantee garment workers are not left high and dry as a result of adverse events. As an industry, we all have a huge responsibility, with buyers themselves having duties under the UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights as well as under the OECD Guidelines for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment Sector to respect the human rights of workers in their supply chain. This includes making sure that the workers who are the drivers of this industry are protected.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

It has been no surprise to see thousands of workers returning to their families in the villages when job losses/lay-offs have begun to stack up in the garment hubs during the pandemic.

QUOTABLE Quote

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
(1806-1861)
English poet

Measure not the work until the day's out and the labor done.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Info
- 5 Thanksgiving dish
- 9 Enthusiasm
- 10 Striped rock
- 12 Moved cautiously
- 13 Musical closes
- 14 Leafy vegetables
- 16 Print measures
- 17 Load unit
- 18 Leafy vegetable
- 20 Idolized
- 22 Start the bidding
- 23 Stand
- 25 Quite bright
- 28 Account book
- 32 Leafy vegetable
- 34 Keats work
- 35 Morse bit
- 36 Leafy vegetable
- 38 Moscow setting
- 40 Suffered
- 41 Daughter of Lear
- 42 Agitates
- 43 Put in stitches
- 44 Beholds

DOWN

- 1 Chinese food
- 2 "Twelfth Night" duke
- 3 Kitchen need
- 4 Cyclist, for one
- 5 Marina sight
- 6 Previously
- 7 Invented
- 8 Posture
- 9 Goddess of the hearth
- 11 German steel city
- 15 François has one
- 19 - the line (obeyed)
- 21 Tolled
- 24 Atlantic fish
- 25 Low point
- 26 Undermines
- 27 Power problem
- 29 Man in a mask
- 30 Yard tools
- 31 Oboists' needs
- 33 Home of the Huskies
- 37 Fisherman's hope
- 39 Hem and -

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

BEETLE BAILEY

I SAID YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING SPECIAL FOR MY BIRTHDAY

I KNOW...

...AND AFTER LAST YEAR, I KNOW WHAT THAT REALLY MEANS

BABY BLUES

HEY, EVERYBODY! DAD'S GOING TO PLAY A SONG!

I APPRECIATE THE ENTHUSIASM, BUT I'M REALLY NOT THAT GOOD YET.

WE KNOW. I'M JUST HERE FOR THE BAD WORDS.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

A C H E
T R I E S
H O T E L
O U T
S C H O L A R
S H E R O N
J A M
O P A L
P A C
I N K
N E P A L
E L O P E
S T A R

A G H A
M A I N S
B I T T E
A B E T T E D
H U G
P E P E
H U H
V A P I D
D E L U G E D
N O T S
E D W I N
Y E A S T
E Y E S

BY MORT WALKER

BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

8 killed in three road

FROM PAGE 12
from Bhola. The driver lost control and two hit workers of Arial Kha bridge toll plaza and then fell into a roadside ditch.

Two toll plaza workers died on the spot whereas 11 others were injured, he said, adding that the injured were sent to hospitals.

Of the injured, four others died at different hospitals and health complexes, he further said.

According to the OC, they seized the truck but the driver managed to escape the scene.

Meanwhile, in Bogura Sadar upazila, a readymade garment worker -- Abu Hasan, 22, of Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila -- was killed as a bus run over him in Matidali area on Dhaka-Rangpur Highway yesterday.

The accident occurred around 7:30am while the dead was crossing the road.

Shishir Kumar Chakroborty, sub-inspector of Bogura Sadar Police Station, said the victim died on the spot. As per the victim's identity card, he used to work as a sewing operator at a readymade garment factory in Dhaka.

Hasan was going to rejoin his

work at the factory, the police official said, adding that the body was sent to Bogura Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

He also said that the law enforcers seized the bus of Dolphin Paribahan but the driver and helper managed to escape the scene.

In Faridpur's Nagarkanda upazila, a man was killed and his wife was injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Joy Bangla intersection around 9:30am yesterday.

The dead is Kabirul Islam, 32, of Sahebahara village in Begarhat Sadar upazila. He was a private job holder, said police.

Quoting locals, Saha Alam, sub-inspector of Bhanga Highway Police Station, said, "The accident took place when a Gopalganj-bound bus of Tungipara Express collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound motorbike."

Kabirul died on the spot and his wife was left injured. She was admitted to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex, he added.

After the accident, the bus driver managed to escape the scene with the bus, added the SI.

