

POST-COUP MYANMAR
US dismisses junta's
election plan, urges
Asean pressure
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The unvaccinated can't be outside

Decides govt about those aged above 18, also eases lockdown from August 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not allow any unvaccinated people aged 18 or above on the streets from August 11, the day it will relax the ongoing "lockdown".

According to decisions taken at an inter-ministerial meeting at the Secretariat yesterday, stores, businesses and offices will reopen and public transport will resume on a limited scale from that day.

"Anyone above 18 years will not be allowed on streets and on any mode of transport unless they are vaccinated," Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, who presided over the meeting, told reporters.

However, it could not be known what punishment would be meted out to the violators.

Criticism poured out on social media soon after the government announced the decisions. People found the move to punish

"To enforce it properly, there is a need to empower police so that they can impose penalty to some extent on people who do not wear masks... they can impose fines. For that, an ordinance is necessary. There was discussion about it. Maybe we can go for it."

HEALTH MINISTER
ZAHID MALEQUE

or bar unvaccinated people to join work unrealistic and unjust as the health ministry is currently vaccinating only those aged 25 and above.

On top of that, they pointed out that the government has administered a single dose of vaccines to less than six percent of the country's 16.3 crore population, while less than three percent got both doses.

The government has also decided to give police the power to fine anyone on the streets found without masks. Currently, executive magistrates are performing that function.

After the meeting, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said alongside vaccines, it is important to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

"To enforce it properly, there is a need to empower police so that they can impose penalties to some extent on people who do

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Bangladesh spinner Nasum Ahmed, left, celebrates one of his four wickets with teammates during the first T20I against Australia which the hosts won by 23 runs.

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

Nasum leads Tigers to first T20I win against Aus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed ended with his career-best T20I figures to help Bangladesh defend a low total and register their first-ever T20I victory against Australia in the first T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Defending a modest total of 131 for seven, Bangladesh bundled out Australia for 108 as the Tigers won by 23 runs to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series. It was also the lowest total ever defended by T20Is in the format.

Bangladesh started brilliantly with the ball as spinners Mahedi Hasan, Nasum and Shakib Al Hasan picked up a wicket each in the first three overs of the game, reducing Australia to three for 11 after just 2.1 overs.

Mahedi struck in the very first delivery of the innings, shattering the

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A TALE OF A LANDFILL and its ravages

Dhaka's biggest garbage dump at Matuail operates with capacity exhausted beyond measure

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN
CHANDAN

Abdus Salam, a long-time resident of Miridha Bari area, said the stench from Matuail landfill nearby has become unbearable in the last five to six years.

"They are now dumping waste everywhere in the lakes and ponds, advancing towards our houses from all directions."

"Nobody wants to live in this neighbourhood. Even our relatives do not want to visit us."

Another resident, Arshadul Alam, said, "You will find many vacant houses here. House owners who earn by renting out flats are some of the biggest sufferers."

"We cannot blame others for not staying here because when they burn the waste in the landfill during the dry season, we feel choked and suffocated."

This is the case for hundreds of thousands of people living near the landfill. They suffer daily from the constant stench and air and plastic pollution.



The 100-acre Matuail sanitary landfill, the largest waste disposal site in Dhaka, can no longer justify its sanitary moniker due to poor leachate management, lack of daily covering of the garbage with soil, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Located in the capital's Demra, the landfill receives around 2,500 tonnes of solid waste from Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) areas every day.

Due to a severe shortage of equipment, manpower, and dumping space, it is now little more than an open-air crude dumpsite.

There is another landfill in Aminbazar, which is for waste dumping from Dhaka North City Corporation areas. This too is in disarray with workforce shortage and no segregation and recycling facility.

POOR WASTE MANAGEMENT

With no recycling facilities, experts warned Matuail landfill's poor waste management and maintenance

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Everyone to have a shelter: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no one in Bangladesh would remain without shelter as her government was working to ensure access to affordable housing options for all.

"Everyone will get an address," she said while distributing newly constructed flats among 300 families who had been living in slums of the capital.

The PM handed over allocation papers of the new flats to the families on rental basis. The housing and public works ministry implemented the project through constructing three 14-storey buildings at Mirpur-11.

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SHORTAGE OF HOSPITAL BEDS Govt mulls hotels for patients with mild symptoms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering treating Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms by keeping them in hotels in the face of scarcity of hospital beds as the second wave of coronavirus cases sweep across the country, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"There is no space left [for Covid-19 patients] in the hospitals," he told reporters following an inter-ministerial meeting at the secretariat.

As much as 90 percent of the general beds and 99 percent of the intensive care unit (ICU) beds are occupied, according to Maleque.

As of yesterday noon, about 6,000 Covid-19 patients were being treated in different hospitals across the country, according to the health directorate. Of them, 1,163 were in ICUs.

"So now, we are searching for hotels for Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms," he said, adding that there will be doctors, nurses, medicines and arrangements of oxygen support at the hotels.

At the same time, the convention centre at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University is also being converted into a field hospital.

Quizzed about the reopening of garment factories, he said that the other industries, public transport and businesses will also be reopened gradually and there will be detailed directives on the matter soon.

Maleque's comment came on the day that the health directorate logged in 15,776 new cases and 235 deaths in the preceding 24 hours to 8 am.

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'What's going on in name of journalism?'

HC asks about the errant media outlets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has expressed dissatisfaction at the state of journalism.

"A person named Helena Jahangir reportedly operated an IPTV channel. How many channels have been opened in the name of IPTV? What is going on in the name of journalism?" the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim said yesterday.

Helena Jahangir, a businessperson turned politician, has been arrested and sued recently over her controversial activities. She was sacked from the Awami League subcommittee on women affairs.

Yesterday, the HC expressed discontent during the hearing of a case on publishing false reports by some newspapers, including the Dainik Purbokone, a Bangla daily in Chattogram, on its order regarding the transfer

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EVEN MAYOR NOT IMMUNE

Waterlogging remains a major problem in Chattogram city for years mainly due to poor drainage and filled-up canals. There is no respite from flooding for Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury either as rain water entered his home in Bahaddarhat area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Covaxin gets the nod for clinical trial here

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Covaxin, the Covid-19 vaccine developed by India's Bharat Biotech, got ethical permission to conduct human trial in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Medical and Research Council (BMRC) has given the permission on July 18, its Chairman Syed Modasser Ali told The Daily Star.

He said International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), the CRO of the vaccine, sought permission for clinical trials a few months ago and the ethical permission for holding the trial was given as all the requirements were fulfilled.

Although BMRC gave ethical permission to bring the vaccine in the country, the CRO (contract research organisation) has to take permission from the Directorate General of Drug Administration, he said.

The BMRC chairman added that they examined

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IN MEMORIAM

1st Death Anniversary of Late ABDUL MANNAN

"While we know nothing can alleviate your loss, We do want you to know we are remembering you on this day. You were a wonderful and loving soul who we were blessed to have known"



Today, the 4th of August 2021 (Wednesday) is the 1st Death Anniversary of Late ABDUL MANNAN, Former Minister, MP, MD of Biman Bangladesh and Chairman of Bengal Airlift Group of Companies.

On this occasion, distribution of food among the distressed and at Orphanages, Quran Khani and Doa-Mahfil have been organized by the Family and the Companies in different places.

All Relatives, Friends and Well Wishers are kindly requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul...

BANGLADESH UPDATE

15,776
New cases in 24hrs

12,96,093
Total cases

21,397
Deaths

11,25,045
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,253,849
Deaths

199,863,013
Total cases

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

WB clarifies its position

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank addressed its position on the Rohingya issue on its website yesterday.

In a question-and-answer format, the World Bank spoke of Rohingya repatriation, its Refugee Policy Review and other issues.

Recently, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said that the World Bank sent a letter attaching a document that spoke of Rohingyas' freedom of movement, birth certificates, privileges of education and job, and infrastructure.

Although the document was not Bangladesh-specific, the government informed the World Bank that it would not agree to those suggestions, the foreign minister had said.

The questions and answers posted on the World Bank's website yesterday are as follows:

What is the World Bank's position on the repatriation of the displaced Rohingya population?

The World Bank is helping Bangladesh address the needs of the displaced Rohingya population until their safe and voluntary return to Myanmar. The World Bank is also supporting Bangladesh to minimise the impact of the influx on the host communities.

How much has the World Bank committed to support Bangladesh to address the challenges created by the influx of the displaced Rohingya population?

The World Bank has committed

\$590 million for Bangladesh to address the health, informal education, safety net, water and sanitation, and basic infrastructure, including climate resilient roads, solar street lights, and disaster preparedness needs of both the displaced Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

The World Bank's research and analysis are also providing insights for understanding the challenges and development priorities in Cox's Bazar.

Is this support a loan or a grant?

The entire \$590 million financing is on grant terms. This is not a credit.

What is the purpose of the Refugee Policy Review?

The Refugee Policy Review aims to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the World Bank financing for the refugee and host communities.

This review has been done in each of the 14 World Bank member countries that are currently hosting displaced population.

How was the Refugee Policy Review done?

The review was done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) following the Refugee Policy Review Framework. UNHCR collected baseline information on the existing policies, practices, and programmes.

Does the Refugee Policy Review make specific recommendations to Bangladesh regarding the Rohingya population?

No, the review does not make any country-specific recommendations.



The Matuail landfill, the largest waste disposal site in the capital, is completely full. The stench from the landfill has become unbearable for the residents in nearby areas. There is a severe shortage of equipment and manpower for waste management. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A tale of a landfill and its ravages

FROM PAGE 1

can cause severe pollution.

Abdullah Al Mueeed, chief operating officer of Citywide Inclusive Sanitation-FSM Support Cell at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), said, "A major portion of our solid waste contains more than 70 percent moisture content.

"When such a huge volume of solid waste has been transferred to a landfill site, it is very difficult to maintain aerobic conditions [presence of oxygen] inside the waste matrix.

"This excess pressure of a huge amount of untreated solid waste changes the aerobic conditions to anaerobic [absence of oxygen] over time, resulting in the emission of greenhouse gases like methane."

Following international headlines of large emissions of methane over Dhaka in April this year, Shafiqullah Siddique Bhuiyan, project director of the Matuail landfill, said they are collecting satellite images of previous months and years, with the help of Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSO) and the Department of Environment (DoE), to calculate the emission rate of greenhouse gases.

DSCC, which manages the site, does not acknowledge the four tonnes of methane per hour figure that an emissions-tracking company came up with, but it does not itself have any estimation of greenhouse gases from the landfill.

"We do not think such a huge amount of this gas emits from this site as it is a sanitary landfill. We have a functional leachate treatment plant, automated weighbridge and our waste collection and management system is quite efficient. You can see it for yourself," he told The Daily Star.

During a recent visit to the landfill, this correspondent observed massive mounds of solid waste -- including plastic and kitchen waste -- uncovered and untreated at the waste site, emanating a horrific stench.

In some places, these waste mounds tower at almost 70 feet -- equivalent to a five-storey building -- above ground.

Leachate, a toxic by-product generated from compacted high-moisture content waste, has leaked all over the site, as the leachate collection drains are either full to the brim or completely choked by solid waste.

Leachate management is crucial as it can percolate down to groundwater and consequently into surface water sources.

Project Director Shafiqullah said, "We need to install leachate collection drains for every 20-25 feet layer of solid waste.

"Currently, the solid waste layer is around 70 feet high. So, we should have at least three layers of leachate drains; instead, we have only one layer of leachate drain at present."

Also, most parts of the site are left without any soil cover -- in a sanitary landfill, dumped waste is supposed to be compacted and covered by soil on a daily basis to prevent interaction between the waste and air, reduce odour, and make a firm surface for better handling by heavy equipment.

LACK OF LAND, EQUIPMENT, MANPOWER

Officials concerned say they have only around 40 percent of the heavy equipment they need to process the daily 2,500 tonnes of waste. Also, existing equipment is damaged frequently as they have to operate on uncovered waste, in contact with overflowing leachate.

Both of the two back loaders that are used to move waste, one of the two tyre dozers, two bulldozers, three of the five pay loaders, and two of the five excavators are damaged.

The landfill also has a manpower shortage, with only 10 cleaners and four engineers managing this enormous dumpsite.

As a stopgap measure, the landfill authorities have also engaged 10 DSCC mosquito controllers and 10-12 technicians to work with the cleaners during their free time.

Due to such a severe shortage of equipment and manpower, large amounts of daily collected waste are left untreated and uncovered.

Shafiqullah said, "As a result, we cannot put daily soil cover but when we finish using a section of the landfill we cover it with soil. We have already stopped using some parts of the landfill and covered it with soil and planted trees on it."

The landfill is also short of space for waste disposal.

Originally established in 1989 with 50 acres of land, the landfill's waste collection capacity was exhausted in 2006 and another 50 acres of adjacent land was added to the landfill. These 50 acres' capacity was also exceeded last year.

More than 25 acres of the landfill area have been unusable since February this year when a high-voltage pylon of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh collapsed onto part of the site.

Due to this, the landfill authorities are dumping waste in a nearby lake -- relentlessly polluting its water and soil.

An engineer stationed at the landfill said, "We dump waste transported here by rickshaw vans in the lake because the collapsed high-voltage electricity line

has made all the low-lying platforms unusable."

The remaining platforms are too high for these vans to access, he said, "So, we have no other alternative to using this lake. Once the line is removed, we shall remove the waste from the lake," he added.

Due to a lack of land, the DSCC is vertically extending the already exhausted dumping site by accumulating higher and higher waste mounds every day, instead of covering them with soil and planting trees.

A large amount of plastic waste is also a major concern for the authorities as there is no waste segregation and recycling facilities at the landfill. They do not allow waste pickers who collect recyclable waste from dumpsites inside.

As a result, heaps of plastic waste are only getting larger by the day. Waste like polythene bags often get blown away and pollute nearby waterbodies, sewerage lines, and residential areas.

During the dry season, this plastic waste is set ablaze -- creating severe air pollution in area nearby where Abdus Salam and Arshadul Alam live.

PROPOSED REHAUL OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

Despite local communities suffering, the DSCC has already taken steps to expand the landfill, acquiring a further 81 acres of land.

Air Commodore Badrul Amin, chief waste management officer of the DSCC, said, "We got clearance from the DoE for this expansion and our land acquisition is complete."

However, experts believe expanding the landfill is not a sustainable solution with reducing waste, segregating waste, and more efficient waste treatment needed.

Badrul said they were waiting for the local government and rural development (LGRD) ministry's approval of the "Clean Dhaka Master Plan 2018-2032".

On February 23 last year, Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) submitted a draft of the plan to the LGRD ministry for review. The draft was approved by both the city corporations of Dhaka.

One of the major objectives of the master plan is to implement systematic waste collection, segregation, recycling, reuse, and incineration facilities to reduce waste burden in landfills.

Badrul said, "Once approved and we get the funds, we shall be able to reduce more than 75 percent of the waste through reusing, recycling, and incinerating."

"We are hopeful all of the current problems will be solved gradually in the next 10 years."

Countries need to work together to fight pandemic

Says Momen

BSS, DHAKA

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen emphasised strong cooperation among the nations to improve the ongoing Covid-19 situation across the world, including in Bangladesh.

"We must extend cooperation to the best of our abilities. Through cooperation, we can certainly minimise the sufferings," he said.

The foreign minister remarked while receiving 50 10L Oxygen Concentrators and 1.5m surgical masks as a donation from Singapore Red Cross Society at the state guest house, Padma, yesterday afternoon.

Momen said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was keen to maintain a proper balance between life and livelihood while managing Covid-19.

In this regard, Bangladesh's Covid response has been more successful than many other countries, Momen added.

"Bangladesh is still trying to take more healthcare measures in anticipation and is determined to improve the situation through cooperation with friendly countries," he said.

He thanked the Singapore government and Singapore Red Cross Society for the medical supplies as the need for oxygen concentrators is very critical now.

"Today's event marks a new milestone of bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and Singapore," he said.

Covaxin gets

FROM PAGE 1

not only scientific issues, but also religious, rights and other issues before giving the permission.

The Indian drug maker approached Bangladesh through icddr, in mid-January to hold clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine in the country. India approved the emergency use authorisation of the vaccine in January.

On June 24, the BMRC approved the Phase III clinical trials of a Chinese vaccine developed by the Institute of Medical Biology and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. And it later approved Bangavax developed by Globe Biotech.

The Bangladesh government has approved Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine, Sputnik V, Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines for emergency use in Bangladesh.

Everyone to have

FROM PAGE 1

The event was held at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. The PM joined the programme virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said, "This is the Bangladesh of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Everyone in Bangladesh will get a better life...that's our aim."

The PM said she thinks that materialising the dream of the Father of the Nation is synonymous with the development of Bangladesh.

Hasina said no one could think about the welfare of the country and its people like Bangabandhu did.

About those living in slum-like areas, the premier said the government would arrange proper accommodation for them.

She said had Bangabandhu been alive, the people of Bangladesh would have had a developed life within 10 years of the country's independence with urban-rural balanced development.

"This is unfortunate [for Bangladesh] that he didn't get the time as August 15 [killing] took him away. He didn't get the chance to materialise his dream to reshape every village in a planned way," the PM said.

Regarding the multi-storey integrated office building in Madaripur, where all government services will be available under one roof, Hasina said saving the land of the country should always be in mind while carrying out development activities.

"We did it in Madaripur first. Gradually, we will do the same in every district and upazila for the convenience of people to avail themselves of all types of government services from one place."

The premier said the government has a plan to construct flats at the upazila level to address the accommodation problem of public servants.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Sharif Ahmed and Secretary Md Shahid Ullah Khandaker also spoke at the programme.

Govt mulls hotels

FROM PAGE 1

The overall positivity rate was lower despite a higher number of tests: 28.5 percent as opposed to 29.9 percent in the 24 hours earlier.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 12,96,093 and the total casualties to 21,397.

Of the deceased yesterday, 140 were males and 95 were females.

The highest number of deaths were recorded in the Dhaka division (73), followed by Chattogram (65). Among the other divisions, 32 were in Khulna, 21 in Rajshahi, 12 each in Sylhet, Rangpur and Mymensingh, and eight in Barisal.

Of the total cases, 11,25,045 have recovered from their illnesses, including yesterday's 16,297.

China to release updated climate plans 'in near future': envoy

AFP, Hong Kong

China's climate envoy yesterday said the world's most populous nation would release its updated plans to reduce carbon emissions "in the near future" as nations prepare to meet later this year for a pivotal global conference.

Climate negotiators from 196 countries and the European Union as well as businesses, experts and world leaders will gather in Glasgow in November for the COP26 summit.

The meeting is the crucial next step in getting the world's nations to agree to the kind of reduction in carbon emissions needed to stave off catastrophic climate change.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries are meant to have submitted updated 2030 climate targets ahead of COP26.

But nearly half have yet to do so, including key global emitters like China and India.

Yesterday, China's top climate negotiator said Beijing's updated plans would soon be released, potentially before the Glasgow meet.

"In the near future relevant policy papers will be out there, there will be detailed implementation plans," Xie Zhenhua told an online webinar organised by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

"Then we're going to talk about that support to the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow," he added, according to a simultaneous English translation of his speech.

Nasum leads Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

Hasan's 36 off 33 clearly depict the struggles of the Bangladesh batters to find boundaries and score quick runs. Afif Hossain's 23 off 17 at the death did, however, help the Tigers hobble past the 130-run mark.

While Bangladesh batsmen suffered from a clear lack of firepower within their ranks, Australia pacers were quick to read the nature of a slow Mirpur pitch as they adjusted accordingly. Knuckleballs, slower bouncers and sly change of pace from the likes of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Andrew Tye made things tougher for Bangladeshi batsmen.

Bangladesh lost Soumya Sarkar early when the left-hander chopped one on to his stumps trying to make room off a short delivery from Hazlewood in the fourth over. Mohammad Naim, who started off promisingly by hitting two sixes off Starc, could not convert his start into something meaningful. The left-hander threw his wicket away when he misread the length of the ball while trying to reverse sweep leggie Adam Zampa in the seventh over.

Shakib and Mahmudullah kept ticking the scoreboard in the middle but could never accelerate. Both the experienced campaigners were deceived by Hazlewood's slower deliveries with Mahmudullah falling in the 13th over and Shakib in the 17th.

Bangladesh will face Australia in the second T20I of the series today at the same venue.

After Marsh's departure, it was just a matter of time before Australia were bundled out for their joint fifth-lowest total ever in T20s.

However, earlier, an average batting display saw Bangladesh end with a modest total in a slow Mirpur pitch.

Scores of 30 off 29 from Mohammad Naim, a run-a-ball 20 from skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Shakib Al

The unvaccinated can't be outside

FROM PAGE 1

not wear masks... that is, they can impose fines. For that, an ordinance is necessary. There was a discussion about it. Maybe we can go for it," he said.

"From August 7, we will begin vaccine campaign at the union and ward level for seven days. We will administer one crore doses in seven days. We now have 1.25 crore vaccine doses in hand. We will get one crore more shots by the end of this month."

He also said elderly people will be given priority as their mortality rate from Covid-19 is higher.

The Election Commission's 2021 data shows there are about 11.17 crore people in the country who are voters -- in other words, they are 18 or over.

On the other hand, the Labour Force Survey 2016-17 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics says the total number of employed people in the country is about 6.08 crore, who are aged between 15 and 65. The total employed population aged 15-19 is only 39 lakh.

Till yesterday, some 97 lakh people took the first dose of Covid vaccine and some 44 lakh took both doses, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

That means even if the government administers another one crore doses by August 13, there will still be a huge number of unvaccinated people who will be unable to go outside after August 10 under the government's new limit.

Meanwhile, 235 people died from Covid and at least 15,776 new infections were reported in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, said a DGHS press release.

Yesterday, 12 ministers and state

ministers, the prime minister's principal secretary and cabinet secretary, 16 secretaries of different ministries, chiefs of law enforcement and intelligence agencies attended the meeting both virtually and physically.

Liberation War Affairs Minister Mozammel said no one will have to struggle to get the vaccine as there will be at least two vaccination centres in each union, municipality and city corporation ward.

"Vaccines will be administered at nearly 14,000 centres throughout the week [from August 7 to 13]. The elderly will be prioritised. Working people, store workers and bus helpers will be given vaccines as well. No one will be allowed to go to their workplace without taking the vaccine," he said.

Addressing shopkeepers, he said, "We're giving you three days -- [August] 7, 8 and 9 -- to take the vaccine... The meeting made the decision so that stores can reopen on Aug 11."

There will be a database of the vaccinated to monitor who are jabbed, he added.

"We don't know how long the pandemic will continue. We need to produce vaccines ourselves or partner with another country for manufacturing vaccines as soon as possible. Once it is done, we'll be able to inoculate everyone," he said.

Mozammel said the meeting decided to be strict on people who do not wear masks or follow health guidelines even after being requested to do so.

"It also said if people do not comply, the government may issue an ordinance with the provision of punishment to make people follow health guidelines," he added.

264 dengue patients hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 264 people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals across the country during 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

Of them, only 16 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With them, 3,446 people have been diagnosed with dengue this year and only 118 of them are from outside the capital, according to DGHS data.

In total, 788 were diagnosed with dengue during the current month till yesterday morning, which indicates the fast-rising trend of the disease.

At least 2,286 people were infected in July, 272 in June and 43 in May.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 1,072 are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Despite the lockdown, the capital's Mirpur was seen full of vehicles of all kinds, just except buses, as a traffic jam with a long tailback had formed in front of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DRUG TRADE IN GENEVA CAMP Six gangs vying for control after Ishtiaq's death

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Ishtiaq Ahmed, the top drug lord of Mohammadpur Geneva Camp, who was hiding for a long period, died in a hospital in India after being infected from Covid-19.

Ishtiaq died in the last week of April of this year. Police's intelligence agency and family sources of Ishtiaq confirmed the death to The Daily Star yesterday.

Born in Mohammadpur Geneva camp, Ishtiaq did odd jobs like collecting discarded bottles from roadsides. In early 2004, he started working as a drug carrier. In the following years, he built his own syndicate, got into transport business and started to carry yaba on trucks. He built an empire -- buying cars, 50 trucks, buses, building eight luxurious buildings, and acquiring over 100 bighas of land in Dhaka's Mohammadpur, Uttara, Aminbazar and Ashulia.

Soon after the death of Ishtiaq, four of his associates and two other drug dealers have taken control of his empire and are controlling drug business in the camp, according to insiders.

Sources said Molla Arshad, Ishtiaq's second-in-command, mostly takes care of the narcotics network has now and started a new gang. Born in Saidpur, Arshad is a childhood friend of Ishtiaq.

Both grew up in the Geneva Camp, a densely-populated



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BARISHAL SHER-E-BANGLA MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

Uphill battle for oxygen cylinders

SUSHANTA GHOSH, BARISHAL

Taslima Begum was waiting in queue for an oxygen cylinder at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital's (SBMCH) Covid-19 unit from 9am to 12pm on Monday. After struggling for three hours, she was finally able to get a cylinder.

She told The Daily Star that at least three hours a day are spent trying to get a cylinder.

Although her husband was admitted there three days ago for Covid-19, he had not received central oxygen yet. His oxygen level had dropped to less than 85.

Saiful Islam from Bakerganj said at least a hundred people stand in queue for oxygen cylinders every day, but everyone does not get it. Family members fear that oxygen for their patients will run out.

Although there are 300 beds at the

hospital, over 350 patients are admitted at the unit, said Covid ward staffer Ferdous. The central oxygen line can facilitate only 97 patients. There are 500 cylinders for others, but currently, they have to be refilled at least three times a day.

After visiting the Covid ward around noon on Monday, at least 60 people were seen waiting for cylinders.

Bappi Ghosh, whose mother is being treated at the hospital, said even though her oxygen level dropped to 55, she did not get high-flow or central oxygen immediately. They had to make do with oxygen cylinders for six hours.

One patient was admitted from Pirojpur's Swarupkathi upazila. The on-duty nurse brought a cylinder from another patient and gave it to him when his acute respiratory distress started yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ICU beds being kept occupied by influentials!

Hospital director tells meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, BARISHAL

The Covid-19 situation is dire in Barishal. With worrying spike in cases, people are frantically searching for ICU beds to admit their loved ones, only to be informed that there is no empty bed available at the Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH), the lone Covid-dedicated hospital in the division.

There are only 26 ICU beds and 300 general beds at the hospital to treat Covid-19 patients. However, SBMCH is overrun with coronavirus patients at present, with many being treated even on the floors and corridors.

Yesterday, 14 people died at the hospital out of total 18 Covid-related deaths in the division.

Amid such a situation, some influential people keep

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

12TH DAY OF LOCKDOWN

All but public transport crowd streets of Dhaka

Rush into capital also continues

UNB, DHAKA

On 12th day of the "strict lockdown", the streets of Dhaka was found loaded with vehicles, bringing back its chaotic days. Everything except public transports were plying city streets and people wandering around with little or no regard to the health guidelines.

The government, meanwhile, extended the current lockdown till August 10 amid a surge in Covid-19 across the country.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque disclosed the decision while talking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday.

He said shops, factories and offices will be reopened from August 11 while public transport will be allowed to ply roads on a limited scale once the lockdown is over.

Visiting at different parts of the capital, including Shahbagh, Uttara, Mohakhali, Mirpur, Kalabagan, Biiyoy Srani, Badda, Farmgate, Shyamoli, Karwan Bazar and Bangla Motor, correspondents of the news agency saw the capital almost returning to normal, with an increased number of vehicles and people on the streets.

Usual traffic jams were also seen at most places during office hours from 8:30am to 11am.

Traffic Inspector Asaduzzaman (Mohakhali), said, "Apart from the absence of local buses, I couldn't differentiate today's Dhaka with pre-lockdown days in the morning."

However, law enforcers were seen vigilant on the streets, as many pedestrians

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

GIRL STABBED ON WEDDING DAY

MJF expresses concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has expressed grave concern over the Badarganj, Rangpur incident where a ninth-grader, stabbed by a stalker on her wedding day on July 28, died on Sunday.

Tarmina Akter (14), a madrasa student, was the daughter of Toyab Ali of Lohanipara village.

MJF also expressed deep concern over the rise in child marriage amid the pandemic.

According to MJF, the family encouraged child marriage, even though they claimed that they arranged the wedding considering the girl's safety, as the stalker used to harass her.

The parents could not save the girl by arranging her marriage, without informing the local administration, mentioned MJF, in a press statement yesterday.

MJF believes that in order to prevent child marriage, various departments of the government should take more stringent measures at local level.

The number of child marriages is on the rise during the pandemic, due to the closure of schools, lack of safety of girls and financial instability of the parents. Parents are violating the law and secretly marrying off their underage girls, the statement read.

MJF has already sent a letter to the ministry concerned with an aim to create awareness against violence against women and child marriage.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "No specific allocation has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

JoyJatra TV running broadcast illegally since 2018: Rab

Two of Helena Jahangir's associates arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The so-called IPTV JoyJatra Television was running its broadcasting since 2018 by taking web allocation from a Hong Kong satellite broadcaster in Bangladesh and 34 other countries illegally.

"JoyJatra purchased the allocation for Tk 6 lakh per month," Khandaker Al-Moin, director Legal and Media wing of Rapid Action Battalion told a press briefing, hours after the arrest of two close associates of Helena Jahangir who are top officials of JoyJatra Television and JoyJatra Foundation.

The members of the elite force arrested the duo -- Hazera Khatun (40) and Sanaullah Nuri (47) from the city's Gabtali area yesterday.

He also said Hazera in primary interrogation disclosed that JoyJatra TV provided satellite TV receivers to 50 cable operators across Bangladesh. She also admitted that in 50 districts, Helena appointed representatives from whom she collected Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh at a time, and Tk 10,000 to Tk

20,000 monthly. Hazera said Helena also collected Tk 10,000 to Tk 20,000 from different upazila representatives at a time and monthly charges ranging to Tk 2,000 to Tk 3,000.

Hazera was the general manager (admin) of JoyJatra TV and deputy general manager (admin) of the foundation, while Sanaullah was the coordinator of representatives of JoyJatra TV.

Hazera completed her masters from a university in Cumilla in 2009 and worked in a garments factory. She is also a distant relative of Helena Jahangir, and maintained all financial transactions of Helena's business and personal property.

Arrested Sanaullah used to take money for giving jobs as correspondent of the illegal IPTV channel, Rab said.

HELENA ON 14-DAY REMAND IN 4 CASES

Meanwhile, businessperson-turned-politician Helena Jahangir was placed on a 14-day remand

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

18 BRAHMAN-BREED COWS

HC upholds seizure by custom officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld the customs officials' decision to seize 18 cows of Brahman breed from Dhaka airport on July 5, as they were imported without any prior permission from the authorities concerned and without opening letter of credit (LC).

It refused to order the government to hand over the cows to importer -- dairy farm Sadeque, a concern of Sadeque Agro Limited.

The HC, however, directed the customs authorities to dispose of in 15 days the application submitted by the dairy farm for releasing the cows to its custody.

The court also asked the government to file a case under the money laundering prevention law against Sadeque if it imports the cows from the US with laundered money. Such an order came as Deputy Attorney General Samarendranath Biswas told the court that the cows have been imported through money laundering.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim came up with the directives after hearing a writ petition filed by Md

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Black stone Vishnu idol recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Police on Monday night recovered a statue of Lord Vishnu from Boro Goali village in Daudkandi upazila of Cumilla.

The height of the black stone statue is about 23 inches and its width is 9.5 inches. It weighs about 12kg.

Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Police Station, told The Daily Star, "A teacher named Abu Yusuf found the statue one and a half months ago. But he didn't inform us. On secret information, we recovered it from his house at 9:30pm on Monday."

However, Abu Yusuf, headmaster (in-charge) of Chargoali Khandaker Nazir Uddin Multipurpose School, said, "I noticed this statue about 20-22 days ago while digging soil from a pond... We could not inform police as we were busy with work."

Local union parishad member Faruk Ahmed said, "The statue was found one and a half months back... But some people were trying to cover up the matter by not informing police. So, I informed the law enforcers."

Dr Ataur Rahman, former regional director of Chattogram divisional archeology department, said, "The unearthed Lord Vishnu statue is very valuable. It is possibly more than 1,000 years old. It should be immediately handed over to Mainamati museum for proper preservation."



As the metro rail is 68 percent towards completion, some roads of the capital have regained their space for vehicular movement, as it was lost due to construction materials and machineries occupying large parts of the roads. This photo was taken from the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area on Monday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Miscreants cut veins of teen in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SAVAR

Leg and hand veins of a teenager were cut allegedly by miscreants in Charalpara in Ashulia early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Jeem (13). He worked as a bus driver's helper.

He is being treated at the ICU of Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar.

Six to seven persons attacked Jeem around 3am while he was returning home from work, said Md Liton, his elder brother. Hearing his screams, locals rushed to save him, and the attackers fled.

Liton said the attack was carried out over a feud as he and his brother protested their drug peddling. "We have informed the matter to Ashulia police and will file a case soon," he said.

However when contacted, Ziaul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Ashulia Police Station, said they just heard about the incident and no one filed any complaint yet.

JoyJatra TV

FROM PAGE 3

yesterday, in four cases filed with Gulshan and Pallabi Police stations filed under different acts.

She was placed on a three-day fresh remand against a 10-day remand prayer submitted by Detective Branch (DB) of police in the case filed with Gulshan Police Station under the Digital Security Act.

She was also placed on a three-day remand against a five-day remand prayer submitted by DB in the case filed with the same police station under the Narcotics Control Act, Special Powers Act, Wildlife Conservation Act and Telecommunications Act.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Nivana Khair Jesi passed the orders after DB Inspector Shafiqur Rahman, investigation officer of the cases, produced her before the court with a 15-day remand prayer.

Besides, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shahinur Rahman yesterday placed Helena on eight-day remand in two cases, including a fraud case filed with Pallabi Police Station, after two investigation officers produced her before the court with a seven-day remand prayer in each case.

Earlier in the day, Helena was shown arrested in those cases filed under the Telecommunications Act and the Penal Code after following two separate petitions in this regard.

The defense counsels for Helena also submitted four separate petitions seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayers, saying their client was implicated in the cases as part of a conspiracy to harass her.

In the case filed with Pallabi Police Station, it was alleged that Helena operated IPTV channel JoyJatra TV without government approval and license, and was running its office illegally in Dhaka's Mirpur area.