Our Faridpur and Bogura correspondents contributed to this report

Mexico holds referendum on prosecuting ex-presidents

AFP, Mexico City

Mexicans voted yesterday in a national referendum promoted by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on whether to investigate and prosecute his predecessors for alleged corruption.

Lopez Obrador, a self-styled anti-graft crusader, says the public consultation will strengthen participatory democracy, but critics see it as little more than a political stunt.

To be binding, 37.4 million people -- 40 percent of the electoral roll -- must participate, but many voters appear unenthusiastic.

While the "yes" vote could win up to 90 percent, it will be difficult to achieve even 30 percent turnout, said Roy Campos, director of the polling company Mitofsky.

Girl stabbed

FROM PAGE 12
stalk the girl on the way. His advances were rejected.

The marriage of the girl was scheduled to be held on Wednesday. Knowing it, Sakawat went to the girl's home in the morning on a motorcycle and entered the girl's room forcibly. He fled the spot after stabbing the girl indiscriminately, they said.

Locals rushed her to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. But she lost the battle for life after four days of the incident at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Badarganj Police Station, said a case was filed over the incident of stabbing on Thursday.

Police are trying to arrest the accused, he said.

Military ruler takes PM role

FROM PAGE 12
August 2023 was interpreted by some local media as extending that time frame by six months.

Min Aung Hlaing also said his administration would work with any special envoy named by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Asean foreign ministers are set to meet today, when diplomats say they aim to finalise a special envoy tasked with ending violence and promoting dialogue between the junta and its opponents.

The army seized power after Suu Kyi's ruling party won elections that the military argues were tainted by fraud. It has said its takeover was in line with the constitution. The country's electoral commission has dismissed the fraud allegations.

After the coup, Suu Kyi, 75, was charged with several crimes. Her trial on charges of illegally possessing walkie-talkie radios and breaking

coronavirus protocols is scheduled to resume today.

MONTHS OF PROTESTS
The military authorities have faced months of protests, strikes that have paralysed public and private sectors, and a resurgence of armed conflicts in the borderlands.

The authorities have branded their opponents as terrorists. "At present, the whole country is stable except for some terrorist attacks," Min Aung Hlaing said in his speech.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners activist group has accused the armed forces of killing 939 people in suppressing dissent since the coup and said at least 6,990 military opponents have been arrested.

The military said the number of protesters killed is far lower and members of the armed forces have also died in violence. It said its response has met international norms in the face of threats to national security.

3,437 died in two years

FROM PAGE 12
Saudi Arabia.

The consulate general covers seven out of 13 provinces in the Kingdom. According to the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh, about 22.8 lakhs Bangladeshis are currently employed in Saudi Arabia.

Aminul Islam, labour welfare counsellor at the Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah, said the expatriates died from different causes, including Covid-19.

Since March 2020, the consulate general registered 556 Bangladeshis who died from Covid-19, Aminul told this newspaper yesterday.

He said those who died from Covid-19 were buried in Saudi Arabia for "mandatory reasons" and also because of a changing situation.

Some of the burials may have happened in Bangladesh if international communications were not disrupted due to the pandemic,

he added.

The report also mentioned that in the last two fiscal years, 706 Bangladeshi female migrant workers took shelter at a safe home in Jeddah, which is run by the consulate general.

Of them, 688 were repatriated. Bangladeshi female migrant workers, who want to return home for various reasons and before their work permit ends, usually take temporary shelter at the safe home, Aminul said.

The report said at least 220 cases, involving 925 Bangladeshi expatriates, were disposed of at the Saudi labour court in last two fiscal years.

The consulate general provided legal support to the Bangladeshis in those cases.

Also, 32,603 Bangladeshi migrant workers were freed from deportation centres and jails and were sent back home following the consulate general's intervention between July 2019 and June 2021, the report added.

Freedom fighters

FROM PAGE 12
normalcy inside Bangladesh through a political settlement and take "credible measures" for the safe return of seven million refugees from India.

India also rejected outright the secretary general's suggestion of posting representatives of the UN High Commission for Refugees in India. The communication, delivered in New York today by Samar Sen, Permanent Representative at the UN, was in reply to the aide memoire addressed by U Thant to India and Pakistan on July 20, 1971.

External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh made it clear in parliament today that "if the success of Mukti Foj in establishing their control in any part of Bangladesh is taken as an excuse by President Yahya Khan to start war I have no doubt that our defence forces will give a befitting reply".

BADSHAH KHAN WARNS PAKISTANI LEADERS

The Pakhtoon leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Badshah Khan, today warned the Pakistani military rulers that they would not be able to solve the crisis arising from Bangladesh movement by "brute force" and called for a political solution of the issue. He deplored that those "who were drunk with power did not learn from history" and were following a path leading to the ruin of Pakistan.