In the other case filed with the same police station, it was alleged that Helena took Tk 54,000 from one Abdur Rahman for appointing him as a local correspondent of JoyJatra TV. As a correspondent, Rahman worked for several months, but was not given any salary. On the other hand, the television authority took Tk 3,000 per month from him, said the case statements.

Law enforcers arrested Helena during a raid at her Gulshan residence on Thursday night.

During the raid, Rab seized a huge quantity of liquor and casino equipment from Helena's residence.



The Farmgate-Tejturi Bazar Road at the capital's Tejgaon was excavated for development work and has been in this state for a long time. With all the slopes, holes and mud, the road is almost unusable right now.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Army hands food help to those in need in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Bangladesh Army of Jashore Cantonment distributed food items among destitute people in Khulna yesterday.

As part of the instant humanitarian support programme under the "Operation Covid Shield Part-2", 55 Padatik Division of Bangladesh Army distributed 2,000 sacks of food items among the helpless people at Royal intersection in Khulna city to mitigate the economic hardship caused by coronavirus during the ongoing lockdown.

Bangladesh Army 55 Padatik Division Brig Gen Md Hafizur Rahman, Psc, Lt Col Tamzid and Maj Nazmul were present among others.

Six gangs

FROM PAGE 3

settlement of more than 25,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis.

Arshad teamed up with Ishtiaq in 2011. He took charge as second-in-command after the gang's previous top leader Nadim was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion in July 2018. Arshad was arrested with 60,000 pieces of yaba tablets in March that year but came out on bail in just 21 days.

A high-placed source in law enforcement said Arshad is controlling the gang activity from India, but he sometimes used to visit the country.

Two other associates of Ishtiaq's drug syndicate -- Chua Selim and Gaja Sakil -- have also started their own gangs in the camp and started individual businesses, said a source in Geneva camp.

Gal Kata Monu, who was earlier was a salesman of Ishtiaq, has also started his own business after opening a new gang, said the source.

Besides, another drug dealer Kata Jahid, who used to operate drug business in the camp ten to twelve years back, came back after the death of Ishtiaq.

Jahid was kicked out of the camp by Ishtiaq and his gang members, and he used to operate the business from outside the

camp since.

Meanwhile, Rani alias Gaja Rani, who earlier only used to sell cannabis in the camp, is also trying to establish her influence in the camp and getting involved in selling yaba following death of Ishtiaq, said a camp source, requesting anonymity.

The Daily Star visited the camp on Monday night and tried to communicate with these people who are now allegedly maintaining the narcotics business in the camp.

But they were not found available. Even camp leaders refused to say anything about the drug gang activities in this newspaper.

Abdul Alim, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Mohammadpur police station, told The Daily Star yesterday that they have heard that Ishtiaq died of Covid-19 in February or March.

Asked about the present narcotics scenario of the camp, Alim said that they are continuing drives in the camp and arresting the people found involved in narcotics trade.

During the visit in the camp, this newspaper found peddlers selling yaba pills in the camp for Tk 250 to Tk 300. Besides yaba, the second popular drug in the camp is cannabis, but drug dealers also sell heroin.

Uphill battle

FROM PAGE 3

Every day, a battle for cylinders takes place at the hospital. Many try to get extra cylinders for their patients by various means.

A relative of a Covid-19 patient admitted there said, "We've heard that it's not possible to get oxygen here when needed. As a result, we are already bringing in oxygen cylinders to save the patient."

Another patient said he also brought two oxygen cylinders from home for emergency needs.

Asked, Corona Isolation Unit In-charge and SBMCH Assistant Director Dr Moniruzzaman said some are using one cylinder after another without emptying them, which is wasting oxygen. Many are even taking more than one cylinder.

Not everyone needs oxygen. Moreover, there is no shortage of oxygen, if needed. Half the patients are going to get central oxygen, he said.

SBMCH Director Dr Saiful Islam said the oxygen plant there has a capacity of over 9,000 litres. Although another oxygen plant has been constructed, Spectra Company, the firm contracted for the plant's operation, demanded a higher price rate for oxygen. Therefore, a proposal has been sent to the concerned ministry in this regard.

The decision will come from the ministry, and it will fix the price of oxygen. After that, it will be possible

to launch the plant. Once it starts operation, there will be no more problems, he said.

"Currently, we are facing an oxygen cylinder crisis, not oxygen. For this, we have asked Unicef for a hundred cylinders. Apart from this, I have requested the upazila-level hospitals to return 85 more cylinders. If they become available, there will be no problem," he said.

Apur from this, Abul Khair Group has given 30 cylinders, and the mayor has also given 50.

A doctor working in the Covid-19 ward said there is a high demand for oxygen cylinders. As the number of patients increases, the demand for oxygen rises too.

He said at least 200 more cylinders are needed at the moment. Due to the small diameter of the central oxygen line, the flow is relatively low, which is also causing problems for Covid-19 patients.

Contacted, Barishal Deputy Commissioner Md Jashimuddin said keeping more than one oxygen cylinder is unacceptable. He directed a committee to act in this regard.

Eighteen people died from Covid-19 in Barishal division yesterday. Sources at SBMCH said 14 died yesterday, including three Covid-19 patients and 11 who showed symptoms, bringing the death toll to 1,131 at the Covid-19 ward.

Barisal Divisional Health Director

Dr Basudeb Kumar Das said only Covid-19 patients with severe symptoms should go to SBMCH, not general patients from other districts and upazilas, to reduce the pressure on the hospital.

'ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED OXYGEN SUPPLY'

A group of activists yesterday demonstrated in front of SBMCH's Covid unit, demanding an end to the oxygen crisis and ensuring its uninterrupted supply.

Barishal unit of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) organised the human chain at 11am. Speakers said due to the oxygen crisis at the hospital, patients are suffering.

They also said oxygen crisis was one of the reasons behind the increase in Covid-related deaths in Barishal.

Imran Habib Rumon, convener of BSD (Barishal district), who presided over the event, claimed that every night, 25 to 30 people call them to get oxygen cylinders.

Speakers demanded immediate and uninterrupted supply of oxygen for all patients of the unit through setting up another central oxygen plant.

The event was conducted by BSD member Bijan Sikder. Dr Manisha Chakraborty, member secretary of BSD, and Manik Hawlader, general secretary of Socialist Workers' Front, among others, addressed the event.

DEATH ANNIVERSARY



To-day, the 4th August is the 44th death anniversary of Dr. Nawab Ali, MB (Calcutta); DTM (Calcutta); MRCP (Edin.); FRCP (Edin.). He was former Principal, Dhaka Medical College and the then Professor of Medicine of Lake Medical College, Calcutta of undivided Bengal. Dr. Nawab Ali Memorial Welfare Trust has sought dua for the departed soul.

HC upholds

FROM PAGE 3

Imran Hossain, owner of dairy farm Sadeque, seeking its directive to release 17 imported cows as one of the cows died.

Ruhul Quddus Kazal and Mehdi Hasan appeared for the petitioner while Samarendranath Biswas and Bipul Bagmar represented the state.

To-Let in Bashundhara Area

House # 81, Road # 2, Block # A, 1st Floor, 2nd Floor, 5th Floor & 7th Floor to 8th Floor, 1800 sq.ft, 3-Bed, 4-Bath. House for rent with Living, Dining, Garage & modern fittings. Foreigner will be given Preference. Mobile: 01762-327361, 01795-594960, 01718-553961

All but public

FROM PAGE 3

and commuters were detained or fined for wandering without any reason or not abiding by health guidelines.

Visiting Gabtoli, Syedabad, Tongi, Babu Bazar Bridge, Demra Bridge, Ashulia Bridge and other entry points, a large number of people were seen trying to enter the capital by ambulances in the guise of patients, and eventually getting caught at police check-posts. They were either detained or fined over the matter.

Traffic Inspector Ziaul Haque of Demra Zone said, "We expected the rush of people at these entry points to start declining from today, and were proven wrong. The number of people entering Dhaka was similar to that of the past few days, if not more," he said.

Reimposed at 8am on July 23, the second round of strict lockdown was supposed to be in force till August 5.

The government on Friday allowed industry owners to reopen all export-oriented factories from August 1 with the lockdown in place.

MJF expresses

FROM PAGE 3

been made in the current fiscal year to implement the National Action Plan on Prevention of Child Marriage between 2018-30 and to provide social protection for the girl child and adolescent girls during the pandemic, even though, the government is committed to ending child marriage and forced marriage by 2030.

"Bangladesh is the fourth country in the world in terms of child marriage. We hope the government will come forward to implement the promise soon," she added.

264 dengue

FROM PAGE 3

still undergoing treatment at various hospitals in Dhaka and 47 outside the capital, the DGHS data shows.

Meanwhile, mobile courts of two Dhaka city corporations yesterday fined owners of under-construction buildings, houses and other establishments Tk 7.79 lakh after they found Aedes mosquito larvae at the places.

শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশ
জলবায়ু সঙ্কট বাংলাদেশ।

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Sustainable Forests & Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project
Bangladesh Forest Department
Ban Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
www.bforest.gov.bd

Memo: Ban/SUFAL/IGM-17/2020/1302

Date: 03/08/2021

SUFAL Innovation Grant-2nd Call for Research Proposal

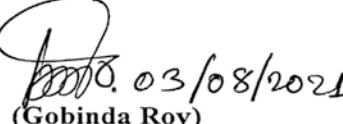
SUFAL Innovation Grant (SIG) Program is a funding window for applied research on forest and biodiversity of IDA financed Sustainable Forests & Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project of Bangladesh Forest Department under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. SUFAL project now invites eligible individual(s)/institution(s) to submit preliminary research proposal for awarding grants on thematic areas outlined in SUFAL Innovation Grant Manual, which is accessible at www.bforest.gov.bd. Workshops will be organized with initial applicants to facilitate detail proposal development. We highly encourage female researcher to apply for SIG and expect to award at least 30% SIG to female researcher. Maximum support from SUFAL Innovation Grant (SIG) would be up to project period.

Prioritized thematic research areas includes: Collaborative Forest Management; Forest Governance; Climate Change issues on Forest, Forest Species and Biodiversity; Infrastructure Optimization in Digital Forest Monitoring; Development of Cost-effective Rooting Materials; Forest Conservation and Restoration; Choice of Species for Future; Wildlife Habitat Conservation; Wildlife Ecology, Digital Service Delivery; Public Private Partnership in Forestry; Eco-tourism Development; Ecosystem Service Valuation; Site- species matching in Coastal Plantations etc.

The project will strictly follow SUFAL Innovation Grant Manual to SIG award and administration. Eligible and interested Bangladeshi individual(s)/institution(s) should provide information on prescribed Innovation Grant Application Form as detailed in annex I of SUFAL Innovation Grant manual. Institutional proposal should be represented by one lead researcher.


Research Proposal must be delivered in PDF copies to the email addresses given below on or before August 29, 2021 within office hours (17:00 hours).

There is no need to re-submit those who have already submitted the research Proposal.


(Gobinda Roy)
Project Director

Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project
Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD)
Room # 504, Ban Bhaban, Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Phone: +880255006786
E-mail: sufal.pmu@gmail.com

GD-1410



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

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স্টাফ বাস ভাড়ার দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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রুটের নাম	গাড়ির আকার	গাড়ির সংখ্যা	মডেল	দরপত্র জামানত
মতিবিল-রাজারবাগ-দীঘিরপাড়-২ (শাহীনবাগ ব্যাংক কলনী)	৩০ আসনের মিনিবাস	০১	২০১৪ সাল বা তৎপরবর্তী	৳২০,০০০/-

আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bb.org.bd) ই-টেন্ডারিং অপশনে Bidders হিসাবে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্নকরতঃ নিজ ক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশপূর্বক আলোচ্য দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। উপরে বর্ণিত দরপত্র জামানত (Tender Security) 'মহাব্যবস্থাপক, কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা' এর অনুকূলে যেকোন তফসিলি ব্যাংকের ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার ১৮/০৮/২০২১ তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে কমন সার্ভিসেস ডিপার্টমেন্ট-১ (৭ম তলা, ২য় সলংগলী ভবন) এ দাখিল করতে হবে এবং একই তারিখ বেলা ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত অনলাইনে (www.etender.bb.org.bd) দরপত্র জমা দেয়া যাবে। একই তারিখ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারীগণ অথবা তাদের প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্রসমূহ খোলা হবে।

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা যেকোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

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মোঃ আবুল কালাম আজাদ
মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফোনঃ ৯৫০০১৪৮

ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২১-২২৪৫
তারিখঃ ০৩/০৮/২০২১
জিডি-১৪০৯



Billal Sikder and his son Mohammad Al-Amin at one of their tree nurseries in Srimangal town of Moulvibazar.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Father-son duo finds success in tree nursery business

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

With a working capital of only Tk 10 thousand, Billal Sikder and his son Mohammad Al-Amin started a tree nursery about 30 years ago on a rented space in Srimangal upazila town of Moulvibazar.

Now the duo has five nurseries in Railgate, Shyamoli and Birampur areas of Srimangal town.

Average monthly sale of seeds and saplings at the five nurseries, on a total of five acres of land, now stands at about 2.5 lakh, raking in a monthly profit of nearly Tk 60 thousand.

Their nurseries now carry seeds and saplings of a wide selection of fruit, medicinal, decorative and

timber trees, which are looked after by about 20 workers.

Demand for different plants and seeds has increased significantly compared to the time when Billal and his son launched their first nursery named Janani Nursery.

People from different parts of the country also get saplings from them and many learn techniques from them to make their own nurseries, said Billal, father of three daughters and a son.

Now their nurseries are source of livelihood for not just Billal's six-member family, but also for their 20 workers, added Billal, who is also an Ansar VDP team leader at Ward 5 of Sreemangal municipality.

He said he developed the hobby of gardening and growing saplings at a young age when he used to spend a good amount of time with several employees of the forest department.

Later, in the 90's, he rented a small space where he started to run a small nursery in his leisure time. He spent the capital mostly to buy seeds and saplings for the nursery.

After incurring losses, he had to move to a different location. He moved his nursery to location due to the same reasons, before he could finally afford to rent a suitable spot on a long-term lease.

His persistence started to pay off especially after his son Al-Amin

joined hands with him full-time. Al-Amin said now many people are into gardening and many others use plants to beautify their homes.

To keep up with the demands, they also grow seedlings of various popular foreign trees.

Even the forest department gets saplings from their nursery to plant those in Bangabandhu Safari Park.

Although the nursery business is very profitable and demands are high, the number of nurseries is falling day by day, he said, adding that only those with motherly affection for trees and are willing to spend a lot of time on learning proper gardening techniques should get into the business.

Illegal sand extraction from Bhairab: 50 families living at risk

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Nargis Begum of Ghoshpara area, a prominent old neighbourhood of Jashore town on bank of the Bhairab river, used to run her family on the meager income of her sick tea vendor husband.

Nargis used to live beside the river in a semi-pucca two-room house with her husband and children. She used to live with her family on her own land even though she was living amid poverty.

However, she claimed that her house collapsed due to illegal sand mining in the name of excavating Bhairab river flowing by the side of her house.

Not only the house of Nargis Begum and many other houses are being washed away by the eroding river. So, she was forced to leave her house with her belongings, she

than 70 km upstream and downstream of the river has already been completed.

In the second phase, the period of excavation of Bhairab river was extended till June 2021 and in the third phase till June 2022. But illegal sand mining is going on in Jashore in the name of river dredging.

Besides, more than 50 families living along the river are spending their days in fear of their houses and shops disappearing into the river.

Shafiq Rahman Sheikh said that his house is on the banks of river Bhairab in old Kasba Ghoshpara. They have been living there for three generations. He is a day laborer by profession.

Due to illegal extraction of sand from the river, two and a half decimals of his ancestral land have been lost in the riverbed, he said.

"Now, I have no place to live," he added.

Topu Ghosh has been living on five bighas of land near the river for several decades. He said, illegal sand mining has made the river more prone to erosion.

The families have been endangered by the greed and interest of some people, he also said.

The houses of 11 families have merged with the rivers and so has his.

Anwar Hossain Bipul, acting chairman of Jashore Sadar Upazila Parishad, said, "I am enraged with the locals for extracting sand in the name of river dredging."

"A number of corrupt officials and employees of the Water Development Board and land grabbers from different regions are extracting sand in the name of river dredging," he said.

Executive Engineer of WDB Jashore Touhidul Islam said, River excavation work is going on as per design.

However, according to our design, in some places there is sand in the river bed and it is being extracted from there.

Those whose houses have been demolished were living there illegally, the engineer added.



More than 50 families living along the Bhairab river are spending their days in fear of their houses and shops disappearing into the river.

PHOTO: STAR

It could be learned that in 2016, the Water Development Board (WDB) started dredging 96 km stretch of Bhairab river from Taherpur in Chougachha of Jashore to Afraghat in Abhaynagar upazila.

The five-year project was undertaken to remove water logging and maintain sustainable water management in the Bhairab River Basin at a cost of Taka 272 crore, WDB sources said.