DHAKA UNIVERSITY REOPENED
The University of Dhaka and the colleges of Dhaka city and Narayanganj including Dhaka Medical College and Salimullah Medical College reopened today. The attendance of the students was reported to be very thin.

PAKISTAN HC OFFICIAL SWITCHES TO BANGLADESH
Abdul Majid, a member of the Pakistan High Commission Staff in New Delhi, today declared his allegiance to the People's Republic of Bangladesh and sought political asylum in India.

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

Scientists

FROM PAGE 12
that includes possums, kangaroos and koalas, even though scientists had been trying for the last 25 years. That's because they have a unique biology and are relatively rare in lab settings.

"It's an accomplishment that I didn't think would perhaps happen in my lifetime," John VandeBerg, a geneticist at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, told the MIT Technology Review.

The new research could help scientists get a better understanding of unique marsupial biology, such as the pouches some carry their young in, as well provide insight into human health. Opossums can get human

diseases like melanoma, and have more types of immune cells than humans, which could warrant further study.

Achieving the result was not easy though.

Researchers had a hard time inserting the CRISPR into the opossum cells without damaging the embryos, as well as syncing up the exact timing of the procedure.

Eventually, they found they could control the lighting in their laboratory to encourage an optimal breeding schedule, and used a tool called a piezoelectric drill, which uses an electric charge, to penetrate cell membranes.

ROUNDTABLE

act:onaid The Daily Star

Post COVID Cottage, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises: Youth and Women Responsive Strategy

The Daily Star and ActionAid Bangladesh organised an online discussion titled "Post COVID Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (CMSMEs): Youth and Women Responsive Strategy" on June 28, 2021. The main objective of the event was to discuss a youth and women responsive strategy for CMSMEs in Bangladesh to support them during Covid-19 pandemic as well as to facilitate growth in the sector after the coronavirus crisis comes to an end. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh

CMSMEs play a key role in Bangladesh's economy, particularly in the area of employment generation. This sector was affected the most by the Covid-19 pandemic. The enterprises owned by young people and women were the worst sufferer. Their problems should be adequately addressed by the government through effective policy measures along with direct support. The government should keep these particular groups in mind while designing the stimulus package. Their easy access to stimulus packages must be ensured.

It is also important to take into account other factors such as production and marketing related issues that these CMSMEs are struggling with but are not addressed directly through stimulus packages. Finally, an eco-system should be set up to nurture and develop CMSMEs in Bangladesh.

Hatem Ali, Deputy Manager (Economic Opportunity and Decent Work), ActionAid Bangladesh

Although there is a lack of data on the exact number of small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in the country, we can estimate that there are currently more than 7.8 million that provide the livelihoods of around 31.2 million people.

Since CMSMEs contribute around 25 per cent of our GDP, they will surely play a crucial role in Bangladesh's graduation from a least developed country in 2026, achieving the country's sustainable development goals by 2030, and Vision 2041.



Farah Kabir



Hatem Ali



Dr. Md. Mafizur Rahman



Salina Yasmin



Husne Ara Shikha



Rebeka Nasreen



Farzana Khan



Ali Sabet



Anir Chowdhury



Rizwan Rahman



Abul Kasem Khan



Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem



Mirza Nurul Ghani Shovon



Mousumi Islam



Shams Jaber



Dr Shri Biren Sikder

Suriya Yeasmin, A Female Entrepreneur

Due to Covid-19, it has become difficult to source the raw materials required for production while demand has also simultaneously declined. Our local government or authorities have not informed us about any kind of stimulus packages on offer. So, we are depending on high-interest loans to run our businesses.

Salina Yasmin, Owner of Pindhon and Onnorokom Beauty Parlour

We have not been receiving bank loan benefits properly. We can't continue to sell our assets to pay our staff and keep our businesses running.

We have also started a credit guarantee scheme for women where 5 per cent of the funds will be allocated for female entrepreneurs. Another stimulus package disbursed through micro-finance institutes reached 93 per cent of the grassroots women SME entrepreneurs.

A challenge with the Tk 20,000 crore package was that it was in the form of working capital. There are some limitations for CMSMEs when dealing with working capital, and some of them are not familiar with the terminology. We are talking with the government to change this to a loan, which will be much easier to distribute. Bangladesh Bank will also write to all relevant government organisations to exempt women entrepreneurs from requiring trade licenses to avail bank loans.

Rebeka Nasreen, Director, Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CWCCI)

In a partnership with the PRISM Bangladesh Foundation, our chamber has provided training in block printing and hand-stitching to young women in remote villages of the region. However, there is no monitoring system to ensure they have been able to put the skills to use. There needs to be funds or loans available for these women.

Farzana Khan, General Manager (Women entrepreneurship, technology, capacity and cluster development wing), SME Foundation
Banks categorise stimulus packages under their regular risk management process even though they are for people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the banks are refusing to provide stimulus funds to some small entrepreneurs.

Many small entrepreneurs who were negatively affected by the pandemic were unable to pay back loans in 2020. A Bangladesh Bank circular has clearly stated that these people can't be considered defaulters but still, the banks do so.

Moreover, many bankers refuse to trust women entrepreneurs who do not have men supporting them. This mind-set must be changed.

Ali Sabet, Team Leader, PRISM Bangladesh Foundation

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be a separate segment for youth and women entrepreneurs in the stimulus package.
- An ecosystem of business support services should be developed for CMSMEs
- A database of SMEs should be developed as soon as possible.

➤ A research and innovation fund should be established for CMSMEs.

➤ Financial support and training services should be provided to women chambers so that they can transfer those to their members.

➤ The 15 per cent VAT placed on f-commerce should be removed

The government had planned a stimulus package of Tk 20,000 crore for the sector soon after Covid-19 began to spread in March last year. Of the amount, 70 per cent is said to have already been disbursed and yet, 62.4 per cent of the CMSMEs were unable to pay their employees' salaries for the past year.

Dr. Md. Mafizur Rahman, Managing Director, SME Foundation

We are planning to help set up facilities that encourage and educate new entrepreneurs to start their businesses.

We will also focus on providing financial literacy to SMEs so that they can get access to various banking products suitable for their business.

Along with a2i, we are working on a database of the existing SMEs in Bangladesh. Once it is complete, we will be able to provide various kinds of support, including stimulus funds and loans, to SMEs in a comprehensive manner.

Instead of loans, CMSME entrepreneurs should be offered grants. Databases should be updated with entrepreneurs from both district and upazila levels. Also, training sessions should be held at the upazila level with proper facilities such as food and accommodation for the duration.

Husne Ara Shikha, General Manager, SME & Special Programmes, Bangladesh Bank
Bangladesh Bank has instructed all lenders to set aside one per cent of their net profits to create a corporate social responsibility (CSR) fund of Tk 116 crore.

These funds will not be disbursed as loans. 50 per cent is reserved for entrepreneurs adversely affected by Covid-19, slum-dwellers, and general people in the Rajshahi and Khulna districts. The rest is allocated for every other district.

Regarding the Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package, 74 per cent has been successfully disbursed, of which 5 per cent was allocated for women.

CMSMEs should be able to register through an app and receive their trade license and universal ID to show banks when applying for loans. The trade licensing process in Bangladesh is complicated, so bank loan applications should not require such a license.

The government should establish a research and innovation fund for CMSMEs and advance taxes should be removed to lessen the need for stimulus.

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
If each SME entrepreneur is given Tk five lakh from the Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package, only six per cent of the country's entrepreneurs will receive the fund.

The CMSME sector should be divided based on sector and occupation. Loans should be disbursed based on these divisions.

Commercial banks wanted credit guarantees in exchange for providing loans to CMSMEs. The central bank organised a fund worth Tk 2,000 crore for them but they took the benefit and didn't keep their end of the bargain. So, the central bank should ensure the objectives of providing such benefits are met.

Mirza Nurul Ghani Shovon, President, National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCI)

There are no separate segments for women or youth entrepreneurs in the Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package. As a trade body leader, I believe the claim that 74 per cent of the stimulus package has already been disbursed is merely on paper. Moreover, it has been established that commercial banks are not following the central bank's guidelines correctly.

Mousumi Islam, President, Association of Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs, Bangladesh (AGWEB)

Women are the ones most affected by the pandemic. There are many conversations about policies and plans, but actual remedies have not been provided. Low-interest loans should be designed specifically for CMSMEs with special criteria for women.

Shams Jaber, Founder of Tech Academy
While everyone celebrates our success whenever SMEs are doing well, no one is there to explain to us how to get out of times of trouble. Even with loan facilities and stimulus packages available, we find ourselves lost because the process is complicated.

Dr Shri Biren Sikder, MP, member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Planning
We have set up many digital centres throughout the country to help people who need access to a wide range of services, including online services. These Digital Centres or Union Digital Centres (UDCs) need to be leveraged by incorporating CMSME facilities into them to ensure the maximum number of people have access to these services.