According to the WDB, the work on more



Alongside a madrasa, a mosque and a rural market place erosion by the Jamuna river devoured portion of Alipur Government Primary School under Gohaliabari union in Tangail's Kalihati upazila within five hours on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208



INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invites International Tender for Supply of Pharmaceutical Raw Material on C&F© Dhaka By Air and Chittagong by Sea basis :-

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/RM/SEM/82/2021-2022 dated 03/08/2021	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. Polyethelen Glycol # 300 BP 02. Dried Aluminium Hydroxide BP 03. Magnesium Hydroxide BP 04. Mannitol BP 05. Peppermint Oil BP	Tk. 2,700.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 32.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 25/08/2021 At 11.00 AM Opening : 25/08/2021 at 11.15 AM

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

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

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website : www.edcl.gov.bd

General Manager
Procurement
For : Managing Director.

(5.5" x 4 col.)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director
Bangladesh Railway
Outer Circular Road, Kamalapur, Dhaka-1217

No. PD/DTJDL/Re-TENDER/WD2-1651 Dated: 02.08.2021

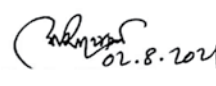
Package No. WD2: Design, Supply, Installation and Testing-Commissioning of Computer Based Interlocked Signaling system at 7 (Seven) stations including interlocking of selected level crossings and installation of optical fiber cable based telecommunication system for block operation and CTC interface work (Turnkey Works) in connection with construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Track in Dhaka-Tongi section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Track in Tongi-Joydebpur section.

Ref:
1. IFT No. PD/DTJDL/Re-TENDER/WD2-1568; Dated 12.06.2021.

Corrigendum No. 01

Sl No. of IFT	Provision as per Re-Tender Notice	Provision as per Corrigendum-01
17.	Tender last selling date	16.08.2021 (during office hours)
18.	Tender closing date and time	17-08-2021 Up to 12:00 hrs BST
19.	Tender opening date and time	17-08-2021 At 12:30 hrs BST

All other terms and conditions of the Tender Notice shall remain unchanged.


Md. Afzal Hossain
Project Director
Construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Lines in Dhaka-Tongi section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Line in Tongi-Joydebpur Section Project
Bangladesh Railway, Kamalapur, Dhaka
Mobile: 01711-506113
E-mail: pd.3rd4th@railway.gov.bd

GD-1408

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh


Office of the Superintending Engineer
PWD Circle, Rangpur
Tel: 0521-62512
Fax: 0521-62422
E-mail: se_rngpr@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No. ২৫.৩৬.৮৫০০.১১০.১৪.০১১.২১.৩৮০ থা Date: ০২/০৮/২০২১ইং

Invitation for e-GP Tender

Sl. No.	e-GP Tender ID & Tender No.	Name of work	Tender proposal closing date and time
1	594484 RNP/CERPP/3	Establishment of 20 bed Isolation Unit & 10 bed ICU at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital FY 2021-2022.	17-Aug-2021 13:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).


Dewan Maududur Rahman
ID No. 202003011021
Superintending Engineer
PWD Circle, Rangpur
E-mail: se_rngpr@pwd.gov.bd

GD-1407

North Korea wants sanctions eased to restart US talks

Claims South Korea's intel chief

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea wants international sanctions banning its metal exports and imports of refined fuel and other necessities lifted before it restarts denuclearisation talks with the United States, South Korean lawmakers said yesterday.

The North has also demanded the easing of sanctions on its imports of luxury goods to be able to bring in fine liquors and suits, the lawmakers said after being briefed by Park Jie-won, head of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), South Korea's main intelligence agency.

The briefing came a week after the two Koreas restored hotlines that North Korea suspended a year ago, the first hint in months that North Korea might be more responsive to engagement efforts.

"As a precondition to reopen talks, North Korea argues that the United States should allow mineral exports and imports of refined oil and necessities," Ha Tae-keung, a member of the parliamentary intelligence committee, told reporters, citing Park.

North Korea's state-run media made no mention yesterday of any new request for the lifting sanctions to restart talks.

North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests since 2006 and test-fired missiles capable of hitting the US. However the country has not tested a nuclear weapon or its longest-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) since 2017.

After a review of North Korea policy, the Biden administration said it would explore diplomacy to achieve the goal of complete denuclearisation of North Korea but would not seek a grand bargain with Kim.



A view shows burning buildings as people try to contain a fire in Melikler, Isparta Province, Turkey, in this still image obtained from social media drone video yesterday. Firefighters using planes and helicopters, and locals with buckets of water, battled wildfires raging for a seventh day near southern resorts in drought-hit Turkey. Eight people have been killed in the wildfires so far.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Quotes of the day



"We will seek to lift the tyrannical sanctions imposed by America. But we will not tie the ... economy to the will of foreigners."

EBRAHIM RAISI, IRAN'S INCOMING PRESIDENT



"The decision by the military to extend the so-called state of emergency in Myanmar is unjustifiable."

DOMINIC RAAB, UK'S FOREIGN MINISTER

STUDY ON SEX-SELECTIVE PRACTICES WORLDWIDE

4.7m fewer girls to be born over next 10 yrs

AFP, Paris

An estimated 4.7 million fewer girls are expected to be born globally in the next 10 years because of sex-selective practices in countries with a cultural preference for male offspring, a trend that could undermine social cohesion in the long term, research showed yesterday.

The research suggested that the projected shortfall in the number of girls being born will lead to a surplus of young men in around a third of the global population by 2030, which could lead to increased anti-social behaviour and violence.

To model what short- and long-term effect sex selection will have on societies, an international team of researchers analysed data from more than three billion births over the last 50 years.

Focusing on 12 countries where the male-to-female ratio had increased since 1970 and another 17 where that ratio was at risk of increasing due to social or cultural trends, they simulated two scenarios.

The first assumed an increase in the rate of sex selection, based on statistical evidence.

The second scenario assumed increased sex selection in certain countries, based on observed trends and decreased fertility, but for which specific data were lacking.

In scenario 1, countries saw a shortfall of 4.7 million in the number of girls being born by 2030. For scenario 2, the figure jumped to more than 22 million globally by 2100.

US slams junta's polls plan

Urges Asean pressure; UK slams military for extending emergency

AGENCIES

The United States said that Myanmar's junta was playing for time with a two-year election timeframe as Secretary of State Antony Blinken prepared to encourage Asean to appoint an envoy.

Blinken is participating virtually in a week of talks involving foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the latest bid by President Joe Biden's administration to engage a region at the frontlines of US competition with China.

Ahead of the Asean talks, Myanmar's junta chief promised to hold elections and lift a state of emergency by August 2023, extending an initial timeline given when the military deposed elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1.

The announcement is "a call for Asean to have to step up its effort because it's clear that the Burmese junta is just stalling for time and wants to keep prolonging the calendar to

its own advantage," said a senior US official, using Myanmar's former name of Burma.

"All the more reason why Asean has to engage on this and live up and uphold the terms of the five-point consensus that Myanmar also signed up to."

POST COUP MYANMAR

Britain on Monday called on Myanmar to return to democracy after military ruler Min Aung Hlaing took on the role of prime minister in a caretaker administration six months after the army seized power.

"The decision by the military to extend the so-called state of emergency in Myanmar is unjustifiable and an attempt to solidify their undemocratic power grab," foreign minister Dominic Raab wrote on Twitter.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing attended

a meeting with Asean members on the crisis in April that led to the so-called consensus statement that called for an immediate end to violence and a regional special envoy.

But the junta leader later distanced himself from the statement, no envoy has been appointed and more than 900 people have been reported killed in the six-month crackdown on dissent.

Asean is not known for its collective diplomatic clout and its meetings have frequently pitted the United States and China against each other as they seek influence.

The US official said Blinken would address Beijing's "coercion" against Asean nations in the dispute-rife South China Sea and also highlight human rights concerns within China.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin visited Southeast Asia last week, where he hammered in on the South China Sea, saying Beijing's claims had no basis in international law.

NEWS IN brief

110 charged with insulting king in one year of Thai protests

More than 100 protesters have been charged under Thailand's royal insult laws since last July, when rallies across the kingdom began demanding reforms to the unassailable monarchy, a lawyer representing the activists and an AFP tally showed yesterday. A mostly youth-led movement kicked off last summer, fuelled by discontent with the government of Thai Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former military chief who first came to power in a coup in 2014. A year since those rallies began, 110 protesters have been charged under lese majeste laws for their role in the movement, which called for Prayut to step down, a rewrite to the military-scripted constitution, and for royal reforms and at their peak drew tens of thousands to the streets. If found guilty, they face sentences of three to 15 years in jail per charge.

Missing Belarus activist found hanged in Ukraine

A missing Belarusian activist has been found hanged in a park in the Ukrainian capital Kiev, police said on Tuesday, adding they had opened a murder probe. Shishov headed the Belarusian House in Ukraine, an NGO helping his compatriots flee repression in Belarus. The activist went jogging in Kiev on Monday morning but did not return and could not be reached on his mobile phone. Friends of Shishov said he had been followed by "strangers" while jogging recently. Belarus strongman Alexander Lukashenko has been cracking down on any form of dissent since mass protests erupted after last year's elections, deemed unfair by the West. The United Nations yesterday called on the Ukrainian authorities to conduct a thorough investigation on the incident.

Saudi intensifies rights crackdown: Amnesty

Saudi Arabia has intensified a crackdown on dissidents and rights activists after a respite that coincided with the country's G20 presidency last year, Amnesty International said yesterday. Saudi authorities "have brazenly intensified the persecution of human rights defenders and dissidents and stepped up executions over the past six months, following a lull... during Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency," the rights group said in a statement. At least 13 people have been prosecuted, sentenced or had their sentences ratified "following grossly unfair trials before the Specialised Criminal Court", Amnesty said. It said recorded executions fell by 85 percent last year, but that "at least 40 people" were put to death between January and July this year, "more than during the whole of 2020".

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A resident (R) sitting on a boat helps a man (C) walking through a road submerged by floodwaters following heavy monsoon rains in Ghatal, Paschim Medinipur district, about 100 km from Kolkata. Photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

TALIBAN OFFENSIVE IN AFGHANISTAN

Civilian toll mounts

Army urges civilians to evacuate city besieged by Taliban; militants accused of 'war crimes'

AFP, Kandahar

Residents were urged yesterday to evacuate a besieged Afghan city as the army prepared a major offensive against Taliban insurgents after three days of heavy fighting.

The Taliban have seized control of much of rural Afghanistan since foreign forces began the last stage of their withdrawal in May, but are now focused on capturing provincial capitals, where they are meeting stiffer resistance.

Fighting is raging for Lashkar Gah, the capital of southern Helmand province, with the United Nations saying at least 40 civilians were killed in the last 24 hours.

"Please leave as soon as possible so that we can start our operation," General Sami Sadat, commander of the 215 Maiwand Afghan Army Corps, said in a message to the city of 200,000 delivered via the media. "I know it is very difficult for you to leave your houses -- it is hard for us too -- but if you are displaced for a few days, please forgive us."

The loss of Lashkar Gah would be a massive strategic and psychological blow for the government, which has pledged to defend cities at all costs after losing much of the rural countryside to the Taliban over the summer.

Fighting was also reported in various parts of the country including Herat and Kandahar.

Washington and London meanwhile accused the Taliban of committing atrocities that may amount to "war crimes" in the town of Spin Boldak, which the insurgents captured last month along the border with Pakistan. Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission earlier said the insurgents had indulged in revenge killings there of at least 40 people.

Fighting across the country has displaced around 80,000 children from the start of June, humanitarian organisation Save the Children said yesterday.



AUGUST 04

1914 - WWI: Britain declares war on Germany.

1944 - After two years hiding in an Amsterdam back room, Anne Frank, her sister, her parents and four other Jews were discovered by the Gestapo.

1956 - Asia's first nuclear reactor was brought on line at Trombay in India.

1993 - Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis sign peace treaty in Arusha, Tanzania.

SOURCE: REUTERS

MONSOON DELUGE IN INDIA

16 more killed in West Bengal

AFP, Kolkata

At least 16 people have been killed and a quarter of a million people displaced from their homes after heavy monsoon rains lashed eastern India, officials said yesterday, as the air force joined rescue efforts.

The latest deaths in West Bengal came a few days after 11 people were also killed in the state as the torrent of water swept away homes and triggered landslides.

Flooding and landslides are common during India's treacherous monsoon season from June to September and causes widespread devastation.

Two river banks were breached and flooding affected at least half a million people in six districts in West Bengal over the past two days, the state's disaster management minister Javed Ahmed Khan told AFP.

Five of the 16 people killed were swept away in the flood and the rest died when their mud houses collapsed, officials said.

Authorities have set up more than 40 relief centres for the displaced in the flood-affected districts, senior state official Harekrishna Dribedi, said.

This year's monsoon, which had earlier inundated the western coast, has claimed the lives of at least 250 people so far. Last month, at least 200 people died in Maharashtra after landslides sent torrents of mud onto villages.

ATTACK ON ISRAELI-LINKED TANKER

US vows 'collective response'

Iran vows retaliation; ultraconservative Raisi inaugurated as president

AGENCIES

The United States has promised to lead a "collective response" against Iran in retaliation for a deadly attack on an Israeli-linked tanker, as Tehran denied blame and warned against "adventurism."

The United States and Israel have both said that their intelligence concluded that an Iranian drone on Thursday attacked the MT Mercer Street, managed by prominent Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, as it sailed off Oman.

A British security guard and a Romanian crew member were killed in what analysts said bore all the hallmarks of the "shadow war" between enemies Iran and Israel, which have included attacks in waters around the Gulf.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the MT Mercer Street incident "a direct threat to freedom of navigation and commerce."

"We are in very close contact, in coordination, with the United Kingdom, Israel, Romania and other countries. And there will be a collective response," Blinken told reporters, the second straight day he has threatened retaliation.

Britain summoned the Iranian ambassador



and demanded that vessels navigate freely in the oil-rich region.

"I think that Iran should face up to the consequences of what they've done," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told reporters, condemning the "unacceptable and outrageous attack" on the ship.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that Israel "must stop such baseless accusations" and called on the United States and Britain to provide evidence if any to support claims of Tehran's responsibility.

Iran "will not hesitate to protect its security and national interests, and will immediately and

decisively respond to any possible adventurism," Khatibzadeh said in a statement.

Iran's foreign ministry also summoned the British charge d'affaires and Romanian ambassador to object to the "baseless" allegations over the ship, state news agency IRNA said.

The incident came ahead of yesterday's inauguration of the ultraconservative Ebrahim Raisi as Iran's new president, replacing Hassan Rouhani who had tried to improve relations with the West.

The attack on the tanker comes as Israel, which sees Iran as its primary adversary, and Iran have engaged in a secret war of attacking on each other's interests across the region.

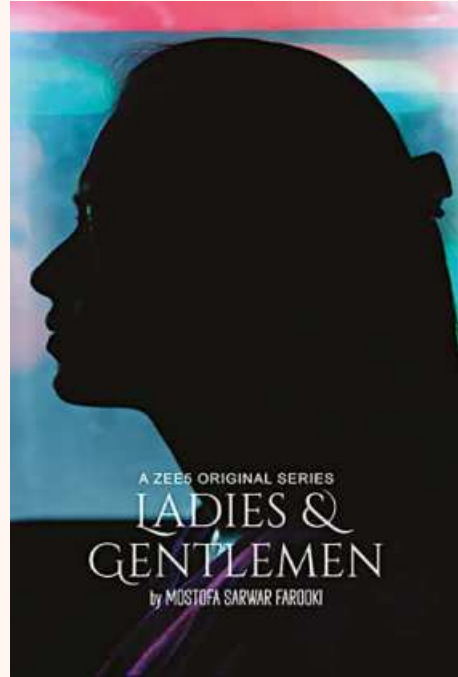
Raisi yesterday said he would take steps to lift "tyrannical" sanctions imposed by the United States, after winning the formal endorsement of the country's supreme leader to take office later this week.

Raisi, who will be sworn in tomorrow and will then have one week to present his cabinet to parliament for a vote of confidence, is expected to adopt "a hard line" approach in the Vienna talks.

COVER STORY

LADIES & GENTLEMEN

'Ladies & Gentlemen' is a new web series available now on ZEE5. The talented minds behind the show include director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, producer Nusrat Imrose Tisha, along with actors Iresh Zaker, Maria Nur, Partha Barua, and Tasnia Farin. In this discussion, the team talk with Rafi Hossain to share their experiences with the project.



NUSRAT IMROSE TISHA

As a director, Farooki always knows what each actor needs, and he draws a perfect picture of the world his characters will be a part of. This portrayal makes it much easier for the actors to transition into their characters. The amount of effort he puts in motivates us. Although, as a producer, he is indecisive. He often changes his mind about scripts. Even though the constant changes can be challenging to deal with at times, working with him is always very exciting. Farooki usually has three stages in his production process. First, he does the scripting, then the shooting, and finally the editing. In all these stages, he makes several alterations, but he always knows what he is doing. By the time the clips leave the editing table, it is as if an entirely different product is delivered. I had to tell our finance manager to extend our shooting time by three days because Farooki always needs it. The first time I worked with him was on a drama by Anisul Hoque. It originally took seven days to shoot it. Five days later, he called me and said he lost all the cassettes. This is why I know it is always better to keep a few extra days for shooting.



process. There is a particular scene in the series without any dialogue, and we shot it after our wrap-up party. After we all celebrated the end of shooting the series, we had to call Maria and Farin again to reshoot these scenes.

While we talk about the relevance of the television industry in Bangladesh, I think televisions will remain relevant for a long time. However, it has become less popular in Bangladesh because television channels no longer appeal to their demographic. Nowadays, these channels create content that is better suited for platforms like YouTube. Existing television audiences, however, do not find this as entertaining as what they previously had. OTT platforms also have a more diverse audience, so there are more opportunities for creators to work freely. They also provide us with more time to prepare for our work. For example, in our case, Farin, Tisha, and I worked together for an entire month, and it was very effective in building Farin's character. Television platforms are more restrictive in this regard. OTT platforms are already popular in other countries, and I think they are the future of entertainment for us as well.

I want to do more web-based films and series, and the reason behind this is even though I worked on several projects for the past few years, I could not show them to my audiences. Different filmmakers have different approaches to their work. Some of them wait a long time after finishing one project before taking up another one. For me, it is like regularly writing a diary that I want people to see. I missed being connected to my audiences so much that it has caused me a great deal of sadness over the years. It got worse because of the pandemic. The advantage of publishing your work on web-based platforms is that a large number of people from all over the world have access to the latest releases at any time. It is very convenient compared to more traditional methods of distribution that take up a lot more time and effort. OTT platforms create space for both high-budget blockbuster films and films made by independent directors such as myself. This is why we have seen such a sharp rise in their popularity. I look forward to working on more films and series for these platforms in the future.

MOSTOFA SARWAR FAROOKI

The shooting for this project was during the pandemic, but the situation was not as bad back then as it is now. We shot the film around February and March of this year. The main story consisted of my ideas, but we had a team for the story development. This team included me, Tisha, Tanvir Hossain as well as Syed. We developed the story for about six months, and I came up with several different stories and ideas before I settled on the final one. The series is a combination of different genres and not purely "thriller". It starts as a drama and then goes into the suspense-thriller territory. We did not shoot it as a pure thriller series as it also follows the structure of dramas. The formation that can be seen on screen is different from the way we shot it. During shooting, I had to change a lot of things and also improvise very frequently. I also made changes during the editing

IRESH ZAKER

Farooki bhai is very empathetic as a director. He considers that each actor has had different journeys. He prioritizes making our work comfortable. His devotion is also contagious and makes us want to work harder. Out of the three directors, I consider the best of all time, he is one of them. For the production of Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very grateful to both Tisha and Sanita because while Farooki bhai was managing his directorial work, they helped relieve a lot of pressure within our operation. Meem, the executive producer, was also a great contributor to our production process. There is a certain level of professionalism embedded within Farooki bhai as well. He handled both the creative aspects of the series skillfully while supporting us throughout production. He does not

stop working on his projects until they are finally released because he wants to perfect them. This includes things like dubbing, trailers, etc. When talking about the experience of working with ZEE5, I would say it was wonderful. We work with them relatively frequently. OTT platforms are still an emerging thing here in Bangladesh, and we are still experimenting with them. Along with a group of companies, we are committing ourselves to work with it because we believe they have a future in this country. We have incredible talent here, such as Farooki bhai, Farin, and Maria, and they are worthy of global recognition. We also have talented writers and cinematographers who can produce work people will undoubtedly pay to see. I am thankful to our partners at ZEE5 for believing in us and investing in our project. If we have this constant support, I think our film industry has a bright future. We are already doing well with our full-length films, so why not try out web series as well?



PARTHA BARUA

I had a positive experience working for Ladies and Gentlemen. I had a wonderful team to work with and enjoyed being part of it. The production also went smoothly. Farooki is also a fantastic director who built the characters up perfectly. He could convey what he wanted in the series perfectly, and it was very comfortable working with him.



TASNIA FARIN

Since this is my first web series, and I had to play an important character throughout the eight episodes, I did feel a little bit of pressure at first. However, knowing the talented people in my team were there to support me was very relieving. I connected with my character, and most of the time, it felt so natural that I did not even think I was acting. As a director, I believe Farooki bhai has a good understanding of people's minds. He knows how to communicate with people individually, as he realizes everyone is different. He prepares each of us for our characters while keeping this in mind, making it easier for us to embody our roles and understand them. When it comes to my achievement, then honestly, I think less about what will appeal to a greater number of audiences and more about how the work would make me feel. I also think about how I would perceive my work as an audience myself. I love to work, and I love playing characters. Because I work for myself first, it resonates with audiences because they can see the heart I put into my roles.



MARIA NUR

Farooki bhai tries to connect all his work to reality, and I think that ties back to the casting process as well. He chooses his actors based on whom he thinks would best suit the character as a real person. Like my team has said, he tries to make us feel comfortable during production. If we had opinions on how we felt certain scenes could be shot, he always considered those and explained his perspective. He was also incredibly motivational. He convinced me that I was the perfect person to play my character made me much more confident about myself. I think that is what makes him such a good director and producer. In simple words, I think he is just amazing, and it shows on the screen in his works. Whenever I watch the scenes after the editing is complete, I often do not recognize them because they change drastically. Even though we all have the script, I could never tell what is going to happen next in the story when I was watching the show for the first time on screen. It was all worth it because the silent scene Farooki bhai mentioned turned out to be very touching. I learned so much from that myself. People appreciated it as well, and they said it helped convey a lot more emotions.



Curbing Covid-19 is a priority, but so is continuing education

After 500 days of school/college closure, it's time for a critical rethink

SCHOOLS and colleges in Bangladesh have remained closed for more than 500 days now, causing immense damage to the life prospects of students and putting unwarranted mental and financial burdens on parents and teachers alike. Although the government has played with the idea of vaccinating university students in order to reopen universities sometime in the near future, no such plan has yet been put forth with regard to schools and colleges. The government had previously said that it would consider reopening schools and colleges once the positivity rate of coronavirus comes down to around five percent. However, as things stand, that still seems to be a long way away, as the positivity rate throughout the country continues to hover around the 30 percent mark. How long then will schools and colleges remain closed? And at what cost?

The pandemic has not only caused havoc in our education system; it has disrupted education across the world. Yet, if we look at China—where the virus originated—education did not stop during the pandemic. In fact, China managed to continue educating its children during the entire lockdown period using the help of technology. Although it must be conceded that there is a huge technological gap between China and Bangladesh—and indeed between different parts of Bangladesh itself—the fact that the government could not come up with any solution to this problem over the course of the last 500 days is incredibly disappointing. And what's even more disappointing is the lack of attempt or vision to do so.

Not only have the students suffered during this lengthy period of school closure, but the teachers and administrators have suffered too. The financial damage wrought by the pandemic has led to many parents failing to pay their children's school fees while schools remained closed. And thousands of schools have been forced to shut down as a result, while others couldn't afford to pay their teachers. If we look at just the kindergarten-level schools, around 3,000 of them have been forced to close down, resulting in some 3.5 lakh teachers becoming unemployed. Private schools that don't rely on government support have also faced similar problems, with many teachers getting discouraged and leaving the profession altogether. The long-term damage this will cause to our education system is impossible to estimate.

Back in July, Unicef and Unesco said that the continued school closure will lead to a "generational catastrophe", and we can't agree more. It is time for the government to prioritise educating our children, as it is on their shoulders that the future of this country will depend. The government should start consultations with experts in this field on an emergency basis and formulate strategies for the continuation of all forms and levels of education. If that requires the use of advanced technology, the government should find ways to bridge the technological gap between students and provide them with the necessary devices to resume their education within a blended learning framework. Supervised, partial reopening of schools and colleges in areas where the positivity rate is lower should not be ruled out either.

Errant private hospitals must be reined in

DGHS needs to be more proactive in checking malfeasance

ONE must admit that in the last two decades or so, the private hospitals have helped in supplementing the public healthcare sector in Bangladesh to a great extent. However, the need to beef up an inadequate public healthcare system saw a mushrooming of private hospitals and health centres, many of which, as it turned out eventually, did not have the required credentials to run those organisations. One of the positives of the pandemic, if a calamity can have any positive at all, has been that the actual conditions of a large number of such poorly staffed, badly set up, and inadequately equipped and run hospitals, lab centres and other such facilities have been exposed. The purpose of these hospitals is simply to make profits; providing healthcare is more of a secondary objective. The pandemic has also, painfully, bared the corrupt nexus between unscrupulous health service providers and health officials, without whose direct collusions such facilities would not have been able to exist and operate in the first place.

It is shocking to see how some of the private hospitals have overstepped their remit and treated patients for Covid-19, violating government orders. The exorbitant amount charged by some of these hospitals from patients for the treatment of Covid-19 defies logic. This has been the practice for a long time. Consequently, private health facilities of all definitions have become money-making concerns rather than healthcare providers.

One would have hoped that after the experiences of last year, the DGHS would be more proactive in bringing the hundreds of private hospitals, clinics and lab centres under scrutiny. Early this week, the health directorate inspected three hospitals in the capital's Uttara and found anomalies that border on criminality. While we commend the DGHS for launching quick investigations and temporarily suspending their operations, we would have hoped that the inspection had been done sooner, and not after receiving complaints from aggrieved patients. We also believe that the licences of these and other such facilities should be cancelled for good.

We suggest that the health administration carry out extensive combing operations to detect such errant establishments on a regular and proactive basis. And not only should their licenses be revoked, we believe their acts of commission and omission, which have resulted in a large number of deaths, should be treated as murders and duly proceeded against. We also think that the corrupt elements inside the health administration, who help keep these establishments afloat for their own benefits, should be identified and dealt with accordingly. Nothing less than proactive and stepped up vigilance can stop this nuisance in the name of healthcare.

The era of loss and damage from climate change is upon us

We must act immediately if we are to avert its worst impacts

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

OVER the last week of July 2021, we all watched on our TV screens as the heat dome and wildfires in north-western US and Canada took many lives and destroyed the town of Lytton in Canada. Then, the devastating floods in Germany and Belgium cost several hundred lives, followed by more loss of lives from devastating floods in China and India. Even here, in Bangladesh, several lives were lost in the Rohingya refugee camps from landslides following heavy rainfall.

As we await the publication of Working Group I (on the science of climate change) as part of the sixth assessment report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), I believe that we have clearly and unequivocally entered the era of human-induced climate change due to the fact that global mean temperature has risen over one degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels already due to past emissions of greenhouse gases.

This means that almost every single day, from now on, we will see record-breaking extreme heat, wildfires, floods and cyclones happening somewhere in the world, and that every year will be worse than the previous one for the next decade to come.

However, we can still avert the worst impacts in the long term by keeping global temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius, as all countries have agreed to do in the Paris Agreement at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) held in 2015. Unfortunately, we have not done enough to achieve that goal, but it is still achievable if every country enhances its actions to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. While we must redouble our collective efforts to keep the global temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius, we must also try to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. Now, we also have to prepare for the inevitable loss and damage from human-induced climate change that is upon us already.

In practical terms, this means improving our early warning systems and also our post-disaster response systems in every country, regardless of whether the country is rich or poor.

Climate change impacts will occur everywhere. Bangladesh is fortunate to have invested in disaster preparedness, for both cyclones and floods (although the latter is more complicated), and has succeeded in bringing down the loss of lives, even though there is still a lot of damage to infrastructure, homes, crops and livelihoods. Bangladesh can share this experience with other countries as well.

At the global level, although there has been some progress on discussing the topic of loss and damage from climate change in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—such as the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage set up in COP19 and the inclusion of loss and damage in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement—there has not been sufficient actions to assist countries to deal with the reality of human-induced climate change impacts.

Hence, the upcoming COP26 to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in November is going to be critical to address the issue with the priority that it clearly deserves. There are some encouraging signs from the recent ministerial meeting held in London, hosted by the UK (president of the incoming COP26), where the issue was indeed recognised as important. However, there is very little time left before COP26 to put something meaningful in place before November. Waiting until the COP will be too late—there are a few ideas that all countries

Almost every single day, from now on, we will see record-breaking extreme heat, wildfires, floods and cyclones happening somewhere in the world.

must consider now and take forward seriously over the remaining months until COP26.

The first bit is relatively easy, and it is to agree on how to set up the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD), which was agreed upon in COP25 in Madrid, Spain in 2019. This needs to be quickly set up in order to assist countries to take practical steps to tackle loss and damage from climate change on the

ground. A robust but flexible arrangement should be negotiated and agreed upon as quickly as possible.

The second and by far the more important bit is raising additional funding for addressing loss and damage, which the developing countries have been asking for but the developed countries have resisted until now. In COP25, while there was no agreement to provide funding for loss and damage, there was an agreement to explore new sources of additional funding

coming as well as where they arrive.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the reason that the developed countries have been so reluctant to even discuss loss and damage is their fear of opening themselves up to claims of liability and compensation. This should not be felt anymore, as the developing countries already agreed not to invoke liability or claim compensation as part of the Paris Agreement. The opportunity now exists for the developed countries to offer



Last week, several lives were lost in the Rohingya refugee camps from landslides following heavy rainfall. This photo is from September 2017, when heavy rainfall created similar havoc in the refugee camps. PHOTO: REUTERS/CATHAL MCNAUGHTON

that could be built upon going forward.

One idea might be to consider enhancing the commitment from the richer countries to provide USD 100 billion a year to support mitigation and adaptation actions in the poorer countries—with an additional USD 50 billion to support loss and damage. So from, say, 2023 or 2024 onwards, the developed countries could provide USD 150 billion a year for mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage, and the funds could be used in combination of all three actions rather than being ring-fenced, which is not efficient.

An increasingly important aspect of loss and damage from climate change is the displacement of people and creation of climate refugees or climate migrants, which will add to the flow of migrants from poor to rich countries. The provision of funding for loss and damage could be a good way to pay for assisting such climate migrants, both from where they are

funding out of a sense of solidarity rather than compensation.

One way to take this issue forward seriously, up to and beyond COP26, would be for the UK to appoint a Special Envoy for Loss and Damage who could talk to all parties prior to the COP in order to find practical ways forward. Also, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres could appoint a Special Envoy on Loss and Damage to take the issue to COP26, COP27 and beyond, in order to make loss and damage a permanent high level agenda item in every COP going forward.

As we have already entered the new era of loss and damage from human-induced climate change, we must take measures on the ground as well as in the UNFCCC to deal with the issue effectively in order to prevent its worst impacts.

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

Fortifying food: An effective strategy to combat hidden hunger



AVIJIT SAHA

BANGLADESH, despite being one of the world's fastest-growing economies with exceptional GDP growth, was unable to avoid extreme food insecurity during the pandemic, which was

experienced by a substantial proportion of the population. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated "hidden hunger" all over the world, resulting in negative public health repercussions.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the reduction of under-five mortality (from 94 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1999–2000 to 31 in 2019), for which the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina received the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Award in 2010. However, despite this success, the prevalence of chronic undernutrition and micronutrient deficiency is still going up. Approximately 25 percent of the population remains food insecure, and 36 percent of children under the age of five suffer from stunting, a classic symptom of chronic malnutrition.

On top of that, a dissemination seminar on "Preliminary findings of the National Micronutrient Survey in Bangladesh 2019-2020" revealed that the vitamin A deficiency among children (0-59 months) has increased alarmingly, from 20.5 percent in 2011 to 52.8 percent in 2019-20. Vitamin A deficiency for non-pregnant non-lactating (NPNL) women also went up from 5.4 percent in 2011 to 8.5 percent in 2019-20. A similar trend can also be found with regard to iron deficiency 14.9 percent (2019-20). However, the opposite trend can be found in the case of iodine, zinc and vitamin D, even though the country is still far from solving the issue of micronutrient deficiencies.

Hidden hunger is a micronutrient (vitamin and mineral) deficiency that occurs when the quality of food people eat does not meet their nutrient requirements, which hinder their growth and development. This can have several negative health and social consequences, including an increased risk of malnutrition, multiple infections, chronic

diseases, poor health and wellbeing, impaired learning, poor mental health, social conflict, and increased social and economic inequalities. These negative consequences also have the potential to jeopardise the overall developmental activities of citizens of various demographics.

Globally, USD 5.6 trillion economic loss is caused by malnutrition every year and in Bangladesh, this loss is more than Tk 7,000 crore (USD one billion).



In Bangladesh, 36 percent of children under the age of five suffer from stunting, a classic symptom of chronic malnutrition. PHOTO: COLLECTED

With over 12 lakh citizens affected by Covid-19 to date, the long-standing need to boost immunity and maintain a healthy diet is now more important than ever. In the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020, Bangladesh was ranked 75 out of 107 countries, indicating a serious malnutrition epidemic, possibly made worse by the pandemic-induced lockdowns. In March this year, The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) placed Bangladesh in a list of countries that require external assistance in food to brave "severe localised food insecurity".

In this context, fortifying food is one of the most cost-effective and reliable investment choices in broader national initiatives to prevent chronic undernutrition. It is considered a highly effective intervention to reduce micronutrient deficiency among children

and pregnant women, which has escalated amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortified foods are enhanced with six essential vitamins and minerals that the poor segment of the population may otherwise not be able to afford due to lack of access to meat, fish, fruits and other non-rice products.

The UN Food Systems Summit 2021, which is going to take place this September, focuses on strengthening food systems, promoting healthy diets

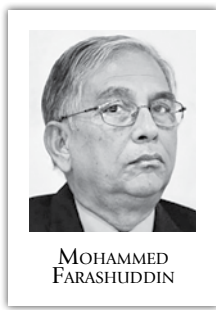
health, nutritional status, survival, growth, development and productivity of the population by preventing and alleviating micronutrient deficiencies, the National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Micronutrient Deficiencies in Bangladesh (NSPCMD), 2015-2024, is being implemented. The Food Safety Act 2013 has also been a monumental step in providing a proper legal framework for ensuring food security for the poorest of the poor in the country.