As a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Planning, I would like to take all the recommendations from this discussion and present those in the parliament for the consideration of all the relevant government bodies.

SPORT

What to WATCH

BTV
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 7:15 am, 8:25 am, 10:35 am, 12:20 pm & 4:05 pm

TEN 1, TEN 2, TEN 3 & SONY SIX
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 8:00 pm & 4:00 am (Tuesday)
T SPORTS

THE HUNDRED
Women's Oval vs Welsh
Live from 8:00 pm
Men's Oval vs Welsh
Live from 11:30 pm



All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, pacer Shoriful Islam and opener Mohammad Naim were in a jovial mood during practice session as both Bangladesh and Australia began training yesterday following three days' strict quarantine at team hotel. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Aussies set foot at the 'home of cricket'

SPORTS REPORTER

After a lot of talks over the health protocols, strict bio-bubble rules amidst uncertainty ahead of the five-match T20I series starting from Tomorrow, hosts Bangladesh and the visitors Australia have finally set foot at the 'home of cricket' in Mirpur to resume action on the field yesterday.

Bangladesh team was the first to enter the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at around 10 am in the morning and took part in their first training session since returning from a successful Zimbabwe tour.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) left no stone unturned when it came to fulfilling all sorts of demands from Cricket Australia on their visit to Bangladesh this time during the huge challenge of Covid-19 pandemic.

Whether it is regarding the facility for the visitors to go straight to the team hotel from landing without the immigration formalities at the airport, or to ensure a strict bio-secure bubble in the team hotel, BCB's management has gone smoothly so far.

Even the BCB directors will not be



Australia on the other hand, was scheduled to practise from 4 pm after completing their three-day room quarantine. As further part of protocols, an Aussie inspection team had inspected the training facilities and health arrangements beforehand.

"We have been in isolation on our first three days in Dhaka and have a session planned in the afternoon. Some guys have been to the ground before in the previous tours so I am looking forward to having a look at conditions and training accordingly to prepare before the game on Tuesday," Aussie off spinner Ashton Turner told the media ahead of the training session yesterday.

allowed to enter the ground through the usual passages that are used by the teams. After Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das missed out the series from violating the ten-day quarantine protocol, BCB's chief curator Gamini de Silva, who arrived in Dhaka on July 28, will be giving instructions virtually from outside the ground, given that he has not been part of the bio-bubble.

No production crew or cameras will be allowed in the field of play, and DRS [Decision Review System] technician cannot sit with the match referee during matches. Moreover, keeping the hotel in Dhaka reserved solely to the two teams and match officials is also among the measures set for the series as part of the 'new normal'.

DOMINGO PLEADS for positivity towards Tigers

MAZHAR UDDIN

The confidence after the successful tour in Zimbabwe was clearly emitting in the words of the Bangladesh team's head coach Russell Domingo during his interaction with the media as both Bangladesh and visitors Australia began their training ahead of the upcoming five-match T20I series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

However, ever since his appointment as the Tigers head coach back in August 2019, Domingo's confidence has always been the same before every series, when it comes to his interaction with the media.

Despite the high confidence from Domingo towards his game plan, it didn't usually reflect a great deal when it came to the execution

on the field and more importantly in the results.

Although it will be interesting to see whether and how the confidence boost obtained from recent success will manifest in the upcoming series against the Aussies. If the Tigers can replicate as per Domingo's plans, it will certainly help Bangladesh cricket to go further as a team.

"Trying to find out our best combination by playing against Australia will give us that opportunity. There are two ways to look at it. Trying to find out our best combination and keep developing some of the younger players. Secondly, Bangladesh doesn't play Australia too often so this is a big series for us and we are really determined to do well," said Domingo to the media during a virtual press conference yesterday.

With the series being likely to become a stern test for the South African as the Tigers will

be up against the mighty Aussies, Domingo even pleaded to the media to be more positive towards the Tigers in a seemingly frustrated manner.

"It's very frustrating to continuously read about the negative articles about Bangladesh cricket team and why you guys say we are not a very good T20 team is beyond me. I think we have got wonderful players and I am sure there is room for improvement but I think we have got the ingredients to be a good T20 team. I know we don't have the physical attributes like the West Indies but we have got some skilled batsmen on our side."

"I am pleading to the media for a bit more positivity towards the team because the existing negativity is draining sometimes. I disagree with you totally as I don't think we are a bad T20 team at all. If our wonderful T20 players are backed and supported with positive

feedback, they can surely be a force to be reckoned with. We know we have to improve but that's obvious as this is always a process. Besides, we haven't played many T20s over the last year," he said.