Another positive development with regard to food fortification is the Mandatory Oil Fortification Act 2013, which makes provisions for the fortification of edible oils with vitamin A. The Act made it mandatory for storing, selling, supplying and marketing of edible oil fortified with vitamin A, whether it is produced locally, refined or imported. Additionally, Bangladesh was one of the first countries globally to introduce mandatory salt iodisation in 1989, aligning with the Universal Salt Iodisation (USI) Programme. Bangladesh has achieved significant success over the years in this regard, with 80.3 percent of households consuming iodised salt and 57 percent of households using adequately iodised salt, according to the National Salt Iodization Survey 2015. However, efforts are still needed to achieve the USI target (more than 90 percent of households) of adequately iodised salt coverage in Bangladesh. In 2021, the government of Bangladesh passed the Iodised Salt Bill, making iodisation of edible salts mandatory to prevent iodine deficiency disorders and improve the nutrition of millions of people.

The Covid-19 pandemic has emerged with new opportunities for boosting immune systems by promoting food fortification. Ideas like rice and oil fortification, and salt iodisation, have already been in the spotlight. However, we still need to focus more on how other micronutrients can be mixed with staple foods like wheat, maize flour or milk at very low costs. Finally, preventing vitamin D deficiency among high-risk population groups is yet to receive enough attention, and must be integrated into the strategy of multiple micronutrient supplementation.

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Black money and undisclosed income: The Bangladesh context



MOHAMMED FARASHUDDIN

MONEY that does not circulate in the open is suspect—either it is outright black money or an accumulation of undisclosed income. The two are very different.

Black money is collected by syndicates, cartels and middlemen

who are seeking to embezzle public and private funds; taking bribes and other forms of gratification in exchange for illegitimate patronage; or over-billing and under-invoicing exports revenue, over-invoicing imports expenditures, wilfully defaulting on bank loans and laundering money abroad. Cheating on tax, non-deposition of VAT collection, non-registration of urban houses/apartments in the guises of “cooperatives” etc; fraud by under-recording the space and paying a lower holding tax rate on urban property; and possible additional remittance of laundered foreign exchange—for example, with a USD 10 billion abnormal hike in remittance, the handler can pocket Tk 1,700 crore as a two percent incentive—all of this also contributes to the creation of black money.

There are a number of examples of when these illegal activities have dominated headlines in Bangladesh. For example, the negligence in bringing to book the perpetrators of major banking scams was widely discussed—such as the snatching of Tk 574 crore from Oriental Bank in 2005; the Tk 3,700 crore Hallmark scam; the illegal banking by Destiny Group, where they took “deposits” at 30 percent interest rate, and transferred crores to personal accounts from the master account; and the AnonTex Group and Bismillah Group scandals. Recently, the alleged billion-taka scams at Evaly have been

brought to the fore, sparking debate on cash-on-delivery payments.

A strange Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) rule preventing minority shareholders from seeking directorship unless they have two percent equity; the concentration of economic power (and possible money laundering) that militates against the equity objectives in a welfare state; and diverting industrial credits to secondary share purchases in 2010-11 and using the stimulus package money for

In 1985-86, Dr SA Latifur Reza, the then director-general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), made an important estimate of the black economy, finding it to be as high as a third of gross domestic product (GDP). Another estimate made by Dr Asaduzzaman of BIDS put the size of the underground economy to be 40 percent of GDP. Professor Abul Barkat estimates that black money is in the range of 33 percent of GDP at market price.

The then Finance Minister AMA Muhith

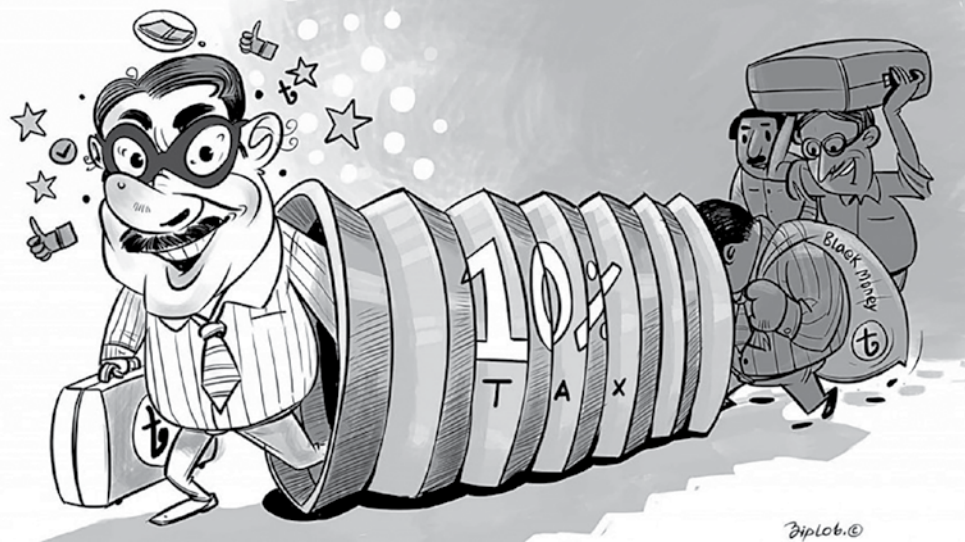


ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

share trading in 2021 are all things that have contributed to the vast amounts of black money that are prevalent in the Bangladesh economy.

However, it must be reiterated that black money is very different from undisclosed money, which accumulates due to middle class laxity and/or ignorance of tax laws. Some laws, rules and practices force the selling of land and real estate to register at lower than the market price.

announced during the 2013 post-budget press conference that 41-82 percent of GDP might be outside the mainstream economy. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the current black money to GDP ratio is around 40 percent. This means that in an economy with a GDP of Tk 2.93 million crore, the size of the shadow economy is Tk 1.17 million crore. During the 2020-21 financial year, Tk 20,600 crore or 1.75 percent of the black money was whitened.

The black economy involves economic activities that do not enter into GDP estimates, which are therefore lower than the actual GDP. In any economy, lower than optimal mobility of goods and services and imperfect information shows an artificially low standard of living. The disparities in income, wealth and opportunities are made worse by the concentration of economic power emanating from black money.

An amount of Tk 78 crore was whitened in the 1977-78 budget, Tk 850 crore during 1987-90, Tk 1,000 crore during 2000-01, Tk 4,403 crore during 2005-06, Tk 9,683 crore during 2007-08, Tk 1,213 crore during 2009-10, and Tk 20,600 crore in 2020-21.

The terms under which black money was mainstreamed as above were more or less similar—a flat tax rate of 10 percent without any penalty for investment in specific sectors such as real estate or the capital market. However, in the 2005-06 budget, the flat tax rate was lower at 7.5 percent. It is the credit of former Finance Ministers Tajuddin Ahmed, Major General MA Mumin, M Sydeduzzaman and Dr Wahidul Haque that no whitening of black money was permitted during their time.

A solution to the unearned income issues lies in a transparent registration process of all real estate, land and apartments at prices reflecting the market. In order not to increase the cost burden of registration, income tax, capital gains tax and municipal tax rates should be significantly adjusted downwards. Corruption minimisation monitoring will have to be put in place. As a warning to manipulating sellers, the government may exercise a right of preemption to purchase such properties at the (vastly reduced) registration price. This was practiced in Bolivia in the 1980s.

To the extent that tax cheating, loan defaults, money laundering and possibly manipulated remittance inflow might be interlinked, a strong break at tax fraud, money laundering or both would be an effective

starting point. Completion of automation of the tax administration, coupled with an incentive of commission (for identification of hitherto hidden income), as well as sharing of income tax, value added tax and customs duty realised from new sources, may be tried. A target of a million new taxpayers every year apportioned to tax officials, with appropriate penalty for failure and rewards for success, may be in order. Priority completion of residential flats and fully equipped modern digital offices should also help.

Under-invoicing of exports and over-invoicing of imports and misdeclaration, if monitored, identified and penalised heavily, will have a salutary impact in reaching a tax-GDP ratio of 15 percent by 2025 and 20 percent by 2030.

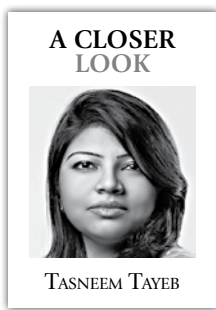
Effective and just disposal of all cases relating to frauds, scams, financial corruption, trade-related money crimes, money laundering and e-commerce, if done properly, will help minimise the accumulation of black money.

Multiple exchange rates for imports (official), exports (plus one percent) and remittances (plus two percent) hurt the long-term health of the economy. If expert opinion so recommends, an appropriately depreciated exchange rate should replace the multiple exchange rates.

June 30, 2022 should be declared to be the last date for mainstreaming unaccounted-for money—unearned or black. After that date, all amounts outside the open economy will have to be confiscated. Income tax on unearned income may be fixed at 10 percent of the amount. In the case of black money, it will be the standard rate for the taxable income slab concerned. We must consider these ways forward if we are ever to deal with the issue of black money in the Bangladesh economy.

Dr Mohammed Farashuddin is a former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

What Taliban resurgence means for the region



A CLOSER LOOK

TASNEEM TAYEB

NAZAR Mohammad, popularly known as Khasha Zwan, was an Afghan comedian. On July 22, 2021, he was abducted from his home in the south of Kandahar by Taliban fighters. He was abused, beaten up and then shot multiple times. The comedian's crime? He was a member of the Afghan National Police, as alleged by Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson.

Khasha Zwan is one of the many victims of the Taliban's macabre revenge killings across Afghanistan. The resurgent Taliban is scouting for individuals who have worked for the Afghan government or been involved in actions against the Taliban.

With the US eyeing 9/11 of 2021 to completely pull out its troops from Afghan soil, after two decades of their eventful presence, the Taliban are increasingly gaining ground in the war-ravaged country. The terrorist outfit is becoming bolder in their ruthlessness. Earlier in the week, they launched rocket attacks aimed at Kandahar airport, apparently because the government had been using it to launch air strikes against the Taliban.

The Taliban now control a significant part of Afghanistan. Earlier in July, they boasted of controlling 85 percent of Afghanistan—a claim rubbished by the Afghan government. However, over time, the Taliban have spread their dominance in major parts of the country. Their aggressive attacks in the three major cities of Kandahar, Herat and Lashkar Gah continue.

Amidst mounting tensions in the country, more than 1,600 civilians have been killed in the first half of 2021. Some 64 percent of these deaths have been attributed to anti-government forces by the UN. In the face of sweeping Taliban advances, more than 300,000 have been displaced, especially

around Kunduz, Balkh, Badakhshan, Baghlan and Takhar. With brutalities on the rise across the nation, Afghan civilians are living in constant fear of retribution and mayhem. However, the resurgence of the Taliban is not only a matter of concern for the war-torn nation, but for Asia as a whole.

India, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, among other nations, should be wary of these recent developments in Afghanistan. While the Chinese foreign minister officially met Taliban delegates in the Chinese city of Tianjin recently, it was not without its fair share of polite warning. China expressed that it feared Afghanistan could be used as a base by separatists, referring to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

While the Taliban delegation has “assured China that they will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against China,” as Al Jazeera quoted Taliban spokesman Mohammed Naem as saying, one cannot fully rule out this possibility, especially amidst the chaos unfolding in the country. However, if China plays its cards right, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan could also lead to a new opportunity to expand its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) into Asia Minor through Afghanistan. This is unlikely to sit well with India.

India has fought its own battles with China and Pakistan and, over the years, endured some of the worst terrorist attacks in history. In the midst of fighting a global pandemic of epic proportions, the last thing it needs is another threat of terrorist resurgence close to home, or an alliance between Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. Such a scenario would be neither economically, nor politically, pleasant for India.

Bangladesh will have equally pressing concerns. With a history of Bangladeshis migrating to Afghanistan in the 1980s to join the Taliban in the anti-Soviet war and then returning to the country post-Soviet defeat—battle-hardened and well-trained in operating heavy arms—to create unrest internally, the country should be on the lookout to prevent this history from repeating itself. In 1992,



Afghan security forces inspect the site of a car bomb attack in Kandahar province, Afghanistan on July 6, 2021.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji) was launched, and many of its members were said to be Afghanistan returnees. This militant outfit had been behind multiple militant attacks in the country between 1999 and 2005, killing more than a hundred people.

There are other militant groups in the country that might now be looking at opportunities to travel to Afghanistan to join the Taliban as well. It has been reported that three members of the militant group Ansar Al Islam have already travelled to Afghanistan, which the police are now investigating. And there remains the possibility of Bangladesh youth being groomed and recruited by militant outfits to join the Taliban. India is not immune to this threat either. In fact, with the internet enabling easy connectivity between

people from various regions of the world, grooming and recruiting unsuspected youth have become easier than ever. And both these countries, along with Pakistan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and others, should keep their guard up. All these countries have fought terrorist threats in the past and these separatist, terrorist elements might now see new opportunities with the resurgence of the Taliban.

While certain groups are accusing Pakistan of aiding the Taliban, strategically it is not a fruitful course for the nation, as it would pose significant internal security threats. In view of the worsening situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan's military and intelligence chiefs held a parliamentary committee briefing where all the political parties decided “to stand behind the army” in this situation, despite their

political differences, as reported by the media.

It is to be noted here that the Afghan Taliban had earlier captured Spin Boldak bordering Pakistan and the situation there has been tense, resulting in closure of a crossing that was only recently reopened. In the midst of growing tension in the bordering regions, many are entering into Pakistan and Iran to flee persecution. While Pakistan and China's roles in handling the situation in Afghanistan are still vague, one hopes they will be able to assess the long-term repercussions of the Taliban's re-emergence and act in the greater interest of the region.

Observers are of the opinion that China and Pakistan are playing with a double-edged sword here. According to them, support for such a militant outfit offers both strategic threats and opportunities, but in the long run, the threats will outweigh the opportunities.

With the re-emergence of the Taliban, Afghanistan has become a potential hotbed for terrorism and criminal activities. If the Taliban is allowed to pursue this course with impunity, soon they will destabilise the country, posing a risk to the entire region. While considering the lack of control of the Afghan government in containing the situation, it has become important to initiate regional dialogues to support the Afghan government in curbing the growing encroachment of the Taliban.

The international community, especially Asian and South Asian countries, including China, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, should now look beyond individual interests and consider the long-term implications of a strong Taliban presence in Afghanistan. In order to fill the void left by the retreating western forces, a dialogue that includes all regional players and the Afghan government in achieving a consensus on concerted regional action to combat the deep-rooted Taliban influence has become imperative.

In the face of growing uncertainties, regional cooperation is the only way to achieve long-term stability in Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is: @tasneem_tayeb

QUOTABLE Quote

MICHEL FOUCAULT
(1926–1984)
French philosopher

Justice must always question itself, just as society can exist only by means of the work it does on itself and on its institutions.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Partners
- 6 After a while
- 11 Grownup
- 12 Electrified
- 13 Sweet snacks
- 15 Paintings and sculpture
- 16 Deli bread
- 17 Fury
- 18 Some terriers
- 20 Dramatist
- 21 Jonson
- 21 Green and Gore
- 22 Ship's pole
- 23 Door-slamming play
- 26 Shopping centers
- 27 Touch on
- 28 Deep groove

DOWN

- 1 Showy parrot
- 2 Love to pieces
- 3 Clumps of grass
- 4 North Pole worker
- 5 Like surgical tools
- 6 Oxford parts
- 7 In the style of

8 Place to order a mai tai

9 Himalayan peak

10 Bristles at

14 Peepers

19 Diplomatic skill

22 School subject

23 It may be sprayed on

24 Chisholm Trail end

25 Search, as at a sale

26 Broadway show

28 Tire holders

30 Sprite

31 Racket

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	P	L	A	T	P	I	N	E
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A	T	E	T	A	N	W	A	N
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A	B	A	T	E	A	D	O	B
S	A	T	I	E	Y	O	K	E
S	E	E	S	S	E	E	D	S

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

THAT'S SARGE'S "POKER FACE"

HE LOOKS LIKE HE HAS A GOOD HAND

YEAH, AND ANYBODY WHO FOLDS IS IN BIG TROUBLE

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ZOE! YOU GOTTA HELP ME SNEAK LANCE AND ANDY BACK TO THEIR HOME BEFORE THEIR OWNERS MISS THEM!

HOW?

WE'LL DRESS LIKE NINJAS AND SNEAK THEM BACK TONIGHT UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS.

YEAH!

I DON'T HAVE ANY NINJA CLOTHES, SO I'LL WEAR MY LIGHT-UP SLIIFT WITH SEQUINS.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST HIRE A MARCHING BAND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT?

Pandemic made them drivers

FROM PAGE 12

His brother, also a kindergarten teacher, left for Dhaka in search of a job.

Tanjul said he was finding it hard to run his family with his meagre income. "The lockdown has made our situation even worse as vehicles are barred from plying."

Many kindergarten teachers are selling vegetables and tree saplings to run their families.

Hazrat Ali, who founded Fatah Kindergarten School in 2005 in Rampura area of the city, was seen selling saplings on a footpath.

Shahidul Islam, a teacher of Mahiganj Amtala Bidyapeet, said he worked at the school for 10 years and never found himself in such a difficult situation before.

"I have not been paid by the school for the last 15 months. I ran out of

all my savings long ago," he said. Shahidul is now looking for a new job.

Azizul Islam, a kindergarten schoolteacher of Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur, became a mason to feed his family.

Many schools in the districts and Kurigram have spent all their money. Some even sold all their furniture to pay their teachers and other staffers.

Sheikh Mohammad Ajaharul Islam, general secretary of North Bengal Kindergarten and Pre-Cadet School Society in Rangpur, said many schoolteachers took up new jobs after failing to get any support from the government.

On behalf of the platform, he requested the government to either reopen the schools or provide the teachers with immediate financial assistance.

A salute to father

FROM PAGE 12

to Bangladesh police in 1990, posted in Police Training Centre in Rangpur.

Later, he served different police stations across the country.

He is the father of three daughters. Of them, Shahnaz is the eldest. She joined Bangladesh Army recently after completing her MBBS from Rangpur Medical College.

She completed her SSC from Kurigram in 2010. Before joining, Shahnaz, clad in the uniform of the Bangladesh Army, saluted his father, who was dressed in the uniform of Bangladesh police.

Smriti Moni Mimi, the youngest daughter of the family, captured the

moment on her camera.

A couple of days ago, Smriti posted the photograph on her Facebook wall and it went viral in no time.

Talking to The Daily Star, the father said, "Smriti shared the photo on her Facebook wall. We did not know about it before."

Salam said he always wanted his daughters to be educated and adapt to the best professions they wanted to.

His eldest daughter made his family proud. His second daughter is also studying at Rangpur Medical College and his youngest daughter is an SSC candidate of Police Lines School in Rangpur.

Covid returns to Wuhan

FROM PAGE 12

Millions are also still under movement restrictions in Australia, where troops Monday hit the streets of the country's largest city of Sydney and surrounding areas, which are entering the sixth week of a lockdown set to run until the end of August.

Authorities have been struggling to stop the spread of the highly infectious Delta variant in the city -- and to ensure that residents follow containment rules -- with more than 3,600 cases recorded since mid-June.

With about 15 percent of Australia's 25 million people fully vaccinated, authorities are still relying on lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus.

HOSPITALISATIONS IN US

And the virus has even spread in places where inoculation rollout programs have been relatively successful, with the EU has now passed the vaccination rate of the US -- which remains on 49.7 percent -- as that country suffers a new wave driven by the Delta variant that has sent hospitalisations soaring to levels not seen since last summer.

The US on Monday hit President Joe Biden's goal of administering at least one jab to 70 percent of adults one month late -- dashing hopes of declaring victory over the worst of the pandemic by Independence Day on July 4.

Officials blamed falling vaccine rates, particularly in areas where hesitancy is higher as well as among younger people, those with lower income and racial minorities, for the missed deadline as well as the soaring caseload.

"These cases are concentrated in communities with lower vaccination rates," Jeff Zients, White House Covid task force coordinator, told reporters.

"One in three cases nationwide occurred in Florida and Texas this past week," he added.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said yesterday that New York City will require proof of vaccination for indoor activities including restaurants, gyms and performances.

The announcement is the latest

in a string of initiatives aimed at encouraging more residents to get vaccinated as the Delta variant spreads in the nation's most populous city.

"We know this is what's going to turn the tide," de Blasio told a news conference.

BOOSTER SHOTS

And faced with the Delta variant, other countries have begun considering a rollout of booster shots, which some drug manufacturers have suggested could enhance immunity to more infectious mutations of the virus.

Germany said Monday that it would begin offering third jabs to elderly and at-risk groups, citing concerns over "a reduced or rapidly declining immune response" among some people.

A booster shot will also be offered to anyone who received the two-dose AstraZeneca or single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines, a document released by the country's health ministry said, "in the interests of preventative healthcare".

The pandemic has killed at least 4,234,618 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data yesterday.

Iran announced more than 39,000 new Covid cases yesterday, the highest in a single day in the Middle East country worst hit by the pandemic.

The health authorities in Iran said another 378 people died of coronavirus and 39,019 tested positive in the past 24 hours.

South Korea has detected its first two cases of the new Delta Plus Covid-19 variant, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said yesterday, as the country battles with its fourth wave of infections.

The Delta Plus variant is a sub-lineage of the Delta variant first identified in India, and has acquired the spike protein mutation called K417N, which is also found in the Beta variant first identified in South Africa, reports Reuters.

Reports of Delta Plus cases have been few, and a handful of countries, including Britain, Portugal and India, have reported some cases.

ATTACK ON VOTING SYSTEM

Brazil's electoral court to probe Bolsonaro

AFP, BRASILIA

Brazil's Superior Electoral Court announced Monday it will investigate far-right President Jair Bolsonaro for his constant and baseless attacks on the country's electronic voting system.

The country's highest electoral body also agreed to ask the Supreme Federal Court to investigate the president for spreading misinformation during a Facebook Live event last Thursday, in which Bolsonaro spoke for more than two hours about his conviction that there had been fraud in the last two presidential elections, saying he should have won in the first round in 2018.

The Electoral Court investigation will determine whether Bolsonaro committed "abuse of economic and political power, improper use of the media, corruption, fraud, conduct banned for public agents and extemporaneous propaganda in his attacks against the electronic voting system and the legitimacy of the 2022 general elections."

Bolsonaro has long been sniping at

electronic voting, introduced in Brazil in 1996, and advocating instead for the use of "printable and auditable" paper ballots to be introduced for the 2022 presidential race.

People in Brazil cast their ballots electronically at voting stations, and Bolsonaro has for years been arguing for a paper printout to be made of each vote cast, suggesting the absence of a paper trail makes cheating easier.

He has not provided evidence of such fraud, and the Superior Electoral Court insists the system is transparent and has never been tainted by irregularities.

On Sunday, thousands of Brazilians took to the streets in several cities, including Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, to support Bolsonaro in protest against electronic voting.

The 66-year-old leader -- under fire from several quarters -- did not take part in the demonstrations.

He is facing an investigation into his handling of the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than half-a-million Brazilians, and his popularity is at a record low.



A man undergoes a health screening before receiving a dose of the vaccine against the coronavirus disease, during a vaccination program on the boat in Gresik, East Java province, Indonesia yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

'What's going on in name of journalism?'

FROM PAGE 1

of Md Sharif Uddin, a deputy assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, from the district.

The HC bench ordered those newspapers, which ran false reports, to publish rejoinders along with corrections, and fixed August 5 for delivering an order on the issue.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan was asked to communicate the orders to the newspapers.

During the proceedings, the lawyer told the HC that the Dainik Purbokone published a rejoinder yesterday and apologized.

On Monday, the HC bench disclosed the incident of fraud in its order regarding transfer of Sharif Uddin and also ordered the ACC to conduct a probe into it.

Sharif Uddin, who had reportedly been conducting investigations into corruption allegations in different offices and hospitals and against some

influential people in the district, was transferred on June 16.

The HC bench led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman on June 30 summarily rejected a writ petition that sought stay on the transfer of Sharif Uddin. One Fozle Azim Mohammad Sibgatullah had filed the writ petition.

But a lawyer named Md Mazharul Haque has issued an advocate-certificate saying that the HC bench of Justice Enayetur Rahim on July 29 stayed the transfer (of Sharif Uddin) and directed the authorities concerned to allow him to continue in the office for next two weeks.

Based on the lawyer-certificate issued by Md Mazharul Haque, the Dainik Purbokone and a few other newspapers published reports on this issue.

On Monday, the HC bench found that another writ petition was moved before it seeking similar order so that

Sharif Uddin's transfer order is halted.

Md Shahidul Islam Liton, claiming himself a human rights activist in Cox's Bazar, filed the writ petition.

Examining the petition, Justice Enayetur said his bench on June 30 rejected a similar writ petition, but a report was published in the Dainik Purbokone on July 31 saying that the bench on July 29 stayed the transfer of the ACC official, which is totally false.

No lawyer named Md Mazharul Haque could be found on the members' list of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

Deputy attorney generals Samarendranath Biswas and Bipul Bagmar represented the state during the virtual proceedings.

Contacted, petitioner's lawyer Ashanur Rahman and the deputy attorney generals said they didn't know Md Mazharul Haque as a lawyer of the Supreme Court.

Bangalee diplomats in US

FROM PAGE 12

Government of Pakistan to sever their connections and pledge themselves to save the lives and honour of their own country and compatriots," said Moshtaque.

A spokesman for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service said some of the diplomats who resigned had applied for permission to remain in the country under political asylum.

BANGABANDHU'S FATE WORRIES INDIA

Indian Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram expressed in the Lok Sabha today the government's concern at the reported statement of General Yahya Khan of Pakistan about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman whom the minister described as the "uncrowned

leader of Bangladesh". He said his government had approached various governments to exercise pressure on the Government of Pakistan so that no harm was done to Bangabandhu. BHUTTO URGES COMPROMISE WITH AL, BANGABANDHU BBC reported today that Pakistan People's Party leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had urged Pakistani rulers to negotiate a compromise formula with the Awami League and its leader Bangabandhu to meet the country's present crisis.

According to the report, Bhutto in his interview with an Iranian Newspaper had said the army could not solve the present problem in East Bengal and civilians' rule should therefore be established as early as possible. He had also expressed the

fear that by-elections, proposed to be held under martial law, would not be fair.

NOEL BAKER SUPPORTS BANGLADESH

Philip Noel Baker, a Nobel laureate for peace and a former secretary in the Atlee Government which was responsible for the transfer of power in India and the creation of Pakistan, came out in support of Bangladesh against Pakistan in an outspoken letter in the Times today. His denunciation of Pakistan was all the more significant as Noel Baker had all along been a supporter of Pakistan and sided with them on the Kashmir issue.

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

19 'joined Neo JMB' from one upazila

FROM PAGE 12

Suspecting the youths have links with the militant outfit, but we need some times to verify it."

Sources claimed that at least 20 to 25 youths, aged between 18 and 24, from Noagaon and Saatgram areas, have been traceless for the last six months. Some of them have been identified.

However, the local police did not have any knowledge about the activities of the militant outfit.

Anichur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Arahazar Police Station, told this paper yesterday that general diaries over people going missing were often filed with the police station and they investigated properly each of the complaints.

"But I have no actual idea and need time to give the update of youths missing from the same areas in the last six months," he added.

A high official of the CTTC unit says they are now trying to identify the missing youths and bring them under de-radicalisation programme as most of them are youths.

"The influence of Ahle-Hadith members is huge in the villages of Arahazar upazila and this might be a reason that militants got the scope to drive some youths into militancy," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Sources says the Neo JMB's top priority is now to train all their recruits on making IED through online videos as part of strengthening the outfit's activities.

Even the last two arrestees, Hridoy and Khalid, were also trained up and they made the remote-controlled IED and then planted it in the police box in Narayanganj. All the steps have been taken after Mahadi Hasan Jon alias Abu Abbas Al Bangali became the ameer of the IS-inspired outfit, they said.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of CTTC unit, said Khalid and Hridoy made IEDs by watching online videos.

According to the case statement filed with Jatrabari Police Station on Sunday following the arrest of the duo, two other youths of Arahazar upazila are also the member of Neo JMB IED cell.

The two youths are Abu Raihan Noman, of Panchrukhi village, and Md Nasim, of Sahapara, reads the case statement.

ADC Rahmat Ullah, also the in-charge of bomb disposal unit of CTTC, said Noman and Nasim and other associates of Khalid and Hridoy went into hiding and drives are on to arrest them.

A STEP INTO MILITANCY In 2001, Hridoy was born in Noagaon village of Arahazar and he is a student

of HSC level. When he was a student of class-X, he first got invitation from Dawatul Islam, a wing of New JMB, according to investigators.

But he did not respond then and continued his study.

But he again got invitation from the outfit, this time via Facebook, and he was inspired and he joined militancy after reading different online articles, they said.

Later, he joined the online messaging apps like telegram and WeChat and got instructions from the Neo JMB chief Jon to attack police.

During interrogation, he admitted that the plan was to attack police personnel as "they are enemy of Islam." Outfit chief Jon instructed him to learn how to make IED by watching online videos.

Spending around Tk 6,000 and three days after their efforts, Hridoy and Khalid were able to make the IED and planted it in the police box. Although they failed to explode it, Jon became happy on the activities and promoted Hridoy as a "captain" in the military wing of Neo JMB.

Addressing reporters on Monday, CTTC chief Asaduzzaman said Neo JMB are very much active on online platforms, but the CTTC is aware of their activities and it is arresting militants before any incident takes place.

Year after Lebanon blast, children still in distress: UN

AFP, Beirut

A year after a monster explosion at Beirut's port, one in three families in Lebanon have children still showing signs of trauma, the UN said yesterday.

"One in three families (34 percent) has children still showing signs of psychological distress," said the UN agency for children, Unicef, citing a July survey of 1,200 families.

"In the case of adults, the figure reaches almost one in two (45.6 percent)," it added in a report published on the eve of the blast's first anniversary.

The August 4, 2020 explosion killed more than 200 people, wounded at least 6,500 others and damaged swathes of the capital.

In the year since, Lebanon has also had to grapple with the coronavirus pandemic and a spiralling economic crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the planet's worst since the mid-19th century.

"One year after the tragic events, children's lives remain deeply affected," said Yukie Mokuo, UNICEF's representative in Lebanon.

"Those families have been struggling

to recover from the aftermath of the explosions at the worst possible time -- in the middle of a devastating economic crisis and a major pandemic."

A Unicef survey in July found that almost all families that requested assistance in the wake of the Beirut port blast still need help, especially cash and food assistance, the agency said.

Many who lost employment because of the blast have yet to find work, UNICEF added, as Lebanon grapples with soaring poverty, rampant inflation and shortages of basic items from medicine to fuel.

Suspected drug

FROM PAGE 12

Ullah Master General Hospital. A medical officer said the man was already dead when brought in.

Liton, from Bogura's Kahalu upazila, was accused in at least four cases, police said.

Ambar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kahalu Police Station, said two of those cases was filed with his station.

His son Wahedul Islam said Liton was a truck driver living in Narayanganj for the last couple of months. The owner of the truck informed his family about the arrest a couple of days ago.

"Two days ago, a man claiming to be a lawyer called us and said my father would not be placed on remand if we pay Tk 6,000. We didn't have that kind of money and couldn't pay him."

"Police from Uttara East called us in the morning and said my father was ill and we had to rush to Dhaka in a microbus. The police personnel [speaking to us] said they would pay the fare once we reached there. He did not inform us about his [Liton's] death."

The family was informed about the death once they reached the police station

Wahedul said his father was a drug addict but not a drug trader.

Vaccination

FROM PAGE 12

The plan is to inoculate 66,000 initially, but eventually all Rohingya refugees will be vaccinated in the camp in Cox's Bazar, where nearly a million have been living since the 2017 military crackdown on them in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Those in Bhashanchar will also come under inoculation later. Currently, there are about 19,000 Rohingyas in Bhashanchar.

So far, 2,400 Rohingyas have reportedly contracted the Covid-19 infection. Of them, 28 have died, Hayat said.

The positivity rate of the infection among the refugees was 11 percent yesterday.

"There are adequate isolation centres and ICU facilities for them in Cox's Bazar."

The decision to vaccinate the Rohingyas comes six months after the country first began the vaccination programme on February 7 with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines.

The vaccination programme was halted for a few weeks as the supply of the vaccine from India had stopped. It restarted with the arrival of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines from the US and BBIP-CorV from Sinopharm China.

The government aims to complete the vaccination of 60 lakh people in the country by August 7 to 14, and another one crore by the end of this month as Covid-19 infections are on the rise.

2 doctors die

FROM PAGE 12

She left behind a husband and one son, he said.

"Dr Jakia was a renowned gynaecologist surgeon. The district people, including the medical community, was shocked and mourned her death."

Tangail Civil Surgeon Dr Abul Fazal Mohammad Shahabuddin expressed his deep shock over the death.

Speaking to The Daily Star, he said, "We lost another frontliner in the war against the coronavirus," adding that Jakia's husband, and army officer, was also infected and in undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, Sobuj, 27, assistant community medical officer at the ICU of covid unit of M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur, died from the infection yesterday.

Dr Afroz Sulnata Luna, a medical officer at Birganj Upazila Health Complex, told The Daily Star that Sobuj tested positive for Covid-19 on July 16 with mild fever and a throat ache.

He was receiving treatment at home and had to be admitted to the hospital as his condition deteriorated due to breathing complications on July 23.

He was taken to the ICU the very next day.

Doctors had engaged all their effort to recover him but he finally succumbed to the infection at around 4:00am early yesterday.

Both victims had received both their vaccine doses earlier.

(Our Tangail and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to the report.)

Japan sends 6.16

FROM PAGE 12

handover ceremony at the airport yesterday.

This vaccine support is expected to contribute to the Bangladesh government's efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to save people's lives in Bangladesh, said Japanese officials.

Japan hopes that a fair, equitable and comprehensive access to vaccines will be ensured in Bangladesh and reiterates that it will stand by Bangladesh in the fight against Covid-19 and will work together to curb the virus spread as soon as possible, Japanese embassy said in a statement.

In the statement, Ito Naoki said, "We are very happy to give the much-needed vaccines to Bangladesh. We hope we will be able to supply the rest of the three million vaccine within this month."



Bangladesh scored only 131 runs in their innings but bowlers, led by Nasum Ahmed, skittled out Australia for 108 to register their first T20I victory over the visitors.

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

TIGERS TO KEEP 'FEET ON THE GROUND'

SPORTS REPORTER

It would appear that Bangladesh knew the opportunity to win the first-ever T20I fixture against an Australia side had surfaced, especially when they happen to be missing a few key players, the likes of -- Steve Smith, David Warner and Pat Cummins -- who have the experience of playing in the subcontinent due to their involvement in Indian Premier League.

Now looking back at this historic first-ever T20I win against Australia, it was hard to miss the fact that despite only managing to post 131 for 7, the Tigers had the belief of producing a bowling display capable enough to thwart the visitors on a slow and turning wicket under humid conditions. And in Nasum Ahmed they had found the exuberance and tenacity of youth required to materialise the momentous occasion of yesterday.

"We knew that it was possible to defend the runs we had put on the board as there was help from the wicket. We tried to execute [our plans]," Nasum said in a video message while replying to the media.

Nasum recalled being excited about the prospect of facing the Aussies at home and found himself

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 131 for seven in 20 overs (Shakib 36, Naim 30, Afif 23, Mahmudullah 20; Hazlewood 3-24, Starc 2-33)
AUSTRALIA: 108 all out in 20 overs (Marsh 45, Starc 14; Nasum 4-19, Mustafizur 2-16, Shoriful 2-19)
RESULT: Bangladesh won by 23 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Nasum Ahmed



in a position where the team trusted him. Having gone for plenty of runs in the final T20I against Zimbabwe last month, he came back to redeem himself with four wickets, including the crucial wicket of Mitchell Marsh

who was threatening to cut loose. "I was bowling in the nets the previous day and the coach called me and said you have a lot of responsibility as you are playing tomorrow. I was excited about

what I was going to do if I played and also my bad bowling display in the last match played in my mind. When we put on 131 runs, [Mahmudullah] Riyad bhai said 'we will fight with these runs and try to bowl dots and put an effort to win'. The four overs that I bowled, Shakib [Al Hasan] bhai and Riyad bhai talked me through. Riyad bhai even said 'let him bowl like he wants to, he will do well.'"

Despite the overwhelming excitement, skipper Mahmudullah however emphasised on keeping their feet on the ground after clinching a 23-run victory. Mahmudullah, who had spoken of a clear plan ahead of the series in order to win, saw his team execute without panicking after posting a small total.

"We had a team talk [after the first innings] that we were 10 runs short, so we had to field well. It was outstanding. The hunger and energy was clearly there. The bowlers executed their plans really well. You need to have an attacking mindset with the ball early on, and that's what we did," Mahmudullah said.

"Now it's time to focus on the next game and try to stay on top from the first ball while keeping our feet on the ground as well," added a determined Mahmudullah.

Top orders to be tested as England face India

AFP, LONDON

Batsmen on both sides are set to face a stiff examination when an England team without Ben Stokes face India in the first Test in Nottingham starting on Wednesday.

Although England captain Joe Root boasts an impressive Test average of 48.68, the next best in his side belongs to opener Rory Burns, with 33.23. Zak Crawley in particular has seen his Test returns decline dramatically since making a brilliant 267 against Pakistan, with a mere 123 runs in 12 subsequent innings.

Following England's 1-0 series loss to New Zealand in June -- their first home campaign reverse in seven years -- former captain Alastair Cook said the current top order "can't handle" the pressure of Test cricket.

There are worries too about India's batsmen ahead of a five-match campaign that comes 50 years after the tourists' first series win in England.

India captain and star batsman Virat Kohli has not scored a Test hundred in nearly two years, while opener Mayank Agarwal was ruled

out of the first Test with suspected concussion after being hit on the head batting in the nets on Monday.

Cheteshwar Pujara, meanwhile, averages under 30 in England. And Ajinkya Rahane, since kick-starting India's stunning revival



during their eventual series win in Australia last year with 112 in Melbourne, has passed fifty just once in 13 subsequent Test innings.

Just as India prepared pitches favouring their spinners during a 3-1 win at home to England earlier this year, it would be no surprise were a green surface designed to maximise the skills of veteran England new-ball duo Stuart Broad -- playing on his Nottinghamshire home ground

-- and James Anderson to be on show this week.

Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, has an especially brilliant Test record at Trent Bridge, with 64 wickets in 10 matches at under 20 apiece.

India, however, also have an impressive seam attack featuring the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Mohammad Siraj.

"We expect England to give us such wickets, this is their home conditions," said vice-captain Rahane, with India having been in England for several weeks since a World Test Championship final loss to New Zealand. "We are not too worried about what wickets they are giving us. We are ready."

The series may be decided by which team copes best with the Covid restriction surrounding players on both sides. It was announced on Friday that key all-rounder Stokes was taking an "indefinite break from all cricket" to prioritise his mental health.

England and India, two of world cricket's biggest drawcards, have made little concession to the coronavirus by continuing to pursue packed schedules that can be especially onerous for multi-format stars such as Stokes.

Norway's Karsten Warholm shattered the world record to claim gold in an epic 400m hurdles at the Olympics on Tuesday. One of the most eagerly anticipated events of the Olympic track and field programme, the 400m hurdles lived up to its billing as world champion Warholm produced a jaw-dropping performance in fierce midday sun at Tokyo's Olympic Stadium. The 25-year-old stormed over the line in an incredible 45.94 seconds, slicing a massive 0.8sec off his own world mark of 46.70 set in Oslo last month.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Jamaican Elaine Thompson-Herah completed a second successive sprint double, roaring home in a 21.53 seconds in the 200m final. [Inset] World record holder Mondo Duplantis of Sweden won men's pole vault gold medal after clearing a height of 6.02 metres on his first effort.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WHAT TO WATCH

BTV, T SPORTS & GTV

Bangladesh vs Australia
Second T20I
Live from 6:00 pm

BTV

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 7:15 am, 8:25 am,
12:20 pm & 3:10 pm

TEN 1, TEN 2, TEN 3 & SONY SIX

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games
Live from 8:00 pm & 4:00 am (Thursday)

Development more necessary than wins

SPORTS REPORTER



A historic first win against Australia in the opening T20I of the five-match series went a long way to providing assurances, perhaps even overshadowing the areas that Bangladesh need to improve upon in the batting department in the coming matches.

One cannot question the batsmen's intent was brimming with positivity from the start after Australian skipper Matthew Wade elected to bat at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

But there was a significant difference when it came to channeling that positivity with the bat as the Tigers struggled against a quality Australian bowling attack. Positivity is not defined by the batsman going after every delivery, instead it requires proper execution of plans with dashes of aggression and intelligence.

Soumya Sarkar (2) displayed a distinct lack of the latter, trying to make room to cut away a ball from pacer Josh Hazlewood and chopping it onto his stumps.

At the other end, Naim Sheikh remained solid and struck two gorgeous sixes off Mitchell Starc.

It seemed that the left-hander could capitalise on the start, but over-aggression got the better of Naim. He opted for a reverse sweep off a fuller Adam Zampa delivery and was bowled after a well-made 30.

Although Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad tried to take push the tempo with expansive strokes, the Tigers fell behind slowly as the Aussies were more focused on bowling dot balls.

That caused the batsmen to aim for big shots while ignoring singles and doubles. In the process, they kept losing wickets at crucial junctures.

When Nurul Hasan was dismissed in the 15th over, 42 of Australia's 90 legal deliveries were dot balls, putting the hosts in a tough situation.

Shakib was forced to play big shots in hot and humid conditions, which drained the energy from him. He was eventually dismissed as Bangladesh's top-scorer, making 36 off 33 balls before becoming Hazlewood's third victim.

However, Bangladesh did manage to 27 runs in the final three overs and post a modest 131 for 7 courtesy of Afif Hossain's 23.

It probably served as a reality check for the batsmen, who may have gauged the difference in the quality of the top-quality opposition, the likes they rarely face.

Perhaps the hosts were also confident of their game plan considering the nature of the surface, on which they eventually defended the total comfortably by a 23-run margin. But with an eye on developing the side further in the future, the Tigers must look to improve on the aspects that were missing yesterday.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Flavour of history not remiss

SPORTS REPORTER

Scenes at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday would have been very different in a pre-pandemic world.

Bangladesh registered their maiden T20I victory against Australia with a convincing 23-run win, but there were no roars from euphoric fans in the gallery to celebrate the triumphant Tigers after such a momentous occasion.

Struck by harsh reality due to the pandemic, fans of a cricket-crazy nation had to appease themselves by celebrating in front of their televisions at home instead of by thronging to the streets of the city as they usually do.

There have been many firsts for the Tigers, like their first-ever win against Australia in ODIs in 2005 in Cardiff, a maiden Test win against the same opposition in Mirpur in 2017 and a first Test victory against England in Mirpur in 2016. Every time, whether those wins came at home or away,

the cricket-crazy fans had celebrated overwhelmingly on the streets.

Just how stark the difference was could be ascertained from the fact that even Shoaib Ali Bukhari, popularly known as Tiger Shoaib, had to get to the top of a building adjacent to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur to enjoy the opener of the first bilateral T20I series between Bangladesh and Australia yesterday.

The enthusiastic fan, who paints his body like a Tiger and has been attending most of Bangladesh's matches from the gallery over the years, had to stay content with waving the Bangladesh flag from afar as strict health protocols restrict spectators from entering the stadium premises.

Although Shoaib, like every fan of Bangladesh cricket, was not allowed to witness the historic victory from the gallery, his presence and support, gave the nation a chance to re-live the feelings that they had gotten during other historic moments of Bangladesh cricket.

OLYMPICS MEDALS TABLE (TOP FIVE)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
CHINA	32	21	16	69
USA	24	28	21	73
JAPAN	19	6	11	36
AUSTRALIA	14	4	15	33
ROC	13	21	18	52

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KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS IN RANGPUR Pandemic made them drivers, vendors

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rendered unemployed by the pandemic, many kindergarten teachers in Rangpur and its nearby districts had to become daily wage earners for survival.

In the absence of a stable income, the teachers, along with their family members, are passing their days in extreme hardship and amid uncertainty.

About six lakh teachers of around 50,000 kindergarten schools across the country have not got their salaries since the pandemic led to the closure of all educational institutions in March last year, according to a platform of such teachers.

Not having any other income sources, many of the teachers had to switch to other professions. Many started operating battery-run easy bikes, many became salespersons while many turned vegetable vendors to feed their families.

Tanjul Islam, who taught at Tawhida Kindergarten School in Rangpur city for 10 long years, is one of them.

For Tanjul and his family, Covid came as a curse, a really bad one, he said.

Their hardship began after guardians of most students of the school stopped paying the monthly tuition fees in April last year, Tajul told The Daily Star.

"Having no income, the school stopped paying my salaries. I had no savings either. So I had no other option but to run an easy bike inside the city. I am a schoolteacher, becoming an easy bike driver was not an easy decision for me," he said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Children, sitting on the laps of their parents, waiting to get tested for dengue at the outdoor section of Shishu Hospital in the capital. The number of such patients has been on the rise in recent days. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

2 doctors die from Covid-19

STAR REPORT

A gynaecological consultant in Tangail and a medical staffer in Dinajpur died of Covid-19.

Jakia Rashid Shafi, the gynaecologist consultant at Tangail General Hospital died around 6:30pm on Monday at Dhaka Combined Military Hospital's ICU, while Sudipta Debnath Sobuj, 27, an assistant community medical officer at Birganj Upazila Health Complex in Dinajpur, breathed his last around 4:00am yesterday.

Confirming the news of the gynaecologist's death, Dr Khandaker Sadequr Rahman, Tangail general hospital assistant director, told The Daily Star that Jakia was receiving treatment at home after she tested positive on July 24.

However, her physical condition deteriorated on Saturday and she was admitted to the Dhaka Combined Military Hospital that same night. She died Monday evening while on ventilation.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Suspected drug trader dies in police custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An accused in a drug case died while being in custody of Uttara-East Police Station early yesterday.

The dead, Liton, 40, was on a two-day remand in a case filed by RAB under the Narcotics Control Act.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of Uttara Division Police, said that Liton was a drug addict and hanged himself while in lock-up.

"There is CCTV in the lock-up. We formed a three-member committee, led by an additional deputy commissioner, to investigate the incident."

An executive magistrate will prepare an inquest on the body, he said.

The body was sent to Tongi's Shaheed Ahsan

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

A salute to father, sways hearts of many



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Going viral on Monday, a picture depicting a salute between a father and his daughter, both serving the nation in two separate forces, has swayed the hearts of thousands of netizens.

The daughter Shahnaz Parvin is a captain in Bangladesh Army while her father Abdus Salam is a sub-inspector (SI) in Bangladesh police.

Ever since the photo was posted on social networking site Facebook, acclaims started outpouring.

Abdus Salam, a residence of Chandrakhana village under Phulbari upazila of Kurigram, joined

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

ASTRAZENECA JABS Japan sends 6.16 lakh more

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan supplied over 6.16 lakh shots of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Bangladesh yesterday. With this, 16.43 lakh doses of the Covid-19 vaccine arrived from Japan so far.

The consignments are part of a total of about 3 million doses that the Japanese government is providing to Bangladesh through the COVAX facility to meet the urgent needs of Bangladeshi people, who have long been waiting for the second dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

About 15 lakh people had not received their second dose after India halted vaccine export amid severe infections in it since March.

Syed Mojibul Huq, additional secretary of the health ministry, and Japanese Ambassador to Dhaka ITO Naoki, among others, were present at a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Bangalee diplomats in US opt for Bangladesh

AUGUST 4, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

14 BANGALEE DIPLOMATS QUIT MISSIONS IN US

Fourteen Pakistani diplomats -- all of Bengalee origin -- resigned today from their embassy in the US or from the mission to the United Nations in protest of what they called "crimes against humanity" in East Pakistan by the government of Pakistan President Yahya Khan.

The group of 14 diplomats was headed by SA Karim, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN. "This is our moment of decision," said Karim. "We have decided to join the suffering millions of Bangladesh who are resisting with their lives the barbarity of the West Pakistan Army who are determined to reduce East Bengal to a colony."

AMA Muhiith, economic counselor of the Pakistani embassy and a leader of the group, said at a news conference at the National Press Club that he and his colleagues felt they could no longer remain silent while the Pakistani government "violates elementary norms of civilised conduct and commits crimes against humanity".

On receipt of the information, Khandaker Moshataque Ahmed, Bangladesh foreign minister, conveyed his warm congratulations to the defecting diplomats. "The mass transfer of allegiance to Bangladesh by Bengali diplomats is another clarion call to all others at home and abroad who may still be in the employ of the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



19 'joined Neo JMB' from one upazila

CTTC says

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

At least 19 youths have joined IS-inspired militant outfit "Neo JMB", an offshoot of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), from a single upazila of Narayanganj, believes counterterrorism unit.

It arrested nine of them in a month. Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit officials claimed that 10 other youths of Noagaon and Saatgram areas of Araihaaz upazila remain missing.

Two members of Neo JMB's military wing Shafiqur Rahman Hridoy alias Baitullah Mehsud alias Captain Khattab and Khalid Hossain Bhuiyan alias Afnan, who were arrested on Sunday, are from the same areas.

CTTC officials have arrested the youths and got information of the missing ones while investigating the remote-controlled Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast incident on May 16 in a traffic police box in Narayanganj.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner of the CTTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have arrested some nine youths from the areas and some others are still missing. We are

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Vaccination of Rohingyas begins on August 10

PORIMOL PALMA

The government will begin vaccinating around 66,000 Rohingya refugees living in the camps of Cox's Bazar from August 10.

"We will begin the vaccination from August 10 unless natural calamity like heavy rains and landslide occur," Shah Rezwan Hayat, commissioner of the Refugee Rehabilitation and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The refugees aged 55 and above, and the frontline workers in the camps will come under the vaccination programme."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 4

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Policemen checking cars at a checkpoint in Gabtoli area, one of the entry points of the capital, yesterday to enforce the restriction on movements to curb the spread of coronavirus.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Covid returns to Wuhan

Authorities in the Chinese city to test whole population as global Delta variant woes mount

AGENCIES

Authorities in China's Wuhan said yesterday they would test the city's entire population for Covid-19, as the virus returned to the place where it first emerged and the highly contagious Delta variant drove tightening lockdowns worldwide.

A resurgent virus has returned with a vengeance, buoyed by stalling vaccination rates and deadly new mutations even in places which had long touted their successes in overcoming the worst of the pandemic.

China brought domestic cases down to virtually zero after the coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan, allowing the economy to rebound and life to return largely to normal.

But a fresh outbreak has thrown that record into jeopardy, as the fast-spreading Delta variant reaches dozens of cities after infections among airport cleaners in Nanjing sparked a chain of cases that have been reported across the country.

In Wuhan -- where the virus first emerged in December 2019 and which faced a gruelling lockdown in the early months of the pandemic -- authorities said they were launching a mass-testing program for all 11 million residents.

And across China, authorities have confined the residents of entire cities to their homes, cut domestic transport links and rolled out mass testing in recent days as the country battles its largest coronavirus outbreak in months.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1