The Tigers head coach also expressed his frustration over the strict quarantine protocol set by Australia which forced Mushfiqur Rahim to eventually miss the series. However, Domingo added that it presents a great opportunity for the fringe cricketers to step up on big occasions.

He also downplayed engaging in any psychological warfare against the Aussies but Domingo did mention that there will be some added pressure on the Australian players who will play as the replacements of some of the key players, the likes of -- Steve Smith, David Warner, Aaron Finch and Glenn Maxwell -- and therefore, Bangladesh could look to utilise that in their favour.



FIVE-STAR DRESSSEL JOINS ELITE OLYMPIC CLUB

Caeleb Dressel powered to his fifth swimming gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday as the United States won their duel in the pool with Australia. Dressel dominated the men's 50m freestyle final, setting a new Olympic record of 21.07sec, and then returned to help his team smash the world mark in the men's 4x100m medley relay. Dressel, 24, didn't get close to matching Michael Phelps' eight-gold haul at Beijing 2008 but he joins just four other swimmers with at least five wins at a single Games. "I'm proud of myself," said the American, who also won two relay golds at the 2016 Rio Games.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Italy's Lamont Marcell Jacobs celebrates his men's 100 metres gold with compatriot Gianmarco Tamberi, who shed tears of joy after winning gold medal in men's high jump event earlier. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Gimbo fired me up a lot'

REUTERS, TOKYO

Lamont Marcell Jacobs claimed a stunning upset victory in the Olympic men's 100 metres final on Sunday, becoming the first Italian to take the most coveted title in athletics and doing it in a European record time of 9.80 seconds.

"I've won an Olympic gold after Usain Bolt, it's unbelievable. Tonight, staring at the ceiling perhaps I will realise," said Jacobs.

"It's been my dream since I was a child," said Jacobs, who was born in the United States but moved to Europe with his Italian mother when he was a month old.

"I need a week or so to understand what has happened. Seeing (compatriot) Gimbo (Tamberi) win the high jump gold (10 minutes earlier) fired me up a lot."

The 29-year-old Gianmarco Tamberi shared the gold with Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim after both had cleared 2.37 metres, only for both to fail at 2.39m. An Olympic official offered them a "jump-off" to decide the matter, but the two athletes decided to share the gold. Maksim Nedasekau of Belarus also cleared the 2.37 mark but he had more failed attempts, resulting in him taking the bronze medal.



ROJAS JUMPS 15.67M TO BREAK WORLD RECORD

Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela jumped 15.67 metres on Sunday to break the world record in the women's triple jump, with her last attempt of the event, having already secured the gold medal. The previous record of 15.50m was set by Ukraine's Inessa Kravets in 1995 in Sweden. The win made Rojas Venezuela's first woman Olympic champion. Patricia Mamona of Portugal won silver with 15.01m, a national record. The bronze went to Spain's Ana Peleteiro, who also broke the national record with 14.87.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Olympics glory remains Bangladesh's distant dream

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh completed yet another disappointing campaign in the Olympics with sprinter Jahir Rayhan producing a lackluster performance to finish 44th among 47 athletes in the 400m run of Tokyo Olympics yesterday.

Having been his nation's sole representative in the track and field event as a wildcard entry, Jahir had wanted to raise his world ranking by displaying an improved performance but the 20-year-old sprinter stood eighth out of eight competitors in Heat-3 with a timing of 48.29 seconds.

Jahir took some 2.75 seconds more than the Swiss sprinter Ricky Petruccianni who secured the 25th spot and managed to qualify for the semifinals of the 400m event as the last athlete with a time of 45.54 seconds.

The frustrating performance of Jahir, who could not even touch his personal best of 46.86 seconds which he had clocked at the National Athletics Championships in 2019, raised a question regarding the justification of Bangladesh Athletic Federation to select the Navy sprinter.

With the elimination of the last of the six athletes from Tokyo Olympics, Bangladesh's participation in "The biggest show on earth" has still remained a symbolic, token one even after the 10th Olympics appearance.

Only archers Ruman Sana and Diya Siddique had given glimpses of hope for the future while rest of the Olympians from shooting, swimming and athletics have been far away from the world class standard and light years from the Olympic medals.



ZVEREV WINS FIRST MEN'S SINGLES GOLD FOR GERMANY

Alexander Zverev became the first German man to win an Olympic singles gold medal on Sunday, with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Karen Khachanov of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC). Zverev, who secured a rare win over world number one Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals, became only the second German to win Olympic singles gold by matching Steffi Graf's achievement at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

PHOTO: REUTERS



MCKEON TAKES PLACE AMONG ALL-TIME GREATS

Emma McKeon was the undisputed sprint queen in Tokyo after completing the sprint double with victory in the 50m freestyle and then winning another gold in the women's 4x100 medley relay. Swimming great Ian Thorpe says Emma McKeon has "flown under the radar" in Australia but now she is firmly on the map after her stunning performances at the Tokyo Olympics. McKeon has joined the greats of Australian sport, winning her 11th Olympic medal -- and fifth gold -- on Sunday to become the country's most decorated Olympian. McKeon's haul eclipses the nine medals won by Thorpe and fellow swimmer Leisel Jones, putting her two clear at the top of Australia's all-time list. "It's very surreal," McKeon said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
China	24	14	13	51
USA	20	23	16	59
Japan	17	5	9	31
Australia	14	3	14	31
ROC	12	19	13	44

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SHAH CEMENT

HIGHWAY THEFT OF EXPORT CARGO Drives on to arrest gangs

BGMEA, truck owners call for tougher laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asaduzzaman Mollah is a member of a highway robbery gang, and as part of their plan, he engineered to get a job as a driver at Noman Group, the country's largest textile exporter.

And in the middle of July, Mollah succeeded in his plan: he made way with a cloth-laden lorry while in transit to the Chittagong Port for shipment abroad.

But this is not an isolated incident. Incidences of such theft have surged in recent months, leaving garment exporters, who are already battling adverse circumstances for the global coronavirus pandemic, on edge.

"Sometimes, it is not possible to know about the robbery unless exporters receive complaints from buyers that some products were missing as the gang members tend to seal the cartons again," said Tofazzal Hossain Majumder, president of the Bangladesh Truck Covered Van Owners Association.

In the last couple of months, there have been more than 50 such incidences of theft on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Often, the thefts take place in collusion with the drivers, who stop their vehicles and unload products in roadside warehouses.

In such cases, installing Global Positioning System tracking devices on the lorries to monitor their routes can help, Majumder said.

But sometimes robbers intercept the goods-laden trucks

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Lamont Marcell Jacobs of Italy sprints to the finish line ahead of the others to win the men's 100m gold of Tokyo 2020 at the Tokyo Olympic Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Italy's Jacobs wins stunning 100m gold

AFP, Tokyo

Italy's Lamont Marcell Jacobs outshone a field of unusual suspects to claim a shock Olympic gold in the men's 100 metres on Sunday, breaking retired Jamaican star Usain Bolt's 13-year hold on the blue ribbon event.

Jacobs, 26, timed a European record of 9.80 seconds, with American Fred Kerley taking silver in 9.84sec in one of the most understated major championship 100m races of recent times.

Canada's Andre de Grasse, a bronze medallist at the 2016 Rio Games, repeated the feat in 9.89sec.

The athletes were introduced in a dramatic light show -- the stadium floodlights were shut off and 12 projectors cast 3D images of the world, zooming in to the Tokyo skyline, and then the name of each sprinter.

The lights came back on, swiftly followed by a horrendous false start for Zharnel Hughes in

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

BANGLADESHIS IN KSA 3,437 died in two years

JAMIL MAHMUD

At least 3,437 Bangladeshis died in different parts of Saudi Arabia, where the Bangladesh consulate general in Jeddah has its jurisdiction between July 2019 and June 2021.

Of the dead, 2,448 were buried locally after taking due permission from their families back home. The other 989 bodies were sent back home, said a recent report of the consulate general.

Fiscal year-wise, 1,696 Bangladeshis died in 2019-2020 and another 1,741 died the following fiscal year, the report said.

It highlighted different services that the consulate general provided the expatriates during the last two fiscal years.

As per the consulate general's data, about 7 lakh Bangladeshis live in various cities under its jurisdiction, which spans over the western part of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Scientists create first genetically modified marsupial



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists in Japan have created the first ever genetically modified (GM) marsupial, breeding a litter of albino opossums using the gene-editing technique CRISPR.

CRISPR, which uses proteins to find, bind to, and modify certain stretches of genetic material, has been around since 2012, and has been used to modify everything from tomatoes to (far more controversially) human embryos.

But up until now, thanks to researchers at Japan's RIKEN institute, those results have never been replicated in marsupials, the family of mammals

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

8 killed in three road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and seven others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna Highway near Arial Kha Bridge toll plaza in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila around 9:00pm on Saturday.

In separate developments, two more people, including a garment worker, were killed in Bogura and Faridpur yesterday.

In Madaripur, the dead are Nirmal Kumar, 30, Mohammad Sohan, 24, Pulak, 25, Mohammad Miraz, 31, Mohammad Arif, 29, and Sohid Mallik, 45, said police.

Quoting locals, Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Shibchar Highway Police Station, said, the accident happened as the driver of a Dhaka-bound truck lost control of the steering wheel.

"The truck was carrying construction materials

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Freedom fighters' strength growing, admits Yahya

AUGUST 2, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

YAHYA'S MESSAGE TO DHAKA CONFERENCE

Pakistan President Yahya Khan today admitted the growing strength of the freedom fighters of Bangladesh and said "their challenge should be met".

"We have to meet the challenge of anti-national elements who seek to jeopardise our economy in an attempt to undermine the unity and integrity of the country," he said in a message to a four-day conference of chief executives of banks and financial institutions opened in Dhaka today.

Meanwhile, Yahya Khan in an interview with Tehran daily Kayhan International last week said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "would be court-martialed and I cannot say whether or not he would be alive when the [National] assembly meets."

OUTSIDE AID FOR REFUGEES CAN'T BUY US: INDIRA

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said today that no amount of foreign aid for refugees could influence India's policy towards Bangladesh. "Our Bangladesh policy is based on idealism and practical politics," she added.

As regards recognition of Bangladesh she said recognition at this moment could precipitate matters to such an extent that it might be harmful.

Meanwhile, in a communication to the UN Secretary-General, India today asked the international community to help restore

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Bangladesh, India flag off fifth rail route

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India and Bangladesh yesterday began regular operation of freight trains through the Haldibari-Chilahati rail route 56 years after it had been suspended following the India-Pakistan war in 1965.

The service, which was inaugurated by the two countries' prime ministers during a virtual bilateral summit on December 17 last year, officially began yesterday with the Indian Railways dispatching stones from Dam Dim Station of Northeast Frontier Railway to Bangladesh.

This is the fifth rail route between the two countries after Petrapole-Benapole, Gede-Darshana, Singhabad-Rohanpur and Radhikapur-Birol.

The commodities that can be exported from India to Bangladesh through the rail route include stones and boulders, food grain, fresh fruits, chemical fertilisers, onion, chillies, garlic, ginger, fly ash, clay, lime, wood and timber etc. From Bangladesh, all exportable commodities can be sent.

Businesses see it as a very positive development as it will help reduce transport cost and time in the export-import business between the two neighbours.

In fiscal 2020-21, Bangladesh Railway
SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

Girl stabbed on her wedding day dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A ninth-grader, who was stabbed by a stalker on her wedding day four days ago, died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The victim, Tarmina Akter, 14, was a daughter of Toyab Ali of Lohanipara village in Rangpur's Badarganj. She was a madrasa student, said police.

Accused Sakhawat Hossain, 23, went into hiding after the incident on July 28.

According to the victim's family members, Sakhawat of the same village used to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



Amid rain, garment workers going to work as their factories were reopened yesterday. The factories had been closed for 12 days due to Eid holidays and Covid lockdown. The photo was taken from the Chattogram EPZ area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

POST COUP MYANMAR Military ruler takes PM role

Pledges elections in 2023, agrees to work with Asean special envoy

REUTERS, Bangkok

Myanmar's military ruler Min Aung Hlaing has taken on the role of prime minister in a newly formed caretaker government, state media reported yesterday, six months after the army seized power from a civilian government.

In a speech yesterday, Min Aung Hlaing repeated a pledge to hold elections by 2023 and said his administration was ready to work with a future regional envoy on Myanmar.

The announcement and speech came exactly six months after the army seized power February 1 from a civilian government following elections that were won by Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party but that the military said had been fraudulent.

Min Aung Hlaing has chaired the State Administration Council (SAC) that was formed just after the coup and that has run Myanmar since then, and the caretaker government will replace it.

"In order to perform the country's duties fast, easily and effectively, the state administration council has been re-formed as caretaker government of Myanmar," a newsreader on state Myawaddy television said.

In his speech, Min Aung Hlaing repeated a pledge to restore democracy, saying, "We will accomplish the provisions of the state of emergency by August 2023".

He added: "I guarantee the establishment of a union based on democracy and federalism."

Shortly after the coup, junta leaders promised new elections within two years. The reference yesterday to

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PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 2

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:47 8:15
JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 6:50 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION